



THE ASMODEUS MIRAGE™



A PATHFINDER®
SOCIETY™ SCENARIO
By Christopher Self

THE ASMODEUS MIRAGE™

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 15

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Pathfinder Society Scenario 15: The Asmodeus Mirage is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st to 7th level characters (Tiers: 1–2, 3–4, and 6–7). 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 ASMODEUS MIRAGE



BY CHRISTOPHER SELF

Since the first gods battled Rovagug across the face of Golarion, the Asmodeus Mirage has appeared in the deep deserts of Katapesh just after the centennial flood rains. A vast, insidious illusion of diabolical power and horrifyingly seductive visions, the Mirage is powered by a single bone devil skeleton made of crystal. This skeleton began its existence as a Herald of Asmodeus and during the many battles the first gods fought against the Rough Beast, the Herald was struck down, its organic matter flayed away in a maelstrom of magical power and its bones left behind, brittle and crystalline. None can agree which god struck down Asmodeus's herald, but most Katapeshi scholars do agree on one thing: the crystal skeleton in the Asmodeus Mirage is dangerous and should be left alone.

For all but one 24-hour period at the end of a 100-year cycle, the Mirage is hidden from view, enclosed in an inaccessible pocket dimension that mirrors a dried-up riverbed valley in far western Katapesh. While trapped in this pocket dimension, no one inside can leave and no one outside can enter. Despite this, a small tribe of gnolls has flourished inside the mirage, even building a rough camp of canvas tents and rubble atop a rocky outcropping amidst ancient and crumbling sandstone ruins. The gnoll tribe never strays far from home, as the mirage is filled with imps, ankhegs, a stir-crazy bronze dragon, and other hazards, as well as its constantly shifting scenery that can confuse unwary travelers and send them walking for days toward nothing. The gnolls subsist on cave farming and hunt the creatures that live within an hour or so by foot of their camp—travel any further away, as many young gnolls have, and they risk never returning home.

Besides the gnoll camp, the Asmodeus Mirage is populated with three other key features: a cave that has been taken over by an ancient and incredibly bored bronze dragon named Enkendu, a swirling maelstrom in the desert, and a small rocky mesa with a huge flower growing on top of it, in the middle of which rests the crystal skeleton of an ancient Herald of Asmodeus. Between these features are miles of rocky, sand-choked desert rubble, mercilessly burned by the sun during the day and brutally frozen during the night.

The Pathfinder Society has long researched the legendary Asmodeus Mirage, but was never able to pinpoint its location or schedule—until now. With the location pinpointed on an Azlanti stone carving found in Osirion and the schedule of its appearance worked out by studying the legends of the shepherds of the desert mountains of western Katapesh, the Society is racing against time to get a band of Pathfinders there to witness and catalog the Mirage's appearance as well as enter it and return with the crystal skeleton before the Mirage disappears again for another 100 years.

SUMMARY

The Asmodeus Mirage returns to the mountain desert of Katapesh. The Society tasks the PCs to get in, grab the crystal bone devil skeleton that powers the Mirage, and get out before the Mirage vanishes for another century. While in the Mirage, the PCs will have to deal with natural desert hazards, the variety of desert creatures trapped inside, and the diabolical forces that are attracted to it. They also have to deal with the Mirage itself, battling their own minds to find their way through as the key features of the Asmodeus Mirage are not fixed—they shift and move with the wind and are rarely found in the same place twice.

GETTING STARTED

Once the PCs are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

Even here, on a back street several blocks removed from the main bustle of the Katapesh markets, merchants hawk their wares, offering cooked meats and vegetables, shiny baubles, and bubbling pots filled with mysterious concoctions. A few short steps away is the Katapesh Pathfinder Lodge, a crumbling temple made of mud and white-washed in plaster. Stepping inside reveals the building to be markedly cooler than the late afternoon market. After a moment, an old, wrinkled Garundi man enters the main hall from a back room. He stares out of a pair of spectacles under a shock of white hair. He clearly matches the description of Venture-Captain Rafmeln, the quiet and rather unassuming head of the Katapeshi Pathfinders.

ADVENTURING IN KATAPESH

Everything you need to run *The Asmodeus Mirage* is included within this scenario. If you'd like to know more about Katapesh, read the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*, *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets—A Guide to Katapesh* or *Pathfinder Companion: Legacy of Fire Player's Guide*, or any of the Legacy of Fire Pathfinder Adventure Path adventures (*Pathfinder* #19 through #24).

"Oh, good, good, you're finally here. Come, I have things to show you," he says and gestures toward a spacious office. He scampers over to a desk in the corner and snatches up a set of papers. The first item he unrolls is a map of Katapesh. His finger jabs down on a spot in the northwestern corner of the country, well north of Solku, in the mountainous deserts bordering Osirion. "This is where the society is sending you. You've heard of the Asmodeus Mirage, yes? Well, no matter, either way, you'll soon be seeing it for yourself. This valley is where it manifests. For the longest time we had no idea what caused the Mirage, but my research has revealed some very compelling clues." He starts unrolling scrolls, opening books, flattening out sketches, and caps this display by retrieving an enormous and heavy tablet from a locked cabinet and carefully places it on his desk. The tablet is covered in pictographs—probably Ancient Osiriani. "Well, without going through all these Journals yourself, you'll just have to take my word for it, but ..." He flattens out another sketch. This one depicts a humanoid skeleton nestled around the pistil of a flower.

His finger jabs down at the skeleton. "This, here, is what you're after. From all the stories and fractured reports I've been able to piece together, this skeleton is what powers the Mirage." He gestures to the piles of paper that he's laid down. "Almost all of these reports that mention the Mirage have something to say about visions of the skeleton, though very few claim to have actually seen the real thing. I fear that those who get close to the skeleton either die or become trapped in the Mirage. There are many people, including a few Pathfinders, who went into that Mirage and never come out. Many die, I am sure. I believe many more are simply trapped. I believe that, if the Mirage ends while you are in it, you are very likely to never get out.

"Well, let's see if we can get around that, shall we, Pathfinders? You're going to go into the desert and get that skeleton. I've arranged a guide and a small camel caravan to get you there and back. You leave in the morning."

At this point, the PCs may ask Venture-Captain Rafmeln any questions they have about the mission or the

skeleton. He has pieced together most of the information presented in the adventure background section, but does not know any particulars about the location of the skeleton. The PCs may also purchase any items they believe they will need for their trip into the Katapesh desert. As this is Katapesh, they may find anything they wish to buy, particularly if they wish to venture into the Nightstalls.

Once the PCs are ready to travel to the Mirage, read or paraphrase the following:

The dawn sun has just peeked over the horizon but already the day is hot. In the valley below can be seen what is normally a sandy valley of dunes. The dunes have flowered with life from the intense centennial rains. Below, there is a riot of ephemeral green dotted with flowers of every color, shape, and size—color that feels inexplicably out of place in this brown, red, and orange desert. All of the colors and shapes of the valley are distorted, however, shimmering and hard to pinpoint. The distortion starts about halfway down a nearby path that snakes down the cliff face and into the midst of the Asmodeus Mirage. The path is still moist from the previous night's rains and the last of the centennial monsoon clouds can be seen scuttling over the southern horizon, back toward the coast.

