

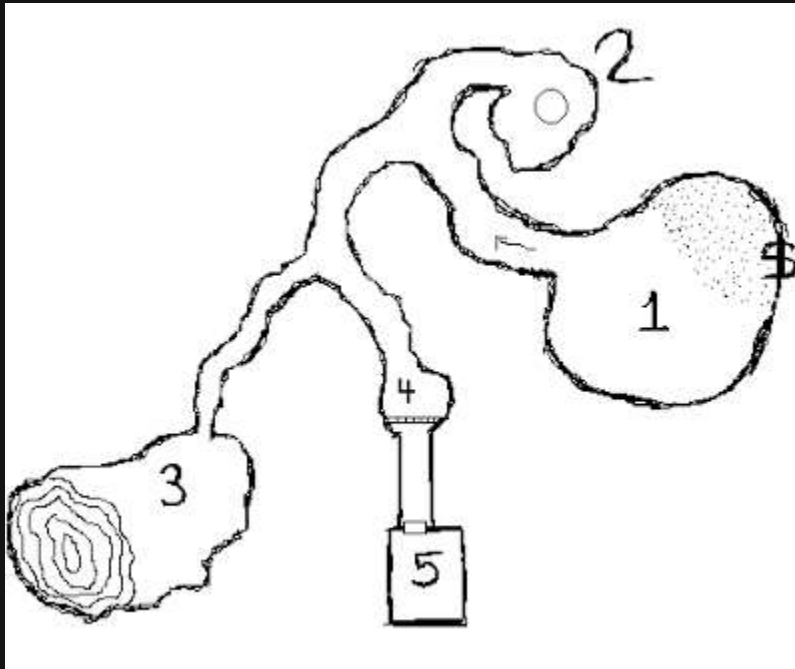
# The Ifrit's Chosen

Along the great Izgoni caravan route over the dunes of the Ulrik Wastes lie the ruins of a small settlement. Once a desert spring bubbled up here, and the settlement was a waypoint for travelers and their animals to water and rest in the shade. Though the tumbledown adobe structures are still used as emergency shelter from the many sandstorms, the settlement is generally bypassed as another dead husk amongst the dunes of Ulrik.

Investigation of the settlement reveals little, though the simple bricked shaft that once served as a well in the village center may draw the curious. Either storm or the disgruntled filled the well shaft with sand and it is only ten feet deep.

On the northern wall, only partially exposed near the surface of the sand, one of the bricks is stamped with a faint symbol of a serpent entwining a palm tree (Search/Spot DC 15). Those with knowledge of the ancient peoples of the Ulrik know that this symbol was for the Caliphate of the East Winds, a small nation that controlled a significant portion of the Izgoni caravan route. With an Intelligence check (DC 18), those with knowledge of the region know that the Caliphate was ruled by the priest kings of the ifrit, Afara, and that their holy warriors roamed the Izgoni route protecting merchants and pilgrims.

Digging out the clay brick reveals a metal bar, about three inches long set into the stone. The bar can be pried away from the wall, which opens a secret door about 3' below the surface of the sand. (Reflex DC 13 or slide into the chamber beyond).



**1) Pile of Sand** – The fall to the top of the sand pile is ten feet, and though this causes no damage, those affected must make a second DC 13 Reflex or slide to the bottom of the 20' tall sand pile that half buries this small natural cavern. A passage exits to the west.

The fall and light surprises several rats who scurry away squeaking.

A skeleton half buried at the bottom of the pile (DC 9) wears a tattered turban with a small garnet set in silver pin (25 gp), a gold signet ring stamped with the symbol of the Caliphate (DC 15), a rusted steel helmet and hauberk. A perfectly preserved leather sack on its belt holds 200sp and a scroll written in the ancient language of the Ulrik peoples (this is a writ authorizing the magistrate of district 27 to collect such taxes as are due the Caliphate from the village of Yaiden)

Those that examine the skeleton notice that both the man's legs were broken. Those with medical knowledge understand that this was caused by blunt force trauma (a hammer) and not a fall into this chamber.

Disturbing the skeleton also disturbs the spitting cobra lairing inside its chest. It attacks with surprise unless the examiner states they are carefully looking for hidden enemies, etc.

**Spitting cobra:** Init +4; Atk bite +2 melee (1 + poison DC 14 Fort or death) or spit (DC 15 Ref; DC 14 Fort blinded); AC 12; HD 2d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: Spit hits unless a DC 15 Ref save; If struck, DC 14 Fort or blinded; SV Fort +1, Ref +4,

Will +0; AL N.

**2) The Secret Well** – A stone brick hemisphere about 4' tall with an opening at the top stands in this natural chamber. This well drops off into darkness. Note that there is no moisture in the room or smell of water from the well. Descending the well requires 100' of rope and leads to roughly circular chamber (30' radius) with a pile of skeletons with dried muscles/viscera beneath the hole. A detailed examination reveals that all been stripped of clothing and killed with a single hammer blow to the forehead (see **Area 5**).

