



# THE THIRD RIDDLE™

BY CLINTON J. BOOMER

# THE THIRD RIDDLE™

## PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 11

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*Pathfinder Society Scenario #11: The Third Riddle* is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- to 5th- level characters (Tiers: 1–2 and 4–5). This scenario is designed for play in Pathfinder Society Organized Play, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This scenario 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 16 of this product.

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# THE THIRD RIDDLE

BY CLINTON J. BOOMER

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Millennia ago, when Ancient Osirion was at the height of its power, the wizard-priest Mektep-Han discovered the last of three known locations of the dread riddles of the insane god of magic, Nethys, in a ruined sphinx far from the peering eyes of mortals. Nethys scattered the three riddles across the deserts of Osirion during his reign as God-King, and each is rumored to contain a single secret of the universe—secrets so potent that uncovering them is said to unbind the mind just as Nethys’s knowledge of everything unbound his. Legends tell that gaining the knowledge of all three secrets will unbind the universe. Mektep-Han devoted his entire life to finding all of them and rather than solve the riddles and unlock the knowledge for himself, he found them and again hid them in an attempt to forever keep his god’s mad secrets hidden from the world.

The third location, known as the Ravenous Sphinx, is a giant beastly statue housing three massive rooms connected by a central antechamber, each containing mind-bending traps and tests to safeguard the Third Riddle. Just as he had done with the first two riddle locations, Mektep-Han constructed complicated traps to guard the entryway and then had the entire statue buried under a mountain of sand, ritually murdering his workers once the project was complete. Unlike the previous two locations, Mektep-Han teleported to the antechamber inside the Ravenous Sphinx and, through a complicated magic ritual lasting several days, sacrificed himself to Nethys and forever bound a Soulwrought Echo of his soul to the Third Riddle in service to his insane god.

Mektep-Han’s spirit guarded the Ravenous Sphinx and the Third Riddle went undisturbed for thousands of years. Six months ago, however, the spirit was ripped from torpor by the knowledge that someone was disturbing the entryway traps. With a thought he brought the entire complex to life, curious that someone might finally be here to unlock the secrets of Nethys and unbind the universe.

The intruder, a senior Pathfinder named Colm Safan, spent 10 years in Osirion libraries searching for the location of the Ravenous Sphinx. As a young Pathfinder, he’d found several references to a beast-like sphinx in the deep deserts of southern Osirion—a sphinx that had been

worked on and reburied a long time ago. Thinking only that the discovery of the sphinx would be a great honor for him and the Pathfinder Society, Safan found the location of the Ravenous Sphinx in the shadow of the Brazen Peaks. He brought an army of laborers with him to recover the ruined statue from the sand. They dug for weeks, finally uncovering the enormous stone doors nestled in the sphinx’s chest and leading into a dark, sloped passageway that plunged deep into the ground. Safan wrote a letter to the venture-captain in Sothis, explaining what he’d found and how he was going to proceed, sent one of the workers north to deliver it, and then plunged into the hallway to further explore the statue.

Unfortunately, Safan was more a scholar than an explorer of tombs and the first trap skewered him where he stood, killing the senior Pathfinder instantly. Mektep-Han’s hope of seeing the secrets of Nethys were dashed and he closed the outer doors, returning the complex to its former torpor.

Outside, the workers fled and spread word through their villages that the beast in the desert, the Ravenous Sphinx, had awakened and claimed its first victim. Meanwhile, the worker sent north delivered his message to Norden Balentiir, the venture-captain of Sothis. Balentiir received it with great excitement, knowing how long his friend Safan had worked to find the hidden sphinx. Once several months passed and no further word came from Safan, Balentiir decided to send a team of Pathfinders south to check in on Safan and bring back from the ruin anything the Pathfinder Society might find of interest. He sent word to Venture-Captain Adril Hestram in Absalom requesting a group of Pathfinders to locate the Ravenous Sphinx and explore it, looking for signs of Safan.

Unknown to Balentiir, other workers at the dig site worked for shadowy interests in Osirion’s capital—namely for a small company of mercenaries in league with the Aspis Consortium, a secretive, wide-ranging group of merchants and nobles who manipulate markets to their own secretive ends and are often at odds with the Pathfinder Society. The Aspis Consortium is eager to get their hands on Nethys’s Third Riddle and have sent

**THE ASPIS CONSORTIUM**

The Aspis Consortium in this scenario is meant only to be a teaser of things to come later in the season. Their involvement is brief—just the battle in Act 1 with the possibility of finding one or more of their mysterious badges. Don't spend too much time on this mystery—the heart of this scenario is inside the Ravenous Sphinx. To learn more about the Aspis Consortium, read page 189 in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*.

a small team of horseman to the ruin even as Venture-Captain Balentiir dispatched Pathfinders south.

**SUMMARY**

The scenario begins with the PCs embroiled in a deadly race against agents of the Aspis Consortium, a wild and furious chase across jagged stone and shifting sand to the Ravenous Sphinx's terrifying maw. Once there, the PCs recover from their battle with the mercenaries of the Aspis Consortium before prying open the doors into the sphinx and entering its deadly gauntlet of traps.

If they survive the traps, the PCs enter an antechamber of the Ravenous Sphinx, wherein they encounter the strange echo of Mektep-Han himself, his soul forever bound to this location. Mektep-Han imbues the PCs with the gift of tongues, able now to read and speak Ancient Osiriani as if it were their native language. The PCs are then presented with three great challenges in three separate but adjacent chambers: the Test of the Necromancer, the Test of the Evoker, and the Test of the Diviner. These may be tackled in any order.

Once each test is passed, the PCs receive a fragment of the final riddle of the Ravenous Sphinx—combining all three fragments assembles Nethys's Third Riddle, an artifact of great power for which the PCs will receive great honors if they return it to the Grand Lodge in Absalom. Once the Third Riddle is assembled, the Ravenous Sphinx will be undone and slowly sink into the sands—if the PCs tarry they may find themselves in possession of one of Golarion's greatest treasures while being buried alive deep beneath the hot sands of Osirion.

**The Ravenous Sphinx**

Carved of ancient black basalt and bearing the head of an unknown snarling beast on the body of a lion, the Ravenous Sphinx juts from the sands of the southern deserts of Osirion in the rain shadow of the Brazen Peaks south of Wati. Access to the rooms inside the sphinx are via two large, 20-foot tall pitch-sealed strong wooden doors bound with steel plating. It takes a DC 25 Strength check to open each door, though this can be accomplished

using any remaining horses or men from the caravan or with all of the PCs working together.

