



Mind Lords of the Last Sea

Sample file

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Dedication: This is for Nik and Wendy Kolinskym, during whose wedding I wrote this, and for their son Jacob.

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Sample file

The Wanderer's Journal

Over the many decades that I, the Wanderer, have traveled the sands of Athas, I have seen many strange things: lands and creatures wracked and twisted by the Sorcerer-Kings' ravaging of our once-fair planet. That foul defiling magic has robbed us of the world of plenty that our ancestors knew, a world that would still exist were it not for the Sorcerer-Kings' mad lust for power.

Imagine my amazement then, when I discovered the facts behind one of Athas's most popular legends: the valley of the Last Sea. Believe me when I say that the rumors are true, at least as far as they go. Far to the north of the Tyr Region, unknown even to most of its neighbors, the Last Sea lies nestled between the arms of the Thunder Mountains and the literally named Burning Plains. There, in a secluded valley protected from even the eyes of the Sorcerer-Kings, rests the only major body of water on all of Athas: a sea so great that its farthest shore is lost to the curve of the horizon!



INTRODUCTION

The day was long and hot, as all days on Athas are. Kabak Giantkiller lifted the wide brim of his shapeless hat and poised to wipe the sweat which dripped into his eyes from his hairless brow. The strip of colored cloth which was supposed to keep his perspiration from his eyes had long since soaked through. He stripped it off and wrung it out, heartily cursing all the while.

It was a labor to cross these mountains—the Thunder Mountains they were called, though Kabak had seen no rain since he left hated Tyr so many long and dusty weeks ago. Their peaks towered high above him, their tips painted with some sort of shiny, white material his guides called “snow.” While the air had actually grown somewhat cooler as he and his guide climbed into the pass, the going was still so strenuous that sweat poured off Kabak as if he were standing in the middle of the Lava Gorge itself.

“How much longer, old one?” he snarled, baring his sharpened teeth. The heat made it almost painful to talk. While nowhere near as hot as it had been when they had skirted the Lava Gorge, it was still enough to bake the inside of his mouth. An old wound he’d taken in the gladiatorial pits of Tyr was making him lame in his left leg, too, and that wasn’t making his mood any better or the going any easier.

The guide, a wizened elf woman, grinned back at him over her shoulder, her pointed ears seeming to twitch in anticipation. “Soon,” she cackled. “We are almost there. But . . .” she barked a laugh—to Kabak, she sounded like a hyena dying of thirst—and wagged a finger at him, “. . . when you find what it is you seek, you may discover that you are not seeking what it is that you wish to find.”

Kabak snarled at this nonsense and smacked the crone on the back of her head. Caught by surprise, she went sprawling.

“Quit talking in riddles, hag,” the ex-gladiator said. “I’ve no patience for such things. If you speak to me with a twisted tongue again, I will rip the very muscle from your withered mouth.”

The elf leapt up to face the mul, a knife in her hand as long and thin as the bones of the arm that held it. Though she appeared frail, her grip on the weapon was strong and steady. “Strike me again, half-breed,” she said, “and I’ll gut you where you stand.” Her cold gray eyes told Kabak that she meant it. He hadn’t known the elf to lie to him yet, and it didn’t look as if she’d decided to start now.

“Put the knife down, Sahanda. When I’m your age, I hope I’ll know enough to not start a fight I can’t win.”

She pointed at his battered leg. “I don’t need to fight you, mul. I could lose you in these mountains in a minute. What say I just leave you here? You’d never find your way out.”

He glared into her eyes darkly, and for a moment she met his stare squarely. In the end, though, she looked away. Kabak laughed coldly.

"Move on, Sahanda." He pointed up the trail. "Time is wasting, and you promised that we'd reach the Last Sea by day's end."

The elf ran the back of a weathered hand across her mouth and came away with a streak of red. Angered by the sight, she spat at the mul's feet. Her reddened saliva smacked onto the top of his left sandal and trickled between his toes. Kabak didn't give the slightest indication he even noticed, and after a long silent moment, the old guide continued on her way, the mul limping along behind her.