"I tell you again," says Puli, a Katapeshi guide that works for the Pathfinder Society in Katapesh, "There's nothing but madness in that valley after the rains—you should turn back now. As you are Pathfinders, you are all crazy and will ignore my advice. I shall wait here for you or for some sign of your death. If you are not here by this time tomorrow, I shall assume you are dead or that Asmodeus's fell Mirage has you." He spits into the wet desert sand and gestures to a small path that leads down into the valley. "Go, if you must."

Development: Puli knows nothing about what the valley contains as his knowledge of this region is Mirage-free. He's more than willing to give the PCs advice on desert survival and does so with insults, accusations of insanity, and other things meant to discourage anyone he's guiding from continuing on. See page 91 of the DMG to learn more about dealing with desert terrain and page 303 in the DMG to learn more about heat dangers. If the PCs get Puli to talk about desert survival, his knowledge grants a +1 circumstance bonus to each PC on their Fortitude rolls versus heat. The daytime temperature in the Asmodeus Mirage is 110 degrees Fahrenheit at its hottest. Generally, the sun rises around 6 A.M. and sets around 6 P.M. By mid-morning, the temperature is over 90 degrees and it doesn't start to cool off again until mid-afternoon. For the sake of Fortitude rolls versus heat, the PCs

The Asmodeus Mirage

will need to make one an hour for six hours starting at 9 A.M. and continuing through 3 P.M. At night, the temperature plunges to around 60 degrees—a precipitous drop that differs so radically from the daytime temperatures that it feels much colder than it really is. While the PCs need not roll for the nighttime temperatures, reinforcing how cold it is at night will go a long way toward giving them the feeling that this desert is harsh, dangerous, and creepy.

The PCs have exactly 24 hours to exit the Asmodeus Mirage. Anyone still in the Mirage after 24 hours is there for the next 100 years or until they die, whichever comes first. Any living PC caught in the Mirage is considered dead for Pathfinder Society Organized Play purposes. That said, go easy on the PCs—don't try to trap them in the Mirage—the time limit should provide the PCs with a purpose to get this done and get out, not punish them for bad luck. The travel times and randomness of the Mirage (see below) are structured so that all but the most unlucky parties can make it through the five encounters and back out again without getting trapped for a century in the illusory desert.

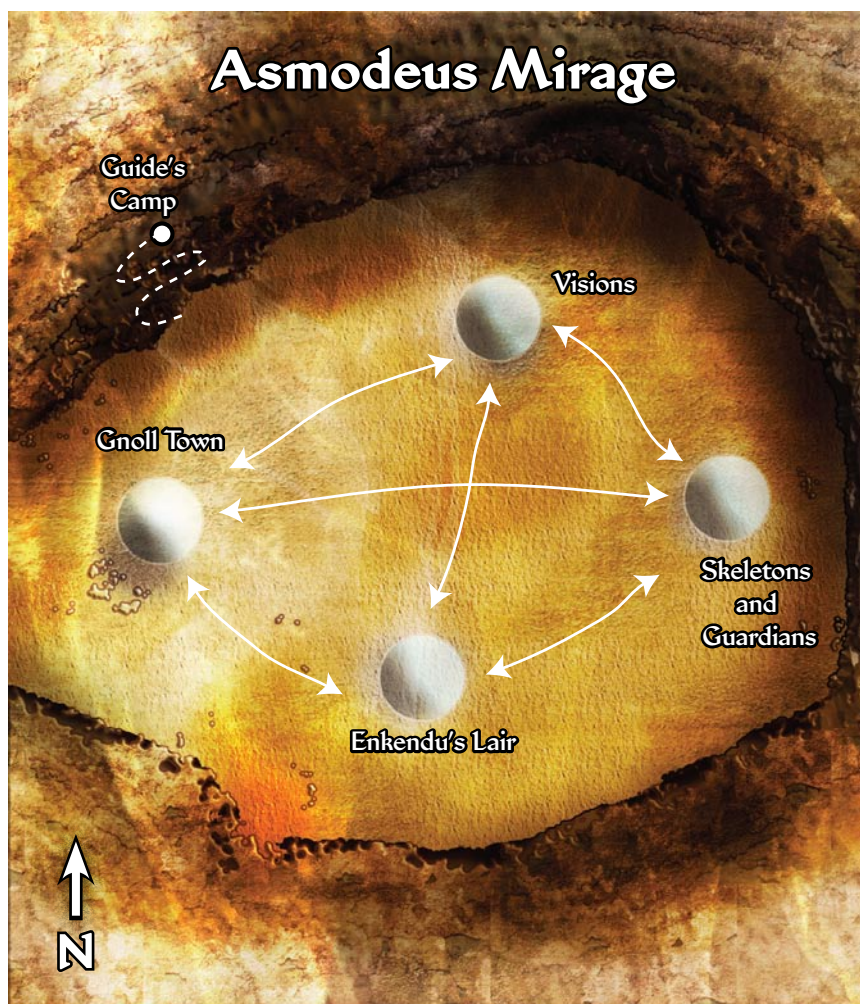
It takes the PCs about 30 minutes to travel down the path from the Guide's Camp to the edge of the Mirage. Once inside, randomly determine which of the four encounters the PCs travel toward and consult the map on page 5. The PCs travel for 1d3 hours between each location as the Mirage leads them on an unpredictable and winding path through the desert that's never the same way twice. Anyone with the Survival skill can make a DC 15 Survival check to reduce the amount of time traveled between each location by 1 hour. The travel time can never be reduced to below 1 hour. The PCs can always attempt to walk toward the trail leading back up to the Guide's Camp from any of the Mirage's four encounter locations. Roll 1d4 when the PCs attempt this—on a result of 1, they make it out of the Mirage. On a result of 2–4, they instead head to one of the four adventure locations. Attempting to leave the Mirage takes 1d4 hours and the time can be reduced with Survival checks just like traveling between locations can. If you randomly determine that the party arrives at Act 4, be sure to run Act 5 immediately afterward as it happens

RUNNING THE ASMODEUS MIRAGE

There is no set order for any of this scenario's encounters. The encounters are designed to give the PCs the feeling they are wandering aimlessly about the desert. GMs should randomly determine the order of locations on the map on page 5 that the PCs visit—even randomly determining that the PCs return to the same encounters repeatedly. *The Asmodeus Mirage* is also restrained by a time limit—the PCs have 24 hours from the moment they enter to escape or they may find themselves trapped in the Mirage forever. See the development section on page 4 for additional details. In the interests of filling a 4-hour time slot, keep your rolls secret to determine the order of encounters and make sure the PCs find each encounter at least once before leaving the Mirage.

at the same location, but atop the mesa rather than in front of it.

Time is very important in this scenario—keep track of it!



ACT 1: VISIONS OF SKELETONS (EL 2 OR EL 5 OR EL 7)

The sand shifts suddenly, swirling in a small maelstrom of rocks, pebbles, and debris. A crackling static electricity fills the air and sparks spit and sputter from inside the sand whirlpool.

