

Chapter 2

Peoples of Al-Dakan

Standard Races

The following races are the most common ones in the desert world. Most non-human characters will be from one of these.

Fa'arim

Fa'arim means "Mouse People." They are the little people of the desert world. They are a people that has adapted to a nocturnal schedule. Their eyes and ears are very sensitive, and they dislike bright lights.

According to their traditions, long ago the fa'arim sought the protection of the seraphim against the hostile desert. After a few generations, they were little better than slaves of the xenophobic seraphim. When they finally managed to escape, they set up their home far away from the other civilized races. For their part, the seraphim deny that this ever happened. If it did, it seems likely that it was only a small group of clans that enslaved the small ones. Nevertheless, the experience has deeply scarred the fa'arim.

Fa'ari culture places great emphasis on learning. Young adults (especially from the upper classes) are often sent to neighboring settlements, where they attend a college to learn some subject such as medicine, astrology, or law. These academics are among the most respected in a fa'ari town. At the same time, they are natural thieves. It is not unheard of for fa'ari children in a human city to make their way as pickpockets.

Personality: For the most part, fa'arim are very friendly and jovial. There is one major exception to this, and that is the seraphim. A seraph is often treated with outright scorn because of their ancient relationship. Fa'arim cannot stand slavery of any sort, and often make special effort to end another's servitude.

Physical Description: Fa'arim stand about three and a half feet tall and are relatively thin. Their skin ranges from dusky to outright dark, and they have dark hair. Men typically have neatly trimmed beards. Older fa'arim grow grey as humans do. By far their most noticeable characteristics are their eyes and ears. Both are disproportionately large for their face, though other than that are very human looking. Eye color is usually dark brown, though grey is not unknown.

Their ears are a major vanity of the fa'arim. Both sexes decorate them with ornate jewelry. This is not

just cosmetic: with a glance, they can use these small rings and chains to instantly read another's family, community standing, and station.

Relations: Fa'arim get along with all races except for seraphim. They have a special sympathy for giants, though this is rarely returned due to the latter's distrust of anything "small and weak." Humans have a tradition that fa'arim are reliable and good with mathematics, and so they are often found as treasurers and bookkeepers.

Alignment: Fa'arim tend strongly towards good. While most are lawful, there is a sizeable majority who live in human cities who are chaotic.

Lands: Fa'arim live in rocky lands away from other races, though many live in human cities. In their own villages, they typically burrow into rock (though they are still a predominantly surface dwelling race) In human towns, they usually live in their own quarter. Fa'ari doctors and lawyers are widely respected in such an environment, and may even have a special relationship with the human rulers.

Religion: Fa'arim venerate the Creator, and believe He had a special hand in rescuing them from the seraphim. The most important celebration of their year still revolves around escaping from their clutches.

Language: Fa'ari is a very guttural language, with many sounds said from the back of the throat. Words are written using a unique runic script. Human scholars sometimes learn it due to the academic works written in the language.

Names: Most fa'ari children are named after a deceased relative. Names tend to be used over and over again within families, but it is rare for two living related fa'arim to possess the same name. Names follow the human custom of using the father's name as a kind of surname. The prefix for "son of" is "bol," while the prefix for "daughter of" is "bia."

Male Names: Akasa, Arad, Eveyan, Ityaleb, Nafir, Tzanion

Female Names: Batrelya, Galit, Halia, Kitura, Vandrosa

Adventurers: Many fa'ari adventurers are simply curious about the world in which they live. They start out with a simple-natured desire to learn, and as time goes on are driven more and more by a genuine need to help others. Others aren't so altruistic. Many of those who grew up in human cities are more self-serving,

having been urchins and pickpockets from a very young age.

Fa'ari Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Strength: Fa'arim are quick and nimble, but lack the strength of the bigger peoples.
- Small: As small creatures, fa'arim have a +1 size bonus to Armor Class and attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus to Hide checks. However they must use medium weapons two-handed, and their lifting and carrying limits are three quarters those of Medium-sized characters.
- Fa'ari base speed is 20 feet.
- +2 racial bonus to both Spot and Listen checks.
- Dark Vision: Fa'arim can see up to 60 feet away, even in total darkness, though they lack the ability to distinguish colors in such an environment.
- Limited blindsight: Using her ears, a fa'ari can "see" objects up to 10 feet away.
- Light sensitivity: in direct sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell, a fa'ari suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls.
- Fa'arim may use any Knowledge skill unskilled, although they have a +2 racial bonus to any Knowledge check in which they are trained.
- Automatic Languages: Fa'ari and Midani (or Common). Bonus Languages: Djinn, Lizardspeak, Maradiki, Seraphi.
- Favored Class: Scholar. A multiclass fa'ari's scholar class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Giants

