

PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH * PART 3 OF 6



Legacy of Fire
**THE JACKAL'S
PRICE**

Adventure by Darrin Drader
New Fiction by Elaine Cunningham



As the rift closed behind Rovagug, the master of destruction knew himself betrayed. But the god of disasters could afford little time for regret. Crushing pressure, liquid metal, fire, and stone surrounded him, pressing the Beast from all sides. Rovagug took out his rage upon the planar fabric, squeezing air from earth, turning fire to water, carving vast halls against the weight of rock.

In time, Rovagug created enough space to feel safe, and hungered. No souls to consume, Rovagug devoured hidden mountains and washed them down with magma and boiling iron. He dug through the earth, and spent a year gnawing new tunnels and caverns in the depths. And as his halls collapsed, Rovagug recaptured moments of destructive joy, but came no closer to vengeance. He needed more eyes, more feet, more claws.

The god had never considered offspring, but now the solution seemed obvious. He drew upon the essences of the stones and base beasts of the depths, and his children were born. To these unholy spawn he granted shells of adamantite, claws to tear the earth, and bodies that writhed and crawled. He sent six of them in all directions, and none returned. Then he sent another six, and another, knowing that their tunnels would surely, someday, reach a portal or a surface.

In time, he realized that he could not send too many, for each child left him exhausted. And so the spawn of Rovagug grew fewer, even as he impressed on each monstrosity the urgent need to find a passage out of his prison. Some of these children did find the world of light and, having inherited their parent's savagery, set to slaying every living thing they found. Yet none of these monstrosities ever returned to the depths, being as wrathful as their father in their murderous abandon, and heedless of Rovagug's search for freedom.



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ADVENTURE PATH PART 3 of 6



Legacy of Fire

THE JACKAL'S PRICE

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"The Jackal's Price" is a *Pathfinder Adventure Path* scenario designed for four 7th-level characters. By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 9th level. This adventure is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the 3.5 edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 90 of this product.

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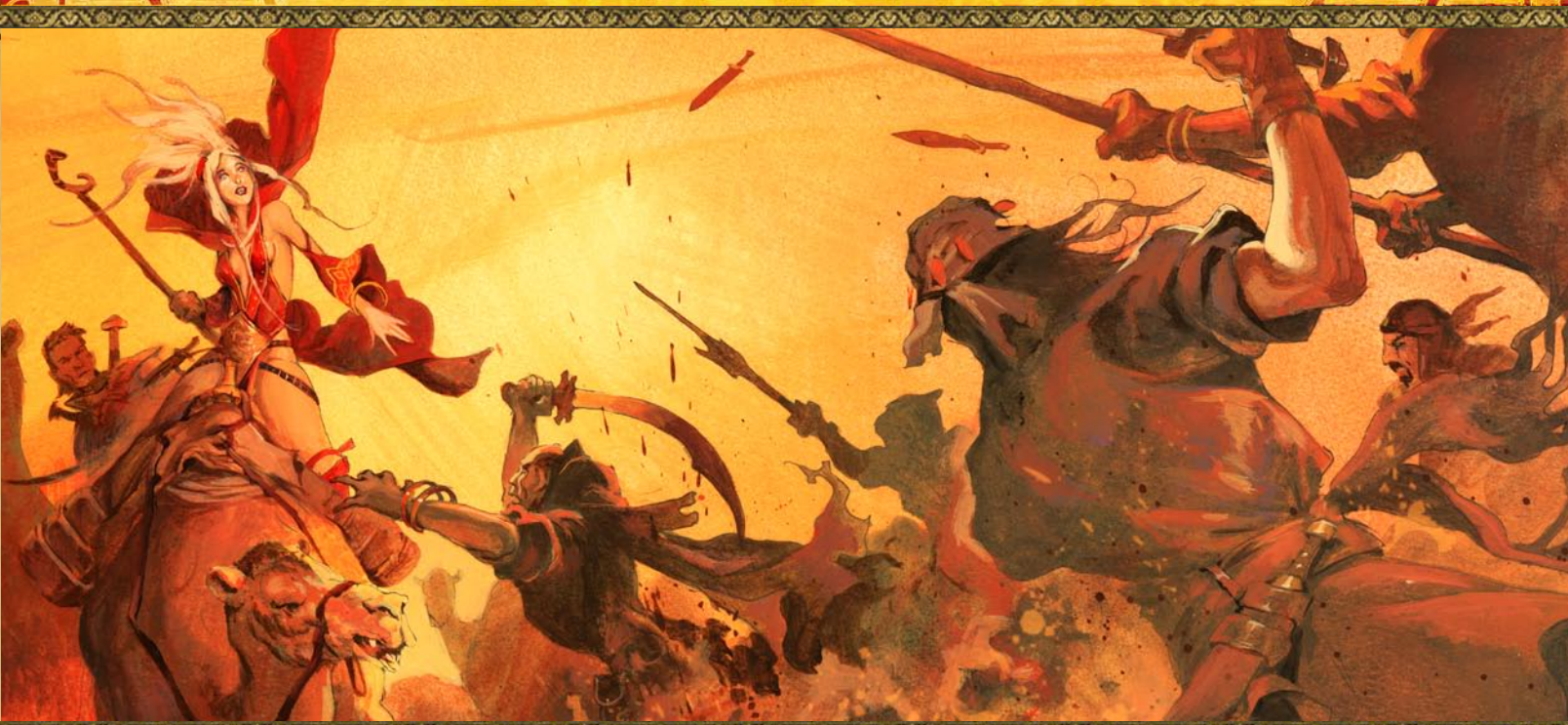


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BAZAAR OF THE BIZARRE

The city of Katapesh goes by many names, but “Bazaar of the Bizarre” is probably the most accurate. As in the case of the Fritz Leiber short story of the same name, Katapesh (like Lankhmar’s Plaza of Dark Delights in Leiber’s story) is a place where anything can be purchased, and where many of the merchants are something more than human. Absalom may be the largest city in the Inner Sea region, but it is of Katapesh that most merchants and tradesmen whisper in awe, for here is a city that exists not to shelter its citizens or house an army—it is a place where everything is for sale for the right price. Yet while this makes for interesting and fun flavor, I wouldn’t be surprised if the concept makes some GMs twitch in nervous frustration.

In earlier editions of the world’s most popular role-playing game, magic items sometimes had prices listed, but the concept of the “magic shop” was something that didn’t really exist. With no hard and fast rules on how magic items interact with the world’s economy, many games simply ignored the idea of magic shops entirely.

The treasure you found while adventuring was what you had to make do with. And when you found treasure you didn’t want, you either gave it away (usually to hirelings and henchmen), threw it away, or hoarded it. *Bags of holding* and *portable holes* became clogged with dozens of +1 *longswords* and *cloaks of protection*—magic items that weren’t useful to any of the PCs (since they all had better by then), but which no one wanted to get rid of. This got even worse in the second edition of the game, when GP values for magic items vanished entirely. To quote the second-edition DMG, “...no magical stores exist.”

With the third edition, this changed. Not only did magic items all have prices again, but the rules for crafting magic items were front and center rather than obscured in the back of the book. Spellcasters were now expected and encouraged to build their own gear, and the price of each item played a heavy role in determining what a caster of a specific level could or couldn’t create. Furthermore, with rules on gp limits for settlements, the implication was that you could now simply march into a large town or city and not only sell

all your old, outdated magic items, but (gasp!) shop for new ones and buy them! No longer were players forced to adapt their characters to fit the treasures they happened to find in monster lairs—now you could, relatively easily, customize your load of magic items to fit your character!

On the surface, this is a good idea—I much prefer a world where the most valuable objects in the game are also valuable commodities in city markets, rather than just being doomed to gather dust in a *portable hole* somewhere. Yet at the same time, this change came with a sacrifice—once you can buy magic items off the shelf, finding these items is no longer quite as “magical.” In time, it became apparent that certain items were just hands-down better than others—particularly those that increase your ability scores, your saving throws, your Armor Class, and your weapon skills. In earlier editions, PCs were often quite distinct in the mix of magic items they owned, but today every PC and NPC would seem to be equipped more or less the same way. Strange and unusual items like *rings of shooting stars*, *boots of the winterlands*, and *cloaks of the manta ray* grew even more uncommon, replaced by the ubiquity of *rings of protection*, *boots of speed*, and *cloaks of resistance*. The pendulum had swung, yet it went too far in the other direction. If all magic items were available for sale in all places (subject, of course, to the area’s gp limit), then it’s only natural that the most desirable ones would dominate. And eventually, this domination crept into the subconscious of the game designer, and suddenly the game expected PCs of certain levels to be equipped with *belts of giant strength +6* and *rings of protection +5*. A character who chose to wear a more unusual item would, as a result, often find himself at an unexpected disadvantage compared to those who obeyed the magic item status quo.

And that, in my opinion, is unfortunate. Magic items deserve better. They deserve to be things that evoke a sense of wonder and excitement, not a sense of “I can cash these *gloves of the hungry ghost* in and get 5,000 gp closer to upgrading my *gloves of Dexterity!*” Yet at the same point, it’s ridiculous to assume that no one in the world sells magic items, and that magical shops don’t exist. Somewhere between the two extremes, there has to be a sweet spot.

SHOPPING FOR MAGIC

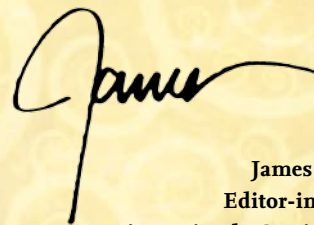
That brings us back to Katapesh (which you can read about in more detail in *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh*). Here, if anywhere, is a city that should have a bustling magic item trade, with numerous magic shops on street corners and back alleys. Going strictly by the rules, you can simply turn your PCs loose in Katapesh, tell them they can buy anything they want as long as it’s under the city’s gp limit of 100,000 gp, toss the PCs a few DMGs to shop in, and then sit back in your big GM chair with a ham sandwich and a glass of lemonade and take a much-needed

break for a few hours while the jackals squabble over prices and maximizing their item slots. But as we all know, the job of being a GM should never be so easy.

(By the by, calling players “jackals” is a habit of mine, a term of endearment I apply to my own group—a group that includes professional game designers and RPG Superstars. Trust me, it’s a term well earned. They’ve got plenty of names for me as the GM as well, but I’m the one writing this foreword, not them! If the concept of calling a player a “jackal” doesn’t sit well with you, might I suggest the following options: “hoodlum,” “lout,” “vulture,” “dastard,” and “poltroon.”)

My advice is to check out this volume’s article on the markets of Katapesh, and when the PCs get to the city and find themselves with some free time on their hands and some bulging coin purses on their belts, treat the act of shopping almost like combat. You don’t have to have PCs roll initiative, but it might help. Go around the table and ask each PC what they’re looking for (magic swords, magic rings, protective cloaks—try to encourage the PCs to ask for item categories rather than specific items), and then look through the marketplace article to find a store that would likely sell the item they seek. One PC at a time, describe the nature of the merchant they’ve found and the type of wares he offers, then present that PC with a list of items for sale. In this manner, you can control what kinds of items are available while at the same time building the world. No longer is the transaction between the player and the rulebook—now it’s a transaction between the character and a merchant who might or might not have an ulterior motive. Even better, you can drop in a few more items for PCs to buy—items that they might not have thought about or that might appeal to their sense of story or whimsy. Other players waiting their turn to shop might be intrigued by the offerings at a store as well, and after a few sessions, you should find PCs aren’t as eager to page through the DMG as they are to check up on “what’s new down at the Peculiar Emporium” or to find out if the latest shipment of Osirian tomb harvests has come in.

Of course, the game’s focus shouldn’t drift too far from adventure. If you find that shopping trips are taking too long, you can always revert back to simply letting the PCs shop as they wish for a few minutes. Ham sandwiches and lemonade are pretty good GM fuel, after all!



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Legacy of Fire: Chapters

The Jackal's Price



The archmage Nex is known for countless wondrous creations and horrific atrocities. His capital city of Quantium remains one of Garund's most cosmopolitan and refined cities, and the scar of land known as the Mana Wastes is a sobering testament to his power and anger. Yet while most of the tales of this powerful wizard still told today concern themselves with his world-shaking war with his fellow wizard Geb, Nex accomplished many miracles before this war struck both him and his nation. Even today, adventurers continue to uncover ancient relics created by the lost wizard-king—yet few can match the hidden paradise of Kakishon in scale, scope, and wonder.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Nex created Kakishon to be a place he could retreat to in times of stress to relax. His closest friends valued invitations to Kakishon, and his enemies quailed at the thought of exile into the magical realm's more dangerous corners. While the act of creating an entire archipelago of disparate islands was in and of itself a feat almost godlike in its scope, Nex went one better. With the aid of a small army of proteans, primal spirits of chaos harvested from the deep entropy of the Outer Planes' Maelstrom, Nex hid the islands of Kakishon in a tiny planar bubble and then hid that demiplane in a parchment scroll. To the casual observer, this scroll would seem to bear only a single, strange rune, but when activated, this rune transforms into a detailed map—a map of the realm of Kakishon. With the proper words, Nex could open a portal through the map and step into this paradise realm to escape all his worldly worries.

Nex created Kakishon to be self-renewing—those who lived within would never want for comfort or sustenance. Yet even such a mighty work could not keep Nex's attention forever. It is, perhaps, a testament to his vast power that he grew so bored with Kakishon that he eventually set the scroll aside in one of his numerous libraries and forgot about it. Centuries after Nex vanished at the climax of his war with Geb, the *Scroll of Kakishon* was discovered by a now-forgotten merchant. His attempt to sell the relic ended in tragedy as he was assassinated, and the *Scroll of Kakishon* fell into obscurity. The potent relic passed through dozens of owners, with none ever quite discovering the famed artifact's trigger before someone else came along and claimed it as his own. Eventually, the *Scroll of Kakishon* became part of a dragon's hoard, and there it languished for over 3,000 years.

The scroll was rediscovered a mere few centuries ago by a wizard named Andrathi. Lover to the exiled djinni Nefeshti, it took Andrathi several years to decipher the map's purpose, and had he just a few months more he could perhaps have mastered the artifact's power. Yet fate intervened before he had that chance.

His lover Nefeshti was the leader of a powerful group of genie crusaders rallying against the cruelties of the City of Brass. Called the Templars of the Five Winds, Nefeshti

and her janni warriors had recently become embroiled in a brutal war against the efreeti Jhavlul and his own army of wish-fueled warriors and monsters. As potent as Nefeshti and her Templars were, they were slowly losing the war. When Andrathi approached Nefeshti with an audacious plan to force open the portal to Kakishon and capture Jhavlul and his army within the hidden world, she begrudgingly accepted that this was the only way they could win their war against the efreeti warlord.

The plan was simple—Nefeshti and her Templars would lure Jhavlul into an ambush, letting the efreeti believe that he had the advantage.

Nefeshti would use herself and her Templars as bait and a distraction, and as soon as Jhavlul and his army attacked, Andrathi would be able to steal into the midst of the efreeti's forces and tear open the portal to Kakishon.

The plan was not without risk, for while Andrathi was certain he could open the portal, he was uncertain if he could close it, or how violently the artifact would react to the forced entry.

He didn't want to risk his lover or her army on something that could backfire, and so he volunteered to trigger the trap on his own.

Everything went according to plan until the last minute. When Andrathi forced open the portal to Kakishon, the resulting vortex violently drew everything in the region through—Jhavlul, Andrathi, and a significant portion of the efreeti's army. In the blink of an eye, where once raged a genie horde, all that remained was the *Scroll of Kakishon* itself. Nefeshti saw the event, and ordered her Templars to strike at once—they handily defeated the fraction of Jhavlul's army that had escaped being drawn into Kakishon, but not before one of Jhavlul's gnoll priests, a wily creature named Shirak, claimed the *Scroll of Kakishon* from where it lay. Shirak retreated to the depths of Jhavlul's fortress in the House of the Beast and hid the *Scroll of Kakishon*, hoping someday to be able to free her master. By the time Nefeshti defeated the other remnants of the army, Shirak and the scroll were long gone.

The Templars' successful defeat of Jhavlul and his army left a bitter taste in Nefeshti's mouth. The djinni grew obsessed with searching for the *Scroll of Kakishon* so she could rescue her lover and ensure her enemy Jhavlul was defeated, and in her obsession she failed to notice how her Templars were falling to internal strife. As years turned into decades, and decades turned into centuries, Nefeshti grew more and more insular and her Templars drifted



Advancement Track

Characters should be 7th level when they begin “The Jackal’s Price,” and should reach 9th level by the adventure’s end. By the time the PCs are on the trail of Father Jackal and their ally Rayhan has been abducted, they should be 8th level, for the challenges that await them below the One Source Merchants’ Guild warehouse are deadly indeed.

apart. Yet no sign of Jhavhul emerged, so they at last grew complacent and satisfied that, while it had cost one of their own, the enemy had indeed been truly defeated.

Adventure Synopsis

After defeating the Carrion King and discovering the *Scroll of Kakishon* in the crypts below the House of the Beast, the PCs return to the village of Kelmarane with their mysterious treasure and quickly learn that what they’ve discovered is far more than a simple map. It resists damage, radiates overwhelmingly powerful magic, and ignores most magical attempts to divine its nature.

In order to learn more about their new treasure, the PCs must travel east to the city of Katapesh, where they can bring the scroll to a scholarly ally of their patron, Almah. Yet word spreads quickly, and before long, others are trying to steal the scroll from the PCs, including a band of gnoll hunters enraged at the ruin the PCs brought to the Carrion King. The overland journey to Katapesh culminates in a desperate battle against the gnolls at the last oasis before the city gates.

When the PCs finally arrive at the city of Katapesh, their troubles become more subtle. They meet with their sage ally, a wizard named Rayhan, and become his guests in his decadent Katapesh villa. Merchants, thieves, and strange visitors come to call, each with their own interest in the *Scroll of Kakishon*, and eventually the villa is attacked late at night by a group of masked thugs. Rayhan himself is abducted, and the PCs are contacted by one of Katapesh’s most notorious crimelords, the mysterious Father Jackal. He offers a trade: the *Scroll of Kakishon* for their friend. Will the PCs pay the Jackal’s price, or will they find a way to rescue their ally and perhaps defeat a burgeoning plot against the Pactmasters of Katapesh?

PART ONE: THE LURE OF KAKISHON

This adventure technically begins the instant the PCs claim the *Scroll of Kakishon* at the end of “House of the Beast,” even though you’ll still need the previous adventure to close out their adventures there. Take your time and let things work

themselves out organically—in fact, the longer the PCs have the scroll in their possession outside of the hidden levels below the House of the Beast, the better, since that allows more time for the various interested parties to learn that the scroll has resurfaced. Certainly the fact that the scroll was so sought after by the evil janni Zayifid should be enough to intrigue the PCs, as should its seeming invulnerability, the powerful magic it exudes, and its other unusual qualities. To a certain extent, this adventure depends on player curiosity more than anything else—ideally, it’s the PCs’ attempts to decipher what their new item actually is that sends them to the city of Katapesh for answers. If one of the PCs carries the weapon *Tempest* and is the moldspeaker (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #19), he certainly has a strong urge to claim the scroll, although this urge should be presented to that player more as an almost-overwhelming sensation of fear at the very thought of the scroll falling into the wrong hands. The moldspeaker feels that it is important to maintain control over the scroll and not let it pass to anyone else—at least as long as its properties remain unknown to the PCs. Of course, this is the spirit of the janni Templar Vardishal urging his symbiotic host to retain control over the scroll until they can ensure that Jhavhul will remain trapped inside.

Although the PCs can learn a few things about the *Scroll of Kakishon*, what they learn should be nothing more than tantalizing hints. Knowledge (arcana) is the proper skill to learn more about the obscure but powerful artifact; bardic knowledge will also work, and you can even allow characters to use Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (the planes) if you wish. If the person making this knowledge check is the moldspeaker, he gains a +5 bonus on the check as the spirit hiding within his soul provides unanticipated insights. The results of any of these knowledge checks, be they made by PCs or NPCs in the town of Kelmarane, are listed in the sidebar on the opposite page; any information equal to or less than the required DC can be learned with one roll. A *legend lore* or *vision* spell reveals all of the information at once.

If none of the PCs can successfully make these rolls and they seek out aid among their allies in the town of Kelmarane, their patron Almah Roveshki is particularly intrigued. Which of their allies is most suited to assisting them depends in large part on who the PCs have come to trust over the past two adventures, and who is still alive. Father Zastoran or the bard Felliped are the two best choices to fill this role, and Almah herself can even step in if you wish. In any case, you can assume that the NPC expert the PCs choose to go to knows as much about the scroll as can be learned by a DC 20 check above (even if the NPC in question doesn’t actually have the proper skill). In this way, you can give the PCs enough information about their find that they know where to go to uncover more

information, but at the same point don't give away the two higher results for free; instead, set these results aside as rewards for PCs who make the checks themselves, or delay that information until the PCs actually reach the city of Katapesh.

Once the word "Kakishon" is known, Almah's expression brightens. In her time in the city of Katapesh, she's made countless contacts with various notables, and one in particular comes to mind when she hears the word "Kakishon." This is an old family friend, a man named Rayhan, who has made a comfortable life for himself as a merchant, a scholar of note, and a wizard. She has visited with Rayhan several times in the past, usually when seeking his advice on mercantile matters involving the arcane and bizarre, and particularly with matters involving Katapesh's neighbor to the south—Nex. Almah specifically recalls one visit when Rayhan had been researching numerous legendary and mythical realms supposedly conquered by Nex during the Age of Destiny. A place called Kakishon was said to be the most beautiful and valuable of these conquests, but no modern map of the world indicates where such a place may be, or even may once have been. In Rayhan, the PCs have the compelling combination of vast knowledge and a friendly disposition—the only problem is that he lives in the distant city of Katapesh.

SCROLL OF KAKISHON

Aura overwhelming conjuration; **CL** 23rd

Slot —; **Price** —; **Weight** 3 lb.

DESCRIPTION

When inactive, the *Scroll of Kakishon* looks like nothing more than tattered parchment bearing a single, immense rune. At certain times (when viewed as a reflection in a mirror by a character that can cast arcane spells, by someone just woken from a deep sleep, or under the light of the rising or setting sun), the rune seems to waver and transform into a map of a region whose coastlines closely match the rune. *Comprehend languages* causes the rune to resolve into a map of the island archipelago for the duration of the spell, and observing the map through any remote viewing spell such as *clairaudience/clairvoyance* or *scrying* reveals the actual contents as well.

Yet all of this simply allows the user to examine the map of Kakishon itself, a map that is frustratingly vague and, in places, apparently unfinished. Worse, exact spellings of locations tend to appear differently depending on who examines the map, and any attempt to copy the map into another medium frustratingly results in maps that bear little to no resemblance to the source material.

The scroll itself resists all forms of damage; despite its tattered appearance, any attempt to burn, fold, tear, cut, or otherwise damage the map results in only fleeting disfigurement before the map repairs itself. If impaled on a spike, the map somehow finds its way off the spike in the

Investigating the Scroll of Kakishon

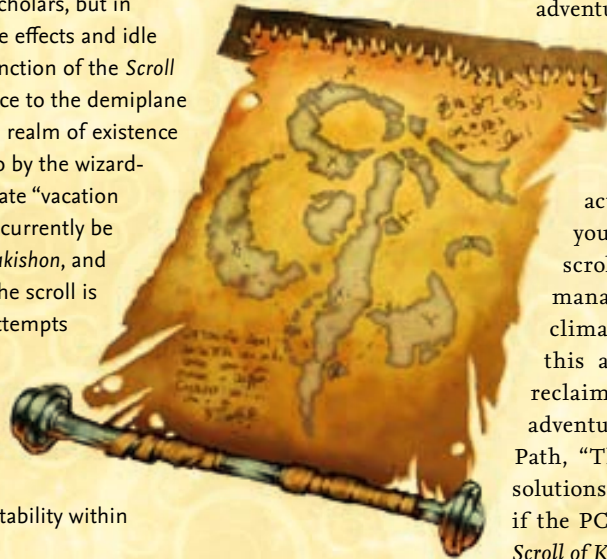
Knowledge

check Kakishon Lore

- DC 15** The scroll is not a typical magic scroll—it does not contain hidden spells, but has some other use. The rune on the scroll itself is not a character from any known alphabet, but it nonetheless bears a resemblance to runes of power utilized in the workings of arcanists from the southern nation of Nex.
- DC 20** The strange rune on the scroll is one that is often associated with the mysterious wizard-king Nex, although this association is primarily with periods early in Nex's rule, from a time after he had achieved great power but before his war with Geb reached its height. Runes like these were often used to mask the true contents of a page, and often one gifted in magic could pierce the obscuring rune with spells, by observing the map in a reflected surface or under certain kinds of light, while under the effects of mind-altering substances, or after waking from particularly vivid dreams. The rune itself is an obscure Nexian rune that symbolizes a mysterious realm called Kakishon.
- DC 25** The realm of Kakishon is said to have been either conquered or created by Nex and used by the wizard-king as a secret hideout or retreat for pleasure and private researches. Properly translated, the rune is said to transform into a map of the realm of Kakishon and to point out the way to reach it. Legend holds that a weapon of great power, something called the "Firebleeder" (thought by most to be a fiery falchion and by others to be a magical spell that allows total control over the element of fire), was hidden in a vault in Kakishon, along with a mind-boggling horde of other treasures as well, including a number of Nex's own creations.
- DC 30** This item is very likely one of Nex's most ancient creations, and one of his first after transcending the typical mortal ken of magic and passing into the workings of the quasi-divine. This scroll is not only a map of the hidden realm of Kakishon, but is also the doorway through which one can travel to the legendary realm, yet only if the proper secret words and rituals of opening are known. The keeper of the *Scroll of Kakishon* controls the only point of entrance into and out of the mysterious realm. Nex is said to have used the realm as a place to experiment with his more outlandish theories, and what is hidden within could rival or even exceed the wonders the world knows today in his kingdom to the south.

blink of an eye; if torn, the map appears whole as soon as the tear is completed.

These qualities and traits are more than enough to intrigue and vex most scholars, but in truth, these are merely side effects and idle curiosities. The primary function of the *Scroll of Kakishon* is as an entrance to the demiplane of Kakishon itself, a closed realm of existence that was invented ages ago by the wizard-king Nex to serve as a private “vacation realm.” Kakishon can only currently be reached via the *Scroll of Kakishon*, and the method of activating the scroll is hidden. Worse, previous attempts to force open this portal have damaged the connection to Kakishon, such that the next time it is opened, the ramifications for reality’s stability within could be dire.



DESTRUCTION

The *Scroll of Kakishon* was irrevocably damaged when it was forced open hundreds of years ago by the wizard Andrathi to capture Jhavhul and his army. Building on his notes, another could recreate this method—but even opening the scroll’s portal as it was originally intended might finish the job and destroy it completely. Kakishon—and the scroll—are living on borrowed time, and the events in “The End of Eternity” chronicle the path of this artifact’s drawn-out destruction.

Interested Parties

When this adventure begins, knowledge that the *Scroll of Kakishon* has been uncovered is relatively confined. Yet this knowledge does not stay that way—as the adventure progresses, more and more interested parties learn that the PCs have a powerful artifact in their possession. Some of these interested parties want to buy the map from the PCs, while others are more interested in taking it from them. Discounting the various merchants who operate in Katapesh (any number of whom would try to get the map from the PCs if they knew about it), this adventure is focused on three groups in particular: the One Source Merchants’ Guild, the Sons of Carrion, and the Captain of the Sunset Ship. The moldspeaker character should be filled with trepidation at the prospect of anyone else getting their hands on the *Scroll of Kakishon*.

The search for the opening method serves as one of the focuses for this adventure. The actual procedure of opening the portal to Kakishon and what lies therein are detailed in the next adventure, “The End of Eternity.” If your PCs manage to open this portal before the climax of “The Jackal’s Price,” you’ll need to be ready to proceed

immediately with what comes next in “The End of Eternity.” This adventure’s construction attempts to force the timing of this event so that it occurs at the end of the adventure, but PCs are nothing if not crafty and resourceful.

The adventure also assumes that the PCs retain control of the *Scroll of Kakishon* and don’t simply give it up or sell it, but again, the actions of PCs are hard to predict. If your players divest themselves of the scroll early, or if one of their enemies manages to steal it before the adventure’s climax, all is not lost. Feel free to continue this adventure with the PCs trying to reclaim the scroll as you see fit. The next adventure in the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path, “The End of Eternity,” offers several solutions on how to begin that adventure if the PCs no longer have possession of the *Scroll of Kakishon*.

One Source Merchants’ Guild

The primary antagonist for this adventure is the One Source Merchants’ Guild. Known in Katapesh to be one of dozens of major importer/exporter guilds helping to keep the mercantile machine of the huge city in constant motion, the One Source is in fact a cover for a group of criminals who traffic in truly reprehensible items—including some trade that even the disreputable Nightstalls (Katapesh’s “black market,” run by a group called the Duskwalker Guild) would quail at offering. Yet the One Source keeps its taxes and payments to the Duskwalker Guild up to date, and thus even they are deemed useful by the amoral Pactmasters that rule the city, and are allowed to continue their cruelties mostly unopposed. What even the Pactmasters don’t know is that the One Source is not only dedicated to crime and cruelty, but to the Rough Beast himself—they are worshipers of the dark god Rovagug.

The One Source Merchants’ Guild is led by a mysterious man known to his followers as “Father Jackal,” a cruel beast capable of shifting between human, jackal, and hybrid forms. Many believe Father Jackal to be a werejackal, a man who can change into a slaving cur. In fact, the opposite is true: Father Jackal is a jackalwere, a beast that has gained the power to become a man. Little loyalty to humanity remains in Father Jackal’s soul—he has no memories of life as a man before being saddled with a curse that turns him into beast. He is a beast who has learned to pose as a man, and while he puts on airs of civilization, his true nature is savage.

Recently, the One Source Merchants’ Guild may have made a critical error in overestimating their ability to

deliver to a customer. Katapesh is notorious throughout the Inner Sea region for its open policies regarding who may trade and what may be traded, making it a beacon for disreputable and sinister traders from throughout the region—and beyond. Once every 7 years, a strange ship with red sails comes to Katapesh, crewed by mysterious tall men who wear dark robes and tightly wrapped turbans. They arrive in Katapesh seeking slaves, magical treasures, and rare books and documents, paying generously for the choicest offerings with handfuls of rubies. Yet few are brave enough to traffic with the Sunset Ship, as it is called, for something about its crew unsettles the mind, and those who fail to provide what they promise to the Sunset Ship's captain invariably vanish.

Yet those are the fears of men, and Father Jackal is less than human. Seven years ago, when the Sunset Ship put in to port, the jackalwere approached the mysterious captain and offered his services. He learned that the Sunset Ship was particularly interested in two things this time around: a strange leathery ovoid known as a Rough Seed and a map to a mysterious realm known as Kakishon. The Captain of the Sunset Ship, as the strange vessel's commander is known in Katapesh, gave no reason for his interest in these objects, but did show Father Jackal the boggling amount of rubies he was prepared to pay for these objects. Father Jackal promised that he would have them both for the Captain by the time he returned to Katapesh in 7 years.

Time passed, and Father Jackal managed to recover one of the two objects relatively quickly. His agents caught wind of an old rumor that a Rough Seed, said to be one of Rovagug's eggs, was hidden in a cavern below an ancient ruin in the eastern Brazen Peaks. This half of the bargain secured, Father Jackal turned his attention to finding the *Scroll of Kakishon*. All he's uncovered so far are maddening hints that the map was buried in a hidden crypt in the

Visitors from Leng

The denizens of Leng are inspired by the strange turbaned slavers who torment Randolph Carter in H. P. Lovecraft's *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, one of the author's most ambitious works. This story is perhaps the closest he ever came to an action-packed fantasy. If you're looking for more information on Leng, the city of Inganok, or the strange denizens and their red-sailed ships, check out Chaosium's (chaosium.com) excellent *Dreamlands* hardcover, or go right to the source with Lovecraft's rousing epic of ghouls and ghosts, moon beasts and outer gods, and armies clashing on fantastic shores.

mountains to the west—he's had agents scouring the cities and towns for further clues, but as of yet, they've heard nothing. The Sunset Ship's return to Katapesh occurs as this adventure begins, and as luck would have it, word that the *Scroll of Kakishon* has surfaced reaches Father Jackal's ears at the same time. He needs to get his hands on the *Scroll of Kakishon* before the captain of the Sunset Ship is ready to leave Katapesh, lest the Captain take Father Jackal away as a substitute for the promised scroll!

The Sunset Ship

The captain and crew of the mysterious Sunset Ship are not human at all—they are in fact sadistic and malevolent explorers from a distant dimension called Leng. Travelers of multiple realities, the denizens of Leng who crew the Sunset Ship come to Katapesh once every 7 years when the boundaries between worlds are thin enough for the Sunset Ship to sail through the land of dreams and into the Inner Sea. Once there, they make their way to Katapesh and



captain
of the
sunset ship

dock at the same pier, one that the Pactmasters are bribed handsomely with rubies to keep available for these visits. Contacts and merchants in other dimensions pay well for certain forms of magic or life from the Material Plane, and the crew of the Sunset Ship always make a profit on their visits to Katapesh as a result.

The Captain of the Sunset Ship learned about Kakishon from the mind of a lost dreamer several decades ago, and has long sought a way to reach the fabled land so that he could add it to his ports of call—certainly an undiscovered world would hold a plethora of valuable commodities in the form of exotic slaves and magic to harvest. The Rough Seed, on the other hand, is a valuable form of life from the Material Plane, the misbegotten spawn of the god Rovagug, and as such much sought after by the priests of Inganok in Leng itself for various eldritch and unknowable rites. The Captain hopes to kill two birds with one stone on this visit to Katapesh, securing the Rough Seed and the *Scroll of Kakishon*—or at the very least, the strange man-creature known as Father Jackal. While not as valuable as either of the other things he seeks, jackalweres are not completely without value in some of the more decadent and despicable ports of call coming up on the Sunset Ship's eternal route between realities.

The Sons of Carrion

Although the PCs likely defeated the Carrion King and many of the gnolls of his tribe, there are far more gnolls in the Pale Mountain region than those that lurked in the House of the Beast. While many of the Pale Mountain tribes will exalt in the opportunity to have one of their own take up the new mantle of kingship, and while other tribes take the opportunity to attack onetime allies and glory in their newfound freedom from the regular tributes once offered to the Carrion King, one small group of gnolls takes exception to the death of their king. Word of who's responsible for the king's death spreads fast through the Pale Mountain tribes, and in each of the otherwise bickering packs, small groups of gnolls eager to avenge their king come forth. By the time the PCs are ready to leave Kelmarane for the journey to the city of Katapesh, these gnolls have formed a hunting pack called the Sons of Carrion—their goal is not only to avenge the Carrion King's death, but to reclaim the treasures the PCs stole from the Carrion King (including the *Scroll of Kakishon*) and return to the House of the Beast. In addition to the gnolls and hyenas, the Sons of Carrion have augmented their numbers with a group of disparate raiders and bandits, including an ettin. The Sons of Carrion are led by three dangerous gnolls, but the most powerful of the three (and the one destined to become their leader soon) is a prophetic gnoll named Shiz—a gnoll whose visions of the stolen scroll and the Carrion King's death have driven her beyond the edge of sanity.

PART TWO: LONG ROAD TO KATAPESH

As the PCs make ready their trip to Katapesh, Almah also reminds the PCs that Katapesh's markets are the most robust and fantastic in the Inner Sea region. Once they've determined what the *Scroll of Kakishon* is capable of doing, there's no better place she can think of to find a buyer for the mysterious artifact. She also advises the PCs to avoid advertising that they have a possibly powerful artifact to sell, for as many and varied as the merchants of Katapesh are, her thieves and criminals are more so.

Almah can write a letter of introduction to Rayhan for the PCs, and encourages them to set out for the city of Katapesh at once—especially PCs who have never been there. The PCs have more than earned a vacation, in any case, and now that the Carrion King is defeated, Almah is more certain than ever of Kelmarane's safety. She'll even award each PC a bonus for the valuable services they've provided, for without their aid, Kelmarane would not be the burgeoning town it has become today. This reward should be a small bag of gems worth 2,500 gp per character—profits, Almah admits, she's been saving from Kelmarane's battle market and planning on gifting to the PCs for some time. With the Carrion King's defeat and what looks to be a trip to the big city in the near future, Almah has decided now is the best time to reward the PCs for a job well done.

In addition to this reward, Almah also provides the PCs with an escort and mounts if they wish. Camels are the standard mount for long overland journeys in Katapesh, with travelers either mounted on camelback or riding in wagons. Almah can supply the PCs with enough camels for each of them to ride, or a single wagon that can seat four and additional camels as needed. Further, she asks her majordomo Garavel to accompany the PCs, especially if not all of them have been to the city of Katapesh. With the Carrion King dead, things in Kelmarane are relatively safe and calm, and Almah has no worries about sending her closest ally with the PCs, along with a small host of soldiers as well. Almah initially offers four soldiers to go with the PCs, but if a PC is romantically involved with Almah or can make a DC 20 Diplomacy check, she increases the number of guards to eight.

As the PCs travel east, they face a number of set encounters designed to introduce them to several of the organizations that play roles in this adventure. The Sons of Carrion are the primary antagonists for this section of the adventure, and as the PCs draw closer to Katapesh, the gnolls grow increasingly desperate. This part of the adventure's climax occurs as the Sons of Carrion make a last-ditch attempt to ambush and defeat the PCs. The 210-mile journey from Kelmarane to Katapesh takes about 6 days (assuming the PCs travel by camel at a speed of 50

feet), and while the following events are each keyed to a specific time along that journey, feel free to adjust them as you see fit to make for more enjoyable play.

Garavel and the Guards

With a lantern jaw and short black hair, Garavel looks more like a swordsman than an accountant and business expert, yet it is he who oversees much of Almah's personal business. A strange metal bolt protrudes from the left side of his skull, a sign of his direct servitude to the Pactmasters and a magical method of keeping his emotions in check while he engages in important business matters on their behalf. He often hides this bolt by wearing a plain white keffiyeh over his head—this metal bolt is a *Pactmaster's favor*, and apart from ensuring loyalty and preventing emotional outbursts, the device grants Garavel a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects (but at the cost of never being able to gain the benefits of a morale bonus of any sort). A DC 15 Spot check is enough to notice the bolt while he wears his keffiyeh. The guards Almah sends with the PCs in fact answer to Garavel unless the PCs have taken significant steps to earn the trust of the Kelmarane guards over the past two adventures. The guards' purpose on the journey is to provide the PCs with additional protection from lesser threats, but when the big set piece battles begin, feel free to have the guards serve as distractions. Some of the encounters on the road have large numbers of foes, and the assumption is that the additional guards will take some of the hits in these encounters so that the PCs will have more chances to strike.

