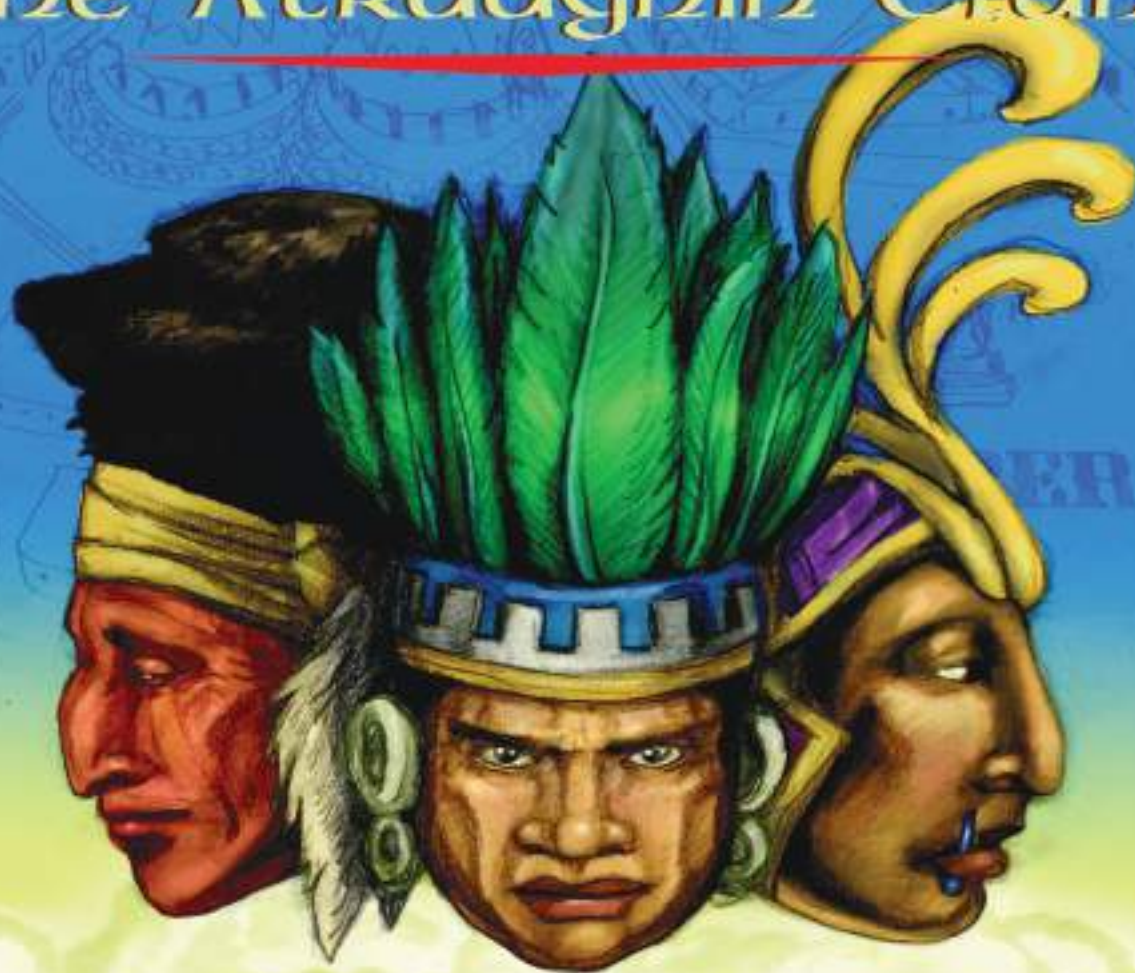


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The Atruaghin Clans



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# DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE

by Glen Welch

This book, and the accompanying Player's Guide, started off as an idea while I was locked in my house during Hurricane Harvey, with my neighborhood turned into a spontaneous island. I read through the entire gazetteer line, and noticed the sharp decline in quality for the Atruaghin book. The padding was obvious, there were no NPCs detailed in any measure, no cities, no bestiary, glaring mechanical problems, none of the standard parts of the other gazetteers. Reading on the history of the original Atruaghin Clans, the reasons were well documented. The book was a rush job. This is not to fault the author, in fact it's quite impressive the amount of work done to meet the ridiculous deadline. This was the last of the gazetteers, and the upper management wanted the line finished immediately. So the book was rushed and came out sub-par. But I wondered what could have been, if this book had the same effort devoted to the previous books in the line, how it could have added to the Mystara setting. So I wrote this revised gazetteer, fixing the mechanical issues and more importantly fleshing out the nation. Inside this book you will find a much more expansive look at the Atruaghin. Instead of the tranquil plateau where everybody gets along, you'll find a people at odds with each other. The theme of tradition versus change is tearing the land apart. One clan, long isolated from their cousins, have abandoned their past for a promising future. The Atruaghin's once feared warriors seek a new home to begin their old wars anew. The most influential clan finds themselves losing power as their kin turn away from the Old Ways. The proud cliff dwellers are finding their clan splintering over increased contact with merchants and the wealth they bring. And the twisted and evil traitors to the Atruaghin find themselves in danger of self destruction through their own machinations.

The art was done by Marco Ortiz Walters, Mischa Cel Frumos, Faith McLaughlin, Andrzej Rybus and Heather Holcomb. The map was done by Sergio Colautti. All of the art created for this book was donated. So please go hire these artists if you like the art. This is a fan creation, no part of this book is meant to be copyright challenge.

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## Timeline

**BC 4,000** Blackmoor civilization begins a meteoric rise to power due to their great technological abilities.

**BC 4,000** The Oltec culture arises. They have no contact with the Blackmoor culture or the elves and take a more leisurely path to civilization.

**BC 3,500** A rift occurs in the Oltec culture. An aggressive sub-culture, the Azcans, splits off and begins to battle the Oltecs.

**BC 3,000** The Great Rain of Fire. Several Blackmoor devices explode, shattering their civilization and shifting the very axis of the world. Azcans and Oltecs see the Great Rain of Fire as an important event in their mysticism: the End of the Fifth Sun. The Immortals transplant large numbers of these peoples to the Hollow World to save them.

**BC 2,800** The Azcans have defeated the Oltecs. However, the war and ecological changes brought on by the Great Rain of Fire has almost destroyed the Azcans as well. A small number of survivors take refuge in the caves of a mighty plateau. These are the ancestors of the modern Atruaghin Clans. This plateau, although impressive, is nowhere near as grand as the one that now stands in the lands north of the Sea of Dread.

**BC 1,750** Geological disasters- volcanic eruptions and earthquakes- splinter off much of the land south of the modern-day nations of the Five Shires and Atruaghin Clans. The plateau under which the surviving Azcans have been living collapses, killing many of them and leaving the survivors in a shattered, hostile land.

**BC 1,700** Glantri elves discover a lost Blackmoor device and detonate

it, destroying their nation. The survivors begin a migration deep underground as the blast sends a massive cloud of ash and smoke in the air that does not dissipate for many years.

**BC 1,675** Tahkati Stormtamer unites the tribes that are now known as the Children of the Horse and leads them in conquest of the other tribes that now make up the Atruaghin Clans. Eventually, he becomes an Immortal.

**BC 1,650** Atziann, one of the surviving Glantri elves, comes across the Hollow World Azcans. He spends several years living among them (in disguise) and studying their ways before leaving to pursue his dream of Immortality.

**BC 1625** The nūñē'hī make themselves known to the people that will become the Children of Atruaghin. Thus begins a friendship that lasts centuries.

**BC 1,500** Atziann attains Immortality and adopts the Azcan form of his name, Atzanteotl. He begins to manipulate the priests that rule Azcan society, turning them to evil and entropy. Only Atruatzin, who would later become Atruaghin, resists the Immortal.

**BC 1,494** Atruatzin, ruler of the Azcans, and his most faithful followers are driven out of the Azcan lands in the Hollow World by his philosophical and political rivals (who follow Atzanteotl). They settle in the fortress of Quauhnhuac.

**BC 1,484** Following the guidance of Atzanteotl and out of fear that Atruatzin might reclaim the throne, the Azcan usurper leads an attack on Quauhnhuac. There is no trace of Atruatzin or his inner circle.

**BC 1,468** Atruatzin and his loyal companions establish Mictlan, the "Land of the Dead."

**BC 1,420** Schattenalfen (the survivors of the Glantri explosion) begin to follow the Immortal Atzanteotl. They come across Mictlan, destroy it, and build the city of Aengmor upon its ruins. All of Atruatzin followers are slain; he alone escapes.

**BC 1,410** Atruatzin reaches the surface world in his quest for meaning in his life. He finds the lost descendants of the surface world Azcans and Oltecs living in the shattered lands north of the Sea of Dread.

**BC 1,400** Atruazin, who now calls himself Atruaghin, unites the warring tribes he lives among. His skill as a warrior and leader makes this a challenging, but not impossible task. The newly unified people begin to call themselves the Children of Atruaghin- the outside world calls them the Atruaghin Clans.

**BC 1,265** Ahmanni Turtlerider and Atruaghin become lovers. Atruaghin's ageless nature becomes apparent, making marriage between them impossible.

**BC 1,260** Atruaghin leaves the Atruaghin Clans to explore the surface world in a search for the nature of his seemingly eternal youth. He appoints new chiefs to each of the Clans and establishes the Words of Atruaghin that his people try to live by to this day.

**BC 1,259** Tahkati Stormtamer, now an Immortal, agrees to help Atzanteotl in destroying the work that Atruaghin has done in uniting the Atruaghin Clans.

**BC 1,257** Wogar and his tribes of Red Orcs conquer and enslave the people of the Atruaghin Clans. His rule is oppressive and savage. Tahkati Stormtamer realizes he has been betrayed by Atzanteotl and



breaks all ties with the Immortals of Entropy. He vows vengeance.

**BC 900** Atruaghin returns to the Hollow World briefly. He visits the ruins of Quauhnahuac and uses his ever-increasing power to create Atruaghin's Mystic Conveyor, a powerful magical artifact that links to the Known and Hollow Worlds.

**BC 800** Using the artifact he constructed at Quauhnahuac. Atruaghin returns from his exploration of the Known and Hollow Worlds to lead his adopted people in a revolt against the Red Orcs. The conflict is savage, but in the end, the Children of Atruaghin are successful.

**BC 795** Atruaghin recalls the memory of the great plateau that once stood in the lands of his people. Using magics and powers that he has acquired from his travels throughout the Known and Hollow Worlds, he calls it back into existence so that the Children of Atruaghin never again fear invasion. Atruaghin becomes an Immortal in recognition of his struggle against Entropy.

**BC 792** Atzanteotl begins to turn Danel Tigerstripes against Atruaghin and his followers. Atruaghin sends Hattani Stoneclaw, leader of the Bear Clan, to prevent his corruption. The intervention is too late, the Children of the Tiger begin to worship Atzanteotl, and Hattani Stoneclaw becomes an Immortal.

**BC 783** Danel Tigerstripes is wholly corrupted and becomes an Immortal in the Sphere of Entropy. He is considered the greatest traitor in all the Clans. The Tiger Clan declares itself as the enemy of Atruaghin.

**BC 452** Mahmatti Running Elk becomes an Immortal after becoming one of the most powerful shamani ever to exist atop the Atruaghin Plateau.

**AC 0** The Atruaghin Confederation is founded in the Elk city of Kin Náshdóifbái. An agreement between the Bear, Elk, Horse, and Turtle Clans to maintain the Old Ways, protect each other in times of war, and to trade freely with each other. Each year the clans send a delegate to the Elk capital to share news and affirm their allegiance to each other.

**AC 126** A green dragon sets up his lair near Elk Territory, Horse Clan braves attack the beast and slay it after a prolonged battle that ranged across a large part of the plateau.

**AC 213** The Tiger Clan discovers both gold and gems at the base of the Great Plateau. The Clan begins mining operations, with most of the gold and gems going to the priesthood to enhance the temples. Smuggling to outsiders is kept to a minimum through draconian punishments.

**AC 286** The first Tiger Clan raid into Malpheggi swamp destroys several lizardman villages and returns with hundreds of slaves for sacrifice.

**AC 350** War nearly breaks out between the Bear and Horse Clans when a Horse Clan raid steals a newly born albino bear cub from the Bear Clan. The Bear Clan mobilizes all its braves and marches on the Horse Clan. Only the last-minute intervention by the Elk Clan kept the clans coming to blows, with the bear cub being returned unharmed.

**AC 415** For the only time in history, the Horse Clan is able to bring down a bodendruker, though with serious loss of life. The entire Clan carve up the beast and holds a massive celebration in honor of the hunters that killed the creature, even inviting the other clans to participate. The creature's skull is hung in a place of honor in Ayani as a sacred relic.

**AC 485** Thyatian expedition lead by Gemmus Thalos lands at Whale Bone Island and sets up a small settlement as a base of operations. The outpost lasts for another ten years before it is abandoned due to frequent poor weather and the need for a larger port facility.

**AC 501** A clan of mountain giants makes a home near the Bear Clan. They prove to be peaceful neighbors, but the isolationist Atruaghin offer them a large fortune in goods to move on. The giants accept the offer and move north to Glantri.

**AC 654** Battle of Spirits. An attempt to scale the Great Plateau by the Tiger Clan leads to a massive magical battle between the shamani of the Elk and the Tiger Clans. Eventually, the Tiger Clan is pushed back, though at great loss of life on both sides.

**AC 663** The Tiger Clan's first and only attempt to land raiders on Ierendi ends in disaster when their war canoes encounter a single Ierendi naval ship that obliterates them.

**AC 685** Battle of Fiery Tears. A Darokin expedition is captured and sacrificed in their first experience with the Tiger Clan. Three years later, the Tiger Clan begins their numerous raids into Darokin.

**AC 742** Battle of the Moon. The Tiger Clan encounters the nūnnē'hi for the first time during a lunar eclipse. The superstitious Tiger braves put up a fierce defense, but break thinking the battle a bad omen.

**AC 811** Turtle and Ierendi whalers encounter each other off the coast of Roaring Surf Island. Communications are established with the help of magic, and both fleets depart on friendly terms.



**AC 895** Battle of Tenobar. Tiger Clan decimates a Darokinian legion outside of Port Tenobar. The city is abandoned and is sacked in short order. The braves return laden with stolen goods, but very few slaves.

**AC 900** Atzanteotl begins the secret construction of the Mouth of Azcan, a massive artifact similar to the World Conveyor. It is designed to transport Azcan warriors to the Known World by the thousands so that the Children of Atruaghin can be utterly destroyed. Once the Atruaghin Clans are exterminated, Atzanteotl plans to send them to attack the elves of Alfheim.

**AC 905** Battle of Cowards. The Tiger Clan reaches the furthest they ever have into nūñnē'hī lands, burning the forest as they go. The entire raiding party is struck down by magic in a single night, those that aren't killed outright are torn to pieces by angry spirits summoned by the nūñnē'hī.

**AC 923** Nani the Black and White, an adventurous nūñnē'hī, discovers the Hollow World when she accidentally activates the World Conveyor. She spends the next fifty years exploring the Hollow World

before she encounters the Lighthouse and its scholars.

**AC 934** Darokin completes the construction of the World Elevator, opening up trade to the top of the plateau. Caravans depart immediately, but initially receive cool receptions from the Elk and Horse Clans.

**AC 954** A Turtle Clan woman marries a sailor from Ierendi, marking the first known marriage to an outsider.

**AC 969** The nation of Sind opens up formal trade with the Shark Tribe of the Turtle Clan. In just a few years, the traders reach almost every city of the Children of the Turtle.

**AC 972** Darokin establishes informal ties with the Turtle Clan and funds the construction of a large port complex at Kin Tliish. Soon ships from Minrothad and the Five Shires are also frequenting the port.

**AC 973** The Lighthouse sends an expedition to the Known World, establishing a base camp around the Palace of Atruaghin. The expedition begins to send explorers as far across the Known World as they can.

**AC 975** The Horse Clan discovers

Tsoh Tse'aan, a massive passage carved by an enormous purple worm that leads to the bottom of the plateau. Large enough to ride twenty-five abreast, it offers the clan a way off the plateau.

**AC 996** A Darokin raid on the Tiger Clan city of Macuexcohuatl is quickly repulsed, but when the Tiger Braves pursue, they are led straight into a well-crafted trap. Of the 5,000 braves of the Tiger Clan, fewer than 200 return. The city is yet to recover from the devastating defeat.

**AC 998** Battle of Darkness. A Tiger Clan raiding party tries to sneak past the nūñnē'hī, only to be attacked under cover of magical darkness on a moonless night. The Tiger braves are massacred, with almost no losses among the nūñnē'hī.

**AC 999** Battle of Storms. The Tiger Clan successfully scale the Great Plateau and conduct a devastating raid against the Deer Tribe of the Elk Clan. The Elk Clan sends every brave they can muster against the raiders, driving them off the plateau. The damage to the peace of the Elk Clan is done, though.

**AC 1000** Present Day





# History of the Children

## Early History

The earliest ancestors of the Children of Atruaghin began as the Oltecs. At the same time that the elves of the southern continent and Blackmoor were evolving and growing, the Oltec culture arose. Living in a lush tropical area, they had no contact with the other civilizations of the world.

Five hundred years after the Oltec emerged, a split occurred with the Azcan, an aggressive subject nation. A long and bloody war followed, punctuated by the Great Rain of Fire that destroyed Blackmoor and the southern elves. In the end, the remnants of both the Oltec and Azcan people were transported to the Hollow World by the Immortals.

Only a handful of Azcan and Oltec refugees remained on the surface of the Known World. Seeking shelter from the shattered ecology around them, they began to dwell in caves cut into the side of a mighty plateau. It is important to note that it is not the Great Plateau of the modern age.

## The Elemental Chaos

Roughly 1,000 years after survivors of the Azcan state found refuge in the plateau's shadow, a new dark age fell upon them. The region that they lived in, which is now the north coast of the Sea of Dread, was geologically unstable. A series of violent tremors caused the plateau to collapse. Many of their lands broke away from the continent and drifted south. Later, these places became the island chains that are now known as the Kingdom of Ierendi and the Minrothad Guilds. The survivors of the Azcans and Oltecs were reduced almost to barbarism.



## The Coming of Stormtamer

A century after the collapse of the original plateau, Tahkati Stormtamer united several tribes (most of which now belong to the Horse Clan). He waged a war of conquest and dominated most of the other tribes for many years. Upon his ascension to Immortality, this brutal government gradually eroded and the tribes returned to individual states that fought endless petty battles with each other.

## The Coming of Atruaghin

A new presence appeared in the Known World two hundred and fifty years after the dissolution of Tahkati Stormtamer's nation. Exiled from his home deep in the Hollow World, Atruaghin found his way to the surface and was adopted by one of the warring tribes. For the course of the next several years, he united these divergent peoples into a single nation. Thus were born the Atruaghin Clans.

Atruaghin taught the descendants of the Oltecs and Azcans to live together in peace. He urged them to study

and respect the forces of nature and instilled in them a love of all things wild and untamed.

## Atruaghin Departs

When Atruaghin was convinced that the government he had established was sound, he began to entertain thoughts of leaving the clans for a time. Always curious and inquisitive, Atruaghin decided that it was time for him to explore the surface world and return, briefly, to the Hollow World.

When Atruaghin left the clans in BC 1260, he left wise and noble leaders behind to rule them. Little did he know, the Immortals Atzanteotl and Tahkati Stormtamer were plotting against him.

## The Humanoid Invasion

In BC 1257, a great wave of humanoids known as the Red Orcs came crashing down upon the peaceful followers of Atruaghin. The braves of the Horse Clan put up a brutal defense but were eventually killed or captured. For the next 350 years, Wogar and his descendants



ruled the Children of Atruaghin with the merciless crack of the taskmaster's whip.

### **Atruaghin Returns**

Eventually, Atruaghin returned from his wandering and discovered what had befallen his people. He located and contacted the pockets of resistance that had been fighting the humanoids for the past several centuries.

In a matter of months, the Red Orcs were defeated. Their power was broken, their armies shattered, and their leaders were slain. The Children of Atruaghin, their faith born out, were free again.

### **Rise of the Great Plateau**

To ensure that his people would never again have to face invasions from the outlanders, Atruaghin called upon the most potent magics he could. Combining spells and enchantments he had collected from various sources in both the Known

and Hollow Worlds, he called upon the Immortals to restore the Great Plateau that once sheltered the refugees of the Azcan/Oltec war.

When the spells were done and the magics exhausted, the grand plateau had not just been replicated; it had been improved. The Great Plateau stood 2,000 feet tall and covered three times the territory it previously did. The Great Plateau was a tremendous geological wonder. But the creation was not perfect; the magic ran out before all the territory could be affected. Two of the clans, the Turtle and the Tiger, were both left in the lowlands to the south, cut off from their Atruaghin cousins.

### **Corruption of the Tiger**

The Immortal Atzanteotl always hated Atruaghin, and he made it his goal to destroy the people that swore their faith to him. First, Atzanteotl tried to corrupt Tahkati Stormtamer during the Red Orc invasion. When that failed, he turned to corrupting Danel

Tigerstripe of the Tiger Clan.

Atzanteotl succeeds in appealing to the savage nature of the Tiger Clan. They rejected the teaches of Atruaghin and turned on the neighboring Turtle Clan and the lands that would become Darokin.

### **The Clans Splinter**

Centuries passed, and the isolationist Atruaghin were largely left alone. But soon, other nations began to encroach on the clans' territory and started to interact with the Turtle and Bear Clans. Ierendi and Sind become friendly with the Turtle Clan. At the same time, Darokin entered into business dealings with the Bear Clan, including the creation of the World Elevator in AC 934, allowing outlanders access to the top of the Great Plateau for the first time. Now the clans were caught between keeping with the Old Ways and the prosperity that interaction with other nations brings.





## Ecology and Geology

### Atruaghin Ecology

The Atruaghin territory is divided into several regions, each occupied by a different clan. The Tiger and Turtle Clans live in lush lowland coastal wooded areas, with the Forest of Death appearing tropical for unknown reasons. The remaining three clans living on the two thousand feet high Great Plateau. The Elk Clan is centered around the forest on the southern edge, fed by the rains coming from the Bay of Whales. The rains provide for the grasslands that dominate most of the plateau, only stalling out near the northern edge of the plateau.

The northern section of the plateau is divided between the arid eastern edge where the Bear Clan resides and the western edge, which is dominated by the only natural lakes found on the plateau. Thunder Lake and Horn Lake are both spring fed, and thriving with fish. The rivers feed the smaller Roaring Lake, which drains into the plateau itself. The Baldika River flows from Horn Lake, while the Matai River flows from Thunder Lake. Both rivers and all the lakes are sacred to the Horse Tribe, who rely on the waters for food. It has become a ritual to send their dead over the falls in Roaring Lake, where the bodies are washed down the drains into the plateau itself.

The ample rains and food mean the Atruaghin lands teem with life, though the Bear Clan's territory is known for being arid and hard to work. The entire base of the plateau outside of the southern regions consists of hills covered in scrub brush, though it is left undisturbed by the clans. Storms are frequent on the southern coast, but only a portion of the storms ever reach the

top of the plateau. It rains for much of the year on the coast, with the Elk villages getting moderate amounts of rain. The Horse Clans don't see much rain, but the occasional storms refresh the grasslands and prevent devastating flash fires except in times of drought. The Bear Clan only sees rain a few times a year, mostly coming from the north, originating off Lake Amsorak. The northern rains rarely reach the top of the plateau, so the Bear have to make extensive use of irrigation for their crops.

### Flora and Fauna

The plant life around the plateau depends heavily on the specific location. The constant rain in the Turtle Clan's territory leads to large conifer forests. Because the region has more days with rain than without, it is lush with foliage. Temperatures tend to be moderate, with wet and cold winters because of the ocean currents. The Tiger Clan region is almost tropical, which is the result of Atzanteotl using Immortal magic to make the Tiger lands resemble his native Azcan territories in the Hollow World. The soil is lush and fertile, resulting in most of the trees being broad-leaved evergreens. On the plateau there are several distinct regions, with most of the plateau dominated by treeless grasslands. The southeastern area occupied by the Elk Clan is a large temperate deciduous forest, as well as several naturally occurring cash crops like cotton and tobacco. Lakes dominate the northwestern region and have a large number of trees like willows and cypress in the area. The region populated by the Bear Clan, as well as much of the Atruaghin territory that surrounds the northern plateau, is mostly scrub grasses and trees.

The plateau teems with life of all sorts, both wild and domesticated. The tribes raise large numbers of horses, goats, sheep, various poultry, and add seafood to their diet when available. There many game animals to be found as well, the most famous being the buffalo that are endemic to the plateau. Numbering approximately a million, they roam much of the plateau. Elk and deer are also present in the region, unlike the buffalo, they are found both on the plateau and in the lowlands of the Tiger and Turtle Clans. Other native species found in the region include raccoons, skunks, bears, wolves, and various types of snakes. As all kinds of wildlife inhabit the Atruaghin territories, animal and nature spirits pervade the region. They are greatest in number closer to the Buffalo Home but can be found from the base of the plateau to the north to the Bay of Whales. The closer to the center of the plateau, the more powerful the spirits are. On the plateau itself, there are no humanoids living at the top, but at the northern lowlands, red orcs are common, and there are several groups of pachydermions near the border with Sind. Inside the plateau itself, there is at least one known hephaeston. The Bear Clan know of his presence, but there is little they can do about him. Fortunately, he doesn't interact with the tribes, only the rare visitor. There are numerous magical creatures also living inside the caves of the plateau. Possibly the largest concentration of griffins in the Known World is found on the southern cliff face. The griffins feed on the massive herds of buffalo and wild horses found at the top of the plateau. The Horse Clan attacks the creatures on sight, but can't do much more than drive them off. There are



numerous bodendruker living on the top of the plateau, feeding on the purple worms that live in the southwestern part of the plateau, as well as a few earthquake beetles in the same region. Several chevls live among the horse herds, much to the chagrin of the Horse Clan's braves. Numerous other flying creatures plague the top of the plateau, including harpies, dragonnes, thunderheads, wyverns, and manticores.

The southern lowlands are divided into three distinct habitats for creatures, divided where the Singing Forest and the Forest of Death converge in the nūññē'hī lands. The Turtle Clan's territories include large amounts of moose, otter, and beaver; as well as the large number of whales found off their coast. The waters off the coast are frequented by various aquatic creatures such as merrow, tritons, and kna. Elemental creatures are found in numbers on the Island of Spirits. The nūññē'hī lands are filled with all sorts of fey and sylvan creatures including but not limited to centaurs, dryads, wood drakes, hsiao, and treants. At least one gakararak is known to live in the area, moving from the Turtle lands to the Tiger lands as it desires. Inside the Tiger lands, the wildlife is hostile with large numbers of ebon tigers and werejaguars known to prowl the jungles. Because of its violent history, the Forest of Death is crawling with all manner of undead, both intelligent and mindless. While the shamani ensure the well-patrolled trade routes are safe, wraiths, spirits, specters, and much more exotic undead are found off the beaten path. The sheer number of undead creatures gave the region its name, the Forest of Death.

## Locations of Interest

### Buffalo Home

In the dead center of the Great Plateau, there is a place not even the most courageous braves will go. It is a dark and haunted clearing that is claimed by the nature spirits that call the plateau home. The animal spirits that frequent the site are fickle beings at the best of times. When they are angry, they will attack without provocation or mercy.

However, shamani from all the clans seek the wisdom that the spirits are thought to possess. The spirits' moods are tied to a large number of factors, including the phases of the moon, the weather, and the season of the year. Shamani observe all the signs to see if they can approach the spirits when they are most docile.