**3) The True Well** – The original spring receded to here. The pool is 25' deep, though a series of cracks and small passages lead down into the aquifer (impassible without extreme magical means). The shore is muddy stone with the footprints and scat of rats (rats will scatter if surprised, though they move and hide at approaching lights). Cave cricket, crayfish and other insect corpses abound. Walls crawl with various blind insects. Note the effects of the book (**Area 5**) if brought into this room.

Carvings on the wall depict symbols of the ancient caliphate and a religious symbol (DC 12) depicting a curved knife -- this is the symbol of Afara, the ifrit "god" of the Caliphate.

If a new well is dropped over this spot, it supplies water to a village of ~100 people and animals for the next 15 years before drying up.

**4) Bricked up chamber** – This small natural chamber is intersected by a brick wall concealing the tomb of the guardians of Yaiden. Each brick is carved with hundreds of warding symbols associated with Afara (DC 12). These symbols are not magical (DC 15; or detect magic). The bricks can be smashed down fairly easily, though it requires a hefty hammer and an iron spike or some similar combination of tools (2 turns). With a normal hammer/warhammer alone, this takes 1-2 hours.

Beyond the wall is a worked stone and brick passage. The passage walls curve to a mere 5' ceiling and the clay-stucco walls are crowded with runes, symbols and sutras dedicated to Afara (DC 12). Moving into this passage causes various random runes to flash green, glow and fade to darkness in a complicated and continuous pattern. This causes confusion (DC 12 Fort) for 1d3 turns. The effects can be defeated simply by closing the eyes, covering the walls somehow, magical darkness, or the like.

**5) The Tomb** – The plain seal to the tomb is a solid stone slab set into the surrounding walls (hammer and spike to open, as above, though anything less than a sledge and spike makes it impossible to break). When broken, a foul gust of gas issues from the very stone, coalescing as a Guardian Jinn, who attacks intruders immediately.

**NOTE:** Moving back down the passage results in the same confusing flashes of runes.

**Guardian Jinn:** Init +4; Atk sword +6 melee (2d4 + Disjunction); AC 14; HD 2d12+4; MV 30', 50' Fly; SP Disjunction (Will DC 16), immune to normal weapons, gaseous form when killed; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

The Guardian Jinn transforms from a sentient gas to a humanoid entity composed of living water. When attacking, it extrudes a sword from its arm. When struck by this sword, opponents must make a DC 16 Will save or have all magical effects dispelled for 2d5 rounds. This includes any magical items held or worn by the opponent (a separate Will save for each item at the bearer's bonus). When the guardian jinn's hit points reach 0, it transforms into a gaseous form and becomes locked inside its holy vessel for 1,001 nights.

## Tomb of the Chosen

Within the tomb are two skeletal figures dressed in rich robes and jeweled turbans seated on stone chairs facing each other. One is kitted in pristine chainmail, a shield with a tree device painted on its face, and a stone-headed hammer (this will be familiar to those examining the bodies at the bottom of the secret well). The second holds a book in his lap with a tree device painted on the cover. (Described below)

The turbans turns to dust when touched, though 300 gp worth of gems can be recovered from each. Removing the book from the skeletal hands causes a swarm of biting insects to pour, seemingly, from the chest of the skeleton. The swarm forms into a vaguely humanoid form and attacks!

**Swarm Guardian:** Init +4; Atk Stinging slam +5 (1d3+paralysis); AC 16; HD 5d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP Poison (DC 14 Fort or paralyzed for 2d3 turns), dissolve to swarm when "killed"; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will -1; AL N.

The swarm guardian is a creature composed of a magical insect swarm. The swarm forms into a humanoid creature about 8' tall, though the swarm continually shifts and moves to suit the creature's purpose. When attacking, the swarm guardian strikes with its swarming insect fists delivering a poisonous sting. Those that fail the saving throw are paralyzed for 2d3 turns. When reduced to 0 hit points, the swarm guardian dissolves into 1d3+1 insect swarms (as per the Core Rules)

## **The Accoutrements of the Grand Holy Ghazi Abdul-Rahman Mukhtar Masoud Salah-al-Din Ahmed**

These artifacts were created by the ifrit, Afara, for warrior-priests in its service and include:

- **Shield with Silver Tree Device** – The shield provides a +2 AC (total) and weighs only 3 lbs.
- **Chainmail** – This extremely light armor weighs as much as leather armor, while providing the protection of chain. Additionally, the wearer receives a +2 to all saves against the power of any god other than Afara and +2 to Fortitude saves due to deprivation.
- **Long-handled Stone Hammer** – This weapon can be used one-handed for 1d6+1 damage. When wielded two-handed, the weapon deals 1d8+2 damage. The weapon is considered magical when dealing with opponents only harmed by magical weapons.

