



Dark Sun

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO BALIC



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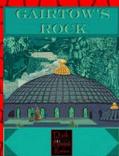
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THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO BALIC

Credits

Designer, Writer, Cover Artist, Interior Artist, Cartographer: Christopher J Moneymaker

Editor: Kelley Bowers



Knoxville, TN

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Life in Balic

Introduction

Welcome to The Player's Guide to Balic, Dark House Rules Games first foray into the Dark Sun setting. This product is intended to be used by Dark Sun players who want to know more about the city-state of Balic, so they can role play a player character who has lived in that city. The Player's Guide to Balic is broken up into four chapters, each with information to help you create a character from Balic. The first chapter "Life in Balic" gives you a brief overview of the city, its people, and their culture. The second chapter, "Around Balic" will introduce you to important locations in the city-state of Balic. Everything from the Megaleneon, the Dictator's palace, to a local bakery. In the third chapter, "Getting Started in Balic" you will be given potential backgrounds for Balican player characters of every class. Finally, the fourth chapter, "New Kits" has information on a new psionicist kit called a Dust Pilot. There is also a new non-weapon proficiency introduced for use with the Dust Pilot in this chapter.

So where are all the stats you ask? This is a product intended for players to use to get a feel for the city-state of Balic. As such it has only what the players need to know for a man

on the street, level of play. The stats for all the NPCs, silt skimmers, and monsters unique to the city-state of Balic will be in our next Dark Sun product, "The City-state of Balic". That is where all the DM level information will be found. Having that behind us you are now ready to pass through the caravan gate into the great and marvelous city-state of Balic. Enjoy its exotic pleasures but beware there are many lurking dangers.

Life in Balic

Balic is the most southerly of all the city-states of the tablelands. Because of its remoteness it has developed unique food, clothing, and culture. No other city-state both relies on and is tormented by the Sea of Silt like Balic. The sea is a source of food and trade as well as marauding giant raiders. Balic sits on some of the most verdant land west of the Ringing Mountains but is perched on the edge of the most barren and deadly terrain on all Athas, the Sea of Silt. The people of Balic live and love, fight and die day in and day out beneath the olive sky of Athas.

The City- Balic is a well ordered, relatively clean, and comfortable city, by Athasian standards. It sits at the tip of a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the estuary of

Life in Balic



the forked tongue. Beyond its high walls the land to the west for nearly twenty miles is fertile and green. Olive and orange orchards cover low rolling hills, while the plains between are filled with fields of wheat, barley, and emmer. Large ranches produce kanks, erdlu, kitsus, goats, and sheep for food skins and beasts of burden. What makes Balic truly unique in the Tyr region is its Silt Skimmer ports. None of the other six cities of the region are built on the shores of the Silt Sea. This makes Balic a major center of trade. Through the silt skimmers that visit the city, it can trade with a number of villages all up and down the coast.

The people of Balic- Balic is home to a little over 28,000 people. Most of whom are human, but all other races are found in the city as well. Elves are a special case and will be discussed in more detail later.

The Sorcerer King- Andropinis is the Sorcerer King, an office referred to as the Dictator in the city-state of Balic. Although Balic has a long tradition of democracy Andropinis always has the last word. He has the power to overturn the results of any election and can make decrees that have the full weight of the law behind them. Unlike some other Sorcerer Monarchs, who go decades without being seen by the people of their

city's, Andropinis takes part in parades in his honor and appears in the imperial box at the arena, on a regular basis. He is born on a heavily guarded litter when he goes on outings through the city. He employs four half-giant litter bearers, and it is joked that the brutes are necessary to carry his bloated body. Andropinis wears a gleaming white tunic to cover his immense girth while he travels his city. On his head rests a wreath of golden laurels, that sparkle in the crimson light of the Athasian sun. Even the Patricians fear being called over to chat with their Dictator. Depending on his mood he is as likely to have someone put to death as showered with riches.

Nobles- The Nobles of Balic are referred to as Patricians. Most of them own farms, orchards, or ranches just west of the city. Much of the city's food is grown by the Nobles, and their lands are so fertile, that in all but the leanest of years, there is plenty left to export to the other city-states of the tablelands. Along with the lands they farm every Patrician family has a large villa in the city. These are all in one district of Balic north of the Criterion. Aside from their wealth, one of the primary privileges the Patricians enjoy is representation in the Chamber of Patricians, a legislative body that writes the laws of the city. The head of each



Life in Balic

Patrician family has the honor of being a member.

Freemen-The free men and women of Balic, run the gamut of the economic scale. There are those that live hand to mouth as beggars or day laborers, who seldom see a ceramic piece, being payed with bread and olive oil. On the other end of the spectrum there are master artisans who are as rich as any Patrician, only being distinguished from the nobility by a lack of title. Freemen have the right to own property, and vote in the elections of the templars who will patrol their neighborhoods. Freeman also have the right to a trial for any crime they are accused of. Although these trials are judged by templars, and a freeman has only himself to present the facts of his case.