Nonetheless, arriving at the city of Katapesh with guards intact should be one of the PCs' goals. Award the PCs experience for a CR 1 creature for each guard still alive once the city is reached, and award them experience for a CR 3 creature if they successfully escort Garavel there as well.

GARAVEL

CR 3

Male human fighter 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15

(+5 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 27 (3d10+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2; +4 against mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +7 (2d4+3/18–20)

Ranged composite longbow +4 (1d8+2/×3)

TACTICS

During Combat Garavel fights swiftly and silently, his face a placid mask. If one of the PCs in particular has earned his respect and trust, he tries at all times to place himself between that PC and

any danger.

Morale Garavel fights to the death, abandoning a cause only if the Pactmasters will it.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Feats Dodge, Combat Expertise, Mobility, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Handle Animal +5, Jump +7, Ride +9

Languages Common, Gnoll, Kelish, Osiriani, Varisian

Gear +1 *chain shirt*, masterwork falchion, composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +1, *Pactmaster's favor* (see *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh* for more details)

CARAVAN GUARDS

CR 1

Male human warrior 2

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16

(+4 armor, +2 shield)

hp 14 (2d8+5)

Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee scimitar +3 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged longbow +2 (1d8/×3)

TACTICS

During Combat The guards favor their longbows in combat, reverting to melee with their scimitars only if their foes move to engage, if directly commanded to change their tactics, or to move up to support other guards caught in melee.

Morale The guards fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Feats Alertness, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +4, Ride +5

Languages Common, Osiriani

Gear chain shirt, heavy steel shield, scimitar, longbow with 20 arrows

Event 1. A Rogue in Need (EL 6)

The One Source Merchants' Guild has agents in dozens of towns and cities along the western border of Katapesh, among them the town of Kelmarane. These agents keep an ear to the ground, on the constant lookout for any clues as to the location of the *Scroll of Kakishon*. The agent stationed in Kelmarane is a man named Radi Hamdi, and the timing of when he finds out the PCs have recovered the *Scroll of Kakishon* depends on how good the PCs are at keeping that a secret. This adventure assumes that the PCs

don't keep their discovery secret—after all, they should have no reason to keep the strange map under wraps until after talking with Almah. If they do avoid letting many others know about it, you can delay this event until later in the adventure or omit it entirely, in which case the One Source Merchants' Guild finds out about the *Scroll of Kakishon* at some point soon after the PCs arrive in the city of Katapesh.

Assuming Radi Hamdi learns about the scroll and the PCs' plan to journey to Katapesh, the rogue quickly realizes he'd have no chance to really defeat the party, and doesn't like his chances of successfully pilfering the scroll. Instead, he decides to play to his strengths as a con-man, posing as a merchant who needs help in reaching Katapesh. Radi does his research, and to simulate this you can use some of what you know about your players against them—if you think that the PCs would be open to escorting a merchant from Kelmarane to Katapesh, then Radi poses as such and offers the PCs a reward of 1,000 gp once they reach the big city. If you think the PCs would be more likely to react favorably to him if he poses as a merchant whose camels have been slaughtered by gnolls and his wares stolen, he heads out a day before the PCs and prepares a scene along the trade route for the PCs to come upon (a few slaughtered camels, some empty chests, and a believable hiding spot for Radi to burst out of as the PCs approach should do the trick).

Radi's goal is, of course, to have the PCs take him under their wing, allowing him to observe them in battle, learn their strengths and weaknesses, and otherwise prepare the One Source Merchants' Guild for their inevitable conflict with the PCs. He'll try to learn which PC carries the *Scroll of Kakishon*, where it is carried, and what protections the PCs might have set up for it. If he gets the opportunity one night, he might even try to steal the scroll, although he'll likely wait until they're closer to Katapesh to attempt this.

Radi's role in the adventure, though, is not to deprive the PCs of the *Scroll of Kakishon* for long. His role, unfortunately for him, is to let the PCs know that someone, somewhere, wants the scroll. This information can play out in any number of ways, and it's best to let it do so organically. If the PCs grow suspicious of Radi, they might learn the truth with *discern lies* or *detect thoughts*. If he fumbles his Move Silently and Sleight of Hand rolls, they might catch him trying to steal the scroll. If he does manage to get away from the PCs with the scroll, you should stage an

encounter soon thereafter with Radi being ambushed by several gnolls working with the Sons of Carrion, timed so that the PCs come upon the scene just as the gnolls are looting the dead rogue and discover the stolen scroll. This development works well in that it reveals not only that Radi wanted the scroll, but that the gnolls do as well. In the end, Radi is essentially a tool you can use to foreshadow the coming conflict that waits for the PCs in the big city, not a method to deprive them of the whole point of the adventure before it even begins.

Radi is native to Katapesh, and he has a reputation there as a swindler and a thief. He frequently embarks upon some legitimate business enterprise, but upon some degree of success, figures out how to use it as a means to advance his career on the wrong side of the law. Because of this, he isn't trusted by any of the merchants, though his skills and his contact with the underworld make him quite useful. His reputation is not so great that he is known to the average person of Katapesh, but he is well known to the city's watch. A character who's from the city of Katapesh who sees through one of Radi's bluffs with a Sense Motive check should be told

that his story seems off, and perhaps that he's hiding something—at this point, a DC 25 Knowledge (local) check (with a +5 circumstance bonus if that character is from the city of Katapesh) allows a character to realize Radi is a semi-notorious con-artist who hires out to the highest bidder.

If the PCs reveal Radi's identity, and can make him helpful (his initial attitude being hostile once the PCs are on to him), he admits that he's working for one of Katapesh's more notorious slavers—a man known as Father Jackal. Radi is unaware of Father Jackal's association with the One Source Merchants' Guild, nor does he know the man is actually a jackalwere. He was hired by Father Jackal (who paid Radi in rubies and promised more for the completed job) to find out where the *Scroll of Kakishon* was and then return to the city of Katapesh and contact Father Jackal with the *silver raven* he carries to report on his findings. When he realized that the PCs had the scroll and were bringing it to Katapesh, Radi decided to try to accompany the PCs and claim the scroll for himself, then return to the city and ransom the scroll to Father Jackal—perhaps not the wisest plan, but certainly one that appealed to Radi's arrogance and greed. In any event, if Radi doesn't get a chance to make his move before the PCs reach Katapesh, he slips away not long after the PCs first



radi
hamdi



catch sight of the city; if he makes it to Katapesh alive, he'll be part of the group that raids Rayhan's villa in Event 7.

RADI HAMDI

CR 6

Male human rogue 6

NE Medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen +8, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12

(+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 35 (6d6+12)

Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +7 (1d3)

Ranged shortspear +7 (1d6)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat If forced to fight, Radi goes on the defensive, and fights only as long as it takes to try to escape peril.

Morale If reduced to 14 hit points or less, Radi surrenders and begs for mercy, offering the PCs all of his gear and wealth in

return for his life.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +4; Grp +4

Feats Deflect Arrows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +8

Languages Common, Kelish, Gnoll

SQ trapfinding

Gear +1 padded armor, shortspear, figurine of wondrous power (silver raven), 400 gp in rubies, 9 pp, 14 gp

Event 2. Worm-Infested Oasis (EL 9)

Unlike the One Source Merchants' Guild, the Sons of Carrion know the PCs are their target from the start. They number too few to strike against the PCs while they are in Kelmarane, but once the PCs leave, the Sons of Carrion begin tracking them and anticipating their moves. At some point after the PCs are well on their way, likely as evening on the second day of their journey approaches, the Sons of Carrion make their first attempt at revenge.

The trade route to Katapesh from Kelmarane follows a specific route for a reason: for large portions of the route, the land is barren and inhospitable, a grim combination of dry savannah and searing desert. Yet the trade route offers a safe series of oases that serve perfectly as campsites for weary travelers, allowing merchants to devote space they would have normally used to carry water to carry more trade goods. Although this adventure assumes that the PCs follow this advice, you can just as easily have the first ambush by the Sons of Carrion occur at any point along the way.

The Sons of Carrion know the PCs are powerful—they defeated their king, after all. Rather than risk an attack on their own, the gnolls lured a dangerous creature to the vicinity of the oasis the PCs are destined to reach on the evening of their second day. This creature is a monstrous beast called a death worm, a 30-foot-long worm that spits acid and lightning, and unfortunately for the gnolls, they underestimated their ability to handle the monster. With the entire group's aid, they managed to subdue a particularly large death worm using a trap baited with poisoned meat. The worm ate the meat and took enough Dexterity damage to become paralyzed, and then the gnolls bound the creature with several ropes and, joined by a pack of trained hyenas, dragged the monster the 2 miles from where they caught it back to this oasis. The plan was to weaken the ropes, have one of the two clerics traveling with the Sons of Carrion use a few *lesser restoration* spells to waken the monster, and then flee the scene before it could break free. Unfortunately, the gnolls underestimated the monster's strength and it broke free after only a few rounds and two *lesser restorations*. It swiftly killed the gnolls and hyenas, then burrowed into the sand nearby to digest its meal. The remaining Sons of Carrion, watching from a distant hilltop, cut their losses—a few of their number had perished in setting the trap, but the death worm was in place. Now, they wait.

Vultures wheel in the sky above the oasis in the gathering gloom. Scattered along the shore of the oasis are several mangled and quite dead bodies—gnolls and hyenas, although it's impossible to tell how many of each due to their fragmentary state. These half-burned and melted remains are all that linger to tell of the catastrophe that resulted when the death worm broke free. Coils of rope, nearly 200 feet in all, lie sprawled along a 30-foot swath near the bodies, snapped and half-melted so that no single piece remains over 10 feet in length. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) or Heal check is good enough to note that whatever caused all this damage to bodies and ropes alike used a lot of acid and electricity.

Any PC that makes a DC 25 Spot check notices a flash atop a dune nearly a mile to the east, as if the last rays of the setting sun had just reflected off of something metallic. This is a glint off one of the weapons carried by

the Sons of Carrion who are watching events unfold. As soon as anyone notices this glint, or if the PCs are about to leave the site or make camp, the death worm strikes.

Creature: The death worm is a 30-foot-long, slender, reddish-brown monster. Its skin is mottled yellow across its back, the colors tapering off near its head. Its mouth is huge and lined with diamond-hard teeth that allow it to break rocks and earth as it burrows underground. While its body hasn't yet fully recovered from its poisoned meal, its appetite certainly has, and it attacks the PCs with a terrible ferocity.

ADVANCED DEATH WORM

CR 9

Advanced death worm (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 92)

N Huge magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 6, flat-footed 17

(–2 Dex, +11 natural, –2 size)

hp 157 (15d10+75)

Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee bite +18 (2d6+23 plus 1d8 acid)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks spit acid, spit lightning

TACTICS

Before Combat The worm lies in wait, but as it burrows up to attack, allow the party Spot checks to notice the creature's approach and prevent it from emerging to spit lightning in the surprise round.

During Combat The monster lunges at the largest target, spitting acid as often as it can and attacking with a 5-point Power Attack while it waits for its acid to replenish.

Morale The death worm fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 6 (normally 11), **Con** 20, **Int** 3, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +32

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide –10 (–2 in sand), Listen +11, Spot +11

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spit Acid (Ex) 30-foot line, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 4d6 acid, Reflex DC 22 half. The save DC is Constitution-based. Death worms are immune to their own acid and that of other death worms.

Spit Lightning (Ex) 20-foot line, once per minute, damage 3d6 electricity, Reflex DC 22 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: Among the bits and pieces of gnoll remains are 43 gp, an obsidian holy symbol of Rovagug worth 20

gp, and a gnoll's hand still clutching a jade *wand of lesser restoration* (19 charges).

Development: Unless the PCs teleport to the site of the mysterious glint to the east, the Sons of Carrion are long gone by the time the PCs arrive to inspect the area. A DC 10 Survival check is enough to note that as many as a dozen creatures may have been watching from the area. The tracks lead north, out of the sand and into the rocky foothills of the Brazen Peaks, where following them farther is a DC 20 check. If the PCs successfully track these prints for several hours, feel free to have them discover the Sons of Carrion campsite in the scrublands—in this case, you can run Event 3, save in a reversed capacity with the PCs as the aggressors and the gnolls as the defenders.

Event 3. The Carrion Siege (EL 7–8)

The Sons of Carrion take what they learn from their semi-botched attempt to ambush the PCs in Event 2 and use that to stage their actual attack here. Time this event so that it occurs at a point near the end of the journey to the city of Katapesh, so that it can function as the climax of this part.

After the previous attempt to avenge the death of the Carrion King fails, the Sons of Carrion fall increasingly to infighting and bickering. The death of their cleric in the death worm fiasco leaves only two gnolls in the role of leader—a scheming ranger named Vlark and an aggressive and hot-headed sorcerer/rogue named Shiz. Arguments and tempers flare as these two fight over how best to strike at the PCs the next time, the remaining gnolls caught between Vlark's call for another stealthy ambush and Shiz's call for an all-out assault. When the last of these arguments comes to blows, Shiz murders Vlark in a gory, public battle. Her bloodlust up, she orders her pack (and their mercenaries) to move out and assault the PCs at once.

This confrontation with the Sons of Carrion should play out as a three-stage battle against the gnolls, with the PCs having a variable amount of time to prepare defenses. When you start this encounter, inform the players that their characters are approaching what appears to be another roadside oasis, but that this one has a ruined stone sphinx crouched nearby. At this point, have each PC make a DC 20 Spot check to notice an ominous cloud of dust approaching over stony hill and gritty dune. If no PCs make this check, they notice the onrushing Sons of Carrion as the gnolls, hyenas, and ettin crest a nearby hill, leaving the PCs a mere 1d6 rounds to prepare for the battle. If at least one PC succeeds, though, they have 1d4 minutes to prepare for the battle.

Use the map of the Sphinx's Oasis to run this battle—if the PCs wish to confront the Sons of Carrion on the open sand, they'll not have the advantage of cover. If the PCs

attempt to outrun the gnolls, you can use the rules for forced march (PH 164) to determine if the PCs outlast them and reach the safety of Katapesh before the gnolls catch up; you can even use a variant of the chase rules system presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #7's adventure, "Edge of Anarchy." Yet this adventure assumes the PCs make the more heroic choice to face the gnolls head on; you can use Garavel to coax hesitant PCs into making this decision by having him point out that it's better to use the Sphinx's Oasis as a defensive position than to risk being caught out in the open by the enemy. Allow the players as much time as their Spot checks allow to prepare for the battle—once the fight begins, all three waves should occur in rapid succession.

This site was once a small shrine to an ancient Osirian deity now fallen into obscurity—all that remains are the two jackal-headed statues and one crumbling sphinx with a short flight of steps between its paws that leads up to a 10-foot-square alcove under its chin. This alcove is littered with refuse from previous travelers' visits. The water in the oasis itself averages 3 feet deep. Nightback scorpions infest the place, but they are relatively harmless and timid and scuttle for cover once combat begins.

Creatures: The elements and the misadventure with the death worm have winnowed the ranks of the Sons of Carrion, yet they still number enough to pose a significant threat. The Sons of Carrion hit the PCs in three distinct waves as their three groups reach the site of the Sphinx's Oasis. The desperate human mercenaries are the first wave to hit, sent ahead by the gnolls to "have the first chance at glory" (in fact, the gnolls see the mercenaries as expendable and are simply using them to soften up the PCs before the actual attack). The second wave consists of the bulk of the gnoll forces and their trained hyena pets, while the third wave is their leader Shiz, her ettin bodyguard, and a few gnolls she held back.

Wave One (EL 7): This initial wave consists of a group of raiders dressed in dark robes and armed with scimitars and longbows. These are desperate men who, after their previous leader quailed at the thought of working for gnolls, murdered him for the promise of a few gold coins from the Sons of Carrion. They attempt to approach the largest visible concentration of PCs and their allies, splitting into two groups—four charge in to fight in melee, while another four hang back to use their longbows on any PCs who don't rush to engage in melee. These raiders fight until four of their number have been killed, at which point they turn and flee—but as they do, they crash directly into Wave Two.

DESERT RAIDERS (8)

CE Medium humanoid

hp 14 each (as Caravan Guards, see page 13)

CR 1

The Sphinx's Oasis

Flip Mat: Desert

The map used for Event 3 is taken from *Flip Mat: Desert*, available from paizo.com.

One square = 5 feet

Wave Two (EL 8): This wave consists of a group of eight gnolls and four slaving hyenas. These vicious beasts loop around to approach the Sphinx's Oasis from a different direction than the raiders did, hoping to sneak up behind the PCs if they can. If the PCs force the raiders to retreat and flee, they just happen to head directly into this second wave. The gnolls, furious at the raiders' cowardice, spend the first round or two of combat attacking them, perhaps giving the PCs a few precious rounds to catch their breaths or regroup. Once the gnolls get close, they sic their hyenas on the PCs and hang back with their shortbows, forcing the PCs to come to them before switching to melee. These gnolls are loyal to Shiz and eager for vengeance—they fight to the death.

GNOLLS (8)
hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

HYENAS (4)
hp 13 each (MM 274)

CR 1

Wave Three (EL 8): The final wave consists of Shiz, her ettin bodyguard, and three final gnolls. Starting with the second round of Wave Two, these gnolls move into position near the Sphinx's Oasis at a point the PCs aren't occupying.

They observe the battle, but do not join in immediately unless they are directly attacked. Once the combatants in Wave Two are down to only three survivors, Shiz shrieks in frustration and anger and orders the ettin and her remaining gnolls into battle, ordering them to "Slay them all in the name of the Carrion King!"

SHIZ

CR 5

Female gnoll rogue 2/sorcerer 4

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot +2

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 20

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +4 shield)

hp 42 (8 HD; 2d8+2d6+4d4+16)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk spear +8 (1d8+4/×3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spells Known (CL 4th; +6 ranged touch; 15% spell failure)

2nd (4/day)—*scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 13), *magic missile*, *shield*

the jackal's price

o (6/day)—*acid splash*, *flare* (DC 12), *ghost sound* (DC 12),
message, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

TACTICS

Before Combat Shiz casts *shield* on herself before stepping onto the field of battle.

During Combat Shiz lets her ettin engage foes in melee while she provides support with *scorching rays* and *magic missiles*. In melee, she relies on *burning hands* unless she has a chance to try a sneak attack, in which case she uses her spear.

Morale Shiz fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will

Skills Concentration +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Spot +2 (+5 in bright light), Tumble +9

Languages Common, Gnoll

SQ summon familiar (hawk named Eddia), trapfinding

Gear +1 *studded leather*, masterwork spear, masterwork light crossbow, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, obsidian unholy symbol of Rovagug worth 200 gp, 45 gp

ETTIN

hp 65 (MM 106)

CR 6

GNOLLS (3)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

Development: With Shiz's death or defeat, the Sons of Carrion themselves are no longer a concern for the PCs. If Shiz escapes, feel free to develop her into a recurring character—she might round up a new band of murderers and assassins to try to strike at the PCs again, and this time she won't balk at entering the city of Katapesh to do so.

PART TWO: THE SCHOLAR'S VILLA

The city of Katapesh is the second largest in the Inner Sea region, a sprawling, bustling port that forms the central hub of all trade for the nation. Governed by a mysterious group known as the Pactmasters, the markets of Katapesh are notorious for their eclectic contents and almost anarchic organization. If it can be bought or sold, it can be had in Katapesh. A summary of Katapesh, and an in-depth investigation of its marketplaces, can be found on page 54 of this book. Although this adventure details a few specific locations in Katapesh, it does not require the PCs to spend much time exploring the city to complete it—yet chances are good your PCs are going to want to do just that, if only to go hit the markets for some wheeling and dealing. The Pathfinder Chronicles product *Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh* delves into much greater

detail, presenting a wealth of information for GMs eager to expand adventures in this exotic city.

By the time the PCs reach the city, rumors that a powerful artifact has been brought for sale to an unknown buyer have already begun to circulate. Although to some extent this can be ascribed to the PCs if they've not taken many steps to hide the nature of the scroll they carry, Father Jackal is certainly not the only merchant in town to have agents in far-flung locales like Kelmarane. Unless the PCs have been very aggressive in advertising why they've come to the city, though, few know much more than these vague rumors, and they tend to overlap and compete for attention with numerous other rumors, some of which relate to things the PCs will soon face, and others that do not.

Rayhan's Villa

Once the PCs reach Katapesh, their first order of business should be to contact Almah's friend Rayhan. If Garavel is still with the PCs, he can lead them to Rayhan's villa; if the PCs traveled on their own and don't have directions from Almah, a DC 15 Gather Information check (or a 5 gp payment to a local



City of Katapesh



guide) is enough to secure directions to the merchant wizard's home. As it happens, Rayhan's villa is not actually located within the city walls itself, but in a well-to-do section of the city just to the southeast. This area, dominated by Castle Clarion (home to a relatively infamous family that has made its fortune in the slave trade), is popular among several of Katapesh's more successful merchants who enjoy the convenience of the city but not the bustle and mayhem of actual city living.

Rayhan's villa is a modest three-story structure built from heavy clay bricks perched on a cliff overlooking the Obari Ocean. The villa is certainly not the extravagant affair one might expect such a successful merchant to own. The villa itself consists of the main house, a few outbuildings, and a well-kept garden. Grass grows thick on the villa grounds—Rayhan employs a caretaker to maintain it and the garden, and often keeps exotic and sometimes dangerous pets in a nearby building. A gated brick wall surrounds the entire cluster of buildings.

Garavel and the guards have little reason to remain with the PCs once they reach the villa, in any event. Unless the PCs ask him to stay, Garavel leaves them once they arrive and takes the remaining guards to make several purchases in the markets before returning to Kelmarane to report their safe arrival to Almah. This adventure assumes that Garavel and the guards are not present for what is to follow—if the PCs ask him to stay around, you'll need to adjust some of the following encounters as appropriate.

Meeting Rayhan

Rayhan is a wizard and a scholar, a somewhat intimidating man who made his fortune early in life as an adventurer and then went into semi-retirement. He maintains a healthy income both by selling magic items he's crafted and hiring out as a sage and researcher. His specialty is the study and history of ancient magic items, particularly those dealing with the manipulation of dimensions and reality, such as *bags of holding* and *portable holes*. His current project is an exhaustive study of the *well of many worlds*, including a catalogue of the various other worlds these items open into. He has yet to secure one of the potent and expensive magical items for direct study, something that's frustrated him greatly, and as a result his research is going slowly. His library is one of the most extensive collections of dimensional theory and planar lore in Katapesh, and Rayhan is considered one of the most learned individuals in Katapesh in the field of planar study.

Rayhan sometimes takes pupils, instructing them in the basics of magic and taking them from no skill at all to first level, after which he sends them on their way with instructions to return only if they can teach him something. An examination of the heavens is included with their studies, because he believes that magic is an expression of the power

of the natural universe, which can be directly observed by understanding the natural order of the heavens. When asked about its relevance, Rayhan simply states that the art of magic prefers a disciplined mind.

Rayhan is a bald-headed man who stands at a towering 6 feet, 5 inches. Just recently 50 years old, Rayhan remains spry and in fine health. Most remember him by his piercing gaze and the raucous raven Abaneshi that is never far from his side. Despite his somewhat intimidating appearance and brusque nature, he warms immediately as soon as the PCs give him Almah's letter of introduction. Between questions of what she's been up to and how she's doing, he invites the PCs into his home to visit.

RAYHAN XOBHADI

CR 8

Male old human diviner 8

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 21 (8d4)

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +9

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4–2/19–20)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th)

4th—*locate creature*, *minor creation*, *scrying* (DC 19), *summon monster IV*

3rd—*arcane sight*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*

2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *locate object*, *minor image* (DC 17), *levitate*, *obscure object*

1st—*comprehend languages*, *floating disc*, *identify* (2), *mage armor*, *summon monster I*, *unseen servant*

0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Prohibited School necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Rayhan starts every day by casting *unseen servant*.

He's fallen out of the habit of casting *mage armor* when he wakes, but if he suspects trouble or danger, he casts *mage armor* as soon as possible.

During Combat In battle, Rayhan casts *summon monster IV* to call up 1d3 Small air elementals to distract foes, then hangs back and casts *displacement* and *fly* before entering combat using his *wand of magic missile*.

Morale Rayhan is brave but not foolhardy. If reduced to less than 10 hit points, he flees combat via *dimension door* and *fly*, retreating to one of several friends' houses in Katapesh to hide out and recover.

STATISTICS

Str 7, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 11

Base Atk +4; Grp +3

Feats Alertness, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Cosmopolitan, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana])

Skills Appraise +19, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Spellcraft +18

Languages Ancient Osiriani, Common, Kelish, Osiriani, Vudrani
SQ summon familiar (raven named Abaneshi)

Combat Gear *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 43 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of intellect* +2, *ring of protection* +1, pouch of five 100 gp pearls

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cosmopolitan This feat, from the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*, grants Rayhan two bonus languages, and Appraise and Diplomacy as class skills.

Rayhan's Villa

When the PCs are invited into Rayhan's villa, the scholar brings them into his study (area A7) to talk. The villa is an unusual structure—apart from a single groundskeeper/cook who lives in a small outbuilding (area A6), Rayhan is the only one who lives in this building. Cleaning and upkeep is generally handled by unseen servants, and Rayhan himself spends the majority of his time in his library working on his various projects. The villa has three guest rooms—when doing research for out-of-town customers, Rayhan usually allows them to stay in his home, free of charge, as long as they are well-mannered and quiet. Guests are also welcome to share their meals with Rayhan, but his repasts are usually quite small and bland, limited to soup and vegetables from his garden—guests looking for more robust fare are encouraged to visit the Cliffside Tavern, a fine eatery just down the hill from the villa.

A1. Villa Grounds

A ten-foot-high stone wall surrounds modest-looking grounds perched on a cliff overlooking the ocean, and a wide metal gate secures the only entrance. Within stand five buildings, the central of which, at three stories, is easily the largest and tallest. To the west, a small but well-tended garden seems to be well-stocked with vegetables and fruit, while the grounds themselves are well-maintained with trimmed grass and a few palm trees.

After dark, Rayhan's groundskeeper Eramin locks the gate—this lock can be picked with a DC 30 Open Lock check. The walls themselves can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check.

A2. Stables

This single-story building contains five stalls, each large enough to fit a single horse or camel. The northernmost stall contains feed and hay.

Currently only two of the stalls are occupied—both with Rayhan's horses, a white mare named Lightning and a black foal with a white streak on its nose named Starfire. The PCs are welcome to leave their mounts here, but if the stables are simply not large enough to accommodate them all, Rayhan apologetically recommends stabling the mounts at the Cliffside Tavern down the hill.

A3. Tool Shed

The door to this building is kept locked. A DC 30 Open Lock check picks the lock; Eramin carries one key, and Rayhan keeps another in his room (area A9).

This tool shed holds numerous items for tending to the grounds. The tools are meticulously sorted by type and function, with trimmers in one open-door cabinet, shovels and spades in another, saws elsewhere, and other assorted odds and ends in various areas. Piled near the doorway is a four-foot-tall pile of mud bricks.

Treasure: Among the tools stored in this building is a bronze *decanter of endless water* that Eramin uses to aid in watering the plants and to provide the villa with drinking water.

A4. Garden

This small garden area contains a surprising variety of plants, including tomatos, berries, squash, potatoes, corn, peas, and artichokes.

This relatively small plot of land serves as a garden where Eramin grows the vegetables that make up the vast majority of his and Rayhan's meals. A few of the plants grown here are used for spell components, but most of them are used for food.

A5. Storage Shed

This small building contains numerous odds and ends that Rayhan has accumulated but has no space for within the house. All of the items here are mundane, including things like packs, bedrolls, chairs, firewood, old clothes, sheets, towels, and the like. The walls and door to the building, though, are unusually stout and strong—Rayhan periodically uses the building to house dangerous or exotic animals that strike his fancy.

A6. Eramin's House

This small building is the home of Rayhan's groundskeeper, a loyal man named **Eramin Venshaw** (LN male human expert 2). Eramin was, in his youth, a messenger, but after his tongue was cut out by a particularly cruel customer who didn't like the message he had been hired to deliver, he fell on hard times. Rayhan hired him when no one else



would, giving him a place to sleep and a job as a cook, gardener, and groundskeeper. Eramin is completely loyal to his master as a result. The owlish-looking man is quiet even beyond what one would suspect from a mute, and lives a simple life—there is nothing of any real value here as a result. Eramin keeps to himself and avoids interaction with Rayhan's guests, but those who can manage to establish communication with him swiftly find Eramin to be both friendly and perceptive.

A7. Common Room

This room is filled with comfortable seating, several small tables, an expensive silk carpet, and a large overstuffed couch. Paintings on the wall depict all manner of strange and exotic locations, including a huge dead creature in a swamp whose body has been turned into a fly-shrouded throne, a vast graveyard with a skull-shaped moon in the night sky, an idyllic woodland around crumbling stone ruins inhabited by animals who walk like men, and a gold and silver palace at the edge of a mirror-like lake above which flying women with the lower bodies of snakes play. The largest of these paintings hangs on the northern wall and depicts a jungle-covered island with a strange ship moored at a short stone pier on the closest beach.

Rayhan normally meets with guests in this room, and it is also here that he lectures to his students, bringing in additional chairs from storage as necessary.

Treasure: The paintings on the walls are of various locations and sites throughout the Great Beyond: Apollyon's Throne of Flies, Pharama's Boneyard, an agathion conclave on Nirvana, and the Thousand-Mirror Palace on Elysium. The large painting is of Kakishon, a masterpiece by an artist named Vormeesa Hoon. The painting bears a small bronze plaque that reads, "Lost Kakishon," and the detail is almost realistic in its rendition—one can look at the 4-foot-wide, 6-foot-tall painting for hours and not find all the strange animals, creatures, and eerie ruins hidden in the junglescape.

The smaller paintings are all by minor artists and are worth only 50 gp apiece. The Hoon masterpiece is another story—it is worth 3,500 gp, and is one of Rayhan's greatest treasures.

A8. Guest Rooms

Each of these rooms contain a large bed and a variety of tables, chairs, and shelves to serve as guest rooms for Rayhan's visitors. Each room is equipped with a chamber pot under the bed and a footlocker and key for the storage

of valuables. It's likely that, with only three rooms, there won't be enough rooms here for the PCs to each have their own—Rayhan apologizes for the lack of accommodations but notes that he usually doesn't have this many guests at once. He has Eramin bring in several bedrolls from storage in area A5 to make these rooms work for as many PCs as necessary.

A9. Rayhan's Room

This bedroom appears lived in, although orderly and clean. Thick curtains hang over the windows to the north and south, and the shelf to the east is heavy with books and various bits of statuary and odd sculptures.

Rayhan doesn't always sleep here—he often sleeps in his library above. The contents of the shelf include a number of books and scrolls, mostly fictional accounts of visits to the Outer Planes, while the bits of sculpture and statuary are from all manner of locations throughout the planes. Most depict strange animals, holy symbols, or heroic figures. All of them are in relatively bad condition—their value to Rayhan is more nostalgic and personal than monetary.



rayhan

A10. Dining Room

This room contains a long dining table and several chairs. A wine rack stocked with several bottles lies along the west wall. Along the east wall is an ornate cabinet that displays a set of china with a gold-inlaid pattern that evokes an ancient Osirian feel.

Treasure: The silverware kept here is all fine quality—the set as a whole is worth 50 gp. Likewise, the wine selection is quite good, with 9 bottles in all worth 75 gp apiece.

A11. Kitchen

This simple kitchen features two wall-mounted preparation tables, under and above each of which are numerous cupboards and bins for storing utensils and vegetables. A compact wood-burning stove sits to the north.

This is where Eramin prepares the daily breakfast and dinner for Rayhan; the two sometimes share their meals in the dining room. The stove itself bears a minor magical enhancement—any object placed inside it can be ignited by a command word that sparks several tiny flames. The flames won't activate if the stove front is open.

A12. Bath

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this room are decorated with white porcelain tiles, with other ornate adornments that make the place seem to be more of a royal bath chamber than anything else. A large, two-foot-deep pool in the room's center and several braziers and bins for heating polished oval rocks complete the image.

One of Rayhan's pleasures is luxuriating in long hot baths and saunas—this large chamber was the primary reason he settled on this villa when looking for a place to retire.

The small wood-burning stoves bear minor magics that purify smoke, preventing the room from becoming too smoky while wood is burned to heat the rocks needed to create a sauna-like atmosphere. The pool itself also bears minor magic—its porcelain sides are linked to the temperature of the rocks in the bins, so that as these bins are heated, the water in the pool heats as well.

A13. Storage

This long chamber contains all manner of storage—items such as extra blankets and towels, firewood, cleaning supplies, and utensils. Nothing of value is kept here.

A14. Library

This entire floor of the building consists of a single, vast library. Wooden shelves heavy with books, scrolls, bits of statuary,

and stone tablets covered with runes line the walls. Additional shelves stand in the middle of each wing, further increasing shelf space. A round table heaped with books and papers sits in the middle of the room, attended by a few padded chairs. Two opaque skylights in the ceiling help somewhat to open up the room's otherwise claustrophobic feel.

Treasure: The huge collection of books here is perhaps the only of Rayhan's treasures he values more than his Kakishon painting. The books themselves are painstakingly organized—alphabetically by subject, then author—and focus entirely on matters relating to astronomy, the planes, and other dimensions. While relatively small, the section on Nex's hidden realm of Kakishon is nonetheless well represented. Taken as a whole, these books grant a +10 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge checks made relating to the subject matter of the planes, other dimensions, the cosmos and stars, and associated magic. The collection itself is worth 10,000 gp as a whole.

A15. Rooftop

This flat-topped roof is strewn with gravel to aid in footing during rain. Two large glass skylights are set into the floor, opening up to the floor below. A six-inch-high rim runs along the roof edge, and shallow gutters run away from the skylights to funnel water through several tiny gargoyles perched along the edge.

The two skylights are fitted with huge panes of frosted glass that are cleaned by the groundskeeper once a month. The glass is thick enough that a Small creature can walk on it, but a larger creature crashes through into area A14 below. The skylights are fixed and cannot be opened.

Event 4: Secrets of Kakishon

This event occurs when the PCs first contact Rayhan. He invites them into area A7 to speak once he's seen Almah's letter of introduction, and when he learns that the PCs believe they've found the *Scroll of Kakishon*, he becomes skeptical and all but asks them to leave before they waste any more of his time. Yet once the PCs show him the map, Rayhan's disbelief swiftly erodes. He examines it silently for several minutes, first without aid, and then with the assistance of magic, using *detect magic*, *arcane sight*, and *identify*. When *identify* fails to give him concrete results, he looks up excitedly at the PCs, his hands shaking and eyes wide as he speaks:

"It would appear that I was a bit hasty in my initial disbelief. This scroll is highly intriguing. I've studied the legend of Kakishon for years, and in that time I've seen countless shams and forgeries and dead ends. But this scroll... this could be the real thing.

Establishing Patterns

The climax of this part of the adventure is an assault on Rayhan's villa at the hands of the One Source Merchants' Guild. As a result, you'll need to know where the PCs are when this attack occurs, but you don't want to encourage metagame thinking by giving the PCs unnecessary clues that something big's about to go down, such as by asking them out of the blue where their characters are at midnight.

Instead, starting with the first evening the PCs spend at the villa, go around the table and find out what the PCs are doing that evening. Where are they sleeping? Are they posting guards? Are they alone or do they spend time with other PCs or NPCs? Are they going to take advantage of the baths in the villa to relax? Do they have a habit of raiding the food stores for midnight snacks? Are some of the PCs insomniacs or early risers?

Each night that follows, repeat this process. This solves two problems—it puts the PCs off guard if night after night passes without major events, and it lets you find out what the PCs are up to at night so that when the attack does come, you'll know if any of the PCs are positioned to act early or if they'll be caught off-guard.

"The legends say that Kakishon was created by the wizard-king Nex to serve him as a portable paradise and an impenetrable bolt-hole. Much as the more commonplace *bag of holding* opens into its own reality, the *Scroll of Kakishon* was said to contain this entire world inside of it—the scroll was not Kakishon, but the doorway by which Nex could enter and exit the realm. Kakishon was said to have been a paradise, a laboratory, a menagerie, a hunting ground, and even a tomb—most likely, it was all these things and more, with each island serving a different role.

"The legend of Kakishon falls into increasing obscurity after Nex's war with Geb began. All signs point to the strong possibility that Nex had grown dissatisfied with Kakishon and had lost interest. When he vanished from the face of Garund in 576 AR, he left the *Scroll of Kakishon* behind. Eventually, it was stolen from his castle and the scroll passed through many hands. Some used it as a prison for their enemies, others as a place to impress allies or as a vault for their treasures, the stories say. The closer to the present day we get, the more obscure the rumors grow—no sign of the *Scroll of Kakishon* seems to have surfaced over the past several hundred years.

"The last person to own the scroll, I believe, was a Keleshite wizard named Andrathi. The accounts of his life are vague and fragmentary, but it would appear that he was the lover of a genie named Nefeshti, the leader of a group known as the Templars

of the Five Winds. Legend holds that the Templars fought somewhere in the mountains against a cruel efreeti warlord named Jhavhul, and that while the Templars of the Five Winds managed to capture Jhavhul inside of Kakishon, the defeat was shadowed in loss. No sign of Andrathi or the *Scroll of Kakishon* remained after the battle. No sign... until today.

“This is an important find. If you will let me, I would very much like to look into this matter, to research this scroll and decipher some of the writings upon it. And if this is indeed the *Scroll of Kakishon*, there are protections placed upon it to prevent undesirables from being able to open it and travel to the world within. Yet in time, I feel that I will be able to decipher these writings. You see, before he vanished, the wizard Andrathi went through the same process—yet he obviously managed to discover the way to open the scroll, even if it meant his doom. Some of his writings have survived to this day, and as it happens, I own copies of these writings. By building upon the foundation he lays in his writings, I am sure that I will be able to duplicate his research and refine it. It may take days, even weeks, but if this is indeed the *Scroll of Kakishon*, I will find the key to open it.