**1. Trapped Hallway:** This 20-foot-tall hallway begins at the outside doors and slopes at a 20-degree angle down toward area 2. The hallway is unlit, though if the outside doors are open during daylight, the first 30 feet of the hallway is illuminated by shadowy illumination. The ceilings and walls of this hallway chamber are ornately carved in ancient Osirian glyphs and brightly colored funerary pictographs. Most of the pictures show a human male, the right side of his body blackened and crackling with lightning and the left side pristine and glowing with a white radiance. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or bardic knowledge check reveals this figure to be Nethys, the god of magic. This hallway is guarded by three traps, one of which was recently sprung and still holds the remains of its victim. See Act 2.

**2. Mektep-Han's Antechamber:** This 30-foot-cubed room is comprised of black basalt and devoid of any markings. A 10-foot-by-10-foot door rests in each of its four walls and the doors are made of the same pitch-sealed wood as the entry doors. The room smells strongly of pitch and sulfur and a faded gray stain can be seen in the center of the room. A ghostly figure of a dark-skinned Osirian man with blank white eyes and wispy white robes floats above the stain. Nearly 20 feet tall, the figure is the Soulwrought Echo of the wizard-priest Mektep-Han and he speaks in a constant stream of ancient Osiriani, as if orating for a large audience. Once the PCs enter the room from any direction, Mektep-Han ceases speaking and regards them with a curious, albeit intense gaze. A DC 10 Knowledge (history) checks reveals that the man seems to be of ancient Osirian descent and wears the robes of an Osirian wizard-priest. See Act 3.

**3. Test of the Necromancer:** This large room has a 40-foot-high ceiling concealed by rusting chains and tattered banners. A small winch, attached to a chain that runs up into the ceiling, sits next to the entryway doors. At the center of the room is a pyramidal platform upon which rests a large, bubbling fountain, overflowing with blood. The blood patters down the side of the fountain and onto the pyramid, which is heavily cracked and covered in bright-red blooming flowers. Attached to the blood-fountain via 35-foot-long coiled chains are four large bronze bowls. Steep steps surround the corner platforms and centered atop each is a brazier that hangs down from the ceiling, burning with pale light. This room has shadowy illumination, flickering down from the ceiling and from the four braziers in the corners. See Act 4.

**4. Test of the Diviner:** This large room has a 40-foot-high ceiling and four 10-foot-square pillars support a second floor of catwalks twenty feet above. Well-wrought wooden ladders lean on the stone pillars. The pillars and

walls are honeycombed with thousands of non-magical scrolls. In the center of the room is a large, empty pool. Steam gently rises from it as if water boiled inside the pool. On the north side of the room is a 10-foot-wide scribe's desk; in front of it hangs a large 40-pound ground-glass lens. Behind the desk on a 10-foot-high pedestal is a huge hourglass full of dark, starry liquid swiftly churning over and over. This room has shadowy illumination, provided by the hundreds of candles set on every possible surface—tables, chairs, even the floor. The candles do not impede movement in any way. See Act 5.

**5. Test of the Evoker:** This large room has a 20-foot-high ceiling and several platforms of various sizes all spaced apart from one another with cold water filling the space in between. When the PCs enter, the water line is 5 feet below the top of the platforms and the water's depth is 15 feet. Five feet below the waterline is a 5-foot-wide, 10-foot-tall walkway that runs north and south from the main platform and squares around to connect with the platform on the far side of the room. If the room is drained of water, this platform becomes a wall of sorts, either forcing the PCs into the center of the room or keeping them out. The sides of each platform (but not the walkway) are covered in ridges so that anyone needing to climb one need only make a DC 10 Climb check. On the easternmost platform is a large statue of a cloaked and hooded figure over which hangs a huge pendulum, currently motionless. A brightly glowing blue key dangles from the hand of the hooded figure. On the wall behind each of the statue's shoulders is carved a single great symbol in ancient Osiriani—the left symbol (from the PC's vantage point) reads **DROUGHT** while the symbol on the right reads **FLOOD**. Across the central platforms running north to south is a shimmering, see-through wall of intangible but impassable material. Acting as a *wall of force*, this nearly invisible barrier runs from the ceiling down to the initial level of the water as well as wall-to-wall. It also contains a limited *dimensional anchor* effect and prohibits all movement through it—both physical and magical. One-foot-diameter holes blocked by grates can be seen in the upper corners of the room and large drains can be seen beneath the water throughout the room. A small chest sits to the north side of the entryway doors, glowing with the same blue light as the key the figure holds. The chest cannot be moved or influenced in any way. This room has shadowy illumination, flickering down from large icons on the ceiling of a sun hidden behind a stylized moon, creating an eclipse. See Act 6.

**6. Hallways:** Each one of 10-foot-high hallways is comprised of the same black basalt as area 2. They, too, are devoid of markings and smell faintly of pitch and sulfur. Both ends of the hallway are capped by pitch-sealed wooden doors that are unlocked and easy to open.

### OSIRION

While everything you need to know about the nation of Osirion in order to run this scenario is detailed here, you can learn more about the ancient desert kingdom by reading any of these Paizo products: *GameMastery Module J1: Entombed with the Pharaohs*, *Pathfinder Module J4: The Pact Stone Pyramid*, *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*, and *Pathfinder Companion: Osirion, Land of Pharaohs*.

Additionally, you can learn more about the mad god of magic, Nethys, by reading the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* as well as *Pathfinder Chronicles: Gods & Magic*.

All of these books are available online at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) as well as at your local hobby gaming store.

The PCs will travel these hallways many times as they move between areas 2–5.

## GETTING STARTED

Read the following to get the adventure underway:

“You must make all haste for Sothis,” said Venture-Captain Adril Hestram as he paced the meeting hall of the Grand Lodge in Absalom several weeks ago. “There is a Korvosan galley waiting to take you to Osirion's capital. One of our own is missing and the venture-captain in Sothis wants you to help. Pack for the desert, boys, it's going to be hot.”

Upon arrival in Sothis, local Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir told the tale of Colm Safan, his longtime friend and fellow Sothis Pathfinder who traveled south some months ago to find the final location of a great hidden monument the locals speak of in hushed tones called the Ravenous Sphinx. An ancient myth of the Keleshites of southern Osirion tells of a beastly monument in the desert that comes to life and swallows whole any who dare draw near. Safan searched the libraries of Sothis for 10 years to find even a hint of the Ravenous Sphinx's location and 6 months ago he believed he had finally found it.

With great time and great effort, with mountains of gold and honeyed promises and gallons of wine, he obtained maps and stories; he obtained horses and supplies, and finally he obtained the services of a caravan master willing to lead him into the empty nothing-lands that simmer in the rain-shadow of the Brazen Peaks. Other than a short letter informing Balentiir that he'd found the sphinx, was using local labor to dig it from the sands, and would soon enter to explore its purpose, Colm Safan has not been heard from since.

