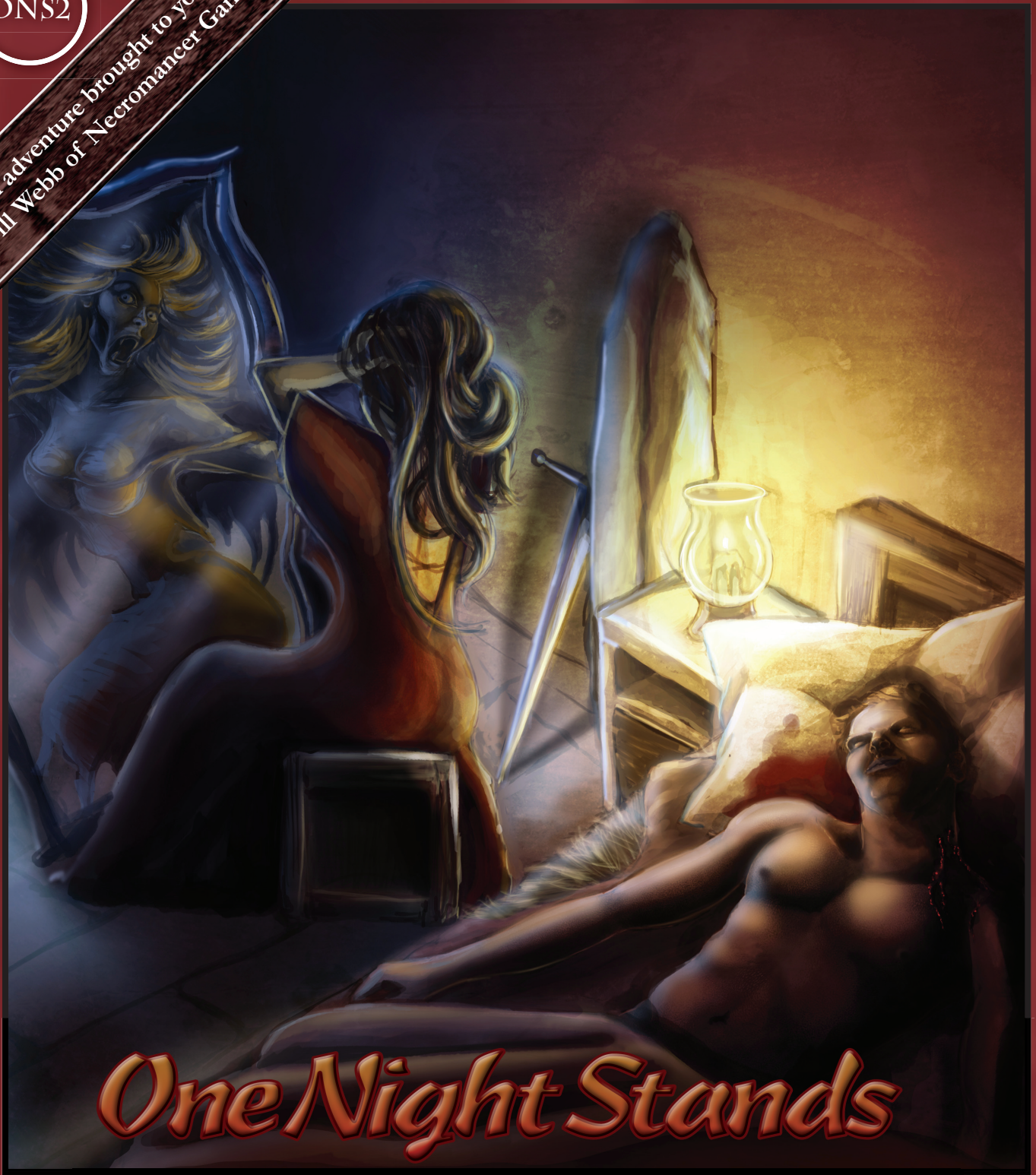


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# One Night Stands

— Death in the Painted Canyons —

By Kenneth Spencer

**SWORDS &  
WIZARDRY**



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# Introduction

## Death in the Painted Canyons

*Death in the Painted Canyons* is an adventure for Swords & Wizardry for 4-6 characters levels 5-6. The party should include a mix of abilities, especially characters with investigative and survival skills. It would be helpful, but not necessary, if at least one PC has some knowledge of the Painted Canyons, or at least some experience with desert survival. If your party lacks investigative skills, there are clues as to the criminal conspiracy in the gnomish encampment, or you can just drop that aspect of the adventure and run it as a stand-up fight. Parties lacking survival skills or desert experience can hire a guide at Salt Springs for 3 silver shekels (gp) a day. There is a hidden secret behind all the events of *Death in the Painted Canyons*; a great deal of combat can be expected, and those attempting this adventure should be prepared for a vicious battle before resolving the plot.

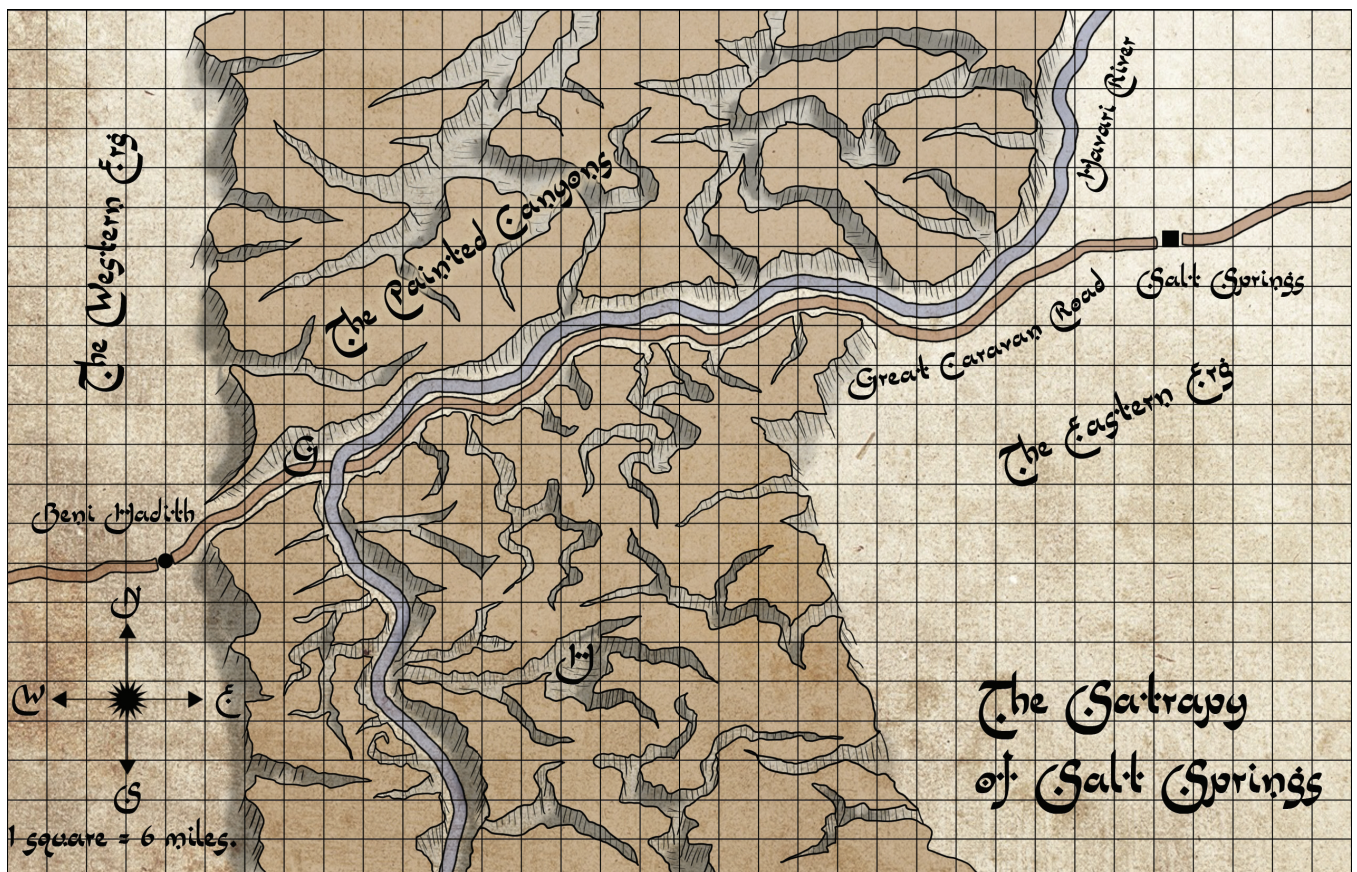
The adventure takes place in a hilly, arid region called the Caliphate, but can be set in any campaign world. A well-defined caravan route dotted with caravanserais, small walled oasis communities that provide safe locales for the caravans to rest and resupply, crosses this region. Each caravanserai is almost an independent fiefdom, their isolation resulting in the local rulers possessing great leeway in the exercise of their authority.

## Adventure Background

Caravans passing from the caravanserai at Salt Springs through the Painted Canyons and on towards the oasis town of Beni-Hadith are being attacked by a band of gnolls. These gnolls have been particularly lucky, always seeming to strike the caravans that are the least guarded and where the most valuable items are being carried. The Satrap of Salt Springs has offered a bounty for the destruction of these gnolls but is unaware that treachery from within actually lurks behind the attacks.

## Adventure Summary

All is not as it seems, as the gnolls are in the employ of Hiram Parth, a corrupt merchant in Salt Springs. Parth has been supplying them with information concerning the caravans and then fencing the goods through his criminal contacts in the distant city of Bhutan. As the adventurers poke around they alert Parth, and he will warn the gnolls. To solve the mystery, the heroes must not only face the gnolls, but also uncover the traitor in Salt Springs. But all know that only death awaits in the Painted Canyons.





# The Satrap's Request

The PCs are traveling through an area not far from Salt Springs when they notice that placed in the markets are several official announcements calling for adventurers and mercenaries to come to the aid of the Satrap of Salt Springs. Alternately, the PCs can hear about the job through idle gossip in taverns or from a crier hired by the pasha's agents to spread the word.

## ADVENTURERS AND MERCENARIES WANTED!

By His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar,  
The Satrap of the Salt Springs Caravanserai

To Rid His Wisdom of a Plague of Gnolls that,  
in their Perfidy, have troubled His Wisdom,  
Especially The Most Villainous Leaders of this  
Savage Band, Red Mane and Talking Dog.

Success will be Greatly Rewarded:  
5 Silver Shekels per Pair of Gnoll's Ears  
200 Silver Shekels Each for Red Mane and Talking Dog

An Additional Reward and His Wisdom's  
Eternal Gratitude and Respect  
For Disposing of this Issue Once and for All.

The PCs can find out more by asking around. His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar, has a reputation for being an honest, if somewhat harsh, man. Caravans passing through his territory can expect to receive decent treatment. Criminals, on the other hand, can expect the maximum punishment allowed by law, if not more. In the past, wandering swordsmen and such riff-raff have received little assistance from His Wisdom, and more than a little official harassment. That he is openly requesting the aid of such folk is a sign that he has grown desperate, a situation that an enterprising party can work to their advantage.