“But once it is open, I will need your aid, should you be willing to provide it. The legends speak of great treasures kept safe in Kakishon, the greatest of which was Jhavhul’s own weapon, the legendary Firebleeder, said by some to be a falchion and others a living flame. Sadly, my adventuring days are behind me, but if I find the way, I would be honored to accompany you into Kakishon to find the truth!”

Rayhan normally charges steep fees for his work, but this case is unusual, and he tells the PCs that he is waiving the fee, provided that he is allowed to accompany the PCs into Kakishon if the map proves to be real. If the map proves false, he asks only to be allowed to keep the forgery as payment. Rayhan estimates that he’ll need at least a week to refresh his familiarity with Andrathi’s notes and to piece together his own research before he’ll be able to even attempt deciphering the trigger to open the portal to Kakishon. For this duration, he offers his home to the PCs as a place for them to stay while he conducts his research. This courtesy not only helps to prove his good intentions, but keeps the PCs close by should Rayhan’s research result in an unexpected breakthrough. He asks the PCs to keep quiet about the scroll, but admits he fears that knowledge of the scroll’s arrival in Katapesh is already spreading—no fault of the PCs, certainly, for the merchants of Katapesh are quite gifted at sniffing out news of valuable items entering the city.

As for security, Rayhan can think of no better guardians for the scroll than the PCs themselves. He’ll need to reference the scroll now and then for a few hours (and certainly for several on the first day of his study), but his research does not require constant consultation of the artifact. He tells the PCs that they should keep

the scroll on their persons at all times, and to watch it protectively. If it proves to be the real thing and Rayhan discovers a method to open it, they can move things to a more secure location, but until that point Rayhan wants to keep things as quiet as possible. Certainly, allowing the PCs to retain possession of the scroll should set their minds at ease. How the PCs keep the scroll safe is left to them, but Rayhan encourages them to not let it too far out of their control. There are security services and vaults aplenty in Katapesh, but as a native of the city, Rayhan knows that with ensured security comes great expense. Once the authenticity of the scroll can be proven, such expenses will surely become trivial matters, but for now, secrecy is the best defense.

For the next several days, the PCs are more or less on their own. They can spend this time shopping in Katapesh, crafting items, or perhaps even becoming involved in short adventures of your own devising. *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets*, *A Guide to Katapesh* provides ample adventure seeds and details for running adventures in the city, and the “Katapesh Marketplace” article on page 54 of this book should be of great help in handling trips to the city markets. The events to follow should occur in the order they are presented, but the timing of when they occur is up to you; they should take place at points that feel organic to the campaign while at the same time giving the PCs a chance to unwind and relax.

Event 5: The Three Merchants

Despite attempts at secrecy, rumors of the scroll’s arrival in Katapesh spread quickly. At some point during the adventure, the PCs should be visited by three different merchants, each with their own interest and curiosity in the scroll they’re supposed to have brought into Katapesh. When these merchants approach the PCs and in what order they do so is up to you. Some might accost them in the market. Others might “accidentally” bump into them at a tavern. One could even seek out the PCs at Rayhan’s villa for an interview. These encounters aren’t meant to be antagonistic confrontations, merely indications to the PCs that knowledge of the scrolls is spreading. The three merchants in question are detailed below—feel free to add more eager merchants of your own design to further vex the PCs as you wish.

Note that while each merchant offers the PCs a price for the map, this is more of a promise to deliver once Rayhan confirms the map is legitimate—none of the merchants want to purchase the map until Rayhan proves that it is what it is. And of course, the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path won’t be giving the PCs a chance to collect on these offers—these merchants are not intended to be a sudden source of wealth for the PCs, but rather as an indication of the incredible value of the object they’ve discovered. In

all cases, a DC 20 Diplomacy check convinces a merchant to increase his or her offer by 10,000 gp (and by a further 10,000 gp for each 5 points that the Diplomacy check exceeds DC 20).

Marzuk (NG male human expert 2/aristocrat 6): The middle son of the Mus'ad merchant family, Marzuk is the primary negotiator for the family's business dealings. He is known as a skillful haggler, as well as someone other merchants can trust to stick to an agreement. His family's interest in the *Scroll of Kakishon* is not motivated by trade, but by prestige. They would very much like to add it to their collection of rare and valuable magic items. If the scroll is proven to be legitimate, Marzuk is prepared to offer the PCs up to 55,000 gp in gems or coin. If his offer is rebuffed, Marzuk informs them that he is usually present in the bazaar and they are welcome to see him again if they change their mind.

Badra (LN female human aristocrat 4/fighter 2): Badra started her career as a mercenary in the employ of a wealthy merchant. When a caravan she was protecting fell under attack and the caravan's owner and half the caravan's members were slain, she assumed ownership of the operation over the protests of some of the others who had a vested interest. Since then, she has taken what had effectively been a moderately successful traveling items shop and turned it into a small trading empire, with contacts in nearly every major city in the Inner Sea region. Her greatest customers are a number of wizards—Badra suspects that she'll be able to make an incredible amount of money auctioning the *Scroll of Kakishon* to these contacts. Badra is polite and businesslike, but subtly insinuates that selling to anybody other than her could endanger the PCs' lives. She is willing to make a first offer of 35,000 gp (adjusted via Diplomacy as above), but if she learns another merchant has offered more, she exceeds her rival's offer by 5,000 gp.

Tamir (NE male halfling rogue 1/wizard 7): Tamir introduces himself as an associate of the One Source Merchants' Guild, working as an independent scout and agent paid to seek out attractive new prospects and exotic artifacts. Tamir doesn't present himself as anything other than the rogue that he is, pointing out that the One Source uses folk like him all the time to handle purchases of "sensitive matters." If the PCs confront him with his alignment, he makes light of the accusation, shrugging and pointing out that there are plenty of other scoundrels

in the city—why should he be held to a higher standard than any of them? The truth of the matter is that Tamir is one of Father Jackal's closest allies—the halfling's been charged with confirming that the PCs do indeed have the *Scroll of Kakishon* and making a token attempt to purchase the artifact. Tamir's initial offer for the *Scroll of Kakishon* is 30,000 gp. He fully expects the PCs to balk at such a low price—the guild isn't really interested in buying the artifact anyway. His primary goal is to scope out the PCs and to gather intelligence for the eventual assault on Rayhan's villa, not to secure a legal transaction.



marzuk

Event 6: The Dinner Party

After the third merchant approaches the PCs with offers to purchase the *Scroll of Kakishon*, Rayhan confides to the PCs that he is growing increasingly certain that the artifact the PCs have is legitimate. Perhaps over dinner, Rayhan asks the PCs what they plan on doing with the artifact if it does indeed prove to be what they all hope it is. Do they eventually intend to sell it? If so, Rayhan points out that Katapesh is indeed the best place to sell such a rare artifact—he also points out that pricing such a thing for sale is tricky business. He asks the PCs their impressions of the merchants that have approached them so far with offers, noting that since the cat's out of the bag, it might be a good idea to have those merchants up to the villa in a day or so for a dinner party—such parties are something of a tradition in the city when expensive sales are in the works. Getting all of the merchants into one area should give the PCs a chance to see if a bidding war is possible, but more importantly it'll help curb the growing rumors and curiosity about the artifact.

Assuming the PCs agree, Rayhan has Eramin draft up invitations. Beyond the three merchants that have already expressed interest, Rayhan strongly recommends that the PCs invite a cleric of Abadar—in the presence of such officialdom, they'll be able to dispense with worries about security, since no Katapeshi merchant would try something illegal in the presence of one of Abadar's clergy. Furthermore, it's best to keep the church informed of big dealings in the merchant world—not hosting a dinner party (and thus not inviting a cleric to put any rumors of misdealing to rest) would arouse the suspicion of the Pactmasters themselves, something Rayhan has no interest in doing. As a result, Rayhan goes ahead and schedules the

The Dinner Party Guests

The dinner party is relatively small—this adventure assumes that only the following four guests are invited. If more attend, you should take the time to jot down personality quirks like those below to help guide roleplay during the event.

Marzuk: Marzuk arrives dressed in an expensive white outfit with a silk turban. He enjoys these parties and is likely to take an interest in attractive female PCs, offering one of them a tour of his “family grounds” later in the week. He grows increasingly loud and drunk as the evening progresses, much to Badra’s disdain and Tamir’s delight.

Badra: Badra is dressed in a decorative red silk dress and gold silk scarves. Her attitude is one of grim endurance—she sees these parties as something to be endured, rather than enjoyed. Much of what she says seems critical (the food is overcooked, the wine too bitter, the companionship too loud), with the exception of the Hoon painting of Kakishon, which impresses her greatly and about which she has many questions.

Tamir: The halfling Tamir doesn’t dress quite so extravagantly as the other guests, opting instead for comfortable (but clean and well-tailored) clothes and a constant smile. He jokes often, and may challenge a PC into a game of one-upping jokes with increasingly lewd or scandalous punch lines.

Kazim: As the official representative of the Church of Abadar, the beautiful **Kazim** (LN female human cleric of Abadar 6) wears an elegant but simple white and green robe. She is observant and quiet at the party, but when she speaks (usually to compliment someone or to make an observation that is relatively obvious), the other guests listen attentively and agree with her in an almost exaggerated manner.

dinner party even if the PCs balk—not all of the PCs need to attend, but it would look awkward if they didn’t.

The dinner party itself is scheduled for sunset; Rayhan has Eramin handle most of the preparations, but if the PCs haven’t been to the Katapesh market yet, sending them down to pick up some wine or other supplies can be a good way to get the PCs to experience the madness of the market. Rayhan also warns the PCs that, as the sellers, the PCs are expected to provide some form of post-meal entertainment to the guests. He leaves it to

the PCs to determine what sort of entertainment should be provided—if they ask for suggestions, he notes that performances of art, lectures on matters related to the object to be sold, and even weapon or acrobatic demonstrations have all been used in the past. He also points out that although only one entertainment is required, multiple bits of entertainment are better since they’ll impress the guests (especially Kazim) more. And if Kazim is impressed, then Abadar and the Pactmasters will be more inclined to support the eventual sale of the *Scroll of Kakishon* with loans and other incentives to the buyer—which directly translates into much higher profits for the seller. Even if the PCs don’t intend to sell the scroll, getting in the good graces of

Katapesh’s leadership is never a bad thing.

The guests start to arrive as early as an hour before sundown, and it falls to the PCs to keep them entertained until the meal starts. Feel free to roleplay this out if you wish—brief notes on how each guest acts at the party appear in the sidebar nearby.

As the appointed hour approaches, the partygoers move to the dining room.

Rayhan waits until everyone is seated (additional chairs are brought in as necessary), before he taps a spoon against a crystal wineglass and raises a toast.



badra

“Welcome, honored guests! Kakishon has long been a place of myth and legend. Some scholars had turned away from the notion of this place after convincing themselves that the place was pure legend and did not truly exist. I distinctly recall the suspicion I felt just a few days ago when these fine folk arrived with what they believed was the *Scroll of Kakishon* itself. After seeing so many charlatans and forgeries in my life, it was hard to believe at first—but I believe what these folk have brought me may indeed be the real thing. I complete my research and appraisal in a few days, at which point we can talk prices. For now, though, let this toast be for the heroes who have brought to Katapesh a piece of history!”

The guests all raise their glasses and toast the PCs, after which the food is served. Eramin brings out plates of aromatic sliced meats, vegetables and fruits from the garden, salads, bread, and fine wine until the dining table is covered completely. Once the food is served, the table erupts into conversation. Some of the guests ask how closely Rayhan has examined the map and if he’s figured out how to activate it yet. Others want to know what the party intends to do with the map. Marzuk states that he simply cannot

fathom the notion that they would wish to keep it, given that there are so many others who have been waiting lifetimes for a chance to learn its secrets. Yet at no times do any of the guests make offers—they've already stated their offers to the PCs, after all, and haggling and bargaining at a dinner party is considered crass.

As soon as the guests have finished eating, the party retires downstairs to the parlor, which has been set up to accommodate whatever form of entertainment the PCs have decided to provide to the guests. Bottles of wine are opened and drinks flow liberally among the guests during the PCs' performances. Feel free to roleplay these performances out, but in each case, they should come down to skill checks. Perform checks can be used for things like music, acting, and dance. Knowledge checks should be used for lectures. Balance or Tumble should be used for acrobatic displays. Intimidate checks should be used for displays of martial prowess, and Spellcraft for displays of magical power. Each performing PC should make the appropriate check. A DC 25 check is enough to impress the guests and earn the PC honest applause. Anything of DC 10 or less earns polite but stinging silence. A result between these produces polite applause.

When the performances are over, the guests thank Rayhan and the PCs and leave for their homes—Rayhan himself seems exhausted but returns to the library above, asking the PCs to leave him to his studies for the rest of the evening, noting that the party has put him behind schedule.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: For each DC 25 success the PCs achieve during the after-dinner entertainment, award the party experience as if they had defeated a CR 7 creature in combat.

Event 7: The Abduction (EL 10)

After the dinner party, Father Jackal is ready to make his move. He realizes that once the scroll officially goes up for sale his only option would be to buy it, and with the other merchants involved, he knows the One Source Merchants' Guild would lose out on a bidding war. But if he can get the scroll before it goes up for sale, or at the very least, get something the PCs hold dear that he can use as leverage, he'll be able to deliver the scroll to the Captain of the Sunset Ship before paying the price for failing on his promise to them.

This event should take place at night after the dinner party—after receiving Tamir's report, Father Jackal sends

the halfling right back to the villa with a small group of thugs to make their move. If Tamir knows where the *Scroll of Kakishon* is hidden and suspects it is easy to get, nabbing it becomes his priority. More likely, he'll instead make a two-pronged attack late in the night, using a summoned monster and the bulk of his thugs as a distraction while he steals into the library to abduct the man responsible for deciphering the scroll itself.

The logistics of this attack depend somewhat on where the PCs are located and what they're doing at midnight.

The only real requirement is that Rayhan should be alone in the library when the attack comes—but if the PCs never leave him alone, go ahead and roll with it.

Creatures: The attacking group consists of Tamir and nine One Source thugs. The thieves split into two groups, Group One (consisting of Tamir and two thugs) and Group Two (consisting of the remaining seven thugs).

They approach the villa from two directions, timing their attack at a point late in the night after they suspect the PCs and Rayhan are asleep (anytime between midnight and dawn should work perfectly). When the assault begins, Tamir casts *knock* twice; first on the front gate and next on the front door, both from a point well across the street in the shadows

of an alleyway (but still within his 170-foot range for the spell). A character at either location

can make a DC 15 Listen check to hear the door or gate unlock. Tamir uses his *scroll of dimension door* to teleport atop the building with his two thugs while Group Two swarms silently into the grounds toward the front door. Once both groups are in motion, their invasion attempts the following schedule.

Group One: Tamir gives Group Two 5 rounds to infiltrate the house, then uses his *scroll of summon monster IV* to summon an earth mephitis. He orders the mephitis to fly down to the ground floor, enlarge itself, and loudly torment the horses in the stable, hoping that the resulting noise will distract the PCs and draw them out of the central building. If he hears an alarm raised before 5 rounds pass, Tamir summons his mephitis at once. He then uses *knock* to open the door to the stairwell and he and his two thugs move down into the library. Once there, Tamir attempts to cast *charm person* on Rayhan; if that fails, his thugs attempt to knock him unconscious with their saps while Tamir hits the wizard with *ray of enfeeblement* or *hold person*. If they subdue Rayhan, Tamir bundles the



kazim

An Alternative Goal

This assault focuses on Rayhan's abduction mostly because it assumes that the PCs have taken steps to ensure the safety of the *Scroll of Kakishon*. Father Jackal knows that a direct assault against untested foes in an attempt to simply take the artifact is risky—abducting an old man who is a friend to the PCs feels safer.

Yet if Tamir learns where the PCs are keeping the *Scroll of Kakishon*, he and his thugs might instead try to get the map itself. In this event, they leave no ransom note—the PCs will need to use their wits (and perhaps a few divination spells) to determine where their treasure went in this case. As described in Part Three, Father Jackal does not immediately turn over the scroll to the Captain of the Sunset Ship; from the time he gains the scroll, the PCs should have no more than 3 days to get it back from him before it's gone for good.

wizard into his *bag of holding*, then uses *dimension door* to travel to a point 650 feet to the south. After this, he casts *invisibility* on himself, then *fly*, and moves quickly to the One Source Warehouse, where Rayhan is extracted from the *bag of holding* before he suffocates, gagged and bound, and taken to the dungeons below.

Group Two: The thugs, using *Move Silently*, enter area **A7** and then split into four groups. One thug remains in area **A7**, while the others form groups of two each and check the doors to the guest rooms. If they find the PCs asleep inside, they bide their time; groups that find no PCs immediately move up to the second floor to continue their search (all six move up to the second floor at once if lights in windows or undue noise seem to indicate the PCs are all upstairs). Once they hear the shrieking mephit and panicked horses in the stable (or after a minute passes), the thugs attack, hoping to catch the PCs unaware for a sneak attack. The rogues then retreat back to area **A7** to make their stand, attempting to lure the PCs to this room to give Tamir time to finish his work in the library above.

ONE SOURCE THUGS (9)

CR 2

Human rogue 2

CE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

(+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 13 each (2d6+4)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal) or

mwk short sword +3 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +4 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat The thugs want to avoid killing PCs, knowing that murder is likely to make the PCs more interested in revenge than bargaining for Rayhan's release, and thus favor saps in battle.

Morale The thugs fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; Grp +2

Feats Combat Reflexes, Stealthy

Skills Balance +7, Climb +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +9, Listen +6,

Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +6

Languages Common, Osiriani

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear**

masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork sap, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork thieves' tools, two small flawed rubies worth 250 gp each

TAMIR

CR 8

Male halfling rogue 1/wizard 7

CE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 20

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +4 shield, +1 size)

hp 39 (8 HD; 1d6+7d4+16)

Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7 (+8 against fear)

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +6 (1d4–1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 7th, +9 ranged touch)

4th—*dimension door*

3rd—*fly*, *hold person* (DC 16)

2nd—*knock* (4), *invisibility*

1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*

0—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *message*, *open/close*

TACTICS

Before Combat Tamir casts *mage armor* and *shield* just before beginning the invasion.

During Combat Tamir relies heavily on his *wand of scorching ray* in combat, as he needs his spells to abduct Rayhan and escape.

Morale Tamir abandons the attempted abduction and flees back to the One Source Merchants' Guild if brought below 10 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8

the jackal's price



Base Atk +5; **Grp** +0

Feats Alertness, Cosmopolitan (Bluff, Listen, see page 22), Craft Wand, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +13, Concentration +9, Gather Information +3, Hide +11, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +16, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +9, Spot +7

Languages Common, Halfling, Kelish, Osiriani, Sahuagin, Terran

SQ summon familiar (snake named Inephees), trapfinding

Combat Gear *scroll of dimension door*, *scroll of summon monster IV*, *wand of scorching ray* (14 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *boots of elvenkind*, *ring of protection* +1, *bag of holding* (type II), spellbook (contains prepared spells plus all cantrips and *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *magic aura*, *true strike*, *ventriloquism*, *alter self*, *false life*, *arcane sight*, *gentle repose*, *lightning bolt*, and *locate creature*), six small flawed rubies worth 250 gp each

EARTH MEPHIT

hp 19 (MM 182)

Development: If the assault is successful and Rayhan is abducted, the PCs find a short message pinned to his desk in the library by a small knife (reproduced as Handout 1).

CR —

If the abduction fails, award the PCs experience as if they had defeated a CR 7 creature. The invasion should be an obvious indication to the PCs that someone is willing to go to extreme lengths to get the *Scroll of Kakishon*, and Rayhan suggests the PCs go on the offensive and seek out their enemy before the enemy strikes again. If the PCs don't take the battle to the One Source and Father Jackal in a few days, the enemy does indeed strike again. Father Jackal knows that another invasion would doubtless arouse retaliation from the Pactmasters, but attacks on visitors who are not citizens of the city are another matter. Using his agents, he tries to spy on the PCs' actions, and then strikes when one is alone, sending a group of eight thugs (and Tamir if he still lives) against a PC or Rayhan in an attempt to abduct him. Alternatively, if Garavel is still in town, he could become the victim, replacing Rayhan as the abducted.

PART THREE: THE ONE SOURCE

Word of the assault on Rayhan's villa spreads quickly, even if the PCs don't raise the alarm or contact the authorities. Within a few minutes of the battle's resolution, an armed

Your friend is now my guest in my lair. If you would see him alive again, you will agree to my price. I want the Scroll of Kakishon—you would surely agree that a life is more than fair a trade for such a treasure, yes? Place the scroll in a box, weight the box with stones, place a light spell on the box, and throw the box into the sea from Rayhan's villa tomorrow at sunset. When I have the map, your friend will be returned unharmed. If I do not receive the map by sunset, your friend's blood is on your hands.

—Father Jackal

group of Zephyr Guards arrives at the villa to determine what occurred. Accompanying them is Kazim, the same cleric who attended the dinner party the previous night. She does not waste any time on pleasantries, going so far as to break down Rayhan's front door if the party refuses to answer.

Kazim suggests that the party have a conversation in Rayhan's common room, where she gestures toward the seats. As soon as the PCs are seated, she sits herself, and begins to speak.

"Greetings. I apologize for my abrupt arrival, but there is a matter we must discuss. Know that I am here on both the authority of the church and that of the Pactmasters—and I bring word of their displeasure. Both have been troubled recently by your arrival in our city. They had hoped your claim was false, or that if it were true, you would conduct your business swiftly and be gone. The traffic of powerful artifacts is welcome in Katapesh, but it also causes the worst of men's natures to rise. What we have seen here tonight is proof of that.

"While the city respects the value of an individual's property, and theft violates the highest laws of the land, inciting riots and disrupting trade is equally offensive to our codes, and you currently walk a fine line in that regard.

"Know that several parties have come to the Pactmasters and demanded that the city force you to relinquish control of the *Scroll of Kakishon* to the highest bidder. Specifically, the One Source Merchants' Guild is threatening a trade embargo if they are not allowed the opportunity to bid for the map. Though you are the rightful owner and cannot be forced to sell, they therefore ask you to choose a buyer within the next day or else leave the city. It is one thing to hold out on a trade for the best price, but another to hold out so long that our merchants lose sight of their civility.

"You have but one other option. If you can find out who perpetrated this crime against you and the master of this house, and if you can bring me proof that the situation has been resolved before the time limit elapses, both the church and the Pactmasters will be appreciative of your efforts and turn deaf ears to the complaints of a few jealous merchants."

Although this sounds an awful lot like an ultimatum, it is in fact the Pactmasters' subtle way to solve a situation that's been growing for some time. The One Source Merchants' Guild has overstepped their bounds this time, and Father Jackal has tested the patience of the Pactmasters for the last time. Yet it would be unseemly to simply disband the One Source and arrest Father Jackal, as the man has been careful to cover his tracks, using agents like Tamir who cannot be officially tied to him, and maintaining all of his proper payments to the government. The process of officially arresting

and dissolving such a well-established guild is complex and time-consuming—but the process of cleaning up after a victimized group takes righteous revenge on its oppressor is much less so.

Essentially, Kazim is giving the PCs a time limit to resolve the situation on their own before the Pactmasters force her to take action. No matter the results of the dinner party, she was entertained and impressed by the way they presented themselves, and believes secretly that they should be given the chance to keep what is rightfully theirs, or to decide when and where to sell on their own volition. Yet in order for this to happen, they need to do a favor for the Pactmasters—and removing Father Jackal from the scene would be just such a favor. She can't outright say that this is the case, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check can confirm the suspicion if a PC voices it.

Kazim is willing to entertain a few questions, but there are certain things she will address, and other things she will not. If the PCs ask about the Pactmasters of Katapesh, she simply tells them that information is unnecessary in solving the PCs' current problem. If the PCs suggest that they might just leave the city, she assures them that this is an option, though those who wish to obtain the map would like that very much because it would allow them to strike at the party openly. Within the city, there is order and the rule of law, which makes it why very few attacks are carried out here.

If the PCs ask (or if they make a DC 20 Knowledge [local] check), Kazim confirms that the law in Katapesh is indeed relatively laissez faire—in fact, many visitors to Katapesh from other cities find the place to be almost anarchic. The Pactmasters are interested first and foremost in the business of trade, and less so in standard laws and policing the streets. City guards do patrol the markets, but they are there primarily as a deterrent—if one merchant wrongs another, it is encouraged for the wronged merchant to solve his own problem in such a way that trade in the city is not disrupted. That criminals who operate within the strictures of the system can get away with murder may seem unfair, but it is the way things have always been in Katapesh.

In brief—while the PCs can expect to find little aid from the city watch in handling the problem with Father Jackal and the One Source Merchants' Guild, they can also rest assured that, as long as they don't let their fighting spill out into the street, the city won't step in to defend the One Source from what many believe is a comeuppance long since overdue.

On the Trail of Father Jackal

Once the PCs know that they have an enemy in the city, they'll need to start piecing together the clues as to who's after them. This adventure assumes that the primary motivation for the PCs to confront Father Jackal is to rescue Rayhan, but they could have other reasons—recovering the stolen *Scroll of Kakishon*, rescuing another abducted PC or NPC, or simply revenge for the attack on the villa or the PCs themselves.

Father Jackal has done little to obscure from the PCs the fact that he is their enemy, going so far as to sign his ransom note. In part, this is his attempt to lure the PCs into his lair where he is confident that he and his minions can destroy them and pluck from their remains the artifact he seeks.

Listed below are the various clues the PCs can use that eventually point them toward the One Source Merchants' Guild as their enemy.

Interrogating the Enemy: If the PCs catch any of Tamir's thugs alive and can adjust their hostile attitude to at least friendly, the thugs can confirm that they work for Father Jackal. If made helpful, they also confirm that Father Jackal is the leader of the One Source Merchants' Guild.

The Rubies: All of those who serve Father Jackal seem to carry rubies. A DC 15 Gather Information check or Knowledge (local) check confirms that the rubies come from a mysterious merchant known only as the Captain of the Sunset Ship. While the Sunset Ship hasn't been in port for weeks, this check confirms that they've been doing the vast majority of their business of late with the One Source Merchants' Guild.

Following Known Associates: If the PCs know someone who works for Father Jackal (such as Radi, Tamir, or one of the thugs), they can trail that person to the One Source Merchants' Guild if they're stealthy enough. A captured thug could be "allowed" to escape captivity—such thugs make a beeline for the safety of the One Source Warehouse, inadvertently leading anyone following directly to the lair.

Tamir: Tamir admits working for the One Source Merchants' Guild when he first meets the PCs; if the PCs realize he's part of the assault on the villa, this is evidence enough that should lead them to the warehouse.

Father Jackal: A DC 15 Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check is enough to confirm that Father Jackal is a minor but well-known slaver and merchant who operates at times in the Nightstalls. His reputation for violence is well known, and only the most desperate or powerful merchants willingly do business with him—many suspect that he uses a front to handle most of his less-important business. It's a DC 25 Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check to know that this front is, in fact, the One Source Merchants' Guild.

Following the Scroll: The PCs can go along with Father Jackal's request and deliver the *Scroll of Kakishon* (or a forgery) as requested by throwing the scroll into the sea at the next sunset. Father Jackal charges his cleric ally Khair al Din to lead the retrieval of the scroll. The cleric casts *water breathing* on himself and, accompanied by two sahuagin, is waiting underwater below the villa that evening; the water there is 20 feet deep, and once the glowing box containing the scroll is hurled into the sea, Khair al Din can find the glowing box swiftly. When he recovers it, he places the box in a sack to douse the glow and then returns to the caverns under the One Source Merchants' Guild via the submerged caves. Canny PCs can follow the cleric and his sahuagin allies right back to the Jackal's lair. Less canny PCs can use the handoff as an ambush, and if they can capture Khair al Din and shift his attitude from hostile to helpful (or use *Speak with Dead* or other magical methods), they can extract the location of the Jackal's lair that way. At the very least, asking around about where a man matching Khair al Din's description lives and works reveals the One Source Warehouse with a successful DC 25 Gather Information check.



tamir

The One Source Warehouse

The One Source Warehouse is owned and operated by Father Jackal, although he doesn't advertise the fact that he is the true owner. On paper and in public, the owner is a half-elf woman named Maysam Fajr. The merchants who go out among the people to conduct trade are members of the cult, while the guild officials rank slightly higher within the cult, but are by no means

leaders. Father Jackal involves himself in the operations of the guild to a very limited extent. He typically checks into the office every 2 or 3 days to ensure that the balance sheets are in the positive and that there aren't any major dealings within the city that would bring undue attention to their organization. Aside from that, he leaves the operations to Maysam.

The warehouse lies within the docks district—a single-story building constructed from wood. It is in reasonably good repair, with several large doors in the main portion of the warehouse that open to the outside. The external doors are locked at night (Open Lock DC 30), but unlocked during daylight hours. Lanterns that hang from iron pegs driven into the support timbers light the warehouse interior (aboveground and below).

Several of the doors in the Jackal's Lair are locked with a variant of *arcane lock* that allows for the passage of creatures other than the caster (Tamir) by speaking a password. These passwords can be learned from the denizens of the den who know them, or by making a DC 30 Search check of the door, as the password must be carved into the doors in hidden areas and in tiny letters—the phrases are all written in Halfling.

B1. Warehouse (EL 7)

This massive room is over a hundred feet or more in length and width, but the towering stacks of crates and containers make it difficult to discern exact dimensions. The building's floor is of hard-packed sand over stone. Some areas are completely open, while others are veritable mazes of crates stacked all the way up to the ceiling twenty feet above. The crates themselves are of wood, and no single crate is larger than five feet square, making it possible to clamber up and around on them with a little work.

The trade goods (silks, clothing, pottery, furniture, and grains) housed here are mundane, and comprise the vast bulk of business that goes through the One Source Merchants' Guild. Horse- and camel-drawn wagons load and unload crates here during all hours of the day, aided by a workforce of 20 slaves (all 1st-level human commoners). The slaves constantly climb up the massive shelving to retrieve items, which are then brought to the carts below and sent out with the merchants. At night, they sleep in their only belongings—ratty bedrolls they're allowed to unroll anywhere there's floor space.

Creatures: The slaves are overseen, fed, and periodically punished by a group of six One Source thugs during the day. At night, a different shift of six guards patrols the main room, ready to raise the alarm if anything untoward attracts their attention. The guards have been alerted that characters bearing the PCs' descriptions are

not welcome, and if the PCs disregard the warnings to get out, the thugs attack. If the PCs are disguised, they can win an escort to speak with Maysam Fajr in area B2 with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check (or a successful Bluff check).

ONE SOURCE THUGS (6)

CR 2

hp 13 each (see page 30)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: The slaves are thankful if released, but as this is Katapesh they have little hope of freedom since their ownership reverts to the city unless the PCs pay a government fine of 50 gp per slave. If this fine is paid, the fate of the slaves is up to the PCs; if they grant the slaves their freedom, award the PCs experience as if they had defeated a CR 5 creature.

B2. Foyer

A large desk stands in the center of the room. A pair of leather chairs sits to the east, while to the west is a long table. The room is lit with lamps, but remains dim.

This room is kept fairly dark, though it is intended to appear as comfortable as possible. Customers whose business requires Maysam's attention meet with the half-elf here to work out new deals, payment schedules, or grievances. If the PCs manage to secure a meeting with Maysam, they're sent here to wait—Maysam arrives 1d4 minutes later, her pet cockatrices in tow, and asks them their business. If she suspects the PCs are the adventurers that Father Jackal warned the guild about, she tries not to let her recognition show, concludes the business, and then escorts the PCs out into area B1, where she commands the guards there to attack. She joins in the attack as well, but flees to area B6 if she takes more than 10 points of damage.

B3. Meditation Room (EL 2–5)

Several large, padded mats sit on the floor of this otherwise empty room.

The One Source Merchants' Guild offers this room to the guards who serve in area B1 as a place to stay, although most of the guards instead prefer to spend their off hours at taverns or brothels, sleeping where they can find a bed and staggering back here only if there's no other option. There's a 25% chance that 1d4 off-duty guards are resting here when the PCs arrive.

ONE SOURCE THUGS (1D4)

CR 2

hp 13 each (see page 30)



The One Source Warehouse

One square = 5 feet

B4. Coffer Room

The door to this room is locked with an *arcane lock* spell (CL 7th); it can be opened with the password “jackals protect us.”

This room is filled with riches and finery, all awaiting the proper customer. Casks of rare alcohols, bejeweled statuettes of long-forgotten fertility goddesses, stacks of elegant tapestries, and cases of unusual weapons are among the items stored here. The most immediately notable item stands against the middle of the south wall—an ancient sarcophagus bearing the raised silhouette of a noble of ancient Osirion.

Treasure: This is where the guild keeps its finer trade stock. In all, there is approximately 10,000 gp in jewelry, masterwork weapons, fine alcohol, and other trade goods kept here—most of which is confiscated by the city if the PCs don’t find a way to subtly make off with the loot. The bulky size of the goods stored here makes the logistics of claiming it without arousing the suspicion of the Pactmasters a somewhat difficult task, especially if the PCs brag about where they managed to find 50 pounds of imported Qadiran silk, for example.

The sarcophagus can be identified as once belonging to Nubkaura Inyotef VIII with a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check—a minor lord of ancient Osirion nonetheless notable for his habit of drinking the blood of his favored concubines, using the *awaken* spell to grant animal sacrifices sentience just long enough for them to comprehend the terror of being offered up to Rovagug, and murdering his father on the day he ascended to adulthood in order to take over the family’s wealth and lands.

Although a grim piece of history, there is nothing particularly interesting or valuable about the mummy within. He is simply a wrapped and preserved carcass, now ravaged by regular degradations over a period of years. He is kept here solely because he continues to be despised by the undead mummy Nubkaura Inyotef VII, his murdered father, who has served Father Jackal as an advisor for many years. Part of this servitude’s payment required Father Jackal to raid the mummy’s tomb so that the undead father could gloat in having forever deprived his son of a peaceful afterlife. Characters who open the sarcophagus are greeted by a tangle of bones and violated remains mixed with camel dung and dead flies—all that remains of the once brutal child-lord.

B5. Bookkeeping

Each side of the room contains three heavy desks made from polished wood, each heaped high with documents, books, and ledgers.

This room is where Maysam handles all of the legitimate bookkeeping for the One Source guild. Although the PCs might hope to find something incriminating, the ledgers and accounts are all by the book and legitimate—there is nothing of interest here.

Treasure: A shelf above the eastern desk contains a narrow wooden coffer with the message “In Case of Accidental Petrification” burnt into the lid. Inside are two pottery jars, each containing a dose of *stone salve*. Maysam keeps these handy in the event of an unintended accident involving her dangerous pets.

B6. Maysam Fajr’s Office (EL 8)

This well-appointed office features a sturdy oak desk and several intricate tapestries hanging from the walls. To the southeast sits a large fur rug on which several blankets and pillows have been stacked. Two iron rungs are driven into the wall to the southwest—the ground underneath spattered with white, chalky bird droppings.

Hidden under the bedroll is a trapdoor; PCs who don’t specifically look under the bedroll can find the trapdoor by examining the area and making a DC 12 Search check. The trapdoor is locked via an *arcane lock* spell (CL 7th); the password to open the door is “the jackal povidés.” All of the members of the guild know this password, and if made helpful are more than willing to give out the information to an interrogator. The stairs lead down to a passageway that runs south for about 100 feet before reaching the main complex of Father Jackal’s lair.

Creature: This room serves as both office and bedchamber for Maysam Fajr, an attractive half-elven woman who has served Father Jackal as the face of the One Source Merchants’ Guild (and periodically as a lover) ever since the jackalwere seized control of the guild many years ago. Maysam, ever the amoral mercenary, offered to keep the public face of the Guild in return for her life (after she witnessed the jackalwere murder and eat her previous employer), and Father Jackal accepted. Maysam Fajr entertains guests by invitation only, and such invitations are typically made weeks in advance. She does not tolerate intrusions and orders her personal guards to attack the party the moment they enter the room uninvited.

Maysam Fajr keeps two dangerous pets—a pair of cockatrices she purchased years ago. She keeps both

creatures loyal with weekly *charm monster* spells; they are fiercely protective of her as a result. When at rest, they roost on the iron rungs to the southwest. Maysam sometimes uses the cockatrices as a way to dispose of enemies; after they petrify her foe, she enjoys selling the resulting statue to various shady collectors at a small profit.

MAYSAM FAJR

CR 7

Female half-elf bard 7

CE Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen –1, Spot –1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

(+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 34 (7d6+7)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged shortbow +7 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks bardic music (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, *suggestion*)

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (1/day)—*charm monster* (DC 16), *gaseous form*

2nd (3/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 15), *tongues*

1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14), *undetected alignment*

0 (3/day)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Maysam casts *undetected alignment* on herself every morning.

During Combat Maysam orders her cockatrices to attack, bolstering them with inspire courage and then joining them by casting spells or using her rapier. She’s fond of using *suggestion* to force foes to adopt dramatic poses and remain motionless so that when they’re petrified, the resulting statues are worth more.

Morale If brought below 10 hit points, Maysam casts *gaseous form* and attempts to escape down through the trapdoor to area

B10, where she alerts Khair al Din to the situation.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +13, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Perform (sing) +13, Profession (merchant) +9

Languages Common, Elven, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ bardic knowledge +11

Combat Gear wand of *cure moderate wounds* (45 charges); **Other Gear** chain shirt, +1 rapier, shortbow with 20 arrows, cloak of Charisma +2



The Jackal's Lair

One square = 10 feet

COCKATRICES (2)

hp 27 each (MM 37)

CR 3

B7. Cultist Guards (EL 2–7)

This room contains six rickety looking cots, a table with a deck of playing cards spread out over it, and a weapon rack that holds several weapons.

Creatures: This room serves as the barracks for the six guards who patrol areas **B7–B14**. The guards normally remain in their armor when not asleep, but extra weapons are stored here in case some are lost in battle. The weapons include seven short swords, four hand crossbows, and a case of 300 hand crossbow bolts.

If the complex is on alert, these guards have all relocated to area **B13**, otherwise 1d6 of the guards are here when the PCs arrive. The remaining guards are on patrol elsewhere (determine their position randomly among areas **B8–B14**, with guards at area **B8** and **B10** standing in front of the entrance to the room rather than within).

