

WARLOCK

6



CITY OF BRASS

WARLOCK

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CREDITS

Design: Richard Green, Jeff Grubb, Richard Pett, Steve Winter

Development & Editing: Scott Gable

Art Director & Graphic Design: Marc Radle

Cover Art: Justine Jones

Back Cover Art: Justine Jones

Interior Art: Pedro Potier, Karl Waller

Publisher: Wolfgang Baur

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ON THE CITY OF BRASS AND THE HIERARCHY OF THE GENIES

By Jeff Grubb

Of all the settlements and all the citadels to be found within the Elemental Planes, the best known by far and the most visited is the City of Brass, located in the Plane of Elemental Fire. There are other such cities, mighty metropolises in the other Inner Planes, but the Burnished City sees the greatest number of visitors—elemental, infernal, and otherwise.

The chief reason for this is the ruling inhabitants of the city: the efreeti, a powerful genie race. The efreeti are black-hearted and cruel but are bound both by honor and their own legal codes, and this lawful tendency makes their domain an ideal meeting ground for different species from all the planes. Under the wise oversight of Grand Sultan Ixingaltrix—may his name ever be praised—the city is a crossroad and marketplace, a prison, a refuge, and a neutral ground for all who are willing to bend a knee and tug a forelock in obeisance to its master's rule.

The power of the grand sultan—be he ever powerful—keeps the more malignant nature of their fiery native plane at bay and provides a safe haven where even a water-dwelling marid can find comfort (though they complain mightily about the dryness of the air). His Most Wise Majesty rules with an iron hand, and justice for those who do not act in accordance with his wishes is both swift and often fatal. As a result, the City of Brass is a location that can host devils and archons, demons and petty godlings, and

merchants of all stripes, confident of their (relative) protection.

The City of Brass is also a place of exile and refuge. Demon lords who have lost their home planes, archdukes on the outs with the Infernal Hierarchy, and powerful wizards who have crossed one too many patrons all can be found within its walls. Some enjoy their exile while others continually plot and plan for their inevitable return to power. The grand sultan—who like a wise father allows his children their own futures—permits such conspiring as long as it does not threaten the Charcoal Throne.

The confluence of so many peoples from so many planes makes the city a great trading hub where merchants from half a hundred empires, planar layers, and demiplanes come to seek out the unique and the expensive. Dreams are for sale here as are hopes and futures and birthrights. If it cannot be found here, someone may be located in its bathhouses and gambling dens who can find it for a very affordable price.

Magic, in particular, is a currency in the City of Brass, and trade is brisk. The grand sultan—his wisdom be unquestioned—often punishes those who violate his considerate rule by imprisonment in enchanted iron flasks for a century or two, and there are said to be huge vaults of them beneath his palace. Given the large number of prisoners, it is little wonder that sometimes a flask or ten are forgotten or fall into the hands of



others or are even removed and cast out into the Material Plane, so the creatures within cannot be found and freed at the end of their sentence. Trade in such matters, and everything else, is common here.

The City of Brass is organized, and all within know their place. The grand sultan—who hears when you speak his name—rules

wisely from his Charcoal Throne. He is well served by six great pashas, also efreeti, who serve as advisors and commanders of his armies. The pashas, in turn, are the leading lights of all the great and powerful noble genies of the city, which are the mightiest of their species, including sage djinni, dour dao, and cunning marids. All these beings, while

powerful, are considered less trustworthy than an efreeti who gives their word (though the exact wording should always be checked). The efreeti consider themselves the most honest of the genie peoples.

Beneath the most noble of the genies are the collection known to mortals simply as genies (do not call them “common” or “ordinary” at peril of one’s life). Within the Burnished City, it is primarily efreeti, of course, but also a number of the other known races who form a sort of gentry to the more powerful nobles. They have their own bases of power and areas of expertise, and many hold domains far from the city itself and merely maintain villas within its walls or come simply to conduct business.

Beneath the genies themselves—sentient creatures of pure elemental fury—are the jann who, like the genies, are made of elemental power but, unlike the genies, have a muddled heritage, which consists of a mix of primal elements. These beings are responsible for the day-to-day work within the city and are often seen as merchants, magical researchers, overseers, instructors, entertainers, and captains of the great planar dromons. They maintain among themselves the Para-Elemental Parliament for sorting out their own matters in the service of the greater genies that they are dedicated to.

The jann themselves have servants, and these include both powerful creatures—elemental and mortal—as well as those whose primordial blood is mixed with those of the mortal planes. These are the jinns, mortal beings in whose blood flows the elemental power of the genies and other such creatures. Within the hierarchy of the City of Brass, the jinns are the workers, team bosses, clerks, guard captains, and major domos who make sure all works like clockwork within the Burnished Citadel.

The jinns are both mortal and primordial, and serving them are the mortals

themselves. Most of these are slaves, for within the city, slavery is a recognized fact. Easily identified by a copper band around the neck, creatures of all mortal species find their way there as slaves. Some are voluntary, rescued from death by jann traders who offer salvation in exchange for servitude. Some are victims, taken in raids led by efreeti hunting parties. Some are merely unfortunate, allowed to work off a debt or a bet with servitude. Slavery is recognized and protected within the city, and the grand sultan—may his protection always extend over us all—deals harshly with those who seek to overturn the established order. Rebellious or untrustworthy slaves may be sold to clients in other planes or merely cast out of the city into the seething chaos that surrounds it.

Mortal visitors are treated better than slaves, and in general, within the social pecking order, they are at the same level as jinns; the most powerful are equivalent in status to jann or run-of-the-mill genies. Those visitors with a fire-based background (some dragons, some devils, some giants) are particularly welcome. Travelers with magical abilities are more highly valued and respected than those without, and those with the ability to create—be it in song, dance, or story—have the greatest value of all. Indeed, such individuals risk being spirited away and bound with a copper torc by a more powerful genie who finds them appealing.

Visitors to the City of Brass are hereby warned: this is a place of great order, but it is an order alien to many from other planes. The law of the grand sultan—may his years be eternal—is absolute, shaded only by the mercy of his court. Come to the city, trade in its bazaars, browse the iron-shod books of its great libraries, sup with devils and demons and exiled princes, but watch your own step lest you be fitted for a copper torc or an iron flask.

Jann of the Burnished City

The genies of the Elemental Planes keep slaves, but they also need servants—individuals powerful enough to run their petty citadels and elemental empires but not rise to become rivals to their power. These are the jann, beings made of multiple primal elements. A beautiful people of striking appearance and demeanor, they suffer the egos of their masters and keep such great metropolises as the City of Brass in some sense of order.