"And there went out a champion from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span." (1 Samuel 17:4)

Giants are essentially oversized human beings. Although they are naturally bigger and heavier than humans, in most other respects they are just like them and can interbreed without restriction (though this rarely happens). In areas where giants live, they are most often dominated by their smaller cousins. They form an underclass of laborers, slaves, and front line warriors—doing all the dirty work of the richer humans. Because of this many of them exhibit a great deal of resentment towards the smaller peoples, and humans in particular.

Personality: Giants tend to be fairly gruff. Many believe that might makes right, and have a disdain for intellectual pursuits. Although they are not actually stupid, generations of living as slaves or near slaves has reinforced this stereotype among them.

Physical Description: Except for their phenomenal size (averaging about nine feet tall), giants are human beings. They show all the variation inherent in the human races. However, they do tend to be very well muscled from a life of labor. Many also bear scars all over their bodies, as mementos of a harsh life.

Relations: Giants tend to mistrust humans because of their past, and see seraphim as being too haughty. Of the other races they like fa'arim the best, although they often think of them as being too weak, and disdain their intellectual leanings.

Alignment: Giants tend towards the chaotic. They have a great love of freedom, and a great resentment of any who would take it away from them.

Lands: Most giants are from Kiriath Anak and its environs. Here they constitute much of the lower class, laborer, and slave populations. It is very rare that a group of giants has a land of its own.

Religion: Giants tend to follow human religion, though they place a greater emphasis on personal freedom and less on the intellectual aspects of religion.

Language: Giants speak whatever language the humans in the area do. Usually this is Midani.

Names: Giants follow the same naming conventions as humans.

Adventurers: Many giant adventurers are those who have escaped slavery or who are otherwise fugitives from the law. Others are simply trying to find their fortune, in order to rise up out of their station. Many have some form a military training, as giants form a healthy portion of many armies.

Giant Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, -2 Dexterity. Giants are stronger than humans, though their bulk makes them slower and easier to hit.
- Large: As Large creatures, giants suffer a -1 size penalty to Armor Class, a -1 size penalty to attack rolls, and a -4 size penalty on Hide checks. However they may use larger weapons than humans, and their lifting and carrying limits are twice those of Medium-sized characters. They have a natural reach of 10 feet.
- Giant base speed is 40 feet. When using tables in which there is no 40 ft. entry, double the values in the 20 ft. column.
- Giants receive a +2 racial bonus to all Fortitude saves.
- Giants may take levels in the Giant racial class. This gives the character extra abilities and advantages specific to the species.
- Giant blood: for all game purposes, giants have a creature type of Giant rather than Humanoid. However they are still subject to spells that affect humans.

- Automatic Languages: Midani (or Common). Bonus Languages: Any, as humans.
- Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass giant's fighter class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing. Giants have a great respect for those warriors who can dominate the battlefield through sheer strength.

Seraphim

According to legend, the seraphim were created when the Creator cried at the evil of men. Where His tears landed on the sand, the seraphim were born. Today they live deep in the desert, away from the interference of the other races. They tend to be very private and isolationist, a trait that at worst exhibits itself as extreme xenophobia. They also believe themselves to be the most refined and noble of the races. However, they are most famous for running through the desert without need for rest or much water. They can keep up this pace for days.

Personality: Seraphim appear to the outside world to be cold and dispassionate. In reality they are a highly emotional people, though not comfortable revealing this to outsiders. Among themselves they will revel and dance through the night. Seraphim base their personality on that of their clan. An insult to one is an insult to all, and they do not hesitate to die for the good of their clanmates. Though individuals of other races may earn their trust and become insiders, until this happens they will seem very haughty and aloof. They also tend to be somewhat reckless, and often do not recognize their own faults.

Physical Description: Seraphim are tall and slender, about seven feet in height though weighing roughly the same as humans. Their faces are gaunt and sharply pointed, with the skin stretched tight over their bones. Most humans tend to think they look cruel and disdainful. Their ears are swept into narrow backward points, giving them a feral look. Their skin is pale white, like an albino human, occasionally with a blue tinge. Their eyes range from deep brown to pale golden or red. Hair is worn long on both sexes, and is usually but not always dark. Although grey haired individuals exist, hair color does not change with age. Seraphim grow no facial hair. They tend to dress in long, loose, light colored clothing.