The area known as the Buffalo Home is several leagues due north of the Trout Tribe of the Elk Clan, and the Bear Clan's trade routes veer north to avoid getting too close to the nature spirits' territory. The animal spirits commonly found in the area are not just every animal sacred to the Children of Atruaghin, including the Tiger Clan, but also many animals widely found on the plateau. The most common are the massive ayanidine which resemble shaggy giants with the head of a bison. The spirits love to fight among each other, trying to establish dominance over the other spirits. The one time the shamani want to visit more than anything else is during equinoxes and solstices. Then the spirits celebrate their holiday in a massive dance that lasts the entire day. The shamani that join in the dance are treated as honored by both the spirits and their fellow shamani.

Few come to the Buffalo Home knowingly, children are warned about

it as soon as they can understand. The areas around it are marked with easily visible trail markers letting anyone know they are in great danger if they proceed. The spirits are much more dangerous at night when the veil between the material world and the spirit world is thinnest. One individual spirit is rarely dangerous to a brave unless it is notoriously fierce like an ayanidine or bear spirit. Still, the less dangerous ones are seldom found alone. The biggest threat to trespassers on the plateau is to ignore the warning markers and unintentionally find themselves in the Buffalo Home.

### The Eternal Powwow

The nūññē'hī are eternal creatures, originating from a time before history was recorded. They took on the shape of the creatures around them, leading to many people to believe they were the ancestors of many races, including elves. However, like all sidhe, nūññē'hī take their inspiration from the cultures that have intrigued them for thousands of years. When the Atruaghin settled in the areas around the nūññē'hī, the fey creatures were delighted and began copying the humans and their strange ways. The nūññē'hī chief Haw Haw the Diagonal, much like the Ard Ri of all the Sidhe King Oberon, has set up his court in a strange imitation of Atruaghin customs. Thus the nūññē'hī conduct a nonstop celebration in the middle of their territory, performing the same rituals and ceremonies that they don't completely understand.

Visitors to the nūññē'hī territory will hear the Powwow long before they actually it. The nūññē'hī maintain ceremonial drums day and night, never stopping. Because of the drums, anyone who wants to find the Powwow can do so easily. Inside the



celebration every aspect of Atruaghin life is mimicked, complete with horse races with nūñnē'hī braves mounted on impossibly fast coltpixies, manic dances by all manner of fey, even magical versions of the Tiger Clan's deadly games. Mortals coming to the Eternal Powwow will be drawn in by the fairy magic and be enthralled to join in the games, dancing, and festivities. Like everything born of the sidhe, however, joining into their celebrations can often prove to be dangerous, if not deadly.

The nūñnē'hī camp only exists in the mortal world, unlike Oberon's sidhe court, which is most often found in the fey world. Chief Haw-Haw could easily move his court to the fey world, but that would take him away from his beloved Atruaghin. Many of the Eternal Powwow residents are human, specifically human children taken from the Tiger Clan and replaced with changelings. The nūñnē'hī despise the Tiger Clan and frequently attempt to sabotage them with both spells and infiltration. The humans taken from the Tiger Clan are raised among the nūñnē'hī without ever knowing their true heritage, and are kept in the fey realm to be observed and copied. In the Atruaghin tongue, they are called the Ani ġi Lāa ii, or Stolen Ones. Those that dare visit the Eternal Powwow will notice there are hundreds of Stolen Ones living there, taken from the vicious Tiger Clan and raised by their hated enemies in the nūñnē'hī.

### **Island of Spirits**

The largest of the Bay of Whales Islands, is the only one without a permanent human population. The island is said to be haunted by ocean spirits that have claimed more than one ship without warning. Mists roll off the islands, often against the

wind, making both the Turtle Clan and Ierendi sailors believe the island to be haunted. Storms frequently develop over or near the island with no apparent cause, which has been the doom of many a ship. Most sailors wisely give the island a wide berth, preferring the safer waters of the two smaller islands nearby. What few realize is the source of the strange weather and unusual winds is not spirits, but elementals.

Located in the center of the island, miles from the shore is a cave that exhales the freshest air anyone in the Known World has ever breathed. The bottom of the cave opens into a rift in the Elemental Plane of Air, allowing its numerous inhabitants to visit the Prime Material Plane if only briefly. Because the elementals and other resident creatures find the air outside their plane dirty and impure, they rarely venture far from the island. But on the island, or preferably above it, the skies are home to dozens of fundamentals and elementals. Djinn have been known to vacation on the Island of Spirits, to sample what the Prime Material Plane has to offer, before returning to their plane. On rare occasions, even anemo and eolians enter through the portal, spending a few short hours flying over the ocean before returning. The most dangerous of the elemental creatures, however, is the kara-muru, or ship's bane. These malevolent creatures are responsible for most of the mists that surround the island and will venture much further than the rest of the elementals for the express purpose to slaughter crews just for fun.

Mortal exploration of the island is almost unheard of. Occasionally a shipwrecked sailor will arrive on the island, but will quickly perish or use a piece of flotsam to get back to sea.

With the winds constantly blowing outward, a survivor can try to make it to Whale Bone Island or attempt to paddle to one of the heavily used trade routes and hope to be discovered. It's a long shot, but it's their only hope of survival. The elemental portal has attracted attention from the Fire Wizards of Ierendi. While the elementals can't venture far from the island, the wizards aren't going to take that chance. They typically have at least one ship stationed nearby the island to monitor the elemental activity, and to exterminate any kara-muru they can find. No one knows the wizards' reasons for doing this, and the famously tight-lipped magic users aren't exactly forthcoming.

### **Mouth of Azcan**

Far below the Great Plateau located in the mysterious Hollow World is the Azcan Empire, descendants of the Great Rain of Fire survivors. They are a cruel and vicious people, who are similar in many regards to the Tiger Clan of Atruaghin. The most crucial similarity is they both worship Atzanteotl, the Immortal patron of corruption. In the Hollow World, the Azcan number is in the millions, but they are equally matched in strength by several other empires on their borders. Above the Tiger Clan has hundreds of thousands of warriors but is dwarfed by Darokin to their west, blocked by the Great Plateau to the north, and stymied by the Nūñnē'hī to their west. Because of his worshipers' lack of progress due to their rivals, Atzanteotl has decided on a new plan. If the Azcan are too evenly matched and the Tiger Clan is too outnumbered, bring the Azcan to the surface world to overwhelm the nūñnē'hī and the forces of Darokin, then exterminate the Children of Atruaghin before laying waste to the



elves of Alfheim, completing the Immortal's evil goals. So he has begun work on a massive artifact similar to Atruaghin's World Conveyor, but capable of transporting thousands at a time instead of a paltry dozen.

Atzanteotl began the construction of the device, dubbed the Mouth of Azcan by sending visions to his most loyal and capable priests. He told them that building the artifact would allow them to fulfill all his desires, and they would be rewarded for their efforts. The Azcan priests received a list of items and materials needed to start the construction of the base of the artifact. While the surface world priests, from the cult called the Children of the Viper, were also given instructions on how to create the arrival point for the artifact. Both factions sent out braves on quests to find what was demanded of them. Their first task was clearing out the locations specified by Atzanteotl so that both ends of the Mouth of Azcan is lined up perfectly.

On the surface, the incomplete artifact is currently a massive opening in the ground nearly half a mile across, ringed at the top by an enormous ring of carved gold. The opening is being mined by slaves explicitly captured to create the artifact. The slaves are mostly humanoids captured in Malpeggi Swamp, but also including more than a few Turtle Clan members and any outsiders the Children of the Viper can capture. The digging is done in secret, because unknown to the Tiger Clan, Atzanteotl is planning to have the Azcan warriors exterminate any members of the clan not loyal to him exclusively. Slaves are worn out quickly and must be replaced often, and the Children of the Viper are having to resort to kidnapping Tiger



Clan members to keep up with the massive demands for the labor the project needs. The pit is currently half a mile deep but will need to be another mile and a half before it is considered complete. At the current rate of progress, the artifact's surface element will be complete in just under two years, if the Children of the Viper can keep it secret that long.

#### **Naaltsoos bá Hooghan**

Typically the Atruaghin shun arcane magic; it is one of the prohibitions set forth in the Words of Atruaghin that none of his children embrace the teachings of the outlanders. With the weakening of the Old Ways, there has been more Atruaghin that look at the magics of the outlanders with curiosity. Atruaghin wizards are still rare, with only a handful in most clans, and those that have embraced the arcane arts are outcasts. But there is a cabal of wizards in the strangest of places, deep in the heart of Elk Clan territory.

The Elk Clan patron Mahmatti Running Elk had spent a portion of his life held captive in the distant

land of Glantri, where an evil sorceress drained him of his vitality. Still, he was rescued by a rival of hers who also commanded fantastic magics. Mahmatti concluded that arcane magic was not inherently evil, but just as much of a tool as a shovel or a rake. It was said he even learned some arcane spells during his time in Glantri, so when he returned, he used this knowledge to clear his name. His teachings about arcane magic were ignored by most of the Elk Clan, save for one tribe, the Owl Tribe. They took his message to heart and began studying magic from what little information Mahmatti had given them. Over the centuries the Owl Tribe has stored all their arcane lore in a single longhouse in Kin Né'eshjaà, they call it Naaltsoos bá Hooghan, or the House of Books. The library is unusual because it contains no books, only scrolls. Because the Elk Clan does not make paper, the wizards have to use leather to transcribe their discoveries. The Owl Tribe holds knowledge to be sacred, and as such,



when a wizard dies, they are ritually skinned, and their skins are used to make more scrolls. It is a dark and macabre practice, little understood by the rest of their clan. The rest of the Elk find the Owl Tribe mysterious, if not outright terrifying. The tribe does point out to the rest of their clan that they are breaking none of the Old Ways, for Atruaghin said never to learn the magic of the outlanders, where the tribe has only used the teachings of Mahmatti himself as their starting point into the research of magic. The library pales in comparison to any wizard's guild, but the tribe has also compiled the only written history of their people, also on the human skin scrolls. The wizards allow none of their scrolls to be taken from the building; all research must be done in their village. Their knowledge of their own nation's history draws in shamani from all over the plateau searching for answers to mysteries even if the visitors would rather be anywhere else in the world.

### **Palace of Atruaghin**

One of the oldest secrets of the Atruaghin people is so hidden it is unknown to even them. Over two thousand years ago, Atruaghin reached the surface world after being chased out of the Hollow World by the followers of Atzanteotl. He found the remnants of the people that his nation has descended from, eking out what they could from the forest and plains of what would become the Atruaghin Clans. He immediately began to organize them, and his first step was to use them to build a city that he could spread his teachings and leadership from. Thus was created the Palace of Atruaghin, built in the old style of the Azcans. It took over a century to build, but in the end, it resembled the finest cities in

the empire Atruaghin left centuries ago. Satisfied, Atruaghin left his people in the hands of his appointed chiefs and explored the world looking for answers to his unnaturally long lifespan. Unfortunately, the glory was short-lived as King Wogar, and his Red Orcs, invaded the Atruaghin lands, enslaving or driving off all that lived there. The city was abandoned and forgotten in the centuries of occupation that followed.

After three hundred years of brutal occupation, Atruaghin returned to his people by constructing the World Conveyor, an artifact that allowed access from the surface world to the Hollow World. He stepped out of his artifact into the Palace of Atruaghin to find it overgrown and empty, long reclaimed by nature after centuries of neglect. He rallied his people to throw out the orc invaders, and then created the Great Plateau to keep them safe. But this act cut off three of the five tribes from the lost city, with the Turtle Clan uninterested in what lies inland, and the Tiger Clan long corrupted and held at bay by the nûnně'hī. The city seemed destined to be lost forever.

This changed with a curious group of nûnně'hī who decided to explore the ruins for fun. They discovered the World Conveyor and after some amount of trial and error, accidentally activated it, sending a single nûnně'hī to the Hollow World. The nûnně'hī fled, thinking the machine was some sort of execution device and the palace was left abandoned again. But fifty years later the lone nûnně'hī returned from the Hollow World, accompanied by an expedition from the Light House. Now the city is being restored little by little to its former glory as explorers and scholars from the Hollow World have repaired buildings, began

exploring the local area, and making the city livable again. While nowhere near its former glory, the city finally has come back to life.

### **Roaring Surf Island**

The easternmost island is also the island of least interest to the Atruaghin. It has no supernatural curse or hostile inhabitants; it just happens not to have any natural coves or shelters to put a ship ashore. The island is ringed with rocky beaches and vicious undertows, making getting a boat close enough to the island to land dangerous. The island seems to be covered with forests except for a single wide-area of scrub to the south, but nothing of interest to the Atruaghin or the Ierendi that frequent the area. But the island is not uninhabited.

Three hundred years ago an attempted Thyatian invasion of Ierendi resulted in the almost total destruction of the Thyatian navy when the Ierendi Fireships made their presence known. Ten of thousands of Thyatian sailors died in a single day, incinerated by the Ierendi or sent to the bottom of the ocean. One galley trying to escape the flaming carnage that the battle became known for, deliberately ran aground on Roaring Surf Island. Of the hundreds of crew and marines, barely a quarter survived to reach the shore. Among the survivors was a wizard attached to the ship to serve as support for the battle, and she was lucky enough to make it ashore with her spellbook. She realized the island's natural defenses and the strategic location was perfect for an observation post to keep an eye on foreign ships in the surrounding area. While the battle was a total disaster for the empire, at least something good could be salvaged.



Using her magic to send word back to Thyatis of her situation and report on the number of survivors and her plans for an observation post, the wizard was able to get permission to begin the construction of several concealed posts all along the island's coast. Workers and fresh supplies were teleported in, there was no way to get provisions by boat, and soon a network of tunnels and redoubts had been constructed. The wizard was quickly recalled to Thyatis, her talents were wasted on simple construction, and a military commander was put in place along with scouts and less experienced wizards to send messages back to Thyatis. The garrison established farms in the middle of the island, and keeps livestock corralled away from the coast. The post is not a desirable assignment in the legion, but a necessary one. The scouts report back on fleet movements and pirate activity, keeping an eye out for foreign warships that are new to the area. Troops are cycled out after a year to prevent morale problems. The camp itself was given the name Point Theopolis, after the wizard centuries ago that suggested its construction. It is recorded she was the only person from that battle to earn any reward at all.

#### **Tsoh Tse'aan**

The Horse Clan has long roamed the Great Plateau hunting bison and raiding their neighbors in supposedly bloodless combat. But the wild braves have bristled under the Old Ways laws because it stifles their warrior culture. The Horse shamani follow Tahkati Stormtamer, their tempestuous patron who is the oldest of all the patrons of the Atruaghin Clans, including Atruaghin himself. Tahkati was the first to unite the clans under his rule by force. He

opposed Atruaghin when he first appeared, and only began to support him after Atzanteotl betrayed Tahkati. When Atruaghin raised the Great Plateau, the Horse Clan was trapped along with the Elk and Bear Clans. While the Bear Clans were able to carve cities out of the plateau walls, and the Elk were happy with their isolation, the Horse Clans were trapped without a foe to conquer. All they could do was stage mock war games against their neighbors and sing songs of old glories when the Horse braves would ride across the battlefield, scattering their enemies before them. But twenty-five years ago, the Horse Clan made a monumental discovery, the Tsoh Tse'aan.

The Tsoh Tse'aan was a massive tunnel carved centuries ago by a purple worm, and was covered over by foliage in the following years. It was located at the northwestern tip of the plateau, in a rugged area unsuitable for horse riding. A group of scouts stumbled across the cave while exploring the region to see what game animals could be found. They entered it to see if any animals were taking up lairs in it but quickly realized the cave was larger in scope than they could even imagine. The scouts returned to their village and gave a detailed report of what they had discovered. The chief sent back several expeditions to explore it to see how far it went down. Each expedition had to return because their supplies ran low. The next one was sent down with more supplies until the seventh attempt was able to reach the end. The tunnel opened into an overgrown cave mouth at the bottom south of the Sind province of Nagpuri. The clan suddenly had a way off the plateau and new land to raid.

The ramifications of the tunnel were immediately apparent to all the chiefs of the Horse Clan. It was the most important discovery in the clan's history and one that would shatter the Atruaghin Confederation. The great chief of the Horse Clan called together representatives of all the tribes to discuss the future of the Clan. Several wanted to take the entire clan and leave immediately. The tunnel was slightly over a hundred miles long, winding through the plateau. But scouts and raiders reported the lowlands had little in the way of animals that the Horse Clan needed to feed itself.

Most importantly, they had none of the buffalo that the Horse Clan needed to survive. A plan was put forward, drive all the buffalo herds north into the Tsoh Tse'aan, where they will migrate to the plains of Nagpuri, and the clan will follow. But first, the clan has to build a road across the rough terrain leading to the cave, and find a way to light up the tunnel itself to guide the buffalo on their route. Finally, the clan has to coordinate the largest buffalo hunt in their history to push the herds into the cave. How long these preparations will take remains to be seen, but the clan is hurriedly setting their plan in motion. In a few years, the other clans will wake up one day and find one of the Children of Atruaghin has wholly abandoned the Great Plateau and the rest of their people.

#### **Whale Bone Island**

The smallest of the Bay of Whales islands, Whale Bone Island is also the only island approachable by boat. It earned its name, because for whatever reason, it has an unusual number of whales beaching themselves on the island. While the number isn't large enough to mean



anything sinister, it does make life easier for the Turtle Clan fishermen, so much that they have a permanent whaling station erected on the island. Older members of the tribe that still want to go out on the ocean will be dropped off on the island along with youth not old enough to catch whales. When the occasional whale beaches itself, the Atruaghin will rush out with harpoons and ropes to finish off the beast and begin to render it down to be transported back to the mainland. This teaches the youth the tricks of the trade and allows the elderly to pass down their knowledge in some degree of safety. Ierendi once claimed the island in years past, but the Thyatian occupation forced them to abandon it until they could free themselves. Once the Thyatians had been overthrown, the Ierendi returned to the island to begin whaling operations again. By the time the Ierendi had returned to the islands, the Atruaghin had been there for decades. The initial meeting between the two peoples was more or less peaceful. Both groups were fishermen, not warriors, so neither was inclined to start hostilities. An effort was made to communicate, and an accord was sorted out. The Atruaghin and the Makai share several traits, including a love of the ocean and an aversion to metal weapons. The groups agreed to share the island, with the Atruaghin getting the first claim on any whale that beached itself.

The accord between the two peoples has lasted for centuries; it was the first time since the creation of the plateau that the Atruaghin cooperated with outsiders. The Ierendi brought over supplies to improve the productivity of the whaling stations and even

constructed three more. Now ships of both nations could come to the island and have their catch rendered down into usable goods that could be easily transported back to the home nations. Everyone works together regardless of nationality, and both nations prosper greatly from that cooperation. It is often the place where orphaned members of the Turtle Clan are adopted by the Ierendi, freeing the orphan from a life of slavery and spreading the Atruaghin culture on foreign soil.

### **World Elevator**

If asked what aspect of the Great Plateau do they think of when they think of the Atruaghin, those that have seen it talk of the World Elevator. One of the most impressive man-made creations of the Known World, the construction is a two-thousand-foot-tall cargo elevator constructed by the nation of Darokin for exclusive rights to trade on the plateau. Previously visitors to the plateau had to make their way up a Bear Clan city, a claustrophobic maze of narrow streets and steep stairwells. The construction took ten years to build, even with help from the Bear Clan. When it was finally completed, the Atruaghin plateau was open for Darokin caravans. The elevator is pulled by a team of dozens of horses and ratcheted to prevent the elevator from running away in case of an emergency. The ride takes 3-4 hours and can be quite nauseating to those with even the slightest bit of acrophobia.

The elevator is situated between Kin Aninigii and Kin Nášhdóitsoh, and both have built facilities at the top of the plateau. At the bottom of the elevator Darokin has created a trade depot that has been steadily increasing in size as more merchants move to the area. The trading post,

known as Naalyéhé bá Hooghan, has grown to be one of the largest cities in the Atruaghin plateau. Darokin has a monopoly on the elevator, only approved guild caravans which have paid for the right to use the elevator are allowed up. Under no circumstances are clerics of foreign faiths allowed to ascend the plateau. Members of the Bear Clan are permitted to take the elevator for free, but that privilege is rarely used except by those that work in the lower village and curious youth wanting to experience the trip. All caravans are secured once onboard, and seats are provided because of the long trip to the top.

The trade depots at both ends of the plateau have taken on an almost tourist attraction status. The clan does not accept coins for payment but has started accepting Darokin's certified letters of credit, which visitors purchase from guild merchants at the bottom of the elevator. When a caravan isn't due, the elevator operators will allow small parties to ride the elevator up for a steep fee so they can see the top of the plateau themselves. This excursion is quite popular with artists and bards looking for inspiration. The visitors are not allowed to leave the upper trade-depot, but are permitted to purchase items directly from the Bear Clan merchants. At the bottom, more merchandise is made available, but they tend to be cheaply made copies of Bear Clan goods. Only at the top are items from the Horse and Elk clans available to visitors. The elevator, on average, is used six times a day, each use pouring more wealth into the Bear Clan's coffers. Other nations have begun to send delegations to the trading post, much to Darokin's disapproval.



## Clans and Outsiders

### Bear Clan

Skirting the northeast edge of the Great Plateau, the Bear Clan is a clan tearing itself apart due to conflict between the Old Ways and the new. The merchants of Darokin brought the outside world to the sheltered culture of the Atruaghin. The clan honored the Old Ways of Atruaghin, scraping a meager existence by sustenance farming. Then came the traders from the lowlands who offered goods in exchange for a chance to build a mechanical device that could lift their caravans to the Great Plateau. With the construction of the World Elevator, the Bear Clan's life was torn asunder.

The Bear Clan is still highly religious, keeping the Old Ways and honoring Atruaghin and their patron Hattani Stoneclaw. The clan tills the soil with wooden tools and fights with stone weapons. The merchants provide the clan with modern fabrics and exotic foods. The clan struggles to balance the old and the new, with some tribes

spurning the goods of the outsiders and others embracing their ally's offerings. The unbalanced distribution of trade goods between the tribes closest to the World Elevator and the tribes furthest from it have often turned meetings between the tribes into shouting matches. Maintaining the integrity of the clan is shaping up to be a challenge in the coming years.

While not as conservative as the Elk Clan, the Children of the Bear still hold to the Atruaghin Confederation and what it stands for. They are close allies with the Elk Clan, despite some of the Bear Clan's unorthodox ways. It tolerates the Horse Clan because the Bear Cities are famously difficult to raid and their fields hold little interest to the Horse Clan's raiders. It even welcomes the occasional visitor from the distant Turtle Clan, although these meetings are typically to exchange news and records. The Tiger Clan raids the Bear Clan on rare occasions, but the defenses of the Bear Clan's cities repulse all but the most sudden attacks.

The biggest challenge facing the Bear Clan is the sudden influx of wealth. Unlike the Turtle Clan, which has few dealings with the Confederation and more contact with outsiders, the Bear Clan is bordered by their people and the outsiders Atruaghin warned about. The vast majority of contact is with the nation of Darokin, who shares most of the Bear Clan's borders. Occasionally merchants from Sind arrive at the western cliff cities to conduct trade. The one group of traders the Bear Clan happily greets are the rare caravans from the Five Shires, as the Atruaghin and hin have a love of agriculture that few others appreciate. When a hin caravan arrives, there is typically a feast held where the two peoples trade seeds, tell tales, and swap recipes.

There is a strongly growing divide between the tribes as the larger cities claim most of the incoming wealth for themselves before allowing the scraps to flow to the outlying tribes. Tribes closer to the World Elevator grow in size and status, while those furthest from it are slowly dying as the younger tribe members move to the larger tribes. Corruption is becoming a problem in some of the tribes as supplies meant for other clans or poorer tribes are instead kept by those in charge of sorting out the trade goods. The Bear Clan council is having trouble dealing with the problems caused by their new wealth, but so far, no one has presented a solution they can agree on.

A council of tribes runs the Bear Clan. Each tribe sends a representative to convene at Kin Ma'ii for the Council of Tribes, where they hear all disputes and make new laws for the entire clan. Each tribe chooses their delegate in their own





particular way. The delegate from Hawk and Mountain Goat is a hereditary position. Mountain Lion hires its representative as an employee. Falcon allows the position to be purchased. Eagle picks their delegate by a lottery, letting the Immortals decide. Rattlesnake and Coyote elect their delegates from their people. The delegates remain for two years when the tribes have to select new representatives, but nothing prevents them from sending the same delegate again.

The Council of Tribes selects a chief among the delegates who serves more like a chairman than an executive power. Each tribe presents their proposals to the council, and the delegates vote on each proposal with the chief acting as a tie-breaker. The neutral tribes in the dispute settle disputes between tribes and all major crimes like murder or rape are presented for the council to judge. Punishments that are handed down for the more severe crimes are typically exile at the top of the plateau. This is all too often a death sentence because of the stark conditions outside of the cities. Most die from exposure within a year, and the Horse Clan often enslaves those that don't.

Marriage in the Bear Clan is a simple affair. If the couple decides to get married, they present themselves before the tribal elders and formally declare their love for each other. The families of the married couple hold a celebration to honor them and their new lives. The couple is allotted a small home, typically close to the top of the plateau, to start their new lives. As their family grows, they will be given a new living place to match the size of their family. Divorce is almost unheard of in the Bear Clan, but if one is needed, the couple will

move back in with their families, with any children being awarded to the parent more worthy according to the tribal elders.

The Bear Clan are known for traditionally being a somber people. When it comes time to bury one of their own, the deceased's tribe gathers for the funeral in one of the catacombs they carved out of the plateau. Everyone who wants to speak gives a short speech, followed by the shamani blessing the deceased and praying for a swift journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Then the corpse is placed on a shelf in the catacombs and left for the elements. Due to the dry climate, the bodies don't decompose but instead naturally mummify. The catacombs are frequently visited by the Bear Clan, as it is customary for the clan to offer gifts to dead relatives for good fortune or guidance.

The Bear Clan is one of the more religious clans among the Atruaghin. Their shamani are sought after for their wisdom by both elder and commoner. The shrines to the Immortals are prominent structures at the top of the cliffside villages. The Bear Clan shamani are experiencing a crisis of faith due to the changes foreign merchants have caused. The orthodox shamani want the tribes to shun the merchants and stay with the Old Ways, but the shamani in the tribes close to the World Elevator prefer to adjust to the new status. They allow the adoption of goods that do not violate the Old Ways. The Rattlesnake Tribe has gone so far as to adopt a variant of Darokin's letters of credit as paper money. This disturbs the other tribes' shamani, but so far, they haven't pressed the issue because the tribe isn't technically breaking any of the established laws.

The Bear Clan grows all their food at the top of the plateau, away from any raiders that would destroy their crops in the lowlands. Their farmland is semi-arid, so they rely heavily on irrigation and the occasional magical help. Their most important crop is corn, supplemented with beans and other vegetables. The clan also raises goats and sheep for meat and occasionally trades with the Horse Clan for buffalo. The one food the clan refuses to eat is pork. Wild pigs have long plagued their farmers, and the animal is considered an enemy of the people, only good for being hunted and exterminated. The Bear Clan supplements its diet through trade. More foods are being introduced to the clan's dinner tables through Darokin or Hin traders almost constantly. No one objects to the Bear Clan buying food from outside traders.