Made of Many Elements. While the genies represent a purity of their elemental types, the jann are the grand sultan's middlemen:

- **The House of Ooze** is made up of those jann for whom primordial water and earth are dominant. Its people have oily, supple skin and tend toward green eyes. They rarely speak in certitudes and serve as the dealers, healers, and alchemists for their genie masters.
- **The House of Smoke** is made up of those jann for whom primordial fire and air are dominant. Its members have dry skin and hair, which breaks up as a cloud behind them. They tend toward grey eyes, and their changeable nature makes them skilled diplomats and entertainers.
- **The House of Magma** is made up of those jann for whom primordial fire and earth are dominant. They have red eyes and often a shock of red hair among the dark strands. They are the soldiers and raiders of domains, such as the City of Brass, and often venture into the Prime Material with slave-catching parties.
- **The House of Ice** is made up of those jann for whom primordial water and air are dominant. They have blue eyes and white hair, sometimes only a few strands but often their entire head is covered with ivory locks. They are

considered patient and serve as guards, jailors, and collectors.

A Para-Elemental Parliament. The jann within the City of Brass and in other great genie domains operate as a second government, a bureaucracy that keeps matters on an even keel and keeps any one faction or personality from upsetting the status quo and demanding the attention of the great sultan—may his people always prosper. This Para-Elemental Parliament does not seek power for itself but will balance one group against the others to keep the peace.

Free People of the Desert. Not all jann are pleased with the serving of more powerful genies, and some flee to form their own societies in the barren and arid places of the world. Gathering mortals in their wake, they form large caravans and dominate desert oases with their opulent tent cities. Some go further, encouraging rebellion against their former masters and freeing slaves that have been unjustly captured. Their ability to shift among the elemental planes makes them hard to catch, and their relationship (familial or social) with members of the Para-Elemental Parliament makes the city-bound jann sympathetic to their cause.

JANN

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +5 Wis +5 Cha +7

Condition Immunities See *Para-elemental Nature* below.

Senses Darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 13

Languages Aquan, Auran, Ignan, Terran

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)



Breathless. Jann have no need to breathe, though do so out of courtesy or in order to speak. They cannot drown or be victims of poisonous gas or other attacks that require breathing.

Elemental Demise. If the jann dies, their body disintegrates into its elemental parts (a puddle of ooze, a wisp of smoke, the embers of magma, or melting shards of ice), leaving behind only the equipment the jann was wearing or carrying.

Innate Spellcasting. The jann's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, + 8 to hit with spell attacks). They can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day: *invisibility*

2/day each: *enlarge/reduce, speak with animals*

1/day each: *create food/water, etherealness, planeshift* (Material and Elemental Planes only)

Para-elemental Nature. Jann are made of a mixture of all primordial elements but fall into one of four houses or kingdoms, each with differing abilities:

- **House of Ooze**—
Damage resistance to piercing weapons.
- **House of Smoke**—
Damage resistance to slashing weapons.
- **House of Magma**—
Immunity to fire.
- **House of Ice**—Immunity to cold.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jann makes two great scimitar attacks or two longbow attacks. If armed with two scimitars, they may make two scimitar attacks and one bonus scimitar attack.

Great Scimitar (Treat as Greatsword).

Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 damage (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Scimitar. **Melee Weapon Attack:** +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 damage (1d6 + 4) slashing damage. The bonus attack, if it hits, deals only 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

Longbow. **Ranged Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 damage (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTION

Parry. The jann adds +3 to their AC against one melee attack that would hit them. To do so, the jann must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



BAZAAR OF INEFFABLE WONDERS

by Richard Green

Author's Note. Parts of this article are taken from the Nine Chthonic Papyri of Heknusret the Temerarious, former member of the Honorable Society of Portal Wizards, a secretive order of Nurian mages based in the city of Per-Anu who seek to control the mysterious Red Portals.

Heknusret travelled through dozens of Red Portals to many different times, places, and worlds, often with little regard for his own safety, meticulously recording his discoveries in a collection of scrolls known as the *Chthonic Papyri* which he kept in a leather scroll case embossed with the symbols of Anu-Akma, Lord of the Underworld—a golden ankh and scythe.

Heknusret was expelled from the society for his failure to safeguard the secrets of the portal wizards when his scroll case was stolen during a visit to the River King's Court in the Arbonesse. Copies of the *Chthonic Papyri* have since appeared for sale in markets of cities such as Bemmea and Mhalmet and always fetch astronomical prices. But owning these scrolls is dangerous—the portal wizards actively hunt and eliminate anyone in possession of their lore who is not a member of the society.

A Visit to the Bazaar

A number of Red Portals lead to the fabled City of Brass, but I have always found the most reliable to be the one located in Kel Azjer, the hidden city of the Tamasheq. Head east from the Plaza of the Aeromancer

along the Street of Amphorae until you come to a small temple with a cobalt dome. There is a brass plate on its wooden door depicting an armored knight mounted on a war camel. Rub the nail set in the rider's navel twelve times to open the portal.

Step through the glowing red doorway, and you will find yourself on the bustling streets of one of the greatest cities in the multiverse—the City of Brass, home to the efreeti and their powerful grand sultan. The city is rightly famed across the planes for its markets, bazaars, and souks. Here, a visitor can find many wondrous things available for sale. The trick is knowing where to look.

One promising spot where I have made a number of worthwhile purchases over the years is the Bazaar of Ineffable Wonders, a splendid covered market on the banks of the Incandescent Canal, not far from the Blazing Mosque. The bazaar is built from basalt in the shape of a giant cross—each section is over 300 yards long and can be entered through one of four impressive gates.

The bazaar's roof is topped with a series of copper domes adorned with gold filigree, and rectangular windows high in the walls bath the interior in the eerie, red light of the Plane of Elemental Fire. At the central



point, where the four arms of the cross meet, is a much larger dome; the inside of this impressive cupola is decorated with a spectacular mosaic of gold and glass tesserae of dazzling colors, depicting the Grand Sultan Ixingaltrix holding court in his throne room as the other genie lords prostrate themselves before him.

The Bazaar of Ineffable Wonders holds over 500 shops, selling all manner of marvelous things, many of which I have only ever seen for sale here. As they are in the Southlands, shops selling similar goods are often clustered together, making it hard to find the particular establishment you seek. As you wander through the bazaar, the heady smells of incense, tobacco, and roasting meats merge with the pungent aromas of exotic spices, herbs, and oils. There are magical items to buy here, of course, but there are mechanical wonders too, and a visitor in search of a beautiful carpet, a finely wrought weapon, or a rare tome will not leave disappointed.

MUBARAK'S EMPORIUM OF MECHANICAL MARVELS

Whenever I visit the bazaar, I make a point of stopping at Mubarak's Emporium to see his newest clockwork inventions. Like most shops in the bazaar, Mubarak's is packed with merchandise, its contents spilling out into the walkway. Larger mechanicals, including a clockwork steed and a bronze scorpion, stand outside while the shelves and display cases inside are filled with all manner of smaller, more intricate items.

Mubarak al-Hariq, an irascible azer clockwork mage, runs the emporium and crafts everything for sale here himself. He makes his bigger pieces in a workshop elsewhere in the city but builds the smaller clockworks right in the shop, and I usually find him tinkering with some kind of mechanism or other on his workbench whenever I visit. Abdul, a mechanical monkey, acts as his assistant, fetching tools,

gears, and screws from a cabinet with many small drawers. Occasionally he produces the wrong item, prompting a frustrated Mubarak to swear colorfully at him in Ignan.

