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THE
SLAYER'S
GUIDE
TO

SCORPIONFOLK





The Slayer's Guide To Scorpionfolk

Robert Neil Smith

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INTRODUCTION

The only good scorpionfolk is a dead scorpionfolk
Desert Proverb

What are scorpionfolk and where do they come from? This is a question that many have asked; what is known is that they are savage and destructive. But who are they really, how can they be so savage and yet still exist? Surely they would all have killed one another in an orgy of violence; so there must be more to the scorpionfolk than meets the eye.

The Slayer's Guide to Scorpionfolk will lift the veil that obscures these fascinating and dangerous creatures from mortal ken.

The first travellers realise they are the targets of a scorpionfolk raid is when they are faced with the awesome vision of these huge creatures charging them. Somewhat akin to centaurs these creatures appear to be the blending of two forms, that of a monstrous scorpion some 10 feet in length with a human upper torso. Their skin tone matches that of their scorpion cousins, being dull grey or light brown, the colours of the rock or sand in which they make their homes. Bearing down on their prey with lance, claws and stinger twitching, the folk make short work of their targets taking what they will; food valuables and other treasure. Most caravan routes through the hot barren lands avoid known hot spots of scorpionfolk activity, but it is not always possible to gauge where they will hit. It is much safer to find routes around than to venture into the known haunts of the folk, they acknowledge no authority or boundaries other than their own. Only the most powerful and well-armed expeditions venture into the stomping grounds of the folk, and then only at great need.

Often portrayed as mindless savages the folk have had a bad press, insular and tribal in nature little is known about their origins, their society or their very nature. This Slayer's Guide will open the book on their coming and goings and try and allow players the option of peaceful communication rather than outright war. The normal reaction of a player character seeing a band of folk is to hide and hope to remain unnoticed, or fight if they are discovered. This book aims to give another option to the player, for who is best to provide information to the adventuring group than the very people who live of the land. For the folk are a people, make no mistake about that. They have a society, a culture and a way of

life, alien though it may be, and they act in a logical and predictable fashion. Understanding these rules could save characters unnecessary combat and the casualties these battles will inevitably bring.

Slayer's Guide

This series of supplements, designed for use in all fantasy-based D20 game systems, takes an exhaustive look at specific monster races, detailing their beliefs, society and methods of warfare. Typically, these will be races all but ignored by Games Masters and players alike who pay heed as countless thousands get slaughtered during the acquisition of new levels and magic items.

Scorpionfolk - Implacable Enemy, or Dangerous Ally?

Each Slayer's Guide features a single race, in this case the scorpionfolk. Within these pages you will find a large amount of information on scorpionfolk physiology, habitat and society, giving you a deeper level of understanding on how this race exists and interacts with the rest of the world. Scorpionfolk do not fit in to polite society but they make excellent challenges for player characters to face. Inhuman for the most part they are difficult to roleplay for either Games Master or players. From this book players will learn how to approach scorpionfolk tribes safely and how to defend themselves if necessary. Games Masters are presented with guidelines on how to introduce this race into their existing campaigns. They will also benefit from material demonstrating how to actually portray scorpionfolk to their players, thus giving their campaigns and scenarios even greater depth. For the truly ambitious, rules are given for using scorpionfolk as player characters.



Just what I need, thought Masef to himself as the irritating 'Lord' Archier heeled his horse up to his side. Why did the annoying man constantly feel the need to talk to him? Was it not enough that he and his men were forced out here in this god-awful place to guard his pitiful caravan? Damn his greed all to hell why had he thought this was easy money? Next time it will be a nice little war and no more nursemaid work.

'It is a pleasant day, is it not Captain?' ventured the unsuitably clad official opening the conversation the same way as always.

'Wait for it,' muttered the soldier, eyes shielded from the sun by an elaborate veil. 'He's going to ask about the men again.'

'You are sure your men can protect us, Captain?' came the expected question.

Smiling grimly to himself, Masef once more went through the description of his command. 20 agile lancers with lance and sabre, 10 lightly armed scouts swathed from head to foot in desert robes, 50 massive-thewed northern infantrymen in light armour and last, but not least, 20 longbowmen from the Misty Isle. A small army in anyone's book and very good at their job, but then Masef should know, for he had trained them himself.

Once convinced of the soldiers' prowess again, the courtier switched to his second favourite topic; the mission. As if Masef or any of his men gave a flying fig whether the two countries went to war – in fact it would be better for them if they did. With that thought, Masef drifted back to the conversation nodding and smiling encouragement at all the right junctures.

'The princess must get to the sultan or there will be all out war... only way we can be sure of peace between our peoples...like bribing a dragon,' went Lord Archier.

Glancing at the caravan Masef had to admit it was quite an impressive site. The camel train ringed by lancers on their prancing warhorses, pennons flapping in the breeze. The distant figures out scouting and the soldiers either walking or riding complaining quietly, as soldiers will when bored. The camels carried heavy packs of silk and other gifts but the main treasure, and the reason for the journey, was in the silk clad wagon in the very centre of all the men and animals.

'She is beautiful you know,' mused Archier, snapping the Captain out of his moment of reflection just as something caught his eye.

'Who is that then, my Lord?' asked Masef, distracted now by the movement.

'Why, the princess of course!' said the courtier, oblivious to the stiffness of the Captain's posture. 'She is as beautiful as the sun and the moon, but you will never see her, of course...'

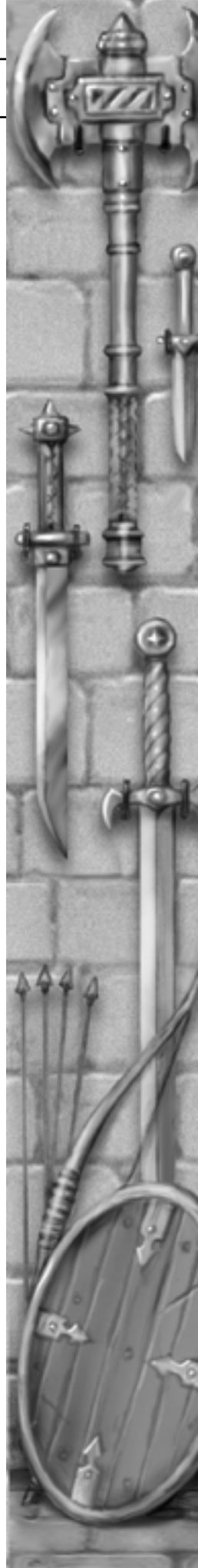
'Quiet man,' interrupted Masef, thrusting his arm up into the sky with a clenched fist.

It had been a long few days with this caravan, and his men had been treating it like a holiday, but when they saw the order they instantly went into action. The caravan was brought to an abrupt halt by the Lieutenant of the troop, forcing the camel drivers to ring the wagon with the beasts.

'What is it, what's going on?' cried the confused courtier. This was beginning to get a little frightening.

'Oh shut up will you and go back to your little princess! It may just be about to get very messy out here,' said Masef adrenaline suddenly flowing. Pointing at the wagon he stared down into the eyes of the man who had thought himself to be master here. 'Go,' he commanded.

The infantrymen had dismounted by now, throwing reins to the horse boys and readying their weapons. Following the prearranged battle plan, the archers readied their bows and the lancers began to trot around the circling camels. Masef signalled again and the distant scouts all vanished. 'Brace yourselves,' he said to no one in particular, drawing his sword and checking his shield.



PHYSIOLOGY

If you want enlightenment look under the log, poke in the hidden places, bring light to the dark and see what is there.

Pwatre, a learned priest

Of the many intelligent races that walk, swim, crawl or fly on any world the scorpionfolk are exceedingly unusual in appearance, for they are a blend of two different creatures. The folk, for that is how they name themselves, are a mix of humans and gigantic scorpions having inhuman strength and uncanny speed and agility. Unlike the likes of centaurs or lamia, the folk are not a mix of mammal and humanoid, these creatures are a mix of insect and humanoids.

This unusual and unnatural pairing means the folk are shunned by most intelligent races who fear their ferocity. Most believe the tales of humanoid scorpions to be just that; tales, suitable to frighten children but no reason for academic study. It is said, in some circles, that the folk are nothing more than humanoid raiders who have tamed huge scorpions for steeds. A misunderstanding fostered by the fact that where you find scorpions you can find the folk: the truly desolate places, the true wildernesses, deserts and the warm deep places of the world.

They are few in number, which is fortunate, so it is only a small minority who can truthfully say they have seen the folk and survived to tell the tale. Consequently any tome claiming to report on them is likely to be rife with inaccuracies, if not outright lies.

Lifting the Lid on Scorpionfolk Physiology

To understand scorpionfolk the place to start is a detailed knowledge of their anatomy. The folk stand on a low-slung scorpion body up to ten feet in length ending in a vicious stinging tail. Their heads top five feet in height most of the time, but they are capable of rearing up to seven feet high on their insect legs when necessary. Their humanoid body appears to have two sets of limbs and their lower body three more. The upper limbs are arms, capable of all the normal movement and manipulation of any humanoid, whereas their lower set of arms are like those of their scorpion brothers, ending in a huge set of pincers. The skin across their humanoid torso matches that of their scorpion body, having a waxy texture and thin chitinous plates. This skin is particularly important

in understanding the folk, for it is this layer of chitin which not only provides a measure of armour, but also stops their bodies from losing water and allows them to inhabit places most creatures find too extreme. The plates are largest on their scorpion torso and humanoid back forming large armoured plates, and smallest on their faces and underside. The humanoid torso appears normal from a distance but on closer examination what looks like muscle definition from a distance is actually chitin plates. Close up the body appears covered in articulated plates, large for the breast and smaller for the stomach. Male and female physiques are impossible to tell apart for the most part; there are no breasts on female folk and while the females are larger and heavier than their male counterparts, older males look very similar in size to younger females.

The skin is tough yet flexible, having a colour reminiscent of their surroundings. If rock dwellers, scorpionfolk skin tends to be dull grey whereas desert-dwelling folk tend to have a sandy brown coloration. Some rare subterranean folk are said to have midnight black skin, although this is only a rumour as these creatures are very difficult to find, even for one who knows the ways of the folk.

Of all their inhuman physiology it is their faces and eyes that cause the observer most difficulty. The plates that cover their body also cover their faces, limiting their scope of expressions. This makes it particularly difficult to understand their motives or emotions. Their eyes are also inhuman being solid black or deepest brown. There is no perceptible iris or pupil and they do not blink, so when looking at their faces it is very difficult to see what they are looking at. Centaurs by comparison are much less inhuman as their faces reflect a similar emotional range to those of any other humanoids. Hair is present in both sexes although it has to be said it is only a simulacrum of hair. The hair is made up of the same material as their scales, not normal hair at all. The strands are tube like in appearance ending in a point. These strands, as thick as a human finger in adults, bunch together naturally to form dreadlocks.

Hair length and its decoration is a matter of status with the scorpionfolk. If single scorpionfolk are encountered with short hair then they are renegades. The pseudo hair grows at the same rate as the folk themselves, not constantly but in bursts. Consequently, once cut, the hair never reaches the height of an uncensored adult. Scorpionfolk with shorn hair remain of low status for the rest of their lives, even if they gain the right to remain in the tribe.