The one thing the Bear Clan is famous for across the continent is their cities carved from the cliff sides. Starting at the bottom of the plateau and reaching thousands of feet straight up, Bear cities are a work of wonder. The villages present rows and columns of walls and windows with no apparent doors looking at them from the lowlands. However, carved inside the cliff face, the buildings are connected by a maze of ladders, stairs, and claustrophobic streets. Visitors are rarely allowed into the cities proper because navigating your way through a Bear city requires a fair amount of skill. Some ladders are private property, used only to enter someone's house. One house's roof is another house's porch. Children run through the streets and across the roofs without regard for the slow-moving adults walking below them. The city structure has an order to it; houses



are built from the top down while shops and granaries are built from the ground up. The older buildings occupy the middle of the city, with new buildings carved on the outskirts or built as freestanding buildings on the plateau itself. Buildings that become vacant are repurposed by the elders of the tribe, with the building frequently being given to an expanding family.

By tradition, the shrines to both Atruaghin and Hattani Stoneclaw are always built on the plateau itself so the shamani can look down on the lands below. Bear Clan braves mostly live in the buildings that reach to the bottom of the plateau, to prevent any attacks from humanoids and the Tiger Clan. There are numerous braves guarding the farms on the top of the plateau from Horse Clan raiders. Navigating the cities is almost impossible by outsiders, though the Bear Clan finds the layout practically second nature. The cities are expanding sideways to make room for new members. The central cities are expected to meet in about a decade, filling the cliffs with dozens of miles of city space.

The Bear Clan cities are so well fortified that distant Thyatis has studied Bear Clan architecture. Thyatians have adopted Bear Clan building features into the Liber Tacticus, their definitive guide to warfare. The lower buildings have the thickest walls, making them impregnable to war machines and most spells. There is no way to access the cities from the lowlands except for ladders that can easily be pulled up or cut down if necessary. Anyone attempting to scale the cliffs with their ladders or siege towers has to approach across broken ground under a hail of rocks and arrows from above. Never has a Bear Clan

city been successfully assaulted from below. The Thyatian general that surveyed Kin Tl'izi for the first time wrote that any attempt to attack would be tantamount to suicide.

Because of their position on the plateau and their possession of the World Elevator, Bear is the only clan with regular contact with all of the other clans, including Tiger. Bear is on good terms with Elk, who they see as brothers in following the Old Ways. Horse raids them on occasion, but prefer to go after Darokin caravans rather than the meager crops of the Bear farms. Tiger raids tries to raid the Bear cities every once in a while but has to scale the cliff face to reach the city. More often than not, the raid ends with the Tiger braves falling to their deaths as the Bear braves pelt them from above with rocks. Even the distant Turtle Clan visits occasionally travel to the World Elevator to exchange news and trade with their cousins. Bear treats the other friendly clans with respect, and is well regarded in return.

Bear has the friendliest relations with foreign nations of any of the Atruaghin Clans except Turtle. The Bear Clan's territory abuts mostly the border of Darokin but does have some contact with the country of Sind as well. Darokin attempts to trade extensively with the Bear Clan, though their caravans can only reach the cities easily by traveling to the top via the Word Elevator. The Bear Clan is split on the outsiders; some don't trust the foreigners, others gladly accept any support offered. Whispers are starting to surface, especially from the Hawk Tribe, that the Bear Clan is being used by Darokin to further its own goals. If it was truly an equal agreement, Darokin would allow caravans from the Bear Clan to travel into other

nations of the continent.

Because of their agreement with Darokin, the Bear Clan has ramped up their production of trade goods to keep up with demand. Darokin's elite are buying as many Bear Clan goods as the clan can produce. The clan primarily made pottery that they traded with the other clans, and Darokin's elite bought up as much as they could afford. The clan has begun to mass-produce various small trinkets from the stone they carve from the plateau as they expand their city. The tribe also makes toys that resemble kachina dolls, modeled after fey of the same name who the tribe has long honored. Older members of the tribe make the dolls and other tribal items like blankets that end up sold to Darokin's wealthiest merchants. In return, the Bear Clan trades for new seeds, clothes, and livestock. The tribes nearest the World Elevator take the lion's share of the goods, leaving little for the outlying cities and causing problems between tribes.

The Bear Clan is unique among the clans as, on rare occasions, it allows outsiders to join the clan. Only humans are extended this courtesy, and even then, only if the shamani allow it. The shamani maintain a shrine called the House of Atruaghin in the middle of each city, separate from the larger shrines to the Immortals at the top of the plateau. The House is restricted only to shamani and is used to store the most sacred relics of the tribe. Visitors who wish to live in the city must offer a donation to the House that goes to benefit the tribe. The donation must be important to the person making it; large amounts of wealth are refused if the money isn't important to the visitor. If the donation is accepted, it disappears



from the house by supernatural means. If it is refused, the donation remains. In that case, the contribution is returned, and the visitor is exiled from the clan. The Bear are a religious people. Their most sacred ritual is the Sahkahn or snake dance. The week before the spring solstice, the shamani gather at the top of the plateau. For four days, they collect every snake they can find, focusing on poisonous ones. At the end of the fourth day, the shamani are sealed in the House of Atruaghin with all the snakes they've collected. The shamani are protected from the snakes by, they claim, the grace of the Immortals. For the next three days, the shamani engage in secret rituals, praying for the harvest's success. The rest of the clan paints their cities bright, vibrant colors using chalks they mine from the plateau itself. On the day of the solstice, the shamani emerge from their shrines to bless the clan, who celebrate with a day-long festival held at the top of the plateau. At dusk, the shamani release all the snakes back into the wild.

### Cities

**Kin Gini** (Falcon) Once one of the poorest cities in the Bear Clan, the Falcon Tribe has resorted to smuggling small shipments of goods to merchants not wishing to pay the exorbitant fees to use the World Elevator. Falcon has a secret agreement with House Toney of Darokin to exchange agricultural supplies for Atruaghin artifacts. The city is prospering, but will eventually have to explain its sudden wealth.

**Kin Aninigii** (Rattlesnake) This city has become almost entirely devoted to operating the World Elevator. It is the only city in the Bear Clan to have boarding houses for the merchants that frequent the area. Provisioners

and guides make themselves readily available for a price at both ends of the elevator. While the city bans metal currency, the Darokin Certified Letter of Credit is accepted freely as a form of exchange. The priests of Atruaghin and Stoneclaw are concerned about the rapidly spreading outside influence on the Rattlesnake Tribe.

**Kin Nāshdóitsoh** (Mountain Lion) The most important trading post in all of the Atruaghin Plateau, the Mountain Lion Tribe has an ideal location just north of the Elk Clan while providing access to most of the Bear Clan as well. Mountain Lion attempts to control the caravan access to the rest of the Bear Clan, while also stockpiling trade goods from the caravans to barter directly with the Elk Clan. This has caused large amounts of wealth to become centered in the city, putting a strain on the religious restrictions of the Atruaghin. The other cities have certainly noticed the deviations from the rest of the clan Mountain Lion has allowed itself.

**Kin Ma'ii** (Coyote) The capital of the Bear Clan, and the largest city in Atruaghin outside the Tiger Clan. It is the only city in Atruaghin with a section populated by outsiders, as Darokin is trying to establish formal trade relations with the tribe. Coyote enjoys the large selection of trade goods that Darokin brings in, but has strict religious laws to keep out foreign influences. The tribes send representatives to the city once a month to air grievances and to make formal announcements. The Coyote tribe members welcome their role as the center of Bear Clan civilization, though they tend not to bring this up when dealing with outsiders.

**Kin Njiljeel** (Hawk) The second largest of the Bear Clan cities, the

Hawk Tribe is the largest critic of the acceptance of outsiders onto the plateau. While Bear has unquestionably benefited from the increased trade with Darokin, the impact on their culture can't be contested either. Foreign currency is already becoming accepted in the Bear cities, and several of the younger generation have left their culture to explore the rest of the world. Hawk's leaders are becoming increasingly isolationist in their thoughts, and the time for them to challenge the leadership of the entire clan is rapidly approaching.

**Kin Atsi** (Eagle) Located along the dying eastern trade route, the Eagle Tribe has turned its back on the influx of wealth the rest of their clan is benefiting from. Eagle has devoted itself to the Old Ways, sticking with traditions and methods dating back to the raising of the Great Plateau. Entirely agricultural, the city is almost self-sufficient. Their only interaction with the outside world is trading with hin merchants for new crops and seeds. Eagle admires the hin for their agricultural expertise, and the hin love the new plants imported from Atruaghin.

**Kin Tl'izi** (Mountain Goat) The city of the Mountain Goat tribe is the poorest of all the Bear Clan tribes. Once an important trading post closest to the Elk Clan, now the caravans only stop to water their animals before proceeding towards Elk or the World Elevator. Many caravans don't even stop, causing Mountain Goat to miss out on much of the wealth being introduced into their nation. Resentment is rising inside the city, at both the Darokin merchants and the other cities of the Bear that hoard the wealth for themselves.



## Elk Clan

To the outside world the Atruaghin the clans are seen as xenophobic isolationists who never leave their homeland. This image of them is slowly fading as the Bear and Turtle clan open up to the outside world. The one tribe that personifies the world's image of the Atruaghin is the Elk Clan. Located at the southern edge of the Great Plateau, the Elk are separated from the rest of the world by massive cliffs on all sides. This is just the way the Elk like it.

The Elk hold themselves as the inheritors of Atruaghin's teachings, they keep to the Old Ways as tribal law. They are the largest of the clans, with large cities spreading out across the Wapita Forest with tens of thousands of tribal members. The Elk Clan was the driving force behind the Atruaghin Confederation, the Great Council is held in Kin Náshdóifbái every year. Tradition is paramount to the Elk, even unpopular traditions like supporting arcane magic are tolerated, though not openly.

The teachings of Atruaghin comprise the majority of Elk Clan law. Their own patron, Mahmatti Running Elk, is held to high regard, but his acceptance of arcane magic is something the clan is not proud of. Now with the Darokin caravans traversing the Great Plateau the Elk are even more of a stickler for the Old Ways. Caravans entering Elk territory are inspected, any items that violate Elk law like metal tools are confiscated and destroyed without exception. The other clans consider the Elk to be borderline fanatical in their adherence to their laws, but leave them to their ways. The strength of the Elk is the fact they strive to be self sufficient. Their farms produce more food than they

need. They keep large herds of livestock to serve as food and leather. The clan's loggers bring in almost as much lumber as the Turtle Clan. Their cities are spread out and clean, their hereditary chiefs keep the tribes orderly and peaceful. The only threats to the clan are the occasional attacks from Tiger braves scaling the cliffs, and raids from the Horse braves looking to steal goods and kidnap slaves. But those threats are minimal to the survival of the tribe. The Tiger attacks are rare, and the Horse Clan does live by their bizarre code of conduct that the Elk can at least work with.

While the clan looks tranquil from the outside, there are tensions within. The more orthodox tribes look with disdain on any clan that breaks with tradition, no matter how minor the transgression. The tribes are highly judgmental of each other for any perceived variation from what the Old Ways dictate. This leads to increased tensions at clan gatherings as the various tribes engage in petty bickering between themselves. While the rivalries between the tribes are minor, they do serve to drive away the more isolated tribes from the rest of the clan. Whether this becomes a larger problem remains to be seen.

The Elk Clan has the largest governing body of any of the clans. Their great chief is elected from the tribal chieftains, who also send tribal representatives to advise the great chief. The tribal chiefs are all hereditary, the clan believes strongly that the Immortals will only provide the most capable to rule. At the clan level there are numerous individuals that run the day to day aspects of the clan. The advisers are assigned to their duties by the great chief as needed by the clan. The advisers serve any number of roles, from

judges to investigators to administrators. The clan has created a bureaucracy that it cannot live without. The government has worked well for centuries, but is beginning to crack because of the inter-tribal rivalries.

Clan life among the Elk is fairly structured, this includes marriages. Many of the marriages are arranged, set up by parents long before the children come of age. Many parents will seek out shamani to find appropriate mates for their children, trusting in the wisdom of the Immortals to guide them to the best choice. Marriage by choice among adults is rare, but not unheard of. Most first marriages are arranged, but if in case of a spouse's death the widow or widower is free to select a new spouse. Divorce is almost unheard of, as it must be approved by a shamani and the tribal chief. Since most marriages are arranged by the shamani, allowing a divorce reflects badly on the priesthood. The only real cause of divorce is if one of the couple commits a crime or becomes insane. If a child is orphaned, they are adopted by their tribe, who will place them in families deemed worthy of raising the children. The Old Ways dictate that no one that is disadvantaged by fate is left uncared for.

Marriage ceremonies among the Elk are elaborate affairs, with months of planning and involving dozens of guests and family. Parents from both families contribute to the wedding, starting with building the new home for the couple before the ceremony. It is a matter of pride for the families to have the largest wedding they can afford. Since the Elk clan is a barter society, much of the dealings involve trading goods or favors with other families. The larger the wedding, the



more important the shamani will perform the ceremony. The function of this focus on large weddings is that the guests will provide the new couple with gifts, so the more guests the easier the start for the couple. In contrast to the clan's elaborate wedding ceremonies, funerals are a brief and somber affairs. Elk has two funeral rites, burial mounds and sky platforms. Those that die from natural causes or diseases are buried in mounds. Those that die violent deaths are placed on open air platforms and exposed to the elements. The Elk territory is ringed with their burial mounds, each containing entire families. The Elk are not buried with any valuables, making raiding by the Horse Clan rare. The open air platforms are placed in the thickest woods, the clan believes that corpses left open to the sky are seen by the Immortals who will take pity and avenge them. No other Atruaghin Clan except maybe the Tiger are as religious as the Elk. The largest building in every Elk tribe is the shrine to Atruaghin. The shrine to Running Elk is an open field for the clan to commune with nature. Each tribe has dozens of shamani serving as advisers and observers to anyone who seeks out their guidance. Religious ceremonies are held on a weekly basis, and are attended by hundreds of the Elk clan. **Members of the Elk Clan that**



do not attend ceremonies or appear to be wavering in their faith will be personally visited by a shamani to encourage them to keep with the Old Ways. While there is no penalty for those that don't publicly show their faith, the societal pressure is massive.

The Elk Clan split their devotion between Atruaghin and Mahmatti Running Elk, attending ceremonies for both every week. Atruaghin represents the Old Ways, the laws held sacred above all others. Running Elk is looked up to because of his knowledge; his teachings are responsible for the Elk having the highest literacy rate in the Atruaghin Clans. Running Elk's acceptance of arcane magic is a topic most of the shamani tend to avoid talking about, except in the Owl Clan that accepts it wholeheartedly. When Atruaghin and Running Elk's teachings differ, most shamani defer to Atruaghin.

The Elk Clan territory is unnaturally fertile. The fields on the edge of the cities are covered in all manner of crops. The light forests and fields at the edge of the territory are filled with livestock. The tribe raises goats, sheep, buffalo and poultry for their own consumption. The sheer amount of food produced by the Elk Clan rivals that of the Five Shires. They grow orchids of fruits, rows of corn, some unknown outside of the plateau. The clan also grows pumpkins, squashes, rye, potatoes, tomatoes, yams and other foods native to the plateau. They have large plantations of tobacco, which is a superior quality to that of the pipeweed of the hin. The clan has had to develop ways to preserve and store the food because they make so much of it. But because of this necessity, even in the harshest winters the Elk clan will not starve.

All Elk Clan cities are laid out in a grid pattern, centering around the shrine of Atruaghin in the middle, with Mahmatti's amphitheater on one side and the tribal council building in the other. In the Bobcat tribe the city is built around three buildings, the Confederation capital building, the shrine to Atruaghin and their own council building. From the city center buildings are spaced out evenly with gardens placed in regular intervals. The cities are almost identical in their grid pattern, with wide streets large enough for several horses. Buildings are made out of wood and stone, and can be built quickly. New buildings can be raised on average in a week. When a new house is needed, the friends and family of the person in need get together and construct the building. Near the farms granaries are built where needed.

Elk maintains itself as the center of the Atruaghin people. Their chief was the one to propose the alliance between the tribes over a century ago. The clan has the largest shrine to Atruaghin on the entire plateau. The Elk make a sign of sending out delegates to every allied tribe, and expects the tribes to do the same. Elk patrols search caravans for contraband, even if the caravans are on roads in Horse or Bear territory. The Elk claim they are trying to keep the other tribes loyal to the teaching of Atruaghin, while the other clans consider the Elk meddlesome puritans.

Of the four tribes of the Confederacy the Elk are the most isolationist. They share no border with any outside power, they conduct only minimal trade with the caravans. Outsiders that approach them are turned away unless an emergency. Most nations don't even know about



the existence of the clan, something that suits the Elk just fine. The Darokin Diplomatic Core has tried to establish relations with the Elk, but the diplomats have all been turned away at the border every time.

While the Elk do not have any formal relations with outside nations, they do trade extensively with the Bear Clan, and occasionally the Horse and Turtle Clans. The Elk trade food and leather goods to the Bear for pottery and stonework. The Elk Clan's tobacco is in high demand in other nations, especially the Shires. The Elk rarely sell the tobacco to the caravans, preferring to sell to the Bear Clan, who, in turn, sells it to Darokin. Because the clan is so self-sufficient, it trades only for luxury goods allowed by the Old Ways. The more prosperous Elk Clan members are known for displays of wealth with stonework decorations outside their homes.

Despite being known for their austere nature, the Elk are also quite the artists. Their favorite canvas is their skin, decorating themselves with elaborate patterns using cosmetics. Each clan member has their preferred style, from geometric patterns to animals to religious symbols. Hairstyles are quite extravagant, with each individual using lard to shape their hair in unique ways. The Elk dress rather garishly, dying their clothing in bright colors. The more noticeable the makeup, clothing, or hairstyle is, the better. Each clan member keeps a small pouch containing cosmetics and lard to touch up their makeup and hair periodically throughout the day.

### Cities

**Kin Hazei** (Squirrel) Possibly the most stringent of all the tribes

following the Old Ways, the Squirrel tribe is almost militant about keeping with the teaching of Atruaghin. To them, outsiders are polluting the very land they walk on. The Horse Clan's flaunting of the Old Ways deserves to be violently punished, not tolerated as a joke. The elders of the Squirrel tribe argue for those that violate the sacred ways be exiled from the Clan, and that the caravans be turned back. The most militant of the tribe propose violence against the merchants. Right now, the tribe's demands are dismissed as bravado, but a few of the other tribes fear what happens if the Squirrel tribe decides to act on their own.

**Kin Loo** (Trout) The closest city to the hunting grounds of the Horse Tribe, the Trout tribe has the largest number of braves of any of the Elk clans. While war between the clans is strictly forbidden, this doesn't stop the Horse braves from raiding the Elk for food and trophies. To counter this, the Trout tribe trains every able-bodied youth in the ways of combat, so when the Horse do come the clan is ready. This causes more than a bit of distrust against outsiders; the Trout are suspicious even of Elk tribes other than their own. The Trout follow the Old Ways, making their fights with the Horse Clan tricky, as they are forbidden from fighting to the death. When they capture a Horse brave, the Horse Clan pays a ransom in the form of buffalo hides, which the Trout tribe will put on posts on their borders to let the Horse clans know the Trout are more than capable of defending themselves.

**Kin Nahashch idí** (Badger) The first city most visitors encounter, the Badger tribe holds to the Old Ways more than any other tribe. They take it upon themselves to inspect all

caravans for contraband, destroying the offending item or turning back the caravan if too much contraband is found. The Badger tribe has riders patrolling the areas around their city, trying to find caravans attempting to sneak past, turning back any they catch. Their role as border guards is a self-appointed position, and tolerate no deviation from religious practices in their city.

**Kin Náshdóifbái** (Bobcat) The pride of the Elk Clan, the Bobcat clan serves as the capital of their people. It is designed precisely as the Immortal Atruaghin had laid out over a thousand years ago, with equal parts garden, temple, and housing in a circular pattern. The Great Hall of the Elk stands at the center of the city, with all roads leading to it. Shrines to Atruaghin and all the other Immortals sacred to the Elk Clan surround the Great Hall, with Mahmatti's shrine the closest to Atruaghin. The Old Ways reign supreme here, outsiders are distrusted, even members of other clans are viewed on with suspicion. The Bobcat tribe keeps an eye on other Elk tribes as well, to make sure they keep with the Old Ways.

**Kin Né'eshjaà** (Owl) Arcane magic is frowned upon in most of Atruaghin despite it being an aspect of Mahmatti Running Elk, wizards are considered against everything Atruaghin stood for. The one place that they are accepted is in the City of the Owl, deep in the Forest of the Elk. Here the teachings of Running Elk are held higher than those of Atruaghin. The few wizards of the Elk Tribe gather to study their people's past and try to predict their future. The Owl tribe already has a sinister reputation, most of the Elk Clan think they are bad luck and avoid them at all costs. The wizards



would have it no other way, content to study their vast library of vellum scrolls containing their nation's lost history.

**Kin Chaa** (Beaver) The largest city in all of Atruaghin, at least in size, the Beaver tribe lives up to the industrious reputation of their namesake. The clan has built numerous buildings of every shape and size from small houses to a massive government building designed for the entire tribe to attend the council meetings. When a building begins to show signs of age, it is torn down and rebuilt. There is no such thing as a disability in the Beaver tribe; those crippled by accident are given some task they are capable of. What is impressive to outsiders is that the clan constructs everything without the use of metal, just like the Old Ways. The city stretches out to the borders of the surrounding tribes, all the way to the edge of the forest to the north. Now the tribe is embarking on its greatest challenge, building a structure on the plateau's edge that will reach the bottom. The other Elk tribes think the idea is insane; the Beaver tribe thinks the idea is their greatest challenge.

**Kin Tábaq̄h M̄a ii** (Raccoon) Known for their twisted sense of humor, the Raccoon tribe is one of the most isolated of all the clans in the Elk Clan. They keep to themselves, except on rare occasions, when younger members of their tribe sneak into other clans to perform various harmless pranks on them. Even among the Raccoon tribe, few know that there is a path leading through a cavern that exits near the Tiger city of Tlalacuezali. On holidays select Raccoon warriors take the long trip down to perform less than harmless pranks on their southern neighbors.

**Kin Bijn** (Deer) The Deer tribe is the poorest and most isolated of all the Elk Clan. Centuries ago, a blight killed off the forest that the clan lived in, forcing them to reside in the grasslands away from the rest of their tribe. The tribe grows more resentful of the rest of their tribe with each year, as the Deer seem to be plagued with bad luck. A few years ago, the Parrot tribe of the Tiger Clan discovered a narrow path up the cliff face leading near the Deer clan, allowing them to decimate the clan in a brutal raid one night. The combined might of the Elk pushed the Parrot tribe back where the path was destroyed, but the Deer have never fully recovered. They linger on barely growing enough food for themselves, but the other clans feel they must have violated the Old Ways and are being punished for their transgression.

#### **Horse Clan**

At the same time, the freest and the most restricted of all the clans, the Horse Clan bristles at what they feel is the greatest injustice of all, the Great Plateau. Once they were warriors, they rode freely on the lowlands and instilled terror in the hearts of their enemies. When the humanoids came, only the Horse remained free while the other clans were imprisoned and conquered. While the Elk, Bear, Tiger and Turtle suffered under the whips of the orc and hobgoblin, the Horse waged war across the entirety of the land. Then Atruaghin returned, drove out the humanoids, and freed the other clans. But before the Horse could ride down the defeated humanoids and repay the treacherous Tiger Clan for their betrayal, Atruaghin used his magic to raise the Plateau. Now the Horse were separated from their foes by a cliff face thousands of feet high.

The great warrior clan of Atruaghin was left without a war to fight.

The Horse Clan keeps to the Old Ways set down by Atruaghin. Their patron Immortal, Tahkati Storm-Tamer, is much older than Atruaghin and has alternated between his ally and his rival. The Horse Clan shares their patron's wild spirit and dislike of authority. The Stormtamer was the first to unite the Atruaghin, a fact that the clan does not let the other residents of the plateau forget this. Arrogance is a common trait among the Horse Clan's braves. The Horse Clan views itself as the only true warriors of the Children of Atruaghin.

The Children of the Horse have long had an independent streak dating back to before the Great Plateau.

This reflects in their adherence to the Old Ways, as they have as many loopholes in Atruaghin's commandments as there are commandments. Atruaghin forbade his Children not to wage war on each other, so the Horse turned their raids against the Elk and the Bear into a game. The Children are not to use metal tools or weapons, but the Horse consider anything taken from a defeated foe as a trophy, and the laws do not apply to trophies. The restriction against taking more from the land that you need is ignored by the Horse Clan, claiming that warriors need more than simple farmers to stay ready.

The Horse Clan prides itself on their warlike nature, but in reality, they are more focused on hunting than fighting. They are taught to ride as soon as they can walk. Every Horse Clan child is given a foal to raise as a right of passage. In the spring, the braves leave to hunt the buffalo to the south, as well as other game they come across in the hunting grounds.



The Clan uses the hunts to practice their tactics, treating the buffalo and other game more like foes than prey. They use lances and bows to bring down the great beasts, and the bravest of the hunters will try to leap onto the buffalo and bring them down with spears and tomahawks. The hunts teach stealth, accuracy, and bravery, as well as being a constant reminder the clan depends on the hunters.

The public face the Horse Clan presents is that of a tribe loyal to the Old Ways as set down by Atruaghin. However, the clan privately has long been discontent with their current situation. Their legends tell of the epic battles their ancestors fought against the humanoids more than a thousand years ago. While the truth isn't as kind to the Horse Clan, what they recorded depicts them as fearless warriors, unmatched in battle. The Horse Clan desperately wishes to recapture their lost glory, to find foes worthy of conquering. The clan is very secretive of their true motives; this is the primary reason they created their sign language to communicate without others knowing their true meaning. With the discovery of the Tsoh Tse'aaan, the clan has a bold plan to get off the hated plateau finally. They plan to drive their buffalo herds off the plateau and leave behind their old home forever.

By ancient tradition, the greatest warrior leads the Horse Clan. Every time a brave defeats a worthy foe in single combat, they are allowed to add a feather to their war bonnet. When an old chief dies, whoever has the most feathers in their bonnet becomes the old chief. If there is a question, who is the most worthy ritual combat decides the victor. If the Great Chief of the Clan dies, all

the tribal chiefs meet to see who is the new Great Chief, and a new chief is selected for that tribe. By clan law, the Great Chief has no tribe. The new leader undergoes a ritual cleansing while shamani commune with the Immortals to see if the would-be leader is indeed worthy of the position. If the shamani agree, the new chief is named. If the brave declines offer of leadership, there is no stigma attached as the clan recognizes not everyone wishes to lead. The brave will never be considered again, though. If the brave fails the ritual and is turned down by the shamani, it is a great shame. Typically failed aspiring chiefs will take their own lives, traditionally by riding a bull boat over the falls. Chiefs have the responsibility to select those that will hunt and those that will raid. The Great Chief also has to select the clan representative to attend meetings of the Atruaghin Confederation, though most find this task a waste of time. Raiding is a, excellent source of honor but highly dangerous. A successful raid brings food and slaves to the Horse Clan, but will also earn the brave a feather for their bonnet. Hunting is safer and just as important. Selecting someone for either the raid or the hunt that performs poorly reflects on the chief. Chiefs also settle disputes, and in the case of monster attacks, lead the war party. If at any time a brave earns more feathers than the chief, the chief may be challenged. Earning more feathers does not automatically cause a challenge, only if the challenger thinks the chief is doing a poor job. Losing a challenge is a source of great dishonor, and the defeated will commit ritual suicide. Horse Clan marriage is a pragmatic and quick affair. The suitor presents

his would-be wife with a horse. If she accepts the gift, the couple moves from the communal building to a separate building for just themselves. The couple tells the chief of their marriage, and the chief announces it to the village. There is no additional ceremony or celebration outside the immediate family. If a couple wishes to get divorced, they again tell the chief who will divide up the property and the two return to the communal buildings. Unlike other tribes, slaves are allowed to be married to clan members; this adopts the slave into the clan. In this case, there is a ceremony in the village to celebrate the new member. Unlike traditional marriages, slaves cannot institute divorce, only the original member of the clan.

