

TUS7-03

Faithfully Correct

A Two-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Tusmit Regional Adventure

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Tensions brewing up following the end of the open rebellion in Tusmit do not stop a young paladin on a spiritual quest from wanting aid in reaching a forgotten monastery in the Yatils. Will you help him? Will you tell anyone what you've found? Will you be coerced in revealing a secret lost for a thousand years? An intensive roleplaying adventure set in Keruz and the Yatil Mountains for characters of level 1 to 9 (APL 2 to 8) and of special interest for members of the Tears of the Marid, Brotherhood of Basharat, Church of Azor'alq, Church of Al'Akbar (True Faith) and Rebellion metaorganizations as well as any characters involved in the Clergy of Istus.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information on NPCs and monsters. For your convenience, Appendix 1 is split by APL.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR). You need one copy of this for each participating player.

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To calculate the Average Party Level (APL), follow the process below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure. Each PC may bring one animal, plus any creatures gained from class abilities to help in combat. (PCs can bring more creatures but they cannot help in combat). If you deem that the animal bestows a significant benefit in combat add the animal's CR to the level of the PC it is accompanying for calculating APL. (Animals gained from class abilities and one standard horse, warhorse, or riding dog for a PC with Mounted Combat do not affect APL).
2. Sum the results of step 1 and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
3. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. A player character more than three levels higher than the APL at which the adventure is played cannot participate. If a player character is more than two levels away from the APL at which the adventure is played, he suffers a 50%

penalty to the amount of gold and XP gained in the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

These APL calculation rules reference version 7.0 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. If you are playing this adventure in 2008, check the current version of the *LGCS* and follow any updated rules presented within.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard two-round Regional adventure, set in Tusmit. Characters native to Tusmit pay two Time Units per round, all others pay four Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in Survival and succeeds on a DC 20 Survival check, he heals temporary ability damage as if he had Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). PCs may Take 10 on this roll.

Chapters 1 and 5 of the *LGCS* present more information about lifestyle and upkeep.

Adventure Background

General background

The events of the fall of 596CY had a detrimental effect on the policies of Muammar Qharan regarding security and the consolidation of his power over Tusmit. Jadhim Orem has stopped his *coup* attempt and faded back in the background of tusman politics. His political supporters, having lost the energy to fight when they saw that the current structure would not budge more than it had, returned under the fold of Muammar Qharan's rule, laying low and doing much needed damage control to re-establish good relations with his Exalted Splendor. To that effect, Muammar Qharan seemed, at the beginning, to be conciliatory with the rebellious sheikdoms and offered a magnanimous hand towards peace and prosperity but soon turned around and became otherwise.

Under pretence to rout the rebellious units out of the troublesome sheikdoms, new military units loyal to Muammar became garrisons in many trouble spots where the rebellious outcries were the loudest. Eysami received the Zeifian regiments sent out by the Sultan, a new Commander of the Water Watchers replaced Kazarai al-Liwa in Blakshidur and many other towns regained the red flag of Tusmit over townhalls, temples and other official buildings.

Under strict supervision from the Office of the Royal Investigators in Sefmur, a lot of new agents were trained to unmask supporters of the rebellion who would continue the fight even after the defeat. They even were successful a few times, uncovering cells of resistance activity even in the capital. Muammar Qharan, making a great show of the findings of his Royal Investigators, continued to tarnish the image of the rebels, accusing them of terrorist activities to disrupt the peace in Tusmit.

During these times of trouble, the different social, religious and commercial factions of Tusmit returned to a "business as usual" state, albeit a tense one, since everybody is now afraid of the Royal Investigators and of what they could uncover in their seemingly random searches of houses, temples and business accounts.

The population of Sefmur, in these troubled times, has tried to "Get over the Rebellion" as they say it in the most sought-after kava houses. They joke and make snide commentaries about how nice things have returned to and how beautiful everything is, but behind it lies pure, unabashed fear.

They fear what could happen if another Kahzaa al-Ahron al-Azor'Alq should voice his opinion on the government of Muammar Qharan. Everybody is shutting up, and nobody talks about that awful thing that happened at the temple. Not even Paffon al-Ayatollah or Sinbad al-Mufti have opened up this can of worms with the Pasha yet. For

the first time in years, the fact that Muammar Qharan is not “Orem” is starting to bother a lot of people. Both churches of Al’Akbar seemed to have lost the ear of the Pasha and are actually trying to see what kind of political power they still wield in Tusmit. All traces of the Church of Azor’Alq have been thrown out of the palace but the burned remains of the temple are left undisturbed by order of the Pasha to be left as an example for anybody who would criticize his rule.

For the population, anger is what remains, but not so much as it is expressed publicly. They feel that their Pasha, which was not that bad since 579CY, went the wrong way in a very public manner in putting a price on Kahzaa’s head and banishing the cult of Azor’alq in all Tusmit. Even Munthir Haddad, the “returned from the past” paladin which was the *de facto* leader in the war against the Worldburners and Kerridzar in Suvii, was banished from ever returning to Sefmur because of his link with the rebels and his association with the Church of Azor’alq.

Shortly after the victory against Kerridzar, Munthir Haddad vanished from sight and is currently thought gone underground to escape the Pasha’s clutches as is Kahzaa al’Ahron, the highest ranking cleric of Azor’Alq in Tusmit.

The fact is that Munthir, having received news of the failure of the Rebellion shortly after Kerridzar’s defeat, went underground and waited until he got news that it was a little safer to get out and to search for the location of his congregation leader Kahzaa al’Ahron and decide what should be done after that, regarding the survival of the cult of Azor’alq in Tusmit.

Kahzaa al’Ahron, high priest of Azor’Alq, at about the same time, received minutes warning before the Royal Investigator’s Office assailed the temple of Azor’alq in Sefmur, and was able to get to safe distance with a good part of his entourage, leaving only token volunteers in the temple for the assault. Since then, the high cleric of Azor’alq has been in hiding and trying to find refuge with several other factions in Tusmit. Having tried unsuccessfully to get asylum with the khund and the elves as well as getting help from the Mouqollad Consortium, and not wanting to exile the clergy to another country like Ekbir, Ket or Zeif, the high cleric finally found solace in the Grand Mufti’s temple in the Yatils, on the Tusman-Ket border. For the last 6-7 months, this unlikely alliance has remained a secret to the Pasha and the 2 groups of worshippers have developed better relations in this short time of need than they had for the last 300 years.

Specific background

The House of Khazzim of the Mouqollad Consortium is a successful house as you can find them in Tusmit: they trade good products, got land for themselves, got a few titles of nobility through diverse branches of the family, they are pious as everybody, they have connections to a lot of important people all around the baklunish lands and they got offsprings who get in trouble.

This one is not half as bad as it gets.

Mehmet bin-Khazzim was thought early in his life that he would be as his other siblings, a merchant with skills in the diplomatic arena, a quick wit and a disarming smile. He even thought it would work for a while and tried his hands in the family business but to no avail, spiritual matters got in the way. Grandeur, glory, fighting the Good Fight and the worship of the Baklunish gods was too much in his blood for him to deny it so he decided to go on the path of the paladin and that he was going to be a follower of Azor’alq. Good for him, it was at the beginning. He met a missionary of the faith when they were proselytising around the return of the great Munthir Haddad and he even was in the procession when they went to the sacred grounds when he returned to life (**TUS5-03 Strands of Faith**). But after a while, he found out that even with this glorious life, something from his past life with the family business was missing. For many months he looked for a way to merge both aspects of his life and continuing his progression as a spiritual warrior and as a merchant, something that was not thought possible.

Through his family’s contacts in and out of Tusmit, he learned that there used to be a special ritual for people like him that were convinced of the possibility of partaking to 2 different paths to converge in one “Unwavering Path”, peculiar to one’s-self and nobody else’s. This ritual, long thought forgotten, was actually taking place in a little known monastery in the Yatil Mountains and was thought to be happening in a mysterious cavern which had its entry in the monastery.

Fortunately for Mehmet, when came the time that the Temple of Azor’alq in Sefmur got assaulted, he had the good fortune of being away on business for his family in Ekbir and when he got back in town, his father told him to stay low for a while. After a few months of idleness and not receiving any news from any member of the Clergy of Azor’alq, Mehmet started to ask a few questions here and there about the forgotten monastery and the fate of the clergy and was red flagged by the Royal Investigators for further questioning. But since House Khazzim is incredibly well connected, Mehmet was never taken into custody for questioning and the

Investigators decided to act through proxies to get more information about what this troublesome young man is looking for.

Major players in this adventure

Mehmet bin-Khazzim

Enthusiastic but nevertheless intelligent and charismatic youth with a mission from God, Mehmet is looking for adventurers like him to help him search for a forgotten monastery in the Yatils. He's a typical baklunish with maybe a hint of an elven heritage many generations back that gives him a sharpness of features and general good looks. He has black hair cut short in a military style and wears a goatee that is not looking full because of his young age (about 20-21). He wears his holy symbol under his clothes when in the city but overtly when he's elsewhere. His clothing is rich looking and befits his station as member of a wealthy Mouqollad house. Divinations he paid for gave him cryptic remarks as to look for Azor'alq by seeking Al'Akbar first and still he searches for the starting point of his quest.