Mubarak greets new customers with suspicion and a scowl but is the most talented clockworker I have ever met, and he talks animatedly with those who know and appreciate clockwork magic and automata. If you are looking for a mechanical helper or clockwork gadget, this is the place to come.

MUBARAK AL-HARIQ

(Azer Clockwork Mage)

Medium elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +9, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +9, Religion +9

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Ignan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Clockworker's Charm. Whenever Mubarak casts *animate construct*, the duration of the spell is increased by 4 minutes.

Golem Form. Mubarak can transform himself into a golem or clockwork creature of CR 10 or less for up to 10 minutes. He retains his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma and the ability to speak and cast spells. Otherwise, this functions as the druid's Wild Shape ability.

Heated Body. A creature that touches Mubarak or hits him with a melee attack while within 5 feet of him takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Heated Weapons. When Mubarak hits with a metal melee weapon, he deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

Illumination. Mubarak sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Spellcasting. Mubarak is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fist of iron**, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *tick stop**

1st level (4 slots): *animate construct**, *burning hands*, *gear shield**, *machine speech**

2nd level (3 slots): *gear barrage**, *shatter*, *winding key**

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *overclock**, *thousand darts**

4th level (3 slots): *absolute command**, *dimension door*, *grinding gears**, *steam blast**

5th level (2 slots): *animate objects*, *mechanical union**

6th level (1 slot): *catapult**, *chain lightning*

7th level (1 slot): *reverse gravity*

*Clockwork spell (see *Midgard Heroes Handbook*)

ACTIONS

Command Construct. One construct that Mubarak can see within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or become friendly to the mage and obey his commands. This effect lasts for 1 hour, until the mage uses this ability again, or until the construct takes damage from Mubarak or his allies. If the saving throw is failed by 5 or more, the duration is extended to 6 hours or until one of the other conditions is fulfilled. When the effect ends, the construct is aware it was controlled by Mubarak.

Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Mubarak al-Hariq has lived in the City of Brass for over a century. Like most azer, he dislikes the efreeti who make up the majority of his customers, but he doesn't much care for humans either, preferring the company of his clockwork "friends."

Already a master of his craft, Mubarak spends his time constantly inventing new clockwork devices and automata. Some of these constructs and gizmos are dangerous

or unpredictable, but this doesn't concern Mubarak. The azer can call upon several clockwork creatures, including clockwork hounds and myrmidons (see *Tome of Beasts*), to defend his shop from robbers or other troublemakers.

Adventure Hooks

There's always a lot happening in the bazaar:

- Mubarak sold an ornithopter for a huge price to Mushir Faruq Mutakabbir, an influential efreeti noble, but regrettably he has not yet received payment. The azer plans to visit the great duke to raise the matter and is looking to hire a group of impressive bodyguards to accompany him.
- Irfan al-Zarqa, wealthy sybarite and friend of the Sultan of Siwal, solved an ancient, bronze puzzle box said to open a portal to a "realm of ultimate sensation." Irfan is now trapped in this other dimension and the sultan would like his friend back. Can Mubarak reopen the puzzle box, so the PCs can mount a rescue mission?
- An elderly fire jinnborn named Saffiyah al-Razzaq purchased a clockwork device from Mubarak designed to slow the aging process. When she took the spider-shaped contraption home, it attached itself to her arm, piercing her skin with its needle-like legs. She immediately felt healthier and stronger, and the wrinkles on her face faded away. The drawback is that she must drain the vitality of the young every night to power the device. Now she is stalking innocent victims throughout the city, leaving shriveled husks in her wake. Can the PCs put an end to the killings and confront Mubarak who has several more of these devices for sale?



Other Notable Shops

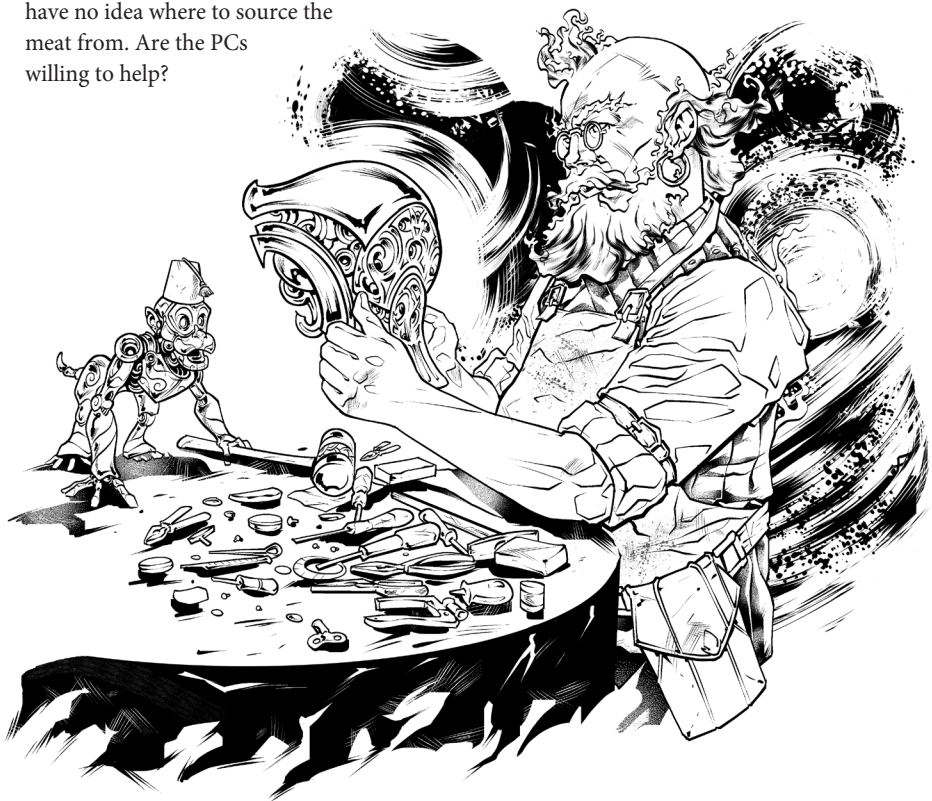
In my visits to the bazaar over the years, a lot of establishments have come and gone, but these have stood the test of time, becoming beloved institutions with a loyal clientele.

Char and Scorch are a pair of dim-witted magma mephits that run the **Big Grill**, a place selling a wide variety of smoked and barbecued meats—everything from auroch and giant elk to roasted gorgon and purple worm steaks. The meat is generally served very well done and is coated with a nearly inedible spicy glaze made with very hot infernal chilies (DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one minute, save ends).

Hook—A regular efreeti customer has demanded a unicorn steak pita for tomorrow's lunch and the two mephits have no idea where to source the meat from. Are the PCs willing to help?