“So it falls to you,” Venture-Captain Balentiir said. “Hire a caravan and follow Safan's map south. Find the Ravenous Sphinx, find Pathfinder Safan, and report back to me when you have.”

After a long journey through blistering desert sands, after

### GAMEMASTERY MAP PACK: CARAVAN

The map for Act 1 was constructed from several wagons featured in GameMastery Map Pack: Caravan. Obviously, everything you need to run Act 1 is provided here, but if you want to use the actual caravan wagons featured below, you can purchase this map pack online at paizo.com or at your local gaming store.

### RUNNING RIDDLE

The *Third Riddle* is a relatively free-form scenario: PCs start with the chase in Act 1, move to the entrance to the Ravenous Sphinx in Act 2, and roleplay with the Soulwrought Echo in Act 3. Acts 4–6 are played in whatever order the PCs choose and they can even interact with the Soulwrought Echo again after each of those acts for additional roleplaying opportunities.

weeks of hard travel through a windswept place of uncharted dust, in the blighted wastelands the servants of the Ruby Prince call the Parched Dunes, the snarling, bestial visage of the Ravenous Sphinx, carved from ancient black basalt, looms large on the horizon.

Suddenly a cry goes out across the desert caravan—riders approaching from the east, and fast. Black-clad in flowing robes and wearing wrapped keffiyehs covering all but their eyes, they wield shortbows and scimitars and ride fast-moving, dark-skinned horses. They ride hard for the caravan and their intentions are clear—this is an ambush.

## ACT 1: RACING SHADOWS IN THE SUNSET (EL 5 OR EL 8)

The PCs begin play at sunset, aboard the middle wagon of a three-wagon caravan, a topless buckboard pulled by two heavy horses (hp 19; MM 273). Allow the PCs to decide where they are, leaving room for the driver in the square marked “D.” All of the wagon drivers keep their buckboards moving 60 feet per round as a double move due to the rough terrain and don’t deviate unless forced to. The PCs are the muscle of this caravan and, as such, the caravan master didn’t bother to hire any additional guards. It’s up to them to stop the ambush.

For the sake of simplicity, move the attacking horsemen in relation to the wagons without actually moving the wagons (but keeping in mind their move speed). The wagons are also moving over broken and uneven ground. At the top of the initiative order, roll on the Wagon Chase Table on page 7 to determine the circumstances of the wagons and apply the results to any applicable checks or

actions during that round. Adding this random element gives the entire chase a more wild sense of action. The wagons move at the bottom of each initiative order—don’t bother to roll for them, just move them last each round. The front and back wagons each have two drivers in the front and one spotter in the back. The middle wagon has only one driver and the PCs. Use the 1st-level Elf Warrior stats (hp 4; MM 102) removing the Elf traits special quality for the drivers and spotters. The second driver and the spotter in the front and back wagons fire their longbows at the attackers each round if able. If PCs (such as paladins) have their own mounts, start them mounted near the middle wagon.

The attacking horsemen all approach from the east—six of them attack the middle wagon and two attempt to kill the drivers of the first wagon before attacking the PCs. If they succeed at killing both of the front drivers, the front wagon slows to a crawl and stops and the other drivers have to take evasive action to avoid hitting it. For the round after the first wagon stops, the PCs use the 1–20 entry on the Wagon Chase Table rather than roll. Each of the attacking horsemen is astride a light warhorse (hp 22; MM 274), though the horse runs off rather than fight if its rider is killed or thrown from the saddle. Keep in mind the penalty for mounted archery (PH 157).

Each of the riders carries a small bronze badge carved with a rampant serpent upon a shield. A DC 30 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check reveals that the symbol the horsemen are carrying is the badge of the bronze agents of the Aspis Consortium, the lowest tier of mercenaries and former military professionals that serve the secretive group of market-controlling merchants. The Aspis Consortium seeks to assemble the riddle and return it to their masked lords in Chelixa as well as destroy anyone seeking the same prize. Though the PCs don’t yet know of the riddle, the Aspis ambushers are mindless of that and want them dead all the same.

### TIER 1–2 (EL 5)

#### ASPIS CONSORTIUM AGENTS (8)

CR 1/2

Male or Female human warrior 1

NE Medium humanoid

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12

(+2 armor, +0 Dex)

**hp** 5 (1d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., mounted 60 ft.

**Melee** scimitar +1 (1d6/18–20, x3)

**Ranged** shortbow +2 (1d6/x3)

## The Third Riddle

### WAGON CHASE TABLE

Roll each round to determine the effect of the chase on that round's actions.

Roll d%	Result
01–20	<b>Take evasive action!</b> An object causes the wagon driver to swerve suddenly. All PCs in the wagon must make a DC 12 Reflex save before their action or fall prone as the wagon swerves suddenly left then right.
21–40	<b>Bump in the road.</b> The wagon strikes a bump or pothole in the road, causing the wagon to jump. All PCs in the wagon take a –1 on all melee or ranged attack actions this turn.
41–60	<b>Shower of sand.</b> The front wagon rolls through loose rock, spraying the second wagon with a cloud of rocks and sand. The cloud creates a temporary effect that functions like <i>obscuring mist</i> , centered on the middle wagon and covering only the wagon squares. If the front wagon has been disabled, nothing happens this round.
61–80	<b>Heavy debris.</b> All wagons slow to a double move speed of 40 feet as they wheel through a heavy debris field of parched sand and shattered rock.
81–100	<b>Hang on!</b> The wagon hits a severely sloped portion of road, causing the wagon to tilt suddenly left (01–50%) or right (51–100%). Anyone on the side the wagon tilts toward must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall from the wagon. Anyone falling from the wagon may immediately make a DC 12 Reflex save to grab the edge of the wagon. Anyone who falls takes 1d6 falling damage.

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Aspis Consortium agents ride toward the caravan from the east, bows drawn and ready to fire.

**During Combat** The Aspis Consortium agents prefer to fire their bows at the caravan rather than move in close to attack. If they miss more than one or two times from a distance, they draw their scimitars and ride in close to hack at the PCs. Six agents attack the middle wagon with the PCs and two attack the drivers in the front wagon.

**Morale** The Aspis Consortium agents fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 11, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +1

**Feats** Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (shortbow)

**Skills** Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Ride +4

**Languages** Common

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** bronze Aspis Consortium badge (1 gp value), masterwork leather armor, scimitar, shortbow with 20 arrows

**Ranged** mwk shortbow +5 (1d6/x3)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Aspis Consortium agents approach the caravan from the east, bows drawn and ready to fire.