Munthir Haddad

Born in the final days of the Baklunish Empire (he was 14 years old when the Twin Cataclysm occurred), Munthir was in the first families to migrate in the East of the Flanaess. During this period of travels, he became a worshipper of the Banisher of Darkness and helped his tribe settle in the new lands. During the first years of stability under the rule of Ulamur, the first pasha of Tusmit, he went back to the west, trying to reach the extreme colonies of the former Baklunish Empire with some of his adventuring friends and came back 3 years later, finding the country in turmoil. He learned that during his absence, the first Pasha of Tusmit saw the greatest threat to the fledgling country in the Flan occupants. Munthir and his friends jumped on the occasion and put their new found experience to the service of the nation. Ulamur had sent notices to the Flan leaders to submit to him or be destroyed. Many Flans simply accepted the new Pasha but others, especially the Ur-Flan autochthones, refused to submit. After a while, Ulamur ordered a series of high-ranking soldiers, amongst them Munthir, to lead armies to submit the Flan. Seeing that his enemies, lead by what was called the Kas'Tashi Covenant, were corrupted and evil, many of them worshipping Nerull, Munthir's army, also named the "Host of Light", swept through the Ur-Flan settlements, burning them to the ground. In the later days of the war, not long after the battle of Um-Mathar, Munthir died his first death under mysterious circumstances and that information has not been made

public outside of the high-ranking members of the church. In 595 CY, Munthir was resurrected by Kahzaa Al'Ahron al-Azor'alq, the leader of the faith in Tusmit.

Munthir has got a lot of history behind him and a lot is not known by the current Clergy of Azor'alq, including Kahzaa himself. He is still a man out of his time and was content for a while to have something to do in battling the Worldburners and Kerridzar. Until a few months ago, he was starting to get a little more time to himself to find out how he would continue on living in this strange period and continue to serve the Son of Light to the best of his abilities, but of course, political matters intervened and introspection was put aside so that survival could be assured. He went underground in Suvii shortly after he learned of Kahzaa Al'Ahron's flight and is currently trying to make his way into the Yatils to an old monastery he frequented when he was a younger man, nearly a thousand years ago. This monastery ("Pillars of the Faithful") is actually the place where Mehmet is trying to go to proceed with his ritual, but only Munthir knows of this place and knows it might not be as empty of residents as someone would think. Actually, Munthir hopes that the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery has been in use continually for the last centuries and that his old comrade-in-arms, an elven warrior, has been taking care of it, teaching secret techniques to whom came to learn. Munthir himself used to know special techniques and used to teach them there. Munthir recently decided that the affront Muammar Qharan did to the Clergy of Azor'alq was the last straw that broke the camel's back, and that he would teach his nearly extinct techniques to a new generation of Azor'alq crusaders and continue to fight for the overthrowing of Muammar Qharan's regime.

Kahzaa Al'Ahron al-Azor'alq

Kahzaa is still, after all these troubles in Sefmur, the current head of the Clergy of the Son of Light. He has been tending to his flock to the best of his abilities for the last months in directing their flight from the centers of power to more secure locations. For years, stability had made of this man of god a politician and leads him on the path to stagnation and his lack of vision, up until the last few months, resulted in dwindling the Azor'alq faith in Tusmit. As a last desperate measure, the resurrection of Munthir Haddad had seemed, even to him, a mad attempt to restore the congregation with new members, drawn by the glory of this incredible act of power over death itself. But now, something else is happening to Kahzaa: he is himself regaining faith in his abilities as a leader and as a spiritual guide. His brash but inspired act of defiance against Muammar Qharan, instigated by the righteous wrath he felt when he saw what the Pasha was doing, have lead him on a path of terrible consequences

to deal with and, for the first time in his life, he is not doing any damage control with the powers in place. Inspired by the Banisher of Darkness, he is a man renewed in his faith and is leading the members of his church through a war for the very survival of the faith of Azor'alq. His recent alliance with the Grand Mufti of the True Faith came after a last ditch effort to find a place to rest. A long conversation with the Grand Mufti made clear to them that both faiths needed a dialogue and mutual benefits could be reaped by temporarily residing in the same locale. Kahzaa is now tempted to approach the holy texts relating to Azor'alq the same way the True Faith does the akbarite holy works and, in doing, remodelling the teachings of the azorite faith under purer principles.

The Grand Mufti

The Grand Mufti has been a leader in exile for a long time. Since 579 CY, he has been looking at the Pasha of Tusmit as a wayward son, looking forward to greet him in the name of Al'Akbar and to show him what the High Cleric can do to benefit him and all the population of Tusmit. His days were, less than a year ago, illuminated by the possibility of having back Jadhim, the son of his old friend, returning rightfully to the throne of Pasha of Tusmit, but he sees now that the recovery will probably not happen in his lifetime. For now, he is hoping Muammar Qharan would at least come to him and stabilize the whole situation. He is, not reluctantly but by happenstance, host to a clergy on the run and, by virtue of the Four Feet, he is considering taking this task, maybe his last in a long fruitful life, as a final offer to the High Cleric and the Baklunish Gods. He knows that he is risking a lot in giving asylum to Kahzaa Al'Ahran since Muammar Qharan is not even considering his benediction as a prerequisite for his rule in Tusmit. He hopes and prays to Al'Akbar, Istus and Azor'alq that this conflict will lead to a betterment of the situation and that the Lady of our Fate has put this in his capable hands just to this end. Through his wisdom he has lead Kahzaa to a better understanding of the situation and to a reflection on his interpretation of his faith in the Son of Light. To what end will Kahzaa put this better understanding, he does not know, but he is confident that good things will happen because of his influence.

Qurell tas'Hassan (the Odd-Eye)

Qurell is an old elf that lived in reclusion for many centuries in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery. So old he is now but young he was when he started adventuring with Munthir Haddad as one of his companions back in the days of the Host of Light. Qurell is still practicing his fighting skills of old and taking students once in a while. He is, if not the last, one of the few masters of the ancient

martial arts techniques of the Baklunish Empire still alive. During his youth, he travelled westward with Munthir and was taught the ancient arts by the remaining master the west still had. He returned after 3 years with Munthir at his side and took part of the Host of Light but when Munthir was struck, because of a terrible folly, by a terrible illness and died, he sought a place in the Yatils where he could meditate on all that happened and pass on what he knew to who would reach him. For many years, the secret of the location of the Pillars of the Faithful was not revealed by any mean other than by divination to somebody who would enquire about specific places to learn fighting techniques, vows having been willingly accepted by any student of Odd-Eye to not reveal the location. Recently, such divination spells have pointed to Munthir Haddad who knows of the location. Odd-Eye has been greatly troubled by the rumors of the return of his old companion, mostly because of the prophecies linked to his re-appearance and to the tenants of the Azor'alq faith that shows a Great Darkness coming with his return. Nevertheless, he is happy to see him and will initiate the ritual of the Unwavering Path for Mehmet when he asks him on his behalf.

Kabil al-Mullah

Kabil is an experienced government operative that has seen a lot of political events and survived them all, always on top. He is a distinguished baklunish man in his late-forties and is currently Second-in-Command in His Exalted Splendor's Royal Investigators, a newly appointed secret service unconditionally loyal to the Pasha that used to be part of the constabulary of Sefmur. Kabil is relinquishing his new position and his new political powers that grant him the right to interrogate, detain and punish anybody that could represent a threat to the security of the nation. He is a vicious man, but a gracious host, a dangerous man altogether that nobody wants to cross. He is currently managing the files of dangerous rogue operatives (adventurers) that might influence the stability of the realm and will do anything to keep them under control. The fact that a prominent son of a Mouqollad House and a known worshipper of a rogue church is looking for something in an unknown location in tusman lands has raised a few red flags and he wants to know what is happening. He has no moral limitations in coercing adventurers for the good of all Tusmit, using threats and willing to exercise force to obtain what he wants.

Lapa

Lapa is a half-elven rogue working for the Tears of the Marid as a go-between when they need to contact individuals outside of the Tears that are going to work for

them. The Tears noticed a certain interest from the Royal Investigators for the quest that Mehmet bin-Khazzim is starting and they want the information about the location of the monastery for themselves to be bargained later at their convenience. She is ready to call her marker on the PCs if they contracted her “IOU” from **TUS6-03** *Spygames* in exchange for that information.

Al’Kafil

Al’Kafil is a very old noble djinn that has been around the Yatils for centuries. His story, long and fruitful, has made him enter contact many times over with the authorities of the True Faith in the last 800 years. He is now a valued ally of the Grand Mufti and counsellor on the spiritual matters of the akbarite faith. He is a wily old dog with a roguish but twisted good mind that has helped a lot of people over the years. He used to inhabit Al’Kafil’s Maze near the entrance of Apocalypse, the residence of the Grand Mufti, because he loved to hear the wind in the tight passages in the rock. After a confrontation with Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif, 5th Generation Heir to Al’Akbar, he became a worshipper of the akbarite faith and has defended it since. A fortuitous meeting with Qurell Tas’Hassan centuries ago led to the noble djinn giving one of his *wishes* to Qurell that he used to put magical protection around the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery.

Adventure Summary

Introduction: Bringing the sheep into the fold. Each PC starts the adventure in Sefmur individually having been cornered to a wall or in a position where they have to make an immediate decision as to who will be their employer and who will be getting the location of the monastery when they find it.

Encounter 1: Bright Eyed kid. The PCs are meeting each other at the ruins of the temple of Azor’alq in Sefmur where they also meet Mehmet bin-Khazzim and he explains what he is questing for.

Encounter 2: Conflicting Agendas. During their time on the road, Mehmet and the PCs are being targeted by another faction that wants answers as to the location of the monastery.

Encounter 3: The Odd Traveler. Mehmet and the PCs stumble on a heated discussion in an inn on the Pilgrim’s Road and meet a mysterious traveler and 3 clerics of Istus. Traveler is revealed as being Munthir Haddad under a disguise and he is going to the Grand Mufti’s residence as well.

Encounter 4: Apocalypse. Arrival at the Grand Mufti’s residence in the Yatils. Discovery of the asylum of the clergy of Azor’alq within the sanctuary’s walls. Revelation of the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery by Munthir and what will be found there. Moral dilemma of the PCs regarding the new information they received and what they should reveal to their employer.

Encounter 5: Pillars of the Faithful. Mehmet, the PCs and Munthir travel to the monastery where they meet the only surviving member of the Host of Light (beside Munthir), the old elf Odd-Eye. Explanation of the ritual.

Encounter 6: Give and Take. Mehmet and the PCs go down in the Cave where they are going to *plane shift* and experience the ritual having to confront fiends.