The Horse Clan places a strong imperative on making sure that all fallen receive proper funeral rites. The traditional method for disposing of the dead is to put them on a boat and letting them go over the falls into the Roaring Lake. Those close to the deceased will stand at the shore and sing about the great deeds of their life. Those who die in a hunt or on a raid will be returned as soon as possible for their funeral. The Horse Clan rarely leaves behind their fallen. The deceased's loved ones are expected to finish their grieving at the funeral; the harsh life of the Clan does not leave much time for anything except trying to survive. Unlike the other clans, the Horse Clan does not venerate Atruaghin over that of their patron, Tahkati. Tahkati's teachings take precedent and mainly affect life in the Clan. When dealing with other Clans, then the teachings of Atruaghin are followed. The shamani of the Horse Clan are the most powerful of the Children of Atruaghin, second only in



their clan to the Great Chief. The shamani decide what any challenges for leadership will be; they are not above giving an unworthy challenger a contest stacked heavily in favor of their rival. The shamani judge those coming of age to see where in the tribe they will serve. The Horse Clan enforces roles on all their members, the role dictates not just the task of the clan member, but even their choice of clothes. A young girl chosen to be a brave must dress in clothes usually reserved for men, while a boy that is chosen to be a seamstress has to wear dresses normally worn by women. The clan member has no say in the matter. The clan follows the teachings of the shamani without question because they commune directly with Tahkati constantly. The shamani tell the Great Chief of Tahkati's desires, and the Great Chief tries to put those wishes into action. Now there is a murmuring among the shamani because more of their communing rituals keep coming back with the same command, leave. With the discovery of the Tsoh Tse'aan, the clan has a way off the Great Plateau, but first, they must find a way to drive the buffalo through the cave, so the clan has something hunt on the lowlands. These murmuring are kept secret from the rest of the clans because it would be the destruction of the Atruaghin Confederation. The Horse Clan diet is mostly meat, mainly buffalo. Because the buffalo herds are found far from the Horse Clan villages, most of the diet is dried and salted. The Horse Clan looks down on harvesting crops, leaving that task only to their slaves. The villages keep some livestock for fresh meat, but generally, fresh meat is only served for special occasions. The Horse raiders do target the crops



of both the Bear and Elk Clans, riding under cover of darkness to fill up their bags on fruits and gourds before disappearing back into the night.

One new addition to the diet of the Horse Clan from their secret raids into the lowlands is the acquisition of alcohol. It has rapidly become the most sought-after item during the attacks, though most of it is consumed before the raiders return. The chiefs try to keep the tribes from overindulging, but it is one of the few things the Horse Clans readily trade for. Dealing with the clan's taste for alcohol is one of the factors that the chiefs are going to have to deal with if the clan is finally going to migrate to the lowlands.

The Horse villages are laid in no particular pattern. The chief's lodge is typically at the center with the shamani lodges close to it. After that, the communal lodges are laid out with men on one side of the village and the women on the other. The slaves are placed on the village's outskirts, where the braves guard them when not on hunts. The

villages' outskirts are mainly for animal pens, with the few crops found near the slave compounds. The hunting camps' layout is straightforward, with the most veteran hunter's tepee found in the middle of the camp. The rest of the hunters set up their tepees in order of seniority, the more senior the hunter, the closer they are to the center of camp. The rest of the hunters set up their tepees in order of seniority, the more senior the hunter the closer they are to the center of camp.

Relations between the Horse Clan and the rest of the clans range from strained to nonexistent. The Turtle Clan has almost no contact with the Horse outside a yearly visit from a single representative. To the Bear and Elk Clans, the Horse Clan represents raiders who do little but take what they want. The Horse Clan does keep with the Old Ways restriction on shedding Atruaghin blood. Instead, they treat their attacks as games that they play with the other clans. While the Horse braves avoid bloodshed, they do take



captives and steal goods from the others. The Horse Clan purchases the freedom of any of its braves captured during raids with furs taken from hunts. Prisoners taken from the Bear or Elk can be freed by paying a ransom, which infuriates them. The relations between the clans are strained; only the interventions of the shamani of the different clans maintains the peace. Until recently, the Horse were cut off from all contact with the outside world. Two factors changed that, causing a reckoning among the tribe's population. First, the Bear Clan allowed Darokin to build the World Elevator, bringing merchants to the Great Plateau. At first, Horse saw this as an opportunity to raid new targets. Still, the elevator was at first denied to any clan save the Bear, and the merchants were protected by Bear Clan braves, making the caravans impossible to raid without breaking the Old Ways.

The more important discovery was the Tsoh Tse'aan, a massive cave winding miles through the heart of the Great Plateau and exiting into the steppes of Sind. Suddenly the clan had access to the rest of the world. The clan explored the cave, marking the passage out so the braves could easily find it. Then the clan unleashed their first raid into the lowlands in a thousand years. They attacked some surprised red orcs, who still mimicked the ways of the Atruaghin. The raiders brought back steel weapons, tools, and scalps to show their success. To avoid suspicion and retaliation, the clan only sends a few raiders into the lowlands every season, attacking mainly the hated orcs, though Darokin and Sind have not been immune from the Horse Clan's attacks. Now the clan discusses

leaving the plateau behind to live on the grasslands of Nagpuri for themselves, though they must first drive the buffalo from the plateau into the lowlands. Because of their unique culture centered around hunting and raiding, the Horse clan produces little in the way of trade goods. What they do produce in large quantities is items made from the buffalo. The skins and dried meat sustain the tribe, but they make enough to occasion trade with the Elk and Bear for pottery or fresh food. This typically only happens once a year when the shamani called for a meeting of the Confederation, as the Horse are more likely to take what they want. The Horse Clan has no merchants of its own.

The Horse Clan holds on to its warrior ethos despite not having any real foes to fight for centuries. The braves practice mock battles against each other and occasionally the other clans to stay sharp. The clan still practices scalping, a tradition the other tribes find barbaric. Now with the raiders able to ride on the lowlands, they bring back the scalps of those killed in battle as trophies. The Horse also count coup, a non-lethal blow against enemies to show the Horse brave bested their foe without killing them. This came about because of the Old Ways since the braves are not allowed to kill, a solid blow with a club to the torso of their foe would have to do.

Horse is the most independent of all the clans; they have no capital to serve as the center of their territory. The Great Chief travels from tribe to tribe over the year, even participating in the hunts when needed. The clan meetings are not tied to a single tribe. Instead they meet where ever the food is most available, and the weather is pleasant. Since all Horse

Clan members own at least two horses, traveling inside their territory is relatively quick. When they need to move, they use a wooden sled, called a travois, to transport their belongings. If a tribe member is not happy with the leadership, it's a simple matter of packing up and moving to another tribe.

A unique aspect of the clan is their use of sign language. It was initially thought the tribe had no spoken word at all, but they prefer not to communicate with those outside their clan if they can help it. Typically when encountering outsiders, only the leader of the group will speak. Everyone in the clan is taught sign language at an early age; it is used to communicate with another member while another conversation is going on. The language is subtle; everything from facial expressions to hand gestures to different poses has a hidden meaning. Outsiders can learn it, but finding someone to teach you is often impossible.

### **Cities**

#### **Ma iitsoh (Wolf)**

The camp that is closest to Tsoh Tse'aan, the almost 100-mile tunnel that exits in the middle of Red Orc territory. The camp is hostile to those outside the Clan, as the tunnel is highly secret. The Wolf Tribe considers themselves the greatest warriors of the Atruaghin. At the start of hunting season, the tribe selects a hundred warriors at random to take part in a raiding party into the lands below. No warrior is allowed to join the war party two years in a row.

#### **Dinilchii (Salmon)**

The most prosperous of the Horse Clan tribes, Salmon supplements their hunters with fishing from the



three lakes that surround their village. The tribe makes extensive use of bull boats to fish, clumsy one-man craft created from buffalo hide and bones. The warriors know of several paths and caves down to the lowlands, though none are easy to navigate. The Salmon tribe frequently trade with the Bear Clan as well as the Darokin merchants allied with the Bear Clan. The Horse Clan allows Salmon to be their face to the other clans, something the Salmon grudgingly accepts.

#### **Ayani** (Buffalo)

This is the most successful of all the Horse Clan hunters. They take up the slack for the other Horse Clan tribes when they are raiding, trading excess hides and meat to the other clans in exchange for items brought back from the low lands. The other clans allow the best hunters from the Buffalo Tribe to accompany them on raids to thank the Buffalo Tribe for hunting for them. They possess the largest herd of horses, something that invites raiding from the other tribes.

#### **Deeteel** (Moose)

The Moose Tribe are the most feared raiders in the Horse Clan, going after the crops of the Elk and Bear Clans more than any of the other Horse Clan tribes. Moose skirts the law against waging war against other Atruaghin by nocturnal raids against the Elk Clan villages. The Moose try to avoid any bloodshed, they reward any member of the Elk Clan that captures one of theirs with buffalo hides to appease them.

#### **Tiger Clan**

There is one Clan of Atruaghin that stands isolated from the world, the Children of the Tiger. The Clan lies to the southeast of the plateau in the middle of a dense jungle. The

Children of the Tiger are feared for their sadistic natures and bloodthirsty warriors. The Children attack nearby settlements searching for captives and plunder to sacrifice to their evil Immortals. The clan is starting to splinter between its Immortals as Atzanteotl's demand for constant sacrifices is straining his follower's capacity to provide them. The Children of the Tiger do not follow the teachings of Atruaghin, their patron Immortal Danel Tigerstripes being corrupted by the Entropic Immortal Atzanteotl centuries ago. Because of their corruption, the Children of Atruaghin do not consider the Children of the Tiger as their people. Their restrictions against waging war against their kind do not apply to the Children of the Tiger. When the Clans war with each other, the fights are brutal. The Children of Atruaghin know what fate awaits for them if they are taken back to the Tiger's cities, so the fights are almost always to the death.

The Tiger Tribe has rejected every aspect of Atruaghin's teachings; they have no compunctions about using metal weapons or tools. The tribe has to raid nearby Darokin for weapons, as they have no way to smelt iron. This makes the isolated Southeastern Darokin a dangerous land because of the constant threat of attack by the Tiger Tribe. Numerous forts have been created to protect against the raiders, and the city of Port Tenobar has a standing army specifically to defend against the Children of the Tiger.

For all it's savagery, the Tribe is on the decline. Atzanteotl demands daily sacrifices to him from his followers. Only sentient creatures sate his bloodthirst, but he cares little of the type. The Children of the

Tiger concentrate their attacks on any settlements nearby, be they the Children of the Turtle, the settlers of Darokin, or any of the myriad lizardfolk that thrive in the Malpheggi Swamp. Over the years, however, the Tiger Tribe's regular targets have increased their defenses to levels that make it difficult for the raids to succeed. Even the Children of Atruaghin that live on the Great Plateau, who were only occasionally raided by the bravest of the Tiger Tribes, have taken steps to defend against the savage jungle dwellers. Now the attacks only bring a trickle of sacrifices.

The Children of the Tiger are also being corrupted from the inside by one of their Patron Immortals. Atzanteotl's hatred of Atruaghin is so overwhelming he hates even those that follow him. He's slowly been converting Danel's followers to his faith, the Children of the Viper. The Viper Tribe operates in secret, moving against the priests of Danel Tigerstripes and using them for sacrifices when they can. Atzanteotl's ultimate plan is to subvert the complete worship of Tigerstripes, destroying him in the process and waging a genocidal war against Atruaghin's people with the Children of the Viper. Under Atzanteotl's guidance, he has overstretched the reach of the Tiger Tribe, and now their leadership is questioned. Soon the priests of the Viper Tribe will throw down the Tiger Tribe, and Atzanteotl will begin his war that will end with the destruction of all the Children of Atruaghin, and the Children of the Viper. Then the Entropic Immortal's revenge will be complete.

The Children of the Tiger are a theocracy, with duties of ruling the nation are in theory split evenly



between the High Priest of the Tiger and the High Priest of the Viper. In reality, the High Priest Tlotxl of the Viper Clan makes all the decisions for the nation. The High Priest of the Tiger Clan Tlilpotonqui acts as his subordinate, following the dictates handed down by him. All aspects of clan life are run by the priesthood, from waging war to what crops will be planted, to even the schedule of games. Dissent is crushed, anyone found in defiance of the priesthood is soon found on the sacrificial altar. Dissent is crushed, anyone found in defiance of the priesthood is soon found on the sacrificial altar.

The laws that control the lives of the Children of the Tiger are numerous, and the penalties for breaking any of them are draconian. Gender roles are imposed from birth; men serve as priests, warriors, and athletes, while women are required to work in the fields, raise children, and produce clothing. The Tiger Clan makes extensive use of slaves, most being sacrificed to appease their patron Immortals. All slaves are property of the temple, though the temple does sell slaves for a hefty fee. Tiger Clan nobility will purchase slaves to serve in the fields raising crops, as general laborers building and repairing the vast cities, and lastly, as concubines. Slaves that are not purchased are usually sacrificed in less than a week. Purchased slaves that become lame or problematic are returned to the temple to be sacrificed.

The Tiger Clan has a rigid caste system from which there is no escape. Those taken into the priesthood are at the pinnacle of the Tiger Clan hierarchy, their orders can only be overruled by a higher ranking priest. Beneath the priests are the soldiers whose lives depend on capturing prisoners and bring tribute

to the priests from their raids. The merchants are next, who pay punitive taxes to the priesthood in exchange for being allowed to operate with some degree of autonomy. Lastly are the workers, whose lives are usually short and brutal from the excessive amount of work needed to maintain the Tiger Clan's numerous buildings. Only slaves live a harsher life than laborers, toiling long hours to sustain the Tiger Clan and stay off the sacrificial altar. The only exception to the caste restrictions is reserved for athletes. The athletes are technically part of the laborer's caste but can gain great fame and wealth as long as they keep the masses entertained. A famous athlete can become quite wealthy and gain enough notoriety to live a comfortable life even after they retire from the games. However, an athlete that becomes injured or does not play well on the pitch will quickly find himself on the altar.

Family life in the Tiger Clan is a formal and highly structured affair. Marriage is considered a tool to gain more prestige than wealth and is never done for love. Daughters are betrothed to suitors based entirely on what kind of material gain can be acquired from the pairing. The Tiger Clan practices polygyny, with men being allowed to marry multiple women. Also, concubines are often purchased from the temples, with more exotic slaves fetching exorbitant prices. Having a large number of wives in Tiger Clan society is considered a mark of prestige, though a man who struggles to afford a large family is regarded as a fool. Children are sorted into their caste at the age of ten if they live that long. Those that are born sickly or misshapen are sacrificed at birth. A family can gain honor or material

boons by offering up a child as a sacrifice, especially during one of the Tiger Clan's numerous holidays. This is often done if a child is considered destined for a lower class caste to save the family from embarrassment. All children are taught to read, as one of the requirements for the priesthood is literacy. After a boy is sorted into a caste by the priesthood, they are taken from their parents and given over to a teacher of that particular profession. Girls are left with their parents to be raised and taught how to raise children, sew, and farm in hopes of finding a wealthy husband. Marriages can be arranged as young as ten, but the daughter cannot be consummated until she is at least 16. Once she is of the majority age, only then can she live with her husband.

The Tiger Clan is obsessed with death, slaves and prisoners are sacrificed at the top of their pyramids every day. Death is a constant companion with the Children of the Tiger, and it is more important how





you died than how you lived.

Because of this, they have multiple methods of burial, depending on the nature of how the deceased met their fate.

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The funeral reserved for suicides and those who showed cowardice when they met their fate is called the *tzak-ti*. Any sacrifice that begs for mercy, a soldier slain while fleeing from battle or any criminal condemned to death who tries to avoid their fate is declared *tzak-ti* or the coward's death. Those who suffered the *tzak-ti* are treated as if they were rubbish to be disposed of. The priesthood confiscates all their possessions, and the body is left for scavengers in the jungle, if not just thrown into a piranha pool. Their name is stricken from the records, and nothing is left of them except their shameful memory.

People who are sacrificed and do not ask for mercy are said to be *cho-ti* or the lingering death. Anyone who dies under torture inflicted by the priesthood also is declared *cho-ti*. Their fate is to be buried in an unmarked grave with their possessions. Anyone is free to loot the grave, though few slaves have anything worth taking.

The typical funeral is the common death, called the *tchat-ti*. These are given to anyone who dies from an accident, natural causes, or old age. Those that die in this manner are

cremated, and their families are allowed to mourn, but only for the fact their relative did not die bravely. The corpse is put on a pyre along with all material possessions. The ashes are then returned to the family for disposal.

Those that die in the Tiger Clan service are said to have died the *slaz-ti* or soldier's death. Braves that die in defense of their city, or while raiding an enemy, are given the honorable *slaz-ti* funeral. Soldiers that died after being taken by surprise are not considered to have died honorable death as no true Tiger brave should ever allow himself to be ambushed. The honor of a *slaz-ti* is also given to anyone who dies in the Tiger Clan's games. The deceased lays in state outside the pyramid with their possessions, while the faithful give gifts to the fallen to take with them to the afterlife. Those that fell in battle but whose bodies could not be recovered instead have their possessions laid out in place of their body. After two days, the fallen and all gifts presented to them are cremated and presented to their family to be kept in their house in a place of honor.

The most prestigious death a Child of the Tiger can die is called the *tlol-ti*, or hero's death. These are the deaths done while completing an impossible task. Those who sacrifice their lives to save the lives of a high priest or die on the battlefield after killing an unbelievable number of foes are declared *tlol-ti*. On infrequent occasions, outsiders or slaves who die heroically are also declared *tlol-ti*, and in addition, are posthumously adopted into the clan. *Tlol-ti* funerals are elaborate events, with mandatory attendance is expected of all the lower classes. The body is presented at the top of the

pyramid for three days, while relatives, friends, and commoners are expected to pay their respects with gifts to the deceased. On the third day, the high priest in an elaborate ceremony cremates the fallen and stores their ashes inside of a vault at the base of the pyramid while their name is carved into the stone to honor them for all time.

The very nature of the Tiger Clan is religious. Their patron Immortal was the one that led them away from the teachings of Atruaghin and who dictates how they live their lives today. Danel Tigerstripes is presented as the Tiger Clan's primary religion, with honor also given to his patron, Atzanteotl. Danel's priests lead the tribes to war, dictates who they attack and when to wage war. Atzanteotl, in theory, is worshiped regarding everyday happenings. His clerics handle the sacrifices and ceremonies, decide which children are placed in which caste.

The dark secret behind the priesthood is the clerics of Atzanteotl are slowly moving the worship of the tribes away from Danel Tigerstripes completely. Fewer children are being chosen to serve Danel, and more of his clerics are being sent to fight on the front lines of the raids against increasingly dangerous foes. This is all part of Atzanteotl's master plan, the destruction of all the Children of Atruaghin, even the Tiger Clan. Atzanteotl's secret priesthood, called the Children of the Viper, have conspired to remove influential followers of Tigerstripes. Priests are poisoned, warriors are ambushed, shrines devoted to him are sabotaged. The Children of the Viper have convinced these works are the deeds of the other Atruaghin Clans, whipping up the already palpable hatred towards the clan's distant



cousins. The Children of the Tiger have no reason to distrust their priests, and so Atzanteotl's machinations continue unhindered. The primary diet of the Tiger Clan is comprised mainly of corn and squash with other vegetables and fruits in a lesser number and supplemented with game that is caught by the warrior caste. Meat is reserved mainly by the priesthood for themselves, with its availability decreasing further with each caste. The crops are harvested by slaves purchased from the temples by the plantation owners from the merchant caste. The priests are supposed to store excess crops for times of difficulty but tend to indulge in feasts during times of plenty, reducing future supplies. During famines, the slaves are sacrificed in greater numbers to appease the Immortals. This also reduces the number of mouths to feed.

The primary building material is stone. The Tiger Clan has numerous quarries near the Great Plateau that provide the cities with all the stones they need to continue expanding. The quarries are exclusively mined out by slaves, who need to be continuously

replaced because of the conditions they endure under their masters. Every Tiger Clan city is planned and laid out in a grid pattern. Each city has a step pyramid at their center, representing the twin shrine to Atzanteotl and Danel Tigerstripes. The closer a building is to the pyramid, the more critical it is. Pools of piranha, sacred to Atzanteotl, are placed at specific areas around each city, these pools also double as areas to dispose of excess food.

The rich and powerful of the Tiger Clan constantly bicker among each other to try to acquire the closest house to the pyramid. Peasants have to live on the outskirts of the city, with buildings made of crumbling stone or simple mud. Around every city is found the farms that feed the Tiger Clan, with slave shacks surrounding the fields. One part of Tiger Clan settlements that visitors would find unusual if visitors weren't enslaved is the large number of parks and recreational areas in each city. Every city has a daraxi field, with the larger cities having several. While the Tiger Clan life is violent and often short, they do love their luxuries.

Among the tribes that followed Atruaghin, only the Tiger Clan has turned from him in favor of following their two patron Immortals. The relationship between Tiger and the rest of the Atruaghin is nothing short of outright war. Because the Great Plateau isolates the Tiger Clan from most of the other clans, open conflict between the sides is rare. The Tiger Clan prefers to attack the other clans more than outsiders because of their lingering hatred dating back centuries. However, the geographic obstacles between the tribes is often a problem.

The closest tribe is Turtle seventy miles to the west, but the area between the tribes is occupied by the nūnnē'hī, a fey race that is not at all friendly to the Tiger Clan. The Bear Clan is to the north, but the Tiger Clan has to go around the Plateau. The issue with raiding the Bear cities is they are famously well-defended, making long raids impractical. The Horse Clan is on the opposite end of the Great Plateau, making contact with them exceptionally rare. The Elk Clan lives nearby the Tiger Clan, but at the top of the cliff. Tiger braves that are determined enough to make the two thousand foot climb can surprise the unsuspecting Elk cities. The only problem with raiding the Elk Clan is there is no way to bring back captives.

The Tiger Clan is truly alone in the known world. They are almost as hostile to the local settlements to their east as to the other clans. Their closest neighbor is Darokin, which has been an enemy for centuries. The Tiger braves raid Darokin settlements and forts for slaves regularly, to the point that Darokin has deployed an entire legion to the area to combat the Tiger Clan's incursions. The other





common target is the lizardman tribes in the Malpheggi swamps. While the Tiger Clans prefer human slaves, the humanoids of the swamp are much easier targets. The other nations that have come into contact with the Tiger Clan have been met with hostility, so the clan is given a wide berth.

To the east in the Singing Forest live the nūññē'hi, who the Tiger despise almost more than the other clans. As fey the nūññē'hi cannot be permanently killed, so sacrificing them doesn't appease the Immortals. The nūññē'hi despise the Entropic Immortals, and the Tiger Clan as a result. Tiger braves have to give the nūññē'hi a wide berth, as the fey are masters of illusion and ambush. The two races have clashed repeatedly, with the Tiger Clan usually on the losing end of the battles.

The only trade the Tiger Clan conducts is with itself because of its hostility to all other nations. The most commonly traded items are stolen goods from various raids. The Tiger Clan values metal weapons unlike the other clans, but have no way of smelting the weapons themselves. High-quality steel weapons can be worth several slaves to the Tiger Clan priests. Mass-produced tools found in Darokin also fetch a high price, though the braves don't find much honor in stealing a shovel or a hoe.

For items produced in the Tiger Clan, food and slaves are the most commonly traded commodities. The Tiger Clan has very little industry; most of their labor is done with slaves. Gold jewelry is common in the Tiger Clan's cities, as they mine gold from the plateau. While the jewelry would bring a hefty price to the merchants of Darokin, the tribe hordes their gold, mostly owned by

the priesthood. The priests of each city negotiate all trades, typically exchanging slaves for food when one city suffers from a poor crop.

The Tiger Clan loves sports almost as much as it loves war. The clan has two favorite sports, the ball game daraxi, and the mock war game eschxixi. Both sports are brutal, with death a constant risk in either sport. Daraxi is the most popular, with professional teams being sponsored by the various cities. The larger and more populous cities have multiple daraxi teams. There are even unaligned daraxi teams that travel from city to city looking for games. Eschxixi, on the other hand, is always fought between two cities and is a very formal affair.

Daraxi is played with a five-man team and a leather ball. The game is played in ten minute periods, with the object being to get the ball into the rival team's goal the most times in a period. The first team to win two rounds wins the game. There are no substitutions in the game until the end of the period; wounded players are left on the playing field. Periods that end in a tie do not count and must be replayed. The game is quite brutal, with deaths frequent. Teams that win often are treated as heroes among the Tiger Clan, even among the priesthood. Teams that fail to win their matches risk being offered as sacrifices by disappointed priests. Eschxixi is a formal challenge issued by one high priest of a city to another. Refusing a challenge is a great dishonor and is never done. The challenged party selects the size of the warriors allowed to participate and the battle location. The challenger then provides a prize, often a gold statue, that the challenged party must capture or be forced to match the value of the

award. If the challenged party takes the prize, it keeps the trophy as its reward. There are no rules in the eschxixi save a prohibition on magic and poison; it is in all other aspects an actual war. It is not uncommon for an entire eschxixi team to be killed in the course of the game. Eschxixi matches are used to keep warriors ready for war in years where raids are few.

#### **Cities:**

**Miztli** (Cougar) The only city with a heavy nautical presence, the Cougar tribe is the furthest south located off Narwhal Cape. Their primitive ships are used to try and capture Turtle Tribe's longboats as well as raid as far away as Athenos. The tribe quickly learned to avoid Ierendi shipping, as the island nation's retaliation was overwhelming. Away from the eyes of the other cities, Cougar is the one city that follows Tigerstripes more than Atzanteotl. If the head priest in Cuanmiztli discovered the city's wavering faith, bloodshed would ensue.

**Tzinacan** (Vampire Bat) This city is in a constant state of war with the Darokin city of Port Tenobar. The Vampire Bat clan thought the Darokin city was easy pickings, only to find out after several raids pirates and other rough sorts heavily populated the city. The two cities frequently raid each other, the Atruaghin trying to capture slaves while the Tenobarians come looking for bloody reprisals. Neither side is willing to back down, so the frequent raids show no sign of stopping.

**Ozomahtli** (Monkey) The bane of the Turtle Clan, the raiders from the City of the Monkey are sadistic even for the cruel Tiger clan. Their hunting parties range almost a hundred miles to attack their neighbors to the west.



The Monkey Clan is known for their overland speed, as they can travel over 30 miles a day through jungle. Captives are taken back to be sacrificed, assuming they survive the trip back. The clan isn't picky in their targets they will attack any sentient creatures they come across, sylvan and fey creatures are a common target in the jungle.

**Cuanmiztli** (Jaguar) The capital of the Tiger Clan cities has the twin pyramids devoted to Atzanteotl and Danel Tigerstripes. The other cities have to provide tribute to the City of the Jaguars. Everything about the city is large, from the Daraxi courts to the pavilion leading up to the great pyramids. The city sacrifices thousands of slaves a year. Slaves tend the fields surrounding the city, worked mercilessly to provide food for the priesthood. When the slaves tire, they are immediately sacrificed. The city has a number of werejaguars, who are sacred creatures by the clan's twisted religion.