**During Combat** The Aspis Consortium agents prefer to fire their bows at the caravan rather than move in close to attack. Six agents attack the middle wagon with the PCs and two attack the drivers in the front wagon.

**Morale** The Aspis Consortium agents fight to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 11, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

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

**Feats** Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (shortbow)

**Skills** Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Ride +6

**Languages** Common

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** bronze Aspis Consortium badge (1 gp value), masterwork leather armor, masterwork scimitar, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows

**Development:** PCs knocked from the wagon have a chance to catch back to up the caravan on foot. Keep in mind that the wagons only move 60 feet per round as a double move action and that most PCs at running speed should be able to catch the wagons again. Allow PCs knocked from the wagon a DC 15 Climb check to climb back into the wagon if they so choose. Anyone knocked from a wagon will largely be ignored by the riders, unless they run up on them and attack. The drivers of the wagons refuse to stop, so PCs who want to bring the caravan to a halt to fight the agents will have to restrain the drivers in some way to do so. Stopping the middle wagon does not, however, stop the front and back wagons and they continue on across the desert, under attack by two of the eight Aspis agents.

## TIER 4–5 (CL 8)

### ASPIS CONSORTIUM AGENTS (8)

CR 2

Male or Female human warrior 3

NE Medium humanoid

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12

(+2 armor, +0 Dex)

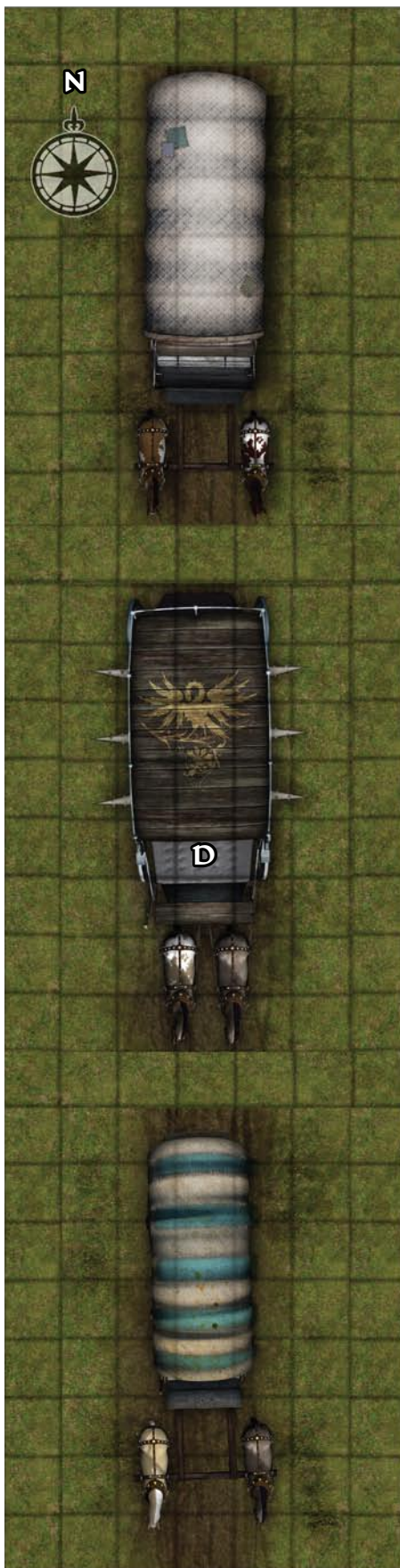
**hp** 14 (3d8)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., mounted 60 ft.

**Melee** mwk scimitar +4 (1d6/18–20, x3)



If an Aspis Consortium agent is captured, he or she knows only that they were sent to kill the Pathfinders traveling to the Ravenous Sphinx and were then supposed to send word to their shadowy contact in nearby Wati that the job was done so that additional agents could be sent out to explore the sphinx. The Aspis agents know nothing of Nethys's riddle or anything else inside the ruin.

The PCs have plenty of time to rest and recover from the encounter with the Aspis agents before entering the sphinx's trapped main hallway. It is after dark once the PCs reach the Ravenous Sphinx.

**Mission Notes:** PCs of the Taldor faction should be interested in the bronze badges carried by each of the Aspis Consortium agents.

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat the Aspis Consortium agents, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 1–2:**

Give each player 171 gp.

**Tier 4–5:**

Give each player 571 gp.

## ACT 2: INTO THE RIDDLE'S HEART (EL 4 OR EL 6)

**Traps:** There are three traps here that vary by tier (marked X, Y, and Z on the map on page 9). The trap marked X has been tripped and contains the mangled corpse of Pathfinder Colm Safan. This should be the first clue for the PCs that this hall contains more traps. Safan's body is quite difficult to remove from the trap and a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Disable Device, or bardic knowledge check reveals that removing him automatically resets the trap. Safan's corpse is stuck between the scything blade and the floor and he can be pulled out with a DC 18 Strength check—removing his body causes the scything blade to wind back into the ceiling and resets area X on the map as a trap area. Resetting the trap also closes the outside doors to area 1.

The other two traps vary by tier. For Tier 1–2, area Y is a *burning hands* trap that erupts from the floor followed by a camouflaged pit trap in area Z. For Tier 3–4, area Y is a poisoned dart trap that fires from the walls and area Z is a spiked pit trap.