Slaves-In general the numerous slaves of Balic are treated better than their counterparts in other cities of the Tyr region. They often work with their masters instead of under them. They even serve in the city militia, just like all other adults in the city. Balican masters are less likely to use a punishment method that causes lasting physical harm, than one that breaks a slave's will to resist without breaking their bodies. Slaves have no rights, and are considered the property of their masters to do with as they will

Elves-While elves are permitted within the city of Balic, they are restricted in many ways that the other races of the tablelands are not. Andropinis distrusts elves, so he has instructed his Templars to only allow two hundred of them in the city at any time. He has also decreed that all Elves must leave Balic by nightfall and may not return until sunrise. Elves are not allowed to become citizens of Balic either. Unless they are overtly elvish in their aspect most half-elves can pass as human and avoid such mistreatment.

Government-The city-state of Balic is a republic, where the authorities of all levels are elected. This is true from the lowest level of templars, all the way up to the Dictator for Life, a position held for the last 700 years, at least, by Andropinis. The official history of the city tells that Andropinis was elected by the Chamber of Patricians to his position for life, they had no way of knowing that he was immortal, because of this the Balican people are often suspicious of the outcomes of some elections. It is suspected that the Dictator rigs elections.

Templars, who do the majority of the day to day administration of the city and are elected to ten-year terms of service. Are just as power hungry as any of the other cities. They are known for exploiting loopholes and taking

Life in Balic



advantage of their broad powers to interpret statutes, to impose their will over anyone unlucky enough to earn their special attention.

All laws in Balic are drafted by the Chamber of Patricians, but must be ratified by the Dictator, so Andropinis is the ultimate authority in Balic. Laws are enforced by the templars and the army. Balic has one of the largest armies in all the tablelands. It numbers ten thousand, most of whom are serving as conscripts for one month terms every tenth month.

Dress- The freemen of the city usually wear a sleeveless tunic that comes down to just above their knees and is bound with a leather belt around the waist. While freewomen don long pleated linen ankle length dresses and a veil over their heads. Both sexes wear sandals or boots, usually made of inix leather. Slaves sometimes are indistinguishable from the free citizens of Balic in the manner of their dress, although many may be given little more than a breach cloth, depending on what their masters deem fit. On normal days Patrician males wear a body length pleated tunic called a chiton, with a short linen cloak called a chlamys. The chlamys are often decorated with printed patterns such as checks stripes or even floral patterns. Patrician women on the other hand wear their chiton bound up by a girdle to give

them a shapelier appearance. Except on the hottest of days they will also drape a shawl over their shoulders to complete the look. On formal occasions, like attending the Chamber of Patricians, Noble men will wear long togas. These are white with a stripe along one hem. The color of the stripe is associated with the family the Patrician belongs to. Amongst men of all economic strata those who have reached middle age, wear pointed beards, while young men go clean shaven.

Food- The diet of a common Balican is rich and varied by the standards of the other city-states, because of the great fertility of their verdant belt the people of Balic enjoy diverse options when it comes to food and drink. Balic's wide network of trading partners only broadens the variety of food that can be found there. A large portion of a common Balican's diet is made up of breads, fruits, cheese, legumes, and the creatures that are fished out of the Sea of Silt. An ubiquitous staple for all the classes is a round loaf of bread called galla. Galla is flat on the top and bottom like a cake, and scored into eight sections, so it can be easily torn apart for serving. Galla can be made from wheat flower or emmer, and is often seasoned with olives, dates, rosemary, cinnamon, or honey. Most



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meals include olive oil in some way or another. Either it is used to fry up meat or vegetables, or it is set out in boles to dip food in. Clean water is hard to come by in a big city like Balic, so wine is the beverage of choice, along with fermented kank nectar. Ale is also available and most often drunk by the poor and slaves. Mead is very expensive, only the Patricians and the wealthiest of commoners can afford it. Like most anywhere on Athas the wealthier one is, the more meat they have in their diets. Slaves almost never get any meat, rarely getting anything more than puls, a type of grain and bean porridge, and some basic galla. The meat freeman eat is more likely than not to be salt cured, unless it is a feast day, in which case they may have fried mutton or goat. In contrast the Patricians have fresh meat daily. They believe good nutrition helps them maintain their superiority over the lower classes.

Feast Days- Balic has several public holidays, most of which celebrate Andropinis and his victories of the past. The biggest of these is the Licartta, commemorating Andropinis' victory over Kalid-Ma and the invading hordes from Kalidnay. The historical scrolls proclaim that it is this victory that inspired the Chamber of Patricians to elect him Dictator for Life. The Licartta is

celebrated with a week of gladiatorial games, and triumphal parades, culminating with a reenactment of the battle in the Criterion. Everyone who can afford it indulges in feasting and drinking, and those who cannot are given the leftovers and scraps, so it is a joyous time for all. There are a few other holidays that are not strictly to remember the greatness of Andropinis. These are mostly based around the phases of Athas' two moons, Ral and Guthay. The largest of these lunar feasts comes every time both moons are full in the sky on the same night. This is known as a night of Del-nee in Balic. On a night of Del-nee the skimmers in Balic's great harbor set out with their nets. On such bright nights, the Torbon, a fish like creature that lives in the Sea of Silt, comes to the surface in great schools to feed. The markets, for weeks after a night of Del-nee, are flush with Torbon products, and all eat their fill. On the night of Del-nee, the people of Balic climb to the tops of the walls facing the estuary of the forked tongue, sing and drink wine, while awaiting the skimmer fleet to return just before sunrise. A great cacophony of cheers rise up in the crowd when the skimmers at last make port.