Growth amongst the scorpionfolk is a peculiar thing, unlike that of vertebrates. They grow in spurts, the chitin armour once set is relatively stiff making it impossible for the soft tissue inside to grow beyond the limit set by the armour. Consequently, in order for them to grow they must shed their skin, like a snake. This occurs approximately once a year for well-fed scorpionfolk, and takes about an hour. Once the outer chitin is shed, the new flesh underneath is soft which allows a burst of growth, normally a 20% increase in size. Although particularly well-fed examples moult more than once a year, this 20% increase is the limit of growth. The new chitin armour takes a number of hours to harden dependant on conditions, in the hot desert it can take no more than two hours but in more temperate regions it can take up to three times this.

An adult female member of a successful tribe can expect to be of adult size and ready to mate at 10 years, but this can be reduced by half if they are fed more than normal.

Females grow to approximately ten feet long from the front of their scorpion torso to the bottom of their tail, males are a little smaller and lighter. This is the limit of normal growth after this while they age and moult normally they do so at a reduced rate. Each time they

moult their hair grows, they put on a little bulk and grow spines or growths instead of the normal size increase. These growths and the increase in bulk make them look more formidable but have no other effect.

The scorpionfolk body is articulated in a different manner to that of vertebrates. They do not have an internal skeleton and as such do not have the same range of movement one would expect. Their upper torso does not have the same flexibility as that of a humanoid. Their body is rigid, articulated around joints allowing some bending but no flexing.

The folk can bend their torso forwards and backwards up to 30° from their 'waist' but have little sideways movement. This allows the folk to pick up things from the floor but not to lie down, or crouch over.

Scorpionfolk within tribes live for between thirty and forty years. Unusual examples can live up to fifty or sixty, but at forty they are past their prime, and have stopped moulting and growing.

Once members of the tribe are past their prime they are likely to have their positions usurped by younger, fitter adults. If they are not killed when they lose their position they are exiled from the tribe. Exiles are fair

He did not have long to wait before, bursting forth from the rocks and ground, came an army of aberrations. Creatures out of a nightmare, they approached the caravan at a charge, making peculiar chittering noises, seemingly men riding huge scorpions.

The archers instantly began to rain arrows down on the creatures, calmly sure of the spearmen's protection. Gritting their teeth, the lancers drove their terrified warhorses straight at the charging creatures.

The noise of the subsequent clash was huge but most of Masef's troopers survived to break through the charging line. With the momentum of their charge barely slowed by the impact with the lancers, the enemy bore onwards. As they closed, the Captain – all icy calm now combat was joined – realised that these beasts were the dread scorpionfolk of legend.

On they charged towards the standing archers, until at the last minute the infantry stepped in front, each grounding a long, heavy spear. As the scorpionfolk crashed against these spears, many died instantly and many more were wounded for the soldiers were well trained in handling cavalry.

'Damn!' shouted Masef as he lopped the head from one of the folk foolish enough to attack his warhorse. His men were taking casualties as well and some of the dying scorpionfolk managed to break the defensive line and still kill some of his men.

The momentum of the charge was broken though and some fifty of the scorpionfolk were left dead or dying on the spears of the infantrymen or peppered with arrows. Those that survived or shied away raced back the way they had come, only to be met in turn by the remaining lancers who killed far more this time.

The courtier, battered but still alive, rushed towards Masef to offer his congratulations, only to find all the soldiers still at arms facing outwards. 'What is wrong? We won didn't we?'

Sighing at the stupidity of the man, the weary captain replied 'It's not over. That was just the beginning; they were just testing us out. See those bodies? They are the young expendable males.' Glancing at his second he raised an eyebrow and the lieutenant raised two hands and indicated seven. 'We lost seven good men, little man, and it is not over by a long shot.'

'So what do we do now?' asked the courtier in a quiet voice, shock setting in at last.

'We wait and we pray that we have given them something to think about. Hopefully we have become too expensive for them to swallow, which will make them think twice about attacking again. Hopefully. Now leave me alone. I have work to do.'

The shrinking man straightened a touch, shaping to reinforce his authority over the caravan. Masef waved the action away without a word, his gesture implicit. This was no time for a city-bred lapdog. It was a time of war.

game for any scorpionfolk that come across them, so only an exceptional individual survives. Old folk are very unusual; they normally just fade away as their physical prowess declines.

The folk are perfectly adapted to the nomadic life they lead; they are not comfortable in the cities and houses of humanoid races. Obviously these places are not built for the folk and they do not fit in physically or mentally. Their eating habits do not endear them to polite society and their physical presence makes most people wary, if not openly hostile.

It is in the wide-open spaces that they are most at home, where they have no fear of knocking over everything in sight.

How the Folk Came to Be

'The history of how the scorpion folk came into being is shrouded in mystery, no one really knows, but they were once human.'

Nomadic bard oral tradition

The scorpionfolk were almost certainly created as a result of magical intervention, but what form the magic took is open to speculation.

Their form is similar to that of the driders, the spider-drow combination seen elsewhere in the world. Indeed, scorpions and spiders are cousins in the natural world, so the fusion of man and scorpion could be something of a similar nature.

According to some scholars the Great Desert came into being as a result of a conflict between two rival civilisations and their gods. Of the two gods little is really known, the conflict was wide ranging and savage, leaving the shattered remains of great cities and other buildings in the desert. Only one of the gods has been positively identified from ancient carvings and from the oral tales of local people. This is the Scorpion God still worshiped by the folk today.

When the conflict drew to a close the losing side had the last laugh, turning their verdant green kingdom into the barren desert we see today. Who the god of these people was and where the losing side disappeared to is unknown.

Refusing to give up the land that they had won at such cost, the victors petitioned their god to make the land

fit for them to live in. The Scorpion God found it was unable to reverse the mighty spell used to create the desert so it answered their prayers in an unusual fashion.

Be careful what you wish for, for it may come to pass in ways you do not expect.

Ancient Proverb

Harnessing the power of the spell used to create the desert, the Scorpion God changed its people to live in the land they had won.

As a result the scorpionfolk were born from the ashes of their once humanoid race and the image of their god. The Scorpion God is non-human and in this fusion of humanoid and scorpion something was lost and whatever civilisation they had previously was completely changed. Their transformation was so complete and all encompassing that their very thought processes and attitudes were completely changed, becoming as inhuman as their god. The things that had previously driven them now held no interest, their goods and treasures were useless to them, clothing, foodstuffs, even jewellery just did not suit them anymore.

The scorpionfolk were not unhappy with the transformation. Revelling in their newfound power they took to wandering the broken lands that made up their former domain. An arrogant and competitive people before the change, the majority took to this new life. It is certain that there are few voices of descent within the folk today.

Over time the folk learned that they had not completely lost their mastery of magic; some magic from their transformation was left in their new bodies allowing all to harness this power to cast the illusions that they are so fond of today.

Into the Minds of the Folk

How do they think these people these folk, who knows the mind of a killer

Borrik, Bard of the Barrens

It is difficult for most humanoids to understand and relate to any truly inhuman race and the scorpionfolk are as inhuman as they come. Once they may have been like man, elf or dwarf, but now they are completely different. Even saurians can be related to humanoids;



PHYSIOLOGY

after all mammals and saurians have a similar ancestor somewhere in their family trees.

Scorpionfolk revere insect-kind and scorpions most of all. Their actions often reflect those of their more primitive cousins. Short tempered and exceedingly violent in their response to the unexpected. Scorpions strike first and worry about the consequences after and so do the folk. This is the most important thing to remember about the scorpionfolk, surprise them and they will attack immediately.

Where the spider is considered a patient creature, the scorpion is an impulse hunter, the violent aggressive killer of anything big or small that crosses its path. This is, of course, not true; the scorpion does not strike out completely at random, but only when threatened, and the spider is often more aggressive than the scorpion, but never let truth get in the way of generalisation. The folk do not follow a behaviour pattern based on a stylised caricature of the scorpion.

Like many creatures there are two imperatives that drive scorpionfolk: survival and reproduction. Their physiology requires that they eat live prey, hunting and killing their own food. They consume the whole of their prey and as such do not need to hunt often, but their large size requires they consume a large amount. An antelope or a horse will sustain an adult for a couple of months of normal activity before they need to feed again. The alternative is one humanoid each month, for they have no problem eating anything that walks, crawls, swims or flies. They do not brew beer or drink wine and they do not need to drink water – all the moisture they need comes from their prey. This makes them poor hosts for dinner and even worse guests.

It does however give them plenty of time between meals to do what they want. What they want to do is protect their territory, killing or drive off any intruders or other tribe of scorpionfolk who infringe their boundaries. They defend their territory aggressively, seeking out any intruder and punishing them mercilessly.

As a people, one of the best ways to understand the folk is to realise that they are intrinsically indolent. When not hunting or travelling the thing they like best is to do nothing. The only thing that concerns a member of the folk who is not hungry or under threat is improving their social position. Males spend their lives trying to gain the right to mate with the alpha female and, if they survive, breed with the highest-ranking females. The

females spend their time trying to earn the right to breed and perhaps take the position of the alpha female.

Each member of a tribe has to earn the right to live, and the young must spend much of their early lives fighting among themselves trying to survive and have their own tent. Any who survive to five moults, approximately five years, and who have an adult sponsor can expect to undergo a trial after which they are given their own space in camp and a tent in which to live. After this point they will live alone for the rest of their lives, trying to improve their social position.

All scorpionfolk acquire possessions and pets – giant scorpions – throughout their lives, filling their tents with their treasures. The scorpions are guards and beast of burden, trained from an early age to follow simple commands. These scorpions provide an essential component in folk society, not just as beasts of burden but also as totem creatures and signals of authority. The larger the stable of scorpions a member of the folk has the higher their ranking.



HABITAT

The scorpionfolk form small, close-knit communities, the largest being 50 adults, double the number of young and upwards of 50 giant scorpions. Being nomadic they need little in terms of property carrying what they need on the backs of their animals between temporary camps. Needing little food and being unable to save or preserve any excess, they carry few supplies of this nature. What they do carry are their treasures, their weapons and the comforts of their tents.

Scorpionfolk communities are generally matriarchal, centred around the largest and eldest female of the group, although this is not exclusively the case.

The places where the scorpionfolk live are generally barren lands and desert areas. While they do not like direct sunlight, they seem to have a high tolerance for heat but very low temperatures make them sluggish. They breed slowly in bursts, because of external pressures. Consequently they do not overpopulate their environment and feel little need for conquest over other lands, perhaps a throwback to their creation as guardians of the Great Desert.

THE DEEP

The deserts and the arid land that surrounds them are difficult and dangerous to travel across. Great preparations are required before travelling in this inhospitable terrain. The dryness and lack of a readily available food source requires that any traveller take supplies with them, which in turn requires pack animals. Planning such a journey is a matter of balance; the more you take, the more supplies are required, and the more supplies taken, the more transport is required. Only great need or great profits make these journeys worthwhile. Large caravans allow a number of guards to be supported but also make them larger and more profitable targets for brigands or the scorpionfolk.