### TIER 1–2 (EL 4)

**SCYTHING BLADE TRAP**

CR –

Type mechanical; Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20

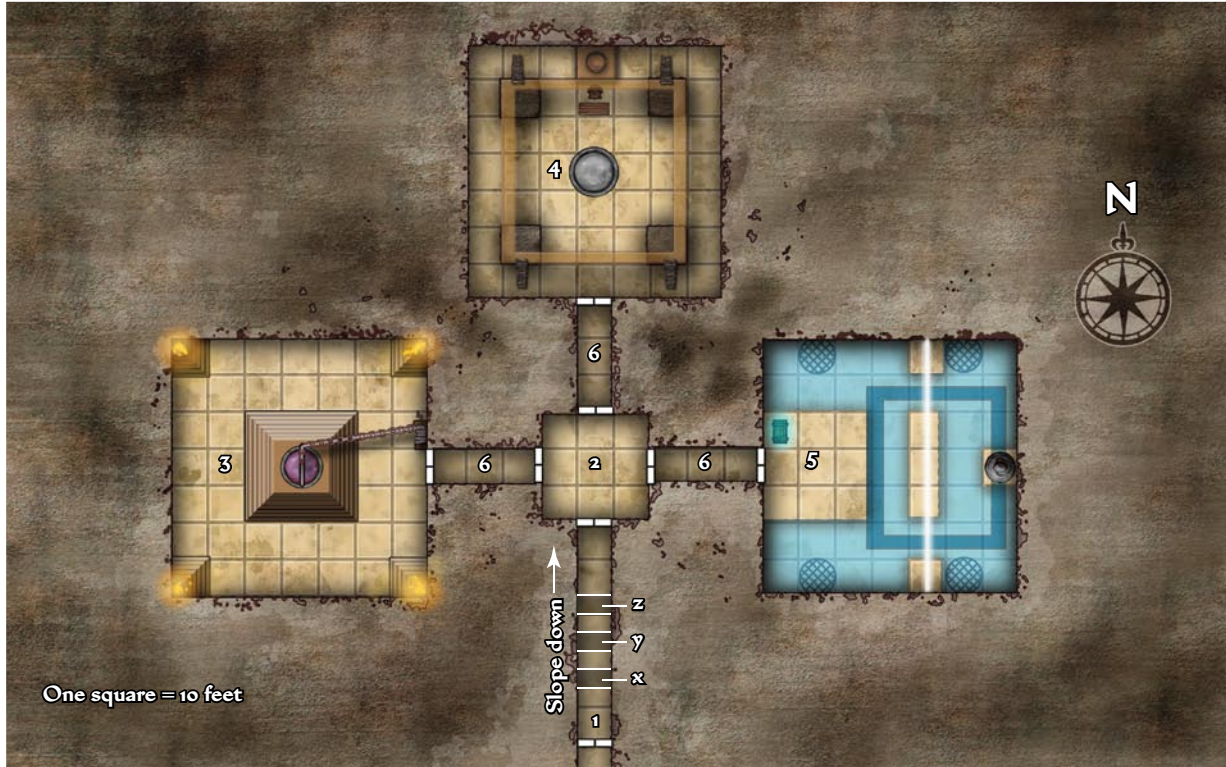
**EFFECTS**

Trigger location (area X—already triggered and jammed open);

Reset automatic



## The Third Riddle



**Effect** Attack +8 melee (5d8/x3) and closes the outside doors (DC 25 Strength to prevent)

### SPECIAL

**Note:** If the scything blade trap is reset, it becomes a CR 4 trap.

### BURNING HANDS TRAP

CR 2

**Type** magical; **Search** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity (area Y); **Reset** automatic

**Spell Effect** *burning hands*, CL 1st, 1d4 fire, Reflex DC 11 half damage

### CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP

CR 2

**Type** mechanical; **Search** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 19

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location (area Z); **Reset** manual

**Effect** Reflex DC 20 avoids; 20-ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each 5-ft. square of area Z)

## TIER 4–5 (CEL 6)

As Tier 1–2, but replace Y and Z traps with the following:

### POISONED DART TRAP

CR 4

**Type** mechanical; **Search** DC 21; **Disable Device** 22

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location (area Y); **Reset** manual

**Effect** Attack +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in area Y); poison (Small monstrous centipede poison, Fortitude DC 10 resists, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex)

### SPIKED PIT TRAP

CR 3

**Type** mechanical; **Search** DC 21; **Disable Device** DC 20

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location (area Z); **Reset** manual

**Effect** Reflex DC 20 avoids; 20 ft.-deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first two targets in area Z); pit spikes (Attack +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each)

**Treasure:** A DC 10 Search check of Safan's body finds the following items: a +2 *quarterstaff* (Tier 4–5 only—Tier 1–2 finds a +1 *quarterstaff*), a damaged and inoperable *wayfinder*, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, and a *scroll of lightning bolt*. Searching his body and removing items does not reset the trap. An additional DC 15 Search check of the nearby hallway (area X) finds his journal, a thickly bound leather tome containing all of Safan's notes from almost 2 decades of exploring Garund for the Pathfinder Society.

**Mission Notes:** PCs of the Cheliox faction should be interested in the journal of Colm Safan.

**Rewards:** If the PCs recover the items from the body of Pathfinder Colm Safan, reward each tier thusly:

#### Tier 1–2:

Give each player 310 gp.

#### Tier 4–5:

Give each player 810 gp.

## ACT 3: HEART OF THE RAVENOUS SPHINX

When the PCs enter area 2 for the first time, the Soulwrought Echo of the wizard-priest Mektep-Han floats above the center of the room and converses with an unseen host in ancient Osiriani. He stops talking once all of the PCs are in the room and for a moment regards them with a curious, albeit intense gaze. He waves his left hand at the PCs, creating a haze of blue light that settles on each of them. Then he speaks in ancient Osiriani—a language the PCs can suddenly understand.

---

“I am the Soulwrought Echo of wizard-priest Mektep-Han of Nethys, the God-King of Osirion. Rejoice and tremble, ye seekers of the Third Riddle. My only gift to you is this: that you comprehend the tongue of gods.

“Through these doors are three tests that unlock the third dread riddle of Nethys. Each test’s reward is a portion of the Third Riddle and each portion is sealed in a Thaumaturgical Ark. You will have your wits, your skill at arms, and your skill at spells challenged and tried. You may use whatever tools you have at your disposal—but remember, everything has its price.

“The choice is yours, mortals—decide on your first test. May the secrets of God-King Nethys unbind your mind as they have unbound his.”

---

The ability to speak and understand ancient Osirani only lasts within the walls of the Ravenous Sphinx. Should the PCs leave the sphinx before the completion of the scenario, they lose this ability. This may cause complications in some of the tests as they all rely on some ability to understand the language. Mektep-Han cannot be persuaded to perform the ritual again.

The west, north, and east doors in this room all lead to a different test of the Third Riddle. The west door is marked in ancient Osiriani as “Bloody Chains of the Necromancer,” the north door is marked “Shifting Crucible of the Evoker,” and the east door is marked “Living Library of the Diviner.”

The PCs can communicate with the Soulwrought Echo of Mektep-Han. He’ll even answer their questions, but if they ask anything about any of the tests he stares at them blankly and doesn’t speak until they ask another question that doesn’t pertain specifically to one of the three tests. He will, however, answer questions about the other two dread riddles of Nethys, though he only acknowledges that they exist and stares blankly at the PCs if asked where the other riddles are. If asked, “What happens when we collect all three riddles?” Mektep-Han answers simply, “You unbind the universe.” He refuses to explain further.

Mektep-Han serves as an excellent go-between as the PCs travel from one room to the next. As they emerge from the first test, he might comment on a misstep or haughtily poke

fun at their errors. His interactions with the PCs are entirely up to you as the GM, but feel free to make the wizard-priest an enigmatic break between the intense tests.