Bel'shun's **Smoker's Paradise** is a shop selling all manner of sweet-smelling tobaccos and exotic incense, many of which have magical properties, as well as beautifully made water pipes sized for humans, efreeti, and fire giants. Bel'shun is a fire jinnborn whose powerful jinn patron lives in an opulent mansion in the smartest part of the city. Bel'shun has brick red skin, golden hair, and a long aquiline nose; he dresses in a djellaba of crimson silk adorned with gold coins and other trinkets. His deep black eyes flicker with a blue flame when he is nervous.

Hook—One of Bel'shun's customers experienced a strange vision in which the PCs appeared, battling an angry genie whom they had inadvertently freed from a copper urn.



The Shackle Shop specializes in unbreakable chains, iron slave collars, bronze manacles, and branding irons marked with the sigils of efreeti noble houses—everything a cruel overseer needs to keep their slaves in line. Lysandrix, a salamander and former efreeti slave, was given his freedom by his master after three decades of loyal service. He set up this shop in the bazaar and made money off the misery of his kin and wretched humanoids. Lysandrix's forge work is of superior quality: the DC to break one of his chains or pick the lock of his manacles is 10 higher than normal.

Hook—Lysandrix's sister is still a slave, and the salamander's former master has ignored his pleas to grant her freedom. Lysandrix offers the PCs a set of magical *dimensional shackles* as a reward for sneaking into the efreeti's estate and unlocking his sister's manacles with the key he provides.

Pyramids of Spice is an aptly named shop near the Brimstone Gate, one of the bazaar's four entrances. Dozens of brightly colored mounds of different spices, herbs, and teas sit in wooden trays on the tables filling this shop. The owner is a red-scaled, fire-breathing dragonkin named Ansa Khetek, a spice merchant originally from the Southlands of Midgard who came to the City of Brass twelve years ago to trade in exotic chili peppers, saw an opportunity, and never left. Ansa sells her wares to some of the city's finest restaurants and wealthiest efreeti nobles, including the grand sultan himself. She has an incredible sense of smell and ironclad (but also very refined) taste buds.

Hook—The last batch of infernal chilies Ansa purchased from her supplier was not hot enough, and her customers are complaining. She needs a fresh batch urgently and is willing to pay the PCs a hefty fee if they will fetch her some from the Eleven Hells.

MARVELOUS MECHANICALS AND OTHER WONDERS

PCs visiting the bazaar in search of unusual items should not be disappointed. Here is a sample of the merchandise available.

Clockwork Monkey

Wondrous item, rare

Built by Mubarak al-Hariq—who uses one of these mechanical monkeys as a helper in his workshop—it is fashioned from copper and stands about a foot tall, wearing a little felt fez atop its metal head. The monkey is friendly to you and your companions and obeys your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, the monkey amuses itself by dancing and capering on the spot or hanging from a lamp fitting with its tail.

CLOCKWORK MONKEY

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +2, Sleight of Hand +5

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages understands Ignan

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Expert Lockpicker. The clockwork monkey has expertise with thieves' tools (+7).

Immutable Form. The clockwork monkey is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The clockwork monkey has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.



Clockwork Mynah Bird

Wondrous item, rare

Another Mubarak al-Hariq creation, this mechanical brass bird is nine inches long from the tip of its beak to the end of its tail. If you use your action to speak the first command word (“listen” in Ignan), it cocks its head and listen intently to what is being said for up to 10 minutes. When you give the second command word (“speak”), it will repeat back what it has heard in a metallic-sounding—though reasonably accurate—portrayal of the speakers’ voices.

You can use the clockwork mynah bird to relay conversations it has heard to others. You can command the mynah to fly to a location it has previously visited, where your friend or contact can use the command word to get it to repeat back what it has heard. The mynah bird returns to you as soon as it has carried out this task.

The clockwork mynah bird has AC 14, 1 hp, and a fly speed of 50 ft.

Incense of Recovery

Wondrous item, rare

This block of perfumed incense appears to be normal, nonmagical incense until lit. The incense burns for one hour and gives off a lavender-like scent, accompanied by pale mauve smoke. If you are a spellcaster, you can recover a single expended spell slot following a short rest that takes place while the incense is burning.

Sheeshah of Revelations

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This finely crafted water pipe is made from silver and glass. Its vase is etched with arcane symbols. When you use the sheeshah to smoke normal or flavored tobacco, you enter a dreamlike state and are granted a cryptic or surreal vision giving you insight into your current quest or a significant event in your near future. The GM will describe your vision to you.

Using the *sheeshah of revelations* is physically taxing. You emerge from the dreamlike state with a level of exhaustion. You cannot use the sheeshah again until the events hinted at in your vision have come to pass.

Spice Box of Zest

Wondrous item, very rare

This small, square wooden box is carved with scenes of life in the City of Brass. Inside, the box is divided into six compartments, each holding a different magical spice. A small wooden spoon is also stored inside the box for measuring. A spice box of zest contains six spoonfuls of each spice when full.

You can add one spoonful of a single spice per person to a meal that you or someone else is cooking. If you add two or more spices, a culinary mishap may ensue.

The spices have the following effects on those consuming the meal and last for one hour unless otherwise indicated:

Baharat—Your Strength score increases to 21.

Cassia—You are no longer suffering the effects of exhaustion.

Cloves—You cannot become frightened.

Fiery Chilies—You can use a bonus action to exhale fire in a 15-foot cone. The target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 fire damage on a failed save or half damage on a successful one. The effect ends after you have used your fiery breath or after one hour, whichever comes first.

- **Saffron**—You become charmed by the next creature you see 10 minutes after eating the meal. If the creature is of a species and gender you are normally attracted to, you regard it as your true love while you are charmed.

- **Turmeric**—You have advantage on saving throws against spells.

THIS WAY TO THE CITY OF BRASS

by Steve Winter

Of all the infinite locations outside the Material Plane, the most iconic may well be the City of Brass. It's the type of place where any GM would love to set an adventure and where most adventurers would love to wander. Still, they need a good reason to go there; bold adventurers don't travel as tourists.

Any of these hooks can be used to push, pull, or drop characters into the Plane of Elemental Fire and the legendary City of Brass. Here, they're grouped into three categories based on which approach they take: pushing, pulling, or dropping.

Pushes

A push-type hook is one that has its roots outside the Plane of Elemental Fire, but for one or more reasons, characters can't accomplish their objective without visiting the City of Brass. Many of these involve the characters being hired or otherwise employed to visit the City of Brass for some specific reason:

1. The characters' patron has a message or an item that must be delivered to a specific creature in the City of Brass. The recipient is either difficult to find or difficult to get an audience with. As a variant, the "package" for delivery is another sentient creature who doesn't want to be handed over.
2. The City of Brass is protected against the searing heat of the Plane of Elemental Fire, so it's more hospitable to creatures not native to the plane than are the surrounding environs. The characters' patron wants to know how that astounding feat is accomplished.
3. The characters were put in charge of safeguarding an especially valuable item or location while its owner was away. An efreeti showed up, caused all sorts of havoc and destruction, stole the item, and fled with it back to the Plane of Elemental Fire. To fulfill their obligation, the characters need to get it back.
4. A powerful individual or consortium wants to know more about the defenses and military strength of the grand sultan. The characters are sent to the City of Brass under cover of being traders or diplomats to scout the city's defenses. They must get into areas that outsiders are barred from entering and assess the strength of the grand sultan's preparations. Alternatively, the characters could be sent to learn the ins and outs of efreeti customs and etiquette in preparation for a major diplomatic mission from the Material Plane.