There is little moisture in these lands and creatures not adapted to them do not survive without supplies of water. The scorpionfolk on the other hand lose little moisture during the heat of the day, and seldom drink. They do not require water the way mammals do, deriving what they need from their prey.

The heat of the day and the direct light of the sun at noon are uncomfortable even for the scorpionfolk. Due to their inability to blink they find direct sunlight uncomfortable and must shade their eyes from the glare, meaning that they normally find shade during the height of the day.

If a traveller in the desert comes across a shady spot with a sea of brightly coloured pavilions he is wise to avoid them. If that is possible of course, because the scorpionfolk have guards even when at rest. Beware the rustling of crickets where they do not belong.

The scorpionfolk use illusions too, so an unexpected oasis should be treated with some scepticism and avoided on principle.

The physiology of the scorpionfolk, with their many legs, spreads their weight out over a wide area making them able to travel across even the softest sand easily without appreciable loss of speed. In addition, the tips of their feet are equipped with hooks allowing them to climb well regardless of their bulk, so the high, steep cliff faces of a desert wadi are no real guarantee of safety from a creature that can scale walls.

The colours of the scorpionfolk blend in with their surroundings, muted greys and brown. Like the people of the ice lands desert dwelling scorpionfolk have many names for the sand at their feet. Describing every nuance of the sand, they think of themselves as part of the land, living with it rather than on it.

Where they have taken up residence in land other than the sand, they have a similar connection to their home territory. Knowing their home territory intimately they are the masters of the ambush, enhanced by their use of illusions to disguise their positions.

Wadis of the desert and the rocks of the outlands are favourite ambush sites for the scorpionfolk because the best illusions are based in reality. Any large rocks or mounds of sand need to be treated with suspicion as they may be hiding one or more of the scorpionfolk.

There is game enough on the outer fringes of the desert to sustain the scorpionfolk, making them less likely to raid for food. Scorpionfolk living in these areas often make deals with the local traders allowing them to travel across designated routes, for a price. This ensures that these scorpionfolk are less likely to attack people if they are just passing through and more likely to negotiate. However, if these travellers stray from the



HABITAT

caravan routes and into territory not covered by agreements then they risk disaster.

A meticulous and ordered people, scorpionfolk set up camp in a predictable layout each time they bivouac. The shape and symmetry of the tents is one of the best ways to identify the individual tribe encountered because each tribe uses a different pattern.

The layout of any camp does bear certain similarities being set up in a circular fashion with the leader of the tribe in the centre of a number of pavilions radiating outwards like the spokes of a wagon wheel.



Members of the tribe with the highest standing have their accommodation in the largest pavilions at the

centre of the camp. Those of lower standing have positions farther away from the centre towards the outer edges. The young are kept in crèches approximately

It was some time later, after the soldiers had dispatched the fallen and begun treating the wounded, that Masef sent for the courtier.

'Have you been praying?' asked Masef, still watching his men.

'Yes, for all I am worth, yes,' said Archier. 'The priest was helping me, the Scorpion God is jealous of his territory, and we have been praying for divine aid.'

'What did you just say?' barked Masef, forgetting the man's title once more in his fury. 'You're telling me there is a priest travelling with us and you've had him praying with you!'

Archier nodded mutely at the anger in the captain's voice.

'Well go get him and have him help my men, you little idiot!' Masef was holding his rising temper at bay as best he could. 'But before you go is there anyone else you've not told me about?'

'Only the royal sage, Captain Masef,' cringed the cowed courtier 'He is only a bit of a mage, useful for finding out things.'

'Lieutenant,' called Masef, in his uncomfortably quiet voice.

'Sir?' came the reply as the younger man approached.

'This man has a priest and a mage in that wagon. Get Sergeant Hathen and three men. Have the priest taken to the wounded and see what he can do. Find out what use the mage is and search the wagon for anything else that has been forgotten.'

'But but no one can see her before the Sultan! She is as a rose which will wither under the open sun,' protested Archier, plucking at Masef's arm.

The Captain glanced at Archier and then down to his arm. 'Oh, and Lieutenant? If this man opens his mouth again kill him, if you would be so kind.'

'As you command, captain,' replied the lieutenant formally, enjoying the look of terror on the courtier's face.

SCORPIONFOLK SOCIETY

Scorpionfolk civilised? Don't make me laugh. They are all savages.

Caravan survivor

The size and opulence of a scorpionfolk's tent is a good indication of status; even renegade folk living in civilisations other than their own have, as their inner sanctum, a tent filled with cushions and tapestries, where they retire during the middle of the day and the cool of night.

Most races view the scorpionfolk as an unpredictable, self-serving and unrepentantly evil race. Any that know the folk would not agree with this stereotype and most scorpionfolk would not consider themselves evil; they are as they always have been.

The minds of the folk are not like those of the mammalian or saurian races. There is no such thing as love or compassion, not because they deny themselves these emotions but because they genuinely do not feel them. They only respond to might, fear for their tribe or of losing status within the tribe, because nothing matters except the tribe.

One of the many things lost in their transformation was the need or ability to create things with their own hands. Scorpionfolk no longer make anything for themselves having no arts or crafts of their own. The folk do not even carry equipment to make or mend anything, disposing of items that are broken or too damaged to use and acquiring new ones. Their lifestyle as wandering nomads could account for this, but it is their arachnid side that is responsible. Scorpions do not make anything for themselves and the folk are no exception to this, being more like intelligent scorpions than humanoids.

Scorpionfolk society is based on the theory that if you can take something and hold onto it then you have the right to do so. As a consequence they do not consider it stealing or murder to kill and eat travellers and steal their goods. If the travellers were worthy they would have arranged better protection for themselves.

Individual status within each tribe is based on this same principle, 'might is right'. Each member of the folk

has to prove their might in order to earn the right to do things within the tribe, from gaining the right to have a tent to earning the right to mate. Throughout their lives scorpionfolk are continually trying to prove themselves worthy of their status by undertaking trials of one kind or another. These trials often involve following the orders of their elders and betters, as well as more formal age and position related trials.

Prestige in Folk Tribes

The hierarchy is very structured and simple to understand. Those with the highest level have the most prestige, with the below list showing precedence in the event of characters with the same level.

- † Priest
- † Ranger
- † Barbarian
- † Warrior
- † Adept
- † Sorcerer
- † Bard
- † Female over male
- † Age over youth
- † Giant scorpion
- † New-born folk

Special druids are not part of a tribe but are treated with great respect.

To better understand scorpionfolk a good place to start is to look at their mating habits and how they handle their young. By looking at these issues it is possible to gain an insight into the way they think through the way they treat one another.

As with anything else an adult male must earn the right to mate. This can be through valour in the field of battle but generally involves helping in the running of the tribe and through usurping the position of other, older males.

Once the males have reached a position where they are eligible to mate they will go through a ritual of purification. This involves leaving their tents and their pets and going out into the desert away from the camp. They spend the night avoiding bands of high-ranking females from their troop and the other normal hazards of their land. If the females locate the male they try and capture him and bring him back to the camp. If this happens the females gain prestige and the male loses the right to mate along with much prestige. The



decision to undertake this trial does not come lightly to scorpionfolk males as it can threaten their lives. Females occasionally kill a captured male who they feel is unworthy before returning to camp, and the loss of prestige involved in capture can result in the male being exiled from the tribe.

Should the males return undetected they are deemed worthy of attempting a trial with the alpha female. This is the most dangerous time for a male, as the mating is actually more a test of strength and will than courtship. Under the watchful eyes of the tribe's highest-ranking individuals, the supplicant and the alpha female begin a sideways circular dance. The dance spirals the two together and when they meet the male and female lock pincers and begin a strange tug of war. If the male is powerful enough to wrestle the female into position he may attempt to mate.

This is only symbolic and does not result in a union as the alpha female only mates with the highest ranking male. If the male fails to make any headway with the female she will in all likelihood kill and eat him. Neither partner uses their stings in the dance, and if the female does sting the male then it is because she found him unworthy.

If he survives the male will then get to repeat the process with a female of a similar social standing. Again, the male risks the female eating him if he fails, but if successful he impregnates the female with a number of packets of sperm and she becomes pregnant.

Females give birth to up to 20 young at a time, which are born alive but are only semi-intelligent. The mother determines when to give birth, the number of young and their sex based on the available food supply and the requirements of the tribe. This choice is an unconscious one by the female and is hormonally based. The young are inevitably born in places of safety, special birthing areas in the heart of the scorpionfolk's home range, regardless of when the impregnation takes place. It can be up to a year from impregnation to birth although the female is only pregnant for three months. In times of plenty more young will be borne to the tribe than in times of hardship. The only exception to this is where warfare or other factors have cost the tribe many members. In this situation pregnant females give birth to a large number of young.

The young are approximately two-foot long, miniature versions of their parents, when born. Initially they cling to the back of their mother, never straying more

than a few feet away from her for any length of time. Within a month the mother grows tired of their attention giving them over to one of the tribe's giant scorpion nurses to be looked after in a crèche. The young are not able to tell the difference between mother and nurse, and treat the scorpion the same way they were treating their mother. The crèches are located in large pavilions mid way between the edge of the camp and the centre. The youngest children are located on the outer edge of the crèche and the eldest on the inner. This follows the standard pattern of the folk to have the more expendable on the outside, protecting the less expendable on the inside.

Both parents gain great prestige with the birth of the young but they take no part in their upbringing. After the male has impregnated the female and the female gives up the young to the nurse their parental responsibility ends. Up to this time the male hunts for the female but does not spend time in her tent, they still maintain their solitary existence.

Neither parent takes any further part in the upbringing of their young. The adults' need to be alone overwhelms their parental instincts, and without the symbiotic relationship between scorpionfolk and giant scorpions the tribe would not prosper.

Young scorpionfolk do not need to feed for most of their first year of life, existing on the yolk sack inside their stomach and getting all their nourishment and liquid from this source only. During this period they learn their first lessons in the tribe; how to hunt and kill, and how to avoid being killed themselves. They are hunting machines at this time, preying on anything that crosses their path. These are likely to be small animals, such as mice and reptiles but may also be siblings or even older scorpionfolk. They do not eat their prey, being unable to feed the way adults do. Young folk do not have the enzyme injectors on their legs, but they learn the skills they need to survive. As they get older they spend their time performing feats of strength against one another and against other older young.

As a result of these activities less than half of the young from any one birthing survive to have their first meal. At this point the young are kept in the crèche, segregated by approximate age, well away from the adults. The young are often unable to discern a valid target, like one of their siblings from an adult, and attack any adults that they come across in the same way they hunt each other. If they do this they are inevitably

killed and eaten by the adult no matter if they happen to be the parent or not.

At around six months to a year, the surviving young are turned out of the camp into the wild. Those that successfully kill and eat their first meal may then return to the camp. Those that do not return before the camp moves either die or are abandoned to the wild. Those that return move along with the tribe to their next camp, and begin their first moult.