**Rewards:** There are no rewards for Act 3.

## ACT 4: BLOODY CHAINS (EL 4 OR EL 5)

The doors to area 3 open easily. They are marked in ancient Osiriani with the phrase, “Only blood can extinguish the flames of unlife.” See page 4 for a detailed description of this room.

**Creatures:** Five guardians occupy the room: four undying slave-soldiers (zombies), one chained to each of the four corners with 40-foot-long chains, and a shadow who begins in the center of the room, bound at the neck by a *ghost touch collar*, an ancient Osiriani magic item that restrains incorporeal creatures, and a long chain leading into the darkness above the fountain. If the *ghost touch collar* is removed from the shadow or the shadow is destroyed, the *collar* dissolves into dust and becomes useless.

**Bloody Chains of the Necromancer:** Splashing blood from the fountain on the pyramidal dais onto the flickering braziers in the corner is the only way to extinguish the flames. This can be accomplished by dipping the bronze bowls into the fountain of blood and then walking the blood over to the braziers, which occupies two hands and requires a DC 15 Balance check each round the PCs are on stairs and a DC 10 Balance check each round they are on the floor. A PC carrying a bowl of blood that’s struck in combat must make a DC 10 Reflex save or drop the bowl. The bronze bowls are attached to heavy chains (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28) 35 feet in length—not long enough to make it all the way to the burning braziers in each corner. Once a PC has moved to the full length of the chain with a bowl of blood, he or she must throw the blood at a brazier. Have that PC make a ranged touch attack against an AC of 10—a miss means the PC has to get more blood and try again and a hit means the brazier is extinguished.

In addition, the winch next to the door may be used to reign in the shackled shadow—its *ghost touch collar* is attached to a chain that runs up to the ceiling and back down to the winch. The chain has a lot of slack, and the shadow can range up to 60 feet from the center of the room (covering almost the entire room). However, each full round that a PC spends cranking on the winch (no check needed) reduces this distance by 5 feet, hauling the shadow closer to the center of the room. The shadow can be pulled back to the top of the pyramidal dais in 8 rounds and kept immobile by weighing down the winch with any object weighing more than 1 pound. The shadow has neither mass nor strength and cannot manipulate the winch or any material objects.

## The Third Riddle

The entire room is under a permanent *desecrate* effect, meaning every Charisma check made to turn the undead here suffers a –3 profane penalty and the undead gain a +1 profane bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saves and also gain +1 hit points per HD.

For Tier 1–2 only, whenever a brazier is extinguished, the shadow suffers 6 hp of magic fire damage. Extinguishing all four braziers destroys the shadow.

### TIER 1–2 (EL 4)

#### UNDYING SLAVE SOLDIERS (4)

CR 1/2

Human commoner zombie

hp 18 (MM 266)

---

#### TACTICS

---

**During Combat** The slave-soldiers attack anything that comes near. Because of their chains, they cannot move more than 40 feet from their corner of the room.

**Morale** The slave-soldiers fight until destroyed.

#### SHADOW

CR 3

hp 22 (MM 221)

---

#### TACTICS

---

**During Combat** The shadow attempts to kill anyone approaching either the blood fountain or any of the corner braziers. In addition, movement of the shadow may be limited by PC action (see above). For Tier 1–2 only, the shadow takes damage whenever a brazier is doused (see above).

**Morale** The shadow fights until destroyed.

### TIER 4–5 (EL 5)

#### UNDYING SLAVE SOLDIERS (4)

CR 1

Troglodyte zombie

hp 33 (MM 266)

---

#### TACTICS

---

**During Combat** The slave-soldiers attack anything that comes near. Because of their chains, they cannot move more than 40 feet from their corner of the room.

**Morale** The slave-soldiers fight until destroyed.

#### SHADOW

CR 3

hp 22 (MM 221)

---

#### TACTICS

---

**During Combat** The shadow attempts to kill anyone approaching either the blood fountain or any of the corner braziers. In addition, movement of the shadow may be limited by PC action (see above).

**Morale** The shadow fights until destroyed.

**Development:** Once all four braziers are extinguished, a small chest appears next to the winch by the doors. It glows

with a faint, flickering blue light and is unlocked. The chest cannot be picked up, moved, or manipulated in any way other than opening it. Inside is what appears to be a broken piece of a basalt tablet, covered in unknown symbols and weighing 10 pounds. The basalt radiates a strong divination aura. If this is the third fragment the PCs have found, placing them together on the floor causes them to fuse together, creating an artifact called the *Nethys Tablet*. This artifact is useless when separated from the other two *Nethys Tablets* lost in similar chambers beneath the deserts of Osirion, though it still radiates strong divination magic.

**Rewards:** There are no rewards for Act 4.

### ACT 5: LIVING LIBRARY (EL 3 OR EL 7)

The doors to area 4 open easily. They are marked in ancient Osiriani with the phrase, “With each turning seen of the eye, one scorpion is not a lie.” See page 5 for a detailed description of this room.

**Creatures:** Three guardians occupy this room, lounging in the large, empty steaming pot at the center of the room. Only one of them, however, is real—the other two are illusions. All three appear to be a large or huge scorpion (depending on tier) and once the PCs enter the room the scorpions scatter in three different directions.

**Living Library of the Diviner:** Each round, the hourglass on the northern platform makes a half revolution, causing all three scorpions to switch places. Randomly determine each round which of the three scorpions is real. The illusory scorpions are an effect similar to *shadow conjuration*. Although illusory scorpions fight and move exactly like real scorpions, any PC struck by or striking an illusory scorpion can disbelieve the illusion (Will DC 14). A PC struck by a scorpion who disbelieves the illusion also negates any damage dealt that round by that scorpion. Illusory scorpions never deal poison damage. Illusory scorpions cannot be damaged, although they appear to take damage.

Any PC who takes a full-round action to examine the room through the ground glass lens that hangs above the desk sees only the real scorpion. Determining the real scorpion by looking through the lens gives all PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to disbelieve the illusion that round.

If the hour glass is destroyed (hardness 10, hp 10) all of the liquid inside instantly evaporates and the scorpions cease switching places every round, though the illusory scorpions remain. Once the real scorpion is killed, the illusions vanish.

Climbing the ladders up to the second floor is easy, requiring a DC 5 Climb check to ascend them. The catwalks are flimsy and move as PCs cross them and thus count as difficult terrain. Because of their flimsy

construction, any PC struck in combat on the catwalks must succeed on a Balance or Tumble check (DC 10) or fall. Those who fall can make a Reflex save (DC 12) to catch hold; otherwise, they fall to the floor and suffer 2d6 falling damage.