A seraph often tattoos his or her face with the symbols or colors of his or her clan. In some cases, this may mean half the face or more may be colored.

Seraphim grow up very quickly. They are considered full members of their tribe after only about ten years. After that their aging slows down considerably, and they may reach an age of 200 years or more.

Rather than sleep, seraphim enter a trance-like state much as elves do. While in this state they may continue simple actions (such as running) though their memories of this time are hazy at best. They need four hours of trance each day to be fully rested.

Relations: Seraphim tend to classify giants and humans together, and find them strange and uncouth. They have a respect for the fa'arim and their tradition of learning, though this is not often returned due to the past of the races. Lizardfolk and hyenamen are most often seen as vermin.

Alignment: Seraphim have a strong tendency towards the chaotic. Nevertheless they have a very strong tradition of honor and honesty among each other. Outsiders get no such respect, as a seraphim thinks nothing of cheating one outside his clan.

Lands: Seraphim are usually from the deep desert. They do not like the lands of other races, as the buildings tend to make them feel claustrophobic. They prefer open architecture under the desert sky. Many are nomadic, living around their great desert cities. Seraphim urban aristocracies are usually strongly matriarchal, and all clans for miles around will pay homage to the local Queen.

Religion: Seraphim respect all the various spirits of the land and the Creator. They also follow a form of ancestor worship, venerating the founders of their various clans.

Language: Seraphim is a complicated language for outsiders to learn, and few are given the chance. Words tend to be long, and the language has many hard consonants but few glottal stops. Their script bears a superficial resemblance to Dwarven and other runic alphabets, though it is descended from picture writing. Many of their letters still appear (vaguely) like angular eyes, hands, and animals.

Names: Seraphim names consist of a given name and a clan name. Given names are unique within each clan. The clan names themselves are often translated to Midani when speaking that language. They are usually the names, titles, or nicknames of eponymous ancestors.

Male Names: Baraq, Kalitep, and Athamen.

Female Names: Keti, Surnatra, and Miriak.

Clan Names: Ashdancer, Bloodfist, Earnotch, Humankiller, and Shadowwalker.

Adventurers: Some adventurers have been exiled from their clan for some crime, and are trying to restore their name. Because of the clan-based mindset of the seraphim, this punishment is often seen as worse than death. Others are simply merchants or wanderers seeking their fortune in the wide world. Because of the seraph's view of the world, even those who have not been exiled but still deal with the outside world may be seen with disgust.

Seraphi Racial Traits

- +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom: Seraphim are trained to exert themselves all day, but their lack of common sense can get them into trouble.
- Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures, seraphim have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Seraphi base speed is 40 feet. When using tables in which there is no 40 ft. entry, double the values in the 20 ft. column.
- Immunity to magic sleep spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against Enchantment spells or effects.
- Low-light Vision: Seraphim can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- All seraphim automatically receive the run feat.
- When traveling overland, seraphim may hustle for long periods of time. When doing so, they only suffer the ill effects of walking and forced marching.
- Seraphim can run and walk on sand as if it were Firm Ground, and other creatures suffer accordingly while tracking them.
- Automatic Languages: Seraphi and Midani. Bonus Languages: Djinn, Fa'ari, Hyenaspeak, Lizardspeak, and Maradiki.
- Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass seraph's ranger class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing. Seraphi society extols the lone scout in the desert, running swiftly in service to the Queen.

Djinntouched

Djinntouched does not designate a race, but rather a template that can be added to any character of another race. These are those people with Djinn ancestry, who have a natural talent for manipulating the natural world. Djinntouched do not necessarily have Djinntouched parents. Generations may pass in which Djinn traits lay dormant, waiting for the right child in which to manifest. Djinntouched are still considered members of their base race, with all its inherent advantages (and disadvantages). For example, human Djinntouched still keep the extra human feat and skill points.

In game terms, Djinntouched possess the talent to be sorcerers. Only Djinntouched may choose to take sorcerer levels. Those who do not are automatically considered to be 0-level sorcerers. They know three cantrips, and may cast them spontaneously four times

per day, based on Charisma. This ability does not count as a level for any purpose.