Feeding Habits

Once a prey animal has been immobilised or incapacitated it is returned to the camp where the individual capturing the food eats it. It is important to note that scorpion folk do not share their food but higher-ranking adults can take food from younger or lower ranking adults. In times of scarce food only the highest-ranking adults eat and the younger lower ranking adults are expected to make do. It is not uncommon during a time of extreme hardship for the tribe to shrink down to just it's highest ranking members with the lower ranks being consumed by their tribe mates.

Once they have successfully moulted, scorpionfolk gain a measure of intelligence and begin to learn the intricacies of their native language. They move from the yearling crèche into a larger tent with other young of their own age. They still fight one another but their combats are more stylised now and they begin to show the behaviour patterns of adults. As a result there are less fatalities, and 80% survive to their next moult.

During their second year the young begin to take up duties around the camp clearing up the mess and setting up and taking down the tents. They are under the scrutiny of other older members of the troop and chaperoned by their giant scorpion nannies but still not expected to interact with the adults of the tribe. Attacking or otherwise interfering with the adults of the tribe still gets them killed.

Their second moult is much like the first, they are sent out to hunt, although they have been feeding all year. This time however they are expected to hunt together larger prey and to bring the kills back to the tribe. Successful young are given different quarters again with more space and less occupants.

This pattern is repeated over and over again over the life of the young until at about five years old they are given adult tasks to undertake and expected to become the back bone of any combat force. Young adult males and females from about five years onwards have a full grasp of the language of the tribe and are rational, sentient creatures. They are the menials of the tribe and are expected to control and protect their younger relatives, teaching them what they need to know.

At this stage they are expected to gain a mentor among the adults of the tribe and hone their hunting, scouting and interpersonal skills within the tribe and begin to learn to cast the spells that make them such dangerous opponents. Young folk showing special ability begin training in the classes they will hold for the rest of their lives. Usually these classes are barbarian, ranger, cleric, fighter and, occasionally, sorcerer or bard. All these professions are of high status and greatly sought after but only those who prove to be apt are chosen and only the best survive to full adulthood. Young of this age make up the shock troops of the tribe being the first into a battle and the last to choose from the



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spoils. Of a large litter of 20 young only 10% reach this point, ten years later, ensuring only the strongest and fittest survive.

As they grow they gain 1+1 Hit Dice per moult up to the age of 12, at which point their maximum Hit Dice is set, unless they have a class to improve on this.

MAGIC AND THE FOLK

It is said of the folk that they are magical, they wield magic naturally as if it were part of them rather than some external force.

Druid Malan

From their beginnings, the scorpionfolk have been associated with magic. Their origin is likely to have been as a result of magic, and adventurers who have braved the dangers of the barrens to explore the lost cities tell of finding the remains of great magical constructs or buildings that could only be constructed with magical aid.

So it is perhaps unsurprising that when they became scorpionfolk they still retained a vestige of magic in their new form. The people they were must have been very fond of illusions, for illusions are what make the already deadly folk that much more dangerous. Adult members of every tribe have the ability to cast illusions. At the age of five the young adult folk develop the ability to cast a *mirror image* spell, at seven years old they learn to cast another and at ten, after passing their initiation into manhood, they learn to cast a *major image* once per day.

Another side effect of their transformation is their innate spell resistance, which manifests itself after the young's fifth moult. At this point the young gain a spell resistance of 2, increasing this by 2 points every Hit Dice gained up to a maximum of 18 at 12 Hit Dice.

The scorpionfolk revel in their use of these illusions for both pleasure and for combat. Young folk are encouraged to practise their illusions at the behest of their elders and mentors, and are expected to do so every day. This makes life in a camp an unusual experience as illusions fill the folk's tents.

Adult folk and those involved in hunting parties do not use their *major image* for frivolous activities, but save it for protecting the tribe and for any combat situations. They most often use the image to project an illusion

of an oasis, town or other physical feature to lure travellers into ambushes. Less experienced or capable scorpionfolk use the image to project inoffensive terrain to hide behind.

Tribes of scorpionfolk almost always have a number of divine casters of some description within each tribe, normally a priest of the Scorpion God. The tribes of the folk are probably the only place this god is worshiped and little is known about it as no outsider is ever inducted into the priesthood. Occasionally some tribes produce druids but these are very rare and are ejected from their tribes, the Scorpion God is very jealous of his people.

Occasionally there are very few true arcane magic users in a tribe possibly one or two sorcerors and very occasionally a bard but they never seem to produce wizards. The folk do not seem to have the patience for book learning of any type. What spells their arcane casters use are learned from their mentors and not from other teachings.



Scorpionfolk Language

Like most creatures, scorpionfolk have their own language, although theirs is virtually impossible for normal humanoids to learn. The language is based equally on vocal sounds and body language. Their vocalisations are sharp and guttural with glottal stops and few vowels. While it is possible to understand individual sounds, it is virtually impossible to decipher the meaning of the sentence without considering the body as a whole. Body posture, leg position, the position of the claws and tail make up as important a statement about the conversation as the noises they make.

By rubbing their walking legs together, they make a chirruping noise not unlike a grasshopper, that carries long distances. Rubbing different pairs of legs together produces different noises associated with different emotional states, and the speed at which they are rubbed often indicates an increase in the emotional state the sound indicates.

Generally rubbing the back legs together is a sign of anger and an indication that they are about to charge while rubbing the front pair together indicates hunger or that they are about to feed.

Each tribe or family line has different leg sounds, making inter-tribal conversations a little complicated and inter-species communication fraught with danger.

When the folk are safe and at rest they make a large amount of noise very little of which is intelligible language but all of which is communication. However they can be incredibly silent when hunting or scouting and do not make involuntary sounds of pain or pleasure.

As they grow they learn to speak other tongues, all learn to speak the language of Terran, and most learn the trade tongue. By age three all speak the folk's language and by five they are learning Terran. By ten they can speak the trade tongue.

The spells that arcane casters learn are not directly offensive, such as *magic missile* or *fireball*, but mass effect spells like illusions, charms and the like. They prefer non-destructive spells that enhance their physical capabilities rather than spells for offensive purposes.

The nature of their spell use is probably bound up in their having *spell resistance*. Spells acting directly on individuals may fail but those acting on their surroundings do not.

The distrust the folk have for arcane magic, and especially offensive magic, seems to have a cultural basis, probably a throwback to the war that led to their creation. It is only tribes that have regular contact with the outside world that have these occasional arcane spellcasters.

Some tribes have a tradition of adepts instead of separate divine or arcane spellcasters. These tend to be the less refined and deepest desert dwellers where the tribe cannot spare individuals to undertake both roles, they function as per the adept in *Core Rulebook 2*.

The largest of tribes has one 6th-8th level cleric and two of 4th-6th level, two of 2nd-4th level and four 1st-2nd level apprentices with spheres from Law, Earth, Animal and Travel. Smaller tribes are blessed with clerics of proportionally lower level.

Tribes who do have arcane spellcasters are generally of a larger size whose home range is close to the more civilised lands. Those that have them have a limited number of sorcerers, one of 4th-6th level, one 2nd-4th level and two or three 1st-2nd level apprentices. Where a bard exists within a tribe there will not normally be sorcerers, and there will be less of them, normally one of 4th-6th level and one 2nd-4th level apprentice.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER RACES

Most civilised people avoid the folk and those that seek them out do not often survive the experience.

Excerpt from Travel Guide to the Great Desert

Relations between scorpionfolk and other races are, at best, somewhat strained, if not openly hostile. Those races that know of the folk often do so only through reputation, rather than first-hand knowledge.

Reputation

It is said that a dangerous reputation is worth a thousand soldiers, and the scorpionfolk's reputation is dangerous indeed. It is quite possible that they encourage their



savage reputation. The folk certainly revel in their status and do nothing to dismiss it. The area of land an individual tribe roams is often huge, and patrolling such an expanse is difficult. What better way to prevent interlopers than by having a reputation for slaughtering all comers.

Trade does exist between the scorpionfolk and the other races, as they have no industry. Mention has been made of agreements with traders for caravans to cross folk lands these too speak of trade.

However trying to find out who trades with the folk is difficult. This is due to the nature of such trade, as the trade goods of the scorpionfolk come from their raiding and pillaging activities and as such are considered stolen property by most traders. The traders, most often human, who deal in these goods are unscrupulous to say the least.

Elven people of the surface realms have little or nothing to do with the scorpionfolk as the location of their respective homes, the forests and the desert, ensure their paths seldom cross.

Consequently, where elves and scorpionfolk do meet it is likely that the folk will be treated as any other abominations and driven off. Likewise, elven visitors to the desert will be treated the same as any other interloper and most likely killed.

Legendary Race

Local legends tell of a race of tall desert dwellers with pointed ears. These humanoids are reputed to have a grey brown skin and eyes slitted like a cat. The local tribesmen say they favour desert colours wrapping themselves from head to foot with only their eyes showing.

When they have been observed it is only while fighting armoured men riding huge scorpions. My search begins to narrow. Could these people be the lost race of elves I am seeking?

Anonymous note found amongst wreckage of a caravan

Some tribes of scorpionfolk are rumoured to have colonised portions of the Underdark, which brings them

into competition with the drow. In such situations one might expect alliances to be built, coming as they do from a similar cultural background. Instead, mutual annihilation is a more likely outcome. The folk do not share territory.

Neither dwarves nor gnomes have home realms that preclude contact with scorpionfolk. There are few if any dwarven delves and even fewer gnomish settlements in desert or savannah regions so they do not interact. Just as with the elves, dwarves and gnomes are likely to try and drive off any folk venturing into their lands and the folk will treat them as any other unwanted interlopers to be killed or driven off.

Halflings on the other hand have a reputation for dealing with anyone where profit is concerned. This is not necessarily true of all halflings but their wandering life style has brought them into contact with many different races in many lands. Those that have come across the folk and survived have found themselves a veritable gold mine. Treasure from sacked caravans is readily exchanged for textiles and as much as 50% of all caravan goods that have been taken turn up in halfling hands elsewhere.

Scorpionfolk not having come across halflings before are as likely to attack them as any other intruder. If halfling traders are known to the folk they may actually wait for trade before opening hostilities.

Humans are such a diverse group it is impossible to say how the folk will treat them. Human traders pay for the majority of the caravan routes through scorpionfolk land in trade goods that the folk require.

In some places desert tribesmen have earned the grudging respect of the scorpionfolk, existing as they do in a similar fashion. These humans are often referred to as Twarec although that is thought to be the name of only one of the human tribes living like this. As a people they are a religious and tradition-bound race, very polite and courteous when approached correctly and terribly savage otherwise. They exist by trading across the desert and breeding their horses and livestock.

These Twarec live and prosper where no one else can even travel. Unfortunately they treat unwanted travellers and other interlopers in much the same way that the scorpionfolk do, by killing them.

Twarec Tactics

The Twarec have developed a number of tactics to deal with scorpionfolk, which enable them to coexist within their home ranges.

- † Using Archers mounted on fleet footed horses, too swift and agile for the folk to catch.
- † Never letting scorpionfolk close into melee.
- † Using scouts to match those of the scorpionfolk and to find the folk before the folk find them.
- † Having an intimate knowledge of the land.
- † Ambushing and killing scorpionfolk where they can.
- † Killing the young when they are on their trials.
- † Using hit and run tactics to harass scorpionfolk scouts and hunting parties.
- † Wounding their enemies and running away, letting the desert kill them.
- † Making and wearing armour from cast moults to confuse the scorpionfolk’s sense of smell.