This is one of the four encounters that can be done in any order. This encounter is exactly the same each time the PCs encounter it, though the fight may get progressively easier each time (see below). Have the PCs determine surprise by rolling a DC 12 Spot check (DC 10, Tier 1–2). Those that succeed can see skeletons quickly clawing their way out of the maelstrom. Those that fail do not act during the surprise round, though they may act normally after that.

Creatures: A variety of skeletons (regardless of tier, they all look humanoid) emerge from the sand whirlpool and attack the PCs. They are all illusory and function as a *major image* with some alterations. Any physical interaction with them (such as attacking them, grappling

GAMEMASTERY FLIP-MAT: DESERT

Several encounters in this scenario use the art from *GameMastery Flip-Mat: Desert*. While everything you need to run the scenario is included, you might want to pick up this Flip-Mat at your local hobby shop or online at paizo.com for ease of play.

them, touching them, etc.) allows the PC interacting with them to make a DC 15 Will save (DC 12, Tier 1–2) to determine if they're real. If a PC succeeds, he can disbelieve the damage dealt to him—if he fails, he takes the damage as real damage. Once one PC determines the skeletons to be illusory, he may call out such and grant the rest of his party a +2 circumstance bonus to their next Will save versus the illusion. Once a PC determines the skeletons to be an illusion, the skeletons stop attacking that PC and focus on the others. Once all PCs have determined the skeletons to be illusions, they vanish. It's possible the PCs will encounter the skeletons more than once—each time they do, it's exactly the same

encounter though if the PCs previously saved to disbelieve the illusion they are no longer affected by it and can laugh it off. Finally, it's important to note that clerics will be unable to turn these skeletons as they are not actually undead.

Tier 1–2 (EL 2)

ILLUSORY SKELETAL WARRIORS (6) CR 1/3
hp 6 (MM 226—use the stats for the human warrior skeleton)

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons are mindless creatures. They attack whoever is closest to them.

Morale The illusory skeletal warriors fight until they're destroyed or disbelieved.

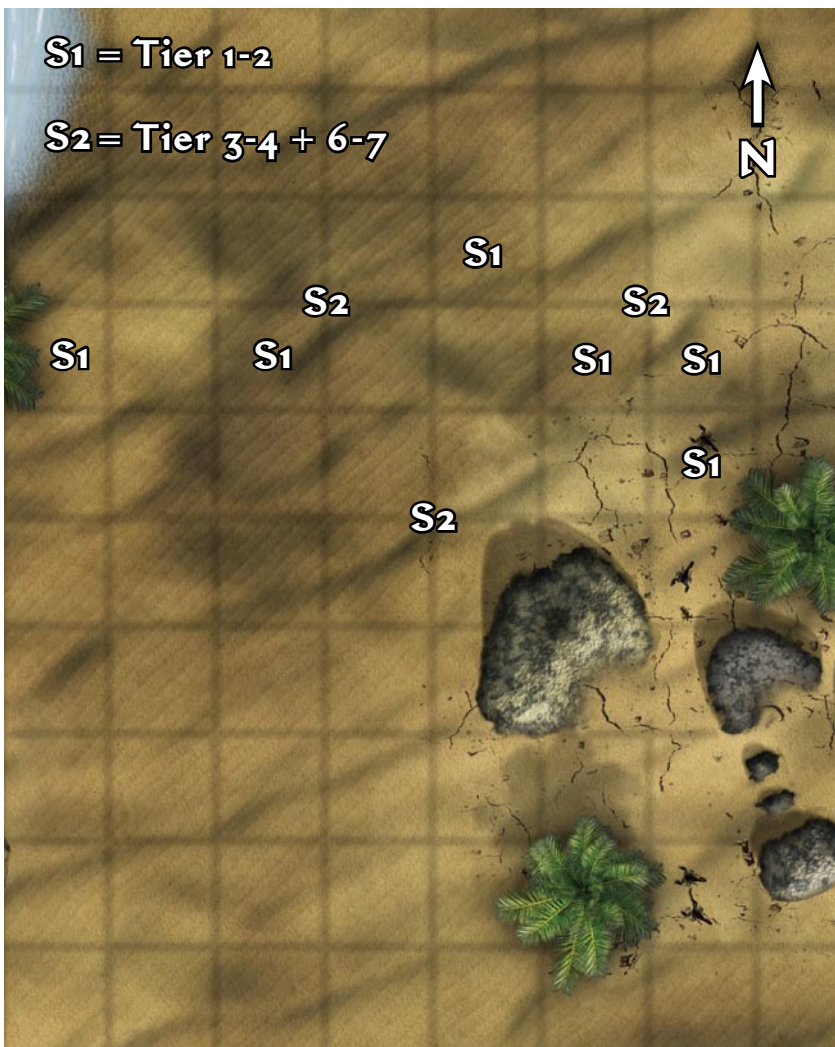
Tier 3–4 (EL 5)

ILLUSORY SKELETAL WARRIORS (4) CR 2
hp 13 (MM 226—use the stats for the owlbear skeleton)

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons are mindless creatures. They attack whoever is closest to them.

Morale The illusory skeletal warriors fight until they're destroyed or disbelieved.



Tier 6–7 (EL 7)

ILLUSORY SKELETAL WARRIORS (4)

CR 3

hp 39 (MM 227—use the stats for the troll skeleton)

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons are mindless creatures. They attack whoever is closest to them.

Morale The illusory skeletal warriors fight until they're destroyed or disbelieved.

Development: More than likely, the combat will end because the PCs succeeded on their Will saves to disbelieve the illusory warriors. In the unlikely event the PCs don't succeed, their only escape is back into the Mirage (triggering another roll to determine where they flee to—which could lead them right back to this encounter again in a matter of hours). If this encounter seems to go rather quickly, have one more wave of skeletons appropriate to each tier emerge from the maelstrom and attack. This second wave is at the GM's discretion—don't throw it at the party if they're having a tough time dealing with the first wave or if the first wave significantly reduces their resources.

Rewards: There are no rewards for this act.