ONE SOURCE THUGS (6)

hp 13 each (see page 30)

CR 2

B8. Semi-Eternal Rest (EL 5)

This room is decorated with lavish silk wall hangings, a circular multi-colored carpet, and numerous incense burners. A gold-plated sarcophagus decorated with numerous hieroglyphs sits in the center of the room.

Creature: Father Jackal came into the ownership of this gold-plated sarcophagus many years ago, and to his delight and surprise, when he broke the wards that kept the sarcophagus sealed, he found the mummy within to be animate. This mummy is a minor lord of ancient Osirion known as Nubkaura Inyotef VII, the Faithful Father—a somewhat mocking title applied post-mortem after he was murdered by his own son. Nubkaura Inyotef VII has pledged his services as an advisor and guardian to Father Jackal not so much out of reverence for their shared patron, but more because Father Jackal agreed to rob his son's tomb and bring the traitor's body back for the father to despoil. The mummy has stored the mummified remains of his son in the coffers above, and takes great pleasure in the belief that possessing the corpse prevents him from peacefully entering the afterlife. It is not unusual for him to have the corpse brought to him so

he can defile it before sending it back into storage. Nubkaura Inyotef VII otherwise spends much of his time “sleeping” in his sarcophagus, patiently waiting for his physical body to pass into the afterlife he still hopes someday to achieve. In the meantime, he periodically advises Father Jackal on locations where his agents might dig to find ancient artifacts to sell and upon other matters. In life, Nubkaura Inyotef VII traded often with the ageless Captain of the Sunset Ship, and it was in large part due to the mummy’s support and advice that Father Jackal managed to secure such a flexible arrangement with the denizens of Leng regarding the delivery of the *Scroll of Kakishon* and the Rough Seed.

Nubkaura is content to rest within his sarcophagus, but if the PCs tamper with it, he rises immediately to wreak vengeance on them. If the complex is on alert, Father Jackal awakens the mummy himself and asks him to remain at his side in area **B21**, in which case this room is empty when the PCs arrive.

NUBKaura INYOTEF VII

CR 5

hp 55 (MM 190)

B9. Overflow Storage (EL 7)

This room contains several statues that depict an odd arrangement of characters. The largest stands in one corner of the room and is a man with the face of a spider. His arms are outstretched, palms up, and each hand cradles a spider nearly the size of the hand itself. Prostrate before it are three more statues, these depicting devil-like, winged creatures with horns and tails. In addition to these strange statues, a few crates and chests sit against the edges of the room.

This room is used to store overflow from the warehouse above, and to store trade goods and items that are too “hot” to reintroduce into the marketplace. Father Jackal often takes in goods from dubious sources (caravan raiders and pirates being a favorite), and such goods are usually left here for months to cool down before being moved upstairs. Currently, there is nothing of any real interest kept here save for the room’s guardians.

Creatures: The three demonic statues are in fact gargoyles smuggled into the room by Father Jackal years ago and kept as guardians. Their loyalty is maintained by *charm monster* spells and regular offerings of living, frightened food harvested from the homeless on the streets of Katapesh above. The gargoyles maintain their prostrate position using their freeze ability, hoping to strike at intruders after they’ve turned their attention away from the statues. They fight to the death.

GARGOYLES (3)

CR 4

hp 37 each (MM 113)

B10. High Priest’s Chambers

The door to this room is kept locked and requires a DC 30 Open Lock check to open.

This room appears to be the bedroom and main chamber for an important individual. A large bed with a chest at its foot sits against one wall, while against the opposite wall stands a small altar. Shelves carved into the walls contain books, tiny statuettes of spiders and scorpions, and bottles of wine.

The bookshelf holds numerous reprehensible and relatively worthless texts devoted to the worship of Rovagug, and the “wine” actually consists of several bottles of nearly poisonous grog that the room’s occupant has a taste for.

Creature: This room serves as the quarters for one of Father Jackal’s more dangerous minions—a defrocked cleric of Abadar who abandoned the worship of that god for the power promised by the worship of Rovagug many years ago. After receiving visions of a jackal that vomited up a scorpion that spoke to him, Khair al Din sought out Father Jackal and offered his services. Khair al Din never learned that those “visions” were paid for by Father Jackal, who had Maysam use several *scrolls of nightmare* to vex and torment the man until he followed up on the visions to join the One Source Merchants’ Guild. If Khair al Din were to learn this truth today, he would likely just cackle and admit that the Rough Beast works in mysterious ways.

If caught off their guard here, the PCs are likely to find Khair al Din reading one of his books on his bed or in the act of mutilating a dog on the altar in preparation for his dinner. In either case, the half-insane cleric shrieks in anger at the disturbance and attacks at once.

KHAIR AL DIN

CR 8

Male human fighter 2/cleric 6

CE Medium humanoid

Init +4; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20

(+10 armor)

hp 58 (8 HD; 2d10+6d8+16)

Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +8

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 greataxe +12/+7 (1d12+9/x3)

Special Attacks rebuke undead 4/day (+1s mite 1/day (+4 attack, +6 damage)

Spells Prepared (CL 6th)

3rd—contagion^P (DC 16), cure serious wounds, dispel magic, water breathing

2nd—bull’s strength, death knell (DC 15), hold person (DC 15), lesser restoration, spiritual weapon^P

the jackal's price

1st—*command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *inflict light wounds*^D (DC 14), *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith*

0—*cure minor wounds*, *guidance*, *light* (3)

D domain spell; **Domains** Destruction, War

TACTICS

During Combat Khair al Din's first act in combat is to cast *bull's strength* (his statistics already reflect this), after which he casts *divine favor* and then attacks in melee. He relies on his offensive spells to fight against foes at range.

Morale If brought below 20 hit points, Khair al Din casts *sanctuary* and attempts to escape to area **B11**, whereupon he leaps into the water and casts *water breathing*. While the PCs deal with the sahuagin in that room, Khair al Din lets his armor sink him to the bottom of the water, whereupon he trudges upriver to area **B15** and thence to area **B21** to warn Father Jackal.

Base Statistics **Melee** +1 *greataxe* +10/+5 (1d12+6/×3); **Str** 14; **Grp** +8

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Feats Craft Wand, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*greataxe*), Weapon Specialization (*greataxe*)

Skills Concentration +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +1, Knowledge (religion) +5

Languages Common, Osiriani

SQ spontaneous casting (*inflict spells*)

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (37 charges);

Other Gear +2 *full plate*, +1 *greataxe*, obsidian and gold unholy symbol worth 140 gp

Development: If Khair al Din is alerted to trouble (likely by Maysam fleeing from the PCs to this room), he relocates with the person who warned him to area **B13**, along with the area's six guards, to set up a defense.

B11. The Sea Cave (EL 8)

A relatively small section of worked stone floor overlooks an immense sea cave here. The roof arches to nearly twenty feet above the surging waters below.

This cave and the other to the northwest were, at one point, the only chambers in this area—Father Jackal used them as the basis for much of the surrounding complex, but decided to retain the underwater passage to the southeast that leads to Katapesh harbor at a point 25 feet below the surface at low tide. The exit into the harbor is hidden by thick growths of seaweed, and can be found from the ocean floor with a DC 25 Search check.

Creatures: This room is now the den of a small group of sahuagin that Father Jackal has hired to aid in many matters—primarily the smuggling of pirated goods from ships at sea to here for storage so he can avoid paying import

tariffs to the Pactmasters. This fact alone is enough to convince the Pactmasters to look upon the PCs favorably, assuming the PCs break up the One Source Merchants' Guild. The sahuagin primarily serve Father Jackal as underwater spies that patrol the harbor and keep an eye on things from below—and perhaps drill holes in the hulls of enemy ships now and then at Father Jackal's request.

The sahuagin themselves are deserters from a larger city of their kin, many miles out in the Obari Ocean. They number five in all, and are led by an experienced rogue named Rhun-gah. The sahuagin absolutely hate Emabier, the strange and hideous guardian of area **B14**. The sahuagin and the eye of the deep are traditional enemies in their native ocean environments, and this has translated to tensions between the two here. Neither side actively antagonizes the other, but they have

khair
al din





exchanged heated words in the past, with the sahuagin making it known that they would hunt Emabier if they were not in these surroundings and eat his central eye raw. Likewise, Emabier has goaded them on, daring them to take action against him, amused by the fact that their greed for Father Jackal's coin prevents them from acting according to their nature.

The sahuagin are aquatic, so they find this room comforting. They normally use the rock mounds to sit upon, particularly when receiving orders from Father Jackal, but otherwise they remain submerged in the flowing water for as much of the time as possible while they hunt the fish that regularly find their way down here.

RHUN-GHA

CR 7

Male sahuagin rogue 6

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13,

Spot +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19

(+4 armor, +4 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 54 (8 HD; 2d8+6d6+24)

Fort +5, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

Weaknesses freshwater sensitivity, light blindness, water dependent

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee +1 *short sword* +12/+7 (1d6+5/19–20) and

talon +8 (1d4+2) and

bite +8 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks blood frenzy, rake 1d4+2, sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat Rhun-gha and his sahuagin are paid to be spies, smugglers, and saboteurs—they do not attack obvious intruders unless they enter the water. In this event, they move swiftly to surround foes. Rhun-gha activates his blood frenzy as soon as possible, and delays his actions in a round if necessary so an ally can flank a foe with him and grant him sneak attacks on all his attacks.

Morale If two of the sahuagin are slain, or if Rhun-gha is reduced to less than 15 hit points, he surrenders on the condition that the party allows them to aid in the battle against the eye of the deep.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +10

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Handle Animal +3 (+7 with sharks), Hide +15 (+19 underwater), Listen +13 (+17 underwater), Move Silently +15, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13 (+17 underwater), Swim +21, Tumble +15

Languages Aquan, Common, Sahuagin; speak with sharks
SQ trapfinding

Gear +2 leather armor, +1 short sword

SAHUAGIN (4)

CR 2

hp 11 each (MM 217)

B12. The Gathering Circle

A single large wooden table, surrounded by six chairs, sits in this room.

This room serves as a meeting place where matters of business and faith are discussed, often in preparation for entering room B13 for the weekly sermon devoted to Rovagug.

Development: If any of the thugs survived the assault on the villa, they are stationed here as additional guards—if Tamir survived, he instead can be encountered at Khair al Din's side in either area B10 or B13.

B13. Outer Sanctum (EL 3)

The ceiling of this room arches up to a height of twenty feet, yet the thick, rotten smell in the air makes the room seem close and cramped. Three wide benches sit in the room facing a ten-foot-wide dais at the far end. The wall behind the dais depicts an immense carving of a hideous arachnid monster creeping out of a hole in the world the size of a kingdom. The smell seems to be coming from the mounds of decaying bodies heaped to the left and right of the dais, bodies in various stages of decay and caked with wax from the drippings of dozens of fat, sloppy candles wedged in among tangled limbs, empty eyesockets, and battered ribcages.

This room is where Khair al Din holds his weekly sermons on the nature of the Rough Beast and the coming end of the world. Father Jackal isn't much of a religious creature, but he does find Khair's stories to be entertaining and requires his other minions and guards to attend these meetings, understanding that religion and fear of god is a great way to maintain control. As long as he controls Khair al Din, he controls the guild.

The carving on the wall can be identified as a representation of Rovagug emerging from the Pit of Gormuz with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. The bodies are the remains of sacrifices—mostly the homeless, but here and there a merchant that got on the wrong side of the guild.

The Eye and the Seed

As detailed on page 81, the Rough Seeds of Rovagug have strange and unnatural effects on the more aberrant and verminoid of the world's creatures—they require contact with specific entities before they can awaken and hatch. In the case of this particular Rough Seed, that catalyst was Emabier. The eye of the deep still doesn't quite understand that, in a strange way, it is the mother of the creature that has since hatched from the seed, nor does it suspect that the link between it and the hatchling remains, and that if the spawn is allowed to grow to maturity, the eye of the deep's soul will serve as the spawn's chrysalis.

If the PCs slay the hatchling, Emabier is released from the strange pull and, if it still lives, it realizes it's out of its element and flees back to the deep ocean. If instead the PCs slay the eye of the deep before they confront the hatchling, it immediately gains 2 negative levels and is forever doomed to remain a hatchling.

Creature: Three of the "bodies" caked with wax are in fact ghouls that Khair al Din has commanded with his rebuke undead ability. He has ordered the ghouls to remain motionless in the pile of bodies, but to attack anyone they do not recognize as being part of the faith. The ghouls do just that when the PCs enter the room.

GHOULS (3)

CR 1

hp 13 each (MM 119)

Development: If the complex is on alert, the PCs face a far more deadly fight in this room—in addition to the ghouls, they'll be confronted by Khair al Din, six One Source thugs, and possibly Tamir and Maysam as well. If all of these foes are present at once, the PCs face an EL 11 encounter—hopefully the PCs don't let that many foes escape and regroup here!

B14. The Eye Watches (EL 8)

Much of this room is submerged in water. The water's edge laps restlessly against two shores connected by a stout-looking wooden bridge. The floor of each shore is uneven, as is the ceiling, giving the room the appearance of lying at an angle.

The bridge is solid, but the planks are slippery—crossing the bridge requires a DC 12 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates the character has fallen into the water. The water itself is 20 feet deep, and serves as the lair of one of Father Jackal's most unusual guardians.

Creature: One of Father Jackal's most recent triumphs was the enticing of a strange deep-sea predator to serve him

in this room as a guardian. The creature in question is an eye of the deep—a 5-foot-wide, roughly spherical aberration with a huge central eye, two additional eyes on stalks, a large serrated mouth, and two large crab-like pincers.

The creature's name is Emabier. Normally denizens of the deepest ocean reaches, unknowable urges sometimes seize the eyes of the deep and drive them upward to shallow shorelines. In Emabier's case, it was the arrival of the Rough Seed in Katapesh—the eye of the deep found its way into area **B11** of the Jackal's Lair, lured by the proximity of the Rough Seed's silent call.

There, Emabier encountered the sahuagin—some of its kind's traditional enemies. The eye of the deep slew several of the sahuagin and left others stunned, but so powerful was the lure of the Rough Seed that it left the stunned enemies behind and continued to this cave. Upon finding the route onward barred, the eye of the deep flew into a rage. When the sahuagin alerted Father Jackal to the intrusion, the jackalwere was intrigued—he managed to make peaceful contact with Emabier (much to the sahuagin's dismay) and in return for allowing the eye of the deep to touch and feel the Rough Seed (Father Jackal brought it into the cave), he secured Emabier's loyalty as a guardian.

Emabier hates the sahuagin in area **B11**. In their natural ocean habitat, he would prey upon such weaker creatures. The sahuagin have made threats against him in the past, and he quietly waits for the opportunity to unleash his might against those incompetent fools. If the party accepted the offer of help from the sahuagin earlier, he concentrates his attacks against the fish-men at first because he so desires to see them dead.

EMABIER

CR 8

Elite variant eye of the deep (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 190)

CE Medium aberration (aquatic)

Init +1; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13,

Spot +17

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15

(+1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Spd 5 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (2d4+1) and bite +7 (1d6+1)

Ranged 2 eye rays +8 touch

Special Attacks stun cone, illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Emabier hides in the deepest part of the pool and uses *minor image* to create an illusion of a glowing, golden sword in the water 10 feet from the center of the bridge in an attempt to lure PCs into the pool.

During Combat If the PCs enter the water, Emabier uses its eye rays on the closest target, then moves in to engage in melee, using eye rays on foes that stay out of reach on land. Otherwise, Emabier doesn't attack until the first PC approaches within 15 feet of area **B15**. If the PCs are accompanied by sahuagin, Emabier attacks them in preference to the PCs.

Morale Emabier fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack

Skills Hide +14, Listen +13, Search +5, Spot +17, Swim +10

Languages Aquan, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) An eye of the deep's stalked eyes give it a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks, and prevent it from being flanked.

Constrict (Ex) An eye of the deep deals 2d4+1 points of damage when it constricts.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, an eye of the deep must hit a creature of its size or smaller with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Eye Rays (Su) Each of Emabier's two stalked eyes can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. These eye rays are always its primary attacks; its claws and bites are secondary attacks. It can aim both of its eye rays in any direction. Each eye ray resembles a spell cast by a 12th-level caster and follows the rules for a ray. Each eye ray has a range of 150 feet and a save DC of 19. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Hold Monster: Right eye—the target hit must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.

Weakness: Left eye—the target hit must succeed on a Fortitude save or be affected as if by a *ray of enfeeblement*, taking a penalty to its Strength score equal to 1d6+5.



emabier

Illusion (Su) An eye of the deep can create a *minor image* at will (CL 12th) by combining the effects of its stalked eyes; it cannot use its eye rays while concentrating on this illusion.

Stun Cone (Su) Once per round as a standard action, an eye of the deep's central eye can produce a 30-foot cone of energy. Those in the area of effect must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or be stunned for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

B15. Locked Door

This door is the only entrance into the innermost reaches of Father Jackal's den. The door itself is made of stone and decorated with a carving of a jackal-headed man holding a hatchet in one hand and a hand-sized spider in the other. The door is *arcane locked* (CL 7th); the password to open it is "let jackals eat the bones of your enemies."

B16. Prison Cells

Both doors to this room are locked—the locks can be picked with a DC 30 Open Lock check. Father Jackal carries the key to both doors.

This room is empty, save for three metal grates set in the floor, each locked with a thick iron chain and manacle. The odor emanating from the pits is horrid.

These prison cells are used to hold sacrifices or other prisoners Father Jackal doesn't immediately know what to do with. It is here that Rayhan (or whomever the jackal were abducts) is held prisoner; the lock to his cell can be opened with the key Father Jackal carries or picked with a DC 30 Open Lock check. The pit below the grating is only 4 feet deep, and caked with filth and 2 inches of seawater. Rayhan is in sorry shape, hands bound to his feet and gagged—when the PCs release him, he's suffering from mild hypothermia (reducing his Strength to 3) and has only 1d4 hit points.

Rayhan wants only to be led from this nightmare world below Katapesh, but understands if the PCs don't want to leave until they've dealt with Father Jackal. If the PCs can cure his Strength damage and his hit points, Rayhan may even be able to lend them a hand. He still has any spells he prepared the night he was abducted, although without his gear and spell components, he's limited in the help he can provide. Rayhan's gear is currently located in area B19.

B17. Guard Chamber

The floor of this room is covered with a black, gold-trimmed carpet. Statues of jackal-faced men stand in the four corners of the room.

Although paranoid PCs may suspect the statues are golems, they are in fact much less dangerous guardians—

they function similarly to *stones of alarm*. Any creature that passes into the room without holding one hand high and making a talon-shaped claw with two fingers and a thumb causes the four statues to open their stony jaws and emit loud, piercing howls—enough to alert the denizens of the nearby rooms that trouble is near. Invisibility can defeat the statues with ease—they have Spot +15 for the purposes of noticing characters that are hidden.

B18. The Sunset Captain (EL 10)

This room seems to be a study or lounge of some sort. The floor is covered with thick, red carpeting, and the walls hang with deep purple curtains. Strangely smokeless braziers flicker in the corners of the room, radiating a pleasant warmth. Two long benches sit against two walls, while in the opposite corner stands a small round table and a large chair.

This room is where Father Jackal meets with important visitors and entertains guests (a rare, but not unheard of event). The room's decor stands in sharp contrast to the furnishings of his personal chambers nearby in area B19.

Creature: For the past several weeks, this room has had a single occupant—the eerily patient Captain of the Sunset Ship to whom Father Jackal owes the newly hatched emkrah and the *Scroll of Kakishon*. It is a credit to Father Jackal's skills at both bargaining and groveling that, when the Sunset Ship sailed into port at the start of this adventure, its Captain didn't take him away to parts unknown and a sickening fate to punish him for having only part of the agreed upon trade. The Captain sent his ship on to their next mysterious port of call, informing Father Jackal that they would return in a few weeks to collect what was due—be it the *Scroll of Kakishon* or Father Jackal himself.

To serve as a constant reminder to the ticking clock, the Captain of the Sunset Ship has moved into this chamber—insanely patient, the eerie outsider has spent the past many days quietly sitting in the leather chair. For much of the time, he appears to be asleep, eyes closed and breathing regular. In fact, while he is exploring the further corners of dream, he remains quite aware of his surroundings here. The Captain looks humanoid, but very little of his flesh is visible under his luxurious yellow robes, and the way those robes hang from his body hint at a form far less humanoid than might appear. In truth, the Captain is a denizen of Leng, and under his robes he is a malformed monstrosity with a horned head, a hideous tentacled and spidery mouth, thick clawed fingers, and crooked legs that end in hooves.

When the PCs enter the room, the Captain's eyes open to regard them with a strange and unsettling stare. When he speaks, his voice is strangely deep. "And so you are the ones to have vexed my puppet so. Have you come to deliver the

Scroll of Kakishon to him? What do you imagine the jackal would do if he were to learn that what I truly wanted was his humiliation and defeat—that I gave to him two impossible tasks so that when I returned he would be ruined with the shame? You fleshy fools are so much more useful to me when your own minds break your spirits before I tend to more... visceral pursuits.”

What the enigmatic Captain says is true—while he is delighted that Father Jackal managed to deliver on the *Rough Seed* and almost delivered on the *Scroll of Kakishon*, his true goal is the jackalwere himself—he does not divulge the exact nature of the entity that sent him to *Kakishon* to gather such a strange trophy, hinting that it is better for fragile minds not to look too deeply into the *Dark Tapestry*, lest they learn too much of what lies beyond.

In any event, the Captain has a proposition for the PCs. He produces a small vial of red liquid and holds it out for the PCs to take, informing them that it is a vial of dreams. He asks them to feed the contents of the vial to the hatchling of the *Rough Seed* (the Captain informs the PCs that the creature lairs in a cavern to the east, providing directions through area **B17** to area **B20**), going on to explain that the red liquid is a stolen dream, and that feeding it to the hatchling will compel it to turn on Father Jackal and consume him. The Captain warns the PCs that until they feed the liquid to the hatchling, it will likely prove dangerous to them, but once the liquid is delivered, their troubles with Father Jackal will be near an end. A PC who decides to drink the liquid himself must make a DC 25 Will save or be driven permanently insane (as per the spell). The Captain makes no attempt to prevent PCs from doing this if they do so in his presence. In return for this small task, the Captain tells the PCs that they may keep the *Scroll of Kakishon* for themselves.

If, instead, the PCs decide the strange creature is not to be trusted and attack, the Captain defends himself as detailed in his tactics—if at any point the PCs realize they may have bitten off too much, the Captain is willing to cease hostilities in return for the PCs delivering the vial to the hatchling as promised.

CAPTAIN OF THE SUNSET SHIP

CR 10

Male denizen of Leng rogue 2 (*Pathfinder* #6)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +12; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18

(+8 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 136 (12 HD; 10d8+2d6+84); planar fast healing 10

Fort +14, Ref +18, Will +10

Defensive Abilities evasion, internal derangement; DR 5/cold iron; Immune cold, electricity, poison; SR 18

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee dagger of venom +20/+15/+10 (1d4+2/17–20) and claw +18 (1d4+1) and bite +18 (1d6+1 plus disrupt flesh)

Special Attacks sneak attack +6d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

3/day—detect thoughts (DC 19), hypnotic pattern (DC 19), levitate, minor image (DC 19)

1/day—locate object, plane shift (DC 22)

TACTICS

During Combat The Captain fights one foe at a time, using his great intellect to determine which PC poses the greatest threat and making full attacks against that single foe before moving on to the next threat.

Morale The Captain fights to the “death,” knowing that he’ll merely awaken again in Leng if defeated. He may (or may not) seek vengeance against the PCs at some point in the future.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 27, Con 24, Int 26, Wis 16, Cha 24

Base Atk +11; Grp +12

Feats Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +22, Concentration +20, Craft (gemcutting) +23, Diplomacy +19, Disable Device +23, Disguise +22 (+26 as human), Forgery +23, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (geography) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Listen +18, Profession (sailor) +18, Search +23, Sleight of Hand +25, Spellcraft +21, Spot +18

Languages gift of tongues

SQ no breath, trapfinding

Gear dagger of venom, amulet of mighty fists +1, 3,000 gp in rubies

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disrupt Flesh (Su) On a successful bite, a denizen of Leng’s otherworldly teeth and tongue infuse the victim with the essence of Leng. This deals 1d6 Dexterity drain as the victim’s body twists and deforms. Constructs, elementals, outsiders, and undead are immune to this effect.

Gift of Tongues (Su) A denizen of Leng can speak and understand any language it hears spoken by another for at least 1 minute, and retains knowledge of this language forever—most denizens of Leng know all languages as a result.

Internal Derangement (Ex) When a critical hit or sneak attack is scored on a denizen of Leng, it has a 50% chance to ignore the additional damage from the attack. A denizen of Leng is immune to effects dealt from bleeding, such as that caused by a wounding weapon.

No Breath (Ex) A denizen of Leng does not breathe, and is immune to inhaled toxins and diseases.

Planar Fast Healing (Ex) On the Material Plane, a denizen of Leng has fast healing 10. On the plane of Leng, it has no fast healing. Everywhere else it has fast healing 5. A denizen of Leng that is slain anywhere but on Leng dissolves into

nothingness in 1d3 rounds and reforms on Leng with full hit points, but is barred from returning to the plane of its demise for 1 year. Equipment carried remains behind on the plane of its death.

B19. Father Jackal's Den

This filthy room reeks of decayed meat and blood. Gnawed-upon bones lie in a semi-orderly heap in one corner of the room, while in another is a large nest of ratty furs, blankets, and tattered pillows. A lopsided wicker basket with a lid sits nearby.

Father Jackal prefers to sleep in his jackal form, and this room is his den. There is little to interest the PCs here apart from the strange nature of the room's almost kennel-like accoutrements.

Treasure: The large basket by the nest contains all of Rayhan's gear—Father Jackal hasn't bothered to catalog and identify it yet.

B20. The Hatchling's Den (EL 9)

This large cave is filthy with slime and ooze—thick, gelatinous sheets of the stuff cling to the floors and ceiling of the place. The floor slopes down sharply as the cave dips away into darkness to the south.

Creature: The denizen of this cave is the hatchling that emerged from the Rough Seed not long after the eye of the deep caressed it and woke it from its slumber. The creature has eaten the remnants of its shell (as well as dozens of hapless offerings fed to it by Father Jackal), and now lurks in the southern reach of the cave, near where the jagged slope leads up into area B21. It lumbers out of the shadows to attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room.

If the PCs have the vial of dreams from the Captain of the Sunset Ship, they may attempt to feed the vial to the hatchling by either throwing it (a ranged touch attack) or pouring the liquid over the creature (a melee touch attack that provokes an attack of opportunity). The vial is tough—if they miss on a throw, it won't break but they'll need to get by the hungry hatchling to get to it and try feeding the beast again).

As soon as the hatchling is fed the vial, it shudders and freezes in place for a moment, then turns toward area B21. With a hideous muffled roar, the monster clambers up the ragged slope to seek out Father Jackal and consume him. At this point, the PCs can partake in the battle if they wish, or if they want to ensure that the hatchling has

assistance in consuming its new target—in any event, the hatchling is no longer a menace to them.

EMKRAH

hp 126 (see page 80)

CR 9

B21. Inner Sanctum (EL 9+)

The ceiling of this enormous room rises thirty feet, and is supported by a dozen stone pillars. The chamber is empty, save for an immense stone dais to the west upon which stands a huge and horrifying statue carved of black stone. The statue resembles a spider and a scorpion, but is neither—it is something unaccountably more horrifying to look upon. Two dozen sparkling pearl eyes glare out of the monstrous statue's face.

father
jackal



This immense, cathedral-like chamber is where Father Jackal spends much of his time. Although not himself a cleric, he knows the value of keeping up appearances, and spends large portions of his time in this empty hall, supposedly contemplating the majesty of the huge black basalt statue of Rovagug that is the cathedral's centerpiece.

Creature: Father Jackal had hoped to avoid a confrontation with the PCs, and if they manage to reach him here, he knows they are dangerous foes. His initial reaction to the PCs' arrival is somewhat craven as a result—he offers a very insincere apology for going to such lengths to acquire the map, and then apologizes for abducting Rayhan. If the PCs allow him to speak, he points out the fact that they have effectively put an end to his guild, and that he'll be forced to abandon the city of Katapesh as a result. If they agree to just walk away with their rescued friend, he promises the PCs will never hear from him again.

This is, of course, all a ruse to put the PCs off guard, and to allow him a chance to approach close enough to them so that they are all in range of his sleep gaze. When they are, he activates the gaze and attacks. If Nubkaura Inyotef VII is here as well, the mummy stands motionless near the statue of Rovagug, moving forward to attack as soon as Father Jackal strikes.

As Father Jackal attacks, he gives a high-pitched call to the hatchling in area **B20**. The monstrous creature lumbers up out of the pit immediately into this room and joins the battle—unless the PCs have the vial of dreams from the Captain of the Sunset Ship, this battle may quickly go against them.

FATHER JACKAL

CR 9

Male jackalwere fighter 4/rogue 4 (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 403)

CE Medium magical beast (shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +10

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 27, flat-footed 25

(+6 armor, +4 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 natural, +2 shield)

hp 104 (11 HD; 3d8+4d10+4d6+55)

Fort +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. without armor)

Melee +1 *battleaxe* +14/+9 (1d8+6/x3) and bite +8 (1d6+1)

Ranged throwing axe +12/+7 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks sleep gaze, sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Father Jackal drinks a potion of *shield of faith* +4.

During Combat Father Jackal makes good use of improved feint to make sneak attacks with greater ease, and also pulls animals from his *tan bag of tricks* to increase the number of allies with which he can flank before closing to melee. He's aware of the fact that his sleep gaze might cause his animal allies to fall asleep—if one does, he pulls another from his bag to replace the sleeping animal with a frustrated snarl.

Morale Father Jackal fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Focus (*battleaxe*), Weapon Specialization (*battleaxe*)

Skills Bluff +14, Disguise +14, Jump +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +10, Spot +10, Swim +5, Survival +6 (+10 when tracking by scent), Tumble +14

Languages Ancient Osiriani, Aquan, Common, Kelish, Osiriani, Sahuagin

SQ alternate form, trapfinding

Combat Gear *potion of shield of faith* +4 (3), *tan bag of tricks*; **Other Gear** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *battleaxe*, throwing axes (6), *gauntlets of ogre power*, key to area **B16** and the prison cells within

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alternate Form (Su) Father Jackal prefers his hybrid form, but if he wishes, he may change into his human form or his jackal form as a standard action. He reverts to jackal form if slain.

Sleep Gaze (Su) Sleep for 3 minutes, 30 feet, Will DC 13 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Treasure: Despite worries some PCs might have about curses or divine retribution, the statue of Rovagug is harmless. Its two dozen eyes are all large pearls worth 100 gp apiece.

Development: If the hatchling is fed the vial of dreams and then manages to swallow Father Jackal whole, the creature begins feeding on the hapless jackalwere in a hideous display, tearing him apart and expelling any non-organic matter (including all of the jackalwere's gear) in a spattering heap on the ground. As it feeds, the Captain of the Sunset Ship steps into the room. Silently, the mysterious creature approaches the hatchling, which grows quiet and motionless as the denizen of Leng does so. When it reaches the hatchling, the Captain turns to face the PCs and speaks, holding out a red silk pouch for the PCs.

"You know not what you have done, yet still you have provided me a service. Take the contents of this pouch as your reward. You may find its contents of great value once you reach Kakishon. I have been upon its secret shores before, for I knew the way when Nex still walked them. Yet know this—what you seek in Kakishon is what you need, yet what you need is not what you seek."



With these last enigmatic words, the denizen of Leng reaches out to touch the hatchling, and in the blink of an eye both creatures are gone—the captain has returned to Leng.

The red silk pouch contains 10,000 gp in small rubies, a larger ruby the size of a goose egg, and what appears to be a twisted tuning fork carved from a single ruby. The large egg-shaped ruby is in fact a *stone of good luck*. The tuning fork radiates faint abjuration magic—it has no use now (aside from being worth 15,000 gp for its material alone), but if the PCs keep it, the tuning fork will aid them greatly in their coming trip to Kakishon.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Rayhan rescued from peril and the One Source Merchants' Guild and its notorious leader out of commission, the situation facing the PCs becomes much safer. They may be concerned about the strange meeting with the Captain of the Sunset Ship or curious about the strange gift he presented to them, but as far as Katapesh is concerned, they are still the keepers of a valuable artifact, and rumors now fly as to how much the *Scroll of Kakishon*

might be going for, and who might be rich enough to afford such a treasure. Yet rumors of how the PCs handled the One Source spread as well, and as a result, the merchants give the PCs a greater modicum of respect. They can wait for the obviously dangerous PCs to make their decision on who they wish to sell to, and as a result the PCs are no longer harassed by groups trying to convince them to sell.

After another week and a half of study, Rayhan finally discovers how to activate the scroll, although he certainly won't do so until the PCs are at hand to witness the wonder. Unknown to Rayhan and the PCs, the *Scroll of Kakishon* is not in the best of conditions—it is slowly unraveling from the inside out, and what was once a paradise world has become a war zone. And when the PCs open that portal into what they might suspect to be a world of wonder, what finds them is the greatest danger they have yet faced.

The next adventure, "The End of Eternity," begins with the PCs opening that portal and being drawn into the world of Kakishon in a violent maelstrom of light and magic. If you wish to end this adventure on a cliffhanger, you can do so by having Rayhan speak the words of activation while the PCs are gathered around the scroll, only to be blinded as the world fills with light and then upended into a dizzying fall that seems to last forever...



TALES AND TRUTHS OF GENIES

Sometimes it seems that the lands of Katapesh and Osirion are not entirely the realm of men, but first and foremost the abode of jinn, those creatures whose souls are more akin to the tempers of nature than the passions of mortal-kind. These lands themselves are hostile to human life and full of elemental forces—sand, wind, water, and sun define the desert kingdoms. It's not surprising, then, that genies find comfort in these lands. Yet most desert dwellers know little of genie-kind, embracing centuries of legends and ancient fears, imagining these wanderers as creatures of story and song. Perhaps rightfully so, for these radiant beings are kin to the elements, and fundamentally greater than those forced to suffer the whims of the multiverse.

For untold centuries the peoples of the desert have told tales of the jinn, these stories spreading to far-off lands and capturing the imaginations of listeners across Golarion. Numerous wizards, researchers, and storytellers have sought to collect tales of these incredible creatures, hoping to find power within such tales, seeking

wisdom of realms beyond the mortal plane, or merely entranced by the exotic tales of the desert. Regardless of such scholars' intentions, presented here are many of the most celebrated "facts" about the jinn. While many jinn might laugh at the tales passed as truth among mortals, all five major races of genies prove notoriously tightlipped about the efforts and ways of their people, and thus the observers of mortal-kind must make due with stories and tales they hope hold the seeds of truth.

THE FIVE FAMILIES OF JINN

The forms of all true genies correspond to the four elements: the air is ruled by the djinn, the earth by the shaitans, the waters and oceans by the marids, and flames by the efreet. Then there are the jann, who combine all four elements into a clear and balanced whole. While the jinn prove tightlipped about the ways and workings of their great societies, countless legends and the songs of the desert reveal a number of supposed truths—some more dubious than others.

tales and truths of genies

*In the name of the earth, sky, and ocean,
In the name of the fire that none can quench,
Listen, my beloved children, and grow wise in the ways of the jinn,
Whose souls are both more and less than our own.*

—Faidal al-Bashiri, the Barber of Al-Bashir



Djinn

The body of a djinni is half cloud and half flesh, with pale skin, light eyes, and hair ranging through the colors of clouds. Their clothes always seem to ripple in the wind, even inside buildings or during a calm. They prefer flying over walking at all times, and their feet rarely touch the earth—their sandals often drifting just above the sands, leaving no footprints. Many djinn refuse to wear shirts even on the coldest days or on high mountain peaks. They favor tattoos, occasionally animating the ink within their skins to make them dance and move. Most are known for their flighty nature, but overall djinn seem good at heart and outgoing, and of all the jinn they prove the friendliest to the people of Golarion.

Efreet

Creatures of fire and wrath, efreet delight in destruction and are said to be born of the smoke from burning tents and charred cities. Their bodies range through a variety of smoldering shades, from the brazen red of the setting sun to the blackness of a dampened fire's smoke. Tales say their skin burns like a lit torch, their hair blazes like flame, and their appetites are as endless as fire. Efreet greatly enjoy the taste of flesh, both of animal and human sacrifices, and of creatures left to burn on pyres or battlefields. Failing that, they happily devour anything that burns: wood, cloth, coal, incense, and exotic flammable metals infused with phlogiston and phosphor. They consume these materials by the pound, and drink nothing but a strange slurry of wood shavings and coal dust.

Jann

The jann are the genies of the mortal plane, creatures of the world but still set apart from its other natives. In them, all the elements that empower the other races of genies unite, the contradictions and fundamental oppositions of these natural powers serving to weaken the jann rather than invigorate them. The weakest of all genies, the jann appear most akin to humans yet prove vastly more powerful. For them, elemental magic is second nature, physical form is an intrinsically changeable thing, and the bonds of reality are loose. Although these genies may travel to the domains

of their kin on the Elemental Planes, they are not at home in such realms and must return to the mortal plane after a short time.

Marids

Marids are a tranquil yet powerful people well known through the tales of sailors and hopeful desert nomads. They concern themselves with the affairs of the seas and protection of bodies of water, rarely venturing far from ocean shores or lush desert oases. Marids have bodies covered in fine scales and hair like flowing kelp, most often blue, black, or green, though many can transform themselves into translucent, liquid forms that prove effectively invisible in water. Most are known to be flighty, impetuous, whimsical, or otherwise lacking in attention, moving from one topic or passion as swiftly as a surging river. Of all the genies, marids most often take human lovers, whom they lure into the waters from the shore, promising riches, lavish palaces, and a life of indolence. Surprisingly, they most often keep these promises, though their paramours might be little more than prisoners beneath the sea.

Shaitans

Many think of the shaitans as sinister creatures of the Darklands, but truly they are things of the earth, the empty caverns, and the high hills. Their skin is stone, their hearts molten lava, and their eyes jewel-like in their sparkle. Few shaitans share similar skins, either in color or texture, and some are smooth and delicate like polished lapis lazuli, while others are hulking and rugged like rough granite. Strands of jewels and sheets of beaten metals are the preferred clothing of these earthen jinn, and they wear them much as mortals wear linen, cotton, or silk. These jeweled garments are sometimes worth a prince's ransom, but the death of a shaitan does more than make his killer wealthy: it typically buys a blood feud, as the shaitan's brethren strive for compensation. Those who seek to escape retribution from the shaitan might take to a life spent upon the sea or amid the clouds, knowing that accusing shaitans lurk beneath every rock, field, and sand dune.