Trade- Even being on the southeastern edge of the table lands Balic is a center of trade. Trade routes branch out into the Sea of Silt,

Life in Balic



and across the land. The markets of the other city-states of the Tyr region are hungry for the goods produced in Balic, and in turn Balic is hungry for the produce of those cities. The merchant houses come to Balic in search of silver, salt, grains, livestock, leather, olive oil, and kank nectar. In trade for this they bring caravans full of goods in short supply in the city; these include copper, textiles, obsidian, hemp rope, honey, wine, and slaves.

Three Merchant Houses dominate most of the trade in the city, although elf tribes and smaller traders, also do business in Balic. The most powerful Merchant House in the city is house Wavir. Balic is house Wavir's home city, and it shows. They have a larger presence in the Agora, Balic's marketplace, than all the other houses combined. The other two Merchant Houses that have a large stake in the Agora are house Tomblador and house Rees. Between the three Merchant Houses they make up about eighty percent of the trade conducted in the city-state of Balic.

The Gray Death

The gray death is a common cause of death on or around the Sea of Silt. Airborne silt sticks anywhere there is moisture. This could be a poorly sealed waterskin, the unprotected

eyes, or even lungs of anyone within a cloud of billowing silt. If you find yourself in such a predicament it's only a matter of time before the dust chokes your lungs and the gray death sets in. You can cover your eyes with goggles and your mouth and nose with a damp cloth to stave off this lurking fate.



Around Balic

The City Of Balic



Deep Silt
Shallow Silt
Verdant Belt
Silt Chanel
Clif Face

Outer Wall
King's Road
Skimmer Docks

1 Inch = 200 Feet

Warrens
Middle Class
Noble's Quarter

Warehouse District
Artisan's District
Military/Templar
Market
Elven Market



Around Balic



Locations in the Singing City

Balic is a city of marvelous marble monuments and villas, and wretched rotting shanties. In its markets can be found exquisitely fragrant fruits and herbs, as well as the vilest of venoms. Below is but a taste of what Balic has to offer.

(1) The Megaleneon- Located atop a 300-foot-tall plateau, Andropinis' palace known as the Megaleneon, is a vast structure. Its roof crests some 80 feet in the sky and is held up by dozens of thick scalloped columns. The whole palace is wrought from fine white marble and is said to be older than the city itself. Little is known about the Megaleneon in Balic, common folk are not permitted to approach it.

(2) The Criterion- This is the name given to Balic's gladiatorial arena. Criterion means, "place of judgment" in the ancient tongue of the city. The Criterion is bordered to its west by the cliffs of the Megaleneon, while to its north lays the Patrician's quarter.

The architecture of the Criterion is unique in all the tablelands. Its great marble facade is carved to resemble the sails of the silt skimmers that Balic is so famed for. The Arena's oddity does not stop there. The arena's floor

is made up of hundreds of hexagonal stone columns. These columns can be raised or lowered by more than twice the height of a half-giant. This allows the masters of the Criterion to make hills, valleys, forts, or labyrinths that the gladiators can battle in, for the amusement of the throng of unwashed mobs that frequent the games.



(3) The Neroleum- Meaning healing waters, is the temple of the element of water for Balic.



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The temple is built from brown brick and is roughly square. There is a large open courtyard at the Neroleum's center that contains an open pool of clear fresh water. It is forbidden for any to drink from or bath in this pool. Each of the four sides of the temple has a deep well attended to by water clerics. A variety of services, ranging from blessings to resurrection can be had here, if the price can be paid.

(4) The Pironeum- Is the temple of fire in Balic. It is a four layered cone with a dome roof. It is built from red, orange, and yellow lacquered bricks. Braziers ring the upper levels of the temple, burning day and night. An eternal flame burns at the heart of the Pironeum. Many claim it is living fire from the burning realm itself. Healing can be found here, but it comes with great pain. Healing flames are still searing hot.

(5) The Seveve-lapous- means the Temple of Earth or House of Stone, depending on who you ask. This heptagonal tower rises 70 feet into the Athasian sky. It is formed from granite of varying shades, giving it a striped appearance. Of all the elemental temples in Balic, this is the most affordable and reliable. A deal struck with a priest of stone will not be renege upon, they will keep up their end of any bargain.

(6) The House of Jarko Ludus- This large structure is built against the cliffs that hold up the Megaleneon. Its facade is made to blend in with the cliff face. Inside are housed all the gladiators and beasts awaiting their turn on the arena floor. The Ludus is so called because it also contains one of the best gladiator training schools in the whole of the tablelands. This school is run by House Jarko and has produced many slave champions over the years.

(7) The Heilops- The temple of the morning winds. This temple of air is the largest of the four in Balic. It, like all the other temples in the city provides clerical services, but its primary purpose is as a source of the divine wind. The city, of Balic could not exist so close to the Sea of Silt, without the divine wind to blow away the airborne silt that is kicked up on windy days. The people of Balic would all quickly fall victim to the gray death if the Heilops did not provide their protection. From the tall dome topped cylinder, of the temple, sprout hundreds of ceramic pipes. These pipes run to the city wall. They run the length of the walls. Every 50 feet or so one bends out from the walls of Balic, terminating in an opening that is shaped like the horn of a ram. On days when the silt in the air is thick, a constant blast of rushing air bellows forth from

Around Balic



the pipes. Silt skimmer captains use the harmonic sounds of the pipes to navigate on such days when visibility is low. They say the city sounds like a distant chorus holding one long note. It is because of this that they gave Balic one of its nicknames, the Singing City.