### TIER 1–2 (EL 3)

#### LARGE MONSTROUS SCORPION

hp 32 (MM 287)

CR 3

### TIER 4–5 (EL 7)

#### HUGE MONSTROUS SCORPION

hp 75 (MM 287)

CR 7

**Development:** If the real scorpion is slain, both illusory scorpions vanish and a small chest appears on the desk. It glows with a faint, flickering blue light and is unlocked. The chest cannot be picked up, moved, or manipulated in any way other than opening it. Inside is what appears to be a broken piece of a basalt tablet, covered in unknown symbols and weighing 10 pounds. The basalt radiates a strong divination aura. If this is the third fragment the PCs have found, placing them together on the floor causes them to fuse together, creating an artifact called the *Nethys Tablet*. This artifact is useless when separated from the other two *Nethys Tablets* lost in similar chambers beneath the deserts of Osirion, though it still radiates strong divination magic.

**Mission Notes:** Andoran, Osirion, and Qadira faction members all have items of interest in area 4. Andoran faction PCs, once the scorpion has been dealt with, can take all the time they need to find the specific scroll that reveals the slave-freeing actions of Pharaoh Menedes XVII (Search DC 20). Osirion faction PCs need to recover any 20 scrolls—it matters not which. Keep in mind, however,

that each scroll is ornately constructed and thickly rolled and weighs 2 pounds each. Osirion faction PCs will therefore have to contend with an additional 40 pounds of weight throughout the rest of the scenario. Qadira faction PCs need only destroy the lens to accomplish their faction mission.

**Rewards:** There are no rewards for Act 5.

## ACT 6: SHIFTING CRUCIBLE (EL 2 OR EL 3)

The doors to area 5 open easily. They are marked in ancient Osiriani with the phrase, “Life is fire and fire is death. Between drought and flood, speech is what balances power.” See page 5 for a detailed description of this room.

**Creature:** One guardian occupies this room: an ancient serpentine creature of terrible size and power. When the PCs enter, the guardian is in the water immediately east of the statue. He attacks once the PCs activate the pendulum.



## The Third Riddle

**Shifting Crucible of the Evoker:** To activate the pendulum of drought and flood, a PC need only speak one of the following words and succeed at a DC 12 Will save:

“Sun,” “flame,” “heat,” or “drought” moves the pendulum toward drought.

“Rain,” “food,” “water,” or “storm” moves the pendulum toward flood.

Once the pendulum swings toward drought, valves in the ceiling holes close (if they weren’t closed already) and large drains open in the floor, causing the water level to drop at the rate of 5 feet per round. The only exception is the water inside the submerged 10-foot-tall walkway—the water never fully drains from within the walkway and will always be at least 10 feet deep. Once the water starts to drain, the moon icon in the ceiling stops blocking the sun, and the room becomes brightly illuminated and rapidly heats. Every surface in the room (along with any gear carried by the PCs) is affected by *heat metal* 1 round after the pendulum swings toward drought. This effect stops once the pendulum swings toward flood.

Once the pendulum swings toward flood, the drains in the floor close and four torrents of water pour into the room from the holes in the upper corners, increasing the water level at the rate of 5 feet of standing water per round until completely flooded. Once the pendulum swings toward flood, the doors slam shut and lock tight, becoming impossible to open. The moon icon on the ceiling shifts to entirely block the sun, and the room is submerged in darkness. It remains this way until the pendulum swings toward drought.

The PCs need not slay the guardian to complete the test: only obtain the key from the figure and return it to the intangible chest.

### TIER 1–2 (EL 2)

**LARGE VIPER SNAKE**  
hp 33 (MM 280)

CR 2

### TIER 4–5 (EL 3)

**HUGE VIPER SNAKE**  
hp 33 (MM 280)

CR 3

**Development:** Once the glowing blue key is obtained from the hand of the hooded figure at the base of the pendulum, it must be returned to the ghostly chest. The key unlocks the chest, interacting with it as if the chest were a solid object. The chest cannot be picked up, moved, or manipulated in any way other than opening it with the key. Inside is what appears to be a broken piece of a basalt tablet, covered in unknown symbols and weighing 10 pounds. The basalt radiates a strong divination aura.

If this is the third fragment the PCs have found, placing them together on the floor causes them to fuse together, creating an artifact called the *Nethys Tablet*. This artifact is useless when separated from the other two *Nethys Tablets* lost in similar chambers beneath the deserts of Osirion, though it still radiates strong divination magic. Once the chest is opened with the key, the pendulum reverts back to neutral and the room resets to its beginning decription.

**Rewards:** There are no rewards for Act 6.

## CONCLUSION

Once all three tests are complete, and the disparate parts of the Third Riddle are reunited, the Soulwrought Echo of Mektep-Han appears and congratulates the PCs. He also delivers a most dire warning as to the power combining the three dread riddles of Nethys can unleash—the power to boil the oceans, and blacken the sky, and to light all the world aflame. Once Mektep-Han gives his warning, the Ravenous Sphinx begins to collapse—the PCs have about 30 minutes to exit the Ravenous Sphinx before they are unable to. The test rooms collapse first, slowly breaking apart and crumbling to ruin beneath the sands, before the antechamber and connecting hallways start rumbling closed. Lastly, the trapped entry hallway crumbles to dust and then the entire Ravenous Sphinx statue breaks apart and sinks into the sands, lost forever as ancient detritus in the desert. The crumbling of the Ravenous Sphinx is meant to be dramatic—it shouldn’t actually injure or kill a PC unless they feel the need to stay behind, in which case, they are crushed to death.

As mentioned previously, the constructed *Nethys Tablet* radiates strong divination magic but is otherwise useless unless grouped with the other two lost *tablets*. For now, the *Nethys Tablet* is a storied trinket, an artifact of legend and, in the case of the Pathfinder Society, a tale worthy of a *Pathfinder Chronicle*.

## FACTION MISSIONS

**Andoran Faction:** PCs from the Andoran faction who obtain, from area 4, proof that Pharaoh Menedes XVII freed all the slaves of Osirion earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Cheliox Faction:** PCs from the Cheliox faction who retrieve the journal of Pathfinder Colm Safan from area 1 and deliver either the original or a copy to Zarta Dralneen earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Osirion Faction:** PCs from the Osirion faction who acquire 20 scrolls from area 4 earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Qadira Faction:** PCs from the Qadira faction who destroy the lens in area 4 earn 1 Prestige Award.

**Taldor Faction:** PCs from the Taldor faction who bring at least one bronze badge of the Aspis Consortium to Baron Dalsine earn 1 Prestige Award.