A Name Beyond Words

In the real world, the creatures commonly known in the West as genies have their roots in ancient Arabic tales of the *jinn*. In their earliest mythological incarnations, jinn are spirits or deities capable of bestowing aid or hardships upon humans. Islam explains that they are a race created alongside humans and angels, some proving virtuous but others acting as foul tempters akin to the corruptive spirits of other religions. Yet the legends of jinn probably best known to Western audiences come from interpretations of tales from *The Thousand and One Nights* following the exploits of the hero Aladdin and his genies.

It is from European translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* in the 1600s that the name jinn was first transliterated as “genie.” Drawing from the Latin *genius* (plural *genii*), protective personal spirits from Ancient Rome, French translators of these Arabic tales used their language’s version of this word, *genie*, due to its similar sound and meaning. Thus, countless Westerners were first introduced to tales of spirits, magic lamps, and sweeping romances featuring exotic creatures called genies, and the tradition has persisted ever since.

Other names for specific genies and genies in general can be found throughout the folkloric tradition of the Middle East, a few examples being Azazil, Deev, Efreet, Ghaddar, Ghul, Jann, Marid, Nasnas, Shaytans, Shiqq, Silat, Sut, and Taus.

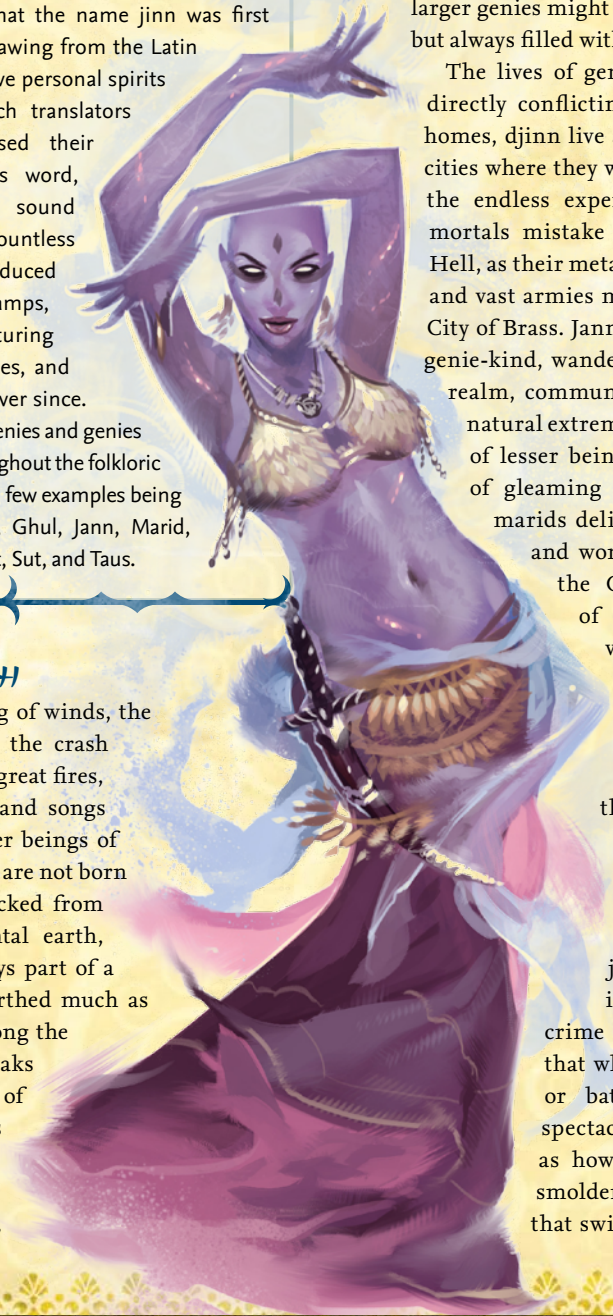
GENIE LIFE & DEATH

Tales say that in the rushing of winds, the shuddering of earthquakes, the crash of waves, and the roaring of great fires, one can hear the passions and songs of genies. Unlike many other beings of the Elemental Planes, genies are not born directly from flames or cracked from stony eggs, though elemental earth, air, fire, and water are always part of a genie’s birth. Genies are birthed much as many mortals—a rarity among the races of the planes. This speaks toward the strange heritages of the jinn race, being creatures part flesh and part elemental. Newly born genies rarely enter their existence alone,

but rather as twins or quadruplets, sometimes in litters as large as eight. These young genies grow into adults in a matter of years, far faster than creatures of the mortal plane. While djinn and efreet are fully grown by their sixth year, marids take 10 years to grow to adulthood, and shaitans and jann take 15. Genies seem to consider the longer periods of humanoid fertility a sign of inferiority, or at least laziness on the part of such simple creatures. The sizes of genies are often relative, however. As genies age they grow larger and more powerful, typically gathering ever-greater magical and elemental power that often takes concrete, physical form. Upon reaching adulthood, the size and apparent age of a genie is a sign of his power. Thus, small, thin genies might be young or powerless, while larger genies might be comparatively inexperienced but always filled with elemental power.

The lives of genies vary wildly in their often directly conflicting societies. Within their airy homes, djinn live amid floating palaces and lofty cities where they welcome strangers and embrace the endless experiences of the spheres. Many mortals mistake the domain of the efreet for Hell, as their metal towers rise from seas of flame and vast armies march the avenues of the fabled City of Brass. Jann follow the simplest lives of all genie-kind, wandering the deserts of the mortal realm, communing with the elements among natural extremes and avoiding the prying eyes of lesser beings. Within a decadent empire of gleaming shells and pearlescent cities, marids delight in the pleasures of the sea and wonders of the depths. And from the Opaline Vault of their realm of stone, the shaitans assemble vast treasuries, locking them away in impregnable earthen keeps. While untold numbers of each genie race embrace the fundamental natures of their people, there are always exceptions, and stoic marids and whimsical shaitans are not unknown.

As immortal beings, jinn do not view death as an inevitability, but as a terrible crime or punishment. Legends say that when jinn die violently, in feuds or battle, their ends are usually spectacular, with djinn departing as howling winds, efreet turning to smoldering columns of coals and ash that swiftly crumble, marids changing



into fog and water that swiftly evaporates, and jann simply fading away. Supposedly only shaitans leave any real remains: strangely tubular bones of copper, iron, or even mithral, though few can prove that such metals truthfully come from the bones of genies. Other than this, it's said that a dead genie leaves little trace.

The genie customs of mourning are primarily rooted in songs and sacrifices, and the creation of a memorial marker to honor the departed. These events can last for hours or days, and usually involve long speeches by genie nobles. A death marks a time of neutrality and peace, as feuds are set aside for the duration of the funeral and one day afterward. But a genie's grief doesn't necessarily last long. Most, once the mourning is past, turn immediately to the pressing business of revenge.

GENIE CULTURE

The lives of jinn are long and complicated. With each breed of genie having its own distinct culture, untold tomes could be written on the specifics of any one of these varied societies. Fortunately certain similarities exist between each of these ancient cultures and in the traditions followed by genies of all types. Noted here are just a few facts one might know regarding genies, though many of their societies' other aspects prove far more complicated.

Genie Lore

Knowledge (the planes)

| DC | Result |
|----|--|
| 10 | All genies are powerful spirits, part flesh and part living natural force. This status gives them human-like desires and powers over the elements. |
| 15 | There are five dominant races of genies: djinn, with power over air; efreet, with mastery of fire; marids, with control over water; shaitans, with mastery of stone; and jann, who embody all of these elements. |
| 20 | Genies are well known for their power to grant wishes, either by specifically adjusting the fetters of reality or by drawing upon their great might and that of their brethren to do their masters' will. Genies typically only grant such wishes when forced to by powerful magic or in reward for a great service. |
| 25 | Genies are very susceptible to flattery, and those who would deal with these creatures do well by offering them valuable gifts and artful praise. They are immortal and their memories are long, meaning that a scorned genie never forgets a slight or an enemy. |
| 30 | Although few genies cooperate with one another—having little tolerance for beings as arrogant as themselves—certain races hold particular animosity |

The Cursed Death

Unlike most outsiders, genies can be corrupted, their souls forbidden from returning to the Elemental Planes of their creation upon their deaths. At least three types of corrupted jinn are known:

Div: Although slain jinn have their spirits reabsorbed by the Elemental Planes, it is said that the foulest souls of the first genies slipped the bonds of the Inner Sphere and found their way to Abbadon. There, amid the warped landscapes and fundamental foulness of that grim realm, these jinn souls underwent a centuries-long transmogrification, emerging as the first divs, sadistic fiends who seek to ruin mortal lives.

Statistics for a variety of divs and their ruler, Ahriman, can be found in the bestiaries of the *Legacy of Fire Adventure Path*.

Edimmu: Jinn slain upon the Material Plane yet magically compelled to remain there to complete a term of service find their bodies destroyed but their essences lingering on. These edimmu are tormented spirits that either endlessly act out the duties set by masters often long dead, or eternally rage against the mortal races they blame for barring them from their elemental homes.

Statistics for edimmu appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #20.

Ghul: These undead rise from the corpses of jinn who attracted the foul attentions of the ruler of the divs, the fiend Ahriman, or were attacked by ancient and more powerful ghuls. Resembling the jinn they were in life—though rotted, sometimes to the point of being skeletal—ghuls are intelligent and often retain some control over their core element. They are a combination of elemental power and necromantic corruption, and all true genies consider them abominations.

Statistics for ghuls can be found in *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh*.

toward one another, with regular hostilities breaking out between efreet and djinn. This aggression increases to open war when it comes to the shaitans and efreet, who have long battled each other upon the planes and mortal realm.

Customs & Mating

Genies are proud and eager for recognition by their peers, enjoying the opportunity to show off to others of their kind their sumptuous garments, wildly improbable magical vehicles, and manors and palaces suitable for pashas among pashas. Their gifts are often illusory, but even so, the energies invested in creating silver robes of pure starshine, building cities amid a realm of fire, or carrying

The Granting of Wishes

Many tales of genies tell of wishes that go awry, imperiling the wisher or leaving him to some terrible, yet often deserved fate. More than moral lessons, such stories serve as warnings against the fickle and often cruel natures of these powerful beings. In any case, a genie's wishes are powerful and might easily be bent or honored depending on the whims of the jinn granting them, how the genie is treated by his captors, and whether the genie is good or evil. Sometimes even the most seemingly beneficent jinn might attempt such trickery, viewing an overly literal or otherwise mischievous interpretation of a wisher's commands as educational or character-building in some twisted sense. Any character attempting to have a genie grant his wish might make an opposed Sense Motive check to determine whether or not a genie might attempt to maliciously misconstrue his wish. In the cases of genies a character might find bound or otherwise enslaved to service, a GM might allow characters to make DC 25 Diplomacy, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), or Knowledge (the planes) checks to glean what offerings a genie might favor and thus make it more likely to grant a wish without mischief.

glacial sherbets from the mountains to the middle of vast deserts are considerable.

This extravagance is due primarily to the simple fact that female genies are relatively rare, comprising no more than roughly a third of the race of genies. The reasons for this are unclear, but might reflect a deficit of female souls when the race was created, or perhaps a divine limitation required by the gods to keep the genies from growing into an unstoppably dominant race upon the planes. Whatever the cause, the effect is profound on genie mating customs, and female genies prove quite demanding of their male suitors. Female genies hold all the power in the mating game, with two or more suitors for every female hand, and eagerly exploit their prerogative to choose a mate.

Male genies eagerly strive to gain the attentions of the few female genies, and so prove boastful, loud peacocks always willing to dismiss other males. The only exceptions are efreet, who take to open warfare with other males to win the affections of their paramours—and ostensibly to reduce the number of living males. Efreet are also the only jinn to cloister their women away from view, and slavery among their own kind is not unknown.

Among the shaitans, marids, jann, and djinn, polyandry is quite common, with female genies keeping up to four husbands or consorts. This leads to frequent outbursts among jealous, feuding males, which is why the females prefer to keep their men busy with tasks: fetching

pomegranates from distant lands, weaving enormous carpets of gold and red madder, or finding and harassing caravans that might pay bribes in perfume or silk. For most such households, the female genie remains in her palace, and the males fetch and carry goods, expand her house, organize her servants, and fight her wars.

Wishes

Noble djinn, efreet, and marids can all grant wishes to non-genies, who bargain for such boons or otherwise compel these beings to use such great and dangerous magic. Considering the often selfish nature of many genies, the granting of wishes to lesser races seems unlikely at best. Storytellers suggest that all races of genies provide these wishes not out of fear of death when captured or enslaved, but rather to discharge some karmic debt or epic obligation. Some tales say that the first genies wagered with universal powers and lost, and now must serve the whims of lesser creatures when magically captured. While this is an interesting theory, the genies demur when questioned about it.

A few jinn have offered an alternative take on the origin of wishes. In their description, it is the genie's ties to the Elemental Planes and to the deeper magic of Golarion that make them able and willing to grant wishes to those who capture them. They do this not out of obligation, but out of a sense of pity or fair play. Any of the mortal world's creatures are lesser beings and, thus, if one of them manages to best a genie, certainly the poor creature deserves a wish or three. In this view, genies are indulgent elder brothers to mortals.

Genie wishes are generally honored as long as the wisher does not request too much. Braggarts, swaggering fools, and those who hold themselves in high regard irk the vast egos of most genies, who consider themselves to be doing the wisher a favor. The louder a wisher crows about his victory, the more inclined a genie is to undermine it.

Allies & Servants

Genies are all fond of servitors, steeds, and troops who can carry on their feuds for them. The types vary, but generally any elemental creature might serve a genie of the proper elemental type. In addition, some other monsters serve out of ancient loyalty, or are captured and tamed by the genies because of their powers.

Djinn: Djinn are fond of rocs, giant eagles, invisible stalkers, cloud giants, and the strange torthune (from *Kobold Quarterly* #7). Anything that flies is a friend of theirs, though belkers and some mephits are less welcome than others. Earthbound creatures mostly evoke their pity and scorn, and the djinn have a talent for considering even their friends beneath their notice when

some new artistry or magic entrances them. Most other genies consider djinn shallow narcissists.

Efreet: All fire creatures are either friends of the efreet, eager to share in their cruelties, or deathly afraid of being caught and enslaved by them. These genies' more willing allies include salamanders, fire giants, iron golems, various mephits, and fire wisps (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #23). Less willing slaves include azers, ogres, and firesnakes. For some reason, pale and sickly elves are especially popular as concubines among the efreet. Few of them last long in the genies' fiery embrace, though.

Marids: These water genies favor whales, dolphins, and giant sea horses as servants, as well as locathah, nixies, hippocampi, and devilfish (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #7). Marid lords consider storm giants their equals, and are also known to speak with brine dragons on matters of concern to the greater depths. For the most part, though, marids consider merfolk and other aquatic species little more interesting than talking fish.

Shaitans: Shaitans use a wide variety of monsters to serve their needs below the earth, from xorn and delvers to purple worms, sandmen, clay golems, and sandwalkers (from *Kobold Quarterly* #7). They often buy dwarves, pech, svirfneblin, and other Darklands races as slaves, or trade great wealth for such minions. The shaitans' desire for gems makes them push their servants to search ever deeper for riches. Slaves of shaitan masters often survive for years, as their labor, while forced, is not wholly unpleasant, with the genies allowing their prisoners rotating periods of rest and rewards for exemplary work.

Enemies

Some savants believe there is no greater doom than to become enmeshed in the affairs of the genies. Jinn see things differently: all those who are not their friend must, perforce, be their vilest enemies. Although they enjoy civilized haggling over prices, terms, and quality for goods or services, they have surprisingly little patience for diplomacy, which involves meeting other creatures and pretending at equality or at least treating them with respect. Nearly all genies are extraordinarily proud, meaning that even the best-natured of their kind often come off as insufferable at best and insulting at worst. This arrogance often leads to intense feuds among genies as those of equal standing seek to prove their dominance.

As a result, the long hatred of the efreet for the djinn, and the shaitans for the marids, grows and festers and multiplies, sometimes even drawing in their jann cousins. Genies fight more among themselves than they do against other creatures of the planes, such as demons or devils. In this way, the typical approach to manipulating genies involves appealing to their vanity while disparaging their enemies—and implying a willingness to aid their most hated foes if they become difficult.

BEYOND LEGENDS

Although many tales of jinn bear distinct similarities and hints of veracity, few beyond genies themselves can be sure what aspects of these stories are truth and which are pure fiction. More than one brazen mortal has dared the fury of a genie, believing to possess knowledge to keep him at bay or some magical word to coerce his obedience. No interaction with genie-kind ever proves so simple, though, and such bold souls often become the newest slaves of fundamentally more powerful masters. Thus, a word of caution to all who would deal with jinn, as even the most benevolent genies hold the power to unwittingly crush the unwary.





THE KATAPESH MARKETPLACE

Katapesh—the Bazaar of the Bizarre—is the greatest marketplace in Golarion. Built upon trade and commerce, every street or alley in Katapesh seems to have its own unique market. From the Tiny Song Market where only hummingbirds are sold on up to the Great Tannery where each street and plaza, each footpath and square has its own character and wares, the markets of Katapesh are a truly varied lot. A thousand markets cram these narrow streets and alleyways—and those that exist today may not exist tomorrow. It is not only a place of vast variety, but a place of constant change. Today, colorful tikka sellers haggle with farmers for better prices on coriander, while tomorrow that spot might house a camel trader singing of the fine quality of his wares while a tall sailor sells a smuggled cargo of diamonds to a pesh addict. Trade is everywhere and always in Katapesh—the city never sleeps while money can be made and bargains can be had. If you can find a way through the endless markets without being robbed, hoodwinked by con-men, or dragged off by slavers, you may well find your heart's desire in the Katapesh marketplace.

Souks Beyond Counting

Katapesh has a vast population, all needing to be fed, clothed, and watered. In a city where every inch seems to be given over to commerce, it is possible to obtain most things day and night—when they must, many traders opt to sleep at their stalls with tiny bells above their heads that customers can ring to wake them.

The city represents an incredible opportunity for players to purchase practically anything they wish, especially since Katapesh, with its population of over 210,000 souls, has a gp limit of 100,000. This does present the GM with an unusual challenge, though. Simply telling your PCs “you have a 100,000 gp limit—buy anything you want from any sourcebook,” is a surefire way to break your game. Conversely, you don't want to limit options by saying something like, “You have a 100,000 gp limit, but the only things available are what's in the core rules.” It's also unlikely that you want your game session to simply become a bland shopping spree with everyone at your table sifting through books for hours to find the perfect item—where's the roleplay in that?

the katapesh marketplace

“There is no silence, not even in the depths of the night. Here all hours are given by the Pactmasters to trade—it is their gift to us. Time to buy, to sell, and to speak the tongue of Katapesh—the language of barter. No language is more universal, no speech more widely known than talk of profit, of gain, of purchase.”

—Mahameen al Makkhar, Fourth Generation Katapeshi Marketlord



When a PC goes shopping in Katapesh, use the following guidelines to encourage roleplaying and to invest a bit more verisimilitude into the more outlandish and expensive purchases. Anything of up to 5,000 gp value can be commonly found for sale in Katapesh with minimal work—a few minutes of shopping in the right marketplace can turn up what’s needed. For items of greater value, a customer must spend 2d4 hours shopping around multiple stalls and shops throughout the city (a DC 20 Gather Information check reduces this time requirement to 1 hour). After this time, and if you as the GM want the item in question to be available, the PC can purchase the item at the listed price (or perhaps at a slightly lower or greater price if you feel like roleplaying out the haggling session).

To add an even deeper layer to the experience, you can judge that some items are available but must be “special ordered.” A good rule to go by here is that objects in the core rules in the DMG are always available after the 2d4 hours spent shopping, but that items from other sourcebooks that have been approved by you, the GM, must be brought in from elsewhere. Katapesh’s more successful merchants aren’t above utilizing magic like *teleport* or *wind walk* to go out and find an obscure object for a customer—special orders like these are available in a mere 3d8 hours 50% of the time, but the remainder of that time they’re available in 2d6 days. Due to the extra level of service required for special orders, a merchant typically increases the final asking price by 10%.

Katapesh also hosts countless crafters of all manner of objects. In some cases, you might tell a shopper that a particular magic item isn’t available, but that it can be commissioned from a local spellcaster. Prices in this case are generally by the book, but the shopper must wait for the magic item to be created before he can claim it (typically requiring a wait period of 1 day per 1,000 gp value of the item’s cost).

The Feel of the Mart

There’s more to the Katapesh Market experience than simply handing a merchant a bag of gold and claiming your purchase, though. When your PCs decide they want to go shopping, you don’t have to gloss it over by saying,

“Okay... sift through the book and buy what you want—I’ll be sitting here quietly reading up on the adventure.” At the very least, the first time the PCs go shopping in Katapesh, use the information presented here to bring the experience to life. Part of the excitement of shopping in Katapesh isn’t the fact that they have what you know you want, but that they have things you didn’t know you wanted!

Katapesh is a vast, sun-scorched city with narrow alleys, colorful, tall houses and, of course, traders. Be sure to emphasize the crowding, the smells, and the noise. Katapesh abounds in color and life; livestock roams the streets, beggars congregate around the temples and greater markets—as do the guards and villains—and calls to prayer sound out at all hours of the day. The air is hot and dry, with the city becoming quietest (but never truly silent) in the heat of midday sun. The markets truly come alive at nightfall.

Adding color and flavor is an important part of the backdrop to any adventure, and emphasizing the strangeness of Katapesh helps to make the setting and hence any adventures here memorable.

Goods: In the markets, one may find Vudran carpets, salt imported from far Qadira, and all manner of colorful Chelish “Devil Boxes” (handheld wooden puzzle boxes, sometimes featuring dozens of moving parts). All goods from all places, it seems, arrive here to be sold. Katapesh gives you a great opportunity to root out those obscure equipment lists or scour the Internet for the weird and wonderful purchases of fantasy roleplaying worlds. However, the vast bulk of goods are commonplace ones—the staples of life. Such common goods are sold at every street corner; every market has its pesh-seller, every plaza its water-trader, and every souk its pan-maker.

Food and Drink: Cool, clear water is the most common drink sold on the streets of Katapesh, usually from great barrels at a price of a copper piece a tankard. It, along with mint tea, is the staple drink for Katapeshi people. Wine may be found but it is generally thin, while ale and beer are almost unheard of outside of specialty taverns. The staple foods are bread and rice, which are usually served with hot spices—the most common being a mildly spicy bread called khat. The most common meal served on street corners is an oily mix of pickled olives, limes, and rice called thal.

Clothing: Silk and cotton clothes are the most popular apparel sold, with heavier garments made of leather or fur being confined to specialties. The profession of tailoring is seen as a respectable one, as it exists to cover modesty.

Household Wares: Torches, candles, utensils, tools, and other goods referred to in common equipment lists are sold by traders across the city—such wares are generally laid out on silk cloth or rugs, awaiting only the start of barter. Occasionally, a great treasure might be found here, covered in dirt or filth, its seller unaware of its worth. Each day the PCs spend shopping, feel free to set a 1% chance that a randomly determined minor magic item (DMG 216) might be found for sale at a tiny fraction of its actual price. A DC 25 Appraise or Spellcraft check identifies such an accidental bargain, as can *detect magic*.

Fakes, Lies, and Scams: An uncountable number of fake potion makers, antiquarian dealers selling clever forgeries of rare documents, confidence men and snake-oil salesmen, perpetrate their schemes throughout the city. While some of these scams are easy to spot, many are well practiced—the art of the purse-slasher has reached new heights here, games that seem to be purely chance are anything but, and friendly offers to “Come with me into this alley to see the *real deals*” are often precursors to attack in quieter streets.

THE KATAPESH MARKETS AT A GLANCE

Although streetside vendors and traveling merchants are perhaps among the most prevalent salesmen in Katapesh, they are by their nature transitory. It’s impossible to get to know these merchants, since they move along so rapidly, and as a result, one can never be sure of the quality of the goods purchased, or indeed, if what you’re looking for is even available.

For the majority of Katapesh’s natives, it is to the numerous permanent markets that the buyer travels. Here, merchants have the benefit of permanent buildings to house their shops, and often ownership of a business can be traced back for generations. Pride in one’s shop translates directly to business in Katapesh, for it is to these renowned old shops that those most familiar with the city will habitually come to buy their goods. The rest of this article details many of these permanent markets, shops, and locales—if your PCs are interested in a particular type of good or service, the result of their Gather Information check could point them to an appropriate merchant from the list below.

1. The Great Plaza: The Plaza is vast—a bowl of noise in the center of the great city. It is the heart of trade in Katapesh, a place where all manner of common goods can be had—fruits and vegetables, life-giving water, and the flesh of animals. The Plaza is overlooked by a thousand ancient buildings variously used as homes, workshops, and temples. Even in the dead of night figures move across torchlight-kissed cobbles on their way to or from trading. A whole cant

and set of bylaws has developed among the traders who frequent the vast plaza, with phrases like “Plaka ghul” (Plaza ghou—traders who operate after dark), “rata gros quu-cul Plaka” (as fat as a Plaza rat—a portly or corpulent person), and “Plaka sorrol” (as silent as the Plaza—referring to an incredibly noisy place, person, or event).

2. Sweat Town: Some say that the endless narrow streets of Sweat Town show the true face of Katapesh—a vast populace slogging away in sweatshops. To walk in Sweat Town is to walk amid the desperate and the hopeless, their faces hanging heavy with toil and despair. These workshops have their own masters, their own rigid caste system, and their own brutal laws.

Sweat Town specializes in simple trade goods—clothes and tools, basic weapons and armor, as well as camel-saddles and basic transport. Sales are handled by a “d’hakor” (overseer), but buying goods directly from workers reduces the initial price by 25%, as long as the transaction isn’t noticed by a d’hakor (most d’hakors have Spot +10)—if they notice, the worker making the sale is punished by the lash and the hopeful customer is told to leave Sweat Town or suffer the same fate.

3. The Pesh Quarter: If the Great Plaza is the city’s heart, then the Pesh Quarter is its arteries and veins. The streets here are broader than those of Sweat Town, and its occupants of a higher caste—afforded rank and respect by the word of the Pactmasters. Pesh is made, bought, and sold here in vast quantities, the boiling vats working day and night to reduce the cactus sap to a slurry which is compressed into resin and sold. The scent of pesh drifts everywhere, and the workers bear the terrible signs of addiction—many have lost their noses or even whole parts of their faces.

4. Streets of Silver and Gold: The shops and merchants that throng in these two narrow streets specialize in trade of gold and silver, gems and jewels, and are home to some of the wealthiest and most powerful merchants in the city, many of whom dwell in huge townhouses surrounding great courtyard gardens full of flowers and huge trees.

5. The Great Camel-Mart: The camel-mart operates every Fireday—a confusion of dust and noise, the low call of the stock, and the scent of musk. This area of the city is a low, dirty bowl of earth surrounded by and infested with hundreds of small corrals and stockyards. On good days, some one thousand camels are traded here, and it is said that Katapeshi camels are the most noble and sought-after of all of their kind. While a general riding camel fetches around 300 gp, beasts from the more noble lines can cost 10 or even 20 times that. Such beasts may grant a +2 bonus on Ride checks, have maximum hit points or elite statistics, or simply come from a line celebrated in some song or tale.

6. The Water Market: Here amid Katapesh’s docks, boats and ships of all type vie for space. Tian dhows skirt great Qadiran galleys, tiny local fishing vessels cower beside

the katapesh marketplace

Nexian caravels. All trade ships must register their cargoes here, a process that can take hours or even days. Many of the shops here cater exclusively to ship crews waiting for their cargo to be registered. These traders ply the waters around the docklands on small, nimble barges, selling everything from water to cure-alls, offers of guidance and lodgings, prostitutes and poisons, alcohol and pesh—in short, the sorts of things many sailors hold dear.

7. The Grand Tannery: The stench of the tannery can almost be felt, a reek so overpowering that many find it impossible to even approach. The Great Tannery is a huge, open yard along the banks of the River Scorpius, a colorful wound in the sprawl some 200 yards across. Here, countless tanners work at open vats, curing, coloring, and drying their wares for all to see. The place is a riot of noise and color and stench, with its not-quite-so-foul-smelling borders delineated by a ring of leather and skin traders eager to sell fresh hides brought forth from deeper within the tannery.

8. The Cattle Market: This great street winds through the slums, lined on each side by uncountable cages, pits, prisons, lock-ups, holds, and pounds. The Cattle Market—the greatest slave market of Katapesh—lurks at the end of this street, a large crumbling amphitheater where slaves are sold and auctioned. Slaves that don't sell are often given over to the Grand Coliseum. Gnolls, in particular, are common here, with many such savage slavers arriving astride hyaenodon mounts with another horde of chained slaves to sell.

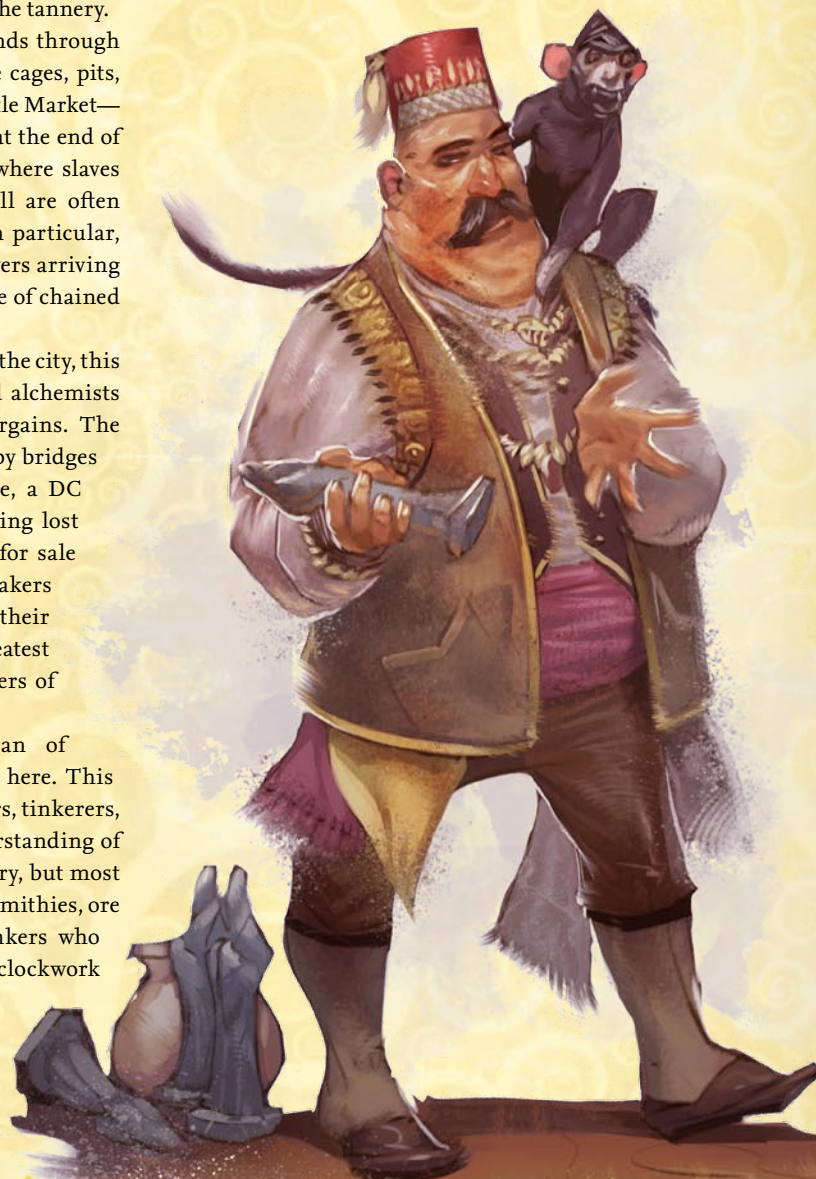
9. Peculiar Emporium: The magical souk of the city, this is where many wizards, sorcerers, bards, and alchemists come to trade their wares and shop for bargains. The Emporium is a maze of buildings connected by bridges and underground passages—without a guide, a DC 15 Survival check is required to avoid becoming lost every hour. The scale and amount of wares for sale here is breathtaking, from simple potion makers and scroll scribes (who often have to make their wares in tiny stalls on the streets) to the greatest crafters of mighty wondrous items and masters of the darkest magics.

10. The Mechanical Market: The groan of machine and the screech of iron commands here. This small quarter is filled with engineers, inventors, tinkerers, and madmen, all eager to advance their understanding of mechanics—some for the sheer joy of discovery, but most for greed. The market is home to hundreds of smithies, ore smelters, alchemists, weaponsmiths, and tinkers who toil at advanced water-wheels, toys, cranes, clockwork wonders, and stranger inventions.

11. The Souk of the Magnificent and Inscrutable: A warship towers over this souk, raised from the sea and put on stilts for all to see. Naturally this ship, like everything else

in the city, is for sale. This souk specializes in the grand—five sphinx statues 100 feet high have had stonecarvers diligently working on completing their creation for decades in one section, while in another, war machines of almost impossible complexity are slowly constructed under the nervous gaze of their creators. One particularly large project, a working model volcano 60 feet in diameter, is being created for an eccentric Taldan lord. The geniuses of Golarion come here to learn and trade, and any manner of weird and wonderful grandiose objects may be found.

12. The Roof Market: Lashed across the rooftops near the Great Plaza, the Roof Market is a relatively new addition to Katapesh. One of the largest flea markets in the city, the Roof Market specializes in second- or third-hand goods. The Roof Market can get very busy—dangerously so at times as thousands upon thousands of locals crawl up its rickety ladders and wander its creaking boards in search



of a bargain. Goods for sale at the RoofMarket vary greatly, but as a simple rule of thumb, there is a 30% chance of any mundane items of equipment being found here, with a starting price before haggling of 50% of their original cost. Some 20% of such goods are shoddy or substandard in some way, and this may only be noticed by a DC 20 Appraise check—otherwise the item breaks 1d6 times after its initial use.

13. The Menagerie: The market for exotic animals, strange beasts, and even monsters is strong in Katapesh, and the Menagerie is its epicenter. This market occupies a dozen streets that wind amid a score of disused temples converted into cages and kennels of all shapes and sizes. Here it is possible to purchase a trained owlbear, a chained ogre, griffon eggs, and a whole host of other exotic or more mundane creatures. From the goliath moth of the Mwangi Expanse to the tiny Thuvian fey-ferret, the Menador Mountain great griffon to the Andoren black pegasus, they can all be found at the Menagerie. At rare times, even subdued dragons were traded here, although such trade is now largely a thing of the past. This market is particularly renowned with those seeking more exotic familiars, as many are likely to be found here.

The Nightstalls

Katapesh's most infamous markets are not as much a physical location as they are a state of mind. In most cities, trade of lives, poison, souls, and other vile merchandise is regulated to the black market, yet in Katapesh, these wares are legitimate mercantile offerings—as long as their peddlers keep their payments to the Pactmasters on a timely basis and as long as their wares don't disrupt trade. The Nightstalls does the majority of its business after dark, seeming to sprout up amid shops closed for the day like strange shadow-versions of diurnal business.

The Nightstalls is ostensibly run by **Khafira Blacktongue** (LE female tiefling rogue 7/assassin 4). Karfira oversees the Duskwalker Guild, a group of shadowy merchants who take a cut of every Nightstalls transaction in return for granting these unsavory merchants a safe place to ply their trade. The Nightstalls is spreading as fast as its infamy, and the market "overlays" much of the city today. Many of the merchants who work in the Nightstalls maintain dynamic locations, changing often as customers and their customers' victims seek their own justice against the unsavory merchants. The following presents the most infamous of the Nightstalls' merchants, but is by no means an exhaustive list.

The Violet Fire: Khafira Blacktongue herself has worked the brothels and sin-pits of various port cities across Golarion and has developed a fine understanding of the needs of more discerning (and wealthy) clientele. The Violet Fire is at once a brothel, a fighting arena, a

drug den, and her own palace. A quartet of female and a pair of male tiefling prostitutes work within the themed chambers of this garish townhouse. These tieflings love their work and tend to perform in outrageous costumes, masks, and accessories. Khafira has taken an enslaved fiendish satyr as her lover and business partner. The satyr, **Sayyid Farokh** (CE male satyr bard 4), is currently engaged in an interesting case of double-cross, intending to relieve Khafira of her brothel and wealth and claim it as his own. Part of Sayyid's plan has recently failed, with one of the male tiefling prostitutes being unmasked as an Eagle Knight spy who was attempting to discover something about the Nightstalls that he could present to the Pactmasters to encourage them to shut the Nightstalls down. Despite this intrigue and treachery, the Violet Fire has a reputation for entwining cruelty into its vice, and the games overseen by Sayyid Farokh, woven with liberal use of pesh, and his pipes to charm then cast fear on its clients, has ensured a steady stream of well-paying customers.

Answers to Many Questions: Pesh-addicted **M'hem** (N male human sorcerer 7) uses a small army of imps (20 in all) to assist him in learning secrets and spying for clientele. M'hem was hideously burned 3 years ago in a mysterious fire which, unknown to him, was caused by other imps in the service of Hashcuss H'rann, proprietor of the Nightstall known as "The Brewer." M'hem's charges depend upon the difficulty of the information to be found; an easy task, such as finding where someone in the city lives, costs 100 gp, but something as complex as a floor plan for the Immaculate Repository would cost many thousands of gold pieces.

Ancient Tomes: A quartet of Eagle Knight spies has managed to infiltrate the Nightstalls with this bookstore. Here ostensibly to bring down the Katapesh slave trade, the spies are beginning to unravel an even darker story and are presently plotting to break into the Royal Palace. The huge collection of banned texts and forbidden tomes here is a cover for the spies' real purpose, and the spies have gone through great lengths to make this cover believable. Many spells and secrets may be found in this small minaret-topped townhouse. Generally the bookish **H'kul Mushain** (LN male half-elf bard 7) deals with customers to ensure a fabric of normality. He uses illusions to appear as an aging cripple who speaks with a pronounced stutter. H'kul has a great knowledge of tomes and arcana, but his attention span, driven by his dangerous mission, is very short and he is prone to bouts of infuriating forgetfulness—he often agrees to carry out works or find tomes, only to have forgotten his promises completely a few hours later.