Conclusion: Return to civilization. The PCs return to Sefmur and say their goodbyes. PCs report to their employers what they found.

Introduction: Bringing the sheep into the Fold

Advice for DMs

For the better enjoyment of your players and yourself, this adventure should be interpreted not as a “fighting” adventure, heavily accented by the combat encounters the PCs might meet, nor should it be considered an “investigation” adventure either. This is somewhat an adventure that should be enjoyed as roleplay-intensive where questions of morality and trust issues will come to the fore and plague the characters with consequences even beyond the conclusion of this adventure.

Tusmit has always been a realm of information gatherers where spies and informants travel to all corners of Tusmit and on all social levels in quest for further knowledge to be hoarded and sold to the highest bidders. This, for many centuries, has been Tusmit’s strong point and what created the country since, although less powerful than all its neighbors, it’s still an independent country. Usually, the PCs almost never see this kind of work since its pretty “low-action” material that would not be entertaining to put in a story. But not this time. Now the PCs are seeing first hand the stress and paranoia that plague the information networks culturally integrated in the tusman mindset. As a DM, you should put this forward through all the social interactions with members of the Royal Investigators, the Tears and the Brotherhood. Muammar Qharan almost saw his realm getting out of his control and he is not bothering with velvet gloves at this point; the Iron Hand of Tusmit has a

scimitar in his hand and can and will chop heads to make sure it NEVER gets out of control again.

Put also forward the real fear that both clergies of Azor'alq and Al'Akbar have of being discovered in their dealings. They KNOW that being caught would mean certain death and not just a slap on a wrist. The focal point of this adventure should be the decision of the PCs to reveal the location of the monastery and the presence of the clergy of Azor'alq and betraying the trust of the Grand Mufti, Kahzaa Al'Ahran, Munthir Haddad and Odd-Eye to escape the terror of further persecution (or to get the reward) by the Pasha or to honor that trust and risk the Pasha's ire. You should balance both options at all times, dangling the rewards and consequences of both sides. You can even hint at the kind of critical event that could occur if either one of the options would happen.

Before we begin

The introduction of the characters might be the most crucial part of this story since everything is revolving about the decision to reveal a secret of utmost importance or maybe two. The action will start in Sefmur and the PCs will INDIVIDUALLY be cornered without having anything to say about it and offered a path of betrayal. But by whom and under what conditions, that is up to their own "thinking on their two feet" and your capacity to implement the element of paranoia and suspicion when you read or paraphrase the following text. Also, don't forget to print a few copies of each of the **Player Handouts #1 through #3** because each of the PCs will have to get his own to read by himself.

Sefmur, jewel of the Baklunish lands and capital of Tusmit had seemed a more inviting locale in the past. Now, even as you approach the city, you understand that truth was apparent behind the rumors and the hushed comments that you heard during the last few nights at the caravan-serails. Tension can be tasted in air as you approach; a heavy cloud of eyes on the back of your neck makes your hair rise as if expecting an axe to fall. "The Investigators are out these days", somebody said, " and they are out for blood, any blood, but mostly.... rebel blood."

You've heard the dreadful news through the rumor mill, stating public executions en masse to ferret out rebels, indicating fervor from his Exalted Splendor to be done with the Rebel threat once and for all. Outside the walls of Sefmur, you've heard of many innocents killed but the more you approached the capital, more hushed and discreet they were.

Your guard duty you were hired for by the caravan master was closing to an end and you were going to

enter the place that many of your friends, or even yourself, call home.

Have the PCs roll a Knowledge (Local: VTF) check.

DC 2: Yes, the Caravan Master is leading you to Sefmur, capital of Tusmit.

DC 5: His Exalted Splendor, Muammar Qharan, is Pasha of Tusmit.

DC 10: Muammar Qharan has an Office of Royal Investigators that reports directly to him.

DC 15: Those Royal Investigators, having in their ranks people from all walks of life, are the ones called when there is a difficult crime that needs to be solved.

DC 18: The Royal Investigators are currently going over the traditional boundaries of their mandate. This might have been given by authority of the Pasha.

Have them roll a separate Gather Information check so they might have gathered more information than usual in the caravan-serails.

DC 5: The Pasha hasn't removed the Martial Law in Sefmur. (True)

DC 8: There is still a curfew going on after sundown. (True)

DC 10: Rebels are not welcomed at all at the gate, they arrest you if you have had a past affiliation with the Rebels and did not get back into the fold (with the *Loyal Subject of Tusmit Certificate*). (True)

DC 12: They say the Pasha has commissioned the College of the Arts to create a powerful magic item to reveal any rebel that would come to the gate under a disguise. (False)

DC 15: Religious leaders like Paffon al-Ayatollah (Exalted Faith) and Sinbad al-Mufti (True Faith) have not been able to calm the Pasha or have him put under traditional trial the people accused of being "rebels". (True)

DC 18: A few factions in town had more luck than the religious leaders in pulling strings to have key operative escape the death penalty for high treason. (True).

DC 20: The City Guard has a "Blacklist" where the names and description of known rebels are indicated. (True)

DC 22: Influence with political figures in Tusmit might help you get away with past affiliations. (True for some of them)

DC 25: Influence with the Mouqollad Consortium is a boon to anybody who gets in trouble because the Pasha does not want to aggravate the already sad status of his coffers. (True).

Ask these questions of the PCs when they are about to enter town.

- 1- Rebel, Loyalist (past affiliation with loyalists known or has got the *Loyal Subject of Tusmit* certificate) or Unaligned?
- 2- How do you prepare your entry in town?
- 3- Are you a member of the Tears of the Marid, the Brotherhood of Basharat or the Mouqollad Consortium metaorg?

The reason for the second question is if they are Rebel sympathizers, have another reason to be wanted in Sefmur or have been punished in the past by Tusman authorities, they might want to disguise themselves or forge papers or just go inside the walls with other means. If they thought about it by themselves, give them the possibility of taking 20 on the roll for the Disguise check, but not for the Forgery check since they are not in the best of environment to do so (on the road, etc.). If they come up with creative ways to convince you otherwise, allow it, PCs should be rewarded for creativeness. If the PCs express the idea of sneaking their way into town by hiding with the merchandise on the chariot or through any other mean, tell them they remember that their names were on a roster that the Caravan-Master had to give to the authorities before the trip even begun. The guards at the gate will search all chariots belonging to this caravan until the PCs are found. Play it cinematic and not making rolls. The PCs that are doing that will automatically get the Bad Side Royal Investigator (**Player Handout #1**). If they still want to go through by going over the walls, make them do a DC 15 Climb, then a DC 25 Hide and Move Silently checks at to have them bypass the "At the Gate" section, if they fail, they are arrested and have a visit in their cells by the Bad Side Royal Investigator (**Player Handout #1**). If they are members in good standing with one of the 3 metaorgs mentioned, have them go through the "At the Gate" encounter as if "unaligned" and follow through with the "At the Inn" because the higher instances of their organizations had them removed from any "Blacklist" held by the Pasha's authority for this time.

Each PC is coming through different means with different guard duties on different caravans and they are not entering the capital with the other PCs. They will have to make their own forged papers or disguise themselves as best as they can alone, without help.

At the Gate

Read or paraphrase this.

The line is long to pass through the gate and get to the warehouse sector of the city. When approaching

the doors, the conversation diminishes as tensions take its toll on the people in line. Nobody wants to be taken to the side never to be seen again unless on an executioner's block. As your turn comes, three guard's starts to search the cart you are on and a fourth one, probably the one in charge, looks through your personal belongings and starts to ask questions.

Ask pertinent questions of each PC and press on with more specific questions if the player is not cooperating immediately or is elusive in his answers. The way it is played will determine which kind of roll he will make (Bluff, Forgery, Disguise).

Unaligned

Have the PC roll a DC 15 Diplomacy check with these circumstance bonuses taken in consideration.

Follower of Mouqol openly showing his symbol: +2

Establish clearly his answers to the DM's questions about his identity: +5

Mumbles out answers or is not open to DM's questions about his identity: -5

Have in his possessions a symbol of Azor'alq: -20

If the Diplomacy check is successful, the story checks out and the PC will be let in the capital where he will go to the *Whirling Sand Devil's Inn* where he is supposed to meet his employer and receive his pay.

If the Diplomacy check is unsuccessful, the PC will be taken inside and roughed up a little bit (feel free to describe the scene) but his story will eventually check out and he will be able to get to the *Whirling Sand Devil's Inn* to get his paycheck.

Loyalist (with AR or certificate to prove it)

Have the PC roll a DC 15 Diplomacy check with these circumstance bonuses taken into consideration.

PC known as a Loyalist (shows the AR stating *Tusman Loyalist* and has no other AR stating he switched allegiance before or after): +10

PC known as a Loyalist (shows the AR stating *Tusman Loyalist* or *Loyal Subject of Tusmit* and has had another AR stating he switched allegiance before): +5

Follower of Mouqol openly showing his symbol: +2

Establish clearly his answers to the DM's questions about his identity: +10

Mumbles out answers or is not open to DM's questions about his identity: -5

Has in his possessions a symbol of Azor'alq: -20

If the Diplomacy check is successful, the Guard has recognized the PC and sends him immediately inside without violence, even showing respect to the PC as if his presence was expected. He will meet the Good Side Royal Investigator. (**Player Handout #2**)

If the Diplomacy check is unsuccessful, the PC will be taken inside and roughed up a little bit (feel free to describe the scene) but his story will eventually check out and, as he is released, a Good Side Royal Investigator will wait for him, apologize for the rough treatment he received and will make up to him by offering him an assignment. (**Player Handout #2**).

The Royal Investigator will offer a reward in the form of a **Favor of the Royal Investigators** only if the exclusive beneficiary of the information requested is them. The favor consist namely of an Influence Point with the tusman government and a possibility of getting help on one of their future inquiries made within Tusmit.