ACT 2: GNOLL CAMP (EL 2 OR EL 5 OR EL 7)

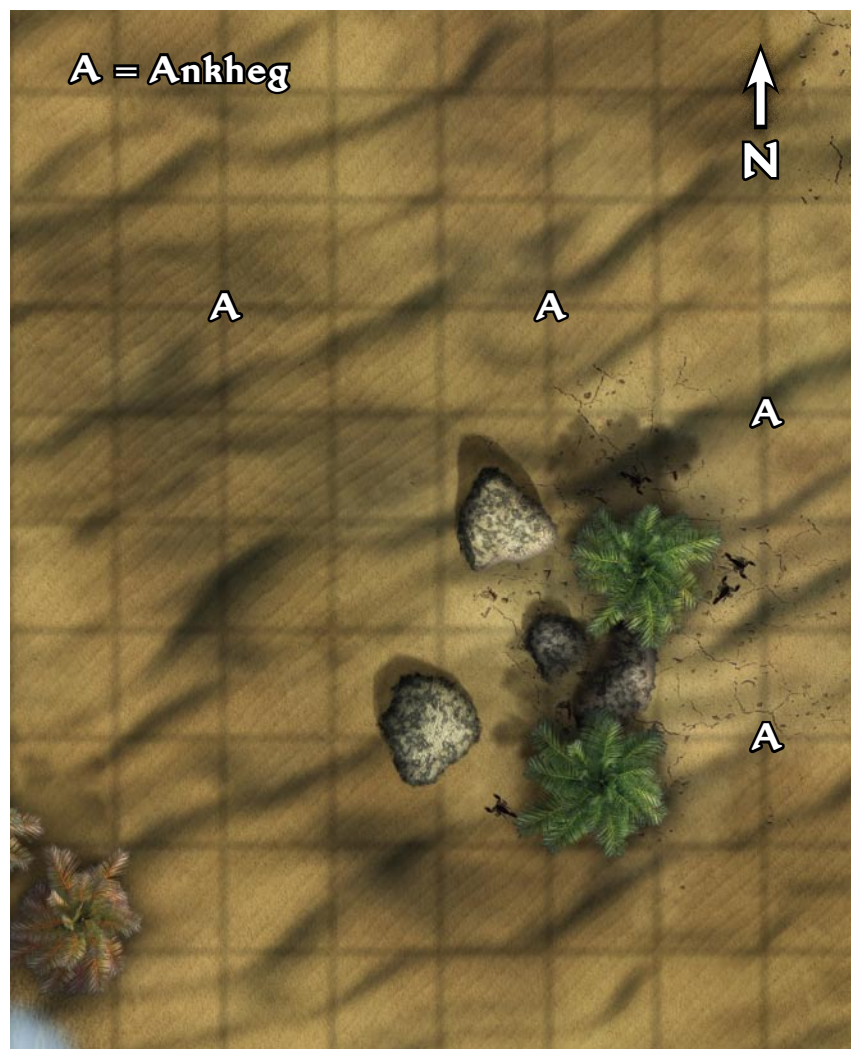
Rising in the distance is a small, craggy mesa. Several ladders lead up the side of the mesa to what appears to be a settlement—though a shanty town at best. Tents and makeshift ramshackle buildings have been hastily constructed in the midst of crumbling sandstone ruins of what looks to have once been a great desert temple. Humanoid figures can be seen moving about the ruins.

This is one of the four encounters that can be done in any order. What happens on each successive trip to this area is largely up to the GM, but should reflect how the PCs treated the gnolls earlier. This mesa is home to the descendants of a tribe of gnolls who wandered into the Mirage a few hundred years ago. As the PCs approach the base of the mesa, they are hailed by a solitary gnoll scout (hp 11, MM 130) who seems friendly and first attempts to speak to them in gnoll.

If, as is likely, none of the PCs speak gnoll, he then speaks in broken, heavily accented common.

Not used to seeing any strangers in the Mirage, the gnoll tells the PCs that if they mean well they can climb up to the camp and trade with the residents. If the PCs climb up to trade, keep track of how much time they spend in the camp. They can trade small trinkets for other small trinkets as what the gnoll tribe considers an object for trade is meager compared to what their counterparts outside of the Mirage consider a good trade. The camp has one remaining slave—an old Katapeshi human man named Verthig who is the last remaining descendant of the slaves the gnolls had when they became trapped here. Verthig is well-treated by the gnolls and acts more like a butler than a slave—albeit, a shabbily dressed one. While the PCs are in the gnoll camp, one of the gnoll elders approaches them and warns them of the ankhegs that plague the surrounding desert (if this happens give all of the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus for Spot checks to determine surprise against the ankhegs).

The gnolls also want to show the PCs their cave farm where they grow food, offering to trade fresh mushrooms



and other lichens and edible mosses for anything the PCs are willing to part with. If the PCs tell the gnolls that they have 24 hours to escape the Mirage, this sparks a mass exodus as half the tribe gathers what little belongings they possess and climbs down the ladders, and wanders off to the north. GMs may wish to have the PCs encounter the gnoll exodus again later (for example, they might find them fighting the illusory skeletons or being eaten by Enkendu). It's entirely up to the PCs if they want to help the gnolls leave the Mirage. The gnolls who choose to stay atop the mesa can't be convinced to leave.

If the PCs attack the gnoll scout, the ladders are pulled up and a hail of rocks and arrows rain down on them from the camp (1d3 arrows and rocks per PC, +1 ranged attack, 1d6 damage). The gnolls are far more interested in news from outside the Mirage and trading for trinkets than attacking the PCs—they'll only attack the PCs if they attack a gnoll inside the camp. If this happens, the entire tribe attacks (use the gnoll stat block at MM 130 with 40 combatants) which will likely result in the death or enslavement of the PCs.

Creatures: Once the PCs leave the gnoll camp (regardless of whether or not they go up into the village and talk to the elders) they encounter a nest of ankhegs. Keep in mind the +2 circumstance bonus the PCs receive if the elders warned them of the burrowing menaces. For Tier 1–2, use the "A" on the map on page 7 for the wounded ankheg. For Tier 3–4, use the two leftmost "A" marks on the map. Beyond the map is flat, featureless desert.

Tier 1–2 (EL 2)

WOUNDED ANKHEG

CR 2

hp 14 (MM 14)

SPECIAL

Note: This ankheg has been wounded by many recent skirmishes with the gnoll scouts from the camp. It's currently at 50% of its total hit points and has a long spear stuck in its acid sacks, rendering them useless. As such, the ankheg lacks the normal spit attack and does not deal acid damage on successful bite attacks.

TACTICS

Before Combat The ankheg rests just below the surface, nursing its wounds.

During Combat The ankheg is wounded and confused and when it senses the PCs it erupts from the ground and blindly attacks the nearest PC.

Morale The ankheg fights to the death.

Tier 3–4 (EL 5)

ANKHEG (2)

CR 3

hp 28 (MM 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat Both ankhegs lie in wait to ambush any gnoll scouts leaving the camp.

During Combat Ankhegs never work together in combat—each one attacks a different target.

Morale The ankhegs fight to the death.

Tier 6–7 (EL 7)

As Tier 3–4, but increase the number of ankhegs to 4.

Development: If the PCs defeat the ankhegs, the gnoll tribe is grateful and (for what it's worth) tells the PCs they may always consider the gnoll camp their home. If the PCs make it out of the Mirage, they'll find that a few gnolls made it out of the Mirage and are spreading the tale of the PCs to the other tribes. The PCs will receive a boon in the form of a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate rolls made against any gnolls in Garund as the tale will spread far and fast of the Pathfinders who freed gnolls from the Asmodeus Mirage.

Treasure: The ankhegs have collected an impressive collection of items over the years. Strewn around the sand where the ankheg(s) attacks the PCs are the following items:

Tier 1–2: An ornamented glaive (see the Andoran faction mission), a set of masterwork artisan's tools (leatherworking), a battered greatsword, a set of damaged but serviceable half plate, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork whip, *potion of blur*, *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *unguent of timelessness*, *wand of detect magic*, thunderstone (2), and a pouch containing 155 gp.