It should take the PCs no more than a day or two to reach Salt Springs. The trip is uneventful.

## Local Currency

You can give the adventure a more exotic feel by referring to the monetary currency by the local names. In the Caliphate, a silver shekel (a heavy silver coin) is the equivalent to a standard gold piece (1 gp), while a gold daric (1 pp), a silver drachma (1 sp), and a copper obol (1 cp) round out the currency equivalencies. PCs can exchange their normal currency prior to the adventure at this rate, or if it is easier you can simply ignore the Caliphate designations and use the standard currencies (given in parentheses throughout the adventure).

## The Satrapy of Salt Springs

The caravanserai at Salt Springs is a sprawling walled compound encompassing the springs themselves, as well as stables, markets, inns, and the Satrap's Palace. Salt Springs sits at the edge of a large erg, a region of open sandy desert. Its location is the sole reason for its existence, and the entire population is engaged in providing services — both legal and otherwise — to the many caravans traveling through the region. Daily, a string of camels and more exotic draft animals trundles into the maw of Salt Springs. The journey from distant lands is long and arduous, and so most merchants work one stage of the Great Caravan Road. In Salt Springs they can rest, resupply, and exchange goods brought from one end of the Great Road for goods from another. The pasha collects a tax on every transaction, and forwards a portion of it to the caliph far to the west. The next treasure caravan is due to depart in a few months, and worries over the gnoll raids are what have prompted His Wisdom to stoop to hire adventurers.

Most of the structure is fully roofed, thus limiting entrance to a few choice, and well guarded, doors. Slaves are routinely tasked with shoveling away dunes that have piled up against the caravanserai's walls and gates. The structure itself is built from limestone quarried from the Painted Canyons and artfully arranged in bands of color. The roof is also of stone, though centuries of torches and lanterns have stained the vivid colors a dull black. Navigating the caravanserai is difficult, and a local guide is highly suggested, lest one become lost in the maze of covered streets and markets. Lanterns light the merchant and market areas, as well as some of the residential neighborhoods, but beyond these a wanderer should bring his or her own light source.

Salt Springs is divided into six quarters based on the type of people who live there or the tasks they perform.

# THE SATRAP'S REQUEST



## 1. The Pasha's Palace

The central quarter is the Pasha's Palace, a network of rooms and corridors decorated in a restrained opulence and heavily guarded. These areas are well lit at great expense by glass jars containing *continual lights*. The pasha is wealthy enough to maintain a small garden at the center of the palace so that he and his favorites may enjoy natural light, water fountains, and green vegetation.

## 2. Merchant's Quarter

Close to the palace, but also adjacent to the Central Souk, is the Merchant Quarter. In addition to the resident merchants, traveling merchants can find high-class accommodations here. The area is lit by lanterns and well tended by a cadre of slaves (owned by the pasha and rented to the merchants). Guards regularly patrol here, and a guard station sits in the middle of the quarter. It is here that the infamous bitter springs of the caravanserai flow (Area A), closely controlled by the merchant's consortium and only open for public use during certain hours of the day.

## 3. Central Souk

The Central Souk is the largest of several open markets within the walls and roof of the caravanserai. Goods of all kinds change hands here, mostly in bulk. A few vendors work the edges selling food and water, but the souk is largely given over to the larger merchants. Other souks throughout Salt Springs are dedicated to various types of goods, such as preserved food, bulk water, livestock, clothes, and manufactured goods.

## 4. Dwarven Souk

The Dwarven Souk is home to the small Stoneholme clan of dwarves from the near-fabled Northlands who operate a large smithy and are

willing to repair or manufacture metal goods, weapons, and armor.

## 5. Caravaneers' Quarters

At the East Gate and West Gate are twin Caravaneers' Quarters designed to serve the caravans directly. Here there are stables, inns, taverns, brothels, wine shops, and gambling dens. All these businesses, even those of ill repute, are legal in Salt Springs, provided that they pay their taxes to the pasha. Large beasts cannot navigate the deeper corridors of the caravanserai, and so must remain in the stable areas. Smaller animals are permitted further within the caravanserai, provided the owner is willing to put forth a deposit against any damages they might cause (and defecating outside a privy is considered damage) This amount varies based on the nature of the creature, though a minimum of 3 drachmas (sp) will be levied. These quarters are lit by torches or lanterns and only loosely patrolled.

## 6. Laborers' Quarters

Backing onto the Caravaneers' Quarters and forming a narrow band from gate to gate is the Laborers' Quarter. This is the home to the free men and women who load and unload the caravans, shuttle goods from one gate to the other, and perform most of the day-to-day work of the caravanserai. This area is rarely patrolled and is lit only by what means the locals can afford, which means very little and only when necessary.

## 7. Slave Quarter

Adjacent to the Laborers' Quarter, but only connected to it by two narrow, guarded corridors at the east and west ends, is the small Slave Quarter. Slaves are used for the least pleasant tasks in Salt Springs, such as cleaning out privies and hauling the muck to the roof to be dried for use as low cost fuel or fertilizer. Below the Slave Quarter is a large natural cavern that has been expanded, and is used to grow certain varieties of





edible mushroom and raise stunted, blind cows (both originally brought at great expense from the Dwarven Holds to the north).

Most districts of Salt Springs are safe; the pasha makes sure travelers and merchants can pass though unmolested. However, there are no laws or rulership so draconian as to completely stamp out crime, and smuggling as well as con games and the occasional robbery do occur. The areas around the Caravaneers' Quarter, the Laborer's Quarter, and Slave Quarters are the most notorious.

## Meeting the Satrap

The PCs are asked their business when they approach the gates, and if they reply that they are here to answer the Satrap's call for adventurers, they are escorted to a set of rooms inside the gates where they may rest and recover from their journey. Although treated with respect, they are not able to wander the caravanserai without an escort. After some time, they are brought to the palace for an audience with His Wisdom, Pasha Hari Abubakkar.

The audience room is small, but well decorated with rich tapestries and ornaments of gold. The floor is covered with a detailed mosaic map of the satrapy, including the Great Caravan Road through the Painted Canyons. As His Wisdom explains matters to the party, he leaves his throne and walks around the tile, pointing out areas as he mentions them.

"I am an open and honest man, so I will tell you what is in my mind and heart. I find your kind abhorrent; your unbound and vagabond lifestyle mocks all that is good and orderly in society, and you are little more than bandits, renegades, and cutthroats. However, I find myself in need of your sort of scum, and so you can expect fair and equitable treatment from me. During your

stay in my satrapy, you will receive food and lodgings equal to the task I am placing before you, and not equal to you station — that is, you will be treated far better than you deserve.

"Caravans traveling from here to the oasis at Beni-Hadith must pass through a region 100 miles in length known as the Painted Canyons. As they travel through that blasted and desolate land, they are often being attacked by a band of unclean beastmen — gnolls. These brutes, less than savages in my view, have so far eluded my soldiers and managed to escape back into the maze of canyons from which they spring forth.

"The gnolls are lead by an infamous savage named Red Mane, a beast of great size and cunning. A pagan shaman called Talking Dog assists him in his depredations. We have reason to believe that these base creatures enslave captives taken in these raids, and that some have even been sacrificed to their dark gods.

"The attacks have been well planned, and seem to strike at the caravans when they are at their most vulnerable. Furthermore, the most valuable cargoes are targeted with too much regularity to be a mere coincidence. Red Mane has managed to even sniff out hidden cargoes and carry these off. How such lowly and barely intelligent creatures — who all know are not much more than animals — have managed this is beyond me. You have no doubt seen the posts I have had placed throughout the region and are thus aware of the rewards I am offering. That will be your total reward for this enterprise, as I wish to have any goods taken by the gnolls returned to their rightful owners or, if such cannot be found, I will gift their value to worthy causes.

"If you have any needs that must be addressed, please feel free to bring them to Hiram Parth, a respected merchant of this caravanserai and my wisest advisor. You may now leave my presence until you can return in triumph and glory. May the gods be with you."

## THE SATRAP'S REQUEST

The pasha's starting attitude towards the party is indifferent, although this may change in the course of the conversation if the adventurers either impress him or lower themselves in his (already low) esteem.

If the PCs impress the pasha, he will be more respectful and provide them with better accommodations. If they are disrespectful or appear inept, he will become quite unfriendly and signal an end to the already chilly reception. In this case the party can expect a minimum of assistance; they are merely servants tasked with an unpleasant chore, after all. The party is then escorted back to their quarters and told that Hiram Parth will be available to meet with them the next morning.

If the pasha's attitude remains basically unchanged as a result of the interview, the PCs will be quartered in the servants' quarters of his palace (Area B) and given a fine meal to fortify them before their coming endeavors. They may come and go from these quarters as they please for up to 1 week before the pasha grows impatient and his attitude changes back to indifferent. If the pasha is impressed by them, that night the PCs are given lavish guest chambers in the palace (Area C) and are treated to fine food and wine, as well as, entertainment provided by a minstrel and several dancing girls. They are given free run of the palace (including passwords to the dungeon) and the caravanserai. They will remain in favor for 2 weeks, after which point the pasha might rethink his general impression if the party seems not to be worth his high regard. If the party bungled the interview, they will be barracked in unused bunks in the guardhouse of the Pasha's Dungeon (Area F2) but given the password to come and go freely. Finally, if the adventurers managed to appear simultaneously incompetent and rude, the party is on its own and must find and pay for its own lodgings out in the caravanserai while in Salt Springs. If they have not left the caravanserai within a week of accepting their audience, the pasha grows impatient, and there is a 30% chance each day that one of them will be arrested by the pasha's secret police and thrown in the dungeons for 1d4 days for some minor violation, e.g. vagrancy, loitering, etc. (see "Complications in Salt Springs").

## The House of Parth (Area D)

The morning following their audience with the pasha, the PCs are again escorted through the caravanserai, this time to the house of Salt Spring's most prosperous merchant, Hiram Parth. Parth lives in a modest home built on the inside of the caravanserai's outer wall (Area D). The outside lacks adornment of any type, but once inside, the party is struck by the sheer opulence of the dwelling. Golden threaded tapestries hang on the walls, the furnishings are made of exotic hardwoods, every possible ornament is made from gold or silver, and the cushions upon which Hiram and his guests sit are covered with silk. Servants abound, and during their interview, the PCs each have their own personal attendant to fill their drinks, bring them food, and stand ready with bowls of water with which to clean their fingers. After being led into Parth's opulent dining salon and being seated upon silk cushions around a low table, their jewel-bedecked host arrives. He is fat and jowly, wearing fine silks, silken slippers, and a bright green turban ornamented with strings of tiny pearls. Once all the PCs have seated themselves and been attended to by their assigned servants, Parth seats himself and addresses them.

The PCs may ask Hiram for anything they may need, within reason (100 shekels or less per individual), and will receive it. The party may very well wish to question the fat merchant about the gnolls, the Painted Canyons, or other issues (see sidebar below).