Rebel (with AR to prove it) OR Wanted/Punished in the past for crimes committed in Tusmit

Have the PC roll either a DC 25 Bluff, Forgery or Disguise check. You can advise the PC he will only have one roll to make to get his story straight and will not be able to roll another check with a different skill so he should take his best skill for this roll. The guards are aware that somebody on the "Blacklist" of the PC's description and/or name will go through their gate because of the roster and will be checking more intensely for presence of indicators that this name/description is the PC's. Apply the following modifiers.

Follower of Mouqol openly showing his symbol: +2

Establish clearly his answers to the DM's questions about his "false" identity: +5

Mumbles out answers or is not open to DM's questions about his "false" identity: -5

Has in his possessions a symbol of Azor'alq: -20

Has the *Loyal Subject of Tusmit* Certificate: +2

Been known to have switched allegiance in the conflict (from Loyalist to Rebel and have AR to prove it): -5

If the check is successful, the PC is going to the *Whirling Sand Devil's Inn* to meet his employer and get his pay, having escaped the Royal Investigator's clutches for a little while.

If the check is unsuccessful, the PC is caught lying or deliberately falsifying documents or impersonating somebody else to escape conviction of crimes against Tusmit and the Pasha's government and will be in deep trouble. Ten other well armed guards will have gotten out

of the guard post and surrounded the PC. They will gang up of him if resisting and will bring him inside to see the Bad Side Royal Investigator (give the PC the **Player's Handout #1**). If the PC is starting to get scared while reading the handout and asks if he can interact with the Investigator to change the course of the interview or convince him that he should not be treated like this, take into consideration that the Investigator is Hostile and needs to be brought back to Helpful on a Diplomacy check before switching gear and giving the PC the **Player's Handout #2** with the Good Side Royal Investigator. The other way would be to burn Influence Points with pro-eminent tusman authorities such as Sheiks or loyalist military leaders such as bin-Khadij (3 would do the trick)

While you are giving your players the Player Handouts, it is suggested that you let them read it by themselves while you are going on with the other player introductions. Once everybody has gone through the text, ask the players individually (and not in the presence of the others) if they accept the mission. They can ask more details about the mission such as why are the Investigators not picking up bin-Khazzim for interrogation or who might be the other groups interested in getting the information. Give them as little as possible but still answer their questions with the knowledge that you have in the Adventure Background section.

If a PC refuses the offer made in **Player Handout #1**, the character is imprisoned for suspicion of being a rebel spy and will be spending the next 26 TUs in jail for possible terrorist activities.

At the Inn

The Whirling Sand Devil's Inn is in many ways a standard inn where a good meal and a strong drink are served on a regular basis. It is located in the Warehouse District of Sefmur and it's clientele is composed of warehouse employees and general hands. Some private rooms can be seen in the back, many curtains keeping a façade of privacy. Stairs lead to the second floor where rooms are available for the weary traveler and more private meetings. The night patrons are settling in as night falls down on the city, most of them having secured through contacts a pass to be exempted from the curfew, the others, such as yourself, have a room in the inn for the night. From a distinct atmosphere of honest workers coming to eat during the day, the air of the place changes as the evening creeps in. The rowdier crowd slips in and shadier characters are crawling out of whatever hole they were in during the daytime hours. Your employer came with your pay and went away before

curfew leaving you with the money he owed you for guard duty of his caravan. As you were starting to feel the pull of the night around you and the desire to meet your pillow face-to-face, a female half-elf in used leathers and sporting her hair in dreadlocks approaches your table negligently and without care for your humble opinion sits down on the chair in front of you, a cynic smile on her face.

PCs having played **TUS6-03 Spygames** on the Rebel side or being members of the Tears of the Marid will recognize Lapa, the witty “front member” and general public relation’s girl for the higher instances of the organization.

She will be friendly with any PCs member of the Tears of the Marid, wanting to recruit them for a minor information gathering mission. She is not tasked with the mission herself, she is just relaying the offer on behalf of her bosses (that she will never reveal the names, she assumes that the PC knows on who’s behalf she comes from). If the PC refuses the mission (personal reasons or previously employed by Royal Investigators), Lapa tells him that he should reconsider his decision because the higher echelons of the organization might not look favorably on him skipping his duties. She says, as a friendly reminder, that all information gathered should be only transmitted to her so that the Tears would be the only beneficiary and no other, the point being that this piece of knowledge would be valid as a bargain only if nobody else knows about it, especially the Royal Investigators or the Brotherhood of Basharat. (Give the **Player’s Handout #3** for Lapa’s offer)

For PCs who have the Tears of the Marid “IOU” from *Spygames*, she will be neutral with a tinge of sarcasm in her voice. The offer of employment she will convey will be putting their debt back to zero (thus voiding the IOU) and might even be profitable to them (will not reveal for how much though). If they refuse, for personal reasons or previously employed by Royal Investigators, she will automatically switch to unfriendly (in the content of her speech and tone of voice) and threaten them with a lot of bad stuff (under veiled terms, of course...). In the case the PC is saying yes to the offer, Lapa says that only the Tears should be the beneficiary of the information gained and no other party, otherwise the “IOU” would not be voided and the PC could risk the **Anger of the Tears** (and nobody wants that to happen...). If the PC with the “IOU” does not take the mission on the behalf of the Tears, he gets automatically the **Anger of the Tears** award on the AR (but circumstance might change that depending on the decision made in the Conclusion). Give the **Player’s Handout #3** for Lapa’s offer.

If the PC has no idea who that woman is, she introduces herself as Lapa, a voice for higher concerns in Sefmur that are in need of some information. She tells the offer playfully, as if trying to seduce or win over the PC by joking around, her tone promising interesting rewards from her employers in exchange for a little fact-finding mission. A DC 15 Knowledge (Local: VTF) would indicate that the persons she is referring to are a thieves’ guild of some sort and, considering the city, there is a very good chance this would be the Tears of the Marid behind the employment offer. If the PC wants to take the job, she announces the terms of the contract being that the information would be exclusively destined to the group she represents and that the information should be delivered to her only. If the PC refuses the offer for personal reasons or previously employed by the Royal Investigators, she pouts a bit and begs the PC to reconsider and if the PC does not budge, she gets off the chair and leaves, exaggerating her sadness. (Give the **Player’s Handout #3** for Lapa’s offer)

When Lapa makes her offers, she tells you of the nature of the rewards the Tears are ready to give the PC in the form of the **Kudos of the Tears of the Marid** if he does help them (namely an Influence Point with them and the possibility of fencing a magical item for a very good profit).

The only way Lapa can give the promised rewards is if only the Tears get the information and no other. If information is leaked by the PC under any circumstance to the Pasha or the Brotherhood, PC gets **Anger of the Tears** award on the AR and voids any Influence Point with the Tears and can never be a member of the metaorg in the future.

Follow up on individual introductions and troubleshooting

Having given all the respective player handouts to all your players after you were done with each and every one of them, everybody should have finished reading their own right now (they are long just for that reason). Make sure that individually each PC has made a decision regarding whom should be his employer if the PC decided to have one at all. A lot of combinations might happen. From the PC who’s got no employer at all because he dodged the bullet with the government and got no reason to work with the Tears but heard from the Investigator that someone was looking for traveling companions to the rebel PC who HAS to work for the Pasha and got the Tears “IOU”, everything might happen. Just make sure that your players get to **Encounter One**. If they feel like not going there, you can tell them under the table that they risk getting the AR very early.

Encounter One: Bright Eyed Kid

If the PCs do not do anything during the night, read or paraphrase the following.

The morning finds you barely asleep as all that happened yesterday kept coming back all night long. Having taken your decision to work for your employer willingly or not-so-willingly, you make your way to the Temple District for noon where you know that Mehmet bin-Khazzim will be: in front of the destroyed Azor'alq temple, at the Dancing Kukri's Kava House.

If the PCs want to purchase items they have access to during the morning, they are allowed to do so. Going to the Temple District is not difficult and they should meet no resistance. If you find it useful for your group of players maybe cause a meeting between them before they meet with Mehmet, but otherwise have them meet each other at the *Dancing Kukri's* where they can introduce each other before Mehmet shows up.

The Dancing Kukri's Kava House is one of the few respectable coffee shops that have been opened in the Temple District for generations, even longer than have ever been a Temple District in Sefmur. The current owner and bartender, Pasquale Kegbottom is a tallfellow Halfling with sand-blond hair and a tanned face. He seems full of energy and always on the move inside his establishment but comes anyway to the front to greet customers and seat them at the tables on the terrace. "Welcome friend! You must be one of Mehmet's future companion. You look just the adventurer-type! Come, Come, don't wait in the noon-day sun! Mehmet should arrive shortly and he reserved my best table under the shade to welcome all of you." Pasquale practically runs to the table on his short legs and sets it up with utensils and glasses of water even before everybody reaches it. "I'll bring olives, dates and figs right away", he says, running to the kitchen. The look of the friendly halfling brings a smile to illuminate your face, almost forgetting what you were asked to do and you turn around to look at your surroundings. You almost recoil at the horror of the destruction that took place just in front of you a few months ago. The huge temple grounds of the cult of the Son of Light completely destroyed, weapons, still strewn around the place, bones, clothing, armors here and there, just beyond the limits of the half-demolished walls. You can make out an official edict around the ground zero of this destruction warning

the passersby to not trespass on pain of beheading if anybody should be found inside.

Have the PC come together at about the same time so they may introduce themselves. If they ask Pasquale about the Temple of Azor'alq and recent events, tell them some of the gather information results from the introduction. He tells them as well that actually his business seem even better with the tourists since the destruction of the temple since it has become a main attraction around this part of town.

Here comes Mehmet...

After 15 minutes, Mehmet bin-Khazzim arrives (you can describe him as in the adventure background) very enthusiastic about meeting everybody. He introduces himself and asks everybody's name and what they have done in the past as adventurer. He is himself an adventurer and he needs companionship on a quest that will make him, or so he thinks, leave the comforts of Sefmur. Once he learned the names of everybody, made sure that everybody received enough food and drink, he raises his voice a little bit to get everybody's attention.