Tier 3–4: As Tier 1–2, but add a *wand of cure light wounds*, change the masterwork chain shirt to a +1 *chain shirt*, and change the *potion of cure light wounds* (3) to *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2).

Tier 6–7: as Tier 3–4, but add a *bag of holding* (type I).

Mission Notes: Qadira faction PCs may acquire a map from the gnoll elders to complete their mission. Andoran faction PCs should be interested in the glaive found near the ankhegs.

Rewards: If the PCs defeat the ankhegs, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 1–2:

Give each player 221 gp.

Tier 3–4:

Give each player 550 gp.

Tier 6–7:

Give each player 921 gp.

ACT 3: ENKENDU'S LAIR (EL 2 OR EL 4-5 OR EL 7)

Rounding a rocky ridge, a deep exhalation of breath can be heard from somewhere above. A large, brass-plated lizard-like head peers over the edge of a tumble of rocks and a toothy grin sprouts in the middle of its face. The brass dragon cocks his head, and says, “New travelers! Wonderful! You’ll have so much to talk about!”

This is one of the four encounters that can be done in any order. If the PCs reach Act 3 for the second time, how Enkendu reacts to them will largely depend on their success the first time. If they cleared the crazy dragon’s lair, he’ll be friendly. If they successfully fled from him, he’ll attempt the same madness as detailed below.

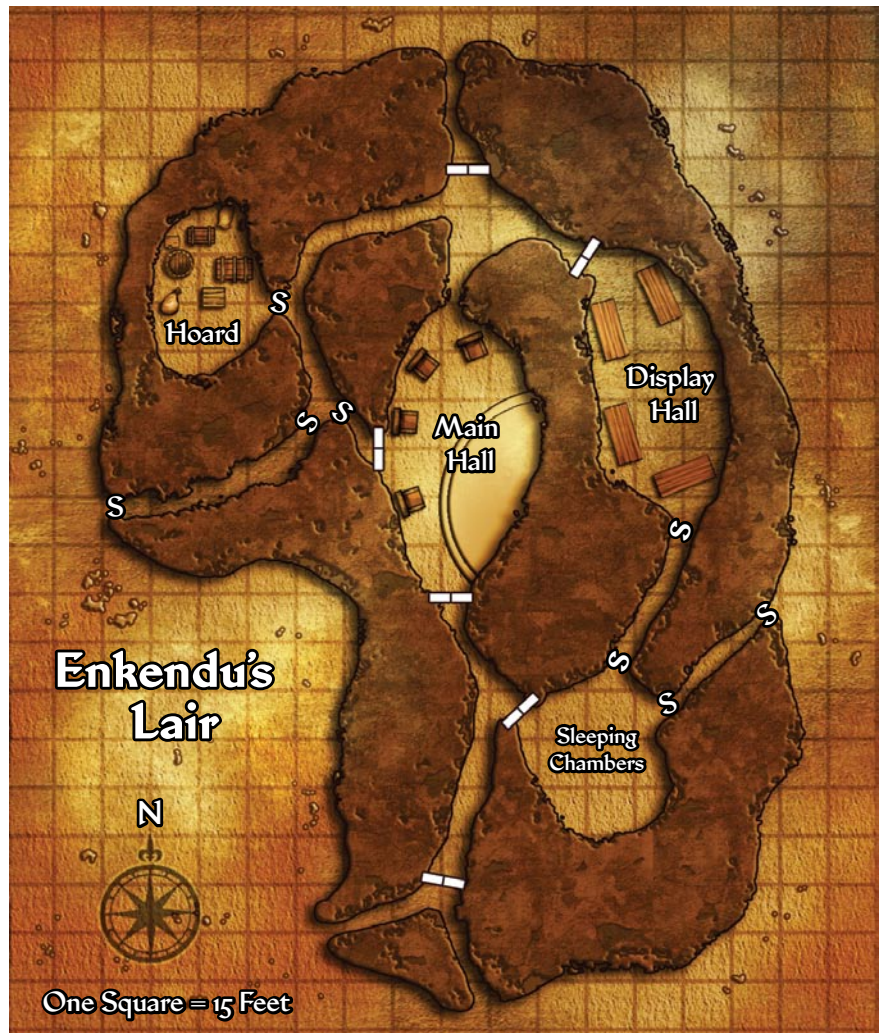
Enkendu is a crazy brass dragon and he’s been trapped in the Mirage for 900 years. He entered the valley just after one of the centennial rains and became trapped here when the Mirage shifted away from Golarion. Unable to get out and with no one but the other denizens of the valley to converse with, most notably the gnolls and what devils will speak to him, he has gone a bit stir crazy for new people to converse with. When he spies the PCs, he immediately comes down from his perch and insists that the PCs accompany him back to his lair for a chat. If the PCs attempt to flee, he carefully rounds them up (using his *sleep* breath weapon as necessary) and deposits them inside the northernmost entrance to his lair, remaining outside to guard it from the PC’s “escaping.” If they attack him, he responds with force (see his stat block entry). It should be tremendously obvious from his size that Enkendu will outmatch any group that might try to best him. Remind your players of this repeatedly—*attacking Enkendu will lead to a TPK.*

Enkendu’s lair is close by and dug out of the largest outcropping of bedrock in the area. Inside, the stir-crazy dragon has trapped several other denizens from around the valley and he politely, but firmly, expects the PCs to enter his lair and clear them out. First he wants the PCs to listen to his very long tale (30 minutes) about how he captured the specific denizens—if they refuse, he sighs and herds the PCs into the northernmost door

of his lair, by force if necessary. If they listen, they get to learn all about what exactly it is they’re facing inside the brass dragon’s lair. The stat blocks below have been modified with a location tag—this location is where the PCs can find that creature in Enkendu’s lair below. Each creature is meant to be fought one at a time, though it’s possible the PCs might fight several at once if they’re not careful.

Enkendu’s Lair

The crazy old brass dragon makes his lair in an enormous rocky outcropping. Most of the lair is hard for him to move around in due to his size, so when he’s home he spends most of his time in the Display Room or the Main Hall. The floors are hard rock covered in sand and pebbles, making Acrobatics, Move Silently, and Tumble checks slightly more difficult (–1 to any of those three skills while inside the brass dragon’s lair). The ceilings are all 20 feet high and the walls are made from solid, uncarved stone. Every room is magically lit from a flameless brazier attached to the ceiling that’s been magically restrained there (i.e., PCs can’t simply tear them off the wall and



try to walk out with them). Only the northernmost door of his lair is open and Enkendu awaits the PCs outside of it. All other exterior doors are locked and have *dimensional anchor* cast on them—this prohibits magical movement through them, but doesn't prevent *teleport* from getting the PCs out of the lair altogether. All of the secret doors are unlocked, stone doors that can be pushed either way. They all take a DC 20 Search check to find (DC 15, Tier 1–2).