(8) The Great Harbor- This sheltered harbor is protected on all sides, save a narrow opening, by the city walls. The silt in the harbor is shallow enough that even the smallest of wheeled skimmers can use it. The harbor is always busy. Silt skimmers coming and going, people loading and unloading them at all hours of the day and night. The warehouse district lays between the Great Harbor and the Agora, Balic's marketplace. Because of the opening in the city walls, and the silt itself, the harbors of Balic are some of the most dangerous places in the whole city.

(9) The Kings Port- This harbor is located on the extreme east end of the city. It is where the royal navy is kept. At its height, the royal navy consisted of over 3 dozen psionic silt skimmers, that patrolled the area enforcing Andropinis' will. The Dictator has, in the past used his fleet to combat tribes of giants and crush silt pirates who menaced Balic's trade routes. The psionic silt skimmer fleet of the Balican navy has no equal in the known world.

(10) The Temple of Silt- This temple does not offer any healing. It has one purpose, blessing the journeys of the many silt skimmers who set out from Balic, to parts beyond. No skimmer captain would think of pressing their luck out on the open silt without a blessing from the temple of silt. The price for such a blessing is usually a cut of the profits from each haul. Because of this the silt clerics of the temple take an inventory of most of the skimmers that trade in Balic. The blessing trade has made the temple of silt very rich, and thus also influential.

(11) The Caravan Gate - The caravan gate is the only entrance to the city on land. It has heavy timber gates that remain open except in times of war or if giants have been spotted in the area. The gates are guarded by a small cadre of soldiers that number around 2 dozen, 16 of which are on duty at any given time.

Deep Silt- This silt is too deep for wheeled silt skimmers to traverse. Only psionically floated silt skimmers can cross deep silt without submerging below its surface.

Shallow Silt- This is silt shallow enough that wheeled silt skimmers can navigate it. Under the surface of the silt, 5 to 15 feet, are sholes that wheeled silt skimmers can roll along the top of.



Around Balic

Verdant Belt- This area is covered in vegetation. It has sufficient water and nutrients to support agriculture. The verdant belt around Balic extends out around 5 miles. In it there are several Patrician owned farms and orchards.

The Silt Channel- This is one of the strangest features of the city-state of Balic. At the base of the east side of the Megaleneon cliffs, there 2 massive upwellings of silt, that form a narrow channel some 70 feet wide and around 30 feet deep. No one knows why silt springs out of the ground to form the channel, but it has been there, even in the oldest legends. The silt in the channel moves along at a fast pace and empties into the Sea of Silt through a huge drain hole next to the temple of silt. It is into this drain that living sacrifices to the temple are thrown.

Cliff Face- These sheer cliffs rise 300 feet above the rest of the city. Anyone who climbs them will be met with a 30-foot wall and templar led patrols for their trouble.

Outer Walls- The outer walls are the city's first line of defense. They protect the citizens of Balic not only from invading armies and marauding giants, but also from the gray death. The walls are topped with horns that blow the suffocating airborne silt back away from the

city. To turn back the many giants that live in the region, the outer walls are constructed of huge stone blocks. They tower 40 feet over the surrounding countryside and are as thick as they are tall.

The King's Road- This is the name given to the wide roads that run through the city. Any road wide enough for a full-sized caravan wagon to pass through is part of the King's Road system.

Skimmer Docks- These docks are made for the efficient loading and unloading of silt skimmers. The docks are wide enough for traffic going both ways and are equipped with cargo cranes.

Warrens- This is where Balic's poor live. There are 2 of these wretched crowded Hives of poverty in the city, the east and west warrens. They are a jumble of tightly packed 2 and 3 story wooden buildings, separated by a maze of narrow un-cobbled streets and alleys. The people here literally live on top of one another. Crime is rampant in both warrens. Gangs hold small territories with near impunity.

Middle Class- These neighborhoods are where the craft and tradesmen live. The streets here are cobbled, and the buildings are made of stone. Most families own their own modest home.

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Patrician's Quarter- The Patrician's Quarter, a large well patrolled section of Balic, with wide, well-lit streets running between opulent villas of white marble. Each noble family has at least one villa here. Ruffians and people who do not seem to belong, are quickly swept up by the squads of junior templars that walk regular rounds throughout the Patrician's quarter.

The Warehouse District- As its name implies this part of Balic is full of warehouses. It is located between the Great Harbor and the Agora, Balic's marketplace. Caravans from Altruk can easily offload their goods in the warehouse district, because of its proximity to the King's Road. All the trading houses, both large and small, that operate in Balic have offices here.

The Artisan's District- This portion of Balic surrounds the main gate. It is filled with the workshops and studios of craftsmen, tradesmen, and artists of every description. Armorers, potters, weavers, spinners, millers, cobblers, and many more can be found here. There are a handful of silversmiths that can be found in Balic's artisan's district. No other city-state of the tablelands can boast more than one, if that even.