**Macuexcohuatl** (Python) The once-powerful clan is currently licking its wounds after a brutal defeat at the hands of the Fort Nar garrison. Normally the clan would bypass the fort to assault Port Tenobar to the south or attack the reptilian tribes that populate Malpheggi Swamp.

Tired of the constant assaults by the Python Clan, the commander of Fort Nar attacked the city in retaliation. The attack was easily beaten, but when the tribe pursued, they discovered it was a trap. Two full legions of Darokin troops ambushed the pursuing Atruaghin from both sides. Now the city sits largely unpopulated, most of its warriors slain in battle. Now children, though too young to work, are being pressed into adult roles to make up for the death of their parents.

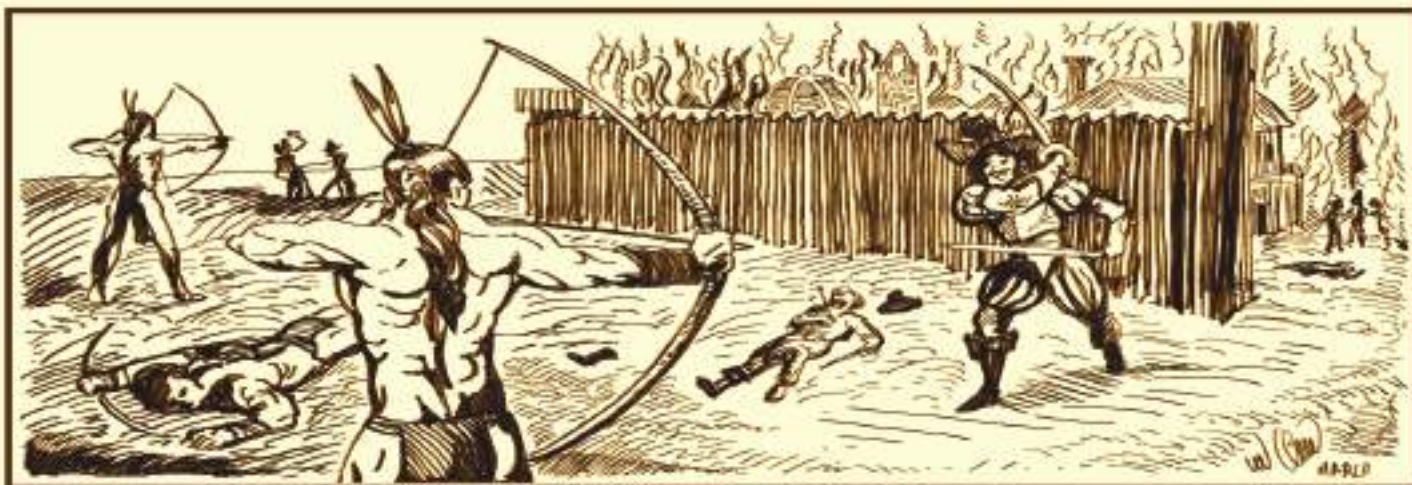
**Tlalacuezali** (Parrot) The city lies at the edge of the Forest of Death, near the plateau's wooded hills. The tribe occasionally raids up the plateau, but due to the risk involved, prefer to attack the large number of sylvan races that live between the Tiger and Turtle clans. The Parrot clan has made enemies of a large number of centaurs, satyrs, dryads, and other species on their borders. While fey are useless as sacrifices, the clan hunts them for nothing but practice. The clan is plagued by fey creatures seeking revenge, especially the tiny kachina that use their magics to annoy and pester the hated Tiger Clan.

**Hahuicmichi** (Piranha) The Piranha clan is unique among their brethren for several reasons. First, they are

known for their open acceptance of cannibalism. They don't just sacrifice their victims; they also make meals of them to consume all their aspects. The other trait is that the Piranha clan are expert climbers, and prefer to raid the plateau itself. The Elk Tribe, normally safe from attacks in their isolated lands, have been savaged multiple times by Piranha raiding parties.

**Tlatziuhqui** (Sloth) The one city that doesn't rely on human sacrifice, the Sloth clan instead raids nearby Malpheggi swamp for the horrors that reside there. Countless lizardmen, cay-men, and gatomen have been dragged back to the altars of the Sloth Clan. The clan also targets any sentient monster they can find; trolls are a dangerous yet prestigious trophies. Darokin tends to look the other way when the clan is raiding the swamp but will retaliate if they attack human targets. Because of their success against the swamp dwellers, the Sloth clan is well regarded by their clerics, though their targets poverty leaves them one of the more impoverished tribes.

**Tetzauhtototl** (Peacock) This clan is enjoying a period of prosperity, though that time is rapidly coming to a close. The Peacock clan





successfully sacked and destroyed the original Fort Marny, slaughtering hundreds of Darokin troops and ravaging the surrounding settlements. Hundreds of slaves were taken back as sacrifices, and tons of gold were stolen in their victory. The clan lived up to their namesake by crafting gaudy outfits and jewelry as their everyday garments. However, Darokin has rebuilt the fort and deployed larger numbers of troops in response to their defeat. Now it is a matter of time before the city has to do battle again with their Western neighbor.

**Cuetzpali** (Chameleon) The city of the Chameleon Tribe is dying off because of attacks from the Great Wyrms Attura and the nūññē'hī to their west. Attura claims all the land the Chameleon tribe is settled on and likes to remind them by occasionally flying over and breathing poison gas over the city. All attempts to appease the dragon have failed, as well as numerous expeditions to kill her. Because the tribe attempts to enslave the numerous sylvan creatures found in the nūññē'hī lands, those enigmatic creatures have taken it upon themselves to ambush and slaughter the tribe's raiders when they are discovered. Lately, the nūññē'hī have taken a more direct approach in attacking the city with magic. Children disappear, taken by the fey. Crops rot in the field, and animals go feral. The city cannot be abandoned, admitting failure would get most of the tribe reduced to slave status or more than likely sacrificed to appease the Immortals.

#### **Turtle Clan**

Far to the south of the Great Plateau live the most modern of all the clans, the Turtle Clan. This clan was cut off from the rest of the Clans loyal to Atruaghin when he raised the Great

Plateau, causing outside influences from nearby lands to creep slowly into Turtle culture. The clan's primary professions are fishing and whaling. They also partake in moderate levels of logging to provide materials for their use and for trade to nations with whom they have formal trade relations. Turtle Clan is a peaceful clan but maintains a formidable fighting force due to the malevolent Tiger Clan to their east. Turtle Clan follows the teachings of Atruaghin and their patron Immortal, Ahmanni Turtlerider. When the Great Plateau was formed, they kept the word of Atruaghin over that of Ahmanni, but as centuries passed, the isolation from their cousins began to foment a rift between the clans. Turtle Clan is still on friendly terms with Bear, Elk, and Horse Clans, but besides the occasional visitor, Turtle doesn't have much to do with them. As such, Turtle Clan has begun to follow the lessons of Ahmanni more than those of Atruaghin.

Turtle Clan's territory stretches along with the land between the Singing Forest and the Sea of Dread. From there, they range out in boats to harvest the schools of fish common to their seas, as well as hunt for the whales that the clan depends on for much of its livelihood. Much of the clan's wealth comes from the sea. They trade with outsiders more than any other clan because of their access to neighboring countries. Merchants from across the Sea of Dread bring trade goods in large numbers in exchange for Turtle Clan's jewelry, lumber, scrimshaw, and ambergris.

Turtle Clan's culture is at a crossroads. Atruaghin teaches his clans to isolate themselves from the rest of the world for their protection,

but the Turtle Clan doesn't have easy access to the rest of the Confederation. Most Turtle tribes haven't seen a visitor from the other clans in decades. Horse and Elk are trapped on the plateau; Bear has access to the outside world but is on the other side of the plateau. Traders from foreign nations frequent the Turtle Clan. Sind is right on their border, Ierendi fishes in the same waters, and Minrothad and Darokin send merchants to do business with the clan. The clan has seen the benefits of dealing with outsiders, and they are starting to doubt the Old Ways set down before the Great Plateau. Ahmanni was always the most forward-thinking of the Clans' patron Immortals, and she realized her tribes were beginning to stagnate. While trying not to antagonize Atruaghin, she is sending signs to her shamani and clerics that it is time for Turtle Clan to start to modernize. Metal is still looked upon with some suspicion but is becoming more accepted, especially among the whalers. Some Turtle tribes are adopting outside traditions, and even marriages to outsiders, especially from Ierendi or Sind, are no longer considered taboo. Turtle Clan stands to join the other nations as a modern society, but at the cost of turning its back on the Confederation.

Turtle Clan is a collective affiliation of five tribes, with power shared throughout the tribes. The capital is in Kin Tliish (City of the Sea Snake), simply because it's nearest the middle of Turtle Clan territory. The noble caste, the hashaki elect the chief of Turtle Clan. The chief does not serve for a set term; the position is at will. A chief can step down for any reason; just informing the council of hashaki in the Great Lodge at Kin Tliish is enough to



resign. If a chief resigns, the hashaki at the Great Lodge elect a temporary chief until the rest of the hashaki can attend or send their vote within one week to select a new chief. Any clan member who is a member of the hashaki caste can be elected chief; even previous chiefs are eligible. If a chief needs to be removed from their position, a simple vote called by a hashaki will suffice. However, if the hashaki who calls the vote fails, they lose status and are demoted to the treshaki caste.

The chief's primary concern is dealing with outlander merchants. There's not much crime in Turtle Clan; the clan is prosperous and shares the wealth brought by the increased trade. Tribal leaders settle personal disputes, and if two people have a long-standing feud, they will be encouraged to drop it, or one or both of them will be asked to leave. The clan thrives on cooperation; they have a long history of working together to survive. The trade brought in to the clan is the clan's property and distributed where it is needed. Those that do not pull their weight suffer a loss of status to the loshaki caste and cannot benefit from wealth distribution until they improve their status. Criminals are treated as slaves called noshaki and work to help the clan to pay off their crimes.

Turtle Clan knows not all the tribes produce the same amount of goods, yet all produce something needed for the clan to prosper. The Sea Lion Tribe serves as the clan's defender and produces little in the way of trade goods or food. Without them, the Turtle Clan would be vulnerable to the predations of the Tiger Clan or the pirates that plague the Sea of Dread. While Sea Lion produces little for the other tribes, their vigilance

makes them an essential part of the clan, and every month they receive a full share of the clan's bounty. Other tribes provide goods for Turtle Clan's survival and prosperity. All who work benefit from this arrangement, those who are old or disabled are given simple tasks to contribute to the clan. Those who are lazy or try to take more than their share are shunned, receiving nothing from the clan until they can provide for themselves.

Matrimony in Turtle Clan is used as an excuse to celebrate. Marriage is done mostly for love, though the tribal elders must approve the wedding. Those trying to marry too young or being forced to marry will have their request denied. If there are children born out of wedlock or from a previous marriage, they will be adopted by the new parent during the ceremony. Every wedding is a cause for a patshatl or great feast. The tribe provides a wedding patshatl, and the entire tribe will frequently turn out. A patshatl that is exceptionally festive and leads to even more weddings will increase the bride and groom's social status. A divorce in Turtle Clan is simple; the couple tells the tribal council they wish to separate. The council decides who will keep what property, and then both husband and wife are sent to live in different tribes for a year. The temporary exile keeps bad blood from lingering in the tribe. During this exile, neither is allowed to marry into the other's tribe.

One major aspect that is changing for the Turtle Clan is the number of marriages to outsiders. Fifty years ago, a young woman from the Pelican Tribe asked to marry a Makai from Ierendi, which had never been asked before. The elders tried to talk her out of it but realized it was indeed

what she wanted and relented. The groom came in a war canoe with many gifts from his people, and the ensuing patshatl is still talked about today. No one remembers the details, but when daybreak came, the bride had been elevated to hashaki caste, and the groom had been informally adopted into the clan. While marriage outside the clan is still very rare, the taboo against it is mostly gone.

Funerals in Turtle Clan are a simple affair. After a brief religious ceremony onshore, the deceased is placed on a raft covered in flowers and gifts from friends and mourners and left for the outgoing tide. Turtle Clan believes the sea provides them with what they need to live, so they will go to the sea once the land is done with them. In cases where there isn't a body, especially when the deceased is lost at sea, flowers are released into the tide. After the ceremony, the tribe has a patshatl feast to remember the happier times of the deceased's life.

Turtle Clan is having a crisis of faith. The Atruaghin Clans' namesake Immortal is always the most important in terms of worship, but Turtle is beginning to doubt how relevant laws made a thousand years ago are to the clan. Ahmanni was always a forward thinker, protecting the clan even if it meant breaking the rules on occasion. The clan's gradual progress into modern society is starting to contradict the teachings of Atruaghin directly, but not those of Ahmanni. Some Turtle tribes, like Sea Lion, hold true to Atruaghin's Like Halibut, others adopt new methods that are just barely in line with the teachings of Atruaghin. The Pelican Tribe pays lip service to Atruaghin now and primarily worships Ahmanni. The most



controversial is the Shark Tribe, which has allowed shrines to Immortals from outside Atruaghin's pantheon, like the People's Temple of Ierendi or Proteus from Darokin. The other clans would be appalled how much Turtle Clan has turned its back on the old teachings, except they are too far away to notice.

Befitting their coastal location, the primary diet of Turtle Clan is mostly seafood. The majority of their catch is whale meat, though they do catch a variety of smaller fish. On land, they harvest the typical crops of the Atruaghin, mostly gourds, and corn. Their increased trade has begun to introduce new crops, especially grains and fruits. The variety of food available to the clan has dramatically increased because of their relationship with their neighbors. In particular, Sindhi and Ierendi food are now common in clan patshatls. Because of the abundant supply of wood in their territory, structures tend to be well built and numerous. The ample supply of food meant Turtle tribes could settle in a single location. As the clan prospered, the villages built outward, so families weren't sharing multiple longhouses. Now the traditional village consists of A-frame buildings for each family. Turtle Clan has tribe members whose only purpose is to build new structures. When a building is destroyed, another is constructed to replace it. Much like food and trade goods, housing is allotted by the tribal elders. People in good standing get better treatment than those that aren't. Slaves are housed in communal longhouses and not allowed to live with the tribes. A unique component of Turtle Clan architecture is their totem poles. Four poles are placed at the corner of every building, with their bottoms

and tops decorated with the tribe's totem and the family's totem animal. Significant events are recorded on the pole, with achievements being carved from the bottom up and favors bestowed by the tribe recorded from the top down. When all four poles are filled, the family must expand their home and add new poles, or move to a new building to begin recording their history anew. The totem poles are blessed by the shamani when they are first raised. As long as the family has an honored status, their home is under a protection from evil spell.

Foreign powers have begun to have delegations permanently stationed in Turtle villages. Most of the outsiders live in Kin Tliish, but others have set up residence in all of the other tribes except for Sea Lion. Because of the importance of the ports for the new merchant ships, the Darokin Diplomatic Corps paid the clan a massive sum to expand their capacity to handle the new trade. The clan has used their new wealth to create modern whaling stations on Whale Bone Island. The expanded port facilities have given Turtle Clan the ability to create their great canoes in a matter of weeks instead of months. The same care and rituals go into making the canoe, but the facilities allow for easier access for the workers to carve the elaborate markings into the wood.

Turtle Clan stands alone among the Atruaghin Confederation as they are exempt from the decisions made by the Bear, Elk, and Horse Clans. They are over one hundred miles from the Elk Clan and have to deal with the plateau wall. The other members of the Confederation mostly ignore the Turtle Clan because of the lack of contact between them. Instead of sending a shamani to the yearly

gathering of the clerics, Turtle Clan has the representative from the Elk Clan double as their shamani. The Turtle Clan doesn't bother with the affairs of the other clans. Their cousins are always welcome, but until that happens, they aren't given a second thought.

Of course, this attitude doesn't apply to the hated Tiger Clan, long a bane of Turtle Clan. Sea Lion has made it their primary purpose to defend against attacks from the fallen clan. Attacks have gotten fewer over the centuries as Tiger Clan found new enemies, but it doesn't lessen the vigilance of Turtle braves. Of particular threat is the ramshackle boats Tiger Clan occasionally sends to try and raid the coast. Such attacks are rare because the Tiger Clan aren't good sailors, but because attacks are uncommon, they tend to have the element of surprise. Turtle Clan are far superior sailors, and the rare naval battles are always one-sided, but one Tiger boat making it past Sea Lion patrols can inflict quite a bit of damage before retreating.

Turtle Clan has by far the most contact with outside nations of any of the Atruaghin Clans. Visitors from Sind, Ierendi, and Darokin are familiar sights in the larger Turtle cities and merchants as far away as Minrothad and Thyatis aren't unheard of. The clan's acceptance of foreigners has begun to change the clan's members, with fashions and goods from surrounding lands finding their way into Turtle Clan culture. The clan members are fond of bright colored fabrics bought from Sind and Ierendi. Gold coins from the outsiders are more than welcome because of the metal's importance in Turtle Clan culture. The clan has done nothing but benefit from the opening of its borders.



One crucial change that contact with other nations has created in Turtle Clan is how they handle orphan children. Under Turtle law, children who lose their parents must be adopted by immediate relatives. If there are no immediate relatives available or the relatives refuse to accept the child, the orphan becomes a noshaki. The orphan is unable to increase in status, and cannot own property, become married, or have children. Many members of the clan find this tradition a cruel holdover from the Old Ways, though the elders uphold it. With the increase in visitors to the clan, it has become a practice on an orphan's 18th birthday to take the young adult to the docks where a ship from a foreign power awaits to take the orphan away to a new life. There is an impromptu ceremony to mark the orphan's new life, always done in the dark of night, to symbolize the breaking of tradition. The docks leading to the ship are usually covered with gifts from the tribe to help the orphans establish themselves in their new home. While this practice is technically illegal, no elder or shamani would dare to enforce the law. It is only a matter of time before the stigma of being an orphan is removed from Turtle Clan culture.

On their eastern border is the land of the nūñnē'hī, a mysterious and elusive people. Turtle Clan treats them with respect and avoids their territory, if possible. The nūñnē'hī find Turtle Clan a curiosity because their ways are so different from the Tiger Clan who also border the nūñnē'hī lands. Inside the nūñnē'hī territory live several sylvan creatures who leave the Atruaghin alone as long as they keep their logging and farming at reasonable levels. So far, this hasn't been a problem.

Turtle Clan has embraced foreign trade more than any other Atruaghin Clan. Their chief goods include woodworking, scrimshaw, and cultural items. Atruaghin goods are currently in high demand in Darokin and Minrothad, and fetch high prices in faraway Thyatis. The lumber of the Singing Forest is a superior quality wood with a large number of uses. Turtle Clan law prohibits trading raw wood to prevent excessive logging. Many nations are intrigued by the sacred totem poles, something the clan would never sell, but they are more than willing to make purely cosmetic versions of the totem poles and trade those to the merchants.

Craftsmen and artists are a recent addition to Turtle Clan. In the past, clan members would create works of art as a hobby. The demand for scrimshaw, wood carvings, and gold jewelry has encouraged the artists to devote themselves to creating art to support the clan. The clan's sacred artifacts, like totem poles and golden ones, are forbidden from being exported. Still, the elders also understand that the foreigners have no idea of the artifacts' true cultural significance. Every piece of art shipped from the Turtle Clan is a pale imitation of the sacred relics, and no one outside of the Turtle Clan is the wiser. Thyatian nobles pay exorbitant sums for totem poles with the faces of famous ancestors, which Turtle craftsmen are more than happy to carve. Of course, the craftsman thinks the patron paying for a carving is foolish for paying for what they should be doing themselves.

As the clan attaches honor to high-quality work, the craftsmen whose goods demand the highest prices are often elevated to a higher caste. Because of this impetus, the quality

of Turtle goods is some of the best in the known world. The best craftsmen are allocated better quality clothes and goods, just as the most successful whalers or loggers are given preferential treatment. While craftsmen are still only a fraction of the population, their growing contribution to Turtle Clan's success is increasing their numbers significantly.

Turtle Clan members like to show off their wealth. The most common way for them to do this is through the ritual of the golden ones. When one family is insulted by another, the aggrieved party commissions creation of a totem called a golden one.

Created by a shamani using gold supplied by the family, the golden one is then presented for sale to the family that committed the insult. In a week, the two families begin to haggle over the price of the golden one. Refusing to buy a golden one that is offered is a grave insult. This gives the more affluent family a chance to show off their wealth while the poorer family can show off the quality of their crafting. If a price cannot be agreed upon, both families lose face.

Many foreigners are intrigued by the concept of the golden ones, but these items are sacred to their owners, and no one will ever part with one.

However, the outsiders have no way of telling the difference between a golden one and an ordinary piece of gold jewelry not blessed by a shamani. Most of the gold pieces brought from foreign lands end up melted down and recast as golden ones or replicas. The Turtle Clan's less scrupulous merchants have made a very tidy profit selling these forgeries, and don't feel the slightest bit of guilt taking advantage of the naive outsiders.



## Cities

**Kin Hashkehe** (Shark). The village closest to Sind, the Shark Tribe is one of the most productive of all the Turtle tribes. They have used their wealth to greatly expand their city so it can handle the increasing number of merchants. They have even begun to use elephants acquired from Sind to help with their industry. The massive beasts are able to haul logs to the mills faster, as well as drag whale carcasses to waiting Turtle Clan knives. Shark Tribe has also begun to use metal tools to some extent in their industry, though not in agriculture. A Shark Tribe member is easy to notice because of their love of brightly colored clothing, typically acquired from Sind or Ierendi. The Shark Tribe stands alone from the rest of their clan as they have allowed shrines to Immortals from other nations to be constructed for visitors, especially the People's Temple, Proteus, and Asterius.

**Kin Ootahe** (Halibut). Turtle Clan is rapidly abandoning the Old Ways, but the Halibut Tribe is still trying to balance the old with the new. Their shrine to Atruaghin is still considered equal to that of Ahmanni. They have

built a separate quarter just for visitors to keep outsiders out of their village proper. They keep to the tradition of wooden and stone tools on shore but utilize metal harpoons for whaling. Because several of the other tribes have embraced using metal tools for logging, Halibut has largely given up on that aspect of their life, preferring to make most of their wealth in whaling. The tribe is doing its best to keep to the Old Ways, but as the younger generations are introduced to more outsiders, it is only a matter of time before Halibut begins to follow the path of the other tribes.

**Kin Tliish** (Sea Snake). The Sea Snake Tribe serves as Turtle Clan's capital. The village became the capital because the Old Ways dictate the center of the territory as where the tribes should gather to do business. Here the clan has set up buildings so emissaries of foreign nations can establish formal relations, and representatives of other Atruaghin Clans have somewhere to stay. Sea Snake pays lip service to the Old Ways, but in reality, they modernized long ago. Their docks have been built up to handle the largest Minrothad

merchant vessels. Caravans receive and deliver goods to the other tribes on a daily basis. The tribe gets around prohibitions on metal coins by using elaborately carved whalebone chips for currency instead. The bone coins are worthless outside of the tribe except as a collector's item, but the concept of money has been catching on in the tribe quickly. Currently, the city has embassies from Sind, Minrothad, Ierendi, Darokin and the Five Shires. The representatives from the other clans view the modernization of Turtle Clan with either curiosity (Horse and the Bear), or abject horror (Elk). Whether Turtle Clan likes it or not, the rest of the world views them as an independent nation.

**Kin Tsíidiidaatsohí** (Pelican). The one tribe that has fully shed themselves of the Old Ways and embraced the modern world is the Pelican Tribe. The tribe dresses in modern clothing imported from Darokin and Minrothad, utilizes metal tools and weapons, and even modifies their great canoes with sails and rudders. They alone have their own merchants who travel to nearby Ierendi and Darokin, bringing back large amounts of trade goods to be distributed among the tribe. The rest of Turtle Clan looks at the tribe with varying degrees of apprehension because they so readily embraced the ways of the outsiders. The village has become an attraction for rich merchants and tourists wanting to experience the Atruaghin ways first hand. The Pelican Tribe is more than happy to hold daily patshatls in honor of their affluent visitors and perform ritual songs and dances for foreigners so quick to part with their wealth.

**Kin Tabaaqstiintsoh** (Sea Lion). One Turtle Clan tribe has not so easily





lost the Old Ways. By the easternmost border, the Sea Lion Tribe still tills the earth with stone tools and fights Tiger Clan with nothing more than wooden weapons. Sea Lion has no use for outsiders because the safety of the Clan should be up to those born into it. The tribe is not openly hostile to foreign powers, but they are certainly not welcoming of them. Sea Lion is the first line of defense against the murderous Tiger Clan, so it is on constant watch against them. If their rivals were able to raid another tribe, it would reflect poorly on Sea Lion defenses. The tribe accepts the constant supplies sent from the rest of Turtle Clan, and the rest of the Clan respects their wishes and only sends tools and weapons per the Old Ways. The Vlan sees Sea Lion as trapped in the past, where Sea Lion strongly feels Turtle Clan will eventually come to suffer from the modernization of the youth. The one group of outsiders Sea Lion is friendly with, strangely enough, is the inhuman nūññē'hī to their north. They find a kinship with the fey and sylvan creatures, which in turn protect the tribe from surprise attacks from the north.

### **The Lighthouse Expedition**

In 923AC a band of nūññē'hī from the Dream Woods discovered the World Conveyor in the Palace of Atruaghin. The fey creatures proved immune to the magic protecting the artifact, even though they didn't know what they had discovered. The sidhe experimented with the machine out of curiosity until with a lurch, the device activated. Trapped inside the elevator was an adventurous sidhe named Nani the Black and White, who found herself in the Hollow World.

For the next fifty years, Nani explored

much of the Hollow World, documenting and recording what she saw for when she eventually returned to the land of the nūññē'hī. She visited all of the floating islands, rode a dinosaur up an Azcan pyramid, and entertained the entire race of Blacklore elves for a decade. Then Nani finally made her way to the Lighthouse, which changed their history forever. She found a society not trapped in their past, which enthralled her. Then the immortal explorer spent the next year telling the insatiable knowledge seekers of the land above. The Lighthouse made the most difficult decision in their history. They agreed to send an expedition with Nani through the conveyor to the surface world.

Nani took the group of two dozen explorers through the Azcan lands, using her illusion magic to allow them to avoid the patrols of their braves. The expedition spent a week examining the World Conveyor before attempting to activate it. Nani and ten explorers returned to the surface, where they sent back a message letting the rest know the expedition reached the surface safely. The explorers set up a base camp called the Palace Expedition, and several months later, twenty more explorers reached the surface. Eventually, a hundred explorers from the Hollow World had set up a small town surrounding the World Conveyor. The expedition six months later sent back documents on what they had discovered just in the immediate vicinity, including weather reports, star charts, and plant and animal samples. Nani introduced the Lighthouse members to other sidhe, who were just as curious about the explorers as the explorers were about them. For her efforts, Nani received a personal invitation to the Sidhe

Court, where she regaled Oberon and Titania about her adventures fair below the earth. She presented the king and queen with trophies she had taken on her experiences, and as a reward, she was appointed to represent the nūññē'hī in the Lighthouse settlement.

The Palace of Atruaghin now serves as the starting point for Lighthouse expeditions to other parts of the surface world. The explorers are sent out to find out about the culture and history of the various nations. Nani secretly introduced people of Oltec blood to the Turtle Clan. Currently, the expedition has scholars in Darokin, Ierendi, Karameikos, Sind, Thyatis, and even in faraway Ethengar. The Lighthouse has goals on infiltrating the magiocracy of Glantri and the demihuman nations, but so far, the cultures are too dissimilar for the explorers to succeed.