The Tongue that Tastes, the Fang that Slays: **Ebrahim Nashoord** (N male gnome rogue 6) sells poison snakes. The Katapeshi ringback viper is his best seller; this Small viper sells for 200 gp and comes complete with wicker basket

the katapesh marketplace

to carry it away in—as do all his wares. The blue-eyed hood viper (Medium viper) costs 800 gp, while his most expensive snake, the red-scaled burning cobra (Large viper), costs 2,500 gp. Burning cobras are elite Large vipers, and available only on special order.

The Cabal Inquisitor: Unknown to most, the **Seer** (NE male human lich wizard 12), one of the Nightstalls' more secretive and dangerous merchants, is in fact a lich. This mysterious figure claims to be able to obtain any secret ingredient for any spell, and is prepared to meet a high price for new and rare magic. His library and shop is a spiraling tower of stone rising to a great dome at the rooftops, a megalithic, artificial mushroom. The Seer is as twisted as his crumbling manse home, which is widely avoided by the locals. For his rare public appearances, he wears a faded, red velvet robe that conceals many useful items, and hides behind a bone-carved mask that depicts a smiling human face. The Seer is attended at all times by the **One Who Is Travesty**, a four-faced, eight-armed, unusually intelligent flesh golem who acts as both a guard and an assassin. The **One Who Is Travesty** wields eight razor-sharp scimitars in combat and is said to devour the bodies of its master's enemies to prevent resurrection.

If a magic component is required, the Seer is likely to be able to locate them, either through local intermediaries or through a network of spies and contacts across the Obari Ocean. The Seer is presently at work translating the insane contents of one of the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, smuggled in by his accomplice **Kolra Kazbegi** (see *Antiquaries*, below).

Those Bound and Forgotten: Squint-eyed **Marquin Ortstone** (NE male gnome cleric of Asmodeus 9) is a mummy smuggler. He presently has some 10 sarcophagi, of various ages and types, within which lie seven mummies that serve him as henchmen and thugs. Marquin hires out his undead slaves to carry out deeds to be determined by the purchaser (at a suitable cost). Marquin is a strangely colorful character who wears a magnifying lens like a monocle and who has an addiction for fine gems. He also trades in loot gathered from tomb-robbing, selling mummy rot (flesh gone foul by the disease), and various antiquities.

Extraordinary Slaves: Noseless, blind, pesh-addicted **Y'aalay Quam** (N male gnoll fighter 6) imports beasts and slaves that are extraordinary. His stock moves frequently, but at any given time he has at least six monsters (CR 1–6 each) and the same number of unusual humanoid slaves available, which he sells at a cost of roughly 200 gp per Hit Dice.

The Brewer: **Hashcuss H'rann** (NE male elf rogue 8/assassin 3) toils in his alchemical workshop, a brick tower held together

by the dozen iron chimneys that throttle it. Hashcuss trades and makes poisons with the aid of a trio of imps who also act as ingredient gatherers when the need arises. These imps are jealous and frightened of the superior numbers of imps in the employ of M'hem D'jall, and are always seeking to undo the group in some petty way.

One Whose Touch Corrupts: **Klane Raicht** (NE male human wererat druid 7) specializes in sickness and disease—he has a quartet of caged otyughs in his basement which he uses to harvest filth fever (usually by allowing an otyugh to bite and infect a dog or halfling slave), and has also purchased creatures infected with mummy rot and devil chills in hopes of distilling the sickness into elixirs. Klane is a foul creature, with oily hair falling across his pimply forehead. He walks clumsily with the aid of a stick, as one of his legs has been eaten away by leprosy. Klane's prices for infected slaves and creatures varies, but a dog or halfling carrying filth fever is usually for sale for 500 gp.

Master Reapesmoor: One of Katapesh's most notorious Nightstalls merchants dwells in a rotting timber church overlooking the ocean. This is **Master Reapesmoor** (aka *The Shanky Benefactor*, *The Kind Gentleman*, and *Master*

the
SEER



Smiles), a horned devil exiled from Hell who usually uses a magic ring to appear as a tall, well-dressed Taldan man when he steps out in public. He finds the ability to peddle infernal wares legally and in public amusing, and is curious about the Pactmasters. In time he hopes to learn why they allow such depravity to exist, and has recently begun courting Khafira Blacktongue as a way to learn a little more. He holds many lesser Nightstalls merchants in some sort of thrall, and most of his direct trade with customers is handled through these proxies. Even though he usually appears in disguise, maggots occasionally appear in his mouth and the noises he makes while crunching and swallowing them are particularly vile.

Master Reapesmoor deals in souls, and always has a plentiful supply. In the dungeon below his church, he keeps a number of lemures held in great bell jars to punish cruelly for amusement. One of Master Reapesmoor's favorite tricks is to claim to have the soul of a saint within a receptacle and offer to free the soul in return for some suitably horrific task. Master Reapesmoor likes to haggle over the cost of his souls, and generally does not trade in anything so vulgar as money—preferring instead tasks and favors, such as making the purchaser lie to a loved one or perform some act of violence, hate, or aggression.

Antiquaries: Pesh-addicted smuggler **Kolra Kazbegi** (NE male human ranger 9) is one of the Pactmasters' most valuable accomplices. A Varisian by lineage but a citizen of Katapesh by birth, Kolra's specialty is the smuggling of dangerous magic from his Sczarni contacts in distant Ustalav. Operating from the sinister town of Carrion Hill, a place infamous for its connections with ancient magic, Kolra risks the wrath of the province princes to smuggle objects for the Pactmasters as well as valuable items for his own profit. His home, a teetering, steep-gabled manor, has its own private dock, where the Carrion Storm, his caravel, lies moored when he is in the city.

Kazbegi likes the finer things in life, and is always on the hunt for beautiful foreign women to expand his considerable harem. He also keeps a small staff of loyal followers in his sumptuously appointed and expensive home. He is a black-hearted, arrogant, and tyrannical man who regards himself as a folk-hero and ensures that tales of his heroism are frequently spread. A close accomplice and valuable ally of the Seer, Kazbegi's most recent triumph includes the delivery of a terrible book from the Charnel Libraries of Carrion Hill—one of the infamous *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*.

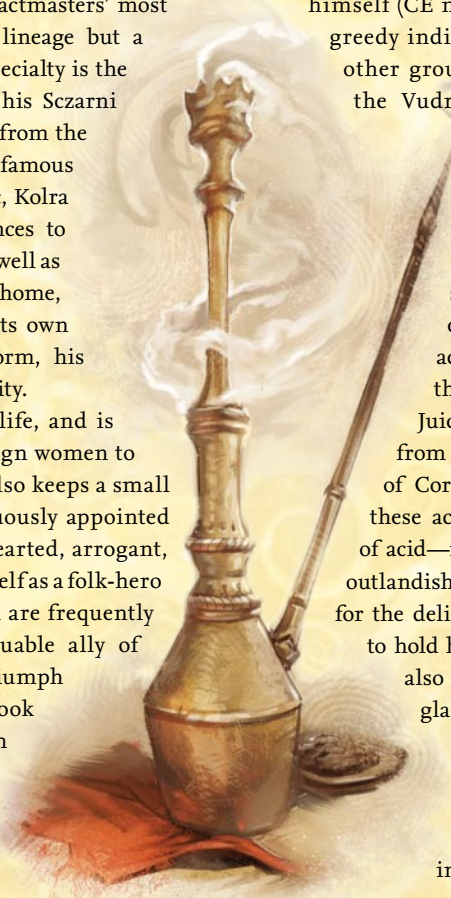
Vudran Secrets: The Vudrani **Slajeev Djincan** (NE male human

fighter 7) imports wares from Vudra—great brass and copper objects, as well as more infamous Vudrani produce such as the poison breath of a tiger (cost 3,200 gp, inhaled Fort DC 18, damage 1d6 Con/2d6 Con), the incense of Megeer (cost 1,200 gp, inhaled Fort DC 15, damage nausea/1d12 Wis), and even strange psionically-charged items capable of magical effects both unique and frightening. Djincan is keen to establish a Vudran pesh den in the Nightstalls, but all his efforts have so far met with failure at the hands of agents of Huzshak.

The Gables: This is an eating hall lashed to the rooftops. Here, visitors can indulge in outlandish meals, such as fried wyvern hearts with oysters, boiled eyes of bulette in jelly, and harpy hand poached in honey and coriander, among others. Private booths overlook the sea, while a pair of strange, four-armed slave girls plays multiple panpipes in the background. **Lork Hlay** (NE female human bard 6/rogue 3) is always on the lookout for new ingredients and dishes, and often hires smart-witted adventurers to sail to exotic lands and return with a live catch for her chef **T'zol** (NE male janni), whom she tricked into working for her for 40 years and a day.

Khumol Hask Huzshak's Pesh Den: This notoriously large pesh den is run by a group of rogues who allow their pesh-addicted customers to carry out their dirty work for them in return for payment in pesh. **Huzshak** himself (CE male human rogue 11) is a corpulent, greedy individual engaged in petty battles with other groups in the Nightstalls, most notably the Vudran Slajeev, whom he regards as a foreign interloper.

Acids and Spittles of Many Creatures: **K'havass Mahurll** (N male human expert 3/fighter 6) harvests the acids of dangerous creatures and sells them to assassins, poisoners, and crooks throughout Katapesh. Mahurll's acids all bear grandiose names, such as the Spittle of Hell's Vipers, the Festering Juice of the Gargantuan Slug, and the Milk from the Teat of the Daughters of the Sphinx of Corrosion, although in practice most of these acids are identical to the standard vial of acid—in a lot of ways, his customers pay the outlandish prices (often 50 gp or higher) as much for the delicate artistry of the containers he uses to hold his acids as for the acid itself. Mahurll also proudly stores large, specially blown glass vials of green slime which he sells for 1,000 gp apiece—he refuses to buy the stuff, though, pointing out that he can resupply his slime quite easily by simply throwing a cat or a street urchin into the pool he keeps in his basement.



TEN STRANGE BAUBLES

Listed below are 10 different strange and unusual objects that a character might find for sale at a curio shop or from a roadside merchant. These objects can also serve as things that someone might gain by using Sleight of Hand, or even as unusual items of treasure found in a creature's stash of loot. Since each of these items is relatively unique, you might want to keep a list of which ones you hand out and then invent new items to fill the gaps you've created, using the following as inspiration for these new objects.

1) Tiny Bejeweled Vest: This red silk vest is sized for a monkey. Even though it has tiny pearl buttons and gold thread, the vest is unbelievably filthy after having been worn by a monkey for several years. A DC 25 Appraise check reveals the object's true value—something its seller hasn't accomplished. The vest carries a price tag of 10 gp, but cleaned up is actually worth 500 gp.

2) Jade Lizard: A three-inch-long jade sculpture of a lizard. The jade radiates faint transmutation magic; it is always pleasantly warm to the touch, but has no other properties. Carved into the lizard's belly is a strange word: "Cazamazan," a command word for a magic item, perhaps, or maybe the name of the jade lizard's previous owner. The statuette is worth 250 gp.

3) Treasure Map Fragment: Half of a map of what appears to be the floor plan of a ruined church of Abadar, with a hidden vault clearly marked. Missing from the map is the top half, which presumably indicated where the church in question was located. The map sells for a mere 50 gp, but the merchant wants 10% of the treasure found in the vault if the map leads to riches.

4) The Songs of Shazathared: A beautifully illuminated, undersized book that contains a dozen short legends, as told by the legendary marid princess Shazathared to her cruel efreeti captor. These legends are reprinted on the inside front covers of the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path volumes—the booklet itself is worth 3,500 gp for its exquisite artistry, and could actually come in handy later in this Adventure Path in "The Impossible Eye."

5) Frog Statuette: This is an incredibly lifelike basalt statuette of a frog, selling for a mere 6 gp. A DC 26 Spellcraft check reveals that the statuette is actually a real frog that's been petrified by *stone to flesh*. The intrigue goes deeper—the "frog" is in fact a *baleful polymorphed* halfling con-man named **Ildaki Shrevewort** (CN male halfling rogue 6) who, 200 years ago, conned a wizard out of his spellbook. Unfortunately for Ildaki, the wizard figured out the con, sought him out, and exacted revenge. If restored to life, Ildaki promises to lead the PCs to an old Desnan shrine hidden in the Katapeshi wilds where he claims to have hidden a nest egg. What Ildaki's nest consists of (and what dangerous creature might live at the shrine now) is up to you.

6) Shrunken Gnoll Head: This shrunken head, barely over 4 inches in diameter and threaded with a leather cord, once belonged to a gnoll king named Balok Baaru. The head itself is somewhat poorly preserved, but functions as a *stone of good luck*. Unfortunately, it's also cursed (a fact the merchant doesn't reveal, using his Bluff +12 to hide), and while it is carried, the user's personality grows more crass and foul, resulting in a -1 penalty to Charisma. This penalty applies as soon as the user is forced to make a check that's modified by the item's luck bonus, and persists until it is removed via *remove curse*, *break enchantment*, or a similar effect (the curse functions at CL 9th). The merchant tries to sell the gnoll head for its full 20,000 gp price, but if the buyer confronts the merchant with the truth, he agrees to drop the price to 10,000 gp.

7) Monkey's Paw: A withered, mummified monkey's paw, with one finger missing and the wrist capped with a tarnished silver bulb from which dangles a silver chain. This grisly charm sells for 40 gp. If the silver bulb is removed from the paw, a tiny silver key is found wedged inside—what the key opens is a mystery.

8) Pixie Dagger: The merchant claims that this is a Tiny +3 *returning shocking burst giant bane dagger* used by a pixie hero to defend his magic mushroom home from a ravenous shadow giant named Uguthonk the Lisper. The dagger is, in fact, a Tiny +1 *returning dagger* that periodically issues a bright spark when one unsheathes the blade, enhanced by several magic aura spells to make it appear to be more than it is. The merchant tries to get 98,000 gp for the dagger, but settles for its actual price of 8,301 gp if confronted.

9) Mummy Repellant: A silver ankh that glows in the dark like an everburning torch, the merchant tries to sell this object as an ankh that repels mummies. It does nothing of the sort, and is worth no more than an everburning torch (110 gp), despite the fact that the merchant (Bluff +10) asks for 6,000 gp.

10) High Noon Fire Monsoon: This is a 4-inch-diameter glass globe that, strangely, contains a tiny model of Kelmarane (or whatever town or city is of particular importance to the person touching the globe). Peering closely reveals tiny people going about their daily business in the miniature town. Engraved in the globe's silver and gold base is the phrase, "High Noon Fire Monsoon." When shaken, a storm of fiery rain lashes the town, burning buildings and forcing the tiny people to race in panic for 1 minute before the fire fades and the scene within returns to normal. Those who hold the globe to the ear can hear tiny screams of terror. This effect is nothing more than a programmed illusion—while the fire "burns," the globe sheds light like a torch. It's worth 3,000 gp for the artistry alone, but could be of use later in the adventure in "The Impossible Eye," as the strange bauble is in fact part of a set once owned by the efreeti warlord Jhavlul.



Hell of Eternal Thirst

A sickness festers in the heart of the Deep Well of Paradise, a place of legend and seemingly one of the most verdant oases in Katapesh. This corruption lies rooted in open malice, blasphemies against the goddess of redemption, and a curse that knows no age. Within this desert garden hide flowers that breathe a noxious poison and deadly thorns seeking to claim all who would dare come near. Now, what was once known as the Deep Well of Paradise has become a place the people of the deserts call the Hell of Eternal Thirst.

Whether sent on a holy errand or lured by rumors of ancient treasure to investigate the mythical Deep Well of Paradise—which legends place several days ride east from Kelmarane—generations of heroes, thieves, and arcanists have all vanished within the seemingly pristine garden without a trace. Those who brave the winding way into the nameless wastes must face a host of horrors; the most formidable, perhaps, the holy guardian called Assad Ashraf-Asim, an angelic creature of unearthly ferocity and power. Within the shadowed gardens, watched over

by the Lion of Five Heavens, dwells a blasphemous host of undead, victims to a most terrible series of curses.

“Hell of Eternal Thirst” is a wilderness adventure for four 8th-level characters. In addition to working as a standalone adventure, this Set Piece can easily supplement this month’s Adventure Path installment, “The Jackal’s Price,” or any other desert adventure.

IN THE ADVENTURE PATH

GMs seeking to incorporate this Set Piece into the month’s adventure, “The Jackal’s Price,” should have little trouble doing so, as Part Two: Long Road to Katapesh makes a natural place for its inclusion. Tales of missing caravans, hints of a rumored “secret route” to the country’s capital, or the pleas of Sarenrae’s faithful all might serve to draw the PCs’ curiosity. If devotees of the Dawnflower request that the party investigate the Deep Well of Paradise and return the holy sword lost within, they offer goods or gold worth approximately 3,400 gold pieces and a simple description of the location and how to find it.

hell of eternal thirst

Centuries ago, a never-failing oasis bloomed in the heart of the waste: the Deep Well of Paradise. Legendarily called into existence by the genie princess Avanashea herself, called by some the holy daughter of Sarenrae, the blessed oasis sustained those who suffered in the desert's unrelenting heat, proof against feral gnolls and cruel slavers. Those nomads who walk the blasted way between Ipeq and Katapesh know where the lost gardens lie, though now they grow untended. By night a terrible evil wakes there, thrice cursed, and screams echo forth across the parched wasteland with each sunset.

—*Tales of the Wandering Folk by Gebral al'Stadi*

Those who seek to learn more about the oasis known in legends as the Deep Well of Paradise can turn up some or all of the following information by making a Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), or Gather Information check among the people of Kelmarane or the desert's nomadic people. Each result notes which check might reveal the related information.

Check

DC Result

- 15 *Holy Waters:* Centuries ago, a hospice and healing temple dedicated to Sarenrae the Dawnflower was erected within an oasis set along the western branch of a now-defunct trade route crossing the wastelands between Katapesh and Ipeq. Fed by a dozen cold springs, the Deep Well of Paradise was a dear boon to those innocents who suffered in the unrelenting heat. (Any check.)
- 18 *Fatal Fall:* The sanctuary at the Deep Well of Paradise aided all who came to its door seeking succor for many years. Eventually, though, a foulness not even the Dawnflower's minions could purge crept into the temple, leaving many priests dead and leading the oasis to be abandoned. (Any check.)
- 23 *Crusader's Cause:* Some decades ago, a youthful paladin of Sarenrae journeyed forth into the haunted oasis to end the mysterious curse of that place and re-open the temple within the Deep Well of Paradise. To that end, she borrowed a potent holy blade from her church. She never returned. (Any check.)
- 25 *Holy Guardian:* A great lammasu calling himself the Lion of Five Heavens has recently taken up guardianship of the oasis. A devotee of the fierce Empyrean Lord Ragathiel, this potent creature called Assad Ashraf-Asim allows no mortal entrance to the Deep Well of Paradise. (Gather Information or Knowledge [local].)
- 25 *Beast of the Wastes:* For a time, the Deep Well of Paradise was the demesne of a clever and monstrous two-headed giant called Kasim-Qahar. The awful,

hulking thing dwelled within the oasis by night; by day, the ettin wandered far and wide devouring all he laid eyes upon, and brought a swift end to any further travel along the dust-choked road. (Knowledge [history]).

THE DEEP WELL OF PARADISE

Held and maintained by four wise and generous imams of Sarenrae's faith, the sanctuary of the Deep Well of Paradise was once a testament to the goddess's mercy. In time, the location of this cool, emerald place was discovered by the vampire Rotaimvei of Geb, a devotee of Urgathoa and servant to the Cinerarium, a necromancer of evil power and darkest cruelty.

Perhaps the priests attending the Deep Well of Paradise had somehow offended the Blood Lords of Geb, perhaps the Gebbite sought some mystical artifact within the walls of that place, or perhaps he snuffed out their lives purely for the love of spite. None can say. What is known is this: the four imams of the Deep Well of Paradise dwell there still, their slaving forms dragging forth each night from unhallowed, sunken sarcophagi, tattered vestments slicked and stuck to their pale forms, aching with the unholy thirst for fresh blood. Those who travel the legendary winding road to Ipeq meet only death.

In recent years, the paladin of Sarenrae, Fadiyah Al'Qiryim, journeyed to the oasis in hopes of reconsecrating the holy place in the name of the Dawnflower. The paladin failed in her task, though, and her panicked flight from the Four Unholy Imams brought her into the clutches of the cruel ettin Kasim-Qahar, whom she slew before finally succumbing to her wounds. The soul of beautiful Fadiyah al'Qiryim now haunts that place as a restless spectre—fortunately, her touch has yet to slay any travelers who seek to escape the four imams or the twisted surroundings by hiding within Sarenrae's defiled temple.

In the intervening years, the lammasu Assad Ashraf-Asim took up the cause of redeeming the oasis, but now

Deep Well of Paradise



finds himself overmatched. He has fought against the four spawn on multiple occasions, yet although he can best the beasts in combat, he cannot retrieve their tombs from the cold, black well that holds them 40 feet below. He allows no others to enter the oasis, for they might die and rise as undead themselves.

As the PCs travel through the Katapeshi wilderness they might spy a great winged creature gliding along the horizon with a DC 15 Spot check. While this check reveals that the flying creature is of exceptional size, much larger than any vulture or hawk, a result of 20 or higher is enough to confirm that the faraway beast is a quadruped, shaped like a hunting cat—perhaps a griffon, sphinx, or other winged predator. Any PC who makes a Spot check of 25 or higher is able to distinguish Assad Ashraf-Asim's bearded, human-like face, and a subsequent DC 17 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the creature as a lammasu, a virtuous creature often in the service of the divine.

Assad Ashraf-Asim, the Lion of Five Heavens, makes his presence as obvious as possible to incoming travelers as he patrols the routes that pass near the Deep Well of Paradise, hoping to scare away the faint of heart. By this time, the Deep Well of Paradise is not yet visible, still a half day's travel away.

Ashraf-Asim often rests upon a huge cairn outside of the oasis (area 1) from which he vigilantly monitors the path passing closest to the Deep Well of Paradise. With his keen eyesight, swift wings, divination spells, and powers of *greater invisibility* and *dimension door*, he is capable of intercepting nearly any approaching party.

1. The Lion of Five Heavens (EL 8)

From the desert wastes springs a seemingly impossible paradise, a miniature jungle of lush leaves, flowering fruits, and rustling brush surrounding a pool of crystalline water. A rise of ancient rock lifts what looks to be the remains of a gleaming marble mosque above this verdant sanctuary, the remains of a small brass dome glinting amid the cool shadows cast by the gently swaying palms.

From a distance, nothing appears out of the ordinary amid the Deep Well of Paradise. Those who come by the oasis at night, however, might make a DC 22 Spot check to hear strange, evil-sounding cavorting coming from within—the raucous, nightly debauches of the Four Unholy Imams and the spectral remains of the ghostly paladin Fadiyah al'Qiryam.

Creatures: The lush vegetation of the Deep Well of Paradise is visible in the distance when Assad Ashraf-Asim confronts the PCs. When the PCs come within 300 feet of the oasis, the Lion of Five Heavens approaches by air (if attacked, he uses his *greater invisibility* spell-like ability before landing), lands within 40 feet of them, and attempts to address the party. He moves to block their passage, and will watch closely to be certain that none of them makes a sudden run for the oasis.

The lammasu initiates this encounter; if the PCs are somehow hidden from him, this encounter does not occur immediately. If the party manages to slip past him, Ashraf-Asim seeks out the interlopers within the oasis itself, hoping to warn them away.

With a flicker of gold and wind, a great beast lands, dust and sand swirling around his mighty paws as powerful wings bring him safely to the barren earth. His form is that of a massive lion, a hunting hawk, and a burning angel all in one, and his regal countenance, at once stern and awesome, gazes out across the sands. True and ancient power radiates from his dark and fathomless eyes, and his voice is like a peal of thunder on distant mountains, a low roar made into speech.

“Foolhardy travelers, turn thee back and depart at once. The Lion of Five Heavens is guardian over this place. Swiftly, make thy departure—only death can be found here.”

Once the lammasu encounters the PCs, he demands that they leave. If the PCs hesitate, claim to be lost, or ask for a moment to confer privately among themselves, Assad Ashraf-Asim will allow them to remain where they are as long as they come no closer to the oasis. He retreats to a discreet distance and allows them to stay. The lammasu immediately begins casting *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, so as to listen in on their conversation—in his experience, travelers who speak privately for more than 5 minutes are invariably up to something sneaky. Should the party contain a priest or paladin of a lawful good deity (or other obvious servant of such a god) Ashraf-Asim respects their privacy. Regardless of the contents of the PCs’ discussion, or whether or not the lammasu is listening in, Ashraf-Asim interrupts after 10 minutes, insisting more fiercely that they cease their loitering and get on their way.

The lammasu begins as unfriendly, and will not allow the PCs to pass into the oasis under any circumstances. In his view, their force is too small, and they will all most likely die and become undead. He willingly converses with the PCs and, should he be made helpful, he might be convinced to allow them to enter the oasis against his better judgment—especially if they seek to reclaim the shrine of the Dawnflower. Worshipers of Ragathiel or Sarenrae gain a +2 bonus to any Diplomacy check made when dealing with Ashraf-Asim.

Wandering Encounters

Once inside the oasis, natural creatures corrupted by the presence of the curse-ruined mosque attack the PCs. Unless the GM decides otherwise, PCs exploring the thick vegetation of the Deep Well of Paradise have a 20% cumulative chance of encountering a group of hostile creatures every half hour. Use these encounters both to provide a break between undead-heavy fights and to keep PCs on their toes.

The befouled creatures instinctively avoid the lammasu (his otherworldly scent and his continuous *magic circle against evil* aura frighten them). The corrupted inhabitants of the Deep Well of Paradise feed primarily upon the pale fish in the central pool of the oasis and make occasional meals of desert scavengers who wander into the tree line in search of water. In turn, they are the favored prey of the Four Unholy Imams.

Unlike normal animals or vermin of their type, these creatures have both the evil subtype and an alignment of neutral evil.

Crawling Death: Swollen to huge and unholy proportions by the sickening power of Urgathoa, these simple-minded things feed off of carrion, birds, foliage and anything else they can reach. A mass of four Huge monstrous centipedes or one Gargantuan monstrous centipede (MM 298) both make EL 6 encounters.

Feral Apes: Bred from pets long ago gifted to the Dawnflower’s faithful by traveling magi from the Mwangi Expanse, these cunning beasts are vicious opponents who fight in swarms and attack from above. A company of seven to nine apes (MM 268) makes an EL 8 encounter.

Predatory Cats: Lethal hunters perfectly adapted to the grim conditions of the damned and benighted oasis, the panthers of the Deep Well of Paradise always strike suddenly, and from cover. A pack of five or six leopards (MM 274) equates to an EL 7 encounter.

If he is convinced to aid the PCs, charmed, or otherwise placated, Assad Ashraf-Asim shares a great deal of information as to the layout of the oasis, but only so that the PCs may pass the information onto others and leave this place unmolested. If forced, he will engage in combat.

An honorable combatant the equal of any paladin, Assad Ashraf-Asim asks his opponents to surrender, drop their weapons, or flee each round, leaving surrendering, unarmed, or fleeing opponents unmolested for the duration of the encounter. Assad Ashraf-Asim considers the violation of this surrender an evil act. PCs who return to combat after surrendering are assaulted with his full fury.

ASSAD ASHRAF-ASIM

CR 8

LG Medium lammasu

hp 59 (MM 165)

OFFENSE

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6/5/4/2; save DC 13 + spell level)

4th—*divine power*, *holy smite*^D

3rd—*blindness/deafness*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*^D, *daylight*, *dispel magic*

2nd—*aid*^D, *bear's endurance*, *hold person*, *resist energy*, *sound burst*

1st—*bless*, *command*, *detect evil*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *protection from evil*^D

o—*detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Good and Knowledge

TACTICS

Before Combat Assad Ashraf-Asim prepares for a fight by using his *greater invisibility* spell-like ability, then castigating his foes while taking flight and casting other spells upon himself. He attacks while invisible. If given the opportunity to cast several rounds of spells, Assad Ashraf-Asim combines *divine power*, his continuous *magic circle against evil*, *bear's endurance*, and *aid*.

During Combat Assad Ashraf-Asim uses *blindness/deafness* on obvious spellcasters and *hold person* on other combatants. If he believes he faces evil-aligned foes, Assad Ashraf-Asim does not hesitate to cast *holy smite*.

Morale If brought below 10 hit points, the lammasu uses his *greater invisibility* spell-like ability to retreat and heal.

Development: If honorably defeated but not slain, Assad Ashraf-Asim is suitably impressed with the PCs and will share with them the layout of the oasis, including the locations of the dilapidated sanctuary (area 3), the Rain of Hateful Thirst (area 2), and the Ruined Temple of the Dawnflower (area 5). If, after besting the Lion of Five Heavens, a good-aligned PC shows respect to the lammasu or heals his wounds, Assad Ashraf-Asim will give the party his blessing and his treasure.

Treasure: The Lion of Five Heavens possesses a *ring of sustenance* and three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, which he keeps within his cairn.

2. Rain of Hateful Thirst (EL 6)

A sickly, oily hue swirls beneath the deep blue surface of the oasis's broad pool. From these waters drifts a stench unlike any other; rot, sulfur, and bile seem to compose the majority of it, but another, more toxic stench hangs in the air, offensive and sickeningly sweet. The teeming desert plants recoil from the waters, circling the pool with a sandy beach. A foaming waterfall cascades into the pool from a steep nearby rise, and two small rocky islands float at its center, the sparkle of metal obvious upon their slick stones.

This broad pool once offered life to all the various plants and beasts of the Deep Well of Paradise. Now, though, its waters are tainted by a hidden corruption. Although legends say it once produced a shower of pure holy water whose curative powers could soothe even the most potent of ailments, the magic of this spring has been tainted to infect all who taste of it with a vile strain of supernatural ghoulish fever. Any creature who drinks of the pool must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract ghoulish fever, eventually becoming a lacedon. This curse can be undone by swimming to the bottom of the pool and destroying the large mosaic of rocks forming the symbol of the foul goddess Urgathoa there. The pool is, on average, 16-foot deep.

This place houses the majority of treasure taken from those who have visited the accursed oasis in the past decades. Most of it is piled in plain view upon the islands in the center of the water. Although it glitters like gold, a DC 22 Spot check reveals—even from a significant distance—that the bulk of the treasure heap is copper, silver, and brass.

Creatures: A coven of 7 lacedons lair within the oasis's depths. Clever predators, a small number of lacedons hide along the wet rocks next to the waterfall and within the thick overgrowth surrounding the pool, carefully pulled far enough back into the foliage that their awful stench won't give away their locations. Any who spot a living humanoid hisses a warning to any fellow lacedons nearby before stalking forward to ambush their prey. Once combat is joined, these creatures emerge, attempt to paralyze weak-looking characters, and then drag them (or throw them) into the water.

More than one coven of lacedons might occupy the Deep Well of Paradise. If the PCs make easy work of one group, consider adding a second or even third group that attacks at a later time. This encounter can also be incredibly deadly because of the combination of paralysis and water, so great care should be taken in such an instance.

LACEDONS (7)

CR 1

hp 13 (MM 119)

TACTICS

During Combat Aware that their stench and their swim speed are their deadliest physical skills, the lacedons try to swarm their foes, bringing as many of their kind as possible within 10 feet of multiple opponents at once. The lacedons attempt to drag paralyzed foes into the water to drown them (see page 304 of the DMG for details on suffocation).

Morale These creatures have nothing to lose, and fight with the panicked ferocity of the starving dead.

Treasure: Glittering mounds of silver and copper coins are set casually upon the two islands in the center of the

oasis, and a DC 18 Spot check notices a silver, ruby-set crown resting on a rock beside the waterfall—they are bait used by the ghouls to attract the unwary. All told, these coins and art objects are worth 3,600 gp.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs erase the symbol of Urgathoa hidden at the bottom of the pool, grant them experience for an EL 7 encounter.

3. Four Unholy Imams (EL 8)

A pile of rubble and burnt timbers lies upon the northern shore of the oasis, its wreckage long overgrown with brittle grasses and hairy vines. Nearby lie numerous shattered gravestones, each bearing the symbol of a sunburst that has been violently scratched out. A heap of wet rocks also marks the half-collapsed remains of a well, its mouth yawning into the darkness below.

This structure once served as a simple shrine to Sarenrae set amid a small garden. Here the Dawnflower's honored dead were laid to rest, their bodies committed to a place of endless beauty. With the destruction of Sarenrae's mosque, the Unholy Imams destroyed this shrine and defaced the holy symbols upon the nearby gravestones. Now, their coffins taint the water of the ruined well here, hiding them from the light and all trespassers.

Any creature who descends into the well here discovers the resting places of the Four Unholy Imams, four stone sarcophagi etched with a variety of blasphemous runes. Dredging the sarcophagi from the bottom of the 40-foot-deep well proves a difficult task—each one weighing 2,000 pounds. A simpler solution might appear to be to cast a spell like *stone shape* on the lip of the well itself or otherwise seal the top of the shaft, thus locking the vampires below. This is a dangerous resolution, however, as the vampire spawn, once sealed in the well, will eventually escape one way or another.

Creatures: The terrible vampire spawn awaken at nightfall and emerge moments later from their sunken stone sarcophagi within the well. Crawling swiftly from the water, the fell things hunt down the PCs as soon as they learn that fresh, humanoid blood is available. They are able to go anywhere except for area 5 within the Deep Well of Paradise, and this encounter might occur wherever the PCs find themselves when night falls.

The four vampire spawn enjoy tormenting their prey, often singing mocking, off-key hymns, speaking casually about terrible atrocities, or even loudly and blasphemously debating scripture. Because they can approach the PCs from multiple angles (including from above, using *spider climb* and *gaseous form*), their tactics often include surprise assaults. They do not fear death or violence in any way, and as such take little in the way of precaution when attacking.

THE UNHOLY IMAMS (4)

Vampire spawn (MM 253)

hp 29

TACTICS

During Combat The Four Unholy Imams attack in waves, trusting in their energy-draining strikes to wear down even the most potent foes. They use pack-hunting tactics to bring down single opponents; all four will attempt to grapple a single foe, trusting that one of them will succeed. Once grappling, the imams immediately begin draining the creature of blood.

Morale Resistant to non-silver weapons, able to heal swiftly from even the most grievous wound, and literally incapable of being permanently destroyed until their coffins are retrieved and unmade, these creatures only flee to regroup or re-coordinate attacks. If three are destroyed, the remaining imam flees back to the well to hide until his brothers heal.



4. The Pillar of Dawn Ascendant

A granite obelisk, easily more than 50 feet tall, stabs into the air here. While its upper reaches are featureless, its lower quarter bears all manner of crude scratches and perverse symbols. A small circle of crushed and blackened skulls caked in layers of melted red wax ring the base of the column, hinting at some manner of blasphemous rite performed here again and again.

When first discovered, this 80-foot-tall granite obelisk seems, from outer inspection, like some profane idol. In truth, though, the symbols of Urgathoa and other blasphemous inscriptions are but graffiti scrawled upon this holy monument by the Four Unholy Imams. Any character who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes this obelisk as a *sun spire*, a rare creation holy to the goddess of redemption. If cleaned and reconsecrated with holy water or *bless* (or a similar spell), this towering

monument might please the Dawnflower once more and serve as a font of her blessings and divine power. Cleansing the spire restores the holy power of the magical Pillar of Dawn Ascendant, causing its entire surface to gleam with supernatural radiance as if eternally catching the flash of sunrise, and reveals the following properties:

Righteous Rest: Any creature that sleeps within 20 feet of the Pillar of Dawn Ascendant is treated as if under long-term care, as per the Heal skill.

Hope of the New Day: The Pillar of Dawn Ascendant grants all non-evil creatures within 20 feet a +4 morale bonus on all saves to resist effects caused by evil creatures.

Burnt Sacrifice: After setting a small, ritualistic fire at the base of the obelisk and intoning a brief prayer, a good-aligned creature can request divine aid. The supplicant must burn to ash an amount of treasure or a magical item of value equal to or exceeding 1,000 gp. Doing so grants the supplicant and any allies within 20 feet the benefits of the spell *protection from evil* for 24 hours.

The Pillar of Dawn Ascendant is a powerful magical item similar to a minor artifact, and cannot be destroyed or moved from its location without rendering it inert.

5. Ruined Temple of the Dawnflower (EL 8)

Atop this overgrown bluff stands a bubbling pool of pristine water and the ominous shell of an abandoned mosque. Crumbling and scarred by the soot of some ancient fire, the interior is thoroughly burnt out, reducing the once gleaming edifice to nothing more than a forlorn husk. Nearby lie the broken bones of numerous humanoids, ravaged as if some great beast made a meal of these unfortunates long ago.

A steep slope rises to the ruins of what was once a beautiful desert mosque. Although the path to the holy place collapsed long ago, any creature who makes a DC 15 Climb check can make the 30-foot ascent to the bluff's top with little trouble.

This small mosque was once the holiest of holy sites within the oasis and generally closed to those travelers who did not venerate Sarenrae. It has fallen far from its past splendor, though, having been badly damaged by violence and by the passage of time. Terribly defiled by the vampire Rotaimvei, it now carries a unique curse: anything that dies within the mosque—an unholy site now dedicated to Urgathoa, the goddess of disease and undeath—rises as an unliving monstrosity, and any undead created slain within 30 feet of the mosque will rejuvenate (as per a ghost) in 2d4 days. The mosque radiates both a strong evil and a strong necromantic aura.

This broken holy place, a ruinous reflection of its former glory, sits here as the final violation struck down

upon Sarenrae's gift: a mass of scratched stones and shattered glass, painted with blasphemies to the goddess of disease. The floors of the minaret that once rose from the mosque have all burnt or fallen away, making it little more than an massive, empty stone cylinder. Once a large, shining brass symbol of Sarenrae adorned the mosque's façade, but it has been stripped away by Rotaimvei and his minions and sunk to the bottom of the nearby spring.

Once the temple was sacked and desecrated by Rotaimvei and his servants, he declared himself sole owner of the building's grounds and revoked the open invitation extended to all who worshiped Sarenrae and who truly desired succor. As such, the four imams cannot enter the building, a fact long ago employed to the advantage of the ettin Kasim-Qahar. If the PCs destroy the ettin skeleton and the spectre lairing here, they might use the location as a safe refuge from which to escape the imams.