Welcome to Marnita, the Last Sea, the final remnant of an age long since past in the turbulent history of Athas, the world of the Dark Sun. Nestled in a distant part of the globe, far from the better-documented Tyr Region, the Last Sea is a true marvel, a brilliant, watery jewel that stands out all the more for being set in the desiccated sands of Athas's endless deserts.

The Mind Lords of the Last Sea is a product in three parts. The first is this book that you are holding, the 96-page sourcebook. The second is a 32-page adventure entitled *In the Lands of the Last Sea*. This adventure takes place primarily in Saragar, the largest city on the shores of Marnita, itself the home to the mysterious Mind Lords. The third part is the full-color mapsheet which depicts the Last Sea and the territory surrounding it, again giving special attention to once-mighty Saragar.

Who Should Read This

How much of this product you should read is up to your Dungeon Master. The DM should read through this entire product before deciding which portions of it to share with his players. Obviously, under no circumstances should players read the adventure. Doing so would spoil many of the surprises in it and make the game less enjoyable.

Of the sourcebook, players could certainly be permitted to read *Chapter One: The Lay of the Land*. This is a brief overview of the Last Sea, and it reveals no startling secrets better unveiled at a later date. As for allowing players to peruse the rest of this book, it all depends on how much you, as DM, want your players to know about the Last Sea region before their characters enter it.



Of course, DMs who like to play their cards close to their chest may not wish to let their players read any of this product at all. In this way, everything the players' characters encounter in adventures in and near Marnita will be entirely new to them.

How This Book Works

Chapter One contains a brief overview of the Last Sea and its surrounding lands. If the DM wishes, it can be read by players planning on possibly visiting the Mind Lords' realm. In any case, it serves as an excellent primer for everything else to come, no matter who happens to be reading it.

Since most player characters hail from somewhere in the Tyr Region, Chapter Two details the various ways by which a party of adventures might manage to make their way from more familiar territories to Marnita, and it reveals some of the inevitable hazards that lay en route to this legendary region. Once the heroes finally manage to reach Saragar, though, they still have to find some way to surmount the ancient wards that have kept the Last Sea isolated for so long from the rest of the world.

Chapter Three relates the unique history behind Saragar and Marnita. It reveals how they've remained connected to the Green Age of Athas for so long and just how their own history has developed, insulated as they've been from the changes that have ravaged the rest of the world.

As it turns out, the answer to how the Last Sea has survived is less of a what and more of a who. Chapter Four fully describes the three mysterious Mind Lords who have taken it as their sacred duty to protect the lands in which they reside, as well as the people who live alongside them.

Chapter Five moves on from the personalities behind the miraculous land to the very miracle itself. It covers the Last Sea and the lands directly surrounding it, as well as the last remaining settlement of lizard men living beneath the sea's sometimes turbulent surface. The struids and water clerics of Marnita are described here, as well. Rare characters elsewhere on Athas, here they have thrived.

The most important part of the Last Sea region is undoubtedly the fabled city of Saragar—the heart, mind, and soul of the Last Sea—and Chapter Six discusses it in great detail. Everything truly important about the area happens here. At one time, Saragar was the last bastion of an enlightened civilization, the only surviving remnant of a dead age. Today, things are different, as the situations which permitted the society to survive have also caused it to stagnate in unusual ways.

Most Athasians have never seen a full bathtub, much less an entire sea. Chapter Seven covers all sorts of new rules concerning how Athasians from drier regions (basically all of Athas outside of the Last Sea) manage things like swimming, sailing, and drowning.

The end of this book features a MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix. Here, you'll find full statistics on creatures from the region of the Last Sea, ranging from the unusual Athasian lizard men to the Mind Lords themselves.

Once you've read through this book, you'll have plenty of material to support as much adventuring in the Last Sea region as you're likely to ever need. Then, for a good example of how to get an adventure campaign rolling in and about Saragar, check out the adventure book that came with this sourcebook. You surely won't be disappointed.