5. Someone is stirring up trouble between efreeti and mortals, breaking generations-old agreements in ways that offend or harm both sides. No one knows who's behind these outrages or why, but unless they're stopped, war may result. The characters' patron believes the answer can be found in the back alleys and discontented underbelly of the City of Brass. Characters may be able to call on limited aid from the grand sultan to uncover the culprits, but the pashas can't be seen taking sides with mortals against their own subjects.
6. Emissaries of the efreeti contacted the characters' patron with a message that they have a delicate task for a group of mortals who broadly fit the party's description. When characters arrive in the City of Brass, efreeti emissaries "recognize" the characters as the subjects of an ancient efreeti prophecy on which the fate of the city depends.
3. At the end of a long adventure to capture a dangerous artifact, characters learn that it can be destroyed only in a sacred pillar of flame in the City of Brass—but doing so will also extinguish the flame.
4. A request for help has been received across dimensions. The grand sultan wants one of his own kind eliminated or punished, but for inscrutable legal or political reasons, the dirty deed can't be done by other efreet. The characters' patron is a longtime ally of the efreeti, so he offers the job to them.
5. Love survives across dimensions! The NPC spouse or lover of one of the characters disappears into the City of Brass. The NPC might have been kidnapped by an efreeti who's in love with the same person, for revenge against the characters, or the NPC might have left voluntarily to escape from what he or she now sees as a dead-end relationship.

Pulls

A pull-type hook is one that has its roots in the City of Brass. The adventure doesn't necessarily start there, but that's where it's likely to end:

1. Characters are on the trail of an infamous and powerful criminal, and indications point to him having fled to the City of Brass. Characters must bring him back to the material world for justice and smooth over any uproar he causes in the Plane of Elemental Fire.
2. A vital ritual can be completed only with flame from the Burning Palace of the Grand Sultan. The grand sultan doesn't normally allow this flame to be taken out of his palace, so characters must infiltrate and steal it and then escape back to their own realm with the flame still lit.

6. A portal to the Plane of Elemental Fire has opened in town and fire elementals are coming through, causing raging conflagrations. Characters must deal with the elementals, travel through the portal to the City of Brass, find a way to close it from other side, and then find a way back home without the portal.

Drops

A drop-type hook is one that doesn't give the characters much choice. They're going to the City of Brass whether or not they want to:

1. A magic portal, a *teleportation* spell, or some other means of instantaneous travel goes haywire. Instead of arriving at their expected destination, the characters suddenly find themselves in the City of Brass without the means to turn around and jaunt back home.

2. A large building the characters are staying in—an aristocrat's palace or a major inn, for example—catches fire during the night. Try as they might to escape, the characters find themselves completely hemmed in by roaring flames. As the flames and heat wash over them, the characters expect only a horrible death, but when they open their eyes, they find themselves alive by some miracle and in the City of Brass.

3. The characters just pulled off a tremendously successful tomb-looting expedition. As they sift through the heap of well-earned treasure, they find a sealed crystal bottle that contains an efreeti. After a tough negotiation for their three wishes, they unstopper the vial and release its prisoner—who immediately reneges on all his promises and magically transports everyone to the City of Brass.



4. The characters are passengers on a sailing ship, looking forward to an uneventful crossing. Another passenger, however, has brought an efreeti bottle aboard and, at some point, opens it. The efreeti kills the bottle's owner and attacks whoever else it finds aboard. When characters and other passengers finally have the enraged efreeti cornered and at death's door, it triggers a failsafe magical effect that hijacks the ship and all its contents to the City of Brass.
5. Characters find themselves sharing an inn's common room with an efreeti disguised as a dragonkin. Without realizing the true nature of their companion, the characters say or do something that offends its rigorous sense of honor or etiquette. No efreeti would put up with such an affront, so it transports all of them to the City of Brass and locks them in the dungeon of its fiery home.
6. Someone or something in the City of Brass casts the efreeti's version of a *conjure mortals* spell, and the player characters were the unlucky creatures pulled through the ether to perform a short term of service in the Plane of Elemental Fire.

What a Twist!

Any hook can be spiced up with an unexpected twist. To add a peculiarity to any hook, roll 1d6:

1. The characters are somehow stuck with a demon as an ally.
2. Characters must accomplish their objective without killing anyone.
3. The patron who brought them in on this mission actually wants them to fail.
4. If the mission succeeds, innocent people will be hurt by it.
5. While in the City of Brass, characters are mistaken for another, similar group of mortals who caused a lot of trouble recently.
6. The actual goal is very different from what characters were told. Their patron concocted an elaborate story to get them to bring a specific item into the Burning Palace where it will magically transform into a powerful killer bent on assassinating the grand sultan. Unless characters stop it, they'll wind up with the blame.

SPELLS FROM THE FIRE

by Steve Winter

These fourteen spells are suitable for a campaign that visits the City of Brass or that takes place in a setting where fire, heat, and the desert loom large, such as the Southlands. They're geared toward wizards, but there's no reason why sorcerers and warlocks—or even clerics and druids—can't have access to them if you decide it's appropriate in your campaign.

1ST LEVEL

AVERT EVIL EYE

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a blue bead)

Duration: 1 hour

The evil eye takes many forms. Any incident of bad luck can be blamed on it, especially if a character recently displayed arrogance or selfishness. When *avert evil eye* is cast, the recipient has a small degree of protection against the evil eye for up to 1 hour. While the spell lasts, the target of the spell has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, cursed, and frightened. During the spell's duration, the target can also cancel disadvantage on one d20 roll the target is about to make, but doing so ends the spell's effect.

CANDLE'S INSIGHT

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (a blessed candle)

Duration: 10 minutes

Candle's insight is cast on its target as the component candle is lit. The candle burns for up to 10 minutes unless it's extinguished normally or by the spell's effect. While the candle burns, the caster can question the spell's target, and the candle reveals whether the target speaks truthfully. An intentionally misleading or partial answer causes the flame to flicker and dim. An outright lie causes the flame to flare and then go out, ending the spell. The candle judges honesty, not absolute truth; the flame burns steadily through even an outrageously false statement, if the target believes it's true.

Candle's insight is used across society: by merchants while negotiating deals, by inquisitors investigating heresy, and by monarchs as they interview foreign diplomats. In some societies, casting *candle's insight* without the consent of the spell's target is considered a serious breach of hospitality.

2ND LEVEL

DAGGERHAWK

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a dagger)

Duration: 1 minute

When *daggerhawk* is cast on a mundane dagger, a ghostly hawk appears around the weapon. The hawk and dagger fly into the air and make a melee attack against one creature you select within 60 feet, using your spell attack modifier and doing $1d4 +$ (your spellcasting ability modifier) piercing damage on a successful hit. On your following turns, you can use a bonus action to cause the daggerhawk to attack the same target. Once a target is selected for the daggerhawk, it can't switch to any other. The daggerhawk has AC 14 and, although it's invulnerable to all damage, a successful attack against it that does bludgeoning, force, or slashing damage sends the daggerhawk tumbling, so it can't attack again until after your next turn.