1. Display Hall: This room contains several enormous display cases with inch-thick reinforced glass. Inside are all manner of wondrous and priceless treasures: shrunken heads, idols, small statuettes, mummies (the benign kind), brass figurines, glass beads, animal bones, and so on. The entire collection, should it be removed from the hall and then hauled to a museum, could fetch a handsome sum of gold, though Enkendu might have something to say about the objects being removed.

2. Main Hall: Enkendu appears to have built this area to entertain guests, though judging by the dust on the large wooden stage and the mildew smell coming from the furniture it has not been used in a long time.

3. Horde: This room contains a limitless pile of gold and treasures that Enkendu will not tolerate being tampered with or stolen. He's warded the room, so if the PCs find the secret door and make their way inside he'll know and assume they've taken something, demanding it back when the PCs leave. The catch is that the entire horde is an illusion, something Enkendu created a long time ago and forgot about.

4. Sleeping Area: This is where Enkendu sleeps. It smells horrible and the floor is covered in centuries of shedded (and worthless) dragon skin, scales, and other disgusting unmentionables.

All Tiers (EL –)

ENKENDU THE MAD CR 19

Male very old brass dragon

CN Huge dragon (fire)

hp 350 (MM 79)

NOTE

Enkendu isn't meant to be a combat encounter himself. In fact, if the PCs attack him at all he laughs at them and giggles like they're tickling him. If they do more than 50 hit points of damage to the brass dragon, he gets frustrated and takes a –4 to attack the PCs with his claws, dealing nonlethal damage (and using his cone of *sleep* breath weapon) until they're all unconscious. Once they awake from the nonlethal damage, he attempts to get them to do his bidding again—namely, to play his game. Enkendu is mad, but not evil. He will not kill the PCs.

Tier 1–2 (EL 2*)

LEOPARD CR 2

hp 19 (MM 274)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 2.

ANIMATED BRASS STATUE CR 2

hp 31 (MM 13, use the stats for the animated statue, medium)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 1.

BAT SWARM CR 2

hp 13 (MM 237)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 4.

Tier 3–4 (EL 4–5*)

POLAR BEAR CR 4

hp 68 (MM 269)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 2.

ANIMATED BRASS STATUE CR 5

hp 84 (MM 14, use the stats for the animated object, huge)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 1.

CENTIPEDE SWARM CR 4

hp 31 (MM 238)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 4.

Tier 6–7 (EL 7*)

DIRE BEAR CR 7

hp 105 (MM 63)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 2.

ANIMATED BRASS STATUE CR 7

hp 148 (MM 14, use the stats for the animated statue, gargantuan)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 1.

AIR ELEMENTAL, HUGE CR 7

hp 136 (MM 96)

NOTE

This creature can be found in area 4.

*Each encounter.

Development: Once the PCs clear the brass dragon's lair, he thanks them profusely and makes a long, meandering speech exalting their bravery. If told that the Mirage is open and he can leave, Enkendu scoffs, not believing the PCs even if shown otherwise to be wrong. Enkendu has made a home for himself here and gone quite mad inside of it; he'll not be convinced to leave.

Mission Notes: Qadira faction PCs can make a map from the meandering speech Enkendu first gives, though they'll need ink, quill, and paper (or some other means) to get it all down. Taldor faction PCs will want to deliver a letter to the crazy brass dragon.

Rewards: There are no rewards for Act 3.

ACT 4: GUARDIANS OF THE MIRAGE (EL 2 OR EL 4 OR EL 9)

Ahead, a large mesa rises from the desert. It's hard to make out exactly, because it continually changes in size, shape, and color and seems to spin on an axis perpendicular to the desert floor. Small, winged creatures, hard to make out from this distance, spin and flap lazily about the whirling mesa.

This is one of the four encounters that can be done in any order. What happens the second time the PCs reach this location depends entirely on what happened the first time they were here.

The PCs are approached by an imp who flies up openly. The imp, whose name is Krasus, alights on a nearby cactus or shrub, remaining well out of melee range, and warns the PCs that they should turn back. If the PCs mention that they are attempting to retrieve the skeleton, Krasus becomes very angrily agitated and starts shouting, "Can't have the master! The master stays here!"

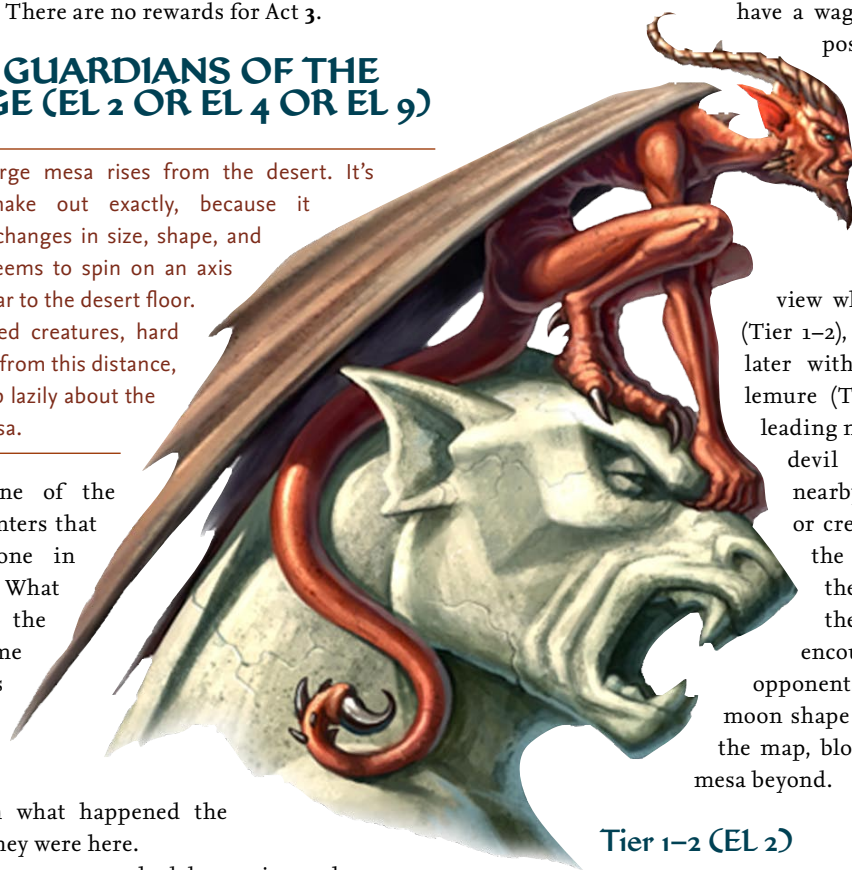
The PCs, assuming they don't immediately attack Krasus, are welcome to converse with him. He is a bit mad from all the time he has spent in the Mirage. Despite his infernal origins, the Mirage has affected him in some odd ways. He is extremely protective of the crystal skeleton

and considers it his master and the visions he receives the master's directives. He also knows the history of the Mirage if the PCs did not learn it from Venture-Captain Rafmeln.

If the PCs attack Krasus at any point, he disappears and attacks as noted below. If the PCs push on toward the mesa in search of the skeleton, Krasus foretells loudly their doom and disappears.

