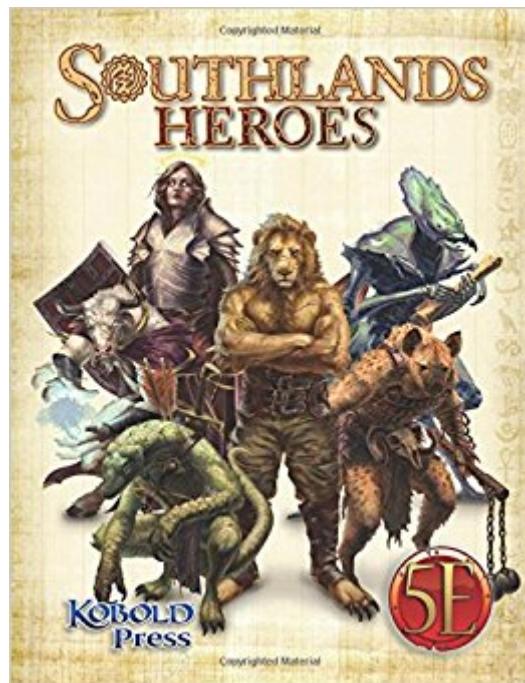


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Southlands Heroes



Synopsis

WHEN EVIL STIRS IN THE SOUTHLANDS, MIGHTY HEROES WILL ARISE! New Options for 5th Edition Heroes Demonic voices mutter and howl in the desert. Strange lights appear among the trees in the jungle's depths; and packs of twisted creatures emerge at night to hunt the grasslands. But you do not fear these things. You are a hero of the Southlands—and by your skill, strength, luck, or the favor of the gods, you will become a legend. Southland Heroes gives you everything you need to play in a 5th Edition campaign set in the Southlands. Southlands Heroes includes: Rules for playing Southlands aasimar, gnolls, lizardfolk, minotaurs, tosuli waspfolk, and werelions New Ambush Predator rogue archetype, Hivemaster variant ranger, and Circle of the Hive and Circle of the Swarm variant druids New backgrounds: Child of the Divine, Temple Slave, Desert Runner, and more! Match wits with djinn, pit your strength against mighty white apes, and plunder the lost temples of demon gods. The Southlands await!

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Customer Reviews

Great addition to my RPG collection! Very useful!

An asset to all role players and DM's unless you are a strict WoTC person. Also great because you can also buy this with the PDF which WoTC is too greedy to offer.

This collection of races clocks in at 26 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial/ToC, 1 page advertisement, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 21 pages of content, so let's take a look! Ah, Midgard and the Southlands - Midgard has been one of my favorite fantasy settings ever

and the absolutely legendary Southlands setting book made my Top Ten of last year for a reason - and if you haven't check it out, dear D&D 5e fans, you will want to: While designed originally for Pathfinder, the book has a MASSIVE array of evocative, amazing content that is system-agnostic and makes it an excellent purchase for 5e as well. Anyways, this book would be the one that takes the unique races that can be found in the Southlands and converts them to 5e...but how do they hold up? Well, after a brief introduction to the subject matter, the first of the races introduced would be Kobold Press' take on the aasimar - these guys, in Midgard, are significantly closer to the mighty passions of the nephilim than to the default celestial-blooded connotations they usually evoke. As with the Midgard Heroes-pdf, this one's write-up does feature some evocative prose for the respective races, though we do not get an assortment of sample names for the respective races. Since the race already exists in 5e, we instead receive 3 variant aasimar: Airy Spirit nets you 1/day gaseous form at 5th level instead of daylight. Alas, the ability does fail to note which attribute is used for the casting of this spell- The second ability replaces resistance to necrotic and radiant damage with fire resistance and the third one nets you blindsight 10 ft in exchange for daylight and darkvision. Heaven's Wrath nets you guiding bolt instead of lesser restoration and daylight - both of which have not been properly italicized and the ability does not note spellcasting attribute used. Divine Splendor nets enhance ability (Eagle's Splendor) at 3rd level with a range of Personal and at 5th level, you also receive Owl's Wisdom's benefits when using this ability, though the ability once again fails to denote the spellcasting attribute employed. This once again replaces lesser restoration and daylight. The second race introduced would be the gnoll, who increases Strength by 2, is Medium with a speed of 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft. advantage on Wisdom (Perception) employing smell, +10 ft. speed when using Disengage and proficiency with spear, shortbow, longbow, light crossbow and heavy crossbow. Gnolls are craven cowards at heart and thus, as bullies, they are considered proficient in Charisma (intimidation) when dealing with weaker foes and add twice their proficiency bonus to the check. However, at the same time, their cowardice means they suffer from disadvantage on all saving throws to avoid the frightened condition. Gnolls have two "subraces" - civilized gnolls increase Constitution by 1 and add the same "double proficiency bonus"-mechanic to Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks dealing with foes that are bigger and more powerful. Savage gnolls instead increase their Wisdom score by 1 and are considered to be proficient in Wisdom (Survival) when scavenging for food, once again doubling their proficiency bonus to such checks. The lizardfolk presented herein increase their Strength by 2 and their Wisdom score by 1, with a speed of 30 ft. and a swimming speed of an equal amount. Their unarmored AC is equal to AC 12 + Dexterity modifier; this may be used in conjunction with shields. They also have proficiency