FEATHER TRAVEL

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, M (a feather)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

The target of *feather travel* transforms into a feather (along with their clothing and other gear) and drifts on the wind. The drifting creature has a limited ability to control their travel. They can move only in the direction the wind is blowing and at the speed of the wind. They can, however, shift up, down, or sideways 5 feet per round as if caught by a gust, allowing them to aim for an open window or doorway, to avoid a flame, or to steer around an animal or another creature. When the spell ends, the feather settles gently to the ground and transforms back into the original creature.

At Higher Levels. When you cast *feather travel* using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, two additional creatures can be transformed per slot level above 2nd.



FIRE DARTS

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S, M (a fire the size of a small campfire or larger)

Duration: Instantaneous

When this spell is cast on any fire that's at least as large as a small campfire or cooking fire, three darts of flame shoot out from the fire toward targets within 30 feet of the fire. Darts can be directed against the same or separate targets as the caster chooses. Each dart does 4d6 fire damage or half damage with a successful Dexterity saving throw.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

3RD LEVEL

BREEZE COMPASS

3rd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a magnetized needle)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

When you cast *breeze compass*, you must clearly imagine or mentally describe a location. It doesn't need to be a location you've been to as long as you know it exists on the Material Plane. Within moments, a gentle breeze arises and blows along the most efficient path toward that destination. Only you can sense this breeze, and whenever it brings you to a decision point (a fork in a tunnel, for example), you must make a successful DC 8 Intelligence (Arcana) check to deduce which way the breeze indicates you should go. The spell ends if the Intelligence check fails. The breeze guides you around cliffs, lava pools, and other natural obstacles, but it doesn't avoid enemies or hostile creatures.

TONGUE OF SAND

3rd-level illusion (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Until dispelled

Tongue of sand is similar in many ways to *magic mouth*. When you cast it, you implant a message in a quantity of sand. The sand must fill a space no smaller than 4 square feet and at least 2 inches deep. The message can be up to 25 words. You also decide the conditions that trigger the speaking of the message. When the message is triggered, a mouth forms in the sand and delivers the message in a raspy, whispered voice that can be heard by creatures within 10 feet of the sand.

Additionally, *tongue of sand* has the ability to interact in a simple, brief manner with creatures who hear its message. For up to 10 minutes after the message is triggered, questions addressed to the sand will be answered as you would answer them. Each answer can be no more than 10 words long, and the spell ends after a second question is answered.

4TH LEVEL

SEARING SUN

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 200 feet

Components: V, S, M (a magnifying lens)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell intensifies the light and heat of the sun, so it burns exposed flesh. You must be able to see the sun when you cast the spell. The searing sunlight affects a cylindrical area 50 feet in radius and 200 feet high, centered on the target point. Every creature that starts its turn in that area takes 5d8 fire damage or half damage with a successful Constitution saving throw. A creature that's shaded by a solid object such as an awning,

a building, or an overhanging boulder has advantage on the saving throw. On your turn, you can use an action to move the target point up to 20 feet in any direction along the ground.

LAVA STONE

4th-level transformation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, M (a sling stone)

Duration: Instantaneous

When you cast *lava stone* on a piece of sling ammo, the stone or bullet becomes intensely hot. As a bonus action, you can launch the heated stone with a sling: the stone increases in size and melts into a glob of lava while in flight. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. If it hits, the target takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage, plus 6d6 fire damage. The target takes additional fire damage at the start of each of your next three turns, beginning at 4d6, then 2d6, and then 1d6. The additional damage can be avoided if the target or an ally within 5 feet of the target scrapes off the lava. This is done by spending an action to make a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check against your spellcasting save DC. The spell ends if the heated sling stone isn't used immediately.

5TH LEVEL

SAND SHIP

4th-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a boat or ship of 10,000 gp value or less)

Duration: 24 hours

Casting *sand ship* on a water vessel up to the size of a small sailing ship transforms it into a vessel capable of sailing on sand as easily as water. The vessel still needs a trained crew and relies on wind or oars for propulsion, but it moves at its normal speed

across sand instead of water for the duration of the spell. It can sail only through sand, not soil or solid rock. For the duration of the spell, the vessel doesn't float; it must be beached or resting on the bottom of a body of water (partially drawn up onto a beach, for example) when the spell is cast or it sinks into the water.

6TH LEVEL

FIREWALK

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

The creature you cast *firewalk* on becomes immune to fire damage. In addition, that creature can walk along any burning surface, such as a burning wall or burning oil spread on water, as if it were solid and horizontal. Even if there is no surface to walk on, the creature can walk along the tops of the flames themselves.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, two additional creatures can be affected for each slot level above 6th.

7TH LEVEL

CREATE THUNDERSTAFF

7th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 10 minutes (ritual)

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a quarterstaff)

Duration: Until depleted

When you cast *create thunderstaff* on a normal quarterstaff, it becomes like a sponge for loud, harsh sounds. The staff must then be mounted in a noisy location, such as a busy marketplace, and left there for 60 days. During those 60 days, the staff absorbs ambient sound, which has the pleasant effect of reducing what would

normally be raucous, discordant noise into a background rumble that, while still noticeable, is not at all unpleasant or distracting. The staff doesn't detract from anyone's ability to converse or to be heard, it just makes unwanted noise easy to ignore.

After 60 days, the staff is fully charged and can't absorb any more sound. At that point, it becomes a *thunderstaff*, a magic quarterstaff that grants a +1 bonus to melee attack and damage rolls made with it. In addition, the staff has 10 charges. When you hit with a melee attack with the staff and expend 1 charge, the target takes an additional 1d8 thunder damage. You can cast *thunderwave* from the staff as a bonus action by expending 2 charges. The staff doesn't recharge.

8TH LEVEL

WIND OF THE HEREAFTER

8th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S, M (a vial of air from a tomb)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a 30-foot-radius sphere of roiling wind that carries the choking stench of death. The sphere is centered on a point you choose within range. The wind blows around corners. When a creature starts its turn in the sphere, it takes 8d8 necrotic damage or half damage with a successful Constitution saving throw. Creatures are affected even if they hold their breath or don't need to breathe.

The sphere moves 10 feet away from you at the start of each of your turns, drifting along the surface of the ground. It is not heavier than air but drifts in a straight line for the duration of the spell, even if that carries it over a cliff or gully. If the sphere meets a wall or other impassable obstacle, it turns to the left or right (select randomly).

9TH LEVEL

UNLEASH EFFIGY

9th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You cause a stone statue that you can see within 60 feet of you to animate as your ally. The statue has the statistics of a stone golem. It takes a turn immediately after your turn. As a bonus action on your turn, you can order the golem to move and attack, provided you're within 60 feet of it. Without orders from you, the statue does nothing.