The sides of the mesa are very steep, treacherous, rocky or sheer cliff-face. There are a few narrow trails leading up the sides of the mesa. These trails are usually too narrow for two people to comfortably walk abreast and only rarely widen, usually on a switchback. (If the PCs have a wagon with them, it is not possible for them to bring it up these trails.) The trails lead to the top of the mesa and Act 5.

Creatures: Once Krasus disappears, combat begins. He either pops back into view when he attacks someone (Tier 1–2), or he returns moments later with a second imp and a lemure (Tier 3–4), or he returns leading many imps and a bearded devil who were all waiting nearby (Tier 7–8). The creature or creatures attack the PCs at the base of the mesa before they begin climbing. Use the map from Act 1 for this encounter, arranging any opponents the PCs face in a half moon shape across the north side of the map, blocking the PCs from the mesa beyond.



Tier 1–2 (EL 2)

KRASUS THE IMP

CR 2

hp 13 (MM 56)

TACTICS

Before Combat Krasus uses his invisibility to position himself near a lightly armored opponent.

During Combat Krasus uses his invisibility whenever he can and uses his speed and flight to his advantage to out-manuever slower opponents.

Morale If reduced to less than 4 hit points, Krasus attempts to fly away.

Tier 3–4 (EL 4)

As Tier 1–2, but Krasus is joined by a second imp and a lemure.

LEMURE

CR 1

hp 9 (MM 57)

Tier 7–8 (EL 9)

As Tier 1–2, but Krasus is joined by 6 additional imps (for a total of 7) and a bearded devil.

BEARDED DEVIL

CR 5

hp 45 (MM 52)

TACTICS

Before Combat The bearded devil waits until Krasus has engaged the PCs, then uses his *greater teleport* to place himself near a strong melee opponent.

During Combat His first action will be to attempt to summon 2d10 lemures. If successful, he uses the lemures as disposable fodder, commanding them to move to foul lines of sight and execute suicide attacks. He uses his *greater teleport* to tactical advantage as necessary.

Morale The bearded devil fights to the death, sure in the knowledge that he’s escaping this plane to go back home.

Treasure: A DC 15 search check (DC 12, Tier 1–2) after the battle reveals Krasus’s nearby hoarded possessions:

Tier 1–2: *Potion of rage*, masterwork dagger, *scroll of phantasmal killer*, and *scroll of cure moderate wounds*.

Tier 3–4: As Tier 1–2 but increase the masterwork dagger to a +1 *dagger of returning*, and add a *scroll of greater invisibility*.

Tier 6–7: As Tier 3–4 but add *ring of protection +2* and *goggles of minute seeing*.

ACT 5: ASMODEUS’S CRYSTAL HERALD (EL 2 OR EL 5 OR EL 9)

Atop the flat clear top of the mesa is a huge desert plant, its towering blossom reaching toward the sky, a glittering crystalline shape nestled deep within and glimmering the sun.

Here the PCs face the final guardian of the crystal skeleton, a creature long ago set to watch and care for the flower to ensure its essence keeps the bone devil’s remains in a stasis that powers the Asmodeus Mirage. The skeleton itself is quite fragile. It has a meager 10 hit points and DR 5/–. It’s currently resting in the center of a 40-foot tall magically-enhanced desert flower. The flower has the same hit points and hardness of wood, but felling the flower will drop the skeleton as well unless the PCs prepare for this eventuality. If the skeleton falls from the flower, it takes 4d6 points of damage. If it is completely

destroyed, the crystal skeleton shatters into thousands of unrecognizable shards—good for the Cheliox faction PCs, bad for everyone else. If the PCs manage to get the skeleton out of the flower, it weighs 50 pounds and has the exact dimensions of a bone devil.

Use the map for Act 2 for this encounter, using the rock and plant features as the base of the giant flower. The creature is resting near the base as the PCs approach from the northwest.

Tier 1–2 (EL 2)

GIANT ANT, SOLDIER

CR 2

hp 11 (MM 284)

TACTICS

Before Combat The giant soldier ant rests beneath the plant.

During Combat The giant soldier ant is a mindless guardian. It attacks the closest foe.

Morale The giant soldier ant fights to the death.

Tier 3–4 (EL 5)

GIANT CONSTRICTOR SNAKE

CR 5

hp 63 (MM 280)

TACTICS

Before Combat The snake rests beneath the plant.

During Combat The snake is a mindless guardian. It attacks the closest foe.

Morale The snake fights to the death.

Tier 6–7 (EL 9)

BONE DEVIL

CR 9

hp 95 (MM 52)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the bone devil sees the PCs coming, he attempts to use his *summon baatezu* ability. Otherwise, he’s resting in the shade of the flower.

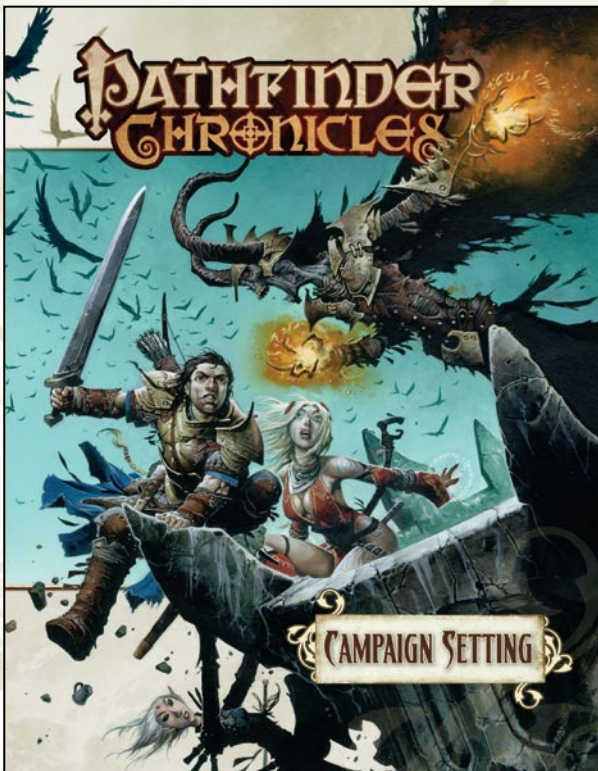
During Combat If he hasn’t otherwise cast it, the bone devil starts combat by using his *summon baatezu* ability, ordering his minions to hamper the PCs while he uses his fear aura and puts himself right in the middle of the PCs, attacking the strongest-looking PCs first.

Morale The bone devil fights to the death.

Mission Notes: Osirion faction PCs will want a clipping of the flower for their faction mission. Cheliox faction PCs will need a piece of the crystal bone devil skeleton.

Rewards: There are no rewards for Act 5.

GOLARION NEEDS HEROES



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CONCLUSION

If any PC is holding the skeleton (or even pieces of the skeleton) when the 24 hours is up, the Mirage fades around them and they find themselves in a void, featureless desert valley in western Katapesh. If the PCs manage to get their bearings, it's a short 1d4-hour hike to the base of the Guide Camp's trail. If the PCs are still inside the Mirage at the end of 24 hours and have not recovered any of the skeleton, they find themselves trapped for the next 100 years in the Mirage. If the PCs remove the crystal bone devil skeleton from the Mirage, it disappears the moment they exit with the crystal skeleton and never returns.