Military/Templar- This part of Balic is separated from the rest of the city, by the silt channel, and a wall with a gate identical to the main gate. The military/templar quarter stretches along the entire south eastern border of the city, from the Megaleneon to the king's port. The Balican navy and army are headquartered here, because of this there are many barracks and armories. This is also where the Templars have their administrative centers, and garrison their acolytes. Beside the Megaleneon itself, the Military/Templar quarter is the most well defended part of Balic.

The Market- The Market is bordered by the cliffs of the Megaleneon to its west and the silt channel to its south. The elven market lies to its north and east. Almost anything can be found in the market if you know who to ask and are willing to pay the price. Because of the silt skimmer trade routes even jade from far Draj can be purchased. Some goods can be bought for a much lower price in Balic's market than almost anywhere else, because of their being produced in the city. Silver items, salt, wool, oranges, olive oil, goat cheese and meat, leather goods, and kank nectar can all be had for far fewer ceramics than one might pay in Tyr or Uric.



Around Balic

The Elven Market- If you are looking for something rare, or illegal, the elven market is where you should go. Like in elven markets all over the table lands, small quantities of rare goods can be bought here. Do you want a dagger made from the finest Uricite obsidian; they might have it? Haven't been able to get your hands on spider silk for your web spell, just make a few discreet inquiries, someone will be happy to take your money. Beware though, you may find that dagger between your shoulder blades if you go into, the wrong tent.

Everyday Locations

Ennion's Vessels and Panes- This glass working shop is located south of the King's Road, near the caravan gate. The front portion of this shop is filled with stacks of crates that contain either glass bottles or panes of glass. Most of the standard stock is made of an amber colored glass, but Ennion the gaffer can make glass of any color, although it will cost a bit more. Ennion is a human male that looks to be around fifty. He keeps his weathered face clean shaven, and always wears a heavy leather apron while at work. He is congenial to anyone who comes into his shop and has been known to hide local youths trying to give templars the slip. Ennion employs two young half elf brothers, Pulla and

Markus, to help him with the heavy lifting. They can usually be found in the factory part of the shop in its back room.

The Grove Theater- Having a prime location, at the edge of the Patrician's quarter on the King's Road, the Grove does brisk business. Most nights this small theater is packed shoulder to shoulder with tradesmen, skimmer captains, and the low-ranking officers and templars of the Singing City. Sometimes the theater is closed to the public for a command performance given for a Patrician and his guests. On these days, the benches are removed and replaced with plush divans.

The grove is run by Ella, a beautiful half-elf woman in her early thirties. She has a troop of bards that number around fifteen, depending on the day. When not performing the troop tends to all the other duties necessary to put on a show. Some collect the entry fee, while others sell kank nectar, and still others man the curtain.

The Stacks- The Stacks is the name given, by the locals, to House Wavir's main warehouse and headquarters in Balic. The name comes from the cavernous mud brick building filled with row upon row of stacked crates. Large quantities of goods are always moving into or out of the Stacks. One corner

Around Balic



of the Stacks is devoted to the offices of House Wavir. Here the Agents of the house get their assignments, caravan guards and skimmers crews are hired, and the house keeps its records. The agent in charge of hiring is a Dwarf named Aegeus. He is hard to bargain with and will always try to get the best deal for House Wavir. He will write up employment contracts for anyone he hires, and insist they leave their mark, even though he knows full well that almost all the people he hires can't read.

The Crematorium and Catacombs- These are located in a set of low verdant hills about a half mile west of the caravan gate. The crematorium is a two-story building, with a tall chimney rising from its rear. There are twenty-foot walls surrounding the complex, with a heavy timber gate, to ward off attacks from desert predators. The main building contains facilities for funeral rites, small elemental shrines to both the elements of earth and fire, the cremation parlor, and the gate to the catacombs. Fire clerics, of the crematorium, cremate the dead, and hand off their ashes to the earth clerics, of the catacombs, to put in their final resting place, deep in the caves below the hills.

The Morning Loaf- The best bread for the price can be found here. This bakery is easy for even foreigners to find, by just following

their nose's. The sweet smell of fresh baked sourdough bread permeates the entire neighborhood. The Morning Loaf is run by an elderly human woman named Cynthia. She sells round loaves sectioned like pies. wheat, barley, rye, and emmer bread are available for purchase. Some of the loaves have olives, dates, or even a honey glaze. Cynthia is suspicious of anyone she has never met before. Bread thieves are a constant threat to her profits.

The Cobbler's Shop- This small shop is pressed against the west wall of the Singing City, just north of the temple of air in that area. The cobbler himself is a bent man in his late forties named Oteous. His shop is dominated by sandals that lace up nearly to the knee. He has slippers and closed toe boots for sale as well, but in smaller numbers. Oteous has a halfling delivery boy, named Artesh, who fetches leather from the tanners, and makes deliveries to special customers who can pay for the service, like the army, or some well healed tradesmen.