Whenever the statue has 75 hit points or fewer at the start of your turn or it is more than 60 feet from you at the start of your turn, you must make a successful DC 16 spellcasting check or the statue goes berserk. On each of its turns, the berserk statue attacks you or one of your allies. If no creature is near enough to be attacked, the statue dashes toward the nearest one instead. Once the statue goes berserk, it remains berserk until it's destroyed.

When the spell ends, the animated statue reverts to a normal, mundane statue.

THE CURIOUS PLACES YOU'LL FIND

by Richard Pett

The boiling, seething mass of the City of Brass defies any attempt but the broadest to catalogue her. Her teeming, steaming maze of streets and sinners and curious locales seems endless with new places born from the streets by the hour—a cycle of growing and withering akin to the countless lives of her inhabitants. Some places are quickly lost, some die, some are mysteriously found after disappearing, and others are to be avoided if possible, but even these have a nasty habit of turning up somehow when wanderers find themselves on the very path they most wanted to avoid.

Here is a small selection of curious locations that may (or may not) be encountered on a trip down her streets. Our intention is to give you inspiration to stage adventures here and also, hopefully, to inspire you to create your own crooked corners of the magnificent City of Brass!

THE GULPING ORIFICE (AKA QUEEN MAW, THE MAD JIG AT THE FALL OF ALL FLAMES)

“The Gulper? Yes, I’ve seen her once, and once was enough. To be truthful, you more feel her and hear her than see her—looking into her soul too deep scorches the eyes, you see. I’ve heard tell of mariners that catch a glimpse of her, and it’s the last thing they ever see. Unless they see the buildings said to be inside her—great impossible cliffs of

worked stone and strange metal sometimes glimpsed deep within her jowls.”

Lurking in the deepest reaches of the Sea of Fire, the Gulping Maw is a vast whirlpool of molten lava said to have a soul and anger all its own. So deep, she is said to reach into the heart of the world and to have her soul buried there—the Gulper is part creature, part god of the city. A marriage of a dozen conjoined, schizophrenic fire elementals of the greatest size occasionally seen dancing in the sea, the Gulper is tended by a cabal of salamanders that lurk in the buildings that are occasionally glimpsed when the whirlpool is formed, an occasional event linked to the passing and alignment of heavenly bodies. So far, the beast has only ever been partially awoken by such events, raising it into a short-lived storm of fury and lava. The salamanders seek to change that.

Calling themselves the Heralds of the Fiery Bride, the score or so of salamanders—all paragons of their own race—work tirelessly to permanently awaken their living god in the hope of bringing her to terrible life. Hoping, of course, that she will be grateful for their “gift” and assist them in their secret goal of dominating the City of Brass. We mentioned that each of the heralds is a paragon, which is true of itself, but they are not physical paragons—indeed, in this regard, they are the very opposite,

struck down by some malignant, terrible affliction that has changed their bodies, turning each into an abomination. The leader of the heralds, the appalling Scalded Queen, is herself the most disfigured of all the salamanders. Dragging her distended, bloated, serpentine form about their temple, she commands a small army of terrified henchmen, worshippers, and slaves throughout the city, always with the aim of unravelling the mystery of the connection between Queen Maw and the stars.

THE EPHEMERAL GYRE TEMPLE OF BAAL AND THE PENANCE OF THE FAITHLESS

Swelling like some dreadful lesion from the surface of the Sea of Fire, a bloated mass of blackened stone floats upon the lava. Impossibly, this stone has been worked or forced into a structure—you can see walkways and archways and rooms within its terrible mass as it slowly, spastically slithers across the surface of the Sea of Fire with the speed of hands upon a clock. A great, glowering doorway, which appears to be a horned dragon's head leering from the flames, gazes outward from this strange place whilst above rises a crooked spire.

Slithering atop a slumbering corner of the Sea of Fire, the Ephemeral Temple is a curiously twisted structure—if structure is the right word—born of the lava of the sea itself and growing upward and outward. It is a place birthed by fire and fury and has become a shrine for those who worship Baal, Lord of Fire and Master of Noble Sacrifice, King of All Dragons.

The founder and leader of the temple is the Visionary, a gnoll whose eyes were removed by heartless slavers when he was but a child but who can see—or perhaps more correctly feel and hear—the temple. It was he who walked across the lava in the first place when he was but a child, an act taken

by those who saw it as madness but which brought the gnoll to this peculiar shrine. Perhaps, some say, it was he who birthed or caused the place to rise in the beginning. The Visionary is a fearsome yet just figure, his words echoing the moods of the fire below and about him in tone only, for he is always measured in what he says and does. His wisdom is sought by many, but the means to reach it keep the less devout at bay, as we shall see shortly.

All worshippers of Baal are welcome here, but the presence of the Visionary draws many gnolls to the transient shrine. Many have stayed. A core of monks of Baal tend and collect holy relics here, and the now-ancient Visionary has a lifetime of gifts and objects of great and holy power, many given in return for his vision and advice and blessings. The place glows with them, gold winks from every corner, jewels from every shadow. The shrine is now the size of a church, yet its growing continues, and recently, stretching from atop the structure, a great twisting spire rises—said by some to be the spine of a great dragon being birthed from the sea itself. In recent days, the Visionary and his monks have been seeking a dragonkin said to bear a special mark that will signify them as the new Visionary. Is the spire a herald of joy or portent of woe?

The fickle temple slowly dances across the surface of the great and terrible Sea of Fire, sometimes shedding her parts (often with deadly result). Worse awaits the faithful than a mere fickle structure, however. The truly faithful do not seek to fly or find magical means of crossing to the place of most holy worship—they walk there. To assist in this seemingly impossible journey of stepping across the surface of a sea of molten magma, a small but redoubtable group of djinni and efreeti guides are on hand to offer the faithful advice on the best paths to tread, where no paths exist. Some



are said to be ascetics who seek to slay and rob the faithful. Such villains meet awful fiery ends if the monks find them.

Yet many still take the walk across lava and live and are blessed.

The nearest shore houses a series of ghats where the faithful to Baal are burned and cast into the sea itself. Some fanatical worshippers of Baal have cast themselves into the sea in the vain hope that they will be reborn as dragons.

A series of festivals culminates in the Day of Stepping, the annual date when the Visionary first stepped across the Sea of Fire and entered the temple, a place he has rumored never to have left since. This festival is opulent; the streets dance with the aroma of incense and the finery of gold holy objects. Monks of the shrine go into the city with gifts of great wealth for anyone deemed to be holy by them, guided by their fiery god's hand.

THE VENT, THE MYRIAD, AND THE WAYS OF STEAM

Rumors persist of a series of secret, possibly interdimensional passages said to crawl their way across the city, linking its more outré and repellent parts—as well as providing easy access between.

The tales are, as so often occurs in the fabulous City of Brass, true. The passages are extremely fickle and dangerous, however, as they host an equally erratic series of fearful vents, lurking in the shadows and cracks of the city, that occasionally boil outward, cooking anything within the corridors, stripping flesh and boiling bones. A small, some might say untrustworthy, group of minotaur guides first found the Ways and claim knowledge of her moods.