The Palace Expedition is highly organized, with everyone there for a specific purpose. The expedition leader is a mountain of a man called Indigo Jack Callahan, a renowned explorer from the Merry Pirate Sea. His job is more of an administrator as everyone on the expedition is a highly motivated volunteer who has handpicked for their specialty. Callahan handles all emergencies, from food shortages to Tiger braves getting dangerously close to the expedition site. Fortunately for all, he's a capable leader who is not afraid to take charge or delegate when needed.

The rest of the leadership of the Palace Expedition is a strange mix of Hollow World cultures. Callahan has a team of four directly under him, each in charge of a specific activity in the camp. A massive beastman known only as Wally is in charge of



operating the Conveyor. He unloads new shipments and helps new expedition members get to their assignments, as well as load up each shipment of discoveries into the Conveyor for the trip down. Despite being the size of an ogre, he is quite intelligent and creative in his ability to find new supplies.

Annathressnewlin is an elf of Blacklore descent who helped Nani escape from her overly curious people. Known as either Anna or Lin to the expedition (she changes the abbreviation on a whim), she is in charge of cataloging every thing returned to the expedition. For items too large to fit in the Conveyor she sketches out the item and makes highly detailed notes that are sent back instead. She is still adjusting to life among the Lighthouse members, she finds them too primitive compared to her homeland. She also has a problem living around so much nature, or the fact her people's beliefs on casual nudity tends to conflict with the rest of the expedition. Darna Spiderbane is a kubitt warrior in charge of providing food for the expedition. She is a fierce hunter, despite her size. She has several hunters and farmers under her that provide for everyone in the expedition. Because of her small size she tends to ride on Garm, a garl she befriended in the Hollow World and pulled numerous strings to bring along with her. She is feared for her wild streak, and her absolute stubborn nature.

The camp utilizes most of the buildings still standing from the time of Atruaghin. They have cleaned up and repaired as many buildings as

they could to serve as houses and storage areas. As the expedition expands more buildings are repurposed. Right now fifty houses and storage buildings are in use for the needs of the expedition. Most of the Palace of Atruaghin is being heavily studied by the expedition, only buildings too far gone are left alone. In just a few years the entire city has been cataloged and mapped. Areas outside the palace are used to grow crops, fortunately the food above is similar to much of the plants



below. The largest building they could salvage is currently holding a large supply of artifacts from every nation they have spread across. While the items and books they've collected aren't particularly valuable, to the Lighthouse they are priceless. The primary goal now of the Palace Expedition is to research as much as they can of the surface world. Intermingling with the other cultures is a desired goal, but has to be approached with extraordinary care.

The first step was to try and infiltrate the Atruaghin Clans, but the expedition is finding this difficult. The Tiger Clan is suspiciously similar to the bloodthirsty Azcan empire below, and is considered too dangerous to infiltrate. The Atruaghin Confederation is proving to be too insular to properly infiltrate properly. The Turtle Clan is the easiest to reach, and because they are more open than the other tribes some progress has been made. But the other clans are isolated by the plateau, isolationists and have cultures so alien as to be difficult for the expedition to understand properly. Progress is being made, but at a snail's pace.

The infiltration into other realms was difficult at first but has proven easier. Because so many of the cultures from the Hollow World are the predecessors of many surface world cultures, the expedition was able to find members that could impersonate members of the nations. Members with Traldar blood have entered into Karamaikos. Milenians have infiltrated Kerendas. By random chance one explorer was able to join with a tribe in far northern Ethengar. The more the expedition can learn about the culture and history of the surface world, the better equipped the next expedition will be. The greatest danger to the expedition is of course exposure. Each nation poses a unique threat, with the danger ranging from imprisonment to death. If the nations of the surface world discovered a vast world deep beneath their own feet, the ramifications could be dire. Darokin would see a new market to exploit.



Thyatis' imperial ambitions would explode if they suddenly discovered a massive land filled with mineral wealth and poorly armed enemies. While the expedition is interested in the magic of the surface world, that increases the danger exponentially. If Glantri discovered the Hollow World's existence, they would spare no measure to find a way to exploit the magic and the creatures there.

The Palace Expedition is scouring everywhere they can look for examples of the various cultures of the known world. They are especially fond of any history books they can get their hands on. Several have joined multiple schools as students to be educated in the ways of the surface nations. Callahan has used his experience as a pirate to establish a group of smugglers to transport the goods to a hidden port between the Tiger and Turtle lands. The smugglers don't understand why they are transporting everyday items to a hidden drop, but Callahan pays well with Hollow World items, which would be considered antiques in the surface world. From the hidden drop, the expedition transports the goods to the Palace of Atruaghin.

### **Nûnnē'hī**

Located deep in the heart of Atruaghin territory, just south of the Palace of Atruaghin, and stretching across much of the Singing Forest and deep into Tiger territory is a hidden kingdom. In the tongue of the Thyatians, they are known as the sidhe, an ancient and mysterious race of creatures. For the Atruaghin, they are called the nûnnē'hī. These fey creatures have been the secret protectors of the Atruaghin for thousands of years, intrigued by the unique culture of the human civilization that borders them on all sides. The nûnnē'hī are treated as

guardian spirits by the Atruaghin, save the Tiger Clan who considers them merciless horrors.

The Singing Forest has always been home to the nûnnē'hī before the Atruaghin came the fey also populated most of what is now the Forest of Death. The nûnnē'hī were delighted with the arrival of the humans and helped them establish their cities on the plains and in the forests. An elusive race, the help provided by the nûnnē'hī always came in the form of gifts left at a doorstep, predators staying far away from settlements, or lost children somehow finding their way back to safety. The Atruaghin thanked their hidden benefactors with gifts left at the edge of their villages, and the nûnnē'hī accepted the gifts graciously. Two events shattered the relationship between the two peoples, the red orc invasion and the corruption of the Tiger Clan.

The orcs swept aside all resistance from the Atruaghin to enslave the people for centuries. During this time the nûnnē'hī assisted the humans whenever they could, hiding escaped slaves or ambushing orc patrols that ventured too far into nûnnē'hī territory. The fey were not aggressive; open warfare was not an option for them. However, their actions convinced the orcs the Singing Forest was haunted, and any slave who could reach the safety of the forest was not pursued. The orcs were eventually driven out by the Atruaghin, in no small part by the free Atruaghin that had been living in the nûnnē'hī lands. When Atruaghin raised the Great Plateau, it cut off three of the clans from their fey protectors, but the memory of the nûnnē'hī never left Atruaghin lore. The biggest tragedy the nûnnē'hī have experienced was the betrayal of

the Tiger Clan. Corrupted by the Immortal Atzanteotl, the once-friendly Tiger Clan turns on their old allies, destroying several of them before the nûnnē'hī fled what is now called the Forest of Death. The nûnnē'hī swore revenge against this betrayal and did their best to curtail Tiger advancement into nûnnē'hī lands. Tiger patrols would go missing, crops would grow stunted, and water would become foul. More recently the nûnnē'hī have taken direct action against the city of Cuetzpali. They have openly warred against Tiger Clan expansion, crushing their armies in AC 742, 905, and most recently in 998.

Now with the increased influence of outsiders on Atruaghin, the nûnnē'hī are apprehensive about the future of their charges. They still interact with all of the clans on the plateau. The highly magical fey have little problem ascending the plateau walls, and they still remember their time among the Horse, Elk, and Bear. The nûnnē'hī see Turtle turning away from the Old Ways, watch as Horse plan to leave their brothers behind forever, see Bear tear itself apart with internal strife and Elk become more xenophobic from the outside pressures. The special relationship between the Atruaghin and nûnnē'hī might be coming to an end.

Like all sidhe, the nûnnē'hī organize in an approximation of human society. For the nûnnē'hī, they have tried to copy various aspects of the Atruaghin Clans. They have a great chief named Lord Haw-Haw who dresses like the most ostentatious of the Elk Clan. He mimics parts of every Atruaghin culture. He organizes feasts like the Turtle Clan. A favorite past time is performing the Bear Clan snake dance, though the nûnnē'hī don't understand the



cultural meaning behind it. From the Horse Tribe, the sidhe love their love of mock combat and have entire battles where the only purpose seems to be to hit each other in the head with sticks. The Elk's strange love with cosmetics is taken to an extreme degree, with the nūnnē'hī often painting themselves head to toe with dyes in bizarre patterns. Even the Tiger Clan is copied with their love of sports. The Tiger game of daraxi is played in the nūnnē'hī lands, though the highly magical sidhe add even more rules to the already restrictive game. They play the game underwater, in the air, and have even played the sport in front of King Oberon and his full court.

The nūnnē'hī are still on friendly terms with the Atruaghin, though it's on their terms. With the issues facing the various clans, the nūnnē'hī prefer to watch from afar and assist only when needed. The nūnnē'hī prefer clans that follow the Old Ways, finding them quaint throwbacks to their ancient past. While the Turtle Clan is physically the closest of the clans, they've largely abandoned the Old Ways. The exception is the Sea Lion tribe who still holds to the past laws. The tribe

is also the most threatened by the Tiger Clan, and the nūnnē'hī are more than happy to protect the tribe from the Tiger's attacks.

Their relationship with the Tiger Clan borders on outright hostility. The nūnnē'hī aren't aggressive normally; they don't initiate attacks against the Tiger Clan, preferring to use magic and sabotage to make their lives miserable. When the Tiger Clan sends troops into the nūnnē'hī lands; however, the sidhe are merciless. With the help of their sylvan allies, few Tiger braves ever live to see their homeland. The nūnnē'hī have a large number of humans that were kidnapped and replaced with changelings from the Tiger Clan. While they are well cared for, the nūnnē'hī realize they have more than they can care for easily.

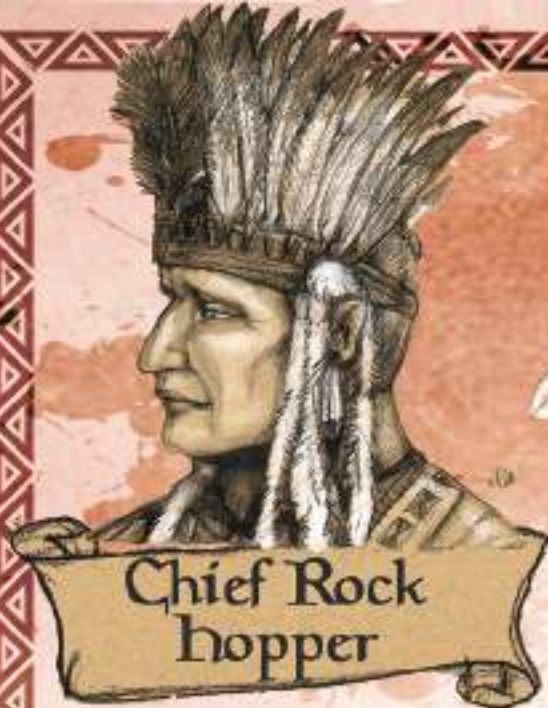
On infrequent occasions the Tiger Clan has massed an army to attack the nūnnē'hī directly it has always ended in disaster. In AC 742, the first battle between the two resulted in the Battle of the Moon, when a large force of Tiger Braves was caught by surprise and slaughtered to a man during a lunar eclipse. The Battle of Cowards in AC 905 was another

massive defeat for the Tiger Clan as the nūnnē'hī used their magic to sicken the braves and then unleashed animal spirits on the survivors. Most recently the Tiger Clan attempted to bypass the nūnnē'hī lands to attack the Turtle Clan in AC 998 during a moonless night. The nūnnē'hī unleashed the full wrath of their sylvan allies, hundreds of braves were slaughtered in what became known as the Battle of Darkness.

With the arrival of the Palace Expedition, the nūnnē'hī have found a whole new culture to become obsessed with. They are curious about the myriad of new cultures that have suddenly appeared in their lands, especially since it was one of their own that led the expedition to the surface world. The nūnnē'hī are still secretive around the expedition but will assist them just as they help the Atruaghin. They make sure nothing hostile wanders into the expedition's camp, and the explorers always seem to find their way through nūnnē'hī territory unhindered. The expedition knows they are being assisted, but don't comprehend how much aid they are receiving.







## Personalities of Atruaghin

### Bear Clan NPCs

#### Chief Ahote Rock Hopper

The leader of the Bear Clan, Ahote has the unenviable task of trying to keep peace within his clan because of the sudden influx of wealth. He is an advocate of the Old Ways, but the visible benefits of trade are eroding his faith. Ahote is becoming increasingly indecisive in his rulings. He is leaning towards the wealthier tribes but enraging the poorer tribes because of his favoritism. He attempts to appease the impoverished tribes but is undermined by the increasing corruption from the Rattlesnake and Mountain Lion tribes.

Ahote is a middle-aged Bear Clan elder. He has gone prematurely gray, unable to take the stress of his position. He has begun walking with a cane, not so much from the pressure he is unable to handle, but from a lingering injury, he suffered as a young man. Ahote dresses in fine cloth bought from Darokin, dyed in common Bear Clan patterns. He is a kindly grandfather, though his constant smile is fading every year.

#### Tahome Silver Tongue

Tahome is possibly the most successful of any member of the Bear Clan and the least reverent at the same time. Born in Kin Aninigii in the shadow of the World Elevator, he was always curious about the world outside the plateau. One day he snuck out of his city into the Darokin city of Akesoli, where he found himself enraptured with the foreign culture and their vast wealth compared to the cliff dwelling Bear Clan. He taught himself both the common trade tongue and the Darokin language in just a couple of years. He became a masterful thief and conman, seducing and charming his way into the homes of many of Darokin's elite. But after every major crime, he always returns home to Kin Aninigii to throw anyone off his trail. In just a decade, he is by far the richest man in all of Atruaghin.

Tahome is considered a rather attractive Atruaghin man with strong features and an extremely charming personality. He is fair-skinned for an Atruaghin, which allows him to walk around in Darokin cities without a second glance. He dresses in the

finest clothes during his escapades into Darokin, but much more modestly back in his homeland to remove suspicion. He can adapt multiple personas to help him in his cons, and he is intelligent enough to remember who he conned, and how. Eventually, he plans to leave the plateau entirely, moving permanently to Darokin City. Until then, he bides his times and builds up his wealth.

#### Emil Falte

Darokin has a strange relation with the Bear Clan, the clan owns the World Elevator, but the merchant guilds run its operation. The man in charge of the elevator is Emil Falte, a veteran merchant from Toney House, who was awarded the position for his long service to the nation. Falte also maintains the trading post at the bottom of the plateau. He follows his orders to the letter but makes a point of profiting from ambiguous orders that provide him a little leeway. Members of the Bear Clan that benefit significantly from the trade make sure that Falte is significantly rewarded for prioritizing certain loads over others. Technically Falte has broken no laws in either Atruaghin or Darokin, but many in both nations would find his behavior unethical.





Falte is a well dressed Darokinian in his early 40's known for his thin hawkish appearance. He wears large and gaudy hats popular in Darokin City to hide his receding hairline. He keeps with Darokin fashion, dressing well, but not ostentatiously. He has taken an Atruaghin wife, a political marriage arranged with one of the most powerful families in Kin Nášhdóitsoh. The marriage strengthened relations between both nations, even if everybody knew it was not a marriage of romance.

#### **Haseya Long Legs**

Haseya personifies the rebellious spirit that is Kin Gini, the westernmost city in the Bear Clans. She is the most successful smuggler in her tribe, exchanging Atruaghin artifacts for Darokin and Sind luxuries. She moves the contraband to the top of her city through an ingenious system of cargo elevators she purchased from Darokin engineers. She has completely given up on the Old Ways, paying only lip service to the Immortals. Because of this, she will traffic in all sorts of contraband from alcohol to metal

weapons. She is building a large network outside of Atruaghin and in the process, creating a vast criminal enterprise.

Haseya is almost unremarkable in her appearance. She is of average height and weight, she keeps her hair in traditional styles and only wears minimal makeup. She can blend in almost any crowd, a talent she has honed. Her clothes are unadorned, nearly those of a peasant. Her vast wealth is spent on luxury items or used to pay for more lucrative contraband items. She knows her crimes would get her exiled immediately if she was ever caught, her smuggling is far beyond what even the Falcon Tribe allows. Because of this, she has moved a large portion of her wealth secretly to various Darokin cities, so she will live in comfort when she has to leave.

#### **Klah Bitter Fox**

The chief of the Mountain Goat Tribe, Klah rules over his people in Kin Tl'izi, the westernmost city in the Bear Clan. He earned his name because of his increasing opposition and spite towards the effects the

World Elevator had on the Old Ways. He had ruled over his tribe for decades long before the foreign guilds came. His tribe was always poor, but they were proud. All the Bear Clan before the elevator were subsistence farmers, trading with each other to avoid shortages. But now the central cities have prospered at the expense of the poorer towns. Instead of sharing their wealth like in the old days, the central cities keep most of the trade goods for themselves and have stopped trading with their people. Now Klah has had enough of the failures of his clan and concerns himself with the needs of only his tribe. His disillusionment has reached such levels that he doesn't even bother sending representatives to the clan's councils.

Klah is now an ancient man, appearing to be almost a stick figure to those who meet him. His hair is long since gone, his eyesight is failing. He wears the traditional garb of a tribal chief, but his trappings are as old and cracked as he is. He cannot move very well anymore because of his advanced age and has



to be helped around by two braves. He rarely speaks to anyone outside of his tribe, and even among his tribe, he usually only talks to his inner council. Lately, he has received visitors from the Hawk and Eagle tribes. They have begun to discuss what was previously unthinkable, seceding the easternmost cities of the Bear Clan from the modernizing central tribes of the clan.

#### **Elk Clan NPCs**

##### **Chief Degataga Tall Corn**

Selected almost twenty years ago to govern Elk Clan, Degataga is known for being a highly effective administrator and a humorless authoritarian. He carries with him an extreme dislike toward the outsiders that have been allowed on the plateau. His distaste for those that violate the Old Ways has begun to turn to loathing, especially towards the Horse and Turtle Clans. Even the Bear Clan has attracted his ire. He spends much of his time with his advisory council trying to figure out ways to enforce the Old Ways on the wavering clans.

Degataga is in his early 60's but looks much younger. He claims his vigor is proof he is descended from Atruaghin himself, though there is little proof of that. He dresses in traditional Elk Clan clothing, with all the ceremonial trappings of the high chief of the Elk Clan. He applies his makeup, but his elaborate hairstyle requires assistance from helpers. It takes over an hour for him to apply his make up and have his hair swept back like an eagle's wings, but his vanity demands no less. The makeup softens his stern look, but it is only maintaining a facade. He may look like a friendly uncle, but the tone of his voice reveals his feelings toward anyone he is directly addressing.

##### **Inali Long River**

The strictest and most orthodox of all the Elk Clan shamani, Inali, is the senior adviser to Degataga Tall Corn. She is the most powerful woman in the entire Elk Clan, and one of the most powerful women in all of the Atruaghin Clans. She has been the Elk Clan's high shamani for over thirty years, and a shamani for more than fifty decades. She is a grim, humorless woman, never allowing herself a moment of levity. She is critical of other shamani, always finding fault in everyone else. She is avoided by most members of the Elk Clan in public, but her counsel is sought by the High Chief daily.

Inali is well into her seventieth year and looks every year of it. Her hair is white and sparse, and her teeth are few. Her eyes are clouded with cataracts, but even then, her stare is harsh. She dresses in Elk Clan finery as befits her station. She is a single-minded woman, demanding all Children of Atruaghin follow the Old Ways to the letter. The weakening of the Old Ways by the other clans infuriates her. She whispers into Tall Corn's ear to enforce the Old Ways on the other clans. The Elk have the numbers, and they are the most prosperous of all the clans living on the plateau so that it would be possible. Only the reality that this would bring the clans to the brink of war and break the Code of Atruaghin keeps Tall Corn from acting on Inali's suggestions.

##### **Unaduti Skunk Hair**

The Elk Clan are a somber people, devoting their life between their worship and their work. Unaduti is the exception to that stereotype, as he is the head librarian of Naaltsoos bá Hooghan, the Owl tribe library. He is the most powerful wizard of the

Atruaghin, a diviner whose skill dwarfs that of much of the wizards of Glantri. He is one of Chief Tall Corn's most trusted advisers because Unaduti's predictions are frighteningly accurate. Wizards are shunned in Atruaghin, and Unaduti rarely leaves his village, but when he does, it is to deliver a dire warning to those that will listen.

Someone looking at Unaduti would not suspect he is trained in the arcane arts. He is a mountain of a man, naturally broad-shouldered and possessing incredible strength. He gets his description from the skunk skin hat he wears to cover up his bald head as he lost his hair early in adulthood. His premature baldness was an old shame, but one he's since outgrown. He prefers to paint a spider on his face to intimidate outsiders to his tribe. His personality is surprising to many, as he is as charming and intelligent as he is strong. He has sworn to answer any question asked of him truthfully. Many have tried to take advantage of this oath, only to regret the answer he provides.

##### **Kununa Stone Maker**

The Beaver tribe have the reputation of the most productive of all the Elk Clan. Their tribal chief is the personification of their industrious culture. Kununa became the tribal chief just a few years ago and is loved because of his natural charisma, intelligence, and mechanical aptitude. Kununa saw the stagnation that he believes is plaguing his clan and gives his tribe a daunting task more as a challenge than anything else. Under his supervision, the Beaver tribe has begun constructing a giant stairwell down the plateau's face. Kununa in just the space of a couple of years has reached halfway down the





plateau using only wood and stone, he fully plans to open trading with the Turtle Clan once the stairwell is finished.

Kununa is an attractive man in his mid 30's; he breaks away from Elk Clan culture by avoiding the complicated face paint and hairstyles familiar to his people. The cosmetics tend to run when he's working, and he's always working. He possesses a sharp mind and would be a master architect in any other nation. One thing that baffles him is the clan's progress in building the stairwell; they are far ahead of schedule. Kununa has inspected the project countless times and can find no evidence of a rushed job. What he doesn't know is that the nūññēhī send brownies to work on it at night to help the Beaver tribe. The more progressive Elk Clan villages have been whispering that perhaps Kununa would make for a better Great Chief because he is looking to the future instead of being trapped in the past.

#### **Galilani Fast Horse**

The Squirrel tribe despises those that violate the Old Ways, and they are

quite militant about it. Their tribal representative sits in council at Kin Nāshdóífbái demanding the Great Chief punish the lawbreakers. For Galilani Fast Horse, this is not enough. She leads a group of raiders comprising volunteers from the strictest Elk Clan tribes, targeting the caravans arriving from the World Elevator. They try to avoid bloodshed, preferring to burn the wagons, leaving the merchants only with enough food to walk back. Her raids have been sporadic, but they are starting to draw more attention from the Bear Clan, who are sending their braves as guards on most caravans now. The increased security is making Galilani increase the savagery of her attacks. It is only a matter of time before blood is shed. Galiliani is a muscular woman in her early 20's with long flowing hair. Her expression is a stone mask; she is not given to levity. When she is among her people, she dresses in traditional clothing, complete with full-face cosmetics. But while she is raiding, she prefers to disguise herself as a member of the Horse Clan to throw off suspicion. Her methods have been successful so far,

but the Bear Clan is growing tired of the raids and has told their braves to defend themselves, even if they have to draw blood. The Horse Clan is scouring the plains looking for the raiders that are impersonating them and increasing tension between them and the Bear Clan. It is only a matter of time before Galilani is forced into a fight she cannot win.

#### **Horse Clan NPCs**

##### **Nocona**

The Horse Clan leader became the first clan chief to walk the ground of the low lands in over a thousand years when he heard a passage off the plateau had been discovered. Nocona was unsure when the Tsoh Tse'aan had been carved, but with its discovery, the entire purpose of his reign was changed. He was forced to be content with the keeping of the Old Ways. The Horse Clan would hunt the buffalo, raid the Bear and Elk and patrol the plains the same way their ancestors had done it for a thousand years. Like many of his clan, Nocona was a warrior, but he was a warrior without a war. His culture had grown stagnant and backwards. The Horse Clan had





been reduced to ritual and tradition because that was the way they had always done it. But now there was a way off the plateau. There were new villages to raid, new enemies to fight, and new lands to conquer. For the first time in a thousand years, the Horse Clan was ecstatic to have something new to look forward to. Their chief Nocona is the happiest of them all.

The Horse Clan chief is a well-muscled warrior in his early 30's. He keeps his hair long and applies a minimal amount of war paint when necessary. Nocona was just a child when the Tsoh Tse'aan was discovered, but he became fascinated by it when the first scouts came back with fantastic stories about the people that lived below. When he became chief a few years ago, he made it a point to visit the lowlands. It was everything he had hoped it would be. Now he is focusing all his efforts into relocated his tribe, abandoning the Great Plateau to the

Bear's infighting and the Elk's isolationism. The Children of the Horse were born to run; they were not meant to live and die on a rock cut off from the world. Nocona intends to be the first Horse Clan chief to live on the lowlands, and nothing in the world will stop him.

#### **Na'Ura**

The head scout of the Horse Clan has an enormous weight on her shoulders, being the eldest of the scout that discovered the Tsoh Tse'aan. Her father's discovery was the most monumental event in the Horse Clan's history since Atruaghin raised the plateau eighteen hundred years ago. With the passing of her father, the young woman has been handed the vital task of scouting out the areas at the base of the plateau and still looking for the hunters' buffalo herds. She needs to maintain the Horse Clan's appearance and perform their typical activities so as not to alert the other clans. Because of the increased need for information

about the clan's surroundings, she is rarely found in her people's cities.

Na'Ura has just reached her second decade and is considered highly attractive by Horse Clan tastes. She is small for her age, standing only over 5', but that allows her to ride a smaller and faster pony, which suits her well. She is noted for having rather short hair for a Horse Clan woman, originally caused by an accident with a glue pot, but she's kept the style out of personal preference. She sports a headband with several feathers; she has encountered more than a few orcs in her trips below the plateau. She shares her clan's newfound optimism, so much so she is rarely seen without a smile. She has received several marriage proposals, has told them all only once the clan has finally left the plateau will she take a husband. This has encouraged several of her suitors to encourage Chief Nocona to speed up the process.





### Jaquan

Possibly the most admired man in the entire Horse Clan short of the Great Chief, Jaquan was initially tasked to take warriors to clear the mouth of the Tsoh Tse'aan from any potential enemies. What he did was win a rather brief and brutal war with the hated red orcs of Atruaghin lore. The orcs never expected an attack from an enemy they had not seen in over a thousand years. As a reward, Chief Nocona has given Jaquan permission to handpick warriors from all the tribes to accompany him into raids into the outlands. The braves have attacked various small settlements in the Sind province of Nagpuri, as well as smaller Darokin villages. The braves make a point of recovering their fallen and never attacking the same place twice. Jaquan has brought back large amounts of loot to the clan, including weapons, magical items, and gems and jewelry. The more successful he becomes, the more he attracts the love of his clan. Jaquan cuts an imposing figure. He is the ideal of a Horse Clan warrior, tall, muscular and toned. He is

fantastically wealthy for a brave, complete with magical metal weapons and several horses. He doesn't have a wife but maintains several mistresses. This is usually frowned upon, but since Jaquan has the favor of Nocona and is considered a major hero, no one makes an issue. Jaquan's exploits in battles and raids have earned him many honors, more than enough to challenge Nocona for the leadership of the clan. However, Jaquan has nothing but respect and even a bit of hero worship for the High Chief, and instead of being a rival, he is Nocona's closet friend and ally. Jaquan is the heir apparent, and he is more than patient to wait for his friend to retire.