with a 1d6 bite, the Stealth skill and may hold their breath for Constitution score minutes. Instead of subraces, there are a variety of alternate racial traits to be chosen from: You may replace your swimming speed and hold breath with proficiency in Strength (athletics) and double proficiency bonus to climbing; alternatively, you may replace these traits with advantage on Stealth-checks when not moving (or carrying items). Not cool - for the same exchange, you may gain 40 feet flying speed (no hovering) and no falling damage. The option to dig through dirt or sand at 10 ft. per round would eat swimming speed (but not hold breath). Some lizards may, instead of a bite attack, spurt short-range jets of blood from their eyes, potentially frightening foes. Instead of the predatory tricks and the natural armor, some lizardfolk get increased healing, adding twice their Constitution modifier to hit point regeneration when spending an HD. Regenerating limbs slowly is also possible, but incurs exhaustion. In exchange for natural armor, swim speed and hold breath as well as bite, you may gain a poisoned bite. This replaces the regular bite, but fails to denote the damage the poisoned bite inflicts. Instead of natural armor, they can have advantage on saves versus poison and disease and an alternate ability array (+2 Dex, +1 Wis) with Small size can be chosen. I am NOT a fan of this array. The base race is already pretty strong and some of the abilities here exacerbate this. Finally, here would be as well a place as any to denote that it's "proficiency bonus", not "proficiency modifier." The pdf also contains a lizardfolk class archetype, the ambush predator (assassin) - instead of the regular bonus proficiencies, this one maintains proficiency with poisoner's kits and the option to use Cunning Action to apply poison to a weapon. At 9th level, you receive advantage on saves to avoid falling asleep/exhaustion, provided you do not move and engage in light activity while stationary and still receive the benefits of a rest, replacing infiltration expertise thus. At 13th level, you do not automatically reveal your location when attacking while hidden, provided you are at least 10 feet away - instead, you compare Dexterity (Stealth) with Wisdom (Perception) of those looking, replacing imposter thus. Not the biggest fan. I already talked about the minotaur race in my review of Midgard Heroes - they have been reproduced here (or the other way round) - either way, I'm not the biggest fan of the overlap here, particularly considering that the southlands race Jinnborn is missing from this pdf. The next race would be thematically one of my favorites, the odd and alien tosculi. Hiveless tosculi, the only playable ones, have been translated thus to 5e: They may choose one physical and one mental attribute and increase each by +2. However, they also must choose one attribute to decrease by 2. Yes, this allows for the cancellation of one of the increased attributes increase. Tosculi are Small with a walking speed of 30 ft, an AC of at the very least 11 + Dexterity modifier, claws that inflict 1d4 slashing damage with which they are proficient and gliding wings that net a flying speed of 40 ft and cancels out falling damage.

Additionally, they are proficient at Perception and Stealth. They may also select up to 4 alternate racial traits: A spittle that immediately hardens and restrains the target, with scaling properties, is cool and may replace the proficiencies. Also instead of the proficiencies, they may gain a 1d6 bite that allows for the grappling of targets as a bonus action (and +1d6 damage at 11th level). As a complaint here: Bites in 5e usually do piercing damage, not slashing damage. The third option nets message as a cantrip that is declared to be psionic and thus not subject to interference by e.g. a silence spell and at 3rd level, detect thoughts becomes available, but only once per rest interval. Both fail to denote their spellcasting attribute and this replace Gliding Wings. Instead of the gliding wings and regular AC, some tosculi may have a carapace of 11 + Dexterity modifier + Constitution modifier, allowing in theory a level 1 unarmored AC of 19. Which is pretty insane. The tosculi also receive two supplemental options for the druid class - the first of these would be the circle of the hive as a variant of circle of the land, who receive appropriately insect-y themed spells as well as immunity to disease and poison at 10th level as well as the ability to ignore movement restriction caused by webbing and advantage on saves versus being restrained instead of Nature's War. The circle of the swarm would be an alternative of the circle of the moon, who may only wild shape into insectoid shapes, receiving a modified list of eligible creatures. 10th level allows for the use of two Wild Shape uses for the transformation into a bullette (heh?), chuul, phase spider or umber hulk instead of going elemental. Weird choices there. Tosculi rangers that adhere to the beast master archetype may elect to become hivemasters instead, gaining either a blood hornet/wasp (flying snake stats) giant crab, giant centipede, giant wolf spider or swarm of insects. You may note that some of these options are decidedly weaker than others...but I get what this tries to do. Telepathic communication with the targets...well, yeah, that's kind of nice. The final race would be the werelion, who increases Wisdom by 2 and Strength by 1, is Medium, has a speed of 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.. They are natural shapechangers and may assume lion or hybrid form as an action and remain thus for 1 hour or cancel the transformation as a bonus action. Hybrid form increases speed to 40 feet and nets both claws and bite, each of which deal 1d4 damage (slashing and piercing, respectively). You have proficiency with these and also receive advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) and Wisdom (Perception) checks reliant on smell while thus transformed, but also suffer from disadvantage on all Intelligence and all other Charisma checks. In lion-shape, you employ the panther's statblock as if you were a druid using wild shape. At 8th level, you instead use the form of a proper lion. For very high-powered games, the optional lycanthropic resistances and vulnerabilities have been included, though thankfully with sufficient warning caveat - the race already has enough oomph and silvering's expensive in 5e. The werelion comes with a new sorcerous origin, the lycanthropic one.