In addition to their audience with Hiram Parth, at some point the PCs may wish to break into his home and search it for clues if they become suspicious of his involvement. He stays out late at his warehouses most nights, so it would be a simple matter to try and gain entry after the servants have left for the day and before he has

## Questioning Hiram

If the PCs question Hiram Parth, he freely provides the information in normal font below if the right questions are asked. He chooses not to disclose the information in italics, since it is not in his interest to do so. How (and if) the party gets this additional information depends on how you choose to play the encounter, but if they simply accept the briefing at face value, they will get none of it. If the party contains a character with high Charisma, Parth's reaction to that will likely bring out a bit more information, and if the party questions him actively, they will not only receive more information but will also realize that Parth is definitely avoiding certain details. Even if the party does not get all the information from Parth, but they ask around with the suspicion that they didn't hear the whole story, they are likely to get more of the italicized information from other sources in the caravanserai.

If the PCs attempt to use magic or force to coerce Hiram Parth, he calls for his guards — 3 large eunuchs armed with falchions — who arrive in 1 round and attempt to take the PCs captive. They will resort to deadly force if Hiram is threatened or one of them is killed. Captured PCs are turned over to the pasha on charges of "assault upon a person of station," sentenced to 10 days in the dungeons, and garner consequences as explained under "Complications in Salt Springs." Killing any of the eunuchs does not produce additional charges against the PCs. Killing Parth results in a death sentence unless they are able to prove his guilt (see "Rewards and Further Adventures").

**3 Eunuch Guards (Ftr5): HD 5; HP 35, 25, 20; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d8+1 due to Str); Move 12; Save 12; CL/XP 5/240XP; Special: None**

## What Parth Knows

- The attacks have been at random locations along the Great Caravan Road through the Painted Canyons *but always at the most opportune places and upon specific pack camels carrying the most valuable goods.*
- The gnolls are little more than filthy beasts, attacking like savage animals *but appear to show a shrewd grasp of military strategy, relying on different and varied tactics in their ambushes.*
- The gnolls are of the Two Bloody Spears tribe that has dwelt in the depths of the Painted Canyons for hundreds of year, *however they have only become this aggressive and coordinated since the coming of the chief Red Mane and his shaman Talking Dog.*
- His Wisdom has dispatched men to track the gnolls and, though the gnolls apparently make no effort to hide their trail, the men have returned empty handed or not at all. *The gnolls apparently plant traps and false trails for pursuers and take prisoner those that fall into their hands.*
- None of the goods taken from the caravans has reappeared in the markets of Salt Springs *but there are other markets available farther afield such as the distant city of Bhutan beyond the Painted Canyons at the western end of the Caravan Road.*
- The settlement of Beni-Hadith is small and could be easily avoided by anyone seeking to circumvent it in order to reach the markets of Bhutan, *but if the gnolls were doing so they would need some sort of merchant contacts within that city in order to sell their ill-gotten goods.*



## THE SATRAP'S REQUEST



Parth will know that someone has been in the house, but is actually unlikely to suspect that it was the characters.

**Hiram Parth (Ftr9):** HD 9 HP 40; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scimitar/dagger combination (+1 to hit, damage 1d8); Move 9; Save 6; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: 1 potion of healing

### Further Trouble with Hiram Parth

After their meeting with Hiram Parth, the PCs are free to travel about Salt Springs at their leisure. If Hiram suspects the PCs may be competent, or if they are getting close to discovering his crimes, he will first approach them under the pretense that he does not wish for His Wisdom's reputation to be sullied by consorting with hired mercenaries and offer up to 10,000 silver drachmas (sp) to just forget the whole thing and leave town. If they refuse the money, or if they seem too trustworthy, Hiram then hires some itinerate ne'er-do-wells from the Laborers' Quarter to kill them.

The **8 thugs** lack finesse, and will simply kick in the door of the party's quarters one night in an attempt to slaughter them before they are armed and armored (even if they are staying in the palace servants' quarters, which have an exterior entrance). If slain or captured, the assassins still have the 200 silver drachmas on them that they were paid. They will not rat out Hiram (for fear of reprisal) unless put under torture, a process that will require 1d3 days and that the pasha will attend to with relish if his attitude is generally friendly toward the PCs. If Hiram's involvement is uncovered, he will claim it was done to protect the honor of his satrap; he will be given a stern rebuke and placed under house arrest for 30 days by a slightly bemused pasha.

If the party leaves town before the "assassins" get their chance, or is staying in the palace guest quarters, these curs will simply take Hiram's money and leave town in the opposite direction — you just can't hire good scum these days.

**8 "Assassins":** HD 1d6hp; HP 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d8); Move 12; Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

## The Investigation

The PCs can use whatever means they deem necessary to find the clues that lead to Hiram Parth and his scheme. Several options exist, and enterprising parties will no doubt invent their own. They can follow a caravan and hope it is attacked, talk to locals and witnesses, press Hiram for more information, or simply go to the site of the latest attack and attempt to follow the tracks back to the gnoll's encampment. If they decide to follow a caravan or investigate the site of the latest attack, go to "The Ambush at the Ford", in The Painted Canyons chapter. If the PCs decide to return to Hiram Parth's residence to gain more information, see "The House of Parth" above.

Talking to locals and witnesses requires a good deal of legwork for the party. Hiram Parth has been instructed to aid the party in their investigation, and he will search for any witnesses or survivors of previous raids. Sadly, he finds none (or at least that is what he tells the party), and will explain that other than the resident merchants (who rarely leave) most of the population is rather transitory, and it seems that all witnesses have moved on. If they investigate on their own, the PCs will face a certain level of reluctance by the residents of Salt Springs.

A better avenue would be to work the Caravaneers' and Laborers' quarters. It will take 1d4 hours of asking around to find a witness to one of the gnoll attacks, and no more than three witnesses can be located (caravan workers spend their time on the caravans, not remaining in the caravanserai itself for very long at a time, so there are not many available to find).

If the party questions one of the witnesses, 1d3 of the following information can be gleaned from each:

- The gnolls used differing tactics each attack, sometimes swooping

returned. He has a personal contingent of a **dozen guards** who are always posted at the gates to his manor, but these could be avoided with proper planning. Picking a lock will be necessary to gain entry through a locked window or side door.

**12 Guards:** HD 1; HP 8, 8, 8, 8, 7, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d8); Move 9; Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

Once inside Parth's house, the PCs may search his personal quarters. A search turns up several bottles that are marked as a cheap vintage of wine (certainly out of place here) but if uncorked they are revealed to hold a colorless oil with a peculiar odor. Searching papers may uncover a list of names among his personal papers that includes both merchants of distant Bhutan among their number and a number of notable smugglers and bandits (use a check for secret doors to see if these papers are identified during the search). No explanation is given for the presence of these names, and they do not comprise incriminating evidence in of themselves, but a Thief character will recognize them to be members of the notorious thieves' guild known as the Zuma Qulldishi. It is also possible that a non-thief will recognize the connection to the thieves' guild, although this is unlikely unless the character would have some reason to have learned this, either through shady connections or asking around in the caravanserai about criminal activities.

Unless the party has in some way manipulated Parth's schedule, there is roughly a 40% chance that Parth and his eunuch guards will return to the house during the first hour of the search, increasing cumulatively by 20% with each hour of searching. If the PCs do not keep a lookout, then Parth takes note of their entry due to several small telltale signs that are prepared throughout his house and attempts to ambush them as they leave. In this case Parth and the eunuchs will fight to the death to prevent anything the PCs have discovered from leaving the house. If the party is warned by a lookout and escapes,



## THE SATRAP'S REQUEST

out of a side canyon, other times causing a rock fall to separate the caravan into easily picked off pieces.

- The gnolls are lead by a large and particularly ferocious packmaster called Red Mane. He wields a magical flaming great axe in battle.
- Talking Dog, the shaman of the Two Bloody Spears tribe, is a potent spellcaster, and his acolytes aren't unskilled either.
- Most of the attacks took place at the far end of the Caravan Road, nearer to Beni-Hadith than Salt Springs.
- The gnolls seemed to single out certain camels, usually ones with more valuable loads — even if those loads have been disguised or there are decoy camels included in the caravan.
- One caravan scout allegedly was able to follow the gnolls back to their encampment and escape back to Salt Springs. His name is Hurgash, but he is currently imprisoned in the Pasha's Dungeon for murdering a man in a bar fight and faces execution soon.

## Complications in Salt Springs

Salt Springs is in an isolated and barren region, and so nearly all raw materials and manufactured items need to be imported at great expense. Adding to this are the pasha's high taxes and tariffs on all goods that pass through the caravanserai, as well as, all transactions that occur within its walls. This means that all legal purchases and services are increased by 150% over the list price. Goods and services can be found for less if the buyer is willing to turn to the black market. If the party is native to this area, any character make a connection with the black market and buy goods for regular prices, with only a 5% chance of being caught. Assuming, however, that the characters are strangers to the area, making a purchase on the black market requires a successful saving throw to avoid being caught. Thief characters make the saving throw with a +4 bonus. If the party takes particularly good precautions, or is particularly obvious about what they are doing, assign appropriate bonuses or penalties to the

saving throw roll.

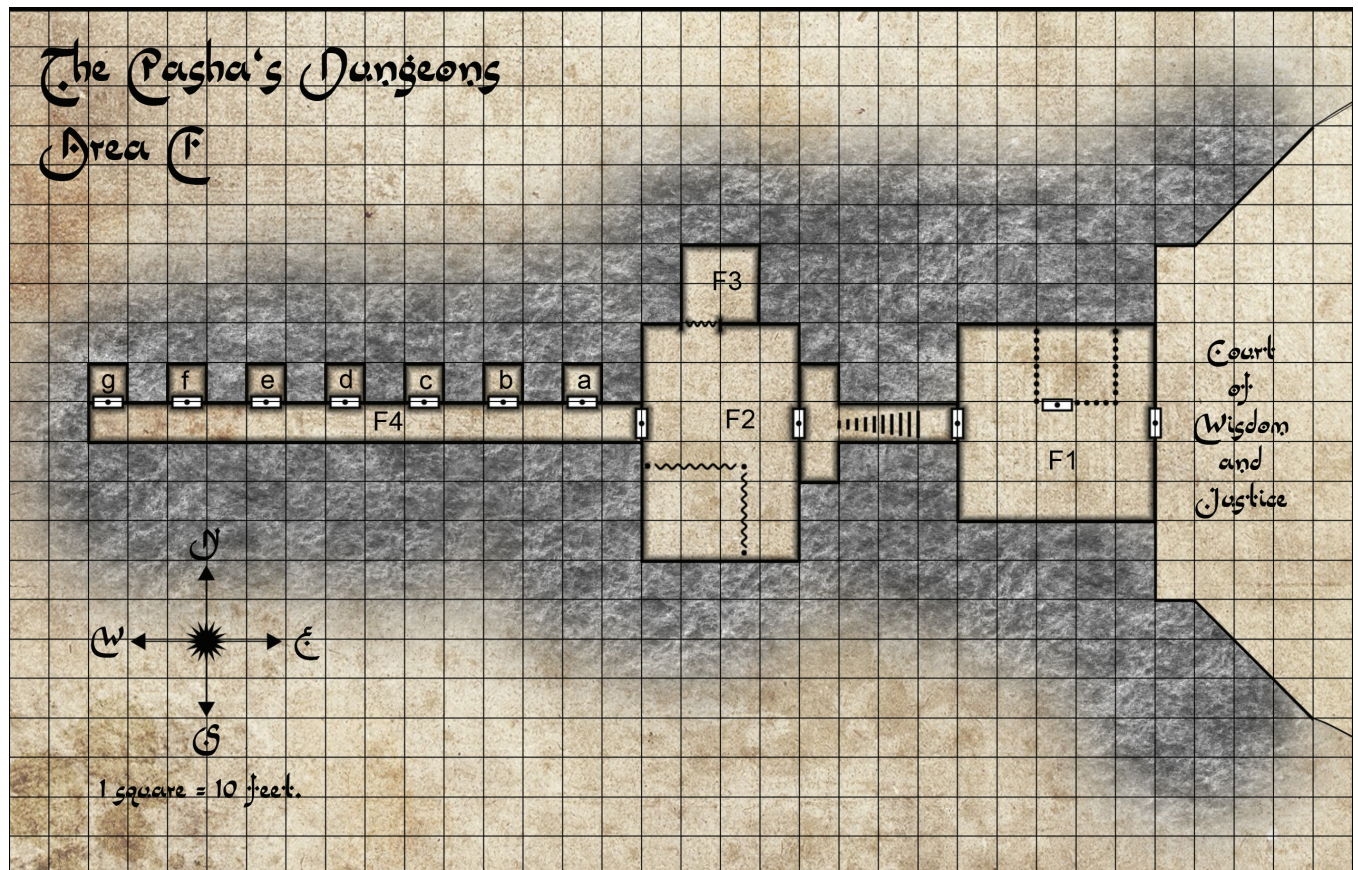
Failing the saving throw results in the character being caught by the pasha's secret police, tried, and imprisoned until he can pay a fine of 300% of the list price of whatever he was trying to buy (See The Pasha's Dungeon below).

PCs who are arrested find that the pasha is unhappy that the adventurers he has hired proceeded to break his laws. He will not meet with them, but if they obtained a favorable reaction during their initial interview, the pasha will allow them to pay the fine out of their reward, though in this case an additional 200% will be levied for "court fees". If any PC that has been arrested has not met with the pasha yet, he is out of luck and must pay the fine. Furthermore, the pasha's initial attitude with him is extremely unfriendly.

In addition, losing the pasha's favor, run-ins with Hiram Parth, attempts to break into Parth's house, heavy handed tactics during the investigation, or any number of other acts undesirable to the pasha can land the PCs in hot water with the caravanserai's soldiers or its secret police and result in arrest and imprisonment. In addition, attempts to reach and/or rescue the caravan scout Hurgash might lead the PCs to the Pasha's Dungeon on their own.

## The Pasha's Dungeon (Area F)

It is a very poor idea to try to break out of the Pasha's Dungeon, but PCs being what they are, someone will no doubt attempt this approach if so incarcerated. The Pasha's Dungeon is built beneath the caravanserai and is constructed from the same stone as the rest of Salt Springs. The dungeon lies beneath the palace proper and can be reached through the Court of Wisdom and Justice (Area E), which is full of guards and court officials during the day but has a single **night watchman** (see "Guards" below) making rounds at night every few minutes. In addition, it has many large (locked) windows that could be forced open.





## THE SATRAP'S REQUEST



There is but the one entrance to the dungeon, and it is heavily guarded. Any attempt, successful or not, to free prisoners from the dungeons results in the guilty parties being branded as outlaws in the Satrapy of Salt Springs. This means the PCs are not able to collect any reward should they decide to strike against the gnolls on their own. Of course this also means that they would be able to keep any treasure acquired. As word of these misdeeds spreads, legal authorities throughout the Caliphate will be alerted about the criminals. A wise move on the part of the party at this point would be to flee the region, at least until things die down. The Northlands are nice this time of year, and a sojourn in that far-off lawless land is no doubt in order.

Ceilings are 10 feet high, and light is provided by heavy stone globes that have been impregnated with *continual light* spells. Doors are of stout oak reinforced with bands of iron. The guard captain carries the keys.

### F1. Entrance

Beyond the reinforced door it lies a room for receiving prisoners, complete with a holding cell and a table at which the guard captain can fill out the necessary paperwork on any prisoners entering or leaving the dungeon. The far door leads to a set of stairs. These steps go down deeper into the dungeon. *Continual flame* globes mounted on the walls light the room and the stairs. Locked in a drawer in the table (the guard captain has the key) is a list of four passwords. One of them is the daily password for the dungeon, but there is no indication of which is correct.

**Creatures:** There are **2 guards** and a **sergeant of the guard** on duty at all times. The two guards stand ready at the far door. There is a 30% chance each half hour that another pair of guards may come in to transport a prisoner to or from the dungeon.

**Sergeant of the Guard (Ftr3):** HD 3; HP 15; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d8); Move 12; Save 15; AL L; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

**Guards (3):** HD 1; HP 6, 6, 5; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 spear (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

### F2. Guardhouse

At the bottom of the stairs is another door and another **2 guards**. They do not allow anyone to enter or leave unless the daily password is given, and they shout an alarm if it is not.

**Guards (2):** HD 1; HP 6, 6; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 spear (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

Beyond this door is the main guardroom, a combination bunk and ready room for the guards. The room is a spacious and features three exits: a reinforced door that leads to the cells, another reinforced door that leads up to the entrance, and a doorway blocked by a curtain of beads that leads to the adjacent slave quarters. A curtained-off bunk area fills one corner. A small round table with four chairs sits in the middle of the room, and normally has either a meal or a quirkat game spread out upon it. Two small braziers of coal are in the room, one in the bunk area and one near the table. Spare clothes, suits of half-plate, heavy crossbows, and halberds line the walls (as do crude drawings of an adult nature), along with any equipment and belongings taken from the prisoners in Area F2.

**Creatures:** A total of **8 guards** can be found in the guardhouse at any time, half sleeping in the bunk area and the other half loafing until needed. Additionally, there is a 30% chance per half hour that an additional 2 guards come through escorting a prisoner to or from the dungeon.

**Guards (8):** HD 1; HP 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 5; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 spear (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

## F3. Slave Quarters

**Creatures:** This small room is the home of the **3 slave women** (normal humans) who clean the dungeon and cook the meals for the guards. They are violently unattractive women, long ago broken in body and spirit by the hopelessness of their life and the drudgery of their tasks. The three share one dirty pile of rags as a bed and own nothing more than their raggedy clothes.

## F4. Cells

A long corridor stretches into the darkness. The heavy stone globes of *Continual Light* would normally illuminate this area, but it is the custom of the guards to throw heavy cloths over them when leaving the room. When entering from the guardhouse, the right hand wall is broken into seven cramped cells. Each cell is closed by a locked iron gate. The cells contain little save for prisoners, a bed of straw, and a necessities bucket.

**Creatures:** Six of the cells are full, and any PCs will be stuffed into the last cell (Cell G). Cell A contains Hirus Burningwrath, a local dwarfish merchant (male dwarf, Neutral, 6hp) who was convicted of falsifying weights; he will be beheaded in the morning. Nasim Ba, a known and convicted smuggler (male human Thf1, N, 3hp), languishes in Cell B; he will also be executed in the morning. Cell C is currently the home of Sara bint Hamza (normal human female, L, 3hp), who has been convicted of teaching slaves to read; she is sentenced to 30 days in the dungeon. As the PCs pass Cell D, Hurgash the Mighty calls to them to free him from false imprisonment on trumped up charges. Though he really did beat a man to death in a tavern brawl, Hurgash acted in self-defense, but his victim was a citizen, and so the caravan scout loses his head in the morning. Estevan Cordoba strums his lute in Cell E, serving 30 days for public performance without a license, while his traveling companion, Chani Morning Star awaits 50 lashes in Cell F for interfering with the satrap's soldiers when she intervened in Estevan's arrest.

**Hurgash the Mighty (Ftr2): HD 2; HP 13; AC 9[10]; Atk unarmed; Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.**

**Estevan Cordoba (Thf2): HD 2; HP 6; AC 9[10]; Atk unarmed; Move 12; Save 15; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Thief abilities, excellent minstrel.**

**Chani Morningstar (Clr2): HD 2; HP 7; AC 9[10]; Atk unarmed; Move 12; Save 15; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Spells (*Cure Light Wounds* x1).**

**Development:** Obviously Hurgash may be of interest to the party, and if they mention a desire to find the Two Bloody Spears gnoll encampment, he quickly promises to guide them there if freed. He can be used as an NPC to join the party or can replace a PC casualty if you wish. Nasim Ba will also make this promise but is lying and attempts to flee at his first chance. Hirus Burningwrath likewise knows something of the Two Bloody Spears because a number of his clansmen were captured by them a few years back. If given his freedom, he offers this tidbit, "My cousin, Havrak's a vengeful dwarf and a master stoneworker. If he's still alive, don't be surprised if he's fixed up some nasty trick in order to have his vengeance on his captors. Bring him or any of our kin home to the Dwarven Souk, and you'll be well rewarded." Estevan and Chani don't know anything of value, but can serve as henchmen if needed out of gratitude if given their freedom.



# The Painted Canyons

The Painted Canyons are a stretch of badlands that lie two days' journey outside of Salt Springs. They are a maze of canyons, colorful sandstone bluffs, and limestone escarpments, mostly devoid of water and forage save for a thin strip of green along the Havari River. This relatively verdant strip is the route that caravans take from Salt Springs to the oasis town of Beni-Hadith. The caravans have been seemingly nowhere, strike, and are gone almost as quickly as they appeared.

Navigating the Painted Canyons is difficult, as the badlands are riven with blind canyons, side passages, rock jumbles, and sheer bluff walls. Finding water and food, especially forage for horses, is not easy, though those who are familiar with desert environments should fare nicely.

Thirst and starvation are not the only dangers in the canyons. The locals say that everything in the Painted Canyons either bites or stings, and this includes the native plant life. Movement through the canyons is difficult due to the rugged terrain, so that a caravan only makes about 15 miles a day and usually requires a week or more to pass through the dreaded region. From the edge of the canyons, it is less than a day to reach Beni-Hadith. Parties should roll daily on the random encounter table below while they are within the Painted Canyons. Encounters may be direct or indirect, at the GM's whim, as the canyons cut line of sight to tens of feet within them, but someone on a bluff can see for miles. Encounters marked with an asterisk do not occur as long as the PCs follow the main trail along the Havari River and should be treated as no encounter. The Attack Site encounter can *only* be encountered along the Caravan Road and is otherwise treated as no encounter.

## Random Encounters in the Painted Canyons

3D10	ENCOUNTER
3-6	No encounter
7-9	Band of Gnolls
10-11	High Desert Nomads
12-14	Bloodlizard
15-16	Pack of Coyotes
17-18	Sun Worshipers
19-21	Giant Scorpion
22	Lesser Giant
23-25	Smoke on the Horizon
26	Hidden Spring*
27	Dead Bodies*
28	Ant Colony*
29	Attack Site
30	Escaped Slave

**No encounter:** Nothing unusual occurs that day.

**Band of Gnolls:** Five gnoll warriors, their 5 mates and 7 cubs are out hunting. If they spot the party, or if the party attacks and any gnolls escape, they return to The Gods' Needles and warn Red Mane. Any captured gnolls can be coerced into giving away information about the band and its encampment in exchange for their freedom.

**Gnoll Warriors:** HD 2; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d10) or jav-

elin (1d6); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

**Female Gnolls:** HD 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or short bow (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

**Gnoll Cubs:** HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 short bow (1d6) or bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

**High Desert Nomads:** A group of ten camel-mounted nomads and their sheep, the nomads are knowledgeable about the territory and gladly offer to guide the party through the Painted Canyons. If the party hires a nomad as a guide, he expects to be paid 5 silver drachmas (sp) a day, and leads the PCs away from danger and to sources of food, fodder, and water. For an additional 20 silver shekels (gp) he will take them to The Gods' Needles (Area H). If the party is in a sad state, the nomads may rescue them and take them back to their camp to recover if you choose.

**Nomads (10):** HD 1+1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 weapon (1d8); Move 12; Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

**Giant Horned Toad:** A deadly giant lizard is out hunting, and has caught the party's scent. It follows the PCs and attacks if they are otherwise engaged or begin to look weak.

**Giant Horned Toad:** HD 4+4; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (1d8); Move 6; Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Squirt blood.

## Toad, Giant Horned

**Hit Dice:** 4+4  
**Armor Class:** 4[15]  
**Attacks:** Bite (1d8)  
**Saving Throw:** 13  
**Special:** Squirt blood  
**Move:** 6  
**Alignment:** Neutrality  
**Challenge Level/XP:** 5/240

These lizard-looking creatures are as large as wolves, and are armored with a thick, knobbly hide. The head of a giant horned toad is wedge-shaped, with short, thick horns protruding from the sides. Twice per day, these monsters can squirt a jet of blood from their eyes, directed at a single target within 50ft. The target must make a successful saving throw or take full damage from the caustic blood (4d6 hit points); a successful saving throw results in only half damage. Giant horned toads are normally found only in dry regions such as deserts or badlands.

**Pack of Coyotes:** These large coyotes (resembling very small, hunched wolves) follow the party, staying out of sight as best they can, hoping someone will eventually drop something tasty or, better yet, die of thirst. In the meantime, they shadow the party, which could cause a rising of paranoia amongst intrepid adventurers. The coyote moon songs at night are lovely, if that's any consolation.

**Coyotes (10):** HD 1+1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d4); Move 18; Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

## THE PAINTED CANYONS

**Sun Worshipers:** These three giant lizards have recently finished eating a stray camel and are now sunning themselves on a large rock. They hiss at any who approach them, but are currently too lazy and well fed to bother attacking except in self-defense.

**Giant Lizards (3):** HD 3; HP 18, 14, 8; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

**Giant Scorpion:** This monster lies in wait along the party's route, hidden under sands or in a cave alongside the trail. When the PCs are close, the giant scorpion springs out, attempts to grab something meaty, and then scuttles off to enjoy its meal.

**Giant Scorpion:** HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 pincers (1d10), sting (1d4 + poison); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Lethal poison sting.

**Ogre:** This poor brute has been lost in the Painted Canyons for some time, and is getting tired of a diet of cactus fruit and giant lizard. As soon as he spots the party, he charges in and fights to the death.

**Ogre:** HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 weapon (1d10+1); Move 9; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

**Smoke on the Horizon:** The party spots several pillars of smoke on the horizon. If they follow them, they find the gnoll encampment. Use the notes for following the gnoll's tracks under "Attack Site" below.

**Hidden Spring:** The party comes across a spring of fresh water hidden in a side draw.

**Dead Bodies:** The party comes across the bodies of three dwarves, long dead in the desert sun, their flesh picked clean. There are signs of violence, and the bodies have been looted. These are members of Hirus Burningwrath's clan that have been missing for over a year.

**Ant Colony:** This canyon is riddled with huge mounds of a giant ant colony; the party must either backtrack or risk causing the ants to swarm. The area of the colonies covers 100 feet of the canyon. Each round that one or more characters are in this area, there is a 1 in 6 chance (per character) that swarms of ants will emerge to defend the colony. If combat is taking place over the top of the colony, an additional swarm will emerge in each combat round.

A swarm is made up of two warriors and five workers, and multiple swarms may emerge. If the party retreats, the ants will not pursue them more than approximately 200ft before returning.

**Giant Worker Ant:** HD 2; AC 3[16]; Atk Bite (1d6); Move 18; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

**Giant Warrior Ant:** HD 3; AC 3[16]; Atk Bite (1d6 + poison); Move 18; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Poison 2d6 (save for 1d4 only).

**Attack Site:** This is one of the sites where the gnolls have previously ambushed a caravan and can be encountered multiple times. The sites show a level of organization normally unheard of amongst the more savage humanoids. Several different tactics have been used, such as wild ambushes from the side canyons, dropping rock falls to break the caravan up into pieces, and some signs point to lookouts and archers being posted on the cavern walls.

Searching the sites of the latest attacks does yield some clues. Gnoll tracks (if the party searches for tracks, treat this as a secret door check), as well as those of several hyenas, camels, and assorted humanoids lead off into the Painted Canyons, eventually reaching the gnoll encampment (Area H). Rangers can follow these tracks as per normal. If the party does not contain a ranger character the tracks can still be followed but every six hours there is a 75% chance to

lose the trail, and it will take an additional 1d6 hours to find it again.

**Escaped Slave:** One of the slaves in Area H-6 or H-7 of the Gnoll Encampment has escaped. He or she is almost dead from thirst and exposure but if rescued can lead the party back to Red Mane's encampment but will not assist in battle or risk recapture.

## Ambush at the Ford (Area G)

If the PCs decide to follow a caravan and look for an attack, there will be one leaving in 1d3+1 days. This caravan, led by Samir ibn Faoud, consists of 36 camels, 30 guards (human soldiers, HP 5 each), 40 drovers (normal humans), and 12 camp followers (normal humans). It is carrying the usual assortment of silks and bundles of tea, plus a collection of rare and exotic feathers from the fabled flying lizards of Tymos Island valued at 3,000 gold darics (pp). The feathers are hidden on one particular camel whose non-descript nature fails to hint at the small fortune riding on its back. Characters that wander through the caravan looking for anything out of place or unusual will detect a strange smell on the camel (recognizable as the oil from Parth's house if the PCs managed to locate it). Hiram Parth personally sees off every caravan in his official capacity as His Wisdom's personal advisor. His attention to detail is legendary, and he goes so far as to check the straps on random loads, inspect the camels and other beasts of burden, and direct the guards as to their duties.

As the party travels with Samir's caravan, they have a tense, but fairly uneventful journey thorough the twisting passages of the Painted Canyons (roll for encounters normally but subtract 5 from the die result due to the 30 armed guards that accompany the column). Side canyons open off of the main canyon that the Havari River passes through. The vibrantly colored bluffs rise up on either side, casting at least half of the canyon in shadow. Natural rock falls line both banks of the river, creating numerous opportunities for ambushers to take cover. The Great Caravan Road stays to the southern bank of the river, crossing at the only good ford near the far western end of the canyons (Area G). There is a cumulative 50% chance each day that Samir points out a place where the gnolls have ambushed caravans (see "Attack Site" above), and the party may investigate these if they wish. However, the caravan is not waiting for them, and will press on even if the adventurers are left many miles behind. If the PCs become separated, roll for encounters normally.

As the caravan approaches the ford, everybody is tense in anticipation of the threat. At the ford the caravan can easily be caught with half on one side of the Havari, and half on the other. Guards are posted on both banks as side canyons open up to the east and west. The party needs to decide how they are arranging themselves for the crossing, and it would not be unreasonable to split the party into teams in order to watch both sides. Samir will wait with a party of mounted guards on the far side of the river, figuring that since the last time the gnolls attacked at the ford they attacked the part of the caravan waiting to cross, and will likely vary their tactics somewhat.

**Creatures:** When the caravan is about halfway across, one of Red Mane's subchiefs leads his warriors in a howling charge out of the side canyon (previously screened by seemingly impassable thorny brush) at Area G1. They are targeting the marked camel with their scent ability but will grab other camels that are nearby, striking down any who get in their way. The grizzled subchief is obvious in directing his raiders, pointing out a specific camel and barking orders. While the warriors are busy with this, Talking Dog leads his acolytes in rounding up prisoners for eventual sacrifice, with a special eye towards attractive females, as these seem to please the packmaster the best (unless Talking Dog and both of his acolytes are slain, assume that they make off with 1d4+4 captives from among the camel drovers and camp followers). The attacking force that the PCs must contend with consist of **Talking Dog, 2 gnoll acolytes, the gnoll subchief, 2 gnoll veterans, 8 gnoll warriors, 2 hyenas, and a giant hyena**. Do not subtract or add any of these forces to the Gnoll Encampment (Area H) other than Talking Dog himself. Other attackers



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are present, but assume that they are occupied by the caravan guards fighting under the direction of Samir. In total, 1d10+10 guards and drovers are slain. Samir will not pursue any stolen property, hurrying instead towards Beni-Hadith and its relative safety. See “The Gnolls” sidebar below for gnoll stat blocks and the “Talking Dog” sidebar on page 20 for more information regarding the mad shaman.

**Development:** The whole thing will be done with as much speed as possible, and unless thwarted, the raiders will be back up and into the canyons within 6 rounds. There Red Mane awaits with a reserve force

that hampers pursuit by his use of tactics he picked up while serving as a mercenary, one of which is to cover his retreat. As soon as the ambushers and the loot are clear (and possibly Talking Dog and the prisoners if there is time) Red Mane will trigger a rock fall that seals off the canyon behind them causing a delay of several hours unless the PCs have the means to fly over or otherwise bypass the obstacle quickly. Red Mane’s reserve force never openly engages the PCs and unless the PCs scout by air, will never be seen by them as they make their way back to the encampment by hidden routes.





# The Two Bloody Spears

The Two Bloody Spears gnoll tribe has lived in the Painted Canyons for generations. For many years their depredations were minor, the occasional raid of a small caravan or harassing the high desert nomads who wandered the region. All this changed when a young gnoll warrior called Red Mane returned from a long journey to the north. There he had served as a mercenary for less-than-finicky humans and dwarves, learning a great deal about how the world outside of the Canyons functions. He also made contacts with a large criminal organization in the city of Bhutan, the Zuma Qulldishi.

Mostly the Zuma engage in smuggling operations and robbery, though they have been known to occasionally commit highway banditry or take on contracts for murder. Through his contacts Red Mane managed to make an arrangement whereby his tribe would raid the caravans passing through the Painted Canyons and the Zuma collect the loot, and return every few months with goods for the gnolls. This has made the Two Bloody Spears tribe prosperous and Red Mane's rule stable.

The tribe is well armed and armored and this wealth has allowed the tribe to conquer the other gnolls in the area and drive off other savage humanoids. The Two Bloody Spears tribe is now poised to become the dominant force in the Painted Canyons.

## The Gnoll Encampment (Area H)

The encampment of the Two Bloody Spears tribe lies deep in the canyons, and is a 50-mile journey from the Caravan Road. Finding

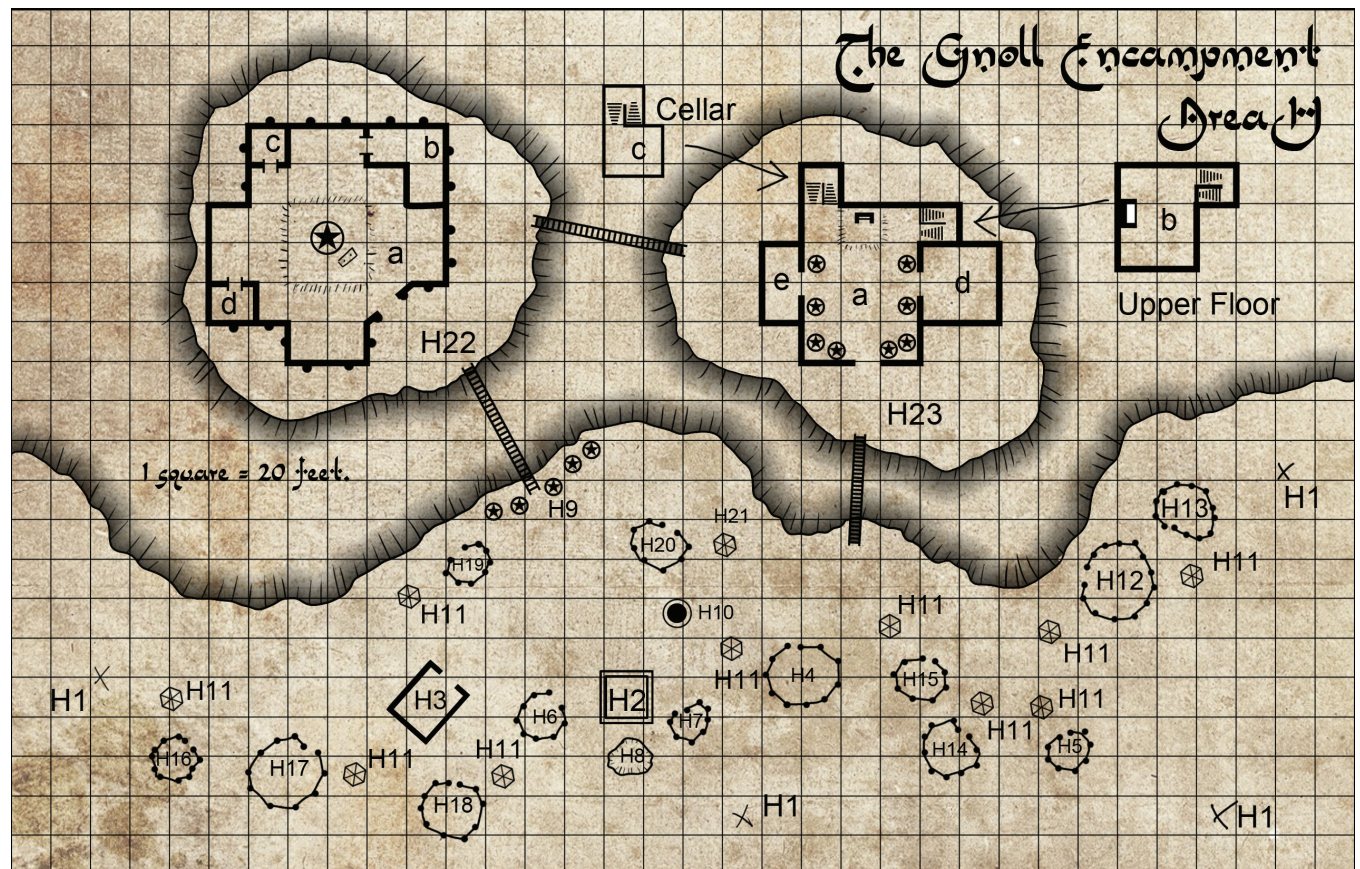
the encampment requires either tracking the gnolls after a raid, or a bit of luck.

Red Mane has chosen a defensible and difficult to locate part of the Painted Canyons to be his base of operations. The encampment sits on two large pillars of rock called The Gods' Needles and an adjacent bluff in a small and out of the way box canyon. The Needles are hard limestone pillars that rise 200 feet above the canyon floor, surrounded on three sides by the softer sandstone canyon walls. Unlike the brightly colored sandstone that comprises most of the Painted Canyons, the Needles are a flat whitish grey in color.

There are two ways to get onto The Gods' Needles, from the canyon below or from the surrounding bluffs. The top of each Needle connects at two points to one of the surrounding bluffs via shoddy rope bridges that are treacherous to cross. The bridges connecting the Needles to each other and to the bluff lack hand lines and are not of the highest quality. Anyone fighting or moving faster than a walk on the bridges risks falling off. A saving throw is required each round to keep one's feet, and any failure results in the character prone and hanging off the bridge. A second saving throw allows anyone hanging off a bridge to pull themselves back up, but failure of this check by more than 4 will result in a plummet to the canyon floor below (20d6 damage).

The Needles themselves may be scaled by a Thief, who can let down rope for others to follow (but this method does provide total concealment to the climbers from any gnoll guards above). The top of the Needles themselves are strewn with rubble and sliced with small fissures.

The gnolls have built huts and structures within in their encampment out of a mixture of construction types. Smaller structures are constructed from the semi-fossilized rib bones of gargantuan animals excavated from





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the canyon walls in the vicinity of The Gods' Needles. These are lashed together at the top and covered with cured hides. At the apex of the rib bones is an adjustable flap that allows smoke to escape (it gets cold at night in the high desert, and thus every evening a fire is lit). Larger structures are composed of adobe with flat roofs braced by wooden beams, long-dried in the desert sun, and occasionally reinforced by more of the mysterious megafauna bones. Doorways are slightly shorter than a gnoll, about 6 feet in height, and are covered by a hide drape. The interior of the typical dwelling contains a pallet of dirty furs for each gnoll or captive living there, a central stone fire circle, the weapons and armor of any gnolls currently in the huts, assorted food stuffs, several water gourds, 1d4 shrunken heads of various humanoids and gnolls and other items unique to each hut listed in the descriptions below.

### The Gnolls

The gnolls of the Two Bloody Spears tribe areas follows:

**Red Mane, the Packmaster (7HD gnoll):** HD 7; HP 35; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 flaming two-handed battle axe (1d10+2) or javelin (1d6); Move 9; Save 9 (8 with belt); AL C; CL/XP 7/600; Special: +2 flaming two-handed battle-axe, belt of scalps (protection +1).

**Treasure:** pouch with 27 gold darics (pp) and 2 shrunken heads filled with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp) each. Red Mane's belt of scalps acts as a ring of protection +1, although it is a grisly object, a belt bearing 13 human scalps.

**Talking Dog, Gnoll Shaman:** HD 6; AC 5[14]; Atk +1 blood spear (1d6+1 and 1/round for 1d6 rounds); Move 9; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Spells.

**Spells (2/2/1/1):**

**Level 1:** *Cure Light Wounds, Cause Light Wounds*

**Level 2:** *Hold Person, Silence 15ft Radius*

**Level 3:** *Speak with Dead*

**Level 4:** *Cure Serious Wounds*

**Treasure:** silver holy symbol set with lizard teeth (worth 35 silver shekels), pouch with 18 gold darics (pp), 35 silver shekels (gp) and a 3 shrunken humanoid heads stuffed with gold dust (35 silver shekels each). Talking Dog's blood spear is a +1 weapon; if it hits, the victim will also take an additional 1hp of damage in each of the 1d6 rounds after being hit, for the weapon's enchantment leaves a ragged wound.

**Gnoll Shaman Acolytes:** HD 2; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d10) or javelin (1d6); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Spell (*Cure Light Wounds*).

**Treasure:** wooden holy symbol set with mica chips (worth 15 silver shekels), pouch with 3d10 silver shekels (gp) and a 1d2 shrunken humanoid heads stuffed with gold dust (35 silver shekels each).

**Gnoll Subchief:** HD 4; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d10) or javelin (1d6); Move 9; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

**Treasure:** pouch with 2d20 silver shekels (gp) and a rough gemstone worth 50 gp.

**Gnoll (Elite Warriors):** HD 3; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d10) or javelin (1d6); Move 9; Save 15; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: None.

**Treasure:** pouch with 3d6 silver shekels (gp)

**Gnoll Warriors:** HD 2; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 scimitar (1d10) or javelin (1d6); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

**Treasure:** pouch with 1d4 silver shekels (gp) and 2d8 silver drachmas (sp)

**Female Gnolls:** HD 2; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (2d4) or short bow (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: None.

**Treasure:** pouch with 1d6 silver drachmas (sp)

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**Gnoll Cubs:** HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 short bow (1d6) or bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

**Giant Hyena:** HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (2d6); Move 18; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; Special: None.

**Hyena:** HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 16; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

## Encampment Key

### H1. Guard Post

At each of these locations, a hyena skull has been mounted upon a short pole. During the day **3 gnoll warriors** and a **hyena** are tasked with keeping watch here for intruders or escaping slaves. At night **5 gnoll warriors** and a **hyena** man each of these positions but, as there have never been any intruders and the slaves are locked away before sunset, they are not terribly vigilant, spending most of their time gambling and dozing. There is a 25% chance at any given time that one of the elite warriors is on duty or checking on the guards (in which case they will be very alert).

### H2. Slave Grounds

This area is where the slaves taken by Red Mane's band in their raids are worked each day. Every day there are clothes to be mended, weapons and armor to be cleaned, and other small tasks the gnolls don't wish to perform. There are currently 10 captives (see Areas H6 and H7) being held — all the previous slaves have been sold, eaten, or sacrificed to Alquemedak. A 3-foot-high wall of poorly dressed, dry-fitted stone surrounds the area. The ground is littered with waste, as the slaves are worked to death and allowed to clean their area only in their "free" time. Whenever slaves are present, **3 female gnolls** keep watch over the area.

### H3. Storehouse

This large structure is the main storehouse for the goods taken from the caravans and destined to be passed on to smugglers. One of the bachelor **gnoll warriors** and his **hyena** are always on guard outside this building.

Every month, a caravan of smugglers sneaks into the valley below to collect their ill-gotten goods and pay Red Mane his share. The smugglers are not due for two weeks, and they do not factor into the adventure. However, one of Talking Dog's acolytes is a clever fellow and has learned how to read. In order to keep from being cheated, Red Mane has ordered the young priest to keep a written record of every item passed on to the smugglers and how much in goods was returned in payment. The bright fellow has gone one step further, and included a list of the names of the people his masters deal with. The inventories and list are written in a very poor form of the Common tongue, but are legible. Anyone who has found the list of names in Hiram Parth's house (see Area D) recognizes these as the same individuals that Parth has been dealing with.

The building is packed with crates, boxes, and bales of trade goods: silks, tea, exotic furs, imported foodstuffs, and bars of gold are all stacked inside. In one corner is a small portable writing table. Opening the table reveals a stack of papers (the manifest mentioned above), several quills, a jar of ink, a penknife, blotting paper, and an abacus. The goods (should the party just make off with them and not return them to the Satrap) are worth 45,000 silver shekels (gp) in total, though some items are of dubious nature (a few bags of exotic drugs and illegal alchemical ingredients). It would require an entire caravan to move all of these goods, though 10,000 shekels' worth

could be transported in as few as four backpacks if the more valuable goods are picked out.

### H4. Young Bloods' Lodge

This hide hut serves as the home of **12 gnoll warriors**. These warriors are the youngest and thus lowest warriors in the band and have yet to earn enough of a reputation to have their own dwelling. Half of the warriors are present here at any given time, usually sleeping, and the rest are on duty at the guard posts. There are also **1d4 hyenas** here at any given time.

### H5. Subchief's Hut

A **gnoll subchief** lives in this hut with his pet **giant hyena**. Once he was the second-in-command of the band, but he was defeated and cast aside by Red Mane during that packmaster's rise to power. Now, it is his job to watch the slaves and make sure the younger warriors keep to their tasks. He is more than a little peeved that he has been placed in a position he sees as beneath him. Inside there is a dirty fur pallet, the subchief's spare armor and weapons (a battleaxe, heavy wooden shield, and scale mail), several wineskins (mostly empty), and scattered foodstuffs. Most night he picks out a female slave or two to serve him, and is often drunk and passed out by midnight.

### H6./H7. Slave Huts

These two small huts are the living quarters for the most useful slaves kept by Red Mane's band (the others having been sold or killed). The slaves are poorly fed, receive a minimum of water rations, and are beaten on a daily basis. Their living quarters are strewn with trash and debris, as they are worked much too hard to be concerned with sanitation or appearances. They are a sullen and oppressed lot, but will fight with utter frenzy if given the chance to turn the tables on their captors. There **4 female slaves** in H6 and **6 male slaves** in H7 (one is the dwarf Havrak Dwellingdeep). All the rest are normal human caravaneers or desert nomads taken in various raids (1d6hp each).

**Development:** If Havrak Dwellingdeep is questioned, he will advise the PCs of the trap he built in area H23b). If he is safely returned to the Dwarven Souk of Salt Springs, the PCs will be rewarded with 100 gold darics (pp).

### H8. Midden Pit

This 12-foot deep pit is used as a rubbish dump by the slaves. It provides a potential hiding place, as the gnolls don't bother to search it unless a slave is missing.

### H9. Votive Statues

These crudely carved wooden statues of the various aspects of Alquemedak the Hyena God stand 7-1/2 feet tall and are decorated with thin, beaten sheets of gold (250 shekels worth apiece). From right to left the statues depict: the Master of Fortune, an aspect to which the gnolls pray to bring them fat and soft targets to plunder; the Taker of Slaves, who stands with both hands clutching manacles, ready to add another victim to the Hyena God's collection of slaves; the Lord of Carrion, who is crouching in offal, a twisted grin on its face; the Giver of Plentitude in Exchange for Sacrifice, its hands holding a bloodstained bowl before it in which small animals and objects are smashed to gain the Hyena God's favor; and finally the Smasher of Skulls, standing tall and strong with its arms crossed, each hand holding a war club. Each of these may be identified by questioning a gnoll prisoner. The gnolls pray to the Smasher of Skulls



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before each raid, and destroying this totem causes a considerable reduction in morale for any gnoll that witnesses its destruction.

### H10. Well

Dwarven slaves were worked to death to dig this well 100 feet down into the highest aquifer. The current batch of slaves spends a good deal of their time raising water from the well and carrying it to the cisterns and gnoll dwellings. If the party is looking for further adventures, the well no doubt connects with a host of caverns below.

### H11. Storage Huts

These small huts are only 5 feet high and are constructed in the same manner is the common dwellings. Each is claimed by a particular **gnoll warrior** (or warriors) who has a 25% chance of looking through its contents at any given time of the day or night. They are filled with foodstuff, looted amphorae mostly filled with water — though there is a 45% chance of finding one filled with expensive wine worth 25 shekels (gp) — tools, clothes, and other assorted household items. Most of the goods are of little value, though looted trade goods worth 1d10+5 silver shekels (gp) can be found.

### H12. Veteran's Hut

This hut is the sleeping place for **5 elite gnoll warriors** and their **8 mates**. **Five cubs** occupy two of the pallets. Each veteran likewise has his own pet **hyena**. As high-ranking warriors of the band, these veterans are not required to stand watch at night, and can be found here late in the evening and until morning. The females and cubs stay nearby during the day, and retreat to their hut as night falls. Hidden in the pallets is 35 shekels (gp) in assorted coinage.

### H13. Empty Hut

This dwelling is normally occupied by 6 gnoll veterans, their mates, and 3 cubs. However, they are currently out hunting in the mesas to the north of the Needles, and have taken any items of value with them.

### H14. Warriors' Lodge

This hut is inhabited by **8 gnoll warriors**. Living with them are **10 gnoll females**, **6 gnoll cubs**, and **4 hyenas**. Half the warriors are here at any given time, the others on watch. One pallet has a silver penny whistle worth 20 silver drachmas (sp) hidden in it.

### H15. Bachelors' Hut

This hut is the home to **3 gnoll warriors** and their **3 hyenas**. These three are all bachelors and the hut looks like it, with items and food debris strewn about. They do not stand watch but are instead tasked with guarding the storehouse (Area H3), where one is always on guard with his hyena. Among the pallets are 4 silver shekels (gp), 45 silver drachmas (sp), and 56 copper obols (cp).

### H16. Feuding Hut

A hut occupied by **4 gnoll warriors** and their families (**3 gnoll females**, **2 gnoll cubs**, and **2 hyenas**); there is a pallet for a fifth, but he was killed in a recent caravan raid, and the four remaining gnolls have been busy feuding over his belongings. These four stand opposite watches, two from dawn to midday, the others from dusk to midnight. The belongings in contention consist of a shrunken

head filled with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp), and a small collection of coinage worth a total of 22 silver shekels (gp).

### H17. The Brothers

Although a large hut and thus usually occupied by a gnoll veterans with families, this hut is the living space of **6 gnoll warriors**, all brothers, and their **3 hyenas**. They have learned to combine their meager resources. The brothers all stand night watch at various parts of the encampment, and thus are found here sleeping during the day. Unlike most of the bachelor huts, this one is somewhat clean and organized. Among the pallets are: 3 silver shekels (gp), 15 silver drachmas (sp), and 6 copper obols (cp).

### H18. The Dying Gnoll

A large hut occupied by an elite gnoll warrior (no longer capable of combat) and his **5 gnoll warrior** sons. The older gnoll was severely wounded in the last raid, and is barely hanging onto life. In consideration of his decades of service, Red Mane has allowed the old warrior to take his time dying in relative peace. The old gnoll's sons, on the other hand, have been busy standing day watches and trying their best to out perform each other, all in the hopes of being granted their father's possessions after he dies (assuming they haven't already stolen the best parts). Along with the warriors are a total of **8 gnoll females**, **7 gnoll cubs**, and **3 hyenas**, representing their various families. The veteran's treasures consist of 5 gold dust-filled shrunken heads worth 35 shekels (gp) each and assorted stolen trade goods worth a total of 100 silver shekels (gp).

### H19. Rite of Passage

**Four gnoll females** and their **4 hyenas** occupy this small hut. They are in seclusion while they await their rite of passage. **Two of the shaman acolytes** guard the entrance to this hut day and night, changing the guard every six hours. Each female wears crude jewelry made of semi-precious stones worth 5 silver drachmas (sp) each.

### H20. Swinging Gnolls

This small dwelling was once the home of 4 gnoll warriors. These warriors were charged with guarding the storehouse, but were caught pilfering from it and brutally executed by Red Mane. In his anger, they were flayed alive in their corpses left to hang in the hut until they rot. The smell is obvious to anyone within 10 feet of the hut.

### H21. Looted Storage

This storage hut belonged to the executed gnolls in Area H20. As a result, it has been thoroughly looted. The interior is empty, save for discarded sacks and boxes.

### H22. Temple of the Hyena God

Standing upon the western Needle is a massive construction of adobe bricks. The same giant ribs used elsewhere in the camp are incorporated here as decorative ornamentation and load-bearing supports. The exterior surfaces of the building have been etched with crude totemistic images of death, destruction, and fire.

### H22a. Worship Hall

The peak of this adobe structure rises thirty feet above the ground, and has a 10-foot-diameter circular opening at the top to allow light

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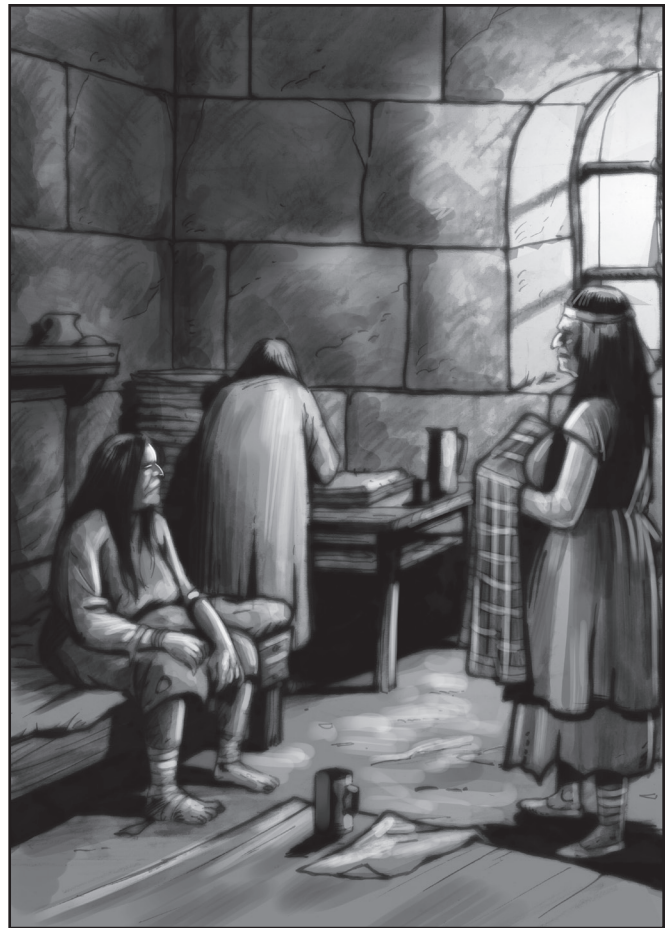
in and smoke out. The air reeks of offal and blood, and fat red candles give off the sent of frying meat. In the center of the temple is a large statue of Alquemedak carved from gleaming obsidian. The statue depicts the Hyena God, a gnoll-like demonic figure, standing upright, its hands raised towards the heavens, and the shattered remains of its victims at its feet. The god's hands and face are covered in dried blood, and its elongated, tooth-filled maw is open in a howl of triumph. The statue is 15 feet tall and stands on a dais of more of the gigantic bones.

Before the statue sits a 6-ft. by 6-ft. by 3-ft. slab of basalt. Chains to hold sacrificial victims are attached at the four corners of the slab. The altar is covered in dried blood, as is the floor and dais around it. Surrounding the altar and the statue is a circle of twenty 3-foot-high red candles made from the tallow of humanoid. Each candle is inscribed with Chaos runes and punctuated by humanoid teeth pressed into the tallow.

**Creatures:** During the day 3 shaman acolytes accompanied by a giant hyena, tend the sacred candles and stand ready to perform any services required of them.

### H22b. Shaman's Chamber

Here Talking Dog and his pet giant hyena (if they survived the Ambush at the Ford) lives and works, unless he is performing ceremonies in the temple, or serving as Red Mane's advisor. Two gnoll acolyte shamans accompany Talking Dog wherever he goes. Of all the gnoll dwellings, this one is the dirtiest. Talking Dog refuses to be bothered with cleaning, and rarely considers the filth here important enough to order a slave to see to it. There is a small bed of furs opposite the entrance, and next to the bed is a locked, iron-bound wooden chest. Inside the chest are a potion of invisibility, a ring of Mammal Control, 15 gold darics (pp), 440 silver shekels (gp), and 76 silver drachmas (sp). A wooden table and chair rests against one wall, but the shaman rarely uses it as anything other than a scratching post or acolyte beater.



### Talking Dog

“The Great God Alquemedak commands that I offer your soul and flesh to him. His will cannot be denied!”

*Description:* Talking Dog is old — at least for a gnoll — and his pelt has grown gray. He walks with a slight hunch and a limp but is still a fearsome warrior who can command the powers of his demonic god.

*Personality:* Mad, mad, mad, mad.

*Background:* Talking Dog felt the power of the Hyena God at an early age and, while still a cub, ran off into the desert to seek the voices that called to him. He found them, and returned to his band to murder and sacrifice all to the glory of Alquemedak. Since then, he has served a variety of packmasters, killing those who don't obey his religious laws, and brining up from the ranks those who will. Red Mane obeys and may live for now, at least as long as Alquemedak commands it.

### H22c. Acolytes' Hall

This chamber serves as the living quarters of Talking Dog's acolytes. There is little in this room save for eight filthy fur pallets — the acolytes know better than to leave anything valuable unattended. Most of the time the room stands empty, as Talking Dog keeps his minions busy. At night 1d4+1 of the gnoll acolyte-shamans can be found here, sleeping off the day's labors.

### H22d. Larder

This dark room is used as a larder by Talking Dog and his acolytes. Inside are a private cistern and various foodstuffs — all rotten and scum covered as befits worshipers of Alquemedak.

### H23. Packmaster's Palace

Smaller only than the Temple of the Hyena god, this multi-level adobe structure serves as the palace of Red Mane, Packmaster of the Two Bloody Spears tribe.

### H23a. Throne Hall

The floor is covered with the dirty pelts of various deadly predators, all hunted down and slain by Red Mane himself. A 50-foot long strip of expensive (and now ruined) purple silk leads from the entrance to the base of a dais. Upon this pediment sits Red Mane's throne of bones. The bones are the remains of his greatest foes, intricately woven to provide a fitting seat for the packmaster. The dais itself stretches 20 feet from the back wall, and is made from the carved shoulder blades and hipbones of some massive beast excavated from the canyon walls below. Along the walls stand eight carved wooden statues, each the likeness of one of the band's former packmasters, three of whom are Red Mane's ancestors. Each statue is crudely painted in an effort to make it more realistic. The walls of the throne room are painted in rather gruesome detail with scenes from Red Mane's life, from his cubhood, through his years among northmen mercenaries, his rise to power among the gnolls alongside Talking Dog, and his cunning in striking a deal with a human merchant (if the party looks closely at the painting they will recognize a resemblance between the pictured merchant and Hiram Parth). Behind the throne



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is a large unlocked ironbound chest that contains the shrunken and preserved heads of every gnoll who has dared to challenge Red Mane for leadership of the band — 17 in all, each stuffed with gold dust worth 35 silver shekels (gp). Unless a council has been called, this chamber is empty.

### H23b. Packmaster's Bedchamber

As befits the leader of a prosperous band of gnolls, only the finest decorations and accouterments serve the packmaster's needs. Against one wall is a feather mattress and carved wooden bed complete with silk canopy looted from a caravan. Sadly, gnolls are hard on their furnishings, and the bed has been cut and rent in multiple places. An actual fireplace, built by dwarven slaves, complete with a brick chimney provides heat and light throughout the day and night. A jumble of wood sits next to the fireplace, and is refilled daily by slaves.

Opposite the fireplace is an upright harpsichord, again looted from a caravan. Red Mane does not know how to play it, but is always on the lookout for a slave who can. Currently, that slave is an elven woman named **Elisa Stardream** (a normal elf female). Elisa is Red Mane's favorite, and along with his **3 mates** (equal to gnoll warriors) and 2 slave concubines (normal human females), can usually be found here with **Red Mane** and is his trained **giant hyena**. Nearby is a table and chair, at which Red Mane takes his meals (the women must sit on the floor and watch). Nailed to the underside of the table is a small wooden box that contains Red Mane's greatest treasure, a ruby and gold gorget-style necklace worth 3,000 silver shekels (gp).

**Traps:** The fireplace was built by dwarven slaves now all dead save for Havrak Dwellingdeep (see Area H7). The whole thing is rigged to collapse when the proper stone is depressed (AC 4[15] to be struck from across the room by a ranged attack). Hidden beneath the wood pile is a waterskin filled with lamp oil as part of the trap planned by the now all but dead dwarves. When the trap is triggered, the hearth and chimney collapse into the 10-ft. by 10 ft. area directly in front of them, dealing bludgeoning and fire damage to anyone occupying those squares. This in turn spreads the burning contents of the fireplace onto the wood pile. In the next round the oil-filled skin explodes dealing fire damage to anyone still in the room for 3 rounds and requiring an additional saving throw to avoid catching on fire.

### Red Mane

"I will enjoy your death, almost as much as I will enjoy eating your flesh afterwards."

*Description:* Red Mane is a big, scarred gnoll of unknown age — at least twenty-three summers. His namesake hair is kept long and wild, as wild as the rampant rage in his eyes.

*Personality:* Red Mane is cruel, callous, demanding, and fearless.

*Background:* Once, many summers ago, Red Mane served in a mixed group of mercenaries that fought in the wars of the softer races. There he learned how to lead men in a civilized way, as well as how to seek out the dark underbelly of city life. Red Mane used this knowledge, and the support of the prophet Talking Dog, to cement his hold over the Two Bloody Spears band of gnolls. Now, he tries to balance his instincts with his learning and raise his people up to become a major force in the region. Luckily for the other races, he lacks the intelligence to do this, and instead merely mimics the military discipline and tactics he saw as a mercenary.

### H23c. Treasury

Inside this subterranean chamber is Red Mane's personal treasure

hoard of 150 gold darics (pp) 1,280 silver shekels (gp), 3,450 silver drachmas (sp), 9,080 copper obols (cp), and three diamonds worth 500 silver shekels (gp) each.

### H23d. Bodyguard Barracks

This is the home of Red Mane's personal bodyguard, a troop of 7 of the elite gnoll warriors and their 3 hyenas. These gnolls are the finest in the band and absolutely loyal to Red Mane — at least as long as he is strong enough to discourage one of them taking over the band. None of them are married, but they do have their pick of available females, and all have their eyes on the young gnoll females awaiting their rite of passage and eventual mating in Area H19. Searching the pelts and crannies of this room reveals a +1 dagger, 56 silver drachmas (sp), 45 copper obols (cp), and three shrunken heads filled with gold dust worth 35 shekels (gp) each.

### H23e. Packmaster's Larder

This foul-smelling chamber is used as a larder by Red Mane, his personal bodyguard, and favored warriors. Inside are a private cistern, various foodstuffs (including haunches of smoked human, elf, and dwarf meat), and thirteen casks of rare Monrovia Fire Wine worth 55 silver shekels (gp) each stolen from a caravan. Drinking at least one glass forces the imbiber to make a saving throw or suffer a -2 penalty to all die rolls until a successful saving throw can be made (one try can be made per hour with a +1 bonus per hour that passes).

## Rewards and Further Adventures

Assuming the party is successful, His Wisdom will be more than generous. Payment will be prompt and in full, with additional rewards for exemplary behavior. If the entire gnoll band is wiped out or driven off, he will give each hero a +1-enchanted weapon or armor appropriate to their class and profession (or has a +1 enchantment added to an existing weapon or armor), plus gives the party an additional 2,000 gold darics (pp). If they managed to uncover Parth's conspiracy, they will receive the above rewards, plus an extra bonus of one fifth of the value of Parth's property (His Wisdom comes into possession of it after the trial and execution of the traitor). This sum will total 5,000 gold darics (pp), but the party will have to wait at least three months for the property to be auctioned and sold. If they choose not to wait, the Pasha will happily hold it for them until their return. All rewards are, of course, subject to the taxation of the satrapy at the rate of 33%.

As long as the PCs have not made fools of themselves and have managed to eliminate the gnolls, they will be welcome at Salt Springs anytime for as long as they want to stay, and given the best accommodations and treatment available. If the PCs have become fugitives from the law of Salt Springs, they can clear their names and collect the above reward by proving that Hiram Parth was in league with the Two Bloody Spears (probably by recovering the gnolls' loot manifest together with the evidence from Parth's own residence). If the PCs do not clear their name, then they receive no rewards and remain on the run from the pasha's men.

If they manage to defeat the gnolls, but fail to uncover Parth's treachery, His Wisdom will not be very happy with them when the attacks resume. He will issue an arrest warrant for the party, and should they ever find themselves in his satrapy again, they had best be disguised and using assumed names. If they are arrested (and assuming that they don't do anything stupid such as resisting arrest) they will be taken to Salt Springs and placed in the dungeon for three days. Once they have had a chance to cool their heels a bit, the guards come and escort the PCs to the edge of the satrapy, returning to them

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any weapons or other items they carried (minus a small amount of coin and jewelry that was 'lost'). There the guards inform them that they are no longer welcome in the Satrapy of Salt Springs, and to return is to discover that failure is punishable by death. Additionally, His Wisdom will have sent messages to neighboring rulers and to the Court of the Grand Caliph describing the PCs and their perfidious ways. The party can expect complications should they get into trouble in any nearby domain.

Our heroes adventures need not end here, however, and the Painted Canyons as well as the Satrapy of Salt Springs would be a suitable place to explore and profit from. The Painted Canyons are no doubt filled with other interesting places to explore and loot (where did the strange gigantic bones used by the gnolls come from, and are there more of those creatures still living somewhere in the fathomless depths of the canyons?). The destruction of the Two Bloody Spears tribe has left a power vacuum in the Painted Canyons, one that any number of would be warlords might be happy to fill. Further, rumors abound that somewhere in the Painted Canyons is the Lost City of Omlach-Tur, a cliff-dwelling ruin and once-capital of a long dead empire.

Having a permanent base is and being the only adventurers the Pasha Abubakkar will allow to operate in his area is a great boon to such endeavors. Seeing the success of paying bounties for the gnolls, His Wisdom may desire to see other foul creatures hunted down in the Painted Canyons. Finally, the PCs could follow the leads learned from Parth and the gnolls and travel to far off Bhutan and root out the Zuma Qulldishi.



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t h e t o m e o f  
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this is the year  
you will make them cower