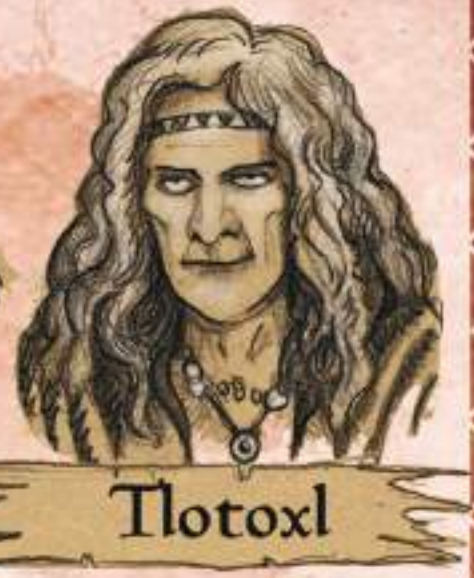
### Mukwoori

The typical Atruaghin shamani is expected to be stoic, judgmental, and taciturn. Mukwoori is not your typical shamani. He is very much symbolic of the Horse Clan's optimistic mood, always with a joke or hearty laugh. He has been admonished for teaching young braves bawdy songs before they leave for a raid, and he has always had a reputation for being a lady's man. He

has the ear of not just Nocona but visits all the tribal chiefs regularly to provide them with his wisdom as well. For the High Shamani to advise a tribal leader would be a severe breach of tradition for other clans, but Mukwoori doesn't care what other clans think. He was selected as the High Shamani of the Horse Clan for both his wisdom and his blunt language. Nocona has little time for those that dance around the truth and appreciates Mukwoori's brutal honesty.

Mukwoori looks more like a brawler than a shamani. His nose is crooked and flattened from one too many fights. One of his ears is missing a chunk where a displacer beast bit it off. He has more scars than half the tribe's braves combined. In his youth Mukwoori took to adventuring, where he made quite the name for himself, even reaching the outlands by climbing down the plateau by hand. But in his 54th year, a vision from Tahkati Stormtamer caused Mukwoori to return to his people and take up the mantle of Great Shamani. He once held to the teachings of Atruaghin, but having seen the Tsoh Tse'aan, he realized the





necessity to abandon the Old Ways. He has seen the future of his people, and his experience among the outlanders is crucial to their destiny.

#### **Anya Von Vorstadt**

For the Glantrian transmuter Anya Von Vorstadt, her entire life changed when she accepted a job from the grizzled adventurer that needed her magic to stabilize a cave for his people. It was an unusual request, but not too much out of the ordinary at first. When Anya arrived at the Tsoh Tse'aan and was greeted by the High Chief of the Horse Clan along with fifty braves, she knew this was the most fantastic opportunity of her life. Speaking through Mukwoori, who was the one that hired her, Anya realized the enormity of her task. The clan wanted her to augment the cave with magical lights and modify the wet stone floor into something they could drive bison through. In exchange, they would shower her with artifacts that would make her one of the wealthiest nobles in all of Glantri. All she had to do was magically alter a hundred mile long winding cave to accommodate a herd of bison numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Anya hails from the Principality of Aalban, making her possibly the only blonde woman living on the entire Atruaghin plateau. She is in her mid-twenties and typically dresses in traditional Aalbanese fashion, but has changed to buckskins during her stay on the plateau. She is a subject of much curiosity and desire by the Horse Clan men, so Nocona has given her a bodyguard of several female braves so the men will leave her alone. Every day she stabilizes and illuminates just a little more of the cave; in just over a year, she's readied twenty miles of the cave. Her work is of paramount importance because if the buffalo panic inside the cave, they could stampede and kill the braves guiding them, or worse, trample each other and block the cave with their corpses. She expects her work will take at least over one more year. In the meantime, she is treated like visiting royalty. Servants wait on her hand and foot, and her longhouse filled with items taken from raids in the outlands to make her feel at home. Mukwoori doesn't trust many Glantrians, and since the project is a secret from not just the other clans but also outlanders, it is

up to Anya to complete all the work by herself. At least when she's done, she will never want for money again.

#### **Tiger Clan NPCs**

##### **King Xiutecuhтли**

Nominally a figurehead, the King of the Tiger Clan is secretly taking steps to gain actual power over the powerful priesthood. The High Chief position is hereditary; Xiutecuhтли is the latest of a long line of kings who have only served to provide the high priests with a degree of legitimacy. The High Priests have been the true power behind the throne for centuries; something Xiutecuhтли intends to stop. His grand scheme is to engineer a great defeat of one of the lesser tribes and blame the debacle on the High Priests, proving they cannot lead the Children of the Tiger. Xiutecuhтли will place them under his authority and then use the more powerful tribes to avenge the loss, proving that he alone is worthy of ruling the Tiger Clan.

Xiutecuhтли is a handsome man in his mid-thirties, always decked out in Tiger Clan finery. He keeps his head shaved, showing to the clan there is not a scar on his face. This is meant to intimidate warriors with the fact



that Xiutecuhтли has never once been seriously challenged in combat, much less defeated. He is a clever man, having survived numerous assassination attempts during his reign. Being assigned to be his food taster is considered a death sentence. He maintains innumerable concubines but has not yet taken a wife. Xiutecuhтли's progeny number over twenty, and he expects them to start murdering each other as they come of age, ensuring that they will not attempt to assassinate him.

### **Tiger Priest Tlilpotonqui**

According to the Tiger Clan, both High Priests are equal in power. In reality, the High Priest of Danel Tigerstripes is considered incompetent and corrupt. The only thing keeping Tlilpotonqui in power is his increasing paranoia. He is known for only being accessible to those that pay for the right to meet him. His gold and jewel-encrusted regalia are so elaborate that he cannot wear all of it and remain standing. He delegates all but essential duties to his lesser priests, spending most of his time feasting and entertaining important guests. He spends most of his days having his every need satisfied by his numerous slaves.

Tlilpotonqui is grotesquely obese, easily the largest man in all of the Tiger Clan, if not all of the Atruaghin Clans. He is barely forty years old but needs help moving around. He cannot speak long without wheezing, one of the reasons he makes few public appearances. The only reason he has lived so long is his periapt against poison. He relies on his magic to keep himself alive. Despite the inherent power of his position, Tlilpotonqui is not considered a major power player in Tiger Clan politics. His vast wealth attracts attention, but little respect.

### **Viper Priest Tlotoxl**

The true power behind the Tiger Clan is Tlotoxl, the High Priest of Atlanteotl. He is a driven individual, following the teachings of his Immortal to the detriment of his people. He is secretly constructing the Mouth of Azlanteotl deep in the jungles of Atruaghin, intending to destroy his people because his Immortal demands it. He rules through fear, which is impressive among the Tiger Clan and their bloody culture. He is a manipulative puppet master who has spies in all aspects of society.

Tlotoxl is a greying middle-aged man with a thick main of hair. He has a sinister air about him, though he can turn on the charm when dealing with Xiutecuhтли and Tlilpotonqui. He is the most competent of the three Tiger Clan leaders, something that most of the clan's elite recognize. He is responsible for keeping Tlilpotonqui alive because the blundering fool's replacement might have a modicum of talent that could hinder Tlotoxl's plans. He knows of Xiutecuhтли's plan to turn the clan against him, but Tlotoxl has assassins in place in case the king goes through with his treachery.

### **Chief Itzpapalotl**

The city of Macuexcohuatl was once one of the greatest cities in the Tiger Clan territories. Four years ago, the chief and almost every brave in the town were ambushed and slaughtered by Darokin forces. Now, the Python tribe has lost most of its men, leaving the chief's widow Itzpapalotl as the only woman leading a Tiger Clan tribe. Now she is trying to save her tribe from extinction, knowing that the only reason her city even stands is that Darokin refused to press their attack. Itzpapalotl is

doing everything from freeing male slaves to be full tribe members to trying to recruit braves from other cities.

Itzpapalotl is just now entering her fiftieth year, and she looks every year of it. She has gone completely gray, and lines streak her face. She never had a chance to mourn her husband, as the Darokin troops buried the fallen Tiger braves in a mass grave, denying him the proper burial he deserved. Itzpapalotl has long had her suspicions about the battle, but Tlilpotonqui and Tlotoxl ignored her concerns. Desperate, Itzpapalotl made the long, dangerous climb to the top of the Great Plateau to talk to the Owl Tribe librarian Unaduti Skunk Hair. She tried to threaten the Elk wizard to get her answer; when she woke up from the spell he cast on her, she was much more retrained. The wizard told her everything she wanted to know, and even more, than she asked. Unaduti warned of the doom coming to the Tiger Clan, and ultimately all of the Atruaghin. Itzpapalotl vowed to overthrow her clan's corrupt leaders, though she must work in secret to further her goals. Itzpapalotl is still a harsh and cruel woman, but she does care about her people and sees the danger presented by the priesthood's rule.

### **Krynidon Zafhir**

Once one of the premiere hardball players in Alphatia, now Zafhir is reduced to a slave who must play the Tiger Clan's sadistic games to survive. After a shipwreck washed him ashore on his way to Ierendi, Zafhir was captured by the Cougar tribe, which in turn sent the blue-skinned Alphonatian to their king as a gift. He was set to be sacrificed to the Immortals when Tlotoxl thought it would be humorous to have several





of the condemned slaves play for their lives in a daraxi tournament, with the losers sacrificed at the end of each match. Zafhir found the brutal game similar in style to hardball, and his team dominated the tournament with his skills. The rest of his team was sold off to various members of the Tiger Clan Elite, but High Priest Tlotoxl himself claimed Zafhir.

Krynidon Zafhir is of noble blood and has the pale blue skin and black hair unique to his people. He is in his mid-twenties with an athletic build and short cut hair. He is treated well in his living quarters in the heart of Cuanmiztli. His performance on the daraxi field made him an instant celebrity, combined with his unusual appearance. He still plays at least one game a month, on a team hand-picked by Tlotoxl. His new team is filled with the best daraxi players in the Tiger Clans and has yet even to be challenged by other teams. But Zafhir lives in a gilded cage. He has all the food and drink he wishes, and has slaves wait on his every need. He knows that one day the High Priest will tire of him and will end up on the altar. Every day he looks for a



way to escape, but in the middle of a foreign jungle, thousands of miles from home, his situation looks dire.

#### **Turtle Clan NPCs**

##### **Chief Tyee Gold Hands**

The success of the Turtle Clan can be directly attributed to its leadership. The hashaki take electing a new chief quite seriously, and those that do not show the ability to lead are quickly replaced. Because of the care taken in selecting a leader, that is rarely an issue. Chief Tyee Gold Hands was chosen because of his uncanny grasp of outlander culture. His election reflected on the clan's increased focus on dealing with those outside its borders, but Tyee has proven more than capable in his position. He has allowed each of the tribes to function in their way, respecting all their customs and appeasing them when he can. His diplomatic handling of the Sea Lion tribe, by arming them with weapons made following ancient tradition from the rare Ironwood trees of Alfheim, showed to all the tribes he could merge the old and the new ways into his governing style.

Tyee is young for a chief, just over thirty years old. He has yet to grey, though he does have a nasty scar on



his temple from a run-in with a bear a decade ago. He makes no effort to hide it, and women find it adds to his appearance. He is known for his intelligence and has a habit of fidgeting while he talks to himself over minor details he's thinking about. His prized possession is a book given to him by the head of the merchant guild House Toney; the book is almost filled with notes on tribal issues he's had to deal with. A magic pen sold to him by Minrothad merchant captain is always in his hand, never running out of ink. Tyee's entire life is based around keeping the Turtle Clan running smoothly. However, the very hashaki that elected him are starting to worry about his health as he's seen as working a little too hard. There is talk of forcing him to take a vacation and possibly finding a wife, so he doesn't kill himself from exhaustion while negotiating another trade deal.

##### **Kusinet Blue Lung**

The chief of the Turtle Clan might be Tyee Gold Hands, but on Whale Bone Island, the only authority recognized is Kusinet Blue Lung. He runs the largest whaling station on the island, and is possibly the most experienced





whaler in the entire clan. Age has slowed his body, but not his mind. He runs the island like his personal kingdom, and when he gives an order, it will get done. Kasinet has forgotten more about whaling than most of the sailors on the island will ever know. He doesn't speak with the voice of experience; he bellows with it. He trains new sailors harshly, and he prepares them well. No one goes on a whaling expedition in the Turtle Clan until Kusinet says they are ready.

The sea has not been kind to Kusinet's body. His face is cracked from exposure to saltwater, his hair is bleached blonde from the spray. He walks with a pronounced gait from decades spent in a canoe. His mind is still sharp, however, and that is he is considered a national treasure. No matter the tribe, they all send their youths that wish to hunt the whales to learn from Kusinet. He is nothing but practical, ignoring the Old Ways if they put anyone in danger. Because of the threat from the Island of Spirits, he has silvered spears scattered across the island in the case of elemental creatures. Even the Ierendi who frequent the island has started to

bring their children to Kusinet to learn from him. Kusinet's children are long since grown, and his grandchildren are already at sea. Each generation that comes to him for training are his new children.

#### **Jann Dru**

Kin Tsidiidaatsohi represents the future of the Turtle Clan, not only has it opened itself up to the outlanders, it is the only tribe to send its ships to other ports to trade. The tribe has begun to embrace the outsiders' ways, even going so far as naming themselves using the common trade tongue to make it easier for foreigners to understand the tribe's complicated language. Jann Dru personifies her clans' embracing of the new ways. She is one of the most successful upcoming merchants, well known in the ports of Darokin, Minrothad, Sind, and Ierendi. Soon she intends to buy a sailing ship from one of the island nations and increase her reach to further lands.

Jann is a typical member of her tribe, dressed in the finest clothes Sind and Ierendi sells. She is in her late twenties, but already wealthy from her business dealings. She is fluent in the common tongue, as well as

Ierendi, Minroth, and Sind. She is in negotiations with another merchant family back in her home city for an arranged marriage to increase her influence and wealth. She intends to expand her business to foreign shores and become the first Atruaghin to bring their goods across the continent.

#### **Tahoma**

One of the cruelest traditions the Turtle Clan still practices is reducing unadopted orphans to noshaki, slaves to the clan. The practice is being abandoned as the tribe increases its contact with outside nations, but it is still a fact in all the tribes. Tahoma is one such case. A native of Kin Tsidiidaatsohi, her parents were killed in a particularly brutal Tiger Clan raid. Her family was never large, so she had no surviving relatives to take her in. She was reduced to noshaki status and made a ward of the tribe. She was never given her tribal name and was forbidden from leaving the tribe or taking a husband. She was required to perform menial tasks for the city, from repairing clothes to babysitting children. The tribe was kind to her, but she had no status by law.





**Da-Ka-Xeen**



**Nani**  
The Black & White



**Indigo Jack Callahan**  
&  
**Dama Spiderbane**

Tahoma is a teenage Atruaghin girl, timid in nature but well-educated on the numerous lessons she was given from the various families she worked for. She listened to the innumerable merchants that came to visit her tribe, hanging on their stories of distant lands and exotic creatures. She learned snippets of their language from the traders and even taught herself to read from a book given to her by an old Darokinian merchant prince. Her fate is looking up, though, as the tribe starts to abandon its traditions. The old merchant prince has agreed to take her on as an apprentice. She will be taught a trade and live a life of her choosing. Tahoma's life is about to change forever, thanks to a tribe eschewing tradition for mercy.

#### **Da-Ka-Xeen**

Not all the Turtle Clan are merchants and whalers; for the Sea Lion tribe, they are warriors first. With the Tiger Clan a constant threat, the tribe has to be ever vigilant. At the forefront of the tribe's braves stands Da-Ka-Xeen. He follows the Old Ways still, fighting the brutish Tiger braves with weapons carved of wood

and stone. He has turned away outlanders who have tried to buy his loyalty with weapons of steel. He still pays homage to both Atruaghin and Turtlerider in his prayers. He even refuses to speak the common tongue, preferring the dialect of his ancestors.

An imposing figure at only 21 years old, Da-Ka-Xeen is a tall and wiry youth yet well-muscled. He ritually shaves his head and is adorned with war paint when he is ready for battle. He has already killed over a dozen of the Tiger Clan in combat, with several scars to show for it. He is armed with two war clubs carved from ironwood, a rare wood almost as hard as iron. They were made from trees purchased from Darokin by the High Chief, prepared to the exact specifications laid out by the tribe. Da-Ka-Xeen is always alert for danger, but lately, he has seen fleeting glancing of a strange woman running through the forest. With skin the color of ivory and jet black hair, she dresses in odd brightly colored clothing and seems to be beckoning him to follow her. Da-Ka-Xeen knows of the nūñnē'hī, and while they are said to be the eternal

friend of the Turtle Clan, they are capricious at best. The young brave's sense of duty so far has bested his curiosity about the fey creature.

#### **The Lighthouse Expedition NPCs**

##### **Nani the Black and White**

The catalyst behind the Palace Expedition, Nani the Black and White has led a life guided by curiosity and adventure. Her accidental trip on the World Conveyor brought her to the Hollow World, where she came across the Light House after decades of misadventures. Her wild tales of the world above was enough to have the organization risk sending the expedition to the surface, having to sneak through Azcan territory to do so. Nani's formidable illusions allowed them to pass unscathed until the Hollow Worlders reached the surface. Now she serves as the unofficial liaison between the expedition and the nūñnē'hī, gladly telling them what they are going to face in other nations, even though her past adventures bias her versions.

Nani's appearance is unusual even among her own people. Her skin is ivory white, while her hair, eyes, and



lips are black as coal. She colors her skin with cosmetics to appear more human-like. She continues the sidhe tradition of dressing garishly, with bizarre and brightly colored clothing. No one is even sure where she got acquired them. Her love of exploration hasn't diminished at all in her centuries of living in her current form. She wants nothing else to return to the Hollow World and see what else it has to offer her. Her personality is infectious, her natural optimism, and her sense of wonder spreading to other members of the expedition.

### **Indigo Jack Callahan**

When the Light House selected an expedition leader, they chose a most unlikely source. Jack Callahan, better known as Indigo Jack because of his heavy coat, was once a member of the Merry Pirates until he overcame the effects of the Spell of Preservation. Callahan's memories of the Savage Coast returned to him, and he volunteered to return to the surface world when asked. His remarkable talent with logistics, gained from decades at sea, has helped keep the expedition well stocked and prepared. He would like to return to the land of his birth, but not until the Red Curse is somehow lifted.

Indigo Jack is known for his imposing features, standing a head taller than most men. His hair and beard are a light brown, and now graying at the temples. He sports a few scars from his days of pirating, but nothing disfiguring. His more recognizable trait is the deep indigo coat he wears. He also sports a brace of pistols from his pirating days. He's secretly acquired a small amount of smoke powder from an expedition that he treasures like a magical artifact. He is well-liked by

the expedition, being both a father figure and a competent leader. He is gregarious but can be stern if his authority is challenged. The expedition has to rely on their abilities to survive. He does not tolerate suggestions that would waste precious resources.

### **Darna Spiderbane**

When asked to imagine a great warrior, few people envision a woman that is dwarfed by halflings. Such is the case of Darna, who serves as Callahan's right-hand woman and the enforcer of his will. Darna is a kubitt, a magical creation of Alphatia that was relocated to the Hollow World to save them from extinction. She is small but possesses a fierce temperament; she has taken down creatures several times her size with her natural climbing ability and jagged blade. Her assistant is Garm, a loyal and rather intelligent for his kind garl. Garm transports the diminutive Darna everywhere she needs to go, and his bulk is often enough to scare off any threats to his friend.

Darna is a stern-looking woman, just having reached the age of thirty, something few of her race ever achieves. She keeps her hair fashioned in dreadlocks and wears war paint even when she isn't expecting trouble. She was born in the Light House after her mother had discovered it decades ago. She has kept her race's ferocity, tempered by the education the Light House scholars provided her. She takes her position seriously, personally confronting any threats that might approach the expedition. On rare occasions when Callahan is away, Darna is left in command. She does follow his instructions precisely to the letter.

### **Annathressnewlin**

Annathressnewlin, Anna to some of her friends, Thress to her coworkers, and Lin to people she has just met, is the expedition's archivist. She is the first Blacklore elf to stand under the yellow sun of the surface in thousands of years; a fact completely lost on her. She records and describes every item brought to the palace, sending on her work to the Light House weekly. Anna works quickly and accurately, spending the rest of her time lounging around. She is only slightly less decadent than the rest of her kin but does love her creature comforts. She has a bad habit of holding on to the more luxurious items returned for a while before finally sending them on. This is a habit that has gotten her in trouble with Callahan more than once.

As typical of her people, Anna is easy to find in a crowd. Her hair color continually changes, currently spiked up, and colored light pink. Her clothing is loud and ugly, covered in asymmetrical patterns when she even bothers to wear clothes. It has been said Anna's fashion sense makes Nani look puritanical. The elf's personality is one of complete immersion. Whatever she does, she goes all in; when she works, she ignores everything but her current project. Anna came to the Light House when Nani discovered the Blacklore Elves. The elf found the tales of the land above far more exciting than her stagnant society. Now that she's on the surface, she wants to see what it has to offer. She as asked to embark on a mission to Callahan several times, but he has always turned her down. He knows if he gives her permission to leave, that will be the last anyone will ever see of her.





### Wally

The massive beastman known only as Wally was originally only brought on the expedition because of his strength and endurance. However, he revealed surprising agility and intelligence. In particular, Callahan was impressed by the beastman's ability to plan the loads being sent back to the Hollow World. Space is limited in the World Conveyor, and the elevator takes a full day to return, making getting as much as possible in each load critical. Wally was once left alone with the items about to be shipped down. He took it upon himself to load the elevator car with the relics about to be transferred. When Callahan returned, Wally had managed to load the car so well they had space left over. Callahan was so impressed discovering Wally's superior spatial awareness he promoted the beastman to loadmaster immediately.

All beastmen have a unique appearance, and Wally is no exception. He stands slightly over 8 feet tall, with gray skin and short black hair. His most prominent

feature is a pair of foot-long tusks, which he uses when eating. As part of his unique biology, he gains very little sustenance from plants, making him almost wholly a carnivore. His diet requirements require the hunting parties to bring down larger game, which they then cure and smoke the meat so he can eat it later. This puts a strain on the expedition's supplies, but Callahan accepts it to keep one of his best workers in the mission. Wally's relations with the rest of the expedition are cordial. He is friendly to everyone but not close to anyone. He is starting to appreciate the attention his talents and his experience are gaining him.

### Nūñnē'hī NPCs

#### Chief Haw-Haw the Diagonal

The sidhe that calls himself Haw-Haw the Diagonal loves all aspects of Atruaghin culture, so much that he modeled his kingdom after the neighboring humans. He constantly hosts events based on all the clans, especially their feasts and traditions. He has ruled the nūñnē'hī for over a thousand years and has guided them to help the Atruaghin during their

troubles. Even after the creation of the Great Plateau, he had the nūñnē'hī guide the Atruaghin, using their magic to stay in touch with even the distant Horse and Bear Clans.

Chief Haw-Haw resembles a typical sidhe with fair skin, brown hair, and bright purple eyes. The chief emulates the look of his beloved Atruaghin by painting his face bright red. He also applies cosmetics to try to look like the Elk Clan members. He also copies their clothing style, wearing buckskins and feathers in his hair. In the manner of the sidhe, he dyes his clothes bright colors, preferring aquamarine and burgundy clothing. He doesn't realize how foolish he looks to the mortals he meets. He is considered strange even by sidhe standards, inviting the Tiger Clan chief for tea the day after he orders the slaughter of one of the Tiger armies. He laughs at random, finds most things funny, and tries to be everyone's friend. No one knows why he's called the Diagonal, and he never gives the same explanation twice.





### Red Oak Cloud Hat

Centuries ago, the Tiger Clan turned upon on their people, slaughtering several tribes of the Turtle Clan, and forever changing the name of the jungle, they lived into the Forest of Death. One creature was there for the slaughter, and he has never forgiven them. Massive by even the standards of his people, the treant named Red Oak Cloud Hat had devoted his long life to avenging the deaths of a tribe that he had befriended when he was just a sapling. He resides at the border of the nūnnē'hī, and Tiger Clan lands, always alert for the hated Tiger braves. To the Turtle Clan, he is a legend, their eternal protector who stands between them and the Tiger Clan. His name among the Tiger Clan is a curse; he has slaughtered them by the hundred., For them to enter into the Singing Forest is to court his ire.

Red Oak towers over other treants, being so old he can't even remember the time of his birth. He is now over a hundred feet tall, with entire flocks

of birds flying around the tops of his branches. When angered, his voice can be heard for almost a mile. Red Oak worries that his rage will consume him, he has been fighting so long than he can't remember the faces of those he is avenging. With the arrival of the Light House expedition, he has found a new reason for living. The expedition is filled with new faces filled with hope and wonder, the same as the lost tribe centuries back. Now his vigil protects the newcomers, giving the old treant a new purpose.

### Wi-No-Na the Raven Queen

Among the fey, the sidhe have ruled since the beginning of time. Only a few of the fairy races are outside the laws of the fey court, and the most powerful are the forwyn oedran. Wi-No-Na is one such creature, a creature of immense power that has lived in the region since before Blackmoor blew itself off the map. She serves as an adviser to Chief Haw-Haw, more to keep his chaotic nature in check than guiding his actions. Like all her kind, Wi-No-Na

is a master of time, able to advance and reverse it almost at will. She can see both the past and present, knows all possible destinies and deeds of anyone she encounters. Seeking out her council is considered risky because she only speaks the truth. Time means nothing to Wi-No-Na; she can appear at any age. She tends to appear as a doe-eyed young woman, but will also test the qualities of strangers by posing as a young girl or ancient crone. She earned the name the Raven Queen because of her jet black hair, she is seen as a great spirit among the Atruaghin. She has witnessed the founding of the Thyatian Empire, the rise of the Great Plateau, and the fall of Taymora. No one knows her true name; she uses whatever name the mortals bestow on her; hundreds have known her throughout the millennia. She has always found mortals amusing; their fleeting lives a source of amusement for her. In exchange for the entertainment they provide, she offers her knowledge to any that would dare ask.



### Johnny Happy Face

The nūññē'hī have taken up a policy of infiltrating the Tiger Clan with magical creations called changelings, then using the changelings to spy on the clan's intentions and if possible change the clan's aggressive nature towards everyone. Sidhe sneak into the Tiger villages and replace infants with changelings and return with the child where they raise it. Johnny Happy Face is one of those children. He has grown up in the Eternal Pow-Wow since infancy; he is one of the fey for all he knows. They treat him as one of their own but have a terrible habit of allowing him his every whim. He doesn't know of the outside world, but he hears rumors of what it's like. He is not quite an adult yet, and he is hoping to explore the surrounding lands. Then he is in for the shock of his life.

Johnny Happy Face has not missed any meals; he is a heavy set Atruaghin teenager who dresses in the bright Sidhe style imitation of Atruaghin clothing. He spends his time dancing and playing the drums in the Eternal Pow-Wow because that's what he was taught to do. He knows almost nothing of how to take care of himself. He's been treated as a child his entire life by the nūññē'hī. He is close to the other humans replaced by changelings, but they are no more aware of their true natures than he is. Since the nūññē'hī took him from his parents, he has been fed, clothed, and allowed to do what he wanted. Now that he's becoming an adult, he wants to know if there is life outside the grand festival he has attended every day since he can remember. Now, as he matures, the desire to explore is intensifying.