Did we say her moods? Well, yes, because this maze is alive.

These guides are paranoid about their own security and can be impossible to locate—as everyone with power wants to know where the Ways go and how they can be navigated. The thieves' guilds in particular are always seeking to gather more knowledge about the Ways and her anger.

The Ways are not simply passages, however. They are indeed living things tended like children by their doting and fierce mother who lurks at the edges of sight in an abandoned place deep in the very bowels of the city. The mother does not

have a name, but her children sometimes cry out for her help if strangers invade their home and being. The various children are linkages made of both flesh, bone, and stone—intertwined—their moods reflected in the way the corridors that make up their bodies appear. Sometimes they sing, their flanks hiding angelic faces and statues that, of course, come to life to draw invaders into the walls, bolstering their own number with trapped souls of intruders. Sometimes they play, become things that trap and tear. Sometimes they cry aloud in terror, and then their mother arrives in a scalding scream of boiling steam and fury.

Occasionally, one of the children goes mad, her crooked form twisting into the realms of the outer city and corrupting them.

The minotaurs who dare these Ways often know the children by name, can speak with them, appeal to them, and ask them to guide their journey. Many go to great lengths to protect and help the Ways, treating them like their own kin. These guides see themselves often as more than simple guides though: they view themselves as guardians of a special maze that deserves their love and respect. However, others and some of their own kin use the Ways to move across the city, carrying out assassinations, spying, theft. These villains cross the Ways furtively, quickly, on routes that can never be mapped but that are known to them. Mastery of the Ways brings power to the few who know them if they can avoid the attentions of the minotaurs who seek to protect them.

And the Ways themselves.

THE SECRET SOUK OF UTTERANCES

Lurking within the city—and somehow encountered when least expected or unlooked for—are a cabal of insular djinni known as the Uttering, and they run a secret souk. They do not sell to those they do not know, for they deal in a curious commodity: they sell voices and the words those voices

speak. Those of the Uttering are a group of wizards who specialize in magic that draws and keeps words and secrets from the lips of those who utter them, even if they are separated by time and space.

Words are power, the members of the Uttering know, and many take great personal risks to become masters of their art, taking words, sometimes even before they are uttered, and selling them. This group is feared, loathed, and admired in equal measure, and they take great pains to hide their secrets and rarely if ever sell—and only to those they trust. Gaining their trust can be the work of many years.

No signs litter the souk, no clue that anything is for sale in the unremarkable corner of the City of Brass this market calls home. A bare score of these wizards know the secrets of Utterance Arcana, their number kept low by fear of discovery, fear of weakening their own power. They have no leader, simply forming themselves into friendships or associations of convenience amongst their number, each sure in their own mind that the fewer they are, the better—both for safety and price. Only if one of their number is threatened—and bearing in mind their abilities, this is indeed very rare—do they come together fleetingly to protect their kind.

It is remarkable—or perhaps unsettling—to note that even with such potential power, the Uttering do not seek dominance. This curious fact, if it could be proved, might lead some, as it has in the wise, to conjecture that with true knowledge comes either absolute contentment or unending and relentless despair. Surely those who have mastered the arts know every secret ever given voice, every oath or curse or joy or whisper of love. What might be the temptations of those with such power?

And what might be revealed.

ADVENTURES IN THESE LOCATIONS

These locations are given to add even more curiosity to the streets of the City of Brass and to enable you to spin a few adventures or encounters—or simply color—to the setting. Each enables you to weave plots and tales into adventures or base those adventures on the locales above:

- The Heralds of the Fiery Bride offer a more overt danger, possibly spanning an adventure path, seeking out clues to bring their god to life. The PCs may be drawn in initially by encountering those who serve the salamanders or even salamanders who fear their own kin. What lurks in the temples beneath the Maw? If you like your adventures a little Lovecraftian, the link between stars and Maw could bring your PCs into contact with occult references, scalded or burnt libraries that give up terrible secrets in the binding of the great marriage of elementals. The Scalded Queen seeks ever more obscure secrets, her agents attacking the great libraries of the city. Perhaps, at first, her agents' actions are deemed as mad vandalism, arsonists bent on the destruction of arcane power for all time. Yet soon, the selective and peculiar nature of these attacks is deduced as something darker. The stars are aligning and some dark ritual said to have birthed the Maw in the first place is whispered of again.
- The Temple of Baal offers a great focus for a campaign, a much loathed yet much visited location in the City of Brass. Presently, the oddly benevolent Visionary seeks a dragonkin as his heir, yet that heir cannot be found by his followers. Could it be that eyes less given to worshipping Baal might be more successful in finding the chosen one? An adventure or even an adventure path where an innocent is trapped by

their own fate gives you an interesting option. The dragonkin might not want to be the chosen one, but those who seek them know better. They are pivotal in a terrible coming event that threatens not only the City of Brass but perhaps the fabric of creation. Possibly this dragonkin child harnesses arcane strength that will be needed to defeat whatever calamity approaches? Maybe there is a race against time against those also bent upon the destruction of the city. The monks lack the numbers and wit to secure the child, so agents (the PCs) are sent out to seek them out, but of course, the child doesn't want to be found. Do the PCs look the part of villains in what they seek to achieve? Finally, what event comes? Is the peculiar temple the focus of the ultimate events? Is the reason for its formation explained as it becomes the center of the adventure path where a final battle occurs? Does the eventual death of the Visionary herald some celestial event that unravels the fiery city? (Perhaps our first two locations have more in common than even we thought? Could the one exist to destroy the other?)

- The Ways could make a great single use location in your adventures, passed through by necessity perhaps or maybe the only way to reach a certain desired locale or dungeon complex. Who would hide in such a place, or who would use the fickle children to move about the city, perhaps risking all by doing so? Certainly the thieves' guilds would pay dearly to have a guide or someone who understands the Ways. Are the PCs

asked to release a prisoner only to find as they near the end of the adventure the entire area about them unravelling into the knotted madness of the Ways as the prisoner makes good their escape anyway? Is the mission simpler? Perhaps minotaurs face some dread attack that is poisoning the mother of the Ways against her children with the PCs facing adventure in the twisting madness that would drive any minotaur insane.

- Finally, our Uttering. What power would such magic hold? Surely its secrets must attract envy. Suppose one of its order was under the power of someone (or thing) wicked. To even think of such an event, trickery or the ability to mask such magic would be needed. Our villain, therefore, may be a powerful wizard once rejected by the group or thrown out due to some foul transgression. Can this caster manipulate the magic to make the words false or to infest the minds of those linked to the curious arcana, thus making them turn to strangers for help? Surely associating with such terrible power would bring dire warnings from the PCs' friends and allies, and what power might the end villain have if they can hear all words? Might they not seemingly be able to thwart and menace the PCs at every turn, knowing almost everything they know?

We hope you find these settings are useful or at least give you a few little morsels for thought in planning your own adventures and locations. The City of Brass is almost endless, as are its possibilities.

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