"My friends, you've answered today an honest plea for help and I'm grateful. I am looking for an old monastery that seems to be inside of Tusmit's borders but that time has forgotten. I am not going to this place for economical advantages that such a place would bring for my family but for spiritual growth that it would bring me and whoever would accompany me. I'm seeking the convergence of the paths into one that would allow me to make a truly individual choice, an "Unwavering Path" that would allow existence of my merchant family traditions and the path of the holy warrior without sacrificing one for the other. Researches into old musty libraries full of forgotten knowledge told me there is a ritual that could be found in this monastery that I'm looking for that would help me, and anybody else that would come with me, obtain that state of grace. Through family contacts, I was able to converse with one great diviner from the clergy of Istus by the name of Perna al-Istus, and the lady gave me a prophecy that she wrote down for me and that I'm supposed to decipher in order to start this quest. Of course, I don't want to force you in helping me solve this riddle, and my family is ready to pay you for your troubles and your time. So what says you?"

All APLs

Mehmet: male Human Paladin 1/Aristocrat 1; Hp 16 See appendix 1

Mehmet will promise to pay them half the APL's gold for their troubles and time spent on this adventure with him. He gets a fine looking scrollcase from his backpack and unscrolls a piece of parchment that he puts on the table (**Player Handout #4**). Give enough time for the PCs to find out how to read the message and once they figured out that the keyword should be "*pyrphoros*". If you need any help deciphering for yourself the prophecy, have a look at **Appendix Five**.

A DC 10 Knowledge (Religion) check will make them remember that this is an old religious title attributed to the Grand Mufti of the True Faith and means in ancient baklunish the "Fire Bearer".

A DC 10 Knowledge (History) check will make them remember that the "*Agôn Pyrphorou*", or the "Trial of the Fire Bearer" was the official name for the trial that the Exalted Faith made *in absentia* against the Grand Mufti that lead to the splitting of the two faiths of Al'Akbar.

A Bardic Knowledge check DC 10 will come up with old baklunish religious chants that are still heard through the True Faith worship that use powerful imagery related to light and fire in their poetry to designate their leader (the Grand Mufti) as the "*Pyrphoros*, the one who bears the flame and the light".

Ask the PCs if they are physically using paper they have in their possession or using the paper the prophecy is written on to solve it. The reason for that is that there is an agent of the Brotherhood of Basharat inside the *Dancing Kukri* that will go pilfering their napkins and other papers after they are gone. If they leave evidence of the solution of the enigma, the PCs will not be assaulted by the Brotherhood of Basharat in **Encounter Two** but will meet them later when the Brotherhood figures out they are stuck without a way to go after going to the Grand Temple of the True Faith. In that case, go directly to **Encounter Three**.

If the PCs are not able to come up with that DC, Mehmet will tell them with a look on his face as if he received a spiritual awakening. Allow the PCs to discuss travels plans and means of getting to the Grand Temple of the True Faith in the Yatils. The adventure is not time constrained and whether they go on foot or on horses are of no import, the encounters will go in order. Insist that they give you a marching order and their turns for watch duty. Mehmet will participate and will take his watch without any preference. Give them the map for Southern Tusmit (**in Appendix Seven**) for them to get a feeling of where they are going and how long it will take them to go there.

Mehmet is anxious to get on the road as soon as possible but if anybody wants to buy anything before going on the

road, they may do so. He will give to the PCs who ask him half of what he offered them to join him on his quest (so ¼ APL) right now for personal purchases. He will have his steed with him (a tusman heavy warhorse) and all his adventuring gear of the finest manufacture ready. Mehmet looks like a rich kid, but doesn't act as one. His gear might be fine, but it looks well used, he does not look pampered but takes care of himself as a son of a important merchant house would do.

As soon as everybody is ready, the party will go through the East Gate without any problem. You can play the paranoia for the characters that have great pressure put on them by their employer by making them roll Spot checks, saying in private that they were barely able to see the Royal Investigator looking at them from a second story window as they were passing nearby. For those working for the Tears, tell them that they saw Lapa waiving and smiling to them discreetly from the shadows of an alley.

As DM, you need not to encourage this, but if at any point during any interactions with Mehmet, one of the PCs confesses to him that they are actually working for an organization that is keeping tabs on his activities, Mehmet, being the good guy that he is, will say that he understands the reasons behind the PCs actions. He will then say that as long as those organizations do not interfere with his quest, he is willing to go along with this and deal with the consequences later. He will thank the PC profusely for his honesty.

Encounter Two: Conflicting Agendas

After two days out of Sefmur, they will be ambushed (or more so, victims of a thievery attempt) by a party sent by the Brotherhood of Basharat. The Brotherhood have agents in Sefmur that were interested in Mehmet's quest as well but decided not to act when they saw that the Royal Investigators and the Tears of the Marid were willing to plant rapidly pressured assets inside the group that would be accompanying Mehmet. They felt that if they would go the same way, it would muddy the waters more and probably go the wrong way in violent results. They know that Mehmet had got himself a prophecy for the path he should take and they have observed, by one of their agents in the *Dancing Kukri*, that the PCs solved the riddle but were not able to intervene in the city. They preferred to wait for the group outside the city's gate to get either the prophecy in its original form or a decrypted version in the group's possession. In the eventuality that they escape with the prophecy without being detected,

they will be among the pilgrims in the Grand Temple and will shadow the group as they continue towards the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery. The PC might notice that their camp has been searched with a DC 12+APL Spot check the next morning, but they will have no idea by whom and for what purpose unless they are actively searching their gear and successfully make a DC 17+APL Search check, or automatically if they are specifically looking for the prophecy, to discover that the prophecy is gone.

The objectives of the Brotherhood team are to go in, get the paper and get out without a fuss. If they are caught red handed by the PCs or Mehmet, they will try to subdue them using only non-lethal force because they are not assassins and want only to search the contents of their gear more thoroughly. If the PCs are defeated, they will wake up in the morning in their sleeping bags, unbound and with their backpacks at the same place they left it last night. With a Search check DC 12+APL they will notice that their gear have been thoroughly searched and unless they look specifically for the prophecy in it's written form (in that case the check is made automatically), only a Search check DC 17+APL will make them notice it is no longer there. They will also be missing each (2d6 x APL) gc, add it in extra gold coin spent.

If the Brotherhood team is intercepted and interrogated successfully by the PCs, there are a few ways to make them talk. The PCs will get only one chance to make a roll for this, so you have to ask them specifically what type of social interaction they want to do. Allow them their bonuses for helping each other only if each of them are effectively interacting with Ali or the others.

Because of the non-lethal side of combat the encounter has been written as a very high EL.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Thug doing his initiation (3): male human Rogue 1; Hp 7; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1; Hp 14; Appendix 1

APL 4 (EL 8)

Young Initiate (4): male human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1; Hp 14; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3; Hp 38; Appendix 1

APL 6 (EL 10)

Brotherhood Muscle (2): male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3; Hp 38; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5; Hp 58; Appendix 1

APL 8 (EL 13)

Brotherhood Head Hunter (2): male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5; Hp 58; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 9; Hp 94; Appendix 1

Brotherhood of Basharat Metaorg members: There might be members of the Brotherhood of Basharat within the group of PCs and they might have scratched their heads wondering why their brothers did not intervene when they were in Sefmur. The guys from the Brotherhood attacking them will recognize those who are members and will make themselves known once they are captured by using a code phrase (tell the PC that he recognizes the code when it is uttered). This code will indicate also that the leader of the group is of higher station within the Brotherhood than the PC and that he should do as he is told. If they are freed, the leader (gives his name as being Ali), will tell them they were not contacted because their sources told them they might have been compromised when they entered Sefmur and they waited until they were at a safe distance before contacting the PC in question. If a PC amongst the group is a member of the Brotherhood and the group decides to intimidate Ali, the PC loses automatically his affiliation with the Brotherhood of Basharat and can never be a member of this metaorg again and gains the **Not a Brother Anymore** award on the AR. If the group decides to bluff the Brotherhood and wins the check, only the PCs member of the Brotherhood of Basharat will be able to get the **Protection from the Brotherhood** award on the AR

Diplomacy: With a DC 24 Diplomacy check they will talk and divulge everything if they are on "friendly" terms.

Bluff: Bluff check can convince them of any good story the PCs want to invent (allow a circumstance bonus up to +4 for the PC that will spin-doctor and fast-talk the whole thing). The DC is 21, no matter the APL.

Intimidate: The DC is 19 for Ali. The other members of the team know nothing.

What Ali knows

The information obtained from the interrogation are limited to what is specified below.

Diplomacy: Consider them as being "indifferent" for a Diplomacy check and they will talk and divulge everything if they are on "friendly" terms.

Give the PCs bonuses for the check if they have the following:

- Still have an Influence point with the Brotherhood: +2
- Still have a favor from Bajat the Bard: +4
- Willing to burn an Influence Point with the Brotherhood now: +5 per IP
- Willing to burn the favor from Bajat the Bard now: +10

Ali knows this:

- He has a mission to discover what Mehmet is after and report that information to his superiors.
- His superiors do not especially want to have this information hidden from other eyes. They care less about secrecy in this matter than what other parties want to do with it.
- He knows some of the PCs have been pressured into service for the Royal Investigators and the Tears, but not who, and he will be sympathetic to their predicament.
- He was given instructions to keep interactions with the PCs to a minimum and to try to find the monastery on his own with the clues he would be able to gather from either following them and guessing where they would be going or pilfering their possessions for clues.

If the PCs were able to get a Diplomacy check high enough to get Ali in a “helpful” mood or if there is a fellow Brother of Basharat amongst the PCs, he will offer them all the **Protection from the Brotherhood** award which will allow them to negate either the **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** OR the **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** if they reveal the information to other parties. You can tell this information to the PCs if they won the Diplomacy check to that level of cooperation.