All Djinntouched have strange colored eyes. In Arabian lands, this usually means green, blue, or purple. They will also have some other distinguishing characteristic, which must be chosen by the player (subject of course to the will of the DM). This will be some easily noticed cosmetic malformity or difference which will not physically inhibit the player in any way. Possible examples include six fingers on the hands, oddly colored or patterned hair, no outer ears, a forked tongue, large cat-like eyes, etc. Most people will treat the Djinntouched with superstition. They will avoid looking in her eyes for fear of the Evil Eye, and may even be driven to violence.

Optional Races

You should get your DM's permission before you decide to run a character from one of these races. Each presents its own unique challenges, as well as substantial prejudice from other peoples.

Lizardfolk (Zabbahim)

The lizardfolk are one of the most enigmatic of peoples in the desert. Their reptilian mindset puts them at odds with almost every other civilized people. Although they are not evil, misunderstandings are all too frequent and the lizardfolk have wisely decided to keep to themselves.

The lizardfolk described here are cousins of those described in the MM. They are adapted to the harsh desert environment, at home beneath the searing sun and needing no water to drink. However, this specialization has a price. They are unable to tolerate being exposed to water. In extreme cases, this can result in death.

Personality: To most others, lizardfolk are detached, aloof, and alien. Their motives often seem obscure and odd. They often have no compunction against killing, and little sense of empathy for others, but are very rarely truly evil. To outsiders, they appear to be simply amoral.

Physical Description: Lizardfolk stand between 6 and 7 feet tall. They range from light yellow to a deep golden brown, and ridges run down their backs to a stiff tail up to two feet in length. Their eyes are usually yellow, though occasionally with orange or green flecks. They rarely dress in clothes, although this is not a problem in human society as they have no mammae or external genitalia. Males and females are the same size, and most other races can't tell the difference. However males do have small hidden throat pouches, which may inflate when he is agitated.

Relations: Excepting hyenamens, lizardfolk see all mammalian species as essentially the same. However

they have great enmity towards the former, and may attack on sight. To further complicate matters, lizardfolk have a completely different body language and set of facial expressions, that can lead to severe misunderstandings. For example, they are likely to interpret a smile which shows the teeth as if it were a threat.

Alignment: Lizardfolk have a very reptilian mindset that is alien to most other civilized peoples. In game terms, they have a very strong tendency toward neutrality. However, in a very real sense morality and ethos simply do not apply to them. Their social standards are outside the comprehension of others. Lizardfolk see absolutely nothing wrong with eating the dead, sacrificing young for the good of the tribe, or other behavior that other races would see as reprehensible. This is not done through extreme selfishness or cruelty, but detachment and practicality.

Lands: Lizardfolk are nomadic, though occasionally they will take shelter in caves or other natural formations. Any land in which they live is by necessity very arid.

Religion: Lizardfolk venerate the land itself as a divine power. Ancestors join with the spirit of the land upon death, and watch over their descendants. Rain is also personified, though as an enemy.

Language: Lizardspeak (sometimes called Zabbahi) is a language of hisses, whistles, clicks and other sounds not common to other languages. Mammalian throats can duplicate it, but not perfectly. The result is understandable, but unpleasant for natives to hear—much like listening to someone who has had a tracheotomy. Lizardfolk have no written language, though some scholars have made efforts to write it with Midani characters.

Body color is an important part of lizardfolk communication, much like facial expressions in other species. Lizardfolk turn dark when angry (occasionally almost black), pale when frightened, and flushed when content.

Names: Young are not given names until they reach their seventh birthday. At this point it is presumed that they'll live to adulthood, and so they are given a formal name. Names often correspond to some personality trait the youth showed, and there is no distinction between male and female names. These names are usually hideously butchered by other peoples, who don't include the necessary hisses and whistles. Examples include K'ritz'chal, Rashad, and Zh'tachi.

Adventurers: Adventurers are often on some kind of mission for their tribe, or have been kicked out for some transgression. Or they may be simply curious about the outside world, in their cold, dispassionate way.