The Tannery- Like the Morning Loaf the tannery is easy to find by smell. Unlike the Morning Loaf, the smell is not sweet. The Tannery stinks up the southern artisan district for several blocks around it with the smell of rancid piss. It is a place most do not linger any



Around Balic



longer than they have to, because of this the head of the Pit Ticks, a local gang, makes the tannery his headquarters. Quentus Verus, the human leader of the Pit Ticks, likes to think himself above the rabble his gang prey on in the warrens, but that is where he was born and raised. The Pit Ticks, extort protection money from those they can intimidate, and steal from those they can't. Verus has two Mul bodyguards with him at all times. It is said that they are both veteran gladiators.

The Gleaming Tower- This fortified structure is located directly next to the Morning Loaf. It is a three-story tower surrounded by a fifteen-foot wall of baked mud bricks. The lower two stories of the tower

are where its guards live and eat. A contingent of twenty guards protect the gleaming tower at all times. The top floor of the tower is where Kamles the Dwarf silver smith has his workshop. Beyond that no one outside of the guards, Kamles, and his apprentices know anything about the layout of the tower.

The Silver Eye- Across the King's Road from the Stacks, next to the north harbor gates is the finest brothel in all of Balic. It gets its name from the price its patrons must pay, one silver piece, for the company of one of its ladies for an evening. This price puts the Silver Eye out of the budget of normal deck hands and dock workers. The clientele is mostly made up of mid-ranked agents of the trading houses, templars, officers of Balic's army, young Patricians, and upper-class artisans. The building itself has one large common room with a maze of hallways leading to bedchambers branching off from it. Women of every race from halfling to half-giant provide intimate services at the Silver Eye. There are even a few young men on offer here as well for those so inclined. The common room of the Silver Eye is a place where many deals are struck. Often times someone wishing to gain favor with a potential business partner will show them a good time at the Silver Eye.

Around Balic



The Lagoon- The Lagoon is one of several public baths in the Singing City. It sits just south of the Pironeum and the Neroleum, near the center of Balic. The Lagoon has four separate bathing rooms, two for each sex. There are hot and cold water rooms, each featuring a green tiled pool about two feet deep. The pools are large enough for a couple of dozen bathers to sit around their edges at a time. Aside from the bathing rooms there are also changing rooms that have shelves for bathers to place their belongings while they are in the baths. All bathing is done in the nude. Wearing clothes into the baths is thought to taint the waters with the filth of the road.



Getting Started in Balic

In the Singing City, everyone's got a story, and everyone's story has to start somewhere. The high templar was not born into that office. The champion of the Criterion was not just handed that title. The high priest of the Heilops did not just walk in and don his feathered robes. They all started out at the bottom and worked their way up, just like you. Where did you learn your trade? How did you make your mark, and become excepted by those of your ilk? This chapter is intended to help you start to answer those questions. Below are places in and around the City-State of Balic That each of the classes could have received their apprenticeship, on their way to a life of adventure.

Fighter- As a fighter in Balic you may have received your training in the Balican army. All residents of the city must perform a compulsory term of service in the city's army. Those who show an aptitude for spear and shield are given more advanced instruction in the use of weapons, and the implementation of military tactics. You may have even been given a small squad to lead, while you were fulfilling your term of service, but that is behind you, for now.

Other possible places for fighters to start their careers are, as guards on a Patrician family's estate, or as a caravan guard for one

of the Merchant Houses. Your DM can provide you with a list of the Patrician families if you decide to go that route. The houses with the largest footprint in Balic are House Wavir, House Tomblador, and House Rees.

Gladiator- Nearly all gladiators started out as slaves. As such you would have been trained hard every day from early adolescence. Deep



bruises, black eyes, and the lash of your master's whip would have been as constant as the blazing crimson sun in the olive Athasian

Getting Started in Balic



sky. Whether your formative years were spent in the stables of one of the Patrician houses, or under the tender mercies of the instructors of the House Jarok's Ludus, life was hard. This in turn made you hard. You learned to ignore unimportant pain. You discovered that the harder you pushed yourself the less your masters seemed to need to motivate you themselves. You saw those who did not learn these harsh lessons fall early on in their training.

The House Jarok Ludus is the largest gladiator training facility in Balic. Several dozen gladiators are being trained there at any given time. Some nobles pay for their slaves to be trained there. The House Jarok Ludus has a reputation of turning out some of the most skilled gladiators in all the tablelands. Many champions got their start there.

Ranger- As a ranger you may have started life either as a slave or a freeman. You were most likely to have been owned or employed by one of the Patrician families. You could have done anything from trapping vermin in the orchards, to hunting game for your lords table, or even tracking escaped slaves to be brought back to the estate you lived on. Outside of an early career with a Patrician family, you could have been a scout for the Balican army, warning your commander of impending ambush.

Another possible path you might have followed could have been that of a freeman hunter. Making a living from the meat and skins you brought to market. If you decided you worked for or were owned by one of the noble families, your DM will have a list of them you can choose from.

Defiler- Being a defiler you were trained in secret. The only exception to this would be if you were one of only a small handful of officially sanctioned defilers who work directly for the Dictator Andropinis. If this is how you got your start, then you probably find yourself in 1 of 2 situations. Number 1: you have been sent on a mission by one of your superiors to do the Dictators business. In which case you are the leader of whatever party you are in. Number 2: the intrigues of the Dictator's court got the better of you, and you are now on the run. Hiding in the warrens until you can find your way out of Balic.