Bluff: In the event that the Bluff check is successful, Ali will reveal the same thing as under the Diplomacy check but he will never give under any circumstance the **Protection from the Brotherhood** award on the AR to the group, only to the metaorg members.

Intimidate: Follow the intimidation rules in the *Player's Handbook*.

The other members of the team know nothing. Ali is hardly impressionable, but in any case, if the Intimidation check was successful, Ali knows this:

- He has a mission to discover what Mehmet is after and report that information to his superiors.
- He knows some of the PCs have been pressured into service for the Royal Investigators and the Tears, but not who.

-He was given the instructions to find the monastery on his own by keeping the interaction with the PCs to a minimum.

Follow up

The Brotherhood of Basharat will regroup and rethink their strategies regarding this mission and, unbeknownst to the PCs, will not pursue the mission. They will go back to report to their superiors what they found out from the PCs and the Brotherhood will concentrate in getting the information from the “inside” waiting for the PCs to come back with the information themselves.

Encounter Three: The Odd Traveler

After a few more days down the road, the PCs are going to enter the foothills of the Yatils and follow one of the rivers that mark the northern border of the Sheikdom of Keruz and that takes its source further north, where the residence of the Grand Mufti is located. To describe the location where the next encounter will be happening, read or paraphrase the text below.

As you went out of Sefmur for a few days you followed the large road bordering the river which became smaller the higher you went up in the foothills. Once in a while, you saw a few farmers and merchants plowing their fields and carrying their wares on mules and carts. Smaller rivers joined the one you were following, a few barijachs manned with river sailors directing them downstream, where you were coming from. Shrines of Fharlanghn here and there on the side of the road were campsites have usually been made for generations. Shrines of Geshtai near the docks where riverboats come for supplies. The villages, still evenly spaced along the river, seemed wealthy enough and well catered by the trade routes established decades and centuries ago by the Mouqollad Consortium.

As you make your way through these little towns, you cannot seem to take your eyes of the religious imagery displayed. Each of the villages boasts one fine temple of Al'Akbar that seems to shadow all the other buildings. The villagers take an exceptional care of it in curing the temple grounds, adding a fresh coat of paint where it needs to and maintaining an incredible number of small shops that sells icons, religious imagery and small pendants in the form of the Cup and Talisman. Perplexity, for a moment, shrouds your face until you finally understand that you are on one of the main pilgrimage roads of the

True Faith that stretches between Sefmur and the Yatils. Pilgrims abound in the inns that cater to any and all needs, from the poorest to the rich. You see Ketite mullahs wearing the traditional black and red of the clerics of their country traveling together, keeping to their own counsel, a few wild-colored Paynim emirs with a few of their flocks with them and Ullites coming from far away down the south roads, all coming to seek the wisdom of the Grand Mufti.

Mehmet asks of you to stop in one of those little towns for the night as you've done the night before, stating that even if he does not share the True Faith worshippers zeal towards the Holy Cleric, it would be a good thing to ask for his benediction on the stations of the Holy Way.

Mehmet is going to pray for guidance at the temple. Any PC that wants to join him is welcomed by him and he says to the others that he will join them later at the *Unending Hajj*, an inn that is operated by an associate of his father and where they will find room and board for the night. If the PCs want to do a Gather Information check, give them these even if it seems that those are more Knowledge (History) related because everybody living here is pretty proud of the history of their village and it is written about everywhere.

DC 5: This is the village of Hekun'Yshia, the 5th Step on the Path of Holy Understanding, the 7th Stage of the Ladder of Inner Ascension, the 14th Station of the Old Pilgrimage Way.

DC 8: The villagers seem to be composed of about half True Faith and half Exalted Faith living peacefully together.

DC 10: This village has been standing there since the old days before the Splitting of the Faiths when the Residence of the Grand Mufti was just a holy site worthy of pilgrimage where a revelation was made to Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif, 5th Generation Heir to the High Cleric, Al'Akbar.

DC 12: Visitors are a constant here and, most of the time, they are peaceful enough. The militia is still present and doing its job, but seldom it is used. The Pasha's rule is respected but mostly it is the Sheik that the inhabitants are listening to.

DC 15: There is a rivalry but no violence between the members of both Churches of Al'Akbar among the villagers and everything is made to make the pilgrims feel welcomed and much is done to accommodate their needs and different customs regarding their particular type of worship of the True Faith.

DC 17: A man currently residing in the *Unending Hajj* has asked a lot of questions about a group of 50 or so pilgrims not wearing the Cup and Talisman that might have passed through the town a few months ago during the night.

DC 18: Friction sometimes arises within the *Unending Hajj*, but never in the temple, between worshippers of different national origins and this is all because the akbarite faith is so much intertwined in politics. The militia mostly has to go there to restrain pilgrims who are assaulting each other for sometimes trivial interpretations of dogma.

DC 20: No important tusman political figures are going through here since the days of Jadhim-Orem because Muammar Qharan is not seeking to meet with the Grand Mufti. Sinbad al-Mufti, the highest ranking member of the True Faith in Tusmit is going to see the Grand Mufti at least twice a year and never misses Al'Akbar's Day of Ascension.

DC 22: One teenager noticed that, during a night 6 months ago, a group of 50 horse backed riders in armor, and amongst them elders, women and even a few children, went through the town, stopped to change horses at the inn, and went their way in the mountain in the direction of the Grand Temple.

DC 25: One guard that was nearly drunk senseless affirms that he woke up during the night 6 months ago after the 50 riders went through the town and he picked up a pendant that bore the figure of a armed man on a mountain (Knowledge (Religion) DC 10 or home region in the Baklunish west to identify Azor'alq)

The Unending Hajj

When the PCs and Mehmet finally go into the inn, have them setup and start the evening. Those paying attention to the occupants will eventually notice a scene forming up.

Read or paraphrase this. The layout of the place is in **Appendix Six**.

As you enter the Unending Hajj, you can automatically feel the tension brewing at the different tables. The place is full and you can see men and women of different national origins sitting down on chairs around tables or standing up, vehemently arguing with each other and between tables.

Make the PCs first roll a Spot check.

DC 5: Busy night eh?

DC 10: 3 tables are actually doing the shouting: the ketite mullahs, a few women wearing the garbs of clerics of

Istus and a True Faith emir backed up silently by his massive companions, all wearing the Cup and Talisman.

DC 15: 3 other tables are not involved in the shouting match: a table with a lone traveler wearing a cloak, a few locals drinking local ale and a group of Ullites watching it all.

DC 20: The bartender just asked one of his stableboys to go somewhere very fast and the teenager leaves in a hurry

If the PCs are interested in what they are saying give them **Players Handout #5** while playing it out. If any PC made the DC 15 Spot check, have that PC roll a Sense Motive check.

DC 5: That whole shouting match will probably come to blows soon enough. Here is what they are saying (give the PCs **Players Handout #5**)

DC 10: The Ullites are having the time of their lives watching the others go at it. The villagers are quickly emptying the drinks and are itching to get out while they can. The kitchen staff is anxiously watching it develop, acknowledging the mess they will have to clean.

DC 12: The emir's bodyguards are controlling themselves for now, but are flexing their fingers and looking menacing. The mullahs are all worked up but cold determination is showing in their eyes and their bodies are, strangely, in a relaxed state. The members of the Clergy of Istus are shrieking right now about some doom or other.

DC 15: The lone traveler hasn't moved at all but you can sense him closely watching how everything goes. He still continues to drink slowly his glass of wine, but his hand is almost imperceptively going to his weapon, a beautiful scimitar.

DC 17: The stable boy went to fetch the guard, even if they may be too late.

DC 20: You know that the bodyguards are going to burst at any moment; the mullahs are slowly moving their chairs out of their way so not to be troubled if fight erupts. If the PC can also make a Knowledge (Religion) check DC 15 as well, he will know by looking at their garb and special akbarite holy symbol, that the mullahs are actually from the Order of the Infinite Stages of Inner Ascension, an order of monks/clerics dedicated to the teachings of Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif, 5th Generation Heir to Al'Akbar. The Istus clerics are completely oblivious that a fight is going to happen and that they are actually failing to calm things down.

When the PCs are done reading the handout or, if they didn't get it, have finished surveying the scene, tell them this: at this moment, the 4 bodyguards each draw a sap

and the emir gets his scimitar in the open. The mullahs, unsurprised by this, quickly kick the table away and assume a battle stance but are unarmed. One of the mullahs violently takes the arm of the nearest cleric of Istus and pushes her out of his way and she falls in the arms of the lone traveler.

All APLs (EL 13)

Mullahs (5): male human Monk 2/Cleric 5; Hp 45; Appendix 1

Bodyguards (4): male human Fighter 6; Hp 58; Appendix 1

Emir: male human Fighter 1/Cleric 3/Aristocrat 4; Hp 45; Appendix 1

Priestesses of Istus (3): female human Cleric 4; Hp 19; Noncombatants

APL 2 (EL 6)

Ullites (4): male human Barbarian 2; Hp 23 each; Appendix 1

APL 4 (EL 8)

Ullites (4): male human Barbarian 4; Hp 44 each; Appendix 1

APL 6 (EL 10)

Ullites (4): male human Barbarian 6; Hp 68 each; Appendix 1

APL 8 (EL 12)

Ullites (4): male human Barbarian 8; Hp 95 each; Appendix 1

Tactics: The mullahs and the emir's crew are going to go at it doing only subdual damage to each other. The mullahs are trained monk/clerics, the bodyguards have saps and the emir has a *merciful* scimitar, but none of the PCs know that until after the first round where they will see welts instead of cuts (DC 5 Heal check). The villagers will be escaping within the first 2 rounds, the Ullites will get up and start fighting too (they were itching for it), the staff personnel will keep to themselves behind the bar and in the kitchen. The militia will be coming in 15 rounds. The lone traveler will protect the clerics of Istus from the fight so show him fighting the mullahs but he won't jump in battle and remain defending his position and the priestesses (the emir's crew will not attack the clerics of Istus and the Ullites will most likely be handled by the PCs).