### Handsome William

The largest problem facing all of the

Atruaghin Clans is the simple fact they have become strangers to each other. The isolation caused by the Great Plateau has made strangers of the Turtle Clan, and outsiders' lure has driven a rift between the Bear Clan and the others nearby. The hsiao called Handsome William does his best to try to smooth out the rifts that threatening to tear the clans apart. He also has discovered the Lighthouse Expedition and has established relations with them. William also tries to provide advice to Chief Haw-Haw when the nūññē'hī listens to him. His best friend in all of the region is the Owl Tribe librarian Unaduti Skunk Hair, who spends hours with the hsiao catching up on gossip.

Handsome William is a typical hsiao, resembling a huge horned owl standing 4 feet tall. He sports a leather vest specially made for him by several women in the Horse Clan. In the vest, he has numerous tools given to him in appreciation for couriering messages between the clans. His prized possession is a pair of glasses crafted for him by the gnomes of Serraine, allowing him to read any print no matter how small. William is one of the only creatures that is welcome by all members of the Confederation, as well as the expedition and nūññē'hī. William is a cleric like most hsiao, following the Immortal Ka. The hsiao is trying his best to save the fragmenting culture, or at least make sure that if the Atruaghin people go their own way, they at least preserve some of the Old Ways.

### Atruaghin Magic Items

**Armor of Feathers:** A common item among the Tiger Clan, this enchanted shirt is covered with brightly covered feathers taken from birds in the Forest of Death. It acts as scale mail

when worn, but only weighs 3 lbs. The armor falls apart if the wearer is slain.

**Armor of the Ghost Bear:** The name is misleading, as the armor is just a chest piece made of animal bones. When worn, the character is under the effects of a protection from normal missiles spell. The armor provides no AC bonus.

**Armor of the Old Ways:** This +1 leather armor is sacred to the Atruaghin, any attack with a metal weapon against the wearer suffers a -4 penalty to hit.

**Bear Claw Chisel:** This tool of the Bear Clan is in great demand by sculptors of the known world. When touched by the chisel, stone becomes incredibly malleable with the texture of warm clay, allowing the stone to be shaped in a fraction of the time typically required.

**Blanket of Comfort:** Created by the Bear Clan, these blankets are treasured by adventurers everywhere. When the blanket is slept on outside, the sleeper gets a full night's rest, and is unharmed or bothered no matter how cold or hot it gets. It also keeps the sleeper dry if it rains.

**Blowgun of the Serpent:** A large blowgun that requires two hands to use properly, this blowgun acts as a +2 weapon with the ability to poison the darts by holding the blowgun in a specific way. Each time a dart is poisoned, a charge is used, the blowgun typically is found with 3d10 charges. The poisons are toxin (save vs. poison or take an additional 2d10 damage), sleep (save vs. poison for fall under the effects of a sleep spell for 10 minutes), or hold (save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 5 minutes.)

**Bridle of Charming:** Fitted for a horse but can be altered to fit any





four-legged animal, when placed over the animal's face, the creature is placed under the effect of a charm animal spell. Magical creatures can make a saving throw against spells to ignore the effect. The effect lasts until the bridle is removed. This item, as expected, is very popular with the Horse Clan raiders.

**Chalice of Animation:** An evil item used by the Tiger Clan clerics, the chalice, when filled with human blood, can animate a corpse as a zombie for one turn. The blood is poured down the throat of the corpse, who reanimates under the complete control of the chalice's user for one hour. The chalice requires a pint of human blood to function. A corpse can be reanimated only once with the chalice.

**Club of the Old Ways:** Another relic of the Atruaghin, this +1 club acts as a +4 club when attacking creatures wearing metal armor.

**Coup Stick:** A common magic item found among the Horse Clan braves, the coup stick acts as a +1 club, though it only does subdual damage. If the bearer can successfully hit five different intelligent creature in combat, he gains the effects of a bless spell for 1 day.

**Decanter of Watering:** An Elk Clan shamani made this clay jar, it has a spout for watering plants. When the decanter is activated with a command word, and a fruit or vegetable bearing plant is watered, in one hour, the plant grows and produces fruit and vegetables enough to feed four people. The decanter has 4d10 charges, after which it shatters into useless pieces of hardened clay.

**Dust of Rust:** A dry clay powder crushed into a ball, this magic item is favorite among the dogmatic Elk Clan. When thrown if the ball hits a target with metal armor or weapons, the victim has to save vs. Dragon Breath or have the weapon and armor reduced to rust. Magical weapons or armor are not affected by the powder.

**Dreamcatcher:** This common item consists of a circular wooden frame with a thread pattern inside the circle. When this item is in a room, anyone in the room cannot have nightmares and are immune to any magical spells or effects that target them specifically while they are sleeping.

**Drum of the Shamani.** This is a large drum that can be played by up to five drummers at once. If the

drum is located in a village, once per day, the drummers can send out a telepathic message to all members of the tribe in a radius equal to one mile per drummer. The message has to be 25 words or less, but all tribal members understand the message. It is typically used to send out warnings of attack or important events like deaths.

**Eyes of Mahmatti:** A simple cloth with the head of an elk embroidered in gold fabric. When placed over the face of a creature, the fabric acts as a true seeing spell, though the cloth is useless in combat as nothing is holding it in place- covering any part of the cloth with a hat or similar causes the magic to cease working.

**Ghost Arrows:** When these +2 arrows hit a spirit, it must make a save vs. spells or be banished back to the spirit world exactly as if it was affected by a dispel evil spell.

**Harpoon of Returning:** This +2 spear has double the thrown range and always returns to the thrower's hand. If the harpoon kills an animal weighing 100 lbs or less, it will drag the animal back with it. Creatures heavier than 100 lbs will not be pulled back.



**Huatl Statues:** These carved pillars show horrific images of demons and evil spirits on all four sides of the statue. The effect of the Huatl is that no undead can come within 100 feet of it, something that is quite important in the Forest of Death. They surround most Tiger Clan villages. They can be moved, but on average, they weigh 400 lbs each.

**Macuahuitl of Sacrifice:** This Tiger Clan weapon is a club with shards of obsidian at acts as a +1 long sword. On a hit, the target has to pass a poison saving throw or suffer bleeding. At the start of each round, the target takes 1d4 damage.

This ends after 10 rounds or until a healing spell is cast on the target.

**Magic Paints:** A set of blessed pigments created by a Horse Clan shamani. The paints can create several effects, applying paint to the face of a character takes one round. A jar of paint contains 1d4+1 uses of paint. Magic paints last for one hour.

**Champion:** All the attacks by the wearer are considered magic weapons to hit monsters with immunity to normal weapons.

**Courage:** The wearer is immune to fear.

**Horsemanship:** The wearer cannot be dismounted and gets a +4 bonus to all Horse Riding skill checks.

**Hunting:** The wearer is undetectable to animals until the character attacks, which ends the effect.

**Survivor:** The wearer regenerates 1hp a round. This effect ends if the wearer takes any fire damage.

**Medicine Pouch:** A small pouch containing various herbs and medicines found on the plateau, when appropriately used, the pouch greatly increases natural healing. When a pouch is used on a wounded

character, the character heals 1d6 wounds after an 8-hour rest. If a healing skill check is passed when the pouch is used, another 1d6 wounds are healed. A medicine pouch has 2d20 charges.

**Nahau Juice:** Made from a rare plant in the Forest of Death, the juice that comes from the berry has a magical effect that, when drunk, removes any lost levels from energy drain effects or attacks. A single dose can be made from the plant, which destroys the plant in the process.

**Pipe of Peace:** Resembling a regular peace pipe, when activated and the pipe is smoked the character's charisma is increased to 18 for one hour. This effect ends if the character attacks or harms another creature. A pipe of peace has 1d10 charges when found.

**Spirit Shield:** This rare magic item is a wooden frame with a leather skin stretched across it. The leather has mystical symbols painted in elaborate patterns. Against attacks from spirits, the wearer of the shield's Armor Class is always 0, unless already better. Any class can use the spirit shield; the item provides no other adjustment to armor class like a regular shield.

**Sands of Healing:** A magic item created by the Bear Clan shamani, the sand is used to create an elaborate painting of someone afflicted with a disease, curse, or physical ailment. The ceremony takes a week if interrupted, the ritual fails, and the sand is wasted. If successful, the target is affected by a cureall spell, though all the possible cures of the spell are invoked, rather than just a single effect.

**Seeds of Plenty:** One of the secret reasons behind the Elk Clan's agricultural mastery, these magic

seeds are planted alongside the regular crops. The enchanted crops cannot be harmed by blights, drought, or parasites and produce double the amount of crops as normal at harvest.

**Tahkati's Horsebow:** This +3 shortbow was enchanted to help the tribe hunt larger game. When this bow hits an animal, all allies within 100 feet of the bow gain +4 to hit and damage the creature until the start of the next round.

**Vine of Diving:** A 50' long coiled vine, when tied to an anchor at the top of a cliff, pit or other straight drop and the ankle of a willing character, the vine will extend to reach the bottom of the descent, bringing the wearer to a sudden but safe stop at the bottom. This acts as the spell feather fall, though with much more dramatic results. The vine detached from the anchor at the top by tugging on the vine and using a command word.

**Wampari:** A ceremonial belt made by the Elk Clan, each belt is made specifically for a specific person. A belt provides a +1 to an ability determined at the creation of the wampari (to a maximum of 18). If the wampari is worn by anyone other than the person it was created for, it counts as a cursed item that reduces the ability by 1 instead. The cursed wampari may be removed with a remove curse spell. If the owner dies, a wampari may be transferred to a new owner by an Elk Clan shamani casting a sanctify spell.

**Whale Totem Necklace.** A common and treasured item among the Turtle Clan, this simple charm prevents its wearer from drowning. The wearer can't breathe water, but will always rise to the surface if submerged. This does make diving impossible.



## Adventure Hooks

### Basic:

A caravan from Darokin is bringing medicine to stop an epidemic from spreading in the Elk Clan. However, the cure is stolen by Horse Clan raiders; it's up to the party to retrieve the medicine without shedding blood.

Someone has poisoned a tobacco crop leading to several people getting sick. The players are tasked to find out who did it and to find the antidote to the poison. The clock is ticking because of an upcoming festival.

A wounded fur trapper is brought to a Bear Clan village for healing and becomes obsessed with finding out the secret medicines of the clan. He kidnaps a young shamani and takes her back to his shack. The party is sent to retrieve her and to convince the trappers to leave the area, by any means necessary.

### Expert:

The young daughter of a powerful Turtle merchant has vanished, seemingly snatched up by the Nūñnē'hī. The party has to return her, only to discover she accidentally discovered the Palace Expedition. While she is being treated kindly, she's also being interrogated about all aspects of Atruaghin life. The party has to come up with a diplomatic solution and decide whether to keep the expedition's secret safe.

Someone has attempted to sabotage the World Elevator. No one was harmed, but Darokin is threatening to move in its troops. The culprits could be any number of groups, including rival guilds, disgruntled Bear Clan members, angry Elk Clan braves, ambitious Tiger Clan warriors, or even human error.

Several tribes are in disarray when their apparent leadership is seen violating numerous laws openly. The party has to track down the real culprits, a pack of doppelgangers that snuck into the plateau on the World Elevator.

### Companion:

After accidentally committing a grave insult, a member of the Bear Clan and friend of the PC's has been declared ahtkasti and banished to the plateau. After the banishment, the tribal chief dies and a small window to clear their friend's name and restore the honor that was lost.

A phantom ship mysterious appears from the fog of the Island of Spirits. The undead aboard pillage several whaling stations and head towards the coastline of the Turtle Clan. The party has to intercept the ghostly ship, discover its origins, and find a way to destroy it.

### Master:

Atruaghin has seen the future of his people as many begin to drift away from his influence. He has decided to preserve the culture that he created for them to convince the Immortal Ka to transport all the clans to the Hollow World. It is up to the players to find a way to persuade Atruaghin to let the clans stay and determine their fate.

Tlotoxl is nearing completion on the Mouth of Azcan. The players have to unite not only the clans but the Nūñnē'hī and nearby Darokin, Sind and Ierendi as well if they have any chance of driving back the Azcan army and destroying the artifact before the surrounding areas are overwhelmed.

Emperor Thincol has decided to reverse the slow retreat of the Thyatian Empire and dispatches several legions to invade the Tiger

Clan. The Tiger Clan is fierce, but no match for the superior Thyatian legions. The clans are terrified that the legions won't just stop with the Tiger Clan. The party has to unite the clans and get assistance from any allied nations to convince the Thyatians to abandon their plans of occupation after they sack the Tiger Clan capitol.

## Atruaghin Bestiary

### Ayanidine

AC: 4

Hit Dice: 9\* (L)

Move: 120' (40')

Attack: 1 Weapon or Headbutt

Damage: 3d6

Number Appearing: 1 (2d6)

Save As: F9

Morale: 9

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 8

Alignment: Neutral

XP Value: 1100

Monster Type: Giant Humanoid (Rare)

One of the most common animal spirits found on the Atruaghin plateau, ayanidine resemble furry giants with the heads and hooves of bison. They are known for their dim nature and have been tricked by clever Atruaghin into doing all sorts of pranks. The ayanidine protect the massive herds of buffalo. The Horse Clan has to find ways to distract the ayanidine before they can hunt a protected herd. Ayanidine will always be found around 10-100 bison at all times.

Ayanidine prefer wide-open plains. They have never approached a city or other inhabited area. One of their duties is to keep the bison away from the plateau's edge, something they take very seriously. They are often approached by shamani for help. If a





shamani is persuasive enough; they can enlist the aid of a few ayanidine. If the shamani is trying to protect the bison herds from magical predators like griffons or dragons, the ayanidine will almost always agree to help.

When enraged, they become highly dangerous. If an ayanidine moves their full movement before attacking, they can head butt their enemy. A large or smaller creature, when hit in this way, must pass a Death Saving throw or be knocked down.

Ayanidine can also throw boulders if necessary. Boulders deal 3d6 points of damage and can be thrown 90 feet.

### **Chindi Spirit**

AC: 5

Hit Dice: 6\*\*\* (M)

Move: 120' (40')

Attack: 2 Claws

Damage: 1d8/1d8

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F6

Morale: 12

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 10

Alignment: Lawful

XP Value: 750

### **Monster Type: Undead (Very Rare)**

A chindi spirit is a powerful undead created when a devout follower of the Old Ways is murdered by an Atruaghin who has abandoned the teachings of Atruaghin. With the deceased's last breath, they expel a spirit of vengeance the Atruaghin call a chindi, who obsessively seeks out their killer to obtain justice. The chindi is singularly minded, pursuing their killer to the exclusion of all else. The Atruaghin view a chindi with fear and respect, for while they are an undead monster, they only try to harm their murderer.

A chindi resembles a silhouette of the deceased surrounded by a dirt devil that is constantly swirling around them. They know the name of their murderer and repeat it constantly when pursuing their prey. A chindi knows the direction of their prey but not the exact location. They always recognize their killer, no matter if their killer is in disguise or even invisible. A chindi is not an evil creature, nor are they good. They behave predictably and do not kill for any reason other than revenge.

A cleric can turn a chindi as a special undead unless the cleric is the

chindi's killer. A chindi can only be hurt by non-metal weapons. Any attack by their killer automatically does the least damage possible. A chindi is immune to any spells or magical attacks from their killer. A chindi will not attack any creature other than their killer unless the chindi is attacked first, then they will fight back. If the attacker flees, the chindi will not follow. If the chindi is killed by someone other than their murderer, the chindi returns to their unlife in 1d6 days.

If a chindi's murderer confesses to a shamani and agrees to accept punishment, a ceremony spell can be cast that will kill the chindi. Killing the murderer with non-metal weapons will put the chindi down, but if the murderer is killed with magic or metal weapons, the chindi will turn upon the person that stole their vengeance. A shamani ceremony spell cast on the target will put the chindi to rest.







#### Deer Woman

AC: 6

Hit Dice: 3\*\* (M)

Move: 120' (40')

Attack: 1 Knife

Damage: 1d4

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: M3

Morale: 7

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 15

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 65

Monster Type: Humanoid (Rare)

Tales of deer women differ in each telling. To some, a deer woman is a temptress luring the innocent to their dooms; to others, she is a blessing sent by the Immortals. In reality, she is something far worse. Deer women are Unseelie fey, eldritch creatures that resemble young attractive Atruaghin women except for their legs, which resemble that of deer. They like to seduce young Atruaghin men and trick them into committing horrible crimes, then arrange their deaths.

Deer women play off the emotions of the vulnerable, all for their sadistic pleasure. They are a constant threat. Although they aren't numerous, they are effective in their tactics. They stalk stragglers near Atruaghin villages, trying to seduce men and convince them to perform acts of chaos against other Atruaghin. Deer women use their beauty and charm to persuade men to perform the actions of their own free will. Charmed victims provide no sport for a deer woman.

Deer women only prey on men. Children detect their evil nature, and women find them suspicious. Because the deer women's legs give them away, they always wear long dresses in traditional Elk Clan style. Deer women are treated as having a Charisma of 18 against men, with a persuasion skill of 20. Their charisma drops to 5 against women and children. They are treated as enchanted creatures for protection from evil and similar spells. They cannot be hurt except with magic or obsidian weapons.

Deer women lose their immunity if their legs are exposed. If a man fails to resist a deer woman's persuasion check, he is treated as charmed until her death, or he sees her legs.

#### Forwyn Oedran

AC: -4

Hit Dice: 24\*\*\*\* (M)

Move: 240' (80')

Attack: 1 Slap or Spell

Damage: 1d4 + Aging

Number Appearing 1 (1)

Save As: M24

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: H

Intelligence: 18

Alignment: Neutral

XP Value: 11,500

Monster Type: Humanoid (Very Rare)

One of the rarest of all the fey, the Forwyn Oedran are the keepers of time. They are known by many names. The Atruaghin call them the Sani Hoya Asdzaa, the wise old women. They are most commonly known by the title Crone of Ages, and they are one of the most feared and sought after of all the fey creatures. They always appear as women but can change their age at will. They can be of any age from a young child to an old crone. They can see into the past or future of any creature they see, making them some of the intelligent individuals in the Known World.

Forwyn Oedran are very secretive creatures. They avoid each other's company because of their ability to

see each other's history gives them headaches. Each settles on a territory and records what she sees as the years go by. They are frequently approached by mortals for both their knowledge and their ability to restore youth. But they can just as easily steal youth, or give a prediction the petitioner doesn't want to hear.

In combat Forwyn Oedran are formidable. They can cast haste, true sight, and mirror image at will. Three times a day, they can cast time stop, inflict curse and disintegrate. If they hit





with a melee attack, their victim must save against spells or be aged 25% of their race's maximum age limit. A human would age 30 years per hit, and an elf would age 238 years. Forwyn Oedran can reverse the aging if forced and restore an equal number of years to someone as a reward. While the Forwyn Oedran can reverse any aging they have caused, they can only give extra years to a creature once. To gain additional years, someone must seek out multiple Forwyn Oedran.

### **Kachina**

AC: 0

Hit Dice: 3\*\*\* (S)

Move: 30' (10')

Attack: 1 Tomahawk

Damage: 1d4 + alignment change

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: D6

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 13

Alignment: Lawful

XP Value: 125

Monster Type: Humanoid (Rare)

Kachina are a race of enigmatic fey creatures unique to the land of the Atruaghin. They serve as secret protectors of the clans, assisting them in times of great need. Kachina appear as one-foot tall children's dolls in the style of the Atruaghin. They cannot speak, but any friendly creature will instantly know what they want. The kachina are especially friendly to children, teaching them how to survive in the harsh lands they live in. It is considered bad luck to harm a kachina.

Kachina prefer to hide rather than fight. They have selective invisibility at will, becoming invisible only to those from whom they wish to hide.



Children are immune to this ability and can always see a kachina, even if it is invisible. Kachina can detect food and water at will and detect water up to 10 feet underground. Kachina are fey creatures and have all the advantages and disadvantages, as explained in Tall Tales of the Wee Folk.

Kachina are a common sight in the Eternal Powwow and are a personal favorite of Chief Haw-Haw. They

serve as a sort of conscience for the nūññē'hī, reminding them they are to help the Atruaghin when possible. The kachina do not like the Tiger Clan, but instead of killing Tiger Clan braves, they prefer to use their magical tomahawk to teach them a lesson. Any non-lawful creature hit by a kachina tomahawk must make a saving throw against spells or become Lawful for 24 hours. The creature cannot violate its new alignment during this time, though a remove curse spell will end the effect.

### **Kimen Kay**

AC: 4

Hit Dice: 3\*\* (M)

Move: 30' (10') 30' swimming

Attack: 2 Claws

Damage: 1d6/1d6 + drowning

Number Appearing: 1-6 (2-12)

Save As: F4

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 13

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 65

Monster Type: Undead (Rare)





Undead created by Turtle Clan members lost at sea without proper ceremonies to help them to the afterlife, Kimen Kay are the bane of the waters near the southern clans. Kimen are ambush killers, only being detected when underwater on a roll of 1. When a kimen attacks, if both the claws hit, it begins to drown its victim. The kimen can inflict 2d10 drowning damage instead of attacking next turn. It can keep drowning until it takes damage.

### **Skinwalker**

AC: 5 (9)

Hit Dice: 6\* (M)

Move: 180' (60')

Attack: 1 Bite

Damage: 2d6

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F6

Morale: 7

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 10

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 175

Monster Type: Monster (Rare)

Skinwalkers are Atruaghin that have been cursed for betraying a close ally. They are changed by the Immortals to reflect their true natures. They appear as normal humans in the daytime, but they have to fight an overwhelming desire to kill those closest to them. Eventually, they succumb to their blood lust and turn into a skinwalker, resembling pale hairless werewolves. They are trapped in that form until they successfully kill their prey.

The change from a human to a skinwalker is insidious. Every skinwalker is a murderer, someone whose treachery has gone unpunished. The curse is Immortal magic and cannot be removed by mortals. The urge to kill those close



to the skinwalker grows greater every day until one night, the desire becomes too great, and the transformation takes place. The skinwalker can only change shape at night and returns to normal form in the daytime. The transformation is automatic. There is nothing the skinwalker can do to prevent the change.

In combat, the skinwalker cannot be harmed except by magical or obsidian weapons. Silver is useless against them, as they are not lycanthropes. They are treated as enchanted creatures for protection from evil and similar spells. They cannot spread their curse. When killed, the skinwalker reverts to its original form. They can be found wherever you find Children of Atruaghin and can come from any clans. When they are going through their transformations, they will flee to the wilderness to avoid detection.

### **Thunderbird**

AC: 2

Hit Dice: 70\*\*\* (L)

Move: 60' (20')

Flying: 240' (80')

Attack: 2 claws/1 bite/spells

Damage: 10d6/10d6/20d6

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F24

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: G

Intelligence: 12

Alignment: Neutral

XP Value: 29,000

Monster Type: Monster (Unique)

The most famous monster in all of the Atruaghin Clans, the thunderbird is a creature so massive it can be seen from parts of Darokin when it manifests. It is an elemental from the quasi elemental plane of lightning and one of the largest elementals ever seen. It appears in the form of a





giant bird comprised entirely of lightning. The thunderbird is almost half a mile from wingtip to wingtip, and its appearance is a religious event among the Atruaghin. It rarely stays on the Prime Material Plane for more than a week, and few creatures or epic adventurers can threaten it.

The thunderbird only crosses into the Prime Material Plane high above the Great Plateau during the worst of the storms to strike Atruaghin lands. It doesn't have any natural enemies. It is not a creature native to the Known World. When it appears, it enters the skies with an earth-shattering roar of thunder. The Atruaghin view the appearance of the thunderbird as a good omen, a sign that Atruaghin is pleased with their current state of affairs.

The thunderbird is immune to electrical damage, mind-affecting spells, poison, and instant death spells. Every hit from the thunderbird also inflicts 2d10 electrical damage. The thunderbird

can cast call lightning, control winds, and control weather at will.

#### **Two Face**

AC: 3

Hit Dice: 8\*\* (M)

Move: 120' (40')

Attack: 2 Claws

Damage: 2d6/2d6

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F8

Morale: 8

Treasure Type: O

Intelligence: 12

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 1750

Monster Type: Humanoid (Very Rare)

Considered one of the most feared of the cursed on the Great Plateau, the abomination known as Two Face, is hated and hunted by all five of the clans. Two Face is created when an Atruaghin kills through deception and isn't caught. The Immortals curse the offender by giving him or her a face on the back of their head,

marking them forever as killers of their kind. For the rest of their life, the creatures hunt their people, luring them away from their village to torture and mutilate them.

The Two Face appears as it did before being cursed, only with a face on the back of its head. This is a dead giveaway to anyone who sees it, so the Two Face will usually wear a cowl to disguise itself. It always approaches its victims as a friendly traveler or someone who requires aid. Once the Two Face has its victim alone, it tears the poor individual to shreds. It makes sure there are no witnesses, so it can continue to terrorize its former people.

Because of its second face, the Two Face cannot be surprised. Anyone who sees the second face must save against paralysis or be paralyzed by fear for one turn. A remove fear or other similar spell ends the effect. They are treated as enchanted creatures for protection from evil and similar spells. The Two Face can only be harmed by magical or obsidian weapons.





### Uktena

AC: 0 or 6

Hit Dice: 5\*\* (M)

Move: 30' (10')

Swim: 90' (30')

Attack: 1 Bite

Damage: 1d10

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F5

Morale: 10 (4)

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 3

Alignment: Neutral

XP Value: 425

Monster Type: Monster (Rare)

Unique to the lakes on the Great Plateau, an uktena is a horned river serpent known for being rather difficult to kill because of the magical gem on its forehead. They are found exclusively in the lakes in Horse Clan territory, where they feed on horses and other animals that come to drink, as well as the occasional unlucky Atruaghin.



The uktena has a deadly poison. On a hit, the victim has to save against poison or die. While the gem is intact on the uktena's forehead, all damage against the uktena does the minimum amount of damage. A fireball that does 5d6 points of damage only does 5 points of damage to the uktena. The gem can be targeted. It's AC is -4, and it has 10 hit points. If the gem is destroyed, the uktena's armor class drops to 6, and it usually flees. A gem will grow back in a month if destroyed. An intact gem can be salvaged from an uktena's body if it is not destroyed. The gem is worth 1d6x1000 gp intact and is highly sought after by wizards for its magical properties.

### Wendigo

AC: 6

Hit Dice: 8\*\* (M)

Move: 120'(40')

Attack: 2 Claws/1 Bite

Damage: 1d8/1d8/2d6

Number Appearing: 1 (1)

Save As: F8

Morale: 10

Treasure Type: N

Intelligence: 11

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 1500

Monster Type: Humanoid (Very Rare)

One of the most feared creatures in Turtle Clan territory, the wendigo, is the result of someone who willingly commits cannibalism. Becoming a wendigo is an Immortal curse that turns the cannibal into a feral creature that is constantly hungry. Wendigo hunger for human flesh but will settle for sasquatch or any humanoid they can catch. Wendigo are solitary creatures and will attack each other on sight, with the victor devouring the loser.

Wendigo resemble scraggly men, covered in coarse brown fur. They have over-sized mouths with needle-like teeth. Their claws tear their victims' limb from limb; then, they eat their prey at their leisure. They prefer to stalk their prey, picking off victims one at a time and gorging themselves after each kill. A wendigo will even eat until it gets sick so that it can keep eating.

Wendigo can only be hurt by magical or obsidian weapons because of their curse. They are treated as enchanted creatures for protection from evil and similar spells. Once per day, a wendigo can cast obscure, ventriloquism, and invisibility. The wendigo can mimic any language it hears, but can only repeat words. It doesn't know the language.





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