FACTION MISSIONS

Andoran Faction: PCs from the Andoran faction who recover the glaive near the ankhegs earn 1 Prestige Award.

Cheliox Faction: PCs from the Cheliox faction who acquire a small piece of the crystal skeleton earn 1 Prestige Award.

Osirion Faction: PCs from the Osirion faction who bring back to Absalom a clipping of the desert flower that holds the crystal skeleton earn 1 Prestige Award.

Qadira Faction: PCs from the Qadira faction who acquire the gnoll camp's map of the valley or write down details of the valley as explained in great length by Enkendu the Mad earn 1 Prestige Award.

Taldor Faction: PCs from the Taldor faction who deliver Baron Dalsine's letter to Enkendu earn 1 Prestige Award.

Andoran Faction Handout

Beacon of Freedom,

Blast that infernal devil lord! Were it up to me, Pathfinder, I would have you nowhere near this mission. I shudder to think of the taint that will come to you for even being in the vicinity of Asmodeus's power. I believe you are strong enough to overcome any malignant force that may be lurking in this dread valley.

Unfortunately, some of our venerable national ancestors have not been so lucky. Several centuries ago, an Andoran Baron named Frosven ventured into the Mirage in search of glory. He never returned. I hear tell that some individuals who go into the Mirage are trapped there, alive, century after century. If Baron Frosven is alive, rescue him if you can. If he is not, see if you can find one of his notable possessions. He is said to have gone into the desert bearing his family's gaudy and ridiculous bejeweled glaive. Bring it or the Baron back, I care not which.

Capt. Colson Maldris Sincerely Yours,
 Captain Colson Maldris



Cheliox Faction Handout

Dearest Servant of My Heart,

My excellently placed (and achingly rewarded!) sources have informed me that you are traveling to the fabled Asmodeus Mirage when it manifests. What serendipity! I shall not have to send the mission I've been meaning to plan all these years. I have learned further that what powers the mirage is a powerful crystalline vessel that is said to belong to Asmodeus himself. What a glorious opportunity! We shall acquire it and use its power against our enemies.

I realize that you must bring most of this divine vessel to the Pathfinders, but you will surely not forget your dear Zarta, will you? Bring me a piece of this vessel. Not doing so means pain for you, my sweet.

Zarta Draldeen
 Paracountess Zarta Draldeen

Osirion Faction Handout

Fellow Servant of the Ruby Prince,

By now your studies have most assuredly led you to know what powers the Asmodeus Mirage. A skeleton in a flower—how very symbolic.

A skeleton that powers a valley full of madness once a century, yes, that is very powerful. I certainly understand why they would want to acquire that. Do you see what I see, my wise friend? There is power in that skeleton, oh yes, but there is a greater power in that valley, one that I hope everyone but you and I overlooks: the power to control the skeleton.

I wish you to bring to me a piece of this flower that the skeleton has resided in for all these centuries. I shall study it and learn much.

In Wisdom's Name,



Amenophus
 Amenophus, The Sapphire Sage

Qadiran Faction Handout

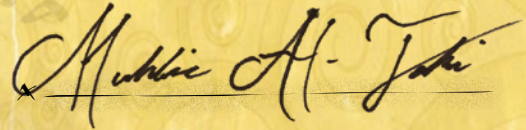
Loyal Seeker of Wealth,

If there is a people that know the desert and how to wring wealth out of it, we Qadirans are that people. Sometimes that wealth comes from what we find in the desert. Sometimes it comes from what we extract from the desert. Sometimes it comes from the people in the desert.

I am taking a bit of a gamble on you and your abilities. I am gambling, first, that you will succeed in the mission the Pathfinders have given you. This will open the valley once and for all. I am gambling, second, that you will be able to do this: find someone or something that tells you the lay of this valley. A map, a detailed journal, a person who is willing to guide you, any of these would work.

I am certain that this valley is a key to wealth, and through that wealth, power. I am further certain that you will not disappoint me.

*May the Sun Always Light Your Way,
Pasha Muhlia Al-Jakri*



Taldor Faction Handout

Servant of the Grand Prince,

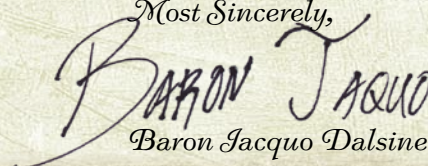
Well I must say I am intrigued by thoughts of this Asmodeus Mirage. Appearing every century, people becoming lost in it, trapped, and reappearing centuries later—this is the stuff of wild tales!



While the empire does not have anything immediately pressing that they need done in the region while you are there, it never hurts to have a contingency, does it? Enclosed, you will find a sealed letter. I would like you to hand this off to any powerful creatures or cultures that you find in the Mirage that seem as if they may someday be amenable to working with us. If you are successful, that means the Mirage will end, yes? And if you are not, then you'll at least be comfortable inside the Mirage with new allies while you await your death.

Please leave the seal intact and the letter unread—only the eyes of mighty should read these words. We, the humble servants of Taldor, are far too low brow for messages such as this.

Most Sincerely,



Baron Jacquo Dalsine

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SCENARIO 15: THE ASMODEUS MIRAGE

Scenario Chronicle #

This Chronicle Certifies That _____

_____ A.K.A. _____

Player Name Character Name Pathfinder Society # Faction

_____ Has Completed This Scenario.

TIER		
1-2	▶	376
TIER		
3-4	▶	1,309
TIER		
6-7	▶	2,262

MAX GOLD

EXPERIENCE

Starting XP

+1 XP

Final XP Total

Prestige Award

Starting PA

PA Gained (GM ONLY)

Final PA Total

GOLD

Start GP

+ GP Gained (GM ONLY)

+ Items Sold

= Sub Total

- Items Bought

= Sub Total

- Gold Spent

= Sub Total

Items Found During This Scenario

TIER
1-2

- Potion of blur (Cost: 300 gp)
- Potion of rage (Cost: 750 gp)
- Scroll of cure moderate wounds (Cost: 150 gp)
- Scroll of phantasmal killer (Cost: 700 gp)
- Ungeunt of timelessness (Cost: 150 gp)
- Wand of detect magic (Cost: 375 gp)

You are known by the Gnolls of western Katapesh as the savior of a long-lost tribe. Whenever you deal with any western Katapesh gnolls, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your Diplomacy or Intimidate checks.

TIER
3-4

- Potion of cure moderate wounds (Cost: 300 gp)
- +1 returning dagger (Cost: 8,302 gp)
- Scroll of greater invisibility (Cost: 700 gp)
- Wand of cure light wounds (Cost: 750 gp)

TIER
6-7

- Bag of holding (type I) (Cost: 2,500 gp)
- Goggles of minute seeing (Cost: 1,250 gp)
- Ring of protection +2 (Cost: 8,000 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

For GM Only

EVENT EVENT CODE DATE Game Master's Signature GM Pathfinder Society #