SCORPIONFOLK ARMOUR RENEGADE FOLK, AND FOLK IN OTHER CULTURES

The cast-off skin of scorpionfolk can be used to make light armour for those that dare to harvest it. It takes a skilled animal hide worker to make this armour (DC 20 check), and one whole adult cast to make a suite of armour for a humanoid creature.



Never met a scorpionfolk you say? Don't you know who the head of your local thieves' guild is? Have you heard of the merchant who can always be relied upon to get caravans through the desert? Yes? Then you have heard of them then, for at the heart of all trade around here sits one of the folk.

Trollus, teller of tall tales

Not all scorpionfolk encountered are within the boundaries of the deserts or savannas they normally call home. Some folk have abandoned their life within a tribe for more civilised climes and have been encountered right across the land in cities and towns.

Renegades are often encountered in the lands inhabited by the folk, but they have a very short life expectancy. With all the area's tribes hunting them it is only a matter of time before they are found cornered and killed. So it is not really surprising that some of these renegades choose to run away completely from their tribal brothers, the will to survive is strong in most living beings.

Light Armour	Cost	Armour Bonus	Max Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure	Speed 30 ft.	Speed 20 ft.	Weight
Scorpionfolk Armour*	50 gp	+2	+7	0	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	5 lb.

*The armour gives a +1 to all Hide checks in the terrain from which the folk originate.



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Even renegade scorpionfolk do not fit into normal polite society, but then there is more to most societies than that seen on the surface. Even the weakest of scorpionfolk stands out far and above normal humanoids in terms of personal power. What use is a rapier wit or a daring mind when faced with the physical might of one of the folk.

When encountered, these scorpionfolk out of the desert normally have short hair for their size indicating that they have been ejected from their tribe for some crime. Those that are in this position are normally very sensitive about it and mentioning or referring to their position out of folk society is more than a little foolish.

Encountering lone scorpionfolk in humanoid societies is very unusual. Normally they are in some position of authority within the boundaries of the society they inhabit. While they are not good at scheming and politicking, which takes up so much time in humanoid societies, they are particularly good at ridding themselves of anyone on their way to the top, often by simply killing and eating them.

These renegades make their homes most readily in monstrous humanoid societies where morality and individual rights are not of high importance. Tribes of hobgoblins and orcs who live near the edge of scorpionfolk territory often have at least one of the folk in a position of authority over them. They are not hard or difficult task masters requiring nothing more than the obedience of their adopted tribe and regular feeding, something that hobgoblins and orcs excel at. In return, the humanoids get the protection of a mighty master.

In more civilised societies it is still possible to find scorpionfolk if you look hard enough. They generally inhabit the underbelly of a society hidden from the eyes of the general population. The folk that can survive in these situations are unusual even among renegades. Living in such societies requires a different thought process from that employed in the tribal environment and one not easily mastered by the straightforward scorpionfolk. Once adapted to the civilised world, individual scorpionfolk can live well. No one is going to cross a crime lord or merchant with a reputation for complete ruthlessness. Someone never seen but whom the best assassins seemingly cannot reach.

What do scorpionfolk who live like this want? They want the same as their tribal brothers, a nice big tent, plenty to eat and no one trying to usurp their position.

Occasionally scorpionfolk produce a druid, who once unmasked is inevitably ejected from their tribe. Unlike other renegades, druids do not have their hair shorn nor do the tribes in their area hunt them. The Scorpion God is a jealous deity but not one powerful enough to anger the gods of the land itself. These druids are more often than not left completely alone for the rest of their lives. Some oases boast an unseen protector who slaughters anyone or anything that upsets the balance of nature around their home. These druids do not follow the same pattern as their tribal brothers living closer to nature and abhorring any possessions at all, killing only for food, and then only none sentient creatures.



METHODS OF WARFARE

Fighting is a way of life for the scorpionfolk, and in many cases they live to do battle, to struggle and to prove their mettle to their tribe by overcoming all obstacles in their way. They consider every situation a challenge to be overcome, every encounter a test of their strength, and their basic method of meeting such challenges is with overwhelming force.

As noted previously, scorpionfolk do not feel emotions in the same way humanoid do, so they have no thought of compassion or mercy. An enemy is anyone who is not of their tribe, and the best way to deal with an enemy is to defeat them. Scorpionfolk do not take prisoners except when there is a specific reason to do so. After a successful combat the surviving folk almost always consume defeated foes. There is no point wasting food. Any creature taken alive, either surrendering or being captured is taken back to camp. Prisoners are inevitably killed and consumed back at the camp by the high status folk not involved in the combat.

This makes them very dangerous opponents in combat, because they seek nothing less than the complete annihilation of their enemies.

Scorpionfolk have four significant advantages over humanoid races in combat.

- † Firstly, they move very rapidly and have excellent manoeuvrability over a number of different surfaces.
- † Secondly, they are exceedingly strong, having a physical presence making most sane creatures avoid physical combat with them. Their pincers and their sting are bad enough but they wield weapons as well, making them very difficult opponents.
- † Thirdly, they have very tough, armour-like skin making them difficult to hit.
- † Finally, their use of illusionary magic to protect themselves during combat and help them ambush unwary souls means combat with them is generally a very short, one-sided affair.

Their tactics are simple; find the enemy before they find you, identify a problem before it becomes a threat to the tribe and crush it completely.

To achieve these aims tribes always have scouts spread out widely around the camp. If moving, the scouts tend to congregate in front and to the sides of the tribal column, but if they are at rest they spread out evenly all around.

These scouting groups are made up of three individuals; one young adult, one low-ranking adult and one specially trained ranger scout. If any of these groups spots a problem they signal the tribe by means of mirrors or by returning the young adult when this is not possible.

Once the main group has been informed of the problem a senior member of the tribe moves to investigate and young are sent out to contact the other scouts and inform them of the problem. Anyone observing the scorpionfolk at this point would be forgiven for thinking they were observing an ant's nest being disturbed. There is a frenzy of activity with the youngest being bundled away with their nurses to points of safety and a defensive posture being set up by the remaining adults and young.

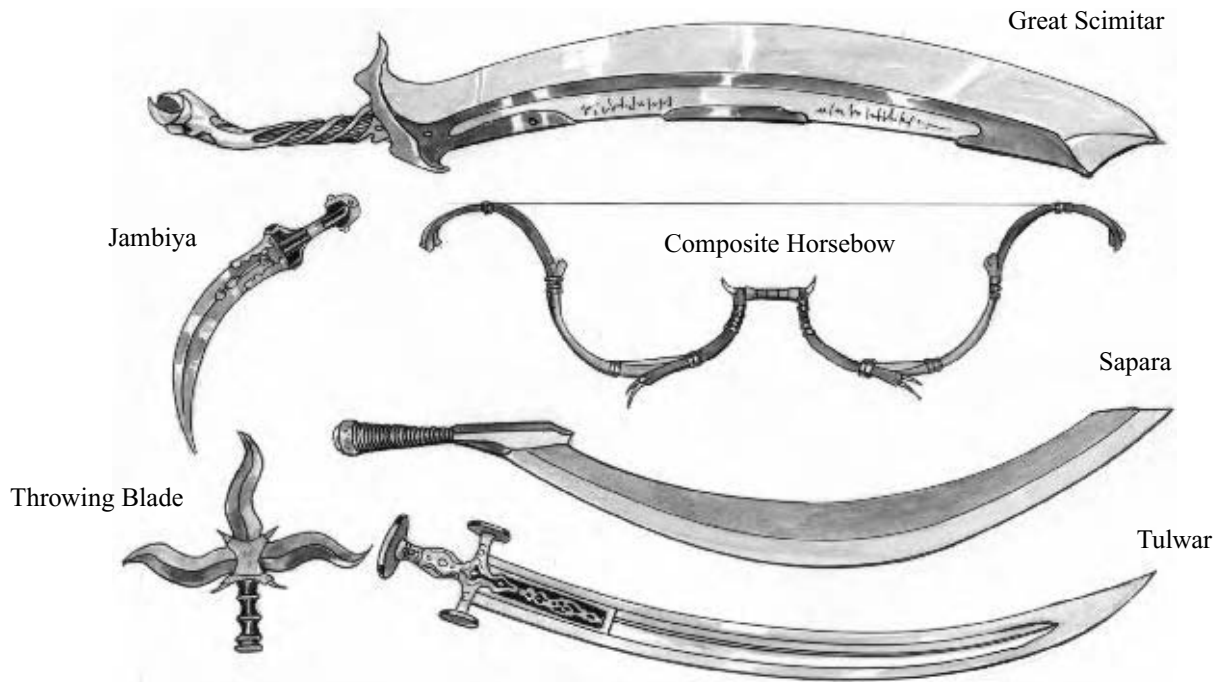
If a threat is too much to handle the tribe takes cover and hides or moves away at top speed, leaving a rear guard of expendable young adults to delay pursuit. If the problem is not so severe scorpionfolk will take their time and investigate thoroughly. Taking into account the terrain that the enemy is in or moving into and their potential capabilities, the adults quickly decide how to tackle the situation.

Having decided on a course of action, another frenzy of activity occurs with messages sent back to the main group. A war party is quickly assembled, made up predominantly of the expendable lower status folk with a smattering of more experienced and senior adults. This force gathers ahead of the enemy taking up camouflaged positions using natural cover and illusions.

When the enemy is in the perfect position a signal is given and the ambush begins. One group cast *mirror image* on themselves and charges down from all sides using heavy lances. The remainder stay out of melee and rain arrows down on the unsuspecting foe. The group involved in melee is made up of the more expendable, lower standing adults, with the senior adults present acting as archers.

Once the lancers hit they trample down and sting as many of the enemy as they can indiscriminately and





then disengage, repeating the charge time and again, not staying in contact for too long, not only giving them time to regroup, but allowing the archers to fire once more.

The speed and ferocity of the attack usually means the enemy is quickly overwhelmed. If the enemy puts up stiff resistance and the scorpionfolk start to take casualties, they withdraw as quickly as they attacked. The war band then scatters and hides before the enemy can regroup and counterattack.

The senior adults then meet to decide what to do. If the enemy is too strong for them, they tend to simply melt away into the desert. Otherwise reinforcements are sent for to replace those fallen and another ambush is prepared.

While the new ambush is being set up a small number of archers will harry the enemy from a distance, appearing from hiding to shoot a volley before disappearing once more. This pattern of harassment continues for a time and then stops, only to begin again later. This tactic is not intended to significantly hurt the enemy, but rather to keep them off balance and disorientate them.

Once the enemy reaches this new ambush site the pattern repeats itself; charge, trample and, if necessary, break off and run away.

If a tribal camp is under threat, a different technique is used. The lowest standing scorpionfolk are thrown at the enemy with the intention of engaging in melee until they are told otherwise or they are dead, while the rest of the tribe dismantle the camp and withdraw to a place of safety.