As the two undead creatures lurk within the temple unless an intruder compels them to leave, any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Spot check detects of the presence of the ettin, standing—eerily quiet—within.

Creatures: Here lairs the insane remnants of the paladin Fadiyah al'Qiryim. The building is guarded over now by both the paladin's spectre and the reanimated skeleton of the ettin whom she slew before passing. Neither she nor the skeleton go far from the mosque for any reason, refusing to leave the bluff. Fadiyah al'Qiryim is trapped here. When she dies, though, her spirit does not dissipate, rather it is dragged screaming to the stain in the floor where her holy sword lies, hinting at the torment the spectre is too crazed to reveal.

SPECTRE OF FADIYAH AL'QIRYM

CR 7

Spectre (MM 232)

hp 45

TACTICS

Before Combat Antagonistic to all life, the paladin's spectre sinks into the floor near her fallen holy sword when she becomes aware of intruders. She emerges and attacks when she hears footfalls come near her, or when PCs are engaged in combat with the ettin skeleton.

During Combat Fadiyah focuses her attacks on divine casters, hoping to slay them with her energy drain and create more spectres to share in her eternal misery. She is a frighteningly intelligent combatant, and will remain within the floor—using it as cover and striking using blind-fighting. Fadiyah makes a more direct assault if the PCs obtain her fallen sword or damage the roof, fearing the sunlight that will fill her gravesite if the ceiling is removed.

Morale Because she secretly hopes only to be destroyed, Fadiyah fights until reduced to 0 hit-points. The curse of the temple, however, returns her to existence after 2d4 days.

hell of eternal thirst

CORPSE OF KASIM-QAHAR

Ettin skeleton (MM 227)

hp 65

TACTICS

During Combat Frighteningly quick for its size and power, the corpse of the two-headed giant attacks any creature it can, smashing them with its morningstars. It pursues fleeing opponents, but will not leave the bluff under any circumstances.

Morale As a fearless and mindless undead being, the skeleton fights until destroyed.

Treasure: The borrowed holy sword *Dawn's Swift Burning* lies here, unused, upon a stain of dried blood that represents the last physical remains of the Dawnflower's servant, Fadiyah. *Dawn's Swift Burning* is a +1 holy longsword, but only works as such while exposed to the light of day; at all other times it is a mere +1 longsword.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Any PCs devoted to Sarenrae can make a DC 23 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check to recognize Fadiyah al'Qiryim and the tale of her disappearance. Those who witness her death might also make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check to note that her soul did not seem to depart, but rather became trapped within the bloodstained mosque. PCs who retrieve the paladin's holy sword and cast a *remove curse* spell upon either it or the bloody floor release the spirit of

CR 5

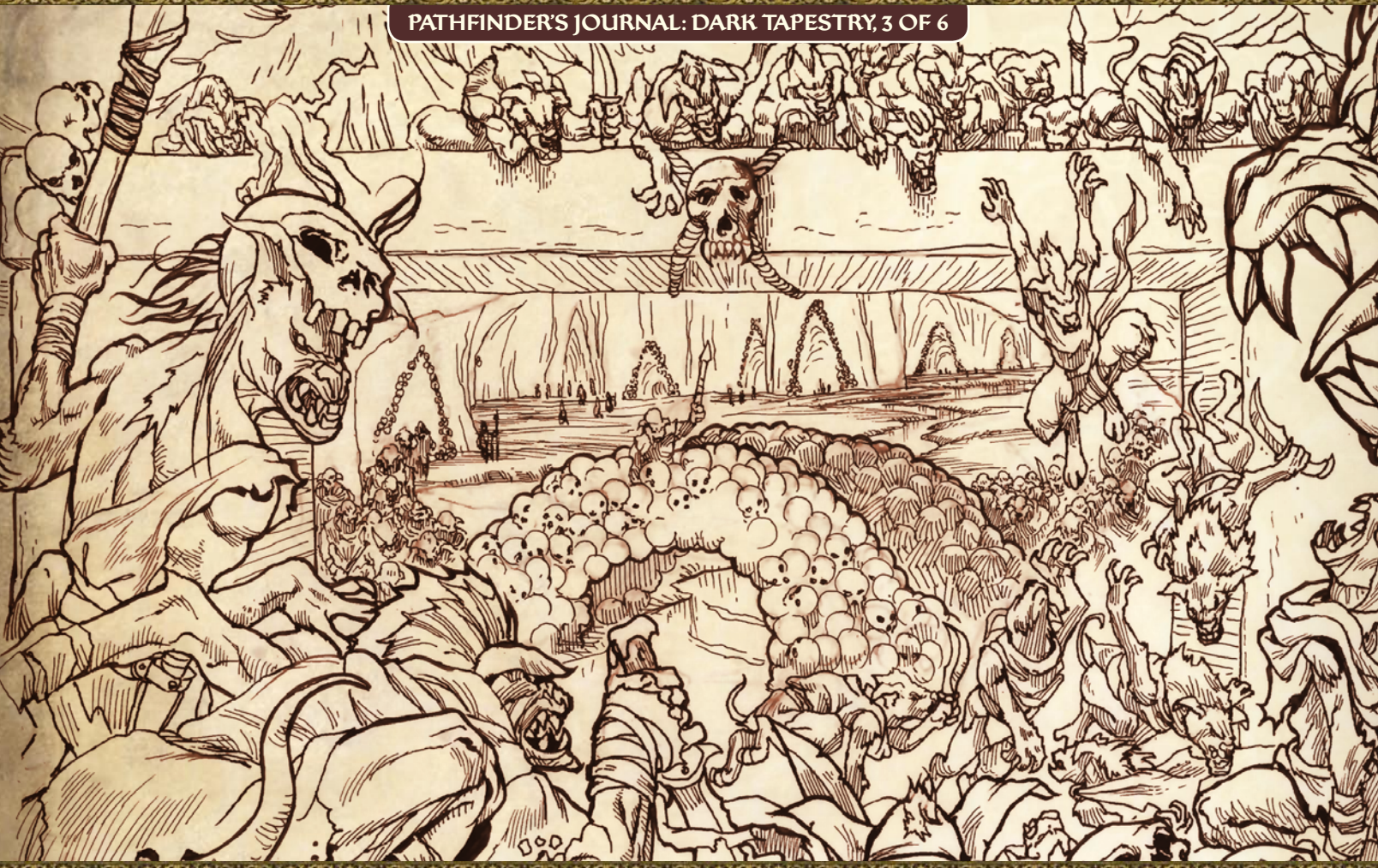
Fadiyah al'Qiryim. Parties that perform such an exorcism gain experience for an EL 6 encounter. Likewise, the undead-rejuvenating quality of this shrine to Urgathoa can be undone with another *remove curse* and grants the same experience bonus.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on the goals and motives of the PCs, they may conclude the adventure in a number of ways. If they seek only to confirm the existence of this mythic oasis, they may escape with any looted treasure at any time. If their cause is a holy or heroic one, though, they might not be satisfied until all of the undead haunting the Deep Well of Paradise have been slain, the icons of Urgathoa have been erased, the Four Unholy Imams laid to final rest, *Dawn's Swift Burning* is retrieved, and the temple reconsecrated to Sarenrae. Those who return *Dawn's Swift Burning* to another temple of Sarenrae and relate their tale are handsomely rewarded, either with treasures valued at upwards of 7,000 gp, or with other boons. However, if the PCs did not realize that Fadiyah al'Qiryim's soul still has not reached its eternal rest, priests of Sarenrae might prove hesitant to believe the party—or not reward them until her spirit is exorcised. Clearing the oasis of threats greatly pleases the church of the Dawnflower and the lammasu Assad Ashraf-Asim, who promises to heal and protect the Deep Well of Paradise as a desert sanctuary for as long as he lives.

assad
ashraf-asim





Raising the Green Flag

I had no problem blending into the crowd, despite being taller than any of the women and most of the men.

Ziloth was a small market town just north of the border between Osirion and Katapesh, and people of all sorts passed through. The rapt faces turned toward the Pool of Justice ranged in hue from sand-colored to ebony. I fell somewhere in the middle, and as long as I covered my ears with a headscarf, people assumed I was a woman from the Mwangi Expanse. Without the scarf, I'd probably join the "criminals" awaiting their turn in the dunking stool.

Not that half-elves are hated in Osirion, exactly, but we are solitary in nature and therefore unlikely to be missed; in short, we're the sort of people the magistrate's men would seek out if the day's entertainment was deemed insufficient.

Ziloth's magistrate was a tall man with the red-brown skin common to well-born Osirians. Naked to the waist and wearing a gilded mask and a fortune in cloth-of-gold kilted around his hips, he stood on the dais surrounding

the pool, gazing intently into the roiling water. Suddenly he raised his jackal-headed staff and brought it sharply down on the wooden platform.

The water wraiths had passed judgment.

A murmur of anticipation rippled through the crowd as two of the magistrate's servants feverishly turned cranks, one of which was attached to the gears and pulleys that lifted the dunking stool from the pool, the other a smaller crank that raised a banner proclaiming the verdict. As the green flag rose, the crowd erupted into cheers and groans, depending upon the wagers they'd made.

"Guilty," said the man standing to my left. The satisfaction ringing through his voice raised my curiosity, even before he added, "May the embalmers piss on his rotting corpse."

Now, Osirians are fond of cursing each other, but most are content to cast aspersions on a man's lineage or question the nature of his relationship with camels.

Embalming touches upon the afterlife; it's a serious matter, never invoked lightly.

I elbowed the speaker to get his attention. "That man did you wrong?"

"Man?" He turned away and spat on the ground. "Long-eared spawn of a two-legged jackal."

Ah. An elf, then.

I smirked to acknowledge his opinion of my half-kin and turned my attention back to the dais. The magistrate's servants plucked several sinuous, foot-long lizards from the condemned elf's body and tossed them back into the pool. There was no denying that the water wraiths were very green indeed.

Native to the Mwangi Expanse, the color-changing lizards known as water wraiths can match their surroundings so perfectly as to appear invisible. In open waters, they can grow to nearly the length of crocodiles, and they're every bit as vicious. They can tear their prey to shreds with the talons on their eight short, powerful legs, but prefer to latch on and suck blood like lampreys. They possess a sort of dim intelligence and are able to change their color at will. Local superstition claims water wraiths prefer the blood of the innocent. Since the creatures frequently turn red as they enter feeding frenzy, red is considered the color of innocence. Assuming the magistrate's men can pull the lizards off in time, the exonerated party is free to go.

A cynical person might look to the three bodies tossed to one side of the dais and assume the lizards' latest verdict had more to do with their full bellies than the elf's guilt. I knew better. Years ago, I took the shape of a water wraith to battle elves who meant me harm. It is impossible to take a creature's shape without also knowing something of its mind and habits. From this experience I learned that, in the opinion of water wraiths, elves are not very tasty.

Strangely enough, most of the elves I've met would probably be insulted by this news.

As the magistrate's men dragged the condemned elf to his feet, a shock of recognition jolted through me. I knew him. He was a merchant who traded with the elves of the Mwangi Expanse throughout my childhood.

"What is his crime?" I asked my new acquaintance.

The man spat again. "He killed a friend of mine. Poison." "Yucami blossoms?"

His eyes widened, then narrowed in suspicion. "How did you know?"

This required no great feat of divination on my part. Yucami grew in the Mwangi jungles. Burning a very small amount of dried flowers in a censor cleared the lungs and drove off fever. But some humans had taken to drinking the potent smoke directly from small pipes. The result was extreme euphoria, occasionally followed by

death. Few elves would dare sell the herb to humans for fear of this very result.

"Did your friend purchase the yucami?"

The man sent me a quick, sidelong glance. "The elf cheated him," he said defensively. "He charged too much for his medicines. My friend only took enough to balance the scales. The yucami was poisoned. The water wraiths prove this to be so."

A familiar howl cut through the crowd, saving me from the urge to point out the fallacies in this argument. The time of prophecy and divination was past, but people devised new ways to avoid thinking and they did not thank you for challenging them. Besides, I had more important matters to attend. Ratsheek, my oath-bound friend and longtime enemy, was about to answer for her many crimes.

I pushed through the crowd toward the dais as three sweating, red-faced men dragged a cloaked and hooded figure up the stairs to the platform—a gnoll, if the exposed feet, tipped with claws and covered with sand-colored fur, were any indication. Even with her ankles hobbled with a short chain and her hands bound, the gnoll put up an impressive resistance.

The crowd hummed with excitement. Wagers flew and markers changed hands as the executioners wrestled the cursing, struggling gnoll into the dunking stool. When she was secured, the magistrate whisked off the hood with a theatrical flourish. At this signal, the crowd quieted. The magistrate recited Ratsheek's crimes, a lengthy list that nonetheless omitted most of her truly interesting offenses.

Once I sorted through the lies and dramatic flourishes, it came down to this: Ratsheek had been caught spending more money than she could explain to her tribe. From there, it was easy enough to figure out what had brought her to the dunking stool. I had recently escaped from Ratsheek's band of gnoll slavers in Katapesh, only to be unjustly accused of robbing and killing an extremely wealthy woman on the island of Chiron. If word of my supposed crime reached the gnolls, they would almost certainly assume Ratsheek had set me free for a share of the stolen money. To make up for the theft of their property—that would be me—the gnolls sold Ratsheek to the magistrate's men.

Once the charges had been read, the magistrate gestured to one of his men. The servant pulled a long, curved knife from his sash and sliced through the ties securing the gnoll's cloak. Two more men dragged the tattered garment away.

A sharp bark of laughter escaped me. For the water wraiths' convenience, Ratsheek had been shaved from neck to ankle.

The gnoll's head snapped toward me and her gaze found mine. For a moment she went very still, and the

malevolence in her eyes was nearly a living thing. Several people stepped out of the path of it before they realized what they were doing.

Ratsheek's hairless chest swelled as she drew in air to cry out some sort of accusation against me. But the magistrate's staff came down, and her shout was swallowed by water as the dunking stool plunged into the pool.

Immediately I reached out to the water wraiths, none too hopeful I'd be able to connect with them in time. But they were creatures of water, and their feral minds swam comfortably against the currents of my own. Two of them, in particular, seemed receptive to the image I sent their way, the unusual pattern and play of color—

The frantic pounding of the staff against the dais shattered my communion with the color-changing lizards.

"Get the gnoll out. Get her out!" shrieked the magistrate, nearly dancing with impatience and terror.

His men frantically worked the cranks and ropes, and Ratsheek shot out of the water like a leaping dolphin. Two water wraiths clung to her shoulders, their long tails draped over her shaved chest.

A deep, stunned silence fell over the market crowd.

The water wraiths had taken on a pattern of color, a sunset-to-midnight sweep that moved from rose and gold at the tails to twilight purple torsos to heads the black of a night sky. I'd taken a chance that the people of Ziloth would recognize the pattern of the Night Heralds' robes.



The look of shock frozen onto dozens of faces indicated that they did.

I tucked this information away for further consideration as I pushed my way up to the dais. The magistrate's servants were falling over each other in their eagerness to free the gnoll and send her off to her supposed masters. They stopped babbling apologies when I climbed the stairs to the dais.

I shook out the sand-colored wrap I'd bought for the trek through the Brazen Peaks and held it out to Ratsheek.

"Your cloak, my lady," I said in deferential tones.

Generally speaking, it is better to be thought a servant to evil folk than someone who can wield her own share of dark power. Few heroes feel compelled to challenge a mere servant, and the craven leave you alone for fear of inconveniencing your masters.

The gnoll's eyes narrowed in speculation, but she quickly donned both the cloak and the role. The cloak swirled around her as she spun and flowed dramatically behind as she stalked through the swiftly parting crowd. I fell in meekly, swallowing a smile at her grand performance.

We didn't speak until we'd left Ziloth by the northern gate and were well beyond the ears of the watching guards.

"You saved my life," she said as she strode northward, her voice expressionless and her eyes forward. "If this has something to do with that oath we swore—"

"Ratsheek." The smile in my voice brought her to a stop. "You are speaking to Channa Ti."

"Right." She resumed walking. "In that case, what do you want?"

"I need to get to Sothis."

"So? Take passage on a ship."

"Ordinarily I would, but I have to keep away from the ports."

The gnoll cut her gaze in my direction, and her lips peeled away from her teeth in a canine sneer. "Banned from the seas, water witch? What did you do now?"

"I stand accused of murder. Falsely accused."

Ratsheek waved away that distinction as irrelevant. "Anyone I know?"

"Do you know anyone on Chiron?"

Understanding swept over her face, closely followed by a swift, short blaze of wrath. She eyed me thoughtfully, a mixture of incredulity and respect in her black eyes.

That told me several important things. First, Ratsheek had come to the same conclusion as I had about her tribe's betrayal. Second, she knew about

"When your whole justice system is a lizard, something is very wrong."

the Night Heralds and she knew they had a presence in Chiron. She assumed I had aligned myself with them, which surprised her but also earned her approval. And since Ratsheek approved of profit about all else, I surmised that she expected to do very well on this venture.

I named a generous sum. "I will pay you this now, and twice that when we cross the Brazen Peaks. The village of Posdam is a day's walk beyond the mountains. A moneylender there is holding funds for me."

Ratsheek responded with laughter—a short, bitter burst of staccato yips. "When people call me a bitch, that is not an insult but a statement of fact. When I call you a bitch—"

"That is both insult and fact," I broke in impatiently. "Yes, I know you can't safely enter your tribe's territory, any more than I can."

"My punishment for saving you from slavery," she snarled.

I didn't bother to respond. The last time I crossed the Brazen Peaks, Ratsheek led the band of gnolls that attacked the treasure hunters I was guiding. The gnolls killed them all and brought me to the slave markets of Katapesh. Yes, Ratsheek had arranged my escape, but only so she could pocket a generous fee from my current employer rather than share my slave price with her fellow gnolls. And her tribe, tired of her self-serving ways, had not been forgiving.

"You're a rogue," I said calmly. "Condemned to live and die alone, without clan or tribe."

"Bitch."

"We've covered that. Despite all, you could find a new tribe, one that would revere you as a goddess."

Ratsheek sent a cautious glance my way. "Go on."

"You've heard of the pugwampis?"

She spun toward me and slammed her fist into my jaw, rocking my head painfully to one side and sending me staggering back a step or two. I shook away the stars careening around the edges of my vision and ducked under her second, wilder swing.

"You would have me join a tribe of *jackal rats*?" she growled.

"They're intelligent creatures," I said as I backed away, both hands lifted in a conciliatory gesture.

"They're hideous, hairless, thieving little monsters!"

Other than "little," this description fit Ratsheek admirably. For a moment I was tempted to twitch aside the folds of her cloak to underscore this point. The raw fury on her face suggested this would be an unwise plan.

"The pugwampis control tunnels that run under the Brazen Peaks. They build cities. They create art."

Ratsheek lowered her fists. "Art?"

"Of a sort. And they are, as you pointed out, thieves. I won't argue that their lairs rival dragons' hoards, but they do very well."

The gnoll considered this. "You've discovered these underground lairs?"

I shrugged modestly. Actually, this "discovery" had been entirely accidental. I'd followed an old map into a forgotten tunnel system under the Brazen Peaks. Unfortunately, jackal rats had claimed most of those tunnels since the map's creation.

"If you know the way, why do you need me?"

A fair question, but one I'd hoped to avoid. "The tunnel follows an underground river that passes through a cavern in which the pugwampi swarm has built a city. I could get through the cavern in animal form, but I can only call upon that magic so often."

"And you've spent that particular coin today."

I nodded. I'd used up my daily allotment of shape-shifting magic in the early morning hours to escape from the Night Herald's grotto. I disliked admitting this or any other weakness to Ratsheek. The speculative expression on her face did little for my peace of mind.

"So why not wait until tomorrow?"

Why? Because I was wanted for murder, because I had just left a town where elves were suspect and half-elves were easy prey, because I was competing with an imp for a prize of unknown power and importance. Oh, and because the real Night Heralds would soon hear the details of my little rescue.

"Why?" I echoed. "Because you need my help. Because I wish to honor our oath of aid and friendship."

Ratsheek snorted. "If you want to keep your reasons to yourself, just say so."

We walked in silence into the foothills. At my direction, Ratsheek brushed the sand away from the base of a steep rock butte. A broad canine grin stretched her muzzle as her fingers found the edges of the stone doorway.

Working together, we edged it aside and crawled into the low-ceilinged tunnel. On hands and knees, we crawled for what seemed like hours. I was grateful when the sun set, and for more than one reason.

Some druids can sense the turning of the world, the rise and set of the sun and moon. I am not among them, but I can feel the rising tide of my own druidic powers. Most people greet the new day at dawn. In my tradition, a new day began at sunset.

"Too dark," muttered Ratsheek behind me, a note of panic skirting the edges of her voice. "Too small."

"It opens up when we get to the river. There're glowing fungi in plenty there. You won't have any problem seeing."

"Are you sure you're going the right way?" she complained.

I stopped crawling and let Ratsheek close the distance between us. When I deemed the moment right, I kicked straight back. My boot connected solidly with the gnoll's snout.

When she'd stopped cursing me, I observed, "And what would you have done, had I questioned your sense of smell?"

A long moment of silence followed. "Good point," she said grudgingly.

We continued on our way. The unmistakable sound of water running over stone lent new energy to the gnoll and had her nipping at my heels, literally and painfully. I picked up the pace, and soon we rolled from the tunnel and rose gratefully to our feet.

As I stretched out my cramped muscles, Ratsheek studied the rough rock walls, her black eyes alight with greed.

"There's no gold in these mountains, but that mica glitters brightly enough to part many a fool from his money. Perhaps the pugwampis can be taught mining. Can they use tools?"

"In a few moments, you can judge that for yourself."

The river was narrow, little more than a creek, but its song grew louder as we followed the path around a sharp bend. Ahead, the water fell in a steep, narrow spill. The lichen here glowed an eerie green, and the restless mists swirling around the lichen-clad rocks resembled verdant ghosts.

This strange beauty was utterly lost on Ratsheek. The gnoll's gaze remained fixed on the stone carvings lining

the walls, a frieze that depicted life-sized gnolls in fierce battle. The carvings were primitive and time had worn away some of the finer detail, but I'd seen less impressive sculpture in the collections of princes.

"The pugwampis carved these?" Ratsheek marveled, tracing a stone muzzle with one claw. She snatched a smaller figure out of a stone niche. "And these?"

I nodded. "I'd leave that where it is, at least for the time being. That might be an object of veneration."

The gnoll set down the idol. "Well then," she said brightly. "The sooner I see you through this warren of tunnels, the sooner I can collect my fee and start rebuilding my fortune."

There was something in her tone I mistrusted, but I needed her to get through the pugwampis. I started down the rough stairs carved into the steeply descending path, wet from the waterfall's spray. We made our way to the bottom, where the falls ended in a deep pool. The river disappeared there, winding down into many narrow passages. These trickles of water converged under the cavern floor, and reemerged as a deeper, swifter stream on the far side of the cavern.

The cavern combined meeting place, fest hall, armory, and temple. Some of the alcoves chipped into the walls held collections of weapons, others were larders of game: burrowing animals such as hares and ground squirrels, pale fish pulled from the underground river. The stone floor sloped down toward a bloodstained dolmen, over which presided the statue of a snarling gnoll. Piles of skulls, many of which appeared to be human, decorated the pugwampi temple. Beyond, a bridge of skulls led over the reemerging river.

A quick, light skittering was my only warning. Before I could draw breath to give the alarm, the pugwampi swarm roiled out of a side tunnel beyond the falls and raced toward us.

They moved like rats, unruly and disorganized, careening off each other and pushing two or three hapless creatures over the edge of the pool as they went. But they moved forward, and they moved fast.

I have seldom seen more hideous creatures. Only a foot tall and boasting no more than a few stray tufts of hair, the pugwampis were gray-skinned and rat-tailed, and they resembled small misshapen gnolls. Like gnolls, they ran on two powerful hind legs. With their long-fingered hands they clutched knives nearly the length of their arms, and their dripping fangs and gleaming red eyes gave them the look of demonic lapdogs.



"You can always trust a gnoll—to do exactly as she pleases."

Ratsheek's howl rang through the cavern and brought the swarm to a dead stop. She strode forward, putting herself between me and the pugwampis, then tossed back the hood of her cloak.

"Oooooooh," murmured the swarm. I have never heard a sound that was at once so deeply reverent and so profoundly creepy.

Their excitement grew when the gnoll flipped the cape back over her shoulders, revealing her nearly hairless form. I did not need to understand their language to get the gist of their high-pitched chittering. A gnoll come to their cavern was marvel enough, but this creature was like them. A gigantic pugwampi hero of legend, or a minor deity, or a great priestess—

Ratsheek seized me and flung me over her shoulder. She strode down toward the dolmen altar.

"Definitely a priestess," I murmured.

"One who brings her own sacrifice," the gnoll added smugly.

I saw little sense in struggling, not with a small army of devout, knife-wielding pugwampis trailing behind.

"There's no sense, I suppose, in reminding you that you gave your word to see me through to the other side."

"None whatsoever," Ratsheek agreed cheerfully. "Vows are for children and fools, and neither of us are children."

When we reached the other side of the cavern, Ratsheek climbed the dolmen and flung me down onto the capstone. The pugwampis encircled the altar, again a roiling rat-swarm. They jostled each other, their weapons held high as they vied for the honor of lending the sacrificial knife.

Ratsheek knelt at the dolmen's edge and reached down to accept a blade.

I seized the moment and changed.

A water wraith the size and weight of a tall half-elf is a powerful, powerful creature. One swat of my tail was enough to send Ratsheek pitching into the crowd of her followers, and onto their upraised blades.

They went down under her weight, a score of them or more, shrieking and chittering in outrage. I leaped onto the bridge Ratsheek's body provided, and my eight feet were wet with her blood as I ran for the bridge of skulls.

Before I slipped into the water, I met the gnoll's gaze for a brief moment, touched a bloody forefoot to my snout, and willed my borrowed form to turn bright green.

Let her make of that what she would.

Stars gleamed overhead as I crawled out of the dry streambed that marked the end of the tunnels through the Brazen Peaks. Three days had passed since I abandoned my water wraith form. In another day, I would reach Posdam, where I would instruct a certain moneylender to pay Ratsheek the money I promised her.

Water Wraiths

Water wraiths are eight-legged aquatic lizards native to the Mwangi Expanse, but frequently exported to the rest of Garund as exotic pets due to their ability to change color at will. Tenacious and cunning predators, water wraiths lie still in ponds and rivers waiting for prey to come within range. When it does, the lizards rush forward, their eight powerful legs equally adept on land or in water, and latch onto the unfortunate creatures with toothy, lamprey-like mouths, bleeding them dry.

In addition to their roles as exotic pets or savage guard dogs, water wraiths have spawned numerous superstitions stemming from their color-changing abilities and uncanny intelligence. In some areas it is believed that the lizards turn red (the color of a feeding frenzy) when feeding on the innocent, and green if their prey has a guilty conscience.

While most captive water wraiths are kept underfed and rarely grow beyond 2 feet in length, in the wild they can reach a dozen feet long. Use the statistics for standard lizards (MM 275) or monitor lizards (MM 275) to represent stunted or wild specimens, but with an Intelligence score of 2 and a swim speed of 40 for each.

I couldn't know if Ratsheek had survived, or if so, whether or not she would try to collect her fee. Having gone back on her word, she probably expected me to do the same.

But to my mind, the gnoll had done her part, exactly as I'd expected.

Ratsheek had betrayed me before and I expected her to do so again, and in the most dramatic means available to her. I'd taken note of that altar, that pile of skulls, and expected her to act as she had.

The gnoll probably didn't believe me when I said I couldn't change to animal form again that day. I didn't expect her to, not until she saw me keep my half-elf form when the pugwampi swarm attacked. She had no way of knowing that none of the creatures whose form I could take were small enough to squeeze through the passage between the waterfall's pool and the river beyond the pugwampi temple. She took me to the other side, just as I'd asked. So I would pay her agreed-upon wage, just as I'd promised, and I would hope she lived to collect it.

We were neither of us children, but Ratsheek was wrong about two things: First, I am no one's fool. And though I might pretend otherwise, a vow means something to me. When I give my word, I do my best to keep it.

But because I'm no fool, I don't expect anyone else to do the same.



Bestiary: Creatures of Katapesh

Beasts of the desert depths, strange things from beyond, and horrors akin to the imprisoned god of disaster roam this month's entry into the *Pathfinder* Bestiary. Combining legends of the Middle East and films like *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, the ferocious and gigantic two-headed rukh ravenously seeks prey, not just for itself, but for its squawking young. The massive hadhayosh and clanking tophet also draw upon the legends of the region, bringing fire and devastation—sometimes unintentionally and sometimes all too cruelly—to the realms they travel. Terrifying servants of unimaginable evils also take shape from the desert sands. The first takes the form of yet another new div, the leonine shir, who stalks the dusty darkness like the savage hunters they resemble. The other is the half-formed spawn of the god of calamity, the twisted emkrah, living blasphemous born from the body of Rovagug himself. Whether from ancient lore or the minds of twisted immortals, more than heat and thirst conspire to ruin any who would brave Katapesh's deadly wilds.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Traveling through Katapesh's vast deserts and savannahs, the PCs might encounter all manner of strange animals and deadly creatures. From the wild life that flourishes upon these dusty expanses to determined travelers, native people and terrible monstrosities born from the desert heart, Katapesh's central reaches are anything but lifeless. Noted here are just a few of the creatures characters might encounter on their journey from Kelmarane to the fabulous city of Katapesh, but GMs might add any creature that favors the sandy desert depths or rugged veldt.

Beasts: A number of distinct creatures roam the vast Katapeshi wilds. Lions, scorpions, camels, and other beasts can be found with some frequency, as can herds of gazelle (uses the stats for ponies). More unusual monstrous creatures also occasionally appear, such as the rare but massive and terrifying desert worms (use the stats for purple worms).

No one traveled the Path of the Mother's Cry, the desert peoples calling it the route of sobs and black feathers. Its canyon walls and rocky cairns rose like monuments to false gods, golden and beauteous yet wrong in ways both numerous and deep. Past the chasm's entrance the Hundred Princes of Silver trod; past the carved warnings of old the hundred merchant kings rode. Although the rift path looked empty from its mouth, a bend and a curve beyond lay a sultan's ransom, a treasure vault cast into the sands, gleaming through the dust and skeletons of shattered chests. A moment's awe, then like jackals the princes leapt, never a care for whose gold they shoveled into their sleeves, never a wonder at the fates of such riches' past owners. And in their jubilation, none noticed the fast shadow, nor heard the first of the Mother's cries.

—Shazathared, *The Hundred Princes of Silver*

Caravan: These native merchants brave the wilds on their way to Katapesh or more distant markets. This band of numerous human commoners (porters) and experts (traders) are guarded by 2d4 2nd-level human warriors (see page 13), well prepared to fend off desert raiders and simple threats. Although they begin with an unfriendly attitude, any offering of extra water or legitimate offer to buy their goods or sell valuable treasures goes far in making them friendlier. Shrewd and experienced, the caravan's traders know the demanding ways of the desert and the often desperate situations of travelers, and thus buy items at a mere 70% of their actual value and sell their goods at an inflated 125%. Should the merchants be made helpful, though, they buy and sell at standard prices. Although most of their goods are basic equipment and fine but mundane textiles (usually valued around 1,200 gp), there is a 20% chance that the merchants have for sale 1d4 items randomly determined from the table on page 247 of the DMG.

Dragon: Katapesh is no stranger to dragons. Numerous blue wyrms of varying ages make their homes amid desert ruins and arid cairns. Brass dragons roam the land as well, favoring serene oases. More rarely, red dragons might wander from their mountainous homes to feast upon the beasts of the savannah, and bronze dragons may also be seen upon occasion soaring from the mountains over the plains. An encounter with a juvenile blue or brass dragon makes for an EL 8 encounter.

Nomads: Numerous tribes of human nomads wander the depths of central Katapesh. While some are peaceful hunters, others survive by preying upon travelers. In either case, these natives are a proud lot, obsessed with traditions of honor and suspicious of outsiders. Should the PCs encounter a band of nomads, there is a 35% chance they are hostile raiders. While more peaceful nomads are typically comprised of 2d10 2nd-level warriors and a 2nd-level rogue leader, raiders often travel in bands of 2d4 2nd-level rogues (see page 30 for these stats).

Random Encounters in Katapesh

| d% | Encounter | Avg. EL | Source |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1–5 | 1 camel | 1 | MM 270 |
| 6–7 | 1 death dog | 2 | ToHR 91* |
| 8–14 | 2d12 gazelles ^B | 3 | MM 277 |
| 15–16 | 2d8 human skeletons | 3 | MM 225 |
| 17–19 | 2d6 Small monstrous scorpions | 3 | MM 287 |
| 20–25 | Caravan | 4 | — |
| 26–28 | 2d4 dhabbas | 4 | <i>Dark Markets</i> 60** |
| 29–31 | 1 griffon | 4 | MM 139 |
| 32–38 | 2d6 hyenas | 4 | MM 274 |
| 39–40 | 1 basilisk | 5 | MM 23 |
| 41–43 | 1d4 Large monstrous scorpions | 5 | MM 287 |
| 44–45 | 1 sand eel | 5 | <i>Dark Markets</i> 61** |
| 46–48 | 1 ant lion | 6 | ToHR 18* |
| 49–52 | 1 deathworm | 6 | ToHR 92* |
| 53–55 | 1d6 juvenile rukhs | 6 | <i>Pathfinder</i> #21 |
| 56–59 | 1d6 lions | 6 | MM 274 |
| 60–65 | Nomads | 7 | — |
| 66 | 1d4 ghuls | 7 | <i>Dark Markets</i> 62** |
| 67–70 | 1 dragonne | 7 | MM 89 |
| 71–73 | 1d6 genies, jann | 7 | MM 114 |
| 74–77 | 1 gynosphinx | 8 | MM 232 |
| 78–80 | 1 lammasu | 8 | MM 165 |
| 81–84 | 1d4 lamias | 8 | MM 165 |
| 85–86 | 1d8 hieracosphinxes | 9 | MM 234 |
| 87–89 | 1 roc | 9 | MM 215 |
| 90–91 | 1 div, shir | 10 | <i>Pathfinder</i> #21 |
| 92–94 | 1d8 lamias | 10 | MM 165 |
| 95–97 | 1d4 rukhs | 12 | <i>Pathfinder</i> #21 |
| 98–99 | 1 desert worm ^B | 12 | MM 211 |
| 100 | Dragon | Varies | — |

* *Tome of Horrors Revised*

** *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh*

^B See the Beasts entry on page 76



Div, Shir

With each step this brutal figure takes, dust and ash shakes free from its tawny, fur-covered frame. The creature's head resembles a lioness, with dead, black eyes staring forth above a vicious leonine muzzle. Powerful shoulders support muscular arms ending in cruel claws, while a thick tail lashes the air in irritation. Despite its bulk, this creature moves with a silent, deadly grace.

Div, Shir

Always NE Large outsider (div, evil, extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, see in darkness, true seeing; Listen +20, Spot +20

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20
(+5 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 126 (1d8+77)

Fort +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13

DR 10/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resistance** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 20

CR 10

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee 2 claws +18 (1d6+8) and bite +16 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks consume essence, improved grab, rend (2d6+12)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 13th)

3/day—*magic circle against good*, *waves of fatigue*

At will—*greater teleport* (self only plus 50 pounds of objects only)

TACTICS

Before Combat When stalking a victim, a shir utilizes its *true seeing* spell-like ability to prepare itself for any unseen defenses its prey might possess. Before closing in combat, it makes use of *magic circle against good*.

During Combat In combat, a shir eagerly charges toward its victim, staying close to attack with its vicious claws and bite, making use of its *waves of fatigue* ability if multiple enemies are nearby. Against a particularly nimble and mobile foe, it attempts a grapple in order to immobilize the creature.

Morale A shir has no fear and no regrets. It fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 21, **Con** 24, **Int** 13, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +23

Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Run

Skills Balance +19, Climb +22, Hide +15, Intimidate +19, Jump +25, Listen +20, Move Silently +19, Spot +20, Survival +20, Tumble +14

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ dusty pelt, summon div

ECOLOGY

Environment Abaddon

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 11–22 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Consume Essence (Su) A shir's deadliest attacks drain away a portion of its victim's essence. Whenever a shir scores a critical hit or makes a coup de grace attack using its bite, the target must make a DC 22 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dusty Pelt (Ex) A shir collects and produces copious amounts of dust within the coarse hairs of its furry hide. Any creature striking a shir that does at least 10 points of physical damage produces a blinding cloud of dust that fills the div's space. The dust cloud swirls around the shir, providing concealment for the creature for 1 round. A shir can also shake as a move action to produce this cloud. A light wind disperses this cloud immediately.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a shir must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Rend (Ex) If a shir hits with both of its claw attacks, it latches

onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+12 points of damage.

Summon Div (Sp) A shir can summon either 1d2 pairakas or another shir with a 35% chance of success. This ability is equivalent to a 3rd-level spell.

All living things do well to fear the leonine divs known as shirs. Bizarre and pernicious creatures, these fiends live to hunt and feed, their powerful frames and feline stealth combining in a hunter's grace. They resemble anthropomorphic lionesses with powerful features, their keen senses, speed, and physical prowess making them deadly trackers, warriors, and assassins. A shir's fur ranges through shades of light browns and grays, aiding its ability to hide both on its home world and in the wastes of Golarion. Most shirs stand 10 feet tall and weigh approximately 1,200 pounds.

Ecology

Shirs prefer hunting alone. They fraternize with their own kind only rarely, allying to hunt bands of victims large enough to feed multiple huntresses, though the final division of prey often turns quarrelsome. These divs prefer to hunt intelligent humanoids over all other quarries, such souls being the most delicious to their sinister tastes. They do not experience birth as mortals know it, but rather form fully grown within the jungle depths of Abaddon each time one of their number ceases to exist. From the reaches of Abaddon, ever do they seek paths to the Material Plane, endlessly yearning to rend mortal flesh and feed upon the essence of life. Some shirs, as their time goes on, grow bored of consuming the essences of humanoids and go on to devour other creatures, even fellow fiends.

As all divs possess some manner of esoteric weakness in their personality, shirs find it difficult to go for an easy kill. These divs love to play with their food, and when choosing a dish from a group of victims, they tend to go for the most obviously powerful. This trait has led to the destruction of many shirs who chose their victims poorly. In most instances, though, the brutal murder of a crowd's mightiest member spreads panic through the rest, allowing a div to leisurely prey upon the survivors to its heart's savage content.