The lone traveler's statistics are not provided in this adventure but you can assume he has the upper hand in

any fighting situation, regardless of the odds, during this adventure.

The PCs have the chance to knock around whichever they want but they should be attacked by the Ullites and let the mullahs and the emir's crew fight each other. Even if the PCs try to stay out of the way the Ullites will attack them in this majestic bar fight.

The stats for the emir's crew and the mullahs are untiered but you will find the stats for the Ullites in **Appendix One**.

Unless the PCs start to get involved with the battle between the Mullahs and the Emir there is no need to roll dices for them so as to keep things simple, their fight will last quite a while without a victor and eventually the guard will round them up when they arrive.

Aftermath

Ask the PCs who played with that character the Tusmit adventure **TUS5-03 Strands of Faith**, **TUS5-09 Dance on a Volcano** or **TUSInt6-02 Tales of the Ashes**. If you happen to have more than one candidate, choose the PC in this order:

- 1- Cleric, paladin or worshipper of Azor'alq
- 2- Lawful Good alignment
- 3- Still has an active favor with the Church of Azor'alq OR Munthir Haddad
- 4- The highest Charisma modifier

Play the scene but instead put the PC's name instead of Mehmet and let the player play it out instead of reading what he would do. You should put in the description that the stranger has a very commanding voice, a voice belonging to somebody used to issuing orders on a field of battle, a familiar voice but not one you can place now in the midst of combat.

During the fight, the lone traveler has not been inactive, and protected the 3 clerics of Istus.

As soon as all the Ullites are down or if 10 rounds pass, even if the mullahs and the emir's crew are still at it, he nods at Mehmet. Read or paraphrase the text below.

"Mehmet bin-Khazzim, I'm in need of your assistance", says the hooded stranger, holding in his arm one of the clerics of Istus who seem to have injured her head falling down on the table at the beginning of the fight. Mehmet, perplexed in hearing his own name uttered by a stranger, hesitates one second then looks at him. "We need to get them out of here before the militia comes, let the Ullites and the rest of these poor fools answer to the law",

continues the stranger. Mehmet looks at him, squints his eyes as if trying to pierce a disguise or remember where he heard that voice, then acknowledges the need for a fast exit. Mehmet turns then to you and says "Friends, we must go, Now!"

Ask the PCs what they are doing. If they continue the fight beyond the 15th round, the militia will be coming and will arrest everybody still present. If that happens, refer to **Appendix Three: The Laws of Southern Tusmit**, for punishment, and the adventure is over for those convicted. Once everybody is outside, read or paraphrase this.

As you make your way towards the street, you can see people looking through their windows at the Unending Hajj, hoping to see what is going on inside. The stranger, still holding the priestess of Istus and flanked by the 2 others, turns around towards you and says "Get to your horses, I have a place to hide in the woods and we will do presentations once there." On that note, the 2 other clerics of Istus untie their horses while the stranger approaches a beautiful white mare who was left untied, positioning herself for him to get easy access to the saddle. He then gracefully climbs on the horse, still holding the cleric delicately in his arms. He waits for a few seconds for the 2 other clerics to join him then sprints off towards the woods.

If one PC was named by the stranger during the fight, he waits for him too. If not, he will wait for Mehmet that will have obediently followed. At this point, if the PCs are not following, they will miss a lot of information and probably will have a lot of catching up to do later. If the PCs are staying around, the militia will come and they will be detained and arrested for troubling the peace and will be processed accordingly.

Destiny calling

As the PCs follow Mehmet or the stranger they ride for about an hour in the woods following a trail that leads them to a bend in the river near a fall. Great pines are about everywhere and the way is clear when they arrive at a little campsite that seemed to have been used very recently. This is the place where the stranger will reveal himself as Munthir Haddad, the "back from the dead" paladin of Azor'alq. If one or more PCs have seen Munthir in other Tusmit adventures, you might want to reveal him under a different light and feel free to do so. Munthir is the type of leader who remembers all the names of all men who served with him or under him. He will especially remember PCs who interacted with him under previous circumstances such as at his resurrection or participating in the fight against Kerridzar. He will be

very happy to see familiar faces and will let his guard down. Read or paraphrase this.

As you come about near the river, the stranger stops and lowers himself as well as the unconscious cleric near the campfire. The 2 other clerics approach their unconscious sister, holding their holy symbols and making their gestures as if to cure her, and as they are lowering their burden comfortably on a bedroll, one of them looks at the stranger and says: "This is not right, she should have woke up about now." The stranger looks perplexed and says "Is there anything we can do?" "No", she answers, "my sister and I think that the trauma she received that made her loose consciousness was not due to her fall, but something else. She is not sleeping right now; she is in a Sacred Trance, weaving the Thread." To that, the stranger turns around, looking at each of you, trying to remember if one of you is a familiar face. He removes the hood of his cloak and you can see the face of an ordinary man wearing a bandana. His hand goes to it and he removes it. His features change and you can see a man of about 45 years old, slightly balding on top but wearing his hair loose down on his shoulders. He is wearing a not so trimmed beard, like he spent a while in the wild.

"I'm Munthir Haddad, paladin of Azor'alq. Pleased to meet you all"

For PCs who never met Munthir, have them roll a DC 8 Knowledge (Local:VTF) to get the basic information about Munthir since he is back from the dead.

PCs will probably have questions to ask Munthir and this is where they will have some answers. If the PCs don't ask the questions you can have Mehmet ask them. This will explain a lot of what happened at the Inn and basic concepts about how religion works in the baklunish lands. You can always go back to this section if the questions come later.

Q: What are you doing here?

A: I'm looking for some pilgrims who went through here a few months back. I received information that they did actually go up the road toward the Residence of the Grand Mufti.

Q: Pilgrims? Pilgrims of whom?

A: I'm looking for Azor'alq cultists that escaped Sefmur when the temple was destroyed. I've heard a rumor that Kahzaa al'Ahran, the highest ranking cleric of Azor'alq in Tusmit was amongst them.

Q: So I guess they are not dead? But why to the Grand Mufti?

I think they are looking for asylum from persecution and they were rebuked by other political players such as the elves and the dwarves. I'm hoping to have better news soon.

Q: So where have you been since the death of Kerridzar?

I tried to deal with the tusman authorities regarding splitting the treasure, using it to help the poorest in Tusmit, create new infrastructures to help the country and not associating any of it with the Rebellion against Muammar's authority, you know, tried to do the right thing. The representatives of the Pasha were negotiating very hard and I was making no headway when we received the news that the Church of Azor'alq was banned from Tusmit. I was supporting Jadhim-Orem at the time and that made things awkward with the representatives because they were clearly uncomfortable with my status. Seeing that the situation was becoming precarious and that they would probably arrest me, I left quickly and traveled through Tusmit, Ekbir and Ket, trying to find news of the whereabouts of the congregation while remaining hidden.

Q: You seem to know the 3 priestesses of Istus. Can you tell us more about them?

I actually don't know these women, but in my time, the clergy of Istus was respected a lot more by the warriors and adventurers. They are Thread Weavers and can reveal Fate or Destiny. They used to be Inviolable and Sacred, and had the right to talk about religious matters no matter which god you worshipped in the baklunish lands, even if what they said did not make sense right away. This is what we call the Right of Sanction and that is actually only given to the priests of a single god for their own internal issues. The emir and the mullahs back in town had the right to discuss dogma between them and argue about it because they are basically priests of Al'Akbar, but they had no right to treat the priestesses of Istus like this. They have lost their ways.

Q: Is the woman really injured? That did not seem that bad.

A: Effectively, but I've heard of different ways that the clerics of Istus can receive their visions and that fits what is happening.

Q: What could have triggered it?

A: Honestly, I don't know. I've had a few predictions made about me since I'm back and that might be something related to that or related to you.

At this point, Mehmet will be very interested in discussing with Munthir since he was present in the

procession that brought him back to life. Munthir remembers well the young man since he was the attendant assigned to him by Kahzaa Al'Ahrn to give him news of the current world and helped him adjust to his new setting in the present. You can play it out as you want but mostly it will be small talk about Mehmet's family and Munthir's whereabouts. At some point though, Munthir will ask Mehmet the reason why he is here and he will explain what he is looking for. Munthir will smile and look upon Mehmet as a mentor looks to his favored student and will tell him he will help to the best of his knowledge and experience once they have news of the rest of the congregation.

The 2 priestesses of Istus that were tending to their sister will come once this scene has played out and will talk in front of everybody but it will be aimed at Munthir. Read or paraphrase this.

"Noble Warrior, our sister has awakened and asks for you as well as the other ones that followed you, for you all need to hear what Thread the Weave has revealed." Munthir looks at the woman, bows his head towards her reverently and says in a tone reminiscent of the answer made by rote in a temple "Fate and Destiny obliges". He then looks at you and says "I guess we will know now."

The now-conscious woman is sitting down, a cup of strong tea in her hands, she watches you approaching. "I did not know you would be there. Istus showed me a great many things in my life, but never something so sudden and so dramatically introduced. Time must be of the essence. We were lead to here by what Thread we were weaving, but clouded was the path and the individuals we would meet. We thought that the poor fools we tried to stop at the inn where the ones we were supposed to talk to, but small minded they were and small minded we were to think we could anticipate the will of Istus. Here we are and everything is clear, the Pattern is showing and you all showed up where you were supposed to. But you", she says, pointing at Munthir, "are why we are here. For the Thread that was weaved a long time ago is still attached to you and you are now on the step to fulfilling everything we thought would happen. Meetings arranged have I, hope is now assured but despair is still brewing in Darkness. Your Fate or your Destiny awaits as it always did and you have the chance to undo what was done."

At that, Munthir closes his eyes, briefly feeling the pain that only a memory brings but he does not answer. The woman then talks to everybody "But now is not the time for all that Darkness because Light is so much more present amongst you, young folks."