Like all animals, they are at their most dangerous when their young are threatened. If there is a chance of escape, the tribe fights only long enough so that the highest standing adults and some of the young can escape. If there is no escape the whole tribe, including the young, throw themselves at the enemy in suicidal waves, trusting that their mindless savagery and physical capability will drive the enemy off.

Arms and Armour

The people who were to become the scorpionfolk came from a civilised and organised society. They had all the normal arts and crafts associated with a Bronze Age civilisation. Since their cataclysmic alteration, they do not make any of their own weapons, taking what they need from the bodies of their foes, seeking weapons familiar in the recesses of their own memories.

Scorpionfolk favour exotic weapons in their humanoid hands. The weapons of choice in raiding and war parties are the lance and the composite horsebow (see below), which they use with great expertise. They

avoid reach weapons, except the lance, as using them tends to preclude a scorpionfolk warrior using its potent natural weapons.

What weapons scorpionfolk use are constrained by their availability. People being targeted by raiding or war parties can expect to face the same weapons they use themselves.

Weapons Commonly used by Scorpionfolk

These are weapons commonly used by desert dwellers, such as the aforementioned Twarc. Scorpionfolk will quite happily use any weapons available, but these are their preferred choices, along with a standard lance.

The bow is designed specifically for the requirements of horse archers. It is very powerful over short distances without requiring a large strength to wield and fires with a flat trajectory. A mounted archer cannot use his full body strength when drawing a bow and finds it difficult to employ the curved trajectory of normal bows due to the motion of his mount. The bow is so stiff that an arrow is not drawn up to the chin to fire but just past the elbow. The trajectory of the arrow once fired is flat and direct, almost like a crossbow.

Great Scimitar: The great scimitar is a useful and mighty sword. Simply an enlarged version of a normal scimitar with a larger than usual grip for two-handed use. Found most often in the hands of ceremonial

Martial Weapons

<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>						
Weapon	Cost	Damage (M)	Critical	Range		Type
Jambiya	4 gp	1d4	19-20/x2	-	1 lb.	Piercing/Slashing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Khopesh	15 gp	1d8	19-20/x2	-	4 lb.	Slashing
Sapara	15 gp	1d10	x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing
Tulwar	22 gp	1d6	19-20/x2	-	4 lb.	Slashing

Exotic Weapons

<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range		Type
Great Scimitar	75 gp	2d6	18-20/x2	-	14 lb.	Slashing
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>						
	80 gp	1d6	19-20/x3	50 ft.	4 lb.	Piercing
Throwing Blade	5 gp	1d4	19-20/x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing

Composite Horsebow: A variant of the composite or manufactured bow. These weapons are smaller in length than the normal composite shortbows, being on average no greater than 2 ½ feet in length. The weapon is made in the normal fashion for a composite bow in that it employs layers of bone and hide rather than wood to provide the spring of the weapon. Typified by a double 's'-shaped body, it is sometimes referred to as a recurved bow.

troops and headsmen, this weapon is unwieldy and difficult to use in battle hence it is an exotic weapon.

Jambiya: This flat, highly curved dagger has a narrow blade, sharp on both the inside and outside of the curve. Held from the thumb side of the hand, point forwards towards enemy. This is the standard dagger found in some of the desert climes.



METHODS OF WARFARE

Khopesh: The khopesh is a heavy, primitive and awkward weapon to use. The blade looks like a sickle blade grafted on to a straight shaft. This blade design is developed from an agricultural scythe, with the size and shape being because of the limitations of bronze from which the weapons were originally made. The khopesh is likely to have been the ancestor of many of the curved bladed weapons used in more advanced societies.

Sapara: The sapara is a variant of the khopesh. Saparas give a +1 inherent bonus to Trip attacks.

Throwing Blade: This weapon resembles a short sword with three or four points. The handle and lower part of the blade appear normal, but the blade forks several times into a number of dagger-like points. It is thrown horizontally, so that it spins parallel to the ground.

Tulwar: The Tulwar is essentially a heavy scimitar with a small handle. It has a heavy, curved blade, somewhat longer than a falchion, and in unskilled hands is particularly unwieldy. The blade is sharp on its convex side, forming a slashing weapon with a sharp tip that could also be used for thrusting when necessary.

Scorpionfolk do not manufacture armour themselves and do not have the patience to have armour made for them. Renegades who exist in other societies may well get themselves fitted for armour if they feel the need, but most folk, wherever they are, have a preference for not wearing armour.

Wearing Humanoid Armour

Should a scorpionfolk choose to wear a suite of humanoid armour they suffer the following penalties;

- † -4 AC Penalty
- † -4 Armour Check penalty
- † +20% Arcane Failure chance

Shields are equally ill thought of by scorpionfolk as they are of limited help to the individuals wielding them. Even the largest shield can only be used to protect the forward face of the user, leaving the sides unprotected. Additionally the shield interferes with the action of the pincers, stopping them from attacking properly. This alone makes them a rarity among scorpionfolk.



ROLEPLAYING WITH SCORPIONFOLK

There are two basic places to use scorpionfolk against players, those situations where the adventurers venture into land frequented by the folk and those situations where a renegade has set up outside these areas. These situations have some similarities, scorpionfolk behave in a predictable fashion, but in each case the motivation is different.

In the former case, scorpionfolk act to protect their land and drive off intruders regardless of why the intruders are there, while in the latter case the renegade will be acting to further whatever motive drove it into exile. In principle entering the folk's land is in itself fraught with danger; encountering them singly is bad enough but five of them, or worse, an entire tribe of scorpionfolk in their natural habitat is likely to be the death of a small party. Appearance is deceiving though, because this danger is one that can be prepared for and anticipated. When one of the folk is acting outside their culture things become a lot more difficult to predict. In many cases players may not even know that the creature they are acting against is not humanoid at all.

Scorpionfolk, no matter where they are tend, to follow the 'protect the tribe' pattern of behaviour. They will work initially to defeat the players not by force but by guile, sacrificing minor, less valuable, pawns while probing for weaknesses. The goal will be the same in the desert or in other more exotic locations – to destroy what ever gets in their way.

Scorpionfolk are, for the most part, uncomfortable with arcane magic and they will not instinctively resort to tactics involving its use. That is of course except their innate illusionary abilities, but then these are god given and not really considered arcane magic at all. They are quiet proficient at divine magic and more than happy to use divine spells against their enemies. Bearing in mind that divine casters in a tribal situation are considered to be high status individuals and are not sacrificed in quite the same way as young warriors. Getting a priest killed is not something that endears a tribe to their god after all. In situations where the exile is a

priest then these restrictions are even more apparent, they will not risk themselves in combat at all they are the tribe after all.

Treasure is not a driving force for tribes of scorpionfolk, but if those carrying something useful are weak, then they can expect to be shown no mercy, for the folk does not even understand the concept.

What is mine is mine and what is yours is yours only as long as you can keep it.

Scorpionfolk adage

Exiles can seem to act to acquire goods and treasure, but it is likely that this is an illusion, no scorpionfolk anywhere risks the tribe for material gain. If a renegade has arranged for something to be acquired it will be to show their power, not because they want it but because they can take it.

Trying to understand these creatures is very difficult in a one-to-one situation, motives are not clear, their facial expressions are none existent and their voices are harsh and do not project any emotion. The folk do not feel things they have a simple and uncomplicated emotional make up, there is anger and occasionally fear, elicit either or both and the response will be quick and simple, death to whatever caused the feeling.

Scorpionfolk exist to struggle, against each other, against the land but most of all against everything else that is not of the folk. The only exceptions are druids, and with them it is only a slight change in emphasis, the struggle is for the land and against anything that harms it. If one understands that challenging the scorpionfolk is what they are seeking in the first place then one understands why they make such good opponents. They like being challenged, the greater the better, and being at their most creative and effective when faced with something that really tests them. Why this is and to whom they are proving themselves remains a mystery.

The only defence against scorpionfolk in their environment is to be more like them than they are. Hiding from them and remaining unobserved is perhaps the safest thing, but not always practical. Facing them in combat is a terrible thing; anyone who does so and expects to survive must be incredibly powerful or have a lot of magical aid. The scorpionfolk are masters of the hit and run attack, damaging morale and destroying their enemy's ability to respond. The Twarec manage to survive and to a limited degree prosper by turning the



scorpionfolk's tactics against them. Surviving against a tribe requires the same from any adventuring party.

Against scorpionfolk hidden in other societies, this is made worse because they will be hidden from obvious view. They will use all their many advantages against their enemies. They will have the loyalty of their subordinates through fear, they will maximise their advantages and minimise those of their enemies. Opponents only have one advantage, one psychological weak spot to exploit: scorpionfolk hate surprises. They like things to be orderly and people and places to act in expected ways. Being creative and doing the unexpected is the best way of defeating a scorpionfolk enemy. Doing the unexpected and surprising scorpionfolk brings but one response; the same as if you surprised a scorpion - they react in anger, lashing out.



Scorpionfolk Names

The naming convention used by scorpionfolk is totally alien to outsiders. Bearing in mind that the language of the folk is based not just on sounds but on posture, names can sound the same for many individuals within the tribe with the only difference being a subtle change in posture. This makes things complicated for an outsider to tell them apart, even in conversation.

Much like other primitive tribes, the names tend to be descriptive. These descriptions change with great regularity, as the individual progresses through the different positions in the tribe. So an individual could have one name per year or even two or three through their lives. In theory, a 40-year-old, high-status individual could have had as many as 120 names in their life. This is very confusing for someone who visits with a tribe irregularly to meet and see the same creature.

Young individuals before their first moult are all known as 'Grrak.'

Young within their second and subsequent years are named for the crèche they inhabit e.g. Arrak, Mrrak, Vrrak and the like, and to differentiate between individuals the body posture is modified to indicate more or less respect. High-status individuals in a crèche receive the most respect. These names change as the young age and change crèches and as they change status within a crèche.

Older young under training for a profession are known by a name describing their class with a body position that describes their status and a leg sound that describes their master or mentor.

Zrazzk: Priest of the Scorpion God
Mrazzk: Scout/Ranger
Crazzk: Barbarian
Frazzk: Warrior
Prazzk: Sorcerer or bard (they do not differentiate between the two)
Drazzk: Druid

Those without professions or classes are known by their tribal name and their status within it.

The highest status male is known as Azarrk followed by his class name and the name of their tribe.
The male barbarian leader of the tribe Krakk is named Azarrk Crazzk Krakk.

The highest status female is known as Mzzak followed by her class name and the name of their tribe.
The female priest leader of the tribe Krakk is named Mzzak Zrazzk Krakk.

SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

Scorpionfolk are not the easiest of opponents but they are a fantastically challenging one. Defeating a tribe of orcs is one thing but defeating a tribe of the folk is something else entirely. Only the very powerful or very foolish choose to attempt it.

Having an ECL modifier of 16 and an individual challenge rating of 7 indicates just how much of a challenge these creatures are without any extra class levels. A large tribe could have a dozen divine casters of up to 8th level, rangers and barbarians of double this number but of a similar level and even more fighters. A tribe of scorpionfolk should be considered a hostile army and treated accordingly.