Lizardfolk Racial Traits

- +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence: Lizardfolk are very hardy, but lack some of the intelligent reasoning abilities of other peoples.
- Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures, lizardfolk have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Lizardfolk base speed is 30 feet.
- Lizardfolk have natural claw and bite attacks, that do 1d4 damage. Note that the bite is a secondary attack, and hence only adds one half damage for Strength. When the character uses a one-handed weapon, he may use the remaining claw as a secondary weapon.
- Lizardfolk may take levels in the Lizardfolk racial class. This gives the character extra abilities and advantages specific to the species.
- Lizardfolk receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks when they are in desert areas.
- Lizardfolk do not need to drink water. They get all they need from the food they eat. As they are cold blooded, they only need to eat about a tenth the amount of other races. Lizardfolk often go as long as a week without eating.
- For every 10° below 60° temperature, lizardfolk suffer a -2 racial penalty to Dexterity.
- Because of their tails and back ridges, lizardfolk need to wear armor that is specially made for them.
- Lizardfolk are completely unadapted to water. They have a natural fear of liquid, and find any moisture to be extraordinarily unpleasant. Exposure can give them a rotting skin disease and can even kill them. The DC and damage of the disease depends on the level of exposure. See page 74 of the DMG for more detail.

Exposure	DC	Incubation	Damage
Light Rain / Heavy Humidity	10	1 day	1d4 Con
Heavy Rain	15	1 day	1d4 Con
Immersion	20	1 day	1d6 Con
Prolonged Immersion	25	1 day	1d6 Con

If the affected individual is kept absolutely dry during recovery, she gains a +5 circumstance bonus to the corresponding Fortitude saves.

- Automatic Languages: Lizardspeak, Midani (or Common). Bonus Languages: Fa'ari, Hyenaspeak, Maradiki, and Seraphi.
- Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass lizardfolk character's fighter class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for

multiclassing. Lizardfolk are effective and deadly warriors.

perhaps they've lost a fight with the new leader, or perhaps they're just genuinely good.

Hyenafolk (D'abiam)

The desert hyenafolk are very close relative of the gnoll. Hyenafolk have an often deserved reputation of being vicious and cruel. They are cunning warriors, and often prey upon the other intelligent species.

Hyenafolk pack structure is strongly matriarchal. The head of a pack is the strongest female, followed by her daughters. Favored mates of the ruling clique and other females come next, followed by the remaining males and cubs.

Personality: Hyenafolk tend to be boorish and unpleasant at best, and sadistic beasts at worst. They are accustomed to a world of kill-or-be-killed, and their outlook shows it.

Physical Description: Hyenafolk are a little over 7 feet tall, and have grayish skin covered with spotted fur. Their heads are those of hyenas, complete with mane and sharp teeth. Their eyes are yellowish-green, and glow like a cat's when reflecting light.

Relations: Other races usually think of hyenafolk are usually thought of as vermin to be eliminated. The feeling is mutual. Lizardfolk are particularly hated, as the two often share territories.

Alignment: Hyenafolk have a predilection toward chaos and evil. Player characters are often exceptions.

Lands: Hyenafolk live wherever no one else wants to. Usually this means the deep desert or barely fertile scrublands.

Religion: A religious hyenafolk character is rare. Occasionally a pack will have a shaman who venerates the natural spirits of the land.

Language: Hyenaspeak (on rare occasions called D'abi) is an exceedingly difficult language for others to master. Most words are formed by sharp barks, growls, and whines. Posture is also very important. The language has no written alphabet.

Names: Names are usually just descriptions of the hyenafolk in question. Because of the incompatibility of their language with others, names are usually translated into Midani (or whatever language is appropriate). However because their own names are so unpleasant, some hyenafolk will just choose names of other species when dealing with outsiders. For the most part there is no distinction between male and female names, although female names are more likely to mention familial relations. Possible names include Cries-Far, Drooler, One-Eye, Slasher, or Many-Pups (for females).

Adventurers: Adventurers are almost always those who have been kicked out of their pack for whatever reason. Perhaps they are small and weak,

Hyenafolk Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, -2 Intelligence and -2 Charisma: Hyenafolk are strong, but they are relatively dim and ill-tempered.
- Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures hyenafolk have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Hyenafolk base speed is 30 feet.
- Dark Vision: Hyenafolk can see up to 60 feet away, even in total darkness, though they lack the ability to distinguish colors in such an environment.
- Hyenafolk may take levels in the Hyenafolk racial class. This gives the character extra abilities and advantages specific to the species.
- Automatic Languages: Hyenaspeak and Midani (or Common). Bonus languages: Lizardspeak, Maradiki, and Seraphi.
- Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass hyenafolk character's ranger class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing. Hyenafolk are experts at survival in the harsh desert.