Habitat & Society

At home in Abaddon, despite the caustic waters, ashy dunes, and desolate plains of lifeless ruin, shirs are uneasy. Their talents, although enhanced and heightened by the plane, find no fertile land whereupon to grow and flourish. In their searches for gates and portals from their homeland to more bountiful realms, they often go to the point of corrupting mortals to summon them. Although not skilled in the ways of bargaining or lying, these savage divs make

any claim or promise to which their victims might prove receptive, knowing that even in the fraction of a moment they might exist on the mortal plane, they'll likely find at least one life to devour. Those loosed upon mortal worlds become poxes upon the lands they inhabit, for shirs are seeds of destruction searching for soil in which to be planted. Once they find their root, the surrounding region faces a deadly predation. The stealthy fiends attack like ravenous ghosts, brutally murdering unsuspecting victims in even the seemingly safest redoubts only to disappear, leaving either no trace or baffling evidence of a massive, clawed predator.

Some long-lived shirs take it upon themselves to be the claws of fate and the executioners of those who would seek to steal years beyond their mortal span. Those that claim superiority through extended life find themselves hunted and cut down by the cabal of shirs called the Dami-Anaeshem. These devious divs roam Abaddon and the worlds beyond, completely disinterested in the fleeting life essence of mortals, with full intent to feast upon those who claim a sempiternal existence. These bestial assassins claim to be granted strength by the life forces of beings whose essences have existed for centuries past their time, though few can say exactly what powers the greatest of shirs truly possess.

Some scholars suggest that shirs are the favored minions of Arhiman, as they bear leonine features similar to the beast-headed lord of the divs. Although it seems doubtful that the fiendish lord favors any being besides himself, some say that those shirs who displease their lord lose their power to resurrect upon Abaddon and truly perish.

Shirs in Katapesh

Numerous shirs currently roam the deserts of Katapesh, either released upon the world by ancient summons or recently summoned to fulfill dark intents.

Rantisiz: The Shadowed Eye of Solku serves the nefarious wizard and poison dealer Aqsarm, who bound the shir to his service nearly 15 years ago, having since made subtle use of his powerful slave to assassinate many of his competitors in the poison and contraband business. Few know of the deadly merchant's control over the brutal div, the murders of the Shadowed Eye having become a fearful urban legend in the past years, but to those who do, Aqsarm eagerly rents out his minion for extraordinarily high prices.

Agakiv: This shir claims three great oases in central Katapesh as her hunting ground, roaming between them to pick up the trails of passing caravans and desert nomads. She delights in silently murdering the leaders of such groups and arranging them in gory tableaux to be discovered by their followers. Her tastes extend only toward leaders, though, as she has no taste for those she views as slaves, seeing no challenge in slaying the weak among a herd.



EMKRAH

Lashing furiously, this semi-gelatinous abomination surges forward upon a wave of tentacular legs. These artery-like legs knot into a single stalk capped by a bulbous, fleshy head dominated by a huge mouth and a yawning, empty eyesocket. The thing's disgusting trunk and head float within a transparent body of vein-riddled ooze, like a gigantic jellyfish.

EMKRAH

Always CE Large aberration

Init +7; **Sense** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 9

(+3 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 126 (12d8+72)

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

Immune acid, cold, critical hits

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee bite +15 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d8 acid) and

4 tentacle slams +13 (1d6+3)

Ranged acid spittle +11 touch (1d8 acid)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks acid spittle, doom gaze, improved grab, swallow whole

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility

Skills Climb +10, Spot +12, Swim +10

SQ acidic, amorphous

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement 12–19 HD (Large), 20–31 HD (Huge), 32+ (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid Spittle (Ex) An emkrah can spit a glob of its highly corrosive goo up to 30 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment. Creatures struck by this acid spittle take 1d8 points of acid damage.

Acidic (Ex) An emkrah's body is little more than a shell of gelatinous digestive acid that dissolves organic material quickly. Any fleshy, living creature that attacks an emkrah with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike, or attempts to grapple an emkrah, takes 1d8 points of acid damage.

Amorphous (Ex) An emkrah is not subject to critical hits. It cannot be flanked.

Doom Gaze (Su) Deals 1d6 points of damage, 30 feet, Will DC 20 negates. If an emkrah actively uses its gaze upon a creature, it deals 1d8 points of damage. Evil creatures gain a +2 bonus on their saves versus an emkrah's doom gaze. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, an emkrah must hit with one of its tentacle attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Swallow Whole (Ex) An emkrah can attempt to swallow a grappled opponent of Medium or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. (A emkrah doesn't actually "swallow" the opponent—it engulfs it within its gelatinous form—but the effect is essentially the same.) Once inside, the opponent takes an automatic 8 points of acid damage per round from the beast's corrosive body. An emkrah can continue to bite a creature that has been swallowed whole. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by dealing 5 points of damage to the emkrah (AC 22). An emkrah's body can hold 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive or smaller creatures.

The misbegotten offspring of the god of destruction, emkrahs are the Spawn of Rovagug that will never be.

Taking their names from the Kelish word for wrongful births, these horrendous beings hatch from the repulsive egg sacks known as Rough Seeds, grotesque expulsions of Rovagug himself. While not all seeds hatch, those that do draw upon the life force of destructive beings nearby, using such creatures' essences to fuel their grotesque metamorphoses. Once hatched, emkrahs never develop into full-fledged Spawn of Rovagug, but their smaller size and strange births do nothing to curb their destructive natures, which mark them as true scions of the god of disaster.

Emkrahs vary widely in size and form, with many having excess tentacles, strange colorations, multiple eyes, and other abnormalities. Most, however, measure 10 feet tall from their tentacles to the top of their gelatinous shells and weigh approximately 400 pounds.

Ecology

Emkrahs experience a strange and doubtful lifecycle, with only a fraction of those flung forth by Rovagug finding the foul spark they require to develop. These strange abominations begin their lives as grotesque ejecta or terrible fossils, so-called Rough Seeds, emitted by the imprisoned god of destruction. While most are crushed or consumed by the raging god, some make it to the surface, falling upon the scarred wasteland surrounding the infamous Pit of Gormuz. Once flung from the depths, most Rough Seeds are simply buried, or else shrivel and rot away from exposure to the harsh environs. Occasionally, though, either by luck or the attentions of the cult of Rovagug, these leaking black egg clusters reach another fate, carried away from the pit to undergo a grotesque metamorphosis.

While worshipers of the god of wrath claim that Rough Seeds bear within them the embryos of undeveloped Spawn of Rovagug, the eggs hold no ability to produce such behemoths, lacking some fundamental divine stimulation. In truth, they lack the ability to produce any sort of life alone. But to some beings, creatures of unrestrained destruction and rage—typically aberrations, foul outsiders, and powerful vermin—the Rough Seeds possess an irresistible draw. As such beings come near the seeds, something flares within. Slowly, over several days of close proximity, something grows within the Rough Seed. After this metamorphosis, the egg unravels its slick, wet shell, having become an emkrah. In most cases, the link between the emkrah and the destructive being that so inspired it deteriorates, but in some instances, the beasts become obsessed, even fundamentally fused with one another. The reasons and results of such connections are vague and vary, as different beasts—especially aberrant ones and outsiders—react to these lesser offspring of the god of destruction in often strange and little-understood ways. However a being might concern itself over an emkrah, though, these gelatinous horrors never reciprocate, and while they might prove

The Shrouded Seed

In some places across Golarion, the cult of Rovagug grows incongruously strong. Some say these are cursed places where dark events once transpired, or places where the people are just naturally wrong. Others point to great clefts in the mountains or footprint-like vales, claiming that such sites are the scars of Rovagug's passing in the cataclysmic time before time. In these places, profane remnants of the god of destruction's ancient rampage occasionally issue forth from the earth and stone. These Rough Seeds, hidden by time, issue the power of Rovagug even millennia after falling from the god of disaster's monstrous form. Those sensitive to Rovagug's power find themselves inexplicably drawn to such sites, while those who spend their lives in close proximity to these hidden evils prove violent and quick to anger. Although rare, the remnants of the imprisoned god are far-flung and many, and his evil taints the world in ways few can imagine.

cooperative one moment, they might be feasting upon the flesh of their indirect parent in the next.

Emkrahs have strange and insatiable hungers. While all desire flesh, some seek out valuable stones, holy animals, or even certain types of people. After a time, all emkrahs seek the essences of living creatures to devour. Rather than just dissolving its victim's flesh, the beast manages to capture and fundamentally destroy the being's soul. Instantly, upon finishing this meal, an emkrah's amorphous shell hardens and its tentacles retract. The beast spends several days in this state before emerging a size category larger and possessing either DR 10/good or regeneration 5.

Although the cult of Rovagug's few records are vague on the matter, these writings suggest that the oldest and largest emkrahs play some role in creating true Spawn of Rovagug.

Habitat & Society

Although typically only found near the infamous Pit of Gormuz in central Casmaron, emkrahs find their way throughout Golarion with little effort of their own. The cult of Rovagug sees in these grotesque eggs a living connection to their imprisoned deity and covet them, doing much to keep them safe and assure their strange metamorphosis. Finding and fertilizing a Rough Seed is a daunting and ultimately unlikely task, making emkrahs exceptionally rare creatures, even for those who have long sought to hatch such beasts.

Upon hatching into the world, emkrahs care little for their surroundings, knowing only their terrible hunger. Set loose, these terrors prefer to lair in violent climes, seemingly attracted to places of great volcanic activity, where earthquakes frequently occur, or even lands in the grip of social disorder.



HADHAYOSH

This titanic bull has skin like brass and a mane of flames. It towers over the treetops, stopping periodically to eat from the foliage above. Mighty twisted horns thrust forward from above its massive head. Its hooves are cloven and a powerful tail thrashes about behind it.

HADHAYOSH

Always N Gargantuan magical beast (fire)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +13, Spot +13 **DEFENSE**

AC 34, touch 8, flat-footed 32

(+2 Dex, +26 natural, -4 size)

hp 264 (23d10+138)

Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +9

DR 10/—; **Immune** acid, electricity, fire, sonic;

Weakness cold

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee gore +31 (4d6+12 plus 1d6 fire/19–20) and

bite +29 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 fire) and

2 hooves +29 (2d8+6 plus 1d6 fire)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks frightful charge, heat, rush, stench

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 15, **Con** 22, **Int** 3, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +23; **Grp** +47

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved

Critical (gore), Power Attack

Skills Listen +13, Spot +13

Languages Ignan

SQ godforged horns

ECOLOGY

Environment warm hills and deserts

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

Advancement 23–40 HD (Gargantuan), 41+ HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Frightful Charge (Su) A hadhayosh can inspire terror by charging or attacking. A creature charged by a hadhayosh must succeed on a DC 23 Will save or become paralyzed with fear, remaining in that condition as long as they stay within 60 feet of the hadhayosh. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Godforged Horns (Ex) A hadhayosh's horns are treated as silver and cold iron for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Heat (Ex) A hadhayosh generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. A hadhayosh controls the heat it emits, allowing it to carry riders without harming them.

Rush (Ex) Once per minute, the hadhayosh can move at a speed of 150 feet.

Stench (Ex) A foul musk clings to a hadhayosh. Living creatures within 100 feet must succeed on a DC 30 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same hadhayosh's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonuses on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Created by a deity of the forge in ancient times, hadhayoshes tower over the lands, symbols of the power of the gods and the fury of the desert. While they look similar to oxen in general shape, these massive beasts have skin like beaten brass and flames that leap from their heads and backs in radiant manes. They are typically docile creatures motivated primarily by the urge to sleep, reproduce, and eat, in that order, though a certain wanderlust afflicts the beasts, causing them to roam over vast territories. When angered, hadhayoshes become ferocious, striking out with

rage at any creature that would dare to challenge them. They are not accustomed to lesser creatures causing trouble for them, though they often find themselves prey for other giants such as dragons.

Strangely uniform in size, as if measured to divine specifics, all adult hadhayoshes stand 52 feet tall and weigh exactly 57 tons.

Ecology

Although physically similar to a titanic ox, a hadhayosh's body generates far greater heat and grows dense metal instead of normal horns or hooves. Although gigantic creatures, these massive oxen require surprisingly little food to survive and seem to be able to flourish by drinking any liquid. Some witnesses tell of seeing adult hadhayoshes drinking from volcanoes, lapping up magma thirstily without regard to the heat or chunks of cooling stone. Young hadhayoshes are rarely seen, the creatures' low fecundity in part accounting for their rarity. When spotted, though, such youths appear much like full-grown gorgons with gleaming brass skin. Although appearing similar, little else connects the two species, though this hardly lessens the number of strange theories regarding their origins.

Habitat & Society

Hadhayoshes graze lightly over large territories, preferring warm, hilly regions and deserts. They enjoy areas with healthy amounts of foliage on which to dine, favoring trees over grasses because they are much easier to reach from their height. They travel frequently, sometimes staying in one locale for weeks, then spontaneously migrating hundreds of miles. Whenever possible they wait for at least a year before returning to the same area, seeming to dislike even passing through areas they've previously walked. Few obstacles serve as barriers to hadhayoshes, with some even walking between continents in their travels.

Many peoples believe sighting a hadhayosh is lucky, as the beasts so rarely return to regions they've visited before. When one of these fantastic creatures draws near, whole villages might turn out to watch it graze. More than once, though, such wonder has quickly turned to terror as the unmindful beast tramples the homes of its adorers.

Legends of the Hadhayosh

Numerous stories surround hadhayoshes. Some believe that the appearance of these creatures nearby is an omen of good luck, wealth, and prosperity, while others try to chase these creatures out of the area for fear that they bring wildfires and destruction. The tales of many desert peoples tell that the great oxen are particularly sensitive to the whims and wishes of the gods, and often work

divine will. Due to this supposed divine connection, the princes of many lands place especial value on hadhayoshes, greatly rewarding those who capture these titans for their menageries. In some lands, it is said that the blood of a hadhayosh is divine and can bestow the divine right to rule, making them dangerous quarry for rebels, princes, and other would-be rulers. More than a few sultanates force royal offspring to seek out and slay a hadhayosh to prove who among them has the greatest right to rule. While in modern disputes over rulership the "hadhayosh" might be some rare symbolic icon, few signs of worth prove more convincing than the corpse of a true hadhayosh.

The Burning Herd: The stories of several cultures tell of powerful gods or demigods who possess vast herds of hadhayoshes. Symbols of strength, these beast pull the plows in these deities' celestial fields, draw their mighty carriages, and dig paths for new rivers and oceans. Many tales tell of heroes who provoked the ire of the gods by stealing their favored beasts, or their favor by returning those lost. The Iron Lord Gorum in particular is known to favor these beasts, using a great team of them to turn many of the gears that power his great forge.

Hush: The greatest legend surrounding hadhayoshes claims that their bodies are infused with divine power and that, when properly prepared with the rare herb haoma, they create an elixir called hush that grants eternal life. For this reason alone, hadhayoshes have been hunted to near extinction, though few claim to know the exact formula for creating this incredible draught. It is said only the gods know how to prepare hush and divulge these secrets of its creation to those they seek to test. Some mischievous deities, though, might let the secret fall into the hands of the unfit, delighting in seeing foolish mortals come to terrible ends beneath the hooves of a hadhayosh.

Riding a Hadhayosh

Hadhayoshes are stubborn animals and, under most situations, refuse to allow even the most skilled handler to ride them. However, a suitable display of divine power impresses these creatures, changing their typical attitude of indifferent to helpful. To do this, a cleric or paladin must channel power through his holy symbol great enough to affect a 10 HD undead creature (see the Turning Undead chart on page 159 of the PH). A cleric with the Glory, Fire, Strength, or Sun domain gains a +2 bonus on this check (having multiple domains does not cause the bonus to stack). This show of divine might awes a hadhayosh and convinces it to lower its heat ability. Once so compelled, it will allow the character and up to 11 allies to ride it, though the creature will not attack or otherwise go out of its way to aid its riders.



RUKH

Beating its greasy, night-black wings, this gigantic two-headed vulture picks it way across the ground upon two earthshearing talons. Craning its massive, wrinkled heads forward, the terrible avian opens its giant twin beaks to unleash a bloodcurdling shriek.

RUKH

Always N Gargantuan animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +12, Spot +21

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 19
(+2 Dex, +13 natural, -4 size)

hp 184 (16d8+112)

Fort +17, **Ref**+12, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee 2 bites +20 (2d8+12) and
2 talons +18 (2d6+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks improved grab, swallow whole

TACTICS

CR 10

Before Combat When not resting within its nest, a rukh is typically hunting and attacks any Medium or larger creature that appears edible. Rukhs tend to ignore smaller creatures unless starving, though they viciously attack if such creatures do them harm.

During Combat Except for when finishing off wounded quarry, a rukh attacks from the air, swooping earthward to snatch prey in its powerful talons and carrying it off for itself and its young to devour. A mated pair of rukhs attacks in concert, fighting to the death to defend its nests or hatchlings.

Morale Rukhs are primarily interested in satisfying their hunger. They attempt to fly away from enemies that reduce them to fewer than half their hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 15, **Con** 24, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +36

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Multiattack, Snatch, Wingover

Skills Listen +12, Spot +21

ECOLOGY

Environment warm mountains or deserts

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

Advancement 17–30 HD (Gargantuan); 31–45 (Colossal)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a rukh must hit an opponent of up to one size smaller with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex) A rukh can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the rukh's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A rukh's gizzard can hold 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Skills A rukh receives a natural +8 bonus to Spot checks because of their multiple heads.

JUVENILE RUKH

Slick, downy feathers barely cover the sickly pink-gray body of this monstrous vulture. Its two wrinkled, bald heads seem to be constantly at odds, viciously snapping at each other and stealing fleshy scraps from each other's crooked beaks.

JUVENILE RUKH

CR 3

Always N Large animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +13

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12
(+2 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 42 (5d8+20)

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 bites +4 (1d6+3) and
2 talons +2 (1d6+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

TACTICS

Before Combat Young rukhs typically band together for protection, but greedily venture away from their brethren to attack creatures that appear weakened or wounded.

During Combat Although more comfortable on land, juvenile rukhs awkwardly fly in pursuit of prey when they must. While they might attempt to grab the smallest foes, they typically remain in combat only long enough to snatch a mouthful or two of meat before fleeing so that another member of the flock can do the same.

Morale Like older rukhs, younger ones run or fly away if they're up against an opponent that they cannot handle. If wounded, juvenile rukhs shriek loudly, hoping to attract the attention of one of their parents.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +9

Feats Flyby Attack, Multiattack

Skills Listen +5, Spot +13

ECOLOGY

Environment warm mountains or desert

Organization pair or flock (3-10)

Treasure none

Advancement 6-12 (Large), 13-15 (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Skills Rukhs receive a natural +8 bonus to Spot checks because of their second head.

Rukhs are a gigantic, divergent species of foul-tempered, vulture-like rocs, most recognizable by their two featherless heads. In addition to having two deadly heads to feed, these ravenous avians prove exceptionally alert in their endless hunt for food—both living beasts and carrion. These repulsive birds of prey typically glide high above the desert, watching for creatures that might provide a suitable amount of food for them and their young. Horses, camels, and humanoids passing below often attract their attention, though they are careful to avoid creatures of roughly the same size or that most likely would be too powerful for them to best.

A typical adult rukh stands nearly 35 feet tall with a wingspan of over 60 feet. Although often starving, they

can weigh upward of 800 pounds. Juvenile rukhs usually stand about 10 feet tall, with a relatively small wingspan of near 18 feet. Most weigh about 200 pounds.

Ecology

Rukhs are among the deadliest opportunistic hunters of the deserts. Hatching from large gray eggs, they emerge frail and starving. While rukh parents feed their newborns for a few months, their offspring quickly take to the air and begin hunting in groups along with other clutch mates. Many have compared young rukhs to vultures, with one major exception: vultures wait for their prey to die and then feast on the carcasses, while young rukhs have no qualms about finishing the job themselves so that they can start searching for their next meal. As a result, tired travelers rightfully panic when they look to the skies and see a flock of large, two-headed birds circling overhead.

Despite the menace that they pose, young rukhs rarely live to adulthood. If water is the currency of the desert, food is the luxury item, and young rukhs are highly sought after as a source of food by both beasts and desert dwellers. It is not uncommon for some travelers to appear intentionally weak so that they can lure in one or more young rukhs, and then kill them for sustenance. One bird is enough to feed a group of 10 adults for several days, or until the meat spoils, whichever comes first. While the meat is not as tasty as poultry or other domesticated birds, their ability to feed numerous people makes a freshly slain carcass quite valuable in the depths of the desert, where they can be used to feed whole caravans for days. An average-sized slain young rukh can be worth nearly 30 gp in many markets.

Habitat & Society

Rukhs prefer warm desert climates. They typically glide at high altitudes until they spot horses or camels passing below, then dive down to attack them. Small caravans and travelers also often find themselves on the menu. Too large to nest in trees, rukhs typically nest at high perches on mountains and cliff sides. It is not uncommon for a rukh to capture prey and then fly a hundred miles or more to its lair, and some prey find themselves snatched from hot deserts only to be consumed far away atop snow-covered peaks.

Compared to rocs, rukhs are considerably rarer, their numbers amounting to about a quarter that of the great raptors. Likewise, they are not as widely known as rocs, except in the arid areas where they are common and pose a significant threat. In the wastelands where they are known, though, locals often make use of their feathers and tough skins in a variety of manners—sources of shade, thatching for roofs, or even grim decorations.



TOPHET

A distended metal maw filled with blunt, sculpted teeth stretches across the upper portion of this rotund iron effigy. Husky arms ending in knot-like fingers jut from the sides of its bloated, ovular body, shaped to resemble the prodigious belly of a corpulent king. A small metal hatch with an elaborate lock lies within the figure's stomach. The statue wobbles madly, moving not upon legs but upon four evenly spaced nubs like the feet of a massive cauldron, each motion causing a muted clang to echo from its darkened maw.

TOPHET

Always N Large construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 8, flat-footed 24

(-1 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 107 (14d10+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities construct traits; **DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** fire

CR 10

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+8) and
2 slam +12 (1d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks improved grab, swallow whole, trample

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +22

SQ conductive

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or prison (2–12)

Treasure none

Alignment neutral

Advancement 15–21 HD (Large), 22–28 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Conductive (Ex) Anytime a tophet is affected by an effect that deals fire damage, determine how much damage the construct would have taken if it were not immune to fire. Creatures currently swallowed whole by the construct take fire damage equal to half of this amount.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a tophet must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe in the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex) A tophet can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to one size smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, an opponent takes no damage, but is trapped. The construct's maw locks down, preventing creatures from climbing back out. A swallowed creature can potentially cut its way out using a light slashing or piercing weapon, by dealing 38 points of damage to the tophet's interior, which has AC 24 and DR 5/adamantine. Once the creature exits by cutting its way out, the tophet can no longer swallow whole.

Alternatively, a swallowed creature might be able to pick the lock on the iron hatch in the tophet's stomach by making a DC 30 Open Locks check. Once the creature exits by picking the lock, the tophet closes its hatch and can swallow whole again. These locks can also be picked from the outside, but only after the tophet is slain.

A Large tophet's gullet can hold 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive, or 128 Fine creatures.

Trample (Ex) Reflex DC 25 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Known in some lands as furnace guards or iron gluttons, tophets have long served in the palaces and prisons of tyrants as vigilant sentinels and dreaded punishments. Appearing as rotund iron statues, often bearing the slanderous visages of past kings or dishonored noblemen, these constructs all possess yawning maws, capable of

easily gobbling up smaller creatures. Upon consuming a victim, the animate statue becomes a walking prison, holding its victim within with little chance for escape. The iron statue can then return its victim to the proper cell, the feet of its lord, or any other fate its creator determines. In the most feared case, tophets capture or are fed prisoners, then wander out into the desert heat, where their interiors raise to hellish temperatures, torturing or outright killing those trapped within.

In most cases, tophets stand 10 feet tall and weigh approximately 3,000 pounds.

Ecology

Created by cruel rulers and imperious wizards, tophets are living punishments. Mindless creatures capable only of obeying their masters' whims, these unthinking constructs make incorruptible guardians and prove endlessly loyal. Their necessarily bloated bodies make them poor warriors, though, causing most to fall into roles as stationary watchmen, stoic bodyguards, and gruesome displays.

Most tophets possess a hatch within their metal bellies, which their masters might unlock and use to release those held within or retrieve items swallowed by their creations. Tophets have no ability to open these hatches, requiring a key commonly held by their creator or another designated master. Those trapped within a tophet gain some solace from the hope of picking the exposed locking mechanism within, but unless captives bring the tools to bypass these locks with them, there is little chance of success.

Habitat & Society

Tophets most commonly appear in desert environs and other excessively hot climates, where the constructs might be used in their "hot box" fashion. Some variations are known, though, acting as little more than animate cages that might wander out into the snow or even trek across the bottoms of lakes. Tales also tell of tophets that bear burdens of miniature undead, terrible vermin, acid, or other deadly contents that they either release from their hatches (which have had their locks removed) or submerge their captives within.

These constructs are expensive to create and, therefore, are only used for the most horrific of criminals or prisoners of war. One tale tells of a cruel princess of Thuvia, who would toss prisoners into her tophet guards, then order the constructs to walk to the local market square and place themselves in the sun. After the construct had stood in the desert sun with its charge in its belly for hours, the fate of thieves and enemies of the city became apparent to all in the market as the voices of the tormented carried from within.

Construction

The method of constructing a tophet lies in numerous Garundi tomes of dark lore. While the first of these

A Burning Death

In the real world, the name *tophet* or *topheth* likely comes from Hebrew meaning "place of burning," referring to a location in ancient Jerusalem where ancient peoples sacrificed their children by fire to the bull-headed god Moloch. Although Golarion's tophet constructs bear no fundamental connection to the archfiend Moloch, cultists foresworn to the General of Hell might create their own infernal variations, using these gruesome figures in addition to or in favor of the molochs commonly used to sacrifice to their dread lord. Alternatively, the worshipers of other, less sinister deities of the desert and fire might also have their own roles for tophets, committing living souls—whether man or beast—into these living altars to honor their deities. While the act of human sacrifice might widely be held as an evil act, such is not the case in all cultures, as morality often proves subjective. Regardless, most would agree the suffering faced by those sacrificed within tophets seems a terrible, pain-filled end.

creatures appears to have been created in ancient Katapesh, today they are most frequently found in Rahadoum and Thuvia—though even in those lands they remain quite rare. The body of a tophet is assembled from nearly 2 tons of solid iron and 2,000 gp worth of gems and chemicals. Assembling the body requires a DC 18 Craft (armorsmithing) or Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

CL 12th; Craft Construct, *bull's strength*, *endure elements*, caster must be at least 12th level; Price 45,000 gp; Cost 24,500+1,800 XP.

Variant Tophets

Not all villains who create tophets prove beneficent enough to leave their constructs empty. Some fill these animate oubliettes with tortures to assure any victim's final moments are painful, terror-filled ones. Presented here is just a sampling of the horrors that might wait within one of these living statues. Aside from the noted abilities, these creatures have the same statistics as normal tophets.

Pyre Gut: These tophets have bellies full of flames. Any creature swallowed by a pyre gut takes 2d6 points of fire damage until it escapes. These variant tophets require the spell *fireball* be cast during their creation and are 3,000 gp more expensive.

Silent Screamer: The hollows within these tophets are absolutely empty, lacking even air to breathe. Any creature swallowed by a silent screamer begins suffocating (see page 304 of the DMG). These variant tophets require the spell *secret chest* be cast during their creation and are 5,000 gp more expensive.

VALEROS



MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 7

ALIGN NG **INIT** +7 **SPEED** 20 ft.

DEITY: Cayden Cailean

HOMELAND: Andoran

ABILITIES

| | |
|----|-----|
| 16 | STR |
| 16 | DEX |
| 12 | CON |
| 13 | INT |
| 8 | WIS |
| 10 | CHA |

DEFENSE

HP 50
AC 20
touch 16, flat-footed 17
Fort +6, **Ref** +5,
Will +1

OFFENSE

Melee +1 *frost* longsword +12/+7 (1d8+6/19–20 plus 1d6 cold)
Dual Wielding +1 *frost* longsword +10/+5 (1d8+6/19–20 plus 1d6 cold) and +1 *short sword* +10 (1d6+2/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +11 (1d8+3/x3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10

SKILLS

Climb +10
Intimidate +10
Ride +13
Swim +7

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)



Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of shield of faith* +3; **Other Gear** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *frost* longsword, +1 *short sword*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, silver dagger, *gauntlets of ogre power*, backpack, lucky tankard, rations (6), silk rope, 30 pp

Born a farmer's son in the quiet Andoren countryside, Valeros spent his youth dreaming of adventure and exploring the world. For the past several years, he's been a mercenary with the Band of the Mauler, a guard for the Aspis Consortium, a freelance bounty hunter, and hired muscle for a dozen different employers. Gone is his youthful naivete, replaced by scars and the resolve of a veteran warrior. While noble at heart, Valeros hides this beneath a jaded, sometimes crass demeanor, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of hard drinking and a night of soft company."

KYRA



FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 7

ALIGN NG **INIT** –1 **SPEED** 20 ft.

DEITY: Sarenrae

HOMELAND: Qadira

ABILITIES

| | |
|----|-----|
| 13 | STR |
| 8 | DEX |
| 14 | CON |
| 10 | INT |
| 18 | WIS |
| 12 | CHA |

DEFENSE

HP 49
AC 20
touch 10, flat-footed 20
Fort +8, **Ref** +2
Will +12

Special Attacks greater turning 1/day, turn undead 4/day

OFFENSE

Melee +1 *scimitar* +8 (1d6+2/18–20)
Ranged l. crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6
Spells Prepared (CL 7th)
4th—*air walk*, *freedom of movement*, *fire shield*^D
3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *dispel magic* (2), *searing light*^D
2nd—*aid*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*^D, *hold person* (DC 16), *resist energy*
1st—*command* (DC 15), *endure elements*^D, *divine favor* (2), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
0—*create water* (2), *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*
D domain spell (healing, sun)

SKILLS

Concentration +12
Heal +14
Knowledge (religion) +10

FEATS

Combat Casting, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Weapon Focus (scimitar)



Combat Gear holy water (3), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 *chainmail*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *scimitar*, light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, *periapt of wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, backpack, rations (6), gold holy symbol (with *continual flame*) worth 300 gp, rations (4), 30 pp

Kyra was one of the few survivors of a brutal raid on her hometown, and on the smoking ruins of her village she swore her life and sword arm to Sarenrae. Possessed of a fierce will, pride in her faith, and skill with the scimitar, Kyra has traveled far since her trial by fire. She lost her family and home that fateful day, yet where another might be consumed by anger and a thirst for revenge, Kyra has found peace in the Dawnflower. If she can prevent even one death at evil hands, her own losses will not have been in vain.

MERISIEL



FEMALE ELF ROGUE 7

ALIGN CN INIT +5 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Calistria

HOMELAND: Varisia

ABILITIES

| | |
|----|-----|
| 12 | STR |
| 20 | DEX |
| 12 | CON |
| 8 | INT |
| 13 | WIS |
| 10 | CHA |

DEFENSE

HP 34

AC 20

touch 15, flat-footed 15

Fort +3, Ref +10,
Will +3; +2 against
enchantment

Special Qualities low-light vision, trapfinding; **Defense** evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Melee +1 keen rapier +11
(1d6+2/15–20)

Ranged dagger +10 (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +5; Grp +6

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

SKILLS

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Disable Device | +9 |
| Hide | +15 |
| Listen | +14 |
| Jump | +18 |
| Move Silently | +15 |
| Search | +11 |
| Spot | +14 |
| Tumble | +17 |

FEATS

Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse



Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility* (2); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, +1 keen rapier, daggers (12), amulet of natural armor +1, gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of jumping, masterwork thieves' tools, polished jade worth 50 gp, 25 gp

Merisiel's life experiences have taught her to enjoy things to their fullest as they occur, since it's impossible to tell when the good times might end. Never the sharpest knife in the drawer, Merisiel makes up for this by carrying at least a dozen of them on her person. She hasn't met a problem yet that can't, in one way or another, be solved with things that slice. While she's always on the move and working on her latest batch of plots for easy money, in the end it comes down to being faster than everyone else—either on her feet, or with her beloved blades. She wouldn't have it any other way.

EZREN



MALE HUMAN WIZARD 7

ALIGN NG INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Atheist

HOMELAND: Absalom

ABILITIES

| | |
|----|-----|
| 11 | STR |
| 9 | DEX |
| 12 | CON |
| 19 | INT |
| 15 | WIS |
| 9 | CHA |

DEFENSE

HP 26

AC 13

touch 10, flat-footed 13

Fort +6, Ref +2,
Will +8

OFFENSE

Melee cane +3 (1d6)

Ranged light crossbow +2
(1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +3; Grp +3

Spells Prepared (CL 7th)

4th—*ice storm*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *fireball* (DC 17)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *invisibility*,
scorching ray, *web* (DC 16)

1st—*endure elements*, *grease* (DC
15), *magic missile* (2), *shield*

0—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic* (2),
light

SKILLS

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Appraise | +14 |
| Concentration | +11 |
| Knowledge (arcana) | +14 |
| Knowledge (geography) | +14 |
| Knowledge (history) | +14 |
| Spellcraft | +16 |

FEATS

Combat Casting,
Empower Spell, Great
Fortitude, Improved
Initiative, Scribe Scroll,
Spell Penetration

FAMILIAR

Sneak (weasel, MM 282)



Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of scorching ray*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 50 charges); **Other Gear** cane (as club), dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, bracers of armor +3, cloak of resistance +1, headband of intellect +2, ring of protection +1, backpack, rations (6), scroll case, spellbook, spell component pouch, diamond dust (250 gp), 100 gp pearls (2), 35 gp

Born to a successful spice merchant in one of Absalom's more affluent districts, Ezren's childhood was pleasantly safe. This changed when his father was charged with heresy. Ezren spent much of his adult life attempting to prove his father's innocence, only to discover his father was guilty. The revelation shook Ezren's faith in family and church to the core and he abandoned both, setting out into the world to find a new life. Ezren fell naturally into the ways of wizardry, and swiftly became a gifted spellcaster.

Next Month in PATHFINDER™



THE END OF ETERNITY

by Jason Nelson

The doorway to Kakishon is open, yet what lies hidden within the map-world is not the paradise the legends portend. Each of the realm's many islands hide countless ways to slay the unprepared. Worse, the realm is at war as the rag-tag remnants of an ancient army of genies clash against the otherworldly monsters that dwell just beyond the edge of reality. Can the heroes escape Kakishon before the war within tears the world apart?

KEEPERS OF CHAOS

by Todd Stewart

They were the first. Before reality existed, when all was nothing but a maelstrom of possibility and entropy ruled, the proteans were kings. Yet the primal chaos did not last—like a malignant cancer spreading through the beauty of madness, reality drove the multiverse into order and stability, paving the way for life to flourish, civilizations to rise, and the gods themselves to rule. Yet the proteans survived, and if they have their way, this new disease called reality shall be cured.

THE SEALS OF SULESH THE GREAT

by Wolfgang Baur

As long as genies have haunted dreams and hopes, humanity has sought to harness the near limitless power of their mastery over the elements—and over reality itself. Discover methods to summon genies, how to bargain with them for power, and how to bind them to your will!

AND MORE!

This month's Set Piece adventure explores the underwater den of a powerful sea monster. Intrigue and danger challenge Channa Ti as she travels the deadly waters of the river Asp; a new entry into the Pathfinder's Journal by Elaine Cunningham.

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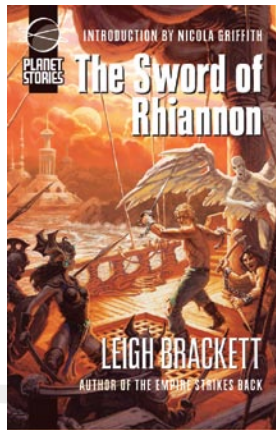
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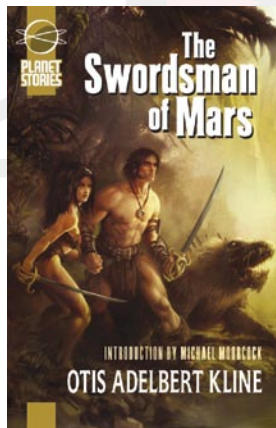
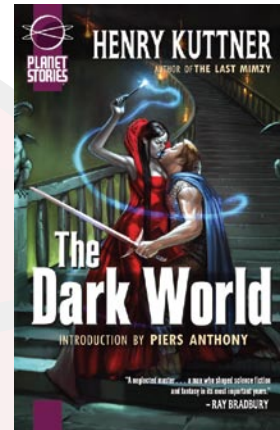
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he caravan was lost in a sandstorm. The lead camel had stumbled twice, a terrible omen. The caravan master himself had wandered away following some siren song.

Tarik the lead camel driver was worried. "This storm will shift the dunes and we'll never find our way back to the shore. Our bones will rest here, playthings for vultures." He would have taken his gloom out upon the junior camel drivers, but the wind was too loud.

And when the storm passed, it was just as he had feared. Dunes had fled like startled doves, three men and six camels had wandered into the storm, and the sea was nowhere in sight. But something had come.

A stranger stood in the camp, a figure, tall like no man and wearing a red turban that showed nothing but his eyes. "Who rules here?" asked the stranger.

"I am lead camel driver," said Tarik. "But no one rules the Wastes of Katapesh."

"That will change," said the stranger. "Give me just a little blood and a few souls each year, and I will make sweet springs well up here, and water a great city of trade."

The camel driver did not consider long. "I have long wanted to be a master of trade rather than its servant. I accept."

"Good," said the stranger. "Should you also grant me the youngest of your number, I shall show you platinum for mining, bend the seas to form a deepwater harbor, and work magic to defend you against those who will grow jealous of your riches."

But Tarik was wary, as his men stood shocked and asked to whom he spoke. "Why do the others question me so?" Tarik asked.

"They do not see me," said the stranger. "And so long as you keep our pact, they never will, though they grow rich from our bargain."

Nodding, Tarik ordered his men, "Fetch me the youngest camel driver. Here is to be our home. Here we will be kings."



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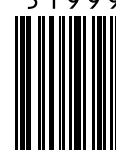
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