If you were not one of Andropinis' defilers, then you learned your craft from a family member. Perhaps one of your parents or grandparents was also a defiler and taught you about the rush of magic. Some Patricians and merchant houses secretly employ defilers to perform services that no one else can. These could have been or still may be your employers.



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Preserver- Unlike defilers, preservers have no legal way to practice their art in the city of Balic. You were most likely taken in, as an orphan, by the Veiled Alliance. As a young child you would have been a lookout or messenger, but when you got a bit older you were inducted into the mysteries of the Brotherhood of the Arcane. Your cell would have been no more than 4 or 5 members strong, and only its leader would have known anyone from other cells. You may start out on the run from Andropinis' templars following a raid or failed mission. Your cell leader may have also entrusted you with a special task to complete, one that is vital to the survival of the alliance.

Cleric- As an elemental cleric you almost definitely got your training in one of the temples in the city. There is at least one temple for each of the 4 elements as well as one dedicated to the para-elemental plane of silt. **Air** clerics spend their youth running the walls of Balic removing nests from the singing horns that protect the city from the grey death. Clerics of **Earth** learn to feel their stillness, sitting unmoving for hours, in preparation for their lessons in the ways of the stony realm. Would be **Fire** clerics dance, flailing their arms and legs, as they spiral across the floor of the Pironeum. They

brandish flaming torches, that they use to beat and burn the carcasses of beasts defeated in the Criterion. This teaches the initiates to the ways of flame that fire transforms raw materials into life giving food. These broiled carcasses are then given to those who come to the temple to beg. To become an acolyte of **Water**, would be priests are tested by collecting sewage from around the city, and delivering it in large casks to the plantations of the Patricians beyond the great caravan gate. This is intended to weed out all but the most dedicated, and to teach them that water is life, even in an impure form. Lastly, a young **Silt** cleric spends their days drowning the live offerings that are made to their temple and raising silt spawn from hatchlings. This helps them to understand the hellish beasts, allowing them some small amount of control over the abominations of the silt. Clerics of the para-elemental planes of **Rain**, **Sun**, and **Magma**: have no temple within the walls of Balic. They may have been inducted into their faiths by an elder. Whether you were a member of one of the merchant houses, or a healer for one of the many gladiator stables ran by the Patricians of the city, your teacher saw potential in you. They took you on as an apprentice, teaching everything you could learn from them. Then the day came when they told you that they

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were no longer your master. To learn more, you would have to seek out steam-drenched jungles, stark white shimmering salt flats, or smoking mountain tops belching flame and ash. On that day, Athas became your teacher.

Druid- You never liked the hustle and bustle of Balic. Its cobbled streets were like a shell that always kept you from feeling the spirit of the place. It is said that a powerful druid protects the city from itself, but who knows that could just be rumors that the veiled alliance started to keep defilers in line. As a druid you may have taken over the protection of a Patrician's lands from a haggard old half-elf. After your teacher passed back into the land to be one with its spirit, you may have worked with a ranger in the employ of the Patrician who "owned... ha what a thought", the land you protect. They may have helped you manage the balance of getting the best crop yields, while not stamping out all the indigenous life that made their homes there. There are lands beyond the verdant belt that borders Balic to its north west. You may have called one of these lonely stretches of desert home. Whatever the case, you spend as little time in the city proper as possible.

Templar- Just like becoming a templar in any other city-state of the tablelands, it's not so important who you are, as it is who you know.

Influential Patrusion relatives may have greased a few palms to ensure the Dictator would take you into his fold. If you didn't come from wealth you may have made your own way, by informing on the street gangs, to your local templars, getting in good with them by the time you came of age. All templars are elected to their posts by the neighborhood's they serve in, but this is just a sham formality to placate the commoners. The people never see the ballots counted, so the results of any election are as the Dictator wills it. As a novice templar you may be assigned to one of the administrative burgesses dedicated to running the Singing City. You may lead small patrols of guardsmen through the city keeping the peace, or might be part of a patrol led by a higher ranking templar outside the city walls. If you are not assigned to the army or policing the city you may supervise small teams of workers who repair and maintain Balic's public facilities. No matter what the circumstances of your assignment, when adventure finds you, you will be in a position of authority.

Thief- Like any city opportunities for thieves to ply their trade abound in Balic. The maze of streets and back alleys make it easy for thieves to emerge from the shadows and disappear as quick as they came. As a thief, you most likely started your career as a child,



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picking the pockets of people in crowds, and stealing from unwary merchants. When you grew up you probably followed one of two paths. The first path is to go it alone. This is the more dangerous path, having no one to watch your back, and always being threatened by the gangs of the city. The advantage to going it alone is your cut is 100%. You do not have to share with anyone. The second path is joining a gang. Either you and some of your friends formed one or you fell in with one of the existing street gangs. The largest of these gangs of thieves is the Pit Ticks. Their territory covers all the west warren, and a large portion of the artisan district.

Bard- You may have been taught your preforming skills as a child by your parents, or if you were a slave by an overseer. Many of the Patrician families own bards, that they use to entertain their guests and themselves, so you may have spent the days of your youth picking olives and your evenings dancing or singing. There are a half dozen theaters in Balic. If you were razed free, one of them, maybe the Grove was your home before you took up adventuring. There are also several troops of bards who work for hire in the Singing City. A life with one of the preforming troops would have been full of

intrigue, as they are often hired to steal from or assassinate someone in their audience.