## Andoran Faction Handout

Fellow Free Citizen,

I fear that true terror awaits you in the lost sands of Ancient Osirion. Were I able, I would send a full score of Eagle Knights to aid you. Alas, we have not the time and even scribbling this missive may put enemies closer to your trail. Keep your eyes ever behind you as we hear rumors of a black ship docking in the moonlit harbor of Sothis and dispatching black-clad riders south toward your objective.

I have a task for you in the sands: find some proof of the intriguing tales regarding the Pharaoh Menedes XVII, an ancient ruler of Osirion before the coming of Kelesh power to those lands. Though it's an accepted fact among Osiriontologists that their people have forever engaged in the barbaric act of slavery, there are some unconfirmed legends which suggest otherwise: that the greatest of their rulers, in days of glory, freed every man, woman and child from the chains of bondage. No records remain of such an act, doubtless scoured from the records after that Pharaoh's passing, but any proof of it might sway many an Osirian citizen to our banner.

Your service to Liberty benefits all of the free people of Golarion.

Sincerely,  
Captain Colson Maldris

## Cheliax Faction Handout

Her Majestix's Most Loyal Servant,

It is with quivering pleasure that I share this missive, with a shuddering delight that tingles to my very core. I have three commandments for you—obey them and your rewards will be beyond mortal reckoning.

Be careful. Agents of Cheliax are unwelcome in many parts of Osirion, and those who serve under our banner, officially, are not acting in northern Garund.

Beware treachery. There are black rumors of riders dispatched from Sothis, hell bent on reaching the Ravenous Sphinx before you. Their presence in Osirion is a surprise to our local agents and we have only rumors of their affiliation. I'd hate to miss the pleasures of your company—don't let your guard down as you travel south, not for a moment.

Bring the journal of Pathfinder Colm Safan to me. It can be a copy, if your meddling fellow Pathfinders refuse to let you take it, but we need that journal. Safan was a loyal Osirian and his catalogs of many travels through northern Garund may shed insight on our desert enemy.

Serve well and the rewards I shall lavish upon you will be without number or name.

Achingly Yours,  
Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

## Osirion Faction Handout

Honored Subject of the Ruby Prince,

A thousand blessings upon you and your ancestors. Soon you will be ashore in vaunted Sothis. By order of the Ruby Prince Himself, the findings of our forgotten past are for the betterment of the world: what you take from the Ravenous Sphinx is, by divine decree, to be held by the Grand Lodge in Absalom.

Take great care while here—spies and enemies abound, and we cannot trust a full military excavation of the Parched Dunes. Tread carefully, and trust no one, for none can act on your behalf but your fellow Pathfinders.

You venture far into dangerous territory and there you may find a secret prize of great importance: in a place called the Living Library inside the Ravenous Sphinx it is said that every deed of every Osirian, from Pharaoh to slave, was kept right up until the sphinx was lost the first time. Return to us with a sampling of the scrolls you may find there—twenty should suffice. It would take an army to empty the Living Library, if the tales be true, so these scrolls should give us insight into whether or not it's worth sending an army there to retrieve them.

In Service to Lore,  
Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage

## The Third Riddle

### Qadiran Faction Handout

Servant of the Satrap,

It is the wise man watching the wheels of trade that knows when greatness is at hand—or about to be lost. In the ages long before Kelesh influence in the dust-filled lands of Osirion, they were a mighty people; theirs was a kingdom guided by prophecy and by wise rule perhaps rivaling even the Padishah Emperor. Though those days are long-since passed, some artifacts remain half-buried and half-remembered in the sand—it would be a tragedy for the strength arising under the foolish Ruby Prince to flower back into true majesty on the shaky foundations of rediscovered power.

Your task is a simple one: destroy the lens that is said to reside in the Living Library inside the Ravenous Sphinx. It is fabled the lens was an item of flawless prognostication, known to be in the possession of a man called Horus-Rani, the Diviner-Prince, who constructed the Living Library. To leave such unparalleled power in the lands of Osirion would be a death sentence, as cleanly as slitting one's own throat.

One last item of note—our merchants in Sothis send cryptic warnings. Black-clad riders, debarking from a ship of Chelish registry, are said to be racing for the Ravenous Sphinx as you read this missive. Their purpose is unknown. As one is careful in the market place, so too should you be careful in the Parched Dunes.

Your loyalty, as always, will be rewarded with gold.

Kind Regards,  
Pasha Muhlia Al-Jakri

### Taldor Faction Handout

Agent of the Empire,

Your rarified services are once again required. I'll not dally with obfuscation: time is far too limited, and the threat of failure too great. Barbarians and bandits alike will strive to keep you from your goal, but my faith in you has yet to be misplaced. I trust, in fact, that nothing is outside your skill.

Your presence in Osirion and your mission to the Ravenous Sphinx place the great Empire of Taldor in a position of strength. Word has it that your little journey through the desert has attracted the attention of certain interests deep within the Chelish Empire. Our hatred for that petty nation of devil-worshipping miscreants knows no bounds, so when it was whispered in my ears that some rebel faction of their government dispatched agents to the same location as you, the opportunity to sow fractious dissent between Osirion and Cheliex was too great to resist.

The Emperor, may he live forever, wants to know who those agents are. Should you encounter them, deal with them as you will, but return to me any items of interest they might carry with them: official papers, badges of office, letters of marque, etc. If there is a rebel faction in the nation of Cheliex, we would know about it now.

In the Emperor's Trust,  
Baron Jacquo Dalsine

## The Third Riddle

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# SCENARIO II: THE THIRD RIDDLE

This Chronicle Certifies That \_\_\_\_\_

Player Name	A.K.A.	Character Name	Pathfinder Society #	Faction
-------------	--------	----------------	----------------------	---------

Has Completed This Scenario. \_\_\_\_\_

### Items Found During This Scenario

TIER

1-2

Potion of cure serious wounds (Cost: 750 gp)  
Scroll of lightning bolt (Cost: 375 gp)

TIER

4-5

Quarterstaff +2 (Cost: 8,600 gp)

### Items Sold / Conditions Gained


TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD  
Add 1/2 this value to the "Items Sold" Box

### Items Bought / Conditions Cleared


TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT

Scenario Chronicle #

TIER

TIER	1-2	481
TIER	4-5	1,381

MAX GOLD

### EXPERIENCE

Starting XP
+1 XP
Final XP Total

### Prestige Award

Starting PA	
	<small>GM's Initial</small>
PA Gained (GM ONLY)	
Final PA Total	

### GOLD

Start GP	
+	<small>GM's Initial</small>
GP Gained (GM ONLY)	
+	
Items Sold	
=	
Sub Total	
-	
Items Bought	
=	
Sub Total	
-	
Gold Spent	
=	
Sub Total	

### For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #