

Dunes of Desolation



By Tom Knauss



FROG GOD
GAMES

Credits

Design & Author

Tom Knauss

Developers

John Ling, Greg Vaughan

Copyeditors

John Ling, Skeeter Green

Pathfinder Content Editors

Erica Balsley, Skeeter Green, John Ling

Art Director

Charles A. Wright

Layout and Typesetting

Charles A. Wright

Interior Art

Andrew DeFelice, Chris McFann, Mike Chaney,
Leif Jones, Brian LeBlanc, Nate Pride

Front Cover Art

Artem Shukayev

Cartography

Robert Altbauer

FROG GOD GAMES IS

CEO

Bill Webb

Art Director

Charles A. Wright

Creative Director: Swords & Wizardry

Matthew J. Finch

Walks in Single File to Hide His Numbers

Skeeter Green

Creative Director: Pathfinder

Greg A. Vaughan



**FROG
GOD
GAMES**

**ADVENTURES
WORTH
WINNING**

©2014 Frog God Games.

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter One: A Desert Primer	4
Chapter Two: Desert Travel	10
Chapter Three: Desert Hazards	14
Chapter Four: Skills and Feats	23
Chapter Five: Desert Equipment	29
Chapter Six: New Monsters	42
Chapter Seven: Spells	67
Chapter Eight: Archetypes	79
Chapter Nine: Faiths of the Desert	91
Chapter Ten: Child's Play	115
Chapter Eleven: King of Beasts	132
Chapter Twelve: My Blue Oasis	162
Appendix: Random Desert Events and Monster Encounters	187
Legal Appendix	191

Introduction

In a land where the sun relentlessly bakes its sandy surface, water is king. In the desert, the life-sustaining fluid is more valuable than the most precious metals, desirable gems and mightiest weapons. Most adventurers believe that water's scarcity makes the desert an inhospitable place devoid of life, riches and challenges. The incessant glare of a distant, roiling inferno, the intolerable heat of day, the monotonous expanses of sand and the fierce winds are enough to break the will of any man or beast, but natives and experienced adventurers know that the dunes conceal many secrets and treasures. Scratch a few feet beneath the surface and the wondrous ruins of lost cities miraculously come to life. Some of these settlements succumbed to the desert's natural forces, while vengeful deities, demons or spirits condemned others to an eternity beneath the dunes. Marvelous oases abounding with life and mystery also dot the forbidding landscape. Those fortunate enough to discover these refuges are delighted to find fresh water, but danger often lurks amid the lush vegetation or beneath the water's surface. Those intrepid souls hardy enough to brave the elements and explore the wonders of this harsh terrain are well-rewarded for their efforts.

The desert is a stark contrast of astounding wealth and utter depravation. Those ambitious men and women that rule these lands dwell in lavish palaces within the heart of bustling metropolises teeming with exotic goods, peoples and creatures. They command vast armies of soldiers to wage war against each other and the land's native denizens, and great legions of servants to attend to their earthly desires. But, they are not alone in coveting the desert's wealth. Dragons, genies, sphinxes and other avaricious monsters also stake their claims to such prizes. Any adventurer bold enough to do battle against such foes and vie to make his mark in this harsh environment must come prepared. That is this sourcebook's purpose — to provide PCs with the feats, equipment, magic and abilities to not only survive, but thrive in the desert. Fearsome scimitars, magical hookah pipes, resistance to extreme temperatures, combat prowess and arcane specialization are just some of the tools in the desert adventurers' diverse repertoire. Outwardly mundane items and extraordinary adaptations also supplement these mystical wonders. Common articles of clothing such as a scarf, a headdress, a linen cloak and even a humble pair of worn sandals are sometimes the difference between life and death for a desert explorer. In addition to the material goods presented here, fresh ideas also abound. New faiths, philosophies and variations on existing disciplines are also available to adventurers willing to expand their horizons into previously uncharted territory. In the end, those that aspire to be heroes in this forbidding land need more than a few lucky dice rolls and fortuitous finds. The brave souls who dare to tame this unforgiving world must rely upon their ingenuity, wits and resourcefulness to achieve their seemingly impossible goal — mastery over the scorching sands.

In addition to aiding PCs on their way to accomplishing this lofty ambition, this sourcebook also provides GMs with a myriad of exciting new possibilities to challenge his players and expand upon the environment's rich and diverse history. Foremost among these are the forces of nature. The weather events tormenting this battered landscape are more formidable than those found in any other biome. Oppressive heat, incessant sunlight, howling winds and blowing sand do not grant respite for the weary or the unprepared nor do its monstrous denizens. Previously unknown creatures and crafty predators stalk the terrain searching for new victims to add to their body count. In furtherance of the desert's unique mystique, age-old stories, proverbs, sayings and aphorisms are scattered throughout *Dunes of Desolation* to give greater insight and understanding of the people and creatures that defy the odds and inhabit this inhospitable realm.

So read a few lines from a seductive poem; polish the side of a mysterious golden lamp; dream of a glorious night aboard a magic carpet and imagine an amazing world where the impossible sometimes masquerades as the mundane. In the words of a typical desert native, "there is nothing that a determined man and a loyal camel cannot do."

A Desert Primer

For the average person, the word desert conjures the image of an intensely hot, windswept landscape of swirling and shifting sand dunes. The blazing sun incessantly rains waves of heat and bright light down upon this desolate world. The air is fiery and dry, and water is nowhere to be found. Nothing survives in this inhospitable, barren wasteland. At least that is the picture that first comes to mind when someone mentions the word — desert. It is certainly true that deserts lack the multitude of diverse life forms found in a tropical rain forest or temperate grasslands, but what desert life forms lack in numbers, they make up for in hardiness and resourcefulness. Its flora has adapted to an environment where water is scarce with several different methodologies. Some plants grow deep root systems to tap subterranean water sources. Others reduce moisture loss by developing small, spiny leaves to minimize water loss from exposure to the heat. The largest desert plants — and those most commonly associated with this biome — survive by retaining and storing water for long-term usage. Needles, thorns or a waxy coating protect their vital leaves and stems against voracious plant-eating creatures and evaporation from the sun's scorching rays. Likewise, its fauna also developed specialized behavioral and physiological changes necessary to survive in this harsh climate. Many desert animals are nocturnal. They hide underground during the hottest times of the day and emerge during the significantly cooler evening and overnight hours. Others have undergone radical physical changes ranging from the creation of a hump to store moisture and fatty deposits, as seen in the camel, to the development of larger and more efficient kidneys to process water multiple times before excreting it. Life in the desert is a difficult struggle, but as its inhabitants prove it is not impossible.

But what actually makes a desert a desert? Popular notion defines a desert as an extremely hot, sandy environment with little or no water. This definition is part true. Certainly many deserts are hot, but extreme heat does not classify a region as a desert. In fact, the Arctic and Antarctic ice caps are considered by many to be the largest deserts in the world, and they are the two coldest places on Earth. What the polar ice caps and the arid, windswept dunes of the Sahara share is a lack of precipitation. A desert is generally defined as a region that receives ten or fewer centimeters of annual rainfall. In warm deserts, the intense heat evaporates more water than the area receives, which creates a much greater moisture deficit than cold deserts which lose little moisture to evaporation, because most water exists in its frozen state and temperatures rarely if ever exceed the freezing point of water.

It is this lack of water that makes hot deserts so hot during the day and much cooler at night. In a moist, temperate environment, much of the sun's energy is used to complete the evaporation process, which uses light and heat energy to convert water into water vapor. In contrast, the desert's surface has no moisture, so all of the energy that would normally be devoted to evaporating moisture is instead absorbed directly into the ground, which increases the surface temperature. This is the reason why most people often claim that "dry heat" does not feel as oppressive as the same temperature in a humid environment. Sweating is the human body's natural cooling mechanism, but because the air is more saturated with water vapor in a humid climate, sweat evaporates at a slower rate than in a desert where the air lacks any moisture. The process works in reverse at night. When the sun sets, the desert cools rapidly because the dry air does not retain heat as well as humid air. In addition, the water vapor created during the course of the day retains heat and acts as a greenhouse gas. The desert lacks any water vapor, so there is no greenhouse gas to better retain the heat created during the course of the day. The heat generated during the day is quickly lost once the sun sets and darkness reigns over the arid land.

Likewise, there is a common misnomer that the light colored sand is predominately responsible for the desert's intense heat, but the opposite

is true. Dark colors absorb sunlight, and light colors reflect sunlight. This helps explain why the polar ice caps are so cold. The white snow and ice reflect more sunlight and retain less heat than darker surfaces. So if the desert sands were a dark color, the dry ground would retain even more heat and make the surface even hotter.

Birth of a Desert

The planet's surface is never static. Biomes constantly yield and advance to other biomes as terrestrial, atmospheric and oceanographic conditions change. A volcanic eruption can transform a lush forest into woodland overnight. Areas thousands of miles away from the explosion can experience drastic temperature changes, as ash and soot block the sun. Even manmade activities can alter the landscape as evidenced by the black blizzards that ravaged the North American prairies during the 1930's. Drought combined with unsound farming practices resulted in the loss of topsoil and the spawning of vast dust storms. In many ways, the Dust Bowl event is a perfect example of how a desert typically forms. The lack of surface moisture, the felling of wind-breaking trees and the removal of deep-rooted grasses caused the fertile topsoil to dry out, loosen and then blow away as worthless dust, leaving the land barren and infertile. In the absence of man's intervention, there are three major natural processes that account for the creation of the world's deserts.

Warm air holds more moisture than cold air. This is demonstrated by the fact that the two coldest places on Earth are also the planet's largest deserts. The frigid air retains little if any moisture. On the other hand, the equator has the warmest air, which then rises and later cools. As it cools, the warm air releases its moisture as rain around the equator. As the planet rotates, and the air subsequently cools and sinks away from the equator, the sun's light and heat warms the now dry air again. Because the dry air is warm again, it can absorb more evaporated moisture from the surface without resulting in precipitation. The warm air's ability to retain moisture from the ground without releasing it back results in the formation of a desert. This process is responsible for the creation of the Sahara and Arabian Deserts.

Tall mountain ranges are also responsible for creating some of the world's deserts. This phenomenon is known as the rain shadow effect. The jet stream steers warm, moist air from the ocean onto coastal regions and then drives it further inland. When the warm air approaches a large mountain range, the warm air rises up the face of the mountain and cools as it reaches higher elevations, which prevents it from retaining as much water. The air condenses and releases rain on the front side of the mountain. The now dry air rolls over the top of the mountain where it once again warms as it sinks back to the surface and creates a desert on the lee side of the mountain range. This process is best exemplified by the desert areas east of the Sierra Nevada range, such as those found in parts of California, Nevada and Arizona.

Cold water currents play a significant role in the creation of coastal deserts. Cold water is swept up from the ocean floor and pushed to the surface where it cools the warm air that comes in contact with it. As the warm air cools, it condenses and releases its moisture as rain long before it reaches land. The dry air then arrives onshore where it is warmed once again and can once again hold more moisture evaporated from the surface. This process is best exemplified by the Atacama Desert in South America, which is generally recognized as the driest desert on Earth though it lies adjacent to the largest body of water on Earth — the Pacific Ocean.

These natural processes are extremely slow and take extended periods of time to turn previously fertile land into inert desert. Sudden climate change, a major terrestrial event, such as a volcanic eruption



or an asteroid impact, irresponsible human activities or any combination of these forces can rapidly accelerate desertification as exemplified by the devastating black blizzards of the 1930s. Drought, wind and deforestation are the three main ingredients to expand or create a desert.

On the other hand, it is also possible to reclaim desert land with proper irrigation techniques, the reintroduction of fertile soil and the introduction of plant species with deep and extensive root structures to keep the soil intact. Such efforts must occur in desert lands abutting fertile lands including those surrounding an oasis, and they must exercise caution not to overburden the available water resources.

Game Applications

The creation of a desert and the reclamation of desert land present several adventure possibilities. Turning vital farmland into desert by magical or traditional means is sure to destroy any desert community and spur them to take actions to find and stop the culprit. Likewise, a terrible drought can have devastating political and economic consequences on a desert kingdom. If caused by an unnatural source, such as a capricious genie or a sinister wizard, the kingdom's rulers must get to the root cause of the problem to restore the natural order and save the kingdom from certain ruin. Alternatively, a community may attempt to reclaim desert land around an oasis only to discover that someone else had tried before and inadvertently unleashed something it did not expect to find into the world. A newly created oasis surrounded by date palm trees and exotic fruits is sure to capture the interest and attention of the desert's native denizens looking to stake their claim to the fresh watering hole. Any of these events are likely to spur action from one or more interested parties

Desert Types

All deserts share the common characteristic that they suffer from a deprivation of rainfall, but not all deserts are the same. The traditional desert of sweltering heat and vast expanses of undulating sand dunes is just one type of desert. The general consensus is that there are four types of deserts — the hot and dry desert, the semiarid desert, the coastal desert and the cold desert. This sourcebook primarily focuses on the hot and dry desert with lesser emphasis on the semiarid desert and only passing references to the coastal and cold deserts. Deserts can also be classified according to their geographic location and the area's prevailing weather patterns, but ultimately these variations fall into one of the four previously discussed general categories.

Hot and Dry Desert

The hot and dry desert lives up to its name as it is generally hot throughout the year with little variation in seasonal temperatures. The best real world example is the Sahara Desert in northern Africa, which is also the largest hot and dry desert in the world. Naturally, summer is the warmest month with daytime highs routinely reaching in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and something hitting a sweltering 135 degrees Fahrenheit. Meanwhile, nighttime lows regularly drop 50 or even 75 degrees from the daytime high temperatures. Daytime highs during the winter months are only moderately cooler. If the desert receives any precipitation, it frequently occurs during the winter months. These storms are short-lived but very intense dropping as much as one millimeter of

DUNES OF DESOLATION

rain per minute in quick bursts. It is not uncommon for these weather systems to spawn flash floods, which drain into dried stream channels commonly known as wadis.

Sand is the feature most associated with hot and dry deserts, though it is not found in every desert, and on average it accounts only for 20% of the desert's surface area. Most of the desert's sand accumulates in vast sheets or seas that are shaped into dunes by the prevailing winds. The most common type of dune is the crescentic or barchan dune. This crescent-shaped mound is formed by winds that blow only from one particular direction. Over time, these dunes move across the desert as the wind continually pushes the sand further in the same direction that the wind blows. Other types of dunes include long sand ridges known as linear dunes, pyramidal sand caps formed by multidirectional winds called star dunes, and U-shaped mounds of sand referred to as parabolic dunes.

Where sand is not present, the hot and dry desert's soil is rocky and gravelly. These heavier particles remained behind when the wind blew the finer grains of sand away from the surface. This granular dirt is ill-suited to support the tall trees or lush grasses found in the forests and steppes of the world, but it is not devoid of any flora. Low-lying shrubs and short, woody trees take root in this nutrient-poor soil. These hardy plants rely upon water conservation and water storage adaptations to survive. The indigenous animals also adopt the same approach. The vast majority remains underground during the scorching heat of the daytime hours and only ventures outside after the sun sets. A few intrepid species even manage to eke out an existence within the desert's salt pans. Salt pans were once salt water lakes or smaller bodies of water that evaporated over time leaving nothing behind other than the water's salt content. Regardless of whether the fauna or flora makes its home among the desert's dunes, dry valleys or salt pans, survival ultimately depends upon finding water and maximizing its yield for as long as possible.

Though there is little rainfall in the hot and dry desert, water can be found in isolated locations. Some rivers that originate in other locations cross through the desert en route to another body of water. Rivers navigating a path through the desert lose tremendous volumes of water to absorption by the parched soil and evaporation from the intense heat. Because of these factors, massive rivers are the only bodies of water capable of making this perilous journey across the sunbaked desert and still remain largely intact. Subterranean springs, rivers and reservoirs are another source of water for desert inhabitants. Some are found only a few feet beneath the surface, while others lay much deeper beneath the sands. Yet the oasis is the most well-known and mystical source of water found in the hot and dry desert. Oases are formed by underground rivers or aquifers that are forced to the surface by pressure or through manmade means, such as a pump or a well. When vegetation takes root around the oasis, its root systems anchor the soil in place and retain more moisture. This in turn allows larger plants to take hold in the fertile ground and not lose their topsoil to unprotected winds or encroaching sand. The date palm tree is the plant species most readily identifiable with the desert oasis. In addition to being a vital food source for the oasis' denizens, the tree's broad leaves provide ample shade to the plants beneath it, which provides some cooling relief and allows the surface plants to retain more moisture from less exposure to direct sunlight and cooler temperatures.

Like all human settlement patterns, cities, towns and villages almost always spring up close to a readily available water source and farmland able to support food crops such as wheat and rice as well as livestock. Unlike most other biomes, water is scarce throughout the desert, so the areas suitable for settlement are rather limited. Most desert cities lie near the mighty rivers that cut a path through the arid landscape, bringing not only fresh water to the parched soil, but also deposits of silt and other waterborne nutrients that the river picked up along the way. These organic materials are essential for farming. A navigable waterway also offers a quicker and cheaper means of transporting goods than the much slower and more dangerous overland route, provided that the intended destination also has a port of its own, which is rarely a certainty in the desert. Coastal communities are also possible in areas near a freshwater sea. In the absence of a river or other large body of water, residents may establish a community in a valley, where runoff from the nearby mountains pours into underground reservoirs and rivers beneath the settlement. The water is then brought to the surface by pumps and wells where it is then disseminated for drinking and irrigation needs.

Hot and Dry Desert Campaigns

On the surface, a hot and dry desert campaign appears to be the least hospitable environment for adventuring. An environment with scorching temperatures, incessant sunlight, swirling sands and lack of water seems better suited for survival training than exploration. Yet it is these very elements that give a desert campaign its unique flavor. In a world where vital resources are in short supply, scarcity inevitably leads to conflict between those vying to control and even exploit these precious commodities for their own purposes. In the cities scattered through the desert, palace intrigues abound within the royal courts and harems, as powerful men and women devise and implement schemes to further their ambitions and the designs of those around them. Behind closed doors, conniving genies wield their influence in these affairs, seeking to carve out a bigger share of the pie for themselves and those they purport to serve. Desert cities are the epicenter of trade, as merchants from all corners of the world peddle their wares in the city's open air bazaars. Within these cosmopolitan marketplaces, a hundred different languages, cultures, peoples and forms of currency interact and change hands on a daily basis. Anything is available for the right price, and thieves abound looking to pluck a neglected coin purse from the unwary. Meanwhile amid the cacophony of competing bids and deals of a lifetime, the common man faces a daily struggle for survival in a harsh, unforgiving climate as he battles the forces of nature as well as dangerous men and monsters looking for easy prey.

In the desert itself, many wonders and riches lay buried beneath the swirling sands. Though a desert explorer can travel for miles, days or even weeks without happening upon another living creature, the dunes hold many secrets ripe for the taking. Beneath the sands are the ruins of lost cities, towns, temples and palaces that the desert reclaimed over the centuries. Legends of dreadful artifacts, mountains of gold and rare oddities whisper down through the ages, weaving captivating tales of love, betrayal, heroism and deceit. But not all of the desert's marvels lay beneath the sand. Rumors speak of a great necropolis, a city of the dead, that stretches for as far as the eye can see hidden somewhere in a remote part of the desert. An age ago, the rulers of a mighty empire laid their god-kings to eternal slumber within its marbled walls. A few men claim to have happened upon the glorious tombs during their desert travels, but none has any evidence to prove it. Other great temples, fortresses and citadels rise up from the thirsty ground and cast a long shadow over their claims. They are often the strongholds of forbidden religions, great generals and mad wizards, who ventured into the desert to avoid the judgmental eyes of others and rule over their forsaken fiefdoms.

Man's creations are not the only sites worthy of mention. Beautiful oases also dot the landscape providing welcome refuge for desert travelers and a bounty of undiscovered treasures for those brave enough to take them. Many of these bodies of water support small towns and villages that serve as vital way stations for traders and merchants traversing the desert sands in search of new commodities and markets for their wares. These intrepid souls are an excellent source of information and adventure, as they come into contact with many people from far off lands and frequently require assistance to protect their goods against theft by marauders or more dangerous adversaries. Experienced desert travelers know that desert is not as lonely as it seems. Dark forces lurk among the dunes, and those that do not keep their wits about them become easy prey.

Semiarid Deserts

The semiarid desert is a step down from the hot and dry desert in terms of temperature and moisture levels. The best real world example of a semiarid desert is the sagebrush area of the western United States. Summers are still warm and dry, but the daytime temperatures average around 80 degrees Fahrenheit with occasional highs topping 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures average around 50 degrees Fahrenheit at night. Furthermore, condensation from the cooling temperatures forms dew, which is a vital source of water for the native plants and animals. Because there is more moisture in the ground than the hot and dry desert, semiarid deserts do not experience the temperature extremes prevalent in the hot and dry desert. Rain is still a rare event, but when it does occur it happens most often during the winter months. The rains are brief, but torrential. Lightning strikes may also accompany these thunderstorm cells, as they rumble across the land at breakneck speed.

A DESERT PRIMER

Semiarid deserts are less sandy than the hot and dry desert. Because semiarid deserts receive and retain more moisture than their hot and dry counterparts, the soil is generally firmer, more fertile and able to support a greater diversity of flora and fauna. Large trees and grasses are still a rarity, but shrubbery is more plentiful and varied than the hot and dry desert. There is also a greater abundance of animals here, particularly in the numbers of birds found in this biome. Lakes, rivers, streams, ponds and underground reservoirs are still uncommon, but more prevalent than in the hot and dry deserts. These bodies of water sometimes expose veins of valuable metals inlaid in the surrounding rocks. It is not usual to find rich deposits of copper, silver or even gold near the small streams, brooks and rivers rolling over this dusty and rocky terrain.

Semiarid Desert Campaigns

Semiarid deserts are rough and tumble worlds populated with hard men, headstrong women and fearsome monsters that stalk the trackless wilderness in search of a fresh meal. Pockmarked throughout the rugged hills and plateaus scarring this arid land are secret caves, hidden valleys and lost mountains concealing the mysteries of bygone civilizations. Some succumbed to the unforgiving environment, others fell at the hands of rival states, and a few disappeared without a trace. Small towns and villages with varying degrees of civil authority populate the sprawling landscape, offering opportunities for would-be adventurers to make their mark in this world exploring the undiscovered country around these settlements or defending the inhabitants against the desert's encroaching denizens or its own citizens.

The Old West

Though this sourcebook focuses on adventuring in the hot and dry deserts popularized in the great Arabian works of fiction and its rich history, there are also several elements of the American Old West in this sourcebook. A campaign based upon this era of history is best-suited for the rugged environment of the semiarid desert, which includes much of the western United States. Several new monsters introduced in Chapter 6 draw inspiration from Native American myths and legends, and there is one example of the archetypical undead gunfighter, the loathsome desperado. All of these creatures are easily includible in an Arabian inspired setting without any changes with the exception of the desperado. For GM's that want to include the desperado, but want to eliminate firearms from their campaigns, we recommend changing the creature's weaponry to a repeating hand crossbow and altering some of the flavor text to eliminate references to the American Old West.

Coastal Deserts

Coastal deserts are far less stable and more complex than deserts found in interior regions. They are typically found along the edge of a continent, where several natural forces including the prevailing wind patterns, ocean currents and atmospheric forces converge to create this unique biome. The Atacama Desert of South America is the best example of a coastal desert. The weather in these deserts is extremely volatile. Violent windstorms and fierce electrical storms are common during the winter months where temperatures can drop well below freezing during the overnight hours. In addition, ultraviolet radiation is extremely high, which makes it near impossible to move about during the day without ample skin and eye protection.

Cold Deserts

Cold deserts experience the opposite of hot and dry deserts. They have brief, mild and somewhat moist summers. Winters are long and cold

with moderate amounts of snowfall. Most cold deserts are covered by ice and snow throughout the year, so plant life is only found in those areas warm enough to thaw the ice and snow and allow plants to take root. Furthermore, the white blanket covering the surface reflects much of the sun's light and heat back into space, helping to keep temperatures down during the daylight hours and making the overnight hours even colder. Finding water is not usually difficult because of the abundant snow cover, but the snow atop the cold desert's ice sheet may have fallen to the ground years or even decades earlier. The continent of Antarctica is considered by some to be the world's largest desert despite being covered by frozen water.

Transition Zones

On a map, desert boundaries are crisply drawn and never move, but in reality deserts constantly expand and contract according to the forces that created them. While a desert created by the rain shadow effect is not likely to expand to the other side of the mountain range that spawned it, deserts bordering equatorial regions are affected by prevailing weather and wind patterns. Increased rainfall within the desert or prolonged periods of drought outside the desert proper can result in the desertification or reclamation of land by either biome. In other words, the desert does not simply end, and a lush, vibrant forest of tall trees and abundant vegetation abruptly springs up next to it. Instead, there is a transition zone between the arid or semiarid desert and the tropical or temperate forests. This transition zone is commonly known as the steppe.

Steppes are grassland plains with shrubs and few trees. This biome is too arid to support vast forests of towering trees, but it is moist enough to allow grasses to take root and hold the topsoil in place. The best real world examples of this ecosystem are the steppe plains of Mongolia, which border the Gobi Desert in Asia, and the prairies of the central United States and western Canada. Grasslands are also found along the banks of great rivers and river deltas that navigate a path through the desert. The moisture absorbed into the soil from the river is sufficient to support grass, shrubs and vital grains like rice and wheat. Though not specifically categorized as a steppe, the Nile River and the Nile Delta are examples of this ecosystem as they border the Sahara Desert. Steppes provide neighboring desert peoples with crucial agricultural and water resources to sustain life in their harsh environment.

Water

Water is the desert's most valuable commodity. A pound of gold, silver or precious stones is worth less than a few drops of the life-sustaining fluid on the tongue of a thirsty man. Water is the mother of all civilization in the desert. Cities, towns and villages cannot exist without a reliable source of water nearby. It draws political boundaries as competing factions vie to discover new and secure existing sources of water while overseeing its distribution to their thirsty subjects. It shapes the desert's economy as vital trade routes follow its path through the unforgiving landscape, enabling the desert's inhabitants to exchange goods with people from distant lands and forge commercial and social bonds that would never exist otherwise. Water is the force that binds the desert and its inhabitants together.

Rivers and Lakes

Most large desert cities exist because of an easily accessible and sustainable body of water. Rivers and lakes are the most readily apparent and abundant water supply in the desert. Their banks are the most fertile tracts of land found in the desert, enabling important food crops including wheat, rice and other grains to thrive in this warm and moderately moist environment. Grasses and low shrubs also grow well in this soil and can extend miles inland. Desert rivers typically originate from somewhere beyond the desert's borders. For example, the Nile River originates in distant Lake Victoria and carves a path through portions of the Sahara Desert before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. Others begin outside

DUNES OF DESOLATION

the desert, but lack a sufficient volume of water to endure the long trek across the sands. The intense sunlight, blistering heat and thirsty soil take their toll, as evaporation and absorption bring the river's journey to an end within the desert. Waterways that originate within the desert are usually short-lived, stretching out for several miles before petering out and yielding to the desert sands. In some circumstances, the river may divide into many smaller tributaries, turning vast areas of desert land into arable farmland. These regions are known as deltas. Most are small covering several hundred square miles, but an extremely large delta, such as the Nile Delta can cover an area of 10,000 square miles. Naturally, an immense delta or a large river is the easiest body of water to locate in the desert. With grasses stretching for tens or even hundreds of miles from the water itself, desert travelers can follow the trail of plants and animals to the water source. In addition, most of the desert's population takes up residence within or alongside these fertile grounds. Civilization always leaves its unmistakable mark on the land. Roads, way stations, and other manmade structures all eventually lead to a source of water.

Oases

Most deserts lack such obvious sources of water, so inhabitants must look elsewhere to find the precious commodity. Mighty rivers and massive lakes reveal telltale signs of their presence, but smaller bodies of water leave only subtle clues to their existence. The most famous and celebrated of these is the legendary oasis. Oases are formed by the collaboration of several phenomena. As a rule, water sinks to its lowest level. Water from higher elevations descends through permeable materials, such as sand, and literally hits rock bottom, which is normally a layer of bedrock or stone that traps the water and prevents it from seeping deeper into the ground. This layer of subterranean water is known as the local water table. It is the same scientific principle seen while digging a hole in the sand on a beach. Even though the waves do not reach the hole, water fills it when its depth reaches a certain level. The same concept applies in the desert.

Erosion is the next ingredient needed to create an oasis. Over time, wind and the desert's occasional torrential rains erode the sand cover and create a depression in the ground. When the depression reaches the depth of the local water table, the hydraulic pressure forces the water to the surface and gives birth to an oasis. Moisture seeps into the surrounding soil and is ready to support plant life. As local insects, animals and birds discover and frequent the watering hole, they bring seeds and other life-giving materials with them. Humans are rarely far behind, and they too contribute to the oasis' biodiversity by planting date palm trees, other fruit-bearing trees and edible plants and grains at the site. The oasis becomes the hub of activity for the local residents, humans, animals and monsters alike.

Finding an oasis in the open desert is a much more difficult proposition than discovering a much bigger river or other large body of water and its surrounding environs. Though the largest oases can encompass an area of up to fifty square miles, most are significantly smaller. Locating a one square mile oasis in a ten thousand square mile area of sand and gravel seems like a fool's quest, but seasoned desert travelers are up to the challenge. Experience and intuition guide them on their way.

Several clues can lead the desert traveler to an oasis. Wildlife is an excellent source of information about the nearest watering hole. Though they leave no tracks, birds are the easiest creatures to spot and hear in the desert skies, and they are a reliable indicator of an oasis' location. Birds typically fly to and from the oasis in the early morning and late evening hours, so intrepid adventurers rise before dawn and await the sun's first light to catch a glimpse of passing birds and follow them towards water. Land animals also provide valuable insight about an oasis' location, but spotting them is somewhat more challenging. Most desert animals are active only at night, when the desert is much cooler and pitch black. Furthermore, a bird flying overhead may be visible from several miles away, while a small animal traversing through the undulating dunes may be visible from only 100 feet away or even less. So finding a small target in the darkness presents many more problems than finding an airborne target in broad daylight. Still, a skilled tracker can pick up a trail of footprints or a fresh scent leading him and his party towards an oasis. (**Chapter 4** discusses how to use various skills to accomplish these tasks.) Plants and

humanoids are the final pieces in this puzzle. Date palm trees can soar up to 75 feet above the desert's surface, allowing observers to spot the distinctive trees from a fair distance away depending upon the intervening terrain. Trade routes often spring up close to oases as well, so the telltale evidence of a desert caravan passing through the area is a sure sign that the trail leads to or from an accessible water source capable of sustaining a large group of people and their domesticated animals. In many respects, oases are the refilling stations of the desert. All traffic in the open desert eventually leads to or from one.

Other Locations

Finding water on the desert's surface is difficult enough, but locating it underground or in unusual places is even tougher. Fortunately, the laws of nature are constant and universal. Water still sinks to the lowest point even if that means seeping underground. The most obvious subterranean location is beneath the surface of a dried river bed or channel. Deserts see little rain, but the rare thunderstorms that roll through the desert unleash torrential rains in a condensed period of time. Though it seems like an oxymoron, the deluge of water triggers flash floods, which collect in channels known as wadis. Once the rains end, the parched land and the blazing sun reclaim the water, but moisture sometimes lingers a few feet below the surface. Like oases, wadis form in the lowest elevation in the area, but they are still higher than the local water table so the water is not forced up to the surface like an oasis. Accessing the water found beneath a wadi requires some digging, but it is a serviceable, short-term source of drinking water, if it exists beneath the channel.

Similar to wadis, underground rivers and aquifers are another source of water commonly used by city engineers and planners to provide a consistent water supply to a planned development. Unlike oases and wadis, subterranean water reservoirs are not visible from the surface and also require the use of a well or a pump to bring the water to the surface. Because of this limitation, reliance upon an underground water supply is not feasible at higher elevations. Water sinks to its lowest level, so a settlement atop a hill may have to drill a well several hundred feet deep to reach an underground aquifer, if one even exists at the site. To avoid this pitfall, engineers prefer building most cities and towns dependent upon a subterranean water network in a low-lying area, most typically at the bottom of a valley surrounded by large mountains. This location solves several logistical problems. Because of its low elevation, the local water table is much closer to the surface than at a higher elevation, so residents do not have to dig deep into the earth to reach water. In addition, water runoff from the mountains drains into the valley, which confines the water runoff from a larger area into a smaller space thus resulting in a higher concentration of water. Furthermore, it is also likely that a non-permeable layer of bedrock rests beneath the valley, forming the equivalent of a giant, natural pool to collect water from all available sources. Other than a large, sustainable oasis, aquifers are the only other feasible option to meet the water demands of a sizeable city or town.

Alternate Water Sources

Humans are accustomed to drinking water in its usual, liquid form, but when faced with breaking conventions or dying from thirst, desperate times call for unconventional methods. In the absence of an oasis, wadi or an accessible aquifer, desert travelers rely upon water derived from the pulp of certain desert plants and condensation to survive. (**Chapter 4** discusses the skill checks needed to safely gather water from these sources.) The majority of desert plants evolved water conservation adaptations rather than water storage adaptations to survive the desert's hot and arid climate, but some developed thick, waxy stems to retain moisture and inhibit evaporation. Cacti are the most recognizable example of these plant types. Unfortunately, cactus juice tastes awful at best and is poisonous at worst. In addition, gaining access to the plant's juicy pulp requires the use of a cutting implement to hack through the hard, outer stem, which is also covered by sharp needles. Cacti and related plants may be found in hot and dry and semiarid deserts, but they are more prevalent in the latter biome.

A DESERT PRIMER

Condensation refers to the end result of water vapor reverting to its liquid state, which is commonly referred to as dew. The process occurs when air reaches its maximum saturation level, which is known as relative humidity. Dew generally occurs in the overnight hours, when the air temperature drops and air contracts. Because cool air holds less moisture than warm air, the excess moisture built up during the course of the day becomes water once again. When the sun rises and the air reheats, dew reassumes its gaseous state. It would seem improbable that dew would form in an arid environment, but the temperature decrease from the desert's daytime high to its overnight low is dramatic enough to spur the transformation. Dew collects only on solid surfaces, so veterans of the sands leave cool, flat objects out in the open overnight, hoping to collect a few precious drops of dew. Dew must be harvested just before dawn, as it evaporates extremely quickly under the glare of the hot, desert sun. Even under ideal conditions, it is difficult to collect enough condensation to meet a human's daily water intake requirements, but it is enough to stave off dehydration for a short time.

As a measure of last resort, many people assume that it is safe and even advisable to drink one's own urine to avoid dehydration. Though it is sterile, absent an underlying infection, undiluted urine contains high concentrations of salt and minerals that the body wants to excrete rather than retain. Returning those contaminants to the body requires the kidneys to flush them out again, which consumes more water in the process and makes the person ingesting it even more dehydrated. (Chapter 3 discusses the possible repercussions that may result.) In other words, drinking one's own bodily waste creates more problems than it actually solves.

Availability

Even the most seasoned, knowledgeable and resourceful desert traveler cannot find water that is not there. Though it is possible to gather dew almost anywhere in the desert, coming upon an oasis, wadi or aquifer in an open expanse of desert is a much less certain prospect. (Rivers and lakes are not listed because they are generally large enough to appear as specific locations on a desert map.) The following water availability tables give the percentile chance of there being a source of water within a 1,000 square mile area based upon the desert type and season. A 1,000 square mile area is roughly equal to an area thirty-three miles wide by thirty-three miles long. PCs with a maximum speed of 20 feet can traverse this distance in two days. (Tables are presented only for the hot and dry desert and the semiarid desert.) A particular area may contain multiple sources of water even those of the same type, so the GM should note what water sources are available in this area and continue rolling on the chart until his roll results in "no water." If the GM's initial roll indicates that there is no water present in the area, there is no need to make additional rolls on the table. Presented below are the tables for the hot and dry desert with the season along the horizontal axis of the chart, and the available water type on the vertical side of the table.

Though a body of water may exist in a particular location that does not mean the PCs stumble upon it. The table only indicates that there is water to be found in the area, if the PCs succeed at finding it. When the GM determines that a source of water is present within a 1,000 square mile

Available Water in a Hot and Dry Desert

Water Source	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Oasis	0-3	01-03	01-03	01-03
Wadi	04-10	04-06	04-08	04-12
Aquifer	11-15	07-09	09-12	13-18
Plants	16-21	09-12	13-17	19-25
No Water	22-00	13-00	18-00	26-00

Available Water in a Semiarid Desert

Water Source	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Oasis	01-08	01-06	01-07	01-09
Wadi	09-17	07-11	08-14	10-20
Aquifer	18-26	12-16	15-21	21-30
Plants	27-34	17-22	22-28	31-40
No Water	35-00	23-00	29-00	41-00

area, he may randomly determine its distance and direction from the PCs when they first enter the area. In general, the PCs are always presumed to be moving forward, (unless they are lost), and the maximum distance that they may travel within that area is approximately 46 miles, if they were to travel in a straight line from one corner of the grid to the opposite corner. However, those instances should be rare, so it is recommended that the GM roll 2d20 for each water source to determine how many miles away it is from the PCs, and roll 1d12 to determine a random direction in a 180 degree arc in front of the PCs. Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (geography) and Survival are the key skills needed to locate water in the vast expanse of the desert. The DCs needed to succeed at each skill check depends upon the circumstances of the situation. In addition, the water availability table does not include water found in human settlements, which may also be located by succeeding on various skill checks. Cities, towns, villages and way stations are presumed to have an ample water supply to meet the PCs' needs.

Desert Travel

At first blush, the idea of traveling through the desert seems like a fool's errand. The blinding sun, the withering daytime heat, the chilly evenings, the endless stretches of trackless terrain and the scarcity of food and water conspire to make it appear as a hopeless endeavor. But man and beast alike adapted to this challenging environment and devised methods to overcome these imposing obstacles. Through a combination of perseverance and ingenuity, it is possible, but still arduous and dangerous, to forge a path across the unforgiving sands to reach a far off destination.

Though man has found ways to venture through this harsh landscape, the first question that arises is — why. Why bother to traverse the burning sands? What reward could possibly be waiting on the other side? The hardest desert travelers scratch out an existence as nomads, wandering the dunes in search of enough food and water to sustain themselves and their livestock. But these souls are the exception as the vast majority of desert explorers make the perilous trek across the desert for commercial reasons. Trade is the desert's lifeblood. The natural forces that shape the desert often place it between exotic ports of call on one side and landlocked civilizations on the other. The overland route across the scorching sands frequently is the only means of transporting vital goods from one location to the other. In addition to importing and exporting commodities from neighboring areas, the desert also boasts its share of valuable products. Frankincense, myrrh and exotic spices are common plant-based materials found in and around desert biomes. Gold, silver, copper and other precious metals are found in the streams and river beds of many semiarid deserts. Sadly, many desert cultures also engage in the despicable business of human trafficking. In most cases, young boys and girls are torn from their families and sold to the highest bidder to serve as slaves or prostitutes. Whether legal, illicit or immoral, like most inventions the means and methods of traveling through the desert arose out of economic necessity more than any other factor.

Roads

The foundation of every great civilization does not rest on the cornerstones of its temples, palaces and outer walls, but on the cobblestones and well-worn paths that comprise its roads. The ancient adage that “all roads lead to Rome” is indicative of this philosophy. Roads connect people, places and ideas to one another far more than grandiose structures and rampaging armies. They allow goods, services and even information to travel great distances in a relatively fast, safe and reliable manner. If traders were left to constantly forge their own routes across the desert, many would fail in the journey by succumbing to the unforgiving, natural obstacles or fall victim to the cutthroats, thieves or monsters. Merchants would quickly go out of business if their shipments kept getting lost or stolen instead of arriving at their intended destination. Trade would dry up, commerce would come to a screeching halt, and the desert's largest cities and towns would fall into ruin without the constant influx of fresh coins and essential goods from distant lands. It is hard to imagine any type of desert civilization without a network of roads linking them together.

For these reasons, political leaders, mighty generals and commercial interests combine forces to build and maintain a secure highway system across the desert. But desert engineers face a different set of challenges than those constructing roads in forested and non-arid environments. Desert road builders do not need to fell trees, ford waterways or in most instances circumvent mountains like their more conventional counterparts do. Instead, roads through the barren dunes and swirling sands must trace a path in close proximity to the desert's most valuable commodity — water. Every living creature that walks along the road eventually needs to stop for food and more importantly, for water. But water does more than just satisfy the hydration needs of parched desert travelers and their entourages. The life-sustaining fluid forges a crucial economic

relationship between the merchants, caravans and desert travelers who journey on the roads, and the people that live in the cities, towns and villages that sprang up around the supply of water. The local residents provide travelers with necessary goods and services, including food, shelter, clothing, supplies and products purchased from other passing traders. In exchange, travelers spend money and trade goods within these communities, infusing coins and commodities into the local economy. The caravansary is the most direct example of this relationship. These small roadside way stations exist solely to meet the needs of caravans passing through the area. They frequently consist of an inn to shelter travelers, a shop to feed and equip caravans, a water supply and a secure, grazing area for feeding pack animals. The caravansary's few permanent residents live here for the sole purpose of meeting the needs of travelers passing through the area. Without roads, caravansaries and other desert settlements would be entirely self-sufficient, and travelers would have to blindly forage throughout the countryside searching for food and water.

The following tables represent the percentile chance of encountering a settlement while traveling on the highway or road in a hot and dry desert and a semiarid desert. (Cities are not included on the table, because they are large enough to generally appear on a map of the immediate area.) The “Movement” section of Chapter 7 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* indicates that creatures can travel without impediment on a highway through the sandy desert and at half speed on a road. These restrictions on movement apply to passing across or through sand dunes. Movement across rocky and gravelly terrain found in the desert should be treated as if the PCs were moving across plains instead of sandy desert. The GM should consult the table every 24 miles, which is the amount of ground that an unencumbered man can cover in a single day on the highway. Naturally, creatures that move faster than 30 feet may require the GM to consult the table more than once over the course of the day, and those that move slower may roll on the table every other day instead. The GM should make only one roll for each 24 mile interval.

Table 2–1: Settlement in Hot and Dry Deserts

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Presence
Caravansary	01–25
Village	26–35
Town	36–40
No Settlement	41–00

Table 2–2: Settlement in Semiarid Deserts

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Presence
Village	01–30
Town	31–50
No Settlement	51–00

Villages and towns are more common in semiarid deserts, making caravansaries unnecessary.

Constructing and Maintaining Roads

The conventional road is a paved or cobblestoned surface in and around a civilized area or a beaten-down path of bare earth that has been carved out of the surrounding wilderness. Desert roads are much different. They are more akin to a guide than a clearly, delineated map. They consist of identifiable markers set at varying intervals along the route to lead travelers in the right direction. The fierce winds and shifting sands render it impossible to actually resurface the ground with cobblestones or maintain



a surface of bare earth easily distinguishable from the surrounding terrain. The harsh and ever-changing landscape necessitates road markers that can withstand the forces of erosion and tower above the desert floor, as they guide travelers on their way. Tall steles standing as high as 30 feet above the ground and constructed from hard stone commonly serve as road markers. Engineers may also incorporate natural rock formations or other easily distinguishable terrain features, such as a canyon. Despite every effort to create a uniform path across the sands, desert roads are always more amorphous than traditional roadways. In fact, two different people can easily follow a desert road, and yet their steps may never cross one another's. Still, road planners must exercise judgment when deciding where and how to carve a safe passage through the desert. As previously mentioned the availability of water is a crucial factor in this decision, but other considerations must also play a role in these decisions. Whenever possible, desert roads avoid steep inclines or sharp descents, as these features are physically taxing when ascending a gradient and hazardous for vehicles when coming down the other side. Unstable mounds of sand also wreak havoc on wagons and other vehicles with wheels, so designers avoid passing through areas with undulating dunes and dense layers of sand. The loose grains cannot support the vehicle's weight, which makes the wheels sink below the surface causing a significant loss of traction. Because of these factors, desert roads are more than straight lines from one water supply to another. They are carefully planned and cleverly devised arteries that make the best use of the landscape they are given.

Over time, even the best designed roads succumb to the natural forces working against them. Sand dunes constantly move, wind batters road markers, torrential rains wash flood waters into low-lying elevations and the actions of living creatures all conspire against the road's longevity. Combating these elements is a constant battle that requires money and manpower. The most common way of raising the coin needed to perform this undertaking is to charge a toll to anyone using the road. Tolls are usage fees collected by a governmental or private authority to pay for the road's upkeep. The toll collection site may be as elaborate as a garrison of armed soldiers to as simple as a crude, undersized booth manned

by a single person. Naturally, because the toll collection site is a fixed location, it makes little sense to place it in a location that makes it easy to circumvent the toll collection site and return to the road in short order for free. Road builders take great care to strategically locate toll booths at locations that make it very difficult to evade the toll. For instance, the toll may be situated at the mouth of a ravine, which would require anyone trying to circumvent the toll to go miles out of their way to get around the toll or climb up a steep mountain face to find an accessible passage through the mountain.

Tolls in a Campaign

Toll collection can be a lucrative business, and money always attracts the interest of thieves. Some work on the inside, skimming cash from their employer and pocketing the ill-gotten gains for themselves. Others plan daring heists against vulnerable toll collection sites, often with some help from someone on the inside. A few robberies are works of depraved genius that net a score far beyond the thieves' wildest dreams, but the vast majority of thefts devolve into folly before they even get underway. In addition to directly targeting toll collection sites, robbers also target couriers transporting toll proceeds from the collection site to the individuals or entity operating the toll booth. These couriers are always accompanied by a contingent of armed men also employed by the booth's operator. The savviest larcenists know that a group of men traveling across open country is much more vulnerable to attack than those same men fending them off from the relative safety of a fortified position. Planning an assault against an armed group of men requires careful study of the target and extensive familiarity with the terrain. An experienced thief needs to know the armed contingent's size and strength and its planned route to aid in determining how and where to assault the target. A group of men on horseback are a formidable force on flat, gravelly terrain, but they are far less effective traversing a narrow, sloping path through a ravine replete with rocky overhangs ideal for concealing archers. In game terms,

PCs may find themselves on either side of this cat-and-mouse game. The toll operators may hire the PCs to defend their shipment against would-be robbers. Alternatively, the PCs themselves may stage the robbery. Transporting large sums of money across the desert offers a wealth of adventure opportunities for PCs looking to make a name for themselves on either side of the ledger as good guys or bad guys.

Traveling Desert Roads

Only the bravest adventurers stray from the relative security afforded by desert roads and blaze a new trail across virgin sands. There are many incentives for desert travelers to remain on the road rather than go off course and wander across open terrain. Most importantly, roads offer the promise of supplying food, water and other basic needs to passing travelers along the way, but there are other benefits. At any given time, hundreds and possibly even thousands of people and animals may be traversing the desert's network of highways. The constant flow of men and beasts provides reassuring comfort that no one is truly alone as long as they remain on the road. The commonly held belief that there is greater safety in numbers rings true from the experience of most desert travelers. Opportunist animal predators prefer zeroing in on a lone target rather than attempting to bring down multiple creatures. Noise and light frequently scare such hunters away or at least keep them at bay until one or both die down. The road offers the prospect that help or aid may be just a few paces or a shout away. As in a modern city, traveling in the company of others along a well-traveled street offers less opportunity for criminals to ply their craft unnoticed or without fear of apprehension than walking alone through a dark, isolated alleyway. In addition to the logistical and psychological advantages of road travel, there is a commonly accepted principle among many desert peoples that roads transcend political boundaries and offer safe passage through neighboring jurisdictions. This perception exists because even the desert's most xenophobic tyrant realizes that their kingdom would cease to exist without trade. Any government audacious enough to restrict the free flow of goods across its borders is guaranteed to elicit the ire of its neighbors and may even lead to war between the competing states. Safe passage though is not without its limits. Tolls are an accepted practice in most desert kingdoms, and states are free to confiscate contraband from passing merchants and arrest the offenders. Illegal drugs top the list of illicit materials seized in manner, but restricted goods run the gamut from banned books to destructive wildlife. Though it seems foolish to attempt transporting illegal goods with the likely prospect of being searched and possibly discovered, the alternative can be much worse. Experienced smugglers know that it is better to forfeit one's goods than one's life. When caught in the act of smuggling on the road, a substantial bribe may buy one's freedom. On open ground, border guards operate under the principle of kill first and ask questions later. In their minds, anyone sneaking around or acting suspicious must be committing a crime. In the end, the smuggler must choose which he values more — money or his life. Not surprisingly, the most experienced and oldest smugglers opt for the latter. In fact, the decision whether to remain on the road or veer off of it comes down to the same consideration even for those who have committed no offense.

For most desert travelers, it is more advantageous to remain on the road than deviate from it, but it is not foolproof or without charge. Tolls lighten the coin purses of passing merchants, which generates a fair amount of grumbling in many circles. After a few rounds of mead, some miserly businessmen even question whether it is worth the cost until they regain sobriety. The musings of drunkards rarely make sense, but there are in fact some instances where the benefits of road travel can be perceived as detriments. Though noise, light and numbers may fend off some predators, these elements attract the interest of monsters and highwaymen, which are not as easily frightened as wild animals. Over time, animals, men and monsters alike come to realize that the road provides a consistent and steady stream of victims that given the right circumstances may be ripe for the taking. These creatures share many of the same water supplies as the roadside settlements, which brings them into increased contact with passing travelers and residents alike. Numbers grant safety, but they also garner attention.

Modes of Travel

The fastest mode of travel is usually the best method, but the desert relishes bucking conventional wisdom. Horses are the fastest and most commonly ridden domesticated animal. They can sprint at blistering speeds and cover tremendous ground in a single day. Camels, on the other hand, are slower, unrulier and much dirtier than their sleeker and majestic counterparts. There would seem to be no debate as to which animal is better suited for desert transport, yet an old desert adage sums up the situation best. "A horse may win the race, but the camel is the only one standing at the race's end." The aphorism expounds on the camel's incredible durability and its unchallenged ability to travel vast distances without stopping for water. Every human settlement in the desert was built on the camel's back. Without the hauling capacity of this remarkable animal, few desert goods would fill the shelves of distant markets.

Camels

Desert travelers use camels for two primary purposes — riding and shipping. Like the horse, riding camels are a luxury beyond the economic means of the common man. In many large desert cities and towns, riding camels are a status symbol among the elite. Those traveling in such circles are judged not only by the number of camels they own, but by their quality. Size, demeanor and coloration are desirable traits, yet these features all pale in comparison with the most prized quality — speed. Unlike subjective traits, there is an easy way to settle the debate of who owns the fastest camel — a race. Men and women of power crave competition, and few contests rival the thrills generated by several tons of flesh and bone barreling down a dusty racetrack at breakneck speeds. The throngs of spectators watching the event share in the excitement of the festivities, as huge sums of money change hands amongst the betting public. Yet, beyond the public spectacle, riding camels are the preferred means of travel across the desert for those that can afford it. Depending upon the terrain, a riding camel can traverse a distance of forty miles in a single day without risking overexertion. In addition to its rider, the camel can carry sufficient food and water to meet the rider's and the camel needs for two weeks of desert travel without any impediments to its movement. A dire camel, a larger version of its smaller cousin, is prized for its significantly greater carrying capacity and combat abilities. They are the mount of choice among desert cavalry officers, because they offer increased size, strength and attack abilities without sacrificing speed. Desert nobility frequently ride atop these proud creatures at public events to flaunt their wealth and power. Whether used for transportation, racing or military purposes, riding camels move people from one place to another across the desert.

Camels unsuited for racing, combat, or display serve a less grandiose, but far more important role in desert society. Nearly every product sitting on the shelves in the bustling bazaar of a large city or on an open-air stand in a small village made its way to the market on a camel's back. These sturdy, reliable work animals provide the only realistic and affordable means of shipping goods through this brutal and unrelenting terrain. To maximize their carrying capacity, the camel's owner or handler walks alongside the animal rather than ride atop it, allowing it to haul larger loads than if mounted. Because the camel cannot travel faster than the man standing next to it, camel owners happily sacrifice speed in exchange for holding more weight. A fully encumbered camel can handle a load of 600 to 900 pounds, which is placed in saddle bags custom fitted for each individual animal. Camels are rarely given the task of drawing wagons or carts across the desert, because such vehicles often get bogged down in deep layers of sand.

Some camels and their masters make the sojourn across the desert alone or in small groups, but the overwhelming majority of camels are part of a much larger group known as a caravan. The average desert caravan numbers roughly 1,000 camels accompanied by a few hundred men. The largest caravans can exceed 10,000 camels and a few thousand men. Though caravans travel in tight formations across the scorching sands and gravel, a typical caravan still stretches for several miles making them vulnerable to attacks from predatory animals, monsters or

DESERT TRAVEL

bandits. All large caravans include a retinue of armed soldiers to defend them against such transgressions, but losses are inevitable. Caravans are self-sufficient in some regards, but they are ultimately dependent upon the desert's highway system to navigate a relatively safe path across the dunes and meet the food and water demands of its men and animals. As the caravan nears towns and villages further up the road, the drivers dispatch runners several miles ahead of the main group to gather supplies and prepare the townspeople for its imminent arrival. In addition to meeting the caravan's food and water needs, their arrival also gives the settlement's residents the opportunity to trade or sell locally produced goods to the mobile marketplace. Its economic benefits apply to more than the towns and villages along its route. Caravans offer PCs an excellent opportunity to earn additional income as part of the group's armed escorts. Adventurers are in especially high demand when the caravan approaches a dangerous area renowned for ambushes or monster attacks. In some cases, caravan operators may hire adventurers to rid a notorious location of particularly troublesome monsters or men to alleviate the problem once and for all. If too many caravans go missing, the economic and political consequences could be devastating. Caravans are the engine of the desert commerce.

Horses, Donkeys and Mules

Camels reign supreme as the mount of choice across hot and dry deserts, but horses and donkeys are viable alternatives for short treks and have some distinct advantages when traveling through semiarid desert terrain. Horses are slightly faster sprinters than camels, though the camels eventually win out in the long run because of their greater endurance. Horses regularly need water and food, so they fair poorly on extended treks in the desert, but they are able to traverse short distances with little difficulty even across the hottest sands. In many nomadic desert cultures, horses enjoy exalted status and are even treated as members of the family thanks to their gentle temperament, while the camel's ill manners relegate it to the role of pack animal. Horses are fast learners and respond more easily to the rider's verbal and non-verbal commands. Their ability to quickly react to the rider's cues makes them more maneuverable in tight quarters, which makes them ideally suited for mounted combat. Horses and camels can both charge straight at an enemy formation in combat, but horses are more agile and require less effort to guide their actions in the din of battle. Because of these advantages, rank and file cavalry troops prefer riding horses, as their leaders sit atop dire camels.

Donkeys and mules are smaller cousins of the horse. In fact, a mule is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. Though they are slower and have less carrying capacity than a horse or camel, these animals are valued for their sure-footedness, especially along the narrow mountain passes and precarious slopes commonly found in semiarid deserts. Donkeys and mules are predominately used as pack animals to haul goods over and down steep inclines and other difficult terrain that horses and camels would have difficulty negotiating in many semiarid deserts. They have the same food and water requirements as horses making them poor alternatives for long distance desert journeys and are too small to be used as cavalry mounts.

Presented below are two tables with the costs to purchase desert mounts and the distance they travel over the course of a single day.

Table 2–3: Costs to Purchase Desert Mounts

Creature	Cost
Al-haloon	250 gp
Camel	150 gp
Dire Camel	1000 gp
Donkey or Mule	8 gp
Griffon	8000 gp
Hippogriff	5000 gp
Horse	75–300 gp based upon type of horse

Table 2–4: Distance of Overland Travel Per Day

Creature	Miles Traveled
Al-haloon	32 miles
Camel	40 miles
Dire Camel	40 miles
Donkey or Mule	32 miles
Griffon	64 miles
Hippogriff	80 miles
Horse	40 miles

These speeds are based upon traveling by highway across the desert without risking overexertion. Travel across difficult terrain, roads, trails and trackless expanses may reduce these speeds, while moving at a hustle or force marching the creature may increase these speeds albeit at the risk of injuring or killing the mount.

Exotic Mounts

No animal can take the camel's place as part of a large caravan, but there is another animal specially adapted to serve as a riding mount for desert travelers. Where the camel developed a means of storing water and fat for long-term usage, the gentle al-haloon (described in **Chapter 6: "New Monsters"**) went a different route. This well-mannered pack animal akin to a giraffe can smell water up to a mile away and can even detect underground water sources at closer distances. To complement its ability to locate water beneath the surface, the al-haloon developed a retractable neck that can burrow through up to 15 feet of loose sand in search of an underground water source. Al-haloons must replenish lost fluids like nearly all other creatures, but its uncanny trait to find water practically anywhere makes it an attractive alternative to camels for some. These unusual animals lack the camel's speed and must regularly stop to drink water, which makes them impractical for large caravans, but they fare well when working in smaller groups of twenty or less. Their ability to locate previously undiscovered sources of water make them especially popular mounts among expedition groups seeking to blaze new trails across uncharted tracts of desert. Dignitaries and emissaries take a preference to them too as many of their ranks perceive al-haloons to be cleaner, more prestigious and far more dignified animals than the camel or even the dire camel. In addition to the pomp and circumstance they bring with them, al-haloons are very capable of defending themselves and their riders in combat, which is another desirable trait for smaller contingents traveling through the desert. Yet, the animal's favorable qualities are not enough to supplant the camel as the desert traveler's mount of choice.

Flying creatures are impractical for shipping large quantities of goods across the desert, but they make for a spectacular display for the rare few who can afford such legendary creatures. Hippogriffs are the least expensive and easiest to train of the exotic mounts. They are competent fliers able to cover vast distances in a single day. The largest desert cities use a squadron of these beasts to patrol the skies overhead for danger or deliver messages of the utmost urgency. Food and water are less of a concern for these creatures, because they cover far more ground than their land-based counterparts and can spot sources of water more easily from the air. Griffons are far less common than hippogriffs and are exclusively used by royalty and the wealthiest desert citizens. Griffons cost significantly more than hippogriffs and are much more difficult to train. Their flight abilities are comparable to hippogriffs, but they are better combatants. Even rarer than the griffin is the roc. Only a few legendary figures throughout history succeeded in taming this mighty beast for their personal usage. Rumors also speak of daring men riding sphinxes and other monsters across the desert, yet these tales remain unsubstantiated. In any case, these alternatives to the more mundane modes of desert transport are exceedingly uncommon and should not be the norm for the typical desert campaign.

Desert Hazards

Life in the desert is an arduous proposition for even the most adventurous souls. Nature and its creations conspire against humanity at every turn. Soaring temperatures, ferocious winds and suffocating dust clouds roll across the scorched earth with alarming regularity. When the rains come, the skies open and unleash a deluge of water, thunder and lightning in the flash of an eye. Water is scarce. In fact, the scant bits of water scrounged from the arid soil are sometimes capable of making the situation worse rather than better. Many of the hardy and resourceful creatures that call this world home are dangerous in their own right. Venomous animals and vermin abound in the dark places of the desert. Invisible pathogens immediately descend on the rotting carcasses of any creature that the desert claims as its victim. Danger lurks behind every corner, under the shadow of every dune and in the false reflection of every illusory oasis. All of these factors compound to the misery of eking out an existence under the relentless glare of the uncompromising sun, yet men still defy the odds to not only survive, but thrive in this harsh environment. Life in the desert is possible for those with the stamina, ingenuity and will to leave their indelible mark on the burning sands of this perilous world.

Overview

The desert's major hazards are organized into four categories. The first category, basic necessities discusses thirst in the desert. Previous chapters addressed how and where to find water, so this chapter reviews what happens to PCs that go without water as well as those that procure water from plant sources or try to drink their own bodily waste. The second category, terrestrial hazards, presents rules and information to adjudicate the effects of non-weather related natural dangers. These include large-scale disasters such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes to more mundane, but still lethal natural phenomenon such as mirages, quicksand and high concentrations of salt and other minerals in the desert soil. The third category, desert inhabitants, discusses the hazards posed by the indigenous species that inhabit this biome. Many frightening horrors both great and small skulk about in the darkness in search of fresh prey. The final category, weather, details the impact of heat, wind and rain on desert inhabitants as well as discussing lesser recognized dangers such as sun glare and sun burn. This section also provides tables for generating random weather effects in a hot and dry and semiarid desert. Some of these sections summarize and expand upon rules that already appear in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Others are entirely new ways to look at old and overlooked hazards encountered in the desert.

Basic Necessities

Every living creature needs food and water to survive. Finding them is the greatest challenge in the desert. Water is the more pressing need of the two, as men can survive several weeks or more without food, but just a handful of days without water. On average, a Medium creature needs to drink 1 gallon of water per day and eat 1 pound of food to meet its daily nutritional requirements. Drinking or eating less than these amounts for short periods has no ill effects, but over time, the body begins to suffer the ravages of dehydration and malnutrition. PCs must exercise tremendous caution to procure enough of these basic necessities to survive and ensure that they are safe to eat and drink.

Thirst

Thirst is every desert inhabitant's most important concern. In a temperate or cold climate, 1 gallon of water per day is sufficient to keep a Medium creature properly hydrated, but heat takes a toll on the body. Most creatures keep cool in a warm climate by sweating, but the very act

itself necessitates the intake of additional fluids to prevent the creature from dehydrating. A character exposed to very hot conditions (above 90° F) must drink at least 2 gallons of water per day, and a character in severe heat (above 110° F) must drink at least 3 gallons of water per day to avoid taking nonlethal damage from thirst. Taking measures to cool off, including finding shade, getting doused in water, and being targeted by *endure elements* relieve characters of these additional water requirements. Because of the increased demand for water, characters exposed to very hot or severe heat feel the effects of dehydration sooner than usual. A character can normally go without water for one day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score before he must succeed at Constitution checks to avoid taking nonlethal damage. (The "Starvation and Thirst" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* describes the dehydration process and its effects on the character.) However in very hot conditions, a character can only go without water for twelve hours plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score, and in severe heat a character can go without water for a number of hours equal to his Constitution score without risking taking nonlethal damage from thirst. Drinking a portion of the character's daily fluid requirement does not delay the process, but it grants a +4 bonus to Constitution checks made to avoid taking nonlethal damage from thirst for every gallon of water the creature drank during the course of the day.

Characters feeling the ravages of dehydration may resort to desperate methods of replenishing fluid loss. Chewing the pulp or drinking the juice of poisonous, indigenous plants is a risky proposition out in the wild. In addition to its toxic properties, the plant's flesh and liquid taste so terrible that they nauseate most creatures. The desert plant species synonymous with storing water is the cactus. Unfortunately, most cacti and their relatives are poisonous. This is especially true of cacti that bleed a milky, white sap when their stems are pierced. Presented below are a few sample desert plant poisons.

Sample Plant Poisons

The GM may use the following sample plant poisons or create additional ones.

Agave

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 13; onset 1 minute; frequency 1/minute for 2 minutes; effect nauseated for 1d4 rounds; cure 1 save

Datura

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 18; onset 1 minute; frequency 1/minute for 6 minutes; effect 1d4 Wis damage; cure 2 consecutive saves

Elephant's ear flower

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 16; onset 1 minute; frequency 1/minute for 6 minutes; effect 1d3 Str damage; cure 1 save

Peyote cactus

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 16; onset 10 minutes; frequency 1/minute for 2 minutes; initial effect nauseated 1 round; secondary effect 1d3 Wis damage and confused 1 minute; cure 2 consecutive saves

DESERT HAZARDS

Correctly distinguishing which desert plants are safe to use for this purpose requires a successful DC 20 Survival check or DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check. The GM should roll this check in secret so that the character is unaware of the actual results. Though *purify food and drink* makes it safe to chew or drink these substances without fear of poisoning, it does not make them taste any better. In fact, they still sicken or nauseate the drinker, even though they are no longer toxic. In addition to its immediate effects, nausea results in the expulsion of precious fluids. Nauseated characters suffer a –1 penalty to Constitution checks made to avoid dehydration for every round that they were nauseated.

Nausea also applies to characters that drink their own urine. As mentioned in earlier chapters, doing so provides short-term relief with long-term consequences. Once again, though *purify food and drink* makes the liquid safe to drink from a toxicity standpoint, it does not improve the taste in one's mouth, both actual and psychological. PCs that resort to this measure must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save to avoid being nauseated for 2d4 rounds.

Too little water is not the only danger faced by desert travelers. Not every source of water found in the desert is pure and safe to drink. Desert water sources, especially stagnant ones, are commonly contaminated by harmful biological organisms. It is not uncommon for them to also contain trace amounts of arsenic and other toxic heavy metals. Once again, *purify food and water* makes the water safe for consumption. Boiling water before drinking it also kills pathogens, but it does not remove mineral deposits from the water. PCs may use a still to accomplish that feat. For those creatures that choose to throw caution to the wind and drink anyway, they may contract diseases such as botulism, cholera and dysentery or ingest toxic arsenic. Presented in the sidebar is a percentile-based table illustrating the chances of drawing water from a contaminated source and several sample diseases PCs may come into contact by drinking tainted water.

Table 2–4: Water Purity

Source	Safe	Contaminated
Aquifer	01–90	91–00
Oasis	01–85	86–00
Pond	01–60	61–00
River	01–95	96–00
Stream	01–80	81–00
Wadi	01–75	76–00

Waterborne diseases

Characters drinking contaminated water may contract any of the following diseases or other diseases of the GM's creation.

Botulism

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 16; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect paralysis and 1d3 Dex/day, at 0 Dex suffocation and death occur; cure 2 consecutive saves

Cholera

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 14; onset 1d4 days; frequency 1/day for 7 days; effect 1d3 Con damage; cure 1 save

Dysentery

Type—ingested; save Fort DC 12; onset 2d4 days; frequency 1/day for 7 days; effect 1 Con damage; cure 1 save

Besides taking the necessary precautions and stockpiling essential supplies, PCs can avoid dehydration with magical assistance. Contaminated food and water become safe to eat after casting *purify food and drink*, and *create food and water*. *Heroes' feast* brings into existence an ample supply of clean water and food. In the case of *create food and water*, the spell conjures enough water to hydrate 3 humans per level under normal circumstances, yet the desert's extreme heat requires humans to drink two or three times as much water as usual. Because humans normally need 1 gallon of water per day, the spell creates 3 gallons of water per level. Spells are not the only means of cleansing or crafting water in the desert. A *decanter of endless water* is a highly sought after magic item. This useful tool provides more than enough water to satisfy the PCs' hydration needs and those of their animals or companions. Magic though is fickle. Spellcasters sustain injuries or die in battle. Items can be damaged, destroyed or stolen. Relying solely on magic is a foolish mistake for any desert traveler.

Starvation

Starvation is also a realistic possibility in the desert, but the ravages of malnutrition are much slower to develop and less pronounced than extreme thirst. (The "Starvation and Thirst" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* describes the starvation process and its effects on the character.) As in the case of untreated water, creatures eating improperly cooked food or meat harvested from infected animals run the risks of suffering from food poisoning or contracting a disease from the sick animal. The same diseases that contaminate water are also present in food. Food poisoning nauseates the affected creature for 1d6 rounds unless the character succeeds on a DC 11 Fortitude save. The bout of nausea makes the character more susceptible to dehydration.

Terrestrial Hazards

In the desert, the land itself can be a traveler's worst enemy. The featureless sands conceal deadly sinkholes and sinister quagmires capable of ensnaring unsuspecting men and beasts in a matter of minutes. If the hidden dangers were not enough to make men doubt their senses, the tantalizing vision of a distant, illusory oasis is sure to make them question their eyes and their sanity. However, there is no denying that in many locations, the caustic ground itself corrodes any protective footwear and bare skin that comes into contact with it for prolonged periods of time. The thin air found in high altitude deserts also takes its toll on the minds and bodies of those subjected to oxygen deprivation at those dizzying heights. Though serious and potentially lethal in their own right, these common perils do not spawn the terror wreaked by more spectacular events. Fiery volcanoes spewing lava onto the pristine dunes or violent tremors shaking the mounds of sand to their foundation are not images commonly associated with the desert, but these relatively rare calamities pose a real threat to the land and its inhabitants. The only saving grace in regards to these disasters is the fact that large swaths of desert are sparsely or entirely uninhabited, which keeps the body count significantly lower than in densely populated temperate regions.

Quicksand

Few images are as synonymous with the desert as quicksand. The horror of helplessly watching an outstretched hand sink into the depths of a hungry vortex of swirling sand touches upon man's primordial fear of disappearing forever. There is something about the very earth itself swallowing another person that strikes a vulnerable spot deep within the human psyche. Perhaps being pulled below the surface reminds man of the grave's inevitability, or the destruction of earthly remains reinforces that it is easier for the living to forget the victim without some tangible relic to remind others of their existence. Whatever the reason, the fear of falling into quicksand burdens the weary minds of many desert travelers.

Quicksand is an imperfect amalgamation of water and sand. It forms when fine, granular particles like sand or silt become overly saturated by a swell of groundwater, which remains hidden below a layer of sand. Whenever a creature steps onto the surface and exerts enough pressure on the unstable soil, the loose grains of sand and water quickly separate and

DUNES OF DESOLATION

transform the mess into a soupy liquid. In short, falling into quicksand is more akin to falling into a previously hidden pool of water than falling through a crack in the earth. Experienced desert travelers are adept at spotting the telltale signs of this lurking danger. Characters moving at a normal pace notice quicksand with a successful DC 8 Survival check. Creatures charging or running through the area bumble right into the quicksand. (See the “Marsh Terrain” section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more details on adjudicating the effects of quicksand.) Desert explorers typically refer to this type of quicksand as wet quicksand.

Wet quicksand is uncommon, but natives tell tales of an extremely rare variety that is far deadlier. Though never truly substantiated, numerous legends recount the stories of large caravans and even entire armies marching into a vast expanse of quicksand that swallowed them whole in a few terrifying minutes. It is known as dry quicksand and for good reason. In short, wet quicksand is gooey water, which even in its liquid form is still denser than the human body giving it buoyancy. Dry quicksand, on the other hand, contains no water. Instead, it is compromised of minute, loose particles of granular material infused with air. This may occur when the wind blows extremely fine grains of sand into the air, and those same grains then tumble back to the surface and pile atop one another. Though it is truly solid, dry quicksand lacks density causing heavy creatures that step into it to literally fall through the sand and bury themselves. Dry quicksand is more stable than wet quicksand, so it is able to support some weight before it instantaneously gives way and collapses upon itself. This feature makes it very difficult to detect, because it looks and behaves like solid ground under visual and tactile inspection. Characters moving at a normal pace can detect dry quicksand with a successful DC 18 Perception check. Creatures charging or running through the area have no chance of spotting dry quicksand before stumbling onto it. The typical patch of dry quicksand is 50 feet in diameter. Because of its ability to support roughly 50 pounds of weight, the momentum of a running or charging character carries him 1d4 x 5 feet into the dry quicksand before he sinks into it. Creatures weighing less than 50 pounds are unaffected by dry quicksand.

Creatures that fall into dry quicksand only have seconds to react. Characters in dry quicksand must succeed on a DC 20 Climb check to avoid sinking below the surface or a DC 25 Climb check to move at half his normal speed in any desired direction. If the trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to suffocate whenever he can no longer hold his breath. Characters below the surface may climb back to the surface with a successful Climb check (DC 25, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface). Dry quicksand is 2d6+10 feet deep, so extremely tall creatures can keep their heads above the ground. The procedure to rescue a trapped character is the same as that for wet quicksand except that Climb checks are used in place of Swim checks.

Mirages

The desert can be a fiendish practical joker, and the mirage is its cruellest parlor trick. For a creature desperately struggling to find just a few drops of water, the mirage is a welcome sight. The shimmering reflection from a pure desert spring beckons thirsty men like a siren’s irresistible call. The parched desert explorer races across the sand, tumbling down the lee side of intervening dunes anticipating the refreshing taste of pristine water only to find that it was all an illusion — an elaborate hoax played by some dark force with a twisted sense of humor. Though frustrating, men in their right mind chalk the experience up to a lesson well learned, yet for those suffering from the ravages of dehydration the letdown can be literally maddening.

A mirage is an optical illusion caused by the refraction of light as it passes through cold air in close contact with significantly warmer air. Because of the lack of moisture in the air, the air temperature at ground level is much hotter than the temperature several hundred feet above the surface. These temperature extremes cause light rays to bend in an upward trajectory, which creates an inverted image. The human eye then misinterprets what it sees by creating an image of the sky appearing just above the ground. In fact, the pool of fresh, blue water is actually the image of the clear, blue sky. The mirage’s shimmering effect is caused when hot air from the surface rises and the colder, denser air above it sinks towards the ground. The interaction between the ascending warm air and the descending cold air makes the image unstable thus accounting for the shimmering effect. When the creature moves closer to the mirage, the human eye sees the mirage for what it really is — a cruel, natural practical joke.

Mirages cause no physical harm to the observer, but that does not mean they pose no danger to desert travelers. Some clever monsters or human marauders ambush other creatures in areas where mirages commonly form. These cunning hunters sometimes build deadfall pits throughout the area to ensnare the unwary or conceal themselves within holes dug into the ground so they can emerge from their hiding places and attack at the most opportune moment. Despite the havoc wreaked by these creatures, mirages deal far more damage to vulnerable minds than unsuspecting bodies. Mirages tantalize dehydrated creatures with the sight of fresh water just to take it away as they are about to quench their unbearable thirst. To a man dying of thirst, it seems as if the world conspired against him to perpetrate a wicked prank. The taunting is just too much for his comprised mind to bear, and he sinks into madness.

Natives call the sickness “mirage delirium” and it only affects characters that take nonlethal damage from thirst. Whenever such a character encounters a mirage, the character must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + nonlethal damage from thirst) to avoid becoming captivated by the mirage. A captivated character moves towards the mirage by the most direct means available and can take no action other than to defend itself. When the character comes within 1d6 x 10 feet of the mirage, the character sees the illusion for what it really is and begins doubting his senses. He must succeed at another Will save (DC 10 + nonlethal damage from thirst) or take 1d3 points of Wisdom damage. Over time, the character’s thirst worsens, and he descends into madness. Most victims of “mirage delirium” eventually collapse and die from dehydration within sight of a mirage. Many rise from their desert graves to begin an undead existence as a malevolent thirstmonger, a new monster that appears in **Chapter 6**. In the desert, the mirage proves there is no such thing as a victimless hoax.

Minerals

The desert’s gravelly, granular soil contains a high concentration of mineral deposits, none more so than the salt pans found in many hot and dry and semiarid deserts. Though salt and many other minerals like calcium and potassium are essential for life, ingesting too much of these minerals can sicken or even kill. For instance, salt is a valuable flavor agent and an essential part of the human diet, but drinking large quantities of salt water can lead to madness, delirium and even death. Other minerals have similar effects on human physiology. Fortunately, most creatures are aware of the dangers posed by ingesting large chunks of salt or drinking water clouded by minerals, yet soil containing high concentrations of minerals can corrode or desiccate any material they come in contact with for extended periods of time. This is especially true of footwear and exposed skin.

Over time, salt corrodes practically everything, especially leather and cloth. Through the process of osmosis, salt depletes moisture from any substance it comes in contact with, causing the material to crack or peel. This is particularly true for leather, which loses its suppleness and becomes brittle. Bare skin is even more susceptible to injury from prolonged exposure to salt. In addition to salt’s desiccating properties, the jagged crystals lacerate the skin causing debilitating pain and even more moisture loss. Creatures walking barefoot and objects, such as footwear, that come into contact with sand, gravel or salt for more than 8 hours over the course of a day must make a successful Fortitude save to avoid taking damage from prolonged contact with the soil. Presented in the sidebar is a table listing each type of soil, the damage each deals and the saving throw DC to negate the damage.

Table 2–5:
Damage Dealt by Soil Type

Soil Type	Damage	Fort Save DC
Gravel	1d4	10
Salt	2d3	12
Sand	1d3	8

In addition to taking damage from the soil's mineral content, creatures walking barefoot across the hot sands suffer a –2 penalty to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of heat from exposure to very hot conditions or severe heat.

High Altitudes

Most outsiders perceive the desert as a flat expanse of endless sand, but mountain ranges cut paths through many deserts. This is especially true in the case of coastal deserts and those created by the rain shadow effect described in **Chapter 1**. Desert mountain ranges typically include expansive plateaus covered by rocky soil that support a greater diversity of flora and fauna than is typically found in the warmer desert below it. Logic would seem to dictate that the temperature atop a mountain in a hot and dry desert would be even hotter than the temperature at sea level because the mountain's peak is closer to the sun than the surrounding terrain. However, that is not the case. Gravity keeps most air molecules close to the planet's surface, so air at higher elevations is less pressurized than air at sea level. Air in a pressurized environment compresses and warms, whereas air in a less pressurized environment expands and cools. So the air temperature atop the highest peaks in a hot and dry desert may actually be rather comfortable, but the dizzying altitude poses another problem — altitude sickness. There are fewer air molecules at higher elevations and therefore less air to breathe. Creatures that need oxygen to survive suffer altitude sickness. (The "Mountain Travel" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* describes the effects of altitude sickness.) Nearly all hot and dry desert mountain ranges fall into the low pass and high pass categories described in the aforementioned section. Semiarid, coastal and cold deserts may boast many peaks reaching heights of 15,000 feet or greater.

Volcanoes

The idea of finding a volcano in the middle of a hot and dry desert seems even more remote than finding a cool, refreshing lake, yet a few volcanoes rise above the dunes and flat plains of sand. Active desert volcanoes are typically found in remote corners of the world far away from civilization. The rich, volcanic soil that attracts farmers to the slopes of volcanoes in forested regions dries out and turns to worthless dust that simply blows away in the wind. In fact, a volcanic eruption in an area with dense vegetation often creates what is referred to as a volcanic desert. The rain of ash and lava destroys all plant and animal life and reduces the area around the volcano to a barren wasteland. Volcanic deserts lack flora and fauna, but the amount of annual rainfall they receive remains unchanged. In the absence of additional eruptions, life often returns to the volcanic desert over an extended period of time.

Shield volcanoes comprise the overwhelming majority of desert volcanoes. This type of volcano encompasses a wide area and gradually rises to a peak which makes it look similar to an inverted warrior's shield. Shield volcanoes are often in a continual state of eruption spewing watery lava that spreads across a vast region surrounding the volcano's opening. This lava is more fluid allowing it to simply roll over any intervening obstacles as it diffuses across a wide area. The flow travels at a speed of 60 feet per round. Creatures in the lava's path must make a successful DC 20 Reflex save to avoid being engulfed by it. Lava deals 2d6 points of damage per round of exposure, but it deals 20d6 points of damage per round to creatures engulfed in it. Damage from lava continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact (that is, 1d6 or 10d6 points per round). Rumors abound that noble efreet dwell within magnificent basalt palaces built deep in the heart of many desert volcanoes.

Earthquakes

Like most features of the natural world, man frequently takes the stability of solid ground for granted, but at any given time nature can literally shake this belief to its very foundations. The planet's surface is not fixed or immobile. Instead it is more like pieces of an interlocking jigsaw puzzle floating upon a sea of molten rock. The "pieces" are known as tectonic plates which are large masses of contiguous land or ocean floor that interconnect with the tectonic plates around them. The space between

adjoining plates is known as a fault or a fault line. The tectonic plates are constantly subjected to the tremendous pressure exerted by the tectonic plates surrounding them. When a portion of one or more tectonic plates can no longer withstand the pressure, they shift resulting in an earthquake. Though the vast majority of earthquakes occur along a fault line, some occur within a contiguous tectonic plate as witnessed by the New Madrid earthquakes of the 19th century. However these types of earthquakes are the exceptions rather than the rule.

Earthquakes are among nature's most powerful forces, but they pose no real danger to someone standing out in the open unless they are standing in close proximity to the fault line. Otherwise, the tremor would likely knock him to the ground and disorient him for a few minutes afterward. This is the case in most parts of the uninhabited or sparsely populated desert. On the other hand, desert cities are extremely vulnerable to an earthquake's devastating effects. The violent shaking can easily damage poorly constructed buildings or extremely tall structures. Earthquakes deal 20d10 points of damage to all structures subject to its effects. GMs may want to increase the damage by up to 50% for buildings located near the epicenter and decrease it by up to 50% for building in outlying areas. Many desert natives believe that mischievous shaitans are responsible for nearly all of the world's earthquakes.

Desert Inhabitants

Wildlife does not abound in the desert, but the few species that call this rugged environment home are among the world's hardest and most resilient creatures. Because of the intense daytime heat in hot and dry and semiarid deserts, nearly all wild creatures are active during the cooler evening, overnight and early morning hours. Venomous scorpions, spiders and snakes scuttle and slither across the sands in pursuit of fresh prey. Bright light, roaring fires and warm bodies attract these creatures like free beer at a seedy, dockside tavern. Larger predators such as coyotes, hyenas and jackals prowl the dunes as well along with a host of humanoid and monstrous denizens. Their reasons for moving about are varied, but if one thing is certain, they excel at whatever it is they do.

Vermin

At some point in his life, a terrible nightmare rouses nearly every desert native from a sound sleep. Though it is still warm outside, cold sweat gushes from every pore coating him in a chilly lather. For a brief instant, he dreamt that he shared his bed with a crawling horror — a venomous scorpion or a large spider. These tiny creatures pose no realistic danger to a fully awake and equipped adventurer, but the creatures can leave a painful reminder of their presence.

Even a novice fighter would trample the average scorpion or spider underfoot in a split second in a straight up fight, but these cunning hunters operate under the cover of darkness and attack when their foes are most vulnerable. They use their diminutive size and the shadows to their advantage, avoiding detection as they crawl into the unattended shoes, clothing or bed of their unsuspecting and often unintentional target while the creature sleeps or is otherwise occupied. Then, in an instant, the victim feels a sharp pinch as the culprit sinks its fangs or stinger into the creature's skin before making its daring escape. The *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* includes statistics blocks for giant versions of these monsters along with basic statistics for smaller versions of these creatures. Naturally, the smallest variety of these creatures is closest to an average specimen, yet even the Tiny-sized creature is still more powerful than a normal scorpion or spider. To incorporate scorpions and spiders in the game without creating a combat encounter, the GM may give an ordinary spider or scorpion the opportunity to sneak up and bite a sleeping or preoccupied character. Characters spot an approaching spider or scorpion by making a successful DC 34 Perception check allowing him to kill it without making an attack roll. If the creature remains undetected, there is a 50% chance that it bites or stings the character. Like a swarm, the spider or scorpion deals 1 point of automatic damage and poisons the victim. After it bites or stings the character, a successful DC 14 Perception check locates the culprit. This is treated as a CR 1/4 encounter. Presented in the sidebar are the game statistics for scorpion and spider venom.

Common Vermin Venom

Scorpion venom

Sting—injury; save Fort DC 12; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1 Strength damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Spider venom

Bite—injury; save Fort DC 10; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1 Strength damage; cure 1 save.

These variant rules should not be commonly used as a substitute for standard combat. Instead, they are designed to provide GMs with a fast-paced alternative means of introducing these creatures into the game to add flavor to a desert campaign and keep PCs on their toes.

Animals

No desert animal is more feared or reviled than snakes. In nearly every desert culture, snakes are associated with lying and treachery and function as the willing servants of evil deities in nearly every land. In reality, most snakes avoid people whenever possible and lash out only when threatened or provoked. For instance, rattlesnakes shake their tails to generate a rattling sound that warns other creatures not to disturb them. On the other hand some snakes are very aggressive and pack a lethal bite. Cobras and sidewinders hunt on the sandy dunes of many hot and dry deserts. Adders, asps and vipers are also found in desert areas and the transition zones. Venomous snakes are described in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* under the entry “Snake, Venomous.” In addition, a comprehensive listing of variant snake venoms can be found in *The Tome of Horrors Complete*. Presented in below are two percentile dice tables to randomly determine the type of snake encountered in hot and dry and semiarid deserts as well as provide more individualized entries for the species’ venom.



Table 2—6: Hot and Dry Desert Snakes

Type of Snake	Encounter Chance
Adder ^N	01–10
Brown snake ^H	11–20
Cobra ^{1N}	21–60
Rattlesnake ^H	61–90
Viper ^H	90–00

¹GMs may add the advanced and/or giant templates to the base creature to create a king cobra.

^HHemotoxin

^NNeurotoxin

Table 2 —7: Semiarid Desert Snakes

Type of Snake	Encounter Chance
Adder ^N	01–08
Brown snake ^H	09–20
Cobra ^{1N}	21–40
Coral snake ^N	41–50
Krait ^N	51–60
Rattlesnake ^H	61–90
Taipan ^N	91–95
Viper ^H	96–00

¹GMs may add the advanced and/or giant templates to the base creature to create a king cobra.

^HHemotoxin

^NNeurotoxin

Snake venom comes in two general varieties — hemotoxins and neurotoxins. Hemotoxins destroy living tissue and red blood cells which disrupts clotting. Neurotoxins are paralytic agents that shut down the victim’s nervous system. The poison that appears in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* “Snake, Venomous” details hemotoxic poison. Most snake venoms incorporate elements of both types of toxin, but one is generally predominate. Presented below are the statistics for a snake bite that delivers neurotoxin.

Neurotoxin Poison

Bite—injury; save Fort DC 13; onset 1 minute; frequency 1/minute for 2 minutes; initial effect paralysis for 1 minute; secondary effect paralysis for 1d4 hours; save 1 save.

Because neurotoxin is potentially deadlier than hemotoxin, GMs may consider adding +1 to the CR of an animal that delivers neurotoxin.

Snakes are not the only desert predators with an underserved reputation for evil. In these two cases, the reason is better understood and more transparent. In many semiarid deserts, coyotes and jackals are the bane of farmers and nomads alike. These pack animals are known to attack and kill livestock, putting them at odds with the humans trying to protect their animals from harm. In many human cultures, coyotes are perceived as tricksters and liars, and jackals are believed to be the servants of the

evil desert deity, Set. Sadly, these perceptions have some basis in fact as the ordinary animals occasionally give rise to their monstrous cousins, the akbadia, (a new monster that appears in **Chapter 6**), and the jackalwere. These two evil creatures can appear as one of these animals, as a normal man or as a hybrid of the two forms. Whenever humans encounter these animals, they can never be entirely certain that they are facing an ordinary animal or one of these creatures in their animal form.

In hot and dry deserts and semiarid deserts, the hyena suffers from a similar image problem. Most human cultures view hyenas as scheming opportunists that make a living off the hard work of others. To make matters even worse for the hyena, it frequently emits an eerie, unsettling yelp that almost sounds like a laugh giving the impression that it is mocking or taunting its victim. Just like the coyote and the jackal, hyenas also share a monstrous cousin — the werehyena. Werehyenas (a new monster described in **Chapter 6**) are lycanthropes capable of spreading their disease to other humans through their cursed bite. Like the akbadia and jackalwere, werehyenas can also assume an animal form, allowing them to easily blend in with a pack of ordinary hyenas. Though the average coyote, jackal or hyena does not present an immediate danger to adult humans, they pose a threat to domesticated animals and bring the realistic fear that a monstrous beast may walk among these canine predators.

Men and Monsters

Hungry animals are not the only predators stalking the dunes and sand plains of the world's deserts. A fair number of men also live in the desert. Some eke out an existence as nomadic herders and hunters, but others make their abode in this rugged landscape to ply their nefarious trades. Bandits, highwaymen, smugglers and kidnappers search the desert for their next big score. The most daring and boldest criminals go it alone; however most follow the example set by the desert's canine hunters and assemble into gangs. Like pack animals, gangs are organized according to a rigid hierarchy. There is a clear leader, a second-in-command, followers, and oftentimes there is the human equivalent of a runt, an inept gang member that serves as the butt of the group's jokes or scorn. Most gangs live communally in remote, hidden locations. Gangs refer to their homes as hideouts, and they are typically found in caves or abandoned towns and villages partially buried under the sand. The hideout is more than just a home; it is also a base of operations to store loot taken from previous jobs and to plan the gang's next caper. Gangs usually specialize in a particular criminal act using the group's strengths to its advantage. For instance, skilled camel and horse riders are in high demand among gangs that target caravans and other moving targets. Archers are particularly useful for groups that ambush passing travelers, and stealthy individuals that can move about undetected in the darkness are well-suited as kidnappers. Some gangs are so successful that they have outlived their original members and remained in existence for several generations. Examples include Akbar Peshawa and his Thirteen Thieves, The One-Eyed Gang, The Suns of the Desert and the most unique gang, The Veiled Kiss, which is comprised entirely of ex-harem women and is allegedly led by a kharam, (a new monster detailed in **Chapter 6**). Desert kingdoms and wealthy interests do not let the gangs' crimes go unchallenged or unpunished. Bounties hang over many gang members' heads, and there is no shortage of nearly equally unscrupulous men pursuing these bounties at any given time. Adventurers are frequently sought to protect travelers and goods from harm before they begin their journey across the desert, particularly if the route passes through areas known for gang activity. They may also be hired to rescue kidnapping victims and bring the perpetrators to justice or stop a gang of smugglers attempting to sneak illicit goods into a town or city. Desert gangs and criminals present a wealth of adventuring opportunities for GMs and players alike.

Men are not the only sentient creatures to stalk the deserts. Monsters also travel across the dunes and the sand plains in furtherance of their plans. Dragons and genies sit atop the proverbial monstrous hierarchy. Wicked blue dragons corrupt and defile desert peoples, while benevolent brass dragons attempt to thwart the schemes of their blue relatives. Genies are fickle and capricious creatures more interested in furthering their ambitions than those of the men and women they purport to serve. Legendary creatures including lamias, phoenixes and sphinxes are also encountered in the desert along with giant vermin and the new desert monsters detailed in **Chapter 6** of this sourcebook.

Weather

The desert is a land of extremes. Scorching heat, blazing sun, numbing cold, howling winds and torrential downpours are all features of the biome's weather cycle. Temperatures can easily soar well above 100° F during the day before plunging to 32° or less at night. Though deserts never experience the ferocious winds generated by monstrous weather systems like a hurricane, dangerous winds roll across the sandy plains and dunes with alarming regularity, hurling sand, dust and gravel at everything in their path. On those rare occasions where the desert experiences a storm's wrath, the event is brief yet intense. Swirling winds lash torrents of rain onto the parched earth triggering flash floods. Ominous peals of thunder tear the heavens asunder and bolts of lightning plummet from the sky and electrify the shocked earth. Sunlight itself is another weather danger in the desert. Over time, its brightness and UV rays can irreparably damage the eyes and exposed skin. The sun's rays pose just as great a danger in cold deserts despite the frigid temperatures. Creatures making their way across or through the desert must take numerous and sometimes contradictory precautions against anything nature unleashes on this unforgiving environment.

Sunlight

Sunlight illuminates and warms the planet, yet too much of a good thing can be harmful. This is particularly true in the desert where the lack of cloud cover and the reflective properties of the lightly-colored desert terrain intensify the sun's rays. Obviously, staring directly at the sun for more than a brief glimpse can temporarily blind the onlooker, but prolonged indirect exposure to sunlight can also harm one's vision. The eyes are not the only organs that the sun can injure. The sun can also damage the body's largest organ — the skin. The damage is referred to as sunburn, and it is not caused by an overexposure to heat. Instead, ultraviolet radiation emitted from the sun causes radiation burns, so it is equally possible to get sunburn on a bright, cold day than it is on a warm, sunny day. The reason that people rarely get sunburn during the winter is because they are usually wearing thicker layers of clothing that shield their skin from the sun's harmful rays and generally limit their outdoor exposure to only a few minutes at a time.

To protect themselves against the sun's destructive glare, desert natives wear loose-fitting, white clothing along with a headdress crafted from the same material. Most headdresses also feature a brim or ridge to shield the eyes and face from the sun. Even so, these precautions are not perfect. Scarves protect the neck and lower face, but it is impossible to cover the eyes without sacrificing vision. Likewise, it is too hot to wear gloves during the daytime hours. For these reasons, most people avoid moving

Table 2—8:
Sunburn Check DC Modifiers

Precaution	Sunburn Check DC Modifiers
Clothing ¹	+4
Every previous check that day	+1
Footwear	–1
Headdress	–2
Light-colored clothing	–2
Scarf	–2
Visor	–2

¹Clothing must cover the arms, torso and legs



about during the brightest time of day; however that is not always an option. From 10:00 am in the morning until 3:00 pm in the afternoon, humanoids exposed to direct sunlight must make a successful DC 10 Constitution check every hour to avoid getting sunburn on body parts not covered by clothing. These typically include the face, neck and eyes.

Sunburned humanoids begin to feel its effects within 2d12 hours after exposure to the sun. Sunburn deals 1d4 points of nonlethal damage for the next 1d4 days. Characters can only get sunburned once per day, but its effects are cumulative and stack with one another. Whenever a character rolls a natural 1 on its Constitution check, its eyes become sunburned. In addition to taking nonlethal damage, the character suffers from light sensitivity and takes a –2 penalty to Perception checks. Healing the nonlethal damage does not cure light sensitivity or the penalty to Perception checks. Creatures with a natural armor bonus are immune to the effects of sunburn.

In addition, between 10:00 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon, creatures with light sensitivity suffer instead from light blindness unless they succeed on a DC 10 Constitution check. They must make this check every hour during this time frame and the check's DC increases by +1 for every previous check that day. Humanoids that roll a natural 1 on an attack roll or saving throw while outside during this time of day must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid suffering from light sensitivity for the next 1d4 minutes. This effect is not cumulative and does not stack with itself.

Temperature

Nowhere else in the world experiences the temperature extremes found in the desert. Hot and dry deserts are the hottest places in the world, yet many classify the two coldest places in the world as deserts also. Nonetheless *Dunes of Desolation* focuses its attention on the hot and dry and semiarid deserts which are practically synonymous with blistering heat. Summer is exceptionally hot and winter offers little reprieve from the oppressive temperatures. The two key temperatures that GMs must keep close account of are 90° F and 110° F.

At 90° F and above, characters are exposed to very hot conditions, and must make a successful Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a –4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus to this saving throw and might be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per hour).

At 110° F and above, characters are exposed to severe heat and must make a successful Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a –4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and might be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per each 10-minute interval).

A character that takes nonlethal damage from heat exposure suffers from heatstroke and is fatigued. If the fatigued character takes any additional action that would cause him to become fatigued, he suffers from heat exhaustion and is exhausted. These conditions end when the character recovers from the nonlethal damage he took from the heat. In addition, characters in very hot conditions must drink 2 gallons of water per day, and characters in severe heat must drink 3 gallons of water per day to avoid suffering from thirst. Failure to do so accelerates the dehydration process as discussed earlier in this chapter. If the extreme heat were not bad enough, deserts rapidly cool at night with temperatures sometimes dipping below freezing. When temperatures drop below 40° F, unprotected characters are exposed to cold weather and must make a successful Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and might be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Random weather charts that appear at the end of this chapter allow the GM to determine the daily high and low temperatures.

Wind

Wind literally shapes the desert more than any other natural force. It sculpts magnificent dunes from featureless sand and hurls vast clouds of sand and dust across the scarred landscape. Wind is the engine that powers the desert's destructive sandstorms, yet desert winds differ from those in temperate and tropical environments. The high winds that ravage tropical and temperate regions are almost universally spawned by powerful thunderstorms and hurricanes that also unleash tremendous amounts of precipitation. Desert winds are predominately fueled by masses of air interacting with each other which create powerful air currents that do not produce precipitation. They pick up sand, dust and any other fine particles and transform them into minute airborne projectiles in the form of a sandstorm or a dust storm.

Sandstorms reduce visibility to 1d10 x 5 feet and inflict a –4 penalty on Perception checks. A sandstorm deals 1d3 points of nonlethal damage per hour to any creatures caught in the open, and leaves a thin coating of sand in its wake. Driving sand creeps in through all but the most secure seals and seams, chafing skin and contaminating gear. Sandstorms can last for hours or even days. The average sandstorm lasts for 2d6 hours; however 10% of sandstorms drag on for 1d3 days. For every hour of the sandstorm's duration, it buries everything in its path in 1d3 inches of sand. In the case of a sandstorm stretching across several days, characters could find themselves buried under 10 feet of sand. Characters buried under that much sand are treated as if they were in the slide zone of a cave-in. (See the "Dungeons" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for details on adjudicating the effects of a cave-in.)

Dust storms obscure vision, smothers unprotected flames, and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). Most dust storms are accompanied by severe winds and leave behind a deposit of 1d6 inches of sand. There is a 10% chance for a greater dust storm to be accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds. These greater dust storms deal 1d3 points of nonlethal damage each round to anyone caught out in the open without shelter and also pose a choking hazard. (A character with a scarf or similar protection across his mouth and nose does not begin to choke until after a number of rounds equal to 10 + his Constitution score). Greater dust storms leave 2d3–1 feet of fine sand in their wake.

Rain

Rain is rare in the desert, yet on those odd days when the skies crackle with electricity and the waters pour down from the heavens nature regales the dunes with a spectacular show of force. Warm air fuels violent weather, and the desert boasts the hottest air in the world. Desert thunderstorms rumble across the parched earth at breakneck speed with a typical life span of 5d6 minutes. As the storm rages, visibility is reduced to zero, making Perception checks and all ranged weapon attacks impossible. Unprotected flames are automatically extinguished, and protected flames have a 75% chance of being doused. Torrential rain pelts the ground and winds in excess of sixty miles per hour howl across the desert. (See the "Weather" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for details on how these winds affect characters out in the open.) Every 30 seconds, a lightning bolt crashes to the ground 1d6–1 miles away from the storm's center. The bolt deals between 4d8 and 10d8 points of electricity damage to everything in its path. There is a 1% chance of lightning striking any character within 1 mile of the bolt. This chance is reduced to .5% if the character is curled into a ball in a depression or other low-lying area.

Daily Weather

Unlike the weather in areas that receive ample rainfall, the desert's weather changes very little from day to day. Summers are long, hot and dry, and winters are short and mild with a few days of rainfall. Presented below are several tables that allow GMs to determine the weather in a hot and dry desert and a semiarid desert based upon the season. The tables are organized according to desert type, so the first group of tables applies to weather in a hot and dry desert, and the second group applies to weather in a semiarid desert. The tables allow the GM to determine the daily high temperature, daily low temperature, wind speed and chance of precipitation. All of the tables are based upon percentile dice.

Hot and Dry Deserts

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in a hot and dry desert according to season. Summers in a hot and dry desert can last for 6 months, while winter is rarely more than 1 or 2 months.

Table 2–9: Daily High Temperature

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	95+4d6° F	105+4d6° F	85+4d6° F	75+4d6° F
11–20	95+3d6° F	105+3d6° F	85+3d6° F	75+3d6° F
21–30	90+4d6° F	100+4d6° F	80+4d6° F	70+4d6° F
31–40	90+3d6° F	100+3d6° F	80+3d6° F	70+3d6° F
41–50	85+4d6° F	95+4d6° F	75+4d6° F	65+4d6° F
51–60	85+3d6° F	95+3d6° F	75+3d6° F	65+3d6° F
61–70	80+4d6° F	90+4d6° F	70+4d6° F	60+4d6° F
71–80	80+3d6° F	90+3d6° F	70+3d6° F	60+3d6° F
81–90	75+4d6° F	85+4d6° F	65+4d6° F	55+4d6° F
91–00	75+3d6° F	85+3d6° F	65+3d6° F	55+3d6° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 109° F, and the low temperature generates a result of 25 – 4d6°, which results in a total of 36°, the daily low temperature is 73° F (109° – 36° = 73° F).

Table 2–10: Daily Low Temperatures

Die Roll	Low Temperature
01–10	–20+3d6
11–20	–20+4d6
21–30	–25+3d6
31–40	–25+4d6
41–50	–30+3d6
51–60	–30+4d6
61–70	–35+3d6
71–80	–35+4d6
81–90	–40+3d6
91–00	–40+4d6

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 2–10 Daily Wind Speed

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	1d6	1d4	1d6	1d8
11–20	1d8	1d6	1d8	1d10
21–30	1d10	1d8	1d10	1d12
31–40	1d12	1d10	1d12	3d6
41–50	3d6	1d12	3d6	4d6
51–60	4d6	3d6	4d6	5d6
61–70	5d6	4d6	5d6	6d6
71–80	6d6	5d6	6d6	8d6
81–90	8d6	6d6	8d6	10d6
91–00	10d6	8d6	10d6	12d6

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Whenever the wind speed equals or exceeds 30 miles per hour, it triggers a dust storm on rocky, gravelly terrain or a sandstorm on sandy terrain. The preceding section discusses the effects and duration of dust storms and sandstorms.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 2–ix: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01–96	01–99	01–98	01–94
Storm	97–00	00	99–00	95–00

Semiarid Deserts

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in a semiarid desert according to season. Summers in a semiarid desert can last for more than 4 months, while winters rarely stretch for more than 2 months.

Table 2–9: Daily High Temperature

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	88+3d6° F	100+3d6° F	76+3d6° F	64+3d6° F
11–20	88+3d4° F	100+3d4° F	76+3d4° F	64+3d4° F
21–30	83+3d6° F	95+3d6° F	71+3d6° F	59+3d6° F
31–40	83+3d4° F	95+3d4° F	71+3d4° F	59+3d4° F
41–50	78+3d6° F	90+3d6° F	66+3d6° F	54+3d6° F
51–60	78+3d4° F	90+3d4° F	66+3d4° F	54+3d4° F
61–70	73+3d6° F	85+3d6° F	61+3d6° F	49+3d6° F
71–80	73+3d4° F	85+3d4° F	61+3d4° F	49+3d4° F
81–90	68+3d6° F	80+3d6° F	56+3d6° F	44+3d6° F
91–00	68+3d4° F	80+3d4° F	56+3d4° F	44+3d4° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 109° F, and the low temperature generates a result of 25 – 4d6°, which results in a total of 36°, the daily low temperature is 73° F (109° – 36° = 73° F).

Table 2–13: Daily Low Temperatures

Die Roll	Low Temperature
01–10	–10+3d6
11–20	–10+4d6
21–30	–15+3d6
31–40	–15+4d6
41–50	–20+3d6
51–60	–20+4d6
61–70	–25+3d6
71–80	–25+4d6
81–90	–30+3d6
91–00	–30+4d6

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 2–14: Daily Wind Speed

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	1d6	1d4	1d6	1d8
11–20	1d8	1d6	1d8	1d10
21–30	1d10	1d8	1d10	1d12
31–40	1d12	1d10	1d12	3d6
41–50	3d6	1d12	3d6	4d6
51–60	4d6	3d6	4d6	5d6
61–70	5d6	4d6	5d6	6d6
71–80	6d6	5d6	6d6	8d6
81–90	8d6	6d6	8d6	10d6
91–00	10d6	8d6	10d6	12d6

Whenever the wind speed equals or exceeds 30 miles per hour, it triggers a duststorm on rocky, gravelly terrain or a sandstorm on sandy terrain. The preceding section discusses the effects and duration of dust storms and sandstorms.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 2–15: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01–92	01–98	01–96	01–92
Storm	93–00	99–00	97–00	93–00

Skills and Feats

Abilities represent a character's physical and mental attributes, but skills measure his ability to apply that raw strength and acumen in a number of different ways. A child genius may have more natural intelligence than the average adult, yet the adult may know more about nature than the prodigy thanks to years of study in this particular field. In a similar vein, feats grant unique abilities that build upon the character's attributes and skills. They may improve a character's martial prowess, allow him to create a magic item, improve his defenses or hone his competence with a particular skill. Feats differ from skills in the respect that any character can devote time and energy to improve skills, while feats frequently include prerequisites necessitating that the character belong to a certain race or class

Skills

Skills measure a character's adeptness at completing certain tasks and recalling specific information. In most cases, environment does not affect the character's attempt to successfully perform an action like climbing a rock wall or remembering the king's name. There are exceptions though. It is much easier to forage for food and water in a lush, tropical forest than in an arid, sandy desert. This chapter presents some desert-specific uses for several skills. These include identifying geographical features that may lead a desert traveler to water or discerning whether an oasis is really what it seems or is actually a mirage.

Acrobatics

Arid sand plains allow characters to perform tricky maneuvers that are impossible to duplicate in firm, moist soil. The loose particles of granular sand and dust that cover the hard, dry ground beneath it function like ball bearings, allowing a character moving across a sand plain at a quick pace to literally slide a few extra feet. You cannot use Acrobatics to slide if your speed is reduced due to carrying a medium or heavy load or wearing medium or heavy armor. If an ability allows you to move at full speed under such conditions, you can use Acrobatics to slide. Whenever you move in a straight line at your full speed or greater (including when you charge an enemy) you may slide up to 15 additional feet as part of that same action with a successful Acrobatics check. You can make an Acrobatics check to slide only once each turn, even if you run, charge or double move. You may include the additional distance you intend to slide to determine whether you are eligible to charge; however if you fail to slide far enough to attack that enemy, you lose your attack and may take no other actions. You receive a +4 bonus to slide if you move twice your speed, and an additional +4 bonus for every increment of speed in excess of twice your speed, i.e. +8 at triple your speed and so on. If you fail the Acrobatics check, you do not slide, and your movement ends. If you fail the check by 5 or more, you also fall prone in the square where your movement ended.

Acrobatics "Sliding" and DCs

Additional Distance	Acrobatics DC ¹
5 feet	12
10 feet	22
15 feet	32

¹Includes +2 modifier for moving on a slightly obstructed surface (gravel, sand)

Appraise

Bazaars are found in every desert city, town and most villages. This open-air market is a treasure trove of exotic goods, wondrous items and incredible bargains for the savvy shopper, but for every diamond in the rough is a silk purse made from a sow's ear. *Caveat emptor*, Latin for let the buyer beware is a common phrase muttered among prospective buyers seeking the best deal. A character may use Appraise to sift through the sales talk to determine the most valuable item in the bazaar or to determine the merchant with the best prices. The DC of this check is 20 for a bazaar in a village or town but can increase to as high as 30 for a bazaar in a major city. A successful check identifies the merchant whose prices are 1d6% cheaper than the normal list price. If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the prices are 2d6% cheaper. If you fail your Appraise check by 5 or more, items cost 1d6% more than the normal list price. Sizing up a bazaar takes a number of minutes equal to the check's DC so it takes 20 minutes to survey a bazaar in a village and 30 minutes in a major city. Additional attempts to search for the best prices or find the most valuable item reveal the same results. The results of an Appraise check combine with those gained from Profession (merchant).

Climb

One of the most feared and legendary desert hazards is quicksand. In most cases, quicksand consists predominately of water and loose sand. A character caught in this deadly trap can swim to safety but dry quicksand is another matter. As the name implies, this version contains no water so it is impossible to swim to safety. Without outside assistance, the only means of escaping dry quicksand is to climb out of it. The process of using Climb checks to escape dry quicksand is discussed in the "Quicksand" section of **Chapter 2**.

Knowledge (geography)

In the desert, a few drops of water are worth their weight in gold. The laws of physics dictate that water sinks to its lowest level, and characters adept at this particular skill are able to identify potential sources of water based upon the area's topography. You recognize that valleys surrounded by tall mountains, low-lying areas and rocks bearing obvious signs of erosion are terrain features that commonly lead to aquifers, oases and wadis. You can spot these telltale signs by making a successful DC 15 Knowledge (geography) check which may direct you to a supply of water. The DC increases by +1 for every mile between your current location and the water source. Locating these features does not guarantee that there is any water at the site. The GM must consult the tables found in **Chapter 1** to determine whether there is any accessible water source in the area.

Knowledge (nature)

Water is the wellspring of life in the desert. Animals and plants cannot survive for long without the precious fluid, so they can lead you directly to its source. By making a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check, you identify the most likely flight patterns or overland trails that birds or animals would follow to reach a potential source of water. You are also aware of the best times to spot these creatures as they travel to and from a water source. Provided that there is a source of water in the area, you can take up a position in the best possible location to spot birds and animals making their way to and from a source of water. You must still succeed at a Perception check to actually spot these animals and birds as they travel across the



desert or succeed at a Survival check to follow their tracks, if any, to and from the water source. The GM must consult the tables found in **Chapter 1** to determine whether there is any accessible water source within the area.

Perception

Mirages are nature's cruellest pranks. To tantalize a thirsty character with a glistening image of watery delight only to reveal its true form as he nears his coveted prize proves utterly disheartening. In some circumstances, the character's wild dash to the illusory water source can drive the desperate creature to madness. You can use Perception to discern whether the image is actually a body of water or merely a mirage. The DC to correctly identify the image as a mirage is 20 adjusted by the modifiers normally applied to Perception checks.

Profession (merchant)

In desert communities, haggling is the customary and traditional way of conducting business. Paying full price insults many merchants, though the transgression is not enough to stop them from taking the rube's money. In the bazaars of major desert cities, haggling ascends to the level of an entertainment form. Merchants and buyers trade offers, tales and barbs, as they shrewdly negotiate a price for something as mundane as a handful of dates. Wild exaggerations about each participant's mother or crude comments about their spouses are commonly heard throughout the marketplace. The posturing and colorful exchanges are just a prelude to getting down to serious business. Anyone can use Profession (merchant) to get the best price for practically any item. To use this skill both parties must understand each other and have the intelligence to enter into a business transaction. The DC is equal to 10 + creature's Hit Dice + creature's Cha modifier. Alternatively, the parties can make opposed Profession (merchant) checks to determine who gets the best deal. If you succeed at the check or win an opposed check, the price is 1d6% better in your favor. If you fail the check, the price is 1d6% worse. If

you succeed by 10 or more, the price is 2d6% better. Likewise if you fail by 10 or more, the price is 2d6% worse. These results stack with those gained from using the Appraise skill. A character can still make an Appraise check to determine the item's actual value. If he succeeds, he can refuse to pay the other party's price though the other party refuses to budge from their price. Using this skill to haggle takes 1d6 minutes.

Survival

Finding sufficient food and water in a verdant forest is entirely different than locating those same commodities in a hot and dry desert or even a semiarid desert. Bodies of water are relatively common in forests and grasslands, but they are extremely rare in the desert. Before determining whether you can forage for food and water in the desert, the GM should consult the tables found in **Chapter 1** to determine if there is a water source within a 1,000 square mile area. If there is no water, you cannot use the Survival skill to get along in the wild. In the event that there is water in the area, apply the following modifiers to the Survival check's DC to get along in the wild.

Condition	Survival DC Modifier
Semiarid desert	+4
Hot and dry desert	+10
Large body of water ¹	-2
Oasis	+2
Plants	+2
Wadi	+4
Aquifer	+8

¹ This includes rivers and lakes.

SKILLS AND FEATS

You may also use the Survival skill in conjunction with Knowledge (nature) to locate the most likely place to find tracks left by animals moving to and from a water source. Sand dunes and sand plains are treated as very soft ground for following tracks. Salt pans are treated as hard ground. Wind also has a significant effect on trails left in granular materials like dust and sand. For every 24 hours of strong winds, the DC increases by +2. For every 24 hours of severe winds, the DC increases by +4. It is impossible to follow tracks in dusty and sandy areas that have been affected by wind speeds greater than 51 miles per hour.

Survival also allows you to avoid natural hazards like quicksand. The DC to avoid wet quicksand is still DC 15. The DC to avoid dry quicksand increases to 25. One check resolves whether you can avoid natural hazards including wet quicksand and dry quicksand.

Feats

Most feats can be performed just as easily in a crowded tavern, as they could be in a salt flat. Some feats though are best suited for desert adventurers. This section provides several new feats designed for desert campaigns along with many others that have more general applications. Among these are feats that increase a character's speed and reaction time on the sandy dunes as well as those that allow a character to use his charisma to impact combat.

Aces up a Sleeve (Combat)

You can simultaneously throw two light weapons at a single target.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Point-Blank Shot, Quick Draw.

Benefit: When making a full-attack action with light weapons, your first attack throws two light weapons at the same time at a single target. If the first attack hits, both light weapons hit. Apply precision-based damage (such as sneak attack) and critical hit damage only once for this attack. Damage bonuses from a high Strength bonus apply to each light weapon, as do other damage bonuses, such as a ranger's favored enemy bonus. Damage reduction and resistances apply separately to each light weapon.

Backstab

You can swiftly draw a weapon and attack before an enemy can react.

Prerequisites: Sleight of Hand 1 rank, Weapon Finesse.

Benefit: You may attempt a Sleight of Hand check in place of an initiative check if you already threaten an enemy at the time when you would normally make an initiative check. You cannot be surprised by an enemy you threaten. You can use this feat only if you are holding a light weapon, rapier, whip or spiked chain made for a creature of your size category.

Bazaar Merchant

You are an expert at valuing items and negotiating the best prices.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Appraise and Profession (merchant) skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Bazaar Thief

You are adept at concealing your identity while stealing.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Disguise and Sleight of Hand skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Bum's Rush (Teamwork)

You and one or more allies bull rush as a team.

Prerequisites: Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a bull rush combat maneuver against an enemy threatened by an ally with this feat, you roll twice and take the better result. You may roll an additional die for each ally with this feat beyond the first threatening the enemy. In that case, you take the best result.

Caravan Merchant

You are skilled at riding a camel and selling goods.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Profession (merchant) and Ride skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Charioteer

You are an expert at driving a chariot.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Handle Animal and Profession (driver) skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Desert Acclimated

You are adept at avoiding and escaping desert hazards as well as withstanding the environment.

Prerequisite: Endurance.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on the following checks and saves: Climb checks made to escape from dry quicksand; Swim checks made to escape from wet quicksand; Survival checks made to notice wet and dry quicksand; Constitution checks to avoid getting sunburn; and Perception checks made to identify mirages.

You take half damage from starvation, thirst, dust storms, sandstorms, and hot or cold environments. You can drink a half gallon of water per day and eat a half pound of food without being affected by thirst or starvation under normal conditions. You must increase your consumption of water to 1 gallon per day in very hot conditions and 1-1/2 gallons of water in severe heat.

Normal: A Medium creature needs to drink 1 gallon of water and eat 1 pound of food per day to avoid making Constitution checks to avoid thirst or starvation. In very hot conditions and severe heat, water requirements increase to 2 gallons and 3 gallons per day respectively.

Desert Explorer

You are familiar with desert terrain and survival techniques.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on Knowledge (geography) and Survival skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Desert Legs

Enemies find it difficult to perform combat maneuvers against you in desert terrain.

Benefit: You receive a +4 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Defense when resisting a bull rush or trip attempt while standing on desert terrain.

Distracting Escape (Combat, Teamwork)

You and one or more allies can combine forces to escape a grapple.

Prerequisites: Improved Grapple, Escape Artist 5 ranks

When you and an ally with this feat are grappling the same creature, you or your ally may attempt to escape the grapple with the other's assistance. To do this, you or your ally must ready an Escape Artist check triggered by

DUNES OF DESOLATION

the other party's attempt to succeed on an Escape Artist check to break free of the grapple. You and your ally then roll Escape Artist checks and combine the results. If the check is successful, the party that readied the Escape Artist check remains in the grapple, while the other party escapes. Additional parties can assist in the attempt by readying Escape Artist checks, but the party acting on his turn is the only one that can attempt to escape.

Do Your Worst (Combat)

You take no actions to defend yourself to take an additional attack against your enemy.

Prerequisite: Cha 13, Fearsome Reputation.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can make an attack at your full base attack bonus against an enemy within reach. After you make your attack, you lower your defenses against the enemy you just attacked. You lose your Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) and your dodge bonus to AC. Your callous disregard of your enemy provokes an attack of opportunity from him. If he misses, you can make an additional attack (using your full base attack bonus) against that enemy. You can only make one additional attack per round with this feat. The effects of this feat last until your next turn.

Special: The effects of this feat and Fearsome Reputation stack.

Dune Walker

You move faster than normal in desert terrain.

Benefit: While you are wearing light armor or no armor, your base speed increases by 10 feet whenever you move across desert terrain. You lose the benefits of this feat if you carry a medium or heavy load.

Special: You can take this feat only once. Its effects stack with Fleet.

Embalmer

You are skilled at combating the undead and have little fear of them.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Will saves made to resist an undead creature's fear effects. You get a +4 bonus on all Knowledge (religion) checks made to identify undead monsters and their special powers or vulnerabilities.

Eyes of the Desert

You can see things that most others cannot see in the desert.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on the following checks and saves whenever you make them in a desert: all Perception checks, Fortitude saves to resist blindness, Survival checks made to follow tracks and Constitution checks made to avoid light sensitivity and light blindness.

Special: You can take this feat only once. Its effects stack with those gained from other feats and the ranger's favored terrain ability.

Fearsome Reputation (Combat)

You can lower your defenses to increase your accuracy and strength.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: You can choose to take a -1 penalty to your AC and Reflex saves to gain a +1 bonus on all melee attack rolls, weapon damage rolls and combat maneuver checks. When your base attack bonus reaches +4 and every four points thereafter, the AC and Reflex save penalties increase by -1 and the melee attack, weapon damage and combat maneuver checks increase by +1. You can only choose to use this feat when you declare that you are making an attack or a full-attack action with a melee weapon. The effects of this feat last until your next turn.

Flying Carpet Pilot

You can perform special maneuvers atop a flying carpet

Benefit: You can take ranks in the Fly skill even if you normally could

not do so. Your bonus on Fly skill checks is equal to your level while aboard a *carpet of flying*.

Normal: You cannot take ranks in Fly without a natural means of flight or gliding. Your bonus on Fly skill checks is equal to half the caster level while aboard a *carpet of flying*.

Genie Sage

You spent your life studying genies.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (planes) 6 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on Knowledge (planes) checks made to identify genies and their special powers or vulnerabilities. Once per day, you can take 20 on a Knowledge (planes) check made for this purpose. You gain a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls against genies and get a +1 insight bonus to AC against genies.

Horticulturist

You know everything there is to know about plants and how to combat them.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on the following checks and saves: Knowledge (nature) checks made to identify plant monsters and their special powers or vulnerabilities; Fortitude saves to resist all plant-based poisons, Fortitude saves to avoid being sickened or nauseated by plants or plant-based substances; combat maneuver checks made to grapple plants; and Escape Artist checks made to escape from a plant's grapple.

You also receive a +4 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Defense whenever a plant tries to grapple you.

In the Stars

You gain foresight from interpreting celestial omens.

Prerequisite: Profession (astrologer) 5 ranks.

Benefit: You may attempt a Profession (astrologer) skill check in place of an initiative check once per day. When you acquire 10 ranks in this skill and at every 5 ranks thereafter, you may use this feat one additional time per day.

Instinctive Grappler (Combat)

Instinct guides your actions while grappling.

Prerequisites: Combat Expertise, Improved Grapple.

Benefit: You may add your Wisdom modifier to combat maneuver checks made to grapple a foe. You may also add your Wisdom modifier to your Combat Maneuver Defense whenever an opponent tries to grapple you. Whenever a foe with an Intelligence of 3 or less attempts to start a grapple with you, the foe must make two rolls and use the worse result.

Jockey

Mounts achieve astonishing speeds under your guidance.

Prerequisites: Ride 6 ranks, Mounted Combat.

Benefit: You can spur your mount to greater speed with a free action. If you succeed on your Ride check, the mount's speed increases by 10 feet. If you succeed by 5 and every 5 points thereafter, the mount's speed increases by an additional 5 feet. If you roll a natural 20 on your Ride check, the mount takes no damage for that round. You can use this feat every round, but the mount becomes fatigued after a number of rounds equal to 1-1/2 times its Constitution score.

Normal: You can spur your mount as a move action. A successful Ride check increases the mount's speed by 10 feet for 1 round. The mount becomes fatigued after a number of rounds equal to its Constitution score.

Last Chance

You expend all your energy on one desperate gamble.

Prerequisite: Con 13.

Benefit: You must use this feat during your turn before you attempt any die rolls, and its effects last until your next turn. You add your Constitution bonus as a morale bonus to one attack roll, weapon damage roll, saving throw, skill check or ability check of your choice even if your Constitution modifier has already modified the die roll. At the end of your turn, you take nonlethal damage equal to your Constitution bonus and must succeed at a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being staggered until the end of your next turn. If you roll a natural 1 on the Constitution check, you immediately fall unconscious and remain so until the end of your next turn. You cannot use this feat if you are fatigued, exhausted or already staggered.

Mental Rehearsal (Combat)

Additional time brings greater insight.

Benefit: Whenever you ready an attack, you get a +1 insight bonus to your attack roll. The insight bonus applies only to the attack triggered by the event specified in your ready action. You do not gain an insight bonus when you make attacks of opportunity. When your base attack bonus reaches +6 and every five points thereafter the insight bonus increases by +1.

My Turn (Combat)

You choose not to act in order to deliver a punishing blow to an enemy that just hit you.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Combat Reflexes, Fearsome Reputation.

Benefit: You may take no actions this round other than a 5-foot step. Whenever an enemy hits you with a melee attack before the start of your next turn, you can make a melee attack at your full base attack bonus against that enemy as an immediate action. You can make only one such attack each round. This attack does not count towards the number of attacks of opportunity you can make in a round, so you are still entitled to take attacks of opportunity if the opportunities arise. You may add your Charisma modifier to your attack and weapon damage rolls on this attack, and any other melee attacks you make until the beginning of your next turn.

Now You See It (Teamwork)

When working in concert with another, your ally can snatch a weapon out of mid-air.

Prerequisites: Sleight of Hand 5 ranks, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm.

Benefit: Whenever you attempt a disarm combat maneuver against an enemy threatened by an ally with this feat, you get a +2 bonus to the attempt. This bonus stacks with the bonus gained from the Improved Disarm feat. If you succeed at disarming the enemy, your ally can take an immediate action to grab the item in mid-air. To do so, he must succeed on a Sleight of Hand check using the enemy's Combat Maneuver Defense as the DC for the check. He must have at least one hand free to grab the item. If he has both hands free, he gets a +4 bonus to his Sleight of Hand check.

Olé (Combat)

You can avoid charging creatures.

Prerequisites: Step Up.

Benefit: Whenever an enemy charges at you, you get a +2 dodge bonus to AC and may take a 5-foot step after he ends his movement, but before he resolves the attack. If you move out of the creature's threat range, he cannot attack you.

Palace Schemer

You have inside knowledge about the royal court and local events.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Knowledge (local) and Knowledge (nobility) skill checks. If you have 10 or more ranks in one of these skills, the bonus increases to +4 for that skill.

Royal Taster

You can taste poison in your food or water and identify potions by taste.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on saving throws against all ingested poisons (but not other poisons) and Perception checks made to identify the powers of a potion through taste.

Sales Pitch

You can fool people with fast talk.

Benefit: You can attempt a Profession (merchant) skill check in place of a Bluff skill check to convince your opponent that what you are saying is true. The Bluff skill check modifiers also apply to the Profession (merchant) skill check.

Sand in the Eyes

You can blind enemies by throwing sand in their eyes.

Prerequisites: Combat Expertise, Improved Dirty Trick, Throw Anything

Benefit: Instead of making a melee attack as an attack of opportunity, you can attempt a dirty trick combat maneuver to throw sand in your enemy's eyes, blinding him for 1 round. (See the "Combat Maneuvers" section in Chapter 8 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Players Guide* for details regarding dirty trick combat maneuvers.) You must have at least one free hand to perform this maneuver.

Normal: A dirty trick combat maneuver is only usable as a standard action.

Sand Rat

You can sense movement upon the sands.

Prerequisites: Perception 4 ranks, Improved Initiative.

Benefit: So long as you and your enemy are in desert terrain, you cannot be surprised, and you get a +2 bonus on initiative checks and Perception checks.

Selective Hearing

The words of others exert less influence on you.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on the following checks and saves: Sense Motive checks to avoid being bluffed, saves to resist language-dependent spells and effects, and saves to resist spells and effects that rely upon audible components (such as *ghost sound*).

You also receive a +2 bonus on all saves to resist spells and effects that deal sonic damage.

Snake Charmer

You can easily influence animals with a wind instrument.

Prerequisites: Bardic performance class feature, Perform (wind instruments) 1 rank

Benefit: When you use bardic performance with audible components, you may target twice as many creatures of the animal type as normal. In addition, the DC for saving throws against your bardic performance is

DUNES OF DESOLATION

increased by +2 for creatures of the animal type.

Special: You must use a wind instrument to get these benefits.

Swarm Expert

You can deal weapon damage to swarms and take half damage from their attacks.

Benefit: You deal your normal damage to swarms of any size when you attack them with a slashing or piercing weapon. A swarm made up of Tiny creatures takes half damage when you attack it with a bludgeoning weapon. A swarm composed of Fine or Diminutive creatures is immune to damage from your bludgeoning weapons.

You also take half damage from all attacks made by swarms.

Normal: A swarm made up of Tiny creatures takes half damage from slashing and piercing weapons. A swarm composed of Fine or Diminutive creatures is immune to all weapon damage.

Take the Pain

Mental toughness drives your body forward.

Prerequisites: Iron Will.

Benefit: You can attempt a Will save in place of a Fortitude save to avoid taking nonlethal damage from any source.

Twice-Bitten

You are resistant to animal and vermin poisons.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to saves made against animal and vermin poisons.

Wind Warrior

Wind has little effect on you.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty to ranged attacks in strong or severe winds, and a -4 penalty in a windstorm. It is still impossible to make ranged attacks in hurricane or tornado force winds. You are treated as if you were one size category larger than you actually are when determining if you are checked or blown away by high winds. In addition, you suffer no penalties to your Fly skill checks in strong or severe winds and the penalties suffered in a windstorm, hurricane and tornado are 4 less than normal.

Desert Equipment

Humans cannot survive in the desert on stamina and guile alone. Their lives depend upon a diverse array of items and tools to tame the desert's harsh and unforgiving climate and make it somewhat livable. This equipment ranges from mundane linen robes and leather sandals to fantastic magical carpets and golden lamps. Proper clothing, supplies and survival gear are a must for any desert explorer hoping to endure the arduous trek across the burning sands. Breathable fabrics, protective headwear and durable shoes are absolutely essential. Lightweight and reliable storage containers for food and water are also critical while more exotic tools like a compass or a map guide desert travelers in the right direction. Those brave souls in pursuit of adventure must supplement these essentials with a repertoire of mystical items to aid them in their quests. Magical clothing and jewelry bestowing added protection against the elements are always popular choices among adventurers as are items that heal injuries caused by the desert's many natural hazards. Enchanted scimitars, wondrous oils and resins, mysterious talismans and other magical creations also aid skilled warriors and wizards en route to becoming a legend of the dunes. No matter how seemingly ordinary, every piece of equipment on a desert traveler's person may one day spell the difference between life — and death.

Clothing

There is an old adage that clothes makes the man, and nowhere is it truer than in the desert. In fact, without magical intervention, it is impossible for a human to survive for more than a few hours in a cold desert without warm clothing. Though hot and dry deserts and semiarid deserts also experience their share of freezing temperatures during the overnight hours, clothing is just as important for coping with the extremes of a superheated environment as it is for dealing with numbing cold. This concept seems counterintuitive as most people are accustomed to beating the heat by stripping down to as little clothing as decorum allows, but clothing offers valuable protection against the relentless waves of harmful light and warmth radiating from the distant sun. An outer robe and headdress help prevent sunburn and surprisingly do more to keep the body cool than going without them. Durable and comfortable shoes are also a necessity to protect the traveler's feet on those long hikes across the hot sands. In addition to the dangers caused by walking with bare feet on the searing sands, the desert's mineral-laden ground also corrodes and desiccates any material it comes in contact with — including living flesh. Presented below are several nonmagical articles of clothing that aid desert explorers in their travels.

Robe

A long-sleeved flowing robe stretching from the shoulders to just above the ankle is the outer garment of choice for most desert natives. It seems illogical to wear clothing that covers the entire body given the climate's stifling heat, but a properly crafted robe provides more comfort and protection against the sun's heat and radiation than bare skin. When choosing outerwear for the desert, the two most important features are material and fit. Porous fabrics that allow air to penetrate through the weaves and circulate between the robe and the body are the most desirable materials. For this reason, most desert robes are woven from cotton, wool, flax, linen or a combination of these materials. These natural fibers strike a perfect balance between keeping the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays at bay, absorbing perspiration and letting cool breezes pass through the robe with minimal hindrance. The desert traveler only gains these benefits if the robe is loosely fitted. If it is too snug, there is not enough room for air to circulate between the robe and body. Worse yet, the wearer's sweat

evaporates quickly in tight-fitting clothing. Perspiration is cooler than the air temperature, so it acts as a natural refrigerant. The intended goal behind a desert robe is akin to a modern day air conditioner. As fresh air pushes its way through the outer garment and passes over perspiration, it cools. The cooler air then circulates across the body before rising through the top of the garment and beginning the process anew. Common sense would also dictate that color should play a significant role in this cooling effect, yet its impact is relatively minimal. Though most desert robes are white or dyed a light color that reflects sunlight, some desert peoples wear black robes that absorb sunlight. It is believed that dark colors increase the robe's circulation. Because the fabric retains more heat, air passing through the robe rises faster which increases the rate of circulation.

Headwear

The robe is the desert traveler's most visible article of clothing, but headwear is equally important. Its primary purpose is to shield the head and face from the sun's damaging rays, and it comes in several varieties and styles. One version consists of a rectangular piece of cloth that drapes over the head and covers the nape of the neck. It is fastened by a cord that wraps around the forehead. Another popular style features a long piece of cloth that is tightly wound around the head and ends in a loose strip of cloth that can be stretched across the mouth and nose to protect those orifices from sand and dust. Regardless of the variety, headwear is usually made from cotton, wool, flax, silk or a combination of these materials.

Sandals

Shoes round out the last essential accoutrement of the desert explorer's attire. The components range from straw and reeds for the simplest varieties to leather and wood for high-end products. Travelers overwhelmingly prefer sandals over traditional shoes found in temperate and cold climates. Sandals differ from conventional shoes in the fact that they do not completely encapsulate the foot. Instead, they consist of a sole fashioned from straw, reeds, leather or wood that is fastened around the foot by straps fitted to the sole which leaves most of the foot out in the open for greater relief from the stifling temperatures. Traditional closed-design shoes grant protection against the corrosive soil, but they impose a -1 circumstance penalty on Fortitude saves against exposure to hot weather. Shoes provide valuable protection against the heat and mineral-laden soil which take their toll on bare feet after long periods of exposure to these perils.

Miscellaneous Articles

To complement the basics of desert outerwear, the best-equipped explorers prepare themselves for every contingency. Blazing hot days are commonly followed by chilly evenings. It is impractical for the desert traveler to wear a warm weather outfit during the day and also carry cold weather clothing for the much cooler overnight hours, so most adventurers pack away a utilitarian, finely stitched lightweight blanket that not only retains body heat in cold weather but also protects against sand and dust blown about by high winds. Protective eyewear is another concern for the well-prepared adventurer. Sand, sun and bright light take their toll on these critical organs. The variations of eyewear run the gamut from a simple wooden visor worn above the eyes to elaborate eyeglasses. The visor offers effective protection against sunburn, but eyeglasses do much more. In addition to warding the eyes against the sun's harmful rays, they also lessen glare and the sun's intense brightness. The best designed eyeglasses consist of two expertly crafted lenses in a precisely fitted

DUNES OF DESOLATION

leather framework that forms a tight seal around the eyes and is fastened around the back of the head by leather straps. As the name implies, the lenses are predominately made from glass but many magical variations incorporate other transparent materials like polished crystal. Despite the intense heat and bright sunlight, the best prepared desert adventurer is generally covered from head to toe in protective clothing and gear.

Item	Cost	Weight
Desert blanket, masterwork	20 gp	1 lb.
Desert outfit	7 gp	4 lbs.
Desert outfit, masterwork	150 gp	3 lbs.
Desert robe	5 gp	2 lbs.
Desert robe, masterwork	100 gp	1 lb.
Eyeglasses	50 gp	—
Eyeglasses, masterwork	500 gp	—
Headgear	2 gp	1 lb.
Headgear, masterwork	40 gp	1 lb.
Sandals	1 gp	1 lb.
Sandals, masterwork	20 gp	1 lb.
Scarf	1 sp	—
Visor	2 gp	1 lb.

Desert Blanket, Masterwork

Usually sewn from tightly woven silk, wool and cotton fabrics, the desert blanket grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against exposure to cold weather. When wrapped around the body, it protects skin and carried gear against contamination from sand during a dust storm or a sandstorm and when draped across the nose and mouth it protects against choking during a dust storm or sandstorm.

Desert Outfit

The desert outfit includes a desert robe, headgear and sandals.

Desert Outfit, Masterwork

This variety includes masterwork versions of the desert robe, headgear and sandals. When worn together, they grant a +4 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against exposure to hot weather.

Desert Robe

Fabricated from cotton, linen, wool or a combination of these materials, the desert robe protects the body against the dangers of sunburn.

Desert Robe, Masterwork

This intricately woven silk outer garment affords the same protection as an ordinary robe against sunburn, but it also grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saving throws against exposure to hot weather. This circumstance bonus stacks with those granted from wearing masterwork headgear and sandals. A masterwork desert robe also protects the skin and carried gear against the effects of sandstorms.

Eyeglasses

These glasses include two lenses fitted into a wooden or metal frame that sit on the bridge of the nose and are loosely wrapped around the wearer's ears. They afford the same protection against sunburn as a visor, i.e. –2 to the Constitution check DC to resist sunburn. In addition, they grant a +1 circumstance bonus on Constitution checks against light sensitivity or light blindness.

Eyeglasses, masterwork

Precision-crafted from the finest materials, masterwork eyeglasses consist of two lenses fitted into a leather frame that forms a tight seal

around the eyes. They afford the same protection against sunburn as ordinary eyeglasses except that rolling a natural 1 on a Constitution check against sunburn does not result in the character's eyes getting sunburned. Furthermore, these eyeglasses negate the effects of light sensitivity and light blindness, so a character suffering from either condition can see normally while wearing the eyeglasses. The eyeglasses grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Perception checks made to detect a mirage and a +4 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves to resist blindness caused by foreign objects coming into contact with the eyes, such as a dirty trick maneuver to throw sand in the wearer's eyes.

Headgear

Made from cotton, wool or flax, headgear protects the head against the ravages of the sun.

Headgear, Masterwork

Expertly tailored from a continuous piece of cloth, this piece of headgear provides protection against sunburn and grants a +1 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves made against exposure to hot weather. This bonus stacks with the bonuses granted from wearing a masterwork desert robe and masterwork sandals. This version also includes a scarf that protects against sunburn and shields the nose and mouth against the choking hazards of a duststorm.

Sandals

These simple leather sandals provide adequate protection against the heat and desiccating sands.

Sandals, Masterwork

Solid, corrosive-resistant wood and leather provide exceptional protection against the desert's hazards. The sandals grant a +1 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves made against exposure to hot weather and taking damage from prolonged contact with the soil.

Scarf

This simple band of cloth is used to cover the nose and mouth to protect against the choking hazards of a dust storm.

Visor

Visors are made from wood and covered in fabric that is also used to fasten the item around the head. The item protects the eyes and face from sunburn.

Survival Gear

Proper clothing affords valuable protection against the elements, but it is incapable of providing adequate hydration and nourishment. Water is the explorer's most pressing concern, so procuring enough water for a long journey is critical, but storing that much water is a big problem, both literally and figuratively. A single gallon of water weighs 8-1/3 pounds (not including its container) so carrying enough water to keep the average person hydrated in severe heat for just one day would require the character to haul 25 pounds of water. To extrapolate this a little further, a weeklong supply of water for a single person in severe heat would weigh almost 200 pounds. To solve this dilemma, desert explorers rely upon several creative solutions. Magic is certainly an option for the best-equipped parties, but most others use less costly means of meeting their basic needs. These include an alchemical drink that rehydrates the body more efficiently than water, and portable devices that can purify water from contaminated sources.

Al-haloon Kidney

The al-haloon kidney is a more practical yet somewhat revolting alternative to the traditional portable still. As the moniker implies, this

water purification device consists of a kidney extracted from an al-haloon that is placed inside a traditional waterskin. Because the creature tends to drink water from sources with high mineral contents and other impurities, it evolved specialized kidneys that can filter and purify water from any contaminated source. The kidney secretes impurities into the outer container while the purified water remains within the kidney. The user must discard any accumulated liquids in the outer waterskin before the device can be safely used again.

Creating an al-haloon kidney for this purpose requires more skill than simply tearing the organ out of the creature's body. It requires the craftsmanship of an expert leatherworker capable of sterilizing the organ while retaining its elasticity and filtration properties. An al-haloon kidney holds 1 gallon of water, and takes 1 hour to make contaminated and even poisoned water safe to drink. When filled, the item's weight increases to 14 pounds.

Create: Craft (leather) DC 15

Alchemical Water

The process of dehydration is more complex than the mere loss of fluids. The body also loses vital chemical compounds through perspiration. Alchemists devised this liquid concoction to restore those essential compounds in addition to replenishing fluid loss. Because of its added components, alchemical water is more revitalizing and refreshing than ordinary water. It is also more efficient which means that it takes significantly less alchemical water to satisfy the drinker's hydration needs. Alchemical water generally comes in pint-sized ceramic, glass or leather containers.

The recently discovered formula for alchemical water is a tightly guarded secret in many circles, especially among its creators and purveyors in areas with a high demand for the product. The substance is ordinary water infused with essential salts and other compounds. A single pint of alchemical water is the equivalent of 1 gallon of ordinary water. It satisfies the hydration needs of any creature that must drink water to survive, but it is specially formulated for human physiology. Whenever a human drinks nothing but alchemical water for at least 1 week, the character receives a +2 bonus on checks made against thirst.

Create: Craft (alchemy) DC 20

Portable Still

Made from metals with a high tolerance for heat, a still is a self-contained contraption that allows the user to boil water in one part of the device and capture the purified condensed liquid in a separate container within the device. During the heating stage, the water transforms into its gaseous state, leaving harmful impurities and solid materials behind in the process as well as killing most harmful biological contaminants. The steam rises and then travels through a series of metallic coils that lead to a much cooler container where the water returns to its liquid state. The water in the second container is pure and safe to drink. Small-scale models are available, but they are too bulky to carry on a long, desert journey. The more feasible larger models are typically kept in a wagon pulled by a large caravan. Even in the case of a caravan, the usage of a portable still is seen as a desperate, emergency measure. In most instances, the still is more commonly used to produce alcoholic spirits like whiskey and vodka instead of purifying water.

Though it is not particularly heavy, the portable still's components make it unwieldy to carry for extended periods of time. It consists of one enclosed container for boiling water, connecting coils and an enclosed condenser. The components are constructed from metal or ceramic. It takes the still 1 hour to transform 1 gallon of impure water into potable drinking water. Properly building and operating a portable still requires a successful Profession (engineer) check.

Create and Operate: Profession (engineer) DC 20

Item	Cost	Weight
Al-haloon kidney (empty)	25 gp	6 lbs.
Alchemical water (pint)	10 gp	1 lbs
Portable still	100 gp	5 lbs.

Navigational Gear

Getting lost is a common and well-founded fear among travelers, though losing one's way is far more dangerous in the desert than other biomes. Making a wrong turn en route to a city in a temperate climate may add extra miles to a long trip, but the added distance is not likely to exhaust the traveler's supplies. Straying miles away from an intended destination in a parched, barren and ferociously hot environment may kill a wayward traveler. In addition, hot and dry deserts feature few natural landmarks to steer adventurers in the right direction. To compensate, seasoned explorers use an astrolabe, a compass, a map or any combination of these tools to lead them to their intended destination.

Astrolabe

Though commonly associated with seafarers, an astrolabe is a complex, navigational instrument that is equally useful on land. It is larger and heavier than a compass, but its increased size and weight are a small price to pay for improved versatility and accuracy. Astrologers also use this device to make predictions based on their interpretation of celestial alignments.

Anyone who has been taught how to use this mechanical device can use it at night when the stars are showing to determine the date and time. This process takes 1 minute. An astrolabe grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (geography) and Survival checks to navigate in the desert.

Compass

The compass is a simple, yet effective tool that always points to the world's magnetic pole which is typically due north. It is small, lightweight and durable. Only the most foolhardy or experienced desert adventurers set foot out of their tent without at least a compass tucked somewhere in their robes.

An ordinary compass that points to the magnetic north grants its user a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks made to avoid becoming lost. It also can be used to grant the same bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks made to navigate underground.

Map

Cities, towns and important sites are the most important features on a typical map, but desert map makers take great care to point out known sources of water rather than human settlements. Desert maps cannot rely upon easily recognizable landmarks to steer travelers in the right direction, so they depend upon precise calculations to determine the exact distance between the various points on the map. These maps are significantly more expensive than ordinary maps because they require a high degree of mathematical and geographical expertise.

A geographically relevant map grants a user a +4 circumstance bonus on Survival checks made to navigate in the desert. It can also be used to grant the same bonus on Survival checks to forage for food and water in the desert.

Item	Cost	Weight
Astrolabe	100 gp	6 lbs.
Compass	10 gp	1/2 lb.
Map	225 gp	2 lb.

Magical Items

Mundane items are cheaper, more abundant and easier to produce than magical marvels though they simply cannot match the raw power and wonder that accompany their mystical counterparts. The most exquisitely crafted and expensive sandal may look better and perhaps even be more durable than a pair of magical sandals, but the abilities granted by the magical sandals far outweigh style and longevity. Many magical items encountered in the desert are specially crafted for this rugged environment in both functionality and design. For instance, magical boots are commonly replaced by heat-friendly sandals. Alchemists mix ointments and elixirs from native ingredients like frankincense and myrrh. A significant percentage of magic items are manufactured for the express purpose of making life on the searing sands much more tolerable for those that brave this unforgiving biome. Others are made to combat a particularly troublesome desert menace. The magic items found here accurately reflect the ingenuity found in the hearts and minds of the diverse peoples that adapted to this challenging world of sweltering dunes. Presented below is an assortment of magical items that demonstrate these principles.

Armor

Mithral Shirt of Arrow Blunting

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot armor; **Price** 12,100 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This extremely light +1 *chain shirt* is made of very fine mithral links woven atop a layer of silk. The armor has an arcane spell failure chance of 10%, a maximum Dexterity bonus of +6, and no armor check penalty. It gives its wearer damage reduction 10/magic against ranged attacks. It is considered light armor.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, protection from arrows; **Cost** 6,600 gp.

Shield of Dazzling Colors

Aura moderate illusion; **CL** 6th

Slot —; **Price** 8,250 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This +1 *light wooden shield* is painted in a dizzying array of contrasting colors. The shield's wielder can cause the shield to unleash a vivid cone of clashing colors that causes creatures to be stunned, perhaps also blinded, and possibly knocking them unconscious. The effect duplicates the effects of *color spray*. This is a mind-affecting pattern effect. The shield can create this effect three times per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *color spray*; **Cost** 4,201 gp, 5 sp.

Weapons

Handaxe of Scalping

Aura: moderate transmutation; **CL** 6th

Slot —; **Price** 8,306 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This +1 *handaxe* is most commonly found among nomadic peoples living in the semiarid deserts. The haft is always

fabricated from the bone of a large predatory animal, and etched images of fearsome birds adorn the blade. Whenever the wielder confirms a critical hit with this weapon, the handaxe crashes into the victim's skull and strips the flesh from bone. In addition to dealing the damage from the critical hit, the gaping wound deals 1 point of Charisma damage and dazes the victim for 1 round. A successful DC 14 Fortitude save negates the daze effect, but not the Charisma damage. The handaxe's wielder must be able to reach the victim's head to use this ability.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magical Arms and Armor, *daze*; **Cost** 4,306 gp.

Rattlesnake Whip

Aura faint evocation and transmutation; **CL** 3th

Slot —; **Price** 8,301 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Sloughed rattlesnake skin and the animal's infamous tail are the primary components used to fashion this +1 *whip*. Three times per day, as a standard action, the wielder can rapidly twirl the whip overhead creating a sickening rattle that can be heard by all creatures within a 20-foot radius centered on the wielder. The loud, unnerving sound deals 1d8 points of sonic damage to all creatures except for the wielder. There is no save against this effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *sound burst*, creator must be proficient with a whip; **Cost** 4,301 gp.

Scimitar of El-Marresh

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 4,315 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Centuries ago King Abdul, the ruler of El-Marresh, ordered his blacksmiths to build 100 of these wondrously crafted scimitars for his personal bodyguard. Mysterious runes adorn the blade, and the haft is carved from bone wrapped in exquisite silk. At least half of the blades are reputed to have survived to this day. This weapon is a +1 *scimitar* that grants its wielder a +5 competence bonus to Intimidate checks made to demoralize foes. In addition, whenever the weapon confirms a critical hit, the wielder may attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize foes as a free action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cause fear*, creator must have 5 ranks in the Intimidate skill; **Cost** 2,315 gp.

Staves

Staff of Desert Sustenance

Aura strong abjuration and moderate conjuration; **CL** 12th

Slot —; **Price** 57,600 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Carved from the wood of a desert conifer and topped by a solidified orb of myrrh, this staff is commonly known as the "traveler's stick" because it provides food, drink and protection from the elements. This staff allows the use of the following spells:

- *create food and water* (1 charge)

DESERT EQUIPMENT

- *endure elements* (1 charge)
- *purify food and drink* (1 charge)
- *heroes' feast* (2 charges)

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Create Staff, *create food and water*, *endure elements*, *heroes' feast*, *purify food and drink*; **Cost** 28,800 gp.

Wondrous Items

Ankh of Eternal Life

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 8th
Slot neck; **Price** 8,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Made from solid gold and inlaid with lapis lazuli, this cross with a handle is attached to a golden chain that hangs around the wearer's neck. The ankh grants the wearer a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against death effects, energy drain, negative energy, and spells and spell-like abilities of the necromancy school. In addition, once per day, the ankh can bestow temporary hit points upon the wearer as *false life*. Many desert peoples bury their dead with an ankh of eternal life still draped around their neck. Because of this tradition, grave robbers target the sealed tombs and crypts of the recently departed in the hopes of finding this valuable item.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *death ward*, *false life*; **Cost** 4,000 gp.

Astrolabe of Foreshadowing

Aura faint divination; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 12,500 gp; **Weight** 6 lb.

DESCRIPTION

In addition to functioning as an ordinary astrolabe, this magical device has an added property. When the astrolabe's owner spends at least 10 minutes peering at the night sky with the astrolabe, he gains hidden insight about the next day's events. At any time during the next 24 hours, the owner can declare that he is adding a +5 insight bonus to one attack roll, saving throw, skill check or ability check of his choice. The user must declare that he is applying this bonus before he attempts the die roll. This ability can only be used once per day. It takes 24 hours for the astrolabe to attune itself to its user.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *true strike*, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Profession (astrologer) skill; **Cost** 6,250 gp.

Canopic Phylactery

Aura varies (see below); **CL** varies
Slot headband; **Price** 2,000 gp (*intestines*), 2,000 gp (*liver*), 2,000 gp (*lungs*), 4,000 gp (*stomach*); **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Many desert civilizations mummify the earthly remains of important political, civil and religious figures. During the process, the embalmers remove four of the deceased's vital organs (intestines, liver, lungs and stomach) and place them in earthenware containers known as canopic jars. In most cases, the preserved bodily tissue and its receptacle have no magical properties, but there are exceptions. Whenever a religious

martyr dies for his faith, the high priests and their followers typically demand devotional relics made in their honor. In these instances, the embalmers do not place the entire organ in a jar. Instead, they cut the organ into small pieces and place them inside a phylactery that they enchant and then bestow to their most devout worshippers. The phylactery consists of a small, sealed leather box that is attached to a leather strap worn around the devotee's forehead.

Each phylactery has different powers coinciding with the piece of organ tissue placed inside of the box. A phylactery may contain only one type of organ tissue. Presented below are the four types of phylacteries and their magical properties.

Intestines: The wearer can go without food or water for twice as long as normal without having to attempt Fortitude saves against thirst and starvation and receives a +2 morale bonus on saves against fear. Faint abjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *remove fear*.

Liver: The wearer receives a +2 bonus on saves against poison. Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *delay poison*.

Lungs: The wearer can hold his breath for twice as long as normal without having to make Constitution checks against suffocation and receives a +2 morale bonus on saves against inhaled poisons. Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *water breathing*.

Stomach: The wearer cannot be sickened or nauseated and receives a +2 morale bonus on saves against ingested poisons. Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *purify food and drink*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, additional spells (see text); **Cost** 1,000 gp (*intestines*), 1,000 gp (*liver*), 1,000 gp (*lungs*), 2,000 gp (*stomach*).

Carpet of Flying

Carpets of flying come in many varieties. Though the conventional versions are the most common, there are more specialized models built from the base model. Presented below are four variations of the *carpet of flying*.

Carpet of Acrobatic Flying

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th
Slot —; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This 5 ft. by 5 ft. rug is able to fly through the air as if affected by a *fly* spell of unlimited duration. Expertly handcrafted from silk and wool, this carpet has a carrying capacity of 200 lbs. and can fly at a speed of 60 ft. The carpet has its own command word to activate it — if the device is within voice range, the command word activates it, whether the speaker is on the rug or not. The carpet is then controlled by spoken directions. When the carpet is activated, a pair of delicate, silk shoes appears in the middle of the carpet. When the user places his feet into the shoes, any attempts to separate him from the carpet have no effect. While he is securely fastened to the carpet, the carpet grants a +10 competence bonus to all Fly checks made to perform flying maneuvers. In addition, he does not need to make concentration checks to cast spells while the carpet is moving.

A *carpet of acrobatic flying* can carry up to double its capacity, but doing so reduces its speed to 40 feet. A *carpet of acrobatic flying* can hover without making a Fly skill check.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *fly*, *cat's grace*; **Cost** 15,000 gp.



Carpet of Daring Flying

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th
Slot —; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This 5 ft. by 10 ft. rug is able to fly through the air as if affected by an *overland flight* spell of unlimited duration. Expertly handcrafted from silk and shimmering glass threads, this carpet has a carrying capacity of 400 lbs. and can fly at a speed of 40 ft. The carpet has its own command word to activate it — if the device is within voice range, the command word activates it, whether the speaker is on the rug or not. The carpet is then controlled by spoken directions. Upon command, the user and the carpet become invisible for up to 5 rounds. Doing so requires a standard action. If the user willingly let another creature onto the carpet, it also becomes invisible until the effect expires. The user can use this ability up to three times per day.

A *carpet of daring flying* can carry up to double its capacity, but doing so reduces its speed to 30 feet. A *carpet of daring flying* can hover without making a Fly skill check and gives a +5 bonus to other Fly checks. This item is the subject of many tales recounting famous rescues and last minute escapes from certain doom.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *overland flight*, *vanish*[†];
Cost 15,000 gp.

[†]Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide

Carpet of Deadly Flying

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th

Slot —; **Price** 32,000 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This 5 ft. by 5 ft. rug is able to fly through the air as if affected by an *overland flight* spell of unlimited duration. Woven from a combination of silk, wool and gossamer mithral, this carpet has a carrying capacity of 200 lbs. and can fly at a speed of 40 ft. The carpet has its own command word to activate it — if the device is within voice range, the command word activates it, whether the speaker is on the rug or not. The carpet is then controlled by spoken directions. When activated, the carpet grants its user the Flyby Attack and Deflect Arrows feats while the user remains aboard the carpet even if he does not meet the feats' prerequisites. While aboard the *carpet of deadly flying*, the user gains a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls.

A *carpet of deadly flying* can carry up to double its capacity, but doing so reduces its speed to 30 feet. A *carpet of deadly flying* can hover without making a Fly skill check and gives a +5 bonus to other Fly checks. The wealthiest desert kingdoms can deploy an entire squadron of these flying terrors.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *entropic shield*, *overland flight*; **Cost** 16,000 gp.

Carpet of Luxurious Flying

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 20th
Slot —; **Price** 110,000 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This 10 ft. by 10 ft. rug is able to fly through the air as if affected by an *overland flight* spell of unlimited duration.

DESERT EQUIPMENT

Expertly handcrafted from silk and wool, this carpet has a carrying capacity of 800 lbs. and can fly at a speed of 40 ft. The carpet has its own command word to activate it — if the device is within voice range, the command word activates it, whether the speaker is on the rug or not. The carpet is then controlled by spoken directions. When the carpet is activated, a canopy in the likeness of the rug appears 10 ft. overhead, and transparent cloth drapes down from the canopy creating an extradimensional space within the area encapsulated by the rug, canopy and cloth. The rug is not hidden though it appears to be unoccupied. Within this space, creatures do not age, and natural healing takes place at twice the normal rate. Fresh water and food (fruits and vegetables only) are in abundance. The climate is comfortable for all creatures involved. Creatures in the extradimensional space are hidden, beyond the reach of spells (including divinations), unless those spells work across planes. Spells cannot be cast across the extradimensional interface, nor can area effects cross it. Those in the extradimensional space can see through the transparent cloth surrounding it. The transparent cloth is invisible, and even creatures that can see the transparent cloth cannot see through it. The carpet can continuously maintain this extradimensional space up to 30 days divided by the number of creatures affected by it. It must then recharge for at least 24 hours before it can be activated again.

A *carpet of luxurious flying* can carry up to double its capacity, but doing so reduces its speed to 30 feet. A *carpet of luxurious flying* can hover without making a Fly skill check and gives a +5 bonus to other Fly checks. Ownership of this carpet is considered to be the ultimate status symbol among desert peoples.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *gate*, *rope trick*, *overland flight*; **Cost** 55,000 gp.

Cloak of the Dunes

Aura moderate abjuration and evocation; **CL** 6th
Slot shoulders; **Price** 6,800 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This white, silk cloak protects the wearer from the desert's natural hazards. The cloak keeps the wearer cool during the hot daytime hours and warm during the chilly evenings as if he were affected by *endure elements*. Once per day, the wearer can command the cloak to transform into a small tent that shields the wearer and possibly his allies from the elements. The tent appears to be made of durable canvas that occupies a 15-ft.-diameter sphere centered on the wearer's square. The tent is large enough to accommodate the wearer and up to eight other Medium creatures. Other than these exceptions, the tent duplicates the effects of *tiny hut*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*, *tiny hut*; **Cost** 3,400 gp.

Compass of Water Detection

Aura faint divination; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This bronze compass has two indicators on its face. The top indicator points to magnetic north which grants its user a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks made to avoid becoming lost, just like an ordinary compass. The lower indicator is carved from a piece of bone removed from an

al-haloon's nose. This dial points to the largest volume of water within 1 mile of the device. If there is no water in the area, it also points to magnetic north. The compass cannot locate water that is buried beneath 1 foot of solid material including earth, sand, stone or wood.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*; **Cost** 500 gp.

Date of Palm Tree Bonding

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th
Slot —; **Price** 32,400 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

When held by its user, this ordinary-looking date allows its owner to activate several abilities as a standard action. The date's user can assume the form of a date palm tree (as *tree shape*). He can infuse himself with a date palm tree and teleport himself from one date palm tree to another (as *tree stride*). Lastly, the date grants him a +2 natural armor bonus for 40 minutes (as *barkskin*). Each of these abilities is usable once per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *tree shape*, *tree stride*; **Cost** 16,200 gp.

Decryption Spectacles

Aura moderate abjuration and divination; **CL** 10th
Slot eyes; **Price** 11,500 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This pair of ivory rimmed spectacles grants the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Spellcraft checks made to decipher a scroll or learn a spell from a spellbook or scroll. The competence bonus also applies to Use Magic Device checks made to decipher a written spell. In addition, the spectacles let the wearer carefully examine magical seals, glyphs and other spells and spell-like effects that can be bypassed with the utterance of a password. Doing so takes a full-round action, and the wearer must be aware of the spell or spell-like effect before he can examine it. To learn the password needed to bypass a magical ward, the wearer must succeed on a decryption check (1d20 + 10 [the spectacles' caster level]) against the spell being targeted by the spectacles (DC = 11 + the spell's caster level). If the decryption check succeeds, the wearer learns the password and can safely pass through the warded area. In the event that the wearer fails the decryption check, the wearer learns nothing. If the decryption check fails by 5 or more, the spectacles reveal an incorrect password. The spectacles can make only one decryption check per spell. Additional attempts generate the same result as the first attempt.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *dispel magic*, *read magic*, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Spellcraft and Use Magic Device skills; **Cost** 5,750 gp.

El-Halaj Ointment

Aura faint abjuration, conjuration and enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 1,750 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

A jar of this foul-smelling ointment is 2 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep, and contains three applications. The ointment

DUNES OF DESOLATION

is made by combining jasmine oil with powder derived from crushing a small piece of an el-halaj's horn. Applied to a diseased area, it removes disease (as *remove disease*). When swallowed, the ointment bolsters the creature's courage (as *remove fear*). When rubbed behind the ears, it fills the creature with rage (as *rage*).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *rage*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*; **Cost** 875 gp.

Eyeglasses of Distortion

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 3rd

Slot eyes; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This pair of eyeglasses consists of two finely polished crystal lenses fitted into a lightweight, ceramic frame. The item's crystal lenses distort visual images in such a manner that they allow the wearer to see clearly while protecting the wearer's eyes from gaze attacks. The eyeglasses grant the wearer a +4 morale bonus to saves against gaze attacks. In addition, if the attacking creature makes a gaze attack targeting the wearer, the attacking creature's gaze attack is reflected back at the attacking creature whenever the wearer rolls a natural 20 on his saving throw against the gaze attack.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *mirror image*, creator must have at least 5 ranks in Craft (glass) skill; **Cost** 2,000 gp.

Frankincense Ointment

Aura faint conjuration, necromancy and transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 1,500 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A jar of this ointment is 2 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep, and contains three applications. Applied to the face, the ointment grants a temporary +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma (as *eagle's splendor*). Applied on the eyes of a dead creature it preserves the body so that it does not decay (as *gentle repose*). Rubbed on a wound, the ointment cures 1d8+5 points of damage (as *cure light wounds*).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cure light wounds*, *eagle's splendor*, *gentle repose*; **Cost** 750 gp.

Genie Lamp

Aura Strong conjuration; **CL** 15th

Slot —; **Price** 60,000 gp (*djinni lamp*), 54,000 gp (*efreeti lamp*), 24,000 gp (*janni lamp*), 66,000 gp (*marid lamp*), 54,000 gp (*shaitan lamp*); **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These lamps appear as golden versions of an ordinary oil lamp. In actuality, they contain the trapped soul of a genie which is imprisoned within a gem inlaid beneath a layer of poured gold inside the lamp. Opening the lamp and breaking the gem releases the trapped genie requiring it to perform a service as *trap the soul*. As long as the gem remains intact, the *genie lamp* functions normally. The imprisoned genie can telepathically communicate with the lamp's owner. Its attitude towards the lamp's owner depends upon the owner's alignment. If the owner and genie are of the same alignment or are one step apart, the genie is

friendly and cooperative. If they are two or more steps apart, the genie is ambivalent towards the owner. It bombards the owner with nonsensical telepathic messages to such an extent that it distracts the owner preventing him from taking actions that cannot be performed while distracted like taking 10 or 20 on skill checks. The owner must hold the lamp and speak the command word to activate it. While active, the lamp emits dim light equivalent to a torch. The owner cannot use the powers of a *genie lamp* until it has been in his sole possession for 24 consecutive hours. It can have only one owner at any time. The *genie lamp*'s powers depend upon the type of genie imprisoned within the lamp.

Djinni Lamp: When activated, the *djinni lamp* allows the owner to cast *gaseous form* (up to 1 hour), and *wind walk* once per day.

Efreeti Lamp: When activated, the *efreeti lamp* allows the owner to cast *pyrotechnics*, *scorching ray* and *wall of fire* once per day.

Janni Lamp: When activated, the *janni lamp* allows the owner to cast *create food and water* once per day.

Marid Lamp: When activated, the *marid lamp* allows the owner to cast *control water*, *obscuring mist* and *water breathing* once per day.

Shaitan Lamp: When activated, the *shaitan lamp* allows the owner to cast *stoneskin* and *wall of stone* once per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *trap the soul*, additional spells (see above); **Cost** 30,000 gp (*djinni lamp*), 27,000 gp (*efreeti lamp*), 12,000 gp (*janni lamp*), 33,000 gp (*marid lamp*), 27,000 gp (*shaitan lamp*).

Harem Veil

Aura: faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd

Slot head; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Sequins adorn the edges of this veil which covers the head and face. The portion that drapes across the face is made from sheer cloth allowing the wearer and observers to clearly see through the veil. The veil grants the wearer a +2 competence bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks. As a standard action, the veil allows the wearer to cast *hypnotism* except that version of the spell requires the wearer to see the intended target. The victim can resist the effect with a successful DC 11 Will save. The wearer can use this ability three times per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *hypnotism*, creator must have at least 2 ranks in the Bluff and Diplomacy skills; **Cost** 2,000 gp.

Headband of Flawless Memory

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 8th

Slot headband; **Price** 9,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Mnemonic tricks are stitched onto the fabric of this silk headband. The headband makes the wearer immune to Intelligence damage and drain. It also grants him a +5 competence bonus on Knowledge (history) skill checks and Linguistics checks made to decipher writing in an unfamiliar language or a message written in an incomplete or archaic form.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *comprehend languages*, *restoration*; **Cost** 4,500 gp.

Heart-Shaped Box

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 9th
Slot neck; **Price** 3,600 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

As the name suggests, this talisman is a small, wooden box carved in the image of a heart. The *heart-shaped box* is attached to the supple stems of a rose or other flower-bearing plant and hangs around the neck like a locket. The box can only be opened by speaking a command word. An empty *heart-shaped box* has no magical powers until the wearer places a personal item belonging to the intended target inside of the box. Personal items typically include a lock of hair, a ring or any other object with a strong connection to the intended target. When a personal item is placed inside of the box, the wearer can affect the target with a heightened *charm person*. The target can resist the effect with a successful DC 17 Will save. This ability can be used once per day. The personal item loses its efficacy after one use of this item and must be replaced with a new personal item. This item plays some role in nearly every palace scandal.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *charm person*, creator must have at least 2 ranks in the Craft (carpentry) skill; **Cost** 1,800 gp.

Hookahs

A hookah is a self-contained device used for smoking tobacco. Unlike a conventional pipe, the smoke is first passed through a basin filled with water before inhalation by the user through a tube

connected to the basin. In some cases, alcoholic spirits are used instead of water to increase the smoke's intensity. Most hookahs are designed for a single smoker; however they can be built to simultaneously accommodate up to four smokers. Ordinary hookahs are commonplace in many desert communities and are most prevalent in large cities. Magical hookahs are rare, and those designed for more than one smoker are even scarcer.

There are many varieties of magical hookahs, but they all share some basic properties. Magical hookahs function once per day and only bestow their benefits to as many creatures as the hookah can simultaneously accommodate. In other words, smokers cannot take turns inhaling smoke from the same hookah tube and benefit from its magical properties. It takes 1 minute to light and activate a magical hookah. Smokers must inhale the smoke for 5 continuous minutes without interruption to gain its magical properties. The smoke has a distinctive smell, so detecting the odor requires a successful DC 0 Perception check. Presented below are a collection of magical hookahs found in many desert communities.

Hookah of Healing

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 4,000 gp (single person), 8,000 gp (two-person), 12,000 gp (three-person), 16,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This hookah is made from porcelain and is dyed red. Once activated, the hookah's smoke duplicates the effects of *cure moderate wounds*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cure moderate wounds*; **Cost** 2,000 gp (single person) 4,000 gp (two-person), 6,000 gp (three-person), 8,000 gp (four-person).



Hookah of Health

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 6,000 gp (single person), 12,000 gp (two-person), 18,000 gp (three-person), 24,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This hookah is made from glazed ceramic and is covered with depictions of healers tending to the sick. Once activated, the hookah's smoke duplicates the effects of *remove disease*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *remove disease*; **Cost** 3,000 gp (single person) 6,000 gp (two-person), 9,000 gp (three-person), 12,000 gp (four-person).

Hookah of Invigoration

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 2,000 gp (single person), 4,000 gp (two-person), 6,000 gp (three-person), 8,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Forged from cast iron, this hookah is covered with depictions of athletic competitions. Once activated, the hookah's smoke eliminates any fatigue suffered by the character, and improves an exhausted condition to fatigued.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser restoration*; **Cost** 1,000 gp (single person) 2,000 gp (two-person), 3,000 gp (three-person), 4,000 gp (four-person).

Hookah of Sensory Restoration

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 6,000 gp (single person), 12,000 gp (two-person), 18,000 gp (three-person), 24,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This hookah is made from glass and is covered with images of human eyes and bone horns. Once activated, the hookah's smoke duplicates the effects of *remove blindness/deafness*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *remove blindness/deafness*; **Cost** 3,000 gp (single person) 6,000 gp (two-person), 9,000 gp (three-person), 12,000 gp (four-person).

Hookah of Unbinding

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 6,000 gp (single person), 12,000 gp (two-person), 18,000 gp (three-person), 24,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This hookah is made from glass crystal and is covered with lucky symbols found in multitudes of desert cultures. Once activated, the hookah's smoke duplicates the effects of *remove curse*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *remove curse*; **Cost** 3,000 gp (single person) 6,000 gp (two-person), 9,000 gp (three-person), 12,000 gp (four-person).

Hookah of Vitality

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 4,000 gp (single person), 8,000 gp (two-person), 12,000 gp (three-person), 16,000 gp (four-person); **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Forged from cast iron and steel, this hookah is covered with images of warriors and wild animals. Once activated, the hookah's smoke dispels any magical effects reducing one of the subject's ability scores or cures 1d4 points of temporary ability damage to one of the subject's ability scores. It does not restore permanent ability drain.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser restoration*; **Cost** 2,000 gp (single person) 4,000 gp (two-person), 6,000 gp (three-person), 8,000 gp (four-person).

Karkadann Headdress

Aura: faint abjuration; **CL** 3rd

Slot head; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A silk cord dipped in karkadann blood wraps around this silk and wool headdress, affixing it firmly around the wearer's head. The headdress functions as a magical refrigerator, keeping the wearer's head cool. The headdress allows the wearer to ignore the effects of very hot conditions. The headdress grants the wearer a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of severe and extreme heat.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*; **Cost** 1,000 gp.

Merchant's Scales

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot —; **Price** 2,500 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These gilded scales provide great accuracy when determining the value of relatively small items like gems and jewelry. The scales grant the user a +5 competence bonus on Appraise skill checks made to value items weighing 10 lbs. or less.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *identify*, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Appraise skill; **Cost** 1,250 gp.

Merchant's Tongue

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This small, silver brooch is shaped in the likeness of a human tongue and is attached to a silver chain that hangs around the wearer's neck. The brooch grants the wearer a +5 competence bonus on all Profession (merchant) skill checks. Once per day, it allows the wearer to take 20 on an Appraise check to value an item or a Spellcraft check to identify a magical item's properties.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *identify*, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Profession (merchant) skill and at least 2 ranks each in the Appraise and Spellcraft skills; **Cost** 2,500 gp.

DESERT EQUIPMENT

Mirage Stone

Aura moderate abjuration, conjuration and enchantment; **CL** 6th
Slot —; **Price** 7,200 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

When buried just beneath the surface, this tiny stone creates an illusory oasis that fills ten 10-foot cubes. The oasis consists of a fresh spring, date palm trees and other plants growing along the oasis' banks. Sound, smell and thermal illusions are included in the spell effect. Once created, the illusion cannot be moved and remains in existence for 1 hour. Creatures interacting with the illusion can disbelieve it with a successful DC 14 Will save. Otherwise, the illusion functions as *major image*. This ability can be used once per day. Desert bandits and clever monsters sometimes employ these stones as a lure to ambush unwary travelers.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *major image*; **Cost** 3,600 gp.

Myrrh Ointment

Aura: faint enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 1,250 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A jar of this gummy ointment is 2 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep, and contains three applications. Placed upon a poisoned wound or swallowed, the ointment detoxifies any poison (as *neutralize poison*). When applied to a weapon or single piece of ammunition in the same manner as poison, the ointment functions as holy water when it hits corporeal undead creatures and evil outsiders. The ointment deals an additional 2d4 points of damage against mummies.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, *neutralize poison*; **Cost** 625 gp.

Oud of 1,000 Melodies

Aura faint abjuration, conjuration and enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 26,000 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Three centuries ago, the legendary bard Rashid ibn-Raheem, produced twenty of these magnificent pear-shaped stringed instruments. Roughly a dozen have survived to the present day, making the remaining few extremely valuable for more than their magical properties. Like all masterwork musical instruments, the oud gives its user a +2 circumstance bonus on all Perform checks that involve its use. The oud's remaining properties function only in the hands of a bard. When played as part of a bardic performance, the DC to resist the bard's *fascinate* and *suggestion* abilities increases by +2. In addition, the oud can recall more than 1,000 melodies with only the slightest prompting from its user. These songs are often enough to jog the bard's memory, enabling him to remember obscure facts that otherwise would have escaped his mind. This ability allows him to attempt a Perform (string) check in place of the relevant Knowledge skill check. Using this ability requires the bard to begin a bardic performance. Each round of the performance, he may attempt a Perform (string) check and use that check in place of a Knowledge skill check. If the check fails, he may continue the bardic performance until he succeeds. The oud must be continually played throughout the performance, so the Lingering Performance feat cannot be used while playing the oud

in this manner. Each round of the bardic performance is treated as if the bard had spent two rounds performing.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *legend lore*; **Cost** 13,000 gp.

Parasol of Deflection

Aura faint abjuration and evocation; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This dull, ecru-colored parasol has an ivory handle and base with steel framework and silk outer fabric. It can be held in one hand. Most parasols are adorned with geometric patterns. The parasol's protective covering can be extended and retracted with the push of a button. The parasol has no special abilities in the retracted position, but it has a variety of uses in the extended position. When held above the head during daylight hours, the parasol emits a cool breeze making the user feel as if the temperature were 20° less than it actually is. When held in front of the face, the parasol acts as an *entropic shield*. In its extended position, the parasol's steel framework is strong enough to withstand wind speeds of 50 mph or less while protecting the user from the wind's ill effects and negating any damage caused by debris propelled by the wind, such as sand and dust. At wind speeds in excess of 51 mph the parasol must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or be torn apart, rendering it permanently useless.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *entropic shield*, *gust of wind*; **Cost** 2,000 gp.

Peace Pipe

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 4,500 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This ornately decorated wooden pipe measures nearly two feet in length and is open at both ends allowing two people to simultaneously puff on its smoke. The pipe has no magical properties until it is filled with tobacco and ignited which requires a full-round action. Once lit, the pipe remains active for 10 minutes. The pipe's smoke grants the user a +5 competence bonus on all Diplomacy skill checks while the pipe remains active. To use this effect, the user must inhale the pipe's smoke for 1 minute. It can grant this bonus to only one creature at a time. In addition, when two creatures smoke the pipe at the same time, the smoke cements a bond of friendship between the two creatures duplicating the effects of *charm person*. This usage generally requires two willing participants and is often done for ceremonial purposes to celebrate the conclusion of a successful negotiation. In this circumstance, both parties willingly forego their saving throw and accept the pipe's effect. An unwilling creature negates the pipe's effects by succeeding on a DC 14 Will save. Attempting to force an unwilling creature to smoke the *peace pipe* requires a successful grapple check to pin the target and force the pipe into its mouth. Even then, an unwilling creature can continue to hold its breath to prevent it from inhaling the pipe's smoke.

After remaining active for 10 minutes, the *peace pipe* extinguishes itself. The *peace pipe* cannot be used again until 1 hour has passed since it extinguished itself.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *charm person*; **Cost** 2,250 gp.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Ram's Horn

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 6th
Slot head; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This sliver of ram's horn is 2 inches long, a mere fraction of an inch in diameter and whittled to a sharp point on both ends. The horn is affixed to the owner's face or head by piercing it through his skin. It is usually worn as a nose ring, earring or cheek piercing. The *ram's horn* does not function when attached to another part of the body. When properly affixed to the wearer, it grants a +2 competence bonus to attack rolls when making a charge attack. The damage dealt by the charge attack is treated as if the attacker's natural weapons or its weapon were one size category larger than it actually is. In addition, the ram's surefootedness allows the wearer to ignore difficult terrain when charging or running.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *beast shape I*, *lead blades*†; **Cost** 3,000 gp.

† *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*

Saddle of the Aerie Born

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3th
Slot —; **Price** 7,530 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Meticulously handcrafted from fine leather, fur and eagle feathers, this saddle is specifically designed to fit hippogriffs, griffins, rocs and any other flying creature suitable to serve as a mount. The saddle automatically adjusts to properly fit the rider and its mount. The rider receives a +5 competence bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks, and the mount receives a +5 competence bonus on Fly checks. The saddle functions only when worn by a mount with the natural mode of flight.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Fly, Handle Animal and Ride skills; **Cost** 3,765 gp.

Saddle of the Spirited Camel

Aura: faint transmutation; **CL** 3th
Slot —; **Price** 4,250 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Perfectly fitted to rest comfortably against or between a camel's humps, this ornately painted leather saddle grants the rider a +5 competence bonus on all Ride checks. In addition, the rider gains the Spirited Charge feat even if he does not meet the feat's prerequisites. The saddle functions only when strapped onto a camel. It has no effect when used on another animal or creature.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have at least 5 ranks in the Ride skill; **Cost** 2,125 gp.

Sandals of the Dunes

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot feet; **Price** 7,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These leather sandals feature corrosive-resistant wooden soles with interlocking leather straps. In desert terrain, the

wearer can move at 10 times his normal speed when making a charge (once per hour), and the wearer's base land speed increases by 10 feet. In addition to the wearer's increased speed (which is considered an enhancement bonus), the sandals also grant the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Acrobatics checks made to slide across desert terrain.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *longstrider*, creator must have 5 ranks in the Acrobatics skill; **Cost** 3,750 gp.

Suqri's Talisman Against Monumental Failure

Aura faint abjuration, conjuration and enchantment; **CL** 5th
Slot neck; **Price** 9,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Throughout his lifetime the talisman's namesake, Suqri, constantly bemoaned his terrible luck. When he received his inheritance, Suqri promptly lost it in a rigged dice game. He lived his few remaining years alone and in abject squalor, devoting all of his energies to his poetry. Despite his best efforts, Suqri failed as a poet and died as a young man in total anonymity. A decade after his death, Suqri's book of poetry fell into the right hands, and the man who lived and died in utter obscurity became one of the most beloved and celebrated poets in all the land.

This wooden talisman is shaped in the image of a small book and dangles around the neck from a cotton cord. One of Suqri's verses is always inscribed somewhere on the talisman. Three times per day, whenever the wearer rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll or saving throw, the wearer may elect to reroll that attack roll or saving throw. This does not stack with other effects that allow the wearer to reroll an attack roll or saving throw. The wearer may make only one reroll and must use its results even if he rolls another natural 1.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *divine favor*; **Cost** 4,500 gp.

Tome of Infinite Tales

Aura strong divination; **CL** 12th
Slot —; **Price** 67,200 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This exquisite leather-bound tome would be a treasure unto itself even if it had no magical properties. Its vellum pages are filled with breathtaking drawings, inspiring verse and beautiful calligraphy that makes it an artistic and literary masterpiece. Though it is almost 1,000 pages long, the tome weighs considerably less than it should for its massive size. Reading the tome for a total of 24 hours or more attunes the reader to it. The creature remains attuned to the tome until its death or until another creature spends 24 hours or more reading the tome. Once attuned to it, the tome responds to its owner's verbal questioning. Though the tome lacks intelligence and the ability to speak, it directs its owner to a potential answer by opening to an appropriate page where the answer may be found. It takes the tome 2d4 rounds to respond to its owner's inquiries, and it then takes another 2d6 minutes for the owner to scan those pages to find a possible answer.

Asking a question about an upcoming course of action within the next 30 minutes has an 82% chance of getting an accurate and meaningful reply. In this case, the information provided by the tome duplicates the effects of *augury*. Making an inquiry about an important person, place or

DESERT EQUIPMENT

thing generates varying results. If the person or thing is at hand, or if the tome is in the place in question, the tome directs the owner to any and all legends about the subject. If the owner has only detailed information on the subject, the tome points him to less complete and less specific legends. If the owner only knows rumors, there is only a 50% chance that the tome provides any response at all. If it does, the information is vague and incomplete. The tome is only aware of legends concerning subjects that have attained legendary status (as *legend lore*). Failed checks result in a response of "nothing" though it is not clear to the owner whether that is the actual case or if the tome was unsuccessful in locating the information.

Posing a riddle, puzzle or other cryptic message to the tome requires the owner to make a successful Intelligence check. The DC for a simple riddle is 10, but the DC for a complex riddle can be 20 or higher. Success grants the owner a useful insight to the riddle or puzzle's solution. The information should be enough to point the owner in the right direction, but not specific enough to give him the answer. For instance, if a cryptic riddle contains a hidden mathematical formula, the tome may grant the owner generic advice such as "words lie, but numbers do not." However, if the owner rolls a natural 20, the tome gives the owner the precise answer. Conversely, if the owner rolls a natural 1, he takes 1 point of Intelligence damage from being bombarded by false information. There is no saving throw to avoid taking Intelligence damage.

The tome is written in Common and functions once per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *augury*, *commune*, *legend lore*; **Cost** 33,600 gp.

Vambraces of Scimitar Wielding

Aura moderate divination and transmutation; **CL** 6th
Slot wrists; **Price** 9,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These leather vambraces enhance the wearer's ability to wield a scimitar. They grant the wearer a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls made with a scimitar and a +4 bonus against combat maneuvers made to disarm or sunder the wearer's scimitar. The wearer does not drop his scimitar when panicked or stunned. In addition, upon speaking a command word, the wearer can store a scimitar he is holding in the vambraces as a swift action. Retrieving the scimitar is a swift action that causes it to reappear in the wearer's hand. The vambraces can store only one scimitar at a time. If the wearer attempts to store an additional scimitar, that scimitar reappears on the ground in a random location 1d10 feet away from the wearer.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *rope trick*, *true strike*, creator must be proficient with a scimitar; **Cost** 4,500 gp.

New Monsters

New and original monsters are presented here to give player characters fresh challenges in any desert campaign. Many are indigenous to sandy, windswept dunes, while others can be found in desert scrublands. A random encounter table for these monsters and more can be found in the Appendix.

Akbadia

This creature appears human with a bushy mustache, a crafty gleam in its eyes and a wickedly wry smile on its welcoming face.

AKBADIA

XP 19,200

NE Medium magical beast
(shapechanger)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +17

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 152 (16d10+64)

Fort +14; **Ref** +16; **Will** +9

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** mind-affecting

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier

+24/+19/+14/+9 (1d6+3 /15–20), bite +17 (1d6+1) or bite +22 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +8d6, weapon intuition

Spell-Like Abilities

(CL 16th)

3/day—*illusory script* (DC 18)

1/day—*dream* (DC 20), *nightmare* (DC 20), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

Str 14, **Dex** 23, **Con** 19, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 34

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +21, Disguise +13, Perception +17, Stealth +25

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and coyote; *polymorph*), coyote empathy

Gear +1 studded leather armor, +1 rapier, other gear

Environment desert or plains

Organization solitary

Treasure NPC gear

Change Shape (Su) An akbadia has three forms. Its natural

form is that of a coyote, but it can also take the form of a human or a human-coyote hybrid. An akbadia's human form is fixed — it cannot assume different human forms. An akbadia can sneak attack in any of its forms. In coyote form it functions as a dog. In its hybrid form, an akbadia can make a bite attack as a secondary attack, while in human form it lacks its bite attack entirely. An akbadia can shift into any of its three alternate forms as a move action. Equipment does not meld with the new form between human and hybrid forms but does between those forms and its coyote form.

Coyote Empathy (Ex) An akbadia can communicate and empathize with coyotes (use stats for Small dog), and can use Bluff as if it were Diplomacy to change a coyote's attitude, receiving a +4 racial bonus to do so.

Trickster Assailant (Su) As a standard action, an akbadia targets any one creature within 30 feet. If the target fails a DC 23 Will save, it loses its Dexterity bonus to AC against any attack made by the akbadia.

The affected creature sees multiple images of the akbadia, preventing it from adequately defending itself against the akbadia's attacks.

The effect last for 16 rounds.

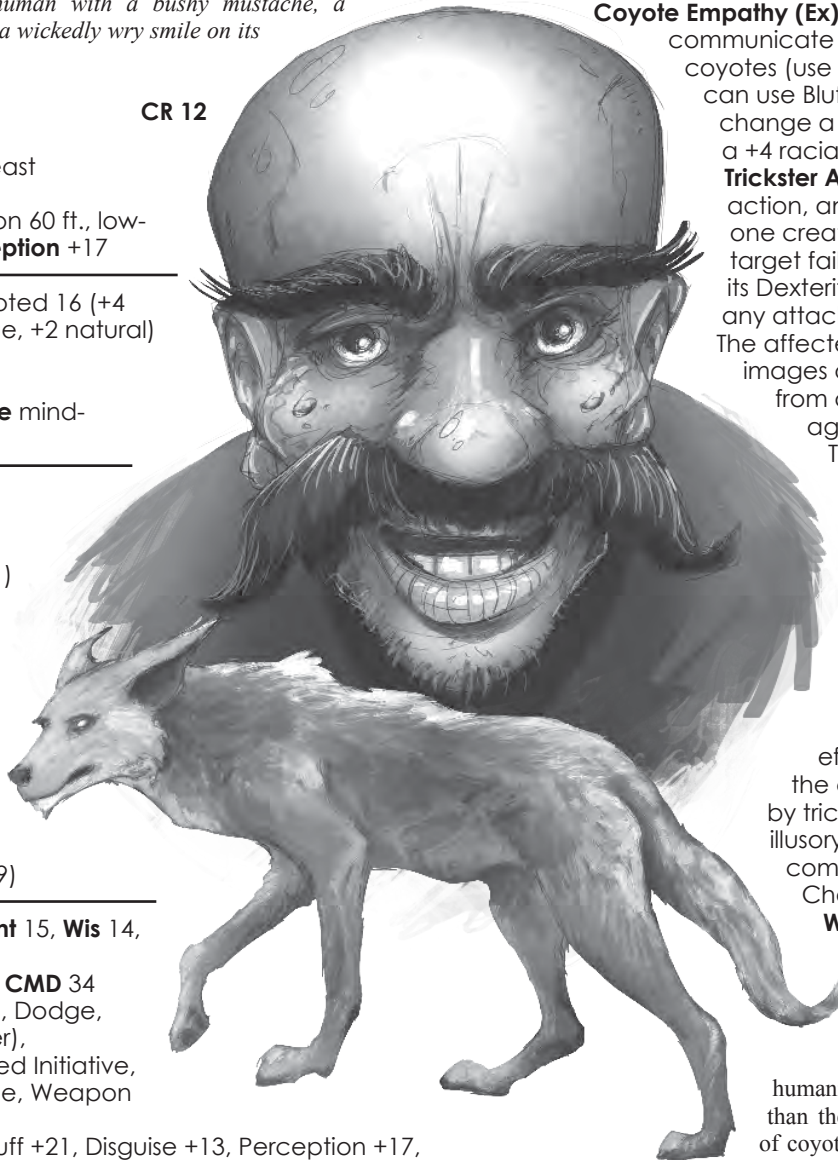
Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same akbadia's trickster assailant ability for 24 hours. The akbadia can affect only one creature with this ability at any time. If it targets another creature, the effect immediately ends for the creature previously affected by trickster assailant. This is an illusory effect that relies on visual components. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Weapon Intuition (Ex)

Akbadias are proficient with all simple and martial weapons.

In the desert scrublands, humanity gives no creature a warier eye than the wily coyote. The vast majority of coyotes are ordinary predators, but the animals' reputation is forever sullied by the akbadia, a wicked shapechanger that can assume human, hybrid and coyote form. In its humanoid form, an akbadia resembles a normal person with a bushy mustache, a mischievous gleam in its eye and an omniscient smile on its round, cherubic face. Unlike lycanthropes, akbadias can control their transformation with exacting precision, and there are no telltale signs or giveaways to betray the creatures' true malevolent nature. Though carnivorous, the creatures delight more in spreading fear and terror than devouring meat and bone.

Akbadias are loners, wandering the desert scrublands and its settlements for fresh victims. During the day, they move about these communities in



NEW MONSTERS

their humanoid form, making friends and acquaintances among the local populace. At night, they revert to their coyote form, slinking around in the darkness to get a better lay of the land. After establishing personal relationships and performing reconnaissance, the akbadia chooses its quarry and begins the hunt by using *dream* to encourage the victim to venture to an ambush site or *nightmare* to terrify and unnerve its victim. An akbadia is a coward at heart, and it ensures that its victim is alone when it ambushes the creature in a remote location or attempts to frighten it to death with *phantasmal killer*. When a superior foe or a group of creatures confront an akbadia, it almost always flees for safety.

Akbadias are often nomadic, but some take up residence and assume an identity in a humanoid settlement. In these circumstances, the creature often assumes a position of trust or authority, allowing it to conduct its nefarious business without scrutiny. Akbadias donning such a guise frequently amass vast wealth that they hoard in a secret vault somewhere within their residence. On even rarer occasions, an akbadia that has accumulated unchallenged power and influence may recruit other humanoids to aid it in its evil endeavors. One bold akbadia even married the beautiful daughter of a wealthy merchant just to acquire the woman's dowry. A community with an akbadia in its midst is bound to notice a sharp uptick in mysterious disappearances and other strange occurrences. When too many residents start asking questions the akbadia leaves town in search of a new location to wreak mayhem.

Alhajan

This large humanoid covered in a fine coat of beige fur has a hunchback, two elongated arms ending in sharp claws and powerful legs with oversized feet. Its face resembles that of a man, though it has a more prominent brow and a protruding jaw.

ALHAJAN

XP 1,600

NE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, -1 size)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

Fort +8; **Ref** +5; **Will** +6

Resist fire 10

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+4 plus grab) or mwk quarterstaff +11/+6 (1d8+6)

Special Attacks howl, rend (2 claws 1d6+6)

Str 19, **Dex** 11, **Con** 18, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22

Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Run

Skills Climb +8, Craft (carpentry) +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +1, Perception +8, Stealth +2, Survival +10

Languages Common

Gear masterwork quarterstaff, other gear

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair, herd (2–8) or stampede (10–40)

Treasure NPC gear

Howl (Su) When an alhajan howls, all creatures except for other alhajans within a 100 foot spread must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected by the same alhajan's howl for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

These large monstrous humanoids are covered in a fine coat of beige-colored hair with a texture and coloring resembling that of cashmere. Their

limbs are unusually long, and their hands and feet are disproportionately oversized. On average, they stand 8 feet tall and weigh almost 400 pounds. The alhajan's hunchback is actually a hump, which stores fat and water allowing the creature to go for days and even a few weeks without water or food. The presence of this rare evolutionary feature and their foul temperament leads some scholars to believe that they are the unnatural offspring of camels and men. Others surmise that some dark force or entity transformed men into these creatures as a form of punishment or a failed experiment. Whatever their origin, experienced desert travelers know it is best to avoid these ill-tempered creatures while traveling through the desert.

Alhajans live in clans with up to 40 extended family members. They lead a nomadic existence, wandering the desert in search of prey and water. An alhajan hunting party consists of two to twelve male clan members. They use simple tactics. They charge anything they see and attack it as a wild mob. Like predatory animals, alhajans surround and attack a single creature if possible. Once they surround their intended victim, the remaining alhajans use their howl ability to drive off other creatures that might come to the victim's rescue. Alhajans hate humans, and they target them in preference to all others. In the absence of humans, they direct their attacks against elves, dwarves and other humanlike races before targeting animals or monsters. Despite their savage nature, alhajans are adept woodworkers, fashioning exquisite quarterstaves from wood harvested from the few trees they encounter during the course of their travels. Alhajans do not amass precious metals, but they do collect valuable wooden objects.

CR 5



Al-haloon

This large, speckled animal resembles a giraffe albeit with a shorter, but substantially thicker neck and a smaller, elongated head with a massive, gray tongue lolling out the side of its filthy, sand-encrusted mouth.

AL-HALOON

XP 800

N Large animal

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +6

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +7; **Ref** +5; **Will** +2

Speed 40 ft., burrow 5 ft. (sand only)

Melee 2 hooves +8 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Str 22, **Dex** 13, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Run

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +2

SQ extend neck, smell water

Environment desert or plains

Organization solitary, or family (1 adult plus 1–4 young)

Treasure none

Extend Neck (Ex) The al-haloon's neck consists of strong but flexible cartilage. In its normal position, the animal's neck is 3 feet long, but it can extend its neck to a length of 10 feet with no difficulty and to a length of 15 feet with a successful DC 10 Strength check. If it fails the Strength check, its neck immediately returns to its normal length, and it cannot attempt to extend it again for one hour.

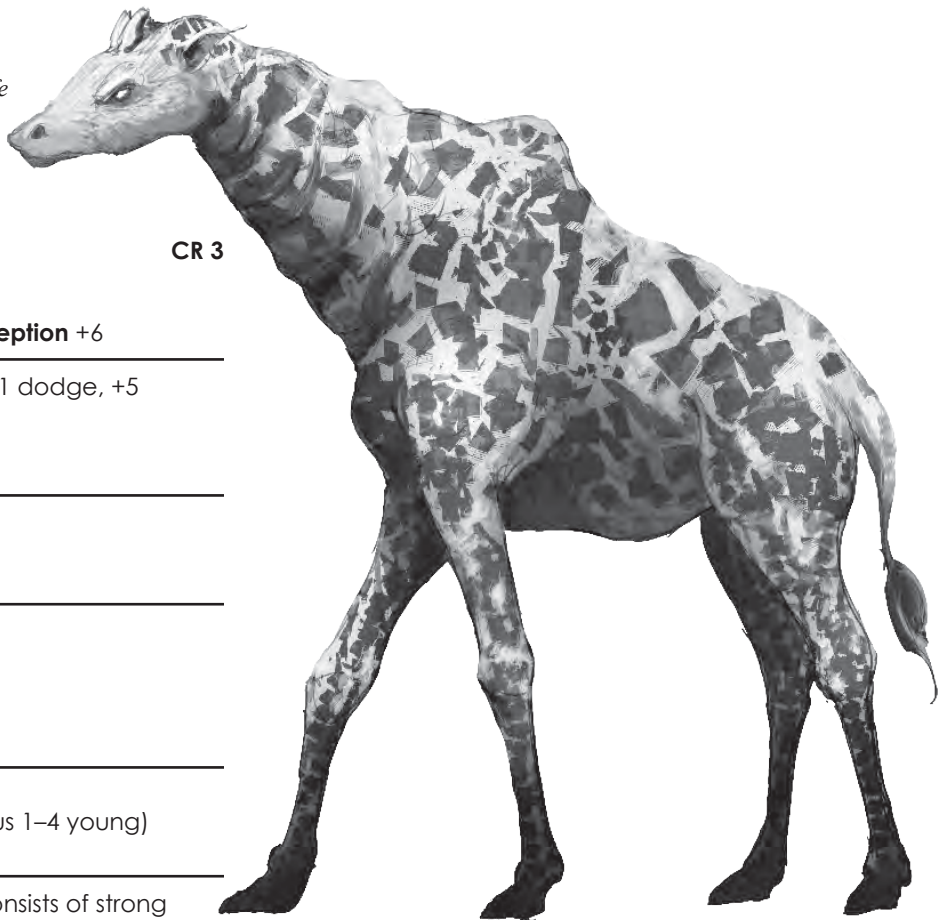
Smell Water (Ex) An al-haloon can detect surface water at a range of one mile, and at a range of 1,000 feet it can detect an underground water source no more than 50 feet beneath the surface.

Al-haloons, camels and dire camels are the mounts and packs animals of choice for many desert travelers. Al-haloons are passive, well-mannered animals that attack only when threatened or provoked. They are slower and more lumbering than the swifter camels, but they are better sprinters and take well to being ridden by humanoids. They resemble long, sleek giraffes and are 8 feet long and stand 6 feet high at the shoulder. A light brown coat of fine fur speckled with darker brown splotches covers their entire body. They have a thin 2-foot long tail and a 3-foot long stout neck covered by wrinkles of densely packed loose skin. The al-haloon's oddly shaped neck allows it to extend its neck and bury its head in the sand to drink water from an underground source. The animal detects water by scent and can burrow into loose sand in search of fresh water buried deep beneath the sandy dunes. Many desert travelers refer to al-haloons as the "dowsers of the desert" because of this unique ability. In fact, al-haloons are credited with founding many settlements and villages thanks to their discovery of a nearby underground aquifer.

Al-haloons encountered in the wild are either solitary animals or a mother and her young. They are herbivores that eat shrubs, saplings and leaves. Unlike camels that store water and fat for extended periods of fasting, al-haloons drink regularly like other mammals so they typically roam an area no further than a day's walk away from a known water supply. They have some tolerance for heat, but they typically sleep during the hottest parts of the day and roam the desert during the cooler evening, overnight and early morning hours.

A light load for an al-haloon is up to 519 pounds, a medium load is 520–1,038 pounds, and a heavy load is 1,039–1,560 pounds. An al-haloon can drag 7,800 pounds.

CR 3



Cacchine

This large cactus plant has two arms and a bifurcation in its lower trunk creating two stubby legs. It has two small, white eyes resembling flowers atop its trunk.

CACDINE

XP 800

N Large plant

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision;

Perception +9

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

Fort +6; **Ref** +3;

Will +1

DR 5/slashing or piercing; **Immune** plant traits; **Resist** fire 5

Speed 10 ft.

Melee slam +7 (1d6+4 plus needles)

Special Attacks needles

Str 19, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16,

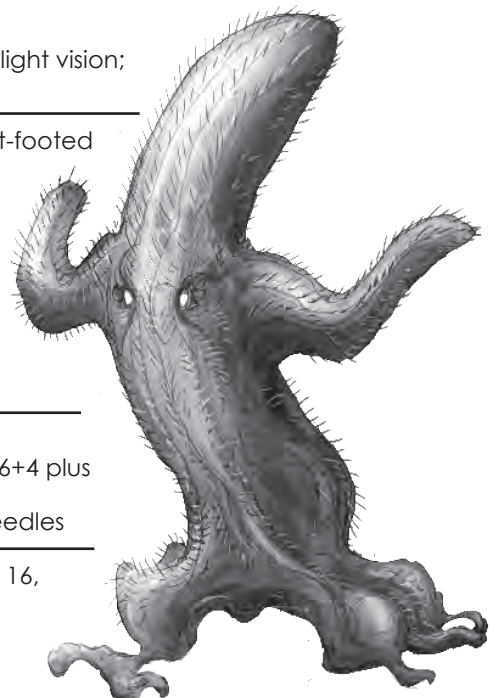
Int 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3;

CMB +8; **CMD** 18

Feats Lightning

CR 3



NEW MONSTERS

Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +5 (+13 in warm deserts); **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+12 in warm deserts)

Languages Common (cannot speak)

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or field (2–7)

Treasure none

Needles (Ex) Any creature attacking a cacdine with natural weapons or an unarmed strike takes 1d4 points of piercing damage. A creature that grapples a cacdine takes 3d4 points of piercing damage each round it does so. Any creature struck by a cacdine's slam attack also takes 1d4 points of piercing damage.

Cacdines appear to be ordinary, though large and robust cactus plants. They are actually semi-intelligent plants with a rudimentary brain and sensory organs located near the top of their trunks. Cacdines typically consist of a central trunk reaching a height of 7 to 10 feet with two 3-foot long arms and a short bifurcation in its lower trunk forming two stubby legs. At its widest point, a cacdine's trunk measures 2 feet in diameter.

Cacdines exclusively eat a liquid diet, but blood is their food of choice. Cacdines lack roots and instead have small rootlets beneath their makeshift feet that they use to draw blood from their victims. Because of this, they must stand atop their victim's body while feeding. Cacdines can subsist on nutrient-rich water or even milk for an extended period of time, but they ultimately need blood to survive. Like their natural kin, cacdines are ideally suited for life in a hot, arid climate.

Cacdines live solitary lives or as a part of a small group, and they are usually found living alongside ordinary cacti. Because they are relatively slow and lumbering, cacdines prefer letting potential victims draw near before attacking them. Cacdines fight to the death, because they have little chance of outrunning a superior foe. Like other cacti, the cacdine's flesh retains moisture and can be compressed or squeezed for water. Although the water is fresh and safe to drink, it tastes terrible, sickening any creature that fails a DC 11 Fortitude save for 2d4 rounds after drinking it.

Demon, Rabassa

This broad-shouldered, chiseled figure has an elephant-shaped head without the trunk, four muscular arms and four squid-like legs that somehow support its body.

DEMON, RABASSA

XP 12,800

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

Aura uncertainty (DC 20)

AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+12 natural)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +13; **Ref** +4; **Will** +10

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison;

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 4 claws +18 (1d6+6 plus doubt)

Special Attacks doubt, sow discord

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will—*cause fear* (DC 15), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

3/day—*crushing despair* (DC 18)

1/day—*geas/quest* (DC 20), *summon* (level 4, 1d4 babau 30%)

Str 23, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Appraise +9, Bluff +25, Climb +8, Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (any other one) +12, Perception +15, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic

Environment any (Abyss)

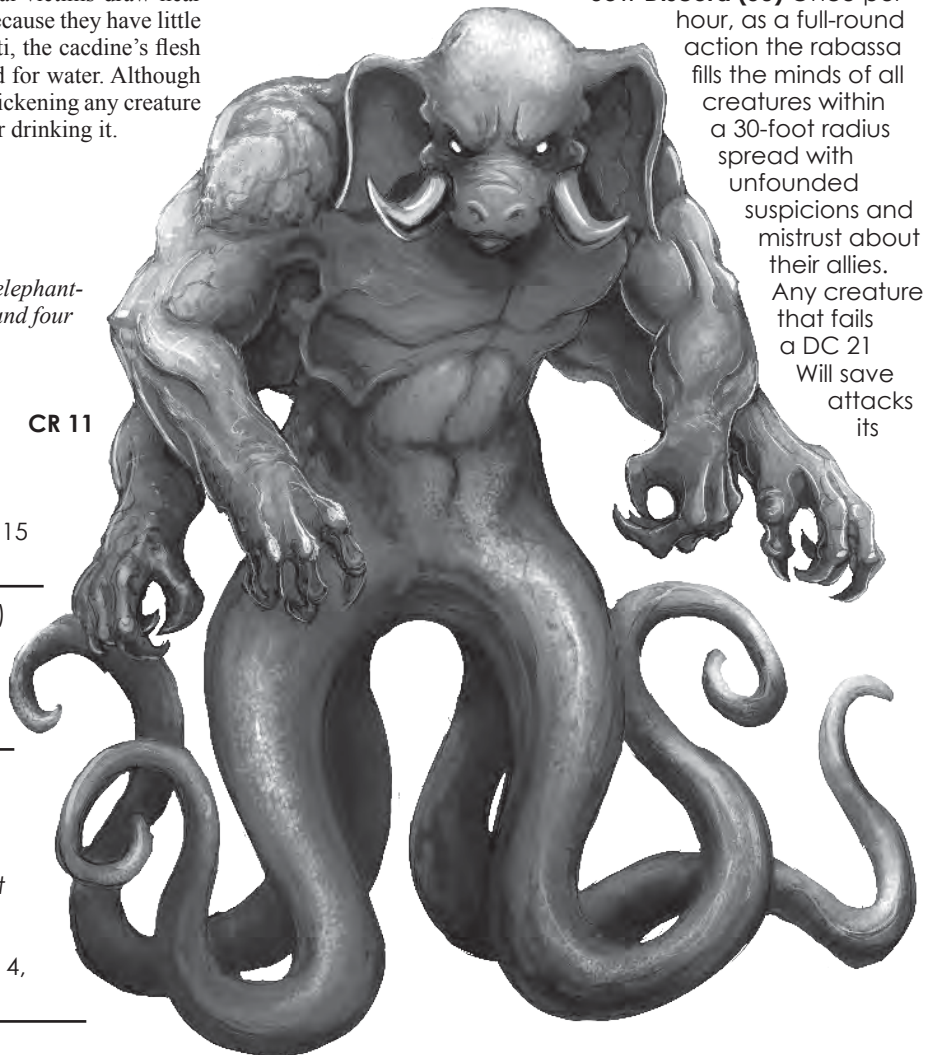
Organization solitary

Treasure none

Aura of Uncertainty (Su) A rabassa's body radiates an aura of uncertainty. Any creature striking a rabassa with a natural weapon or unarmed strike must succeed on a DC 20 Will save to avoid being dazed for 1 round. If the creature scored a critical hit, but failed its Will save, the critical hit is negated, and the attack deals normal damage instead. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Doubt (Su) Creatures struck by a rabassa doubt their actions. Whenever a rabassa hits a creature with its claw attack, the creature struck must succeed on a DC 20 Will save to avoid being dazed for 1 round. If the rabassa scores a critical hit, a creature that fails its Will save against the critical hit becomes stunned for 1d4 rounds instead of being dazed for 1 round. Doubt has no effect on a creature that is already stunned. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sow Discord (Su) Once per hour, as a full-round action the rabassa fills the minds of all creatures within a 30-foot radius spread with unfounded suspicions and mistrust about their allies. Any creature that fails a DC 21 Will save attacks its



DUNES OF DESOLATION

closed ally, as if he were under the effects of *confusion*. Unlike the spell, the creature's only possible action is to attack its allies, but it follows all other conditions of the spell applicable to attacking another creature. If the creature kills the ally, knocks him unconscious or scores a critical hit against him, he may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. Otherwise, sow discord lasts for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Rabassas delight in fear and anarchy. They take particular pleasure watching mortals sink into despair, as doubt and uncertainty occupy the creature's every thought and deprive it of ambition. According to their philosophy, action forestalls disorder, so inaction lets entropy take its natural course. While other demons tempt mortals through seduction or empty promises, rabassas dispense with complex machinations and prefer to let man be his own worst enemy, filling his mind with paranoid suspicions and the terror of failure. Unfortunately, humanity repeatedly proves the rabassa correct.

Rabassas are slightly taller than the average human, but they are considerably burlier than the typical man. They are literally barrel-chested with thick arms and legs covered by a grayish, leathery hide. Their heads are shaped like an elephant's though they have a broad, bull-like nose instead of a trunk. Their oversized, stumpy hands end in sharpened claws. They form from the souls of those mortals who chose to look the other way and ignore evil when they had the chance to stop it and set things right.

These demons always work alone, leading vulnerable mortals down an irretrievable path of despair and anguish. Rabassas ideally target people of great power and influence, hoping that their failure results in widespread chaos, panic and disillusion, providing the dutiful demons with more mortal souls ripe for the taking. They are covetous of worldly goods and particularly prize magic items symbolic of political or military power, such as armor, weapons, staves and rods. Though they are legendary among desert peoples, rabassas can be encountered anywhere.

Dendan

This massive black fish has an elongated garlike jaw, a long, dorsal fin and a stubby, but powerful tail.

DENDAN

XP 19,200

N Colossal animal (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., scent; **Perception** +19

AC 27, touch 1, flat-footed 27 (–1 Dex, +26 natural, –8 size)

hp 171 (18d8+90)

Fort +16; **Ref** +12; **Will** +9

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +20 (4d10+21/19–20 plus grab)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks swallow whole (2d6+21, AC 23, 17 hp)

Environment temperate ocean, rivers, and lakes

Organization solitary, or tide (2–5)

Treasure none

Str 38, **Dex** 8, **Con** 21, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +35; **CMD** 44

Feats Blind-Fight, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Staggering Critical, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +19, Swim +34

Sailors traversing the seas bordering many warm deserts speak of this massive, predatory black fish in hushed whispers. Few mariners have ever seen, let alone encountered a dendan, but that fails to diminish the legend of these elusive hunters. Strangely, witnesses claim that the dendan seemed more intent



on avoiding them rather than the seemingly logical other way around. These accounts have given rise to the belief among some seafarers that dendans fear humans or must avoid contact with them lest they face some terrible fate. The simple truth is that dendans do not perceive ships as prey animals, and in the absence of an injured or bleeding humanoid falling overboard, the dendan sees no need to investigate what it believes is a massive pile of floating driftwood. In those rare instances where a ship attacks a dendan, the gigantic fish hurtles itself against the hull in an attempt to sunder the vessel. If that fails, the dendan uses its reach to bite and swallow any living creatures on deck before retreating beneath the waves. In contrast, dendans aggressively hunt merfolk, which is their prey of choice. Merfolk often seek adventurers to rid the seas of their hated enemy, whenever they detect a dendan's presence.

Dendans live in fresh and salt water oceans, rivers, seas and lakes. They are loosely territorial and are organized into small pods containing two to five individuals. The creatures hunt independently rather than as a group, with each dendan trolling an area that could include more than 100 square miles of open water. A dendan is 30 feet long, 15 feet high and 10 feet wide and is covered in thick, black scales. Its jaw is elongated and filled with rows of daggerlike teeth. The oldest dendans are rumored to be more than 1,000 years old. Merfolk claim that the massive fish's meat is the finest delicacy of the sea; however merfolk may be proliferating that myth to encourage other humanoids to hunt their hated foe to extinction.

Desert Troll

This large, hideous creature is covered in oozing pustules bursting from the surface of its cracked, burnt-red skin. It has a mouth full of jagged, rotting teeth and its hands end in claws.

TROLL, DESERT

XP 4,800

NE Large humanoid (giant)

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +4

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 19 (–1 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40); regeneration 5 (cold or electricity)

Fort +13; **Ref** +2; **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d8+5 plus disease), 2 claws +11 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks disease (DC 19), pustules, rend (2 claws 1d6+7)

Str 20, **Dex** 8, **Con** 19, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +10, Heal +6, Perception +4, Stealth -4, Survival +6

Languages Giant

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair or cull (1 female plus 1–4 young)

Treasure none

Disease (Ex) Desert rot: bite—injury; save Fort DC 19; frequency 1/day; effect 1d2 Str and Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Pustules (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, one of the desert troll's pustules explodes spewing disgusting ooze in a 10 foot cone in a randomly determined direction. Creatures struck by the ooze are sickened for 2d4 rounds unless they succeed on DC 19 Fortitude save. Once a creature succeeds on this save, it is immune to the same desert troll's pustules for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

No other type of troll is as poorly adapted to its particular environment as the desert troll. If not for its regenerative properties, these loathsome monsters would have undoubtedly become extinct. Their pustules are the perfect example. It would seem logical that these growths once stored water or fatty deposits below the skin for storage, but the pustules are actually 2nd-degree burns that turned into massive, pus-filled blisters. In actuality, sunburn ravages the desert troll's skin accounting for its burnt-red coloration.

Desert trolls stand upright, not stooped like their more common cousins. An adult desert troll is 10 feet tall and weighs 400 pounds. They are hideously ugly like other members of their kin with a bestial face, a grotesquely abnormal under bite and powerful claws at the ends of their hands. Because of the intense heat, desert trolls are leaner than their temperate-dwelling cousins, and they are generally active only at night when much cooler temperatures prevail.

Desert trolls, like most other trolls, lead solitary lives with the exceptions of a mated pair and a mother with her young. Desert trolls are fearsome hunters with a ravenous taste for al-haloon and camel meat, which brings them into conflict with the animals' owners. Merchant caravan owners despise desert trolls, and they handsomely reward adventurers brave enough to protect their caravans from the marauding raiders or seek and destroy them before they create any havoc. In many cases, the monsters still carry the ill-gotten spoils from earlier raids. Desert trolls are ferocious combatants. They hurl themselves into battle with reckless abandon, and flee only when confronted by foes dealing significant amounts of cold or electricity damage to them. It is not uncommon to encounter a desert troll furthering the plans of a more intelligent and ambitious master, such as a genie. In these circumstances, desert trolls fight to the bitter end rather than slink back to face their master's wrath.



Desperado

This gaunt, leathery creature wears a ten-gallon hat, leather boots, a button-down shirt and tattered trousers wrapped tight around its waist by a worn-out leather gun belt. This unearthly gunfighter carries with it the foul smell of the grave and a vengeful gleam in its eyes.

DESPERADO
XP 2,400

CR 6

Male human desperado
gunslinger 6 (Pathfinder
Roleplaying Game Ultimate
Combat)

LE Medium undead
(augmented humanoid)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

Aura bad reputation (30 ft., DC 15 Will negates)

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15, +4 Dex, +2 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 51 (6d10+12 plus 6)

Fort +7; **Ref** +11; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities gunslinger's dodge, nimble (+2 dodge bonus to AC when wearing light or no armor), undead traits

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk pistol whip +9/+4 (1d6+2)

Ranged mwk pistol +12/+7 touch (1d8+4/x4)

Special Attacks deadeye, pistol-whip, spectral gunfighter

Str 14, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24

Feats Deadly Aim, Extra Grit^B, Gunsmithing, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw^B, Toughness, Weapon Focus (pistol)
Skills Bluff +8, Disguise +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Perception +11, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +9

Languages Common

SQ deeds (gunslinger initiative, quick clear, utility shot), grit (5), gun training (pistol +4)

Combat Gear masterwork pistol; **Other**

Gear leather boots, ten-gallon hat, gun belt and holster, 20 bullets

Environment desert

Organization solitary

Gear masterwork pistol, leather boots, ten-gallon hat, gun belt and holster, 20 bullets, other treasure

Bad Reputation (Su) All creatures within a 30-ft. radius that see a desperado must succeed on a Will save or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same desperado's bad reputation ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect that relies on visual components. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spectral Gunfighter (Su) A desperado's firearm magically



DUNES OF DESOLATION

reloads after each shot as a swift action. The desperado's firearm never misfires or breaks, and he can use the weapon's butt or handle as a melee weapon that deals bludgeoning damage.

A hole in the desert can hold many secrets, but sometimes it cannot keep an evil soul buried in the ground. Desperados are undead gunfighters that were so mean and despicable in life that even death was not enough to end their killing ways. Desperados never rise from a grave found in any habitat other than a desert, a fact that is often attributed to the climate's ability to naturally mummify humanoid corpses. They remember every facet of their mortal life and spend their undead existence seeking retribution against their enemies and any other unfortunate creature that crosses their path.

All desperados were once human to some degree. They are 6 feet tall and weigh a meager 100 pounds as the hot sun and dry atmosphere mummified their leathery skin and turned their internal organs to dust. They wear the accoutrements they wore in life including tattered trousers, a button-down shirt, a ten-gallon hat and a gun belt with at least a dozen rounds of ammunition. They walk with a frightening swagger and can draw their firearm with remarkable speed.

Despite their dastardly nature, desperados prefer a straight-up gun fight to an ambush or tactical attack. They are so confident in their martial prowess that it is not uncommon for a desperado to let its enemy get the first shot or blow before unleashing its firepower. It can afford this bravado thanks to its spectral gunfighter ability, which magically reloads its firearm after every shot. Though the vast majority of desperados are evil, there are a few tales of good men rising from their graves to right an unspeakable injustice or wreak revenge on those deserving of such a terrible fate.

Creating a Desperado

"Desperado" is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature with class levels in gunslinger. The desperado uses the base creature's stats and abilities except as noted here.

CR: Same as the base creature +1.

Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented). Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves or skill points.

Senses: A desperado gains darkvision 60 ft.

Armor Class: A desperado has a +5 natural armor bonus or the base creature's natural armor bonus, whichever is better.

Hit Dice: Change all of the creature's racial Hit Dice to d8s. All Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged. Desperados use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of Constitution).

Defensive Abilities: A desperado gains all of the immunities granted by its undead traits.

Special Attacks: A desperado gains the following special attack described below.

Spectral Gunfighter (Su) A desperado's firearm magically reloads after each shot as a swift action. The desperado's firearm never misfires or breaks, and he can use the weapon's butt or handle as a melee weapon that deals bludgeoning damage.

Special Qualities: A desperado gains the following special quality described below.

Bad Reputation (Su) All creatures within a 30-ft. radius that see a desperado must succeed on a Will save or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same desperado's bad reputation ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect that relies on visual components. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Abilities: +2 Dex, +2 Wis. Being undead, a desperado has no Constitution score.

Feats: Desperados gain Extra Grit and Quick Draw as bonus feats.

Dire Camel

Foul spittle oozes from the filthy mouth of a large, powerfully-built, two-humped camel.

DIRE CAMEL

CR 3

XP 800

N Huge animal (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*, "Camel," **Frog God Games *The Tome of Horrors Complete***, pg. 718, "Dire Creature Template")

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +6 natural, -2 size)

hp 63 (6d8+36)

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4

Speed 60 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d6+12)

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

Special Attacks spit

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Endurance, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +12, Survival +4

Environment warm deserts

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Spit (Ex) Once per hour, a dire camel can regurgitate the contents of its stomach, spitting the foul material at a single target within 10 feet. The target must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.



NEW MONSTERS

Larger and more aggressive than their domesticated kin, these fearsome animals are the mount of choice for elite desert cavalry units. Dire camels used for military purposes are equipped with custom-fitted barding. Dire camels and al-haloons are the mounts of choice for most desert natives, because of their durability. Like their smaller cousins, dire camels are ill-tempered, but they are well-suited for battle with proper training. Dire camels are herd animals, living in groups of twenty or more when encountered in the wild. These territorial animals charge any creature that they perceive as a threat, especially when their young are present. Dire camels stand 10 feet tall at the shoulder and 12 feet tall at the hump.

El-aurens

This shambling cadaver is coated by a thick, crusty overcoat of sand, which covers its clothing and exposed rotting flesh. Its torso and head bear humanoid features but its appendages end in hardened clumps of gangrenous skin.

EL-AURENS

XP 1,600

N Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +7

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 natural)

hp 45 (6d8+12 plus 6)

Fort +4; **Ref** +2; **Will** +8 **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 5, fire 5

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +9 (1d8+6)

Special Attacks disorient

Spell-Like Abilities CL 6th

At will—know direction

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18

Feats Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +6,

CR 5

Perception +7, **Survival** +7

Languages Common

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or field (2–7)

Gear explorer's outfit, canteen, blanket, compass, spyglass, other treasure

Disorient (Su) Once per day, an el-aurens disorients a living creature within 30 feet unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Will save. Disoriented creatures move in a random direction rather than the desired direction. Once the creature begins moving, it continues moving in the same random direction until it completes its action. This effect also applies to the creature's 5-ft. step. (See the "Throw Splash Weapon" section in Chapter 8 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for guidance on how to determine the disoriented creature's random direction.) The effect lasts for 1d4+1 minutes. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Natural dangers claim their fair share of desert travelers every year. The bodies of most victims are forever lost beneath the dunes, but some emerge from their graves and resume their appointed tasks. These shambling cadavers are known as el-aurens. They are typically found in groups, leading sages to conclude that they once belonged to an expedition force or an exploration group. In fact, el-aurens occasionally provide directions or even temporarily guide desert travelers to their intended destination for the equivalent of 5 gp worth of opals and turquoise stones per mile traveled. Alternatively, there is a 20% chance that an el-aurens has a map of the immediate area, which it may sell at an appropriate cost.

El-aurens are haughty, aloof and devoted to their duty. They stand between 5 and 6 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds. Most wear the tattered remnants of an explorer's outfit, and some carry the tools of their trade including spyglasses, compasses, backpacks, supply containers and tents. Unfortunately, their hands prevent them from using these devices, but they are once again willing to part with these items for an appropriate price in opals and turquoise stones. They attack monsters without hesitation, yet they rarely attack humanoids unless provoked. They speak with a dignified tone and become excited at the prospect of adventure. They envision themselves as guides, and they greet any overtures to pay them to fight with disdain. They ignore any orders to attack other creatures and instead disorient those giving such orders before departing. Desert travelers universally fear undead, but veteran explorers know that these creatures can save the day for those hopelessly lost in the desert.

El-halaj

This dull yellow hare is the size of a large dog, and it has a foot-long black horn protruding from its head and a mouth full of razor sharp teeth. There is a malevolent, red glow in its eyes.

EL-HALAJ

XP 1,200

LE Small magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +6

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+5 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 37 (5d10+10); fast healing 2

Fort +6; **Ref** +11; **Will** +3

Immune disease, poison

Speed 50 ft.

Melee gore +11 (1d4+2 plus disease), bite +11 (1d4+2 plus poison)

Special Attacks disease (DC 14), poison (DC 14)

Str 14, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

CR 4



DUNES OF DESOLATION

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. trip)

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +6, Perception +6, Stealth +14 (+15 in scrublands and deserts); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in scrublands and deserts

Languages Common (cannot speak)

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or pair (rarely)

Treasure none

Disease (Ex) *Hantavirus*: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 14; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect exhaustion and 1d4 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) *Peyote*: Gore—injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect dazed; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The ravenous el-halaj is a predatory, carnivorous hare that stalks desert scrublands and sand dunes. It stands almost 3 feet high at the shoulder, measures 2 feet in length and weighs 60 pounds. Its dull yellow coat resembles the color of baked earth, which grants it some camouflage in its native environs. The el-halaj uses its long, black horn to root through carrion and debris in search of food. Whether by intention or accident, the el-halaj's horn carries the lethal hantavirus, which it undoubtedly contracted while rummaging around dead animals. Similarly, the hare has a fondness for the taste of a particular cactus plant that it used by desert natives for its psychoactive and healing properties.

The el-halaj is most active at night, preferring to scavenge food from campsites or eat the unwanted scraps left behind from another predator's kill. But the carnivorous hare's hunger is never truly sated, driving it to consume at least twenty pounds of meat or cactus a day. Because of its insatiable appetite, leftovers and scraps rarely suffice, and the el-halaj must find more prey, and may even target creatures up to five times its size. The speedy el-halaj prefers to close within 100 feet from its intended victim and then charge headlong at it, hoping to sink its poisonous bite into its flesh. El-halajs are usually found alone, but they may be encountered in pairs during the mating season.

There is a widespread belief that the el-halaj's horn has curative properties, despite the fact that it is also the carrier of a deadly disease. An intact horn can fetch a price of 100 gp on the open market. Though it is dangerous business, poachers and adventurers alike scour the scrublands looking for that they foolishly refer to as the "golden rabbit".



Falak

This huge creature has a serpentine body with dark brown scales, a hard chitinous tail and an immense, toothless maw.

FALAK

XP 9,600

N Huge magical beast

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +9

AC 23, touch 7, flat-footed 23 (–1 Dex, +16 natural, –2 size)

hp 136 (13d10+52 plus 13)

Fort +12; **Ref** +7; **Will** +3

Resist acid 10

Speed 20 ft.; burrow 20 ft.

Melee bite +20 (1d8+8 plus 1d6 acid, grab), tail slap +15 (2d6+12 plus 1d6 acid)

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

Special Attacks spit acid, swallow whole (1d8+12 bludgeoning damage plus 4d6 acid, AC 18, 12 hp)

Str 26, **Dex** 9, **Con** 18, **Int** 1, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +23 (+25 to bull rush, +27 to grapple)

CMD +28 (+32 vs. grapple, cannot be tripped)

Feats Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite, tail slap)

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +0

SQ corrosive slime

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or pod (2–5)

Treasure none

Corrosive Slime (Su) A falak's body is covered in corrosive slime. Anyone striking a falak with a natural weapon or unarmed strike takes 1d6 points of acid damage. Any

NEW MONSTERS

creature struck by a falak with its bite attack or tail slap takes 1d6 points of acid damage. A creature that grapples a falak or is grappled by one takes 4d6 points of acid damage each round the grapple persists.

Spit Acid (Ex) Once every hour, a falak can spit a 30-foot line of acid. Creatures struck by this acid take 9d6 points of acid damage (DC 20 Reflex save halves). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Falaks burrow through the sandy dunes and pliable earth bordering desert regions, consuming anything they find along the way. Their corrosive slime dissolves almost any material in their path, enabling them to burrow through rock and hardened clay with little difficulty. Falaks are the bane of desert caravans, as the group's movement is sure to attract their unwanted attention. The cunning beast often follows the trail for hours, remaining deep beneath the surface waiting for the caravan to come to a halt before it burrows straight up from underneath, hoping to knock anyone or anything in its path into the air.

Falaks are 20 feet long from head to tail. They have a serpentine body with durable, but flexible scales and a rigid tail resembling that of a rattlesnake. Falaks have a circular maw with no tongue or teeth due to the constant secretion of acid, which dissolved their fangs shortly after birth. Falaks almost always travel in mated pairs, and they remain partners for life. If the male is killed or the young threatened, the female abandons her partner and retreats beneath the sands with her young. The male fights to the death. The oldest falaks are rumored to live upwards of 250 years.

Ghazak

This pale-skinned lanky man has long hands and fingers, sinewy limbs and flowing white hair. His eyes are sunken and disproportionally small, while his nose is long and broader than the average human.

GHAZAK

XP 200

Male ghazak ranger 1

LN Medium humanoid (ghazak)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +6

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 8 (1d10+3)

Fort +8; **Ref** +5; **Will** +3; +2 vs. poison, spells and spell-like effects, +4 vs. fatigue and exhaustion

Resist fire 5

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +2 (1d8+1/19–20)

Ranged longbow +3 (1d8/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (undead)

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

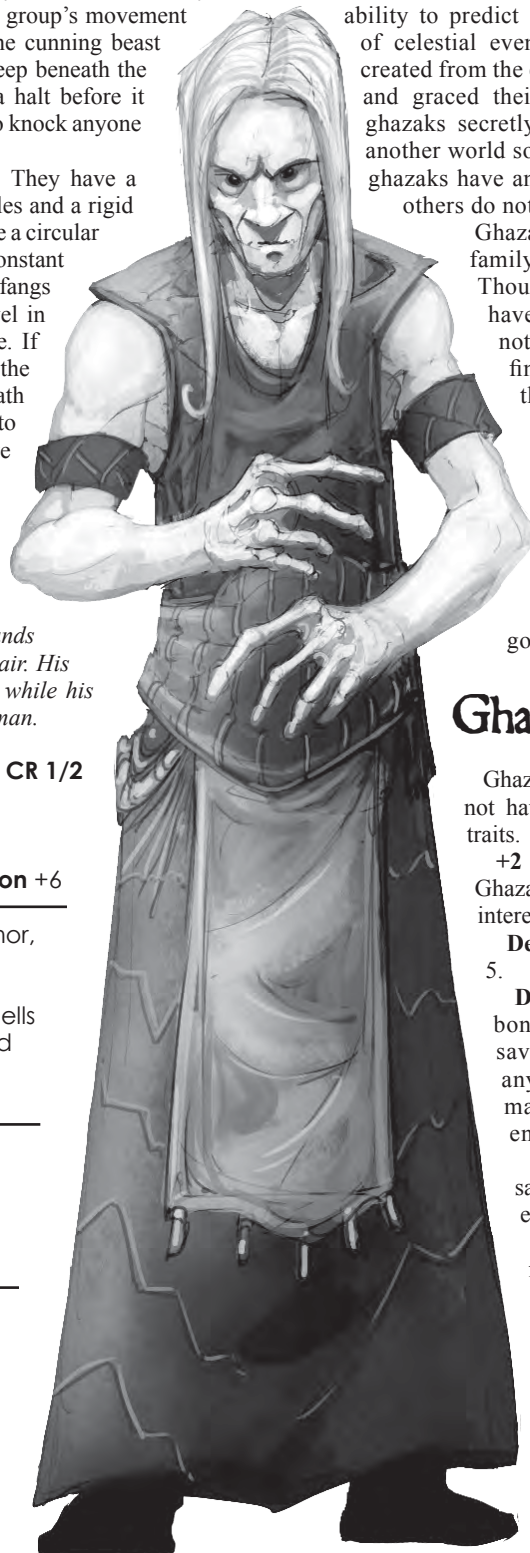
Feats Great Fortitude, Point-Blank Shot

Skills Handle Animal +5, Heal +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Perception +6, Survival +6

Languages Common

SQ track, wild empathy (+2)

CR 1/2



Gear hide armor, longbow, longsword, 20 arrows, waterskin, other treasure

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair or family (3–10)

Ghazaks are humans born and bred in the desert. Over the centuries, ghazaks adapted to their rugged environment, becoming hardier, more durable and savvier than their city-dwelling kin. Their evolutionary development increased their stamina and survival instincts, but they are scrawnier than their human cousins and not as learned. Despite their lack of education, they are adept stargazers. Their calendar is among the most accurate in the world, and they are renowned for their ability to predict future events based upon their interpretation of celestial events. Ghazaks believe that their people were created from the essence of a lucky star that plummeted to earth and graced their people with good fortune. In fact, many ghazaks secretly cling to the notion that they originated in another world somewhere among the stars. Whatever the case, ghazaks have an uncanny knack for getting lucky breaks that others do not.

Ghazaks are predominately nomadic, living in small family units numbering no more than ten individuals. Though ghazaks originated in the deserts, many have migrated to the cities in search of a life not dependent upon the constant struggle to find water, shelter or food. Ghazaks are taller than most men, but also slighter in build and much paler in complexion. They are born with white hair giving them an otherworldly appearance. They are quiet, introspective people with an innate respect for nature and the well-being of others. They are welcomed in most humanoid communities for their hard work ethic, peaceful demeanor and uncanny penchant for benefiting from good luck.

Ghazak Characters

Ghazaks are defined by their class levels — they do not have racial HD. They have the following racial traits.

+2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, –2 Intelligence: Ghazaks are durable and clever, but they show little interest in learning.

Desert Acclimated: Ghazaks have fire resistance 5.

Desert Runner: Ghazaks receive a +4 racial bonus on Constitution checks and Fortitude saves to avoid fatigue and exhaustions, as well as any other ill effects from running, forced marches, starvation, thirst, and hot or cold environments.

Hardy: Ghazaks gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison, spells and spell-like effects.

Low-Light Vision: Ghazaks can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Lucky Stars: At birth, ghazaks gain a +1 racial bonus on saving throws.

Protective Eyelids: Ghazaks adapted to avoid damage from bright light. They receive a +1 bonus to saving throws against blindness.

Languages Ghazaks begin play speaking Common. Ghazaks with high Intelligence scores can choose any of the following: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling and Ignan.

DUNES OF DESOLATION



Golem, Sand

This large construct is sculpted from tightly packed sand. It lumbers along on two heavy legs and its hands are fashioned into two hammer-like fists.

SAND GOLEM

XP 2,400

N Large construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +0

AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19 (-1 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 74 (8d10+30)

Fort +2; **Ref** +1; **Will** +2

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +11 (2d6+4)

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

Special Attacks sandstorm

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 22

Environment desert

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A sand golem is immune to any spell or spell-like effect that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals cold damage slows a sand

golem (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A sand golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.

Sandstorm (Ex) As a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds, a sand golem can unleash a torrent of sand from its outstretched hands in a 30-foot cone. The effect blinds for 1d4 rounds and deals 4d6 points of slashing damage; however a successful DC 14 Reflex save halves the damage and negates blindness. The save DC is Constitution-based.

A sand golem has a humanoid body made from sand. It is frequently fashioned in the image of a chiseled, muscular man with sledgehammer fists and powerful legs. The sand golem's body is polished to a fine sheen, but its facial features are rarely defined. Sand golems cannot speak and move across sandy surfaces with remarkable silence. They are typically built by priests and wizards to serve as guardians for their temples or strongholds. A sand golem is 8 feet tall and weighs 1,000 pounds.

Construction

A sand golem's body must be sculpted from a single block of sand weighing at least 1,000 pounds and treated with honey and resins worth 500 gp.

SAND GOLEM

CL 12th; **Price** 19,300 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate object*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, creator must be caster level 12th; **Skill** Craft (sculpting) DC 17; **Cost** 8,800 gp

Gugunda

This small, aqua blue-skinned creature has white, feathered wings, a cherubic face and the chubby body of a newborn baby.

GUGUNDA

XP 1,200

CG Small outsider (chaotic, good)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +10

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 37 (5d10+10)

Fort +6; **Ref** +10; **Will** +3

Resist fire 10

Speed 30 ft.; fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +1 dagger +11 (1d3+1/19-20)

Special Attacks breath of dreams

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th):

At will—*create water*, *detect evil*, *detect good*

3/day—*cure light wounds*, *endure elements*

1/day—*create food and water*

Str 10, **Dex** 19, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Diplomacy +9, Fly +18, Heal +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +16, Use Magic Device +9

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic

NEW MONSTERS



Gear +1 dagger, other gear

Environment desert
Organization solitary

Breath of Dreams (Su) Once per hour, a gugunda expels a 30-foot cone of wispy, cloudlike vapors that cause all living creatures that fail a DC 16 Will save to fall asleep, as if it were affected by *sleep*. They remain asleep for 5 minutes. Unlike the spell, there is no Hit Dice limitation on the number or strength of creatures that may be affected. Breath of dreams dissipates immediately in the face of a strong wind (21+ mph). This is a mind-affecting, compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

The gugunda is an extremely rare creature of legend. Desert natives and travelers know it by many names including “medic of the sands”, “the boy bearing water” or the “angel of the sands”, and over the centuries it has saved many lives. Because of its affinity for water, most adventurers mistake it for an elemental or a variant marid, but the gugunda actually originates on the Upper Planes where it heals angels and other good-aligned outsiders in their battles against the wicked denizens of the Lower Planes. Gugundas first came to the deserts centuries ago to answer the prayers of a noble order of paladins in pursuit of a powerful mummy and its undead legions. After aiding the men in their noble cause, a few gugundas remained in the desert, tending to those in need of relief from the oppressive heat and lack of water.

Gugundas are 3 feet tall and weigh 50 pounds. They resemble idealized cherubs with chubby arms and legs, a round baby’s face and a pair of white, feathered wings. Most gugundas have sandy blonde hair and light blue eyes though hair color varies from strawberry blonde to radiant white while eye colors skew towards shades of blue and hazel. Gugundas scour the unforgiving sands searching for travelers in desperate need. The benevolent outsiders aid only those it believes are true of heart. While that is usually construed to mean good-aligned creatures, gugundas may heal and provide

water to neutral creatures or in the rarest of circumstances, evil creatures pursuing a worthy cause. On the rare occasion when it speaks, a gugunda’s voice sounds like the crashing of the waves against the seashore.

Gugundas shy away from combat whenever possible. When confronted by a hostile enemy, gugundas first attempt to flee before using their breath of dreams ability and as a desperate last resort, attacking with their magical dagger. Rumors persist that a single gugunda feather contains enough water to parch a man’s thirst for a day during the hottest of days. These stories lead some adventurers to actively hunt down gugundas for their prized feathers.

Hallaraq

This nightmarish abomination has a hard carapace, two serrated claws, eight legs, a birdlike beak and a scorpion’s tail. Its crablike body is the size of a large horse.

HALLARAQ

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large vermin

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +0

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (–1 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)

hp 102 (12d8+48)

Fort +12; **Ref** +3; **Will** +4

DR 5/bludgeoning or piercing; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **Resist** fire 10

Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft. (loose sand only)

Melee bite +13 (1d8+5), 2 claws +13 (1d6+5 plus grab), sting +13 (1d6+5 plus poison)

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

Str 20, **Dex** 8, **Con** 19, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 24 (36 vs. trip)

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or herd (2–7)

Treasure none

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Strength damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.



DUNES OF DESOLATION

The monstrous hallaraq is referred to in many circles as the sewer of the sands for its proclivity to eat absolutely anything. Many adventurers undertake the disgusting task of cracking open its shell and searching its innards for valuables the creature may have eaten during its travels. Despite its formidable appearance, the hallaraq is a scavenger at heart, preferring to eat carrion and even inorganic matter over fresh prey. In simplest terms, the monster is an eating machine that seeks the most reward for the least effort. It is 8 feet wide from the furthest tips of its shell and 6 feet long from its beak to tail, which is roughly the same length as its body.

Hallaraqs live in small groups numbering between two and seven individuals. Rival males are extremely aggressive towards each other particularly as mating season approaches. It is not uncommon to encounter a hallaraq missing a claw or with a damaged tail. Hallaraqs are constantly on the move searching for their next meal. The hallaraqs' shell reflects most of the sun's energy and retains moisture. As a result, they can travel for days without drinking even in extreme heat. In battle, hallaraqs charge at smaller foes, using their claws to grab enemies and then sting them with their venomous tails. When severely threatened, hallaraqs sometimes burrow beneath the sand to escape their attackers. Hallaraqs are mindless; therefore they do not amass treasure.

Fort +11; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d6+8 plus disease), gore +17 (2d6+12)

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

Special Attacks powerful charge (gore, 4d8+16)

Str 26, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +2, Survival +4

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair or family (mated pair plus 1–3 young)

Treasure none

Disease (Ex) *Filth fever*: bite—injury; save Fort DC 19; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Karkadann

This muscular, rhino-like creature has a thick, taupe hide, barrel-shaped legs, a short, sinewy tail and a disgusting maw of rotting molars. A foul stench of decay accompanies the beast.

KARKADANN

XP 4,800

CN Large magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +8

CR 8

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, –1 size)

hp 95 (10d10+40); fast healing 5

The karkadann is an oddity of desert creatures, as its thick hide and muscular body appears unsuited for survival in a hot, arid climate. The massive beast attributes its success to the fact that its aqua-colored blood acts as a natural coolant, keeping its internal temperature down during the day and then allowing its superheated coat to keep it warm during the chilly overnight hours. The karkadann's blood is highly prized by alchemists and wizards alike as it can be used as a spell component and an ingredient in potions and extracts. Similarly, practitioners of the healing arts also covet the karkadann for its horn, which is also used to create healing salves and balms.

Karkadanns are herbivores, eating any vegetation they can find, but they also supplement their diet with carrion. As a result, their disgusting mouths are an incubator for disease. Although they are not natural hunters, karkadanns charge humanoids on sight, perhaps as an evolutionary



NEW MONSTERS

response to those hunting them for their coveted blood and horn. Karkadanns are territorial and always take up residence within a day's walk of a water source. They live alone, as a mated pair or as a family with 1d3 young. They age and mature incredibly slowly. Their gestation period is almost five years, it takes 50 years to reach adulthood, and the oldest karkadanns are more than 500 years old. Karkadanns stand 9 feet high at the shoulder and measure almost 10 feet in length.

Kharam

This gorgeous, voluptuous woman has a forked tongue, phosphorescent green eyes on the front and back of her head and sensuous red lips.

KHARAM XP 4,800

LE Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +12

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)
hp 76 (9d10+27)
Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4
Immune mind-affecting

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +11/+6 (1d4+1/19–20 plus poison), mwk dagger +11 (1d4+1/19–20 plus poison)
Special Attacks disarming kiss, enfeebling gaze, sneak attack +5d6

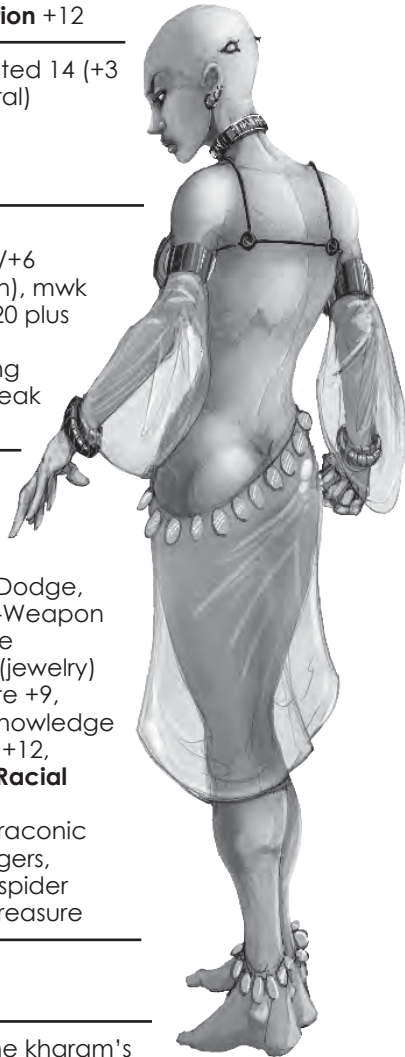
Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15
Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse
Skills Appraise +7, Craft (jewelry) +8, Disguise +7, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Perception +12, Stealth +12, Survival +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception
Languages Common, Draconic
Gear 2 masterwork daggers, 4 doses of black widow spider venom, wig, veil, other treasure

Environment desert
Organization solitary

All-Around Vision (Ex) The kharam's eyes in the back of her head allow her to see in all directions. Kharams gain a +4 racial bonus to Perception checks and cannot be flanked.

Disarming Kiss (Su) The kharam disarms living creatures with a kiss, causing them to drop all of their items and take no actions other than stare lovingly into the kharam's eyes, which causes additional Strength damage from her enfeebling gaze each round. The kharam must grapple an unwilling victim before the kharam can use this ability. A creature must succeed on a DC 16 Will save to resist the effects of this ability. The effect ends if the kharam directly attacks a victim influenced by disarming kiss. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.



CR 8

Enfeebling Gaze (Su) 1d4 Strength damage, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 16 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Poison (Ex) Dagger—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d3 Con and staggered; cure 2 saves. Kharams envenom their daggers with black widow spider venom.

According to legend, kharams first appeared six centuries ago, thanks to a misguided wish. The rich and powerful King Youssef boasted a harem of twelve wives and sixty concubines. Intrigue abounded within the harem, and the exasperated king had just survived a third assassination attempt within as many months. He turned to his marid advisor and wished that there was a way he could tell which of his wives or concubines were planning to kill him. In an instant, the genie fulfilled his wish and transformed nearly his entire harem into kharams, or so the story goes. Whether this tale is true or not, there is no doubting that kharams are mistresses of seduction, intrigue and murder.

A kharam appears as an ordinary woman with a few noteworthy exceptions. She is completely bald and has a pair of eyes in the front and back of her head. Her tongue is forked, presumably to lie, but she relies on her gaze and kiss to seduce victims rather than her words. She is shapely and beautiful and often wears ornate jewelry crafted from gold, silver and precious stones along with form-fitting clothing that accentuates her curvaceous body. The lust for wealth drives her murderous schemes, as she always targets wealthy men and even other women to amass more riches for her treasure hoard. A kharam can never have too much gold.

Kharams typically stalk royal palaces, mansions and noble families in search of more riches. When moving about a city or within a household, kharams veil their eyes and wear a wig to conceal their baldness and the pair of eyes in the back of their head. Once they are alone with their intended victim, they unveil their eyes, remove their wig, unsheathe their poisoned daggers and stab their prey in the back. If the victim survives the surprise attack, the kharam focuses its gaze attack on the unfortunate foe and grapples the creature in order to use its disarming kiss ability. Though the victim is often rendered helpless, the kharam murders the unfortunate for good measure before stealing its valuables.

Kharams are not immune to the gaze attack of others of their kind thus they live and operate alone. They are still fertile and reproduce every 3 to 5 years. The beautiful kharam would have little difficulty finding willing partners, but they prefer taking advantage of unwilling partners to father their children. Young kharams remain with their mothers until adolescence, when they acquire their enfeebling gaze ability. When that time approaches, the mother often sends the child to live with a wealthy family as a servant or other member of the household to learn how to interact within high society and make its own way in the world.

Lycanthrope, Werehyena

This feral creature has human shape, but the hunched shoulders, head and fur of a hyena.

<<insert image lycanthropewerehyela-cmyk.psd here>>

WEREHYENA (HUMAN FORM) XP 600

CR 2

Human male natural werehyena rogue 2 (augmented humanoid) (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Lycanthrope")
NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 13 (2d8+4)
Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +3
Defensive Abilities evasion

Speed 30 ft.
Melee short sword +3 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Special Attacks rogue talent (surprise attack), sneak attack +1d6

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +3, Climb +6, Disguise +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +8, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Languages Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and hyena; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (hyenas), trapfinding

WEREHYENA (HYBRID FORM)

XP 600

Human male natural werehyena rogue 2 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Lycanthrope")

NE Medium male humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +3; **Ref** +5; **Will** +3

CR 2

Defensive Abilities evasion; **DR** 10/silver

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +3 (1d6+3 /19–20), bite –1 (1d6+3 plus trip and curse of lycanthropy)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks rogue talent (surprise attack), sneak attack +1d6

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +3, Climb +8, Disguise +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +8, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Languages Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and hyena; *polymorph*), lycanthropic empathy (hyenas), trapfinding

Gear masterwork studded leather armor, short sword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, vial of antitoxin, other gear

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair, pack (4–6) or rush (11–20)

Werehyenas are the ultimate opportunists, swooping in and reaping the rewards sown by others' actions. In their humanoid form, werehyenas resemble normal people, though they have shaggy, mangy hair and spontaneously emit laughter-like sounds at inopportune times. In many desert communities, uncontrollable vocalizations are considered a telltale sign that the person is in fact a werehyena. Unfortunately, such generalizations are not always accurate as nervous habits and some diseases may be to blame for the behavior.

Like their feral kin, werehyenas live in packs often at the fringes of society, where they earn a living as thieves, swindlers and smugglers. The crafty lycanthropes are adept at spotting newly infected werehyenas, and they quickly take them under their wings by introducing them to their bohemian lifestyle. They adhere to the maxim that there is strength in numbers. While a lone werehyena would hesitate to fight a well-armed soldier in open combat, a pack of werehyenas would jump him in a heartbeat. Even among their own kin, werehyenas constantly squabble amongst themselves about not getting their fair share of the spoils. Envy courses through their veins, and there is no greater affront than to get cheated out of one's proper share of treasure.

Werehyenas are equally at home in a rough and tumble city, as they are in the desert. They are natural predators always on the hunt for victims to rob and potentially eat if the need arises. They always act as a team, preferring to lure victims into the desert and then ambush them at the first opportune moment. If the plan goes awry, they split up and flee into the desert. When self-preservation is at stake, it becomes every werehyena for himself.

Martuush

A frightening combination of scales and exoskeleton, this colossal half-cobra, half-scorpion drips venom from its fangs and its menacing stinger.

MARTUUSH

XP 51,200

N Colossal vermin

Init –2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26

CR 15

AC 26, touch 0, flat-footed 26 (–2 Dex, +26 natural, –8 size)

hp 275 (22d8+176)

Fort +21; **Ref** +5; **Will** +7

Immune mind-affecting effects

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +25 (4d6+17 plus poison), 2 claws +25 (2d8+17)





plus grab), sting +25 (2d8+17 plus poison)
Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Special Attacks constrict (2d8+17), poison (DC 29)

Str 44, **Dex** 6, **Con** 26, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2
Base Atk +16; **CMB** +41 (+45 to grapple); **CMD** 49 (53 vs. grapple, 61 vs. trip)
Skills Climb +21, Perception +4, Stealth –14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

Environment desert
Organization solitary, or clutch (1 female with 1–4 young)
Treasure none

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 29; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d3 Constitution damage; cure 2 saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; save Fort DC 29; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Strength damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The extremely rare and colossal martuush is a bizarre amalgam of a cobra and a scorpion. Whether the combination occurred naturally or through force of magic, those that come across this frightening monstrosity rarely live long enough to answer that question. The creature retains most of its scorpion features including its tail, claws and most of its abdomen and thorax. A cobra's head complete with a massive hood replaces the scorpion head. The cobra's fangs and the scorpion's tail retain their virulent poison. The martuush is a massive creature measuring 30 feet in length and almost the same distance wide from claw to claw. It stands 15 feet off the ground. Its coloration ranges from jet black to dark maroon.

Male martuushs are highly aggressive and attack one another on sight. They always battle to the death. Females may be accompanied by several young, but otherwise lead solitary lives except during mating season. Martuushs dwell in underground complexes, taking up residence in the buried ruins of a lost city or an abandoned lair of another massive creature such as a blue dragon. They only venture out at night and remain close to water at all times. Hallaraqs are their prey of choice, but they attack and devour anything they encounter on the desert sands. Many legends and myths claim that martuushs have devoured a team of camels and a legion of men in a single sitting. Caravan drivers take great care never to mention the monster's name, as even the faintest whisper of the elusive creature is enough to panic an entire caravan team.

Necropolis Guardian

This large construct is sculpted from finely polished alabaster into the likeness of a palace guard armed with a flail in one hand and a crook in the other.

NECROPOLIS GUARDIAN

CR 9

XP 6,400

N Large construct

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +0
Aura desecrate (20 ft.)

AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22 (–1 Dex, +14 natural, –1 size)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4; **Ref** +3; **Will** +4

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 18

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +15 (2d6+4)

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

Special Attacks channel negative energy (6d6, DC 16 Will halves [DC 19 within desecrate aura])

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 26

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair or battalion (3–12)

Treasure none

Channel Negative Energy (Su) A necropolis guardian can use a channel energy effect, as the cleric special ability, as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range



DUNES OF DESOLATION

of 30 feet in a burst centered on the necropolis guardian. A successful DC 19 Will save within the necropolis guardian's aura or a successful DC 16 Will save outside of the necropolis guardian's aura halves the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Desecrate (Sp) All creatures within a 20-ft. radius of the necropolis guardian are affected by desecrate.

A necropolis guardian has a humanoid body made from finely polished alabaster. It is always sculpted into the likeness of a palace guard armed with a flail and crook, though these aesthetic choices do not affect its combat abilities. Their faces are often sculpted in the image of an important person buried within the complex. Necropolis guardians cannot speak, and they move in a deliberate, plodding manner. They are usually found in royal tombs, pyramids or the cities of the dead buried deep within the desert. Intended to ward such places against grave robbers, their creators empowered them with the ability to bolster undead and harm the living. A necropolis guardian is 9 feet tall and weighs 1,200 pounds.

Construction

A necropolis guardian's body must be sculpted from a single block of alabaster weighing at least 1,500 pounds and treated with inlaid lapis lazuli, gold and paints worth 750 gp.

NECROPOLIS GUARDIAN

CL 17th; **Price** 45,000 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *geas/quest*, *miracle*, *spell resistance* creator must be caster level 17th and able to channel negative energy; **Skill** Craft (sculpting) DC 19; **Cost** 22,500 gp

Qarin

When visible, this tiny, winged creature with onyx-colored skin, clawed hands and feet, and a serpentine tongue flutters a few feet above the ground.

QARIN

XP 2,400

NE Tiny outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 60 (8d10+16)

Fort +5; **Ref** +9; **Will** +9

DR 5/good; **Immune** mind-affecting; **Resist** sonic 10

Speed 30 ft.; fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d4–1)

Special Attacks second thought

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th):

Constant—*tongues*

At will—*daze* (DC 13), *invisibility*

3/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *scare* (DC 14)

1/day—*dominate person* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 16)

Str 8, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +14, Fly +20,

Intimidate +14, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge (religion)

+11, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +4, Stealth

+22, Use Magic Device +5

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.
SQ attuned, guardian spirit

Environment any (Pandemonium)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Attuned (Su) Whenever a qarin targets a living creature within 30 feet, that creature must succeed on a DC 17 Will save to avoid having the qarin attune itself to that creature. The attuned creature is vaguely aware that "something" is watching over it, but the sensation initially feels more comforting than alarming. A creature that succeeds on the save is immune to the same qarin's attuned ability for the rest of his life. Once a qarin is attuned to a mortal creature, it remains attuned to that creature until its death, the qarin's death, the qarin leaves or until the attunement is broken with a successful *remove curse* (DC 17). A qarin may be attuned to only one creature at any given time, and it must remain within 30 feet of the creature at all times to remain attuned to it. Once freed of the qarin's influence, the creature is immune to the same qarin's attuned ability for the rest of his life. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Guardian Spirit (Su) Once per day, a qarin may grant the attuned creature a +1 luck bonus to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks for 1 minute. The creature is aware of the bonuses, although it is unaware of the source. The creature can resist gaining the bonuses with a successful DC 17 Will save. Each time the



NEW MONSTERS

attuned creature benefits from the luck bonuses granted by the qarin, the DC to resist the qarin's spell-like abilities increases by +1. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Second Thought (Su) Once per day, a qarin forces an attuned creature to reroll any attack roll, weapon damage roll, saving throw, ability check that it just rolled if the attuned creature fails a DC 17 Will save. The creature must then use the worse result. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Many human cultures share a common notion that a guardian angel or spirit looks after the well-being of each person, but most people dismiss the idea as an ancient superstition or an old-wives' tale. Yet, this legend has basis in truth, as the wicked and deceitful qarin proves. Desert travelers sometimes speak of a reassuring voice that guided them through the wilderness during a particularly hazardous trek, or of benefiting from an improbable string of good luck when death or serious injury seemed certain. The evil qarin delights in this folklore by using it to gain their victim's trust before leading the hapless creature astray into a life of sin and evil.

Qarins originate on the Lower Planes, but spend most of their lives on the Material Plane in search of souls to corrupt, tempt and ultimately destroy. Qarins begin the process by attuning themselves to a specific individual. If the creature appears receptive to the relationship, the qarin reveals itself to the victim as its "guardian spirit". At first, the qarin assists the victim by using its guardian spirit ability to grant luck bonuses to its prey. Once it gains the creature's trust and wears down the creature's defenses, it then employs its spell-like abilities to force the creature to partake in evil acts. When the creature can no longer resist the qarin's magical powers, the qarin drops all pretenses and controls the creature like its puppet, making liberal use of its *charm person*, *dominate person* and *suggestion* spell-like abilities to further its evil agenda.

Qarins adopt a wait-and-see approach with suspicious or wary victims. The conniving outsider remains invisible in the creature's presence. It uses its guardian spirit ability to further enhance the belief that a benevolent force guides the creature's action. In some cases, it uses its Knowledge (religion) skill to feign being a deity or an agent of one to gain the attuned creature's confidence. Once it accomplishes that, the qarin's sets its plan into motion. The qarin's ultimate goal is to have the creature destroyed during the commission of an evil act, almost certainly assuring that its soul rises again as a demon, devil or some other evil outsider. Qarins take particular pleasure in corrupting paladins and good-aligned outsiders, especially aasimars.

Qarins appear as tiny, winged creatures akin to a quasit or imp. In fact, they are commonly mistaken for them. In most cases though, qarins remain invisible until the attuned creature can only resist their spell-like abilities by rolling a natural 20 on its saving throw. Qarins are weak physical combatants and avoid confrontation at all costs by remaining invisible and hiding. Once detected, the qarin attempts to quell the situation using its spell-like abilities, but if that fails, the qarin flees for its life permanently releasing any attuned creature in the process.

Rahada

This olive-skinned, hairless humanoid has a round head with stubby ears, an exaggerated nose, and a muscular build, though his fingers and toes are long and nimble. He has a short, vestigial tail and a layer of thin porous scales just beneath his skin.

RAHADA
XP 200

Male rahada warrior 1
CN Medium humanoid (rahada)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +0

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 7 (1d10+2)

Fort +4; **Ref** +1; **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft.

Melee scimitar +5 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)

Str 17, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative^B,

Quick Draw^B, Weapon

Focus (scimitar)

Skills Bluff +6, Handle

Animal +6, Perception

+0, Ride +3, Sleight

of Hand +4; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Bluff, +2

Sleight of Hand

Languages

Common, Draconic

Gear studded

leather armor,

scimitar, light

crossbow, 20 bolts,

waterskin

Environment desert

Organization

solitary, family (2–

10) or great family

(20–200)

Rahadas are a race of humans that trace their lineage back to an extinct race of purely reptilian humanoids. Over the centuries, they became more human though they retained a few vestigial features of their distant heritage. Their ancestry, their habitat and their societal role have shaped a race of physically strong, charismatic humanoids that are quick to act, but too rash to sort out the consequences of their actions ahead of time. Rahadas are ill-suited for sedentary life in crowded cities, so most make their way in the world as traveling merchants wandering the desert plying their wares. Rahadas are always accompanied by their herd animals bred for desert survival, such as camels or al-haloons. The wealthiest rahadas are said to have a caravan of dire camels literally hauling tons of goods across the desert sands. Though often perceived as wandering vagabonds, rahadas travel through the desert sands along predetermined routes, stopping at designated cities and towns to sell and replenish their eclectic inventory of goods. In fact, rahadas are very proprietary about their trade routes, which are sometimes handed down from generation to generation. Territorial disputes between competing rahada merchants and their families almost always come to blows.

Rahadas live and travel in family units ranging from a few individuals for a poor family to several hundred for an extremely wealthy and successful family. Only the wealthiest rahadas take up permanent roots in a major city or another stopping point along their trade route. Experienced merchants and commercial dealers perceive rahadas as fast-talking but hard-nosed businessmen, but the average man on the street's opinion is less flattering. Though they are unmistakably humanoid, it is not uncommon for disgruntled customers to derogatorily refer to them as snake-men, forked-tongued or much worse. Whatever the perception, there is no denying that rahadas are talkative and outwardly friendly people whose livelihood depends upon their ability to successfully interact with others.

Rahadas are 5 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds. They are squat and muscular, though their fingers and toes are long and quite dexterous. They have olive skin, round heads, stubby ears, yellow eyes, a large nose, a small mouth and a vestigial tail. They are completely hairless, but close examination reveals a thin layer of porous scales beneath their skin. They are well-respected within the business community, but most others see them as shady merchants trying to squeeze a few extra gold pieces from their coin purse.



DUNES OF DESOLATION

Rahada Characters

Rahadas are defined by their class levels — they do not have racial HD. They have the following racial traits.

+2 Strength, +2 Charisma, –2 Wisdom: Rahadas are burly, outgoing people who have a penchant for taking rash actions.

Agile Fingers: Rahadas gain a +2 racial bonus to Sleight of Hands checks.

Always Ready: Rahadas gain Improved Initiative and Quick Draw as bonus feats.

Convincing: Rahadas gain a +4 racial bonus on Bluff checks.

Gregarious: When a rahada successfully uses Diplomacy to win over an individual, that creature takes a –2 penalty on attempts to resist any of the rahada's Charisma-based skills for the next 24 hours.

Languages Rahadas begin play speaking Common and Draconic. Rahadas with high Intelligence scores can choose any of the following: Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Gnoll, Goblin, Halfling and Orc.

Low-Light Vision: Rahadas can see twice as far as normal in dim light.

Natural Armor: Rahadas gain a +1 natural armor bonus from the thin layer of scales beneath their skin.

Melee slam +4 (1d6+3 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks blood drain (1d2 Constitution)

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6 (+10 to grapple); **CMD** 16 (cannot be tripped)

SQ tumbleweed

Environment desert

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Blood Drain (Ex) Razorweed drains blood at the end of its turn if it grapples a foe, inflicting Constitution damage.

Tumbleweed (Ex) A successful DC 10 Perception check notices razorweed from tumbleweed at rest. A successful DC 20 Perception check is needed to notice razorweed while it is moving. A failed Perception check results in the observer mistaking the razorweed for ordinary tumbleweed. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plant.

Razorweed appears to be large, ordinary tumbleweed while rolling across the dusty earth, but at rest it is much easier to spot the subtle differences. Tumbleweed is stiff and dry, while razorweed is supple like a vine. In addition, tiny thorns and barbs cover the plant's branchlike structure, which is tightly wrapped around a central stalk. Another subtle clue to the plant's true nature is its ability to sharply change direction even in the face of a stiff breeze. Most importantly, unlike tumbleweed, razorweed is very much alive and on the hunt for fresh blood. Though it lacks intelligence, it is still a cunning hunter often feigning buffeting on the wind alongside ordinary tumbleweed.

Fresh blood is the razorweed's only source of nourishment. The creature typically attacks rodents, snakes and small mammals, but nothing is too big for the razorweed. The creature rolls along the ground towards its intended victim and then slams into it full force, wrapping its spindly vines around its body and sinking its thorns and barbs into its body. Razorweed drains blood quickly, but once it causes 6 points of Constitution damage it releases its grapple and moves onto to digest its blood meal. If attacked again, the razorweed slams its victim again and continues draining blood until the creature becomes unconscious or dies. Razorweed is found exclusively in the desert scrublands.

Razorweed

This man-sized carnivorous vine is almost identical to tumbleweed except for the razor sharp thorns covering its supple olive-green branches.

RAZORWEED

XP 600

N Large plant

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +3

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+5 natural, –1 size)

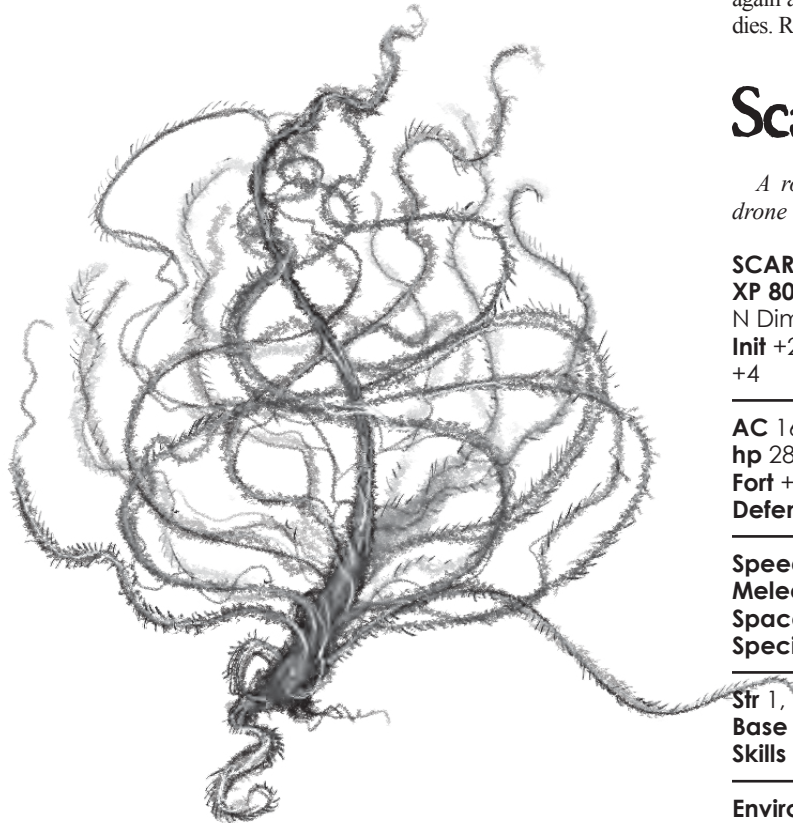
hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +5; **Ref** +1; **Will** +1

Immune plant traits; **Resist** fire 5

Speed 10 ft.

CR 2



Scarab Beetle Swarm

A roiling mass of carnivorous beetles emits an ominous, clattering drone as they devour everything in their path.

SCARAB BEETLE SWARM

XP 800

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; **Perception** +4

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 size)

hp 28 (8d8–8)

Fort +5; **Ref** +4; **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** weapon damage

Speed 40 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks daze (DC 10), distraction (DC 13)

Str 1, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

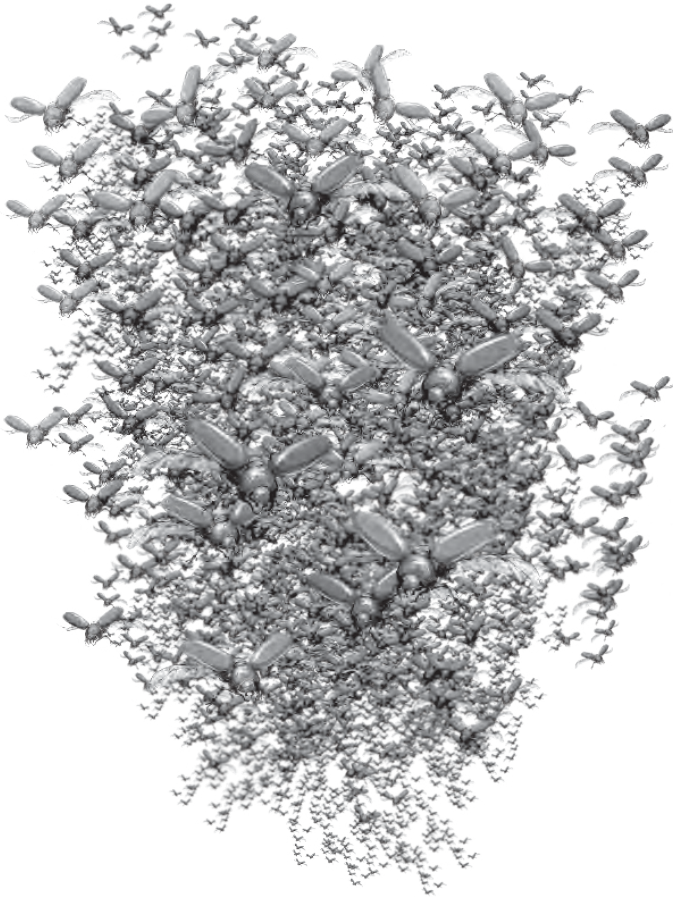
Base Atk +6; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Perception +4; **Racial Modifier** +4 Perception

Environment desert or underground

Organization solitary, or scourge (2–5 swarms)

NEW MONSTERS



Treasure none

Daze (Ex) Any living creature that begins its turn with a beetle swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 10 Will save or be dazed. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

These ravenous, armored beetles devour anything in their path. A scarab beetle swarm consists of 2,000 individual insects. Their incessant scuttling noises often unnerve living creatures in their path. Scarab beetles are primarily nocturnal and are typically encountered indoors or underground, particularly in abandoned temples, where some religions revered them. Scarab beetles are easily distinguishable from regular beetles because of their bright green coloring and incessant chattering. They know no fear and attack until they or their victim is no longer standing.

Shahardeen

This shaggy, ivory-colored, eight-legged creature moves with an arrhythmic, halting gait. Its compound eyes appear to be carved from crystal along with its teeth and claws.

SHAHARDEEN

XP 1,200

N Medium aberration

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +6

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 37 (5d8+10 plus 5)

Fort +5; **Ref** +2; **Will** +5

DR 5/slashing or piercing

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

Speed 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d6+3 plus osmotic bite), 2 claws +6 (1d4+3 plus salt in a wound)

Special Attacks osmotic bite, salt in a wound

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +7, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +4, Perception +6, Stealth +5, Survival +6, Swim +8

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ amphibious, gem guts

Environment desert, lakes and rivers

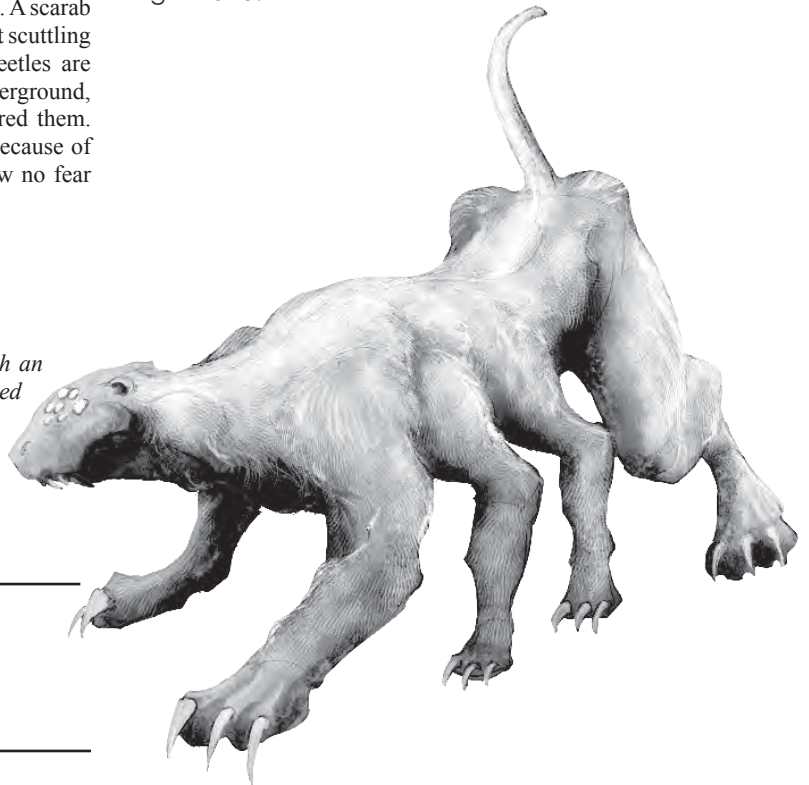
Organization solitary, crew (2–7) or wave (11–20)

Treasure none

Gem Guts (Ex) A shahardeen frequently eats gems and other crystals, which it mistakes for salt. Its digestive tract typically contains 2d4 valuable stones with an average value of 50 gp per gem or crystal. Recovering these items requires a thorough dissection of its digestive tract, which takes 1 minute per Hit Die. In addition, the creature performing this task must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for the duration of the dissection and another 2d4 minutes afterward.

Osmotic Bite (Ex) Whenever a shahardeen bites a living creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or become fatigued. If the shahardeen bites a creature that is already fatigued, that creature becomes exhausted unless it succeeds on its Fortitude save. Osmotic bite has no further effect on a creature that is already exhausted. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Salt on a Wound (Ex) The shahardeen's claw attack deals 2 additional points of nonlethal damage each round. The creature takes this damage every round at the start of each of its turns for the next 1d4+1 rounds. The effect can be stopped by a succeeding on a DC 15 Heal check or the application of any effect that heals hit point damage. The damage from this ability does not stack with itself. This damage bypasses any damage reduction the creature might have.



CR 4

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Few creatures thrive in the harsh desert salt flats of the world, but the shahardeen is one of the rare exceptions. The shahardeen is an evolutionary jack of all trades, an amphibious creature able to survive in an intensely hot or brutally cold environment. It has eight legs, but it relies almost exclusively on its front and rear set of legs to move on land thus explaining its odd gait. In water, all eight legs propel it through the murky depths of the salty lakes and rivers of its native habitat. The shahardeen reaches an average height of 4 feet at the shoulder, a length of 5 feet, and it weighs 150 pounds. A shaggy coat of ivory-colored fur covers its body, partially concealing hardened salt deposits affixed to its skin. These same growths also coat its eyes, teeth and claws. Its torso is thick and muscular, yet its otterlike head is slender and elongated.

Though they are able to and often do eat salt in its raw form, their nutritional needs depend upon a concoction of salt compounds found in other creatures. Because of their unique diet, shahardeens are voracious hunters that frequently consume the equivalent of their own body weight per day. They extract every gram of salt from their victims, while excreting everything else in less than a few hours. Shahardeens mistakenly eat gems and other crystals on a frequent basis, and these minerals tend to stay in the creature's system for considerably longer.

Shahardeens live in packs of closely related individuals with a rigid hierarchy. Like normal pack animals, they hunt as a cohesive unit. On land, shahardeens prefer ambushing their prey. One group of shahardeens scans the landscape for potential victims and then chases them towards a concealed group that leaps up and surprises the intended prey. Underwater, they use a more basic strategy by fanning out and encircling their kill. Shahardeens prefer eating sea creatures because of their higher salt content, but the water's high salinity makes it difficult for other creatures to live in such an environment. As a result, these voracious hunters spend most of their time on land.

Spectral Rider

A ghostly, featureless rider stands atop an equally spectral carpet that hovers a few feet off the ground. The carpet and its rider fly with astounding precision.

SPECTRAL RIDER

XP 9,600

Male human spectral rider sorcerer 9
NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +7

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 85 (9d6+54)

Fort +11; **Ref** +9; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal; **DR** 10/magic and cold iron;

Immune undead traits; **Resist** cold 20

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee despairing touch +6 (1d8 plus despairing touch)

Special Attacks breath of pain, despairing touch (DC 16), humiliating gaze, water's fury

Bloodline Spell-Like Ability (CL 9th, +6 ranged touch):

9/day—frost ray

Spells Known (CL 9th, +6 ranged touch):

4th (5/day)—dimension door, fire shield (DC 20), wall of ice (DC 20)

3rd (7/day)—deep slumber (DC 19), gaseous form, lightning bolt (DC 19), slow (DC 19)

2nd (8/day)—darkness, gust of wind, pyrotechnics, scorching ray, see invisibility

1st (8/day)—burning hands (DC 17), color spray (DC 17),

hypnotism (DC 17), mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist

0 (at will)—acid splash, daze (DC 16), detect magic, flare, ghost sound, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue (DC 16)

Bloodline Marid*

Str —, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 23

Feats Blind-Fight, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +15, Craft (weaving) +9, Fly +22, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Perception +15, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common

SQ bloodline arcana

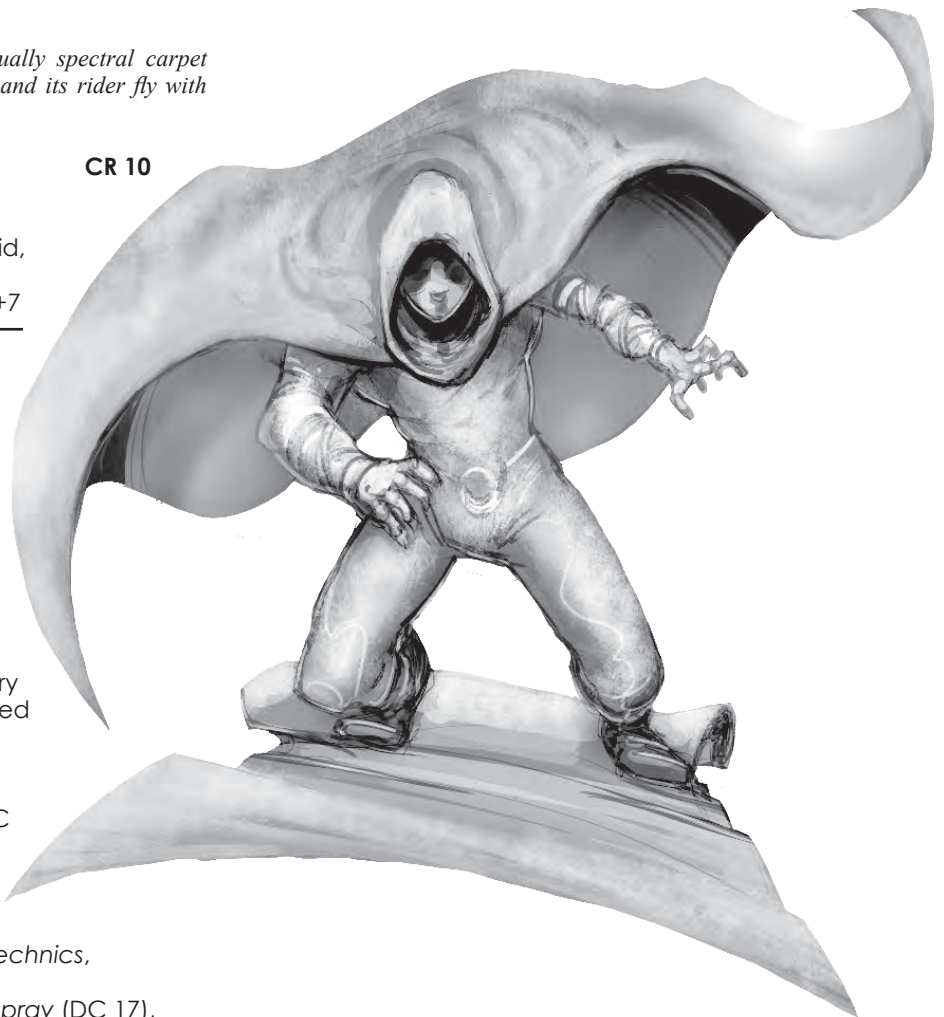
Gear cloak of resistance +2, other treasure

Environment desert

Organization solitary

*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic

Spectral riders are incorporeal undead created when a powerful genie curses a sorcerer that raised its ire. They appear as hooded figures devoid of any facial features, which the genie deliberately did to punish the offender with eternal anonymity. The effect works only on a living creature that shares the same bloodline as the genie uttering the curse. It is rumored, that a djinni created the first spectral rider when an evil sorcerer with the djinni bloodline challenged him to a race aboard his *carpet of flying*. When the genie prevailed, the sorcerer refused to accept



NEW MONSTERS

defeat and cast *bestow curse* on his competitor. Outraged by the offense, the genie cursed the sorcerer instead and consigned him to spend the rest of eternity as a spirit aboard his *carpet of flying*. Either out of tradition or to preserve the punishment's novelty, the capricious genies punish other mortals in the same manner. Although a djinni is responsible for creating the first spectral rider, the chaotic marids take credit for most spectral riders wandering the desert today.

Spectral riders aimlessly roam the deserts searching for sentient victims. They typically begin battle by unleashing a barrage of ranged offensive spells, particularly those that simultaneously affect multiple creatures. After exhausting their complement of spells, the spectral rider uses its Flyby Attack feat to deliver touch attacks to its opponents. They take particular delight in destroying other practitioners of magic, especially those that also share one of the genie bloodlines. Despite their hatred of the beings responsible for their fate, they are reluctant to seek revenge on their old foes. Spectral riders do not amass any treasure and never stay in the same place for more than a few hours at a time.

Creating a Spectral Rider

"Spectral rider" is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature with one of the following sorcerer bloodlines — djinni, efreeti, marid or shaitan. The spectral rider uses the base creature's stats and abilities except as noted here.

CR: Same as the base creature +2.

Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented). Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves or skill points. It gains the incorporeal subtype.

Armor Class: A spectral rider gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier. It loses the base creature's natural armor bonus, as well as all armor and shield bonuses not from force effects or *ghost touch* items.

Hit Dice: Change all of the creature's racial Hit Dice to d8s. All Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged. Spectral riders use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of Constitution).

Defensive Abilities: A spectral rider retains all of the defensive abilities of the base creature save those that rely on a corporeal form to function. They gain channel resistance +4, darkvision 60 ft., the incorporeal ability, and all of the immunities granted by its undead traits.

Speed: Spectral riders lose their previous speeds and gain a fly speed of 40 ft. (perfect).

Melee and Ranged Attacks: A spectral rider loses all of the base creature's attacks. If it could wield weapons in life, it can wield *ghost touch* weapons as a spectral rider.

Special Attacks: A spectral rider retains all the special attacks of the base creature, but any relying on physical contact do not function. In addition, a spectral rider gains one spectral rider special attack from the list below for every 3 points of CR (minimum 1 — the first ability chosen must always be despairing touch). The save DC against a spectral rider's special attack is equal to 10 + 1/2 spectral rider's HD + spectral rider's Charisma modifier unless otherwise noted. The GM may create additional abilities at his own discretion.

Breath of Pain (Su) The genie physically beat the spectral rider during their encounter. The spectral rider targets a living creature within 30 feet, depriving it of air, which inflicts the creature with the staggered condition if it fails a Fortitude save. When the next round begins a staggered creature must succeed at another Fortitude save or become unconscious. A creature that successfully saves against breath of pain cannot be affected by the same spectral rider's breath of pain for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Burning Touch (Su) Fury rages in the spectral rider. The spectral rider gains a touch attack that deals 1d6 points of fire damage for every 2 Hit Dice the spectral rider has. There is no save against this effect.

Corroding Touch (Su) Avarice roils the spectral rider, fueling its desire to destroy what it cannot have. The spectral rider can use *rusting grasp* once every 1d4 rounds (caster level 9th or equal to the spectral rider's HD, whichever is higher.)

Despairing Touch (Su) All spectral riders gain the despairing touch attack. By passing its ghostly hand through a foe's body as a standard

action, the spectral rider imparts its hopelessness by dealing 1d8 points of damage and inflicting a -4 penalty to the creature's attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks for 1d4 minutes. A successful Will save negates the penalties but not the damage. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Humiliating Gaze (Su) The genie shamed the spectral rider before bestowing its curse upon the unfortunate victim. The spectral rider has a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet that inflicts the creature with the confused condition for 2d4 rounds if it fails a Will save. A creature that successfully saves against the gaze cannot be affected by the same spectral rider's gaze for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect that relies on visual components. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Parching Touch (Su) The spectral rider is afflicted with constant thirst. The spectral rider gains a touch attack that deals 2d6 points of nonlethal damage +2 points per spectral rider Hit Die and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A successful Fortitude negates the Constitution damage, but not the physical damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Abilities: As an incorporeal undead creature, a spectral rider has no Strength or Constitution score.

Skills: Spectral riders have a +8 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth skill checks. Otherwise, skills are the same as the base creature.

Thirstmonger

Deep fissures burrow into the desiccated skin of a sun-baked corpse with jaundiced yellow eyes and sharpened, bony fingers. A proboscis covered with suction cups protrudes from its mouth, which is permanently affixed in a puckering position.

THIRSTMONGER
XP 1,200

CR 4

NE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +12

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 37 (5d8+10 plus 5)

Fort +3; **Ref** +3; **Will** +5

Immune undead traits; **Resist** fire 5

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d6+3),

bite +6 (1d4+3 plus

desiccating kiss)

Special Attacks desiccating kiss

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Blind-Fight, Skill Focus

(Perception), Toughness

Skills Climb +11, Intimidate +10,

Perception +12, Stealth +10

Languages Common

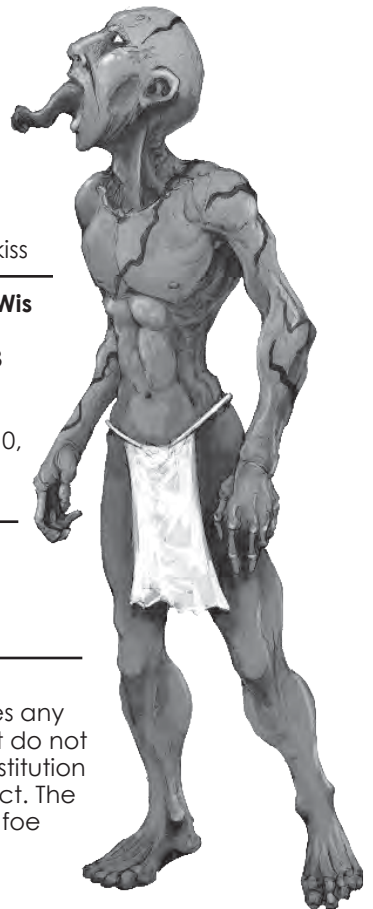
Environment desert (near water)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Desiccating Kiss (Su) A

thirstmonger's bite dehydrates any victim it strikes. Creatures that do not eat and those without a Constitution score are immune to this effect. The first time a thirstmonger hits a foe with its bite attack, the victim takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage if he fails a DC 14



DUNES OF DESOLATION

Fortitude save. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same thirstmonger's desiccating kiss for 24 hours. Alternatively, a thirstmonger can attempt to inflict the exhausted condition on the victim by making a touch attack — this variant requires a standard action, and cannot be attempted in the same round the thirstmonger makes claw attacks. The creature must then succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or become exhausted. This variation of desiccating kiss has no effect on a creature that is already exhausted. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Mirages are the bane of all desert travelers, but none more so than the lamentable thirstmonger. These undead abominations are the risen earthly remains of those unfortunate humanoids that died of thirst in pursuit of fresh water only to be duped by an optical illusion. The desire for water is so intense that the creature joins the ranks of the undead within minutes of death; however its mission remains unchanged — it continues searching for water.

The creature is as tall as the average man and deep fissures cut lines into its desiccated skin. Its mouth is affixed in a kissing posture, allowing a proboscis covered in suckers to protrude between its yellowed and rotten teeth. Thirstmongers wear little if any clothing, but most still carry their empty flask or waterskin as a symbolic reminder of their unquenchable thirst.

Thirstmongers are generally solitary and are almost always encountered near water. The hideous monster frequently burrows beneath the sand, typically atop a high dune or other location that gives the thirstmonger an advantageous tactical position and vantage point. When it detects intruders, the thirstmonger burrows closer and attempts to surprise them. Thirstmongers zealously defend their watering holes and never retreat.

Wadira

This handsome, rugged figure has an athletic build, which gives him a youthful, but experienced appearance. He has a prominent chin and cheekbones with flowing locks of silvery-white hair. He carries an intricately carved quarterstaff.

WADIRA

XP 2,400

NG Medium fey

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

Aura serenity (30 ft., DC 20)

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 55 (10d6+20)

Fort +7; **Ref** +11; **Will** +11

DR 5/cold iron

Weakness oasis bound

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk quarterstaff +9 (1d6+4)

or mwk quarterstaff +7/+7

(1d6+3/1d6+1)

Special Attacks pacify

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):

Constant—*endure elements*

At will—*create water*

3/day—*entangle* (DC 13)

1/day—*plant growth, snare* (DC 15)

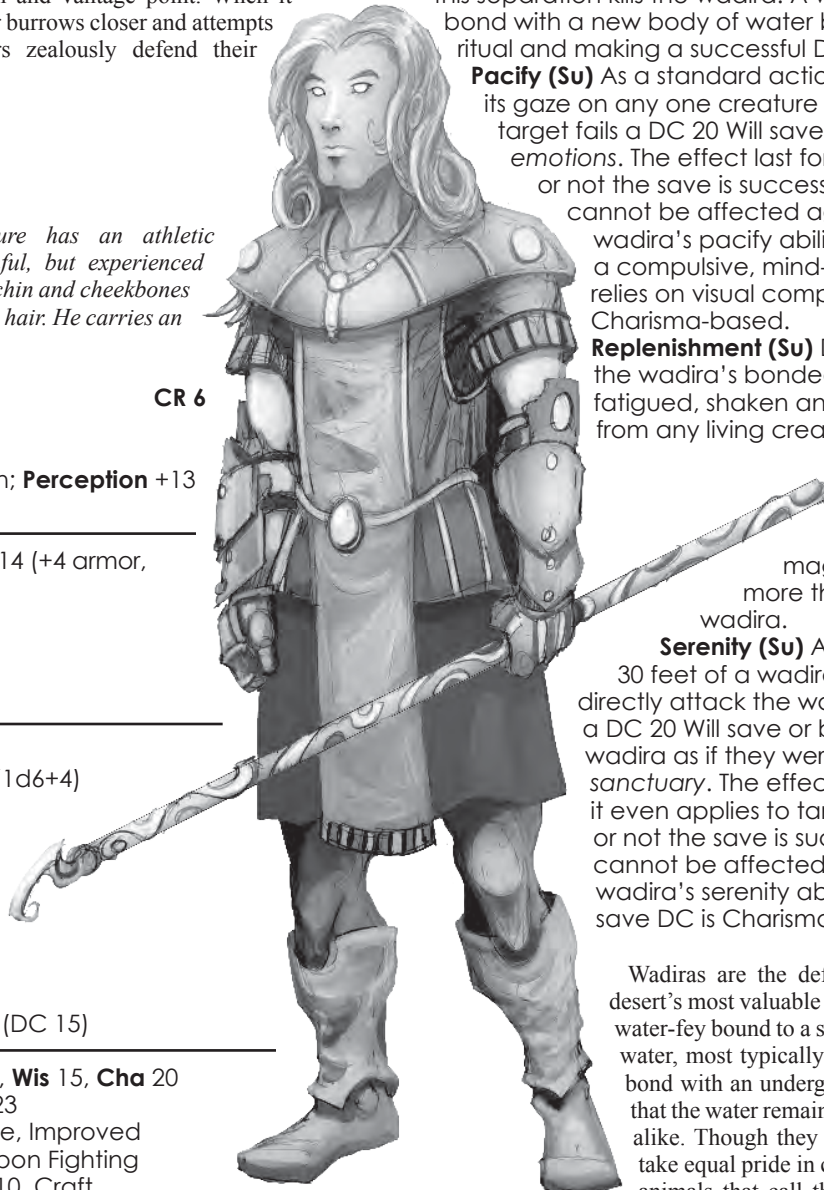
Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +10, Craft (jewelry) +9, Craft (weapons) +9, Diplomacy

CR 6



+16, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +10, Heal +5, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +13, Perform (sing) +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +10, Swim +10, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ replenishment

Gear masterwork chain shirt, masterwork quarterstaff, other gear

Environment desert

Organization solitary, or oasis (2–7)

Treasure NPC gear

Oasis Bound (Su) A wadira is mystically bonded to a single natural body of water and must never stray more than 500 yards from it. The water source is typically an oasis spring, pond, lake or similar body of water, but an underground aquifer and its associated well function as well. A wadira who moves 500 yards beyond the water's edge or the well's edge immediately becomes sickened. Every hour thereafter, he must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist becoming nauseated for an hour. A wadira that is out of range of his bonded body of water for 24 hours takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage, and another 1d6 points of Constitution damage every day that follows — eventually, this separation kills the wadira. A wadira can forge a new bond with a new body of water by performing a 24-hour ritual and making a successful DC 20 Will save.

Pacify (Su) As a standard action, a wadira may fix its gaze on any one creature within 30 feet. If the target fails a DC 20 Will save, it is affected by *calm emotions*. The effect lasts for 5 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same wadira's pacify ability for 24 hours. This is a compulsive, mind-affecting effect that relies on visual components. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Replenishment (Su) Drinking water from the wadira's bonded source removes the fatigued, shaken and sickened conditions from any living creature that does so. The drinker cannot gain these benefits again for another 24 hours.

The water loses all magical properties if it is more than 500 feet from the wadira.

Serenity (Su) All living creatures within 30 feet of a wadira that attempt to directly attack the wadira must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or be unable to attack the wadira as if they were under the influence of *sanctuary*. The effect lasts for 1 minute, and it even applies to targeted spells. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same wadira's serenity ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Wadiras are the defenders and protectors of the desert's most valuable commodity — water. They are water-fey bound to a single naturally created body of water, most typically in an oasis, but they can also bond with an underground aquifer. Wadiras ensure that the water remains pure for man, beast and plant alike. Though they are bonded to the water, they take equal pride in caring for the native plants and animals that call their watering hole home. The

NEW MONSTERS

wadira's bond to the water grants it magical properties, allowing it to cure living creatures of fatigue, fear and sickness.

Wadiras are slightly taller than the average man with a lithe, athletic build. They are handsome and rugged male fey with pronounced facial features and flowing silvery-white hair that drapes around their shoulders. They wear a finely polished, white chain shirt and always carry an ornately carved quarterstaff in their hands. Though they are water-fey, wadiras have a fondness for precious metals and gems, which they often incorporate into jewelry pieces such as necklaces and rings. They also have an eye for lovely female humanoids, particularly elves and other races with an affinity for the wilderness. They shower and adorn such beauties with glowing words and wondrous gifts.

Wadiras generally live alone, but it is possible for two or more of them to reside within a particular oasis if the location has more than one natural body of water. Wadiras view themselves as hospitable caretakers rather than protective owners of their bonded location. They are healers and providers, giving aid and respite to worthy creatures in need of such assistance. They happily share these resources with other creatures, but they steadfastly defend their sacred oasis or well against those seeking to monopolize or exploit it for their own benefit. When confrontation rears its ugly head, wadiras attempt the peaceful approach first using their serenity and pacify abilities to reduce hostility and ease tensions. If these fail, wadiras resort to combat as a measure of last resort, using their handcrafted quarterstaff with deadly efficiency.

Wellwinger

This amorphous creature has a central saclike body of purplish flesh covered in sticky mucous that is surrounded by eight 10-foot-long tentacles coated with tacky adhesive. It has two ivory eyes without pupils and a long beak with an almost grotesque overbite.

WELLWRINGER

XP 1,600

CE Medium aberration

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +6

Immune acid; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Speed 30 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

Melee bite +7 (1d6+2), 6 tentacles +4 (1d4+1 plus grab)

Special Attack adhesive

Str 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6 (+10 to grapple); **CMD** 18

(cannot be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Multiattack[®], Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +15, Escape Artist +6, Perception +8, Stealth +10, Swim +16

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ protective slime

Environment underground, streams and rivers

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental

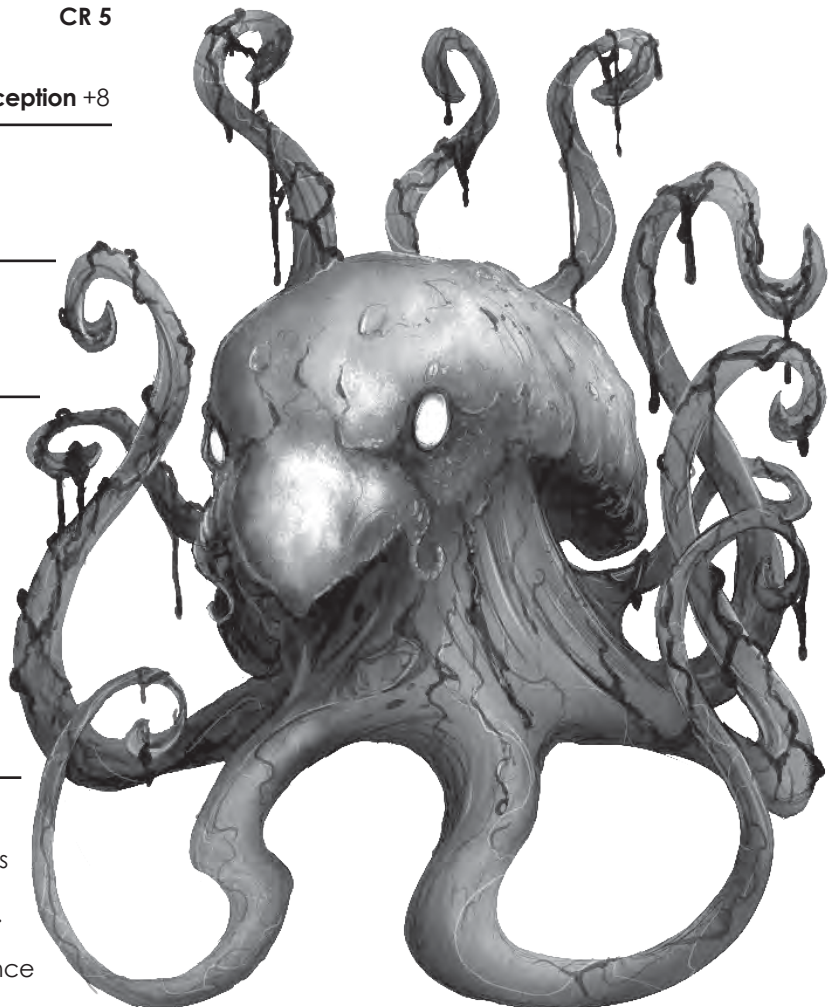
Adhesive (Ex) The wellwinger's suckered tentacles along with the adhesive coating covering it make it easier for the wellwinger to grapple any foe hit by its tentacle attack. This allows the wellwinger to use its grab ability against any Medium or smaller creature.

Protective Slime (Ex) The wellwinger's protective slime grants it immunity to acid attacks and resistance to cold, electricity and fire attacks.

Wells are the life's blood for many desert communities, and the resourceful wellwinger takes full advantage of that necessity. Wellwingers dwell below the sands, taking up residence in the subterranean rivers and streams that crisscross the desert. These carnivorous aberrations primarily feast on the small vermin that inhabit these dark tunnels, but their fondness for humanoid flesh spurs them to search for manmade passages to the surface. When they find such a passage, wellwingers make their way up the slick stone walls and use their tremorsense ability to await the arrival of fresh prey. Wellwingers almost always attack at night, when visibility is poor, and thirsty humanoids cannot see them waiting in the darkness. When the victim draws close enough, the wellwinger lashes out with its tentacles and grabs the victim with its tentacles. With the creature firmly in hand, it pulls it in and hurls it to the bottom of the well where it typically dies from the fall. In the absence of observant eyes, the creature feasts on its hard-earned meal.

Wellwingers have a bizarre anatomy consisting of a 3-foot-diameter central saclike body of purplish flesh much like a cephalopod's body. Sticky mucous coats the main body granting it immunity to acid and resistance to certain types of energy attacks. The creature has eight tentacles, but can only attack with six of them as it uses the other two to anchor it in position. Suckers and an adhesive coating the tentacles make it easier for the predator to grab its prey and hurl it to its demise at the bottom of a well.

Wellwingers are extremely territorial and always hunt alone. Once a wellwinger stakes a claim to a particular location, it defends its hunting grounds against all trespassers, especially other wellwingers. Wellwingers can survive for several weeks without a fresh meal, which allows the creature to retreat out of sight down the well, while the surface humanoids vainly search for the culprit. Wellwingers can remain in a highly populated location for months and sometimes even years if no one takes notice of its nefarious activities. Though they have no concept of wealth or magic, wellwingers stash their victims' possessions behind a loose stone along the shaft wall.



Zibbine

This bloated, corpulent man has a bald head, a maniacal look in his burning red eyes and a mouth full of pointed and crooked teeth.

ZIBBINE

XP 2,400

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +11

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)

hp 68 (8d10+24)

Fort +5; **Ref** +7; **Will** +10

DR 5/piercing or slashing

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +13 (1d6+4 plus neuter),

slam +12 (1d4+4 plus grab)

Special Attack expert grappler, neuter

Str 19, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12 (+20 to grapple);

CMD 22 (28 vs. grapple)

Feats Greater Grapple, Improved Grapple^B, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +11, Intimidate +10,

Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge

(nobility) +9, Perception +11, Sense

Motive +8, Stealth +10, Survival +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Environment urban or underground

Organization solitary, pair or harem (3–12)

Treasure none

Expert Grappler (Ex) The zibbine is a skilled grappler allowing it to use its grab ability against any Medium or smaller creature.

Neuter (Su) When the zibbine bites any living creature, it removes all gender from the creature if it fails a DC 17 Fortitude save. The effect is temporary and lasts for 1d4 minutes. If the creature's saving throw is a natural 1, the change is permanent unless undone with curse-removing magic. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to that same zibbine's neuter effect for 24 hours. The abrupt removal of gender is greatly disturbing, which requires the creature to succeed on a DC 13 Will save to avoid

suffering a –2 morale penalty to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls and saving throws for the duration of the transformation even if it is a permanent transformation. The creature's ability scores remain the same. The save DC to avoid gender removal is Constitution-based. The save DC to avoid the morale penalties is Charisma-based, and it is a mind-affecting effect.

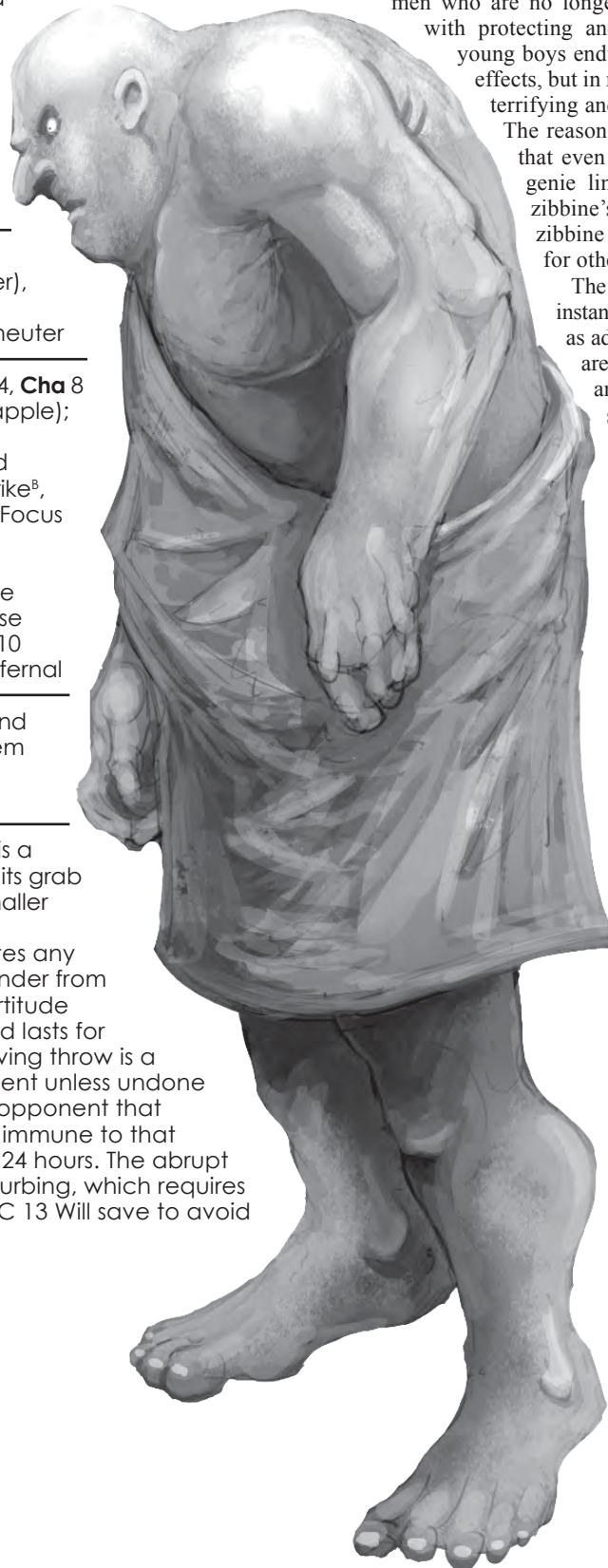
CR 6

Most men of power entrust the safety of their harems to eunuchs, men who are no longer susceptible to the temptations inherent with protecting and serving many beautiful women. Most young boys endure the procedure with no unintended side effects, but in rare circumstances, the operation initiates a terrifying and immediate transformation into a zibbine.

The reasons are a mystery, but most scholars believe that even the smallest trace of fiendish, devilish or genie lineage may be the catalyst that fuels the zibbine's creation. What is not in doubt is that the zibbine is a monstrous brute with an intense hatred for other men.

The zibbine's transformation is practically instantaneous and permanent. Though they appear as adult or even middle-aged men, most zibbines are no more than ten years old. Zibbines grow at an astonishing rate and within a few hours they stand 6-1/2 feet tall and weigh at least 300 pounds. Their faces are round and bloated with maniacal yellow eyes and a mouth full of crooked, pointed teeth. They are completely hairless and quite rotund. They always wear an oversized toga to cover their bellies, and they have a particular fondness for exotic perfumes that they sparingly douse on their outer garment.

Though they appear bestial, zibbines are articulate and learned which they attribute to their disinterest in romantic entanglements. They are interested in exacting revenge against those responsible for their transformation and against other men who flaunt their romantic exploits. Zibbines are ill-suited for life in the desert, so they plot their vengeance in subterranean caverns and secret rooms near the palaces and mansions that spawned them. They always act in concert with others of their kind, and their schemes may include kidnapping, murder or castrating those who did the same to them. Zibbines are skilled grapplers, and they use their expertise to maximum advantage, especially against enemy spellcasters. Zibbines sometimes cooperate with other humanoids to further their schemes if it benefits them too. Most of these plots are hatched by harem women, an irony that does not escape the zibbine's keen mind.



Spells

There is an infinite variety of spells, but they all share one common goal — to harness magic to create a desired effect. They can unleash destructive energies, bolster defenses, conjure false images or heal the injured. Magic is a universal force with endless potential. Those that draw upon this mystical entity constantly tinker with its countless possibilities, as they push the boundaries of reality to their utmost limits. Hundreds of dismal failures precede every remarkable breakthrough. The exorbitant costs and danger fail to deter researchers in their endeavor to shape magic in accordance with their will. Thanks to the efforts of these determined experimenters, arcane and divine magic undergo a continual state of turmoil as new spells proliferate from one magical practitioner to another.

New Spells

Many spells presented in this chapter reflect the creator's desert roots, though in almost all cases they retain universal appeal for those adventuring in other environments. Presented below is a collection of new arcane and divine spells to aid adventurers in their pursuits.

Amplify Instrument

School transmutation [sonic]; **Level** bard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F (a guitar string)
Range touch
Target musical instrument touched
Duration 10 min./level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless, object); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless, object)

An amplified instrument can influence more creatures than normal. When the instrument is used to perform a bardic performance, it increases the bardic performance's area of effect by 5 feet at 4th level plus an additional 5 feet for every four levels thereafter up to a maximum of +25 feet at 20th level.

Blades to Canes

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 3, paladin 3, sorcerer/wizard 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (a few splinters of wood)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target one weapon
Duration permanent (see text)
Saving Throw Will negates (object); see text; **Spell Resistance** yes (object); see text

This spell transforms a manufactured weapon into an ordinary wooden cane. An unattended, nonmagical weapon gets no saving throw. A magical weapon is allowed a saving throw against the spell. A weapon in a creature's possession uses the creature's saving throw bonus unless its own is higher. The spell permanently turns nonmagical weapons into a 3-foot long, solid, wooden cane. The cane is treated as an improvised weapon that deals 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage. Magical weapons become a nonmagical cane for 1 minute per caster level before reverting back to their normal state. If the cane is broken or damaged, a magical weapon gains the broken condition when it returns to its original state. This spell has no effect on artifacts, natural weapons or unarmed strikes.

Buck

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, druid 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (a tuft of hair from a wild horse)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Target one living creature
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell compels the subject to attempt an Acrobatics check and leap straight up into the air as a high jump. The target generally lands in the same location it began without any ill effect. If the spell causes the creature to strike an object, the subject and the object take 1d3 points of bludgeoning damage from the impact, and the jump ends immediately if the creature collides with an immovable object. Unstable objects may fall to the ground causing additional damage. When cast against a mount, the rider must succeed on a Ride check as if he were performing a leap. On a failed check, the rider suffers the consequences from a failed leap and falls to the ground.

Burning Sands

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (a piece of charcoal)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area 20-ft. radius spread (S)
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

Burning sands causes sand, loose soil, salt or gravel to become extremely hot. The superheated ground deals 1d6 points of fire damage per round to any creature or object in direct contact with it and sets fire to combustibles. Damage continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact (that is, 1d3 points per round). The spell has no effect on magical or enchanted soil, and it cannot be used to heat rock or stone.

Cactus Body

School transmutation; **Level** druid 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range personal
Target you
Duration 10 min./level (D)

Your body assumes some features of a cactus plant. Razor-sharp needles protrude from your body which becomes rigid and green like its outer skin. You gain a +5 natural armor bonus, resist fire 10, and deal 1d6 points of damage to enemies that hit you with natural weapons or unarmed strikes. You also deal 1d6 points of damage each round to creatures that you grapple or that grapple you. In addition, you have a 25% chance of negating any critical hit or sneak attack scored against you. You are immune to thirst while in this form.

The added protection comes at the expense of your agility. Your speed is reduced by 10 feet, and you suffer a –4 penalty to Dexterity.

Camelback

School transmutation; **Level** druid 1, ranger 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range touch
Target living creature touched
Duration 1 day/level (D)
Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell causes a small hump to grow on the subject's back. Like a camel's hump, the protrusion stores enough food and water to keep the subject fully nourished and hydrated for the duration of the spell, even in extremely hot or dry conditions. The subject can still eat and drink as normal, if it so chooses.

Canopic Jar

School necromancy; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F (miniature canopic jar)
Range touch
Target living creature touched
Duration instantaneous/10 minutes; see text
Saving Throw Fortitude half; **Spell Resistance** yes

Your successful melee touch attack deals 1d6 points of Constitution, Dexterity or Strength damage (your choice) to the subject. You gain an enhancement bonus equal to the damage you deal to your corresponding ability score. Enhancement bonuses gained from multiple castings of this spell and other sources do not stack. A successful Fortitude save halves the ability score damage (minimum 1). The enhancement bonus disappears 10 minutes later.

Chaste

School abjuration; **Level** cleric 1, paladin 1, witch 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range touch
Target creature touched
Duration 1 hour/level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

The target becomes resistant to the charms of others. The subject gains a +4 sacred bonus to saving throws made to resist magical attacks intended to seduce him or compel him to fall in love with another creature. The bonus applies also to any magical attack delivered with a kiss.

Cloak of Serpents

School abjuration; **Level** druid 5, serpent [good] 5
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range Personal
Target You
Duration 1 round/level (D)

A writhing, twisting, hissing mass of snakes surrounds you, protecting you from attacks and biting those that come near you. This spell has two effects:

First, you gain a +2 deflection bonus to your AC for the duration of the spell.

Second, the snakes surrounding you are at your command and attack any that come within 5 feet of you, if you so desire. The snakes use your

full attack bonus when attacking. If the attack succeeds, the victim takes 1d4 points of damage. In addition, the bite subjects the target to a painful poison that deal 1d4 points of Strength damage for 6 rounds. Poisoned creatures can make a Fortitude save each round to negate the damage for that round; two consecutive saves ends the effect.

You can attack or move normally (including casting other spells) while this spell is in effect. You do not need to concentrate to maintain it.

Concussive Ray

School evocation [force]; **Level** magus 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect ray
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

A concussive ray of force springs from your hand. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack to strike a target. The ray deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage plus 1 point of bludgeoning damage per caster level (maximum +10) and renders the target dizzy for 1 round per caster level. A successful Fortitude save halves the damage and negates the dizzy effect. Whenever a dizzy creature takes a standard action or a move action, he must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone. Even if the subject remains standing, he treats all other creatures as if they had concealment, suffering a 20% miss chance on all attack rolls. Casting spells with a somatic component has a 20% chance of spell failure. Dizzy creatures can take a 5-foot step, free actions, swift actions and immediate actions normally. The target must also succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check to stand up from prone. Each round on its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect, though success does not negate damage already suffered. This is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Coordinated Retreat

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 2, paladin 2, ranger 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Targets one creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

When this spell is cast, an affected creature may take a 5-foot step as an immediate action. You may also take a 5-foot step, even if you already moved during your turn, though this spell does not entitle you to take a second 5-foot step unless another feat, spell or spell-like effect allows you to do so. Creatures taking a 5-foot step during your turn can take another 5-foot step on their next turn.

Counter Curse

School abjuration; **Level** cleric 1, inquisitor 1, sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V
Range personal
Target you
Duration 1 hour/level

Whenever you are the target of a spell that can be removed with *remove curse*, you may use a necromancy spell of the same level or higher to counterspell it as an immediate action, even if you did not ready such an action.

Death Mask

School necromancy; **Level** bard 6, cleric 8, magus 6, sorcerer/wizard 6, witch 7
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (miniature golden death mask worth at least 100 gp)
Range touch
Target one living creature
Duration permanent
Saving Throw Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You must succeed on a melee touch attack to impart this curse. Your touch creates a golden death mask that is an exact replica of the subject's face. The death mask affixes itself to the subject's face, rendering the subject blinded and deafened as well as preventing the target from breathing or speaking. Creatures unable to breathe begin suffocating when they can no longer hold their breath. Those that cannot speak cannot cast spells with verbal components or utter command words to activate magic items.

A successful Fortitude save allows the subject to breathe, speak, see, and hear with some difficulty. The target has a 40% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components, and all creatures that the subject can see gain concealment (20% miss chance). The subject also suffers a –8 penalty to Perception checks. Whether the save is successful or not, the subject cannot eat or drink which may result in dehydration and starvation.

This spell has no effect on creatures that lack a discernible head, such as oozes and elementals, or those with more than one head. As a side effect, the death mask protects the subject's head against physical attacks granting it the light fortification ability.

The death mask cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed by *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse* or *wish*.

Decrypt

School divination; **Level** cleric 3, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 3
Casting Time 10 minutes
Components V, S, F/DF (a pair of spectacles)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect one spell or spell-effect with a password
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell allows you to learn the password for any spells and spell-like effects that can be bypassed with the utterance of a password. You must be aware of the spell or spell-like effect prior to casting this spell. You must succeed on a decryption check (1d20 + your caster level) against the spell you are targeting. (DC = 11 + the spell's caster level). If you succeed, you learn the password, (if any), and can utter it to safely pass through the warded area. You learn nothing on a failed check. If you fail by 5 or more, the spell reveals the wrong password. Multiple *decrypts* on the same spell or spell-like effect use the same dice result as the first *decrypt* spell and yield the same result each time.

Den of Thieves

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** druid 5, sorcerer/wizard 5
Casting Time 10 minutes
Components V, S, M (a small shovel and a splinter from a trap door)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect subterranean hideout up to one 10-ft. cube/level (S)
Duration 2 hours/level (D)
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You transform the solid earth just beneath the surface into a hidden, subterranean complex of interconnected chambers. The hideout is

accessible from the surface via a concealed trap door built into the ground. Creatures other than you must succeed on a DC 30 Perception check to notice the entrance. The trap door is made from strong wood and is secured with *arcane lock* and *alarm*. The hideout must be heated as a normal dwelling, and extreme heat adversely affects it and its occupants.

You can design any floor plan you like to the limit of the spell's effect. The hideout is modestly furnished and contains sufficient amounts of foodstuffs to serve a three-course meal to six people per caster level. Two near-transparent servants attend to the occupants' needs. The servants function as *unseen servant* spells except that they are visible and can go anywhere in the hideout.

If the spell ends while creatures still occupy it, the occupants appear on the surface directly above their previous location. If that space is already occupied by another solid body, the creature appears in the closest unoccupied space. Earth, rock and stone then refills the previously affected area. The hideout's maximum depth is 10 feet. Casting spells that alter the physical properties of earth and stone above the hideout may collapse the hideout's ceiling, causing a cave-in directly beneath the area affected by such spells.

Desert Scales

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 1, druid 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (snake's sloughed skin)
Range touch
Effect creature touched
Duration 24 hours
Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell protects the subject's skin from certain natural hazards. He gains immunity to sunburn and corrosive damage from salt and other naturally occurring minerals. Dust storms and sandstorms deal half damage. *Desert scales* does not grant resistance or immunity to spells and spell-like effects that damage the skin, nor does it protect against acid, cold, electricity or fire damage.

Down to Earth

School transmutation; **Level** druid 4, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (a small magnet)
Range 20 ft.
Effect 20-ft. radius burst centered on you
Duration 1 min./level (D)
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

All nonmagical projectiles weighing 1 pound or less fall harmlessly to the ground. Arrows, crossbow bolts and other fine particles, such as sand, dust, rain and salt, immediately plummet to the ground when they enter the affected area, negating any damage they would otherwise cause.

Enchanted weapons and projectiles created or propelled by magical weapons, spells and spell-like effects are not affected by this spell and function normally.

Dowse

School divination; **Level** druid 2, ranger 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range 1 mile
Area circle, centered on you, with a radius of 1 mile
Duration 1 hour/level (D)
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell improves your chances of finding water in the immediate area.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

You gain a +10 competence bonus to Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks made to locate the nearest source of water.

Extract Organ

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 1, sorcerer/wizard 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (an ounce of myrrh)
Range touch
Target humanoid corpse touched
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

You can extract internal organs from the remains of a dead humanoid without breaking the skin. The organs temporarily contract and pass through the closest bodily orifice before expanding back to their normal size. When targeting specific organs, you must succeed on a Knowledge (nature) check to ascertain the organ's general location. The DC for the check is 10 for major organs (brain, heart, liver, lungs and stomach) and 15 for all other organs. If you belong to a culture that mummifies its dead, you may attempt a Knowledge (religion) check in place of a Knowledge (nature) check. When you determine the organ's correct location, it requires a full-round action to successfully remove the organ. You can remove multiple organs if you have sufficient time to do so.

After extraction, desert peoples typically place the organs in sacred canopic jars prior to mummification.

Eyes of the Desert

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 3, druid 2, magus 3, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (a pair of spectacles)
Range touch
Target creature touched
Duration 1 hour/level
Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

The subject becomes immune to natural and magical effects that blind or impair his vision. This spell protects the target against sun glare and bright light, but it does not allow the target to see through obstacles like fog, mist, smoke or any form of precipitation. The subject immediately recognizes mirages for what they truly are. Subjects with light blindness and light sensitivity may ignore penalties from those qualities even in the brightest of conditions. The spell does not protect creatures vulnerable to sunlight (such as vampires and wraiths).

False Prophet

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 3, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (a nugget of pyrite)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)
Target one living creature
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell functions as a targeted *dispel magic* cast at the subject, though a successful Will save negates the spell's effects. *False prophet* targets the subject's divination spells and spells granting insight bonuses only. When you attempt your dispel checks against these spells, you treat your check as if you rolled a natural 20. The spell does not end when you succeed on a dispel check. Instead, you continue attempting dispel checks until you have made one attempt to dispel every divination spell cast on the target as well as every spell that grants an insight bonus.

Flummox

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 2, druid 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (a child's top)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target one living creature
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Every time the subject moves from one square to the next, (including taking a 5-ft. step), he is instead compelled to move in a random direction (roll 1d8, with 1 indicating north and the other numbers indicating compass going clockwise). The target cannot run or charge. If the subject is forcibly moved by another creature, either because of a combat maneuver or another spell or spell-like effect, the target ignores this spell's effect and moves as directed by the other creature.

This spell affects the subject's movement only. He can still make melee and ranged attacks and cast spells that require a line of sight or line of effect normally. This spell does not affect teleportation spells and effects.

Fortune's Folly

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (a deck of playing cards)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target one creature
Duration 1 round/level or until discharged
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

When the subject rolls a successful ability check, attack roll, saving throw or skill check, the subject must reroll the die and accept the result of the second die roll, even if it is worse. The spell is then discharged. Unless he succeeds on a Spellcraft check to identify the spell as it is being cast, the subject is unaware of the spell's effects until discharged. Without this knowledge, he cannot deliberately discharge the spell by attacking an inanimate object or succeeding at a routine task.

Guiding Light

School divination (scrying); **Level** cleric 3, paladin 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F/DF (an astrolabe)
Range long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target one creature
Duration 1 day/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell allows you and those you designate to follow a creature from afar without detection. When cast, a glowing, celestial body appears in the sky directly above the subject and remains directly above him wherever he goes. It is indistinguishable from a star, planet or comet, though to you and up to two creatures that you designate, it is easily the brightest object in the night sky. During daylight hours, the object is invisible to all except for you and those you designate.

The spell ends immediately if the subject travels to another plane.

Gusher

School conjuration (creation) [earth]; **Level** druid 4, sorcerer/wizard 4, summoner 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V

SPELLS

Range medium (100 ft. + 10ft./level)
Area 20-ft. radius burst, 40 ft. high
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw Reflex partial; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

A gout of flaming, viscous oil leaps into the air, dealing 5d6 points of fire damage to creatures and objects. This damage only occurs once, when the spell is cast. A successful Reflex save halves the damage. Creatures that fail the Reflex save take full damage, fall to the ground, drop everything held and are covered with oil. For the remaining duration of the spell, an oil slick covers the ground and unattended objects.

A creature can walk within or through the oil at half normal speed with a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check. Failure means it cannot move that round (and must then make a Reflex save or fall), while failure by 5 or more means it falls (see the “Acrobatics” section in Chapter 4 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for details). Creatures that fall become covered with oil. Creatures that do not move on their turn do not need to make this check and are not considered flat-footed.

Creatures covered with oil must succeed on a Reflex saving throw in each round that the creature attempts to use or pick up an item; otherwise the creature drops the item or fails to pick up the item. Likewise, the creature must succeed on a Reflex save to pick up or use an object covered in oil. A creature covered with oil gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist checks and combat maneuver checks made to escape a grapple, and to their CMD to avoid being grappled.

The oil burns almost instantly if exposed to flame. Once aflame, the oil burns for the remaining duration of the spell dealing 1d6 points of fire damage each round to creatures and objects standing atop. If a creature covered with oil catches fire, he takes 1d6 points of fire damage each round in addition to any fire damage he may take from standing atop an oily surface that is also burning.

A creature covered with oil may remove the oil with *universal solvent*. Doing so is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Likewise, *universal solvent* can also remove oil from objects. At the end of the duration, the oil disappears, leaving no aftereffects (other than the damage dealt).

Hesitate

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target one living creature
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell causes the subject to hesitate whenever he is called upon to make a decision out of turn. The target cannot attack another creature, move, cast a spell or take any other standard, move, free, swift or immediate action (including attacks of opportunity) during another creature’s turn, even if he would normally be entitled to do so.

Homage

School enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]; **Level** cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V
Range touch
Target creature touched
Duration 1 round (see text)
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You compel the target to give you one of its items. The creature must be able to understand you to comply with your request, and you must specifically designate the item you want; otherwise the target ignores

your request and acts normally. Generic requests, such as “give me your ring” or “hand me your weapon,” lack specificity and automatically fail. However, a request to “give me the ring on your left hand” or “hand me the mace in your left hand” provides sufficient detail to force the target to comply with your demand.

The target spends its next turn complying with your request. This includes retrieving the item from its person or removing a worn item and then giving it to you. When the subject complies with your request, the spell ends, and the subject immediately realizes what happened. If the subject cannot give you the item by the end of its turn, the spell ends. Any act by you or your apparent allies that threatens the subject breaks the spell.

Hot Wind

School evocation [air, fire]; **Level** druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range 60 ft.
Area cone-shaped emanation
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

A cone-shaped emanation of hot wind (approximately 30 mph) rushes out from your fingertips. *Hot wind* deals 1d6 points of fire damage plus 1 point of fire damage per two caster levels (maximum +10) each round. All flying creatures take a –2 penalty on Fly skill checks. Tiny or smaller flying creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Fly skill check to move against the force of the wind.

Small or larger creatures may move normally within a *hot wind* effect. This spell cannot move a creature beyond the limits of its range. Any creature, regardless of size, takes a –2 penalty on ranged attacks and Perception checks in the area of a *hot wind*.

The force of the wind automatically extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames. In addition to the effects noted, *hot wind* typically creates a stinging spray of sand, dust or gravel when cast in the open desert.

Hourglass of Sand

School evocation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 5
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, F (miniature hourglass)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area hourglass (10-ft. square, 20-ft. high)
Duration 1 minute/level
Saving Throw Reflex negates; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell creates an immobile, hardened glass hourglass consisting of two 10-ft. cubes sitting atop one another that are connected by a 1-ft. radius opening. Sand completely fills the upper cube. Creatures are caught and contained in the bottom half of the hourglass, unless they are too big to fit inside, in which case the spell automatically fails. (The hourglass’s bottom part is a 10-ft. cube.) Teleportation and other forms of astral travel provide a means of escape.

Sand pours into the bottom cube at a rate of 1 foot per round. A trapped creature can jam an object of the appropriate size and shape into the opening; however he must win an opposed Strength check each round to keep it in place. The sand has a Strength score of 20 + 1 per foot of sand remaining in the upper cube. The hourglass can be damaged by spells, weapons and supernatural abilities as normal. The glass is 1 inch thick per caster level, and each 10-foot square has a Hardness of 5 and 10 hit points per inch of thickness. Creatures can hit the hourglass automatically. A section of hourglass whose hit points drop to 0 is breached. If a creature tries to break out or into the hourglass with a single attack, the DC for the Strength check is 15 + caster level + 1 per foot of sand in the lower cube. When the glass is breached, it shatters into jagged shards dealing 1d6 points of slashing damage plus 1 point of slashing damage per caster level

DUNES OF DESOLATION

(no save) to all creatures within 5 feet.

When the sand reaches the trapped creature's waist, his attacks deal half damage. He can no longer attack when the sand reaches his shoulders. Creatures buried beneath the sand begin suffocating when they can no longer hold their breath.

Infidel

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 1 min./level

Saving Throw Will negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject gains channel resistance +4. In addition, the target must attempt a Will save against channeled positive and negative energy, even if he is a willing target. If the save succeeds, the amount of damage dealt or healed is halved. The subject cannot voluntarily forego a saving throw to resist this effect.

Instill Faith

School enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]; **Level** cleric 4, inquisitor 4, paladin 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range 40 ft.

Effect all allies within a 40-ft. radius burst centered on you

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

When this spell is cast, it bolsters your allies' resistance to mind-affecting attacks. Each round, you must attempt a Diplomacy skill check as you utter inspirational words and phrases to your allies. Doing so is a free action. While this spell is in effect, any ally that is affected by a mind-affecting magical attack may use your Diplomacy check result in place of its saving throw if, after the saving throw is rolled, the Diplomacy check result proves to be higher. This spell does not work on effects that do not allow saves.

The ally must be able to hear and understand you for this spell to have any effect. If you are rendered speechless, the spell ends immediately.

Intoxicate

School necromancy; **Level** druid 3, ranger 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F/DF (a bud of peyote)

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Calling upon the hallucinogenic properties of the peyote cactus plant, you infect the subject with a potent narcotic by making a successful melee touch attack. The subject suffers a –6 penalty to Dexterity and a –4 penalty on all saves against illusions; treats all ranged attacks as if he rolled a natural 1; suffers a 50% miss chance on melee attack rolls; cannot use any skills that require patience or concentration and has a 50% chance of spell failure when casting spells.

As a side effect, the target also becomes immune to fear and gains a +4 morale bonus to Strength. Spells and effects that target poison also affect *intoxicate*. Intoxicated creatures may attempt a new Fortitude save each round to end the condition. The target then becomes sickened equal to the number of rounds that he was intoxicated. There is no save to eliminate the sickening effect.

Jyoti

School evocation [light]; **Level** bard 4, cleric 4, druid 4, paladin 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F (golden lamp worth at least 50 gp)

Range touch

Target golden lamp touched

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell functions like *daylight*, except when you cast this spell, you must touch the spell's focus — a golden lamp. In addition to duplicating the effects of *daylight*, *jyoti* negates any concealment provided by natural or magical fog, rain, sleet, mist, wind and smoke that is less than total concealment within a 60-ft. radius centered on the spell's focus. This ability continues to function even in magical darkness, if the creature can see normally through magical darkness.

Kiss of Lust

School illusion (phantasm) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one living creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will disbelief; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You create a phantasmal image of the most beautiful creature imaginable to the subject by forming the carnal desires buried deep within the subject's unconscious mind into an irresistible object of lust. Only the spell's subject can see the *object of lust*. You see only a vague shape. The target gets a Will save to recognize the image as unreal. If that save fails, the phantasm kisses the subject, and bestows one negative level to the subject each round. Each round on its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to disbelieve the phantasm and end the effect. This is a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The subject gets a +4 bonus to its Will save for each negative already bestowed.

A creature with an Intelligence score of 2 or lower is not affected. A creature whose type is different from yours receives a +4 bonus on its saving throw, because your perception of beauty differs from its perspective.

Lashing Tentacles

School transmutation; **Level** bard 5, sorcerer/wizard 4, summoner 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 round/level

Six writhing, whiplike tentacles spring from your back and lash out to attack enemies at your command. You can use them as secondary attacks, while making attacks with weapons as a full-round action. The secondary attacks are made using your base attack bonus –5 and adding half your Strength bonus on damage rolls. The tentacles' reach is five feet greater than your normal reach, and they deal 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage if you are Medium (1d4 if Small and 1d8 if Large). The tentacles cannot hold objects or wield weapons. The tentacles created by this spell cannot be damaged, but they can be dispelled as normal.

Last Stand

School necromancy; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a small piece of a wild boar's tusk)
Range personal
Target you
Duration 10 min./level or until discharged (see text)

When your hit point total drops below 0, but you are not dead; you are automatically restored to 1 hp. In addition, you gain temporary hit points equal to 1d10+1 per caster level (maximum +10) and a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks. These temporary hit points last for 1 round per caster level. They do not stack with temporary hit points gained from another source. The morale bonus ends when your temporary hit point total drops to 0 or less.

Market Savvy

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 2, bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range personal
Target you
Duration 10 min./level (D)

This spell prevents merchants and traders from taking advantage of you. You gain a +10 competence bonus to Appraise and Profession (merchant)

as well as Sense Motive skill checks made to avoid being bluffed or determine when "something is up."

Martyr

School conjuration (healing); **Level** paladin 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a drop of your blood)
Range 30 ft.
Target allies within a 30-ft. emanation, centered on the caster (see text)
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell allows you to willingly take damage to heal others. When you cast this spell, you may take no actions and offer no defense against attacks. You are treated as having a Dexterity of 0 (-5 modifier) and lose any dodge bonuses to Armor Class. Whenever an evil creature successfully hits you with a melee attack, your allies within 30 feet that can see you are healed of damage equal to half the damage you took from the attack. Allies benefit from this spell when you are struck by a legitimate threat only. (The GM has sole discretion in determining what comprises a legitimate threat.) When an enemy kills you or drops you to 0 hp or less, allies are healed of damage equal to the damage you took from the attack. Whenever an enemy confirms a critical hit against you, all allies receive a morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls equal to your Charisma bonus on their next single attack roll (if it is made before the end of the next round) in addition to being healed of damage. The spell ends when you are dropped to 0 hp or less, take an action, are healed of any damage or are affected by any spell or spell-like effect cast by an ally.



Mirage Hysteria

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** druid 3, ranger 3, sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 level)
Target one living creature
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject is obsessed with drinking as much water as possible. A victim under the influence of this spell moves toward the closest visible source of water by the most direct means available. The spell has no effect if the target does not see any water source at the time the spell is cast. If the path leads the subject into a dangerous area such as through fire or off a cliff, the subject receives a second saving throw to end the effect before proceeding into the perilous area.

When the subject reaches the water source, he can take no actions other than to drink water. If he is attacked, he can take no actions other than to defend himself. Living creatures that do not need to drink are immune to this spell.

Mummify

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 5
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range touch
Target living creature touched
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Fortitude half; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You must succeed on a melee touch attack. Your touch instantaneously mummifies the subject, causing its muscles to atrophy and its skin to lose its elasticity. The subject takes a penalty to its Constitution, Dexterity and Strength equal to 1d6 plus 1 per two caster levels (maximum 1d6+10). The subject's ability scores cannot drop below 1. A successful Fortitude save reduces this penalty by half. This penalty does not stack with itself. Apply the highest penalty instead.

In addition, the subject gains vulnerability to fire and DR 5/-. There is no save against these effects. The subject remains mummified until a *break enchantment*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle* or *wish* spell is used to cancel the effect of *mummify*.

Murder of Crows

School illusion (phantasm) [mind-affecting]; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a crow's feather)
Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target one living creature
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Will disbelief; **Spell Resistance** yes

You create a phantasmal image of large, black crows that swirl around and peck at the subject. Only the spell's subject can see the crows. You see only the shadowy image of bird wings overhead. The target gets a Will save to recognize the image as unreal. If that save fails, the crows become a constant distraction to the subject. Casting a spell requires a concentration check (DC 15 + the level of the spell). Any other concentration checks have their DC's increased by 5. The DC of Perception checks involving sight is likewise increased by 5, and creatures more than 5 feet away from the subject gain concealment (20% miss chance). Because of the distraction, the subject cannot take 10 or take 20 on ability checks or skill checks.

Neuter

School transmutation (polymorph); **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V
Range touch
Target living creature touched
Duration permanent
Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** no

Your touch removes all gender from the subject, giving him an androgynous, neutered appearance. Though the creature's abilities, mind and memories remain intact, the shocking transformation deals 1d4 points of Charisma damage and stuns the subject for 1 round. If the subject rolled a natural 1 on its saving throw, the creature takes 2 points of Charisma drain as well. The creature's gender can be restored with *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse* or *wish*.

Protection from Serpents

School abjuration; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1, inquisitor 1, serpent [Good] 1
Components V, S, F
Casting Time 1 standard action
Range Touch
Target Creature touched
Duration 1 minute/level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** No (see text)

This spell wards a creature from attacks by serpents (including animals, aberrations, beasts, or magical beasts — such as medusa, naga and imphidians — but not outsiders that are serpents or include serpents in their composition). It creates a magical barrier around the subject to a distance of 1 foot. The barrier moves with the subject and has two major effects:

First, the subject receives a +2 deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus on saves. Both of these bonuses apply to attacks made by serpents.

Second, the barrier prevents serpents from touching the subject. Natural attacks by a serpent fail and the creature recoils from the barrier. The protection ends if the warded creature makes an attack against or tries to force the barrier against a blocked serpent. Spell resistance can allow a creature to overcome this protection and touch the warded creature.

Quicksand

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area 20-ft. radius spread
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw see text; **Spell Resistance** no

When this spell is cast, all natural, undressed sand, loose soil, gravel and soft earth becomes saturated, transforming it into quicksand. You affect a 20-foot radius up to a depth of 1 foot per level (to a maximum of 10 feet). Magical, enchanted or dressed earth and any type of stone cannot be affected. Earth or stone creatures are not affected.

A creature in quicksand must make a successful Reflex save or sink into the quicksand. Creatures large enough to walk on the bottom and keep their head above the surface do not sink. Creatures submerged beneath the surface begin to drown when they can no longer hold their breath. They may attempt to return to the surface by making a successful DC 15 Swim check or using alternate means, such as *levitate* or *fly* to escape the

SPELLS

quicksand altogether. In addition, rescuers may pull a creature back to the surface by using a sturdy object long enough to reach the submerged character. The rescuer must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check to pull the victim, and the victim must succeed on a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the object. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety. Creatures that do not sink into the quicksand have their speed reduced to 5 feet and suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls and AC.

This spell does not affect dressed earth, stone or many other building materials, but the quicksand may extend deep enough to damage building foundations. The effect is too localized to damage or destroy large structures, but it may damage or even partially topple small buildings and structures with compromised foundations. The spell does not affect vertical surfaces or a horizontal surface suspended above the ground like a roof or ceiling.

Rain of Salt

School conjuration (creation) [earth]; **Level** druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, summoner 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M/DF (a salt crystal)

Range long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area cylinder (20-ft. radius, 40 ft. high)

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

When this spell is cast, magical salt crystals rain down from the sky dealing 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage to every creature and 2d6 points of corrosive damage to water creatures. This damage only occurs once, when the spell is cast. For the remaining duration of the spell, large jagged pellets of salt cover the ground. Creatures moving through the area at greater than half speed run the risk of stepping on these sharp crystals. The salt crystals function as caltrops (see the “Adventuring Gear” section in Chapter 6 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for details regarding caltrops).

The salt crystals deal 1d6 points of damage per round to any water creature in direct contact with them. At the end of the duration, the salt crystals disappear, leaving no aftereffects (other than the damage dealt).

Restless

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 4, sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration 1 day/level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You channel negative energy through your touch, turning the target into a bundle of nervous energy. Every round, the subject must move at its full speed, even if that consists of walking in a circle or pacing back and forth. The subject is free to determine his own path, though he is not required to enter squares occupied by obstacles or other creatures. However, he cannot choose not to enter squares threatened by other creatures. If he is unable to move because he is completely surrounded by creatures or obstacles, he becomes dazed for as long as he remains surrounded. If he is under the influence of magic that impedes movement, he is not dazed if he moves as far as possible up to his full speed.

In addition, the spell prevents the subject from sleeping or resting. The subject cannot recover hit points or restore ability damage by resting. He cannot eliminate fatigue or reduce exhaustion to fatigue through rest. In addition, spellcasters that require sleep or rest to prepare spells are unable to do so. Other classes that demand rest or sleep to restore their class features, like the barbarian’s rage, are likewise affected.

Every day that the subject goes without sleep, he must succeed on a Constitution check (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1 point

of ability damage to all of his abilities. Magic sleep effects function normally, though the subject’s restlessness returns as soon as he awakens. Living creatures that do not require sleep or rest (elementals, oozes and plants) are immune to this spell. While under the influence of *restless*, the subject is immune to fatigue and exhaustion.

Restless can be removed with *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse* or *wish*.

Riddle of the Sphinx

School enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one living creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You pose a brief riddle to the subject that he feels compelled to solve. The subject must be able to hear and understand you. The subject can take no actions while contemplating the solution, but he is not considered helpless. On the creature’s next turn, it may attempt to solve the riddle by succeeding on an Intelligence check (DC 10 + your Intelligence modifier). This attempt is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the Intelligence check is successful, the subject solved the riddle, and the spell ends. If not, the creature tries to deduce the answer for the entire duration.

Salinate Weapon

School transmutation [earth]; **Level** cleric 2, druid 2, inquisitor 2, paladin 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a chunk of salt)

Range touch

Target weapon touched or 50 projectiles (all of which must be together at the time of casting)

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless, object); **Spell**

Resistance yes (harmless, object)

Salinate weapon coats a weapon’s surfaces with a thin layer of salt. Increase the weapon’s critical hit multiplier by +1, whenever the weapon confirms a critical hit against corporeal undead.

You cannot cast this spell on a natural attack, such as an unarmed strike.

Sandblast

School evocation [earth]; **Level** druid 4, sorcerer/wizard 4, summoner 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a grain of sand)

Range 60 ft.

Area 60-foot line

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex partial; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You call forth a potent blast of stinging sand that strikes all creatures and objects in its path until it hits something it cannot move past. This blast acts as a bull rush against creatures and moveable objects, and its CMB is equal to your caster level plus your Intelligence or Wisdom modifier (whichever is higher). You make a separate combat maneuver check for each creature and object struck by the blast. The blast does not provoke attacks of opportunity and can affect creatures of any size. If the bull rush succeeds, the blast pushes the creature in a straight line away from you, and the creature must succeed on a Reflex save or fall prone. The blast

DUNES OF DESOLATION

buries prone creatures beneath 1d6 inches of sand which may cause the affected creature to suffocate when it can no longer hold its breath.

The blast cannot break or destroy immovable objects; however it removes inscriptions, etchings, paint and any other surface indentation or impression exposed to the blast. When attempting to break a moveable object, the blast has an effective Strength score equal to your caster level plus your Intelligence or Wisdom modifier.

Scalping Tomahawk

School conjuration (creation); **Level** druid 2, ranger 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range 0 ft.
Effect one magical tomahawk
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw Fortitude half; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

A translucent, tomahawk hewn from flint appears in your open hand. The weapon has a +1 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls and can be hurled as a ranged weapon or used as a melee weapon. If hurled, it has a range increment of 10 feet, and the *returning* special ability. It deals 1d6+1 points of damage (including the tomahawk's enhancement bonus), has a threat range of 19–20 and a critical multiplier of x3.

Whenever the tomahawk confirms a critical hit, the weapon also deals 1d4 points of Charisma damage if the creature struck fails its Fortitude save. A successful save halves the Charisma damage.

Scorpion's Sting

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 4, druid 4, ranger 4, summoner 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V
Range personal
Target you
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw Fortitude negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** no

A scorpion's tail grows from the base of your spine giving you a sting attack. If used as part of a full attack action, the sting attack is made at your full attack bonus –5. The sting deals 1d4 points of damage if you are Medium (1d3 points of damage if you are Small) and injects the creature struck with poison. A successful Fortitude save negates the poison damage, but not the physical damage. The poison deals 1d2 Strength damage per round for 6 rounds. Poisoned creatures can attempt a Fortitude save each round to negate the damage and end the affliction.

Serpent Hands

School transmutation; **Level** druid 6, serpent [evil] 6, sorcerer/wizard 7, summoner 6, witch 7
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (The poison glands of a viper)
Range Personal
Target You
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw None (see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes (harmless)

By casting this spell, you turn your arms and hands into large poisonous vipers. On your next turn and each round thereafter, the vipers can be directed to attack any opponents within 10 feet, allowing you to attack a different opponent with each hand. These attacks are made using your full attack bonus and you do not suffer any penalties for fighting with your off-hand. Each viper deals 1d6 points of damage when it bites and injects a lethal poison. The poison deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage for

6 rounds. Poisoned creatures can make a Fortitude save each round to negate the damage for that round; two consecutive saves ends the effect.

The caster cannot hold or pick up items while this spell is in effect. As a result, the caster cannot cast any spells that require a material component and must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 20) to cast any spell requiring a somatic component while this spell lasts.

Serpent Plague

School conjuration (summoning); **Level** cleric 5, druid 5, serpent [evil] 5, summoner 4

In all other respects, this spell is identical to the spell *insect plague*, except that a horde of serpents, including small flying serpents, is summoned instead of insects.

Sew Shut

School transmutation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a sewing needle and strand of thread)
Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target one creature
Duration 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

The target's lips seal shut, preventing it from opening its mouth. The subject cannot speak, making it impossible to cast spells with verbal components or activate magical items with a command word. The target cannot continue language-dependent spells and effects that were already in effect, and he cannot use skills that require conversation. The spell also prevents the subject from eating, drinking or placing anything in its mouth. If the subject has a bite attack, it cannot use it while its mouth is sewn shut.

The target can pry its lips open by succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check; however doing so deals 1d6 points of damage to the subject. Alternatively, the subject may use a sharp implement to cut its lips open as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity and deals 2d6 points of slashing damage to the subject. The creature does not receive a saving throw in either instance to avoid taking damage. Until the damage is fully healed, the subject has a 20% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components, and suffers a –4 penalty to bite attacks and skill checks requiring conversation. Enemies receive a +4 bonus to saves against the subject's language-dependent spells and effects.

Only creatures made of flesh are affected by this spell. This spell has no effect on creatures without mouths. The spell deals 2d6 points of piercing damage plus 1 point of piercing damage per caster level to creatures with more than one mouth, but it has no other effect.

Shade

School conjuration (creation); **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, druid 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, summoner 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, DF
Range 20 ft.
Area cylinder (20-ft. radius, 40-ft. high emanation centered on you)
Duration 2 hours/level (D)
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell reflects a portion of sunlight back into the atmosphere, reducing the air temperature in the affected area by 2d10° F plus 1° F per caster level. The spell does not affect the prevailing light conditions, nor does it provide protection against precipitation and wind effects. Creatures within the shaded area are protected against sunburn.

Sidewinder

School transmutation; **Level** druid 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a snake scale)
Range touch
Target creature touched
Duration 10 min./level
Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject gains the locomotion of a snake, allowing him to move at half speed while prone. While prone, the subject makes attack rolls with natural weapons or light melee weapons normally, and suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls made with larger melee weapons. The spell allows the target to also make ranged attacks with thrown light weapons normally while prone. The subject still receives a +4 bonus to Armor Class against ranged attacks while prone, but suffers only a –2 penalty to AC against melee attacks. The target may stand up from prone as a free action.

Skirmisher

School transmutation; **Level** bard 2, druid 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M/DF (a bent reed)
Range touch
Target creature touched
Duration 1 min./level
Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject gets a +10 enhancement bonus on Acrobatics checks made to move through a threatened square without provoking an attack of opportunity. The bonus increases to +20 at caster level 8th, and +30 (the maximum) at caster level 16th.

Song of Stone Splitting

School evocation [earth, sonic]; **Level** bard 3, sorcerer/wizard 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V
Range 30 ft.
Area cone-shaped burst
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw Fortitude partial or Reflex negates (object); see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You emit a low-frequency pulse of sound that creates large fissures and cracks in stone and rock. Objects in the area crafted from either material are not destroyed, but they are severely weakened. The Strength DC needed to break rock and stone objects affected by this spell decreases by 10.

Song of stone splitting deals 1d6 points of sonic damage per caster level (maximum 10d6) to creatures made from rock or stone. An affected creature is allowed a Fortitude save to reduce the damage by half, and a creature holding a rock or stone object can negate damage to it with a successful Reflex save.

Spectral Cat

School conjuration (creation); **Level** cleric 5, summoner 5
Casting Time 10 minutes
Components V, S, DF
Range touch

Effect spectral cat guardian; see text
Duration permanent
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You conjure a spectral cat that is invisible to everyone but yourself. The spectral cat sits atop an object that you touch. Whenever any Small or larger creature approaches to within 5 feet of the protected object, the spectral cat hisses, spits and growls at the intruder. It continues to do so as long as the intruder or any other Small or larger creature remains within 10 feet of the object. The cat sees invisible and ethereal creatures. It does not react to figments, but it does react to shadow illusions.

If an intruder touches or disturbs the protected object, the cat attacks with two claw attacks and a bite. The attack bonus for all three attacks is equal to 1/2 your caster level + your Wisdom modifier. The claws deal 1d6+4 points of piercing and slashing damage, and the bite deals 1d4+2 points of piercing damage.

The cat is considered ready to attack intruders, so it delivers all three attacks on the intruder's turn. Its attacks are the equivalent of a magic weapon for the purpose of damage reduction. The cat's attacks affect incorporeal creatures as if it had the *ghost touch* weapon property. The cat cannot be attacked, but it can be dispelled.

This spell is typically used to protect coffins and sarcophagi against grave robbers and undead.

Spring Oasis

School conjuration (creation) [water]; **Level** druid 5, summoner 5
Casting Time 10 minutes
Components V, S
Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area up to two 10-ft. squares/level (S)
Duration 1 day/level; see text
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell causes fresh water to spring forth from sand, loose soil and gravel. Rock, stone and magical earth are not affected by the spell. As the water pours from the ground, it pushes sand, gravel and loose soil outward to form rudimentary banks. The oasis' depth cannot exceed 10 feet with an average depth of 2d4 feet. The spell continually replenishes water lost to evaporation, saturation and consumption so it maintains a consistent volume and depth throughout the life of the spell. When the spell ends, the oasis disappears at a rate of 1d4 10-ft. squares per day, provided that the water is not replenished by some other means.

"

Sticks to Snakes

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 4, druid 4, serpent [good/evil] 4, summoner 4, witch 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (A number of sticks equal to the number of sticks to be changed and a handful of scales from a poisonous snake.)
Range 60 feet
Target 1d4 sticks plus one stick/level
Duration 1 round/level
Saving Throw None (see text); **Spell Resistance** No

By means of this spell, you change 1d4 sticks plus one per caster level (maximum +20) into Small or Medium poisonous vipers, depending on the size of the wood used (sticks under 4 feet long become Small snakes, and sticks over 4 feet long become Medium snakes). Sticks or wood of a magical nature, or those larger than 6 feet long, cannot be affected. If a stick to be affected is held or carried by someone other than the caster when this spell is cast, the item receives a Fortitude save just as if the person holding the stick was making the saving throw.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

The snakes have the abilities and statistics of the standard venomous snake in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*. For Small snakes, apply the “young” template.

Sure-Handed

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 2, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M/DF (a dab of sticky resin)

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject is immune to combat maneuvers, spells and spell-like effects that cause him to drop a held item or take a held item from his hand. He does not drop held items even if another condition would normally cause him to do so. He also gains a +4 bonus to Sleight of Hand checks made to palm an item or take something from a creature.

Tactical Reconfiguration

School conjuration (teleportation); **Level** bard 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 min./level (D) or until discharged

This spell functions in a similar manner to *contingency*, though the condition triggering the spell's effect and the effect itself are always the same. When you fail a Reflex save that deals damage, you may choose to instantly transfer yourself from your current location to any other spot within your line of sight that is not occupied by a solid body. If you transport out of the area affected by the magical attack, you do not take any damage from the attack that triggered this spell. You take full damage if you remain in the affected area.

Attempts to transport to an occupied square discharge the spell with no effect. You cannot bring objects not on your person or other creatures with you. You can only use one *tactical reconfiguration* spell at a time; if a second is cast, the first one, (if still active) is dispelled.

Wall of Sand

School conjuration (creation) [earth]; **Level** druid 3, ranger 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, summoner 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a small pouch of sand)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect mound of sand whose area is up to one 10-ft. square/level (S)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell creates a wide, vertical barrier of sand similar to a berm. The wall must sit upon a firm foundation, but it does not require anchor points. A *wall of sand* is 5 feet thick per two caster levels and composed of up to one 10-foot square per level. You can double the wall's area by halving its thickness. The wall cannot be conjured so that it occupies the same space as a creature or another object.

A *wall of sand* has no structural integrity and must always sit on a firm foundation. It cannot be used to bridge a chasm, but it can be shaped into a ramp as long as there is solid ground beneath it. You can create a *wall of sand* in any vertical shape you desire. Unlike most magical walls, a *wall of sand* is impervious to breaking and chipping. It can be affected by a

disintegrate spell, though sand from adjoining sections of the wall pours in and fills any breach.

Creatures can force their way slowly through the wall by making a Strength check as a full-round action. For every 5 points by which the check exceeds 10, a creature moves 5 feet (up to a maximum distance equal to its normal land speed). Sand fills the area immediately after the creature moves through it. Creatures moving through the *wall of sand* are blinded and must hold their breath, or they begin to suffocate. Creatures can also climb over the wall by succeeding on a DC 25 Climb check.

Any creature within the area of the spell when it is cast is caught inside.

Wall of Serpents

School conjuration (creation); **Level** cleric 7, druid 7, serpent [good] 7, sorcerer/wizard 7, summoner 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M/DF (crushed scales from a constrictor snake and a viper)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect Wall of serpents up to 20 ft. long/caster level or a ring of serpents with a radius of up to 5 ft./two caster levels; either form 20 ft. high

Duration 1 minute/level

Saving Throw See text; **Spell Resistance** No

Using this spell, you can create an immobile wall of poisonous, biting, and constricting snakes. A wall of serpents cannot form in an area occupied by physical objects or creatures.

For the duration of the spell, any creature that comes within 10 feet of the wall must succeed at a Reflex save or automatically be grappled by the constrictor snakes formed from the wall. (A creature must make a Reflex save each round he stays or moves within 10 feet of the wall to avoid being grappled.) A grappled creature can escape by succeeding at a Strength check or Escape Artist check (both DC 20).

A grappled victim is automatically bitten by 1d4 poisonous vipers (1d6 points of damage per snake) each round the hold is maintained and must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 points of Constitution damage for 6 rounds. Poisoned creatures can make a Fortitude save each round to negate the damage for that round; two consecutive saves ends the effect. Note, a grappled creature must make a Fortitude save for each snake that successfully bites in a given round.

The wall can be attacked with spells and weapons. If any 5-foot section of the wall takes 20 points of damage or more in one round, that area ceases to function.

War Paint

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 2, bard 2, inquisitor 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, M/DF (small jar of paint)

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

The subject gains a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls made to confirm critical hits, Will saves and Intimidate checks made to demoralize enemies. The morale bonus does not stack with morale bonuses from other sources.

Archetypes

Everything evolves over time. Some adaptations exceed all expectations and thrive, while others careen towards extinction right from the start. Success and failure depend upon whether the changes suited the individual's specific needs. The conventional druid's ability to effortlessly pass through undergrowth proves useful when moving through a dense thicket, but it provides no benefit to a druid traveling across the trackless sands of a barren desert. Many characters are faced with the same dilemma. Skills, feats and abilities that are invaluable in one environment or campaign may be useless in another. The desert is a sere world that demands specialization, so adventurers heeded the call and adapted to this harsh land by developing alternate class features like the ability to withstand severe heat or to move across the sand without impediment. These alternate class features are in lieu of rather than in addition to familiar class features. Unlike feats, characters cannot pick and choose individual alternate class features. Instead, specific features are combined together to create archetypes.

In short, archetypes are alternate versions of character classes. Though they retain the class's base attack bonus, Hit Dice and saving throws, the class features are different. Archetypes group together several alternate class features to create a more specialized version of the class that is better suited for a particular environment or culture, such as a fighter trained to protect a merchant caravan or a ranger that subsists on the desert's meager resources. Those archetypes with alternate class features that allow characters to brave extreme temperatures are best suited for a desert campaign, but many others are equally effective far from the desert's scorching sands. The archetypes presented in this chapter allow players to explore a variety of options when creating characters for a desert campaign.

Barbarian Archetypes

Barbarians are commonly perceived as crazed, wild men who pour out of some god-forsaken hole in the ground to wreak havoc on civilization. Like most perceptions, there are grains of truth in this outlook. Barbarians can and frequently do whip themselves into a frenzy during the heat of combat, but they are much more than battle-mad warriors spawned from the bowels of the earth. They are skilled animal handlers and proficient riders. They are fast, agile and attuned to the natural world. The archetypes presented in this section exemplify their diversity. The dromedarii is an expert camel rider born and bred for life on the burning sands. The scalp fetishist collects grisly trophies from his victims that enhance his combat abilities. Though both archetypes display aspects of the barbarian stereotype, they are unique enough to also stand apart from it.

Dromedarii

A few days after birth, the dromedarii gets his first view of the world from the back of a camel. His training continues throughout his formative years as he learns to spur his mount to greater speeds and to attack his enemies from the saddle. When he reaches adulthood, the dromedarii and his trusted camel are a frightening instrument of war. Because of their affinity for their mounts, they are seen as an offshoot of the more commonly encountered steppe barbarians who terrorize the grasslands from horseback. Yet there are significant differences. The desert lacks enough food and water to sustain vast hordes of men and beasts, so dromedarii travel alone or in much smaller groups. Those that join a larger force are typically employed as auxiliary troops rather than serving as part of the main fighting force like the barbarians of the steppe. They make excellent scouts, because their mount can travel vast distances without needing to stop for food and water. The dromedarii's speed, knowledge of the land and martial prowess make him a valuable addition to any party setting out into the trackless desert.

Fast Rider (Ex): The speed of any camel the dromedarii rides is increased by 10 feet. This replaces fast movement.

Camel Warrior (Ex): At 2nd level, a dromedarii gains Mounted Combat and Mounted Archery as bonus feats. This ability replaces

uncanny dodge.

Terrain Expert (Ex): At 3rd level, the dromedarii gains a +1 bonus on Acrobatics, Climb, Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks made in desert terrain. These bonuses improve by +1 every three levels after 3rd. This ability replaces trap sense.

Master of the Sands (Ex): At 5th level, the dromedarii and his mount can move across any type of difficult terrain encountered in the desert at their normal speed. Terrain magically manipulated to impede motion still affects them. The dromedarii gains a +4 bonus on Ride checks made to negate a hit against the dromedarii's mount, and a +4 bonus on Survival checks made to notice quicksand. This ability replaces improved uncanny dodge.

Rage Powers: The following rage powers (found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*) complement the dromedarii archetype: ferocious mount, ferocious trample, greater ferocious mount, greater ferocious trample and spirit steed.

Scalp-Taker

Most frequently encountered in semiarid deserts, scalp-takers are savage warriors renowned for displaying gruesome keepsakes culled from the bodies of vanquished enemies. The bloody practice stirs disdain and fear among more civilized desert peoples who view its practitioners as feral animals. But scalping is much more than a primitive act of mutilation. Though it arose from an intention to instill fear into the scalp-taker's enemies, (which it still does), the practice also boosts the barbarian's morale and makes it easier for him to demoralize his foes. This is particularly true because most scalp-takers are part of a much larger tribe. A lone scalp-taker is a fearsome adversary in his own right, but encountering a battle-frenzied group of these barbarians is utterly terrifying. However, some independent-minded scalp-takers abandon their tribal existence and set out on their own in search of adventure. These men and women are skilled warriors and survivalists, though their macabre art may be too much for some companions to stomach.

Scalp Fetish (Ex): The scalp-taker collects scalps from foes he slew in battle. At 3rd level, a scalp-taker can attach one of these scalps to his armor, weapon or piece of clothing such as a belt or sash. This grants the scalp-taker a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls made against cowering, frightened, panicked and shaken creatures and on Intimidate checks made to demoralize enemies. Every three levels beyond 3rd, a scalp-taker can use an additional scalp fetish. The effects of multiple scalp fetishes stack. Alternatively, once per day at 3rd level and one additional time per day for every five levels thereafter, a scalp-taker can choose to add a morale bonus equal to 1/2 his barbarian level to a single weapon damage roll. Doing so destroys the scalp fetish. A scalp fetish can be sundered (hardness 5, 1 hit point) but is not damaged by area attacks or attacks that do not specifically target it. A scalp fetish lasts for a number of days equal to the scalped creature's Hit Dice before it decays and becomes useless. The act of procuring a scalp from a fallen enemy requires a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. This ability replaces trap sense.

Rage Powers: The following rage powers complement the scalp-taker archetype: animal fury, fearless rage, inspire ferocity*, intimidating glare, primal scent, reckless abandon* and scent. Those marked with an asterisk can be found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Bard Archetypes

Bards are the keepers of lore and entertainers of their age. Their words, music and motions stir a wide range of emotions among their listeners and observers. They can rouse the lethargic, inspire the apathetic, soothe the melancholy or charm the wary. Because of their diverse talents and abilities, bards are an important facet of desert culture. Entertainment is a welcome diversion from the drudgeries of daily life in an inhospitable

DUNES OF DESOLATION

environment. Poets are particularly popular among the common people because their poetry collections are easily remembered and reasonably priced, while dancers, musicians, comedians and other live performers are found predominately in the palaces and mansions of those who can afford such luxuries. The concubine, a woman belonging to a harem and the first archetype presented in this section, hails from the latter world. The sha'ir, a poet with an affinity for genie magic, may be found in any social or economic circle. These skilled performers combine their mastery of arcane magic and entertainment prowess to maximum effect.

Concubine

Polygamy is not uncommon in the royal courts and wealthy estates of many desert kingdoms. A powerful king's harem may include dozens of wives and an even larger complement of concubines to entertain and pleasure him. (In general, a concubine moves up to the position of wife by giving birth to his child.) Though the concubine's role is often perceived as being purely sexual, concubines and wives are also responsible for raising, educating and entertaining the many children born from these unions. The relationships forged during the children's formative years pay substantial dividends over the coming years, as these youngsters reach adulthood and vie for succession. Fierce rivalries are common, as wives and concubines allied with them scheme against each other to ensure that their child achieves the status of favored son or daughter. The common man views the harem as an inexhaustible fountain of pleasure, but in reality the harem is a cauldron of perpetual intrigue. A fresh plot lurks around every corner of the harem. Without a vested stake in the endless roils of succession, some concubines leave the harem, either by escaping or by mutual agreement, to make their own way in the world as entertainers or persons of tremendous influence. Skilled in the art of seduction, deception and intrigue, they also have a sharp intellect and beauty that many men find irresistible. Concubines use these diverse talents to influence the actions of others to get whatever they want, often without a fight.

Bardic Performance: A concubine gains the following types of bardic performance.

Seduction (Sp): At 6th level, a concubine can dominate a creature already fascinated by her performance. The affected creature must belong to the same creature type as the concubine and also find her physically attractive. (Unless otherwise noted in the affected creature's description, members of the opposite gender are physically attracted to the concubine.) Using this ability does not disrupt the fascinate effect, but it does require a standard action to activate (in addition to the free action to continue the fascinate effect). If the target succeeds on a Will save (DC 11 + 1/2 the bard's level + the bard's Cha modifier), he resists this power and is immune to it for 24 hours. (The save DC includes the +1 bonus gained from love at first sight.) Failure leaves the creature dominated for as long as the performance continues. If the target takes damage, this effect ends immediately. This mind-affecting ability relies on audible components. This ability replaces suggestion.

1,001 Tales (Su): A concubine of 8th level or higher can spin wondrous tales that capture the imagination of those that hear them. Enemies within 30 feet are unable to attack the bard unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the bard's level + the bard's Cha modifier). This ability duplicates the effects of *sanctuary* even if the creature had no intention to attack the bard. A successful save renders a creature immune to this ability for 24 hours. 1,001 tales is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability that uses audible components. This performance replaces dirge of doom.

Harem Performer (Ex): A concubine adds 1/2 her bard level (minimum 1) to Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility), one type of Perform check (act, dance, oratory, percussion, string instruments or sing) and Sense Motive checks. She may make checks with these skills untrained. This ability replaces bardic knowledge.

Love at First Sight (Ex): At 2nd level, a concubine adds +1 to the DC of mind-affecting effects used against creatures physically attracted to the concubine as defined for her seduction ability. This ability replaces well-versed.

Master Poisoner (Ex): At 2nd level, concubines are trained in the use of poison and cannot accidentally poison themselves when applying poison to a blade. In addition, they are highly skilled at masking the taste



of ingested poisons. Whenever a concubine poisons a creature's food or drink, the save DC to resist the ingested poison is increased by +1. This bonus increases by an additional +1 at every four levels thereafter. This ability replaces versatile performance.

Sneak Attack (Ex): At 5th level, a concubine deals +1d6 points of damage against targets within 30 feet that she flanks or that are denied their Dex bonus to AC against her. This damage increases by +1d6 every five levels after 5th. This ability replaces lore master.

Sha'ir

Many desert creation myths tell that when the world came into existence, a poet uttered a single word, and a genie miraculously appeared to carry out his commands. It is no coincidence then that bards and genies are inexorably linked to one another. Genies are pervasive throughout the literature and music of nearly every desert culture. Words and performances sing praise to their glorious achievements and heroism and decry their capricious acts of betrayal and destruction. The bards that compose and perform these works are commonly known as sha'irs, and they are found at every level of society. To the eyes and ears of the casual listener or observer, the sha'ir seems to be nothing more than a storyteller fascinated with genies. In fact, they are most popular among children whom they captivate with their wondrous tales of fantastical magic and exotic places. Yet beneath the surface, the sha'ir is much more than a publicity machine or propagandist for the genies. His intense study of these mystical beings allows him to duplicate their magical powers and gives him added insight to defeat or aid them in battle. For those that listen carefully to the sha'ir's words and songs, it becomes apparent that he is recounting his own experiences and encounters with the genies, rather than reciting the deeds of others. For that very reason, sha'irs are skilled at matching words and wits with the desert's most conniving denizens.

Bardic Performance: A sha'ir gains the following types of bardic performance.

Scourge of Genies (Ex): A sha'ir who has identified a genie with a Knowledge (planes) check can use performance to guide the actions of his allies in combat. The sha'ir and any allies within 30 feet gain a +1 insight bonus to AC and on attack rolls against that type of genie. This bonus increases by +1 at 5th level and every six levels thereafter. This language-dependent ability requires visual and audible components. This ability replaces inspire courage.

Disappear (Su): At 3rd level, a sha'ir can cause one creature within 30 feet to become invisible. This effect functions as an *invisibility* spell that lasts as long as the target can hear the bard's performance or until the target takes an action that would end the spell's effects. Unwilling creatures can be affected if they fail a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the bard's level + the bard's Cha modifier). Whether the save is successful or not, any creature affected by this performance, (willingly or not), is immune to this performance for 24 hours. The bard cannot use this performance to affect himself. This effect relies upon audible components. This performance replaces inspire competence.

Flight of the Genie (Su): At 6th level, a sha'ir can imbue one creature within 30 feet with the ability to fly. This effect functions as a *fly* spell that lasts as long as the target can hear the bard's performance. Unwilling creatures can be affected if they fail a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the bard's level + the bard's Cha modifier). Whether the save is successful or not, any creature affected by this performance, (willingly or not), is immune to this performance for 24 hours. This effect relies upon audible components. This performance replaces suggestion.

Genie Form (Su): At 8th level, a sha'ir can cause one creature within 30 feet to assume gaseous form. This effect functions as a *gaseous form* spell that lasts as long as the target can hear the bard's performance. Unwilling creatures can be affected if they fail a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the bard's level + the bard's Cha modifier). Whether the save is successful or not, any creature affected by this performance, (willingly or not), is immune to this performance for 24 hours. This effect requires audible components. This performance replaces dirge of doom.

Genie Resistant (Ex): At 2nd level, the sha'ir becomes resistant to the magical powers of genies. He gets a +4 bonus on saves made against all genies' exceptional, supernatural and spell-like abilities. This ability replaces well-versed.

Cleric Archetypes

Clerics serve as the link between the mortal and the divine. They act as the conduit through which all divine energy flows. When deities or a universal entity channel their energy into the world of men, the godly power enters the cleric's body for dispersal to his earthly followers. Gods rarely walk among men, so for the overwhelming majority of worshippers, the cleric is the closest they ever come to a personal audience with the divine. Like most aspects of life in this brutal environment, desert gods and the priests that serve them are also tempestuous and parochial. Rather than fully open their doors and welcome a broad-based group of followers, desert deities focus their attention on small but devout groups of believers single-mindedly dedicated to one cause. The archetypes presented in this section represent this philosophy. The kahin is a cleric consumed with interpreting signs, omens and seeking good fortune. On the other hand the nehjeer is a cleric charged with the preservation of earthly remains and the destruction of the abominations that defy the grave and walk among the living. Resolute in their faith, these clerics sacrifice diversity for total mastery of their chosen domain.

Kahin

Fortune favors the brave or so the motto goes, but for the kahin fate more than courage makes the man. For them, events do not take place because men will them to happen; they occur because destiny dictated that they would. Celestial forces even more powerful than the mightiest deities shape the lives of men, and those able to foresee what the future holds are poised to take advantage of the whims of fate. Kahins strive to be at the forefront of the winds of change, yet they are willing to share their insights with those that share their beliefs or ideologies. In fact, gamblers and other people in high-risk professions typically flock to the kahin's side in search of hidden insight or even the slightest advantage in the odds. They are among the most popular clerics encountered in the desert because of their jovial nature and willingness to share their visions of the future with others. Though they are fervent believers in the power of fate, kahins also believe that they have at least a limited ability to shape their own destinies. Kahin adventurers take this notion to heart for they are convinced that they have more to offer the world than misfortune and bad luck.

Fortune Seeker: A kahin must choose the Luck domain. He does not gain a second domain. If the cleric worships a deity, that deity must be one that grants the Luck domain.

Devotion: A kahin devotes his studies to the mysteries of fortune thus he does not gain Medium Armor Proficiency or Shield Proficiency.

Blessed Fortune (Su): A kahin does not have to touch a targeted creature to bestow his bit of luck granted power. Instead, as a standard action he may target any creature within 30 feet. The kahin can also target unwilling creatures who resist the effect with a successful Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 cleric's level + cleric's Wis modifier). At 8th level, he may target a creature with his bit of luck granted power as a move action, and 16th level, he may target a creature with his bit of luck granted power as a free action.

See the Future (Su): Whenever the kahin casts a spell that grants a luck or insight bonus to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, AC, saving throws, skill checks or ability checks, he casts the spell as if he were one level higher than he actually is.

Added Insight (Su): The kahin can use his good fortune granted power once per day at 6th level, and one additional time per day for every three cleric levels beyond 6th. A cleric normally gains one additional daily usage of this granted power for every six cleric levels beyond 6th.

Nehjeer

Not all clerics tend to the needs of the living. A select few focus their prayers and devotion to preserving the eternal sanctity of the dead. Many desert cultures build elaborate tombs to house the mortal remains of their dearly departed as well as many of the treasures he accumulated during his lifetime. Most crypts are simple, subterranean vaults carved from rock and sand, but for royalty and the extremely wealthy nothing short of a wondrous monument suffices. The greatest kings and princes rest

DUNES OF DESOLATION

forever at the heart of massive pyramids that rival the most extravagant palaces in size and riches. To preserve their earthly bodies for the afterlife, many desert religions mummify their dead. This process is performed by specialized clerics known as *nehjeer*. Though lay people derogatorily refer to them as embalmers, the *nehjeer* is more than an ordinary mortician. These clerics not only perform the religious rites of mummification, they are also charged with the task of destroying those creatures that mock the solemnity of death. *Nehjeers* who embark on careers as adventurers do so with the latter goal in mind. For them, the gods entrusted them with the sacred mission to root out and eradicate any creatures that defy the natural order of death and instead rise as undead abominations. It is a crusade they are ready, willing and able to undertake.

Keeper of the Dead (Ex): A *nehjeer* must choose the Repose domain. He does not gain a second domain. If the cleric worships a deity, that deity must be one that grants the Repose domain.

Undead Tactician (Ex): Whenever a *nehjeer* encounters undead enemies, he can always act in a surprise round even if he failed a Perception check to notice them. He is still considered flat-footed until he acts. This ability works as long as there is at least one undead creature among his enemies.

Face Death (Ex): At 2nd level, a *nehjeer* gain a +1 bonus on Will saves against fear effects from an undead source. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels beyond 2nd.

Rebuke Unlife (Su): At 8th level, the *nehjeer's* spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities used to damage undead deal an extra 50% damage. At 16th level, these effects automatically deal the maximum possible damage for the effect + the extra 50%. This does not stack with abilities or feats such as Empower Spell or Maximize Spell.

Druid Archetypes

Nature is a powerful force, and druids serve as its guardians and benefactors. In temperate and tropical climates, druids tend to the trees and plants of the verdant forests along with the abundant fauna that call these lush paradises home. They use their magical powers and martial prowess to defend the sanctity of the pristine wilderness against despoilers and trespassers bent on exploiting nature for their own benefit. Their role in the lush forests and sweeping grasslands of the world is well-defined, but deserts present a different dilemma. Most creatures venturing across the windswept dunes and scorching sands are simply struggling to survive rather than pillage the desert's scant natural resources. Of course, there are exceptions, but many desert druids view their roles in a different light. Oasis druids seek to preserve and expand the refreshing waters of the desert's oases for the continued usage of the native inhabitants as well as passing travelers. The medicine men of the semiarid deserts use plants materials and other natural resources to heal the sick and injured and fortify the courage of those under their care. For them, nature is a welcoming source of sustenance and comfort for those in the greatest need.

Oasis Druid

Trackless expanses of rolling sand dunes, gravel plains and salt pans comprise the overwhelming majority of a hot and dry desert's surface area. This sere, granular soil lacks any moisture which renders vast swaths of the desert virtually uninhabitable to all but the hardiest of indigenous residents. Yet, pockets of life flourish in this punishing landscape around its scattered oases. Oases are low-lying areas where tremendous pressure has pushed underground water to the surface. The fresh supply of water attracts thirsty birds, animals, men and monsters to its inviting shores. These creatures deliberately or inadvertently carry seeds with them which then take root in the fertile soil along the oasis' edges. As this natural process progresses, oasis druids typically oversee and enhance the oasis' transformation from a fresh water spring to a verdant, green paradise. They see these wellsprings of life as welcoming desert gardens for plants, animals and passing travelers alike. Oasis druids encourage other creatures, both wild and civilized, to drink from its fresh waters and reap its fruits and vegetables, particularly dates from the palm trees that they planted shortly after the oasis' birth. Wanderlust fills the souls of most adventuring oasis druids preventing them from forming lasting bonds with companions. Unsatisfied with tending to the needs of a single

oasis, they search the desert's burning sands and salt flats for more oases to cultivate and expand. Their bold spirit and unsurpassed knowledge of this environment make them one of the desert's greatest resources.

Nature Bond (Ex): An oasis druid may not select an animal companion. Instead he must choose from the following domains, rather than those usually available to druids: Air, Animal, Earth, Plant, Sun, Travel, Water and Weather.

Oasis Seeker (Ex): An oasis druid gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (geography) and Survival checks to find water sources in the desert or get along in the desert. This bonus improves by +1 every three levels thereafter. This ability replaces nature sense.

Vermin Empathy (Su): An oasis druid can improve the attitude of vermin as a normal druid can with animals. Vermin have a starting attitude of unfriendly. The oasis druid can also improve the attitude of animals, but he takes a -4 penalty on the check. This ability replaces wild empathy.

Sandwalker (Ex): At 2nd level, an oasis druid suffers no penalties to speed or on Acrobatics or Stealth checks when moving through desert or sandy terrain. He cannot be tracked in such environments as well. This ability replaces woodland stride.

Desert Endurance (Ex): At 3rd level, an oasis druid ignores the effects of a hot climate as if using *endure elements*. He also has a reduced need to eat and drink, as if wearing a *ring of sustenance* (though normal sleep is still required). This ability replaces trackless step.

Dunecrawler (Ex): At 4th level, an oasis druid gains a burrow speed of 15 feet (10 feet if he wears medium or heavy armor or if he carries a medium of heavy load) through sand, loose soil or gravel. He cannot burrow through stone, wood or hardened earth. He cannot charge or run while burrowing. The loose material fills in behind the oasis druid as he burrows, so he must either hold his breath or find an alternate means of breathing to avoid suffocating. This ability replaces nature's lure.

Date Palm Tree (Ex): At 13th level, an oasis druid can cast *tree shape* at will. The oasis druid must assume the form of a date palm tree. This ability replaces a thousand faces.

Medicine Man

Among many of the nomadic peoples of the semiarid deserts, the medicine man holds an important spiritual and political position within the tribe. Outsiders perceive him as a primitive healer capable of brewing herbal remedies and casting rudimentary curative spells, but his role is much more complex. Though he specializes in the healing arts, his sacred bond to the natural world and its deities grants him religious authority among his people. In addition, his ability to communicate with beasts and interpret natural omens gives him valuable insight that is indispensable to many tribal chieftains. In fact, civic authorities never make an important decision without soliciting the medicine man's opinion first. The medicine man acts as a high priest, spiritualist and strategist, yet in the eyes of the common man he serves as a healer first and foremost. While clerics rely predominately upon magic to aid the infirmed, the medicine man uses more intuitive means to repair injury and cure sickness. Years of experience, skilled hands and a treasure trove of natural ingredients give the medicine man a fighting chance in his battle against wounds, disease and poisons. The medicine man foregoes a close bond with the animal kingdom to heal his fellow man. Medicine men believe that nature is the wellspring of all healing.

Nature Bond (Ex): A medicine man may not select an animal companion. Instead he must choose from the following domains, rather than those usually available to druids: Animal, Healing, Knowledge, Plant, Repose, Sun and Water.

Natural Healer (Ex): A medicine man adds half his class level (minimum 1) to all Heal and Knowledge (nature) checks. This ability replaces nature sense.

Herbal Remedies (Ex): At 2nd level, a medicine man can roll a Heal check and a Knowledge (nature) check and use the higher result whenever he performs any task listed under the Heal skill (first aid, long-term care, treat deadly wounds, poison, disease or wounds from caltrops, *spike growth* or *spike stones*). He can use this ability once per day and one additional time per day for every three levels beyond 2nd level. In addition, he does not provoke attacks of opportunity when treating deadly wounds or treating poison. This ability replaces woodland stride.

Master Brewer (Ex): At 3rd level, the medicine man gains Brew

ARCHETYPES

Potion as a bonus feat. Any cure spell potion brewed by a medicine man is treated as if he were one level higher than he actually is. This does not add any additional cost to the base price. This ability replaces trackless step.

Hale (Ex): At 4th level, the medicine man gains a +4 bonus on saves made against disease and all Heal checks made to treat disease. This ability replaces resist nature's lure.

Antibodies (Ex): At 9th level, a medicine man gains immunity to all diseases, and a +4 bonus on saves made against poison and all Heal checks made to treat poison. This ability replaces venom immunity.

Fighter Archetypes

Fighters are the backbone of every military force. Their battle prowess and diverse combat skills allow them to serve as infantry, archers, crossbowyers or cavalry troops. On the surface, fighters appear to be the most homogenous character class, yet reality is much different. Fighters gain more feats than any other character class, allowing them to focus their training on a particular combat style, mastery of a single weapon or dabble in a broad-based spectrum of fighting disciplines. The sky is the limit for a fighter with ingenuity and imagination. Some fighters opt to follow a career path and hone their skills in furtherance of their chosen profession. The archetypes presented here exemplify this decision. The caravan guard is an experienced desert warrior that is a skilled rider with some merchant skills. The palace guard is a vigilant protector and sworn defender of the kingdom's wealthiest and most powerful individuals. Though they remain fighters at heart, their distinct and well-defined roles make them more than an ordinary foot soldier.

Caravan Guard

Desert cities and towns owe their existence to trade. Roads traverse the sweltering sands allowing caravans of men, camels and other domesticated animals to transport their valuable goods from exotic ports of call and far off destinations to the shelves of desert marketplaces. Yet, the journey

across the barren dunes is not an easy one. In addition to the stifling heat and other natural hazards, bandits, highwaymen, wild animals and cunning monsters pose a constant threat to the caravan's security. To ward against these dangers, affluent merchants hire experienced desert fighters as caravan guards. Though their primary role is to fend off would be thieves and robbers, caravan guards also acquire some additional riding skills as well as a nose for business. Because of the extreme temperatures, caravan guards universally wear light armor. Over time, they learn to master its defensive capabilities. Their weaponry varies, but most caravan guards hone their combat prowess with a mix of ranged and melee weapons. The caravan guard's battle experience and familiarity with desert terrain make him an ideal companion for any journey across the sands.

Skills: A caravan guard adds Appraise and Bluff to his list of class skills and removes Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Swim from his list of class skills.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A caravan guard is not proficient with medium armor, heavy armor or tower shields.

Desert Vigilance (Ex): At 1st level, a caravan guard gains both Alertness and Mounted Combat as bonus feats. This ability replaces the 1st-level fighter bonus combat feat.

Caravan Veteran (Ex): At 2nd level, a caravan guard gains a +1 bonus on Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march; Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst; Fortitude saves made to avoid nonlethal damage from hot environments, all Ride skill checks and all Profession (driver) skill checks. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels after 2nd level (to a maximum of +5 at 18th level). This ability replaces bravery.

Light Armor Expert (Ex): At 3rd level, a caravan guard increases the AC bonus granted by any light armor he uses by 1. At 11th level, a caravan guard increases the AC bonus granted by any light armor he uses by 2. These bonuses do not stack. This ability replaces armor training 1 and 3.

Desert Senses (Ex): At 5th level, a caravan guard gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls, initiative checks, Perception checks and Reflex saves made in the desert. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels after 5th to a maximum of +4 at 17th level. This ability replaces weapon training 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 7th level, a caravan guard can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He cannot be caught flat-footed, nor does he lose his Dexterity bonus to AC if the attacker is invisible. He still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. A caravan guard with this ability can still lose his Dexterity bonus to AC if an opponent successfully uses the feint action against him.

If a caravan guard already has uncanny dodge from a different class, he automatically gains improved uncanny dodge instead. This ability functions only in the desert. This ability replaces armor training 2.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 15th level, a caravan guard can no longer be flanked. This defense denies a rogue the ability to sneak attack the character by flanking him, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than the target has caravan guard levels.

If a character already has uncanny dodge from another class, the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge stack to determine the minimum rogue level required to flank the character. This ability functions only in the desert. This ability replaces armor training 4.

Palace Guard

Wealth and power always attract unwanted attention. Thieves, kidnappers and other miscreants are constantly on the lookout for the next big score, and an opulent palace teeming with riches is certain to garner their interest. Disgruntled people seek opportunities to air their grievances or exact revenge against those they hold accountable for their misfortune. Ambitious rivals hatch schemes to clear their path towards increased power and fortune. Mighty walls can keep only so much danger at bay — the rest is up to the palace guard. Vigilant, attentive and steadfastly loyal, the palace guard is responsible for securing their employer's property and protecting his well-being along with ensuring the safety of his family or trusted associates. Palace guards generally serve royalty, nobility or the extremely wealthy. Many also hail from these elite circles and are handsomely paid for their services. Though their mission to protect the residence against intruders is rather straight-forward, palace guards must also navigate the web of intrigue entangling those already inside the palace. Conspiring family members, jealous spouses, clandestine lovers and disloyal servants abound within mansion walls. Weak-minded and covetous palace guards soon become embroiled in these plots, while those that resist these temptations rise to the highest levels of their profession. The palace guard is a skilled warrior with an extensive network of allies and associates within any desert city.

Skills: A palace guard adds Knowledge (nobility), Perception and Sense Motive to his list of class skills and removes Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (engineering) and Swim from his list of class skills.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A palace guard is not proficient with heavy armor or tower shields.

Right Connections (Ex): At 1st level, a palace guard gains Alertness as a bonus feat. Palace guards enjoy a one-time benefit to their initial finances. Their starting cash increases to 900 gp. A palace guard can attempt a Knowledge (nobility) check in place of a Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy check made to gather information. This ability replaces the 1st-level fighter bonus combat feat.

Strong-Minded (Ex): At 2nd level, a palace guard gains a +1 bonus against enchantment spells and effects and to Sense Motive checks to avoid being bluffed. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels after 2nd level (to a maximum of +5 at 18th level). This ability replaces bravery.

Save the King (Ex): At 3rd level, when performing the aid another action, the palace guard grants a +3 bonus to the ally's Armor Class. The +3 bonus applies to the ally's AC only and not to attack rolls. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels after 3rd level (to a maximum of +6 at 15th level). This ability replaces armor training 1 and 3.

Nice Try (Ex): At 5th level, whenever an enemy attempts a disarm, feint or trip combat maneuver against the palace guard and fails, the palace guard gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls made against that enemy for 1 round. The bonus increases by +1 for every four levels beyond 5th. This effect does not stack with itself, but can be applied to multiple enemies. This ability replaces weapon training 1.

Not So Fast (Ex): At 7th level, a palace guard gains a +4 bonus to his CMD against Acrobatics checks made to avoid an attack of opportunity by moving through a square threatened by the palace guard. The bonus increases to +6 at 15th level. This ability replaces armor training 2 and 4.

Monk Archetypes

Discipline, self-sacrifice and inner determination are the hallmarks of every monk. Endless repetition, deep introspection and solemnity of body and mind combine forces to unleash a weapon that transcends the limitations of the physical world. Their combat abilities ascend to the realm of the supernatural, allowing them to perform maneuvers beyond the bounds of normal reality. In contrast to conventional wisdom, monks achieve these astounding feats by focusing on simplicity and self-deprivation rather than complexity and self-indulgence. Monks shun the trappings and materialism of the outside world in favor of an ascetic lifestyle spent meditating, fasting and exercising. Though these endeavors are typically associated with a religious order, monks are generally not as devoted to a particular deity or belief system as clerics and other divine spellcasters. Yet, there are exceptions to every rule, as one of the archetypes presented here demonstrates. The dervish believes that his martial powers derive from a mystical link between himself and his deity, Mah-Barek. On the other hand, the sadhu taps into the powers of the spiritual world to curse his enemies and reach into the ethereal realm. Despite their divergent ideologies, there is no doubting that the powers wielded by the dervish and sadhu lay closer to the realm of the impossible rather than the plausible.

Dervish of Mah-Barek

The dervish's motions seem like disjointed, whirling dance steps, but hidden amidst the leaps, twirls and spins is a rhythmic conjoining of mysticism and combat maneuvers. Though dervishes spend hours painstakingly rehearsing and practicing these routines, they firmly believe that their deity, Mah-Barek, guides their actions in battle. (Details regarding Mah-Barek appear in **Chapter 9**, "Faiths of the Desert.") Dervish communities are found in almost every major desert city. Because the dervishes perform their rituals in celebration of their faith, they are more open to the public than many monastic orders. In fact, dervishes actively seek converts, yet they do not proselytize new members with fiery sermons or religious texts. Instead, the dervishes' battle dance speaks for itself. Those able to imitate its intricate steps and motions after observing it for a few minutes are immediately approached to join the order. Even the most brazenly devout worshipper of Mah-Barek cannot become a dervish if he cannot master the battle dance. In the heat of combat, the dervish is a unique synthesis of practiced routine and divine inspiration, as he becomes a constant whirlwind of motion striking all enemies within his reach.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dervishes are proficient with the kama, quarterstaff, shortspear, short sword and spear only. This replaces the normal monk weapon proficiencies.

Whirlwind Attack (Ex): At 1st level, a dervish gains Whirlwind Attack as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. When using this feat, a dervish can roll his attack roll twice and take the higher result. If one of these rolls is a critical threat, the other roll is used as the confirmation roll (dervish's choice if they are both critical threats). He can use this ability once per day and no more than once per round. He can use this ability one additional time per day for every four levels thereafter up to a maximum of five times per day at 17th level. This ability replaces stunning fist.

Whirlwind Dance (Ex): At 3rd level, a dervish learns the discipline of incorporating his attack routine with the dervish's battle dance. This allows the dervish to attack enemies and make Perform (dance) checks simultaneously though he incurs a –2 penalty to attack rolls and Perform (dance) checks while doing so. This ability replaces still mind.

Battle Dance (Ex): At 5th level, a dervish can combine his attack and dance routine with devastating effects. While performing a whirlwind dance, he may spend 1 point from his *ki* pool as a swift action to add the results of his Perform (dance) check to his attack roll. He cannot use this ability more than once per round. This ability replaces purity of body.

Inspired Dance (Ex): At 5th level, a dervish adds his level to all Perform (dance) checks. By spending 1 point from his *ki* pool as a swift action, a dervish gains a +20 bonus on Perform (dance) checks for 1 round. He can use this ability in conjunction with other *ki* abilities. This ability replaces high jump.

Saving Dance (Ex): At 7th level, a dervish can grant creatures another saving throw to resist the effects of certain magical effects. While performing a whirlwind dance, he may spend 1 point from his *ki* pool (as a swift action)

Paladin Archetypes

Blessed with a pure heart, the truest convictions and skill at arms, paladins man the vanguard in the struggle against evil. They never waver in the battle against wickedness or compromise their lofty principles when faced with temptation. They exemplify all that is just and right in the world and serve as glorious beacons of goodness and lawfulness for others to emulate. Their fervent belief in their noble cause blesses them and those that serve alongside them. They can call upon the powers of goodness to smite evil, heal the injured or bolster the courage of those not as brave as they are. Paladins bring light where darkness rules, and hope where despair reigns. In many desert cultures, they are the figures of legends. They are courageous knights, just kings and righteous counselors. They take on these prestigious roles because their bravery and strength of convictions make them natural-born leaders. Others aspire to follow in their footsteps and walk the same path they do. The archetypes presented here demonstrate the paladin's ideal to guide and serve others. The mah-bareh is a devout follower and crusader in the service of his deity, Mah-Barek. The janissary defends and guides goodly kings in many desert nations. For these men and women, staunch belief in goodness and faith always triumphs over sin and fear.

Mah-bareh

Since the birth of their faith centuries ago, the mah-barehs have been a shining testimony to the glory and benevolence of their deity, Mah-Barek. They ascribe to the teachings and writings of Fatimashan, one of the four witnesses to their god's manifestation. When Mah-Barek journeyed with her for thirty days and thirty nights across the desert, he spoke of the virtues of love, mercy, charity and kindness — traits every mah-bareh emulates in his words and deeds. Orders of the mah-bareh can be found in every major desert city or town. These holy temples are renowned throughout the kingdoms as places of peace, sanctuary and generosity. The mah-barehs are prohibited from turning away anyone in need. Criminals and undesirables in need of healing, asylum or respite find refuge within these sacred walls, but this generosity comes with a unique price. When the refugee's time of need passes, he is required to fight alongside the mah-barehs in a *faqwad*, which is generally translated as righteous battle. In many cases, the former refugee's experience is so inspirational that he abandons his old lifestyle and joins the mah-bareh in their holy mission. The mah-barehs welcome such converts because they believe that no experience tests the mettle of a man's beliefs and convictions more than combat. In fact, the mah-barehs believe that they are warriors first and men second. Words and good deeds can alter the wayward paths of some, but only the purest of hearts and sharpest of scimitars can rid the world of unrepentant evil forever. Their illustrious history and renowned reputation for doing just that speak for themselves.

Weapon Focus: A mah-bareh gains Weapon Focus (scimitar) as a bonus feat at 1st level. This ability replaces his heavy armor proficiency.

Mah-Barek's Fervor (Su): At 3rd level, a mah-bareh can spend one use of his lay on hands ability as a standard action to grant all adjacent allies (including paladins) a bonus. At 3rd level, adjacent allies receive a +1 sacred bonus on their attack rolls and combat maneuver checks. These bonuses last for a number of rounds equal to the mah-bareh's Charisma modifier. At 9th and 15th levels, this bonus increases by +1. At 6th level, these bonuses are granted to all allies within 10 feet, and allies within this area are immune to fear. At 12th level, these bonuses are granted to allies within 15 feet, and allies within this area gain a +2 circumstance bonus on attack rolls to confirm critical hits. At 18th level, these bonuses are granted to all allies within 20 feet, and allies within this area deal an additional +1d6 points of damage whenever they confirm a critical hit. These bonuses are cumulative with each other. Allies only benefit from these bonuses while in the listed area. This ability replaces mercy.

Mah-Barek's Insight (Su): At 3rd level, when a mah-bareh confirms a critical hit with his scimitar, he can spend one use of his lay on hands ability as a swift action to double the threat range of all weapons wielded by allies within 10 feet of him until the start of his next turn. This effect does not stack with any other effect that expands the threat range of a weapon. His allies must remain within 10 feet of him, and must be able both to see and hear the mah-bareh to gain this benefit. This ability

to grant any creature already under the influence of a mind-affecting magical attack another saving throw against the effect. Any creature that can see the dervish and is within 30 feet of him gains another saving throw against the effect, but it must use the dervish's Perform (dance) skill check result for the save. Saving dance does not work on effects that do not allow saves. This ability relies on visual components. Saving dance lasts for 1 round only, but it can be used multiple times by expending additional points from the dervish's *ki* pool. This ability replaces wholeness of body.

Prayer Dance (Su): At 11th level, a dervish can grant the blessing of Bah-Marek to his allies. While performing a whirlwind dance, he may spend 2 points from his *ki* pool (as a swift action) to duplicate the effects of *prayer* for 1 minute. In addition, whenever an ally affected by *prayer* scores a critical threat, he may use the dervish's Perform (dance) check in place of his confirmation roll if, after the confirmation roll is made, the Perform check result proves to be higher. This ability replaces diamond body.

Sadhu

Sadhus are rigid disciplinarians who follow a strict doctrine of self-deprivation and spiritualism. They accumulate no material goods beyond the bare necessities and regularly fast or abstain from eating meat or animal-based products, like milk or butter. Though sadhus are commonly seen begging on street corners or in other public places, they donate the proceeds to society's least fortunate individuals. Sadhus consider themselves to be spiritually rich, so they have no need for wealth. They are devout, religious men, but they do not worship a particular deity. Instead, they pay homage and pray to a multitude of gods. They believe that the world's wonders are too bountiful and diverse for one being to create or oversee no matter how powerful it may be. Villagers and townspeople revere sadhus as holy men who are admired for their wisdom and incorruptibility. Because of these traits, sadhus may be called upon to settle disputes or resolve conflicts within the community. City dwellers also respect them for their devotion and piety, yet they are met by an undercurrent of resentment and suspicion attributable to their begging activities. When confronted by others, sadhus do not appear as imposing figures. They lack the defined musculature and obvious agility of other monks, but they compensate for their unimpressive physicality with frightening magical powers. As such, sadhus are often mistaken for arcane spellcasters rather than physical combatants, an error that their enemies soon regret.

Hex Strike (Ex): At 1st level, a sadhu gains Hex Strike (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*) as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. When he receives this feat, he must choose one of the following witch's hexes to apply to it: blight, charm, evil eye, fortune, healing, misfortune, slumber or ward. The save to resist the hex is equal to 10 + 1/2 the sadhu's level + the sadhu's Wisdom modifier. His caster level is equal to his monk level. A sadhu may attempt a hexing strike attack a number of times per day equal to his monk level, plus one more time per day for every four levels he has in classes other than monk. He cannot select this feat again unless he gains the hex class feature from another class. This ability replaces stunning fist.

Endurance (Ex): At 1st level, a sadhu gains Endurance as a bonus feat. This ability replaces the monk bonus feat at 1st level.

See the Beyond (Ex): At 2nd level, a sadhu gains Blind-Fight as a bonus feat. At 6th level, the sadhu gains Improved Blind-Fight as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. At 10th level, the sadhu gains Greater Blind-Fight as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. This ability replaces the bonus feat at 2nd level and evasion. Improved Blind-Fight and Greater Blind-Fight are both located in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

See Reality (Ex): At 3rd level, a sadhu gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against illusion spells and effects. This ability replaces still mind.

Ki Pool (Su): At 4th level, in addition to the normal abilities of his *ki* pool, a sadhu may spend 1 point from his *ki* pool to allow his unarmed attacks to be treated as *ghost touch* weapons for 1 round.

See Truth (Ex): At 5th level, a sadhu adds his level to all Sense Motive checks. By spending 1 point from his *ki* pool as a swift action, a sadhu gains a +20 bonus on Sense Motive checks for 1 round. This ability replaces high jump.

Spirit Strike (Su): At 7th level, a sadhu may spend 1 point from his *ki* pool (as a swift action) to treat his unarmed strikes as melee touch attacks for 1 round. This ability replaces wholeness of body.

Freedom of Movement (Su): At 9th level, a sadhu may spend 2 points from his *ki* pool (as a swift action) to duplicate the effects of *freedom of movement* for 10 minutes. This ability replaces improved evasion.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

replaces divine health.

Divine Bond (Su): Upon reaching 5th level, a mah-baresh must form a bond with a scimitar. This ability otherwise functions as the paladin ability.

Mah-Barek's Strength (Su): At 8th level, a mah-baresh can expend a use of his smite evil ability as a swift action to grant himself and all allies within 10 feet the Power Attack and Cleave feats, even if they do not meet the prerequisites. The effects last for 1 minute. Evil creatures gain no benefit from this ability. This ability replaces aura of resolve.

Janissary

Janissaries are the incorruptible defenders of kings, princes and other individuals worthy of such an honor. Becoming a janissary is an arduous and hazardous journey that few men willingly aspire to undertake. Most janissaries begin this road as unwitting, young children culled from the ranks of conquered people hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Tearing children away from their homes and families appears barbarous and cruel, but the reality is that many parents see this as the child's opportunity for a better life. These children receive the finest education and live a life of luxury in the palaces and mansions of the kings and princes. In time, many of the boys and occasional girls that grow up in this unusual system forget about their previous lives and develop an unwavering loyalty towards each other and their benefactors. As the children grow older, they undergo strenuous testing to determine what line of profession they are best suited to perform as adults. Only an elite few have the minds, bodies and hearts to be janissaries. They must be fearless, steadfastly loyal and willing to sacrifice themselves to save the lives of others. Janissaries are adept combatants dedicated to protecting their allies regardless of the cost. Many men of power owe their kingdoms and fortunes to the unwavering devotion and martial prowess of a loyal janissary.

Sacred Karma (Su): At 2nd level, a janissary can spend one use of his lay on hands ability as a standard action to grant all adjacent allies (including paladins) a bonus. At 2nd level, adjacent allies receive a +1 sacred bonus on saving throws. These bonuses last for a number of rounds equal to the janissary's Charisma modifier. At 9th and 15th levels, this bonus increases by +1. At 6th level, these bonuses are granted to all allies within 10 feet. At 12th level, these bonuses are granted to allies within 15 feet. At 18th level, these bonuses are granted to all allies within 20 feet. These bonuses are cumulative with each other. Allies only benefit from these bonuses while in the listed area. This ability replaces divine grace.

Staunch Protector (Su): At 3rd level, a janissary can spend one use of his lay on hands ability as an immediate action to grant a +2 bonus to AC and 1d6 temporary hit points to a targeted creature within 10 feet of him. At 6th level and every four levels thereafter, the ally gains an additional 1d6 temporary hit points. The temporary hit points last for a number of rounds equal to the janissary's Charisma modifier. Multiple uses of this ability do not stack with themselves. This ability replaces divine health.

Karmic Justice (Su): At 11th level, a janissary can expend two uses of his smite evil ability to require all evil creatures within 20 feet of him that fail a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the janissary's level + the janissary's Charisma modifier) to roll their attack rolls twice and use the worse result. Whether or not the save is successful, the creature is immune to karmic justice for 24 hours. The effect lasts for 1 minute and continues to affect creatures that move out of the original area. Creatures moving out of the area remain affected by karmic justice, but creatures moving into the area after its casting are not affected. This ability replaces aura of justice.

Ranger Archetypes

From childhood, rangers learn that nature is inherently cruel. Some creatures are born to ascend to the envied position of top predator, while others are destined to become their prey. Rangers strive to achieve the former role rather than the latter. These self-sufficient wilderness warriors pursue a specialized path to reach their desired goal. Rather than dabble in several different martial disciplines, rangers hone their combat prowess in one particular combat style, learning to become adept archers or skilled dual weapon wielders. Instead of hunting any creature that stumbles across their path, they carefully study the strengths and weaknesses of specific

enemies that become their chosen prey. Rangers also hone their combat abilities and survival skills in a particular environment. Within that terrain, they can forage for life's basic necessities, move through the wilderness undetected, spot concealed enemies and track quarry with relative ease. The archetypes presented here demonstrate the ranger's mastery of his world. The bedouin is an expert desert survivalist and warrior who can brave the intense heat and claim dominion over the hardy creatures that walk or crawl across the burning sands. The trance warrior is a nomad of the semiarid deserts that uses a potent, natural hallucinogen to gain hidden insight about the world around him and see what others cannot see. As these archetypes reveal, nature is an omnipotent force that those attuned to it can use to wield tremendous might.

Bedouin

Where most men fail, the bedouin thrives. The desert's stifling temperatures, ferocious winds and sere landscape claim many victims, but years of experience and perseverance allow these crafty rangers to conquer this harsh environment. However, accomplishing this feat comes with a price. As conventional rangers expand their boundaries, adapt to new surroundings and seek out other prey creatures, the bedouin is single-mindedly focused on conquering his desert world and strengthening the symbiotic bond between him and his trusted mount — the camel. Seated atop the ultimate desert specialist, the bedouin and his animal companion make a formidable team. He is an expert mounted combatant, skilled at deflecting ranged attacks directed at his mount and returning fire from his position atop the camel. In addition, his body is attuned to the blistering heat and resisting the toxic effects of scorpion stings and snake bites. The bedouin is a master of his environment, and any creature that faces him on the swirling sands does so at a lopsided disadvantage.

Desert Warrior (Ex): At 1st level, a bedouin gains a +1 competence bonus to AC, attack rolls and weapon damage rolls when he and the creature he is combating are in desert terrain. He also gains a +2 competence bonus on initiative checks and Acrobatics, Climb, Knowledge (geography), Perception, Stealth and Survival checks made in desert terrain. A bedouin may make Knowledge skill checks untrained when attempting to identify any creature encountered in the desert. A bedouin traveling through the desert leaves no trail and cannot be tracked (though he may leave a trail if he so chooses).

At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, the AC, attack roll and weapon damage bonuses improve by +1 up to a maximum of +5 at 20th level, the initiative check and skill bonuses improve by +2 up to a maximum of +10 at 20th level. This ability replaces favored enemy and favored terrain.

Track (Ex): A bedouin adds his level (minimum 1) to Survival checks made to follow or identify tracks in desert terrain only. He does not receive a bonus to follow or identify tracks in any other environment.

Desert Creature Empathy (Ex): A bedouin can improve the initial attitude of an indigenous desert animal as if using wild empathy. He can also use this ability to influence an animal not native to the desert, magical beasts with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 and vermin, but he takes a –4 penalty on the check. Vermin have a starting attitude of unfriendly. He cannot influence magical beasts or vermin that are not indigenous to the desert. This ability replaces wild empathy.

Combat Style Feat (Ex): At 2nd level, a bedouin ranger must choose the mounted combat style (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*).

Mounted Bond (Ex): At 4th level, the bedouin forms a bond with an animal he can use as a mount, which becomes his animal companion. A Medium ranger must select a camel. A Small ranger must select a mule. This ability functions like the druid animal companion ability except that the ranger's effective druid level is equal to his ranger level –3. The ranger gains a +2 bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks with his animal companion mount. This ability replaces hunter's bond.

Sandwalker (Ex): At 7th level, a bedouin suffers no penalties to speed or on Acrobatics or Stealth checks when moving through desert or sandy terrain. He cannot be tracked in such environments as well. This ability replaces woodland stride.

Fast Rider (Ex): At 8th level, the speed of any camel or mule the Bedouin rides is increased by 10 feet. This ability replaces swift tracker.

Desert Immunity (Ex): At 11th level, a bedouin gains immunity to

ARCHETYPES

animal and vermin poisons. He gains a +2 luck bonus on saves against all other types of poison. This ability replaces quarry.

Desert Camouflage (Ex): At 12th level, a bedouin can use the Stealth skill to hide in desert environments, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment. This ability replaces camouflage.

Meld with Dunes (Ex): At 17th level, a bedouin can use the Stealth skill while he is in the desert, even when being observed. This ability replaces hide in plain sight.

Strong Bond (Ex): At 19th level, the bedouin strengthens his bond with his mount. The ranger's effective druid level for his mount is now equal to his ranger level. This ability replaces improved quarry.

Trance Warrior

Native to many semiarid deserts, the trance warrior believes that there is a reality beyond that which the senses perceive. The physical body is a conduit to a transcendental realm of mystical sights, sounds, smells and experiences. To reach this existential world, the trance warrior enlists the aid of the hallucinogenic agent, peyote, to commune with the natural and spiritual forces all around him. Derived from a cactus plant, the narcotic and the warrior's conviction in his beliefs unleash the hidden power of his inner being and transform him into a seemingly, otherworldly combatant. In this state, the trance warrior appears to react to events before they happen, moving across the battlefield with blinding speed and precision. He appears to be an invincible whirlwind of euphoric devastation, surging past one enemy to the next, but when the short-lived experience ends, the regression back to the real world is disorienting. Confusion overcomes the trance warrior, as he readjusts to his original condition. Yet for those brief moments when he escapes the bonds of the physical world, the trance warrior is a spirit of nature that few dare oppose.

Vision Quest (Su): A trance warrior can relive the experiences of a metaphysical journey, granting him additional insight about the world around him. Starting at 1st level, a trance warrior can go on a vision quest for a number of rounds per day equal to 4 + his Wisdom modifier. At each level after 1st, he can vision quest for 2 additional rounds. Temporary increases to Wisdom such as those gained from spells like *owl's wisdom* do not increase the total number of rounds that a trance warrior can go on a vision quest per day. A trance warrior can enter a vision quest as a free action. The total number of rounds of vision quest per day is renewed after ingesting a small amount of peyote, a species of desert cactus, and resting for 8 hours, although these hours do not need to be consecutive.

While on a vision quest, a trance warrior gains uncanny dodge as the rogue's class feature. He gains a +1 insight bonus to AC, attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws and Wisdom-based skill checks. A trance warrior can end his vision quest as a free action and does nothing but babble incoherently for a number of rounds equal to 2 times the number of rounds spent on the vision quest. A trance warrior cannot begin a new vision quest while babbling incoherently but can otherwise vision quest multiple times during a single encounter or combat. If a trance warrior falls unconscious, the vision quest immediately ends.

At 5th level and every 5 levels thereafter, the insight bonus improves by +1 up to a maximum of +5 at 20th level. In addition, the trance warrior also gains the following abilities while on a vision quest. These effects are cumulative.

Instinctive Reaction: At 5th level, a trance warrior gains improved uncanny dodge as the rogue's class feature.

Recognize Illusion: At 10th level, a trance warrior can roll twice for any miss chance or Will saving throws to disbelieve illusions, taking the better result.

Touch Spirits: At 15th level, a trance warrior deals normal damage to incorporeal creatures even when using nonmagical weapons.

Ancestors' Blessing: At 20th level, once per vision quest as a swift action that costs 2 rounds of vision quest, the trance warrior can implore his ancestors to guide his actions. Ancestors' blessing allows him to reroll one d20 roll he has just made. He can call upon ancestor's blessing after seeing the result of the d20 roll. He must use the second die roll even if it is worse.

This ability replaces favored enemy, quarry and improved quarry.

Fast Movement (Ex): At 7th level, a trance warrior's land speed is faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet. This benefit applies only when he is wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor, and not

carrying a heavy load. This bonus stacks with any other bonuses to the trance warrior's land speed. This ability replaces woodland stride.

Rogue Archetypes

Rogues live and move about on society's rough edges. They can be found tucked away in the isolated corner of the coffee house, shrouded in a veil of darkness and mystery, or warily flitting about the shadowy alleys and back streets of a large, desert city. Wherever they go, an air of intrigue and suspicion follows close behind them. Shopkeepers cast a vigilant eye in their direction whenever they suspect a rogue in their midst, and wealthy merchants keep a tight grip on their coin purses, as they make their way through bustling marketplaces and boisterous crowds. They are well aware that a stray glance in a wayward direction or a seemingly impromptu conversation may be the opening a rogue needs to relief that person of his belongings or in some cases — his life. Though many rogues are not engaged in criminal activities, they gained this reputation among many desert citizens because of the actions of the archetypes presented here. The bazaar thief is a cunning master of deception adept at robbing items from market shelves before disappearing into the crowd without a trace. The caravan thief plies his nefarious trade far from the bustling bazaars of the cities and instead preys upon the lucrative caravans moving across the desert's barren wastelands. Masters of their chosen environments, these rogues prove that cunning, deception and guile more than compensate for heavy armor and magical might.

Bazaar Thief

There is an old proverb among many desert people. The only difference between a thief and a merchant is that one gets thrown in prison for robbing someone blind while the other gets paid to do it. Though the average citizen has no tolerance for a burglar breaking into his home and stealing his valuables, that same person wryly grins when a thief makes off with a merchant's prized goods. In his eyes, karma simply righted an injustice. The bazaar thief takes full advantage of the public's perception of their chosen marks. He plies his trade in the bustling bazaars and marketplaces of desert cities and villages. Merchants vigorously pursue thieves pilfering their inventories, but sympathetic shoppers secretly root for the brazen robber to avoid justice and escape with their hard-fought earnings. This sentiment helps the bazaar thief to blend into the crowd unnoticed after pulling off a robbery, but it is not the only tool in his repertoire. Bazaar thieves rely upon quick thinking and the ability to disguise their actions to perpetrate their activities without being noticed. Over time, some grow bored or remorseful with this lifestyle and use their diverse talents for more constructive purposes, such as adventuring.

Rummage the Shelves (Ex): Whenever a bazaar thief uses Sleight of Hand to palm an unattended object or take something from a creature, he gains a bonus on the opposed roll equal to 1/2 his rogue level (minimum +1). This bonus does not apply to attempts to hide a small object on his body or entertain an audience. This ability replaces trapfinding.

Blend in the Crowd (Ex): At 3rd level, the bazaar thief can take 10 on any Stealth check he makes in urban terrain. Once per day at 6th level and one additional time per day every three levels thereafter, the bazaar thief can attempt an Escape Artist check and add the results of that check to any Stealth check he attempts in urban terrain only. This ability replaces trap sense.

Rogue Talents: The following rogue talents complement the bazaar thief archetype: Camouflage*, Deft Palm**, Fast Fingers*, Fast Getaway* and Fast Stealth. Those marked with an asterisk are located in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide* while deft palm is located in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*.

Advanced Rogue Talents: The following advanced rogue talents complement the bazaar thief archetype: Skill Mastery and Weapon Snatcher (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*).

Caravan Thief

Far from the bustling marketplaces and opulent, royal palaces of civilization, the caravan thief makes his living on the dusty plains and rolling dunes of the barren desert. His is an extremely lucrative yet very

DUNES OF DESOLATION

dangerous business, as he attacks and steals from caravans making their way across the sandy landscape. These traveling merchant trains are laden with gold, coins, exotic goods and other wondrous riches from all corners of the world, making them extremely attractive targets for anyone who wants to literally get rich overnight. Yet great reward comes with overwhelming risk. A contingent of well-armed and highly trained soldiers accompanies nearly every caravan traversing the desert's network of highways and roads. They are sometimes complemented by one or more arcane or divine spellcasters. A lone caravan thief stands no chance against such a well protected target; therefore they rarely, if ever, work alone. Instead, they combine forces and create gangs that specialize in robbing mounts and vehicles. Because they must travel great distances, caravan thieves become skilled riders. In addition, they employ guerilla tactics to target a vulnerable part of the wagon train and get away with as much as they can before being driven off by the caravan's protectors. Many caravan thieves meet their tragic end on the desert sands, but the price still seems worth it for those few remarkable individuals who overcome all the obstacles and achieve unparalleled wealth and infamy as the desert's most notorious outlaws.

Caravan Thief: At 1st level, a caravan thief adds Knowledge (geography) and Ride to his list of class skills and removes Perform and Swim from his list of class skills.

Endurance (Ex): At 1st level, a caravan thief becomes accustomed to life in the desert. He gains Endurance as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. This ability replaces trapfinding.

Mounted Archery (Ex): At 2nd level, the caravan thief learns to fire a ranged weapon from atop a mount. He gains Mounted Archery as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. This ability replaces the 2nd-level rogue talent.

Dodge Bullets (Ex): At 3rd level, a caravan thief gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made against him with firearms, bows or crossbows. (If firearms are not used in the campaign, the caravan thief must choose either bows or crossbows. Once he chooses, he cannot change it at a later time.) This bonus increases by +1 for every three levels, to a maximum of +6 at 18th level. This ability replaces trap sense.

Rogue Talents: The following rogue talents complement the caravan thief archetype: Camouflage, Combat Trick, Fast Stealth, Firearm Training*, Grit*, Sniper's Eye and Terrain Mastery*. Those marked with an asterisk are located in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*. Camouflage is located in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.

Advanced Talents: The following advanced rogue talents complement the caravan thief archetype: Hide in Plain Sight (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*) and Stealthy Sniper (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*).

Sorcerer Archetypes

Sorcerers are born with magic coursing through their veins. Whether they are the progeny of powerful outsiders, the spawn of some monstrous being, or the child of the grave, magic is as innate to the sorcerer as breathing is to the common man. The act of casting spells or wielding arcane forces is purely instinctual. Sorcerers do not spend countless hours memorizing words and symbols to tap into their magical powers; instead it flows from their fingertips with the slightest effort. Yet, their affinity for magic is not limitless. Sorcerers draw their arcane power from their connection to a mystical bloodline, which may be celestial, draconic or infernal in origin. The magic derived from this source allows the sorcerer to emulate the abilities of a particular type of creature or mastery of a specific environment, but such mastery comes at the expense of diversity. Sorcerers have a much smaller repertoire of spells to choose from than wizards, and their ability to incorporate new spells into their magical arsenal is extremely rigid. The sorcerers presented here draw their power from their bloodlines. Magi observe and interpret the hidden meanings of celestial events to give him valuable insight about what the future may hold. Meanwhile, the uzza is the offspring of the desert itself, allowing him to claim dominion over the sands and its creatures. In the hands of these chosen sons, magic can undertake wondrous deeds and terrible calamities.

Magi

Men's lives are fleeting and kingdoms collapse over time, but the distant points of light in the night sky are eternal. They watched untold generations of men and women walk across the desert's gravel plains, yet they remain as they have for countless millennia. As witnesses to history's greatest events, the stars guide those able to understand the hidden meaning of their celestial dance across the boundless expanse of deep space. By and large cosmic happenings are subtle and subject to a myriad of interpretations, but on rare occasions, there is no mistaking that the stars foretell a monumental event in the making. Solar and lunar eclipses, comets streaking across the heavens, and in the rarest of instances, the death of a star are telltale signs that the world is about to dramatically change. The magi live for such moments. These omens are the hard-fought culmination of tireless hours of studying and interpreting the movements of the heavens. They believe that an unseen cosmic force entrusted them with the task of deciphering the cryptic messages that the stars convey. Armed with this foresight, magi wield a magical power that allows them to know what is about to unfold before it actually happens. Magi acquire this knowledge through their connection to the Astrology bloodline.

Astrology (Bloodline)

Somewhere in your lineage, an ancestor came into contact with a heavenly body that plummeted from the skies and crashed to the ground. The vaporous trail of cosmic debris and extraterrestrial radiation left its eternal mark on your family causing you to look to the stars for answers. The wisdom of countless ages is evident in your magic.

Class Skill: Knowledge (history).

Bonus Spells: *true strike* (3rd), *augury* (5th), *clairaudience/clairvoyance* (7th), *divination* (9th), *break enchantment* (11th), *true seeing* (13th), *vision* (15th), *moment of prescience* (17th), *foresight* (19th).

Bonus Feats: Arcane Shield, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Extend Spell, Improved Counterspell, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]).

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever you cast a divination spell, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to the spell's level for 1 minute. Temporary hit points gained from multiple castings do not stack.

Bloodline Powers: Your link to celestial events lets you foreshadow and alter the outcome of future events.

Foresee Outcome (Su): At 1st level, you can alter the outcome of an attack roll, saving throw, skill check or ability check. As an immediate action before you attempt the die roll, you select a number other than 1. If you roll that number on the die roll, the die roll is treated as if you rolled a natural 20. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Sixth Sense (Ex): At 3rd level, you gain the uncanny dodge rogue class feature. If you already have uncanny dodge from a different class, you automatically gain improved uncanny dodge instead. At 9th level, you gain the improved uncanny dodge rogue class feature. If you already have uncanny dodge from another class, the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge stack to determine the minimum rogue level required to flank you.

Precognition (Ex): At 9th level, whenever a creature targets you with a ranged attack, as an immediate action you may take a 5-ft. step in any direction before determining the attack's outcome. The attack roll is modified by any bonuses or penalties attributable to your new location, including any cover bonus to AC, and any penalties incurred for firing into melee or at an increased range increment. If the attacker can no longer attack you as a result of your movement, the attacker's action is lost. At 13th level, you gain the evasion rogue class feature. At 17th level, you gain the improved evasion rogue class feature.

Expert Astrologer (Sp): At 15th level, your caster level is increased by 3 when casting divination spells other than those from the scrying subschool. In addition, once per day as a swift action, your anticipation of what is about to happen allows you to act before all others for 1 round, as if you were under the influence of *time stop*.

Portend the Future (Ex): At 20th level, you can see events before they happen. You gain an insight bonus to all saving throws equal to your Charisma modifier. You gain immunity to mind-affecting spells and effects, and you ignore spells and effects that impose penalties to your die rolls or force you to reroll the outcome of any action you undertook.

Uzza

Desert people rank among the hardest and most resolute members of humanity. Few men and women who attempt to stake out an existence in this harsh landscape willingly abandon their quest. Over time, desert dwellers become one with the land, and this bond gets passed down to their descendants. Family is very important in most desert cultures. In fact, many desert inhabitants are the descendants of settlers who first came to the burning sands hundreds and even thousands of years earlier. For the overwhelming majority of these individuals, the link to the land is purely emotional and figurative, but in rare instances, the connection to the desert is literal. Even from an early age, the hot temperatures, swirling currents of blowing sand and dry landscape pose more of a nuisance than a threat to those with a magical affinity for this unforgiving environment. Known as uzzas, over time these sorcerers gain mastery of their chosen domain, allowing them to manipulate the desert's natural forces in accordance with their whims and desires. Those that challenge an uzza in his domain soon realize that they do battle not just with the sorcerer, but with the very land itself. Uzzas gain their power from their affiliation with the Desert bloodline.

Desert (Bloodline)

Over the centuries, a distant ancestor forged a bond with the desert itself. He may have solved the riddle of a sphinx, discovered a lost city beneath the dunes or succumbed to natural forces in the desert. You are one with the sands, and your magic reflects your desert heritage.

Class Skill: Survival.

Bonus Spells: *endure elements* (3rd), *gust of wind* (5th), *daylight* (7th), *secure shelter* (9th), *blight* (11th), *move earth* (13th), *control weather* (15th), *sunburst* (17th), *imprisonment* (19th).

Bonus Feats: Acrobatic Steps, Alertness, Craft Staff, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Nimble Moves, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness.

Bloodline Arcana: Whenever you and the target of your spell are both in desert terrain, increase the spell's save DC by +1.

Bloodline Powers: Your bond with the desert allows you to brave the elements and make the land itself conform to your will.

Fist of Sand (Sp): At 1st level, as a standard action, you can create a fist-shaped block of sand that strikes a single creature within 30 feet, functioning as a bull rush maneuver using your sorcerer level plus your Charisma modifier in place of your CMB. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Desert Sojourner (Ex): At 3rd level, you gain resist fire 5 and can move across dusty, gravelly and sandy surfaces without penalties and without leaving tracks. At 9th level, you gain resist fire 10 and notice naturally occurring desert hazards, like mirages and quicksand, as if you took 20 on your Perception check, even if you were not actively looking for them.

Dust Devil (Su): At 9th level, you ignore the effects of wind conditions less than hurricane force. You take no damage from dust storms and sandstorms. In addition, you can surround yourself with a swirling vortex of blowing dust, gravel and sand for a number of rounds per day equal to your sorcerer level. It grants you concealment (attacks made against you have a 20% miss chance). Creatures ending their turn adjacent to you take 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage from the granular particles whirling around you and must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your sorcerer level + your Charisma modifier) to avoid being blinded for 1d4 rounds from the swirling sand. You can use this ability once per day at 9th level, twice per day at 17th, and three times per day at 20th.

Dune Bore (Ex): At 15th level, you can tunnel through sand, loose soil or gravel with a burrow speed equal to half your normal speed. You cannot pass through stone. You do not leave a tunnel or trace of your passage. While burrowing beneath the surface, you must either hold your breath or use an alternate means of breathing to avoid suffocation. You can use this ability for 1 minute per sorcerer level each day. The duration is not required to be continuous, but it must be used in 1-minute increments.

Offspring of the Sands (Ex): At 20th level, you become immune to fire, fatigue and exhaustion. Grains of sand protrude through your skin, granting you DR 10/bludgeoning. While in the desert, you gain evasion.

Wizard Archetypes

Wizards are the consummate students of magic, spending countless hours thumbing through dusty, old tomes and ruminating the meaning of cryptic, mystical runes. Wizards are not born with an innate affinity for magic, so they must compensate for the lack of natural talent in other ways. They do so by developing a keen intellect and flawless memory. Devoted study and endless repetition are the tools wizards use to unlock magic's deepest mysteries. If one trait is universal among all wizards, it is their insatiable thirst for knowledge. Curiosity is a powerful force that spurs innovation and discovery. In their sharp minds, the next dog-eared page of every book may unravel an arcane secret capable of changing the world forever. Fueled by their lust for learning, wizards constantly explore new areas of magic and create unique items to guide them along the way. The ankh guardian is a studious wizard intrigued by the dichotomy of life and death and its application to magic. The vizier uses his magic to influence enemies and allies alike as well as advise his sovereign on important matters. Regardless of how they go about their studies, these wizards excel in their chosen specialties.

Ankh Guardian

The ankh, a cross with a handle, is a symbol revered in many desert societies, though its exact meaning varies from one culture to the next. Typically crafted from gold and inlaid with precious stones, the most universally accepted and common interpretation among scholars is that it originally represented life. Its intended purpose has faded from memory, leaving perception only in its wake. For most, the ankh now stands for knowledge and power. It is the instrument by which kings rule their subjects, priests revere their gods and wizards channel their magic. In the hands of royalty and clerics, it may serve as a symbol of earthly dominion or holiness, but when wielded by a wizard, it is a potent implement of mystical strength and lordship over the realms of the living or the dead. Those that form an arcane bond with an ankh are known as ankh guardians. Unlike the conventional arcane bond, the wizard's mystical link to this cryptic symbol infuses him with raw energy unimaginable to others of their kind. The ankh's exact meaning may remain a well-kept secret, but it is obvious that the strange symbol confers potent abilities to any wizard that chooses to bond with it.

Ankh Bond (Sp): At 1st level, an ankh guardian must form an arcane bond with an ankh. The ankh functions as a holy symbol for a good wizard or a neutral wizard who wants to channel positive energy. The ankh functions as an unholy symbol for an evil wizard or a neutral wizard who wants to channel negative energy. In all other respects, this ability is identical to arcane bond.

Ankh Mastery (Su): At 1st level, an ankh guardian can channel positive or negative energy like a cleric, using his wizard level as his effective cleric level when determining the amount of damage healed (or caused to living creatures or undead) and the DC. An ankh guardian who channels positive energy must choose to use his channel ability to either heal living creatures or deal damage to undead, but he cannot do both. Likewise, an ankh guardian who channels negative energy must choose to use his channel ability to either heal undead or deal damage to living creatures, but he cannot do both. Once the choice is made it cannot be reversed. The ankh guardian can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + his Intelligence modifier. This ability replaces Scribe Scroll and the wizard's 5th-level bonus feat.

Ankh School: The mysteries of life and death consume the ankh guardian to the detriment of most other pursuits. At 1st level, the ankh guardian forsakes three schools of magic. These opposition schools are chosen at 1st level and cannot be changed later. An ankh guardian who prepares spells from his opposition school must use two spell slots of that level to prepare the spell. In addition, the ankh guardian takes a -4 penalty on any skill checks made when crafting a magic item that has a spell from one of his opposition schools. This ability replaces arcane school.

Vizier

No desert monarch rules his kingdom alone. Behind the scenes, a retinue of men and women oversee the government's day-to-day

DUNES OF DESOLATION

functions. Fearless warriors defend the royal family from harm, astute treasurers attend to the realm's fiscal responsibilities, and capable administrators carry out and enforce the laws and policies established by the king or queen. Though these individuals perform vital tasks, no government official wields more power within the royal court than the vizier. These trusted confidantes and advisors provide valuable input about every important political and economic decision that the monarch must make. Other than members of the immediate royal family, the vizier has more direct and unfettered access to his sovereign lord than anyone else in the royal court. Offering advice is just one facet of the vizier's role. He may also travel to foreign lands on diplomatic missions or root out traitors and corrupt officials within the royal court itself. Viziers rely upon their enchantment magic to gain allies and force enemies to submit to his will. Combined with their sharp intellect, the vizier is aware of every event transpiring within the kingdom. Though not required, nearly all viziers specialize in the Rulership focused arcane school of magic (See the "Focused Arcane Schools" section in Chapter 2 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide* for details regarding arcane schools of magic).

Rulership School

The rulership wizard uses his magical powers to win allies to his cause, to bend enemies to his will and discover traitors in his midst.

Associated School: Enchantment.

Replacement Powers: The following school powers replace the aura of despair, dazing touch and enchanting smile powers of the enchantment school.

Politician (Ex): You gain a +2 enhancement bonus on Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility) and Sense Motive skill checks. This bonus increases by +1 at 5th level and every five levels thereafter, up to a maximum of +6 at 20th level. At 20th level, whenever you succeed at a saving throw against a spell of the illusion school, as an immediate action you can dispel the illusion by succeeding on a dispel check, as if you cast a targeted *dispel magic* spell against it.

Genuflect (Sp): You can cause a creature to fall prone to the ground and remain prone for 1 round with a successful melee touch. It may act normally while prone but takes any appropriate penalties. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier.

Demand Fealty (Sp): At 8th level, you can compel others to obey your orders. As a standard action, you attempt to command a creature as though using *greater command* spell, except that the creature must have a number of Hit Dice equal to or less than your wizard level. The targeted creature receives a Will saving throw each round to negate the effect. The DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 your wizard level + your Intelligence modifier. You can command creatures for a number of rounds per day equal to your wizard level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. You must concentrate as a standard action to continue commanding the targeted creature. If you give the creature a different command than the previous round, the effect immediately ends.

Faiths of the Desert

Desert inhabitants are a hardy breed of people. They display a measure of resolve and ingenuity missing in many residents from more temperate climates. For them, the struggle to survive is a daily endeavor. The blistering temperatures and scarcity of life's bare necessities conspire against the hard-working souls determined to eke out an existence in this unrelenting environment. Constant toil is an inevitable fact of life in the desert, as the harsh elements grant no respite to the weary. For these reasons, the desert dweller has a much different and in many respects, a much simpler outlook on life and faith than the men and women who inhabit the forests and farms. He is single-mindedly focused on making the most out of his limited resources, and time is one of his most precious assets. In his mind, spending countless hours venerating a pantheon of deities holding dominion over every minutest aspect of life seems like a colossal waste of energy in comparison to showing pious, unwavering devotion to one god who created and oversees the entire world. For him efficiency ensures existence. Granting absolute power to one divine entity makes far more sense than divvying authority up between numerous beings constantly undermining and competing against each other.

Accordingly, desert peoples worship far less deities than their temperate-dwelling kin, but fewer gods does not translate to fewer viewpoints. Schisms are common among desert religions. In fact, one deity can give rise to a dozen sects that hold radically different beliefs than their brethren even though they all pay homage to the same being. The self-sufficiency and determination that gives people the will to survive also fuels stubbornness and parochialism. One group may place far more emphasis on a small facet of spiritual dogma than another. For this reason, rivalries within a particular faith can be more heated than those between members of opposing deities. Familiarity breeds contempt and when fueled by man's most sacred and cherished beliefs, the combination may prove incredibly volatile. With these principles in mind, presented below is a religion that is well-suited for desert campaigns.

Mah-Barek, The Wellspring of the Desert

Thirty centuries ago, Mah-Barek, the Wellspring of the Desert, walked the earth for thirty days and thirty nights with four mortal companions — Fatimashan, Hafaz, Koua and Marwan. At first, the quartet did not recognize Mah-Barek's divinity, but as his teachings touched their hearts and resonated in their souls, they began to realize that they walked in the company of a god. From that moment on, his mere presence mesmerized them, and they hung on his every word and deed. When Mah-Barek departed from their company and walked back across the distant sea, the four friends committed to spreading his message throughout the desert. At first, they traveled together and worked cooperatively. As the faith spread, the demands of their mission required them to part ways and venture out on their own. Separated by time and distance, their unified voice became four separate voices. Though each heard the same words and witnessed the same deeds, their memories and interpretations of these events evolved as the years went by. In addition to advancing differing meanings of Mah-Barek's messages and actions, they also debated the most appropriate way to worship him. When they died — not coincidentally, thirty years after their encounter with Mah-Barek — the faith splintered into four unique churches aligned with the viewpoints and belief systems of the religion's four founders — Fatimashan, Hafaz, Koua and Marwan. Not surprisingly, those churches diverged even further as successor clerics, priests, scholars and thinkers added their own insights to each church's core principles. At last count, Mah-Barek's faith includes four distinct churches with as many as two dozen sects devoted to the tenets of later followers. Yet every sect of Mah-Barak accepts how the desert — and all life for that matter — began.

The Desert's Birth

Long before Mah-Barek took his first steps with his companions, Ellashah, the Great Creator, made the world, the moon, the sun and the stars from his very essence. Ellashah formed the binding elements that held all things together — air, earth, fire and water — and gave these inanimate forces dominion over the whole of creation. For untold millennia, Ellashah marveled at the wonder of his handiwork, yet the passage of time even weighs on the omniscient mind of a bored deity. Though he admired and reveled in the beauty of the heavens and the earth, something was missing. Ellashah pondered the dilemma until the solution struck him like a divine thunderbolt. He realized that he was alone. There was no denying that the sun and the stars existed, but they were incapable of sharing in his delight. They were nothing but lifeless masses of matter and energy, while he was a living being blessed with higher thought and noble purpose. Ellashah desired others to converse with and to share with, yet he expended nearly all of his essence on this grand creation. He had only enough essence left to bring one being to life, so he imbued his progeny with the ability to create others. From his last reserve of essence Ellashah brought Rema, the mother of life, into the world. And after many eons of loneliness Ellashah experienced joy once again.

For the next ten thousand years, Ellashah delighted in showing her his wondrous marvels, and she cherished every moment of it. Yet over time, the sheer magnitude of Ellashah's creations overwhelmed her. She knew what Ellashah expected of her, and she realized that she could never duplicate his monumental effort. Though they were now equals in all respects, Rema's godly might fell far short of Ellashah's at the beginning of time. It would be impossible for her to singlehandedly give life to thousands of unique, individual creatures in perpetuity. She knew such beings would eventually die, and in time life would again disappear from the world. The solution eluded her until she turned her gaze inward. There she found love, the emotion she felt towards the only counterpart she ever knew. If her creations experienced the same feeling, it would be strong enough to join them together for the purpose of creating others of their kind. Populations would not only remain constant; they would substantially increase from generation to generation. Rema presented her idea to Ellashah, and he gave his blessing to her master design.

So it came to pass that Rema breathed life into trees, plants, fishes of the seas and animals of the land. Ellashah marveled at her diverse creations, yet like Ellashah countless centuries earlier, she too felt the pangs of ennui. For all of their beauty and abilities, none of her creations could converse with her, laugh with her or cry with her. Unlike the stars and the moon, life coursed through them, but something was still missing. She longed to be loved by others, as she loved Ellashah, so Rema formed man and woman from her last remaining spare essence, and the sight greatly pleased her. She and Ellashah watched with tremendous joy as generation after generation of men and women populated the land until the fateful day when the world shed its first tear.

Abbashar, son of Alathar and Abbelei, changed the course of history forever. He was the brightest, most handsome and most ambitious man yet to walk the earth. While others graciously accepted and cherished Rema's precious gifts of food, water and life, Abbashar desired more. He yearned to be a god just like Ellashah and Rema. Though he recognized that he was mortal and not divine, he came to realize that he too could wield the power of life and death over others of his kind. He pondered these thoughts while walking through the forest. There he came upon an alluring woman with luxurious flowing hair and loving eyes sitting beneath a tree. At that moment, he vowed that she would be his. Abbashar approached her and boldly proclaimed his undying love for her even though he never set eyes upon her before. The woman, Pandora, graciously listened to his overtures, but politely declined, telling Abbashar that her heart belonged to another whom she was waiting to meet. Abbashar feigned acceptance and

DUNES OF DESOLATION

apologized for the intrusion. He crept back into the wilderness, while these conflicting emotions raced through his troubled mind. For the first time in his life, envy, lust and wrath surged through him. As he grappled with these feelings, he spied Pandora's lover traipsing towards his rendezvous with Pandora. Abbashar angrily strode towards the man to confront him until he saw that Pandora's lover was his own brother, Althazar. Startled but undeterred, Abbashar demanded that Althazar abandon Pandora and leave the forest immediately. Althazar loved Pandora too much to accept his brother's demands so he refused and tried to brush past him. Seeing that Althazar would not relent, Abbashar blocked the path and struck Althazar in the head with his fist knocking him to the ground. For the first time in his life, Althazar felt fear as he looked into the enraged eyes of his lustful brother. He watched in stunned horror as his brother Abbashar lifted a large stone and hurled it downward at Althazar's head. A moment later, Abbashar watched in wonderment as life ebbed out of Althazar's battered body. Abbashar committed the unthinkable. Like divinity, he wielded the ultimate power to mete out death. A few hours later, when Althazar did not appear for his tryst with Pandora, Abbashar feigned ignorance of Althazar's whereabouts and claimed Pandora for his own.

Rema, the mother of life, peered down from the heavens and looked away in shame at the revolting sight. Man succeeded in perverting her greatest creation — love — into lust. Fueled by burning desire, man also learned to wield the power of death in furtherance of his ambitions. Sin crept into the bloodline of men, and it soon spread across the world like a raging inferno infecting every living thing from the most majestic animal to the tiniest organism. Murder became rampant, and Rema could no longer bear to watch her beloved creations destroy one another. She blamed Abbashar for introducing evil into the world, so she swept down from the heavens and hurled him along with herself into a smoldering volcano so as to rid both of them from the world. Stunned by her actions, Ellashah plunged into the volcano hoping to stop her, but he was too late. He watched in abject horror as the intense heat and Rema's broken heart tore her divine essence asunder causing a violent explosion that covered much of the world in fire, dust and ash. Without Rema, Ellashah could not bear eternity alone, so he willed his own destruction. As their divine essence departed from the world, ash, dust, gravel and sand spewed from the earth and fell from the heavens for thirty days and thirty nights turning the lush, green forests into barren deserts. Even the sun displayed its anger with man. It scorched the land with blistering heat leaving it a desolate wasteland. Divine magic abandoned the world of men. And in this way Ellashah and Rema left the desert as their lasting legacy.

Rise of the Genies

In the aftermath of the great calamity, a vast desert covered the world, but Ellashah's self-immolation inadvertently birthed the world's eventual salvation to life. As his divine essence fled his dying body, the four elements that he gave dominion over so long ago — air, earth, fire and water — came to life as the immortal genies. Though they were born of pure divinity, Abbashar's corrupting taint proved just as strong as godliness. As fire consumed his earthly remains, Abbashar's wicked spirit latched onto the flames and filled the souls of the efreeti, the fire genies born of the great conflagration. Despite their differences, the efreeti and their genie-kin, the djinni (air genies), marids (water genies), shaitans (earth genies) and the janni (a combination of the four elements) worked together to awaken the world from its long slumber.

Their task was beyond taunting. The wake of devastation left a world that was vastly different than the one before Rema and Ellashah's destruction. The god and goddess who created the world and breathed life into it were now gone. The cataclysm left the few, surviving men, beasts and plants scattered and defeated. Sand and dust stood where mighty rivers once flowed. Endless plains of corrosive salt covered the ground where great lakes once collected. Even the vast oceans retreated into miniscule, stagnant pools. Life depended on water, and without it, the world was doomed. So the marids tapped into their magic to bring water to the pockets of survivors, as the other genies restored the natural order as best they could. Over the span of countless generations, life ebbed back into the world, and the forests, plains, rivers, lakes and oceans reclaimed a portion of what was lost. The genies succeeded in resurrecting a dying

world, but triumph is frequently short-lived. Envy, greed and ambition festered among the genies, just as it had corrupted the race of men eons earlier. The fractious alliance fell apart, and the genies indulged their previously dormant, capricious nature. They fought among themselves and against the creatures they saved from certain destruction. War loomed on the horizon, as each faction of genies, men and beasts marshaled their forces, drawing strange creatures and monsters from nearly every plane of existence into the conflict. Destruction seemed inevitable until four friends began a desert journey that changed the world forever.

Manifestation of Mah-Barek

Panic spread through every community, as vast armies massed along imaginary borders to face off against each other in a final showdown. In the small village of Baslacta near the war's frontline, four friends since childhood — Fatimashan, Hafaz, Koua and Marwan — set off into the trackless desert to flee the upcoming battle. On the first night of the journey, they stopped at a well-frequented oasis several miles away from their village. There, they encountered a mysterious traveler, who concealed his face and body beneath a heavy, woolen cloak. In a foreign accent, the stranger asked the quartet if he could accompany them on their journey across the desert. The request caught them off guard for they were inherently leery of strangers. After a few moments of suspicious glances and whispered debate, they inexplicably agreed and the group resumed their trek across the burning dunes along with their new friend. That first night, they never saw his face, but his placid demeanor put their worried minds at ease.

The following evening the Traveler thanked the four friends for their generosity before sitting down to share a meal with his newfound companions. They watched in amazement while the mysterious Traveler drew the cloak away from his face. As his countenance came into view, pale, white light danced on his face, basking it in a luminescent glow. A reassuring smile spread across his lips, though the four friends were not sure whether they were looking upon the face of the most handsome man or most beautiful woman they had ever seen. Sensing their curiosity, the Traveler cryptically told them that they were correct in their all assumptions. That night, they fell asleep beneath the stars and pondered the hidden meaning of the Traveler's arcane response.

The next morning, they awoke to find the Traveler patiently waiting for them. They timidly greeted the Stranger who responded only with a warm smile before they set out again across the swirling sands. With each step the four friends contemplated a rational explanation for the strange events from the preceding night, but a reasonable explanation eluded them at every turn. Midday approached, and the sun shone at its highest point. Out in the distance, they saw an immense cloud of swirling sand and dust gathering ahead of them. A few moments later, the ferocious howling pierced their ears. Fear gripped them as a monstrous sandstorm barreled towards them at breakneck speed. They hurriedly secured their provisions and sought shelter from the oncoming storm, yet the Traveler displayed resolute calm. Though they implored him to take precautions, he politely nodded and continued on his way. The four friends watched in nervous anticipation as the sandstorm bore down on him and drew closer, but the Traveler's assured gait never wavered for even a step. They begged him to turn around, yet the Traveler ignored their pleas and persisted. An instant later, he disappeared into the teeth of the raging winds and stinging sands. Dreading the worst, they looked away in despair. They were next. The maelstrom of angry air, biting sand and flying debris marched towards them with callous intent. Though the gods were long dead, they desperately whispered silent prayers to any benevolent force that might hear their cries for help and salvation. The first gust of wind then rushed across their trembling faces. They braced for the impending onslaught and then — nothing.

"The calm before the storm," they initially thought to themselves. A few more seconds passed and still no wind, no sand and no sound. An eerie silence fell over the desert. The next sensation that Fatimashan felt was a gentle hand caressing her face. She opened her eyes, and the Traveler stood before her. Her lips quivered as she stammered for something to say, but her tongue failed her.

"Because you believed," the Traveler answered in response to her

unspoken question.

The four friends fell to their knees as the Traveler removed his cloak from his face. This time they saw a radiant, shining white light contoured into the shape of an idealized human face.

"I am Mah-Barek," the Traveler continued, "And on this day, the faith of four friends redeemed a world that one man's sins nearly destroyed." Mah-Barek stretched out his hand and beckoned them to follow him. "Come with me my friends. The time has come to lead you to a new world."

Over the next twenty-eight days and nights, Mah-Barek imparted his divine revelations to his four awestruck companions. They walked across the desert in a trancelike state, spellbound by Mah-Barek's every word and deed. While the world they left behind reveled in the wanton carnage of war, blissful serenity accompanied them on every step of their journey. On the final night of their pilgrimage, they reached the placid shores of a distant sea. Mah-Barek looked across the sea and then at his friends again. He smiled one last time, as he gazed deeply into their eyes and unlocked the mysteries of their souls.

"The world we left behind smolders with spent anger and rage," Mah-Barek told them. "You must set it ablaze again, but this time you must kindle the flames with the radiant light of hope. My essence burns within each of you. Speak, and I shall hear. Pray, and I shall listen. Believe, and I am your servant." And with those words, Mah-Barek stepped onto the water and walked across the sea until he departed from their sight.

After spending thirty days and thirty nights in Mah-Barek's divine presence, they returned to their homeland determined to change it for the better. Though the genies had scorched the earth with fire, deluged the land with water, caused the ground to tremble and lashed the world with ferocious winds, the former combatants fell to their collective knees before the might of four ordinary people blessed with unwavering faith, inspiring words, miraculous deeds and torrents of hope. In this way, Mah-Barek conquered the world without even lifting a sword.

<2>Foundations of Faith

The four disciples conveyed a simple and consistent message — Mah-Barek brought divinity back to a godless world. They demonstrated this fundamental principle by performing divine magic unseen since Ellashah's and Rema's demise and the genies' arrival. Humbled by their remarkable deeds and inspiring words, the religion spread through the war-torn men, monsters and even many genies like seeds buffeted by a brisk wind. Eager listeners flocked to them in every battle-scarred village, town and city that they visited. Over the first five years of their mission, they remained together, preaching with one singular voice to the ravenous masses yearning for hope. Willing converts journeyed from distant lands to set eyes upon the four mortals chosen to hear a god's message. All accounts agree that 10,000 souls accepted Mah-Barek as their deity during those early years, but many thousands more awaited his calling in far-off nations and cities. One fateful evening after four hours of prayer, the four disciples agreed to part ways and carry Mah-Barek's teachings to the four corners of the world. As time and distance separated them, the religion underwent steady yet noticeable changes. Previously shared recollections of events, deeds and words changed and took on new meanings as their personal beliefs and outside influences shaped their individual messages. On the rare occasions when two or more of them did meet, disagreements over religious doctrine surged to the forefront. The initial points of contention were relatively minor, yet two decades after their separation the differences became too great to reconcile. Within a few years after their deaths, Mah-Barek's unified faith split into four churches.

Though they evolved into unique entities with divergent beliefs, the faith's universal doctrines remained intact, albeit subject to differing interpretations of their true meaning. After Mah-Barek spared his four companions from the raging sandstorm, he taught them that faith can be built on a strong foundation only. A true follower must make the final leap of faith, but he must stand on sturdy ground before leaving his feet. In accordance with these principles he imparted five primary doctrines that form the basis for his religion. Mah-Barek's worshippers call them the Foundations of Faith.

Every worshipper of Mah-Barek, regardless of their church or language, can recite these five tenets verbatim. In fact, these are the first words many children learn to speak. The words are the same, yet the interpretations and emphasis vary among the churches. For instance, adherents of

Foundations of Faith

I am Mah-Barek, the Wellspring of the Desert, the oasis nourished by the Father's blood and the Mother's tears. All divinity flows from me.

When you give yourself to Mah-Barek, impossibility ceases.

Belief is food for the body and energy for the spirit.

Flesh and bone are sacred. When blood is split, I bring peace.

What is mine is yours, and what is yours belongs to all.

Fatimashan's church and Koua's church interpret the phrase "when blood is spilt, I bring peace" in dissimilar manners. Fatimashan's followers believe it means that Mah-Barek reconciles enemies and comforts the injured, while some elements in Koua's church contend that spilling blood in Mah-Barek's name offers the only path to peace. As the churches' beliefs and dogmas moved in different directions, their administrative hierarchy and traditions followed suit in accordance with the clergy's and membership's wishes. Within two generations of the founders' deaths, the four churches were more akin to unique religions than institutions that revered the same deity.

Four Churches, One God

Over the past three millennia, the four churches' dissimilarities only increased as each church branched off into divergent sects. During the religion's early days, conflicts between members of rival groups were heated and passionate, yet remained largely nonviolent. As tensions escalated between the churches, ambitious voices spewing fiery rhetoric saw an opportunity to increase their political and spiritual influence within the church's hierarchy. They fanned the flames of religious zealotry with hateful speeches and dubious promises of divine favor to anyone who followed their orders. Armed battles grew more frequent and deadlier, as their misguided adherents attacked anyone who did not share their beliefs. These battles raged for several hundred years until the mainstream elements within each church stamped out the radical ideologies within their clergy. Though weakened, a handful of firebrand preachers still wield tremendous influence among fringe elements within each church and still harbor bold plans to usurp their church's traditional beliefs and replace them with their heretical viewpoints. For now, they are content to wait and watch for any signs of weakness.

This section contains an overview of each church describing its core beliefs, history, clergy, worshippers, places of worship, holy texts and important sects that branched off from the main church. All the churches worship the same deity, yet each church's clerics gain access to a different set of domains. This also holds true for some of the variant sects found within each church.

Church of Fatimashan, "The Righteous," "The Blessed"

More than sixty percent of Mah-Barek's followers belong to the Church of Fatimashan, making it the largest of the four denominations by an extremely wide margin. Nonbelievers generally presume that Fatimashan's church represents the mainstream worship of Mah-Barek, giving it the added distinction of being the most widely recognized of the four churches. In many respects, the Church of Fatimashan most closely resembles the core tenets and beliefs of Mah-Barek's unified church before its schism 3,000 years ago. For that reason, many members refer to their church as Mah-Barek's true faith.

Church of Fatimashan

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Charity, Glory, Good, Repose, Sun

Symbol: An illuminated page of verse

Typical Worshipers: Charitable humans, some humanoids; only females are clerics

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

Core Beliefs

Mah-Barek returned to the company of men to restore love and hope to a forlorn and desperate world. All benevolence flows from him. His path leads to goodness and righteousness for all that follow in his footsteps. Devout faith in Mah-Barek can overcome any obstacle, and sincere prayer provides the solution to all of life's dilemmas. The body is a sacred temple that must be revered and kept pure, even after death. Mah-Barek, the peacemaker, abhors war and violence. Charity is the greatest virtue for no man claims sole dominion over earthly possessions, and Mah-Barek shares his worldly treasures with even the least of his beloved children.

History

Fatimashan was only fourteen years old when she set foot in the desert, making her the youngest and perhaps the most innocent and vibrant of the four companions. Contemporary accounts describe her as a precocious teenager with a vivacious personality and boundless energy, yet she also exhibited a serious nature when confronted by questions of faith and matters of the heart. For such a charismatic figure, her physical appearance is widely accepted to be ordinary and even unflattering, especially when depicted by her rivals. When the time came for the four companions to go their separate ways, fate took Fatimashan north where she encountered the grandest and most populous desert kingdoms. On her travels, the twenty-one year old Fatimashan met and fell in love with Abdul Nasrahi, a talented, idealistic poet with a modest following. They married shortly afterward, and the union produced three daughters. The family traveled together using Fatimashan's firsthand accounts and Abdul's religious poetry to spread Mah-Barek's message throughout the lands. Thanks to their collective efforts, Fatimashan, her husband and eventually their children rapidly expanded the faith and easily recruited more new converts than her three fellow companions combined. Though luck played some factor in her church's rapid expansion, her conviction, faith and sincerity played much more of the determining factors in her widespread success.

As the decades passed and the schisms widened, Fatimashan never wavered from her belief that the four friends would eventually resolve their differences and restore unity to Mah-Barek's faith. Despite her tireless efforts, her dying wish never came true, and it fell to her three daughters, Hatsetshup, Parveza, and Zahrahan to determine her church's ongoing legacy. The two older children, Hatsetshup and Parveza closely adhered to their mother's tenets and beliefs, but Zahrahan's views deviated from her sisters' in a few important respects. She believed that Mah-Barek personally appointed her mother as the supreme leader of his faith. Zahrahan's increasingly intolerant doctrines brought her followers into conflict with her three rival churches and her two sisters, who desperately wanted to avoid a bloody internal struggle. In a masterful diplomatic and political coup, Parveza and Hatsetshup convinced Zahrahan to venture to a distant shrine and beseech Mah-Barek to reveal a recognizable sign proving that her convictions were true. If he did, they would accept her beliefs and promulgate them as the church's official dogma. Once there, Parveza and Hatsetshup placed Zahrahan under house arrest, though at their father's urging they made certain that no harm would ever to Zahrahan at the hands of her captors. She lived there until she died twenty-four years later, still waiting for the divine revelation that never came. The two sisters succeeded in thwarting a major religious crisis. In time, the vast majority of her followers returned to the conventional flock, yet there are still a few pockets of Zahrahanites, (the name given to her followers), remaining to this very day.

Parveza and Hatsetshup were the last true leaders of Fatimashan's church. Fatimashan's direct descendents still hold a revered position of authority within the hierarchy, yet there is no clearly defined religious figure occupying a leadership role. Through the passing centuries, the Church of Fatimashan made overtures to their fellow churches seeking reunification, but none ever moved past the preliminary discussion stages. Though reconciliation remains one of the church's core doctrines, no one within the church believes it is a realistic possibility.

Relationships

Conventional wisdom would suggest that Fatimashan's followers and Koua's followers would have the most acrimonious relationship, yet that conclusion does not ring true. Though Fatimashan's clergy disapprove of their murderous deeds and vile words, they are quick to forgive them of their transgressions and welcome them back to Mah-Barek's loving arms. Fatimashan's followers take greater umbrage with the Church of Hafaz's elitist attitudes and policies of exclusion. It is a greater sin to claim that Mah-Barek speaks to a chosen few only than to convey a misinterpreted message of his doctrines. In their view, it is better to know Mah-Barek in any form than to never know him at all. The Church of Fatimashan enjoys a cordial and outwardly friendly relationship with Marwan's adherents. In fact, many of Fatimashan's followers secretly applaud the Church of Marwan's public displays of celebratory worship, though they still disagree with some of their religious doctrines. On occasion, Fatimashan's clerics join forces with Marwan's to combat the direst threats to their faith. After eliminating the common enemy, old grudges resurface immediately afterward and fracture the tenuous alliance.

Clerics and Worshipers

Fatimashan's clerics are exclusively female, though there are no racial prohibitions. To become a cleric of Fatimashan, the acolyte must spend thirty days and thirty nights traveling with three fellow acolytes through the desert, preferably following the same path Fatimashan traveled thirty centuries earlier. The Fatimashite, the Church's titular supreme authority and a direct descendent of Fatimashan herself, performs a welcoming ceremony that officially installs the successful candidate as one of the Church's clergy. Once initiated into the order, clerics take a vow of poverty prohibiting them from owning anything in excess of what they can carry on their person. Adventuring gear, including armor, weapons and magic items is permitted as long as those items are used in the furtherance of the faith. Otherwise, traveling clerics never wear more than a simple cloak and carry a quarterstaff only. They are prohibited from adorning their bodies with tattoos, piercings and even jewelry for flesh and bone are deemed sacred. Likewise Fatimashan's clerics wash the bodies of the deceased before anointing them with holy oils and then mummifying them for eternal preservation.

In keeping with their vow of poverty, Fatimashan's clerics are primarily tasked with operating and overseeing charitable institutions. Clerics live on the premises, sharing their personal quarters with members of their immediate family. In many cases, the clerics' husbands and children volunteer their services at that institution. In addition to providing much needed assistance, the experience encourages many young girls to follow in their mothers' footsteps and also become clerics. These organizations function as autonomous entities that employ as many as 100 clerics in the case of a large hospital or orphanage in a major city. Clerics are assigned duties based upon their skills and abilities. Some tend to the injured or supervise young children, while others perform administrative functions like bookkeeping or managing other clerics. Every year, the church's clergy elects one of its own to head the institution as its supreme authority. Known as a prelate, she is responsible for handling all church matters including making personnel decisions, meeting financial obligations and disciplining subordinate clerics that violate the church's rules or traditions. The prelate refers severe transgressions, such as stealing donations, violent crimes and blasphemy, to the Church's Fatimashite who is the only person that can defrock one of her priestesses.

Clerics belonging to the Church of Fatimashan gain access to the

Charity, Glory, Good, Repose and Sun domains. The quarterstaff is the favored weapon. As a tribute to Abdul's influence within the church, an illuminated page containing one of his verses serves as the church's symbol.

Charity Domain

Granted Power: You place the needs of others above your own. Whenever you use an aid another action to assist one of your allies, the ally receives a +3 bonus to his AC, attack rolls, saving throw or skill check.

Helpful (Ex): You can aid another as a free action. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

Last Second Aid (Sp): At 6th level, you can cast *aid* as a swift action. You can use this ability once per day at 6th level, and an additional time per day for every six levels thereafter.

Domain Spells: 1st—*shield of faith*, 2nd—*shield other*, 3rd—*helping hand*, 4th—*imbue with spell ability*, 5th—*breath of life*, 6th—*heroes' feast*, 7th—*resurrection*, 8th—*holy aura*, 9th—*miracle*.

Worshippers adhering to the tenets of Fatimashan's church are an eclectic lot with representation from a broad spectrum of races, classes and professions. Paladins of the mah-baresh order are exclusively found among their ranks. Every day, worshippers are required to pray for at least thirty minutes during the midday hours, and they must perform a charitable act which may include giving one's possessions or time to another. Unlike the clergy, worshippers are not required to take a vow of poverty, but the Church actively discourages its members from publicly flaunting their wealth. Communal prayers are conducted on the last day of the week, though they are usually sparsely attended. Instead, many believers commemorate the day by abstaining from sleeping, eating, drinking or bathing during the daylight hours to reflect upon Mah-Barek's blessings. Many worshippers also follow a time-honored tradition to invite strangers to their homes for a celebratory feast that begins after sunset. There is no greater insult in many desert communities than to decline a seat at another's table, even if the guest is not a fellow church member.

Temples and Shrines

The Church of Fatimashan has no temples in the traditional sense. Instead, believers meet and gather together in communal areas at charitable institutions administered by its clerics. These include hospitals, orphanages, geriatric homes, soup kitchens and other places where the Church gives aid and assistance without compensation. Worshippers are expected to make a donation whenever they visit these locales. The meeting area typically consists of an unadorned room furnished with enough tables and chairs to meet the congregation's needs. All are welcome to attend daily services, including members of other churches, though they sometimes refuse admittance to anyone flaunting their wealth. Places of worship are found in every desert city, town or village.

The Church requires its dead members to be mummified. The preserved remains are then interred in necropolises or catacombs which function as shrines for the faithful. These vast complexes include common burial areas, family vaults and individual chambers that are typically reserved for important religious, political and professional figures. On the first anniversary of a loved one's death, the decedent's family traditionally visits the person's final resting place for thirty minutes and then makes a donation to their respective place of worship in any amount divisible by thirty. A similar tradition applies to the first time that the deceased misses an important event, such as the birth of a child, a wedding or the death of another family member. Instead of making a donation, the family leaves the deceased an important memento from the event.

Holy Texts

Written by Fatimashan's husband, Abdul, the *Al-Qajin* is his poetic account of her words and deeds during her mission to the northern lands. Many prayers are verbatim recitations of what she said on that particular day. Every worshipper is expected to read the book at least once and memorize a personalized, favored saying. The holy text is considered more of a guide than scripture, because Mah-Barek conveys a unique message to all worshippers through prayer and deeds.

Sects

The Church's hierarchy recognizes seven sects as distinct offshoots from the main church. These include the Brotherhood of Abdul, a patriarchal branch of the Church and the Deprived, a group that disavows the ownership of any personal property. Other than minor changes in practice or tradition, they retain the same core beliefs as the main Church. Like nearly all sects of Fatimashan, these splinter groups keep a low profile and remain on friendly terms with the mainstream clergy and laic community. The Zahrahanites are the lone exception to this rule. They actively seek publicity by destroying property and committing violent acts. As one of the oldest and possibly largest sects, the Zahrahanites are highly organized, well-funded and well-connected with operatives and members holding strategic political and military positions in most desert kingdoms. For its part, Fatimashan's Church strongly condemns the Zahrahanites' methods and cooperates with local authorities in the fight against their sister sect. The Church occasionally hires adventurers to infiltrate the organization or launch an assault against one of its strongholds.

Zahrahanites

The Zahrahanites are one of the desert's most hateful and feared spiritual orders. They follow the tenets of Fatimashan's youngest daughter, Zahrahan, who believed that Mah-Barek specifically chose her mother as his divine messenger to the exclusion of all others. Despite their professed allegiance to Fatimashan, they extol none of her virtuous traits. They believe that her two older daughters, Parveza and Hatseshup, betrayed their mother's legacy and turned her Church into a congregation of traitors. Zahrahanites hold members of the other three churches in even lower regard, branding them as heretics. The group strives towards achieving two stated goals—to eradicate all churches other than Fatimashan's and to make Fatimashan's church the state religion in every desert kingdom. They use targeted acts of violence to achieve these desired measures including burning down or destroying rival temples and shrines as well as assassinating high ranking clerics in other churches. Each cleric leads a cell of two to ten likeminded followers to carry out these missions. These groups are completely autonomous and work independently of one another. Though this organizational structure prevents one person from revealing information that would undermine the entire network, it also results in redundancy and occasionally the spilling of blood between competing cells. Membership in the sect is handed down from generation to generation; hence all of the sect's current members descend from Zahrahan's original followers. In many respects, the sect serves as a cautionary example demonstrating how easy it is for good intentions to go terribly awry. In this case, the Zahrahanites became so consumed with forcing others to accept Fatimashan's message of charity and forgiveness that they solely focused on imposing their will on others and in the process forgot the message's redeeming qualities altogether.

Zahrahanite clerics gain access to the Death, Evil, Glory, Nobility and Strength domains. The favored weapon is a quarterstaff. The image of a burning temple serves as the sect's symbol.

Sect of Zahrahan

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Death, Evil, Glory, Nobility, Strength

Symbol: An image of a burning temple

Typical Worshipers: Revolutionaries, violent zealots, would-be tyrants

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

Church of Hafaz, “The Light in the Darkness,” “The Hidden Revealed”

The Church of Hafaz is the smallest of the four churches by far and not by accident. Its low membership numbers are not attributable to recruitment deficiencies or disorganization. Instead, the hierarchy believes that Mah-Barek's words and deeds conceal esoteric messages meant for an elite group of people only. In fact, the most vocal critics within the church complain that it has too many members, even though the Church accounts for no more than five percent of Mah-Barek's total followers.

Church of Hafaz

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Artifice, Esoteric, Knowledge, Magic, Rune

Symbol: An open eye emitting radiant beams of light

Typical Worshippers: Scholars, philosophers, sages, elitists

Favored Weapons: Shortsword

Core Beliefs

Mah-Barek is the coalesced essence of Ellashah and Rema, which he revealed to only a select few capable of comprehending complex matters of divinity. Mah-Barek enlightens those he deems worthy to be privy to the world's arcane mysteries. Belief leads a true follower down many paths invisible to most others in his search of hidden knowledge. Mah-Barek dwells within the mind, bringing inner peace to those who suffer ailments of the body in their quest to discover the unrevealed truth. Bloodshed is deplorable and must be avoided whenever possible. Worldly treasures belong to those he blessed with understanding and insight beyond the abilities of others.

History

Hafaz was the most learned and also the most skeptical of the four companions. He mistrusted Mah-Barek during their initial meeting, leading him to insist that one of them keep him under surveillance at all times on that first night. By nearly all accounts, Hafaz was also the last group member to accept Mah-Barek's divinity, though once he did acknowledge Mah-Barek's godhood he embraced it with an open mind and heart. On many arduous legs of their journey, Hafaz questioned Mah-Barek at length regarding the world's secrets and mysteries that confounded him during the course of his studies. Despite the relentless grilling, Mah-Barek indulged every line of circuitous inquiry with equally cryptic answers. Over time, Hafaz grew to believe that Mah-Barek recognized his unique talents and bequeathed insights to him that he withheld from the others.

After Mah-Barek departed across the sea, Hafaz's curiosity fueled his desire to learn more about the world's origins. During their travels, Mah-Barek told the four companions that he was the oasis nourished by the Father's blood and the Mother's tears, but Hafaz still felt that something was missing. He poured through long-forgotten lore and eldritch tomes, yet answers eluded him at every turn. Who were the Father and Mother and what happened to them? Every avenue of research led to a dead end, but Hafaz refused to leave these questions unanswered. On the verge of giving up, he realized that instead of looking for the direct answer, he should look for someone who could point him in the right direction towards the answer. The genies were the one recurrent constant that kept appearing in his research. Armed with this newfound insight, Hafaz obtained a private audience with an ancient shahzada, a noble marid genie. The genie relayed the story of creation to Hafaz who recorded it and shared it with the other three. Much to Hafaz's surprise, they did not readily accept his accounting of events, but they did agree to pray on the matter in the coming days. That

night, each saw Mah-Barek in a dream and took it as a sign that Hafaz's version of the world's creation was indeed accurate. The creation story became accepted dogma.

Hafaz believed that many other hidden revelations awaited discovery, yet they were not intended to be uncovered by just anyone. Mah-Barek intended to reveal true knowledge to a few individuals only. Hafaz's views on the subject hardened after he journeyed to the sparsely populated south to spread Mah-Barek's message on his own. During his travels, he stumbled upon an exclusive university of magic and philosophy, the Al-Ulasham. Hafaz took this seemingly random event as a sign of Mah-Barek's wishes regarding the search for knowledge. Hafaz returned to the university on many occasions, espousing his growing convictions that Mah-Barek's message is not meant for mass consumption, but is actually directed at men and women driven by curiosity and intellect to uncover the concealed truth. He stopped actively seeking converts and instead revealed Mah-Barek's existence to promising students and intellectuals only.

Fatimashan and Marwan did not look favorably upon his restrictive and secretive recruitment methods causing tremendous friction between them. The matter remained unsettled at the time of Hafaz's death, but his two greatest students, Rahman ibn Kadesh and Malik el-Duraash continued and expanded his legacy. After the schism, Rahman and Malik left the Al-Ulasham and ventured to other universities and centers of learning in search of promising converts. In time, the Church gained traction among a considerable number of learned people who shared Hafaz's elitist opinions on membership. Over the passing centuries, the Church of Hafaz branched out to nearly every institution of higher learning and influential political circles. Though the Church remains relatively small in comparison to its rivals, its ranks include a disproportionate number of the greatest minds of their generation. What the Church lacks in numbers, it more than compensates with talent.

Relationships

Hafaz's church does not publicly acknowledge its existence making it difficult to forge a relationship with any of its sister churches. Privately, the church's hierarchy and its members look down upon Mah-Barek's other worshippers. They derogatorily refer to Fatimashan's followers as Hwaadites which literally translates as “religion for fools”. They hold a similar opinion regarding Marwan's adherents as well calling them Caadamites which translates to “public buffoons”. They give Koua's following a modicum of credit for not taking Mah-Barek's words in a literal sense, but they also consider his constituents to be lazy dullards who perverted Mah-Barek's message to justify their frequently illegal and immoral activities. Despite their critical outlook towards Mah-Barek's fellow believers, they adhere to a strict policy of nonviolence towards them. As Hafaz himself once said, “thoughts and words win more battles than armor and swords.”

Clerics and Worshippers

Clerics and worshippers are one in the same within the Church of Hafaz with one notable exception—the Church requires its clergy to author original works regarding their faith. His clergy jokingly quip that the voice is the instrument for spreading the faith, but the pen is the implement for keeping one's clerical robes. There are no requirements pertaining to the type of composition and the work's subject matter. Ahmad the Feeble, an elderly elf cleric is said to have written more than 1,000 volumes during his lifetime. Otherwise, nothing distinguishes clerics from laymen. Nearly every member dabbles with divine magic to some degree making the line between cleric and worshipper blurry at best. The Church's leaders see no need to weed out prospective acolytes with rituals or requirements. As they see it, membership in the Church of Hafaz makes any constituent worthy of joining the ranks of its clergy. All worshippers must spend at least one hour per day in quiet study, reading and contemplating what the written text is actually trying to say. Poetry is the most common example, as Hafaz's adherents analyze the subtle nuances of every word and phrase in a quest to discover its hidden meaning.

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

The Church of Hafaz lacks central leadership, so church matters are resolved by local councils comprised of the area's four most senior clerics. They have full autonomy to make all decisions regarding the interests of their congregations, particularly in regards to offering membership to worthy individuals. They are also responsible for organizing and leading "introspective studies" which function as its official religious services. Every week at a designated time and day, the local membership gathers together to debate matters of faith, science, history, mathematics and literature. These meetings typically last for several hours as the group discusses revelations hidden within the context of these topics.

Clerics of Hafaz gain access to the Artifice, Esoteric, Knowledge, Magic and Rune domains. Their favored weapon is the shortspear. An open eye emitting radiant beams of light acts as the Church's symbol.

Esoteric Domain

Granted Power: The world around you was not meant to be known or seen by most others. You are endowed with secret knowledge and insight granting you a +2 bonus on Bluff checks to pass secret messages and Linguistics checks to decipher writing in an unfamiliar language or a message written in an incomplete or archaic form.

Detect Secret Doors (Sp): You can *detect secret doors*, as per the spell, for a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your cleric level.

Find Traps (Sp): At 4th level, you can use *find traps* at will as a spell-like ability using your cleric level as the caster level. You can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to your cleric level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Domain Spells: 1st—*detect secret doors*, 2nd—*see invisibility*, 3rd—*arcane sight*, 4th—*divination*, 5th—*true seeing*, 6th—*analyze dweomer*, 7th—*arcane sight, greater*, 8th—*moment of prescience*, 9th—*foresight*.

The church's membership is predominately comprised of scholars, teachers, tutors, wizards and people belonging to other learned professions. Unlike the other churches, they do not recruit new members from among the masses. They instead target specific individuals from universities, schools of magic and private tutors regardless of their race, gender or age. Prospective candidates are brought to the Church's attention because of their intelligence and hunger for learning. Because of their secretive nature, the Church clandestinely drugs and then blindfolds potential new members before they meet with the clergy. The process is jokingly referred to as "Hafaz's nap". The clergy interviews them and tests their mental abilities before rendering a decision. Candidates that do not express an interest in joining the Church are allowed to leave unharmed, though they still remain blindfolded throughout the process. Those that want to become members are interviewed at least one more time to judge their sincerity before they accept a new member. Once welcomed into the church, the member remains so for life. Though they adhere to a general policy of nonviolence against worshippers from rival churches, they do not show the same restraint towards anyone that may threaten the Church's veil of secrecy, including prodigal members. The clergy uses its repertoire of divination spells and informants to pursue those it brands as traitors to the faith. Whenever possible, they kill their victims with a spear thrust to the mouth which they refer to as "Hafaz's rebuke". After death, they remove the deceased's tongue and nail it to a nearby object as a final warning to others that would betray their confidence.

Temples and Shrines

According to legend, Rahman ibn Kadesh once quipped that if one wants to visit Mah-Barek's temple, he should go to a library and study. That statement rings largely true, though church members would never gather together in such a public place. Most introspective studies take place in secret within private chambers that are strictly off-limits to the

general public. These rooms are better suited for academic pursuits than the performance of religious rites.

Shrines may be found in the largest desert cities. In addition to containing massive quantities of obscure tomes and rare books, these shrines also serve as ossuaries for the skulls of the Church's greatest scholars as a tribute to their intellectual greatness. The Church of Hafaz believes that flesh and bone are no longer sacred after death. They preserve the skull and the brain inside of it, and then cremate the rest of the body. Many worshippers believe that the skulls grant inspiration that would otherwise elude them in their studies.

Holy Texts

The Church of Hafaz considers nearly every written document to be a holy text, though books written by fellow church members are considered more important than those written by nonbelievers or rival church members.

Sects

The Church of Hafaz denies the existence of any sects affiliated with its Church. The hierarchy of the other three churches disagrees with them. Rumors persist that a few renegade former members founded a group known as The Vanished. They disavow the use of all divine magic, claiming it to be a tool of deceit created by the genies. Comprised predominately of wizards, they use their arcane magic to elude their pursuers. The growing Cult of Zargareth represents the Church's greatest threat. Its members believe that an all-powerful time traveler originally created Ellashah and the four elements. The mainstream church deems their beliefs to be heretical and does everything in its power to rid the world of their outlandish claims.

Cult of Zargareth

A century ago, the brilliant yet erratic cleric Mustafa Xabi purchased an unusual manuscript entitled *The Shadow in Light* from a mysterious, otherworldly stranger. The beautifully illustrated and hand-crafted gilded tome instantly piqued his interest. He poured through the book, and with each turn of a page it revealed a new earth shattering revelation. When he finished reading, the world he knew changed dramatically. The work penned by an unknown hand claimed that a time traveler named Zargareth created the world as well as Ellashah and the genies. The book further purports that time moves in a circular manner, meaning that existence is doomed to constantly repeat itself in an endless loop. *The Shadow in Light* also claims that it is possible to go backwards in time; however doing so would create a cataclysmic paradox that would snap time's circular path and alter the course of future events from that moment forward.

Cult of Zargareth

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Artifice, Entropy, Knowledge, Magic, Rune

Symbol: A sundered golden circlet

Typical Worshippers: Deranged inventors, anarchists, nihilists, schizophrenics

Favored Weapons: Morningstar

Mustafa shared the mysteries with his most trusted confidantes, but his numerous skeptics dismissed its heretical account of creation as well as its theories regarding the fabric of time. Mustafa vehemently disagreed with their conclusions and left the Church of Hafaz with its irate clergy in hot pursuit. While on the run, he swayed a handful of influential clerics to his cause, but Hafaz's priests finally captured and killed the renegade cleric one year after he purchased the book. Before dying, Mustafa left the tome in the custody of his most trusted associate, Aljadin Buurabbi. Since then *The Shadow in Light* passed through many hands as the cult's influence spread throughout the desert. Its adherents tinkered with technological devices intended to reverse the passage of time or greatly accelerate it. They combined these newfangled inventions with magical incantations

and pseudo-religious rites yielding only lackluster results. Despite abundant failures, his successors continued to forge ahead branching off into increasingly bizarre and gruesome avenues of research. Cultists always operate alone or in pairs, and many still belong to the Church of Hafaz, choosing to conduct their cultist activities in secret laboratories.

Clerics of the Cult of Zargareth gain access to the Artifice, Entropy, Knowledge, Magic and Rune domains. Their favored weapon is a morningstar. A sundered, golden circlet serves as the cult's symbol.

Typical Worshipers: Bureaucrats, dictators, bandits, spies, thieves, assassins

Favored Weapons: Dagger

Core Beliefs

Mah-Barek is the only deity, and he must be worshipped. He makes all things possible and guides the hands of his true servants. The world is yours for the taking. Charity is a fool's errand for Mah-Barek gave his believers the desire and ability to provide for themselves. Those that refuse to worship Mah-Barek must be forced to do so, for only then can he bring peace. Property ownership is a transitory, manmade invention for all things really belong to Mah-Barek. True believers are empowered to take what they need or want for themselves using any means necessary.

History

Koua is the most enigmatic figure among the four founders of the faith. Koua, the man, and Koua, the emissary of Mah-Barek, appear to be two different people. Traditional sources describe Koua before and during the journey as a meek, soft-spoken man in his early twenties. In fact, his two male companions respected him as an older brother, while Fatimashan looked up to him as a father figure. He continued to fulfill this role throughout the unified church's formative years, but shortly after parting ways with his companions his personality abruptly changed. An assertive, dour man replaced his previously timid and gentle persona. Speculation abounds regarding the reasons for the transformation. Circumstantial evidence found in many historical documents hint that Fatimashan rebuffed Koua's romantic overtures prior to him departing to the eastern lands, though most religious scholars dismiss this notion as propaganda. There is no doubt though that Koua's sudden change of heart altered the course his church took in the years and generations to come.

Church of Koua, "The Hand of Mah-Barek," "The Zealot"

The Church of Koua accounts for approximately fifteen percent of Mah-Barek's followers, yet few openly profess their membership. Nonbelievers commonly dismiss Koua's followers as a band of criminals, riff-raffs, and ne'er do wells. This is an overly simplistic and uninformed assessment. On the other hand, Koua's proponents try to smooth out the church's rough edges by contending that they only differ from other worshippers of Mah-Barek in the way that they approach their faith rather than the actual faith itself. Like most debates involving contrasting points of view, the truth rests somewhere in the middle.

Church of Koua

Alignment: Neutral evil

Domains: Intrigue, Nobility, Strength, Trickery, War

Symbol: A white hand wrapped around the hilt of an onyx dagger



FAITHS OF THE DESERT

During his lifetime, Koua never advocated violence against fellow believers or even nonbelievers. However, he demanded that his followers adopt a more proactive approach in shaping the fortunes of their own lives. He felt that too many worshippers accepted the false notion that Mah-Barek was expected to literally do everything for them. This brought him into direct conflict with the compassionate Fatimashan, especially in regards to charity's proper place. Over the passing decades, they argued bitterly over the subject, and it grew into the primary bone of contention between them. Though Koua refused to abandon his religious doctrines in the wake of her pointed criticism, in his final days he privately conceded to his closest confidantes that he regretted the sad state of his relationship with Fatimashan more than anything else he had done.

During the centuries following Koua's death, the church remained true to Koua's core principles regarding nonviolence until a minor squabble with a member of Marwan's church escalated into a public massacre. It started as a religious disagreement between Salaam al-Rasheed, a highly respected cleric of Marwan and Koufas, the leader of Koua's church and a direct descendant of Koua's sister, Shareesha. No one knows how the dispute started, but everyone unanimously agrees that it ended when Koufas and his younger brother, Kuurwan, murdered Salaam, his wife and their three children in a bloody street fight. In response to the outcries for justice, Koufas declared to his followers that murder committed in the name of Mah-Barek is not only justified, it is a true believer's sacred duty. His bold edict rallied many of his followers to his cause. Faced with the prospect of a savage religious war, the Church of Marwan relented in their demands for justice in exchange for a promise to uphold the peace in the future and a financial settlement. With a dozen flicks of his dagger, Koufas forever shattered centuries of precedent and steered the Church of Koua into uncharted waters. Other similar incidents followed in the intervening years, leading many believers to cast a wary eye towards the Church's activities. Because of these attitudes, many of Koua's followers conceal their faith from others.

Relationships

Old grudges can linger for years and sometimes millennia, and the Church of Koua's icy relationship with the Church of Marwan proves this contention. Violence between the rivals is rare, but it is common to hear insults and jibes hurled in either or both directions whenever one is aware of the other's presence. Similarly, they hold the Church of Hafaz in equally low regard. They view his followers as quixotic elitists and eccentrics that waste their time pouring through old tomes vainly searching for hidden meanings that do not exist. And even if they allege to discover something, they never do anything with their so-called knowledge anyway. In an odd twist, the Church enjoys a strained, but cordial relationship with Fatimashan's followers. Many political and social circles believe that Koua's hierarchy placates Fatimashan's clergy with insincere apologies to allay their concerns about the Church's activities. Koua's clergy may also fear Fatimashan's vast numbers and pervasive influence throughout many desert kingdoms which may explain why they sometimes acquiesce to their rival church's demands.

Clergy and Worshippers

In simplest terms, Koua's clergy is a family affair. Koua never fathered children during his lifetime, so prospective clerics must be able to trace their lineage back to Shareesha, Koua's sister, if they aspire to join his priesthood. Because of this restriction, his clerics are overwhelming human, but it is possible for anyone with even a trace of human blood to become one of his clerics provided they can prove direct descent from Koua's line. Men dominate the ranks of his clergy, and they almost exclusively occupy the higher rungs of its hierarchy. The Kouashara, a priest elected from the ranks of the clergy to serve a lifetime appointment, wields absolute authority over Koua's church. Talik el-Ribin is the church's current Kouashara having served in the prestigious position for the last twelve years. Beneath the Kouashara are four Kouashere that are assigned to oversee the churches in their respective quadrants, i.e. north, south, east and west. There are four more layers of bureaucracy between

the Kouashere and the rank and file clergy known as the Kouasha. Clerics lead their congregations in monthly prayer services that last from midnight until the early morning hours during the first night of a new moon. In addition to tending to their followers' spiritual needs, Koua's priests also serve as personal advisors, counselors, matchmakers and even employment recruiters. In addition, they mediate disputes between church members. Higher ranking priests are empowered to pass judgment on criminals that engage in what it deems to be "acts of deviance" which generally include any violent or sexual act committed for no tangible gain, such as pedophilia and rape. In these cases, punishment is swift, harsh and apropos for the crime.

Intrigue Domain

Granted Power: You are skilled at allaying the suspicions of others and ultimately gaining their trust. You are trained in the use of poison and cannot accidentally poison yourself when applying poison to a blade.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Your attack deals extra damage anytime your target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC or when you flank your target. Your attack deals an additional 1d6 points of damage + 1 point for every two cleric levels you have. If you get a sneak attack bonus from another source, the bonuses on damage stack. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

Disappear (Sp): At 8th level, you can become *invisible*, as per the spell, for 1 round per cleric level. The rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Domain Spells: 1st—*disguise self*, 2nd—*invisibility*, 3rd—*nondetection*, 4th—*discern lies*, 5th—*scrying*, 6th—*mislead*, 7th—*scrying, greater*, 8th—*mass invisibility*, 9th—*imprisonment*.

Koua's worshippers run the gamut from the most respected and least respected segments of desert society to everything in the middle. Ambitious men and women occupying positions of power and wealth embrace Koua's positive outlook regarding personal property and self-determination while sharing his dislike of sloth and charity. In a similar vein, the Church attracts thieves, assassins, smugglers, prostitutes and others who believe that the world is one's for the taking using any means necessary. Koua's message also resonates with individuals aspiring to making a better life for themselves regardless of their economic means or profession. The Church accepts, but does not require donations from its members. Traditionally, anyone who comes into a windfall of money, whether obtained legally or illegally, is expected to give four percent of their newfound wealth to the Church. Worshippers refer to these donations as "Mah-Barek's fortunate glance". Though the Church's membership includes a significant number of dubious and in some cases, extremely dangerous individuals, the clergy takes no active role in its members' nefarious schemes. It neither condones nor condemns its members' actions which give rise to the commonly held perception that the Church promotes evil and mayhem. In its defense, worshippers point to the fact that the Church takes a hard line against heinous acts committed for no justifiable reason. Still, the stigma attached to membership is difficult to overcome in most circles, so many of Koua's followers do not openly profess their faith. Instead, it remains a poorly kept secret.

Temples and Shrines

The Church of Koua lacks any formal temples or shrines dedicated for worship. Instead, it always conducts its monthly services outdoors, typically in remote locations far from the glare of prying or judgmental eyes. The clergy selects sites with special significance and that are easy to remember like an unusual rock formation, a uniquely shaped dune or the entrance to a subterranean cave. The location must also grant a clear view of the surrounding area and the night sky.

Mummification is an honor bestowed upon its greatest and most

DUNES OF DESOLATION

illustrious members that often include kings, princes, nobles and wealthy merchants. The tombs of Koua's cherished dead serve as makeshift shrines for the faithful who leave small homemade offerings of art, prepared food, and other finished products. Less renowned figures are usually buried in underground chambers or wilderness locales that also act as informal gathering places for Koua's followers typically on the person's birthday or the anniversary of his death.

Holy Texts

The Treatise of Koufas is widely regarded as the Church's most sacred text. It contains detailed accounts of the Creation story, Koua's solo journey across the desert and the history of the early church. More importantly, the tome establishes the foundations of the Church's beliefs including its doctrines regarding justifiable violence, property ownership and the forced conversion of nonbelievers.

Sects

The two dozen sects that splintered off from the main church encompass a broad spectrum of beliefs, but none if more prevalent or dangerous than the Children of Abbashar. This sect claims that Mah-Barek is Abbashar's essence reincarnated. They espouse that the propensity for violence and murder is an innate trait that should be celebrated and acted upon rather than being suppressed. The Church of Koua and the Children of Abbashar loathe each other. Any contact between the two always results in a bloody dagger and fresh souls for the afterlife. On the other end of the section, the splinter group known as The Union believes that they descend from Morhad the Fertile, who claimed to be Koua's and Fatimashan's illegitimate son. They believe that the four companions parted ways because Hafaz wanted to hide Fatimashan's pregnancy and separate the secretive lovers. Its members constantly try to infiltrate the Church of Hafaz to find documents supporting their questionable claim. Their ill-planned attempts rarely succeed, and the explosive evidence they seek continues to elude them.

Children of Abbashar

The mere mention of this radical organization sends shivers down the spines of powerful rulers, wealthy merchants and all clergy members regardless of their church or religious affiliation. The Children of Abbashar believe that Mah-Barek is the spiritual embodiment of Abbashar, whom they consider to be the first man. Rahadd the Dead Stealer, a notorious grave robber, founded the sect 2,500 years ago. Koua's clergy condemned him to death for committing unspeakable deviant acts on dead corpses, but the depraved criminal escaped justice and set about to rallying others to his cause by taking the mainstream church's teachings one step further. He professed that violence and lust represent man's natural state, because the spirit of Abbashar manifested itself as Mah-Barek. All actions, regardless of how deviant, are justified as long as it brings pleasure to the perpetrator. In fact, he vigorously encouraged believers to commit these acts to achieve union with Abbashar. The fugitive Rahadd spread his message through his network of contacts where it struck a chord with likeminded individuals languishing in prisons as well as those committing deviant acts in secret. Rahadd recruited twenty members to his newfound sect, but his success proved short-lived. The local authorities responded to the group's wanton crime spree with numerous arrests, including Rahadd's. In the end, the Church of Koua carried out its punishment against Rahadd; however his sect survived his death.

Children of Abbashar

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil, Trickery

Symbol: A necrotic fist dripping with blood

Typical Worshippers: Madmen, murderers, deviant hedonists

Favored Weapons: Dagger

The Children of Abbashar learned from Rahadd's mistakes and went underground. Members exercise far more care in planning their deviant

acts rather than engaging in the chaotic bloodbath that lead to Rahadd's downfall. Prospective members aspiring to join the sect must commit a random act of violence and avoid detection in doing so. The sect kills anyone who fails in this endeavor. Its membership is exclusively human and predominately male. Clerics head individual groups, and these smaller groups are loosely affiliated with other groups operating in the immediate vicinity. The sect's crimes range from petty, lewd offenses to barbarous serial killings. Its clerics not only encourage these acts, they advise and even participate in their commission.

The Children of Abbashar's clerics gain access to the Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil and Trickery domains. The favored weapon is a dagger. A necrotic fist dripping with blood is the group's symbol.

Church of Marwan, “The Mystic,” “The Dancer in Dreams”

Roughly twenty percent of Mah-Barek's worshippers partake in the raucous celebration that is the Church of Marwan. His followers forego the quiet reserve and measured secrecy commonly found in the other churches to boldly proclaim their beliefs to any creature within earshot or line of sight. They actively seek new converts and welcome them into their faith with open arms. Church members pride themselves on their devout spiritualism and boundless enthusiasm for their beloved deity. On the other hand, their detractors deride them as annoying salesmen, drug-crazed mystics, circus performers or hopeless dreamers that are out of touch with reality. In typical fashion, Marwan's followers dismiss these criticisms with a warm smile and a hearty laugh.

Church of Marwan

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Chaos, Magic, Liberation, Luck, Performance

Symbol: A swirling gray cloak

Typical Worshippers: Performers, bards, musicians, orators, artists

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

Core Beliefs

Faith must be celebrated for Mah-Barek is the source of all things. He requires worshippers to publicly proclaim his message through performances. He commands that his followers strive to achieve the impossible. The body is a conduit to Mah-Barek's realm beyond the boundaries of this world. If the body is pushed to its absolute limits, the mind achieves true understanding of his purpose in life and Mah-Barek's divine plan for him. There are many ways to achieve one's goals, and battle becomes a necessary evil when all other paths are closed. Put no value in worldly goods for all things belong to Mah-Barek.

History

Tradition holds that when Mah-Barek revealed his divinity to the four companions, sixteen-year old Marwan spontaneously erupted in celebratory singing and dancing and continued to praise Mah-Barek's godhood with music and motion until evening fell that first night. Legends even claim that on one occasion, Marwan preached, sang and danced for thirty-six straight hours before finally collapsing from exhaustion. Throughout the remaining stages of their desert journey and the faith's early years, Marwan gained a reputation for being the group's unofficial spokesman and resident risk-taker. Marwan loved to meet new people, and he quickly ingratiated himself into the fabric of every community they entered. Whenever danger loomed, Marwan stepped to the forefront

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

and greeted it as one would greet a long-lost friend. His zeal and reckless abandon carried over to every facet of his faith and his life. Marwan did not just accept Mah-Barek as his deity. He embraced him with every ounce of strength and conviction he could muster.

Yet Marwan was a man of wild extremes. During the religion's formative years, the effervescent preacher and energetic performer concealed his darker nature. As the years passed and the whirlwind of nonstop activity ebbed, the previously dormant beast roiled to the surface during any extended lull in the action. Moodiness and depression crept into his soul like a ravenous bloodworm. The same passion he exhibited for Mah-Barek also fueled his deep melancholy. Increasingly, Marwan turned to narcotics and alcohol for solace from the relentless monster gnawing at the core of his being. During the last few years of his life, addiction consumed nearly every waking moment, transforming the once vibrant Marwan into a desiccated husk of his former self. Fortunately for his church, few people witnessed his tragic descent into despair and self-loathing. His bastard son and sole heir, Ibrahim Fah, swore all of his father's closest confidantes to absolute secrecy regarding his father's sickness before he embarked on the monumental task of rebuilding his father's image and converting his convoluted and often contradictory messages into a coherent belief system.

To accomplish this feat, he focused his attention on Marwan's early missions. First and foremost, his father believed that faith must be openly proclaimed and celebrated in the most expressive manner possible. Music, dance and words became a cornerstone of the church's services. In addition, he emphasized that Mah-Barek encouraged his followers to strive for the impossible. Man made limits, and man can overcome limitations once he gives himself fully to Mah-Barek. Minor changes filtered into the church throughout subsequent generations, but the core beliefs remain true to Ibrahim's remarkable vision for Marwan's lasting legacy. In many respects, the Church of Marwan would not exist if not for the efforts of Ibrahim and his capable successors.

Relationships

Marwan's worshippers are outgoing and friendly towards everyone with one notable exception — Koua's followers. Marwan's followers never forgot or forgave Koufas and Kuurwan, two of Koua's clerics, for murdering Salaam al-Rasheed, a revered cleric, and his family in cold blood more than 2,000 years ago. The wound still runs deep for many, and most believe that Koua's church never repaid the debt. Koua's followers hold a contrary opinion regarding the matter. Hafaz's secretive church barely acknowledges the Church of Marwan's existence, yet Marwan's followers would welcome any relationship with their fellow believers. The problem lies in how to reconcile the differences between one group that actively recruits and welcomes new members and the other that restricts Mah-Barek's message to a select few individuals of its choosing. They hold Fatimashan's followers in high regard, though they privately complain about her church's stodgy attitude and overabundance of rules and traditions. Over the centuries, the two churches temporarily put their differences aside to root out mutual enemies. Though initially promising, such alliances immediately end after they defeat the common threat.

Clergy and Worshippers

The Church of Marwan demands that prospective acolytes display one trait only — innate talent for performance. The clergy seeks inspirational speakers, daring dancers, accomplished musicians and show-stopping singers blessed with ability and fervent belief to serve as the Church's ambassadors to the masses. Potential candidates are required to audition before at least four clerics before the clergy accepts them into the priesthood. Worship is more akin to a public event like an opera or a play than a formal religious service. Like their Church's founder, Marwan's clerics push the bounds of reality to the absolute breaking point, as they perform dangerous feats of agility, strength and endurance during their public performances. Injuries are uncommon, though clerics and audiences alike attribute failure to a deficiency in faith rather than reckless bravado or a foolhardy idea gone terribly wrong. Despite the outwardly

chaotic and frenetic nature of these services, its hierarchy is surprisingly more organized than most other churches. A lone cleric is responsible for overseeing and managing all Church activities within a designated geographic area. Once every year, all clerics occupying leadership positions within the Church's hierarchy gather together to discuss pressing issues and relay the remarkable words, deeds and feats their subordinate clerics accomplished over the past year.

Clerics of Marwan gain access to the Chaos, Magic, Liberation, Luck and Performance domains. Their favored weapon is the quarterstaff. A swirling, gray cloak serves as the Church's symbol.

Performance Domain

Granted Power: You are an accomplished performer. You treat all Perform skills as class skills.

Fascinate (Su): You can cause a living creature to become fascinated for 1 round as a melee touch attack. Creatures with more Hit Dice than your cleric level are unaffected. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

Powerful Performance (Su): At 6th level, you must choose whether you gain the bardic performance countersong or distraction. Once this choice is made, it cannot be reversed. You can use this ability a number of rounds per day equal to your cleric level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. If another source grants you the ability to use countersong or distraction, the abilities do not stack.

Domain Spells: 1st—*disguise self*, 2nd—*enthrall*, 3rd—*glibness*, 4th—*shout*, 5th—*song of discord*, 6th—*shout, greater*, 7th—*statue*, 8th—*irresistible dance*, 9th—*time stop*.

By nature, Marwan's followers are gregarious extroverts with boundless energy and blind enthusiasm for their faith. His most devout practitioners always say that the heart chooses Fatimashan's church; the mind selects Hafaz's church; instinct opts for Koua's church; but the soul begs for Marwan's church. His devotees are a bohemian mix of artists, authors, dancers, singers and anyone else that wears their emotions on their sleeve and revels in the expression of their faith. The church dispenses with any semblances of formality and instead encourages its members to freely and publicly celebrate and exude their love and devotion to Mah-Barek. Spontaneous outbursts of song and dance are commonly seen in many desert communities. Worshippers not participating in the performances work the crowd soliciting donations that the church later uses to support civic projects and provide assistance to needy members. The church relies exclusively on this income to fund its operations. Marwan's followers are actually prohibited from giving money to their own cause. The Church requires its members to conduct performances at least twice per month, but it maintains no schedules or records of such activity. Marwan's clerics often quip that inspiration cannot be planned. Attention inevitably attracts scrutiny. Critics assail these shows as choreographed gimmicks or glorified panhandling festivals. Thankfully for Marwan's church, their admirers greatly outnumber their detractors, making them a welcome and entertaining sight in most desert communities.

Temples and Shrines

Though chaotic and spontaneous at its core, the Church of Marwan displays unprecedented structure in the artistic design and layout of its temples. The sprawling complex's main building provides housing, meeting rooms and rehearsal space for its resident clerics. Soaring minarets, large domes and intricate carvings and paintings on the outer face and interior surfaces express the artists' passion for their faith. The centerpiece is its elaborate courtyard adorned with sculptures, gardens, mosaics and gazebos. Marwan's priests upkeep the temple's outer areas. Throughout the day, inspired worshippers burst into unrehearsed songs, dances and speeches praising Mah-Barek and Marwan. In many desert cities and large villages, Marwan's temples bustle with activity as residents stroll through its gardens amid the constant hum of activity around them. The

DUNES OF DESOLATION

abundant sights and sounds are a welcome distraction from the drudgeries of daily life, and the temple grounds provide a much safer backdrop for conversations and introspection than the crowded bazaars.

The Church of Marwan mummifies legendary clerics and performers. The subterranean vaults housing their earthly remains serve as makeshift shrines for worshippers who reminisce about the deceased's most daring feats and greatest performances. In honor of their accomplishments, visitors traditionally leave articles of clothing behind as gifts for the tomb's occupant. Tales claim that the tomb of Marajahan the Nimble contains more than 1,500 pairs of sandals left as tribute by his fellow believers.

Holy Texts

Marwan's followers place little emphasis on written documents. According to their perspective, Mah-Barek moves the mind and body to action, not words transcribed in a book. Marwan's exploits and the creation story are passed down from one generation to the next through song, poetry and music. The compilation, *El-Falajad*, is the Church's most significant written work and lone exception to the rule. It contains a diverse collection of poems and stories describing Mah-Barek's time in the world as well as Marwan's personal life and other important figures throughout the religion's history. Nearly every household owns a copy of this seminal document.

Sects

The Poppy's Chorus is by far the largest and most visible sect associated with the Church of Marwan. Members openly engage and encourage the use of narcotics, particularly opium and peyote to reach a state of greater consciousness. In addition, the drugs spur worshippers to perform dangerous stunts that no one in their right mind would dare to attempt. Civic authorities consider the sect to be a criminal enterprise masquerading as a religious group, especially in desert communities that ban these hallucinogenic substances. The populace generally shares the same opinion. In a similar vein, the only other significant sect, *Salaam's Blood*, is also associated with illegal activities. This violent, radical organization attacks Koua's followers on sight. The group's penchant for chaotic brawls and bloody street attacks earned it a well-deserved reputation for causing mayhem, but the sect causes little real damage because of its meager numbers and leadership deficiencies.

The Poppy's Chorus

This sect shares the same beliefs and traditions as the Church of Marwan with one exception — its attitude and usage of narcotics. Though Ibrahim subverted all knowledge of Marwan's abuse of these substances, unfounded rumors spread by rival churches and insiders alike persisted for years after his death. Some of Marwan's followers believed the stories and experimented with drugs, particularly opium, derived from the poppy seed, and peyote, a hallucinogenic species of cactus. Under the influence of these mind-altering substances, energetic and daring followers accomplished unprecedented feats and deeds. They soared higher, moved faster, danced longer and sang louder than ever before. It seemed like a miracle at first, however over time the drugs took their toll on their users. Many found it impossible to function without the narcotics, and in extreme cases, the substances claimed the lives of their users. The Church of Marwan recognized the drugs' inherent danger and outlawed their usage under the guise of religious doctrine by stating that they supplanted the role of belief in achieving the previously impossible. Many abided by the Church's office stance regarding opium and peyote, yet pockets of resistance remained especially in large cities and rural areas close to the source materials.

The Poppy's Chorus

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Chaos, Darkness, Liberation, Madness, Travel

Symbol: A poppy flower

Typical Worshippers: Addicts

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

They became known as The Poppy's Chorus, a name the group earned because its members publicly sing and perform rambling, nonsensical songs allegedly dedicated to Mah-Barek for donations to buy or produce more drugs. In addition to its chaotic and extremely dangerous street performances and panhandling activities, members also resort to running rigged games of chance, confidence schemes and petty thievery for money. Members frequently run afoul of the law, and most spent at least some time in prison. The bohemian group embraces a communal lifestyle lead by its resident cleric. They establish their homesteads on the fringes of society, living in abandoned homes, ruins and other out of the way locales where they can indulge their drug habits in private.

Other Non-Pantheon Faiths

The worship of Mah-Barek is a pervasive and perhaps dominant religion of the deserts, yet it is far from the only faith practiced by the inhabitants of the trackless dunes. Much of the populace, particularly in certain areas where pantheons predominate, ascribes to other beliefs or in some cases no beliefs at all. Outside of these pantheons, which will be discussed in more detail below, some of these beliefs share a common heritage with Mah-Barek's churches, but they differ in the respect that none of them reveres him as a god. Others assign divinity to primal entities and invisible forces. Presented below are brief synopses of each non-pantheon religion's core beliefs, clerics, worshippers, temples, symbols and goals.

Ancestor Worship

Nomadic desert peoples, remote communities and the tribal nations of the semiarid deserts frequently engage in ancestor worship. They believe that the spirits of the dead, especially those of immediate family members, remain with the living forever. Their eternal souls bring good fortune and protect their descendants for countless generations. Ancestor worship comes in two forms. In the first example, the worshiper's ancestors function as intermediaries between mortals and the gods. The believer asks the spirits to intercede on his behalf and relay his prayers directly to his deity. In the second instance, the person's ancestors ascended to godhood. In both cases, the relationship is symbiotic in nature. The family prays for the welfare of the dead, and the ancestral spirits in turn look favorably upon those praying to them. The religion has no formal clergy, as each family venerates its own ancestors. Instead, the family's patriarch serves as its resident cleric. These clerics gain access to the Community, Death, Protection, Repose and Strength domains. Their favored weapon is the light mace. The person's home also acts as a temple. Some families even craft clay likenesses of their ancestors that they keep in a sacred location within the house. Every family has a unique symbol associated with their heritage. Ancestor worshippers typically live amongst extended family members as part of a larger clan or tribe. The bonds of family even between distant cousins are extremely strong, making them an extremely effective and close-knit fighting unit.

Ancients

Born shortly after the rise of Mah-Barek, this religion worships Ellashah and Rema whom they believe are still alive. Though they share a common ancestry with Mah-Barek's faith, they claim that Mah-Barek is an imposter masquerading as a god. This assertion puts them in direct conflict with his followers, so they receive a chilly reception from Mah-Barek's churches. In an unusual twist, prospective clerics must join the clergy as a married couple and remain married during their tenure as priests. Ancients' clerics gain access to the Animal, Earth, Plant, Sun and Weather domains. The favored weapon is the sickle. Worshippers come from all walks of life, but farmers and other professions that subsist off the land comprise the majority of the church's membership. The religion actively recruits new members in agrarian communities, though it retains a much lower profile in large cities dominated by Mah-Barek's churches. As a result, most temples are located on the outskirts of rural desert towns

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

and villages. The resident clerics reside within the buildings. Therein they conduct weekly prayer services and preside over the faith's most important rites — weddings and funerals. In fact, the church requires its members to marry before reaching thirty years of age or face excommunication. In addition, Ancients display no tolerance towards homosexuals and adulterers. When discovered, their clerics are responsible for expelling them from the faith or even in some cases murdering them. The religion's symbol is the silhouette of a man and woman holding hands against a yellow background. Clerics and worshippers alike are tasked with the duty of debunking Mah-Barek's divinity. Ancients commonly spread false rumors about Mah-Barek and even forge alleged holy texts. The Church of Hafaz even claims Ancients wrote the heretical *The Shadow in Light*, though its clerics vehemently deny having a hand in its authorship.

Arcanaeans

Arcanaeans worship arcane magic as a god, believing that creation and all life sprung from this primal force. They also believe that divine magic is not a separate type of magic, but is instead an undiscovered school of arcane magic. Some go as far as to claim that magic is a living being; however that belief is not commonly shared by many of the religion's practitioners. All clerics begin their careers as arcane spellcasters before changing classes. Arcanaean clerics gain access to the Artifice, Knowledge, Magic, Protection and Rune domains. The quarterstaff is their favored weapon. The faith is especially popular among those capable of wielding arcane magic, particularly sorcerers and wizards, who also constitute its hierarchy alongside its few clerics. It is especially prevalent within magical academies, universities and other institutions of higher learning specializing in the mystical arts. These buildings also act as their de facto temples. The church holds no formal religious services or rites, and instead encourages its members to create new arcane spells and magic items. An open tome serves as its symbol. Arcanaeans strive to prove their detractors wrong and acquire the ability to incorporate divine magic into their magical repertoire.

Circle of Doubt

The Circle of Doubt is more akin to an ideology than an actual religion. Its practitioners believe that existence sprang from the dissolution of an invisible, nameless entity that inexplicably split into an infinite number of invisible particles similar to grains of sand. These tiny pieces are the building blocks for every creature and object found throughout the world. Even after death, these minute particles are not destroyed. Instead, they are recycled and reincarnated into a new form. The so-called gods played no part in the world's formation, and instead they are just extremely powerful creatures or monsters that began their lives as ordinary mortals. The Circle's clerics pray for spells like all other priests, but they assert that what remains of the entity is not even aware of their or its own existence. They do nothing to spread their beliefs or sway others to their way of thinking. Instead, they assert that new followers must come to reach this conclusion of their own accord. The Circle's clerics gain access to the Artifice, Knowledge, Law, Liberation and Travel domains. The favored weapon is the club. The Circle's followers include philosophers, poets, students, teachers and members of other learned professions. Members typically meet in informal and impromptu settings to discuss their ideas, so there are no formal temples, services or any other sanctioned activities. Most conceal their faith or lack thereof leading some to mistakenly suspect that they belong to the Church of Hafaz. The ideology's symbol is a gray circle set against a white background. The clergy and its followers have no stated goals or agendas other than to have badgering clerics from other faiths leave them alone.

Deniers

Between five and ten percent of desert peoples fall into the broad category referred to as Deniers. In short, they believe that the world and men always existed or sprang from nothingness. Deities do not exist. They

are figments of overactive imaginations or mighty creatures pretending to be omniscient, all-powerful beings infused with divine power. On the surface, the Circle of Doubt and Deniers appear to share the same beliefs, but they disagree on one critical fact. The Circle of Doubt believes that the being responsible for creating the world still exists in a diffused form; the Deniers counter with the assertion that such a being never existed in the first place. There are no clerics among the ranks of the Deniers. People of various backgrounds comprise the group's ranks, though it attracts a disproportionately high percentage of extremely wealthy individuals. Not surprisingly, some speculate they may have an economic motive for being a Denier. By and large, Deniers keep their personal beliefs to themselves rather than run the risk of inviting a recruitment speech from someone else. Deniers have no temples and symbols. They do not believe in an afterlife or reincarnation, so they extol of philosophy of living life to its fullest during one's brief existence in the world.

Druids

Though more commonly found in temperate climates and lush grasslands, druids can be found in remote areas of the desert tending to verdant green oases or traversing across the scorching dunes. Druids revere nature as an omnipotent entity that nurtures all living creatures. Druids form close bonds with the land itself and its inhabitants. They move across the desert's formidable terrain without hindrance and forge friendships with the resident wildlife. Druids do not establish formal temples or churches like their clerical brethren. Instead, druids and their followers congregate in important wilderness locations like oases or wadis. Druidic services are usually held on special dates and times such as the vernal equinox, summer solstice or a new lunar cycle. Druids live off the bounty of the land, and their primary goal is to ensure that the desert's natural resources remain viable for generations to come.



Light of the Lamp

According to Mah-Barek's followers, Ellashah's dying spirit transformed inanimate matter into the immortal genies. The proponents of this religion dispute their account and instead believe that Ellashah's and Rema's essence coalesced to form the genies since they sprung into being simultaneously with the creator's demise. Members of the Light of the Lamp worship the genies as divine beings. Most genies relish flattery so they neither encourage nor dissuade mortals from worshipping them. They agree that Mah-Barek is a god but for a different reason. They claim he is really the first jann which makes him a genie first — and then a god. In furtherance of this belief, all clerics must claim lineage to the genies or to one of the four elements. Clerics gain access to the Air, Earth, Fire, Water and Weather domains. Their favored weapon is the scimitar. The religion is popular among royalty, nobility and others that interact with the outsiders. The Light of the Lamp also appeals to arcane spellcasters specializing in elemental magic as well as miners, smiths and members of other professions that have close contact with the elements. Temples are found in every major desert city and other significant settlements. They always incorporate some aspect of all four elements into their design. This typically includes a central structure built from quarried stone, a large pool of water, an open air courtyard and a roaring fire. Clerics lead

the services on the last day of the week, sacrificing something of value to the flames in commemoration of Ellashah's demise and the genies' creation. The religion's symbol contains four quadrants each containing an apropos depiction of the four elements. The Light of the Lamp exists to serve the genies and perform their bidding which sometimes leads to a confrontation with Mah-Barek's followers or in rare circumstances fellow worshippers acting under the direction of a rival genie. When this occurs, the genies involved in the matter immediately cease hostilities. Regardless of their personal differences, genies are smart enough to know not to ruin a good thing while it lasts.

Numerologists

Mathematics give the world order and structure. Ratios determine the area, height, size and width of objects. Numerical equations determine the outcome of every event. Without numbers, all things would cease to exist. The proponents of this religion believe that numbers are more than entries in a ledger book. They are the nuts and bolts used by a divine entity to create the world. Numerologists pay no attention to that being's identity; who created the world is unimportant. The real mystery is figuring out how it was created, and numbers are the key to unlocking the secret. Naturally, prospective clerics must demonstrate some mathematical skill. The church's elders administer a test to acolytes to determine their suitability for the priesthood. (A passing grade requires the cleric to succeed on a DC 20 Knowledge or Profession skill check for a field of study or profession that demands math skills like architecture or engineering.) Numerologist clerics gain access to the Artifice, Knowledge, Law, Luck and Magic domains. Their favored weapon is the flail. Worshippers also come from like professions, though the religion is most popular among fortune tellers and gamblers for obvious reasons. Numerologist temples are commonplace in most desert communities and are more akin to libraries than a place of worship. Abaci, measuring equipment and geometry tools replace the statues, altars and incense found in most religious institutions. Clerics lead their congregations in discussion, study and prayer on dates and times with special numerical significance. The church's symbol is an abacus. Numerologists devote their lives to unraveling the hidden meaning of numbers, whether the person is a seer attempting to see into the future or a faro player trying to beat the odds.

Pantheons of the Desert

In addition to the faith of Mah-Barek and the faiths listed above, many of the desert's peoples subscribe to older worship practices — the anthropomorphizing of animals and characteristics of the desert lands into complex pantheons of gods, lesser and greater, good and evil. To the enlightened followers of Mah-Barek these practices are seen as quaint and backward at best and pagan and barbaric at worst. Yet despite this reproach held by many of the desert's cities and kingdoms, the followers of these deities are nonetheless granted divine powers as well. The two philosophies — monotheistic and polytheistic — usually ignore each other and keep to their own regions of influence as much as possible; open warfare, as has occurred in the past, tends to bring ruin to all rather than truly elevate one over the other, and as a result a tense peace of tolerance and avoidance tends to reign on a large scale. Though on an individual scale, such restraint is not necessarily the rule of the day and bloody acts of violence are not unknown.

The religion of Mah-Barek reflects a more modern trend in the theology of the desert peoples embracing complex philosophies and theological practices, whereas the pantheons tend to hearken back to an earlier time when blood sacrifices were not uncommon and the rule of the sword prevailed over the rule of law more often than not. Yet some regions still cling tenaciously to the older ways, refusing to abandon the practices of their ancestors.

If you prefer to not use this potentially volatile mix of religions in your game, then pick and choose as you see fit. Mah-Barek is closer to the more modern ideas of religion and theology and in some ways is intended to reflect characteristics of Judeo-Christianity and Islam, framed in a fantasy game setting, of course. The religions described below reflect the polytheistic

religions more traditionally seen in fantasy games that correspond to those of the world prior to the advent of Christianity or Islam, though often contemporaneous to Judaism. If you prefer not to use this more eclectic combination, feel free to drop or down-play some or all aspects in your game and just focus on those that fit the needs of your own campaign. But for the sake of completeness, we have included both types of religions here.

In *The Lost Lands Campaign Setting* of *Frog God Games*, the religions of Mah-Barek are found more universally than the polytheistic religions and correspond more to the western and northern Ashurian Desert. The peoples of the eastern Ashurian Desert and Zagros Mountains still cling to the old ways and worship some or all of the Anunnaki, depending on where they dwell and who they serve. Across the Free Sea from the Ashurian Desert lies the desert kingdom of Khemit. The people of Khemit follow the state religion of the Pharonic pantheon and its multitude of deities under a strict caste of priests.

The Pharonic Pantheon

The lands of Khemit have a very distinct pantheon of gods, each detailed below. The gods can be divided into the gods of Good, Balance, and Evil. This list was first published in *Gary Gyax's Necropolis* by *Necromancer Games*. It has been updated and provided here for your convenience.

Pharonites

The Pharonic Pantheon of ancient Egypt has been a staple of roleplaying games since James M. Ward's and Robert J. Kuntz's *Deities & Demigods* and earlier. The pantheon as described here bears many similarities to its previous iterations. If you have been involved in roleplaying games for a long time, it is possible that you may be tired of the extensive and well-worn list of deities utilized here. If so, we have included an abbreviated means of using the Pharonic religion in your game without resorting to the entire pantheon. This abbreviated version of the Pharonites is provided below.

Some desert kingdoms are theocracies. The king or queen, often referred to as the pharaoh, claims to descend from the sun god, Amun-Ra, who granted power to his worldly representative. Amun-Ra created the world and all life, and then delegated the responsibility of governing to his descendants. Aided by a ruling class of priests, noblemen and generals, the monarch exerts supreme authority over all economic, political, social and religious matters. In many respects, the kingdom's subjects consider the pharaoh to be a living god rather than his progeny even though he is undoubtedly mortal. The religion's clerics serve as advisors and bodyguards to the pharaoh. Like their master, they also acquired their position through birthright rather than merit. Pharonite clerics gain access to the Law, Nobility, Repose, Sun and War domains. Their favored weapon is the falchion. Openly worshipping any deity other than Amun-Ra and the pharaoh is a crime punishable by death, though small pockets of citizens secretly worship other gods.

Pharonite temples are found in every city, town and village throughout the kingdom. Typically constructed near rivers or major travel arteries, they are sprawling complexes containing numerous monoliths, statues and paintings depicting the pharaoh's glorious accomplishments and solidifying his legacy as an heir to divinity. In architectural terms, temples are rivaled only by the pharaohs' grand tombs known as pyramids. These triangular, mud-brick structures soar high above the city where they house their occupant's mummified remains and his vast collection of worldly treasures for all eternity. In fact, the image of a pyramid serves as the religion's symbol. Pharonites share their ruler's political and religious ambitions. His armies fight wars in his name with the belief that death in battle earns a place at the pharaoh's side in the afterlife.

Gods of Good

Aker, God of the Earth and Death

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Death [Good], Earth, Protection

Symbol: Two lions' heads facing away from each other

Typical Worshipers: Embalmers, guardians, kings

Favored Weapons: Hammer, longsword

Aker rules over the meeting point between the eastern and western horizons in the Khemitian underworld. He guards the gate through which the rulers and aristocrats pass into the underworld. He provides safe passage to those through the underworld.

Amset "Son of Horus,"

Guardian of the Dead

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Animal, Death [Good], Law, Protection

Symbol: Hawk

Typical Worshipers: Embalmers, guardians

Favored Weapon: Longsword

It is the sole duty of Amset to guard the liver of a dead body so that the beasts of the land may not come and devour it. Amset appears as a great hawk-headed god and is one of the sons of Horus. He is the brother of Hapy and Duamutef.

Amun "The Hidden One,"

God of the Sky and Sun

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Air, Knowledge, Magic, Strength, Sun

Symbol: Ram

Typical Worshipers: Rulers, kings, scholars, nobles

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, crook, longsword

Amun is a primeval deity and rose in prominence as the Sun God, even replacing Ra in some areas of Khemit. In other areas, and this seems to be the consensus, he and Ra have merged into one form, becoming known as the Amun-Ra. He is said to have created (or at least aided the other gods in the creation of) the sky and earth out of mere thought. He is the husband of Mut and father of Chons.

In human form, he appears as a blue-skinned, ram-headed humanoid with curved horns. His crown sports two ostrich feathers.

Anhur, God of War and the Hunt

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Strength, War

Symbol: A lance

Typical Worshipers: Hunters, warriors, soldiers

Favored Weapon: Lance

Anhur appears as a tall, bearded warrior wearing robes and a headdress with four feathers. In his hands he carries a powerful lance that never misses its target.

Anhur is the champion of Ra and the defender of Khemit. In war, he goes before the armies of Khemit to strike terror into the enemy and to fight any gods that might be aiding the other side. Mekhit is his consort.

In parts of Khemit he is known as Anhert, Anhuret, or Onuris.

Anket, Goddess of Rivers and Water

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Chaos, Good, Magic, Water

Symbol: Ank

Typical Worshipers: Sailors, fishermen, pleasure seekers

Favored Weapons: Sickle, spear, and quarterstaff

Anket appears as a woman wearing a crown of reeds and ostrich feathers. It is believed that she is not of the same origin as the other Khemitian gods; rather, she is a deity from another pantheon seeking refuge for one reason or another. Many Khemitians build temples and pray to her to ensure fertility to their crops, especially those planted along the riverbanks.

In some parts of Khemit, she is revered as the goddess of pleasure and is considered the mistress to all gods.



Anubis, Guardian of the Dead

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Death [Good], Law, Luck, Protection, Strength

Symbol: Jackal

Typical Worshipers: Embalmers, guardians

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Anubis appears as humanoid with the head of a jackal. His head, unlike a normal jackal's, is black, representing his position as the god of the dead.

Anubis was the original god of the dead, before Osiris took over the position. After that, he became one of the many sons of Osiris and a conductor of souls in the underworld.

Anubis watches over the mummification process to ensure that all is done properly. He guides the souls of the deceased through the underworld, testing their knowledge and faith. It is the job of Anubis to place the hearts of the deceased on the Scales of Justice and weigh them against the feather of Maat. The souls that fail are fed to Amem, the Eater of the Dead.

Apis, God of the Sun and Life

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Bounty, Earth, Good, Strength, Sun

Symbol: Bull wearing the uraeus (cobra amulet) on its head

Typical Worshipers: Farmers, midwives, expectant mothers

Favored Weapons: Sickle, scythe, hammer

Apis is believed to have originally been a form of the water deity Hapy, and then later a part of Ptah. Isis is his mother, and she conceived him after being struck by a flash of lightning. When he dies, he will become a part of Osiris.

He is revered as a deity encompassing all parts of the life-cycle: birth, adulthood, old age, and death. It is through the strength of Apis that the people of Khemit live their lives, and the pharaohs gain the strength and fertility to rule the people.

Apuat “the Messenger,” God of Messengers and Battle

Alignment: Chaotic good
Domains: Air, Strength, Travel, War
Symbol: Banner with a jackal head
Typical Worshippers: Messengers, warriors, barbarians
Favored Weapon: Longsword

Apuat is the messenger of the gods and the one who bears the standard of the deities in times of war. His worshippers are many, and usually those given the task of bearing the standard, either in religious times or times of war. He appears as a great jackal-headed god.

Bast, Goddess of Beauty and Cats

Alignment: Chaotic good
Domains: Animals, Chaos, Good, Luck, Trickery
Symbol: Cat
Typical Worshippers: Nobles, women
Favored Weapons: Dagger or short sword

Bast appears as a woman with the head of a cat. She was originally a sun goddess and is believed to be the daughter of Ra. She is now the goddess of cats and beauty.

To those she favors, she gives great blessings, but her wrath is legendary, and she is often employed by Ra to punish the sinners and enemies of Khemit.

One sure way of drawing her vengeance is to harm a cat. This is a great transgression in the eyes of Bast and her followers, and is almost always punishable by death.

Buto, Goddess of Protection

Alignment: Lawful good
Domains: Law, Protection, Serpent [Good], Travel
Symbol: Cobra
Typical Worshippers: Guardians, fighters, merchants
Favored Weapon: Longsword

Buto appears as a cobra-headed humanoid in most instances, but has been known to take the form of a lioness-headed humanoid. Legend has it that Buto is the daughter of Atum, the first god of the universe. He created her as his eye. Her purpose was to search the universe for his lost sons Tefnut and Shu. Buto did find his sons, and Atum was so happy to see them that he cried. It is said that those tears made humans. As a reward, Atum placed Buto upon his head in the form of a cobra. There she would be feared and respected by all the gods and men.

Chons “the Wanderer,” God of the Moon, Time, and Knowledge

Alignment: Chaotic good
Domains: Chaos, Good, Travel, Trickery
Symbol: Lunar disc
Typical Worshippers: Musicians, bards, merchants, pranksters
Favored Weapons: Spear, short sword

Chons, also called Khonsu, is the son of Amun and Mut. He is regarded as a companion of Thoth and is a lover of games. He frequently plays one deity against another for sheer enjoyment. He appears as a human hawk-headed male in a close, tight-fitting robe wearing a skullcap topped by the crescent of the new moon. His head is shaven, save for the sidelock and punt beard.

Duamutef “Son of Horus,” God of Death

Alignment: Lawful good
Domains: Death [Good], Law, Protection, Strength
Symbol: Hawk spreading its wings over a lunar disc
Typical Worshippers: Guardians, embalmers

Favored Weapons: Light or heavy mace

Duamutef is the funerary god that presides over the death rites and funerals of mortals and gods alike. He is the son of Horus and appears as a great hawk-headed male.

Hamehit, Goddess of the Water, Fish, and Seas

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Animals, Bounty, Good, Luck, Water
Symbol: Fish
Typical Worshippers: Sailors, fishermen
Favored Weapons: Net, trident

Hamehit appears as a fish-headed woman of great stature. She is closely linked to and may be the daughter or wife of Hapy. It is her duty to supply the waters and seas with life. She is thus viewed by the Khemitians as a fertility goddess and is highly revered, for without the life she gives, the land would surely die.

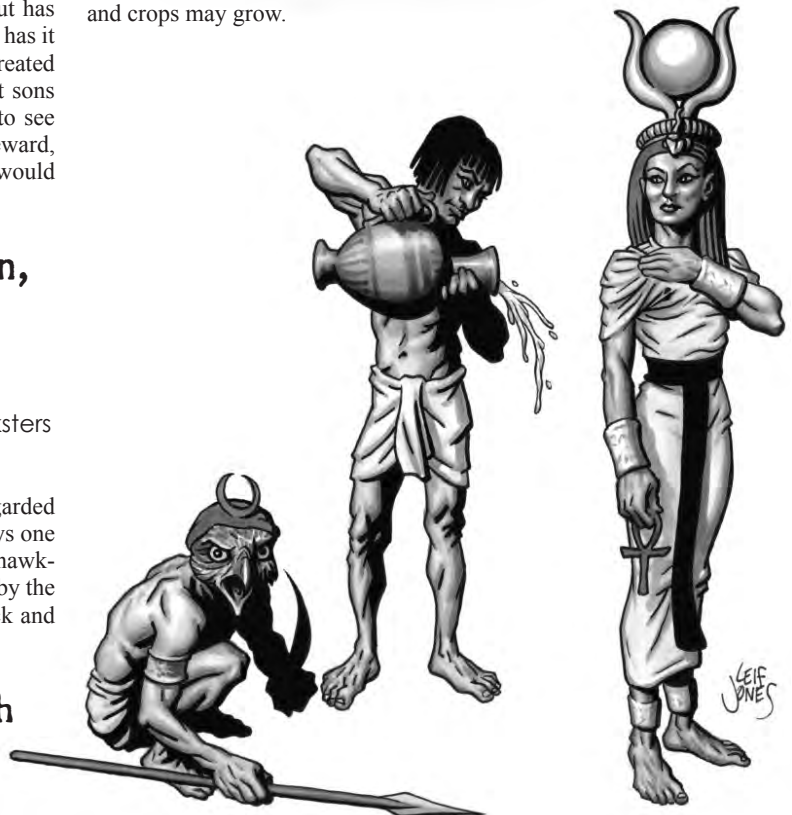
Hapy, God of the Rivers, Oceans, Streams, and Seas

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Animals, Bounty, Good, Protection, Travel, Water
Symbol: Sun disc surrounded by a fish
Typical Worshippers: Sailors, fishermen, those who depend on the sea
Favored Weapons: Net, spear

Hapy is known as the Lord of the Fishes and Birds, indicating that he provided Khemit with these creatures. In Khemit, he is revered, sometimes above Ra, because without him and his powers over the waters, the entire land of Khemit would die.

At a very early stage in his life, Hapy absorbed the essence of Nun, the watery mass from which Ra emerged. He is thought to be the husband of Nekhebet and Buto. When he absorbed the essence of Nun, he became husband to Nun's wife, Naunet, one of the primeval deities of Khemit.

When the rivers of Khemit flood, it is said to be Hapy pouring water from a pitcher in the heavens, so that the land of Khemit will be enriched and crops may grow.



Hathor, Goddess of Music and the Arts

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Good, Healing, Luck, Trickery
Symbol: Sun disc surrounded by horns
Typical Worshippers: Musicians, women
Favored Weapons: Dagger or quarterstaff

Hathor appears as a beautiful woman wearing lightly colored robes with a crown and the sun disc on her head.

Hathor is said to be the deity that brought dance and music into the world. Her clerics and priests often hold huge rituals consisting of music and dancing as their form of worship. She is also the goddess of inspiration and many come to her temple to ask her for aid in creation or guidance. In ancient Khemit, she was depicted as the mother-goddess, though that role has since been taken up by Isis.

Herakhty, God of the Morning and Sunrise

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Earth, Good, Protection, Sun
Symbol: Red sun disc wrapped by a cobra
Typical Worshippers: Farmers
Favored Weapons: Longsword, sickle

Herakhty rules over the sunrise and morning, and it is his duty to see that the sun comes up each morning. Because of this, he is sometimes linked with Nefertem. He is believed to be one of the sons of Horus, though only a handful of his worshippers believe and relate this story. Herakhty's worship throughout Khemit is fading, being replaced by the more popular Nefertem.

Heru "The Watcher," God of Law, Order, Rulership

Alignment: Lawful good
Domains: Law, Good, Knowledge, Strength, War
Symbol: Hawk spreading its wings over a solar disc
Typical Worshippers: Rulers, nobles, lawyers, fighters, warriors
Favored Weapons: Sickle, hammer, longsword

A hawk-headed humanoid, Heru is revered by many leaders and rulers throughout Khemit. Khemitians observe the hawk's quickness, intelligence, alertness, and staying power, and attribute these things to Heru, who in turn bestows them on the ruler of the land. It is said that nothing escapes the watchful eye of the true Heru, and no wrongdoer escapes his claws.

Isis, Goddess of Fertility and Magic

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Bounty, Good, Healing, Magic
Symbol: Ankh
Typical Worshippers: Women, mothers, wizards, clerics, sorcerers
Favored Weapons: None

Isis may be the oldest deity in Khemit and possibly the most important. She is the major goddess of the pantheon and is the mother-goddess of life and magic. She is never selfish and never cruel, and at one time she may have been more powerful than Ra and Osiris. She did after all trick Ra into giving her his truename, so that she might hold power over him.

She is revered as the great protector, a guide, a peacekeeper, and loregiver. Together with Thoth, Isis taught mortals the secret of magic. Powerful and compassionate, crafty but merciful, Isis represents all the qualities of women.

Isis is the daughter of Nut and Geb, and the sister to Osiris, Set, and Nephthys. She is the mother of Horus. In an earlier age, she was not only the wife of Osiris, but his counterpart as well, equal in all ways and power. When Osiris was slain by Set, it was she, with the aid of Thoth, who gathered all his body parts and brought him back to life.

Khnemu, God of Creation and Invention

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Earth, Good, Healing, Luck
Symbol: Lunar disc
Typical Worshippers: Craftsmen, artisans
Favored Weapons: None

Khnemu was the creator of people. He sculpted them out of clay and held them up so Ra could shine his life-giving rays of light upon them. He then placed them in the womb. He is the husband of Menhit and the father of Hike. Though Ptah is revered as the sole deity of creation, there is some speculation, especially among the followers of Khnemu, as to the validity of such a story.

Maat, Goddess of Truth and Law

Alignment: Lawful good
Domains: Good, Knowledge, Law, Strength
Symbol: Stone platform
Typical Worshippers: Judges, city officials, paladins, monks
Favored Weapons: Mace or morningstar

Maat appears as a woman wearing a crown surmounted by a huge ostrich feather. She represents the fundamental order of the universe, without which all of creation would perish. She bestowed the duty of maintaining the law and administering justice to the pharaohs.

In the underworld, Anubis weighs the heart of the deceased against the feather of Maat. If the heart is heavy (with evilness and wickedness) and outweighs the feather, the soul is fed to Amemt, the Eater of the Dead. If the scales balance (indicating honesty and truth), the soul is welcomed to the underworld by Osiris.

Maftet, Goddess of Protection and Healing

Alignment: Chaotic good
Domains: Good, Healing, Serpent [Good], Strength, Vermin
Symbol: Scorpion
Typical Worshippers: Healers, midwives, women, guardians
Favored Weapons: Longsword, trident

Maftet appears as a cheetah-headed woman with braided hair ending in scorpion tails. She occasionally dons a headdress of poisonous snakes. It is her duty to protect the people of the world from the poisonous bites and stings of snakes, scorpions, and other such creatures.

Meretseger the Protector

Alignment: Lawful good
Domains: Good, Law, Protection, Serpent [Good]
Symbol: Cobra wrapped around a sun disc
Typical Worshippers: Guardians, warriors, keepers of secrets
Favored Weapons: Longbow, short sword, dagger, quarterstaff

Meret, the cobra-headed goddess, was appointed guardian and protector of the Valley of the Gods by Ra. She lives on a nearby mountain where she ever watches those coming and going from the Valley. Anyone disturbing the tombs of the great pharaohs is subjected to her wrath, which usually takes the form of poisonous animals descending on the would-be tomb raiders. Though she is vigilant in her protection of the Valley of the Gods, should a person repent of his crimes against the Valley or tombs therein, Meret shows mercy on the person by healing the wounds suffered.

Mert, Goddess of Song and Joy

Alignment: Neutral good
Domains: Good, Healing, Knowledge, Trickery
Symbol: Raven on the sun disc
Typical Worshippers: Musicians, poets, artists, bards
Favored Weapons: Longbow, short sword, dagger, quarterstaff

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Mert is the goddess of song, music, and happiness. It is believed by her followers that she invented music and gave it to the Khemitians so they could share in her happiness. Her worship consists of her priests dancing and rejoicing as they sing praises to her.

Min “Protector of the Moon,” God of Male Fertility

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Good, Knowledge, Magic

Symbol: Twin-plumed crown

Typical Worshippers: Commoners

Favored Weapons: Flail, sickle, scythe

When a male fathers a child, it is the will and grace of Min that allows it to happen. It is his duty to ensure the propagation of Khemit continues, yet does not get out of control so as to cause overpopulation of the lands, thereby leading to a shortage of food, water, and other supplies.

Yet Min has a destructive side as well. His power over life-giving directly relates to supremacy over the enemies of Khemit, therefore Min is linked to both power and destruction.

Min appears as a bearded mummified human male wielding a flail. A small twin-plumed crown sits atop his head.

Nefertem, God of the Sun, Lord of the Sunrise, God of Healing

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Good, Healing, Knowledge, Plant, Sun

Symbol: Lotus blossom on a sun disc

Typical Worshippers: Healers, surgeons, women, sorcerers, wizards

Favored Weapon: Longsword

Nefertem appears as a lion-headed humanoid or as a handsome man with lotus blossoms in his hair. He had no father and mother, but was born of a lotus blossom. His duty as Lord of the Sunrise is to bring the sun into the sky each day to where Ra is located. He is sometimes referred to as the Lord of Flowers or Lord of Perfume (a reference to his birth). Due to his association with flowers and herbs, Nefertem is often revered as the god of healing, and has in fact on several occasions offered his assistance in the healing process to both mortals and gods alike.

Neith, Goddess of War and Wisdom, Guardian of the Dead

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Death [Good], Good, Knowledge, Law, War

Symbol: Crown and longbow

Typical Worshippers: Soldiers, hunters, fighters, paladins, loremasters, scholars, nobles

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff and longbow

Neith appears as a beautiful woman carrying a longbow and shield. She is revered as a goddess of war and guardian of the dead, the latter because she stands along with Isis, guarding the funerary bier of the pharaoh. The wrappings used to mummify a dead body are considered to be “gifts of Neith.” On occasion, she is employed by various deities to act as an arbitrator between two sides, her military prowess and impartiality rendering a fair and just verdict. She is the mother of Sebku.

Nekhbet, Goddess of Protection and War, Childbirth and Fertility

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Law, Protection, Strength, War

Symbol: Vulture with wings spread

Typical Worshippers: Warriors, women, farmers

Favored Weapons: Flail or mace

Nekhbet appears as a tall, shapely woman wearing a white crown. Her head is that of a vulture. In times of war, it is believed that Nekhbet appears on the battlefield hovering above the head of the pharaoh, holding her symbol and flail. She is seen as the pharaoh's personal protector, though lately she has been venerated as a goddess of birth, specializing in the protection of infants and children. It is said that Nekhbet instilled in parents the nurturing and protective qualities they show toward their young.

In some Khemitian legends, she is thought to be the wife of Hapy, while other legends link her with Horus. Though venerated as the goddess of protection and childbirth, she is still a formidable deity in the art of war.

Nephthys, Goddess of the Dead

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Chaos, Death [Good], Knowledge, Magic

Symbol: Full moon surrounded by horns

Typical Worshippers: Women

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff or dagger

Nephthys is the sister of Osiris and Isis and the wife of Set. Though she is the wife of Set, she did not support him in his battle with and slaying of Osiris. Secretly, she helped Isis find the pieces of Osiris' body. She is the mother of Anubis and stands at the head of the family of Khemitian funerary deities.

She is revered as the head of the household of the gods, and she extends this protection to the head woman of any Khemitian house. When a woman is in childbirth, it is believed that Nephthys stands at the head of the bed to offer comfort.

Nut, Goddess of the Night and Sky

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Air, Good, Knowledge, Protection, Trickery

Symbol: Stars twinkling on a black field

Typical Worshippers: Rogues, bards, guardians, paladins

Favored Weapon: Dagger

A naked woman painted with stars bending over the world, her hands and feet touching the four cardinal points. She is often shown being held up by Shu and standing over her husband-brother Geb. Nut is revered as the goddess of the sky. She is the daughter of Shu and Tefnut and the mother of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. She protects the world from darkness and evil.

Osiris, God of Fertility and the Dead

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Death [Good], Good, Law, Protection

Symbol: Crown

Typical Worshippers: Nobles, rulers, farmers, commoners

Favored Weapons: Crook or quarterstaff

Osiris appears as a green-skinned man wearing the raiment of a pharaoh. In power, Osiris is second only to his father, Ra, and is the leader of the gods on the Material Plane. He is the husband of Isis and the father of Horus. He makes his home in the underworld as the lord of the dead because, after Set killed him, Isis resurrected him, and even though he is a god, he can no longer dwell in the land of the living.

In the underworld, Osiris sits on a great throne, where he passes judgment on the newly arrived souls. All those who pass the tests of the underworld become worthy to enter.

Osiris remains in the underworld because Maat dictates that the dead, even dead gods, may not return to the land of the living.

Pakhut, Goddess of Strength

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Good, Strength

Symbol: Lioness

Typical Worshippers: Fighters, barbarians

Favored Weapon: Greatsword

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

Pakhut is seen as the epitome of strength and physical power. While she is feminine in appearance and movement, she has a ferocity and skill in combat that can rival the greatest warrior on the Material or heavenly planes.

Ra, God of the Sun and Pharaoh of the Gods

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Bounty, Good, Knowledge, Protection, Sun

Symbol: A serpent wrapped around a solar disc

Typical Worshippers: Rulers, nobles, scholars

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, club

Ra appears as a great humanoid with the head of a hawk. He is dressed in flowing robes and the headdress of the pharaoh. Ra is the king of the gods and all-father of creation. A sun god, he commands the chariot that rides across the sky during the day. A king, he is the patron of the pharaoh. Ra is the most central god of the Khemitian pantheon.

Ra's position in the pantheon is unusual. He is the only god, apart from Osiris, who is definitely said to be not on the earth. Ra, it is said, is an aging god, still powerful, but too old to deal with his children any longer, so he has gone exclusively to the sky to watch over the world. Horus rules over the earth and the gods in his stead, demonstrating the divine right of kingship.



Renenet "The Lady of the Robes," Goddess of Protection and Fortune

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Luck, Protection, Serpent [Good]

Symbol: Cobra wrapped around a crook

Typical Worshippers: Women, gamblers, guardians

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, short sword

Renenet appears as a cobra-headed goddess in long, flowing robes and is known as the "Nourishing Snake." It is her role, as protector and mother of all children, to give a newborn child its true name. The name the child's parents give is its earthly name; only Renenet and the child know its true name. Because she watches over a child until it is grown, gives it its true name, and nurtures it, she is also known as the goddess of fortune.

She not only is a goddess that nurtures and aids children, she also offers guidance and protection to rulers on their journey through the land of the dead. Because of this, and because Khemitians mummify their rulers, she is known as the "Lady of the Robes."

Seker, God of Death and Light

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Death [Good], Good, Protection, Strength, Sun

Symbol: Hawk-headed mummy holding an ankh

Typical Worshippers: Commoners

Favored Weapons: Halberd, longsword

Seker appears as a hawk-headed humanoid wielding a staff with symbols of power and death inscribed along the staff. He is the patron deity of the dead (the dark) and the living (the light).

In Khemitian religion, he is seen as the resurrected form of Osiris and is thus closely linked to him. They are not, in fact, the same deity, though many seem to believe as such. It is Seker's duty to oversee the funeral cults, burial grounds, and tombs, and he has recently taken it upon himself to destroy all evil on the Material Plane.

Serquet "She Who Breathes," Goddess of the Dead and Strength

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Death [Good], Good, Law, Strength, Vermin

Symbol: Scorpion on a lunar disc

Typical Worshippers: Fighters, guardians, necromancers

Favored Weapons: Dagger, quarterstaff

Serquet appears as a female, with the lower torso of a scorpion. She is one of the oldest Khemitian deities, and her worship has fallen by the wayside lately. It is her duty to guard the canopic jars in which viscera of the dead are dead. She also protects children and the elderly from the venomous bites and stings of various creatures of the world.

Seshat "the Female Scribe," Goddess of Writing, History, Time, Knowledge, and Architecture

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Luck, Magic

Symbol: Writing palette and brush

Typical Worshippers: Record-keepers, scribes, sages

Favored Weapon: Warhammer

Seshat appears as a woman dressed in a panther-skin dress wearing a seven-pointed crown. The crown has a pair of down-turned horns. She, as a lunar deity, is linked to and believed to be the wife and daughter of Thoth. Seshat invented writing and Thoth gave it to the Khemitians.

It is Seshat who records the time allotted to the pharaoh for which he rules Khemit. She also records the time allotted by the gods for each person to remain on the Material Plane.

Shu, Lord of the Air

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Air, Good, Law, Strength

Symbol: Ostrich feather

Typical Worshippers: Mystics, nobles, rulers, warriors

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff and mace (heavy or light)

Shu is the god of the air, and it was he alone that created the wind. His divine duty is to hold up the sky so that it does not come crashing down on the earth. He is the brother of Tefnut and was one of the first deities created at the beginning of time.

Tefnut, Goddess of Storms and Rivers

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Good, Protection, Sun, Water

Symbol: Lioness head

Typical Worshippers: Farmers, fishermen, sailors

Favored Weapon: Spear (any)

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Tefnut, along with her brother Shu, was the first deity at the beginning of time. She is the goddess of moisture and of the warm moist air near the rivers. It is she, along with Hapy, who floods the rivers and provides water to the dry lands of Khemit.

Tuart, Goddess of Fertility and Protection

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Magic, Plant, Protection

Symbol: Sickles

Typical Worshipers: Women, expectant mothers, midwives, farmers

Favored Weapons: Longsword, scimitar

Tuart is the goddess of maternity and childbirth, protector of women and children. Like Bes, she is both a fierce fighter as well as a popular deity who guards the mother and her newborn child.

She appears as a combination of a crocodile, a pregnant hippopotamus standing on her hind legs with large breasts, and a lion. Unlike the composite deity Ammut, her head and body are that of the hippo, her paws are that of the lion, and her back is the back of a crocodile.

It is her role as protector that led to her popularity in Khemit. She assists mothers in childbirth by scaring off demons that have come to cause harm to the mother or child.

She is also a goddess relating to fertility. She is the goddess of harvests as well as a goddess who helps with female sexuality and pregnancy. In this capacity, she is linked with the goddess Hathor. She is linked to Sebk (because of her crocodilian appearance) and is thought to be (or have been) the wife of Bes.

Gods of Balance

Aten, The Sun, The Sun Disc

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Air, Bounty, Fire, Strength, Sun

Symbol: Sun disc

Typical Worshipers: Clerics, sages, wizards

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, longsword

Aten appears as a solar disc of immense size and proportion, sometimes with wings, sometimes with arms and hands.

He is worshipped as a life-giver and is, in some areas of Khemit, more highly venerated than Ptah or Ra. He is thought to be the sole creator of life and the world, though Ptah's followers dispute such claims.

Bes, God of Protection, Happiness, Music, and War

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Luck, Protection, Strength, War

Symbol: Crown wrapped with a panther skin

Typical Worshipers: Fighters, rogues, bards

Favored Weapons: Longsword, short sword, light or heavy mace, dagger, knife

Bes appears as a leonine-faced dwarf wrapped in the skins of panthers, bears, or some other creature. He wears a plumed crown on his head. He is known as the "demonic fighter" because of his ferocity. It is said that he strangles bears, lions, snakes, and antelopes with his bare hands. He is friend to Ra and has helped his friend defend the land of the gods from many enemies.

Bes extends his protection not only to the pharaoh but to women and children as well. He is said to protect both women and children during childbirth by driving away evil spirits that could kill the mother or newborn.

His use as a god of protection came to be a sign of happiness and humor, as he drove away evil and ill, thus he became a god of music and happiness. When a child smiles for no reason, it is said to be Bes pulling faces at the child to make him or her laugh.

Despite his fun-loving nature, Bes is revered as a god of war in parts of Khemit. His ferocious nature and leonine features lend to this belief.

Geb, God of the Earth

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Earth, Plant, Protection, Strength

Symbol: A white goose

Typical Worshipers: Farmers, druids

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Geb appears as a tall, well-muscled man wearing a white crown. As the god of the earth, Geb is a very important deity to the land of Khemit. He is the son of Shu and Tefnut, the wife of Nut, and the father of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. Geb wears a golden crown that allows him to summon any creatures of the earth to fight for him. His staff can slay all but the greatest of gods. His laughter is said to be felt on the Material Plane in the form of earthquakes. Geb is one of the gods who watches the weighing of the heart in the Judgment Hall of Osiris.

Horus the Avenger

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Domains: Destruction, Law, Sun, War

Symbol: Falcon or hawk

Typical Worshipers: Soldiers, warriors, fighters, those seeking vengeance and retribution

Favored Weapons: Longsword and lance

His most common form is that of falcon-headed man, but he is also shown as a falcon, a lion with the head of a falcon, or a sphinx.

Horus is the son of Osiris (though in some Khemitian beliefs he is the son of Ra). He is the protector and guide to the current Pharaoh of Khemit, and it is believed that some time in the past, Horus assumed his earthly form and ruled as Pharaoh for a time. Horus is the patron deity of young men and emblazons the ideal of the son who grows up to become a righteous and honorable person.

When Osiris was slain by Set, Horus took up arms against his uncle, and to this day still battles him to avenge his father's death and to ensure the safety of Khemit.

Horus allows lawful neutral paladins, though instead of smite evil, a paladin of Horus receives smite chaos. Paladins of Horus are the embodiment of oaths and vengeance.

Khebsenef "Son of Horus," God of Death

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Domains: Death [Good and Evil], Law, Protection, Strength

Symbol: Falcon

Typical Worshipers: Guardians, surgeons, physicians

Favored Weapon: Hammer

Khebsenef is a falcon-headed deity that watches over the soul of one who has died. He is believed to be one of the sons of Horus and is thus linked to Hapy, Duamutef, and Amset.

Menu, God of War

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Strength, War

Symbol: Solar disc and uraeus (cobra)

Typical Worshipers: Fighters, warriors

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, longsword, light or heavy mace, flail

Also called Mentu, he is a falcon-headed humanoid crowned with a twin-plumed solar disc. Menu is the embodiment of war. He alone taught the world the art of fighting and war. He is a great general and military leader among the gods. On rare occasions, he has taken an earthly form and helped Khemit drive its enemies from the lands.

Ptah, Creator of the Universe

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Domains: Air, Bounty, Earth, Law, Magic, Sun

Symbol: Apis bull

Typical Worshipers: Craftsmen, artisans

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff, longsword, dagger

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

A man with a punt beard, wrapped like a mummy, with his hands free and gripping a great staff covered in symbols of life and power. It was Ptah that crafted the universe from nothing and created all of the gods of the Khemitian pantheon.

According to one tradition (the northern Khemitian creation myth), Ptah was the primary motive force in creation, thinking and speaking the cosmos into existence. (Elsewhere, he was said to have created the cosmos out of mud.) In this tradition, propagated by his priesthood, it was Ptah who was pre-eminent among the gods. He was said to have invented the 'opening of the mouth' ceremony restoring the faculties of life to the corpse by performing it on the mouths of the gods when he created them.

Sekhmet "Lady of Pestilence," Goddess of the Sun, the Destructor

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Healing, War

Symbol: Sun disc with serpent entwined around it

Typical Worshipers: Surgeons, doctors, healers, warriors

Favored Weapons: Longbow, shortbow

The lion-headed goddess Sekhmet is thought to be the wife of Ptah and mother of Nefertem (though the motherhood of Nefertem is in dispute — Bast and Buto are touted as his mother in their respective cities). Associated with war and retribution, she is said to use arrows to pierce her enemies with fire, her breath being the hot desert wind as her body takes on the glare of the midday sun. She represents the destructive force of the sun.

According to Khemitian history/legend, she came into being when Hathor was sent to the Material Plane to take vengeance on humanity. She was the one who slaughtered humankind and drank their blood.

As mother of Nefertem, she is the healer of the gods. Many of her followers and priests are skilled surgeons and doctors.



Thoth, God of Knowledge and Magic

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Knowledge, Luck, Magic, Travel

Symbol: Ibis

Typical Worshipers: Scholars, sages, travelers

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Thoth appears as a humanoid with the head of an ibis. In his hands he holds a scribe's palette and stylus. Khemitians believe him to be the son of Ra, though it is believed among Thoth's devout followers that he created himself through the power of language. He is the sole creator of magic, the inventor of writing and speech, and the messenger of the gods. He is

also the divine record keeper and acts as mediator when a quarrel erupts among his fellow deities.

It is Thoth who questions the souls of the dead before their heart is weighed against the feather of Maat.

Gods of Evil

Aapep the Black Serpent, The Destroyer

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Death [Evil], Destruction, Evil, Serpent [Evil]

Symbol: Black coiled serpent

Typical Worshipers: Evil power-seeking humanoids, assassins, cults

Favored Weapons: Whip, dagger, longsword

Aapep is the ancient spirit of evil and destruction that dwells in eternal darkness. He appears as a great black serpent several miles in length. He spends each day attempting to devour the great Sun Boat that Ra sails across the heavens. It is Set's task to battle Aapep and keep him from destroying the boat. When Aapep wins the battle, the world is plunged into darkness for a short time as he devours the Sun Boat. Set then uses his weapons to slice open the belly of Aapep, allowing the Sun Boat to escape.

Ament the Devourer, Eater of Hearts, Eater of the Dead

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Death [Evil], Destruction, Evil, Magic

Symbol: Bleeding heart and Scales of Justice

Typical Worshipers: Evil humanoids

Favored Weapons: Dagger, knives

Ament has the head of a crocodile, the body of a leopard, and the hindquarters of a hippo.

She sits in the Judgment Hall of Osiris and devours the soul and heart of any that is unworthy to cross into the underworld. A soul devoured by Ament can never be recovered or revived. It is the final death. She is, by some, considered to be the protector of Osiris.

Sebk, God of Evil, Betrayal, and Water

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Evil, Trickery, Water

Symbol: Crocodile

Typical Worshipers: Sailors, fishermen

Favored Weapons: Scimitar, longsword, dagger

Sebk appears as a crocodile-headed humanoid and is considered the god who controls all the waters of the world. He is worshipped out of fear and appeasement to ensure the fertility of the crops of Khemit and the success of the fishermen of Khemit.

Sebk is revered for his ferocity and speed. He is the god, as written in ancient Khemitian legends, who caught the four sons of Horus in a net as they emerged from the waters in a lotus bloom.

Sebk is the epitome of evil and an adversary to Osiris and Horus. He is also considered to be a cohort of Horus, as he aided Horus in recovering the parts of Osiris from the waters where Set had discarded them. Later, he turned on Horus and aided Set in his eighty-year war with Horus.

Set, God of Evil and the Night

Alignment: Lawful evil

Domains: Death [Evil], Destruction, Evil, Knowledge, Law, Serpent [Evil]

Symbol: Coiled cobra

Typical Worshipers: Evil power-seeking humanoids, evil monks, assassins

Favored Weapons: Cobra staff, Spear of Darkness, poisoned weapons

DUNES OF DESOLATION



Set is a greater god, worshiped on many planes in many forms. He most often appears as a scaled humanoid with the head of a jackal. He is utterly dedicated to the orderly spread of evil and oppression. His symbol is the coiled cobra, though any snake can be used to represent his power. His temples are filled with enormous serpents, always poisonous. His skin is poisonous to the touch. Organized groups of assassins are known to be dedicated to his worship. His priests carry staves worked on one end into the head of a cobra.

The cobra head is normally tipped with steel fangs coated with poison. His clerics also often carry a stylized black spear, representing the *Spear of Darkness* he carries. Many of his worshipers tattoo themselves with serpents or cobras.

New Domains

The following domains are unique to the Pharonic Pantheon. Spells marked with an asterisk are described in **Chapter 7: Spells**.

Bounty Domain

The Bounty domain reflects the bountiful aspect of the waters of the great river Nylle and the sun disk of Ra that are central to life in the lands of Khemit. Note that the Bounty domain is not the same as the elemental domain of water, though there is some overlap.

Granted Powers: Your touch restores and enhances life. In addition, you treat Knowledge (nature) and Survival as class skills.

Create Water (Sp): You can use *create water* at will as a spell-like ability.

Blessing of Life (Su): At 8th level, you can emit a 20-foot aura of life for a number of rounds per day equal to your cleric level. Allies within your aura receive a +4 sacred bonus to saving throws against death effects; in addition, any ally within your aura automatically stabilizes if she drops below 0 hit points. The bonus increases by +2 for every six levels beyond 8th. These rounds need not be used consecutively.

Domain Spells: 1st—*goodberry*; 2nd—*lesser restoration*; 3rd—*create food and water*; 4th—*control water*; 5th—*breath of life*; 6th—*heroes' feast*; 7th—*regeneration*; 8th—*summon nature's ally*; 9th—*miracle*.

<2>Protection Domain

Gods of this domain offer slightly different domain spells than those detailed in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, focusing more on magical warding than on physical resistance. Elemental protection in Khemit is left to the domain of the gods of those elements.

Granted Powers: As the normal Protection domain powers detailed in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

Domain Spells: 1st—*shield of faith*; 2nd—*shield other*; 3rd—*magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law*; 4th—*stoneskin*; 5th—*dispel chaos/evil/good/law*; 6th—*antimagic field*; 7th—*repulsion*; 8th—*protection from spells*; 9th—*antipathy*.

Repose Domain

Death in Khemit is not viewed as inherently evil. Rather, it is a passage to the afterlife. Those of the Repose domain — sometimes called the Death [Good] domain — help ensure the passage of the spirit through the Duat to the Throne of Osiris, where they are judged and the worthy are allowed to enter. Priests of this domain are held in high regard in Khemit and officiate over the elaborate embalming ceremonies common in the kingdom.

Granted Powers: As the normal Repose domain powers detailed in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

Domain Spells: 1st—*deathwatch*; 2nd—*consecrate*; 3rd—*speak with dead*; 4th—*death ward*; 5th—*raise dead*; 6th—*heal*; 7th—*resurrection*; 8th—*clone*; 9th—*true resurrection*.

Serpent Domain (Good and Evil)

Serpents in Khemit are both a symbol of nobility and of evil. Thus, the serpent domain has both good and evil aspects. The great black serpent Aapep embodies all that is evil in serpents, attempting to devour the very sun itself. Buto, the serpent-headed god, on the other hand, is a great guardian and protector, as are Maftet and Renenet. Even the *uraeus* rod — a cobra-headed rod — is a symbol of nobility in Khemit.

Granted Powers: Priests of the serpent domain have the option of spontaneously casting a *summon nature's ally* (serpents only) spell of the equivalent level in addition to the ability to spontaneously casting cure or inflict spells. In addition, you receive a +2 profane or sacred bonus (as appropriate) to saves against poison.

Inhibit Poison (Sp): A creature you touch is affected as though under the effects of *delay poison* for one round. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

Spit of the Viper (Su): Beginning at 8th level, you gain the ability to make a ranged touch at a range of 30 feet. If you successfully strike the target, it's affected as though you successfully cast *poison*. The save DC is 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Wisdom modifier, and also include a +2 sacred or profane bonus, as appropriate for your alignment. You may use this ability 3 times per day, plus an additional use at 1st level and every three levels thereafter. In addition, you are now immune to all poisons.

Domain Spells (Good): 1st—*protection from serpents**; 2nd—*delay poison*; 3rd—*neutralize poison*; 4th—*sticks to snakes**; 5th—*cloak of serpents**; 6th—*regeneration*; 7th—*wall of serpents**; 8th—*animal shapes* (serpents only); 9th—*shapechange* (serpents only).

Domain Spells (Evil): 1st—*hypnotism*; 2nd—*summon swarm* (serpents only); 3rd—*poison*; 4th—*sticks to snakes**; 5th—*serpent plague**; 6th—*serpent hands**; 7th—*destruction*; 8th—*animal shapes* (serpents only); 9th—*shapechange* (serpents only).

Vermin Domain

The desert of Khemit is full of vermin — from the scarab beetle to the scorpion. These creatures feature prominently in the mythology of the region and as such several deities control this domain.

Granted Powers: You gain a +4 sacred or profane bonus (as appropriate) to saves against vermin special abilities, including poison. At 10th level, this bonus increases to +8.

Vermin Mind I (Su): Your spells with the mind-affecting descriptor affect vermin normally, despite their immunity. If the spell allows a saving throw, the vermin target receives a +4 bonus; if the spell normally does not allow a saving throw, the vermin gains one anyway.

Vermin Mind II (Su): Beginning at 8th level, for a number of rounds per day equal to half your cleric level, you are immune to mind-affecting effects. Activating this ability is an immediate action. The rounds need not be used consecutively.

FAITHS OF THE DESERT

Domain Spells: 1st—*spider climb*; 2nd—*summon swarm*; 3rd—*poison*; 4th—*giant vermin*; 5th—*insect plague*; 6th—*web*; 7th—*creeping doom*; 8th—*animal shapes* (except Small or Medium vermin only); 9th—*summon monster IX* (any vermin between CR 13 and 15, such as black scorpion [*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2], shipwrecker crab [*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3], chain worm, or giant sea slug [*The Tome of Horrors Complete*]). Apply the fiendish or celestial template as normal.).

The Anunnaki

The tribes of the eastern Ashurian Desert and Zagros Mountains still follow the gods of their ancestors, the Anunnaki that once dominated the city-states from the mountains to the distant sea. Now only a handful of these desert kingdoms remain that cling to the old ways, but across the Red Waste at night can still be heard the ululating rituals and sacrificial screams from atop moonlit ziggurats and in shadowed mountain passes.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of gods of the Anunnaki are worshipped. Many of these are minor local gods or deities associated with very narrow and specific concepts. This section details only the most important gods of the Anunnaki, who were worshipped almost universally across the Ashurian Desert region.

The Anunnaki can be roughly divided into two groups: The older, or primeval gods, and the younger gods. Apsu and Tiamat were the first gods, both originating from a time when the world was a chaotic, watery abyss. From their union was born two great monsters, Lahmu and Lahamu, who in turn engendered Anshar and Kishar, the sky and the earth. Anshar and Kishar's son, Anu, was the first of the younger gods. He sired Ea, Ishtar, and Erishkigal. However, after aeons even Anu grew old, and bestowed kingship of heaven upon his grandson Marduk.

The Major Gods of the Anunnaki

Anu, The Father and King of the Gods

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Air, Law, Magic, Protection

Symbol: Golden bull's head

Typical Worshipers: Kings, nobles, exorcists

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

This god, besides being Father and King of the Gods, is also God of the Sky, and the source of order in the Universe. He appears as an old, bearded man, wearing loose fitting garments. Ishtar is sometimes his consort. Anu is the great-grandson of Apsu and Tiamat. Anu is a distant god who has retired to the upper heavens and leaves the affairs of the universe to Marduk and the younger generation of gods.

Apsu, The Primeval Father

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Chaos, Knowledge, Magic, Water

Symbol: Deep blue wave

Typical Worshipers: Magicians, sages, mystics

Favored Weapons: Warhammer

The primeval god, the underworld ocean, and the father of the skies and of the earth, who in turn fathered the lesser gods. After a time, Apsu and Tiamat thought that their divine offspring had become too troublesome and sought to slay them. However, Ea discovered their plans, cast a sleeping spell on Apsu and killed him. Apsu is now considered a dead deity.

Ea, The God of Wisdom and Magic

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Earth, Healing, Knowledge, Magic

Symbol: Green tentacle

Typical Worshipers: Exorcists, healers, craftsmen, wizards

Favored Weapons: Trident, dagger

Ea knows everything and is regarded as the source and patron of wisdom, magic, and medical science. He is one of the creators of mankind,

towards whom he is usually well-disposed, and their instructor who taught them arts and crafts.

It was Ea who discovered Tiamat's designs to kill her offspring, and managed to kill her consort Apsu. He forms with Anu and Marduk an important and powerful triad of gods. Ea is shown on the seals with streams of water and fish flowing from his shoulders.

Erishkigal, The Queen of the Underworld

Alignment: Lawful evil

Domains: Death, Earth, Evil, Law

Symbol: Grey crowned skull

Typical Worshipers: Death priests, assassins, evil nobles, tomb robbers, necromancers

Favored Weapons: Scimitar, sickle

Erishkigal is the goddess of death, said to be the sister of Ishtar. Her abode is Irkalla, a region of darkness and dust from which no-one returns. Erishkigal appears as a beautiful, naked, young woman. She is dark and violent, ruling the Underworld with her consort Nergal. As ruler over the shades, Erishkigal receives the mortuary offerings made to the dead.

Ishtar, The Goddess of Love and War

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Animal, Destruction, Protection, War

Symbol: Bloodstained female statuette

Typical Worshipers: Prostitutes, concubines, eunuchs, warriors

Favored Weapons: Scimitar, longbow

The daughter of Anu, Ishtar is the goddess of passion. In her aspect as a love goddess, she is the mate of Tammuz. In her war aspect she is considered a heartless goddess who destroys her lovers and mates and sends disease to her enemies. Temple prostitution is a part of her worship. Ishtar appears as a beautiful, naked, young woman with wings, at times wearing a helmet with ostrich plumes. She is often accompanied by a lion. She is armed with a scimitar and bow.

Kingu, The General of Chaos

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Strength

Symbol: Red barbed whip

Typical Worshipers: Evil warriors, kings, raiders, slavers

Favored Weapons: Two-bladed sword, whip

Kingu was a demon lord who became the husband of Tiamat and general of Chaos after Apsu was killed. Tiamat gave him the Tablets of Destiny and intends to make him lord of the gods. He appears as a young, bearded man, armed with a bow and a sword of cold.

Marduk, The General of Law

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Air, Good, Law, Strength

Symbol: Silver lightning bolt

Typical Worshipers: Warriors, generals, charioteers

Favored Weapons: Heavy mace, longbow

Marduk, also known as Enlil, is the son of Ea and serves as Anu's general in the battle against Chaos. He is a god of light and life, and commands lightning and thunderstorms. Marduk appears as a young man with a beard, wearing a short kilt, and a horned helmet. He rides a chariot pulled by four horses, and is armed with a dagger, bow and mace.

Namtar, The Herald of Evil Destiny

Alignment: Lawful evil

Domains: Evil, Law, Luck, Trickery

Symbol: Shattered clay tablet

Typical Worshipers: Judges, evil viziers, oracles, sorcerers

Favored Weapons: Quarterstaff

Namtar is a demon lord, regarded as the bringer of disease and pestilence. He represents fate, destiny in its evil aspect, and acts as the herald or messenger and chief minister of Ereshkigal and Nergal.

Nergal, The God of Plague

Alignment: Neutral evil

Domains: Air, Destruction, Evil, War

Symbol: White locust

Typical Worshipers: Warlords, plague priests, evil cultists

Favored Weapons: Heavy mace, longsword

Nergal is an evil god who brings war, pestilence, fever and devastation. He is the consort of Ereshkigal. He is armed with a mace, bow, and a dancing sword. Nergal appears as a mature man wearing a kilt, a helmet, and carrying two lion-headed staves.

Sin, The Moon

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Air, Knowledge, Magic, Travel

Symbol: Moon disc

Typical Worshipers: Astrologers, scribes, pilgrims, travelers

Favored Weapons: Falchion

The moon god Sin is the chief astral deity, father of Utu, and lord of the calendar and fixing the seasons. He is also a god of travel. Sin appears as a mature man with a long black beard.

Tammuz, The God of Fertility and Rebirth

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Earth, Good, Healing, Plant

Symbol: Yellow corn-spike

Typical Worshipers: Farmers, peasants, landowners

Favored Weapons: Light flail, sickle

Tammuz is a god of vegetation and the symbol of death and rebirth in nature. He is the son of Ea and husband of Ishtar. Each year he dies in the hot summer and his soul is taken by the gallu-demons to the underworld. Woe and desolation fall upon the earth, and Ishtar leads the world in lamentation. She then descends to the netherworld, ruled by Ereshkigal, and after many trials succeeds in bringing him back, as a result of which fertility and joy return to the earth. Tammuz appears as a handsome young man, wearing a kilt.

Tiamat, The Primeval Mother

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Destruction, Evil

Symbol: Black dragon claw

Typical Worshipers: Evil warriors, sorcerers, nobles

Favored Weapons: Dagger, longsword

Tiamat, the glistening one, is a huge, bloated female dragon that personifies the saltwater ocean, the water of Chaos. She is also the primordial mother of all that exists, including the gods themselves. She mated with Apsu, the personification of the freshwater abyss that lies beneath the Earth. From their union, saltwater with freshwater, the first pair of gods were born. When Apsu was slain by Ea, Tiamat flew into a rage and wanted to avenge her husband. She created an army of monstrous creatures and placed them under the leadership of her new consort and general Kingu, who is also her son.

Utu, The Sun

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Domains: Fire, Law, Sun, War

Symbol: Sun disc

Typical Worshipers: Holy warriors, judges, government officials

Favored Weapons: Battleaxe, morningstar

The sun god is a judge, a lawgiver, a warrior, and the god of wisdom. He appears as a tall man, wearing a robe, and carrying a saw with which he "cuts decisions".

Foreign and Ancient Gods

The following divinities are not part of the Anunnaki, but they are found in parts of the same region. They are foreign and/or ancient gods with minor cults scattered across the Ashurian Desert and surrounding mountains and wastelands.

Baal-Zag, The Howler in Darkness

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Beast, Blood, Strength

Symbol: Three-faloned claw

Typical Worshipers: Evil rangers, cannibals, were-creatures

Favored Weapons: None

Baal-Zag is a dark god of bloodlust, cannibalism and bestiality. He is often pictured in the shape of a wolf- or jackal-headed humanoid. Worshipers are often granted the "blessing" of lycanthropy from Baal-Zag. Rites to Baal-Zag are always performed during the nights of the full moon, when the consumption of raw human flesh is said to bestow strength and invulnerability to weapons upon the faithful for the coming days and weeks.

Nhakhramat of the Emerald Flame

Alignment: Lawful evil

Domains: Knowledge, Magic, Serpents [Evil]

Symbol: Four-armed woman

Typical Worshipers: Mystics, sacred warriors, those seeking the awakening of latent powers

Favored Weapons: Falchion

A mysterious deity depicted as a shapely, four-armed woman surrounded by a halo of emerald flames, holding an ornate oil lamp in each of her hands. One of the rites associated with her is the drinking of serpent poison to "awaken" latent powers in the worshipper.

Shupnikkurat

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Evil, Earth, Plant

Symbol: Red moon disc

Typical Worshipers: Druids, mothers, fertility cultists

Favored Weapons: Sickle

Usually identified with the universal great mother goddess, Shupnikkurat is associated with fertility, birth, and wild animals. Rites are usually performed at night, under star-lit skies, and involve orgiastic feasts accompanied by wild music and ecstatic dancing. The priests and priestesses, who are said to be unusually fanatical, are naked but smeared with blood and mud during these events. By some theologians, Shupnikkurat is seen as a savage and uncivilized aspect of Ishtar.

Yaazotsh, The Eater of The Dead

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Air, Death, Protection

Symbol: Tattered black wings

Typical Worshipers: Death priests, druids, nomads

Favored Weapons: Dagger

Despite certain sinister aspects, the vulture-god Yaazotsh is generally considered benevolent by both civilized and barbaric peoples. His mute priests wear vulture-masks and feathered robes, and it is their sacred duty to carry away the corpses of the recently dead (in cultures that bury their dead, the priests of Yaazotsh claim only those who are too poor to pay for their own funerals). After suitable preparations, the corpses are placed on the carrion altars of Yaazotsh where they are consumed by flocks of vultures, preventing the corpses from rising as undead. Such altars are always placed far away from settlements, due to the unavoidable stench and diseases. Some claim that the vulture-masked priests are actually ghouls who carry away and eat the dead, leaving only token offerings on the altars of Yaazotsh. This has yet to be confirmed, however.

Child's Play

Take heed what you wish for dear child, for misery is only sleeping while joy is awake. The turn of a phrase can transform the most delightful dream into the most terrifying nightmare. Choose your words wisely lest you rue them forever.

Child's Play is a 5th level rescue mission set in a cursed dollhouse populated by childhood monsters and constructs as well as the tormented souls condemned to haunt it for all eternity. The fate of a young girl hangs in the balance as an evil creature bent on exacting revenge and the forces set loose by a cruel genie centuries earlier threaten to consign her and her would-be rescuers to eternal imprisonment in an accursed house of horrors.

Adventure Background

No being is as capricious as a bored genie. Ennui gnaws on the souls of mortals yet utterly devours those that live forever. During the waning days of the efreet city of Iljanna, tedium conspired with cruelty to give birth to a frightful creation. Infernalvist, an efreeti malik, loathed his dull existence in his race's rapidly decaying city. Forever banished from his elemental home by his immortal kin for an unforgiveable transgression, he despised spending his days in exile surrounded by worthless mortals and the very creatures that condemned him to his wretched fate. Even the wanton excesses and cruel indulgences that amused him in the past grew stale and trite over the passing decades. Monotony tormented Infernalvist for as long as he could remember until he overheard a passing comment from a stranger.

"Nothing makes me happier than to see someone's wish come true," the man mumbled to himself as he watched a child play with a newfound toy.

The noble sentiment struck a chord with the despondent genie, though not for the obvious reasons. His demeanor did not change from any desire to transform someone else's life for the better. Instead, he wanted to turn the man's statement on its ear and use others as his playthings. Infernalvist never granted anyone's wishes before, but that was about to change as he contrived a wicked plan to twist joy into horror. The efreeti commissioned his slaves to build a furnished, miniaturized replica of his palatial estate from wood and stone. When they completed the construction, he forced his servants to make wishes that allowed him to animate selected objects and to shape monsters to stalk the facsimile. Using a portion of his own blood, he created a homunculus named **Ezreki** to act as the device's caretaker and a **fire elemental** to serve as its guardian. Infernalvist called his finished creation The House of a Thousand Delights, though its victims experienced nothing but horror and terror.

To set his devious scheme into motion, the crafty genie cajoled indigents, prostitutes and addicts from Iljanna's streets to come to his palace to see a wondrous sight that would forever change their lives. Though they were desperate, no one trusted the efreeti, so Infernalvist overcame their inherent suspicion by showering them with expensive gifts and feigned interest in improving their lot in life. The allure of instant wealth combined with his relentless coercion proved too much for nearly all to resist. They fell for his elaborate charade and followed him to his residence. For the rest of the day, the unwitting victim basked in the trappings of luxury and the syrupy flattery of an immortal being. When the sun rose the following morning, Infernalvist offered his guest a proposition. They could return to the streets and resume their former life, or he could grant them their wish to spend the rest of their life in a stately mansion like his. Too few realized the danger of trifling with a conniving genie. They succumbed to temptation and wished to remain in a grand palace. He eagerly granted their wish which teleported them into an extradimensional space that simultaneously coexisted with his miniaturized house of horrors. Once inside, Infernalvist watched with salacious delight, as the monsters and constructs within claimed another hapless victim. To further enhance his pleasure, he crafted The House of a Thousand Delights' extradimensional space to allow only

genies to see what is happening within that space. Infernalvist's human slaves saw nothing when they looked inside the facsimile prompting them to believe — if they had not already done so — that their master was insane when he would howl in ecstasy while observing what they thought was an empty replica. The efreeti's quest for amusement cost hundreds of lives, and in the end his callous disregard led to his undoing.

While an enemy army routed the genies and their mercenary force outside the city walls, Iljanna's citizens and slaves took matters into their own hands inside its walls. Aided by a network of spies and traitors among the ranks of Iljanna's mercenaries, the people rebelled against their hated efreet masters. Centuries of oppression and injustice fueled their wrath, and none felt their sting more than the sadistic Infernalvist. Unable to return to his homeland, the haughty exile chose to stand his ground and not bend in the face of an angry throng. Though he inflicted many casualties, the enraged mob overwhelmed and destroyed him. With Infernalvist now dead, chaos reigned in his opulent palace. The jubilant victors sacked the residence with reckless abandon. Every valuable object vanished in the blink of an eye, and The House of a Thousand Delights was no exception much to the dismay of Infernalvist's former slaves who feared that the strange replica that amused their master so greatly held some dark secret.

In the centuries since Iljanna's downfall, Infernalvist's miniature palace passed through many hands, though no one knew what it truly was. In fact, the wealthy families that owned it mistakenly believed that it was a large dollhouse. They painted the rooms in pastoral colors and decorated the interior with curtains, silk and lace. Many generations of young girls played with what they believed to be a toy without having even the slightest inkling of its sinister past.

Lakta Jamar

It remained that way until it became the plaything of **Lakta Jamar**, a ten-year-old girl unlike any other that played with The House of a Thousand Delights. In addition to being precocious and blessed with a vivid imagination, genie blood courses through her veins, though she knows nothing of her outsider heritage. Because of her unusual lineage, Lakta was the first child to sense that there was something strange about her dollhouse. She told her mother, Dima, that she sometimes heard terrible screams and saw objects and creatures move within the rooms. Her mother dismissed the young girl's claims as the product of an overactive imagination. Despite these odd occurrences and her growing trepidation, Lakta spends most of her free time playing with her beloved dollhouse.

Jumia Rassad

Lakta's claims about the dollhouse did not escape the notice of her intrusive and alluring tutor, **Jumia Rassad**. She believed her pupil, prompting her to research the matter further. She soon happened upon a description of The House of a Thousand Delights at Hamsha University, causing her to believe that Lakta's dollhouse was in actuality Infernalvist's prized creation. The unexpected discovery suited her plans perfectly. Unbeknownst to Lakta's family, Jumia is a young **kharam** (see **Chapter 6**) that has an old score to settle with her current employer. Lakta's father, Hassan, a personal bodyguard of the regional abaya thwarted an assassination attempt by Jumia's mother ten years earlier when Jumia was just a small child. Hassan and his fellow bodyguards uncovered her plot and slew the murderous kharam in process. On that fateful day, Jumia began planning her revenge against Hassan and his entire family. Ten years later, thanks to her surreptitious find her plan appears poised to come to fruition. By giving the little girl a ring that grants a single wish, she could make Lakta vanish without a trace, depriving Hassan of his only child and paving the way for her to take the rest of his family and fortune away from him.

Family Affair

Jumia is not the only one keeping a secret. **Dima Jamar**, Lakta's mother, also hides one of her own. A few weeks before she married Hassan, Dima began having second thoughts about her upcoming wedding. She walked the streets for hours, internally debating what to do when she came upon a handsome and charming man with an otherworldly quality that she found irresistible. They met several times afterward until Dima's conscience got the better of her. She ended the affair and never saw the mysterious man again. A few days after her wedding, she realized that she was pregnant with Lakta. Convinced that the mysterious stranger fathered her child, Dima did not announce her pregnancy for several months to avoid arousing any suspicions that Hassan was not the father. When she gave birth to Lakta the newborn seemed radiant, though Hassan begrudgingly acknowledged that the infant looked nothing like him or anyone in his family. Still the child's bubbly personality and incredible beauty captured his heart despite his doubts about Lakta's true parentage. His suspicions put a heavy strain on their marriage. They are still together solely for Lakta's sake.

Jumia's Revenge

At an early age, Jumia realized that the loss of a loved one can be a fate worse than death. The young kharam learned this lesson well when Hassan killed her mother, so she planned to return the favor by taking Hassan's young daughter from him. However, that was before she discovered the dollhouse's long-lost mystery. She knew that The House of a Thousand Delights added a new element to her plot — uncertainty. Jumia decided that not knowing what happened to a beloved family member was indeed worse than losing them.

Jumia's plan seemed flawless. Using a magic ring she stole from a family acquaintance, she cajoled Lakta into using the ring's last *wish* spell to allow her to live in her dollhouse in perpetuity, just as Infernal fist convinced so many others to do centuries earlier. At that moment, the kharam's perfect scheme unexpectedly unraveled. Lakta's secret genie heritage prevented her body from entering The House of a Thousand Delights. Instead, it transplanted her brain into a doll while channeling her heart, lungs and liver into other inanimate objects randomly placed throughout the house. Meanwhile her soul remained with her physical body in a virtually lifeless state. The unexpected outcome startled Jumia. Nevertheless, Lakta showed no outward signs of life so Jumia thought she succeeded in killing Lakta even though she was not transported into The House of a Thousand Delights as she expected.

When Lakta's parents found her, they immediately called for assistance. Despite the best efforts of local healers and magical potions, she remained motionless and unresponsive appearing as if she were dead. She had no pulse, no breath and no signs of brain activity, but she remained warm to the touch and retained her color. Lakta's mysterious dilemma baffled everyone, especially Jumia who realized that something was terribly amiss. The only thing that the experts agreed upon was that every moment spent in this condition lessened the chances of her ever emerging and resuming her previous life. Lakta's desperate parents summoned adventurers from around the city in the hopes of finding answers or a miracle.

Adventure Synopsis

Lakta's father **Hassan Jamar** or one of the abaya's (the equivalent of a local governor) inner circle approaches the PCs and offers them a reward if they can rouse the young girl from her coma. The problem is that her physicians and clerics have tried just about everything — they treated her for disease and poison as well as giving her a potion that would undo a curse without any benefit. Lakta's affliction does not appear to be natural and is beyond the ability of her caregivers. Hassan and Dima are convinced that some foul magic is afoot in their humble abode.

Lakta's body and soul are helpless, but the resourceful child's brain is wide awake and terrified. If not for her genie heritage, Lakta's body and soul would have also been dragged into the dollhouse, and she would have vanished

without a trace. Instead, the *wish* transplanted her brain into a doll and three of her physical body's other organs into inanimate objects scattered throughout the dollhouse. Her soul remains in her physical body on the Material Plane. Clues found in the home lead the PCs to her dollhouse where they can faintly hear Lakta's voice crying out for help. She directs them to a closet in her bedroom which leads to a newly created secret door that acts as a gateway into The House of a Thousand Delights. The magic portal transports them into an attic room in the dollhouse's attic where they meet Lakta. Though the rescue plan appears successful, the precocious young girl tells them that escape is not that easy. Her physical body remained intact, but her four major organs are contained in canopic jars placed throughout the house. Lakta attempted to retrieve the scattered parts herself, but the dollhouse's fearsome occupants forced her to retreat and wait for assistance. To make matters worse, the PCs soon discover that they are trapped in the dollhouse and must find another way out of the accursed structure.

Under her guidance or on their own, the PCs must search The House of a Thousand Delights in pursuit of her missing vital organs. Along the way, they encounter terrifying variations of childhood tales and folklore including a mean ogre hiding in a closet, a hag cooking her liver in a kitchen, two lycanthropes posing as overnight guests, and swarms of spiders hiding behind a faux castle door. During their investigation and interaction with Lakta, they learn about Jumia's role in the child's abduction and may gain some insight into Lakta's true origins. As they explore the house in greater detail, they ultimately come to the realization that The House of a Thousand Delights is more than an inanimate object. It is a magical construct powered by some unknown intelligence that must be destroyed from within for them and Lakta to escape from its sinister clutches.

The revelation leads the PCs and Lakta to a secret door leading into a warm basement where they encounter a fire elemental entrusted with defending The House of a Thousand Delights' true master and intelligent component, Ezreki, Infernal fist's homunculus servant. After its efreeti creator's destruction, Ezreki did not go insane as most others of its kin, but instead became one with the house giving shape and direction to its terrors. When the PCs destroy Ezreki, the dollhouse's magic ebbs away, reverting it back to its original state as an ordinary replica of Infernal fist's mansion. Lakta's organs return to her body, and she awakens from her coma. The PCs reappear just outside of the dollhouse. The PCs must now decide how to deal with Jumia, if they did not already, and how to handle the delicate matter of Lakta's birth, if they learned of the girl's genie heritage.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure is set in the small city of Qamara, though its events may also take place in any other desert setting of the GM's choice with a few minor modifications. Hassan Jamar's beloved only child, his daughter Lakta, inexplicably appears dead and has remained in that state for two full days. She cannot be roused from her state and every attempt to discover the root cause of her malady failed. Skilled healers attempted to cure any disease or poison that might be afflicting her, but none were found. In his desperation, Hassan poured a *potion of remove curse* down her throat with no visible effect. During the course of his service for the abaya, he has never encountered any poison, disease or magic that could account for his daughter's condition. Lakta's predicament even baffled the medicinal students and instructors from nearby Hamsha University. Hassan is running out of options to save his only child even with the assistance of his long-time friend and superior, the region's abaya Salamun ibn Saddesh. The grateful abaya urged him to seek out adventurers who may have seen Lakta's strange malady somewhere else in their travels. In order to do so, Salamun is offering a 2,000 gp reward to anyone who can aid the daughter of the man who saved his life ten years earlier.

Adventure Hooks

Several parties may engage the PCs' services to resolve this difficult matter. If the PCs are new to Qamara, it is more likely that Hassan or Salamun approaches the PCs directly. PCs familiar with the city can be drawn into its events by several different sources including any affiliations with the local Church of Fatimashan or through contacts with Hamsha

University. Presented below are three methods of getting the PCs involved in the adventure.

Hook 1 — Urgent Summons

Because of the situation's urgent nature, Hassan or Salamun foregoes dispatching a messenger and instead contacts the PCs himself. Though both men cannot explain Lakta's current predicament, they are certain that time is of the essence, if they want to help the child. In that vein, they waste no time negotiating a suitable reward — it is 2,000 gp — take it or leave it. If the PCs momentarily waver, either man briefly tugs at that person's heartstrings, but the reward amount remains firm. Alternatively, PCs in Salamun's employ or working for any other authority figure may simply be ordered to provide Hassan with assistance.

Hook 2 — Act of Charity

Hassan and Salamun also sought the assistance of the local Church of Fatimashan. The case stumped the local priestesses, but the church still wants to get to solve the mystery and aid fellow believers during their greatest time of need. Fatimashan's priestesses not so subtly twist the proverbial arms of any worshippers or adventurers that they believe could help the Jamar family. Though the church cannot offer any financial recompense and actually takes great offense at any suggestion of receiving a monetary reward, the priestesses make the PCs aware of Salamun's offer, much to their personal disgust.

Hook 3 — Strictly Academic

In addition to beseeching aid from the Church of Fatimashan, the two men also called upon experts from Hamsha University to unravel the mystery. The faculty and pupils are extremely disappointed that they could not resolve Lakta's dilemma; however they are not ready to capitulate. They are convinced that they can get to the bottom of the mystery with a little help from their newfound outside consultants — the PCs. With the proper guidance, the PCs may provide the missing piece to this most confounding puzzle. Alternatively, a professor or student may barter information on another matter in exchange for the PCs' assistance with Lakta's enigma.

Rumors

Hassan Jamar is a well-known and influential person in Qamara, so any news about his daughter spreads quickly throughout the city. The PCs may learn the following information by succeeding on a Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at that level have already been heard.

DC 20

- Hassan Jamar and the abaya, Salamun ibn Saddesh are close friends. Hassan has served as the head of his personal bodyguards for the last ten years.
- Ten years ago, Hassan foiled a plot to assassinate Salamun. Salamun has been in Hassan's debt ever since.
- Hassan and his wife Dima adore their only child. They would never do anything to harm her.

DC 25

- Hassan and Dima's relationship is strained at best. Public consensus is that they are still married strictly for Lakta's sake.
- Hassan has had his share of pursuers over the years, but he continually rebuffs their advances and remains faithful to Dima.
- Hassan is not Lakta's father. The girl looks and behaves nothing like Hassan.

Further Inquiries

Before making their way to Lakta's home, the PCs may conduct a preliminary investigation by interviewing several witnesses or asking

questions of particular persons. Unlike the information obtained from the gossip mill, the PCs can learn the following details from specific sources.

Nur Paddah (LG female human cleric of Fatimashan 4; Int 13; Heal +9) is the priestess Hassan called upon to treat Lakta for poison and disease. Now in her mid-40s, Nur befriended Hassan's family for as long as she can remember. She saw none of the telltale signs of physical trauma, poisoning or illness. Lakta was not feverish, sweating or laboring to breathe. She bore no wounds, bruising, rashes or unusual skin coloring. In fact, her skin color was normal, and she remained warm despite the fact that she was not breathing and had no pulse.

Salaam Ka (N male human expert 3/wizard 2; Int 16; Knowledge [nature] +10) is the star pupil in Hamsha University's medicinal program and fledgling practitioner of arcane magic. He examined Lakta shortly after her parents found her in a coma. As a trained physician, he also noticed that Lakta appeared alive even though she was not breathing and her heart was not beating. He observed no symptoms that would point to a natural cause for her condition. Salaam then turned his attention to a magical cause, using his spells and mystical knowledge to detect any magical auras on the young girl and her possessions. The search revealed nothing. He then suggested to Hassan that he should use his magic potion to rid Lakta of any curses or other magic that could account for her strange condition. Again, the effort failed. Salaam is very anxious to solve the mystery plaguing the young girl.

If the PCs ask either or both of them to lend their further assistance in the matter, they gladly accompany the PCs back to Lakta's house.

Part One: The Wishing Unwell

After conducting their preliminary inquiries and gathering a few important tidbits about Lakta and her family, a visit to the Jamar residence becomes the most obvious course of action. The lovely home stands just a few paces away from the abaya's palace in the city's most affluent neighborhood. Though it pales in comparison to the surrounding mansions and estates, the single-family house is meticulously maintained with a well-manicured outer courtyard outside the ornately carved front door. An eerie calm seems to surround the building and the adjoining street, as residents go about their normal routines oblivious to the turmoil unfolding behind closed doors.

House of Dearth

In contrast to the placid exterior, the Jamar residence's interior is abuzz with chaotic activity and pent-up anxiety. When the PCs arrive at the door, a servant timidly opens it and briefly interrogates them about the reason for the visit and who sent them. The servant is initially suspicious, though her trepidation is easily allayed by mentioning that someone within the household sent for them, or they were asked to go to the Jamar residence by another reputable person. Naturally, if Jamar accompanies the PCs, he allows them into his home without asking any questions.

When the PCs enter the residence, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The spacious residence is spotless and adorned with tile mosaic floors, freestanding sculptures and other valuable artworks. Yet, the luxurious trappings and beautiful objects do nothing to alter the somber and tense mood inside the home. Concerned family members and staff nervously mill about the rooms and hallways vainly searching for a spontaneous flash of insight that would cure the young girl of her mysterious ailment. Three middle-aged female servants are deep in thought, trying to figure out what to do or say next without offending anyone or provoking an emotional outburst. Meanwhile, a young man of apparent noble birth gently comforts an attractive, yet demure lady who bears the weight of the world

on her fragile shoulders. A duty bound man maintains a brave face, yet the deep lines in his cheeks and sagging skin beneath his eyes betray his inner sadness. They always focus at least some of their attention on a pretty, young girl lying on a canopied bed that feels more like a funeral pyre than a resting place. An alluring teenage girl wearing a veil and a silk dress dotes on the reclining child, gingerly stroking her hair and brushing her fingers against her skin. The sensations do nothing to rouse the girl from her seemingly lifeless condition.

The 3 middle-aged female servants (N female human commoner 2; Int 11; Profession [maid] +6) are **A'liyah**, **Feray** and **Turna**. They have worked for the Jamar family ever since the couple's wedding 10 years ago. The women are extremely reluctant to speak ill of their employer, so they give the PCs a wide berth and refuse to voluntarily answer any questions concerning the family's personal affairs. If they are forced to do so, they begrudgingly admit that the marriage exists in name only; however they steadfastly affirm that both parents dote on their only child, Lakta. Neither harbors any ill will towards the child despite their feelings about their partner.

Dima's younger brother **Parava Hameer** (CG male human aristocrat 3; Int 12; Profession [merchant] +8) is the man of noble birth. He loves his sister and resents Hassan's accusations about the circumstances surrounding Lakta's birth and the callous disregard he displays towards her. Parava and Hassan can barely tolerate one another, and it takes only a misspoken word or misinterpreted gesture for either of them to openly express how much they dislike each other.

House Divided

The central players in the drama surrounding the Jamar family are Lakta's mother **Dima Jamar** (LN female human aristocrat 3; Int 13; Knowledge [nobility] +7), Hassan Jamar, Jumia Rassad and Lakta. Hassan's suspicions concerning Dima's fidelity and the circumstances surrounding Lakta's birth put a tremendous strain on their relationship. PCs that succeed on a DC 20 Sense Motive check pick up a hunch about the couple's ambivalent attitude towards each other. They respect each other as parents and both share a mutual love of Lakta, but theirs is a marriage in name only. They treat each other like roommates instead of spouses. Though Hassan displays no romantic interest in the seductive Jumia, she considers herself to be the proverbial "other woman" in this imaginary love triangle. Dima tolerates the flirtatious nubile only because of Lakta's fondness for her private tutor, though that does not prevent her from gesturing behind her back or making a snide comment about her outside of her earshot. However, Lakta's current condition ensures that everyone remains on their best behavior including the murderous kharam who set this chain of events into motion.

Dima Jamar

Lakta's mother is a complex women tormented by guilt and bound by love and a sense of honor. Her affair is the explosive secret that simultaneously keeps the family together and apart. If she reveals it, she clears her conscience but risks losing her husband and daughter in the process. By denying it, nagging suspicions dog her relationship with Hassan, but he remains with her and the girl he desperately wants to believe is his only daughter. To make matters worse, Dima is certain that her clandestine tryst somehow plays a part in current events. For the first time in 10 years, she teeters close to the breaking point of divulging the sin that gnaws on her soul.

A PC that interacts with Dima can convince her to reveal her secret by succeeding on a DC 20 Diplomacy check. In addition, she also admits that Lakta's presumed father had an otherworldly nature about him. She is certain that he carried some outsider lineage. Similarly, anyone directly confronting her about Lakta's parentage can see through her lie by winning an opposed Sense Motive check. A successful Sense Motive check also senses her intense dislike of Jumia. Though her relationship with Hassan

is cold at best, she is still very jealous of the attractive teenager.

Dima knows little about the actual events leading up to Lakta's imprisonment within The House of a Thousand Delights. She and Hassan discovered Lakta unconscious in her bedroom and could not awaken her. She does not recollect her daughter telling her anything about feeling ill. The only strange occurrence she recalls is that Lakta told her that she heard screams and voices emanating from her dollhouse, but she dismissed her claims as a child's imagination run amok. If the PCs inquire further about the dollhouse, she tells them that she and Hassan inherited it from Hassan's parents one month earlier. His parents owned it for two decades and never reported any unusual incidents about the toy.

Hassan Jamar

Lakta's father is a military man through and through. He is a rigid disciplinarian who always maintains a tight leash on his feelings in all personal and business matters except for one — Lakta's welfare. He is holding himself together for now, but he is in a vulnerable state. Any setback or breakthrough releases a flood of emotions. Hassan has long suspected that Lakta is not his daughter, but he fears to uncover the truth. Yet deep down inside, the stern soldier knows that he loves Lakta too much to abandon her and separate a child from her mother.

Hassan's account of Lakta's discovery is identical to Dima's. Lakta is usually eager for dinner, especially since Dima made her favorite food — roasted lamb. When he and Dima went to check on her, they found her not breathing. Every effort to resuscitate her failed. The local priestess of Fatimashan checked to see if she was under the influence of dark magic, but there were no signs of an evil spell on the girl. A skilled physician also examined her and could find no evidence of disease or poison in her body. He also suggested that Hassan give her a magical potion to rid her of any curse that may be afflicting her.

If the PCs ask him about his relationship with Dima, he nonchalantly claims that it is fine. He becomes indignant at any suggestions that he is having an affair or harbors any amorous feelings towards Jumia. He steadfastly claims that the teenage girl is an excellent tutor and Lakta's close friend, even though she has only been her tutor for about a month. He remarks that he inherited a large dollhouse from his deceased mother right around the same time as Jumia's arrival. Lakta spends much of her free time playing with her newfound toy, though he recollects that she commented about how she thinks that it comes to life from time to time. Like her mother, he dismissed her claims as the byproduct of a precocious child's overactive imagination. Hassan also downplays his role in thwarting the assassination attempt against the abaya 10 years ago. If pressed on the matter, he blurts out that he slew an insane woman with an inane plan to kill Salamun.

Hassan displays starkly contrasting emotions when Dima's and Jumia's secret are revealed. The frequently judgmental husband sees the error of his ways and forgives his wife for her transgression, while accepting Lakta as his daughter. On the other hand, he shows no mercy towards Jumia once he learns she is responsible for Lakta's current predicament, or he discovers her relationship to the kharam he killed 10 years earlier. He attacks her alone or fights her alongside the PCs.

HASSAN JAMAR

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human fighter 6

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Perception +4

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 49 (6d10+6 plus 6)

Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +2; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 falchion +13/+8 (2d4+10/18-20)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion)

Skills Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Perception +4, Profession (soldier) +6, Sense Motive +3, Survival +4

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ armor mastery 1

Gear +1 studded leather armor, +1 falchion, cloak of resistance +1, antitoxin, 50 gp

Jumia Rassad (CR 8)

The voluptuous teenager's outer beauty belies her wicked heart and evil motives. The attractive kharam always wears a sheer veil and a wig to conceal her true monstrous identity. After her mother's death, Jumia aimlessly wandered the streets until Rateef Rassad, a sage specializing in Khartous history, took pity on the youngster scavenging through refuse and animal stalls looking for food. Rateef and his wife Tarwa adopted the young girl and reared her as their own. The manipulative Jumia basked in the attention the older couple showered on their only child. She proved to be a quick student and even attended classes at Hamsha University despite her youth. By all outward appearances, the charismatic Jumia seemed to be thriving in her new environment, yet her innate curiosity and gracious exterior was nothing more than a ruse to conceal her true malevolent nature. All the while, the murderous kharam plotted her revenge against the man responsible for her mother's death.

As soon as she acquired all of her innate special abilities, Jumia used her parents' contacts to land her a position in Hassan's household. The charming and outwardly friendly teenager made an immediate and lasting impression on the innocent young girl. For the next three weeks, the cunning kharam carefully observed her surroundings and considered her options. She was prepared to kill Hassan and his entire family in their sleep, yet the surreptitious discovery of The House of a Thousand Delights altered her plans. She returned to Hamsha University to research the item's history and abilities. She soon realized that the seemingly harmless dollhouse was a sinister house of horrors that would destroy any creature transported into it without leaving the slightest trace; however she needed a *wish* spell to unlock its full powers. She then remembered that one of her adoptive father's friends, a rare jewelry collector named Jamaal Ta'alika, claimed to have a ring that made anyone's dream come true. The clever temptress paid the older gentleman a visit and claimed him as her first victim. She took the ring and gave it to Lakta as a gift. She tricked the young girl into wishing herself into The House of a Thousand Delights.

Jumia relies upon her youth and charm to deflect any accusations leveled against her. She denies any involvement in Lakta's current predicament, Jamaal's murder or the ring's theft. Her reactions are more fully described in the following section.

JUMIA RASSAD, KHARAM

CR 8

XP 4,800

LE Medium monstrous humanoid (see **Chapter 6**)

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +12

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+1 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 76 (9d10+27)

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4

Immune mind-affecting

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +11/+6 (1d4+1/19–20 plus poison), mwk dagger +11 (1d4 plus poison /19–20)

Special Attacks disarming kiss, enfeebling gaze, sneak attack +5d6

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +7, Craft (jewelry) +8, Disguise +7, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Perception +12, Stealth +12, Survival +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

Languages Common, Draconic

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of shield of faith*, 4 doses of black widow spider venom (see below for stats); **Other Gear** bracers of armor +1, 2 masterwork daggers, gold ring (100 gp), silver necklace with ebony pendant (75 gp), wig, veil

All-Around Vision (Ex) The kharam's eyes in the back of her head allow her to see in all directions. Kharams gain a +4 racial bonus to Perception checks and cannot be flanked.

Disarming Kiss (Su) The kharam disarms living creatures with a kiss, causing them to drop all of their items and take no actions other than stare lovingly into the kharam's eyes, which causes additional Strength damage from her enfeebling gaze each round. The kharam must grapple an unwilling victim before the kharam can use this ability. A creature must succeed on a DC 16 Will save to resist the effects of this ability. The effect ends if the kharam directly attacks a victim influenced by disarming kiss. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Enfeebling Gaze (Su) 1d4 Strength damage, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 16 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Dagger—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d3 Con and staggered; cure 2 saves. Kharams envenom their daggers with black widow spider venom.

First Impression

Two full days have passed since Lakta last opened her eyes. Her parents, Jumia, clerics and others made numerous attempts to rouse her from her catatonia, but all to no avail. Lakta's parents first discovered her in her bedroom, after she did not appear for dinner. The young girl normally receives a poetry lesson from Jumia before dinner, but the wily Jumia claims that Lakta told her she did not feel well that afternoon and skipped the lesson. PCs can see through her Bluff by winning an opposed Sense Motive check. Otherwise, no one can provide any useful information about Lakta's activities that day. When the PCs approach the young girl, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

A comely, young girl that strikingly resembles her mother lies motionless on an upholstered recamier in the family's living room. On the surface, she appears to be perfectly healthy. Her skin coloring is normal, and she shows no visible signs of illness or injury. She wears a loose-fitting dress and a ring on her left hand.

Lakta's body shows no signs of injury, illness or disease. A PC that succeeds on a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Heal check notices that she has no pulse and is not breathing, yet she remains warm to the touch and shows no signs of decomposition. If that same PC succeeds on the preceding check by 5 or more, he also notices that she has no brain activity and is slightly jaundiced. In addition, the PC also notices that the girl's left ring finger is swollen, indicating that the ring adorning her left hand is new. The golden ring appears to have been inset with three stones at one time, but all of the stones are missing, though they show no signs of being forcibly removed. Lakta's family members and servants do not recognize the ring and do not believe that it belonged to her. Jumia realizes that she made a mistake by not removing the spent *ring of three wishes* from Lakta's hand so she too denies any knowledge of the item. Once again, PCs can detect that she is being untruthful with a

successful opposed Sense Motive check or via magical means. If the PCs confront her about these issues, Jumia relays a half-truth claiming that she gave Lakta the ring as a gift to help her feel better. If Jumia senses that she is in any danger, she conveniently excuses herself or discreetly slips away and coats each of her weapons with poison before returning to the room. She also claims that she initially lied about the ring, because she believes it may be stolen. Furthermore, a PC that succeeds on a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check remembers hearing about a reward for a stolen ring roughly matching the description of this one, though it is currently missing an inset ruby. A successful check also reveals that an unknown assailant murdered the ring's former owner, Jamaal Ta'alika, a rare jewelry collector. She denies any involvement in the actual theft or the killing. When confronted by this accusation, Jumia insists that Dima framed her in a thinly disguised effort to separate her and Hassan. She claims that she and Hassan have been secret lovers ever since she arrived. Jumia continues this charade for as long as possible and even attempts to grab Hassan and kiss him in front of everyone to prove her point. Naturally, she uses her disarming kiss ability. If Hassan is unable to resist, his smitten reaction lends credibility to her story, and it also makes him vulnerable to her enfeebling gaze ability which she directs against him. Otherwise, she attempts to flee, preferably by quaffing her *potion of invisibility*. She fights only if she is left with no other alternative. Jumia begins combat by removing her veil and subjecting all onlookers to her enfeebling gaze before attacking with her poisoned daggers. She then singles out flat-footed opponents who are susceptible to her sneak attacks. Whenever she is reduced to less than a quarter of her original hit points, she begs for mercy and reveals her true identity and motives for her actions in a blatant attempt to garner sympathy to spare her life.

The ring is no longer magical, so PCs cannot identify it using *detect magic* and succeeding on a Spellcraft skill; however certain divination spells may reveal the item's former properties. Spells cast directly on Lakta do not reveal any useful information, including divination spells, such as *detect evil* or *detect magic*. Divination spells of a more general nature, such as *augury* and *divination* yield some helpful, though cryptic information to investigate Lakta's room or retrace her steps. It might also reveal that appearances are not what they seem in regards to Lakta's outsider heritage or Jumia's monstrous secret identity.

Lakta's Bedroom

Lakta's strange claims about her new dollhouse and the mysterious circumstances surrounding her current condition should prompt the PCs to search her bedroom. If Jumia's disguise is still intact, she insists on accompanying the PCs while they investigate the area. When the PCs enter the room, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The young girl's bedroom would be the envy of almost any child. An exquisite collection of masterfully crafted toy animals rests peacefully in her luxurious bed. At least 100 dolls sit on shelves spanning the bedroom walls, along with an assortment of other toys and playthings. The *piece de resistance* is an incredibly detailed, fully furnished dollhouse 5 feet high and 4 feet square. A few articles of girl's clothing are visible behind a slightly ajar closet door.

All of the dolls and toys are valuable in their own right for their exceptional quality, but they all pale in comparison to The House of a Thousand Delights that now masquerades as Lakta's dollhouse. Its sheer size and meticulous focus on details especially in regards to its miniature furniture pieces distinguish it from any ordinary toy. The dollhouse has two floors as well as an attic. On the surface, there is nothing unusual about the dollhouse, but closer examination and knowledge checks unravel its sinister history and the secret it currently conceals.

Lakta's Dollhouse

Infernalfist's creation does not reveal its mysteries without a fight. PCs can gather information about the item using several avenues of inquiry.

Magic

PCs may resort to casting spells, particularly those of the divination school, to gather information about the dollhouse. *Detect magic* reveals that the dollhouse radiates strong universal magic attributable to the *wish* spells used to create it. A PC that uses *detect magic* in conjunction with Spellcraft identifies The House of a Thousand Delights by succeeding on a DC 28 Spellcraft check. (As a malik, Infernalfist's caster level is effectively 13th.) Other divination spells such as *legend lore* or *commune* may also reveal useful information about The House of a Thousand Delights. The GM must exercise his discretion in adjudicating the effects of these spells. Powerful spells like *legend lore* reveal The House of a Thousand Delights for what it is, while lesser spells including *augury* and *divination* reveal cryptic clues about the dollhouse's true nature. These spells may also direct the PCs to the newly created secret door in Lakta's closet that acts as a one-way portal into The House of a Thousand Delights.

Lost Knowledge

PCs that succeed on a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check remember hearing rumors and details about a magnificent dollhouse that has changed hands many times since its discovery in Iljanna shortly after the genies' defeat. A PC that succeeds on the check by 5 or more also uncovers rumors claiming that an efreeti may have constructed the dollhouse for an unknown purpose. Though this discovery may arouse suspicion, there are no stories alleging that its owners derived anything but enjoyment from the miniaturized replica.

PCs may also attempt a Knowledge (history) check independent of or in conjunction with a Knowledge (local) check to link the dollhouse back to its genie origin. A successful standalone DC 30 Knowledge (history) leads the PC to believe that Lakta's dollhouse is in fact The House of a Thousand Delights. A PC that already succeeded on a DC Knowledge (local) check learns this information with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check, while those that succeeded by 5 or more on the earlier Knowledge (local) check discover the link between the dollhouse and Infernalfist by succeeding on a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check. A PC that succeeds on the Knowledge (history) check by 5 or more also learns that victims are trapped inside the house by being deceived into wishing themselves into the dollhouse. Furthermore, genies are the only creatures that can peer into The House of a Thousand Delights, and they cannot be trapped inside of the house. This may lead the PCs to surmise that Lakta has some genie heritage that accounts for her current state.

Powers of Observation

Tactile examination and close observation cannot reveal any information about The House of a Thousand Delights' forgotten past; however they are particularly useful in discovering its sinister purpose. Under normal circumstances, a victim tricked into the dollhouse leaves no trace of what happened to them, but Lakta's genie heritage created an unforeseen dilemma for Ezreki, the dollhouse's hidden caretaker. In its confusion, the dollhouse created Lakta's current predicament, transporting her vital organs into the house while keeping her soul and the remainder of her physical body temporarily alive in her parent's residence. The transformation created links to the real world that would normally be invisible and inaudible. A PC that carefully examines the dollhouse notices a faint light behind a door in the dollhouse's attic with a successful DC 20 Perception check. If the PC succeeds on this check by 5 or more, the PC hears a child's voice repeating the words "attic" and "closet". If the PC opens the door in the dollhouse's attic, he can hear Lakta's voice without succeeding on a Perception check. Similarly, PCs standing near Lakta's closet also notice a faint light emanating from beneath a wall in the back of the closet with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The successful Perception check also leads them to the secret door in the back of the closet. The secret door only grants access to the 5-foot diameter opening

leading into Lakta's hideout in The House of a Thousand Delights' attic compartment.

Secret Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 10; Break DC 15; Perception DC 25.

Development

Lakta cannot hear the PCs from inside the dollhouse so she cannot converse with them. Instead she repeatedly says the words "closet" and "attic", hoping to direct the PCs to the closet in her bedroom or the attic in the dollhouse. Lakta's ability to communicate with the outside world poses a serious problem for Jumia. She must prevent the PCs from possibly rescuing Lakta and discovering the truth, but she is also reluctant to risk her own wellbeing in the process. She tries to convince the PCs that Lakta's voice is an illusion or a trap meant to entice others to their doom. If this attempt fails, she ultimately decides to accompany the PCs into the dollhouse, but not before she coats her blades with poison for her sneak attacks. On the other hand, Hassan and Dima decide to stay behind with their daughter, entrusting the PCs to rescue her from her terrible fate.

Part Two: The House of a Thousand Delights

The PCs' efforts to rescue Lakta not only take them inside of a unique magical construct, but also give them a horrific glimpse into the mind of its caretaker, the demented homunculus Ezreki. Over time, Infernalist's ancient servant developed a sense of irony lacking in its genie creator. It devised ingenious ways to turn a child's toy into a deadly house of horrors based upon fairy tales and stories. The clever monster prides itself on its ability to transform the seemingly harmless and mundane into the utterly terrifying.

The House of a Thousand Delights is the culmination of multiple *wish* spells making it impossible to destroy it or to even harm it by conventional means. It is a marvel of magic and physics as it simultaneously occupies space on the Material Plane and extradimensional space. The extradimensional space fabricates exact duplicates of all inorganic matter within the dollhouse. Unlike typical spells, Infernalist designed The House of a Thousand Delights to allow only genies to see creatures within the extradimensional space. Creatures trapped within the house of horrors are not visible because they occupy the extradimensional space, even after they die. Instead, time passes much slower in the dollhouse than on the Material Plane. Ten minutes spent in the dollhouse is actually 1 hour outside of the dollhouse. Though its rooms and furniture appear miniaturized from the outside, they are much larger on the inside. Similarly, creatures trapped within the dollhouse retain their normal size as well. When someone is trapped within the dollhouse, objects moved or removed by someone outside of the dollhouse do not affect the duplicates created in the extradimensional space without the use of a *wish* or *miracle*.

Lakta's genie blood created a problem for the dollhouse's caretaker. Unsure of what to do, Ezreki forged a link between the Material Plane and the extradimensional space within the dollhouse. This allowed Lakta to see and speak through the portal linking the Material Plane and the extradimensional space; however it does not allow her to escape through it though she is currently not aware of that. Other creatures cannot see or speak through the portal. They must pass through it to contact Lakta. Once again, the portal simultaneously exists in the miniaturized version of the dollhouse allowing the PCs to hear Lakta's voice from her secure spot in the dollhouse's attic and through the portal at the back of her closet. Because of its minute size, the PCs can gain entry into the dollhouse through the closet portal only.

Small Problem

After the PCs open the secret door that conceals the portal leading into Lakta's fortified hiding spot in the dollhouse's attic, the GM may read or

paraphrase the following description.

The concealed door yields to a shadowy, 5-foot diameter space that radiates faint, dim light and obscures all vision. The words "closet" and "attic" echo from the other side of the portal.

Spells cannot be cast through the portal, nor can area effects cross through it. Only spells that work across planes can reveal Lakta's presence on the other side of the portal. When a PC passes through the portal, they emerge in **Area 1** where they first encounter Lakta's brain within a doll.

If Jumia accompanies the PCs and Lakta sees her, Lakta immediately reacts to her presence.

She pleads through the portal. "Jumia tricked me. She gave me a ring and told me to wish to live in the dollhouse. Liar! She did this to me. Help me!"

Jumia tries to dismiss Lakta's cries as another trick or illusion intended to deceive the PCs. If that fails, she unsheathes her daggers and tries to disable as many PCs as she can before fleeing as described in earlier sections. Alternatively, Jumia may jump through the portal if she is in an opportune position and try to attack Lakta. Lakta's brain occupies a doll she hid in a storage compartment in the attic, so Lakta pretends to be an inanimate doll as soon as she sees Jumia pass through the portal. This causes the kharam to hesitate for 1 round, as she tries to figure out what to attack. If Jumia destroys the doll, Lakta dies. Her physical body on the Material Plane immediately begins to decay and grows cold.

I. Storage Room

The portal emerges into a cramped chamber with a severely sloped roof. Cut pieces of wood, tattered lace curtains and weathered linens cover parts of the floor. A sturdy wooden plank bars a barely visible door in the far corner.

Past generations of owners stored the dollhouse's spare parts and decorations in this barred attic chamber. When the *wish* spell drew Lakta into the dollhouse, it pulled her mind into this room where she kept her favorite doll — one she believed looked very similar to her. The long-forgotten doll was actually created by Infernalist as a failsafe in the event that a genie was somehow pulled into his malevolent creation. It is not a coincidence that the toy bears a striking resemblance to the young girl. It is crafted in the likeness of a youthful jann, much like her true father. The door in the room is barred from this side by a heavy wooden plank. During Infernalist's heyday, he barred the door to this room to add to the terror of creatures trying to escape from pursuing creatures.

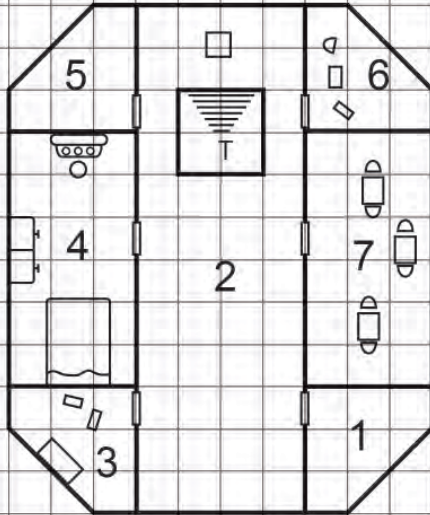
Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 20; Break DC 25.

The strong wooden door can be easily unbarred and opened from inside the room.

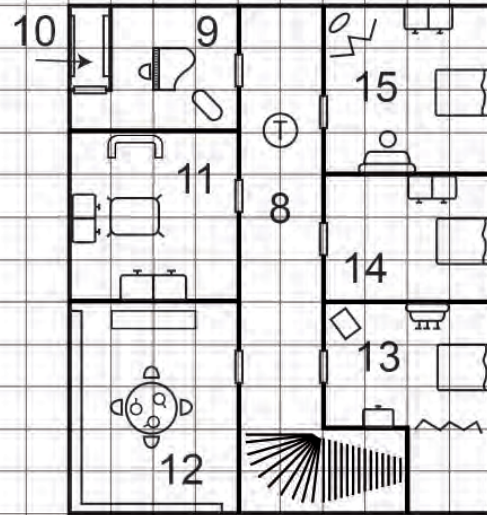
The dollhouse magically transplanted Lakta's brain into her favorite doll that she kept concealed in this secret compartment. The frightened young girl welcomes the PCs as her rescuers, though she warns them that her escape is not as easy as it seems. If she did not do so already, she tells the PCs that Jumia tricked her into making a *wish* that transported her into her dollhouse. She also relays that though her soul remains with her physical body back in her home, her body is not intact. For an unknown reason, she had a vision that her heart, liver and lungs were teleported from her physical body and placed in objects scattered throughout the dollhouse. She attempted to leave the secret compartment to search for them, but retreated back to the safety of this room after large rats attacked her. Though she is still alive, Lakta is currently a **half-construct with a doll body and a human brain** magically implanted into the doll. In addition, the transformation also unlocked the mystical powers she

DUNES OF DESOLATION

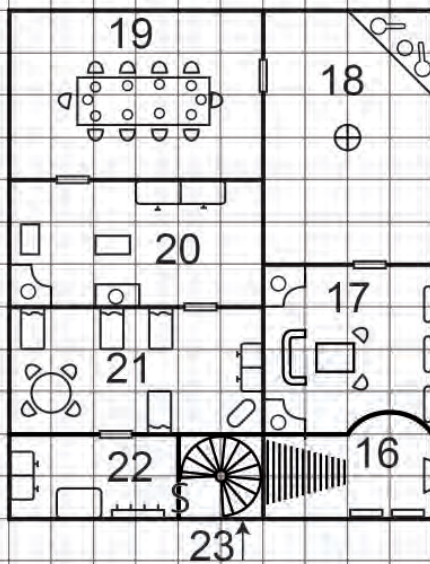
Attic



Second Floor



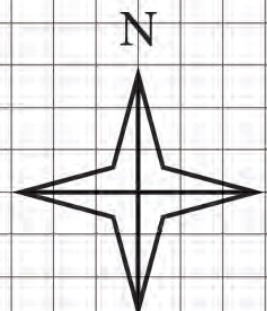
First Floor



Basement Level



1 square - 5 feet



inherited from her elemental bloodline. Lakta is currently adjusting to her new doll body, so her gait is awkward, and she is somewhat clumsy. The PCs face a dilemma. Lakta knows the dollhouse inside and out making her an excellent guide; however if she dies in this state, her brain is forever lost. Without her mind, Lakta's body and soul on the Material Plane die within minutes.

LAKTA JAMAR**CR 2****XP 600**

NG Tiny humanoid (half-construct, human) (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide*, "Half-Construct")

Female human sorcerer 1

Init -1; **Perception** +1

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (-1 Dex, +2 size)

Hp 9 (1d6+3)

Fort +0; **Ref** -1; **Will** +5; +2 racial bonus on saves versus disease, mind-affecting, poison and effects that cause fatigue or exhaustion

Defensive Abilities half-construct traits (does not need to eat or drink)

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +1 (1-1)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Bloodline Spell-Like Ability (CL 1st; ranged touch +1):

5/day—*elemental ray*

Spells Known (CL 1st; ranged touch +1):

1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 13), *protection from evil*

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

Bloodline elemental (air)

Str 8, **Dex** 9, **Con** 10, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +0; **CMB** -3; **CMD** 6

Feats Eschew Materials, Iron Will, Toughness

Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Perception +1, Spellcraft +4

Languages Common

Development: The PCs and Lakta can see and speak through the portal, but they cannot hear creatures on the other side. Likewise, creatures back on the Material Plane can hear them, though they cannot see or speak through the portal. Any attempts to pass through the portal and return to the closet always fail which may distress the PCs. Lakta currently believes that they can escape only if she is reunited with her remaining bodily organs. Lakta knows the dollhouse's layout, yet she cannot say the same for the creatures or objects inhabiting it other than the large rats on the other side of the secret door.

2. Attic (CR 3)

A surge of surprisingly warm and foul air greets the nostrils. Twelve large rats, the size of small dogs, scurry about the floor dragging scraps of torn linen, moldy lace and gnawed bones with them. The floor features a trap door with a set of rickety, folding stairs that apparently lead to a lower level. A lone wooden box with a crank lever on its side sits on the floor just beyond the trap door. There are five additional strong wooden doors uniformly placed throughout the room.

The trap door at the far end of the room grants access to the dollhouse's second level. Its hinges are well-lubricated, so a gentle push is all that is needed for the door to open and the stairs to unfold. The stairs were not designed to support any significant amount of weight. Any Medium creature or larger that attempts to walk down the stairs causes them to collapse and break. The fall is less than 10 feet, so the creature does not take any damage from the fall. The creature lands in **Area 8**.

The wooden box on the floor is a child's jack-in-the-box. Originally

Lakta as a Guide

Lakta is a valuable resource while exploring the dollhouse and also a potential liability. Lakta knows the layout of the entire dollhouse with the exception of the secret door leading into the basement. She can provide a general description of each room's intended purpose, i.e. bedroom, kitchen, storage etc. as well as some specific details about any exceptional inanimate objects in the room. She has no knowledge about what creatures dwell within each chamber. The drawback is that venturing through the dollhouse with the PCs exposes Lakta to dangers that she is ill-equipped to handle. If Lakta is subjected to any fear attacks during the course of the adventure, she may opt to lag far behind the PCs or demand to be returned to her secure location in the attic. Ultimately, the PCs must decide whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

placed into the dollhouse by a young girl shortly after Infernalist's demise, Ezreki cast *magic mouth* on the toy. Turning the crank handle for one full rotation in a clockwise direction opens the jack-in-the-box. An efreeti torso attached to a spring emerges from the box and speaks in a baritone pitch saying the following.

"Are you frightened yet, children? Fear is so much fun. Enjoy yourselves while you still live."

The jack-in-the-box can be reset by pushing the efreeti back into the box and closing the lid.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 20; Break DC 25.

None of the remaining doors are barred or locked. They open with minimal effort.

In the absence of fresh meat, the dire rats that frightened Lakta back into her hiding space underwent the transition from life to undeath becoming **12 dire rat zombies**. The ravenous creatures viciously attack anything that enters the room and do not retreat under any circumstances. The dire rat zombies have no treasure.

DIRE RAT ZOMBIES (12)

CR 1/4**XP 100**

NE Small undead (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Rat, Dire", "Zombie")

Init +2; **Perception** +0

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

Hp 12 (2d8 plus 3)

Fort +0; **Ref** +2; **Will** +3

DR 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d4+1) or slam +3 (1d4+1)

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Toughness⁵

SQ staggered

3. Storage Room

Several splintered planks of wood lie scattered about the floor along with the skeletal remains of at least a dozen people. There is a closed wooden chest abutting the far wall. There is a severe slope in the ceiling.

The broken pieces of wood appear sturdy from a distance, but closer examination reveals that they are merely balsa wood — all part of a

DUNES OF DESOLATION

cruel trick played by a mischievous efreeti. Though none of the skeletons are complete, there are fourteen skulls. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check identifies all of the skulls and skeletons as being human. The bones are thoroughly devoid of flesh, yet anyone who succeeds on a DC 22 Perception check notices a platinum ring worth 100 gp still wrapped around a tiny finger bone.

The wooden chest against the far wall is closed and unlocked. It contains an assortment of cheap, dusty bed linens with no monetary value.

4. Guests' Bedroom (CR 4)

The open doors of an exquisitely crafted armoire opposite the door reveal an assortment of fine clothes and accessories. The outlines of two figures lying beneath satin sheets in a luxurious bed momentarily stir and then seemingly fall asleep again. Several open jars sit atop a vanity table with a small seat tucked underneath it and a large mirror atop the table. An aromatic scent of fresh flowers wafts from that area of the room.

The two sleeping figures are actually **2 werewolves** in human form. Each keeps a longsword underneath the sheets. The sly werewolves rise from their slumber pretending to be startled. They insist that they too are prisoners within the house, though they offer only vague details about how they arrived in The House of a Thousand Delights. They identify themselves as Amari Jankhar and his wife Saana Jankhar and go on to say that they have been here for 200 years. To gain the PCs trust, they tell the PCs that they can help them escape, though it quickly becomes obvious that neither has any knowledge of the house beyond their room. If the PCs fall for their ruse, they attack them at the most opportune time. Likewise, the werewolves immediately attack as soon as they feel threatened. They change into their hybrid form before attacking if possible.

WEREWOLF (2)

CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Lycanthrope, Werewolf")

Treasure: The clothes in the armoire are of exceptional quality. The gentleman's clothing is worth 175 gp, while the lady's wear is worth 150 gp. The satin sheets on the bed are worth 100 gp. A *detect magic* cast in the vicinity of the vanity table reveals a magical aura from two vials. One vial is a *potion of cure moderate wounds* and the other contains a *potion of blur*. The remaining jars of perfume and ointments are worth 75 gp.

5. Storage Room (CR 4)

An eclectic assortment of raggedy dolls lies in a pile near the far corner of the room. There are at least a dozen dolls lying atop one another. A sturdy piece of wood is propped against the wall near the entrance.

Most of the dolls depict young girls of various ethnicities and races, though three of them are sewn into the image of circus clowns. At least half of the dolls are missing their eyes or stuffing. The sturdy wooden plank is normally used to bar the door.

Though the dolls appear ordinary, there are **3 soulbound dolls** mixed among them. The malevolent toys spring to life at the most opportune moment, attacking the creatures nearest to them. They are the restless spirits of three spoiled, ill-mannered children that met their end within the house. Because the dolls reflect their personalities, these creatures pout, sulk and whine whenever they miss an attack. Likewise, they gloat and cackle anytime they hit an enemy in combat. In life, they were three ruffians named Ahmad, Raheem and Xarxes. Infernalist culled the trio from Iljanna's mean streets. They refuse to cooperate with the PCs and

do not divulge any useful information under any circumstances. They are chaotic neutral.

SOULBOUND DOLL (3)

CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2 "Soulbound Doll")

6. Storage Room

Two broken tables along with three chairs, a bed and two dressers in similar disrepair are scattered about the room.

The broken furniture bears the telltale signs of a struggle. The tabletops and bed are smashed as if a heavy object fell on top of them. Likewise the chairs and dressers are sundered in a manner akin to something crashing into them or if they were used to strike a solid object. In addition to whatever damage was dealt to them, the objects also appear to have been scavenged for spare parts.

7. Game Room (CR 2)

A pair of child-size chairs sits on opposite sides of three tables each covered by a game board and game pieces. Even from a distance, it is obvious that there are three different games.

Lakta describes the three games as mancala, *pachisi*, (a forerunner to modern-day Parcheesi) and seega; otherwise the PCs can correctly identify each game by succeeding on a DC 15 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility) or Profession (gambler) check. Even without making a successful skill check, the PCs determine that all three games are set up and ready to play. The game boards and pieces are poorly crafted and rudimentary, yet they serve their intended purpose.

Development: If a PC or Lakta touches a game piece for any of the board games, the game begins. Ezreki acts as the player's opponent, moving the pieces via *telekinesis*. In many respects, Ezreki and The House of a Thousand Delights are one entity, so some of Infernalist's power lingers in his master creation. The game continues until either side wins or a PC prematurely ends the game. If that occurs, Ezreki abruptly ends the other games and refuses to play again. Ezreki plays each game only once.

Whenever the player emerges victorious, Ezreki telepathically communicates useful information to his opponent based upon the game he played. Winning players receive the following messages. The GM may reward the PCs with 400 XP for each game won.

Mancala: Precise to a tee and short by a hare, you may find a heart there

Play the Game

A PC or Lakta wins the game by making a successful DC 10 Intelligence check, with the following modifiers:

- If the PC or Lakta is familiar with the game, the player gets a +2 bonus
- The player and Ezreki each then attempt a Bluff check opposed by the opponent's Sense Motive. (Ezreki has +6 Bluff and +3 Sense Motive.) The player gains a +2 for each check won, and a -2 for each check lost.
- Lastly, the opponents attempt opposed Intimidate checks. (Ezreki has a +0 modifier.) The player gains a +2 bonus for winning this checks, and a -2 penalty for losing.
- If either party wins a check by 5 or more, the bonus or penalty is +4 or -4, as appropriate.

if you dare.

Pachisi: Turn to the right and off by a beat, you may catch her breath with two left feet.

Seega: Burn to a cinder and scratch by a shrew, you may find a liver in a boiling stew.

Several of the homophones in the messages are likely to result in misinterpretation which is naturally by design. Though it seems counterintuitive for the homunculus caretaker to divulge information in the context of a game, Ezreki, like his efreeti master, derives pleasure from toying with other creatures. He, like his creator, is supremely confident that the PCs and Lakta are ultimately doomed to fail. Letting his opponents think they have a chance makes the spectacle even more enjoyable for Ezreki.

Second Floor

The trap door in the attic spills out into the second floor's main corridor. A gentle push is sufficient to retract the trap door and its folding stairs back into their normal position.

The creatures confined to the attic never wander outside of their designated areas; however the restless spirits of those that died in the dollhouse are more prevalent on the first and second floors, though they are most commonly found wandering the main corridors on both floors and the few open areas. They never open any doors on either floor or interact with its other denizens. For every 5 minutes spent on the second floor, the PCs have a 25% chance of encountering **1d3 soulbound dolls**.

SOULBOUND DOLL

XP 600

CR 2

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Soulbound Doll")

8. Main Corridor

Six wooden doors line the walls of a lengthy corridor that ends in a staircase leading down. The surrounding walls and doors are painted in bright pink and green colors. Images of dancing unicorns, rainbows, colorful flowers and radiant yellow stars adorn the walls. In fact, the colors are so bright that they bathe the hallway in dim light. A 3-foot-long strand of rope dangles from the trap door leading into the attic.

The doors lining the corridor are unlocked and open with minimal effort. The staircase at the opposite end of the corridor descends to the first floor and into **Area 16**.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 15; break DC 18.

If a character fell on the stairs and landed in this area, there is a 50% chance that the noise attracts the interest of **1d3 soulbound dolls** of varying alignments.

SOULBOUND DOLL

XP 600

CR 2

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Soulbound Doll")

9. Music Room

The haunting sounds of a melodic tune emanate from an exquisitely crafted piano in the center of the room accompanied by the strings of a brass harp in the near corner. There is another wooden door identical to the entrance.

Though the music appears to come from the piano and the harp, the

effect actually results from a *ghost sound* spell cast by Infernalists centuries earlier. No one sits at the piano or the harp, and it is quite obvious that the keys and strings do not move. The tune plays for 1 full minute before repeating itself again. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) check identifies the song as an archaic wedding march that fell out of favor around the time of Iljanna's collapse. The PCs can disbelieve the *ghost sound* by succeeding on a DC 12 Will save. The piano is too large to move from its current location, though the harp fits through the door. If the PCs insist on taking either musical instrument with them, they discover that items do not return to the Material Plane with them.

10. Maestro's Quarters (CR 4)

Two rows of shelves hold numerous strings, piano parts and tuning equipment. A ghostly figure clad in a formal robe frenetically plays a shadowy zither. The instrument shrieks and hisses as fingers grind and scratch across the zither's strings. A wild-eyed look and angry sneer accompany the unwanted intrusion.

The strings and equipment on the shelves are poorly made and have no monetary value. They are stored here for spare parts or to tune the instruments. Surprisingly, Infernalists had an ear for music, so he is responsible for incorporating the piano and the harp in *The House of a Thousand Delights*. Subsequent generations of children kept the music room intact.

The zither player is named **Ceruth**, a beggar that solicited donations by playing his zither during Iljanna's decline. After death, the bitter musician refused to depart and became a ghost cursed to forever haunt the dollhouse. During combat, Ceruth screams and shouts at his opponents, asking them if they recognize his original compositions. Of course, the PCs are unfamiliar with his music, though they can attempt a Bluff check to convince Ceruth that they have heard it. However, the PC suffers a -10 penalty to the Bluff check, because the outraged ghost firmly believes that his music fell into obscurity. If the check is successful and the PCs defeat Ceruth, his ghost is forever destroyed. Otherwise his spirit emerges from the dollhouse after its destruction and ventures back to Khartous to haunt the back alleys that Ceruth traveled during his mortal existence.

CERUTH

XP 1,200

CR 4

Male human ghost bard 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Ghost")

CN Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 26 (3d8+9)

Fort +4; **Ref** +6; **Will** +5; +4 versus bardic performance, language-dependent and sonic

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +3 (4d6; Fort DC 14 half)

Special Attacks bardic performance 11 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 14], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +1)

Spells Known (CL 3rd; ranged touch +3):

1st (4/day)—grease (DC 14), hideous laughter (DC 14), lesser confusion (DC 14), sleep (DC 14)

0 (at will)—daze (DC 13), ghost sound (DC 13), lullaby (DC 13), mending, resistance, summon instrument

Str —, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perform [string])

Skills Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +6, Fly +15, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +15, Perform (string) +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +8
Languages Common, Elven
SQ bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (string), well-versed

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Ceruth deals 4d6 points of damage. This damage is not negative energy — it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.

Rejuvenation (Su) In most cases, it is difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: the "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a ghost is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace.

II. Nursery (CR 4)

Painted images of playful cats and dogs adorn the festive, pink and light blue walls. An expertly crafted bassinet trimmed with white lace stands in the center of the nursery. A porcelain doll of an infant girl lies peacefully in the crib. It is surrounded by an upholstered sofa, a wooden dresser with a cushioned top and a massive armoire fashioned into the likeness of a castle entrance with two heavy doors affixed to imposing towers. An illustrated, open book rests on the sofa's arm.

The book resting on the arm of the sofa is a collection of nursery rhymes and children's songs. It is written in Common and is open to the pages telling a story about a brave baby that frightened a hungry spider with a loud sneeze. The dresser against the far wall has two drawers and contains cloth diapers, infants' clothing and an array of other baby accessories. The cushioned top is used as a changing table. The massive armoire can be opened by pulling its large doors apart. Despite their size, the doors open with relative ease.

The porcelain doll in the bassinet is a **soulbound doll** containing the spiteful spirit of a selfish, spoiled girl named Naima. She is neutral evil. The doll pretends to be an ordinary toy until someone picks up the open book. When she spots that, Naima sits up and starts wailing uncontrollably. She demands that a PC sing her a lullaby; otherwise she intends to make the story in the book come true. She grants the PCs just one attempt. If the performer succeeds on a DC 20 Perform (sing) check, Naima falls back asleep, but not before she tells the PCs not to open the castle doors, if they do not want to meet her pets. In the event that the PC fails the Perform check, or the PCs open the armoire doors, **2 spider swarms** pour out of it and attack the PCs. Naima uses her levitate ability to stay out of range from the swarm.

SOULBOUND DOLL

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Soulbound Doll")

CR 2

SPIDER SWARM (2)

XP 400

hp 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Spider Swarm")

CR 1

12. Play Room (CR 4)

Dolls, toys and children's books sit atop a long shelf spanning the entire length of the far wall. Miniature figures of children and monsters fill the rooms of a large dollhouse. Meanwhile, four strange figures gather around a circular table for what appears to be a tea party. The apparent leader is a small rabbitlike creature with pink fur and a golden horn. Three animated humanoid corpses with long, sharp teeth and pallid flesh accompany the hyperactive rabbit. A full tea cup and saucer sits in front of each guest.

Though most of the dolls, toys and children's books on the shelves are worthless, a few of them are rare and valuable. These include a porcelain clown doll worth 100 gp, an illustrated book entitled *Jaina and the Tiger* worth 50 gp and six small chess sets worth 10 gp each. The dollhouse does not resemble The House of a Thousand Delights in any way, but all of the rooms feature young children being frightened by horrific monsters hiding under their beds, in the closet or standing in a dark corner.

The tea party "guests" are a strange mix of creatures. The leader is an **al-mir'aj**, the rabbitlike creature heading the ceremony. Despite its pink coloring and golden horn, it is extremely aggressive and attacks on sight. Though it is not particularly intelligent, the creature uses its *dimension door* ability to single out Lakta, if she is present. Otherwise it uses the ability to avoid the best melee combatant. It is incapable of speaking as are the **3 ghouls** accompanying it. The ghouls on the other hand attack living creatures in preference to the half-construct little girl that may be accompanying them. These creatures have no treasure.

AL-MIR'AJ

XP 200

N Small magical beast (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 21 "Al-mir'aj")

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +5

CR 1/2

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 size)
hp 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3; **Ref** +5; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities blink; **Immune** poison; **SR** 11

Speed 40 ft.

Melee gore +5 (1d4-2)

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** -2; **CMD** 11 (15 vs. trip)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +11, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Survival when tracking by scent

SQ dimension door

Blink (Su) Al-mi'raj can *blink* as a free action.

Dimension Door (Su) An al-mi'raj can create an effect identical to a *dimension door* spell once per round as a standard action. The ability affects only the al-mi'raj, which never appears within a solid object and can act immediately after teleporting.

GHOUL (3)

XP 400

hp 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Ghoul")

CR 1

Development: A PC that won the mancala game back in **Area 7** may recognize that the tea and the hare reference points to the rabbitlike creature and the tea party. In fact, a PC that succeeds on a DC 15 Perception check notices that the "tea" appears to be blood. Similarly, anyone that tastes the tea comes to the same conclusion with a successful

CHILD'S PLAY

DC 10 Perception check. The red, porcelain tea kettle (Hardness 4, hp 8, Break DC 10) contains Lakta's heart, though there is no liquid in the kettle. Correctly identifying the organ requires a successful DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check. The kettle's opening is too small for the heart to be removed without damaging it. The heart is fragile and susceptible to injury. If Lakta accompanies the PCs, she insists on being allowed to touch her heart. When she does, the organ disappears and teleports inside of her current body just like her brain. Otherwise, the PCs may carry the organ with them until Lakta can return it to her present body.

13. Child's Bedroom (CR 3)

A dozen cloth dolls resembling wild animals lie atop a child-size bed covered in frilly lace and pink silk sheets. There is a nearby dresser with three drawers and an attached mirror. A closed chest rests against the near wall, and a stuffed clown sits on a chair tucked into the near corner. There is a closed folding door on the wall adjacent to the bed.

The dresser's three drawers and the chest are closed. The drawers are unlocked and contain an assortment of young girl's clothing and a diary that is locked with a tiny key attached to a strand of pink thread. The diary is written in Common and contains numerous hand-drawn pictures of an attractive young girl named Kayla with numerous references to her handsome prince. The story then claims that a horrible monster took her heart in her sleep, but her champion came to her rescue and they lived happily ever after.

The closed toy chest contains an assortment of girl's dolls and majestic cloth elephants and horses. There are nine of these stuffed items in all with an average value of 5 gp each.

The dolls on the child's bed and the clown seated in the chair are ordinary dolls of average quality. There are twelve small wild animal dolls, including a bear, camel, horse, hyena, lion and tiger. These dolls and the clown are worth an average of 2 gp each. Despite the odd color, the satin sheets and frilly lace are worth 20 gp total.

Hidden behind the folding closet door is the stuff of Kayla's nightmares, an **ogre**. The hideous monster bursts through the door and attacks the PCs if they spend more than 1 minute in the room, or anyone attempts to open the folding door. Though the diary suggests that the ogre took Kayla's heart, a thorough search of the attached closet turns up nothing.

OGRE

XP 800

hp 30 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Ogre")

CR 3

14. Child's Bedroom (CR 4)

Painted images of marching soldiers and charging cavalry superimposed over a light blue background adorn the walls. A battered collection of mangled wooden toy soldiers, marionettes and blunt wooden swords lie scattered about the floor in front of a dilapidated, uneven wooden bed. The nearby dresser is in similar shape as its two open drawers tenuously hang from the edge of the furniture piece, their contents of tattered clothing and worthless junk strewn about the area.

All of the objects littering the floor are worthless and beyond repair. Even the dresser and the bed reveal nothing of any value. The young girls that played with the dollhouse over the centuries used this bedroom to simulate their brothers' destructive nature and martial expectations.

Though it is not apparent, the heap of shattered toy soldiers, weapons and marionettes form the components of a lonely **attic whisperer**. The neglected undead creature becomes especially excited if Lakta accompanies the PCs into the room. The attic whisperer calls out to Lakta and the PCs secondarily using the stolen voices of its victims. When the PCs or Lakta come within 10 feet of it, it activates its aura of sobs and then

rises to attack them. It appears as a misshapen amalgamation of arms, legs and swords topped by a marionette's head. The attic whisperer displays a modicum of intelligence. It uses its bite against melee combatants to weaken them, and uses its touch attack against spellcasters to rob them of their voices. The attic whisperer's material components, like the other refuse strewn about the room, have no value.

ATTIC WHISPERER

XP 1,200

hp 45 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Attic Whisperer")

CR 4

15. Parents' Bedroom (CR 5)

An expertly carved mahogany bed rests against the far wall, covered by silk sheets and an exotic fur. There is a nearby vanity table with a mirror and chair tucked beneath it and several jars sitting atop it. On the opposite wall stands a closed armoire with two drawers, adjacent to a black lacquered dressing panel and a full-length mirror in the near corner.

When the door initially opens, the PCs cannot see behind the dressing panel in the near corner where the room's lone occupant currently hides. The silk sheets on the bed are worth 50 gp, and the exotic fur is worth 50 gp as well. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the fur as belonging to an oryx. The vanity table has a small drawer that pulls out, but is empty. There are six jars on top of the vanity table. Three of them contain perfume with a total value of 100 gp. The remaining three jars include a *potion of fly*, *mirror image* and *blur*. The armoire contains a marvelous collection of women's clothing including formal gowns, dresses and silk wraps worth a total of 450 gp. The black lacquered dressing panel stands 7 feet high and partially obscures a full-length silver mirror behind it. Though the mirror is valuable, it is also extremely heavy and rather large.

If Lakta accompanies the PCs, she explains that she roughly furnished the bedroom as a duplicate to her parents' bedroom, though she did not put any clothing in the armoire or the jars on the vanity table. She is also somewhat disturbed that none of her father's items appear in the room. Lakta insists that her father's clothing and belongings should appear in the room as well, but when pressed she admits that she has never seen his items in what she believes is her parents' bedroom.

Lakta's heritage created a logistical headache for the dollhouse's caretaker. In an act of spite and what he deems to be "enlightenment," Ezreki populated the room with an undead abomination of Lakta's distant ancestor. A lone **ghul** hides behind the dressing panel. The creature took great care to position itself out of sight, so PCs do not notice it unless they succeed on a DC 31 Perception check. The ghul waits behind the panel, peeking through the cracks until the opportune moment when it lashes out to attack. Throughout the combat, the bitter creature harps on Lakta's heritage, especially if she is present. It hurls horrific insults at her, calling her a bastard daughter, polluted child, half-breed girl and any other jibe the GM can devise. If Lakta is still unaware of her genie heritage and her true parentage, the ghul's disparaging remarks are likely to cause her to question the PCs about the volley of derogatory comments hurled at her. The ghul wears a gold bracelet worth 250 gp, a gold ring inset with a small sapphire worth 200 gp and a bronze necklace worth 100 gp.

GHUL

XP 1,600

hp 51 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3* "Ghul")

CR 5

First Floor

The staircase in **Area 8** leads down to the dollhouse's first floor. Unlike the dollhouse's second floor, there are no wandering monsters on this level. Here, the PCs discover Lakta's two missing organs as well as the

secret entrance to The House of a Thousand Delights' basement and its caretaker Ezreki.

16. First Floor Landing

The staircase descends into a small antechamber connected to an adjoining room by an archway. A large portrait of a crimson-skinned giant with smoldering eyes and black horns greets visitors as they descend down the stairs. A pair of stately wooden doors lies opposite the archway.

The doors are strong wooden doors that when opened lead to a solid masonry wall. They are the dollhouse's faux entrance. The portrait is an artist's rendering of Infernal fist during his life in Iljanna. A PC that succeeds on a DC 18 Knowledge (planes) check identifies the creature in the picture as an efreeti. If the PCs are aware of Infernal fist, they recognize him as the subject of the portrait with a successful DC 23 Knowledge (history) check. The archway adjoins this entryway with the parlor.

17. Parlor (CR 5)

Two upholstered high-backed gentleman's chairs and a chaise lounge are strategically positioned in the center of the room around an ornately carved wooden table. Crochet, knitting and sewing needles, thread, yarn and needlepoint canvases rest upon the table. There is a magnificent fireplace in one corner and a hutch in the other corner. Three completed needlepoint canvases hang on the near wall.

The three needlepoint canvases hanging from the walls are colorful and syrupy sweet. The closest one features flower petals and an idyllic cottage above the expression "Home Sweet Home." The second is a depiction of the parlor's corner fireplace above the words "Home is Where the Hearth Is." The furthest one is an image of a country farmhouse surrounded by wild fields and populated by domesticated animals. The three chairs surrounding the table are akin to those found in an estate home or a mansion. Almost fifty needles of varying shapes and sizes rest atop the table along with six large balls of pink, yellow and bright green yarn. The fireplace is fully functional and exquisitely carved with bas reliefs of flower petals and dots. The hutch has two drawers that contain an assortment of ceramic and glass drinking vessels. The door on the far wall opens easily with minimal effort.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 15; Break DC 18.

Shortly after the PCs enter the room, its **2 quicklings** start to play with their newfound toys. In their motionless state, the creatures are naturally invisible, so they cannot be spotted with a *see invisibility* spell or similar magic. They begin their festivities by using their abilities in tandem with each other. One uses its *dancing light* ability to create a vaguely humanoid shape while the other uses its *ventriloquism* ability to project its voice from the image in an effort to make the illusion appear to be an incorporeal undead creature. Anyone that hears the voice may disbelieve that the voice is actually coming from someplace other than the image with a successful DC 12 Will save. In addition, the voice speaks so fast that it is difficult to understand anything it says. This tactic makes them visible for 1 round. The quicklings resemble small, pale blue elves with silver hair and large ears. The mischievous and malevolent creatures giggle and snicker the entire time. If possible, the quicklings try to grab a handful of needles that they poison and use to stab the PCs. The needles are relatively small, so they deal only 1 point of damage instead of the dagger's normal damage. If necessary, the quicklings use their superior speed and agility to dart past the PCs and back up the stairs to the second floor where they find an ideal location to hide and coat their needles with poison.

QUICKLING (2)

XP 800

CE Small fey (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 497, "Quickling")

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +11

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size) **hp** 14 (4d6)

Fort +1; **Ref** +11; **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion, natural invisibility, supernatural speed, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/cold iron

Weaknesses slow susceptibility

Speed 120 ft.

Melee dagger +10 (1d3–1/19–20 plus poison)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *flare* (DC 11), *levitate*, *shatter* (DC 13), *ventriloquism* (DC 12)

Str 8, **Dex** 24, **Con** 11, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Mobility⁸, Spring Attack⁸, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+50 jump), Bluff +9, Craft (any one) +9,

Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +11,

Stealth +18 (+26 in natural surroundings), Survival +6; **Racial**

Modifiers +2 Perception, +8 Stealth in natural surroundings

Languages Aklo, Common

SQ poison

Combat Gear 5 doses of kava leaf poison; **Other Gear** dagger

Natural Invisibility (Su) A quickling is invisible when motionless. It loses this invisibility and remains visible for 1 round in any round in which it takes any action other than a free action.

Poison Use (Ex) A quickling is never at risk of poisoning itself when handling poison. They usually use kava leaf poison on their daggers.

Supernatural Speed (Su) A quickling moves with incredible speed. Save for when it remains motionless (at which point it is invisible), a quickling's shape blurs and shimmers with this speed, granting it concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, this ability grants the quickling evasion and uncanny dodge (as the rogue abilities of the same name).

Slow Susceptibility (Ex) A quickling that succumbs to a slow effect loses its supernatural speed ability and is sickened.

18. Ball Room (CR 5)

Painted images of festive dancing and frivolity adorn the chamber's walls. The colors of the rainbow are painted as lines on a smooth, stone column that stands in the room's center. There is a raised dais in the far corner. Two zithers lie on the dais surrounding a small drum. No one is playing these instruments, yet the sound of soothing music fills the hall. Two shapely female humanoids with pale bluish green scales elegantly sway to the intoxicating rhythm around the central column.

Another *ghost sound* spell provides the music emanating from the dais. After spending 1 minute in the room, the melody repeats itself. The two zithers sitting on the dais are masterwork instruments worth 100 gp each. The large bongo style drum has no monetary value, though it has greater significance. Though the drum is sealed, it is heavier than it should be and does not produce a proper sound when struck. The reason is that Lakta's lungs are tucked inside of it. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check can properly identify the organ. Her lungs can be easily removed by cutting through the drum skin with a sharp object. As was the case in **Area 12**, her lungs are teleported into her current body

CHILD'S PLAY

as soon as she comes in physical contact with them. The door into the adjoining chamber opens with no effort. Anyone who won the *pachisi* game in **Area 7** may also realize the connection to Ezreki's cryptic clue.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 15; Break DC 18.

The seductive creatures dancing to the music are **2 inphidian dancers**. They take great care to keep their hands concealed behind their backs as they attempt to fascinate onlookers using their entrancing dance special ability. The creatures' hands are actually viper heads that a PC can spot by succeeding on a DC 20 Perception check. (The inphidian dancers take 10 on their Stealth checks to keep their hands behind their backs.) During their performance, they move closer to the PCs and then attack them with their viper hands. Under normal circumstances, the inphidian dancers would attempt to flee, but there is nowhere for them to go in the dollhouse. They have no treasure.

DANCER INPHIDIAN (2)

CR 3

XP 800

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +10

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)
hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +3; **Ref** +7; **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 snake-hand bites +5 (1d4+1 plus poison)

Special Attacks entrancing dance, poison (DC 16)

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Perform [dance])

Skills Bluff +6, Perception +10, Perform (dance) +9, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Inphidian

Entrancing Dance (Su) A dancer inphidian can sway its body in a rhythmic motion that charms all those within 30 feet viewing the dance. The charmer makes a Perform (dance) check. Those viewing the dance must make a successful Will save (DC equal to the charmer's Perform check) or be fascinated for 1d4+2 rounds. A creature that makes a successful save is immune to the entrancing dance of that charmer for one day.

19. Dining Room

Ten stuffed animal dolls each occupy a small, white chair surrounding a long dining table. Cakes, cookies and other sweet treats cover the table.

The stuffed animals sitting around the table include a lion, hyena, giraffe, horse, camel, rabbit, donkey, cat, dog and mouse. A tray of desserts sits in front of each dinner guest. The door leading into Area 20 is somewhat swollen and requires effort to open.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 15; Break DC 18.

Development: When anyone enters the room, a *programmed image* spell begins. The ten stuffed animals instantly come to life and begin devouring the treats placed in front of them. Between bites, the creatures converse among themselves in Common praising the genies and their clever servant (Ezreki) that made this feast possible. Each guest acts in accordance with its animal counterpart, so the hyena laughs, while the donkey is grim and stubborn. The stuffed animals do not respond to

cues from the PCs or answer their questions. Anyone interacting with the illusion can disbelieve it by rolling a successful DC 19 Will save. By now the PCs are likely on edge that this menagerie is poised to attack them; however after 13 rounds, the stuffed animals and the dessert trays suddenly disappear leaving only empty chairs and an empty table in their wake.

20. Kitchen (CR 5)

Warm air surges from a large kitchen manned by a lone chef. The matronly older woman with light gray hair lovingly stirs a stew slowly simmering in a corner hearth. She wears an apron and holds a knife in her spare hand that she apparently just used to dice several onions atop a nearby table. She briefly looks towards the door and flashes a welcoming smile. The aroma of baked honey and roasted pistachios wafts from a cooling tray sitting on a table close to a warm oven. There is a large pantry on the near wall.

Like the dining room, the kitchen is also subject to an illusion, though this time it is a *permanent image* rather than a programmed one. In this case, only certain elements are part of an illusion. The fire in the hearth and oven, the onions on the table and the fresh tray of *baklava* comprise parts of the illusion. Anyone that interacts with the illusion is entitled to a DC 19 Will save to disbelieve it. The remaining elements are real with the exception of the chef, most important among them being the stew. In this case, Lakta's liver is inside the stew pot, though thankfully it is cool to the touch. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check can correctly identify it. As in **Areas 12** and **18**, Lakta's liver is teleported in her new body as soon as she touches it. Likewise, if anyone won the seega game in **Area 7**, the clue should lead them to the stew pot. The door to the adjoining servants' quarters is less sturdy than the others found on this floor.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 10; Break DC 13.

Like some of the features already encountered in the kitchen, everything is not as it appears to be. The grandmotherly figure is really a **green hag** masquerading as such using her *alter self* ability. She claims that her name is Jenna, and she was imprisoned in the House of a Thousand Delights seven centuries ago. She claims that she entreated Infernalist to spare her life by indulging the genie's sweet tooth with her famous *baklava*. Of course, she realizes that the *baklava* in the tray is an illusion, so she tells curious PCs that it is far too hot to eat. The cunning predator plays along with the ruse and even feigns ignorance about Lakta's liver in the stew. When she is confronted with her inconsistencies or an opportune moment presents itself, she turns invisible and attacks a flat-footed PC. She even uses her mimicry ability to imitate the sounds of the stuffed animals in **Area 19** in an effort to make it seem that they are real after all and serve as a distraction. The green hag fights to the bitter end.

GREEN HAG

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 58 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Hag, Green")

Development: Unless the PCs or Lakta did not find one of her organs along the way, Lakta or the PCs should have all of her missing organs apparently paving the way for them to escape The House of a Thousand Delights. Unfortunately for the PCs that is not the case. Lakta's organs remain with her half-construct body and the portal in Lakta's hiding space in the attic also bars their exit from the dollhouse. Lakta has only one possible explanation. She asserts that the closed cupboard beneath the stairs leading from the second floor to the first floor is the only area inaccessible in her dollhouse back home. She believes that if there is a way to get into the cupboard it must be hidden somewhere in either the servant's quarters or supply room.

21. Servants' Quarters (CR 6)

Space is tight in a crowded room with four beds, a circular table surrounded by four chairs, a large dresser and a full-length mirror. Small, mundane items lie scattered about the floor as well as on top of the table and dresser.

The objects strewn about the room include weathered books, crockery, clothes and other sundries. They have no monetary value, but they are useful for the servants' quarters four unseen occupants.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 10; Break DC 13.

The room's cluster is not an accident. It is haunted by **4 poltergeists** that are the undead spirits of those rare individuals that nearly discovered the house's concealed basement and inner workings. These ghostly abominations use the objects scattered around the room as projectiles, hurling them at the PCs with reckless abandon while remaining invisible. Like the other restless apparitions stalking The House of a Thousand Delights, these beings can only be granted permanent rest by accomplishing what they failed to do — destroy Infernalist's miserable creation.

POLTERGEIST (4)
XP 600

CR 2

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Poltergeist")

22. Supply Room

Eight cleaning implements including brooms, mops and feather dusters are affixed to a support bracket bolted into the wall. The strong odor of ammonia emanates from a half-filled stone basin that sits beneath a washboard and stone. White linens fill the shelves of an open storage cabinet abutting the far wall.

There are two straw brooms, a wire broom, three mops and two feather dusters hanging from the wall bracket. All of these objects can be easily removed from the bracket which opens and closes the secret door leading into the basement. Sliding the bracket to the right opens the door and pushing it back to the left closes the secret door.

Secret Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 20; Break DC 18; Perception DC 20.

The laundry apparatus is fully functional and actually works well to bleach stains. The linens in the open cabinets consist predominately of bed sheets and towels. None of them have any value.

23. Spiral Staircase

A dank, narrow iron spiral staircase descends ten feet into a small, warm room with concrete floors, walls and ceiling.

Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Perception check notices that the warmth emanates from behind a swollen wooden door tightly fitted into the wall.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5, hp 20; Break DC 23.

Basement Level

Nothing has entered the basement since Infernalist constructed The House of a Thousand Delights centuries ago. Ezreki and his fire elemental servant have remained undisturbed since then, waiting for an opportunity to unleash the house's horrors on another terrified and unsuspecting victim. Ezreki monitors the PCs and Lakta's activities using a miniaturized replica of the dollhouse as a *scrying* device, so he is aware that they wait outside of the door searching for an opportunity to escape.

24. Basement (CR 7)

Warm air surges from a swaying pillar of flame smoldering in a 5-foot-wide fire pit in the center of the room. Two tapestries depicting a crimson-skinned giant leading an army of men into battle span the length of opposite walls. A vaguely humanoid creature about the size of a small child with leathery wings, a pronounced underbite, long pointed ears and jagged teeth sits atop a round piece of quartz roughly shaped into a seat. The monster intently gazes at a miniaturized version of Lakta's dollhouse. There is a closed iron chest in the far corner.

The roaring pillar of flame in the center of the room is a **Large fire elemental**. It obeys its new master's commands and immediately steps out of the fire pit to combat the PCs. The creature overlooking the replica dollhouse is **Ezreki**, the advanced homunculus. Upon his master's death, the homunculus and The House of a Thousand Delights became a single consciousness that infused Ezreki with some of its power allowing the intelligent construct to direct its denizens as it so chooses. He does so using a telepathic link that connects him with Infernalist's diabolic creation. Ezreki is incapable of speaking, so he expresses his emotions with childish gestures like stamping his feet in anger. The homunculus leaves the bulk of the melee combat to its fire elemental servant, instead relying upon its speed and maneuverability to bite enemies and leave the vicinity.

EZREKI
XP 1,600

CR 5

Advanced homunculus (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Homunculus")

LE Small construct

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +3

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +7 natural)
hp 48 (7d10+10)

Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities construct traits

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee bite +9 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Special Attacks poison

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Skills Bluff +6, Fly +11, Intimidate +0, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +7

Languages Common (cannot speak); telepathic link (with The House of a Thousand Delights)

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/minute for 60 minutes; effect sleep for 1 minute; cure 1 save. The save is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Telepathic Link (Su) A homunculus cannot speak, but the

CHILD'S PLAY

process of creating one links it telepathically with its creator. A homunculus knows what its master knows and can convey to him or her everything it sees and hears, out to a distance of 1,500 feet.

LARGE FIRE ELEMENTAL

XP 1,600

hp 60 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Fire Elemental, Large")

CR 5

Development: Ezreki is the last physical link to The House of a Thousand Delights' extradimensional space. When it is destroyed, the extradimensional space slowly fades away, and The House of a Thousand Delights loses all of its magical properties. The process takes 1 minute, giving the PCs a chance to grab anything they can before they reappear in Lakta's room around her dollhouse. If Lakta failed to recover all of her missing organs, she dies 1d3+1 minutes after Ezreki's destruction. Otherwise, the PCs and the objects they take from the dollhouse return to their normal size when they reappear on the Material Plane, while Lakta awakens from her catatonic state with her organs and mind intact.

After their ordeal, the PCs are aware of Jumia's role in the plot. If the PCs did not learn of her involvement prior to their adventure in the dollhouse, they must now confront the vengeful kharam. Jumia is not a seasoned killer. After the PCs initial foray into the secret portal, Jumia concocts an excuse and discreetly leaves the Jamar residence for 30 minutes, as she wanders the streets and internally debates the PCs' chance of success. She then periodically returns to the Jamar residence every 30 minutes thereafter to check on any new developments. After repeating this process for two hours, Jumia is satisfied that the PCs are hopelessly trapped within Lakta's dollhouse.

Though Jumia longs to avenge her mother's death, self-preservation remains her foremost concern. She flees whenever she is reduced to less than a quarter of her original hit points. If she escapes, the spiteful monster broods over the failed plot for several weeks before making another assassination attempt against Hassan, Dima or Lakta.

Treasure: The quartz shaped seat is intended to serve as a throne; however it is so misshapen that appears to be a rudimentary seat. The closed iron chest is unlocked and contains the spoils culled from countless victims over the years. Ezreki has no need for these treasures, so he threw

them inside the chest for safekeeping. Inside the chest are a +1 *longsword*, an *elemental gem* (fire), a *ring of protection* +1, a *brooch of shielding*, a *javelin of lightning*, a +1 *chain shirt*, an *elixir of fire breath*, a *cloak of resistance* +1, *wand of scorching ray* (11 charges), an arcane scroll (CL 5th: *blur*, *mirror image*, *ventriloquism*), 10 +1 *arrows*, 3,685 gp and five gems worth 500 gp, 250 (x2), 100 gp and 50 gp. The tapestries are images of Infernal fist during his life in Iljanna. Though they have some value (200 gp), they are extremely large and heavy measuring 20 feet in length and weighing 300 pounds each. Transporting them is not feasible without magical intervention.

Concluding the Adventure

Several loose ends await the PCs when they return to Lakta's bedroom after their nightmarish experience in The House of a Thousand Delights. Lakta's wellbeing is foremost among them. If they saved the young girl's life, Hassan, Dima, their servants and the abaya shower adulation on the PCs and give them their reward, if they were promised one. Hassan and Salamon treat the PCs as heroes and grant them assistance in Qamara whenever they request it. Lakta also becomes their friend for life, offering to accompany the PCs on their perilous adventures when she gets older. Instead of spending her time playing with her dollhouse, Lakta attunes herself to her magical abilities. On the other hand, PCs that fail to save Lakta's life do not get a reward and manage only lukewarm thanks for their effort. PCs that fail to save Lakta or bring Jumia to justice feel the full brunt of the family's discontent. A few household members may even go so far as to publicly question the PCs' competence and abilities.

In addition to the obvious concerns, there is also the delicate matter of Lakta's parentage. Despite Hassan's previous position on the subject, the prospect of losing Lakta, and his family proved too much to bear. He forgives Dima for her past transgression and asks her to forgive him for his boorish behavior on the matter. Likewise, Dima admits to the affair and apologizes to her husband while accepting his. Lakta is also eternally grateful for restoring unity to her family to her.

The PCs' stature within Qamara and the surrounding area rises if they successfully rescued Lakta or at least brought Jumia to justice. Salamon may call upon them again in the future to thwart Jumia's further machinations if she escaped justice, or he could request their assistance in the next adventure "King of Beasts."

King of Beasts

Riddle of the Sands

I may elude those who seek me even though I cannot hide. I may be in plain sight, but they do not see me. I may be at the tip of their tongue, yet they cannot remember me. What am I?

I am an answer.

King of Beasts is an 8th-level desert adventure that takes the PCs on a whirlwind journey through a small village and its outlying area in the Pesha River Delta and then into the heart of the Maighib Desert. A case of mistaken identity sets a chain of events into motion that transforms the hunters into the hunted, as wild beasts under the direction of a vengeful creature turn the tables on mankind. The lives of the guilty and the innocent are at stake unless someone can solve the true riddle of the sands.

Adventure Background

The desert is riddled with secrets, though some do not enjoy being kept that way. Before the Kharitsines arrived to settle the fertile Pesha River Delta, the comparatively primitive Omaruri people farmed the fertile soil, hunted along its nurturing banks and revered the forces of nature for granting them their bountiful harvests and fresh meat. They paid homage to a pantheon of gods that governed the land, the beasts, the water and the weather, yet when they sought counsel their elders and high priests trekked across the sands of the Maighib Desert to a mysterious and ancient structure that predated their arrival to this land. They called the place Chass. Within its cluttered rooms and majestic chambers dwelt a wise and seemingly immortal creature that they knew as Chasshagra, though he referred to himself by another name in his native tongue. Though the Omaruri's first encounters with Chasshagra the androsphinx were tension-filled battles of wits and intellect, over time the gruff and territorial beast grew to appreciate their company and insight about the outside world. He even came to regard their most remarkable sages and leaders as dear friends whom he entertained for days and sometimes weeks at a time while they debated topics of particular interest to him. Foremost among his inquiries were man's role in the natural world as well as who should rule the land — man or beast. Chasshagra always championed the supremacy of beasts. In the end, the Omaruri deferred to Chasshagra's vast intellect and accepted nature's triumph over the forces of civilization, though their successors were not as accommodating.

The Kharitsine's arrival and the subsequent, rapid decline of the Omaruri culture forever changed the dynamic between men and Chasshagra. Though they never openly expressed it, many Omaruri revered the astute sphinx as a living deity, a belief that the worshippers of Mah-Barek considered blasphemous. Within the span of a generation, the pilgrimages to Chass ended. The once highly sought after Chasshagra retreated to the sanctity and loneliness of his treasured library, only venturing into the outside world on rare occasions vainly searching for any signs of his long-lost friends. After the passage of a century, he accepted that his Omaruri admirers were dead and that the Kharitsines were very much alive and probably headed in his direction.

The Kharitsines had no desire to conquer trackless expanses of searing dunes under the Kingdom of Guurzan's nominal control, but they were interested in new business opportunities. They were particularly keen on establishing an overland route from the fertile Pesha River Delta to the distant Guurzan settlement of Qiram far to the east, one that would take them through Chasshagra's territory or even past Chass itself.

The reclusive sphinx greeted the prospect of new visitors with mixed feelings. He greatly missed his discussions with his old friends, yet suspicions persisted about the newcomers. His nagging doubts proved prophetic. Chass itself and the surrounding fresh water springs garnered the traders' interest; however they had no time or patience for the crafty sphinx's philosophical debates or his lively conversation. Much to his dismay, the merchants offered Chasshagra treasure in exchange for his hospitality and access to his water supplies. The proposal insulted the haughty beast. To make matters worse, the merchant leaders misinterpreted his overtures as a negotiating tactic aimed at exacting more gold and riches from them. Dialogue with Chasshagra inevitably broke down denying the traveling merchants access to his water supplies and safe passage through his territory. That was an outcome that some refused to accept. Conflict became unavoidable, yet those that dared to rouse the anger of the immortal being soon came to regret it. After a few hard-fought lessons, the caravan leaders abandoned their attempts to wrest Chass and its resources from the territorial sphinx's control and instead steered a wide berth around the area. Occasional skirmishes erupted over the passing years, but for the most part both sides honored their uneasy, tacit truce.

Though the men sidestepping his territory gave no thought to the ancient sphinx dwelling within Chass, the increasingly misanthropic creature became obsessed with proving beasts' superiority over man. The endeavor consumed nearly every waking moment as he alternated between pouring through his vast library looking for evidence to support his hypothesis and conducting field research following and observing wild animals, particularly lion prides, scattered through the Pesha River Delta. He struggled to maintain his objectivity on the subject, especially when someone killed a wild beast for sport or to protect his property. His contempt for man grew with each affront to nature, yet it all became a distant memory when his path crossed with another of his kin — the gynosphinx Savvith. In the blink of an eye, his obsession with men vanished and was replaced with a new purpose. After a lengthy reprieve of riddles, puzzles and logic problems, Chasshagra's sharp intellect and persistence won over the object of his affections. Savvith accompanied him back to his library, and his ill feelings towards man faded into a distant memory. The beautiful and brilliant gynosphinx occupied his every thought. In a few months, she captured his heart and soul. Less than a year later, she became pregnant with his offspring. Chasshagra doted on his beloved mate, yet she still enjoyed her occasional freedom wandering through the desert in search of new discoveries. But her curiosity brought her face to face with an old enemy that altered their destinies forever.

Game Over

Lost in complex thought, Savvith paid little attention to her surroundings, as she walked across the Maighib Desert's desolate sands where an unexpected band of predators lay in wait. The three men and one woman that comprised Game Over, a renowned troupe of big-game hunters, carefully stalked their coveted prey from a distance. Though they normally targeted wild animals, an ambitious caravan leader named Ameht Baktar offered them a hefty bounty to rid Chass of its resident sphinx. The group of skilled archers and swordsmen followed her every step for nearly an hour until the opportune moment presented itself. Two archers armed with lethal magical projectiles let fly a volley of arrows followed by a headlong charge towards the startled Savvith. She fought back with every ounce of strength she could muster, severely injuring two of them in the wild melee before succumbing to their coordinated attack. They decapitated her and returned to their hunting lodge at the edge of the Maighib Desert with proof of their kill and a prized trophy — Savvith's head which they

proudly mounted on the wall. And all along they had no idea that they killed the wrong sphinx.

Time passes slowly for sphinxes, yet for Chasshagra every passing hour seemed like a thousand years without Savvith. When morning broke without any sign of her, he could not justify any further delay. The nervous sphinx took to the skies in search of his missing love. Eight miles from Chass, his worst fear came true. He saw Savvith's headless, dead body lying on the burning sands. Overcome with grief, the normally reserved beast devolved into a heaving mass of inconsolable flesh and bone. He laid his head against her belly until the following morning desperately longing to hear his unborn offspring in her womb, but no signs of life stirred within her. Profound sadness and melancholy steadily gave way to anger and resentment as he carried her corpse back to Chass. The arrows in her belly left no doubt in his mind about who was responsible for this atrocity. It could only be his old nemesis — man. He used his divination magic to gather a few cryptic facts and deduced that Savvith's killers could only be the hunting group Game Over. He resolved that thought must now give way to action.

Memories of the Omaruri

Chasshagra returned to Chass searching for an ancient magical book given to him centuries earlier by a hermetic Omaruri high priestess named Nawalapuura. While she walked the earth, the benevolent sphinx avoided the wicked cleric whenever possible because of her reputation for worshipping the Omaruri's dark earth mother, Owomarari. Rumors persisted that she animated corpses into undead abominations and summoned sinister beasts to her aid during her evil rituals. Nawalapuura always took an interest in Chasshagra, presumably borne of some desire to corrupt the soul of an inherently good creature. Her dark magic gave her unnaturally long life, and just before she departed this world to join her divine mistress she gave him her book entitled *King of Beasts*. She claimed that he could use it to summon aid from her vile goddess during his greatest time of need. Though Chasshagra never considered the evil priestess' proposition for nearly a thousand years, the current tragedy sparked his interest. He opened its vile pages and began reading through its dark incantations, all of which demanded the freshly spilt blood of a magical beast. Chasshagra considered it apropos that he should sacrifice his own blood to exact his revenge. As he read the accursed words, his spilt blood bubbled and roiled on the floor. With each passing phrase, the life fluids took substance, transforming into bone, flesh and hair as they grew in size. After the vengeful sphinx finished reading the spell, the wicked tome burst into black flames, and three therianthrope lionweres stood before him ready to perform his bidding. He bid his servants to avenge Savvith's death and prove to men that beasts are the world's true masters, not men. He commanded them to find the men who killed Savvith using any means necessary, while he monitored their progress via a *sending* spell that linked master and servants.

Full Circles

The lionweres dashed off from Chass and headed towards the closest settlement to Chass and the hunting group's reputed home — the village of Ramaashta along the Pesha River. The cunning shapechangers assumed their human form and visited the village square seeking information about their quarry's whereabouts. Though no one could provide specific details about Game Over, they learned that Ameht Baktar, a prominent caravan leader offered a massive bounty on Chasshagra's head to give him unfettered access to Chass. The discovery outraged the sphinx. Once again, man's greed and avarice claimed an innocent life, that of his beloved mate. The enraged sphinx took to the skies and captured Ameht Baktar in the open desert as he led his caravan en route to Qiram. Several caravan members perished in the attack while most of the others fled into the desert only to succumb to the scorching heat and native denizens. However, two survivors escaped the carnage and embarked on the perilous journey across the sands. On their way to Ramaashta, they encountered Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki, two members of Game Over. Vaguely familiar with

the siblings, the two survivors conveyed their account of Chasshagra's recent attack on their caravan to the stunned listeners. The Ansiki siblings suddenly realized that they made a grave mistake. They killed the wrong sphinx. Troubled by this news, they returned to their hunting lodge and relayed the information to their perturbed and increasingly paranoid leader, Ammar Tareq. After some internal debate, Ammar demanded that the group must kill the two survivors to spare them any embarrassment from their mistake and to prevent the villagers from blaming them for any repercussions that might result from their error.

Meanwhile, Chasshagra's lionweres grow frustrated with the villagers' lack of cooperation and the need to suppress their inherent murderous instincts. No one knew where to find their quarry, or at least that is what they told the lionweres posing as three strangers. The situation reached its boiling point during a particularly tense encounter with an elderly farmer and his grandniece. Conversation devolved into an argument, and the disagreement then escalated into violence. The lionweres slew both family members. As an unintended consequence, the murders loosened the villagers' tongues. To further improve their surreptitious ruse, the lionweres committed additional murders in their lion form and claimed that they were also game hunters seeking Game Over's assistance in ridding the village of these man-eating beasts. In addition to creating the desired effects among the villagers, the lionweres' murderous deeds inadvertently stirred an ancient evil from her slumber. Sensing the presence of residual magic from her long-forgotten tome, the slumbering Nawalapuura rose from the banks of the Pesha River as a bog mummy where she stalked the El-Rauf Farm on the village's outskirts in search of live bodies to swell the ranks of her minions. When the PCs arrive in Ramaashta events seemingly come full circle, as the PCs must contend with the savage lionweres' murderous rampage, the malevolent bog mummy and the hunting troupe that set everything into motion.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs first become involved in the adventure when they are asked to investigate and stop a series of brutal wild animal attacks in the village of Ramaashta along the banks of the Pesha River. Shortly after arriving at the scene, they learn that the beasts exclusively target men and do not harm livestock or other wild animals. The assaults coincide with the sudden appearance of three strangers — gruff men more akin to beasts that seek information about Game Over, a renowned hunting troupe that dwells beyond the village's borders. It is unclear how the mysterious strangers and the hunting group are related to the recent animal attacks. As the PCs dig deeper, they discover that the savage beasts committing the killings and the mysterious visitors are one and the same. They are lionweres sent by the androsphinx Chasshagra to avenge the death of his beloved mate Savvith at the hands of Game Over. The PCs must solve the mystery and stop the lionweres' murderous ways, but they are just one piece to the rapidly evolving puzzle.

The lionweres' killings stir *King of Beasts*' former owner, Nawalapuura, from her watery grave along the banks of the Pesha River. She rises from the muck as a malevolent bog mummy and infects Mesut Azaz, a local farmhand from the El-Rauf Farm with her evil curse. The day after the PCs arrive in the village, two survivors from Chasshagra's assault against Ameht Baktar's caravan make their way into Ramaashta with Game Over following close behind. Game Over's rash and violent leader, Ammar, searches the village for the two survivors only to discover that three mysterious strangers are looking for Game Over instead. In addition to contending with the lionweres, the PCs now find themselves standing between Game Over and the two innocent men they seek to kill. The situation comes to a head as the PCs must simultaneously halt the lionweres' attacks against the village, take sides in the conflict between Game Over and the two caravan survivors, and defeat the bog mummy stalking the banks of the Pesha River. The PCs must deal with all three threats before they can set out into the Maighib Desert to confront the architect behind the entire plan.

The long trek across the burning sands pits the PCs against the forces of nature and the inhospitable realm's indigenous denizens. Along the way the PCs may also come upon the remnants of Ameht's caravan or the location of Savvith's killing. After braving the dangers of the Maighib

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Desert, Chass and its vengeful master await. Intrigued by the power of Nawalapuura's demonic tome, Chasshagra scoured its surviving pages and created other wicked creatures to exact his revenge. The PCs must overcome these minions as well as the ancient citadel's devious traps and ancient inhabitants before confronting the wrathful sphinx within his grand library. The intelligent beast has dabbled in evil rituals and burns with rage, but he is still not beyond redemption. If the PCs can devise a way to restore life to Savvith, Chasshagra may atone for his sins. Otherwise, the PCs are left with no option but to destroy him and bring this sad chapter of his lengthy existence to a permanent end.

Starting the Adventure

An interested party may contact the PCs anywhere in northern Khartous, including Qamara or any of the villages and towns scattered throughout the Pesha River Delta. The person employing their services requires the PCs to accomplish three fundamental, intertwined tasks — safeguard the local residents against additional attacks, unmask the culprits and put a stop to the vicious assaults. The adventure itself begins in the small village of Ramaashta on the southern branch of the Pesha River close to where the mighty waterway splits into two, though PCs traveling to the region from far away must traverse the treacherous Maighib Desert to reach the remote location. Regardless of who engages the PCs to look into these strange events, their employer provides them with some basic information about the attacks. So far, there are no survivors to relay any rhyme or reason for the assaults. The wounds and tracks left behind by the assailants bear the telltale hallmarks of at least one large, predatory feline. Every attack took place at night under the cover of darkness in a remote and isolated location except for the first attack in a farmhouse. Speculation abounds as to the cause. Theories range from a group of sick beasts driven mad by some disease to fiendish brutes under the sway of a demonic power to everything in between. In addition to the human toll, the vicious assaults are also having a chilling effect on the region's economy. Farmhands are increasingly frightened to till the fields, harvest the crops or tend to the livestock even during the day. Any significant disruption to the Pesha River Delta's ability to produce food would result in major food shortages or famine throughout northern Khartous. This dire prospect is enough to force the most miserly politicians and merchants alike to take action regardless of the monetary cost.

Hooks

Many parties are concerned about these developments prompting them to potentially employ adventurers to resolve the matter. PCs far from the Pesha River Delta are more likely to be contacted by a political official than anywhere else especially if they have an ongoing relationship with that person. If the PCs completed the preceding adventure *Child's Play* and are still in Qamara, Salamun ibn Saddesh directly approaches PCs seeking their assistance with another urgent matter. Those closer to the scene are more apt to be hired by a local merchant with business ties to the affected area or become personally involved in the matter. Regardless of the circumstances, the GM may use one of the following hooks or create another one in order to get the adventure underway.

Murder Most Foul

The brutal deaths of so many citizens cause great concern among Khartous's rulers. Salamun ibn Saddesh, Yamun's abaya, or Sultan Faud Umarr himself summons the PCs to an urgent meeting about the matter. Neither party has additional information about the killings other than they are believed to be caused by wild animals and are concentrated in and around the village of Ramaashta on the southern bank of the Pesha River's eastern branch. Either party offers the PCs a 4,000 gp reward to kill the beasts committing the slayings. PCs may attempt Diplomacy checks to increase the reward, but no matter how successful the check, the reward never increases beyond 5,000 gp. Salamun or Faud directs the PCs to the remote village of Ramaashta and gives them an official letter that they should present to the settlement's local administrator, Aramses Ottama,

indicating that they were personally sent by either of them.

Aramses Ottama

XP 600

hp 20 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*
"Noble Scion")

CR 2

Bad for Business

No one fears the economic fallout from the murders more than **Cirat the Swift-Lipped** (N male human expert 5, Int 15, Profession [merchant] +10), a fabulously wealthy merchant with deep, economic ties in the affected region. The portly, gregarious businessman owns breweries and bakeries that depend upon the village's crop yields. Early reports suggest that the killings directly affected several farms that supply grain to his operations and caused farmhands on adjacent lands to abandon their harvests and seek work elsewhere. The wily Cirat desperately needs the PCs' assistance to protect his assets and revenue stream. Renowned for his ability to crunch numbers to his greatest benefit, the cunning merchant offers them the odd sum of 3,568 gp and 2 sp to stop the creatures responsible for the murders and restore order to the area. Needless to say, the reward amount is non-negotiable unless it favors Cirat. He also directs the PCs to Aramses Ottama for assistance in the matter.

Local Affairs

If the PCs begin the adventure in the local vicinity, their stature attracts tremendous interest among those living in the area, none more than Aramses Ottama, the local administrator. The young, capable official wants to make a name for himself and impress the Abaya as well as the Sultan himself with his ability to handle this pressing matter. He realizes that this situation is beyond his area of expertise; therefore he recruits the PCs to investigate and stop the killings. As a local official in a rural district, Aramses is short on coin and manpower, so he tugs at the PCs' heartstrings and appeals to their sense of honor. Should that fail the crafty politician employs an unusual strategy. He presents his stunningly beautiful younger sister **Kadin Ottama** (CG human female aristocrat 2, Cha 15, Perform [sing] +7) to the PCs and offers her hand in marriage to an appropriately aged PC willing to undertake this important mission. Though he fully expects the PCs to relent on their demand to marry the young woman, he follows through with his promise if the PC insists.

Sandy Trails and Watery Roads

Unless the PCs are in remote village of Ramaashta at the beginning of the adventure, they must still negotiate the treacherous Maighib Desert and the Pesha River Delta to reach the distant settlement of Ramaashta. The GM may challenge those making the arduous trek across the burning sands with one or more of the encounters found in Part 2 of this adventure with the exceptions of Ameht's Caravan and Scene of the Slaughter. In addition, the GM should consult the tables found in **Chapter 3** to determine the prevailing weather conditions and their impact on the PCs as they make their way across the rolling dunes. Though the journey through the Pesha River Delta does not pose the same natural obstacles as the Maighib Desert, travelers moving through the area still encounter several formidable problems. The Pesha River is too deep to walk across, so travelers must seek alternate means to ford the waterway. The current is relatively still; therefore anyone may attempt DC 10 Swim check to move across the water by that means. On average, the river is 80 feet wide and 20 feet deep, so it takes multiple successful Swim checks to get to the other side. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (nature) check directs the PC towards a narrower crossing. Knowledge (geography) checks that succeed by 10 or more reveals the location of a bridge. Though the water route is the safer and less grueling method of travel, the actual distance may be substantially longer depending upon the journey's starting point. On average, boats navigating these waters charge passengers 5 sp to travel to the opposite river bank and a standard rate that roughly equals 1 gp per mile.

Part One: Fields of Blood

After securing passage on a vessel navigating the Pesha River or making the overland journey across the fertile delta, the PCs arrive in the coastal village of Ramaashta, the focal point of the attacks. It is important to remember that the adventure's events do not happen in a vacuum. The PCs' arrival and Chasshagra's actions influence the adventure's outcome. The following timeline of events describing the main antagonists' activities and whereabouts is intended to serve as a guide for adjudicating the outcome of these events. Events that occurred before the PCs' involvement are static; however the GM may modify subsequent incidents accordingly. The timeline's starting point is based upon their arrival in Ramaashta, not when they are first contacted. Since the killings began five nights before the PCs' arrival in Ramaashta, the culprits have claimed six victims.

Cast of Characters

The following sections further describe the actions and activities of the four parties involved in the sad events at Ramaashta. The GM should fully familiarize himself with each group as their actions and reactions depend largely upon what the PCs do in the village. Unlike conventional adventures, there are no set encounters involving any of these parties; therefore the PCs and the GM are free to determine where and when the encounters take place based upon the PCs' travels within the village. For instance, the PCs may surreptitiously run into the lionweres in the village square, or the PCs may get extremely lucky and catch the lionweres in the act during a covert stakeout. In the event that the PCs appear to be struggling with unearthing leads or solving the mystery, the GM may bring the action to the PCs by having the lionweres ambush them or have an important NPC with information seek them out instead.

Lionweres (CR 9)

From his distant residence in Chass, the vengeful sphinx used Nawalapuura's ancient book to breathe life into **3 lionweres** that search the small village of Ramaashta for the hunting troupe Game Over. In human form, the lionweres present themselves as Aswan, Leu and Sanga. Their aggressive demeanor and abrasive rudeness shine through even in their human form which hampers their efforts to garner information from the insular locals. They initially portrayed themselves as three wayward travelers, because they believed that a few questions would quickly lead them right to their intended quarry. When they realized that finding Game Over would be more difficult than they suspected, they assumed the guise of three big-game hunters on the trail of three man-eating lions. They use this ruse in the hope that it lures Game Over to Ramaashta. After the initial assault in the farmhouse, the lionweres lured subsequent victims out into the open while in human form under the guise that they wanted the person to give them a "lay of the land" to aid them in their pursuit of the beasts. Though they are most adept at attacking in their hybrid form, they committed the murders in their animal form to perpetuate the belief that wild animals are responsible for the slayings. Despite their bestial nature and ability to detect scents, the lionweres are poor trackers. In addition to these obstacles, they experience tremendous difficulty suppressing their inherent bloodthirstiness. Though it seems obvious that more killings are not bringing them any closer to new information about the hunting group's current whereabouts, they still indulge their innate cruelty strictly for twisted kicks.

During their first few days in Ramaashta, the trio frequented the village square listening for rumors about Game Over and asking questions of the locals. They focused extra attention on Harkuul Gristlebeard, the village's smith whom they suspected outfits the group with weapons and armor. The gruff dwarf admitted to them that he occasionally supplies Game Over, but he gave them no other information. They were reluctant to assault someone capable of fighting back, so they pursued other leads instead. By the time the PCs arrive in Ramaashta, the lionweres abandoned any hopes of finding Game Over by investigative means and now hope that the killings draw the hunting group into the village in search of answers. The timeline of events describes the lionweres' movements during the course

Timeline of Adventure Events

–1 month ago: Ameht Bakhtar offers a bounty on Chasshagra's head.

–21 days ago: Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki, two members of Game Over, learn of Ameht Bakhtar's proposal during a visit to Ramaashta.

–14 days ago: Caleb and Guadalupe meet with Ameht Bakhtar at the Hook and Sickle to discuss the terms of his offer. The parties agree on a suitable price. The pair purchases a dozen *magical beast bane arrows* from Harkuul Gristlebeard's armory in Ramaashta.

–13 days ago: Game Over heads into the Maighib Desert in search of Chasshagra.

–10 days ago: Game Over encounters and kills Savvith outside of Chass.

–9 days ago: Chasshagra discovers Savvith's corpse.

–8 days ago: Chasshagra reads from *King of Beasts* breathing life into the lionweres who immediately head out to Ramaashta. Ameht Bakhtar leads his caravan of twenty camels and ten men out of Ramaashta and into the Maighib Desert en route to distant Qiram.

–7 days ago: Game Over returns to their lodge with their kill and then heads to Ramaashta's village square to boast about their prize.

–5 days ago: The lionweres arrive in Ramaashta and kill their first victims at the Khottam farmhouse.

–4 days ago: The lionweres learn of Ameht Bakhtar's bounty and relay the information back to Chasshagra. The lionweres kill their next victim at Ramaashta's catacombs.

–3 days ago: Chasshagra locates Ameht Bakhtar's caravan. He captures Ameht Bakhtar and drives off his men. The lionweres kill their next victim in the fields of the Bizayad Farms.

–2 days ago: The lionweres kill another victim on the road near the Cuzek Farm.

–1 day ago: The lionweres slay another victim on the grounds of the El-Rouf Farm. The evil deed stirs the corpse of their former master, Nawalapuura, a bog mummy buried along the banks of the Pesha River.

Present: The PCs arrive in Ramaashta. Nawalapuura infects her first victim, Mesut Azaz, with bog rot. That evening, the diseased Mesut is brought from the El-Rauf Farm to Sholamara's House of Respite for treatment. Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki encounter the caravan survivors and discover their mistake. The lionweres do not attack this evening.

+1 day: The lionweres stalk the grounds of the El-Rauf Farm asking questions during the day and then attacking another victim at night. The caravan attack's two survivors arrive in Ramaashta followed shortly afterward by Game Over. Nawalapuura is first sighted on the banks of the Pesha River.

+2 days: The lionweres move to the neighboring Al-Hoda Farm and kill another victim that night.

+3 days: The lionweres move to Aramses Ottama's estate and slay one of his family members that evening. Nawalapuura infects a second victim, Jazeel Sharif, with bog rot.

+4 days: The lionweres move to the Sharif Farm and claim their last victim.

+5 days and beyond: Nawalapuura's curse spreads through Ramaashta, as she and her undead minions perpetrate more attacks and swell their ranks.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

of the adventure, though they still periodically frequent the village square for supplies, food or water.

If the lionweres cross paths with the PCs or the PCs make their presence abundantly known in the village, they incorrectly mistake them for Game Over. Unlike the unarmed villagers, the lionweres do not directly approach the PCs. They instead follow them from a distance and wait for nightfall before launching a sneak attack in their hybrid form. The lionweres do not avoid the PCs even if they are accompanied by the village's soldiers or Aramses. The lionweres also communicate the PCs' presence to their distant master, Chasshagra via a *sending* spell, which Chasshagra must initiate. Chasshagra communicates with all three simultaneously in order for it to function properly, and Chasshagra can only use it once per day.

In addition to their gear, the lionweres also carry six potions — *blur*, *cure serious wounds*, *displacement*, *fox's cunning*, *remove disease* and *remove paralysis* distributed evenly amongst the lionweres. They also have a rare Omaruri obsidian votive figure worth 1,000 gp.

THERIANTHROPE, LIONWERES (3)

XP 2,400

The Tome of Horrors Complete 738

CE Medium/Large magical beast (shapechanger)

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

Perception +10

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size) as lion; 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size) as hybrid; 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural) as human

hp 32 (5d8+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

DR 5/cold iron

Speed 40 ft. as lion, 30 ft. as hybrid or human

Melee bite +7 (1d8+5 plus grab), 2 claws +7 (1d4+5) as lion, longsword +7 (1d8+5/19-20), bite +2 (1d8+2 plus grab) as hybrid, longsword +8 (1d8+5/19-20) as human

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. as lion, 10 ft./10 ft. as hybrid, 5 ft./ 5 ft. as human

Special Attacks lethargy in all forms; pounce, rake (2 claws +7, 1d4+5) in lion or hybrid

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

1/day—*sending* (Chasshagra only, see above)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple) as lion or hybrid; +8 as human; **CMD** 22 as lion or hybrid (26 vs. trip as lion), 21 as human

Feats Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Disguise +10 (+18 as lion), Perception +10, Stealth +10 (+14 in undergrowth as lion or hybrid, +14 as human); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth as lion or hybrid)

Languages Common

SQ alternate form

Gear longsword, masterwork studded leather armor

Alternate Form (Su) A therianthrope's natural form is that of the base animal. It can shift into two other forms as though using the *polymorph* spell on itself, though only a specific human form or hybrid form can be assumed. Equipment carried by the therianthrope in human or hybrid form shifts with it and is absorbed into its animal form. Magic items do not function while in this form. When a therianthrope shifts back into human or hybrid form, equipment (including magic items) returns to normal and function normally.

A therianthrope's first form is that of a human. A therianthrope always assumes the same appearance and traits in human form. In this form, it cannot use its natural weapons or any extraordinary special attacks. It can wield weapons and wear armor however.

Its second form is a bipedal hybrid form with prehensile hands and animalistic features. The therianthrope retains its natural attacks and extraordinary special attacks in this form, and can also wield weapons or wear armor. Changing forms is a standard action. A slain therianthrope reverts to its animal form, although it remains dead. Separated body parts retain their human or hybrid form, however.

Lethargy (Su) By speaking or singing (or making a sound normal to its animal form), the lionwere can slow all creatures within 60 feet that hear it and fail a DC 14 Will save. The slow effect lasts 1d4 rounds plus 5 rounds per HD of the lionwere (maximum +6). A bard's countersong ability allows the creature to attempt a new Will save. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same therianthrope's lethargy ability for one day. A therianthrope is immune to its own lethargy and the lethargy of other therianthropes of the same base animal type. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Game Over (CR 8)

The renowned hunting troupe plays an unwitting role in the troubles plaguing the nearby village of Ramaashta. The group consists of the Alcaidarian siblings **Caleb Ansiki** and his sister **Guadalupe** along with **Gabriel Ammaska** and its half-elf leader **Ammar Tareq**. They joined forces as teenagers and have been together for two decades. Caleb and Guadalupe are the group's trackers and archers. Gabriel is its ferocious barbarian, and Ammar is its former professional soldier. They dwell in a hunting lodge beyond Ramaashta's outlying farmland and venture to the neighboring settlement on an infrequent basis. On Ammar's rare visits to the village, he openly proclaims that he hunts trespassers on sight. He is famous for saying "Game Over finds you alive and well at your home, but dead and broken if you dare try to find ours." Their partnership with the traveling merchant, Ameht Baktar, sets the entire chain of events into motion when they wrongly slew Savvith, the gynosphinx, instead of Chasshagra, the androsphinx, on the open sands of the Maighib Desert.

Until Caleb and Guadalupe's chance encounter with the caravan survivors, they were completely unaware that they killed the wrong sphinx because Ameht never provided any specifics other than to kill the sphinx at Chass. The news changes everything and outrages their increasingly paranoid and cruel leader Ammar. He berates his colleagues for not detaining or better yet killing the two survivors. Ammar believes that their eyewitness accounts could embarrass the group and lead some to blame them for the surviving sphinx's retribution. He insists that they capture or preferably kill the two survivors who fled to Ramaashta.

Though the residents initially welcome the legendary hunters, the current state of affairs is too much for Ammar. The savage animal attacks, the presence of three strangers asking many questions about them and the PCs' arrival in the village feed his paranoid delusions. He declares open season on the two caravan attack survivors, the three strangers asking questions about them and the PCs in no particular order. He expresses no concerns about stopping the animals terrorizing the village. The Ansiki siblings reluctantly go along with Ammar's violent plans, while Gabriel is delighted by the chance to just "let loose" and do whatever he pleases.

Unlike the group's typical hunts, the jittery Ammar is too impatient for planning. He wants to eradicate all of their threats as quickly as possible. It defeats the purpose of the adventure to have Game Over square off against the lionweres and do the PCs' dirty work for them, so it makes more sense for Game Over to pursue the PCs or the caravan survivors which may bring Game Over into conflict with the PCs anyway. Despite Ammar's orders to the contrary, Caleb and Guadalupe take defensive positions prior to any anticipated battle, preferably atop a building or at a minimum behind some type of cover. Ammar and Gabriel fight to the bitter end. Caleb and Guadalupe may surrender if the PCs kill or incapacitate Ammar and one of the siblings dies or is gravely injured. Caleb and Guadalupe willingly divulge everything they know about the caravan survivors, Ameht Baktar's bounty and Savvith's death.

If the PCs decide to take the fight to Game Over and track them back to their lodge, see the "Game Over's Trail" section in Part Two of this adventure.

KING OF BEASTS

CALEB AND GUADALUPE ANSIKI

XP 1,200

Male and female human ranger 5

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Perception** +10

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 37 (5d10+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +7 (1d6+1 /18–20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +9 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (magical beasts +4, animals +2)

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)

1st—*endure elements*, *Speak with animals*

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +5, Heal +10, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +10, Ride +7, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +14, Survival +10, Swim +6

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (desert +2), hunter's bond (companions), track, wild empathy

Combat Gear *elixir of hiding*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 composite longbow, 60 arrows, masterwork scimitar, 207 gp, hunting lodge key

GABRIEL AMMASKA

XP 1,200

Male human barbarian 5

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Perception** +10

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 53 (5d12+10 plus 5)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 falchion +10 (2d4+5 /18–20)

Ranged mwk javelin +8 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks rage (14 rounds/day), rage powers (low-light vision, scent)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+11 when jumping), Climb +8, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +8, Perception +10, Ride +7, Sense Motive +4, Survival +7

Languages Common

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of lesser restoration*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 falchion, masterwork javelin, 299 gp, hunting lodge key.

Rage: When raging, Gabriel has the following stats: **AC** 13, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, –2 rage); **hp** 63; **Fort** +8, **Will** +6; **Melee** +1 falchion +12 (2d4+8/18–20); **Str** 20, **Con** 18; **CMB** +10, **CMD** 20;

CR 4

AMMAR TAREQ

XP 1,600

Male half-elf fighter 6

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +2

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 shield)

hp 49 (6d10+6 plus 6)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear, +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities bravery +2; **Immune** sleep

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +13/+8 (1d6+7/18–20)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10 (+12 vs. bull rush); **CMD** 20 (22 vs. bull rush)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)

Skills Climb +9, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +13, Perception +2, Ride +4, Survival +7, Swim +7; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Common, Elven, Giant

SQ armor training 1, elf blood

Combat Gear *oil of keen edge*; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 heavy steel shield, cloak of resistance +1, masterwork scimitar, 165 gp, hunting lodge key, key to room G10 in the lodge.

Nawalapuura (CR 8)

The lionweres' residual mystical energy from her dread tome *King of Beasts* proved sufficient to wake the vile priestess from her eternal rest as a **bog mummy** and unleash her on an unsuspecting world. The force of her will and the corruption of her soul were so great that four unfortunate men that drowned countless ages ago also rose from the mire as **4 draugrs**. Like others of her kin, Nawalapuura stays close to her grave along the banks of the Pesha River near the El-Rouf farmhouse. She remains partially submerged during the day and stalks the river bank in the evening along with her draugr allies who rise from their resting places at the bottom of the river. PCs searching the area around the Pesha River must succeed on a DC 31 Perception check to spot the concealed bog mummy during the day. A successful DC 21 Perception check spots Nawalapuura at night. However, her proximity to the river makes it relatively easy to track her movements. A successful DC 10 Perception or Survival check detects her tracks, and the PC can follow the tracks to Nawalapuura's concealed hiding place with a Survival check. If the PCs track her to her lair, she and her minions rise from the muck and attack.

The hateful bog mummy aspires to create more minions to serve her; therefore she slams her victims to the precipice of death so that they rise as bog mummies under her command. She abandons all restraint when faced with superior numbers or a powerful enemy. Though her evil endured the transformation to undeath, her intellect did not. Nawalapuura harbors no grand ambitions and furthers no plans other than to create more creatures in her image and slay any living being she encounters. When the PCs arrive in Ramaashta her first victim, Mesut Azaz, lies in the village's hospital under the care of its resident priestess, Sholamara. Over the course of the adventure, others soon follow as discussed in the preceding timeline of events.

BOG MUMMY

XP 2,400

The Tome of Horrors Complete 75

CE Medium undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

Aura despair (30 ft., paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, Will DC 16 negates)

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 natural)

hp 60 (8d8+16 plus 8)

CR 5

CR 4

CR 6

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Fort +4; **Ref** +2; **Will** +8

DR 5/—; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

Speed 20 ft., marsh move

Melee slam +10 (1d6+4 plus bog rot)

Special Attacks create spawn

Str 17, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +16, Stealth +11

Languages Common

Bog Rot (Su) Supernatural disease—slam; save Fort DC 16; onset 1 day; frequency 1 day; effect 1d6 Str, Dex, Con, or Cha (determine randomly using 1d4); cure —. Creatures afflicted with bog rot do not heal naturally and gain only one-half benefit from magical healing until the disease is cured. Unlike normal diseases, bog rot continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or receives a *remove disease* spell or similar magic. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid that dies from bog rot becomes a bog mummy in 1d4 days unless a *remove disease* is cast (within one day after death) or the creature is brought back to life (*raise dead* is ineffective, but *resurrection* or *true resurrection* works). Spawn are under the command of the bog mummy that created them and remain enslaved until their death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Despair (Su) All creatures within a 30-foot radius that see a bog mummy must make a DC 16 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same bog mummy's despair ability for one day. This is a paralysis and a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Marsh Move (Ex) Bog mummies can move at their normal movement speed through mud, marshes, and swamps with no penalty.

DRAUGR (4)

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Draugr")

CR 2

Caravan Survivors

Nasir and **Samir al-Hoda**, two cousins originally from Ramaashta, are the sole survivors of Chasshagra's assault against Ameht Baktar's desert caravan. The exhausted pair stumbles into Ramaashta's main square the morning after the PCs' arrival in the village. Worn out by the long trek across the hot sands, they immediately make their way to the Hook and Sickle for food and water. After they sate their privation, the experienced desert travelers relay their story to anyone in earshot.

They explain that they left Ramaashta 9 days ago. Five days into their otherwise uneventful trip, the ancient sphinx from Chass swooped down from the skies and grabbed Ameht Baktar, their caravan's leader. He then unleashed three fearsome roars that slew many camels and men and sent the terrified survivors fleeing in every direction. To the best of their knowledge, the sphinx carried Ameht back to his lair and left the caravan's remnants to rot in the desert. Along the journey back to Ramaashta, they encountered Game Over's two siblings who questioned them at length about their encounter with the sphinx. They acknowledge that Ameht offered a bounty on the sphinx, but they presumed that Game Over had not accepted the offer or was preparing to hunt down the magical beast in the near future.

After telling their tale, the news of the attacks in the village greatly unnerves them. To make matters worse, they also hear rumors about Game Over slaying a sphinx before their encounter with Chasshagra in

the desert. They come to the realization that the hunting troupe killed the wrong sphinx. Not only is this information potentially embarrassing to Game Over, it may also lead some to implicate them in the rash of killings. They are now certain of two things. They are convinced that their encounter with the sphinx and the subsequent killings in Ramaashta are not coincidences, and they are in grave peril from Game Over. They fear for their safety and seek protection from Aramses and his soldiers or the PCs. If the PCs are in the village square at the time of their arrival, Nasir and Samir find the PCs first. They tell the PCs their tale and insist that there is a connection between the caravan attack, Ramaashta's killings and Game Over's colossal blunder. Otherwise they seek assistance from Aramses at the administration building.

NASIR AND SAMIR AL-HODA

CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Caravan Guard" except no armor)

Ramaashta

The peaceful, quiet village of Ramaashta lies 35 miles upriver from the much larger settlement of Xamesh on the eastern branch of the Pesha River near the heart of the Pesha River Delta. Since its establishment nearly 400 years ago, Ramaashta is renowned for producing some of the finest and tastiest grains in the region. Several beer makers, most notably Cirat the Swift-Lipped, rely exclusively upon the village's cereal grains to craft their legendary brews. Ramaashta's grains have a distinct taste that appeals predominately to aficionados who can truly appreciate the unique flavors and underlying elements found in these specialty products. In addition, the taste of the beers and breads produced in the region vary wildly from one batch to the next, whereas those made in Xamesh taste the same year after year, making them much more popular among the general public. The same principle applies to Ramaashta's livestock. Connoisseurs prize the meat's distinctive qualities and unique flavoring, while the average household considers them to be too gamey. Despite its lofty reputation among Khartous's elite citizens and its ideal location near the confluence of the Pesha River's northern and southern branches, the village lags far behind its more conventional counterparts in terms of overall sales and popularity.

Ramaashta

CG village

Corruption –1; **Crime** –5; **Economy** –1; **Law** +2; **Lore** –1;

Society +2

Qualities insular, superstitious

Danger +0

Government autocracy

Population 183 (109 humans; 24 dwarves, 20 elves, 10 half-elves, 20 others)

Notable NPCs

Aramses Ottama, Administrator (NG male human aristocrat 4)

Harkuul Gristlebeard, Armory Owner (CN male dwarf expert 5)

Athman al-Qasaad, Proprietor Tariq's Emporium (CG male human expert 3)

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp;

Spellcasting 1st;

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4

The settlement itself consists of a rudimentary wharf for waterborne traffic and a square with administrative buildings and shops. The majority of the population lives on the sprawling farmland outside of the central

KING OF BEASTS

square. Most residents venture to the main square on a recurring basis to procure supplies, ship their agricultural products to distant markets or catch up on local gossip. Though the farms stretch across many miles, Ramaashta is a tight-knit community of long-term settlers. In fact, nearly every family tending to its fertile soil can trace its lineage in the area back to Ramaashta's founding four centuries earlier.

These economic influences and the residents' ancestral ties to the land account for the village's overall demeanor. Its residents are generally friendly and outgoing, but they are also very superstitious and protective of their own. Though they harbor no particular allegiance to Game Over, they still consider the village's infrequent visitors as kin rather than strangers even to the point of risking their own well-being to protect them. Figuring that the newly arrived strangers may be bounty hunters too, the villagers freely admitted that Ameht Baktar, a wealthy merchant that monopolizes Ramaashta's grain trade across the overland route to the distant settlement of Qiram offered a bounty to anyone who would kill a sphinx that refused to share his water supplies with his caravans and blocked a shorter route to the east. However, the villagers mention nothing about Game Over's involvement with Ameht Baktar, though many are aware of their connection to the caravan leader. As news of the killings spread, the deaths produced the desired effect — the villagers began talking. For the first time, the residents acknowledged that they knew of Game Over and that they maintained a hunting lodge somewhere nearby, but no one knew its precise location or even general location.

For his part, the village's competent administrator, Aramses Ottama, does what he can, but he lacks the resources to protect everyone and stop the killings. He has a small garrison of **6 soldiers** to keep the peace. Two of his men patrol the main roads leading to the surrounding farmhouses. Two others maintain wary vigilance in the central square, while the remainder sleeps allowing the unit to maintain around-the-clock surveillance. Whenever possible, Aramses himself lends a hand along with the most able-bodied citizens. The lionweres' ability to blend in with the populace allows them to keep a watchful eye on the groups' activities and avoid them with little difficulty.

RAMAASHTA'S SOLDIERS (6)

CR 2

XP 600

Male human fighter 3

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Perception** +3

AC 14, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 30 (3d10+3 plus 6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +7 (1d6+3/ 18–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (light crossbow), Toughness, Weapon Focus (light crossbow)

Skills Diplomacy +1, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride +6, Survival +6, Swim +7

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scimitar, 225 gp.

Rumors

News about the animal attacks spreads through Ramaashta like wildfire and the explanations for them run the gamut from the plausible to the farfetched. Everyone in the village is aware of the attacks, so PCs new to the area hear about the attacks against the villagers without succeeding

at a skill check, though their employer likely told them already. The PCs may learn the following information by succeeding on a Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. The GM may supplement these rumors with additional outlandish or conceivable explanations for the attacks and the force behind them. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at that level have already been heard.

DC 10

- The animal attacks began about a week ago at the Khottam household. The beasts killed an elderly man and his grandniece. They must have brought these events upon the village, because an angry spirit now haunts the home. (The portion about the Khottam's responsibility for these events is false.)

- The creatures responsible for these attacks recently escaped captivity and are exacting their revenge against their human captors. (This is a false rumor.)

- Someone who saw the killings said that he watched a large, predatory cat flee the scene. The tracks left behind at the scene support the man's version of events.

- There is a curse on this village. Some malevolent force seeks to claim this accursed soil for some hidden purpose. (This is a false rumor.)

- The Sultan and the Abaya are troubled by the killings. They are seeking the aid of adventurers or more soldiers to protect the villagers.

- The beasts never attack livestock or pets. They kill people only.

DC 20

- Game Over is a group of game hunters that infrequently visits the village. No one knows where they live, because they slay trespassers on sight. No one has seen them since the killings began. They would be well-suited to handle this matter.

- Ismael Ka and Jezabel Arashka disappeared last night. The beasts must have killed them, but their bodies are still missing. (This rumor relates to the events in **Area A: The Wharf**.)

- Three strangers arrived in town shortly before the killings started. The men asked many questions about the renowned hunting group Game Over.

- Ameht Baktar, a local merchant, offered a large bounty to evict an ancient sphinx that inhabits Chass, a virtual oasis en route from Ramaashta to the distant town of Qiram.

- The first victims died inside of their homes with their doors closed and intact. These creatures must be restless spirits. Beasts cannot pass shut doors. (Most of this is true except for the speculation about restless spirits.)

- A young man suffers from a horrid disease and is now under the care of Sholamara at the House of Respite. (This rumor does not begin until the evening of the PCs' arrival.)

- A ghastly corpse now haunts the banks of the Peshia River. (This rumor does not begin until one day after the PCs' arrival.)

- A sphinx has inhabited a mysterious building about 60 miles east of Ramaashta in the Maighib Desert for hundreds of years. The cantankerous creature discourages visitors and keeps a close eye on his bountiful fresh water springs, attacking anyone who attempts to drink from them.

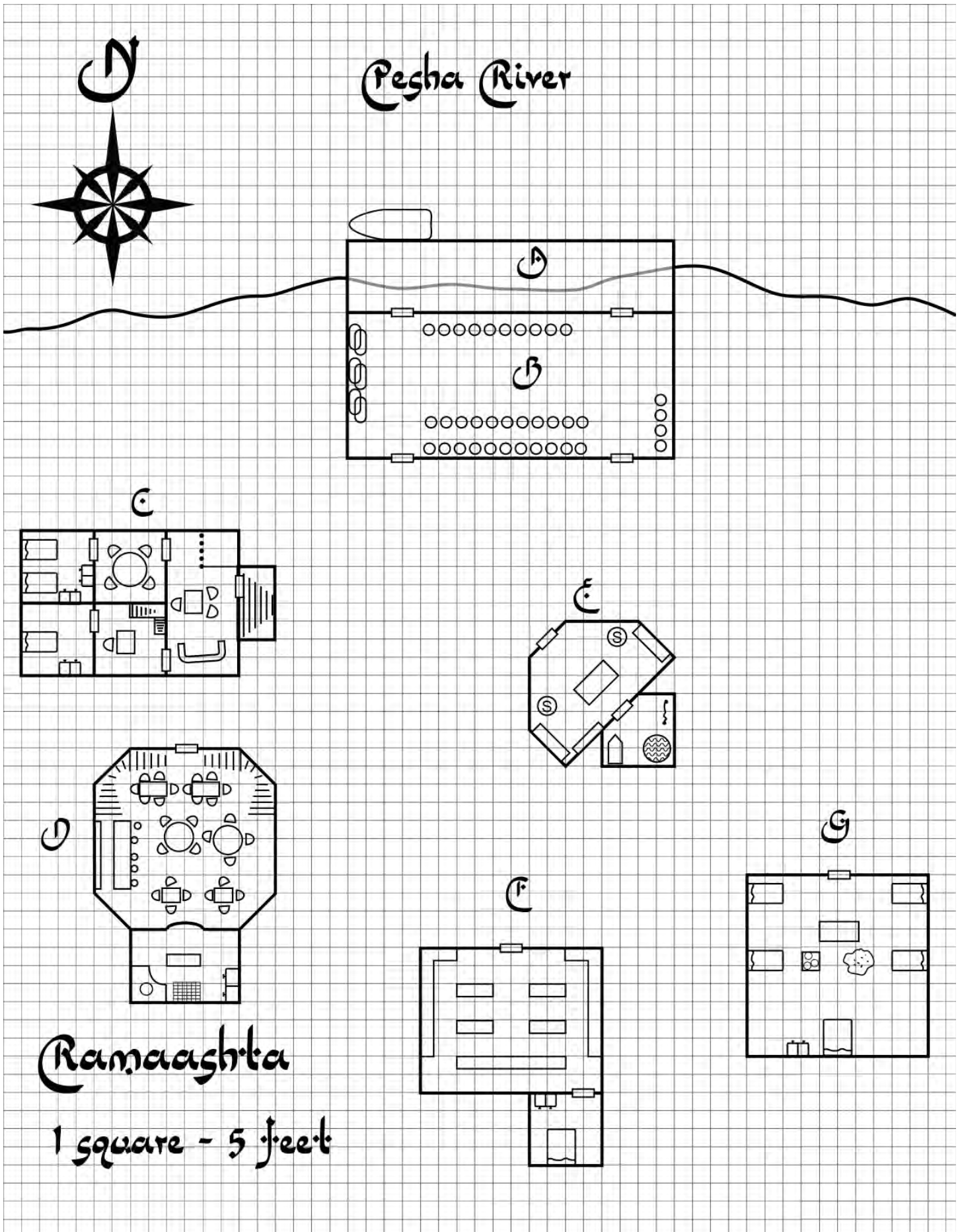
Specific NPCs are the only individuals aware of these rumors.

- Two members of Game Over appeared in town one week ago. They bragged about killing a sphinx in the Maighib Desert that would fetch them a handsome price.

- Ordinary animals are not committing these attacks. Legend says that the Omaruri, the ancient people that inhabited Ramaashta before the Kharitsine's arrival, used dark magic to summon beasts to serve their nefarious purposes.

Ramaashta Proper

Though the surrounding farmland is technically part of Ramaashta, the residents only use the village's proper name to describe the main square which consists of six permanent structures and the wharf. Ramaashta has no formal streets per se. Instead, the village square is a haphazard cluster



KING OF BEASTS

rather than an organized design. The PCs' first steps in the village likely occur on its wharf as they search for their likely point of contact, Aramses. Any PC who succeeds on a DC 10 Sense Motive check notices that the residents are on edge. Nervous glances and whispers greet the PCs as they move through Ramaashta and its environs.

A: The Wharf (CR 8)

The nearly 100-foot-long wharf provides direct access to the nearby Pasha River. A seasoned crew of **5 longshoremen** under the supervision of **Salaam Rabbini** and **6 sailors** are currently loading barrels of grain onto *The Concubine of Qamara*, a merchant ship that is bound for Cirat the Swift-Lipped's brewery on the outskirts of Zakkesh. He and his men are single-mindedly focused on the task at hand under the constant urging of **Karem Abbad**, the ship's captain. The wiry, middle-aged man nervously paces the wooden planks and mumbles angrily to himself as the men fill the ship's hold. He is particularly anxious to set sail from this accursed village. Meanwhile, his **2 mates** rest their backs against the adjacent warehouse's wall. They flank **2 shrouded figures** that lie on the ground.

LONGSHOREMEN (5)

CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Street Thug")

SALAAM RABBIN

CR 3

XP 800

hp 22 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Dealer")

Karem is outwardly friendly and accommodating, especially if the PCs portray themselves as acting on behalf of the Sultan or the Abaya. In any case, he reveals only basic knowledge about the village and the animal attacks, other than to declare them a tragedy. He claims that he arrived on the wharf a few hours earlier and immediately set about the task of preparing the vessel for launch, though a successful opposed Sense Motive check foils his attempt to bluff the PCs. He responds to any questions about the two shrouded figures with a rehearsed answer that they are two mummified bodies destined for burial at the Necropolis of Rabakka. He, the 6 sailors loading the ship and his 2 mates politely refuse to answer any further questions under the guise that they are on a tight schedule.

Action: The PCs' sudden appearance unnerves Karem far more than the recent killings. Though he earns a fair living from the shipping industry, his true profession is much more lucrative and sinister. Karem traffics human beings. He abducts attractive young men and women from remote villages in the Pasha River Delta and sells them to the brothel owners in Khartous's Flame District for a hefty profit. The shrouded figures are his latest victims, Ismael Ka and Jezebel Arashka. Last night, Karem and his crew plied the comely, young couple with enough alcohol to render them unconscious and plan to sell them to their middleman in Zakkesh before offloading their goods at the brewery. They believe that the lion attacks provide the perfect cover story to account for the young people's unexplained disappearance. They try to pass off the shrouded figures as two dead bodies awaiting entombment at the Necropolis of Rabakka.

Karem is short on details about the deceased or religious rituals. A PC may attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check to recognize that the burial process does not comply with traditional practices. If any PC approaches Ismael and Jezebel, Karem rushes forward and bars the PC from moving any closer. Even from a distance, a successful DC 15 Perception check notices the smell of alcohol, while a successful DC 25 Perception check notices that they appear to be breathing. Karem attempts a Bluff check to allay the PCs' suspicions claiming that the alcohol smell is actually a "salt wash" and that the figures appear to be breathing or moving because their bodily fluids are "settling in their chest cavity." If the ruse fails, Karem, his 2 mates, and the 6 sailors rush the PCs. Karem and his 2 mates maneuver around in combat looking for flank attacks or trying to catch an opponent flat-footed. The 6 sailors fight to the best of their abilities, but they are badly overmatched. They surrender or flee into the Pasha River and swim for the other side. Likewise, Karem and his 2

mates loose the boat's moorings and feverishly row away from shore. If escape is not realistic, Karem and his crew reluctantly surrender.

For their part, Salaam and his 5 longshoremen willingly answer the PCs' questions. They are aware of all of the rumors in the first two categories of the preceding **Rumors** section. Inquiries directed at Salaam alter Karem's demeanor making him extremely edgy and agitated. He stammers about deadlines and loudly declares that the PCs are wasting his time and money. If his protestations do not halt the PC's questions, he directly intervenes and physically nudges the PCs aside until they leave. As soon as combat breaks out, Salaam and his 5 longshoremen retreat to a safe location and take in the spectacle from afar. They do not intervene under any circumstances and flee into the adjoining warehouse or the village square whenever the circumstances warrant a hasty escape.

KAREM ABBAD

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human rogue 6

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Perception** +8

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 42 (6d8+6 plus 6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities evasion, resiliency, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +10 (1d6+3/19–20)

Special Attacks rogue talents (finesse rogue, surprise attacks), sneak attack +3d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 2

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

Skills Acrobatics +11, Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +12, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +8, Heal +2, Intimidate +6, Perception +8, Profession (merchant) +5, Profession (sailor) +5, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +12

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +2, *potion of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, +1 shortsword, cloak of resistance +1, masterwork thieves' tools, 290 gp.

KAREM'S MATES (2)

CR 3

XP 800

Male human fighter 4

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Perception** +0

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 38 (4d10+8 plus 4)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +10 (1d6+6/18–20)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Bluff +3, Intimidate +10, Profession (sailor) +2, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength*; **Other Gear** +1

breastplate, masterwork rapier, masterwork heavy wooden shield, 273 gp.

KAREM'S SAILORS (6)

CR 1

XP 400

Male human expert 3

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Perception +6

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield)**hp** 13 (3d8)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk club +5 (1d6+2)**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 8**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14**Feats** Endurance, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus [Profession (sailor)]**Skills** Climb +8, Heal +7, Perception +6, Perform (sing) +3, Profession (cook) +7, Profession (sailor) +10, Survival +7, Swim +8**Languages** Common**Gear** masterwork club, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork light wooden shield, 152 gp.

Development: The wily captain has one more hand to play. As he and his mates moved through the village last night, they overheard other residents talking about three strangers asking questions about Game Over. During his travels, Karem heard that the reclusive hunters maintain a hunting lodge on the edge of the Maighib Desert alongside a remote stretch of grassland outside of Ramaashta. Though he does not know the exact location, he claims that the structure stands near a small hill that the locals refer to as Traitor's Ridge. If the PCs provide this information to the local residents, they can point the PCs towards Game Over's general vicinity. The clever businessman does not divulge this information for nothing. Ever the opportunist, Karem's asking price is his and his crew's freedom. If the PCs balk at his initial proposal, he drops his demands to free his sailors and as a final offer — his mates. Should that fail, he refuses to negotiate any further and instead looks for an opportunity to escape.

Once revived, Ismael and Jezebel recall little from the night before other than drinking very heavily in the company of Karem and his two shipmates. Like most other villagers, they know something from the first category in the **Rumors** section, but cannot provide any additional useful information.

B: Warehouse

Salaam and his longshoremen are responsible for the warehouse's maintenance, security and operation. Under normal circumstances his team mans the building from dawn until dusk. After hours, they lock the doors granting access to the wharf and the village square proper. Salaam keeps the key on his person, though he also has a spare key that he keeps hidden in his rented room at the Hook and Sickle. Any attempts to forcibly open one of the warehouse's doors may attract attention from bystanders in the village square or possibly the soldiers on duty.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Disable Device DC 24.

The warehouse currently stores 24 full barrels of wheat, 8 barrels of barley and 6 crates of cured meat. The items' values range from 5 gp for each barrel of wheat, 10 gp for each barrel of barley and 25 gp for each crate of cured meat. These products are awaiting shipment to various locations along the Pasha River as well as Qamara, Qiram and the city of Khartous, so they are technically belong to the village's farmers who did not get paid for these items yet. Stealing these commodities and attempting to resell them within Ramaashta creates a major complication for the PCs who may face an accusation of theft.

C: Administration Building

Ramaashta's government functions out of this small, multipurpose building. The structure houses **Aramses Ottama's** personal quarters, barracks chambers for the village's tiny garrison of **6 soldiers**, a courtroom that doubles as a meeting chamber, a jail cell, a common room and Aramses private office. Aramses occupies the building for most of the day and night with occasional jaunts to the village square for food, supplies or a brief respite from the stress plaguing his tiny settlement. The soldiers work in 8 hour shifts, so two soldiers are always asleep in the barracks chambers, while the remaining four soldiers patrol the village with two in the main square and the other two scattered across the surrounding farmland. Though the front entrance is normally open to the public, Aramses locks the administration building after dark.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Disable Device DC 26.

Aramses' Information

Aramses is not suited for handling this type of situation so he is extremely relieved that someone responded to his request for aid. He and at least two of his soldiers surveyed each of the crime scenes, though they are not trained or skilled investigators. They were adept enough to secure two eyewitness accounts blaming the attacks on at least two large male lions. The bite marks and slashing wounds found on the victims corroborate these accounts. The attacks follow the same *modus operandi* in each case with one notable exception for the first killing. The first two victims were found in their homes; the other victims died outside of their residence and alone. In each case, the beasts assaulted their prey at night. Despite Aramses' warnings to remain inside with the doors and the windows firmly shut and locked, he and his soldiers discovered the bodies outdoors with no signs of forced entry. After the killings, the beasts' telltale trail seems to vanish without a trace. In addition to the preceding information, Aramses may divulge one rumor from each of the first two categories presented in the Rumors section. Aramses is also aware of Ameht Baktar's bounty to rid Chass of its resident sphinx. He sees no connection between the village's current crisis and this event, so he makes no mention of it unless the PCs directly ask him about Ameht Baktar or the sphinx.

Aramses eagerly agrees to cooperate with the PCs during their stay in Ramaashta. He can direct them to all of the murder scenes and introduce them to other NPCs in the village. (The murder scenes are described in later in the adventure.) His soldiers also obey his orders, including those directing them to follow or accompany the PCs during their travels through the village.

D: Hook and Sickle Inn

The Hook and Sickle Inn is the place to go for Ramaashta's best food, drink, conversation and local gossip. **Hartuz Takram** (CN male human commoner 2, Str 14, Profession [bartender] +5) and his wife, **Amara Takram** (N female human commoner 1, Int 12, Profession [cook] +6) own the establishment. The cantankerous older couple dotes on their patrons and guests, while hurling an endless barrage of insults and disparaging remarks at one another. Locals marvel at the pair's ability to twist the Common tongue to create hilarious, new expressions to describe each other's shortcomings. Phrases such as "hag's rectal wart", "flaccid maggot wand", "camel vomit breath", "beetle dung brain" and "goopy gelatinous breast" ring out from behind the bar and the kitchen with alarming regularity. Though the contemptuous display violates every rule of decorum, Ramaashta's residents are so accustomed to the vulgarity that they consider it part of the Hook and Sickle's signature charm. In fact, some believe that the confrontations are actually staged for entertainment purposes.

The Hook and Sickle Inn's bar and restaurant area opens at varying times during the mid-morning and closes a few hours after sunset. Residents and guests receive a key to lock and unlock the front door during non-business hours.

KING OF BEASTS

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18.

The multipurpose institution serves as a bakery, restaurant, tavern, coffee house, hookah lounge and inn. Local residents and traveling merchants pack the tables and bar throughout the day. Food, drink and rumors fly across the room on a regular basis, including those listed from the first two categories in the Rumors section. Some of the regulars include retired miner **Graz Quartzbane** (CN male dwarf expert 5; Con 15; Profession [miner] +9) who sports an entire mouth full of quartz teeth; local courtesan **Ciril Mambai** (NG female human expert 2; Cha 14; Profession [courtesan] +6) whose looks greatly outshine her intelligence; hookah smoker **Khomar the Inhaler** (CN male human rogue 1; Cha 13; Escape Artist +5) who is the source for any illicit drugs; and resident ladies' man **Rallam ibn-Maktuush** (CG male human aristocrat 3; Cha 15; Bluff +8) who runs at the mere mention of an angry husband. In addition to its patrons, **Kharita** (CG female half-elf expert 2; Cha 15; Profession [barmaid] +7), an attractive and friendly woman waits the tables on most days. If directly questioned about Ameht Baktar or Game Over, she distinctly recalls that the caravan master and the hunting troupe's sibling pair met at the inn a few weeks ago to discuss some business venture. She did not hear the specifics of their conversation, though she is certain that the meeting ended with firm handshakes and a rousing toast. As an aside, she mentions that three strangers also asked questions about Game Over and a bounty for killing some powerful beast several days earlier.

The lionweres visited the Hook and Sickle on their first three days in Ramaashta hoping the locals could quickly steer them in Game Over's direction. After Arames deployed two of his soldiers in the village square, the trio stopped visiting the Hook and Sickle regularly and instead focused their efforts in the outlying areas with occasional jaunts to the village square to keep a tab on current events.

E: Skin and Bow

Hurkuul Gristlebeard (CG male dwarf expert 5; Wis 15; Craft [leather] +10), a retired dwarf miner from the Al-Illam salt plains, is the proprietor of Skin and Bow, Ramaashta's sole armory. The gruff, foul-mouthed craftsman manufactures a variety of leather armor and wooden weapons from local products. He is also the village's only source of non-healing related magic items which he acquires from passing merchants in exchange for his wares. He always keeps at least one suit of masterwork leather and masterwork studded leather armor in stock at all times along with a complement of composite longbows and shortbows. If he is not minding his shop, Hurkuul tans leather in his attached work area or carves bows and arrows from freshly cut wood. Skin and Bow is open from mid-morning until supper time. At night he securely fastens both doors and sleeps in a pull-out bed built into the wall.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23.

Hurkuul exclusively supplies Game Over with some of their weapons and armor. He is particularly friendly with Caleb Ansiki and his sister Guadalupe Ansiki, the hunting group's two archers. Because of his close personal relationship with the pair, he is extremely hesitant to say anything about them or their activities other than he occasionally does business with them. He also relays that the PCs are not the first individuals asking him about his relationship with Game Over, though he says nothing else about the encounter. The PCs may overcome his reluctance with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check, though he provides answers about the group under direct questioning only. A PC may add +1 to the Diplomacy check for every 100 gp he spends in Hurkuul's shop. If the check succeeds, Hurkuul acknowledges his relationship with the Ansiki siblings and relays that they visited him about two weeks ago. They purchased twelve magical arrows specifically imbued to harm magical beasts. He also tells the PCs that three strangers with unusual accents also asked him about Game Over several days ago. He told them virtually nothing, and he never saw them again. If the Diplomacy check succeeded by 5 or more, Hurkuul begrudgingly admits that Caleb and Guadalupe returned a week later bragging that they killed a sphinx near an ancient building known as

Chass in the Maighib Desert. They also mentioned that they would soon spend plenty of coin in his store because they were poised to receive a large payment from Ameht Baktar, a local merchant who offered a sizable bounty to kill a sphinx inhabiting an important way station on his route to Qiram. Hurkkul has no direct knowledge about Game Over's hunting lodge other than it lies south of Ramaashta along the edge of the Maighib Desert. Hurkkul has never been to Chass either, though he knows its purported general location.

F: Tariq's Emporium

A Ramaashta institution, **Athman al-Qasaad**, the general store's current owner, purchased it from its founder a decade ago. The shop features an eclectic collection of local food products, clothing and other sundry items as well as an assortment of exotic goods and wares purchased from passing merchants and visitors. The store opens shortly after dawn and closes in the late afternoon. Athman lives in a small room connected to the store. The emporium's proprietor is a chatty busybody with a reputation for knowing exactly what his customers want within a minute of meeting them, but the detail-oriented merchant fails to see that his assistant **Maritza Huumdal** (CG female human commoner 2; Cha 13; Profession [merchant] +6) is madly in love with him. The caravan master, Ameht Baktar is one of Athman's main suppliers, so he is aware of Ameht's hefty bounty to eradicate the sphinx that stands in his way of securing a quicker route across the Maighib Desert. Yet, the nosy Athman is less willing to part with information than he is to inquire about it. The PCs may learn of his involvement with Ameht Baktar as well as his bounty offer with a successful DC 26 Diplomacy check. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, he also reveals that the hunting troupe Game Over accepted his bounty and is now waiting to collect their spoils.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23.

ATHMAN AL-QASAAD
XP 400

CR 1

hp 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Shopkeep")

G: Sholamara's House of Respite

In keeping with the traditions of the Church of Fatimashan, **Sholamara**, Ramaashta's resident cleric and healer operates a rudimentary hospital that serves as a gathering place for fellow believers. The makeshift house of worship remains open and unlocked at all times. In light of recent events, the hallowed shrine is more akin to a morgue than a house of healing, as mummification is the church's common practice. In fact, Sholamara is so overwhelmed by the recent demand that she hired three local farmhands, **Erdogu** (CG male human commoner 1; Wis 11; Profession [farmer] +5), **Habbas** (CG male human commoner 1; Str 11; Profession [farmer] +5) and **Raheem** (CG male human commoner 1; Cha 11; Profession [farmer] +5) to assist her with the embalming process. The rash of killings tests Sholamara's faith, but she is up to the task and more resolved than ever to assist her followers during their greatest time of need. She holds daily prayer services at noon, and she welcomes the PCs' arrival as Mah-Barek's answers to the pleas of the faithful.

Sholamara and her assistants could not help but see the decedents' graphic injuries during the mummification process. As a healer, she recognized that the wounds are consistent with teeth and claw marks dealt by a large, predatory cat; however she also noticed that the attackers left three different bite patterns in the victims' skin. She is very animated about this point and believes that it is clear-cut evidence that a team of beasts works together to perpetrate these atrocities. She eagerly shares her opinion that the coordination and planning involved in these attacks indicate the work of intelligent monsters rather than wild animals. Sholamara is less reluctant to discuss an ancient religion's involvement in these events without a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check. If the PC succeeds on the check, Sholamara conveys that a lost race known as the Omaruri once inhabited these lands centuries ago. Rumors claim that

DUNES OF DESOLATION

the priests of the Omaruri's dark earth goddess participated in rites and rituals that gave them dominion over monstrous beasts. The secrets of their magic are lost to the race of men, but many believe that a sphinx dwelling in the ancient stronghold of Chass undoubtedly has access to their forgotten mysteries.

If Mesut is here, his case confounds Sholamara. She cured his injuries, yet the disease lingers and seems to be worsening. She correctly believes that beasts did not cause the trauma and a strange contagion is afflicting the terrified young man. The overwhelmed cleric also tells the PCs that his fellow farmhands found him near the banks of the Pesha River on the El-Rouf farm which may prompt the PCs to investigate the area.

Mesut is conscious, but catatonic. He stares blankly at the nearest object and says nothing even when someone directly addresses him. The damage is psychological so any magic short of a *heal* fails to snap Mesut from his catatonia. Mesut recalls little of that night other than the haunting image of a monstrous cadaver covered in mud attacking him. The creature said nothing during the assault and seemingly left the traumatized farmhand for dead.

Sholamara happily agrees to tend to the PCs' wounds and spiritual needs, though she is unwilling to accompany them in their further adventures. She insists that her place is with the devoted, and not traipsing across the Maighib Desert meting out punishment and bloodshed.

SHOLAMARA XP 800

CR 3

Female human cleric of Mah-Barek (Church of Fatimashan) 4
NG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Perception** +3

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor)
hp 29 (4d8+4 plus 4)
Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +2 (1d6–1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 8/day (DC 15 [17 to damage undead], 2d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

6/day—*gentle rest*, *touch of glory* (+2)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd—*augury*, *gentle repose*^D (3)

1st—*endure elements*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith*^D

0 (at will)—*create water*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*, *stabilize*

D Domains Glory, Repose

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

Feats Extra Channel, Selective Channeling, Turn Undead

Skills Diplomacy +10, Heal +10, Knowledge (nature) +5,

Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +6

Languages Common, Dwarven

Gear leather armor, quarterstaff

Witness Accounts

If an attack already took place on that property, the PCs have a 20% chance of encountering someone who actually saw a killing or its aftermath. In this case, the witness provides the PCs with one of the following bits of information. The GM should avoid providing duplicate information and instead grant a new clue for each witness from the following choices.

- I saw three lions seemingly appear out of nowhere. They ignored the other animals they encountered along the way. The beasts then surrounded the victim and slew him with their claws and teeth before running off.

- A few minutes before I heard the victim scream, I saw those three strangers talking to him. I turned away to finish my chores, but when I ran back to investigate I saw a large beast running from the scene.

- Although I am not sure, I swear I heard the beasts conversing with one another during the attack. I could not hear what they were saying, though I am certain that they spoke Common.

- A few minutes before the attack, the victim told me that he was going outside for a few minutes to give some hunters an overview of the property.

R1: Al-Hoda Farm

The Al-Hoda estate includes large fields of wheat and barley, a small vineyard with a winery and three silos for storing grain. The land's middle-aged owner, **Jafraazi Al-Hoda** (CG male human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) fancies himself an amateur winemaker. He lives in a spacious farmhouse along with his wife **Talia** (CG female human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [cook] +5) and their three teenage children **Habriz** (NG male human commoner 1; Int 11; Profession [farmer] +5), **Zafrez** (NG male human commoner 1; Str 12; Profession [farmer] +5) and **Peshwari** (CG female human commoner 1; Cha 11; Profession [farmer] +5). They are courteous, polite people that refrain from talking about their neighbors or even strangers in a disparaging light. Their **8 farmhands** (CG male human commoner 1; Str 11; Profession [farmer] +4) live in a cozy, well-maintained servants' residence adjacent to the main house. Like their employers, these workers are gracious, but subdued.

R2: Kalifa Farm

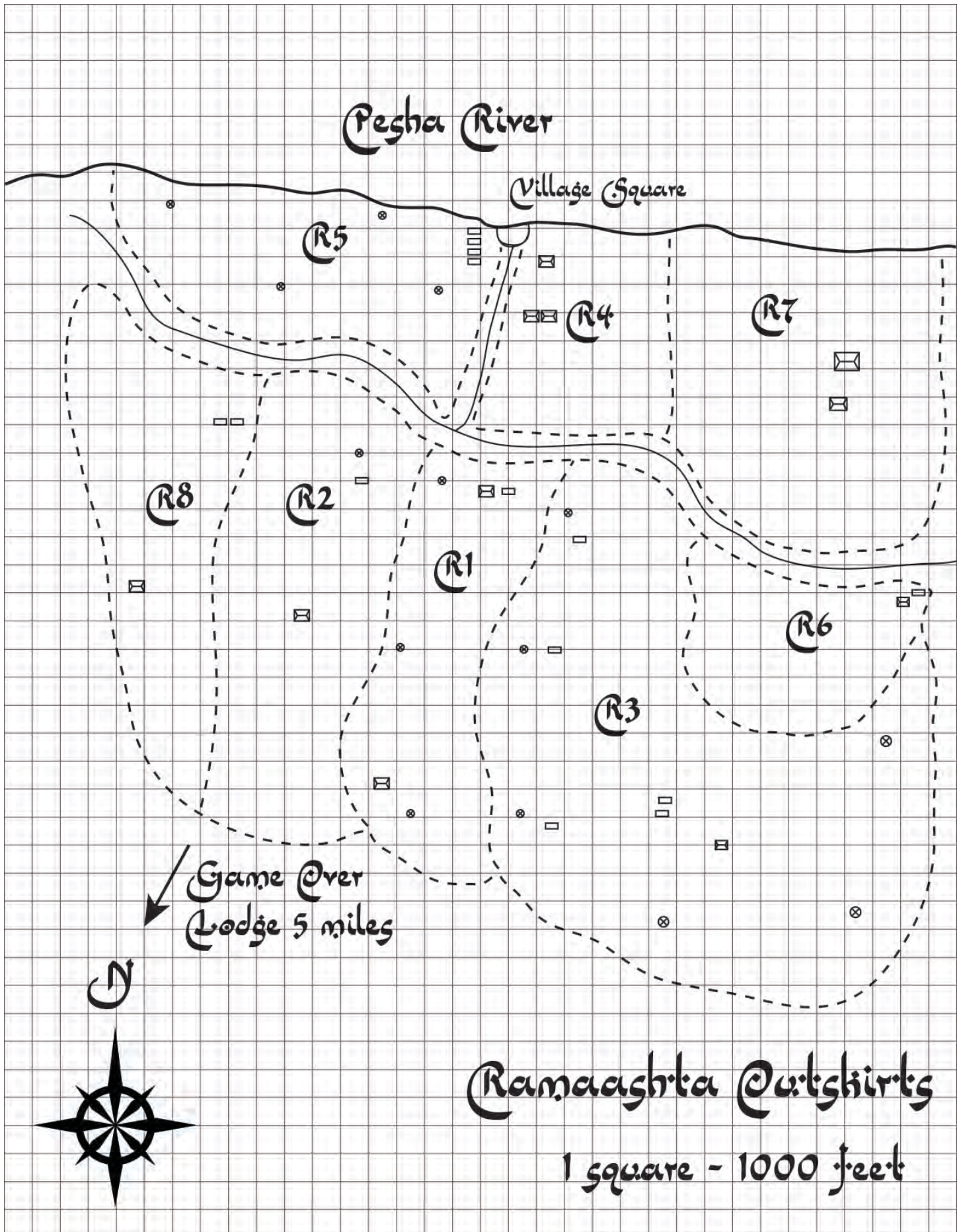
The Kalifas own one of the smaller tracts of land in Ramaashta, but their patriarch, **Mamelak Kalifa** (N male human expert 3; Cha 12; Bluff +7) still harbors grandiose ambitions. He tends to the land with his two surviving sons, **Mustafa** (CN male human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) and **Khalif** (N male human expert 2; Cha 12; Bluff +6), along with a complement of **6 farmhands** (CN male human commoner 1; Wis 11; Profession [farmer] +4). Unlike most estates, the Kalifa family and their workers occupy the same quarters atop a hill overlooking their land. Mamelak exclusively grows wheat that he stores in the family's lone silo or that he mills into flour used to make bread and other cereal products in their bakery. Mamelak and his sons are scheming blowhards that see an opportunity to subtly annex additional land from their deceased neighbors, the Khotoms. They are outwardly friendly to friends and strangers alike, though one cannot help but take everything they say with a heaping spoon of salt.

R3: Cuzek Farm

Naheem Cuzek (CG male human aristocrat 2; Wis 12; Profession [shepherd] +8) operates the largest and most lucrative farm in Ramaashta. His parcel is nearly double the size of his competitors and supports a diverse array of crops including wheat, barley and quinoa as well as a vast expanse of grassland to support his sheep and cattle. Naheem and his team of **6 laborers** (NG male human commoner 1; Wis 11; Profession [farmer] +6) handle the livestock, while his daughter **Zumia** (CG female human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) and her husband **Kabbar** (CG male human

Ramaashta's Outskirts

During the course of their investigation, the PCs are likely to explore the farmland surrounding Ramaashta's central square in search of clues and witnesses to the killings or to pursue the lionweres moving about the area. Eight families, including Aramses Ottama, own spacious tracts of land along the settlement's outskirts. The individual farms are all accessible by a central road that leads out of the village and runs parallel to the Pesha River. Vast fields of wheat, barley and rice border the main thoroughfare. Smaller trails periodically split off from the road and cut a path through the waves of grain to the distant farmhouses perched atop the properties' highest point. The following section provides a brief overview of each property and its residents.



DUNES OF DESOLATION

commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) oversee and supervise a crew of **10 men and women** (CG male and female human commoner 1; Wis 11; Profession [farmer] +4) to tend to their fields. Naheem and his immediate family live in a resplendent manor house more akin to a cosmopolitan setting than a country estate. Their workers predominately occupy modest living quarters close to the fields and grasslands, though a few take up permanent or transitory residence at the Hook and Sickle in the village square. The property also includes a slaughterhouse, smoke house and six silos for grain storage. The Cuzek family members are hardworking people who mind their own business, though they are always willing to help a neighbor in need.

R4: Sharif Farm

This property's main residence is the only farmhouse visible from Ramaashta's village square. The family's elderly, iron-willed matriarch **Eliyah Sharif** (LG female human expert 3; Int 14; Knowledge [religion] +11) still works the property's rice fields with the help of her two grandsons, **Umar** (LG male human commoner 1; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) and **Padeem** (CG male human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) and granddaughter **Lalah** (NG female human expert 2; Wis 12; Knowledge [religion] +6). She and her grandchildren live in the meticulously maintained, elevated farmhouse that has stood for more than two centuries. Eliyah is an extremely pious, good-hearted woman with a rugged, no nonsense exterior, qualities that she instilled in her descendants. The family's **6 farmhands** (CG male human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [farmer] +4) live in a small residence more akin to a military barracks further away from the nearby Pesha River. They are fiercely loyal to their employer and consider the Sharif's land as their ancestral home.

R5: Aramses Farm

Ramaashta's resident administrator, Aramses Ottama, owns a prime location along the Pesha River next to the village square. Aramses' civic duties occupy most of his time; hence his son **Rahaab** (CG male human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [farmer] +6) manages the farm in his absence. The family grows a diverse array of rice, wheat, barley and other niche grains that they use to bake breads in their bakery or ship to Qamara and Khartous for their usage in specialty products. They store the excess grain in four silos scattered about the property. Under normal circumstances, Aramses would return to his comfortable home in the evenings to his wife **Ullema** (LG female human aristocrat 2; Cha 13; Perform [sing] +6) and his two children, but the current crisis prevents him from doing so. The Ottama family gladly offers their assistance to anyone investigating the brutal slayings, as do their **11 farmhands** (NG male human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [farmer] +4) who live in four cottages close to the village square.

R6: Bizayad Farm

Like his much larger neighbor, **Omar Bizayad** (CG male human commoner 3; Wis 14; Profession [farmer] +7) also uses his farm to raise livestock, though he devotes a much higher percentage of his available land towards animal husbandry. Nearly 100 goats and sheep feed on the fertile grasses which the family uses to produce wool, milk and cheeses as well as meat and leather. In fact, Omar's wife **Tarania** (CG female human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [seamstress] +6) and his three daughters, **Jamilah** (CG female human commoner 1; Wis 11; Profession [seamstress] +4), **Sabah** (CG female human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [seamstress] +4) and **Zahra** (CG female human commoner 2; Wis 12; Profession [seamstress] +5) manufacture clothing, while the remaining **6 laborers** (CG male human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [farmer] +4) feed and care for the animals. The farm includes a dairy facility, a slaughterhouse and a smoke house. The Bizayads are hyperactive, disorganized people with good hearts. They live in a ramshackle, older residence at the far end of their property, while their help lives in a dilapidated shack next door.

R7: El-Rouf Farm (CR 8)

The village's most fertile soil is found in the El-Rouf Farm which is also the village's oldest farm. The historic tract of land is in great danger of falling into ruin or being devoured by its neighbors, as its owners,

Youssef El-Rouf (CG male human commoner 2; Wis 9; Profession [carpenter] +5) and his wife **Khari** (NG female human expert 2; Int 15; Profession [merchant] +7) enter their thirties without any children. The farm exclusively grows rice and is renowned throughout Khartous for its extremely flavorful and flood-resistant variety of rice. Youssef is a rather oafish figure, so Khari manages much of the family's affairs including managing the farm's **8 farmhands** (CN male human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [farmer] +5) and making decisions on behalf of her husband. Youssef is an adequate carpenter, so he maintains the family's stylish, yet modest residence as well as the cottages where their employees live.

Though the recent killings greatly concern Youssef and Khari, **Nawalapuura** and her **4 draugr** minions represent a more immediate and pressing danger to them than the lionweres. The bog mummy and her servants hide in the tall reeds on the banks of the Pesha River during the day and emerge from their hiding place at night to attack anyone that crosses their path. She remains partially submerged during the day and stalks the river bank in the evening along with her draugr allies who rise from their resting places at the bottom of the river. PCs searching the area around the Pesha River must succeed on a DC 31 Perception check to spot the concealed bog mummy during the day. A successful DC 21 Perception check spots Nawalapuura at night. However, her proximity to the river makes it relatively easy to track her movements. A successful DC 10 Perception or Survival check detects her tracks, and the PC can follow the tracks to Nawalapuura's concealed hiding place with a Survival check. If the PCs track her to her lair, she and her minions rise from the muck and attack. Nawalapuura already infected one of their farmhands with bog rot. (See the preceding "Nawalapuura" section for details on her actions and her complete stats.)

R8: Khottam Farm (CR 7)

The lionweres began their carnage at this remote farm, killing its elderly owner Yeshua Khottam and his grandniece Shadara. Unlike the subsequent killings, the lionweres did not plan to kill the frail patriarch and his young relative. The lionweres falsely believed that the old man would lead them to Game Over's doorstep with a few simple questions. As their inquiries progressed and their frustration increased, Yeshua's suspicions about the mysterious strangers grew. He accused them of working as agents of the Khalifas trying to strong arm him into selling his property. An argument ensued, and the lionweres morphed into their hybrid form and killed Yeshua and Shadara.

The deaths left the land and the business in disarray. Shadara was Yeshua's last living heir, so the property's ownership and the land itself remain in limbo. The **3 farmhands** (LN male human commoner 1; Wis 10; Profession [farmer] +4) that remain still tend to the wheat and rye fields, but they are uncertain whether they can legally sell the crops or stay in their cottages for much longer. Since the killings, strange sounds emanate from the main residence. Though they did not see anything, the eerie activity keeps them awake for most of the night. To make matters worse, they feel their neighbors' greedy eyes bearing down on the land so much that they initially suspected them of committing the killings until other victims started perishing. Because of these complications, the workers are reluctant to say anything about the slayings or anything else that took place here. In fact, they vigorously discourage the PCs from investigating the main residence out of fear.

Investigation: The main house is a neglected building in a state of utter disrepair. Though the bodies were removed the telltale signs of a deadly struggle are plainly evident in and around the residence. Streaks and droplets of dried blood stain the front door and interior walls, furniture is toppled over or smashed and the walls bear various holes and impact marks as if struck by a heavy object. Bloody footprints and even partial paw prints are still visible on the floor. The exterior doors and windows are intact and undamaged.

A week has passed since the killings, but some unusual tracks remain. A PC that succeeds on a DC 25 Survival check notices that the paw prints on the floor originate from inside the home rather than outside. In other words, the beasts did not leave a trail leading into the residence. Instead, it seems that they spontaneously appeared in the center of the room and then left through the front door. The trail then leads into the fields and becomes impossible to follow. In addition, a PC that succeeds on a DC 30 Perception check notices an unusual hole in the wall that is too clean to have come from a claw or tooth. Though the PC cannot identify the exact

source, it is apparent that it was made by a manufactured weapon driven into the wall with tremendous force unlikely to have come from an elderly man or petite woman.

As the PCs rummage through the Khottam residence, they encounter its lone occupant — a **spectre**. Yeshua's restless spirit emerges from a back room to confront the PCs. He cannot bear to leave his ancestral home, especially given the circumstances of his death. The translucent spectre resembles a wizened man with no teeth and deep wrinkles crisscrossing his face. He is powerless in sunlight, so Yeshua preferably attacks at night or somewhere indoors away from the doors or windows. After hitting his first victim, he mumbles something about "confounded lion-men" and "greedy Khalifas" before resuming the offensive. The angry spectre says nothing else and refuses to engage in any further conversation. Yeshua defends his residence at all costs even if it destroys him.

SPECTRE
XP 3,200

CR 7

hp 52 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Spectre")

R9: Burial Vault

Like nearly all other Khartous communities, Ramaashta inters the mummified remains of its deceased residents in a nearby, subterranean burial vault. Sholamara, the local priestess of Mah-Barek serves as the tomb's caretaker. Under normal circumstances, the burial vault is tranquil and reassuring; however the recent untimely deaths are taking their toll on the residents' emotions and the village's resources. At least **1d4 mourners** (CG male and female human commoner 1; Wis 10; Knowledge [local] +4) moan and wail the loss of a departed family member or friend. These individuals know the first two categories of **Rumors**. The complex is kept open during the day to accommodate visitors and locked at night. Sholamara has the only key.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; 5 hardness; 20 hp; Break DC 25; Disable Device DC 22.

The burial vault consists of ten separate rooms including one for each of the eight farm-owning families and two more for the common citizens. Most corpses lie in a simple wooden coffin though a few of the village's wealthiest residents spend eternity in a bronze or stone sarcophagus. Gifts of fresh grain, rice plants and burning incense can be found atop or near the burial vault's most recent additions.

M: Murder Scenes

It is very likely that the PCs may want to investigate Ramaashta's other murder scenes at some point during the adventure. Unlike the carnage at the Khottam Farm, the lionweres meticulously planned these slayings, so they are virtually identical in all major respects. The killings took place outdoors in a quiet, remote area a good distance away from any homes or other common areas. A successful Survival check detects the presence of large animal tracks around the victim's body. The check's DC is 13 +1 for every day since the killing. The lionweres' trail leads away from the murder and eventually joins up with the main thoroughfare. Inexplicably, the animal tracks suddenly disappear after reaching the road and blend with the other humanoid footprints traversing the path on a daily basis.

Part Two: The Road to Chass

After stopping the lionweres' murderous rampage in Ramaashta, the next stage of the adventure takes the PCs out of the village and onto the unforgiving road to Chasshagra's abode. In addition to the perilous journey across the forbidding Maighib Desert, the PCs may decide to search for Game Over's hunting lodge to obtain additional information or perhaps to return Savvith's head to her bestial lover. The prevailing weather conditions and the dunes' native denizens make the trek to Chass a dangerous one indeed.

Game Over's Trail

After learning of the hunting troupe's unwitting role in the current crisis and the lionweres' interest in them, the PCs may be inclined to take the hunt to them rather than await their arrival in the village. The sheer volume of foot traffic makes it impossible to follow a trail from the square to their lodge on Ramaashta's outskirts, so the PCs must rely upon the locals' word of mouth as well as trial and error to find their hideout. In general terms, the residents believe that Game Over lives several miles beyond the Ramaashta's southernmost farms near the edge of the Maighib Desert; however if the PCs mention its proximity to Traitor's Ridge, the locals provide more specific directions. Even if the PCs stumble in the right direction, the group always covers its tracks to the best of its ability. Nonetheless, PCs searching for tracks within a five-mile radius of the hunting lodge have a 20% chance of coming across a discernible trail for every 10 minutes spent moving through the area. The mere presence of tracks does not ensure that the PCs find them. If there are tracks in the vicinity, the PCs must still succeed on a DC 20 Survival check to actually follow their footsteps. In addition to deliberately hiding their path through the grasslands and farms, Game Over uses animal traps and concealed pits to trap game and maim trespassers violating their privacy. The PCs have a 10% chance of encountering an animal trap or a concealed pit for every 10 minutes spent moving in the vicinity of their lodge. The GM may randomly determine or select one of the following traps.

ANIMAL TRAP
XP 600

CR 2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 23; **Disable Device** DC 23

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect Atk +12 melee (2d8+4); jagged metal jaws snap tight around the creature's lower leg and halve the creature's base speed. The creature can escape with a DC 23 Disable Device, DC 25 Escape Artist or a DC 28 Strength check.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP
XP 800

CR 3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 30-foot deep pit (3d6 falling damage); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot square).

PCs that trigger these traps not only sustain damage from the insidious devices, but they must also devise a means of escape. In most circumstances, this should not be too difficult for experienced adventures; however the unexpected surprise may elicit a loud reaction from the afflicted PC that alerts the lodge's residents to their presence. During the day there is a 30% chance that the Ansiki siblings roam somewhere within a one mile radius of the lodge in search of fresh game or to check the pits and snares scattered about the residence. Otherwise they are inside the lodge with the rest of their group. If Game Over detects someone's presence outside of the home, Gabriel rushes out to investigate and the siblings rush to the second floor windows for a better vantage point and a clear shot from a position of cover. Ammar trails roughly 30 feet behind Gabriel. If the PCs gain access to an entry point undetected or slip into the lodge without being noticed, Game Over reacts differently. Gabriel and Ammar engage the PCs in melee, while Caleb and Guadalupe fire arrows from behind furniture or any other available cover. If possible, the siblings attempt to exit the building and shoot their bows through open windows and doors at visible targets inside. In the event that Caleb and Guadalupe are roaming the grounds, Ammar and Gabriel call for their aid. They arrive 2d4 rounds later. No member of Game Over surrenders in or around the lodge under any circumstances.

Hunting Lodge

Originally designed for short-term usage, the group's small communal residence expanded over the years to accommodate their burgeoning trophy collection. The great room housing their display of severed heads

DUNES OF DESOLATION

is nearly as large as the rest of the house. The residence sits on the edge of the Pasha River Delta's grasslands, though the vegetation in the home's immediate vicinity is more akin to scrubland than the waves of grain found on Ramaashta's farms or even the sparse grass south of the building. In fact, the rolling dunes of the Maighib Desert lie approximately 1 mile south of the hunting lodge. The ground is relatively flat and devoid of large obstacles, so it is relatively easy to see the Game Over's abode from 1,000 feet away. When the PCs come within visual range of the building, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The outline of a large building looms on the edge of the horizon. The L-shaped adobe structure stands 30 feet high and measures roughly 70 feet in width and length at its largest points. A portion of the first story appears to be a later addition from the main residence, because the apparent second floor does not sit atop this extension. Two strong wooden doors denote the residence's presumed entrance. A small opening fitted with interlocking iron bars serves as a window on the first floor. There are five similar windows 25 feet above the ground, though these openings are not fitted with interlocking iron bars. Plumes of dark gray smoke emanate from somewhere on the opposite side of the building.

Further exploration of the building reveals the presence of three additional windows — two on the west wall and one on the north wall — as well as another strong wooden door on the north wall. Game Over keeps the entry and exit doors locked at all times. The interlocking iron bars are present on all of the first floor windows.

Strong Wooden Doors: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23, Disable Device DC 25.

The windows are 2 feet square, making them an extremely tight, yet doable fit for most humans. However, trespassers cannot gain access to the first floor without removing the iron bars or devising a way to bypass them. The bars form roughly 6-inch squares, so a Tiny or smaller creature can squeeze through the barrier without significant difficulty.

Iron Bars: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 25.

If Game Over is present, interior rooms without windows are lit by small oil lamps burning in recessed niches at all times. These oil lamps are also used to light occupied rooms with windows during the overnight hours.

G1: Great Room

Nearly two dozen preserved, lifeless heads hang from the walls of a spacious, rustic great room. A massive carpet stitched together from exotic furs covers most of the floor and is bordered by four life-sized stuffed creatures including an upright juvenile blue dragon, an ogre, a young desert giant and a fetid, desiccated mummy. Two exquisitely carved cherry wood couches upholstered with fine leather face each other near the main entrance. Two high backed fur chairs are placed between the two couches. An archway leads into an adjoining dining area, while a wooden staircase near the front door ascends to the second level.

The 22 heads on the walls represent a diverse collection of beasts, animals, aberrations and monstrous humanoids including a lamia, dire lion, a sea hag and other creatures of the GM's choosing. Its most notable recent addition is Savvith the gynosphinx. Recovering her head presents an opportunity for the PCs to communicate with her. Savvith relays the general circumstances surrounding her death and her love for Chasshagra, but she does not convey any information that the PCs could use to harm her former lover. She indicates that she worries greatly about him and believes that he is sinking further into despair and straying closer to the path of evil, though she cannot explain why. She knows nothing about

King of Beasts or the lionweres' murderous activities.

The trophies are well preserved though somewhat macabre especially among desert cultures. On average, each head is worth 25 gp. The PCs can remove the heads from the wall with brute force necessitating a successful DC 20 Strength check or by disabling the fastening devices which requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. The upright taxidermy pieces are significantly more valuable than their incomplete counterparts on the wall. The gruesome ogre and mummy are worth a mere 20 gp each; however the desert giant is valued at 250 gp and the juvenile blue dragon is worth 750 gp. The figures are bulky and heavy making it difficult to transport them over long distances. The same principle applies to the couches, chairs and carpet which are worth 100 gp each, 50 gp each and 150 gp respectively. Small wooden tables sit in front of one couch and the two chairs. They are worth 10 gp each. When the house is occupied at night, the candles in the iron chandelier hanging over the room are lit, providing illumination for the great room. During daylight hours, the windows provide the chamber with sufficient natural light.

Game Over's movements and actions are not static. As described in previous sections, the PCs may encounter the hunting troupe in their residence, in which case, they are always found in some combination in this area during the day and evenings hours. During the overnight hours, each member takes a 2-hour guard shift in the main room while the others sleep. The lone member periodically walks around the outside of the premises looking for intruders or prey animals. Obviously, if the PCs killed or captured Game Over in Ramaashta or the troupe is currently in the village, the PCs encounter no one in the residence.

G2: Dining Room

Three archways join this ornate dining room with the residence's great room, kitchen and wash room. Its centerpiece is an exquisitely carved wooden table supported by four legs chiseled in the image of an elephant's leg. Eight chairs crafted in the likeness of the table surround the room's focal point. Two paintings depicting a man with elven features hang from opposite walls. One shows the man proudly standing over a dire lion carcass and the other shows the same man beaming over a slain rhinoceros.

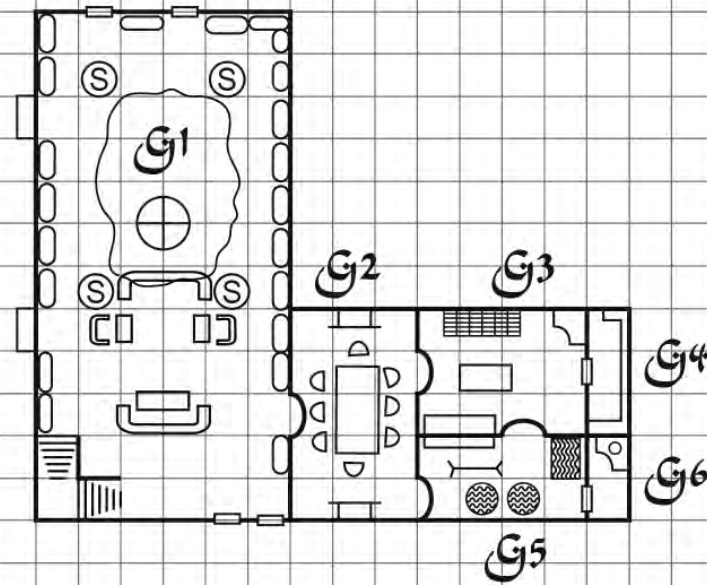
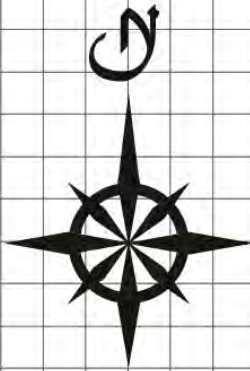
Similar to the furniture in the great room, the table and chairs are valuable, yet they are extremely heavy and cumbersome to transport. The table is worth 250 gp, and the chairs are worth 25 gp each. Ammar is the subject of both paintings, a fact that the PCs can discern if they already encountered him or by rolling a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check.

G3: Kitchen

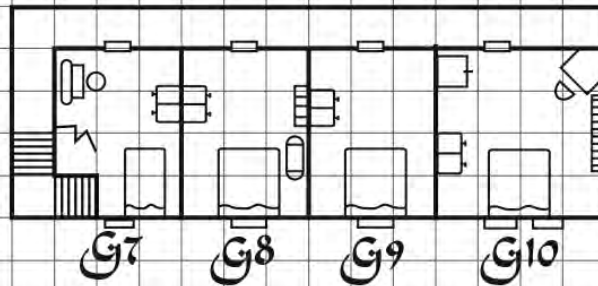
The lingering smell of smoldering charcoal hangs heavy in the air. It clearly emanates from a cast-iron grill abutting the near wall. The smoke wafting from the dying fire within the grill rises into an iron overhang that leads to an exterior vent. Warm air also flows out of a rapidly cooling hearth in the far corner. The kitchen has two work areas. There is a central hardwood island used for cutting, chopping and butchering and a second hardwood work area situated beneath a row of shelves fastened to the wall. A full complement of pots, pans and cutlery rests on the shelves.

Because of their reclusive and secretive nature, Game Over does not rely upon servants to perform the menial household tasks. Instead, all four members share the cooking responsibilities, though the majority of them fall upon Guadalupe. There is also an unlocked door leading into the pantry that opens without effort.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10.



First Floor



Second Floor

Game Over's
Hunting Lodge

1 Square = 5 Feet

G4: Pantry

Four rows of shelves span the entire length of the walls. Numerous jars, bags, small barrels, containers and other storage implements rest upon the shelves.

The pantry is well-stocked with an assortment of herbs, spices, cooking ingredients, oil and even cured meats. None of the food items is particularly valuable or significant, though the oil is used to light the lanterns recessed into the wall.

G5: Wash Room

The unique smell of ammonia is the first scent to greet visitors followed shortly thereafter by the even less pleasant stench of bodily waste that seems to seep out from a closed, wooden door. The initial aroma originates from a half-full barrel of the cleansing liquid near the archway and adjacent to a nearly full barrel of water. Nine fashionable outfits, six men's and three women's rest on wooden hangers supported by a wooden drying rack. There is also a washboard near the far corner and a hardwood table affixed to the wall for folding and storing clean clothes.

The clothing on the drying rack includes four traveler's outfits, three explorer's outfits, a courtier's outfit and a noble's outfit with the latter two designed for women. The ammonia has caustic properties and can be used as weak acid or a weak base. If substituted for more commonly used stronger acids, it only deals half damage to any creature or object that comes in contact with it. The barrel holds approximately four gallons of ammonia. The door to the privy opens with minimal effort.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10.

G6: Privy

There is no mistaking the purpose of this tiny alcove in the residence. A foul stench of rot and decay roils out of a simple circular hole cut in the center of a chairlike apparatus.

Though it smells terrible, the privy is safe to use.

G7: Guadalupe's Bedroom

The sweet aroma of chic perfume gently nudges the senses. The apparent source is a nearby vanity table covered by nearly a dozen jars of cosmetics. A circular mirror attaches to the vanity table and a small, leather upholstered stool is neatly tucked beneath it. There is a wooden dressing panel covered with images of unicorns and other magical beasts in the far corner adjacent to a four-poster bed layered with silk sheets and lace pillow shams. A cool breeze flows through the window above the bed. An exquisitely carved teakwood dresser with two drawers is slightly ajar revealing several frilly undergarments.

Though she appears to be a rugged outdoorswoman, Guadalupe also has a softer, feminine side that she conceals in her private quarters. Her vanity table includes four jars of perfume worth 10 gp each and four containers of makeup worth 5 gp each; however mixed in among her beauty aids are a *potion of lesser restoration* and a *potion of remove disease*. The dressing panel is old, outdated and barely functional, so it has no value. The silk sheets and the lace pillow shams are worth a

total of 65 gp. Guadalupe's dresser contains an assortment of woman's undergarments, three folded outfits and four pairs of shoes. She hides her diary beneath the lower drawer. It can be accessed by pulling the drawer completely out of the dresser or with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

The diary is very personal and contains Guadalupe's impressions of various people in Ramaashta and the outlying farms. She professes to greatly admire Aramses Ottama and Sholamara whom she considers to be the sister she never had. Older entries describe her life in Alcazdar before relocating with her brother across the desert to Khartous to join Game Over. It then describes her early hunts in exacting details as well as her pride in her accomplishments. The more recent entries tell a much different story. She expresses concern about Ammar's increasingly dour personality and reservations about slaying the "noble sphinx" for a "bag of loot." She is fiercely loyal to her brother whom she views as a father figure more than a sibling. The diary is written in Common and has no monetary value.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10.

A strange collection of unusual bows and scimitars hangs from pegs hammered into the near wall, while a badly worn leather saddle sits atop a display stand bolted into the floor. In sharp contrast to these oddities is an ordinary wooden bed covered with linen sheets and a simple, open armoire containing men's clothing, shoes and hats. Light filters in through a window above the bed.

G8: Caleb's Bedroom

Caleb's collection of weaponry ranges from the impractical to the bizarre. It includes six jade arrows that deal only half damage, but are worth 5 gp each for their component parts; a decorative longbow constructed from ivory that is worth 150 gp, yet is too rigid to fire arrows; a worthless, ornamental quartz scimitar that shatters upon impact and a masterwork shortbow worth 330 gp that is inexplicably adorned by concentric white and red circles painted onto the weapon's surface. The saddle is a riding saddle with historical significance. Intended to be used for a camel, careful inspection coupled with a successful DC 25 Perception check reveals the name Carath ibn-Hayuzet cut into a piece of leather that is partially obscured by a later repair. A successful Knowledge (history) check identifies Carath as the first Khartous merchant to make the journey from Qamara to Qiram, making it a collector's item. The saddle is worth 500 gp if the seller is aware of its historical significance; otherwise it is valued as an ordinary, rather abused riding saddle. Caleb's bed, armoire and personal effects are more conventional and also worthless.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10.

G9: Gabriel's Bedroom

Three falchions with bejeweled handles are mounted on a display rack attached to the near wall. A simple, military style bed covered in linen sheets abuts the far wall beneath an open window. Men's undergarments, socks and shoes overflow from two open drawers within a tightly packed dresser.

Gabriel's three falchions are all masterwork blades featuring decorative hilts inset with pearls, garnets, sapphire chips and pieces of ivory. They are worth 375 gp each. The clothing and shoes stuffed into the drawers are worth a total of 50 gp. The bed furnishings are only worth 10 gp.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10.

Gio: Ammar's Bedroom (CR 7)

This spacious, breezy bedroom features a wooden corner desk, a bookshelf stuffed with at least fifty tomes, a freestanding cedar armoire and a comfortable bed covered with silk sheets. Fresh air flows into the bedchamber through an oversized window above the bed. A rugged, iron chest occupies the near corner.

The increasingly paranoid and irrational Ammar keeps his bedroom door locked at all times thus the PCs must force it open, pick the lock or climb in through the window to get inside the room. Ammar treats his bedroom as his sanctuary, allowing him to read his collection of books at his leisure and without interruption. None of the 48 tomes in his library is particularly valuable, though the subject matter gives some insight into his current state of mind. Most focus on philosophical musings regarding the nature of good and evil as well as treatises on the morality of killing other sentient creatures. The works appeal to a specialized market only making them worth a meager 2 gp each. Ammar's armoire includes three pairs of masterwork sandals and three masterwork desert robes. (See **Chapter 5** for details on these items.) The silk sheets covering his bed are worth 50 gp.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15; Disable Device DC 20.

The iron chest is unlocked, but not unprotected. Whenever anyone other than Ammar opens the chest, that person triggers the **trap** which immediately summons a **Huge air elemental** that fights to the death. The chest contains 1,590 gp, six rubies worth 250 gp each, a scroll case, 6 *dragon bane arrows* and 5 *animal bane arrows*. The case contains a divine scroll with the spell *breath of life*.

SUMMON MONSTER VI TRAP

CR 7

Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summon monster VI*, summons 1 Huge air elemental).

HUGE AIR ELEMENTAL

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 95 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Elemental, Air")

Maighib Desert

The only obstacle now standing in the way of the PCs and Chasshagra is the forbidding Maighib Desert. The events depicted in this adventure occur at some point in the late summer, so the GM is encouraged to use the weather rules presented in **Chapter 3** of this sourcebook to determine the temperature and other prevailing conditions during their trek across the burning sands. **Chapter 2** also provides useful information to adjudicate the logistical details of the PCs' trek across the expansive Maighib Desert.

This portion of the adventure includes two set encounters — Ameht's Caravan and Scene of the Slaughter plus three additional encounters that may take place at any point during the PCs' journey to Chass. The three additional encounters appear first followed by the two set encounters. The additional encounters can take place in any order that the GM chooses or can be supplemented with more random encounters.

Encounter 1: How Bazaar? (CR 8)

It is safe to say that no humanoid race adapted to life in the desert better than the rahadas (see **Chapter 6** for details regarding this new race), and **Shazzab Rumun** is the perfect example of this fact. The solitary desert merchant treks across the burning sands accompanied only by his trusty **al-haloon**. In fact, his beast of burden is the only creature that believes anything he says. Though most of his race travels as a family unit, his

kin disowned him long ago because of his endless scheming and innate treacherous nature. Shazzab is not evil per se. He simply looks out for himself first, second, third and so on.

As the PCs make their way across the desert, they come across a lone rahada sitting atop an al-haloon that appears to be lugging a tremendous amount of junk across the searing sands. In most likelihood, Shazzab's keen senses alerted him to the PCs before they became aware of his presence. If this is the case, Shazzab heads in the PCs' direction. Shazzab is always interested in selling one or more of his items or information, but his primary goal is to steal items of value from the PCs and add them to his hoard.

If the PCs decide to interact with Shazzab, he comes across as the consummate snake oil salesman of the Old West. He is gregarious, witty, charming and not averse to telling fantastical tales and blatant exaggerations, though he portrays himself as a humble, hard-working merchant barely eking out a living. Throughout his conversation with the PCs, Shazzab makes self-deprecating comments to put the PCs at ease. Shazzab is particularly pleased these days thanks to Chasshagra's destruction of his most hated rival — Ameht Bakhtar, a fact that he happily relays to the PCs. He minces no words in describing the caravan leader as an overpriced scoundrel who gouged his customers to pay for his numerous mistresses and opium addiction. (The latter allegations are a lie.) He also offers no niceties regarding Chasshagra, whom he describes as the miserly sphinx in Chass that hoards his water and withholds his hospitality from struggling desert merchants such as himself. He can point the PCs in the general direction of Chass for a small fee, but he knows nothing about Savvith's killing or the recent events in Ramaashta. If told of these unfortunate events, Shazzab feigns sadness and recites random lines of poetry from obscure elegies to express his false regret.

Shazzab's inventory includes an eclectic collection of items. The GM should treat Shazzab as a thorp for the purposes of determining what items are available for sale. (See the "The Settlement Stat Block" section in Chapter 7 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* for details regarding a thorp.) Shazzab offers fair prices for his wares and may even grant a discount if the PCs purchase items in bulk. During his interaction with the PCs, he takes careful notice of their valuables, as he looks to pilfer something of great value from their person or preferably from an unattended mount. Shazzab relies upon his exceptional Sleight of Hand abilities to rob the PCs without them noticing it. If the PCs catch him in the act, Shazzab falls back upon his Bluff abilities to convince his accuser that he just wanted to take a closer look at the item and intended to give it back. Shazzab then decides not to tempt fate again and concludes his business with the PCs without any further ado. He rebuffs insistent PCs with a hurried claim that he is already late for a scheduled delivery.

Shazzab does everything he can to avoid a physical confrontation short of parting with his goods on anything but his own terms. If he cannot avoid a fight, he always positions himself for a flank attack using his al-haloon as his ally, or he attempts Bluff check to feint and then sneak attack his opponent. As soon as he is reduced to less than one-quarter of his original hit points, Shazzab pleads for his life and claims that poverty drove him to a life of thievery. If the ruse works, Shazzab gratuitously thanks the PCs for their mercy and begins plotting an opportunity to exact revenge on the PCs at a later date. If the PCs do not accept his bargain, he begs them to let him offer the PCs a valuable gift as recompense. He searches through his items and finds a *potion of invisibility* that he quickly quaffs before trying to escape. He leaves everything behind if necessary, though he plans on returning at a later point in time to reclaim his lost possessions.

SHAZZAB RUMUN

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male rahada rogue 9 (See **Chapter 6**)

CN Medium humanoid (rahada)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +11

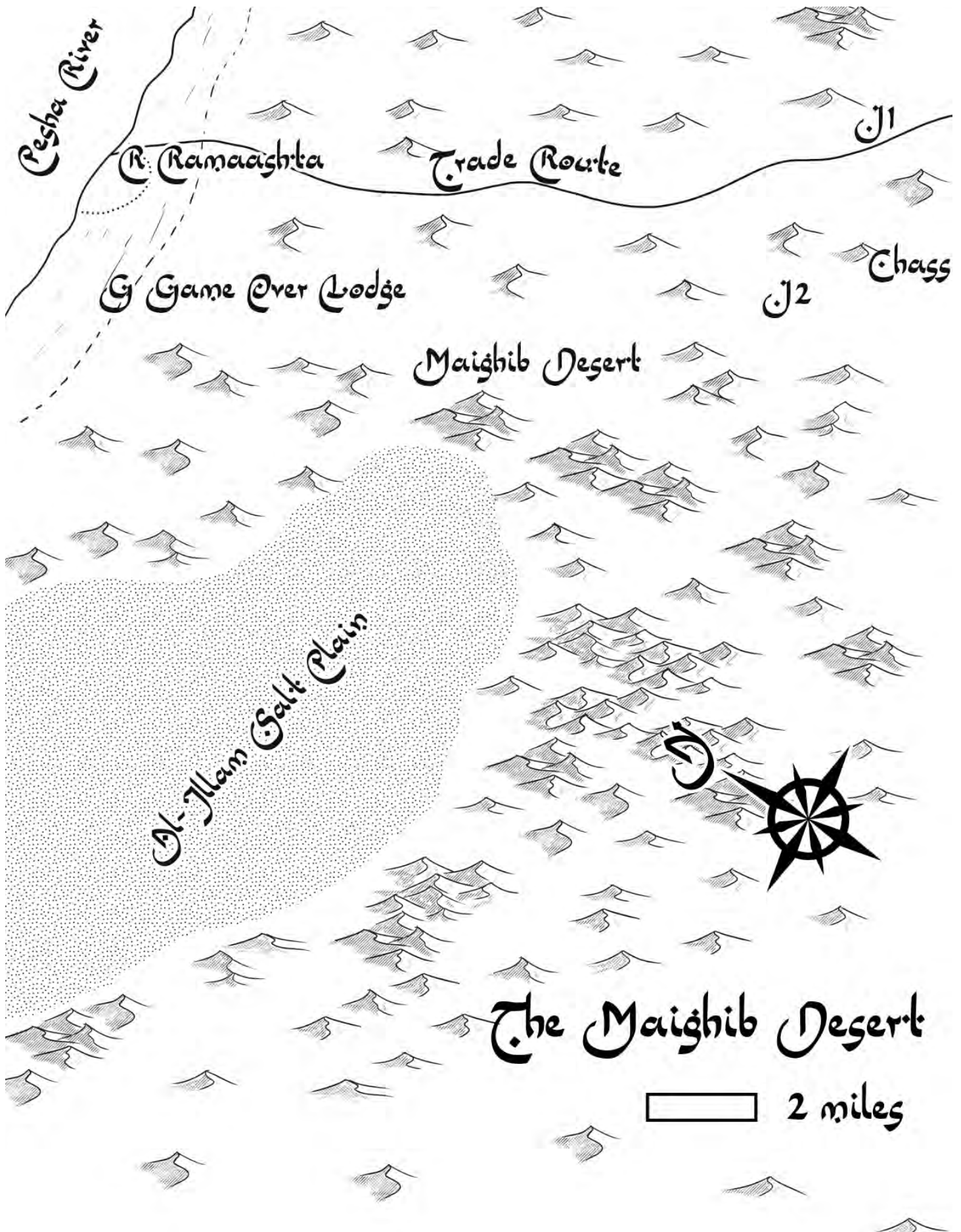
AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 53 (9d8+9)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, resiliency 1/day, trap sense +3

Speed 30 ft.



KING OF BEASTS

Melee +1 short sword +11/+6 (1d6+4/19–20)

Special Attacks rogue talents (bleed attack +5, surprise attack), sneak attack +5d6

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will, Quick Draw^B, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Appraise +13, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +7, Handle Animal +7, Heal +1, Perception +11, Profession (merchant) +8, Ride +9, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +17, Stealth +14, Survival +2; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff, +2 Sleight of Hand

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven

SQ gregarious, rogue talents (weapon training [short sword]), trapfinding +4

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** *bracers of armor* +2, +1 short sword, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork thieves' tools, 740 gp including inventory.

AL-HALOON

XP 800

hp 30 (See Chapter 6)

Encounter 2: Sands in the Hourglass (CR 8)

It is generally easy to see creatures moving atop the searing dunes, but it is much more difficult to spot the cunning creatures that reside beneath the sands waiting for unfortunate prey to happen upon them. The reviled dust diggers are one such predator. This loathsome gang of desert aberrations generally hunts at night, so this encounter should take place during the cooler evening, overnight or early morning hours. Dust diggers are rather slow, so they rely upon their tremorsense ability to detect potential targets before moving in for the kill. They generally attack their prey at campsites or other fixed locations rather than engaging in a futile effort to run down much faster opponents. These **4 dust diggers** approach the PCs using their earth glide ability so it is impossible to detect their presence on the surface unless the PC possesses tremorsense or a similar ability. The cunning predators surround the PCs from all four sides as they move towards the surface. One round before they attack, a PC may attempt a Perception check to notice something amiss underfoot, otherwise the dust diggers surprise the unwary desert travelers. Each positions itself beneath a potential target and uses its sinkhole ability to subject that victim to its tentacle attacks. The cunning creatures rely upon their tentacles to grab opponents and either bite them or swallow them whole depending upon the circumstances. The dust diggers do not retreat, and they have no treasure.

DUST DIGGER (4)

XP 1,200

The Tome of Horrors Complete 247

N Large aberration

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+7 natural, –1 size)

hp 27 (5d8+5)

Fort +2; **Ref** +1; **Will** +4

Speed 10 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee 5 tentacles +8 (1d6+3 plus grab) and bite +8 (2d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (5 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks sinkhole, swallow whole (1d6+3 plus 1d8 acid damage, AC 13, 10 hp)

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +7 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 17 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +5 (+17 sandy terrain); **Racial Modifiers** +12 Stealth in sandy terrain

SQ earth glide

Earth Glide (Ex) A dust digger can glide through sand, loose soil, or other loosely packed earth as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or signs of its presence. A move *earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing dust digger flings the creature back 30 feet, stunning it for 1 round unless it succeeds on a Fortitude save.

Sinkhole (Ex) A buried dust digger can deflate its body as a free action, causing the sand above it to slide toward its maw. A creature standing on a space occupied by a buried dust digger when it deflates is immediately subjected to the dust digger's tentacle attacks.

CR 3

Encounter 3: Waters of Death (CR 8)

Lamias are among the most despised and feared denizens of the desert. They typically reside in places formerly devoted to the cause of good, such as a temple or shrine dedicated to a righteous deity. In this particular instance, a pair of lamias inhabits a long forgotten and abandoned Guurzan crypt that is half-buried beneath the desert sands. When the PCs notice the structure, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The featureless, adobe structure is 30 feet square and 15 feet high with a 10-foot wide entrance facing to the west. Much of the structure's exterior is partially buried beneath the sand.

Shortly after arriving a few years ago, **2 lamias** removed the crypt's stone door, allowing them an unobstructed view of the surrounding area. Whenever they detect intruders, one of the lamias uses *major image* to conjure a heavy stone door covered in hieroglyphics and the other casts *ventriloquism*. Since the lamia not maintaining the image knows that the stone door is an illusion, she can see through it, allowing her to cast her own *major image* in the likeness of an emaciated, wizened sadhu emerging from inside the crypt. The elderly man claims that his name is Marjeev, a sadhu (holy man) and hermit who searches for insight and knowledge. To further the ruse, Marjeev tells the PCs that he is partially deaf so they must speak loudly, allowing the lamia to clearly hear what the PCs are saying so that she can continue to converse with them. The illusion's goal is to lure the unsuspecting PCs into the crypt and an ambush by the lamias. PCs that directly interact with all three of the illusions are entitled to a Will save to disbelieve the figments. In the case of *ventriloquism*, a PC that succeeds on his Will save recognizes the voice as illusory, but still hears it. A successful Will save against the *major image* spells dispels the intended image and replaces it with a faint outline.

Marjeev only directly answers questions about Chasshagra, whom the lamias hate with tremendous passion. The wise monk tells them that he lives in an ancient structure known as Chass. He also knows that he recently met a female of his kin; however she died before they could mate. The lamias take particular pleasure in that turn of events; therefore a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that Marjeev seems very pleased about the gynosphinx's death. Absent any questions about Chasshagra, Marjeev offers the PCs esoteric advice such as "the sun waits for no man," "the desert's heat is cold compared to the fire in one's heart" and other half-baked truisms. He insists on allowing him to offer the PCs his hospitality and invites them into the crypt. When he approaches the door, he pretends to run his fingers across the hieroglyphs causing the

DUNES OF DESOLATION

door to magically disappear. As soon as the PCs step inside, the lamias end the illusions and viciously attack the PCs. If the ruse fails, each lamia uses its *charm monster* spell-like ability against a PC of her choice before charging out of the crypt to attack.

LAMIAS (2)
XP 2,400

CR 6

hp 67 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Lamia")

Treasure: The crypt's interior is empty other than a lone sarcophagus holding an ancient, mummified body and the lamias' ill-gotten treasure. The sarcophagus can be pried open with a successful DC 18 Strength check. In addition to the desiccated corpse, the PCs also find *boots of elvenkind*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, a diamond worth 1,000 gp and 692 gp.

J1: Ameht's Caravan (CR 8)

The enraged Chasshagra attacked Ameht Bakhtar's caravan roughly 10 miles due north of his home and left a wake of carnage in his stead. The devastating aftermath of his fury litters the desert road leading to Qiram with sundered vehicles, slain animals and shattered men. The stench of decay and rot is so powerful that it can be detected from a mile away with a successful DC 20 Perception check, and it is noticeable from a quarter mile away without making a Perception check.

The powerful odor also attracted the unwanted attention of a small raiding party that picks through the broken remains in search of any valuables. Like vultures descending upon a week old kill, the fetid stench of death drew a hunting party of 3 **alhajans** to the scene. The opportunistic scavengers feast on the festering meat and sift through the wreckage seeking anything useful. In fact, their single-minded focus causes them to suffer a -2 penalty on Perception checks made to notice anyone approaching. Like others of their kin, they zealously guard their prize and attack anyone that approaches the area. The cruel monsters forego their usual tactics and instead use their howl special ability to drive off as many trespassers as possible and then envelope any creatures that successfully resisted the fear effect. They use their expertly crafted quarterstaffs to beat their opponents to a bloody pulp.

ALHAJANS (3)
XP 1,600

CR 5

hp 55 (See **Chapter 6**)

Development: After driving off the alhajans, the PCs can fully assess the scene. There are two busted and toppled caravan wagons that held fresh water, fruits, vegetables and 30 barrels of stored grain. These items are now spilt onto the hot sands causing the water to evaporate and the grains to blow away on the wind. There are 3 dead camels and 6 dead men lying on the ground around the caravan. It is impossible to tell the exact manner of their death because of the post-mortem damage caused by the alhajans and other desert scavengers, but a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that their level of decomposition strongly supports the belief that these creatures died around the time of Chasshagra's attack.

Treasure: The alhajans found 642 gp among the wreckage as well as a scrimshaw pendant worth 250 gp, a ruby and gold ring worth 200 gp and six chunks of raw platinum ore worth 100 gp each.

J2: Scene of the Slaughter (CR 8)

Chasshagra hauled Savvith's lifeless body back to Chass, so there are few indications that a battle actually took place here roughly a week ago. The site is an otherwise nondescript tract of bare hardpan approximately 8 miles west of Chass that is now marked by an upright bronze ankh imbedded deep into the sandy earth. The ankh is 6 feet high and is worth 250 gp. It can be removed from the ground with a successful DC 28 Strength check. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) check determines that Guurzan craftsmen manufactured the ankh roughly 500 years ago. Chasshagra left the relic here to forever identify the location where Savvith fell. Any PC that closely examines the surrounding area notices a patch of discolored earth with a successful DC 15

Perception check and 1d4 broken arrows with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The discolored earth is dried blood from Savvith's decapitation and the projectiles are evidence of Caleb and Guadalupe's involvement in the attack.

Within 1d4 minutes after the PCs arrive on the scene, a **hallaraq** appears on the horizon. The monstrous scavenger continuously scours the sands searching for scraps left behind by other predators. In a pinch, the hungry vermin even resorts to eating inorganic matter, and it sets its sights on the bronze ankh looming over the dunes. If the PCs removed the ankh from the sand, its reflection attracts the hallaraq like a shimmering fishing lure. The mindless critter has no interest in attacking the PCs unless they stand in the way between it and its inanimate meal. In the event that a battle does take place, the hallaraq abandons the cause and burrows into the sand whenever it is reduced to less than half its original hit points. The hallaraq has no treasure, but cracking its shell open reveals a camel's skull, (DC 15 Knowledge [nature] check to successfully identify), a ragged suit of studded leather armor, pieces of a javelin and a wooden wheel presumably from a caravan wagon. The hallaraq acquired these items from the slaughter and wreckage of Ameht's caravan.

HALLARAQ
XP 4,800

CR 8

hp 102 (See **Chapter 6**)

Part Three: Chass and Mate

Having endured the arduous trek across the Maighib Desert, the PCs now face the final portion of the adventure — the confrontation with Chasshagra within his mysterious citadel of Chass. The PCs must overcome his first line of defense — a gang of lion beasts of chaos before they can enter the sphinx's ancient structure. Inside the walls of Chass, the PCs must rely upon more than might and magic to defeat Chasshagra. A sharp mind and quick reflexes are needed to solve the magical beast's puzzles and traps if they aspire to make it out alive.

Approaching Chass (CR 8)

Though its original purpose and intent are unknown, Chass' mysterious builders seem to have picked a strategic location for a desert outpost. The oddly-shaped structure sits atop a plateau overlooking the surrounding dunes. At least forty fresh water springs are located within a 2-mile radius of Chass. The vegetation and date palm trees flowering from these oases make Chass look more like a swank resort than an oddity. At one time, the building sat further above the surface; however over the last several thousand years, the shifting sands have gradually leveled out the area around Chass, making its elevation less pronounced. Nonetheless, Chasshagra's bizarre abode is still visible from 6d6 x 20 feet away despite the undulating mounds of sand and dust surrounding the building. When the PCs first enter visual range, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

At least a dozen small oases measuring no more than 50 feet in diameter are scattered about what could best be described as an oddity of architectural engineering or at worst the haphazard design of a rambling mind. Crafted entirely from stone quarried from an unknown source, this unusually shaped structure rests atop a shallow plateau roughly 5 feet higher than the tallest nearby dune. The building reaches a maximum height of 30 feet near its northwestern corner, though in most places it averages 15 feet. Various bizarrely shaped extensions protrude from its walls, indicating that construction likely started and stopped multiple times during its long history. There are no windows or openings of any kind other than a pair of stone doors expertly fitted onto the western wall.

KING OF BEASTS

These creatures are present only if the PCs slew the lionweres; otherwise the entrance to Chass is unguarded. Though the building is visible from quite a distance away, its guardians are not. Scattered among the oases near the western entrance are **3 lion beasts of chaos** that spring upon any creature that approaches Chass' stone doors. The creatures are well camouflaged in the reeds and grasses that grow around the fresh water springs. Each occupies its own spring. A PC can spot any of them amidst the greenery by succeeding on a DC 22 Perception check. Whenever the PCs attack one of the lion beasts, the other emerge from hiding and converge on the PCs. They never retreat. Like the lionweres, Chasshagra can relay messages to the lion beasts via a *sending* spell; however they lack the requisite intelligence to communicate anything of note to their master.

LION BEAST OF CHAOS (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600

The Tome of Horrors Complete 702

CN Large magical beast (augmented animal)

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

Perception +9

Aura frightful presence (30 ft., DC 12)

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 37 (5d10+10)

Fort +6; **Ref** +7; **Will** +2

Immune confusion, fear, hold animal, hold monster, slow, and haste; **SR** 16

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +8 (1d4+6), bite +8 (1d6+6 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks pounce, rage, rake (2 claws +8, 1d4+6)

Str 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 23 (27 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Perception +9, Stealth +8 (12 in undergrowth); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth).

Chass

Chass conforms to no known architectural style or building technique. In addition the materials used to build it are not indigenous to the area. Omaruri oral tradition claims that Chass predates their arrival in the Maighib Desert, but it does not provide any details about its creators or its intended purpose. Their historical record also indicates that Chasshagra inhabited the structure when the Omaruri arrived in the area. Chass shows little wear for its immense age and strange design features. For instance, its ceiling is not sloped like conventional structures; however rain falls so infrequently in the Maighib Desert that any pools of water that may collect on the roof quickly evaporate. Sandstorms left pockmarks on the outer stone wall, but other than this cosmetic damage, the material itself remains intact with no structural damage. The same can be said for its massive, completely undecorated stone doors. Despite their immense weight, these expertly crafted portals open with virtually no effort thus granting access to Chass.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 8, hit points 60.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the doors within Chass share the same characteristics; they are all crafted from stone and open with minimal effort.

C1: Entry Hall (CR 8)

Two alabaster statues of massive lions abut opposing walls, forcing visitors to pass between them to enter the rest of the room. A pair of archways beyond the statues leads to adjoining chambers. At the far end of the room is a stone pedestal that supports a weathered, ancient tome that lies beneath a protective glass case.

Chasshagra once greeted his guests in this grand entry hall, but today it serves more as his first line of defense against intruders than a welcoming chamber. However, the crafty sphinx still takes great pleasure testing the wits and intellects of other creatures. Whenever a creature passes between the two lion statues or past one of them, a *magic mouth* spell activates. It says the following in Common.

"You cannot pass until you answer my riddle.

I have feet, but do not have legs.

I have no shape, but I have at least one line.

I have rhythm, but require no music.

What am I?"

The correct answer is a poem. The first line refers to the measurement of classical meter in poetry, the second line refers to the fact that a poem consists of at least one line, and the third line refers to poetic rhythm. The riddle is particularly apropos because the book beneath the case is an extremely rare book of handwritten poetry penned by the master poet Suqri himself, a fact that a PC can determine with a successful Knowledge (history) check. Though it has no magical properties, the tome is worth 3,000 gp to any serious collector.

After the riddle is presented, one of the lions immediately transforms into a **mythical lion**. As the PCs ponder the answer to the riddle, the massive animal menacingly taps its paw against the ground, furling and unfurling its claws as it does so. The creature immediately attacks if a creature attacks it, a creature passes through one of the archways, the PCs give an incorrect answer to the riddle, or 1 minute passes. The mythical lion attacks until slain or until it runs out of enemies to attack.

MYTHICAL LION

CR 8

XP 4,800

The Tome of Horrors Complete 726

N Large animal

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +18

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 147 (14d8+70 plus 14)

Fort +14; **Ref** +14; **Will** +14

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +21 (2d6+11/19-20 plus grab), 2 claws +20 (1d6+11)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks pounce, rake (2 claws, 1d6+11)

Str 33, **Dex** 21, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +22 (+26 vs. grapple); **CMD** 38 (42 vs. trip)

Feats Endurance^B, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will^B, Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+21 jump), Climb +15, Perception +18, Stealth +13 (+17 in undergrowth), Swim +16; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics (+8 to jump), +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth)

Development: If the PCs correctly answer the riddle, the mythical lion returns to its statue form and a *magic mouth* speaks again.

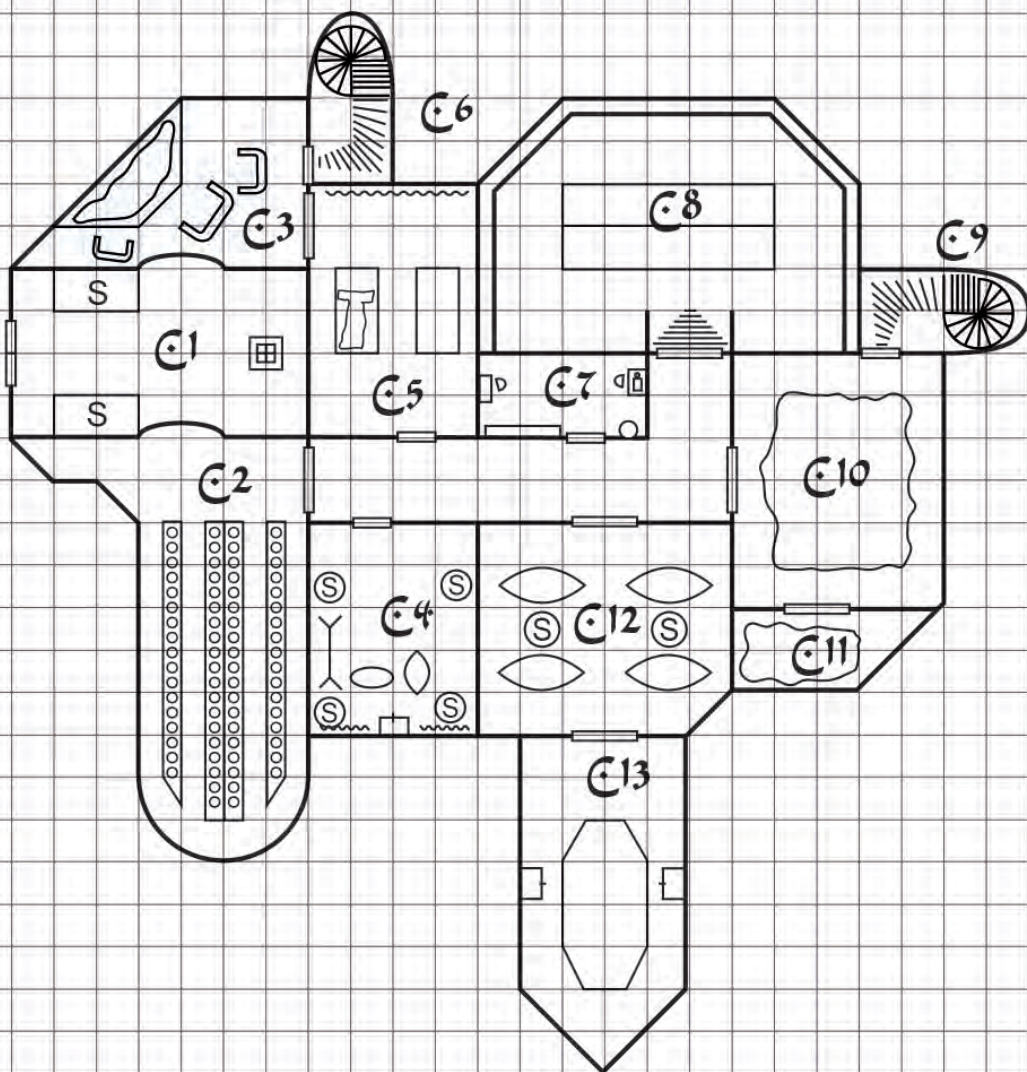
"Well done stranger. You are worthy of entrance into my humble abode."

Ad Hoc XP Award: The GM may award the PCs 2,400 XP for correctly solving the riddle.

C2: Solarium

Sunlight inexplicably pours through the dome-shaped ceiling bathing dozens of brightly colored, potted flowers in warm light. The plants are arranged in four long rows that span the entire length of the room. A gentle, low buzzing sound fills the chamber as ordinary bees fly from flower to flower and back to their hive affixed to the ceiling.

DUNES OF DESOLATION



Chass

1 square = 5 feet

KING OF BEASTS

Though the ceiling covering the dome appears to have been crafted from stone on the outside, it is actually made from 4-inch-thick glass that is made to appear like stone by a permanent *silent image* spell cast by Chass' architects. Chasshagra took advantage of this structural anomaly to hone his horticultural skills. In fact, he intended to use the flowers grown in the solarium to craft perfumes for Savvith and shower their offspring in a bed of flowers harvested from his vast collection. Any PC that succeeds on a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) identifies the flowering plants as indigenous desert species including lilies and poppy plants that can be used to produce opium. The bees are ordinary honeybees used to pollinate the flowers. If a PC opts to brave the insects' wrath and retrieve the bees' sweet delicacy, the honeycomb in the hive 25 feet above the ground contains 50 gp worth of honey. A creature can safely gather the honey with the use of smoke; however the bees deal 1d4 points of damage plus 1 point of Constitution damage to any creature that sticks its hand into the hive and fails a DC 11 Fortitude save. A successful save halves the damage and negates the Constitution damage. The stone door leading into the adjoining chamber opens with ease.

C3: Audience Chamber

Two dusty, upholstered couches marred by visible tears and holes face in the general direction of a raised dais 3 feet above the floor. A smaller upholstered couch on the opposite side of the room also faces the elevated platform. The dais is featureless other than a badly stained wool and silk rug.

During Chass' heyday, the resident sphinx and his Omaruri guests engaged in lively debates in this spacious audience chamber. Since those conversations ended centuries ago, the hall is largely neglected and unused. The carpet, chair and couches are in extremely poor condition and worthless.

C4: Reliquary (CR 8)

Grotesquely deformed faces adorn four wooden totems standing around the chamber's perimeter. Primitive wooden staves, dull blades, spears and javelins are propped against a makeshift weapons' rack between two of the totems. Two oval wicker shields emblazoned with frightening images of eviscerated beasts lie on the floor near the far end of the chamber. An open, wicker chest containing several small votive statues, phylacteries, prayer beads and sinister looking stuffed dolls that resemble men and women abuts the far wall between a pair of tapestries depicting skeletal figures with oversized skulls and mouths full of razor sharp teeth.

In addition to bequeathing *King of Beasts* to Chasshagra, the Omaruri priestess Nawalapuura also gave him other relics and items of particular significance within their culture. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) or (religion) identifies the items as Omaruri in origin. If the Knowledge (religion) check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also learns that the objects are commonly associated with the race's dark earth goddess, Owomarari. Chasshagra collected these oddities and stored them in this reliquary for safekeeping and occasional study. The items never displayed any magical properties until Chasshagra recited his first ritual from *King of Beasts*. Under the right conditions, the inherent evil in these long forgotten items now stirs to life.

Whenever a PC attempts to move or remove any of these objects from the reliquary, they unwittingly spring a devious **trap**. The four totems' mouths open slightly, allowing **4 shadow rat swarms** to pour into the room. The undead vermin display visible signs of decomposition and burning red eyes belying their inherent wickedness. Each totem produces one swarm. The swarms attack until destroyed, even if the offender leaves the room or returns the touched object back to its original location. The shadow rat swarms only assume incorporeal form if the PCs leave the room; otherwise

they remain corporeal.

SHADOW RAT SWARM TRAP

CR 4

Type magic; Perception DC 27; Disable Device DC 27

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*summon swarm*, summons 1 shadow rat swarm per totem).

SHADOW RAT SWARMS (4)

CR 4

XP 1,200

The Tome of Horrors Complete 586

NE Tiny undead (swarm)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +9

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)
hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +4; Ref +6; Will +6

Defensive Abilities half damage from piercing and slashing, incorporeal form, shadow blend; **Immune** swarm traits, undead traits

Weaknesses swarm traits

Speed 40 ft., climb 60 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus 1d4 Strength damage plus disease)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special attacks distraction (DC 15)

Str 6, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +10, Perception +9, Stealth +19;

Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth

Disease (Ex) Filth fever: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 15, onset 1d3 days, frequency 1/day, effect 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage, cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Incorporeal Form (Su) A shadow rat swarm can, as a standard action, assume an incorporeal form for up to 1 hour per day. In this form, the swarm loses its natural AC bonus but gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC. While in this form, the shadow rat swarm is AC 16 (+2 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 size), touch 15, flat-footed 13. The shadow rat swarm can still swarm attack corporeal opponents while in its incorporeal form, but its attack only inflicts Strength damage and cannot distract foes or cause physical damage. The shadow rat swarm gains the incorporeal subtype while using this ability.

Shadow Blend (Ex) A shadow rat swarm can disappear into the shadows as a move action, gaining total concealment in all levels of illumination save bright light.

Strength Damage (Su) A shadow rat swarm deals Strength damage to living foes over which it swarms. A creature reduced to 0 Strength cannot move but does not die — at least, not until the swarm's physical damage takes its toll.

Treasure: Though grisly and macabre, the Omaruri relics are valuable. The totems lose their magical properties after the trap is activated, but they are still worth 100 gp each. The wooden totems are heavy and cumbersome. The two wicker oval shields are purely ceremonial and date back more than 600 years. Once held by a legendary king, the shields are worth 250 gp each. The weapons resting against the rack are ordinary and impractical. There are fifteen in all worth a total of 150 gp based solely upon rarity and historical value rather than usefulness. The assorted items in the chest include votive figures, prayer beads, mysterious dolls and phylacteries. None of the objects is magical, yet as a collection they are worth 1,500 gp. The tapestries behind the chest are exquisitely crafted. They are worth 325 gp each.

C5: Savvith's Tomb

Ear-piercing screams and prolonged peals of hysterical laughter intermittently echo against the heavy stone walls. The disconcerting shrieks and histrionic display come from a disheveled man chained in a seated position to an alabaster slab. Scraps of rancid food lie on the floor around an empty wooden plate, while small pools of water fill the recesses in the floor around an overturned cup. The man faces in the direction of a large creature with the body of a lion, the wings of a falcon and a woman's torso that lies atop an adjacent alabaster slab. The beast is motionless and also headless. Five arrows protrude from the creature's body and freshly picked flowers form a perimeter around her body. A magnificent tapestry hanging on the wall depicts ancient Omaruri people conversing with a majestic winged creature with a lion's body and a man's handsome face.

After her death, Chasshagra brought Savvith's body here and cast a *gentle repose* spell upon her to preserve her body in the event that he finds a way to bring her back to life. He repeats the casting every 6 days when the spell is set to expire. A PC that succeeds on a DC 18 Knowledge (nature) check identifies her as a gynosphinx. Savvith can be restored to life with a *resurrection* spell; however *raise dead* and lesser spells fail because she lacks a head. Even if the PCs have her head with them, it cannot be reattached to a dead creature via *regenerate* and similar magic.

The flowers surrounding her body come from the solarium. The five arrows stuck into her body proved her undoing. All five arrows are *magical beast bane arrows* which may prove useful against Chasshagra. The alabaster slab next to Savvith is intended for Chasshagra when he deems it time for him to join her in the afterlife. The tapestry hanging from the wall is worth 600 gp.

The man chained to the slab is **Ameht Baktar**. As punishment for his crime, Chasshagra chained him to the slab, forcing him to stare at Savvith's dead body to see the consequences of his actions. The spiteful sphinx even forces Ameht to apologize to Savvith every day and beg her forgiveness. After at least a week of captivity and constant shaming, the pampered and confident Ameht is a shell of his former self. He is largely uninjured, at least in a physical sense, though his mind is another matter. Ameht bursts into tears when he first sees the PCs, blubbering about his guilt. The PCs can settle Ameht down and speak with him using magical means, such as a *calm emotions* spell or by succeeding on a DC 25 Diplomacy check; otherwise he incoherently babbles and wails whenever anyone attempts to communicate with him. In a semi-rational state, Ameht tells the PCs that Game Over accepted his bounty to kill Chasshagra, not Savvith. Several days after meeting with the hunting troupe, the vengeful sphinx assaulted his caravan and carried him away to Chass. He has been imprisoned in this chamber ever since. His captor feeds him and gives him water on an irregular basis. Freeing Ameht from his manacles requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check.

AMEHT BAKTAR
XP 1,600

hp 31 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* "Traveling Merchant")

CR 5

Development: This information may prompt the PCs to wait for Chasshagra to appear in the room and ambush him. In this case, the resident sphinx appears in the room 2d4 hours after the PCs' arrival here. However, if the PCs left any indications of their presence in the building, Chasshagra moves through the complex with tremendous caution and may bolster his ranks by casting any available summoning spells, including another attempt to summon more lion beasts of chaos or lionweres using *King of Beasts*. (See the *King of Beasts* entry in **Area C8** for additional details on the book's usage.) In this case, he and his charges split up and enter the room from both sides.

C6: Abandoned Guard Tower

Stone stairs slowly ascend to an elevated landing and a stone spiral staircase that sharply rises to a height of 30 feet and abruptly ends.

In keeping with the building's seemingly haphazard design, the original creators apparently intended to turn this tower into a guard outpost and then inexplicably abandoned the effort. Any attempts to locate secret or concealed doors result in failure.

C7: Scriptorium

Two simple wooden desks with chairs oddly face the walls. One desk is completely empty, while an open book, vial of ink and a quill pen rest atop the other. A strange, large glove with fingerlike appendages also lies upon the desk's surface. A foul-smelling, sealed barrel sits in the near corner, and a series of shelves bolted into the near wall contain sheets of papyrus, vellum and parchment as well as bookbinding materials and leather bound covers.

During Chass' heyday, Omaruri scribes and scholars used this scriptorium to transcribe works from Chasshagra's collection or to pen original manuscripts. On occasion, the brilliant sphinx dictated his thoughts to a waiting scribe who put pen to paper and brought them to life. Since the Omaruri's demise, Chasshagra has been forced to transcribe his materials himself, using the strange glovelike apparatus sitting on the cluttered desk to manipulate and hold a pen in his paw. The item is clever and unique in design, though its limited market appeal reduces its value to a mere 100 gp. The desk against the far wall is empty, but the one close to the entrance holds an open book that is partially completed. The book is written in Sphinx and is entitled *The Nature of Man and Failings of Creation*. PCs most likely require magical assistance to actually read its contents. Chasshagra wrote the book over the course of the past 200 years, so it tends to wander and stray from its themes on a frequent basis. The vast majority of the work is scholarly and historical, citing various incidents throughout human history demonstrating man's darker side and evil nature; however the book takes an abrupt turn from its intellectual musings over the course of the last five pages. It becomes a self-serving diatribe sharply criticizing humanity's failings and questioning the necessity of man's continuing existence. Chasshagra strongly condemns civilization's exploitation of nature and beasts, calling for the children of the earth to rise up and overthrow their humanoid oppressors. He focuses on trying to find a justification for killing Savvith, and as predicated, he cannot find any. Other than providing a glimpse into Chasshagra's angry mind, it provides no useful information about the complex or the sphinx's many abilities.

Is Chasshagra Evil?

At some point in the adventure, the PCs are likely to conclude that Chasshagra fell from grace and succumbed to the temptations of evil. On the surface, that assertion appears valid, but Chasshagra is not beyond hope. So far, the ageless sphinx has resisted the evil effects of Nawalapuur's accursed book and would seek forgiveness from the people of Ramaashta if Savvith were to be restored to life. Though Chasshagra seeks to punish Game Over and Ameht Baktar regardless of the collateral damage, he has no plans to raze Ramaashta to the ground or wantonly kill all humans he encounters, despite his protestations in his written works. Chasshagra's acts are more akin to him being chaotic neutral than chaotic evil. In time, it is possible that further usage of *King of Beasts* may sway him to becoming chaotic evil, but for now he is chaotic neutral.

C8: Library (CR 9)

There are three lines of numbers etched onto the stone door with a small button recessed into the stone beneath each numeral. The first line contains the numbers 81, 70, 59 and 92. The second line contains the numbers 75, 49, 98 and 21. The third line contains the numbers 43, 97, 70 and 16.

Chasshagra uses this combination lock to protect his treasured library. In order to enter the library without triggering the *glyph of warding* trap, the PC must push the buttons beneath numbers 59, 75 and 97 in no particular order. The combination trap is based upon the number 7. In the first line, when the second digit is subtracted from the first digit, the result is 7 except for 59. In the second line, all of the numbers are divisible by 7 except for 75. In the last line, the sum of both digits added together equals 7 except for 97. Forcing the locked door open or pushing the wrong buttons immediately triggers the trap.

GLYPH OF WARDING TRAP XP 1,200

CR 4

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding*, 3d8 fire damage, DC 16 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 5-ft-radius)

After the PCs open the door, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Stone stairs sharply descend 10 feet before opening into an immense library. Hundreds of books, scrolls and weathered pages rest atop shelves that span the perimeter walls as well as a freestanding bookstand in the middle of the room. An almost equal number of written works lie strewn about the floor along with scraps of torn parchment, papyrus and vellum. A large creature with the body of a lion and majestic birdlike wings reclines atop the central bookstand. Annoyed by the intrusion, the beast looks up to reveal the handsome face of a regal man adorned by a pharaoh's golden raiment. The creature appeared to be deep in study porveying an ancient tome covered in thick fur and secured by a locking mechanism resembling a beast's claw.

Hundreds of books, scrolls and sheets of writing materials line the shelves and floor of this magnificent library. Most of the works are quite ancient, predating the Omaruri's arrival in the Pesha River Delta. Unfortunately, the materials show the obvious signs of age and poor upkeep by the highly intelligent, yet somewhat absent-minded sphinx. A complete inventory of the works could take several weeks or even a few months; however roughly 114 books stand out as being noteworthy with a total value of 3,904 gp. Making this determination requires a successful DC 30 Perception check or a DC 20 Linguistics check. The works cover a variety of topics, but the majority focuses on obscure philosophical matters. In addition to the tomes, six scrolls are magical. They contain the divine spells — *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *magic stone*, *lesser restoration*, *tongues* and *water walk*, all cast at 6th level. In addition to these items, the fur-covered book atop the bookshelf is the dreaded minor artifact *King of Beasts* described in the sidebar.

Triggering the trap on the outer door gives Chasshagra the androsphinx, an opportunity to prepare for a confrontation. In this event, he bolsters his combat abilities by casting *shield of faith*, *bull's strength* and *divine favor* on himself. The sphinx lacks enough time to use *King of Beasts* to increase his ranks, so he turns to a *summon monster III* spell instead. However, if Chasshagra somehow becomes aware of the lion beasts of chaos' death, he may have sufficient downtime to create three more lion beasts of chaos to replace those that the PCs killed. Regardless of whether Chasshagra

King of Beasts

Aura strong conjuration (evil); CL 18th
Slot none; Weight 3 lbs.

Nearly all of the original six copies vanished with the demise of the Omaruri civilization except for two that were preserved by others. The evil work is covered in thick black fur, and its corners are shaped into the likeness of beast paws that are used to keep the book closed, though they have no detrimental effects or locking ability other than to tightly close the book's bindings. Dedicated to the Omaruri earth goddess Owomarari, this vile book confers its powers upon its reader at a terrible price. By spilling a drop of chaotic magical beast blood from a living creature onto one, two or three of the tome's pages and then reading the page's incantations within 1 minute afterward, the reader brings an equal number of magical beasts into being. It takes the reader 1 minute to read a single page. The created creatures must be a chaotic magical beast that shares common lineage with the blood's donor. Therefore blood from a magical beast with leonine heritage could conjure a lionwere or a lion beast of chaos, but it could not create a lupine magical beast. Furthermore, the Hit Dice of each individual creature cannot be greater than half the blood donor's Hit Dice; otherwise the attempt fails. The created creatures obey the reader's instructions without question and to the best of their ability based upon their intelligence. The book grants the reader the ability to communicate with the created creatures via a *sending* spell once per day. When the reader uses this ability, it simultaneously affects all created creatures in existence at that time. The reader can have only one group of created creatures in existence at any time; therefore the reader cannot use the book again until all previously created creatures are slain. Each creation attempt, whether successful or not, consumes the pages containing the spilt blood. There are twenty-six pages remaining in the book.

In exchange for its power, the book draws the reader closer to the entropic, dark entity bestowing these powers. Every time a non-chaotic evil creature attempts to create creatures from the tome, his alignment moves one step closer to chaotic evil if he fails a Will save. The save's DC is 10 + 2 for each alignment step between the reader and chaotic evil + 2 for each additional creature beyond the first that the reader is attempting to create and +2 for each prior usage of the book. (See the "Alignment Steps" section in Chapter 7 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for information regarding alignment steps.) If the creature succeeds on the Will save, the spiteful book bursts into black flames burning an additional number of pages equal to the number of creatures created as added incentive for the reader to bend to its will.

DESTRUCTION

King of Beasts can be destroyed only by sprinkling a drop of blood from a living lawful good outsider on each page.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

gets an opportunity to ready for a fight or not, the proud beast appears disturbed by this turn of events. He undoubtedly realizes that the PCs are likely responsible for thwarting his designs for revenge in Ramaashta and traced the plot's origins back to him. Yet, he does not attack the PCs on sight. Instead he asks them about the fate of Game Over. If the PCs killed or captured them, he seems pleased with the outcome though skeptical in the absence of any proof. Presenting Chasshagra with satisfactory evidence of Game Over's demise is sufficient to satiate his appetite for revenge. He is willing to let bygones be bygones and allow the PCs to leave unharmed and also swear off any further plans of revenge against Ramaashta and its residents. If the PCs drive a hard bargain and demand compensation for his actions, Chasshagra is willing to part with all of his treasures except for his beloved library and its contents including *King of Beasts*. The GM should note that good PCs aware of the loathsome book should not accept such a compromise in light of the magical tome's reputation for evil which likely brings them into conflict with Chasshagra.

On the other hand, the haughty sphinx immediately attacks PCs that took no actions against Game Over or who may have even brought one or more of its members with them. Whether he attacks the PCs or not, Chasshagra's main topic of discussion when not otherwise engaged in casting spells or roaring is the supremacy of beasts over men. His tenor during the conversation depends upon his attitude towards the PCs. He engages in a civil discourse with PCs that punished Game Over, while ranting and raving about the subject with PCs that did not. It is impossible to convince Chasshagra that he is wrong and any statements contrary to his opinion cause him to attack the PCs if he has not done so already.

Chasshagra is simultaneously horrified and elated if the PCs present him with Savvith's head. The grisly sight infuriates him, but he also realizes that he can now communicate with her departed spirit via *speak with dead*. Chasshagra grills them about their motives for returning it to him. If he judges them to be sincere, he expresses his gratitude. Furthermore, if the PCs restore Savvith to life, he becomes extremely remorseful for his actions and begs forgiveness. In this case, he is even willing to part with *King of Beasts* or aid in its destruction. He also offers Ramaashta and its citizens any assistance that he can provide. PCs that he judges to be insincere feel his full wrath. The outraged sphinx launches into a brief tirade about Savvith's unjustified murder, Ameht's bounty and man's propensity for cruelty before he attacks the person whom he believed slighted Savvith's remains or memory.

CHASSHAGRA

XP 6,400

hp 123 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3* "Sphinx, Androsphinx")

Gear *suqri's talisman* against monumental favor (See Chapter 5), golden raiment worth 2,500 gp

CR 9

Tactics: Chasshagra opens combat with a roar, hoping to frighten off as many opponents as he can. He continues to roar on the successive 2 rounds as well until he can no longer do so. Though a poor flyer, he realizes that he enjoys a tactical advantage attacking the PCs from higher ground preferably outside the range of their melee attacks. He uses his pounce ability to charge an opponent allowing him to attack with both claws and rake his opponent as well. In the event that he cannot charge, he uses his Flyby Attack feat to attack and grab an opponent before flying to a safe location with his victim in tow preferably above the central bookstand. The furniture piece is 6 feet high, and the ceiling is roughly 25 feet above that. With his enemy firmly in hand, he resorts to using his rake attacks against the grappled target.

Chasshagra refuses to concede defeat and fights to the bitter end, opining that he would rather leave this world and spend eternity with Savvith in the next than bow to the two-legged beasts that trample nature and its wondrous creations underfoot.

C9: Abandoned Guard Tower

Stone stairs slowly ascend to an elevated landing and a stone spiral staircase that sharply rises to a height of 30 feet and abruptly ends.

Like **Area C6**, the original creators apparently intended to turn this tower into a guard outpost and then inexplicably abandoned the effort. Any attempts to locate secret or concealed doors result in failure.

C10: Living Quarters

Wilting flower pedals line the borders of a massive, red, green and white floral print carpet that nearly covers the entire floor. Thick tufts of tan-colored fur are embedded in the carpet's fibers.

Though this spacious chamber technically serves as Chasshagra's living quarters, he rarely spends any time here other than to occasionally nap or give his weary eyes a rest from pouring through his voluminous written works. The decaying flower pedals spread across the carpet's edge came from the flowers in his solarium and were intended for Savvith's enjoyment. Since her death, he has not set foot in this chamber and its adjoining chamber out of inconsolable grief. The chamber's carpet is extremely large, heavy and in poor shape. Prior to his gynosphinx's arrival, Chasshagra dug his sharpened claws into the heavy fabric creating numerous pulls, tugs and holes in the massive textile. PCs that decide to salvage the 1,000 pound carpet get only 500 gp for the monumental effort.

C11: Nursery

Though smaller than the adjoining chamber, this oddly shaped room is similarly decorated. Another large gray and red carpet adorned with images of mythical beasts and playful fey creatures covers much of the floor. Dozens of mathematical equations and extremely detailed hieroglyphs are etched onto the stone walls.

It is almost impossible not to share the profound sadness that Chasshagra experienced when first setting eyes upon this painstakingly crafted nursery. Unlike the carpet in the sphinx's living chambers, this less cumbersome wool and silk carpet is in good shape and is worth 500 gp. Savvith etched the mathematical equations and riddles onto the wall to amuse her offspring. The mathematical equations etched onto the wall include the calculations to determine the area and size of various geometric shapes. PCs can discern this fact by making a successful DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check. The hieroglyphs are written in Sphinx, likely requiring the PCs to use magical means to read and understand them. They are children's riddles interspersed with classic riddles from antiquity.

C12: Omaruri Crypt (CR 7)

Unlike most doors in this complex, this stone door is stuck requiring a successful DC 28 Strength check to break it down.

Four ancient reed boats each hold skeletal remains clad in tattered linens with flecks of color now faded with age. Thick layers of dust and a few strands of straw still cover some of the bones. Two lion-headed mahogany statues holding a spear stand amidst them.

In accordance with Omaruri tradition, four of Chasshagra's long departed friends are laid to rest in the accoutrements of their people near the being they venerated as a living deity. For the better part of the first century after their deaths, their sphinx companion frequently visited and spoke with them using a *speak with dead* spell. Several decades after the Omaruri stopped visiting Chass the spiteful Chasshagra reciprocated and never set foot in the crypt again. Since then, the signs of neglect are everywhere. Thick layers of dust, cobwebs and a stagnant odor fill the room.

If the PCs opt to examine the skeletons, they can determine that they are human with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check. A check that

KING OF BEASTS

succeeds by 5 or more reveals that they are the skeletal remain of Omaruri men. If the check succeeded by 10 or more, the PCs' examination reveals no signs of trauma indicating that they likely died from natural causes. Their clothing fell into tatters long ago, but some valuables remain within each of the reed boats that act as coffins. PCs that opt to search the bodies discover an ivory necklace worth 150 gp, a bone pendant worth 100 gp, a mahogany ring worth 75 gp, an amber bracelet worth 50 gp and nine gems worth 10 gp each with a successful DC 10 Perception check. However, disturbing the remains triggers the wrath of the chamber's two guardians.

Any physical contact with the bodies or the contents of their coffin immediately animates the **2 graven guardians** that watch over the crypt. The monsters' Omaruri creators fashioned them in Chasshagra's humanoid likeness, though their powers are based upon their archaic nature deities. The two constructs attack until destroyed.

GRAVEN GUARDIANS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600

N Medium construct (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3 "Graven Guardian")

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +1

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 53 (6d10+20); fast healing 2

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 16

Weaknesses faith bound

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *keen shortspear* +10/+5 (1d6+5/15–20) or slam +9 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks magic weapon, dazzling (DC 14)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

3/day—*entangle* (DC 14)

1/day—*haste* (self only)

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

SQ guardian domains (Plant, Sun)

Dazzling (Su) When the graven guardian scores a critical hit with its magic weapon, a bright flash blinds the target for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude save negates). The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Faith Bound (Su) A graven guardian cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the holy or unholy symbol of the deity to which the graven guardian is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the graven guardian.

Magic Weapon (Su) A graven guardian that carries its deity's favored weapon treats that weapon as a +1 weapon as long as it is wielded by the guardian. If the weapon is a melee weapon, it gains the *keen* weapon special ability (even if the weapon is a bludgeoning weapon). If it is a thrown weapon, it gains the *returning* weapon special ability. If it is a ranged weapon, it gains the *seeking* weapon special ability, and generates new ammunition with each attack (this ammunition is destroyed whether or not it hits).

C13: Chasshagra's Tomb

Countless sundry items, scraps of shredded linen, bits of construction material and numerous other objects are strewn about the floor or fall out of two overstuffed wooden chests against the walls. The debris is so dense, that it is nearly 2 feet deep and covers every available space in the room. The chamber's centerpiece is a massive, marble sarcophagus exquisitely crafted in the image of a reclining sphinx. The sealed lid is painstakingly detailed down to ridges in the golden raiment adorning the creature's head.

Contemporaneous with the construction of the Omaruri crypt, Chasshagra built this tomb for himself, but since the Kharitsines' arrival, the solitary sphinx abandoned his original plan and left the tomb and its treasures undisturbed. Most of the objects are useless junk that Chasshagra did not need, so he dumped them here when he forsook his plan to be buried here.

Treasure: Even if the PCs thoroughly scrounge the area, the moldy textiles, chunks of raw materials and ordinary items are worth a grand total of 100 gp. However, buried within the chests and piles of garbage are many valuable items. A PC that searches the chests uncovers the following treasures with successful Perception checks. Subsequent successful Perception checks reveal no additional items.

DC 10: *lion's shield*, a +1 *mighty cleaving scimitar*, a suit of elven chain, a *cloak of resistance* +2 and a 3-foot high bronze sculpture of a pouncing lion worth 1,500 gp.

DC 20: 16 gems worth 100 gp each and 3,402 gp.

Concluding the Adventure

When all is said and done, Chasshagra either ends the adventure as a dead villain or a flawed character that miraculously found redemption and is bent on atonement. In the end, there is no right or wrong way per se — just choices and consequences. Ridding Chass of its resident sphinx opens the locale for traveling merchants seeking to make use of its fresh water springs for their caravans and its spacious rooms for shelter. The mad dash to claim ownership of Chass is likely to result in tense standoffs at best and prolonged armed conflict at worst between rival business owners. It is possible that the Abaya or the squabbling parties themselves ask the PCs to intervene and negotiate a settlement, though it is equally likely that one of the rival factions ask the PCs to eliminate his competitors. Theoretically the PCs can solve this matter by declaring themselves as the new masters of Chass since they were responsible for evicting its prior tenant and have the strongest claim. The Sultan or the Abaya support the PCs' position if they originally hired them to undertake this mission. If the situation appears poised to spiral out of control, the Abaya or the Sultan steps in and declares Chass to be state property, a resolution that leaves all interested parties unhappy, but powerless to stop it.

In the more unlikely event that Chasshagra survives the adventure, he begrudgingly grants traveling merchants access to his water supplies. More importantly, he extends a heartfelt invitation to Khartous's greatest minds to join him for lively discussions on any topic, though he steers clear of man's role in the world. He also offers Chass' treasures to the families of the lionweres' victims as well as those slain by Nawalapuura. If the PCs or another party restores Savvith to life, the haughty sphinx becomes a driveling mass of gratitude and happiness.

The moral ambiguities surrounding Game Over also leaves their ultimate fate in the balance as well, if they survived the adventure. Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki remain popular figures in Ramaashta despite their complicity in Ammar's efforts to kill the caravan survivors in cold blood to maintain the group's lofty reputation. Like Chasshagra, they too can atone for their mistakes, though the villagers are unwilling to forgive Ammar and his willing henchman, Gabriel. The PCs must determine whether they face conventional justice or frontier justice.

On the other hand, there are no ethical questions surrounding what to do with Nawalapuura if the PCs did not destroy the bog mummy and her growing legion of minions before setting off for Chass. Upon returning to Ramaashta, Aramses and Sholamara approach the PCs to enlist their aid in defeating the undead monstrosity before the entire village becomes infected with her vile disease.

As a result of their actions, the PCs' reputation in Khartous only increases. If the Abaya or the Sultan were not aware of these heroes, they now take a keen interest in their exploits. In fact, Sultan Faud turns to the PCs in the future for their assistance in defeating Eyegougur, the blue dragon, in the sourcebook's next adventure "My Blue Oasis."

The adventure ends with one enduring mystery — who built Chass and why. Even its resident sphinx does not know the answer to that question, but the PCs may uncover the answer in the next adventure.

My Blue Oasis

It is far better to rule one oasis than lord over a continent of endless sand. At least that is what a popular proverb says, but what if one could turn that same barren wasteland into a blue paradise? In the desert, water is worth its weight in gold, especially in the eyes of the environment's most rapacious creature and a wizard obsessed with unlocking the secret of transforming a tiny crystalline rock into a lush desert spring.

My Blue Oasis is a 12th-level adventure that takes the participants across the desert's burning sands and into the depths of the earth beneath the Oasis of Al-Marak in search of the last remaining fragment from a cosmic impact in the very distant past. Hidden within this minute bit of space debris is a monumental discovery capable of replanting the seeds of life in a desolate landscape or sowing devastation on a mass scale. The birth of new civilizations or the demise of existing ones depends upon who uncovers the find first — the heroes, a greedy beast, or a man consumed by his own obsession.

Adventure Background

The land itself never forgets. Time may bury or conceal its wounds, but they never truly heal. The injuries left behind from primordial impacts fade over the ages, though some residual scars always remain for those who know where to look. Ages ago, a race of subterranean fey creatures excelled at finding these gouge marks. These intrepid explorers scoured the ravaged planetary surfaces and the depths of the earth searching for the remnants of these extraterrestrial collisions. Their expertise yielded astounding finds, unearthing precious minerals and metals with alien properties and newfangled uses. Yet, some things buried deep below the ground are not meant to be discovered, and the consequences for those that do can forever alter the destiny of an individual — and an entire race.

Origins of Chass

One day while traveling across a remote stretch of desert, a large group of fey colonists stumbled upon a massive, freshwater lake that defied all rational explanation. The strange anomaly puzzled them. They sought an explanation, so some of their party delved into the earth in search of an answer, while the remainder built a settlement atop a scenic plateau overlooking the lake. Four months into the expedition, a lone explorer spelunking in the depths below the lake encountered an eerie pulsating blue light. He followed the mysterious luminescence into a vast cavern where he discovered its source, a tiny shard of blue crystal no larger than a small pebble. He marveled at the breathtaking mineral, yet he noticed that he and the world around him began to change. Time ebbed and flowed for no apparent reason. His body steadily withered in its presence. Alarmed by these strange events, he fled the cavern and returned to the surface; however upon arriving at the settlement, he found that the warm rays of the sun seared his skin. Frightened by this new development, he sought an explanation from his people's most powerful sorcerer, Thozzaggard.

For his part, the power hungry Thozzaggard saw a perfect opportunity to take advantage of this situation for his betterment. Though his kin were brilliant in many regards, they were also highly superstitious and fascinated with omens. Thozzaggard boldly proclaimed that the discovery was in fact a "god particle," a small chip of divine essence that would only reveal its origins and secrets to a powerful practitioner of arcane magic. Mesmerizing them by his rousing tale, the charismatic Thozzaggard then led his spellbound followers into the bowels of the earth to pay homage to their newfound deity and its exalted high priest. When they arrived

in the cavern, his brethren fell to their knees and worshipped the minute crystal emitting fluctuating blue light, while it simultaneously tore away the fabric of time and space. Their elation soon turned to terror, as their bodies and then their minds atrophied in the midst of the "god particle." The development even frightened the ambitious Thozzaggard who inexplicably resisted its detrimental effects better than his rapidly withering kin. In an act of desperation, the resourceful sorcerer called upon his mystical powers to utterly disintegrate what would have been the cornerstone of his new faith. Thozzaggard reduced the crystal into fine dust, but the damage was already done. The race that slowly rose to its feet was forever scarred by their encounter with the "god particle." Insanity ravaged their beleaguered minds, while their very skin ached from even the slightest contact with sunlight. Consumed by their madness, they abandoned the settlement to spread their affliction to their descendants. Within the span of several generations, Thozzaggard's disillusioned followers corrupted their entire race giving birth to the derro.

Despite his close call with irreparable insanity, the moderately deranged Thozzaggard became obsessed with unraveling the secret of the "god particle." As he wandered the lonely depths beneath the earth, he encountered a small enclave of his kin beneath another large oasis. Within their complex, he recognized the telltale flashes of blue light as the unmistakable presence of his elusive crystal; however unlike his previous followers, these fey greatly feared the strange mineral. They encased it within a prison sealed by heavy, metallic alloy portals that kept its harmful emanations tucked safely behind closed doors. Despite his impassioned pleas and relentless cajoling, his kin refused to open the reinforced doors. Undeterred, Thozzaggard used his magic to transport himself into the cavern behind the door. This time, the wily sorcerer would not escape the god particle's grasp. Madness overcame him shortly before the alien substance sucked the last vestiges of life from him and hurled his ravaged soul into the void beyond reality. What later rose where his corpse now lay was an undead monstrosity that longed to spread its curse to every living creature. It hurtled his massive body against the alloy doors, allowing some of the god particle's emanations to escape. Before his fey brethren completely succumbed to insanity, they reinforced the alloy doors with a stone and mortar wall that would seal the ungodly abomination behind it forever. In the shadow of Thozzaggard's folly, the derros endured in their subterranean hell for countless millennia to come, ruining the fateful day when a mad sorcerer ruined their race forever.

Obsession Reborn

Unlike Thozzaggard's kin, terrestrial anomalies are nothing more than a source of wonderment and curiosity for most men, but for one man, they consumed his thoughts since childhood. From an early age, Ahmad Pachwari knew he was destined to do something extraordinary. The child prodigy excelled in all his studies, though he took a particularly keen interest in the earth sciences, particularly geology. His enthusiasm for the subject was so great that at the age of thirteen, he set out into the forbidding Maighib Desert in search of a renowned shaitan pasha named Agateye. Using his extensive knowledge of geology, the intrepid teenager discovered previously unknown water sources as he scoured the dunes and gravel looking for the most likely entrance to the noble genie's underground kingdom. After three weeks of searching, the youngster's ingenuity and sharp mind were rewarded. In the depths beneath an unusual rock formation, Ahmad met his newfound tutor for the first time.

The precocious Ahmad spent the next three months in the company of his immortal host, watching and listening as the noble genie explained the wonders of his vast, subterranean realm. He cataloged countless new varieties of gems, metals and stones, but one legendary mineral fascinated him. Agateye referred to the substance as warilium. Even though the noble shaitan doubted its very existence, he told the wide-eyed pupil the legend

about the mysterious cosmic stone. The story told that the incredibly dense material fell from the skies during the world's infancy and imbedded itself deep beneath the surface. These tiny warilium fragments are no larger than a small crystal and weigh less than a pound, yet each allegedly contains enough water to fill a small lake. Throughout the ages, numerous races and beings scoured countless worlds and planes in a futile search for the elusive substance they dubbed "watery stars" or less commonly known as "god particles." The lack of success led the overwhelming majority to eventually abandon the quest; however a few stalwarts persisted in the face of consistent failure and growing ridicule. Over time, the hunt for watery stars escaped the bonds of reality and became a full-blown myth. Scientific hypotheses gave way to esoteric folklore and fanciful tales. The search for watery stars was no longer a topic for discussion in recognized intellectual circles. Instead, scholars relegated warilium to the stuff of children's stories and old wives' tales.

Agateye's tutelage changed Ahmad forever. After he returned from his desert journey, his interest in watery stars steadily grew. His part-time hobby and diversion soon bordered on obsession. His other learned pursuits fell by the wayside as Khartous's brightest scholar focused all of his energy, efforts and mind towards finding the obscure object of his desire. The young genius disassociated himself from the world of academia and immersed himself in pseudoscience and the occult in his mission to solve the age-old mystery of the watery stars. He chased every conceivable lead, meeting with shady and malevolent outsiders, arcane charlatans and false prophets in the faint hope of discovering even the slightest trace of evidence to support the fable's existence. His efforts appeared to be in vain until one day when reality intervened.

Nothing moves faster through the desert than gossip followed shortly thereafter by half-truths, sandstorms and real news. The strange details about the remote structure of Chass reached his attentive ears and piqued his curiosity. (See **Chapter 11** for details regarding Chass.) Down to his last few coins, the reclusive genius gambled his remaining fortunes on a mysterious building in a remote corner of the Maighib Desert. Within moments of arriving, Ahmad knew that his fate was about to change for the better.

Despite spending much of his young adulthood dabbling in quackery, Ahmad was still one of the brightest minds of his age. As soon as he surveyed the landscape around Chass, he realized something that no one else could. He recognized that Chass once stood atop a plateau in the middle of a vast, ancient lake — a body of water that should not have existed and could only be explained by the presence of warilium. Ahmad surmised that Chass' unknown architects also reached the same conclusion and thoroughly mined the area before abandoning the site eons ago leaving the lake to slowly evaporate into the much smaller oases that now exist. Though Ahmad was convinced about warilium's existence, others would not follow suit without being able to touch or at least glimpse at a sliver or chip of the legendary mineral. Ahmad pondered the dilemma for several hours and then proposed a bold hypothesis. What if warilium were responsible for creating Khartous's largest source of water — the Oasis of Al-Marak? Unlike Chass, there were no permanent fixtures to suggest that someone else had mined the area before, so if the watery stars were responsible for creating the massive freshwater spring, it is likely that they are still there. Ahmad had the inspiration and the idea, but no resources and only a handful of coins. Still, he had a hunch about who could solve the latter problem for him.

Though he had distanced himself from his intellectual peers more than a decade earlier, the memories of the boy genius were still strong enough to grant him an audience with the one man in Khartous that could fulfill his childhood dream — Sultan Faud. Ahmad previously met the kingdom's ruler on several occasions during his youth; however Faud was a prince at the time. In a heartfelt plea, the animated man presented his case to his old acquaintance, claiming that a few chips or slivers of watery stars would meet the city's future water needs and those of the entire kingdom for millennia to come. Ahmad's proposal intrigued the Sultan. He deliberated the idea for several days. He sought additional counsel from his advisors and based upon their insight and his own gut instinct, Faud declined to fund the massive undertaking citing the enormous costs and the likely prospect that the massive operation would turn up nothing. The disappointed Ahmad politely accepted Sultan Faud's decision, yet he remained determined to find another way to make his vision a reality.

Ahmad refused to let the Sultan's decision halt his ambitious project. Over the course of the next several weeks, the resolute wizard pitched his idea to many of Khartous's wealthiest citizens, yet like the kingdom's ruler, they also balked at the hefty price tag and the precipitous risk of failure. Disheartened but not defeated, the bitter Ahmad left the capital city determined to fulfill his boyhood dream regardless of how he did it. However, before he departed, he posited a theory. He traded a magical ring to another wizard in exchange for a scroll containing two spells beyond his ability to cast himself — *disintegrate* and *reverse gravity*. Ahmad's scientific mind deduced that the only way to unlock the watery star's full potential would be to reduce it to its basest components and then unravel the primal bonds holding the matter together.

Ahmad had the brains, the tools and an ingenious theory; all he lacked was the manpower. Undeterred, Ahmad set out from Khartous to survey his intended target and possibly sway some desert travelers or even its monstrous denizens to his cause. The seasoned desert traveler blazed his own trail across the trackless dunes, hoping to run across more like-minded individualists and pioneers along the way. More than halfway through his journey, the swirling winds on the horizon kicked up an angry funnel of blistering sand. He immediately recognized the telltale beginnings of an intense sandstorm, so he fled towards a large cavernous opening carved into the face of an odd rock formation. Before he reached his intended shelter, the earth beneath his feet gave way and much to his surprise and horror he plummeted 50 feet into a subterranean chamber. When the startled Ahmad looked up at his new surroundings, the terrified young man soon discovered that he was not alone.

Dragon Hoard

A steaming blast of hot air charged with static electricity tingled across his entire body as a huge blue dragon stared menacingly at the proverbial fly caught in the spider's web. Ahmad landed in the lair of Eyegouger, an avaricious, intelligent mature adult blue dragon with a penchant for grandiosity. The arrogant reptile sized up his stunned prey and dismissed the ragged, young man as no threat. But before the dragon could utter a word, Ahmad regained his senses and in a daring move began pitching his bold plan to his captor. The epic scale of the proposal instantly grabbed Eyegouger's attention. With every passing moment, Ahmad strengthened his grip over the seemingly spellbound dragon. Visions of unfathomable riches frolicked in his greedy mind. Ten minutes later, Ahmad had accomplished the impossible. He sold his idea to the desert's most feared resident — an evil blue dragon.

After concealing the entrance to his lair and securing his immense treasure hoard for the journey across the desert, the pair headed off to the Oasis of Al-Marak to begin their search for the legendary watery stars. Still titillated by the prospect of acquiring instant wealth, Eyegouger flung his immense body headfirst into the sand around the oasis and burrowed beneath the ground. Much to Eyegouger's chagrin, laying claim to Ahmad's promised treasure would not be easy or quick. Over the course of the next few days, the antsy blue dragon recruited more of the desert's denizens to the great undertaking. As more evil monsters and mindless brutes trickled into the area to perform Eyegouger's bidding, Ahmad realized that he made a bargain with the proverbial devil. He watched with dismay as his lifelong ambition became the grand design of a sinister creature bent on exploiting what could potentially be mankind's greatest discovery since fire for his own wicked purpose. At that moment, he understood that genius is no match for obsession.

As the digging progressed and Eyegouger's legions of followers swelled around the oasis, the caravans and travelers that normally frequent the vital watering hole found the location closed for business. The few brave souls that dared to defy the covetous blue dragon and attempted to drink from the refreshing waters met a grisly and electrifying end at the claws and flaring nostrils of the oasis' new resident caretaker. Under Eyegouger's direction, the oasis was off-limits to all humanoid traffic, as he and his minions delved deep below the surface in search of Ahmad's fabled watery stars.

Under pressure from his generals, ministers and merchants alike, Sultan Faud must take action to wrest control of the critical water supply from the scaly nemesis that hoards it. Though a military operation is a possible

DUNES OF DESOLATION

option, the logistics of securing provisions for a full scale assault requires time and resources that the kingdom does not have. In addition, Eyegouger and his allies are certain to inflict mass casualties to a large army with devastating aerial attacks and searing bolts of lightning capable of felling an entire column of men in seconds. After much consideration, the Sultan believes that a small group of highly skilled adventurers is much better suited to deal with Eyegouger than a larger force of ordinary soldiers. Meanwhile, as Faud moves to respond to the crisis, the brilliant Ahmad rues the day he made a foolish deal with his untrustworthy partner. He secretly wishes that he was terribly wrong about the existence of watery stars; otherwise Eyegouger is sure to use the mineral to advance his own interests regardless of the consequences. As they follow in the ancient footsteps of the mad Thozzaggard, Ahmad fears that the object of his lifelong desire lies perilously close to the eager dragon's clutches and certain ruination unless someone more powerful than he stops him.

Adventure Synopsis

Regrets sometimes endure for an eternity, and Ahmad's dilemma personifies this adage to a tee. Though he spent his entire life searching for the fabled watery stars, his current predicament leaves him, and the whole kingdom, wishing he never thought of them. The gifted man appealed to a dragon's avarice and soon learned that its greed knows no bounds. Now, the Sultan or one of several other concerned parties contact the PCs to undo Ahmad's terrible mistake and permanently evict the Oasis of Al-Marak's new, unwanted resident. The PCs soon discover that the normally safe road to the watery paradise is overrun by Eyegouger's loyal and wicked minions making the arduous trek across the Maighib Desert all the more difficult.

After dispatching of the dragon's cohorts and the native denizens, the PCs complete the long, harrowing journey across the windswept dunes and arrive at the Oasis of Al-Marak or at least what remains of it. The malevolent Eyegouger and his servants have transformed the lush, vibrant spring into a mammoth excavation site. Guarded by two desert drakes and a pair of brutish desert trolls, the PCs must defeat or somehow circumvent these sentinels and descend into the boreholes carved into the earth. From there, the PCs must navigate their way through the treacherous subterranean tunnels in pursuit of the blue dragon and the eldritch watery stars. As they descend further below the surface, the PCs contend with the monstrous creatures that constructed this labyrinth of passages and chambers before entering the realm of Thozzaggard's demented descendants.

In addition to contending with the derros inhabiting this underground complex, strange anomalies also plague the area, suggesting that someone or something is altering the very laws of nature themselves. The watery star's powerful gravitational pull and simultaneous coexistence in another dimension warps the boundaries of time and space. The passage of time randomly slows in some areas and accelerates in others. Eerie momentary bursts of bright, blue light suddenly irradiate the underground passages and chamber, temporarily blinding anyone who fails to turn away from the intense flash. After overcoming these obstacles, the PCs finally come face to face with the brawn and the regretful brains behind this ambitious scheme.

The derros' network of chambers and passageways culminate before ominous, reinforced metallic doors at the far end of a massive chamber that Eyegouger recently unearthed behind a hastily constructed stone wall. Though the ancient portal appears to have stood for millennia, a loud pummeling sound emanating from the other side causes it to violently shudder with each successive strike. There, the PCs encounter the apprehensive Eyegouger and his rueful partner Ahmad, as they watch the primordial door helplessly teeter from the constant bashing. Despite his preoccupation, the dragon's insatiable greed drives Eyegouger to immediately attack the PCs to defend his prized treasure from the newcomers. Meanwhile, the conflicted Ahmad stares wide-eyed at the portal. Throughout the struggle, the bonds of reality fluctuate with greater regularity and intensity, affecting both the PCs and their reptilian adversary.

Several minutes later, the battered doorway eventually yields, and a monstrous devourer bursts into the chamber attacking anything in its path. Countless millennia ago, Thozzaggard also found the watery star;

however he succumbed to its power and became an undead abomination. Now that its former guardian is out of the way, the PCs are free to step foot in an immense, cavern of indeterminate age containing nothing other than a pulsating crystal, Thozzaggard's journal and his worldly possessions. Relieved of his trepidations, the watery star's mystical allure once again captivates the awestruck Ahmad; however the PCs realize that the watery star poses a tremendous danger to all living things. They must convince the obsessed wizard to abandon his lifelong quest or he attempts to fulfill the elusive dream that consumed him for most of his adolescence and adulthood. After resolving this crisis, the PCs face their final and most critical dilemma — what to do with a tiny crystal that is simultaneously capable of improving countless lives or destroying them in an instant. Ultimately, the PCs' decision determines many fates including their own.

Starting the Adventure

The events taking place at the Oasis of Al-Marak trouble many concerned parties, including the kingdom's absolute ruler, Sultan Faud. Ideally, the PCs begin the adventure in the city of Khartous or its nearby environs; however the GM is free to incorporate his own setting into the adventure provided that the locale includes desert terrain and a distant oasis. While there, a prospective employer contacts them to resolve the situation at the Oasis of Al-Marak. Because Ahmad presented his proposal to multiple persons throughout the city, everyone involved in the matter is fairly certain that the current events at the important location are somehow associated with his grand plan to excavate the mysterious watery stars from the depths below its refreshing waters. However, details about what is actually transpiring at the watering hole are sketchy at best. Witnesses claim that monstrous beasts constantly circle the skies around the area, while foul creatures patrol the nearby road. A few daring souls attempted to get a closer look, though none were even seen or heard from again. Though Khartous's business interests are primarily worried about regaining accessibility to the vital water supply for their overland caravans, the Sultan is especially fearful of the potentially dire consequences if the watery stars fell into the wrong hands. All involved parties express skepticism about their actual existence, yet the mere possibility that they could be used for nefarious purposes is enough to frighten even the most jaded cynic.

Adventure Hooks

If the PCs already performed services for the Sultan in a previous adventure, he dispatches his most trusted lieutenants to summon them for a private audience. Likewise, merchant interests that worked with the PCs in the past directly contact them for their assistance in this important matter. Alternatively, Jamaal Dakkar, a renowned scholar and secret member of the Church of Hafaz, solicits the PCs to recover Ahmad's watery stars. In addition to the adventure hooks presented here, the GM is free to create another adventure hook tailored specifically for the group's PCs.

Political Crisis

Usman Al-Naddar (NG male human fighter 5; Str 17; Intimidate +8), one of Sultan Faud's most trusted and loyal subordinates approaches the PCs with an urgent request that they meet with the monarch to discuss a vital matter. From the outset of the meeting, it is readily apparent that the current situation weighs heavily on his fretful mind. He explains to the PCs that several weeks ago, Ahmad Pachwari presented him with an ambitious proposal to excavate the Oasis of Al-Marak in search of a legendary rare mineral he referred to as a watery star. Faud declined his request citing his skepticism about the material's existence as well as the immense costs that would be incurred financing such an undertaking. According to Ahmad's account, the mysterious substance weighed no more than a small stone, but contained enough water to fill a small lake under the proper conditions. He expresses to the PCs that the discovery of such an item could be an incredible boon for his people, but in the wrong hands, it could be used as a devastating weapon to flood an entire metropolis. The Sultan is certain that Ahmad began the excavation, though he has no knowledge of who is

supporting him in the endeavor. Faud offers the PCs 10,000 gp to free the Oasis of Al-Marak from its occupiers' grip and prevent the watery stars, if they do exist, from falling into the wrong hands.

Fell by the Way Station

Taliya Maakhana (LN female human expert 8; Cha 17; Profession [merchant] +14) and **Mehmet Asikkurra** (N male human aristocrat 7; Int 16; Profession [merchant] +12) seek out the PCs and offer them a business proposition. The pair controls the vital trade routes from Khartous to the distant settlements of Qiram and Olappo, so their caravans depend upon the oasis to supply them with water for the long journey across the Maighib Desert. Taliya is aware of Ahmad's possible involvement in this affair based upon his proposal to her just a few weeks earlier. Though Ahmad impressed her with his enthusiasm and intellect, she believed the risks greatly exceeded the rewards. Taliya and Mehmet expect two of their caravans returning from Qiram and Olappo to pass through the area over the next several days. Because their caravan leaders are unaware of these recent developments, they are greatly concerned for the safety of their personnel and their goods. In exchange for their assistance, Taliya and Mehmet each offer a payment of 5,000 gp to rid the oasis of its unwanted intruders and secure the critical junction for the foreseeable future.

Esoteric Research

Jamaal Dakkar (N male human expert 5/wizard 4; Int 19; Knowledge [arcana] +15), one of Khartous's most renowned scholars and secret member of the Church of Hafaz, approaches the PCs regarding recent events at the Oasis of Al-Marak. Unlike the PCs' other prospective employers, Jamaal is far more interested in recovering the watery stars, rather than expelling the oasis' current occupiers. The somewhat scatter-brained intellectual has his doubts about their existence, but the prestige associated with such an important find is too great to let the opportunity slip through his fingers. Though he never directly met with Ahmad, several parties that attended one of Ahmad's presentations approached him for his insight and advice. Jamaal's only request is that the PCs prove or disprove the watery star's existence. Of course, by proof he means for the PCs to actually bring him the watery stars. He presumes that in doing so, the PCs would have to deal with the oasis' current occupants, but he never specifically says anything about it unless directly asked. Jamaal offers the PCs an extremely rare golden idol of a winged woman valued at 8,500 gp.

Rumors

Learning additional information about Ahmad himself, the watery stars or the current troubles at the Oasis of Al-Marak is extremely difficult. Few people have ever heard of watery stars, let alone know anything about them. Similarly, the reclusive Ahmad spent much of his adulthood in solitary study. The PCs may attempt Diplomacy and Knowledge (local) checks to gather information about Ahmad and the Oasis of Al-Marak while in Khartous and its immediate vicinity. Details about the watery stars are so difficult to come by that the PC can only acquire that information with a successful Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. Alternatively a successful Knowledge or Profession check in an appropriate science, such as geology or astronomy also reveals useful insight about the celestial bodies. In addition, PCs with access to specialized knowledge, such as a member of the Church of Hafaz, may also learn about the watery stars from a reliable source with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at the current DC have already been heard.

DC 20

- Ahmad was a child prodigy excelling in the earth sciences. In his early teens, Ahmad devoted himself to pursuing his studies in pseudoscience and the occult. His peers no longer took him seriously, and he fell out of favor with established academia. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check.
- Monsters overran the road from Khartous to the Oasis of Al-Marak.

They even say that massive flying beasts circle overhead, attacking any travelers that attempt to approach the watering hole. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check.

- During his adolescent years, Ahmad ventured into the Maighib Desert and studied under the tutelage of a genie who first told him about the watery stars. After his return, the studious young man changed dramatically and became a recluse. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check.
- Ahmad made a bargain with a powerful devil. The foul denizens of Hell toil under his oppressive whip, digging day and night around the oasis in search of his fabled watery stars. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. (This is a false rumor.)
- Ahmad fell under the influence of a mysterious woman during his time in the desert. Some say that she is a demon. Others believe she is a hag, while a few are convinced that she is a sorcerer from the depths of the earth. She has been the guiding hand in all his actions over the past decade including his current undertaking at the Oasis of Al-Marak. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check. (This is a false rumor.)

DC 30

- The so-called watery stars are primordial meteors with mystical and unusual scientific properties. Though they are small and virtually weightless, they are said to hold enough water to fill a small lake under the right circumstances. No one knows for certain how to unlock their stores of water, but it is believed that casting several arcane spells in the proper sequence alters their chemistry enough to release the stored reservoir. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check.
- After Ahmad learned about the mysterious events at Chass, he traveled to the remote outpost and became convinced that watery stars created the numerous desert springs surrounding the unusual structure. He also asserted that Chass' builders also came to the same conclusion and mined the area for any watery stars. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) check.
- A subterranean, alien race worships the watery stars in their bizarre temple deep beneath the surface. The odd chemistry of the legendary mineral warps their minds and bends space and time in ways previously unimaginable. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. (This rumor is mostly true except for the part about the derros worshipping the watery star.)
- Watery stars are the last living remnants of Ellashah and Rema. Powerful magic cast upon these stones could restore the creators back to life. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Diplomacy, Knowledge (local) check or Knowledge (religion) check. (This is a false rumor.)

DC 40

- If they do exist, watery stars must simultaneously coexist on this plane of existence and another dimension. Despite their small size, the gravitational pull from the object must be so great that it alters the fabric of time and space. It would be impossible to actually touch the object or even spend more than a brief period of time around it without feeling any undo effect from the mineral. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (planes) check.

Part One: Long Days' Journey

After gathering background information in Khartous or another suitable locale, all roads point to the Oasis of Al-Marak as the PCs' next destination. The oasis lies roughly 70 miles east of Khartous; therefore it likely takes the PCs several days to reach their goal. The PCs must decide whether to travel via the established trade route from Khartous to the Oasis of Al-Marak or blaze their own trail across the trackless dunes to reach their intended destination. (See **Chapter 2** for information about desert travel.) Each option presents its own benefits and pitfalls.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Obviously, travel across the established road is faster and more direct; however Eyegouger's minions pay closer attention to the thoroughfare than the desert expanses. On the other hand, the uncharted trail across the burning sands is slower and more populated by monstrous denizens that Khartous's soldiers and merchants usually beat back away from the vital trade route. The PCs may avoid some of these dangers if they have the ability to fly for long distances, though it may also prevent them from gathering important clues if they omit all of the overland encounters in their entirety. In addition, several of Eyegouger's minions may also take to the skies to slay any perceived intruders. Regardless of the chosen route or method of transportation, foul beasts and sinister beings block the way to the Oasis of Al-Mararak.

Encounters

As the PCs make their way to the Oasis of Al-Mararak there are eight possible encounters along the journey. A few of them are set encounters that occur at fixed locations in the desert, while the remainder may take place anywhere in the desert. (These encounters do not include those that the PCs may face in and around the oasis itself.) The set encounters are addressed first followed by the random ones. These encounters are denoted as S1, S2 and S3 on the accompanying map of the Maighib Desert. The GM is free to use the Appendix to generate more random encounters or create additional ones of his own design to further challenge the PCs.

S1: Troll Collectors (CR 10)

Like nearly all desert kingdoms, Khartous operates toll collection booths at strategic locations along its major trade routes. In this particular case, the tariff station lies at the base of a steep canyon surrounded by high, windswept dunes. These conditions persist in a 6 to 12 mile radius around the toll collection site. Creatures traveling along the road may attempt to circumvent the area by going around it; however the deep dunes of loose sand and sharp elevation changes make it virtually impossible to navigate a vehicle through the area. Anyone passing through this inhospitable terrain must succeed on DC 5 Climb check to move through the dunes which are also treated as difficult terrain. (The Maighib Desert's airborne predators are also aware of the hazards of moving through this region and typically circle overhead searching for prey attempting to pass across this treacherous landscape.)

If the PCs remain on the road, they come across the remnants of the toll collection station that Eyegouger destroyed shortly after arriving in the area. When they come within visual range of the scene, they can easily make out the remains of a crude, wooden building that has been reduced to splinters and displaced stones as well as the severely charred and desiccated corpses of its presumed former occupants. The stench of burnt flesh and wood is so strong, that the PCs can detect it from 400 feet away with a successful DC 10 Perception check.

Eyegouger left **2 desert trolls** to man the critical juncture in the road. The mated pair of ignorant giants immediately attacks anything that crosses their path. The monstrous brutes fight to the death, as the clever dragon posted them here to constantly remind them of the fate that awaits those that dare to stand in his way. If they are forced to surrender or are temporarily incapacitated, the desert trolls have no information of any consequence other than Eyegouger's responsibility for destroying the toll collection booth.

DESERT TROLL (2)
XP 4,800
hp 85 (Chapter 6)

CR 8

Development: In the aftermath of their encounter with the desert trolls, PCs may investigate the surrounding area and the dead bodies to gather clues about the prior attack. The obvious scorch marks on the collection site's stone foundations and the charred condition of the structure's wooden components and the corpses are all telltale signs that intense heat destroyed these objects and burned the defenders' flesh. These facts indicate that the desert trolls are not responsible for the carnage. PCs that

examine the dead bodies learn that an extremely intense and focused blast of heat burned through their flesh with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check. With that information in hand, a successful DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) check points to an electrical attack as the injuries' likeliest cause.

Treasure: The desert trolls have no treasure of their own; however a singed, iron chest buried beneath fallen timbers in the adjacent structure still contains the toll proceeds collected during the week preceding the attack. A PC can spot the concealed chest with a successful DC 16 Perception check. Though heavily damaged by the subsequent fire and the impact of crashing beams, the chest is still securely locked. There are 396 gp inside the chest. Technically, the money still belongs to the Sultan, so taking it may create some future complications

Iron Chest: 1 in. thick; hardness 10; 30 hp; Break DC 30; Disable Device DC 23.

S2: Giant Trouble (CR 10)

Desert giants are one of the landscape's apex predators. These massive humanoids roam across the desolate sands traveling from one oasis to another in search of food and water. Though they lead a nomadic lifestyle, they still lay claim to vast swaths of territory that they deem their own. In this particular instance, the desert giant Fazzellon called the stretch of desert west of the Oasis of Al-Mararak as his domain. That is until Eyegouger arrived on the scene. Fazzellon fought valiantly against the reptilian intruder, but in the end the potent dragon proved to be too much. Fazzellon ceded his land to Eyegouger in life; however he is unwilling to relinquish his claim so easily. His burning desire to rule over his fiefdom fueled his transformation into something unnatural.

After his destruction at Eyegouger's claws, Fazzellon rose from death as a **juju zombie desert giant**. As in life, Fazzellon fends off all intruders, roaming a 1-mile radius around his battered and broken yurt. Relieved of the burdens of finding food, water or rest, Fazzellon completes an endless circle around his former camp in a desperate effort to keep all intruders off his land. The incredibly powerful giant charges any creature it perceives as threat, which in most cases is anything larger than a small rodent. It attacks with his grand scimitars, hacking and slashing its opponents into a bloody stump of gashes and lacerations. Fazzellon says nothing other than mumbling under his breath about trespassers, thieves and interlopers.

PCs moving through the 1-mile area around Fazzellon's yurt may find the undead monster's tracks with a successful DC 9 Perception or Survival check. (Prevailing weather conditions may further alter the chances of finding tracks. In his undead state, Fazzellon wants creatures to be aware of his presence.) PCs may follow the tracks back to the desert giant's yurt where he kept a large sack buried in the sands nearby his busted tent.

JUJU ZOMBIE DESERT GIANT

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male juju zombie desert giant (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3* "Giant, Desert;" *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2* "Zombie, Juju")

LE Large undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +9

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 71 (13d8 plus 13)

Fort +4, **Ref** +12, **Will** +5

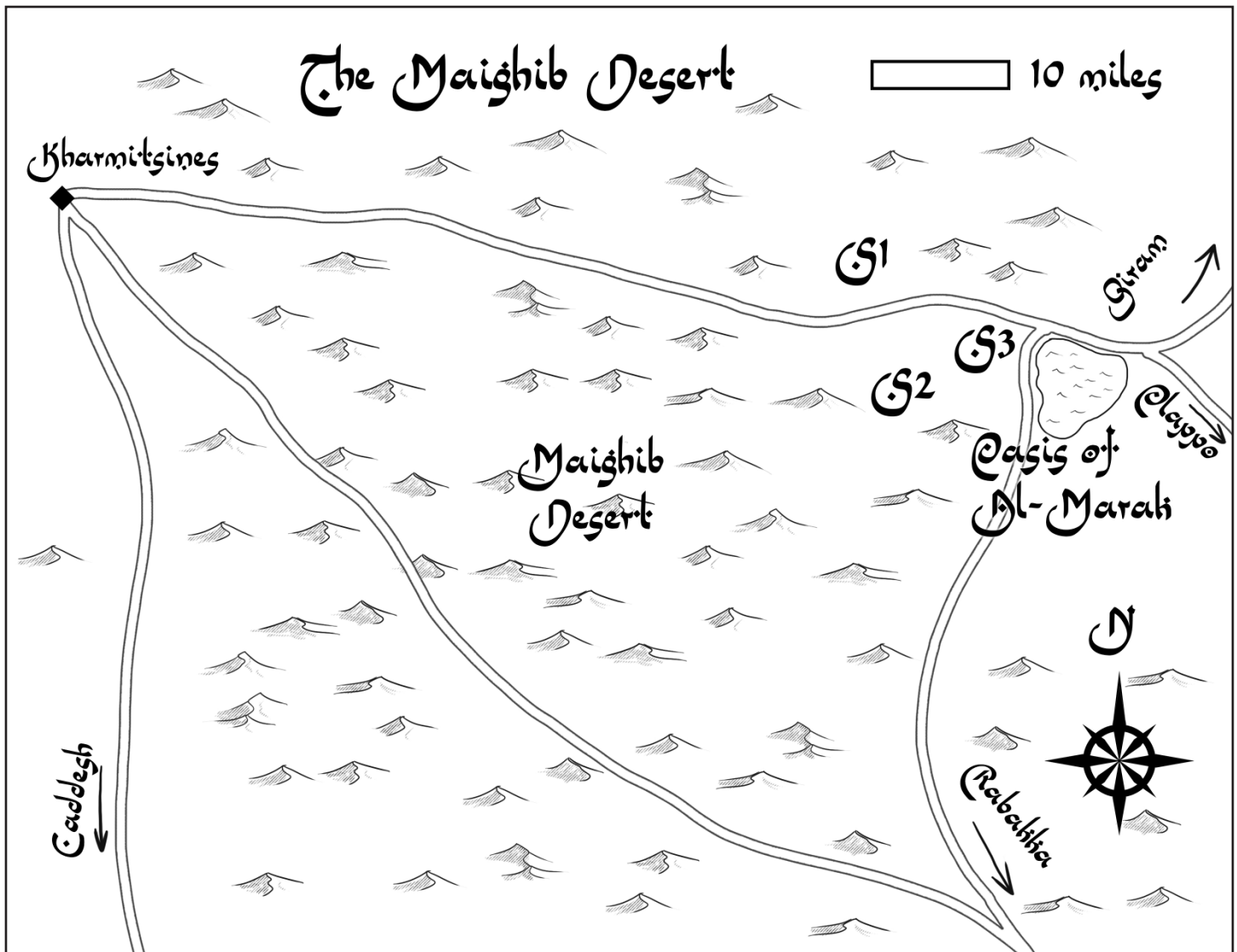
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, rock catching; **DR** 10/magic and slashing; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, magic missile, undead traits

Speed 50 ft.

Melee mwk scimitars +18/+18/+13/+13 (1d8+10/15-20) or slam +18 (1d8+15)

Ranged rock +13 (1d8+10)

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



Special Attacks rock throwing (100 ft.), scimitar training

Str 30, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 35 (39 vs. disarm and sunder)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative^B, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Toughness^B, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+25 when jumping), Climb +18, Intimidate +11, Perception +9, Survival +17, Stealth +5 (+17 sandy terrain); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb

Languages Common, Giant

SQ sandwalking

Gear 2 masterwork scimitars, leather armor

Sandwalking (Ex) A desert giant travels at full speed across sand, rocky ground, or dust, and leave no trail behind unless it chooses to.

Scimitar Training (Ex) All desert giants are proficient with scimitars, and can wield them as if they were light weapons. A desert giant adds its full Strength bonus to attacks made with a scimitar wielded in its off hand, and gains a +4 bonus to CMD versus disarm and sunder attempts when fighting with a scimitar in each hand.

Treasure: A PC may locate the desert giant's sack of treasure beneath 3 feet of sand with a successful DC 22 Perception check. The sack contains 1,059 gp, an elephant's tusk worth 500 gp and a cloak spun from dire camel fur worth 300 gp. If anyone examines Fazzellon's body, they notice

deep, circular singe marks akin to a narrowly focused beam of intense heat with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

S3: Soul Survivor (CR 4)

Four days ago, **Mustafa Kansha**, (LN male human fighter 5, Str 16, Knowledge [geography] +8), a freelance merchant and former caravan guard, made the fateful mistake of attempting to replenish his water supply at the Oasis of Al-Maraki. Unfortunately for his sake, one of the desert drakes hovering above the locale spotted him and attacked him. The seasoned veteran of many desert battles proved no match for the fierce dragon. Mustafa disappeared in a cloud of electrified dust waiting for the inevitable. Yet as luck would have it, (at least for Mustafa), another trespasser appeared on the scene. The oasis' guardian flew off in the direction of the new intruder leaving Mustafa for dead under a pile of sand and dust. That would have spelled the end for most, but the unconscious Mustafa stabilized and slowly recovered from his ordeal. After spending three days beneath a thin layer of sand, the staggered Mustafa dusted himself off, rose to his feet and started off in the direction of the nearby trade route and perceived safety. He did not get very far. After consuming his last drops of water from his flask, Mustafa collapsed atop the sands only a few miles away from his life-altering battle. As the life ebbs from him, several scavenger birds circle overhead and patiently wait for him to breathe his last.

Mustafa is not difficult to find or spot. PCs scanning the skies in the area notice the fowl flying above Mustafa with a successful DC 0 Perception check modified by the PCs' actual distance to Mustafa. In addition,

DUNES OF DESOLATION

Mustafa made no effort to cover his tracks; therefore PCs can spot his trail with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature), Perception or Survival check. Of course, PCs can follow his trail with a successful Survival check only.

Mustafa is currently staggered and hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness. He also has the exhausted condition, having been fatigued from taking nonlethal damage from thirst and then pushing himself to the absolute limit. The PCs must revive him by relieving his dehydration and healing his damage. A *cure light wounds* should be sufficient for him to regain consciousness, though he remains badly injured and exhausted. Mustafa is in no condition to fight nor does he look forward to another encounter with the desert drake that nearly killed him, but he can provide the PCs with some valuable information. He tells the PCs that he was en route from Khartous on his way to Olappo when he encountered the desert drake. He spotted two of the beasts soaring above the northern edge of the oasis near two recently excavated holes in the ground. The excavated sand forms two massive piles that are the equivalent of a 100-foot-tall pyramid. He saw no other activity other than the desert drakes.

Mustafa thanks the PCs for saving his life, but he is unable to offer them anything other than his gratitude.

Flying Lions (CR 10)

More so than any other type of creature, giant vermin thrive in the hot, dry climate of the world's deserts. These mindless beasts scour the sands in search of prey to satiate their voracious appetites. Several days ago, a small cloud of giant adult ant lions emerged from their cocoons and took to the skies looking for their first meal. Unfortunately for the PCs they would seem to be the first dish on their menu.

This encounter may take place at any time during the day either on open ground or in the vicinity of the road. As the PCs trudge across the sandy dunes, **4 giant adult ant lions** become visible on the horizon. The creatures fly low to the ground and in a ragged V-shaped formation. They lack any semblance of intelligence, so like their ordinary kin the huge, ravenous insects travel in a beeline to the closest target and attack with their savage bite. Hunger consumes every thought in their primitive brains, so the concept of retreat never crosses their limited minds. They attack until destroyed, or until they eat their fill, whichever comes first.

GIANT ADULT ANT LIONS (4)

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 85 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3* "Ant Lion, Giant Adult")

Guide Me To the Dunes (CR 10)

A long, hard trudge across the scalding desert is the furthest thing in the minds of most humanoids, but for a select few individuals the windswept dunes represent one of the world's last frontiers. These intrepid beings devoted themselves to a life of discovery and exploration in the harshest climate possible. Sadly, somewhere along the way, the very sands that they loved claimed their broken bodies as their own. However, their devotion to duty and their quest for knowledge were so strong, that they rose from their dusty graves and resumed their life's work albeit as members of the living dead. Despite their unnatural transformation, they are still guided by the same principles from their former existence. Though this encounter may ultimately result in a confrontation, combat can be easily avoided in most circumstances depending upon the PCs' actions. It may take place at any time of day at any location in the open desert.

For the last twelve years, the exploratory society known as the Brotherhood of the Desert has been crisscrossing its way across the Maighib Desert. For the better part of their first decade, they did so in their human form; however for the last few years, they have done so as undead wanderers. The group consists of **6 el-aurenses** that move across the barren terrain in their quest to discover and catalogue the wonders of the desert. When they first take notice of the PCs, the inquisitive trailblazers march towards the PCs. From a distance, it is difficult to tell that they are no longer human. The

creatures are unarmed and do not take any overtly hostile actions as they come closer. The el-aurens are driven by curiosity and want to learn what the PCs discovered in their travels. If the PCs attack the undead explorers, they attempt to disorient them and leave the area. The creatures only use their slam attacks against the PCs as a measure of last resort. Otherwise, the el-aurenses seek to strike up a dialogue with the PCs and may even offer their services to them under the right conditions.

EL-AURENS (6)

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 45 (See **Chapter 6**)

Development: Incredibly, death had no effect on these creatures' attitudes and outlook towards others. They are still haughty and aloof as they were in life and exude a grandiosity only seen among the noblest and wealthiest of Khartous's citizenry. Boran Ahombra acts as the troupe's leader and unofficial spokesman. He is very interested about what the PCs have seen along the way in the Maighib Desert. The el-aurenses are very detail oriented and ask numerous questions about the PCs travels. For their part, the el-aurenses are very familiar with this portion of the desert and are aware of what is transpiring at the Oasis of Al-Marak. They use phrases such as "an affront to common decency," "a bloody scandal," and "altogether ungentelemanly" to describe the current situation at the Oasis of Al-Marak. They confirm that large portions of the earth around the water's edge have been excavated, and that two monstrous serpents circle overhead in the area around the oasis. They do not know who initiated the activity around the watery hole or the reasons why.

Boran offers to guide the PCs to the oasis for a nominal fee equivalent to 5 gp worth of opals or turquoises. He refuses to accept any payment other than these gemstones. They become extremely indignant about any suggestions to fight on behalf of the PCs. The el-aurenses abhor violence and show disdain for any creatures that seem to relish it. In addition, Boran can lead the PCs to set encounters **J1** and **J2** in the Maighib Desert. If the PCs accept his offer to guide them to the oasis, he and his troupe bring them to the very edge of the oasis' visual range and then depart back into the open desert.

Heaven's Alive (CR 11)

The barren wastelands of the desert are the ideal location for performing vile rituals and bizarre experiments. Far from the prying eyes of the general populace, wicked practitioners of the dark arts can indulge their wildest fantasies without interference from meddlers and curiosity seekers. While trekking en route to the Oasis of Al-Marak, the PCs come face to face with two fearsome examples of what is possible when men subjugate ethics for raw power. This encounter can take place at any time of day either on the road or on the sand dunes.

Though all appears quiet in the desert, **2 mantidrakes**, a pair of abominable creations that are the malevolent offspring of a black dragon and manticore, soar in the heavens searching for their next victims. These monstrosities share common draconic heritage with Eyegouger, yet they are neither his prodigy nor involved in his activities at the oasis. The opportunistic predators scour the skies in search of their next meal. When it appears on the horizon, the creatures swoop down and unleash their terrifying breath weapon. They follow this attack with a volley of spikes or a whirlwind of razor sharp claws and teeth. The mantidrakes always remain slightly aloft during combat. From a distance, the creatures appear to be ordinary manticores; however after they close the distance between themselves and their intended target, their scaly, black draconic heads and wings remove all doubt as to the creature's true identity.

MANTIDRAKES (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400

The Tome of Horrors Complete 418

LE Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Perception +14

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1size)

MY BLUE OASIS

hp 94 (9d10+45)
Fort +11; **Ref** +8; **Will** +5
Immune acid, paralysis, sleep

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy)
Melee bite +15 (1d8+7), 2 claws +15 (1d8+7)
Ranged 6 spikes +11 (1d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Attacks breath weapon (60-foot line of acid, 5d8 damage, DC 19), spikes

Str 24, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13
Base Atk +9; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Survival), Weapon Focus (spikes)
Skills Fly –4, Intimidate +3, Perception +14, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception
Languages Common, Draconic

Breath Weapon (Su) A mantidrake's breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds, deals 5d8 points of damage, and allows a DC 19 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spikes (Ex) With a snap of its tail, a mantidrake can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in a single day.

Treasure: Tracking the mantidrakes back to their lair is extremely difficult as the creatures predominately fly across the desert thereby not leaving any discernible tracks. The mantidrakes' lair is built into the side of a rock face approximately 5 miles north-northwest of where the PCs encountered them. If the PCs locate the lair via magical means or sheer luck, the covetous creatures have 2,055 gp, 6,702 sp and 12 turquoise gems worth 500 gp (x2), 250 gp (x6) and 100 gp (x4) in a large pile in the corner of the chamber.

Release the Kraken (CR 8)

One of the dangers of straying from the tried-and-true paths through the desert is the chance of encountering strange beasts that take up permanent residence beneath the sands. This random encounter only occurs someplace in the untracked desert at any time during the day. As the PCs walk across the swirling dunes and gravelly soil, a carnivorous monstrosity lies in wait beneath the surface. A PC may notice the beast's wicked tentacles with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Likewise anyone with ranks in Knowledge (nature) or Survival may also use one of these skills to spot the creature at the same DC as the preceding check. Otherwise, the hapless victim falls into the clutches of the horror that waits below it.

Buried several feet underneath the ground is a **sand kraken**. The creature lashes out with its tentacles attacking any creature directly above it. The monster senses its prey using its tremorsense ability. The creature's main body sits beneath the surface; therefore damage dealt to its writhing tentacles does not reduce those of the creature itself. The only way to truly rid the desert of this vile filth is to dig up the sand and gravel around it and deal damage to the central body. The unintelligent predator has no treasure.

SAND KRAKEN
XP 4,800

The Tome of Horrors Complete 520
N Large magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21 (+0 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)
hp 100 (8d10+60)
Fort +12; **Ref** +6; **Will** +4

Speed 10 ft.

Melee 10 tentacles +13 (1d4+5 plus grab) or bite +8 (2d6+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with tentacle)
Special Attacks constrict (1d6+5)

Str 20, **Dex** 11, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 24 (can't be tripped)
Feats Improve Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)
Skills Perception +11
SQ camouflage

Camouflage (Ex) Because it remains buried until it attacks, it takes a successful DC 20 Perception check to detect the presence of a sand kraken before it attacks. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Perception to notice the sand kraken.

Tentacles (Ex) The only part of a sand kraken that is normally exposed is its tentacles. For combat purposes, the creature's tentacles are treated as separate weapons. A single tentacle has an AC 20 (touch 14) and 15 hit points. Once a tentacle takes more than 15 hit points of damage, it is destroyed. A sand kraken can no longer use the destroyed tentacle to make attacks, however the loss of a tentacle cause the creature no other penalties.

Furthermore, damage dealt to a tentacle does not count against the creature's total hit points. Lost tentacles regrow in 1d4 days.

Development: Though the sand kraken has not moved from this spot for quite some time, it did not accumulate any treasure over that time. Any efforts to search the area for valuables or cut the foul beast open in search of devoured items results in failure and a queasy stomach.

Your Cheitan Heart (CR 10)

Desert peoples are more familiar with genies than any other creature from another plane. These capricious outsiders played an important role in Khartous's creation myth, and they lorded over men for centuries from their stronghold of Iljanna. The relationship between man and genie is so pervasive in many realms that on occasion, the lustful beings take a human spouse or concubine that gives birth to their offspring. Eventually, these hateful creatures return to their human roots and dwell in the lands of their human ancestors, sowing misery and discord wherever they go. This encounter may take place at any time of day and at any location in the desert.

The sun glistens off the bronze skin of 4 **cheitan jann** as they float a few feet above the sands in their endless journey across the desert. Their fiery red eyes constantly scan the terrain hunting for sentient creatures to torment and kill. Rather than waste their energy flying across the burning sands, the cunning beings employ a clever ruse to lure their prey to them. The creatures make camp around a naturally occurring mirage, where they pretend to be refilling their water supplies and idly chatting around the refreshing waters. To conceal their otherworldly identity, they wear headdresses that hide their faces and partially obscure their eyes. PCs that approach the area can recognize the mirage for what it truly is with a successful DC 20 Perception check modified by the PCs' distance from the mirage. (See the "Perception" section in **Chapter 4** for more details about mirages.) In addition, any creature compromised by extreme thirst may succumb to "mirage delirium". (See the "Mirages" section in **Chapter 3** for more details about "mirage delirium".)

The cheitan jann appear preoccupied with refilling their water flasks and exchanging idle banter with each other, while occasionally glancing back at the approaching PCs. If they notice the PCs attempting to avoid them, the cheitan jann watch the PCs from a distance and then use their *invisibility* spell-like ability to pursue them undetected. They use their telepathy to silently communicate their proposed battle plan to one another and then attack when the PCs decide to rest or occupy themselves with another endeavor. The cheitans then wade into battle swinging their scimitars, hoping to surprise the bewildered PCs.

DUNES OF DESOLATION

If the PCs maintain their present course and move towards the cheitan jann, the outsiders feign disinterest in the approaching creatures. As soon as the PCs recognize the mirage for what it truly is, the cheitan jann become invisible and fan out across the area in an attempt to surprise and flank the PCs. They can use their *invisibility* spell-like ability three times per day, so they use it to maximum effect by attacking, becoming invisible, regrouping and then attacking again.

Though they are driven in their actions by innate hatred and malice, they are also interested in self-preservation. Whenever one of their kin falls in battle, the remaining cheitan jann use their spell-like abilities to flee to another plane of existence. They may even return at a later point in the PCs travels to square off against them again under the right circumstances.

CHEITAN JANN (4)

XP 2,400

The Tome of Horrors Complete 706

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +12

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 45 (6d10+12)

Fort +4; **Ref** +9; **Will** +8

Resist fire 20

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect) in chainmail

Melee scimitar +12/+7 (1d6+9/18–20) or 2 slams +12 (1d6+6 plus 1d3 fire)

Ranged composite longbow +10/+5 (1d8+6/x3)

Special Attacks change size, heat

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th unless otherwise noted)

3/day—*detect magic* (CL 6th), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (willing targets to elemental planes, Astral Plane, or Material Plane), *produce flame* (CL 6th), *speak with animals* 1/day—*create food and water*, *ethereal jaunt* (for 1 hour), *pyrotechnics* (CL 6th; DC 15)

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative⁸, Mobility

Skills Appraise +11, Craft (weapons) +11, Fly +13, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +12, Ride +5, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Ignan, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ elemental endurance

Gear chainmail, scimitar, composite longbow [+6 Str] with 20 arrows, other gear

Change Size (Sp) Twice per day, a janni can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the janni chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the janni. A DC 14 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Charisma-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Heat (Ex) A cheitan's body deals 1d3 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee with a natural attack or in each round it maintains a hold while grappling.

Elemental Endurance (Ex) Jann can remain on the Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, or Water for up to 48 hours at a time. Failure to return to the Material Plane before that time expires causes a janni to take 1 point of damage per additional hour spent on the elemental plane, until it dies or returns to the Material Plane.

Treasure: In addition to their gear, the cheitan jann also keep some of their treasures buried beneath the sand near the mirage approximately 50 feet north of where they congregated. Noticing the disturbance where it is buried is quite difficult requiring a successful DC 27 Perception check. The coffer containing their goods lies 2 feet beneath the sand. The intricately carved teakwood coffer contains 1,230 gp, a bronze necklace with a

diamond pendant worth 1,000 gp and a silver brooch with an amber inset worth 250 gp. In addition to their concealed goods, each carries 10d10 gp on their person along with an item of jewelry worth 1d4 x 100 gp. In the event that the PCs capture or detain one or more of the cheitan jann for questioning, they know nothing about the Oasis of Al-Mararak. Inquiries regarding watery stars generate a response that they know these items are the subjects of genie legends. Few creatures believe that they actually exist and no one, including any genie they know, has ever seen one. They attribute the legend of the watery stars to the overactive imagination of a bored shaitan or marid noble.

Part Two: The Oasis of Al-Mararak

After completing the hazardous journey across the Maighib Desert, the PCs arrive at their intended destination — the Oasis of Al-Mararak. As with nearly all oases, the large, fresh water spring lies at a lower elevation than the surrounding terrain. In fact, the contrast is so noticeable that a successful DC 5 Perception check detects the descending gradient. The oasis is literally shaped like a bowl with a roughly circular, raised lip approximately 1 mile from the water's edge. A character that succeeds on a DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check recognizes the crater as the remnants of a primordial impact site spawned by a collision with a celestial body. Because of this topographical feature, PCs cannot see their intended destination until they stand atop, pass over or position themselves above the elevated boundary. The oasis itself sits at the bottom of an immense depression formed by a primordial impact countless millennia ago. When the PCs enter visual range, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

An immense pool of crystal clear water shimmers in the distance, its edges lined by tall, lush grasses and reeds. An eclectic collection of colorful desert flowers blooms amidst the vibrant greenery. Date palm trees soar above the adjacent sands and fertile soil, offering precious shade to the small animals and minute insects moving through the foliage and swimming across its refreshing waters. Crude paths intermittently cut through the reeds and grasses allowing large land creatures to drink the oasis' precious liquid.

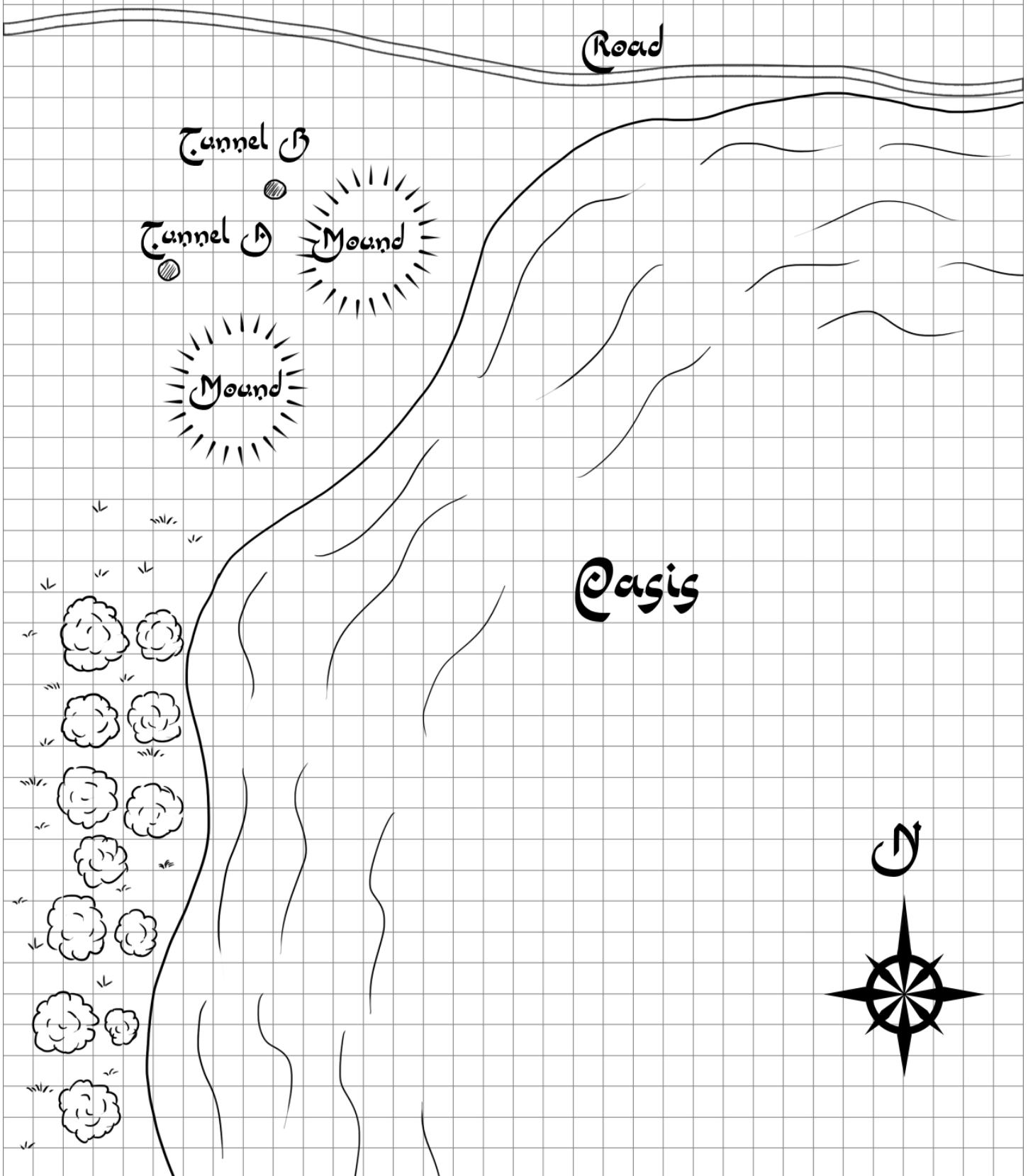
The center of Eyegouger's activity is along the northwestern corner of the oasis. Here, he and his minions dug deep tunnels into the earth in their pursuit of the elusive watery stars. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description for this area. The desert drakes' and desert trolls' locations depend upon the PCs' actions; therefore the GM may need to adjust the descriptions accordingly to include these creatures.

Two large gouges in the earth and two massive piles of sand, earth and loose stone blight the oasis' edge. The boreholes in the ground are wide enough to accommodate a huge giant and are spaced approximately 60 feet apart from one another. Behind these two fissures are their former contents. Two 100-foot-high mounds tower above the desert surface.

The heaps of sand, earth and loose stone measure roughly 80 feet in diameter. At most times one of the desert drakes sits or even sleeps atop the immense pile, while the desert trolls enjoy the shade offered by the large earthworks. The tunnels are approximately 15 feet in diameter and descend to a depth of 160 feet. Sunlight illuminates the upper half of both tunnels. Any creature that falls into the tunnel from the surface takes 15d6 points of falling damage. A successful DC 20 Climb check allows the character to shimmy up or down the rough-hewn stone walls. A creature that falls into the tunnel can attempt to grab hold of a handhold or foothold with a successful DC 40 Climb check.

With the initial excavations finished, the level of activity around the oasis itself has died down substantially. The only telltale signs of any unnatural presence are the two massive holes burrowing into the ground

Oasis of Al-Maraki 1 square - 20 feet



DUNES OF DESOLATION

on the northwestern corner of the oasis and the two immense piles of sand, dirt, gravel and loose soil next to the gouges in the earth. In fact, the eastern and southern sections of the oasis are largely unmonitored and easily accessible. Eyegouger's minions are concentrated in the immediate vicinity around the two boreholes with a wary eye cast in the direction of the trade route passing to the north of the watering hole.

Oasis' Defenses

Eyegouger deployed two lines of defenses against would be heroes that would dare stop his grand plan. The first and most formidable are two desert drakes that circle overhead or perch atop the gigantic mounds adjacent to the tunnels. From the air, the vicious dragons can visually see the entire oasis, though they cannot discern precise details such as a lone figure or even a group of figures moving across the area. The drakes could see an army from approximately 10 miles away, but seeing a small adventuring party is much more difficult. Their earthbound counterparts lack the reptiles' flying abilities, but they are still fearsome opponents. Two desert trolls sit near the water's edge in a seemingly bored state. They pay virtually no attention to their surroundings and indulge their wandering, pea brains in mindless, repetitious activities such as striking stones with their claws or tormenting small insects and arachnids that cross their path. They correctly figure that the drakes are bound to spot intruders long before they do, so the trolls see no reason to expend any precious energy. The following sections describe the encounters with these two sets of creatures as well as an additional meeting with the oasis' resident fey.

Outer Perimeter (CR 10)

The defense of the outer perimeter is left to **2 desert drakes** that survey the surrounding area from an elevated position either soaring through the skies or sitting upon one of the 100-foot high earthwork adjacent to the tunnels. While the desert drakes can scan a massive area, creatures looking up at the heavens can also make out the outline of the creatures from quite a distance away. In general, Perception checks made by either party begin at a distance of 4 miles, treating every intervening tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet. Therefore, at a distance of four miles, each group can notice the other with a successful DC 40 Perception check under normal circumstances. Weather conditions, the use of the Stealth skill and other factors may further modify the Perception check's Difficulty Class. PCs also spot the piles of earth and sand, though a successful Perception check is not needed to notice them.

DESERT DRAKES (2) XP 4,800

CR 8

hp 103 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3* "Drake, Desert")

Tactics: The desert drakes focus their attention predominately on the northern and western approaches to the oasis. They make also cursory glances to the east and south back across the oasis itself. It is possible for a character to steer a wide berth around the oasis and approach the tunnels from the south or even cross the oasis itself to possibly avoid the desert drakes. In addition, the drakes sleep in shifts during the peak daylight hours, figuring that travelers are less likely to brave the midday heat. The sleeping drake always lies atop the mound of dirt and earth, as the other sits on the adjacent pile or hovers overhead scanning the horizon for signs of life. The oasis' edge offers cover equivalent to sparse forest (see the "Forest Terrain" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* for details regarding the effects of a sparse forest). In this case, the PCs may close the gap to 2 miles before the drakes may begin attempting Perception checks to notice them. Like the preceding case, treat every tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet for determining the modifiers to the drakes' Perception checks to spot characters moving through the area. Though swimming across the oasis appears to be a viable alternative, there are several pitfalls. The noise generated by the character's splashing as well as the resulting ripples in the water make it relatively easy for the drakes to notice someone taking the watery route. The drakes may attempt

Perception checks at a distance of 4 miles, once again treating every tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet for determining the modifiers to the drakes' Perception checks. On the other hand, a creature that breathes underwater and swims beneath the surface is virtually undetectable. The drakes do not begin making Perception checks unless the character is less than 180 feet away. In this instance, the check's modifiers for distance function normally.

The drakes' response to an intruder's presence depends upon where they spotted them. If they noticed the character from at least a mile away, the airborne dragons descend from their lofty heights and dive towards the surface several hundred feet away from their intended target. The crafty reptiles then burrow into the sand and continue to move underground towards the PCs. Using their tremorsense ability, they wait to detect the creature's presence and then emerge from the sands. After their initial surprise attack, the reptiles expel a cloud of electrified dust. The monsters then attack with their ferocious bite and wicked tail. Whenever the drakes notice a creature at close range, they use their speed surge ability to close the gap and once again blast their victims with a cloud of electrified dust. After their initial action, they resort to using their bite and tail slap to deal damage to their opponents. The drakes fear nothing except for Eyegouger. They would rather die at the hands of adventurers than face the wrath of an angry blue dragon; therefore they never surrender and do not retreat. In truly desperate circumstances, the drakes attempt to rendezvous with the desert trolls and launch a concerted ground and air assault against their enemies.

Treasure: The drakes store their treasure beneath the northern mound of sand and dirt. Locating the cache of hidden items requires a successful DC 26 Perception check. Their treasures include *boots of striding and springing*, a *bead of force* and an *elixir of fire breath* along with a pouch containing six turquoise gems worth 100 gp each.

Inner Defenses (CR 10)

The desert drakes are tasked with the assignment to protect the oasis' outer perimeter against intruders leaving **2 desert trolls** as the tunnels' last line of defense. The stupid, lazy creatures rely on their draconic counterparts to mind the proverbial store, while they occupy themselves with monotonous activities or devouring anything edible within reach. They always take positions in a shady spot at the base of either mound where they occasionally feign a scrutinizing glance towards the water or out onto the open desert. Under these circumstances, treat the desert trolls Perception checks as if they were constantly taking 10 rather than making opposed skill checks. If the drakes react to an intruder's presence, the trolls follow the drakes' lead and act accordingly. At that point, they are considered to be actively searching for another creature's presence. The trolls do not enjoy the drakes' height advantages; therefore their visibility is much more limited. They may begin attempting Perception checks to notice approaching enemies at the normal distance for desert terrain. (See the "Desert Terrain" section in Chapter 13 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* for more details regarding detection and stealth in the desert.)

The trolls' primary goal is to figure out a way to do as little as possible without incurring Eyegouger's wrath. In keeping with this philosophy, the monstrous brutes snooze during the scorching hot midday hours and perform their cursory patrols during the cooler evening and overnight hours. During these brief walkabouts, they are predominately looking for a fresh meal rather than a fight against formidable opponents. That said, the desert trolls do not back down from combat, especially if the drakes are also involved in the battle.

DESERT TROLLS (2) XP 4,800

CR 8

hp 85 (See **Chapter 6**)

Tactics: Though the desert trolls are somewhat lacking in intelligence, they are cunning adversaries. The savage giants use their size and strength to maximum advantage lashing out with their vicious claws and sinking their rotting teeth into their enemies' exposed flesh. Whenever possible they attempt to push or hurl their opponents into one of the tunnels or the

MY BLUE OASIS

oasis. They are fearful of magic, so they focus their attacks against enemy spellcasters. They attempt to grapple magic-wielding foes that are smaller than they are; however they forego this tactic and instead take full attack actions if the PCs badly outnumber them and the drakes. Their innate fear of electricity drives them to fight to the bitter end rather than face the gruesome prospect of being electrocuted by the desert drakes or worse yet, Eyegouger himself. Their feeble intellect and poor communication skills limit the breadth of their knowledge if the PCs subdue, capture or magically compel the trolls to divulge information. In that case, the trolls relay that a blue dragon and a human wizard dug the massive tunnels along with a huge worm. They do not know the reason why they excavated in this area.

Treasure: The desert trolls keep a cache of items in a filthy sack near one of the mounds. It contains 973 gp, 6 gems worth 100 gp each and a bronze pendant worth 50 gp.

Femme Fatales (CR 9)

Natural forces are responsible for creating the deserts' vital oases, but their continued survival, maintenance and expansion often depend upon external factors. The majestic wadira ranks at or near the top of the list in terms of importance. These wondrous fey creatures spend their lives in close proximity to the chosen oasis, tending to its flora and defending it against large-scale exploitation or the machinations of evil creatures bent on destroying it. The Oasis of Al-Marak is no exception to this rule. As the Maighib Desert's largest body of water, the resident wadiras have dwelt along its fertile banks for centuries where they harmoniously coexisted with the caravan teams and travelers that used the oasis to replenish their water supplies and quench their pack and riding animals' thirst. Throughout the generations, the naturally attuned fey always noticed something peculiar about the oasis, as if some mysterious presence cohabitated its placid waters alongside them. They never sensed any semblance of life or intelligence — just something unnatural.

Under Ahmad's guidance, the mature adult blue dragon dove into the sands along the oasis' edge in an apparent quest to find something. Disgusted by the upheaval left in his wake, 7 wadiras attempted to reason with the human wizard and his reptilian cohort. Negotiations quickly broke down and combat ensued. The overmatched wadiras' futile attempt to expel the greedy monster from their ancestral home proved disastrous. In less than a minute, Eyegouger and his lackeys reduced them to charred dust and crackling ashes. Since the disheartening bloodbath, the remaining wadiras hide along the oasis' banks and only emerge on rare occasions. The PCs' arrival at the oasis offers the first glimmer of hope to the downtrodden fey. At first, the wadiras remain concealed and reconnoiter from afar to gauge their motives. Any character that recklessly despoils the oasis feels the angry creatures' full wrath as **3 wadiras** reveal themselves and savagely attack the intruder. Otherwise, they keep a wary eye on them for several hundred feet before tentatively approaching the PCs. The wadiras err on the side of caution and treat the PCs with great suspicion; however if the PCs mention that they are acting under the Sultan's direction or belong to the Church of Fatimashan, the wadiras dispense with their pretenses and warmly greet them. Under all other circumstances, the PCs must overcome the wadiras' wariness and gain their trust through words or deeds. After they accomplish this task, the wadiras willingly divulge their information.

WADIRAS (3)

XP 2,400

hp 55 (See Chapter 6)

CR 6

Development: They relay that two flying dragons and two disgusting trolls guard the entrance to the subterranean tunnels. The monsters concentrate their efforts on the nearby road and pay little attention to the eastern and southern banks of the oasis as well as its still waters. They do not know how far down the tunnels go or why Eyegouger dug them in the first place, but they confirm that a blue dragon is responsible for their construction. In addition, they also advise the PCs that a human wizard accompanied the mighty reptile. Though they believe the cause to be

noble, they refuse to participate in any attacks against the desert drakes or the desert trolls. They fear that their involvement in an assault could force Eyegouger to destroy large swaths of the oasis, a fate they fear and loathe more than death. However, the wadiras offer the PCs water from the oasis which removes the fatigued, shaken and sickened conditions from any living creature that partakes of their offer.

Part 3: Into the Wormholes

Even without the wadiras' information, the obvious next step is to follow Eyegouger's and Ahmad's footsteps into the belly of the earth. The two boreholes are crudely carved from the loose sand and descend at a precipitous angle into the earth. In the subterranean depths below the oasis, the dragon and his companion realize that they are not the only creatures to stumble upon the elusive watery stars. Long before their arrival, the mysterious mineral altered the fortunes of an erstwhile derro who also attempted to claim the watery star. They soon learned that the task is a fool's errand, as they greatly fear the eerie glow that emanates from the strange object that fell from the skies during their distant ancestors' lifetimes. In addition to warping and twisting the derros' minds, the watery star also tears holes in the fabric of time and space, altering the basic laws of physics in ways previously unimaginable.

In his lust to lay claim to his prized treasure, Eyegouger hurled his massive body against the earth and began digging. The incredibly powerful dragon ripped two massive holes into the ground, piling the accumulated sand, gravel, loose stones and damp earth into gargantuan piles. Eyegouger halted his excavation at a depth of 160 feet because a surreptitious find altered his initial plan. In the darkness of a subterranean cavern, Eyegouger and Ahmad stumbled upon a purple worm that could perform their "dirty" work for them. Ahmad used his repertoire of magic to control the beast and compel it to forge new tunnels from the bare rock. In addition to this fortuitous development, the underground passages and chambers also host the rare dracolisk and a forgotten tribe of morlocks that serve as food and captives for their more powerful counterparts.

Tunnels A and B

Though the boreholes are labeled as Tunnel A and Tunnel B on the corresponding map, they share the same characteristics and roughly end up in the same place. At their current level, it is very likely that the PCs have magical items or abilities that allow them to easily negotiate their way down the tunnels without any risk of falling. This could include the ability to use *feather fall*, *fly*, *spider climb* or even *teleport*, though there is some inherent danger transporting to an unknown location. If the PCs must physically climb down the boreholes, they must succeed on a DC 20 Climb check to negotiate the treacherous handholds and footholds lining the roughly hewn passage walls. Whenever a character loses his grip and falls, the character can grab hold of an intervening object such as a rocky outcropping or an exposed handhold with a successful DC 40 Climb check. Otherwise the character suffers 1d6 points of falling damage per 10 feet beyond the first 10 feet. Any creature with the stonecunning ability can tell that a large beast recently created these tunnels, though the subsequent passages and chambers are significantly older and made by other creatures.

Underground Level

The underground level is the first level of subterranean passages constructed predominately by the purple worm over the years with a few recent additions that opened up into the derros' area on the subterranean level. The tunnels are generally cylindrical in shape, so their dimensions are the same on all sides, i.e. a 15-foot wide passageway is also 15 feet high. All of the corridors and chambers are unlit, as its residents are accustomed and adapted to life in a pitch black environment. At this depth,

DUNES OF DESOLATION

the characters and monsters inhabiting the area do not feel the effects of the watery star; however the GM may add a few hints or a bit of flavor to prepare them for what is to come. The PCs may periodically experience a brief but harmless flash of blue light, an invisible tug on their arm as if something were holding it back or an accelerated step forward while moving through the tunnels that nearly caused the character to trip. For every 10 minutes spent exploring the underground level, the PCs have a 1 in 4 chance of running across either of the subsequent random encounters. The description for area U1 follows this section.

Morlock Raiding Party (CR 12)

Morlocks are ignorant in the traditional sense, but they are cunning hunters and predators. Over the centuries, this band of **6 morlocks** became particularly adept at fighting larger beasts in the crowded passages and chambers that comprise their homeland. In addition, the perpetual darkness enhanced their visual capabilities. Their darkvision extends to a range of 120 feet, allowing them in most circumstances to see enemies long before their opponents can spot them. They are immediately attracted to any light source and position themselves in preparation of an attack. The morlocks prefer to ambush and then swarm their foes. Half of them climb atop the ceiling so they can drop down on their targets while the remainder line themselves along the walls in an effort to get sneak attacks. The morlocks never surrender, even in the face of a superior foe. In the contingency that the PCs somehow subdue these creatures, the morlocks' stupidity inhibits their ability to provide any useful information.

MORLOCKS (6) XP 2,400

CR 7

Male morlock barbarian 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Morlock")

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; **Perception** +9

AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 9 (+5 Dex, +1 natural, -2 rage)
hp 107 (3d10+18 plus 5d12+30 plus 5)
Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7; +3 vs. magic
Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, superstition +3, trap sense +1; **Immune** disease, poison
Weaknesses light blindness

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee mwk club +16/+11 (1d6+9), bite +9 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks leap attack, rage (16 rounds/day), rage power (powerful blow +2), sneak attack +1d6, swarming

Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarian's statistics are AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 11; hp 91; Fort +9, Will +5; Melee mwk club +14/+9 (1d6+6), bite +7 (1d6+2); Str 19, Con 19; CMB +12, CMD 27; Skills Climb +28.

Str 23, **Dex** 21, **Con** 23, **Int** 7, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (club)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+29 when jumping), Climb +20, Intimidate +4, Perception +9, Stealth +11 (+15 in caverns);

Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics, +16 Climb, +4 Stealth in caverns

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber, fast movement

Gear masterwork club

Expert Climber (Ex) A morlock can cling to cave walls and even ceilings as long as the surface has hand- and footholds. In effect, a morlock is treated as constantly being under a nonmagical version of the spell *spider climb*, save that it cannot cling to smooth surfaces. This ability doubles the normal +8 racial bonus to Climb checks normally

afforded creatures with a climb speed to a +16 racial bonus.

Leap Attack (Ex) As a standard action, a morlock may make a single attack during a jump. It can make this attack at any point along the course of the leap — the start, the end, or while in mid-air. While jumping, a morlock does not provoke attacks of opportunity for leaving a threatened square.

Swarming (Ex) Morlocks dwell and fight in cramped quarters every day of their lives, and as such are quite adept at swarming foes. Up to two morlocks can share the same square at the same time. If two morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

Development: Other than their combat gear, the creatures have no treasure. If the PCs opt to follow the creatures back to their lair, the PCs must succeed on a DC 13 Perception or Survival check to locate their tracks. Retracing their steps to their origin can be accomplished only with a successful Survival check.

Stone and Acid (CR 9)

In addition to the morlocks, another reptilian predator stalks the underground level's passages and chambers. A lone creature resembling a six-legged black dragon with shimmering scales and gleaming eyes also attacks anything it encounters. The monster is a **dracolisk**. Like other subterranean species, the creature is well-adapted to a life of perpetual darkness. Any visible light source immediately gains its attention, though the lumbering beast makes no sudden moves towards the illumination. Instead, it slowly creeps in its direction and then waits for its prey to draw close. The crafty dragon always takes its place in a passageway rather than a chamber. Just before the creature's light source is about to expose its position, the creature inches towards its targets exposing them to its petrifying gaze. It then unleashes a crackling bolt of lightning down the passageway before engaging its intended meal in melee.

DRACOLISK XP 6,400

CR 9

hp 115 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Half Dragon, Dracolisk")

Development: The dracolisk has no treasure, but it is easy to track it back to its lair. The large creature leaves telltale claw marks on the floor as it moves. Locating its tracks requires a successful DC 9 Perception or Survival check, and it can be followed back to its abode with a successful Survival check using the preceding DC.

U1: Grand Opening

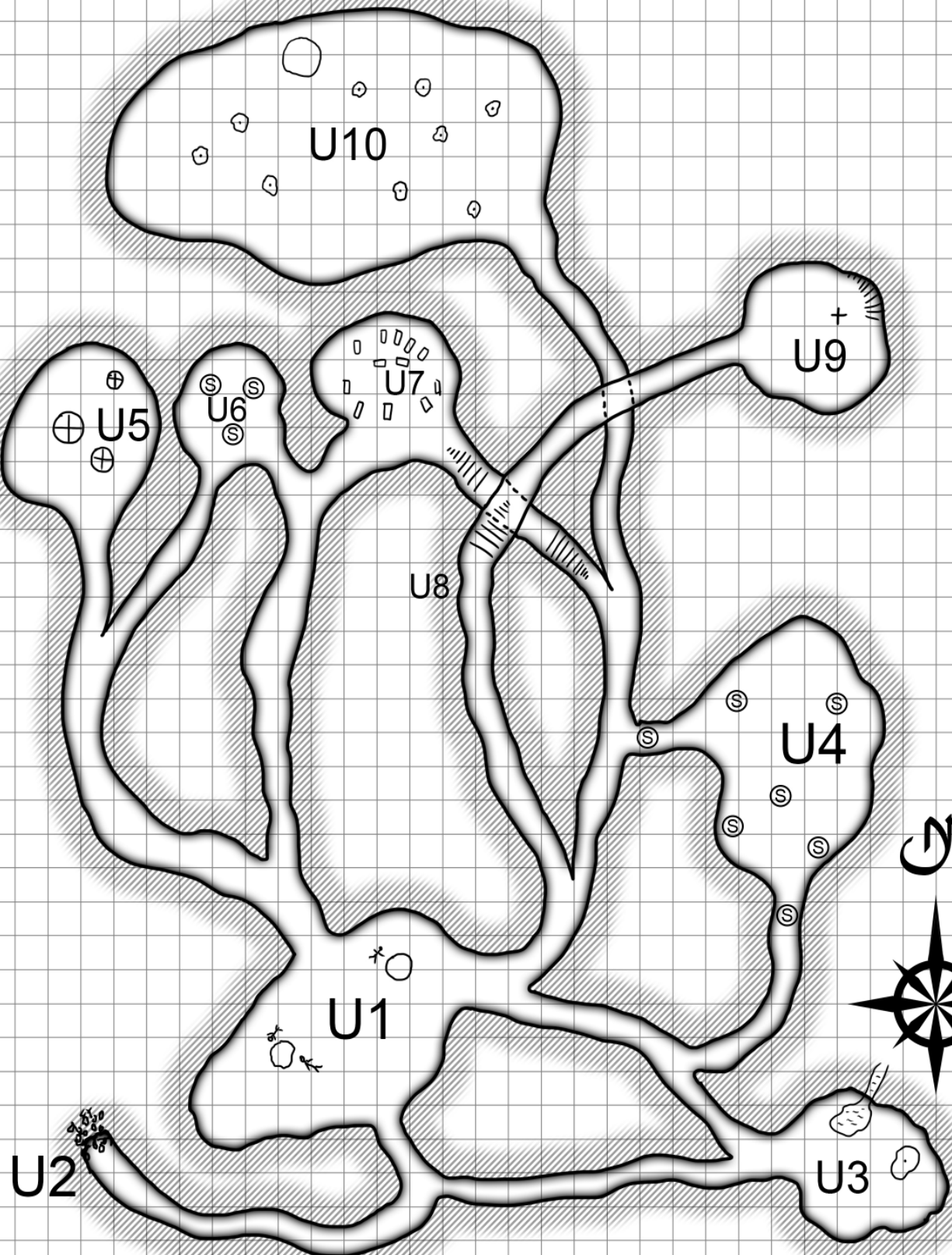
The two tunnels abruptly end and open into a large cavernous chamber with craggy, stone walls and three passageways leading out in different directions. Several mineral deposits are visible on the walls along with the shattered bodies of three lightly armored men littering the cavern floor. Two corpses lie below the western tunnel, and the other is beneath the eastern tunnel.

The purple worm once resided here but moved on after its encounter with Eyegouger and Ahmad. In fact, Eyegouger stopped digging at this point because of the massive creature's presence. Though the pair pressed the creature into service building new tunnels, the three adjacent passageways have existed for quite some time. From the cavern floor, light is visible at the top of the boreholes drilled into this chamber's ceiling which is 20 feet above the cavern floor. Climbing back up the boreholes is virtually impossible from the ground; however a rope or other climbing implement securely fastened to the borehole's surface provides a means of allowing a creature to reach the passage carved into the ceiling. The mineral deposits are concentrated on the western walls. They consist predominately of salt.

Development: The desert trolls tossed the three dead bodies down the

Underground Level

1 square - 20 feet



DUNES OF DESOLATION

boreholes to amuse themselves, but the dim-witted monsters failed to realize that they could not see the corpses hit bottom despite performing the task multiple times. A character may determine the cadavers' injuries with a successful DC 20 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check. Careful scrutiny of their battered bodies reveals that they suffered tremendous electrical burns and several slashing wounds. The fall inflicted substantial postmortem damage in the form of shattered bones. The bodies are clad in desert cloaks. The morlocks scavenged their remaining treasures as tribute to their deity.

U2: Ancient Tunnel Collapse

The underground passageway culminates in a massive pile of loose fitting rocks that impedes all further progress.

Centuries ago, the ceiling collapsed in this section of the complex strewn loose rocks, sand and gravel throughout the entire area. The cave-in stretches for hundreds of feet towards the west. The debris appears undisturbed, though it is possible for a Fine or smaller creature to navigate its way through the earth and stone to the other side. There is no evidence that Eyegouger or Ahmad ventured in this direction. If the PCs insist on attempting to excavate the collapse or attempt another means to bypass it, their journey ends in a long-forgotten chamber filled with the skeletal remains of a massive, serpentine creature.

U3: Morlock Shrine

The soft sound of flowing water echoes against the stone walls as the precious liquid flows through the near wall and replenishes a subterranean pond. Small, eyeless fish navigate its waters, while tiny cave spiders scuttle around the water's edge. A man-sized stalagmite carved into the crude image of a grotesquely pregnant woman greets would-be visitors with a wide-eyed stare and the grimace of excruciating pain etched onto her stone countenance.

An underground river feeds the chamber's pond. The water is safe to drink, though its high sediment content gives it an unpleasant taste. Likewise the fish and spiders are edible with similar aftereffects as the water. The carved stalagmite depicts one of the ancient morlock deities. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that the stalagmite appears to pay homage to an unknown fertility goddess; however there are no further details regarding the deity's name or her intended worshippers. The morlocks frequently visit this area to pay homage to their ancestral goddess and partake in its food and drink. PCs spending more than a few minutes in this area have a 50% chance of encountering the wandering morlock raiding party during their stay.

U4: Dracolisks' Lair (CR 11)

An oddly posed stone statue stands at the precipice of a much larger chamber, where several more of these unusual art pieces are scattered about the room. Two six-legged reptilian creatures covered in glistening, black scales slither among the statues.

The statues are not decorative art pieces, but rather the petrified remains of the **2 dracolisks'** past victims. These two vicious monsters comprise a mated pair. With that in mind, the creatures fight to the death to protect each other and the prospects of any future offspring. The dracolisks initiate combat by using their breath weapons against any creatures still in the adjoining passageways. Afterward, the dracolisks concentrate their attacks against any creature with a light source, forcing all creatures looking at them to resist their petrifying gaze while fending off their vicious melee attacks. As with others of their kin, these creatures have no worldly possessions.

DRACOLISKS (2)

XP 6,400

hp 115 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Half Dragon, Dracolisk")

CR 9

U5: Morlock Living Quarters (CR 8)

Eerie phosphorescent purple light bathes the outlines of three rudimentary hut-shaped, stone structures in an unusual glow. The illumination emanates from dozens of crystals affixed to the ceiling. Lichens, molds and fungi grow on the damp walls and the structure's outer lining. Eight pale-skinned humanoids with bulging eyes move about the chamber performing a variety of tasks such as harvesting the plant materials flourishing on the room's many surfaces.

The morlocks occupy **Area U5** and **Area U6**. The **8 morlocks** that dwell here represent the tribe's females and juveniles. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Perception check notices that two of the horrific humanoids appear to be pregnant. The morlocks attack on sight and raise a tremendous ruckus in the process that alerts their kin in the adjoining chamber to the presence of intruders. Likewise, the morlocks in this chamber react to any alarms sounded in the connecting room.

The morlocks rely upon the fungi, molds and lichen as their primary food source; however Eyegouger's tunnel to the surface offers them the possibility of fresh kills. The adept climbers can easily climb up and down the treacherous boreholes' walls. The crystals imbedded into the ceiling are enchanted by *continual flame* spells. Under normal circumstances, they would be much brighter; however many of the crystals are hundreds and even thousands of years old. As the crystalline structures grew, the magic light steadily dimmed. The illumination emitted by the crystals is half that of a normal *continual flame* spell and is treated as dim light thus creatures with low-light vision can see normally within the affected area.

MORLOCKS (8)

XP 600

hp 22 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Morlock")

CR 2

U6: Morlock Temple (CR 12)

The echo of rhythmic chanting fills the air as six hideous humanoid creatures bow in homage before three heavily damaged stone statues depicting a handsome, strapping nobleman, a voluptuous woman clad in royal garb and a muscular warrior armed with a sword. Another of their kin leads them in this bizarre ritual. Unlike his brethren, this creature wears a magnificent crown and wears a ring on one of his outstretched hands. A small pile of coins and other objects rests on the ground between the three statues.

It is rare that a dragon would turn down any opportunity to add to his treasure hoard, but he deemed the risks of doing battle with the morlocks and their high priest to outweigh the rewards. The morlocks are incapable of advanced tactics so their high priest uses his magic to enhance his combat abilities rather than aid his allies. If the morlocks are aware of the PCs' presence, they use the same strategy as the morlock raiding party. Half of them climb onto the ceiling and attempt to drop down on their foes, while the remainder split up and attempt to flank their outnumbered enemies. The morlocks fight to the death and never surrender, especially within the sanctity of their crude temple.

MORLOCKS (6)

XP 2,400

Male morlock barbarian 5

hp 107 (See **Morlock Raiding Party** above)

CR 7

MORLOCK HIGH PRIEST**XP 4,800**

Male morlock cleric 7

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; **Perception** +4**AC** 17, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 84 (3d10+9 plus 7d8+21 plus 7)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14**Immune** disease, poison**Weaknesses** light blindness**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** +1 club +10/+5 (1d6+2)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 3/day (DC 13, 4d6), leap attack, sneak attack +1d6, swarming**Domain Spell-Like Ability** (CL 7th)7/day—*touch of darkness* (3 rounds), *vision of madness* (+/-3)**Spells Prepared** (CL 7th)4th—*confusion*^D (DC 18), *divine power*, *poison* (DC 18)3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*, *deeper darkness*, *deeper darkness*^D2nd—*blindness/deafness*^D (only to cause blindness) (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*1st—*command* (DC 15), *detect good*, *divine favor*, *lesser confusion*^D (DC 15), *protection from good*, *shield of faith*0—*create water*, *guidance*, *purify food and drink*, *virtue***D Domains** Darkness, Madness

Str 12, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 19, Cha 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 25**Feats** Blind-Fight, Channel Smite, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Vital Strike**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +17, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +4, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 (+8 in caverns), Survival +9; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Acrobatics, +16 Climb, +4 Stealth in caverns**Languages** Undercommon**SQ** aura, expert climber**Gear** +1 club, crown of blasting (minor), ring of protection +2

Expert Climber (Ex) A morlock can cling to cave walls and even ceilings as long as the surface has hand- and footholds. In effect, a morlock is treated as constantly being under a nonmagical version of the spell *spider climb*, save that it cannot cling to smooth surfaces. This ability doubles the normal +8 racial bonus to Climb checks normally afforded creatures with a climb speed to a +16 racial bonus.

Leap Attack (Ex) As a standard action, a morlock may make a single attack during a jump. It can make this attack at any point along the course of the leap — the start, the end, or while in mid-air. While jumping, a morlock does not provoke attacks of opportunity for leaving a threatened square.

Swarming (Ex) Morlocks dwell and fight in cramped quarters every day of their lives, and as such are quite adept at swarming foes. Up to two morlocks can share the same square at the same time. If two morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

Treasure: The pile of coins and objects between the statues include 1,007 gp, 689 sp, three garnets worth 100 gp each and a bronze belt buckle worth 50 gp.

CR 8

U7: Morlock Barracks

The foul stench of bodily waste, rotting flesh and mold immediately bombards the senses. Multiple piles of excrement, half-eaten meats and gnawed bones litter the floor amidst a dozen fetid, leather and fur bedrolls stained with blood, pus and phlegm. Four splintered wooden clubs are scattered amidst the debris.

The morlock barbarians call this disgusting hovel home. The odor is so fierce that any creature that remains here for more than 1 minute becomes sickened for 1d3 minutes with a failed DC 11 Fortitude save. Likewise any character that physically searches the area must also succeed on the aforementioned save or be sickened. Despite the quantity of material here, there is nothing of value in the room.

U8: Morlock Dead

The battered bodies of four hideous humanoids lie broken in the middle of the passageway that descends at a sharp decline. Chunks of rended flesh, streaks of blood and fragments of bone splatter the walls, floor and ceiling.

Eyegouger utterly obliterated his four morlock adversaries in his search for the watery star. A successful DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check confirms that the dragon broke nearly every bone in these creatures' bodies with only a few blows. As a result of this easy tussle with this group of morlocks, Eyegouger decided to focus on his objective rather than waste his time and effort destroying these pathetic humanoids.

U9: Dragon Warning

The pungent aroma of freshly dug earth fills the air along with another unusual scent. The chamber beyond is structurally featureless; however freshly carved runes cover much of the far wall as a viscous substance drips from the ceiling. Affixed to a steel pole embedded into the ground are the eviscerated remains of a battle-hardened man clad in sundered full plate armor. He still holds an exquisite greatsword in his decaying hands.

Ahmad's purple worm guardian began construction on this section of tunnel only to abandon it after they noticed another substance mixed with the rock. The material is asphalt which is commonly used as glue or for embalming. Correctly identifying it requires a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) or Profession (sailor) check as it is also used to waterproof ships. There is enough asphalt readily available to fill two barrels, though transporting them to the surface presents a significant challenge.

The runes are written in Draconic and are intended to serve as a warning to any creature that dares follow in Eyegouger's footsteps. They state the following.

Eyegouger the destroyer, lord of the desert and master of rock and cavern issues this warning. Certain death and excruciating agony lie ahead. Hail Eyegouger ruler of the deepest reaches! Hail Eyegouger king of those that crawl! Bow before his might and worship at his knee or meet this unfortunate soul's fate.

Development: The remains are those of Alajaddin Unhara, a renowned dragon slayer throughout Khartous. He was one of the first to arrive at the oasis to do battle against Eyegouger, though he failed in his quest several days ago. Unlike most desert warriors, Alajaddin wore heavy armor enchanted with magic to protect him from the ravages of extreme heat. Unfortunately for the PCs, Eyegouger destroyed his armor making it

irreparable. His *+1 cold iron flaming greatsword* is broken, but it can be repaired. Ahmad used the asphalt to glue the weapon to his dead hands. A character recognizes Alajaddin as a well-known dragon hunter with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check.

Uto: The Worm Has Turned (CR 12)

Massive stalagmites rise from the floor in some areas, rivaling the height and girth of an ogre or even a giant. Slithering its way through this tangled forest of rough hewn stone is a gargantuan worm covered in sturdy, purplish plates of hardened exoskeleton. Razor sharp teeth fill its gigantic maw which is easily large enough to swallow a dire camel in a single gulp. Another massive tunnel wide enough to accommodate even this immense creature sinks deeper into the earth. Brief, intermittent flashes of eerie blue light pulsate upward from the fissure.

The creature slithering among the stalagmites is a **purple worm**. Eyegouger and Ahmad used brute force and magic to cajole the immense worm to protect this chamber against any intruders. Their guardian knows only one battle tactic — bite, sting, eat. The beast attacks until destroyed. It has no visible treasure, though a character with the stomach for it may cut the monster's belly open where they find sixty-three gem stones worth 100 gp each.

PURPLE WORM

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 200 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Purple Worm")

The stalagmites scattered throughout the room are ordinary rock formations; however the tunnel is a recent creation. The tunnel leads into darkness momentarily pierced by fleeting blasts of blue light. It descends at a 45-degree angle towards the southeast, presumably bringing it directly below the oasis itself. The rough-hewn rocky surface provides adequate traction; therefore Climb checks are not necessary to negotiate the descent towards the final destination — the realm of the watery star and Eyegouger.

Part 4: The Watery Star

The PCs' pursuit of Eyegouger leads them into the purple worm's makeshift tunnel. The passageway meanders and winds through the rock and stone beneath the oasis for nearly 4 miles where it reaches a depth of nearly 2 miles below the surface. Within the confines of this subterranean passageway, the watery star's effects become more noticeable. The flashes of eerie blue light occur at more regular intervals. Time accelerates and decelerates without rhyme or reason. In fact, the mineral's gravitational pull is so strong that it occasionally inhibits a character's blood flow to his brain. Eyegouger's tunnel ends at a sundered wall that leads into an ancient derro complex that has stood for countless centuries. The rapacious dragon and his rueful subordinate realize that someone else found the watery star first begging the question of which came first — the derros' madness or the watery star?

The walls, floors and ceilings throughout the derro complex are crafted from finely cut stone. Similarly, the doors are also made from stone, though the derros' engineering prowess allows them to open with minimal effort unless otherwise noted in the room's description.

Stone Doors: 4 in. thick; hardness 8, hit points 60.

Despite their diminutive stature, the doorways and chambers are vastly oversized to accommodate creatures of their size. The ceilings are 20 feet high in all areas except for **Area S5** and **Area S7** which are 10 feet lower and 10 feet higher than the others respectively. Though they are adept at seeing in complete darkness, the watery star basks the entire complex in an eerie blue light that is the equivalent of dim light. Creatures with darkvision and low-light vision can see normally, while those without either ability still require a light source.

Guidelines of Physics

Within such close proximity to the watery star, the laws of nature and physics bend to become more akin to guidelines rather than laws or rules. Time momentarily speeds up and then later screeches to a grinding halt. Blood rushes from one part of the brain to another causing confusion or greater clarity. In addition, the irradiating blue light becomes more menacing rather than a nuisance. Every 1d4+1 minutes, the watery star alters time and space in a random manner as outlined on the following table.

Table 13-1 Watery Star Random Effects

d%	Effects
01-30	Speed increases by 25%. Ranged weapons suffer a 20% miss chance.
31-60	Speed decreases by 25%. Ranged weapons suffer a 20% miss chance.
61-90	Bright flash of blue light dazzles all creatures that fail a DC 23 Fortitude save for 1d4+1 rounds. Creatures that do not rely upon visual organs for sight are unaffected. (Reroll this result in Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star).
91-00	Gravity affects the creatures' circulation. Creatures must succeed on a concentration check (DC = 10 + spell level) in order to cast any spell. If the character must attempt a concentration check for another reason, i.e. casting defensively, the DC for that check instead increases by +10.

These effects last for 1d4+1 rounds before space and time revert back to normal. This is not a magical effect; therefore spell resistance and spell effects that ignore impediments to movement such as *freedom of movement* do not negate the watery star's warping effects.

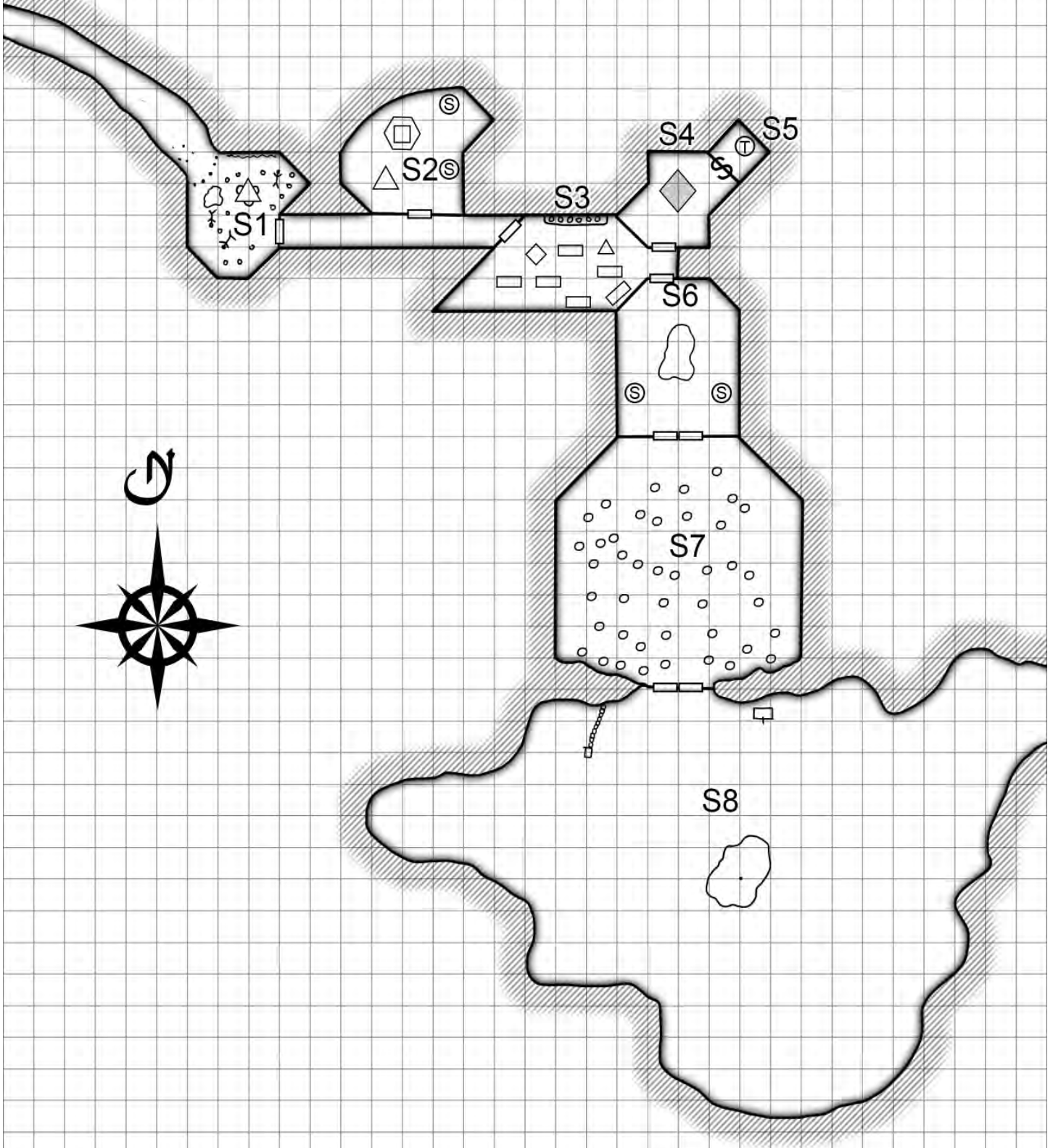
Sr: Derro Laboratory

Large blocks of finely cut stone litter the floor of an oddly shaped chamber. Several open books rest upon a triangular table surrounded by three small chairs. The battered bodies of three small, pale blue-skinned humanoids with bulbous eyes lie nearby the table. Pieces of an elaborate diagram are strewn throughout the chamber, whereas an intact version of a similar diagram hangs on the near wall.

The purple worm cut the vast majority of the preceding tunnel from the rock and stone; however Eyegouger finished the job when they reached the outer wall of the derros' complex. The dragon battered the structure into quick submission, hurling massive chunks of rock and stone throughout the chamber resulting in the injuries to the room's three occupants. The massive bruising and open wounds on their heads clearly indicate that they sustained blunt force trauma, but several plainly visible deep gashes suggest that something or someone finished the job. Eyegouger stripped the bodies clean of everything but their clothing.

The open books and the diagrams on the floor and wall all depict and discuss human physiology. Though the drawings' intent is self-evident, the writings are another matter. Penned in Aklo, their theories on human anatomy range from the plausible to the outright bizarre. The works fixate on man's abilities to withstand the damaging effects of sunlight and devising ways of duplicating the process so that the derros can return to

Subterranean Level 1 square - 10 feet



DUNES OF DESOLATION

the surface world. Radical surgical ideas such as skin grafts are discussed at length and then inexplicably dismissed, while far stranger ideas like coating the skin with hot asphalt or crossbreeding their race with furry animals are advanced as more likely solutions to the problem. In the end, the derros' written works are nothing more than the ramblings of madmen making them utterly worthless.

S2: Derro Living Quarters (CR 9)

Loud squabbling and insane rants fill the air as 8 pale blue-skinned humanoid with bulging eyes vigorously argue amongst themselves. The creatures are primarily congregated around a triangular stone table near the door and a multilayered furniture piece consisting of a square block resting atop a six-sided stone block. They appear to be contesting ownership of two hunks of raw meat akin to a large herbivore's leg that sit atop the triangular table and the square block. Two 4-foot tall statues depicting a wizened member of their race adorn the chamber for no obvious purpose.

The **8 derros** are so immersed in a heated discussion that the PCs' intrusion likely surprises them, though they attack with unbridled ferocity once they notice the PCs. Several of them use their poisoned crossbow bolts whenever possible, whereas the remainder surround a designated enemy allowing them to make sneak attacks against foes they flank. If the battle goes badly, the survivors plunge their enemies into darkness and attempt to escape to warn the others. The derros are hopelessly mad and never surrender regardless of the circumstances. Helpless or subdued derros provide little useful information other than to acknowledge Eyegouger's presence at the "Wall of Stones" as they call it. They know nothing about the watery star's properties and have accepted the complex's temporal and spatial anomalies as "normal."

DERROS (8)

XP 800

hp 25 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Derro")

CR 3

The derros in this chamber have no additional gear beyond those described under their complete statistics. The statues are ancient representations of Thozzagard carved at his direction shortly after his arrival at the derro enclave. Carved countless millennia earlier, these derros have no idea what they depict or why they are here; however an astute PC examining the statue notices that the subject appears slightly different than his kin with a successful DC 20 Perception check. For lack of a better description, the derro depicted in the sculpture appears somewhat sane, at least for the derro.

S3: Derro Laboratory (CR 12)

At first glance, this clinical chamber appears to be a house of healing, but the bloodcurdling screams and terrified shrieks of its so-called "patients" immediately dispel that notion. Thick cords bind two men, a woman and a gnome female to examining tables scattered about the rooms. Their exposed limbs and torsos bear multiple lacerations and gashes that are crudely sewn shut. Shiny metallic devices akin to a tiara wrap around the front of their skulls. They writhe in horrific pain as three pale-skinned humanoids poke, prod and slice their skin with cruel torture implements that they use as makeshift medical instruments. Two examining tables are unoccupied while an assortment of blood-stained beakers, jars and flasks rest upon a shelf affixed to the near wall as well as a triangular and square shaped piece of furniture.

The derros abducted their captives 6 days ago, prior to Eyegouger's arrival in their complex. They can access the surface and return to their subterranean abode via two linked *teleportation circles*. One is concealed behind the secret door in **Area S5**, and the other is located

in the sewers beneath the Flame District in Khartous. The derros' current prisoners are two indigents, a prostitute and a thrill-seeking wild girl from a wealthy family. The derros periodically subdue them by casting *daze* upon them or in rare instances, a *sleep* spell, as they perform gruesome and inane experiments on their skin. They endeavor to figure out how other humanoids survive above the surface; however their scientific methodology and hypotheses are so severely flawed that none of their research has any chance of making a breakthrough. They perform their activities in the name of pseudoscience and not an accepted field of study.

The horrific experience mentally traumatized its four victims to such an extent that they all suffer from some type of psychosis. In addition to their frightening interactions with their captors, they also endured Eyegouger's psychological torture and taunts shortly after his arrival. In their current state, the victims are unresponsive to questioning unless they are magically compelled to do so, or someone heals their underlying mental conditions with spells such as *calm emotions* or a *heal* spell. Under these circumstances, the victims reveal that Eyegouger and a man arrived several days ago. After a tense standoff with the derros, the dragon and his companion proceeded further into the complex, though they sense that the man accompanying the beast seemed reluctant to do so. They remember few details about their capture other than the fact that they were dragged into the sewers of Khartous and arrived here. Ultimately even after regaining their freedom, the quartet resumes their former lives with even greater reckless abandon and debauchery in a deliberate effort to erase the memories of their harrowing ordeal.

Overseeing this charade of a medical laboratory are **3 derro sorcerers**. These quintessential mad scientists engage in a futile effort to find a way to protect their bodies from sunlight by examining other humanoid races. Their recent encounter with Eyegouger left the normally haughty and arrogant creatures humbled, yet even more disturbed. They normally outright slaughter their victims or return their broken captives to the surface after a few days; however they continued experimenting on this lot in new and even more bizarre ways. Eyegouger's presence and his decision to excavate the Wall of Stones trouble their twisted minds even more. Being forced to bend to the will of a greedy dragon does not sit well with the derros' triad of leaders. The PCs' appearance may be the straw that breaks their warped brains once and for all.

Though most of their repertoire of spells is geared to subdue and restrain their "patients" the sly derros quickly adapt to their new circumstances. The adjoining corridor offers the perfect confined space to unleash a deadly *lightning bolt*, otherwise they attempt to *sleep* and *slow* as many enemies as possible. Despite their innate insanity, the derro sorcerers work well as a team and seem to have a method to their proverbial madness. One of them wields a *staff of fire* that they use to seal off the adjoining corridor with a *wall of fire* or hurl a *fireball* down the same corridor if the PCs are clustered in that area. The derros never surrender and fight to the death. Interrogating the derros proves nearly pointless as they babble incoherent phrases and espouse ridiculous ideologies, though they unwittingly offer one vital piece of information. A successful opposed Sense Motive check and the proper questions reveal that they fear the strange blue light and blame it for their race's confinement to their subterranean lair.

DERRO SORCERERS (3)

XP 6,400

Male derro sorcerer 7 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Derro")

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +0

CR 9

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 94 (3d8+15 plus 7d6+35 plus 7)

Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +15

SR 14

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

Speed 20 ft.

Melee short sword +10 (1d4-1/19-20) or aklys +10 (1d6-1)

MY BLUE OASIS

Ranged repeating light crossbow +10 (1d6/19–20 plus poison) or aklys +10 (1d6)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

1/day—*daze* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 17)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

6/day—*laughing touch*

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (5/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *slow* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*hideous laughter* (DC 19), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *scare* (DC 17), *web* (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*color spray* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *entangle* (DC 16), *mage armor*[†], *sleep* (DC 16), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 17), *flare* (DC 15), *light*, *mending*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*

† already cast

Bloodline Fey

Str 9, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +0, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +12

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

SQ bloodline arcane (+2 DC for compulsion spells), madness, poison use, woodland stride

Combat Gear *staff of fire*, *wand of scorching ray* (8th, 14 charges); **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance* +2, short sword, aklys, repeating light crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts

Madness (Ex) Derros use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma.

Poison Use (Ex) Derros are not at risk of poisoning themselves when handling poison. They use Medium spider venom to poison their crossbow bolts, and generally carry 10 pre-poisoned bolts at all times.

Medium Spider Venom—injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d2 Strength damage; cure 1 save.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex) A derro takes 1 point of Con damage after every hour it is exposed to sunlight.

Development: All 3 derro sorcerers wear *cloaks of resistance*; however there is only one *staff of fire* and one *wand of scorching ray*. The beakers, vials and jars on the tables contain blood and other bodily fluids collected over the years, but none of them have any value either monetarily or scientifically. The same applies to the cruel torture implements used by the derros to collect their ill-gotten samples.

S4: Derro Fishery (CR 8)

Hundreds of sightless, albino fish ranging in size from tiny minnows to large bass swim feverishly around a large, diamond-shaped pool of clear water recessed 5 feet into the floor. Creepy depictions of pale, blue-skinned humanoids devouring wriggling fish are painted onto the walls. The graphic images show blood oozing from the creatures' mouths as their foul, jagged teeth rip into the unfortunate animals' flesh. Six smaller versions of the creatures are gathered around the pool, engaging in the very activity depicted in the artwork.

In a rarity for derro enclaves, the vicious humanoids raise fish as a supplemental food source. The **6 derros** that occupy this chamber are juveniles. They are half the size of the adults, and they are unarmed and unequipped to fight. The frightened youngsters immediately drop their meals and huddle in the farthest corner where they point at the intruders, while they keep a wary eye on them. These noncombatant juveniles offer no resistance or assistance. They do not speak or otherwise engage the PCs in any manner.

The water in the pool is pure and safe to drink, though it tastes somewhat fishy. Concealed 1 foot beneath the surface in the western corner is a tiny lever. Though the water is clear, the fishes' constant motion and the apparatus' minute size make it difficult to see. Spotting the device requires a successful DC 30 Perception check. The lever is used to disarm the **trap** on the secret door leading to **Area S5**. The trip is triggered whenever anyone attempts to open the hidden portal without disarming it first.

Secret Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 8, hp 60; Perception DC 30.

INSANITY MIST TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect poison gas (insanity mist); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10 ft.-area).

The insanity mist has no effect on the derros; however they disarm the trap whenever they move prisoners into or out of **Area S5**.

S5: Derro Teleportation Circle

The faint outline of a 10-foot-diameter circle emblazoned with mystical runes covers the floor at the far end of a small chamber. Reddish-brown streaks are visible on the walls and floor in the vicinity of the circle.

Not surprisingly, the streaks on the floor and walls are caused by dried blood from the derros' waylaid victims. They are more prevalent on the floor than the walls, especially in and around the *teleportation circle* itself. The *teleportation circle* and its corresponding *teleportation circle* beneath the streets of Khartous date back thousands of years, giving credence to the possibility that these derros were the first to go insane and later spread their madness to other members of their race through breeding. Identifying the circle as a *teleportation circle* requires a successful DC 29 Knowledge (arcana) check. Likewise, the *teleportation circle* can be disabled for 10 minutes with a successful DC 34 Disarm Device check.

To protect themselves against incursions by surface creatures that accidentally find the corresponding circle, the magical construct in Khartous is protected by a failsafe protocol. It can only be activated by a living derro or by any creature as long as it is activated within 1 minute of the *teleportation circle* in the derro lair. In addition, the *teleportation circles* function only once every 10 minutes even in the presence of a derro. Activating the *teleportation circle* is as simple as standing within its confines for 1 round. There is no chance of error, and the *teleportation circle* always transports the user to the same destination — the corresponding *teleportation circle*.

The PCs can discern the specific functions of the *teleportation circle* with successful DC 34 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft checks. PCs that accidentally or purposely travel to Khartous find themselves in a cramped, foul-smelling sewer section almost directly beneath the Anything Goes For Gold brothel in the Flame District section of the capital city. The teleportation circle offers a viable means of returning to the city after completing the adventure, yet its usage can be extremely problematic at this point in the adventure.

6: Derro Temple (CR 11)

Two small, pale blue-skinned humanoids lead six of their kin in an ominous drone of rhythmic chanting. The creatures' language seems perfectly suited to accommodate the foul prayers of dread emanating from their guttural voices. As they speak the words, two of their brethren paint the image of a blue dragon's head upon the floor. Likewise, two stone doors at the far end are emblazoned with a similar depiction of a gaping dragon's maw. The new draconic artworks are much different than the demonic statues that flank the group's two apparent leaders.

Prior to Eyegouger's arrival, the derros worshipped demonic lords which they believe gave power to the watery star that illuminates their area and tears at the fabric of space and time. The egotistical dragon changed all that. In addition to being greedy, Eyegouger is narcissistic and domineering. Using Ahmad's *tongues* spell, he cajoled the derros into worshipping him since he is destined to rule the mysterious mineral that they fear so much. For their part, the derro priests feign venerating Eyegouger by painting his images on the floor and doors; however they are currently singing their praises to their demonic patrons represented by the two statues flanking their high priests.

The worshippers are so fixated on their maintaining their precise incantations that they likely do not immediately react to the PCs' presence unless they are alerted by their cohorts from **Area S3** or hear the sounds of battle emanating from that area. If that happens, the **2 derro clerics** and the **6 derros** do not join the fray. Instead, the priests and their followers beseech their Abyssal overlords for strength in battle manifested in the form of a *bless* spell one priest casts on the group and *shield of faith* spells cast upon themselves. The followers fire their poisoned crossbow bolts at the intruders, while one priest further bolsters the group with a *prayer* spell and the other casts *rage* on himself. The enraged priest wades into melee combat as his counterpart uses his offensive spells such as *hold person*, *touch of idiocy* and *confusion* against the enemies despite the low difficulty class.

As with others of their kind, the derros do not willingly surrender under any circumstances, especially within their temple. Derros compelled to speak against their will deride Eyegouger and his wizard "lackey" for daring to break through the "Walls of Stone" that keeps them safe from the blue light.

DERROS (6)

XP 800

hp 25 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Derro")

CR 3

DERRO HIGH PRIESTS (2)

XP 3,200

Male derro oracle 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Derro;" *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide* "Oracle")

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4

CR 7

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 85 (3d8+15 plus 6d8+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15

SR 14

Weaknesses vulnerable to sunlight

Speed 20 ft.

Melee short sword +11/+6 (1d4–1/19–20) or aklys +11/+6 (1d6–1)

Ranged repeating light crossbow +11/+6 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

1/day—*daze* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 17)

Spells Known (CL 6th)

3rd (4/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *prayer*, *tongues*

2nd (6/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *dust of twilight*[†], *hold person* (DC 17), *levitate*, *minor image* (DC 17), *resist energy*

1st (8/day)—*bless*, *cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 16),

entropic shield, *lesser confusion* (DC 16), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *create water*, *detect magic*,

detect poison, *ghost sound*, *guidance*, *mage hand*,

stabilize, *virtue*

Mystery dark tapestry[†] <RULE>

Str 9, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning

Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +12, Disguise +7, Heal +5, Intimidate +13,

Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge

(religion) +9, Perception +4, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +14

Languages Aklo, Terran, Undercommon

SQ madness, oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (gift of madness, interstellar void), poison use

Combat Gear scroll of dismissal, scroll of magic circle

against law, scroll of silence, scroll of summon monster III;

Other Gear +1 leather armor, short sword, aklys, repeating

light crossbow, with 10 poisoned bolts, ring of protection +1

Madness (Ex) Derros use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a miracle or wish can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma.

Poison Use (Ex) Derros are not at risk of poisoning themselves when handling poison. They use Medium spider venom to poison their crossbow bolts, and generally carry 10 pre-poisoned bolts at all times.

Medium Spider Venom—injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect 1d2 Strength damage; cure 1 save.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex) A derro takes 1 point of Con damage after every hour it is exposed to sunlight.

[†] *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*

[‡] *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*

Treasure: The derro followers carry only the gear listed in their stats; however the priests also have four amethysts worth 50 gp each and 179 gp.

S7: Walls of Stone (CR 14)

Sundered blocks of stone are strewn about in front of a set of polished, metallic doors at the far end of a vast cavern. A powerful force repeatedly hammers against the strange alloy portals from the other side, causing them to violently shudder from the tremendous impact. Ancient symbols adorn the outside of the doors. Despite the damage being dealt to the doors, the debris littering the floor appears to be the work of the chamber's largest and most terrifying occupant, a huge blue dragon. Fine, white dust covers the massive beast's entire tail that is partially coiled around a shimmering pile of coins and valuable objects. Jagged pieces of white rock and stone are imbedded between its rigid scales as it moves through the rubble littered across the floor. Jolts of static electricity course across its body and mouth as puffs of charged steam smolder from its flaring nostrils. A youthful man accompanies the mighty reptile, though he seems disinterested in the dragon's actions. He appears lost in thought while he frantically fumbles through the pages of a dusty, weathered tome and gazes inquisitively and nervously at the battered doors.

This rough-hewn stone cavern lacks the polished surfaces found in the adjoining derro complex indicating that the humanoids never annexed the area as part of their territory. However, the smashed stones and the doors

themselves bear the obvious hallmarks of derro architecture and culture. The first derros that arrived here millennia ago experienced the watery star's debilitating effects firsthand, so they constructed the perfectly balanced and fitted alloy doors to negate the watery star's potent gravitational pull and temporal energy. The plan initially worked until Thozzaggard arrived and foolishly teleported to the other side. Like Ahmad, the bizarre mineral captivated his imagination and poisoned his mind. In time, the watery star's extradimensional properties and his own madness got the better of him transforming him into the undead abomination on the other side of the door. To prevent him from escaping, his kin reinforced the doors with a 10-foot thick stone wall. Their efforts to contain him succeeded, but in the interim he dealt enough damage to the doors to severely weaken the seal and allow the watery star's incredibly dense mass to create temporal and spatial anomalies throughout the derro complex. The degenerate race's insanity only got worse.

The cavern itself is rather featureless. The loose stones strewn across the cavern floor are 4-foot square blocks on average that may act as cover. The ceiling is exceptionally high reaching a maximum height of 50 feet near the center and tapering off to 30 feet around the walls. The metallic doors are comprised predominately from lead and adamantite with lesser concentrations of silver, nickel and copper. Properly identifying their metallic composition requires a successful DC 30 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. Likewise, a successful DC 30 Knowledge (engineering) check verifies that they are at least several thousand years old and were constructed by the same race that built Chass, even though the materials are different.

The symbols adorning the portals are an archaic form of Aklo. In their writing states "the madness of light and the light of madness." In their own warped way, even the derros realize that the watery star is extremely dangerous and altered their race's destiny in ways their minds could never imagine. The alloy doors are secured by an *arcane lock* spell; however the internal fastening devices have been damaged over the years making them vulnerable to collapse without the reinforced stone behind them. At the current pace, the doors give way in 6 minutes without outside intervention.

Metallic Alloy Door: 5 in. thick; hardness 16, hp 121 (originally 150); Break DC 36 (originally 40).

Ever the egotist, **Eyegouger**, a mature adult blue dragon, taunts his prospective opponents before engaging them in battle. Heroes that dare to challenge the supremely confident beast must first overcome his frightful presence aura. Unlike most of his kind, Eyegouger prefers a more direct approach to everything he does including combat. Rather than rely on subterfuge and deceit, Eyegouger has a *mage armor* spell in effect at all times to boost his melee prowess. He begins the assault with a line of electricity aimed at the largest number of targets whenever possible or at the most heavily armored foe if he cannot affect multiple targets. His tactics vary based upon the PCs' response. If they attempt to surround him, he attempts to intimidate his adversaries by making a bite attack incorporated with his Dazzling Display feat. If the PCs are spread out, shaken or frightened, Eyegouger uses Shatter Defenses to maximum effect, singling out creatures affected by his frightful presence aura. The vicious dragon concentrates his formidable melee attacks against one opponent as part of a deliberate plan to wipe out his enemies one by one.

Though never explicitly spelled out during their time together, Eyegouger expects Ahmad to assist him in battle in the unthinkable event that things go poorly for the conceited dragon. Ahmad's reaction, as discussed later, depends upon the PCs' actions towards him. If Ahmad turns on Eyegouger, the vicious dragon focuses his attention solely on his former ally. Eyegouger has nowhere to flee in the face of a superior foe, so bartering his treasure for his life is his absolute last resort. He starts the negotiations offering a paltry sum of 1,000 gp, but he eventually relents to surrendering half of his hoard. If the PCs reject his offer, Eyegouger fights to the bitter end. He would rather be dead and wealthy than alive and penniless.

Ahmad, shows no aggression and generally reacts to the PCs' actions. He realizes he got himself into this predicament and wants nothing else to do with Eyegouger, yet the PCs are likely unaware of the wizard's trepidation. In many respects, the PCs solve Ahmad's dilemma perfectly. Though he fretted over Eyegouger acquiring the watery star for his own selfish purposes, the PCs provide him a second chance to kill two proverbial birds with one stone. They can rid the world of the conniving

dragon and help him fulfill his nearly lifelong dream of discovering the watery star. However, Ahmad realizes that Eyegouger would not take betrayal lightly, so he focuses his attention on the mysterious portals and the force striking them from the other side to the exclusion of all other distractions including the impending combat.

He takes no offensive actions against his dragon companion or the PCs unless either party attacks him first. If the PCs attack him, Ahmad's response depends upon the severity of the assault. In the case of a magical attack, he first uses his Spellcraft skill to identify the spell. In the event that the check fails, he attempts a saving throw to resist the spell regardless of the circumstance. If it succeeds, he voluntarily forgoes his saving throw or pretends that he failed it against any spell that does not cause bodily harm and allows him to feign temporary cooperation or incapacitation, such as charm and hold spells. On the other hand, he resists damage dealing magical attacks and similar debilitating spells; however they may also provide him with an ideal opportunity to fall to the ground and pretend to be dead. The specific circumstances dictate Ahmad's actions. It is plausible for him to collapse in the face of a high level spell that deals significant damage, but dying as a result of being struck by a *magic missile* is likely to raise suspicions. Under the right conditions, Ahmad slumps to the ground, holds his breath and remains perfectly motionless. A PC or even Eyegouger can see through the ruse by succeeding on a Sense Motive check opposed by Ahmad's Bluff check; otherwise Ahmad feigns death for the remainder of the battle. Ideally, he positions himself in an isolated part of the room unlikely to be subjected to further area effect spells or similar attacks.

If the PCs continue to attack him, Ahmad first attempts to flee or avoid detection using *dimension door*, *rope trick* or *invisibility* before joining forces with Eyegouger to fight back against them, though he does so with great reluctance. The brilliant wizard does not regret his pursuit of the watery star; he resents his decision to involve Eyegouger in the process. In fact, Ahmad may even aid the PCs in their battle against the fearsome dragon in furtherance of an alliance with the newcomers, provided that the PCs did not attack him at any point during the battle. Ahmad generally interjects himself into the combat under one of two extreme circumstances — things are going extremely poorly for the PCs or the PCs are on the verge of victory. In the former case, the GM may use Ahmad as a *deus ex machina* to assist the PCs and cement an alliance between the two parties. This is a much riskier endeavor for Ahmad, because Eyegouger immediately turns on his former associate. Under this circumstance, Ahmad may temporarily distract the wrathful dragon, giving the PCs a brief opportunity to regroup before the cagey wizard does everything he can to escape. Ahmad does not flee in the latter case, staying with the PCs until the job is done.

EYEGOUGER, MATURE ADULT BLUE DRAGON

CR 14

XP 38,400

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary "Chromatic Dragon, Blue"

LE Huge dragon (earth)

Init +4; **Senses** dragon senses; **Perception** +24

Aura electricity (5 ft., 1d6 electricity), frightful presence (210 ft., DC 22)

AC 31, touch 8, flat-footed 31 (+23 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d12+90)

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

DR 10/magic; **Immune** electricity, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 25

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +26 (2d8+13/19–20), 2 claws +25 (2d6+9), 2 wings +23 (1d8+4 [1/2 +9 Str]), tail slap +23 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (100-ft. line, 14d8 electricity, Reflex DC 24 for half), crush (2d8), desert thirst (DC 22)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

At will—*ghost sound* (DC 13), *minor image* (DC 15), *ventriloquism* (DC 14)

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (5/day)—*displacement*, *haste*

2nd (7/day)—*false life*, *invisibility*, *resist energy*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *true strike*, *unseen*

DUNES OF DESOLATION

servant

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Str 29, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 39 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Dazzling Display, Deadly Stroke, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Shatter Defenses, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Bluff +24, Fly +13, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (geography) +24, Knowledge (local) +24, Perception +24, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +13, Survival +24

Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Giant

SQ sound imitation

Desert Thirst (Ex) A blue dragon can cast *create water* at will (CL 18th). Alternatively, it can destroy an equal amount of liquid in a 10-foot burst. Unattended liquids are instantly reduced to sand. Liquid-based magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a Will save (DC 22) or be destroyed.

Electricity Aura (Su) An adult blue dragon is surrounded by an aura of electricity. Creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 points of electricity damage at the beginning of the dragon's turn.

Sound Imitation (Ex) A very young or older blue dragon can mimic any voice or sound it has heard by making a successful Bluff check against a listener's Sense Motive check.

AHMAD PACHWARI

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human diviner 10

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +10; **Perception** +6

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 57 (10d6+10 plus 10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +12

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +5 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

9/day—*diviner's fortune* (+5)

Spells Prepared (CL 10th)

5th—*contact other plane*, *passwall*, *teleport* (2)

4th—*charm monster* (2) (DC 20), *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*, *screy* (DC 20)

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance* (2), *silent invisibility*, *protection from energy*, *tongues*

2nd—*darkvision*, *daze monster* (DC 18), *invisibility*, *knock* (2), *rope trick*, *see invisibility*

1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *color spray* (DC 17), *comprehend languages*, *detect secret doors*, *identify*, *mage armor* (2) (already cast)

0—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *open/close* (DC 16), *read magic*

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 22, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Toughness

Skills Appraise +13, Diplomacy +8, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +13, Knowledge (engineering) +19, Knowledge (geography) +25, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +19, Survival +8, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven,

Giant, Undercommon

SQ *arcane bond* (*ring of feather fall*)

Combat Gear *potion of neutralize poison*, *potion of remove disease*, *potion of resist electricity* (20), *potion of water breathing*, *scroll of disintegrate*, *scroll of reverse gravity*, *scroll of slow*; **Other Gear** dagger, cloak of resistance +1, elemental gem (earth), ring of feather fall, spell component pouch, spellbook, writing equipment, 50 gp

Playing Ahmad

The preceding section addresses Ahmad's actions during the battle against Eyegouger; however his demeanor and goals abruptly change after the avaricious dragon's demise. With Eyegouger out of the way, Ahmad's obsession returns with a vengeance. The watery star consumes his every thought, even though he believes that the strange mineral may account for the derros' insanity. In spite of the inherent risks, the brilliant wizard forges ahead with his intention of proving his naysayers wrong and returning to Khartous a triumphant and vindicated hero. Though he has never seen a watery star and is basing his hypotheses on myths and legends, Ahmad is certain that he unlocked the secret to unlocking the star's true potential. He proposes to split the watery star into minute particles using a *disintegrate* spell from a scroll, immediately followed by a *reverse gravity* spell to sunder its molecular bonds releasing torrents of fresh water compressed to a subatomic level. He is convinced that his theory is correct, and he is ready, willing and eager to put his ideas to the test regardless of the potentially devastating consequences. To further demonstrate his loyalty towards the PCs, he willingly lends a hand during their subsequent encounter with the devourer bolstering their defensive abilities or using his magic against the undead creature.

With that said, Ahmad is not looking to pick a fight with the PCs. Instead, he calls upon his tremendous intellect and knowledge to demonstrate that he is correct. He blurts out complex mathematical formulae, obscure scientific principles, arcane mysteries and a few dashes of pseudoscience to demonstrate that he is the foremost expert on the subject and unequivocally knows what he is doing. Sample phrases may include "sundering the grasp of mutual attraction," "rending the protoplasmic features," "multidimensional polarization," "catastrophic emulsification," "primordial mystical energy," "sundering the bonds of reality" and any other colorful description the GM can devise suited for the situation. Ahmad relentlessly states his case, even as the evidence mounts that the watery stars are too dangerous to conduct tests upon via trial and error. If the PCs relent and allow Ahmad to perform his experiment, the results are devastating as described in **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**.

Despite the PCs' cogent protestations, in the end, logic and reason lose out to obsession as Ahmad's temptations get the better of him. If the PCs refuse to let him test his theory, he pushes past everyone and makes a mad dash to grab the watery star. Unfortunately, doing so causes the effects described in the watery star side box found in **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**. An insane Ahmad does everything in his power to see his plan to fruition. He knows he has only one chance to cast both spells in rapid succession, so uses his entire magical repertoire to allow him to do so without interruption. Hopefully, the PCs realize that they must stop Ahmad at all costs and by any means necessary to prevent a devastating cataclysm. This may include subduing him, incapacitating him, grappling him or if all else fails killing him. If the PCs opt for the last option, the watery star consumes Ahmad's psyche, and his body rises as a **devourer** 1d4+1 rounds later.

If the PCs later cure Ahmad of his insanity, he finally comes to his senses and realizes that further research and study must be conducted before the watery star's beneficial properties can be properly harnessed for the benefit of all. Proving their existence is enough satisfaction for him after his brush with insanity as long as the study of the watery star progresses and is taken seriously. (See the section **Concluding the Adventure** for more details).

Treasure: Eyegouger's treasure hoard is an impressive collection of coins and rare objects able to withstand damage from the dragon's breath weapon, physical attacks and the magical effects of ambitious dragon slayers. These include 7,511 gp, 16,984 sp, *flame tongue*, *rod of metal* and *mineral detection*, *bracers of armor +3*, *+1 dragonhide plate*, *pink and green sphere ioun stone*, *spined shield*, *figurine of wondrous power (silver raven)* and a *bead of force*. Otherwise the chamber is empty.

Development: In the aftermath of their battle against Eyegouger, the PCs have precious little time to recover before the alloy doors finally buckle 6 minutes after they entered the room, releasing the terror from **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**. If that happens, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of what emerges.

A 10-foot tall withered corpse bursts through the doors lashing its claws at any creature that stands in its path. The undead abomination's chest is a prison of jagged ribs that form a bony cage around a small tormented ghostly form. Eerie blue light rushes out from the chamber beyond basking everything in a phosphorescent glow.

S8: Cavern of the Water Star (CR 11)

If the PCs opened the door themselves, they encounter the undead monstrosity behind the door. In that case, the GM may read or paraphrase the creature's description from **Area S7: Walls of Stone** to supplement the following description of the cavern itself.

Peculiar blue light emanates from an asymmetrical depression in the ground illuminating every expanse of a vast chamber in a shimmering aura of deep azure. It pulsates at irregular intervals, though the cessation of light never lasts more than a few seconds. An ancient, weathered tome securely fastened to the wall by a metallic alloy chain hovers in midair, rising and sinking in accordance with the bursts of light emanating from the depression. Similarly, a metallic alloy chest appears to be welded to the stone floor beneath it.

The watery star's bright blue light is now inescapable. All creatures with line of sight to the strange mineral must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save to avoid being dazzled for as long as they remain within visual range of the watery star plus an additional 1d4+1 rounds after leaving the area, turning their back towards it or closing their eyes. Characters that look away from the watery star have a 50% chance to avoid having to make a saving throw against the dazzling effect; however all opponents within the area gain concealment against that character. Characters that completely cover their eyes with a blindfold or shut their eyes are not affected by the dazzling effect, though all opponents within the area gain total concealment against that character. Random temporal or gravitational effects are still determined normally.

The creature imprisoned within this chamber is a **devourer**, the last remaining vestige of Thozzaggard who teleported into this cavern countless ages ago. The monster uses its devour soul attack to add to the ten essence points it already has. The intelligent creature singles out physically weak characters for this particular attack focusing on fellow arcane spellcasters. The creature uses these points to fuel its spell-like abilities. Unless it gains more essence points from one of the PCs or Ahmad, the devourer relies upon its devour soul attack, its claw attacks or its lower level spell-like abilities, particularly *inflict serious wounds*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *suggestion* and *vampiric touch* to destroy the PCs.

The devourer speaks to the PCs throughout the encounter, using its telepathic abilities to communicate with them. It suggests that it must feast on the PCs' souls just as the "blue stone" consumed it. The creature provides no additional details about its demise other than to boast that in the end, nothing can resist the devourer or the blue stone. The devourer fights until destroyed.

DEVOURER

XP 12,800

hp 133 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* "Devourer")

CR 11

Before his transformation into a devourer, Thozzaggard the derro sorcerer, conducted deranged, but nonetheless painstaking historical and scientific research on the watery star. He realized that the watery star's potent gravitational pull eventually dragged unattended objects into its vortex; therefore he securely fastened his journal and his items to the wall and floor respectively. The book tethered to the alloy chain is his journal. It is written in Aklo and contains detailed notes about the watery star's unusual properties and inherent dangers. The author claims that his people built a magnificent structure atop a plateau in the middle of an ancient lake, as they scoured the depths of the earth searching for what unnatural force created the anomalous body of water. A PC who succeeds on a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check deduces that the writer refers to Chass, the scene of the climactic battle in the preceding adventure "King of Beasts." The story goes on to say that four months of searching eventually yielded a tremendous find, a mysterious, pulsating blue crystal in a subterranean cavern. He dubbed the mineral to be a "god particle" and demanded that his kin gather around it to worship it. In short time, the mineral took its toll on his companions, withering their bodies and minds in degenerative chaos. They could no longer bear the light of day, and the ravages of insanity coursed through their very beings. He resisted its powers better than his kin, and in the end he reduced it to ash with a powerful magical incantation. The damage was done, as he and his people abandoned the site. He continued his research, while they spread their madness to others of their kind and each other.

From there, Thozzaggard's journal discusses the temporal and spatial anomalies attributable to the god particle as well as its inherent dangers. He also opines that his actions likely lead his race to ruination, but he remains focused on discovering the god particle's full potential. Through various complex mathematical formulae, educated guesses and pseudoscientific theories, the author proposes that the god particle is a compressed receptacle of unfathomable amounts of water. He believes that magic offers the secret to unlocking its mysteries, but he is not sure how to proceed from here. At this point, Thozzaggard's revelation makes it imperative that Ahmad not be allowed to perform his impromptu experiment in such tight quarters.

The journal picks up again several weeks later, claiming that the author came across another group of his kin that dwelt alongside a god particle; however they feared it and hermetically sealed it behind alloy doors. Thozzaggard questions his brethren's trepidation and criticizes them for being cowardly in the face of greatness. He then resolves to go it alone and magically transport himself beyond the doors and into the presence of the world's foundational building block as he refers to it. After a few semi-coherent entries and a set of crude diagrams, Thozzaggard's journal goes downhill in a hurry and devolves into the ramblings of a madman. Outlandish theories are posited, discredited, reevaluated, rejected and then proven wrong, only to go through the whole process all over again. The last entry says it all. "The god particle breathed life into me, and I stand at the ready to reciprocate its marvelous gesture."

Thozzaggard's journal takes approximately 3d4 minutes to read in its entirety. It should serve as a stern warning not to tussle with the strange mineral resting at the bottom of the depression.

Development: Obviously, allowing Ahmad to perform his experiment and release the watery star's water content proves disastrous in this small, confined space. Water instantly floods the entire derro complex including this chamber as well as the underground level and the surface dealing 20d6 points of damage to every creature and object in its path. A successful DC 25 Reflex save reduces the damage by half. In addition, any creature caught in the deluge eventually drowns unless they can breathe underwater or escape to safety. The resulting tidal wave increases the oasis' dimensions by roughly 50%, completely submerging the nearby trade route and the flora growing along the oasis' current banks. If the PCs read Thozzaggard's journal, it becomes apparent that allowing Ahmad to unleash the watery star's full potential would be utterly disastrous given the current circumstances. Given these circumstances, the PCs must prevent him from doing so by any means necessary.

Treasure: Thozzaggard feared that his journey beyond the alloy doors may be a one-way trip, so he brought his worldly treasures with him and placed them inside his alloy chest with an inset lock. The key has long since vanished. The chest contains 3,556 gp, a *broom of flying*, a *headband of mental prowess*, a *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 8th, 24 charges), a *ring of counterspells* and 8 opal gems worth 100 gp each.

The Watery Star (warilium)

The watery star lies at the bottom of a 3-foot deep, 10-foot diameter gouge in the ground. The translucent crystalline, blue stone is roughly cylindrical in shape and literally stands upright as if it were deliberately planted into the ground. It measures 2 inches in length and 1 inch in diameter and appears to weigh only a few ounces; however its small size belies its true mass. Locked within its molecular and subatomic structure, the tiny mineral contains 10 billion gallons of water, enough liquid to cover 330 acres of land up to a depth of 1 foot. Under normal circumstances, this volume of water would weigh approximately 42 million tons. The gravitational force exerted by such a massive object would duplicate the effects of a localized black hole, but warilium defies all such expectations by simultaneously existing on two planes — the Material Plane and extradimensional space created by its tremendous gravitational forces. As such, the watery star is anchored in place. It cannot be moved either physically or magically without creating a portable connection to the extradimensional space. This can be accomplished by casting a *miracle* or *wish* spell on the watery star itself. In this circumstance, the watery star weighs less than a pound and can be easily moved, though once the spell ends, the watery star crashes to the ground with tremendous force and is once again anchored in place. Incredibly, Ahmad correctly deduced the only way to release the mineral's water content — by disintegrating the watery star and then casting *reverse gravity* in the area of the disintegrated particles which immediately releases the entire volume of water. This procedure frees the water with potentially devastating consequences dependent upon the watery star's location at the time of casting. Cast in a confined space or a highly populated area, the torrent of water would be akin to an immense tidal wave destroying everything in its path and flooding a vast area. On the other hand, under controlled conditions, the watery star could be used to create an immense reservoir that would satisfy a desert community's water needs for decades or even centuries to come. Ahmad's fears are well-founded as the watery star can potentially achieve tremendous good or wreak mindboggling devastation.

Ahmad or the PCs may attempt to deduce these properties via magical means, such as *legend lore* and other appropriate spells or to a lesser extent by succeeding on a DC 40 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check. In the latter case, anyone that succeeds on the Knowledge (dungeoneering) check may then attempt a DC 40 Knowledge (arcana) check to ascertain

the means of moving the watery star and releasing its water content.

In spite of its benefits, the watery star's unique physical properties exact a tremendous toll on living organic matter. Warilium destroys tissue on a cellular level, so it does not cause visible wounds or injuries. For every 1 minute spent within the direct glow of the watery star, a living creature that fails a DC 20 Fortitude save suffers 1 point of Constitution drain. The Difficulty Class increases by +1 for every previous failed saving throw. Each time a creature loses 1 point of Constitution damage, it must also succeed on a DC 10 Will save to avoid becoming insane. The Difficulty Class of this saving throw increases by +1 for every previous saving throw. In addition, creatures outside of this range, but subjected to the watery star's warping effects do not suffer Constitution drain; however they may go insane. Each day, the creature must succeed at a Will save using the preceding DC to avoid this fate. Unlike the *insanity* spell, this form of insanity manifests itself as paranoid delusions rather than duplicating the effects of a *confusion* spell, though it can be cured by the same means as the *insanity* spell. Creatures that go insane perceive that everyone means them harm, and they see creatures, objects and conspiracies that are not there. While insane, the creature has no allies and cannot be affected by spells that also affect the caster's allies; it suffers a 50% miss chance on all melee and ranged attacks; it treats all saving throws to disbelieve illusions as if it rolled a natural 1; and the character acts as if it were constantly distracted which prevents it from taking 10 in most circumstances.

Any living creature that comes in direct physical contact with the watery star takes 1d4 points of Constitution drain per round of contact and immediately becomes insane. There is no saving throw to resist these effects. Whenever the watery star reduces an arcane spellcaster's Constitution score to 0, the creature's psyche is pulled into the extradimensional space, while its body rises as a devourer. The decomposed remains of all other living creatures are eventually pulled into the void and utterly destroyed. The watery star exerts enough gravitational force to pull inanimate objects and nonliving organic matter weighing 1 pound or less towards itself at a rate of 10 feet per minute. Likewise it pulls materials weighing 50 pounds or less towards itself at a speed of 10 feet per hour. Heavier objects move at a proportionally slower pace, whereas inanimate matter weighing greater than 500 pounds is completely unaffected.

Alloy Chest: 4 cubic feet; 75 hit points; Break DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Concluding the Adventure

Provided that the PCs defeat Eyegouger and prevent Ahmad from unleashing the watery star's torrent of water into the subterranean chambers and passageways, the PCs must decide what to do with the watery star. Naturally, the watery star is a valuable commodity for the kingdom as it would solve the land's water needs for the foreseeable future. The problem lies in where and how to do it. Though Ahmad knows the secret to realizing its full potential, he is at a loss for explaining how to physically move it to another location. Additional research over the course of the next several months or even years may yield an answer, but that still requires securing the area against ignorant trespassers and other powerful, ambitious beings that might devise a mechanism for actually moving the watery star. This is particularly true in the case of a genie, demon or devil that may possess the magical means to move the watery star to a secure location until they figure out how to release its tidal wave of destruction.

Another alternative would be to deny the watery star's existence and reinter it deep within the earth. Without any visible aftermath from its discovery, the story is highly plausible especially in light of the skepticism surrounding its existence in the first place. The only variable in this plan is Ahmad. For a man who spent much of his adulthood searching for an elusive discovery, it is impossible to expect him to remain silent and not proclaim his controversial find to all of his detractors and naysayers. However, Ahmad vows not to discuss the watery star if the PCs promise

to help him figure out a way to transport the watery star to a new location. In that case, Ahmad reluctantly keeps the secret as long as their research steadily progresses. If their research shows no progress or the PCs' assistance falls by the wayside, all bets are off and Ahmad tells everyone in earshot about his monumental discovery.

Sultan Faud and Khartous's merchants are pleased that the oasis is fully accessible to travelers even if the PCs flooded the surrounding area in the process. Upon their return to the capital, Sultan Faud expresses concern about the watery star's safekeeping and security, and he even debates stationing a garrison at the oasis to prevent anyone from excavating it for their own nefarious purposes or exerting their influence over the oasis again. Likewise, Khartous's merchants seem interested in its economic value, but they still have their doubts about its purported abilities. Without any concrete proof of its possible commercial benefits, they slough off the idea of pursuing the matter any further. On the other hand, Jamaal Dakkar is far more interested in the discovery than the PCs' battle against the dragon. He is most intrigued by Thozzaggard's journal and claims that the PCs owe it to him as part of their original bargain. Jamaal is insistent about this point and does not take no for an answer, even if it costs him an additional 500 gp to acquire the work to add to his impressive book collection. He is satisfied that the journal provides enough proof to verify their existence given the extreme danger of keeping the watery star in his physical possession.

At a future date, the PCs may finally possess the knowledge and means to safely use the watery star for the kingdom's everlasting benefit. Until that day comes, they are entrusted with the task of ensuring that no one else attempts to do something untoward with the monumental discovery.

Appendix: Random Desert Events and Monster Encounters

This Appendix provides additional strange events and random encounters to spice up any desert campaign. The first section contains a table detailing unusual occurrences that PCs may encounter while trekking across the sands en route to greater adventure. The second section consists of a random encounter chart for desert adventures.

Random Desert Events

Mile after mile of trackless dunes and gravelly soil frequently give rise to ennui and tedium. To break up the drudgery of desert travel, the GM is encouraged to use these spontaneous events to keep the adventurers on their proverbial toes as they make their way across the forbidding landscape. To do so, roll 1d100 and consult the following table.

1d100	Desert Event
1	A lone camel missing its rider crosses paths with the PCs.
2-4	Sun glare is particularly strong imposing a -1 circumstance penalty to all vision-based Perception checks.
5-6	A runaway concubine falls madly in love with the male PC with the highest Charisma score.
7-8	The top of an ancient stone stele peeks through the sands.
9	A tiny meteor crashes into the sands and creates a 40-foot diameter cylinder of dust and sand duplicating the effects of an <i>obscuring mist</i> spell and lasts for 1d4 minutes before dissipating.
10-11	A desert merchant offers to sell his youngest son to the PCs.
12-13	The PCs stumble across two bored noblemen racing camels across a dusty plain.
14-16	One of a rahada family's vehicles is stuck in the sand. The family patriarch asks the PCs to help him dislodge it for a small fee.
17-19	One of the PCs' mounts steps on a jagged stone and injures its foot. The animal's speed is reduced by half until it receives curative magic.
20	The PCs come across a partially mummified al-haloon carcass inexplicably atop a tall dune.
21-28	A mirage appears on the horizon.
29-30	The entrance to a long forgotten burial vault becomes visible in the sands. Grave robbers cleaned out the tomb's valuables centuries ago, but a random disease transmittable by inhalation lingers in the contaminated air.
31-38	A large patch of wet quicksand blocks the way.
39	The PCs encounter an extremely rare area of dry quicksand.
40-44	At some point during the overnight hours, a venomous spider, snake or scorpion decides to share a bed with a sleeping PC.
45-48	A caravan merchant relentlessly pursues the PCs until they agree to purchase one of its overpriced items.
49	The PCs meet a wandering sadhu (see Chapter 8) who claims he can tell them the secret of life if they recapture the cobra he lost two days ago.
50-51	An unconscious man found dying of thirst in the desert is in fact a convicted murderer the authorities banished to the burning sands.
52	Someone finds a gold locket bearing the inscription "forever yours, Abdullah."

DUNES OF DESOLATION

1d100	Desert Event
53-54	A hippogriff and its armored rider soar through the distant heavens apparently searching for someone or something.
55-59	Scavenging birds circle overhead following the PCs' footsteps.
60-61	Flashing streaks of light from a passing comet illuminate the night sky granting a +2 bonus to all Profession (astrologer) checks attempted that night.
62-64	The full moon is particularly bright this evening basking the entire desert in dim light.
65-66	A desert traveler scours through the sand looking for his lost wedding ring.
67-69	Tumbleweed rolls across the sandy plains with a strip of unusual black cloth attached to the plant.
70-71	Traveling merchants offer to sell peyote to the PCs in exchange for a favor.
72-73	An ancient road partially buried beneath the sands leads to the collapsed ceiling of a long abandoned building.
74-85	Roll on the desert random encounter chart found later in this Appendix .
86-87	The PCs cross paths with a band of bounty hunters pursuing an escaped fugitive.
88-89	While in a desert community, Jabar Andazi (CN, male human Rog 2; Dex 14; Sleight of Hand +8) or another NPC attempts to pick one of the PC's pockets.
90-91	An adulterous husband on the run begs the PCs to protect him from his scorned wife's irate father and three older brothers.
92-93	Tax collectors set up an impromptu toll site along the PCs' path.
94-95	Overcast skies reduce the temperature by 1d4 degrees.
96-97	A cave built into the side of a rocky outcropping serves as the hideout for a gang of bandits currently scoping out their next score.
98	The mummified remains of a desert explorer are stripped clean except for concealed scroll that contains a crude map of the surrounding area marked with a cryptic "X".
99-00	A sealed bottle atop a dune contains a note telling the reader to tell Yaharra that he is sorry.

Desert Monster Encounters

To add further dangers to a trek across the burning sands, the GM is free to use the subsequent random chart to generate additional desert encounters. The chart includes monsters appearing in this sourcebook as well as those presented in other works. To use the table, roll 1d1000 (3d10). Roll on the Hot and Dry Desert table for encounters in that particular environment, and the Semiarid Desert table for encounters in that landscape.

Under the heading "Source" the following books are referenced.

DD: *Dunes of Desolation*, monsters detailed in **Chapter 6**

B1: *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*

B2: *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*

B3: *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*

TOHC: *Tome of Horrors Complete* by Frog God Games

Random Desert Encounters

Creature	CR	Source	No. App.	Hot and Dry Desert	Semiarid Desert
Adherer	3	B3	1-12	001-030	001-010
Akbadia	12	DD	1	031-035	011-030
Alhajan	5	DD	1-40	036-055	031-040
Al-haloon	3	DD	1-4	056-077	041-053
Al-mi'raj	1/2	TOHC	1-20	078-085	054-060
Ant lion, giant	5	B3	1-2	086-095	061-070
Ant lion, giant adult	6	B3	1-12	096-100	071-075
Atomie	1	B3	1-14	101-105	076-077
Basilisk, greater	7	TOHC	1-2	106-110	078-080
Bat	2	B1	3-8	111-115	081-100
Behir	8	B1	1-2	116-125	101
Burning Dervish	7	TOHC	1-15	126-140	102-105
Cacchine	3	DD	1-3	141-142	106-125

Random Desert Encounters Continued

Creature	CR	Source	No. App.	Hot and Dry Desert	Semiarid Desert
Camel	1	B2	1	143–185	126–140
Cheitan Janni	6	TOHC	1–12	186–195	141–145
Cyclops, great	12	B3	1–14	196–205	146–150
Death Dog	2	TOHC	2–10	206–210	151–170
Death worm	6	TOHC	1	211–225	171–175
Demon, rabassa	11	DD	1	226–230	176–180
Dendan (aquatic only)	12	DD	2–5	231–235	181–185
Desperado	6	DD	1	236–240	186–200
Dire Camel	3	DD	1	241–250	201–205
Dragon, blue	var.	B1	1	251–260	206–210
Dragon, black	var.	B1	1	261–265	211–220
Dragonne	7	B3	1–10	266–280	221–235
Drake, desert	8	B3	1–12	281–300	236–245
Drake, salt	8	TOHC	1–5	301–310	246–255
Dust digger	4	TOHC	1–10	311–335	256–265
El-aurens	5	DD	1–8	336–355	266–275
El-halaj	4	DD	1	356–370	276–300
Falak	10	DD	1–2	371–385	301–305
Flind	2	TOHC	1–200	386–405	306–335
Gallows Tree Zombie	4	TOHC	1–11	406–410	336–355
Genie, janni	4	B1	1–12	411–430	356–370
Ghazak	1/2	DD	1–20	431–465	371–390
Ghul	5	B3	1–8	466–475	391–400
Giant, Ash	11	B3	1–30	476–480	401–405
Giant, Desert	9	B3	1–30	481–495	406–420
Giant, Sand	14	TOHC	1–27	496–505	421–425
Girtabilu	8	B3	1–14	506–515	426–430
Gnoll	1	B1	1–200	516–535	431–465
Golem, Mummy	6	TOHC	1	536–540	466–468
Golem, Sand	6	DD	1	541–545	469–470
Gugunda	4	DD	1	546–555	471–480
Hallaraq	8	DD	2–7	556–565	481–490
Hyaenodon	4	TOHC	1–16	566–578	491–500
Inphidian, Cobra-Back	3	TOHC	1	579–582	501–502
Inphidian, Common	3	TOHC	1–100	583–600	503–520
Inphidian, Dancer	3	TOHC	1	601–603	521–522
Inphidian, Night Adder	5	TOHC	1	604–605	523–524
Inphidian, Rattler	4	TOHC	1	606–608	525–526
Jackalwere	2	B3	1–5	609–625	527–535
Karkadann	8	DD	1–5	626–635	536–540
Kharam	8	DD	1	636–645	541–550
Lamia	6	B1	1–12	646–670	551–570
Lammasu	8	B3	1	671–685	571–575
Lion Beast of Chaos	5	TOHC	1–11	686–690	576–580

Random Desert Encounters Continued

Creature	CR	Source	No. App.	Hot and Dry Desert	Semiarid Desert
Lizard, Fire	8	TOHC	1–2	691–695	581–595
Lycanthrope, werehyena	2	DD	1–20	696–705	596–610
Maffet	6	B3	1–10	706–715	611–620
Martuush	15	DD	1–5	716–725	621–625
Necropolis guardian	9	DD	1–3	726–730	
Phoenix	15	B1	1	731–732	626
Qarin	6	DD	1	733–735	627–630
Rahada	1/2	DD	1–100	736–750	631–660
Ratfolk	1/3	B3	1–100	751–755	661–690
Razorweed	2	DD	1–8	756–760	691–730
Sand Kraken	8	TOHC	1	761–770	731–735
Sand Stalker	4	TOHC	1–5	771–780	736–745
Scarab beetle swarm	3	DD	1–6	781–795	746–755
Scorpion, colossal black	15	B2	1	796–805	756–770
Scorpion, ghost	1/2	B3	1–6	806–810	771–790
Scorpion, giant	3	B1	1	811–840	791–830
Shahardeen	4	DD	1–8	841–855	831–840
Shedu	7	TOHC	2–8	856–865	841–845
Simurgh	18	B3	1	866–870	846–850
Solifugid	1	B2	1–6	871–880	851–860
Spectral rider	10	DD	1	881–890	861–865
Sphinx	8	B1	1–6	891–900	866–870
Sphinx, andro	9	B3	1	901–905	871–875
Sphinx, crio	7	B3	1	906–915	876–895
Therianthrope, Asswere	2	TOHC	1–5	916–920	896–900
Therianthrope, Lionwere	6	TOHC	1–5	921–928	901–915
Thirstmonger	4	DD	1	929–935	916–925
Troll, Desert	8	DD	1–4	936–955	926–950
Wadira	6	DD	1–2	956–970	951–960
Wellwinger	5	DD	1	971–980	961–980
Yrthak	9	B2	1–6	981–985	981–995
Zibbine	6	DD	1–6	986–1000	996–1000

LEGAL APPENDIX

Designation of Product Identity: The following items are hereby designated as Product Identity as provided in section 1(e) of the Open Game License: Any and all material or content that could be claimed as Product Identity pursuant to section 1(e), below, is hereby claimed as product identity, including but not limited to: **1.** The name “Frog God Games” as well as all logos and identifying marks of Frog God Games, LLC, including but not limited to the Frog God logo and the phrase “Adventures worth winning,” as well as the trade dress of Frog God Games products; **2.** The product name “Cyclopean Deep,” as well as any and all Frog God Games product names referenced in the work; **3.** All artwork, illustration, graphic design, maps, and cartography, including any text contained within such artwork, illustration, maps or cartography; **4.** The proper names, personality, descriptions and/or motivations of all artifacts, characters, races, countries, geographic locations, plane or planes of existence, gods, deities, events, magic items, organizations and/or groups unique to this book, but not their stat blocks or other game mechanic descriptions (if any), and also excluding any such names when they are included in monster, spell or feat names. **5.** Any other content previously designated as Product Identity is hereby designated as Product Identity and is used with permission and/or pursuant to license.

This printing is done under version 1.0a of the Open Game License, below.

Notice of Open Game Content: This product contains Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License, below. Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of the Open Game License.

Designation of Open Game Content: All text within this product — excluding any text on the inside or outside of the front or back cover or on the Credits page — is hereby designated as Open Game Content, subject to the Product Identity designation included in this Legal Appendix.

Use of Content from *Tome of Horrors Complete*: This product contains or references content from the *Tome of Horrors Complete* and/or other monster *Tomes* by Frog God Games. Such content is used by permission and an abbreviated Section 15 entry has been approved. Citation to monsters from the *Tome of Horrors Complete* or other monster *Tomes* must be done by citation to that original work.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) “Contributors” means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) “Derivative Material” means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) “Distribute” means to reproduce, license, rent, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) “Open Game Content” means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity; (e) “Product Identity” means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures; characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) “Trademark” means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor; (g) “Use”, “Used” or “Using” means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content; (h) “You” or “Your” means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE

portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder’s name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

System Reference Document. Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Paizo Publishing, LLC.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook. © 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide © 2012, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Owen K.C. Stephens, Todd Stewart, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide, © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Cam Banks, Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Jim Butler, Eric Cagle, Graeme Davis, Adam Daigle, Joshua J. Frost, James Jacobs, Kenneth Hite, Steven Kenson, Robin Laws, Tito Leati, Rob McCreary, Hal Maclean, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, David Noonan, Richard Pett, Rich Redman, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Amber Scott, Doug Seacat, Mike Selinker, Lisa Stevens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, Penny Williams, Skip Williams, Teeuwynn Woodruff.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary. © 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2. © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Graeme Davis, Crystal Frasier, Joshua J. Frost, Tim Hitchcock, Brandon Hodge, James Jacobs, Steve Kenson, Hal MacLean, Martin Mason, Rob McCreary, Erik Mona, Jason Nelson, Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Owen K.C. Stephens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, and Greg A. Vaughan, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jesse Benner, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, James Jacobs, Michael Kenway, Rob McCreary, Patrick Renie, Chris Sims, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, and Russ Taylor, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Tim Hitchcock, Colin McComb, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K Reynolds, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Brian J. Cortijo, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Richard A. Hunt, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, and Russ Taylor.

The Tome of Horrors Complete, Copyright 2011, Necromancer Games, Inc., published and distributed by Frog God Games.

Dunes of Desolation

In a land where the sun relentlessly bakes its sandy surface, water is king. In the desert, the life-sustaining fluid is more valuable than the most precious metals, desirable gems and mightiest weapons. Most adventurers believe that the scarcity of water makes the desert an inhospitable place devoid of life, riches and challenges.

The incessant glare of a distant, roiling inferno, the intolerable heat of day, the monotonous expanses of sand and the fierce winds are enough to break the will of any man or beast, but natives and experienced adventurers know that the dunes conceal many secrets and treasures. Scratch a few feet beneath the surface and the wondrous ruins of lost cities miraculously come to life. Some of these settlements succumbed to the natural forces of the desert, while vengeful deities, demons or spirits condemned others to an eternity beneath the dunes.

Marvelous oases abounding with life and mystery also dot the forbidding landscape. Those fortunate enough to discover these refuges are delighted to find fresh water, but danger often lurks amid the lush vegetation or beneath the surface of the water. Those intrepid souls hardy enough to brave the elements and explore the wonders of this harsh terrain are well-rewarded for their efforts



FROG GOD
GAMES

ISBN 978-1-62283-202-6