The pdf has a bit of a layout hiccup that blends this header with 1st level's hybrid form benefit together. Hybrid form follows the basics of that of the werelion, but allows for the selection of bear, rat, wolf or great cat. Each choice nets a thematically relevant ability and some sort of additional benefit - rats may squeeze through confined spaces, for example. At 6th level, you may expend sorcery points to increase the damage die of natural weapons by one step when in hybrid form and add either magic or silver to the attack, with the benefit lasting until the next shapechange. Additionally, you speak with animals of the chosen beast's form. As a nitpick, the ability does not state the action it requires to activate. I assume it can't be stacked. 14th level nets the option to expend 3 such points and assume a more powerful form (like brown bears, dire wolves, etc.) - one issue: The beast forms have significant differences in potency that are not really offset by the additional benefits gained: Giant rats are weaker than dire wolves, etc. At 18th level, beasts attacking you need to succeed a Wisdom save or choose a different target and you may expend 4 sorcery points to dominate beast, with additional point expenditure allowing you to increase the spell level. Beyond these racial options, the book also contains a wide array of evocative, well-written backgrounds - the child of the divine, the temple slave, the siwali traveler and two variant soldiers: The quartermaster and the groom/squire. All of these have in common that their features are relevant and well-balanced, their fluff being nice as well - no significant complaints here.

Conclusion: Editing and formatting are good on a formal level, though not perfect. On a rules-level, the pdf is generally nice as well, though not as refined as Midgard Heroes. Layout adheres to Kobold press' two-column full-color standard and the pdf sports several absolutely amazing full-color pieces. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Rich Howard and Rodrigo García Carmona's Southlands Heroes have an unfair disadvantage...namely that I'm reading the book back to back with Midgard Heroes and Unlikely Heroes. While Dan Dillon has taken on the development task here, the book ultimately shows that it preceded Midgard Heroes. This is not a bad selection of 5e-options...but it is one that is less refined than aforementioned offering. Indeed, one of my central gripes would arise mainly in direct comparison: Where Midgard Heroes managed to perfectly translate even powerful races in a balanced manner to 5e, where it had impeccable design, this one is not bad by any stretch of the word...but it somewhat overshoots the target in my book, at least in some cases. The presence of this many alternate racial traits as opposed to subraces also means that there's more minmaxing to be had here - and indeed, internal balance in both racial options and class options is not as impeccable as in Midgard Heroes - there are generally options that exceed the power of others, which is, ultimately, not the best sign here.

Reading them back to back, the difference in aesthetics, rules language precision and

system-mastery can be felt. In short: This feels a bit like D&D 5e has been infiltrated by some PFRPG design aesthetics. Not by much, mind you - this is still very much 5e, though and through...but the nagging feeling is here. On a formal level, I am also pretty bummed to not see a proper take on the jinnborn in the book. That being said, this is by no means a bad book; it is, however, one whose class options won't necessarily blow you away and GMs will want to take a close look at the races before allowing them. The payoff of strengths and weaknesses simply does not reach the perfect equilibrium of Midgard Heroes. How to rate this, then? Well, as mentioned before, this is by no means a bad offering, though, as a person, I am significantly less impressed by this book. Hence, my final verdict will clock in at 3.5 stars. And while, as a person, I will round down (I'm pretty big on maintaining a system's design-aesthetics), my official review will round up due to in dubio pro reo. Endzeitgeist out.

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