Psioniciſt- To make the leap from wild talent to fully fledged Psioniciſt, you had to have training. You may have been privately trained by a relative or hired tutor, but chances are your potential was recognized when you were a child, and you were enrolled in the Cerebran, Balics psionic university. There you would have learned to control yourself and focus your mind to do great things. While the Cerebran is an official branch of the Dictator's government, many of its instructors chafe under his strict rule. They work subtle messages of disobedience into their lessons. Students who haven't the money to pay their full tuition, earn their keep by working the olive groves on campus, when not in class. The head mistress of the Cerebran is an elderly human woman named Iphignea Raxides. Because learning the way of the unseen is such an intensive process, the Cerebran keeps its student body small, seldom more than one hundred would be mind benders.

Kits



Kits

Dust Pilot

From north to south the entire eastern edge of the known world is made up of the coast of the Silt Sea, and the few scattered islands in it that have been charted. This region is full of death for the foolhardy, but opportunity for those skilled enough to ply the dusty depths. Those who have silt skimmers and the experience to use them, can make small fortunes, delivering goods and passengers between seaside villages and ports or exploring the deep silt for unknown treasures. Only rare psionic silt skimmers can travel beyond the shallow shorelines of the Sea of Silt. They float using the way of the unseen by means of a psionic engine. These psionic skimmers need pilots to power their engines, and to maneuver them across the dusty depths. Anyone with psionic ability can pilot a psionic skimmer, even a wild talent, but the best most sought after pilots are those who have grown up on the decks of a skimmer. Trained from their youths, Dust Pilots combine an intimate knowledge of skimmers and strong psychokinetic abilities to be the best of all the psionic silt skimmer pilots.

Role: As their title suggests Dust Pilots spend most of their on duty hours below decks piloting the skimmer. Most psionic silt skimmers have a

small squad of Dust Pilots to keep them afloat. Even experienced Dust Pilots tire after a couple of hours of piloting, so each skimmer must have several to keep going all day. Because of the time they spend alone in the engine room or resting, most Dust Pilots love to spend time in the mess with their crewmates, or on shore leave. Dust pilots work hard, so when they get the opportunity they play hard too. They tend to be the life of the party.

Preferred Disciplines: A Dust Pilot must select Psychokinesis as their primary discipline. They tend to choose either Clairvoyance, for the ability it gives them to scan ahead, or Psychotransportation, because of its obvious utility, as secondary disciplines.

Weapon Proficiencies: Dust Pilots receive a bonus harpoon proficiency. Many also become proficient in the operation of the silt skimmer's weapons, such as catapults, ballista, and uniquely for the pilot the skimmer's ram.

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Bonus-Siltmanship and navigation. Recommended rejuvenation and weather sense.

Equipment: Dust Pilots start play with a set of silt goggles, and silk mask. Without these items they would have never survived their youth on the Silt Sea.



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Special Benefits: Because a Dust Pilot grew up onboard a silt skimmer, they know how the decks lurch and sway while the vessel is under way. This gives them a +1 bonus to any dexterity related check they are called upon to make while onboard a silt skimmer, (+2 if they are on their home skimmer). Conversely it takes Dust Pilots $1d8+6$ days to find their land legs. Until they have, they receive a -1 penalty to all dexterity checks made.

One other advantage to growing up on a silt skimmer is that a Dust Pilot has had a chance to meet all kinds of people and make contacts among the skimmer crews and traders of the Merchant Houses. A Dust Pilot starts play with $1d4$ such contacts. The DM should

create these NPCs at the beginning of the campaign. If a Dust Pilot needs employment, information, or just a favor, so long as they are in a place with a silt skimmer port, they can check to see if one of their contacts is there. The chance there will be one of the Dust Pilots contacts in a place increases with the size of the place. A small trading village or fort has only a 10% chance that one of the Dust Pilots contacts will be found. A large town of a few hundred inhabitants increases the chance to 30%. In Balic the chance of the Dust Pilot finding an old crewmate, uncle, or captain; doubles to 60%. Whether or not the contact can or is willing to help when found, is up to the DM and the Dust Pilots charisma.



Kits



Special Hindrances: Aside from the problem with getting their land legs, mentioned above, Dust Pilots also have issues with etiquette and manors. Dust Pilots were raised as part of a motley crew, and do not even realize that acting as such is considered crude by most non-skimmers. Because of this they receive a -2 penalty to all charisma-based roles when dealing with anyone but silt skimmer crews, dock workers, field hands, soldiers, and gladiators.

Wealth Options: Dust Pilots begin play with 3d4 x30 ceramic pieces, plus a pair of silt goggles and a silk dust mask.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies

Siltmanship

The character is familiar with all the tasks necessary to run a wheel, sail, and psionically driven silt skimmers. They are qualified to work as a crewman, although they cannot actually navigate. Crews of trained siltmen are necessary to manage any silt skimmer, and anyone wishing to pilot a psionic silt skimmer must have the siltmanship non-weapon proficiency and some psionic ability. See the video, "The Sea of Silt: A Complete Guide to the Waterless Sea", for more information on the Sea of Silt and silt skimmers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmG7rkHi5Nw>

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