In these following examples are some simple adventure hooks and ideas for Games Masters to build upon. They accentuate the unique and deadly places where scorpionfolk can be encountered.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND

An old man in desert robes approaches the players. They are greeted in the elaborate fashion of the desert and the old man obviously wants something. He has heard about the legendary strength of the adventurers and wishes to hire them as guards on an archaeological expedition.

The old man, Hassan al Elief, is a well-known scholar interested in the lost peoples of the Great Desert. He has come across references to the two ancient warring peoples and of a huge city buried in the sand.

The city is reputedly full of magical treasure and architectural wonders, for the people who lived there were known to be great magicians. Hassan just wants to study the place and agrees to allow the players to keep any of the treasure found there.

If the party show only a limited amount of interest Hassan will pull out some artefacts which he has traded with local tribesmen. These artefacts are worth a lot

of money but are broken or damaged, examples could be weightless stones, stones that glow with an inner light and idols of a scorpion and a spider inlaid with precious stones and metal.

Neither mention of the people who live in the desert will be made nor of the danger. Hassan has already been refused by most of the mercenary and adventuring groups near the desert and is seeking people who know little of the dangers of the folk.

The caravan will be organised by Hassan and the players will just have to bring themselves and their gear. Mounts and all supplies will be provided if the players do not have their own.

All the players have to do is survive the trip into scorpionfolk territory and back again. The folk will be savage and implacable especially if the players have despoiled the city and stolen relics and other treasures.

Have the scorpionfolk harry the caravan on the way into the ruins but not an all out attack. Then in the ruins there can be all sorts of normal dungeon encounters. On the return journey the caravan will once more be harried by occasional small hit and run attacks, until there is one huge ambush at the end.

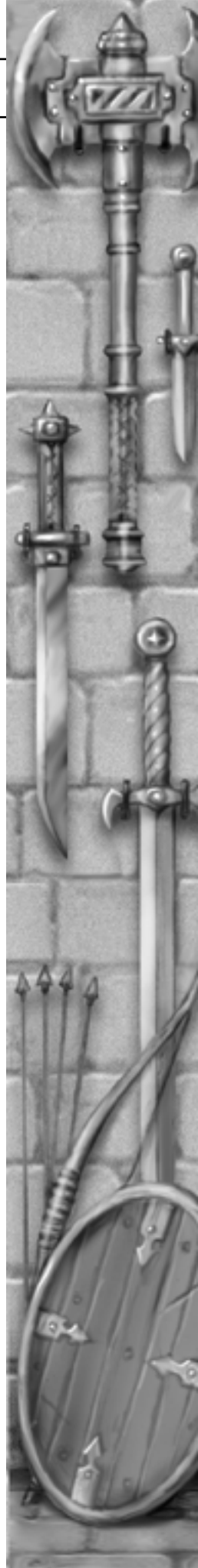
SLAYER'S GUIDE TO SCORPIONFOLK

The simplest of all adventures, a scholar is hired by a university to collect specimens of scorpionfolk for study. The players are hired to provide the muscle to capture one or more of the folk alive and to provide the corpses of others for study.

The expedition will be planned by others so there is no need for the players to do so. What the players will have to do is locate the folk without being located themselves, protect the caravan during any encounters and also to actually capture and subdue the samples.

This is obviously a very dangerous thing to do; capturing an enemy is much harder than simply killing them. Then there will be the nightmare of transporting the live specimens back to civilised lands

One twist could be that the captured creature is a renegade who will try to persuade the group to let it go. It could be a druid and the reason there has



been no hassle from the scorpionfolk is that the druid was stopping the local folk from ravaging local communities.

STING IN THE TAIL

A local businessman hires the group to visit the lands of a tribe of scorpionfolk and offer a new trade deal.

The expedition does not need much planning because the scorpionfolk are coming to a specific spot for the meeting. There are several options open here.

- † The scorpionfolk arrive but they are of a different tribe bent on usurping the power of the expected tribe. The players could be forced to help one tribe against another here.
- † It is a double-cross and the players are instructed to ambush the folk and kill them as the businessman is fed up with paying them extortion money.
- † The players have been hired by a local consortium of traders to find out how the businessman manages to trade with the folk when no one else can. He is of course a renegade.
- † The players meet with the scorpionfolk, who then try and persuade the players to destroy the businessman, promising all sorts of treasure or trade agreements. The reason is that the businessman is a renegade.

SEARCH FOR THE LOST ELVES

Either an elven elder or someone similar approaches the players asking assistance in locating a lost society of

elves. Tales have circulated of a tribe of desert dwelling people who seem to be elven in origin.

They seem to have been at war with the other peoples of the area for as long as anyone can remember. No bodies are ever recovered and any expedition sent into the deep desert is destroyed.

There are three variations here all based on the background of the folk.

- † Tales tell of an elven people in the desert who ride giant scorpions and bring destruction on any newcomers. Any expedition fails because there are no elves; these tales are false and the only inhabitants are the scorpionfolk.
- † An alternative is that there are an elven people deep in the desert. They hunt the folk and any other interlopers. These folk are like wild elves except their environment is that of the desert. They are exceedingly xenophobic and do not welcome any intruders. They have very limited arcane magic but much clerical magic. They do not believe in other elven lands or nations and believe that the whole world is a desert. Shorter lived than their woodland cousins they only have a lifespan of double that of a human, and most die before their time.
- † The last is that there are elves in the desert and the elves are the enemy of the scorpionfolk against whom they have struggled for centuries. These elves follow a spider goddess, have dark skin and retreated underground to escape the encroaching desert. They are, of course, drow, although finding them under one of the great ruined cities is not the blessing that the players expect.



THE KRAKK

The Krakk are perhaps the most infamous tribe of scorpionfolk found on the margins of the Great Desert. That should fool no one into thinking much is known about the Krakk, just that almost nothing is known about any other tribe. The Great Desert holds its secrets close to its chest, those that learn of them either will not or cannot tell.

What is known about the scorpionfolk comes in most part from encounters with the Krakk. Within recent history trade routes have been popping up along the stretch of desert the Krakk control which must be happening with

their collusion. Perhaps the Krakk are more ‘civilised’ than their cousins in the deep desert or perhaps something is driving them to acquire more trade goods. Who knows? No one who does is talking, but perhaps a group of adventurers will find out, one way or another.

THE TRIBE

Krakk is not really the scorpionfolk name for the tribe, it is a local approximation to the word and gestures that the tribe ascribe to themselves. Their name for themselves can be loosely translated as ‘They who live near the edge’ or ‘Those who live on the edge’ dependant on who does the translation. Translating the scorpionfolk language can be an imprecise art form.

Bartleby was heir to the Rockbottom tailoring business, a skilled tailor in his own right, as well as all round rogue and raconteur. Fleeing a slightly dodgy deal that had gone wrong Bartleby chose to hide in the hinterlands of the desert where his pursuers did not seem to want to go. After wandering about for a couple of days trying to find somewhere safe to hole up for a while when a storm blew up. Sand and dust blew in all directions, all but blinding him and driving his pony to distraction. Finally, he found the cave he had been searching for more by luck than judgement. It saved his life and perversely is responsible for making his fortune.

After emerging from his bolthole, he came across a large, tattered tent. No one was in residence but there were little treasures scattered around inside, and evidence that a large animal had been living in it.

He buried the treasures where he found them, being too heavy for him to readily carry. The tent would happily accommodate him and his mount so he took it.

Back in his bolthole he took out his sewing kit and, being a skilled tailor, began repairing the rents and wind damage to the structure.

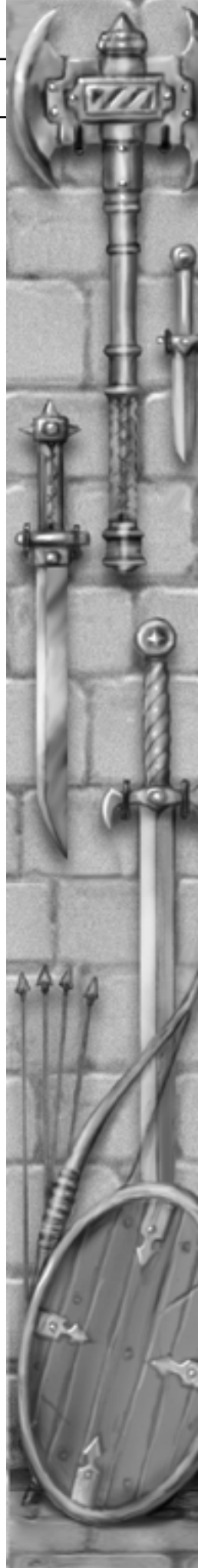
As he was about to finish his pony began to get a little nervous and Bartleby noticed the desert sounds had changed. He could now hear crickets calling to one another. Thinking he might have himself some nice cricket stew that night he took up his sword and sneaked out of the hiding place.

Standing below the entrance, he could see the source of the noise, a huge scorpion with a man riding it. Thinking he had been discovered and throwing caution to the wind he leapt onto the back of the scorpion and pushed his sword under the throat of the rider. Using his *ring of tongues*, he demanded that the man dismount.

Unfortunately he had jumped on the back of one of the scorpionfolk, which fortunately had already eaten that week and was just looking for its tent, which had blown away in the storm.

Tapping Bartleby on the shoulder was the huge claw of a second member of the folk. Amused by the gnome and a little surprised that he could speak their tongue so perfectly, they did not kill him immediately but decided to talk to him. After a while Bartleby admitted to having taken the tent but quite obviously he had not stolen it; he was just ‘fixing it’. They both seemed to believe him and thanked him for fixing it, being fair creatures they then offered the gnome the chance of a quick death or to give him a head start. Bartleby did not like these odds and made a counter offer, he would fix any tents that were damaged within the tribe.

Thus was a beautiful friendship born. Bartleby is still heir to the Rockbottom fortune, but he has more money of his own now. He heads a cartel of merchants who trade with the scorpionfolk of the Krakk. The Krakk too prospered, having better quality goods and weapons to fight their desert conflicts. Rockbottom Enterprises can get anything across the desert; they are very expensive but quicker and cheaper than going around – just.



THE KRAKK

The tribe has gone through great change in recent years with a new pair of leaders the male Azarrk Crazzk Krakk and female Mzzak Zrazzk Krakk. It is with their guidance that the tribe has grown to a record size and opened up trade routes through the desert.

A chance encounter 30 years ago between a scouting party of scorpionfolk and a gnome adventurer named Bartleby Rockbottom III began it all. This meeting changed their fortunes and latterly the tribe itself.

The tribe is very well off in scorpionfolk terms, their tents are well made and always in good condition. Damage is repaired at least once per month when the tribe trades with the Rockbottom men. They are full of luxurious furnishings, carpets, wall hangings and textiles as well as metal lanterns and plates of gold. The lowliest ten-moult adult has more treasure and goods than most other tribes' highest ranking female.

However, this does not change their basic nature. They still slaughter any who infringe their lands, but they often check if the intruders have permission first.

The tribe have a secret though. They are building up their strength for a reason and that reason is conquest. Having found the ruins in the centre of their domain Mzzak Zrazzk Krakk, who leads the tribe now, learned how to read, an unheard of thing.