Those that choose to bear the Holy Accoutrements are making a holy pact with the ifrit, Afara. Though, until Afara is encountered, there is no outward sign. The artifacts themselves cannot bear to be separated from each other. Each bearer of separated Holy Accoutrements must make a daily DC 13 Will save or be compelled to seek out the other artifacts with the intention of reuniting them. This compulsion causes a -2 to all action dice, saving throw and mental ability checks if the bearer is not actively seeking out the other artifacts.

Those bound to gods opposed to Afara that bear one or more of the Accoutrements receive a cumulative +1 increase to their disapproval range per day. This increase cannot be removed by time or sacrifice, though it resets at a rate of -1 per day that the artifacts are not borne.

When Afara is taken as a patron, the Holy Accoutrements are said to “awaken” with purpose and power. •

## **The Holy Writs of Kalid Sakhr**

The sorcerer Kalid Sakhr gathered many of the spells that Afara gifted to his Chosen. These spells may be learned and cast by any wizard or elf, though such actions may incur a mortal debt with the ifrit.

Additionally, the spellbook has an insidious curse. Those carrying the spellbook attract a variety of vermin (insects, rats, bats, etc.). When faced with an attack by such creatures, the bearer of the spellbook is targeted exclusively.

- *Flames of the East Wind* (*flaming hands* with a manifestation of a miniature flame jinn)
- *Farouk's Guardian* (*ward portal* with the manifestation of a stone jinn blocking the affected portal)
- *Blooms of the Desert* (color spray with the manifestation of fresh spring flowers and a wash of damp desert air)
- *Farouk's Gentle Hand* (*featherfall* with the manifestation of a giant jinn's hand lowering the caster to safety)
- *Bolt from the Mountain* (magic missile with the manifestation of shouted sutras and bolts of crackling force)
- *Hakim's Mind Numb* (forget with standard manifestation)
- *Hakim's Free Entry* (knock with the manifestation of a cloud jinn passing through the portal and opening it)
- *Runelight* (note, this is not a spell specific to Afara and is described below)

**NOTE:** Every turn while in this dungeon, the bearer of the book draws 2d10 rats -- they do not attack, but follow the bearer and attack anything that seems to be threatening. They drift away at a rate of 5 per round after leaving this dungeon. If the bearer enters the True Well (Area 3), hordes of cave insects are drawn to the bearer (including crayfish from the pool) causing a chaotic scene of rats attacking swarms of insects.

Spell Name	<u>Runelight</u>						
Level	1	Range	Varies	Duration	Varies	Casting Time	1 action
General	The wizard causes a ball of light to appear on an object held, or in some cases, some distance away. The light has a variety of effects, however, the spell requires a specially prepared ivory or bone rune ( <u>Kaun</u> ) which is consumed in the casting (5 sp). The spell may be cast to create such a rune (11-20: 1 rune created, 21-28: 1+CL runes created, 29+: 1d3+CL runes created)						
Manifestation	Light is colored (1d4: white, blue, green, red) (1d4) 1) simple ball of light 2) Simple flame 3) Motes of lights that swirl around 4) Large disembodied eyes						
Corruption	Roll 1d6: 1) Wizard's eyesight dims (-2 to notice/search) 2) Eyes emit a strange, shimmering light (too dim to use as illumination) 3) Random motes of light escape from the wizard's clothing at odd times 4) Normal flames flicker and dance without wind in the wizard's presence 5) The wizard stinks of chemicals 6) The wizard's touch causes inflammable objects to smolder (no damage or fire)						
Misfire	Roll 1d4: 1) A flash of brilliant colored light blinds everyone in a 10' radius (DC 9) for 1 round 2) Caster's clothes smolder and catch fire on an odd result (1d6) 3) A chemical stink explodes from the caster causing retching and gagging to all in a 10' radius (DC 10) 4) Nearby normal fires flame up and extinguish.						
Roll	Effect						
1	Lost, failure and Worse! Roll 1d6 modified by Luck: (0 or less) corruption, misfire, patron taint (1-2) corruption 3) patron taint (or corruption if no patron) 4+) Misfire						
2-11	Lost. Failure.						
12-13	The caster summons a magical light on an object he or she carries. The light is as bright as a torch and lasts for 1d3+CL hours.						
14-17	As above, but the light is as bright as a lantern and lasts 2d4+CL hours.						
18-19	As above, but the light can be directed like a <u>bullseye</u> lantern. Lasts 2d6+CL hours.						
20-23	The caster summons a magical light that hovers over the caster's shoulder and can be moved up to 30' away. The light is as bright as a lantern and lasts for 1d4+CL hours.						
24-27	As above, but any living thing illuminated is <u>lipped</u> in faint light -- Aides in detection (+2) and ranged attacks (+2)						
28-29	As 20-23, but the light's intensity can be controlled (up to 100' radius) and moved to any distance the caster can see. Nocturnal creatures or others affected by bright light (undead) move away from lights brighter than a lantern.						
30-31	As above, but light brighter than a lantern causes 1d4+CL damage to undead or those affected by sunlight.						
32+	As above, but light of any intensity causes 1d6+CL damage to undead or those affected by sunlight.						