Learning quickly of the glory of the people who lived in the ruins in times gone past, and understanding the connection between them and the scorpionfolk, she began to plan. After much thought and prayer she decided the scorpionfolk should be powerful once more and, with her god's help, soon would be.

The trading that has gone on now for a long time is used to build up the strength of the tribe to allow them to conquer other tribes. The last conquest was three years ago when they destroyed the last of the other great tribes who lived near the edge of the desert.

One of the largest of the scorpionfolk tribes already, eventually they intend to be the only tribe and at that point the people who ring the desert may wish they had never given support to the folk at all.

Using the Krakk

The Krakk are following a god-given plan of conquest, but not against the peoples of the desert. As such they represent the softer side of scorpionfolk, the one that might not kill you as soon as look at you. They may be open to negotiation and can offer the wary a way into the desert without resorting to open warfare.

An encounter with the Krakk can be a dangerous thing but it need not be deadly. They may even help the players as long as it furthers their long-term plans.

Not everyone in the tribe agrees with the path their elders are taking but can do nothing about it. Occasional accidents occur when caravans that should be safe are attacked and people are killed that should be allowed through.

The tribe is generally following a pattern that the Games Master can build on to produce adventures for lower level parties that would ordinarily not venture into scorpionfolk territory.

Krakk Camp

The camp is laid out in the normal circular pattern. All folk of over 4th level are accommodated within the inner circle. Then come the crèche tents with the young and their giant scorpion nannies, and finally those of 4th level and lower.

There are two tents in the centre, those of the male barbarian and female cleric, and the rest are arranged outwards by prestige.

While camped, the surrounding area up to a mile away is continually swept by groups of three folk, one barbarian one ranger and one of the untrained young. There are five of these groups out normally but if there is some sign of danger there can be as many as ten groups roaming around.

When on the move there are five groups of three out scouting up to five miles ahead. Each group is spread out evenly around the edge of the tribe so it is impossible to sneak up on the tribe without them knowing.

The Krakk

One female priest, 8th level (Mzzak Zrazzk Krakk)
One female priest, 6th level
One male and one female priest, 4th level
Two male and two female priests, 2nd level
One male barbarian, 8th level (Azarrk Crazzk Krakk)
Two male barbarians, 5th level
Eight male and four female barbarians, 4th level
Ten male and three female barbarians, 1st level
One male ranger, 6th level
Two female rangers, 4th level
Three male and seven female rangers, 3rd level
Ten young males without class
One male sorcerer, 6th level
One female sorcerer, 3rd level
Twenty huge giant scorpions
One hundred young up to the age of three years old

Exiled but still in the area is a lone male druid, 8th level, who wears the shape of an elf most of the time.

SCORPIONFOLK REFERENCE LIST

The scorpionfolk do not need to be worked out in great detail before an encounter because there are so few of them around. If the adventure features the folk as the major villains of the piece then it is vital that the Games Master prepares before hand.

In the following section are some examples of folk Characters to make the job of Games Mastering a little easier.

Tribal Leader Female

Female Cleric 8th Level

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 20d8 +16 (110 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

AC: 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural) touch 10 flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+26

Attack: Sting +21 melee (1d8+4 plus poison)

Full Attack: Sting +21 melee (1d8+4 plus poison) and two claws +19 melee (1d6+2) or large lance +21/+16/+11/+6 melee (2d6+4) and sting +19 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 2 claws +19 melee (1d6+2)

Face/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spell-like abilities, spells and trample 1d6+6

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Resistance to Fire 5, spell resistance 18

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +16

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +11, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Leadership, Multi-attack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Environment: Warm desert, plains, and hills

Challenge Rating: 15

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Clerical Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13+spell level): 0- *Detect Magic* (x3), *Guidance*, *Resistance*, *Virtue*; 1st- *Magic Stone*, *Cause Fear* (x3), *Divine Favour*, *Doom*; 2nd- *Soften Earth and Mud*, *Bull's Strength*, *Gentle Repose*, *Make Whole*, *Zone of Truth*; 3rd- *Stone Shape*, *Dispel Magic*, *Locate Object*, *Prayer*, *Wind Wall*; 4th- *Spike Stones*, *Giant Vermin*, *Sending*

Tribal Leader Male

Male Ranger 8th Level

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 20d8+36 (130 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

AC: 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+28

Attack: Sting +23 melee (1d8+4 plus poison)

Full Attack: Sting +23 melee (1d8+4 plus poison) and 2 claws +21 melee (1d6+2) or Khopesh +21 / +16 / +11 / +6 melee (1d8+4) and Sapara +21 / +16 melee (1d10+2) and sting +21 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 2 claws +19 melee (1d6+2)

Face/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spell-like abilities, trample 1d6+6

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Resistance to Fire 5, Spell Resistance 18, Woodland Stride

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +11

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 15

Skills: Diplomacy +3, Heal +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +5, Spot +14, Survival +11

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Multi-Attack, Power Attack, Self-Sufficient, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

Environment: Warm desert, plains, and hills

Challenge Rating: 15

Alignment: Normally lawful evil

Ranger Spells Prepared (2; save DC 11+spell level):

1st- *Pass Without Trace*

Favoured Enemies: Scorpionfolk (+4), Humans (+2)

Tribal Elder Male

Male Barbarian 6th Level

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 12d8 +24 + 6d12 +16 (129 hp)

Initiative: +5



SCORPIONFOLK REFERENCE LIST

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

AC: 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, 16 natural) touch 10 flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+27

Attack: Sting +22 melee (1d8+5 plus poison)

Full Attack: Sting +22 melee (1d8+5 plus poison) and 2 claws +20 melee (1d6+2) or large lance +22 / +17 / +12 / +7 melee (2d6+5) and sting +20 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 2 claws +20 melee (1d6+2)

Face/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spell-like abilities, trample 1d6+7

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft. Resistance to Fire 5, Spell Resistance 18, Uncanny dodge (can't be flanked), Rage 2/day

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +11

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +11, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +10, Listen +6, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6, Survival +7

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multi-Attack, Power Attack, Track

Environment: Warm desert, plains, and hills

Challenge Rating: 13

Alignment: Normally Neutral Evil

Untrained Young

Male or Female 12 months old

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 12d8 +12 (66 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

AC: 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, 16 natural) touch 10 flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+20

Attack: Sting +16 melee (1d8+4 plus poison)

Full Attack: Sting +16 melee (1d8+4 plus poison) and 2 claws +19 melee (1d6+2) or large lance +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+4) and sting +14 melee (1d8+4 plus poison) and 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+2) or horsebow +12 missile (1d6)

Face/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spell-like abilities, trample 1d6+6

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Resistance to Fire 5, Spell Resistance 18

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +10

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +6, Listen +7, Sense Motive +5, Spot +7

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Multi-Attack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Sting)

Environment: Warm desert, plains, and hills

Challenge Rating: 7

Alignment: Normally Lawful Evil

Young

Male or Female 5 Months old

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 5d8 (22 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

AC: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+7

Attack: Sting +7 melee (1d8+2 plus poison)

Full Attack: Sting +7 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+1)

Face/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, spell-like abilities, trample 1d6+3

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Resistance to Fire 5, Spell Resistance 18

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +5, Listen +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Multi-Attack

Environment: Warm desert, plains, and hills

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Normally Lawful Evil



As the noonday sun beat down, the surviving soldiers positioned the corpses of the scorpionfolk to create a low wall around the camels, digging a shallow trench behind. It was a difficult job, made worse by the occasional arrow fired from behind the surrounding dunes.

Masef wiped his burning brow, watching the impending arrival of the mysterious mage, being hustled along by two impatient troopers. 'Found him hiding with the princess, sir,' stated one of the men.

Masef raised a quizzical eyebrow. At this the mage bridled and made as if to explain, but his excuses were waved away. 'Enough, I don't want to hear it. You are here under my command, and I command you to help me communicate with these creatures.'

'But, but...' was all the mage could say.

'Silence, wastrel! Do as I tell you or you will not live long enough to meet death at their hands.' With that, Masef snapped out a series of curt instructions, before turning to his own men. 'Sergeant Hathen, take him and five shield bearers 50 yards towards that low hill over there and see he does as I have instructed. Lieutenant, take five archers and support them – and make sure the rest of the men are alert please.'

'What does he want me to do? What can I do? Oh my god I am going to die!' whimpered the mage as he was manhandled out of the camp by the burly sergeant.

'What Archier brought that idiot for I will never know. He doesn't even seem to be much of a mage. I haven't seen one spell or incantation since we discovered him,' mused Masef as the feeble man was hauled away.

A little later, standing out in the desert, the sage gathered himself. He was here now in imminent danger, whether he liked it or not.

Concentrating, he gestured with his hands and uttered apparently formless, arcane incantations. The shield bearers glanced at one another hair standing on end, wondering what was to come, but all the timid mage did was talk quietly.

'Hello can anyone here me? I wish to speak to whoever is in command.' There was no reply. 'My leader knows you are watching and wishes to talk.'

There was no change to the deathly silence.

'Now what?' asked the sage, turning to the sergeant.

'Now, my twitchy friend, we wait?' replied Hathen.

The small party returned to Captain Masef, who waited impatiently amongst his surviving troops. 'Well?' he demanded. 'What news?'

The mage spread his arms apologetically. 'I fear I do not know, captain. That they replied to my simple spell is certain, but what they will do is not.'

Masef was still in the action of shaking his head when the rocks ahead of the caravan shimmered away, revealing the shape of three scorpionfolk. As they turned to move away, the rocks shimmered back into view, leaving the watching men standing in amazement.

'It seems, friend sorcerer, that you have at least accomplished something of worth this day.'



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THE
SLAYER'S
GUIDE
TO

SCORPIONFOLK

Savage Desert Raiders

What are scorpionfolk and where do they come from? This is a question that many have asked; what is known is that they are brutal and destructive. But who are they really, and how can they be so savage and yet still exist? Surely they would all have killed one another in an orgy of violence; so there must be more to the scorpionfolk than meets the eye. The Slayer's Guide to Scorpionfolk will lift the veil that obscures these fascinating and dangerous creatures from mortal ken.

The first travellers realise they are the targets of a scorpionfolk raid is when they are faced with the awesome vision of these huge creatures charging them. Somewhat akin to centaurs, these creatures appear to be the blending of two forms, that of a monstrous scorpion some 10 feet in length with a human upper torso. Bearing down on their prey with lance, claws and stinger twitching, the folk make short work of their targets taking what they will; food valuables and other treasure. Most caravan routes through the hot barren lands avoid known hot spots of scorpionfolk activity, but it is not always possible to gauge where they will hit. It is much safer to find routes around than to venture into the known haunts of the folk, they acknowledge no authority or boundaries other than their own. Only the most powerful and well-armed expeditions venture into the stomping grounds of the folk, and then only at great need.

Inside You Will Find:

Scorpionfolk Physiology	Roleplaying with Scorpionfolk
Habitat	Scenario Hooks and Ideas
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Methods of Warfare	Scorpionfolk Characters

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