Come and sit down near me so we can exchange little pearls of wisdom."

The PCs will probably have a few questions to ask the 3 priestesses and here is useful information they could ask for. They are open and friendly with the PCs and Mehmet, but a little distant with Munthir since he seems to be keeping his own counsel for now and reflecting on inner matters. They see the young adventurers as tools of both Fate and Destiny, agents of Chaos and Law that have roles to play and possible futures both good and bad. Again, if no questions are forthcoming, you can always have Mehmet ask them because they give some background about religious matters in the baklunish lands.

Q: Who are you?

A: Our names are Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos al-Istus, we are 3 sisters in the service of Istus and we each hold our place in the sisterhoods of the Pattern, the Thread and the Weave respectively.

Q: Sisterhoods? Never heard of them.

A: You usually don't. Most don't bother explaining it to people outside the clergy, but we are trying to educate people in the old ways. The Pattern Sisterhood is about contemplating the big picture, the Thread Sisterhood is about knowing the individuals that do lead lives that make them intertwined prominently in the pattern and the Weave Sisterhood is about acting to make them all go together towards their Destiny or their Fate.

Q: Fate? Destiny? Aren't they the same thing?

A: We know that most people confuse them all the time in conversations, but it's clear they are not the same. Usually we say that Destiny is what someone could have if he would act for the best in all situations and the Destiny itself would be the reward. As for Fate, it's what someone could have if he acted not for the best in all situations and Fate itself would be what ultimately fell on the individual. So you see, about everybody is somewhere in the middle between two extremes and are navigating in the Grey Mists, often not knowing if they are going towards Destiny or Fate.

Q: Can you give us a concrete example set in the present?

A: Look at what is happening with the whole thing about the destruction of the Azor'alq temple in Sefmur. Our Exalted Splendor Muammar Qharan, or as we call him the Warrior, has been in power since 579 CY when he made a *coup d'état* and replaced Jadhim-Orem. For the clergy of Istus, this event was an indicator that he was either following his Destiny or his Fate but we had to

observe things before we made up our mind about it. For nearly 2 decades, it was pretty much established that he was following the call of his Destiny since he was acting for the best and the results were good for Tusmit. But, with what happened, we are not sure this judgment will stay because we saw that he was willing to sacrifice something good and upset the people of Tusmit to keep the control of what he obtained in the past. So you see, his Exalted Splendor thought he was acting for the best, but clearly not for the good of all, so he might be right now closer to his Fate than to his Destiny.

Q: And what about what you saw when you met us and Munthir?

That is a little more complicated because we are involved in the weaving of your threads, we are actors in your Destinies or Fates and so it is clouded for us since we have our own motives to act or not to act. We can act for good or evil purposes and still Istus will listen to our pleas and give us what we seek in our divinations because she rules over such things and makes knowledge available without prejudice. As for Munthir, we know there has been Threads attached to him and when he died, his potential to reach his Destiny or his Fate disappeared as such things are bound to do when a life ends. Now, the fact that he was brought back from death brings back all those threads and that is what scared Martha al-Istus into acting against the clergy of Azor'alq when they wanted to bring him back (events in TUS5-03 *Strands of Faith*). The threads attached to Munthir seem to be tied to old prophecies lost to history and that we are able only to glimpse as shadows in the Grey Mists, a Great Darkness that looms over Munthir and everything he touches.

Q: So where does that leave you three?

A: We think we have done what we were supposed to. We were where we needed to be for you to meet him and cross his path so that your future is linked with his. We will depart in the morning and leave you alone for the rest of your quest. We don't know if we're going to meet again.

Q: And what about Mehmet's quest?

A: Perna al-Istus gave him a very good lead, even if she probably had no idea what she was saying at the time, giving him the prophecy you have in your possession. For us it's a proof that Istus still cares about Destinies and Fates of individuals, that she wants them to lead extraordinary lives that permits them to reach their potentials, whether good or bad. You are on the right path, follow it with your heart and trust your instincts about what you should reveal or not.

After a few hours, everybody will go to sleep. Determine who will be on watch duty as usual, but add Mehmet and Munthir as volunteers. On the next morning, the sisters will go on their way and Munthir will suggest that you all continue.

Encounter Four: Apocalypse

Munthir, Mehmet and the PCs are about 3 days ride to the Residence of the Grand Mufti. The road is uneventful and more villages are crossed that all looks more or less the same as the one from Encounter Three. Feel free to add details, names and other oddities that would fit on a pilgrimage road such as temples, shrines, other pilgrims with strange religious attitudes, people from different nationalities all going the same way: up the hills and into the Yatils on a well-traveled path. Let your players enjoy the conversations about Fate and Destiny if they are so inclined and if you have the time because this is what this adventure is all about. The PCs point of view could come into play in the following adventures of the serie.

The road is still following the river and the PCs will learn eventually that the source of the river is the great lake Tash'Ur Geshta•r, or Geshta's Mountain Oasis.

As they approach the final steps on the path, read or paraphrase this.

Yesterday, you left the river at the base of the mountain, it was majestically gushing from inside a great cavern into the open. The road that you were following since Sefmur became a path that lead straight up the hill. Early this morning, you had to enter Al'Kafil's Maze, the great rock formation of interlocking paths that is supposed to lead you to your destination. The path had been well marked for generations by pilgrims and the authorities of the Temple so nobody would get lost coming to the Residence. After you spent the better part of the day on the path following arrows, you rounded another bend between 2 natural walls of rock that flanked the road not 10 feet apart. Only this time, you are seeing the light at the end of the passageway, where the rock walls are abruptly ending.

Have the PCs roll a DC 15 Knowledge (Religion) or DC 18 (the Planes) or DC 15 Bardic Knowledge to remember that Al'Kafil was a djinn that was guarding the entry of the maze when Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif came to this place and that he defeated him in a contest of enigmas and then a wrestling contest to gain entry. This was as well a spiritual contest to prove al-Khalif's determination in finding his true self before finally coming through the

maze and discovering the great lake. A DC 18 Bardic Knowledge check or Knowledge (religion) will also get the PCs the information that Al'Kafil is still around but has never bothered anybody since then.

As you finally make your way out of the maze, you finally discover the wonder of Tash'Ur Geshtar, or Geshtai's Mountain Oasis, one of the great lakes of the Yatils. The maze actually ends in the middle of a cliff, about halfway between the top and the lake below, at over 300 feet from the surface of the lake. A small path not five-foot wide goes either left or right and seems to go around the great basin.

A DC 15 Knowledge (Geography) check will give the PCs the information that the underground river is taking its source underneath them. A DC 15 Knowledge (Architecture & Engineering) check will also indicate that the path around the basin is man-made, but originally there must have been a natural out-cropping that Al-Khafil walked on to reach the end of the cliff and that has been adapted for humanoid traffic since then.

On your left, the path continues until it reaches the end of the cliff and lands on a less steep slope that slowly goes down to the lake-level, maybe a mile distant. On your right the path stretches on the side of the cliff and is meeting a plateau at about the same place where on the left, the path met the slope. You can see the path becoming larger on the top of the cliff, going for about half a mile until it reaches the end where the cliff is plunging in the lake on all sides except from where the path is laying. You can guess the lake have some sort of bay on the other side of that cliff-ending or maybe it is stretching further, but you have no way to see this now because your view of it is hidden by one of the most beautiful structure you have ever seen.

No towers or ziggurats done this landscape but a very large compound surrounded by thick white painted stone walls that you believe are of khund manufacture. You see one large dome in the middle as well as 2 other small ones that gleam in the setting sun as if made of gold. But what is the most impressive feature of it all, because the domes in themselves have nothing so special about them that you never saw elsewhere, is that all the underlying foundation below the main compound is actually built-in, with passageways that are going in and out of the cliff. You can see windows, balconies, verandas and even streets that seem suspended outside the cliff.

Have the PCs roll a DC 15 Knowledge (Architecture & Engineering) or (History) check. If they don't make it,

Mehmet will explain it to them on his own because he came here when he was younger. The exploitation of this place started back in the days of Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif when he had his revelation or "Apocalupsis" in Ancient Baklunish. In order to commemorate this event, he decided to build a sanctuary here where the following generations would come for spiritual awakening. He enlisted khunds and noomiz engineers to build the infrastructures of the complex so that in the next centuries, akbarites could still come here and continue the building process. Because of the difficulty of bringing materials through the maze and then the cliff path, they decided to build it inside the cliff and use the materials dug up to build the external structures. Khunds made the digging, noomiz conceptualized water-pumping equipment and elevators to service this small city. Since then, is it customary for pilgrims that come here to donate money to continue the building process or work here under the supervision of the clerics/engineers. No work made here is magical so as to celebrate the virtue of hard work as a spiritual endeavor. Read or paraphrase the following.

As you take a moment to observe it all laid out before you, Munthir finally speaks.

"I think, Mehmet that you have arrived at the next step on your journey." He smiles, looking at it all with a satisfied look.

Mehmet turns around, looking at you all, and smiles at you as well. "Shall we proceed my friends?" And he starts walking, taking the right path towards the Residence of the Grand Mufti.

As you make your way on the path, you can see many graffiti written on the wall, expressing little bit of prayers, religious depictions of the pilgrimage, icons representing the Saints of the Migration and the following Saints of the Settling in the Flanaess. You finally arrive at the massive iron doors of the compound. Guards in the traditional red-over-black garb of the True Faith wait for pilgrims to come and welcome them in. You are not alone on this road and still many others reach the point where you are now. You don't have to wait for long for your turn to come.

"The Four Feet of the Dragon guide you on your journey, you have finally arrived on the next step", says the guard, "May your purpose be clear and the answers even clearer when you depart."

"I seek the counsel of the Grand Mufti for matters regarding a prophecy that was given to me and that lead me here", asks Mehmet.

"You will be given audience tonight before evenfeast for the list is not long that are remaining today, after that we will all share the meal with the Wise One" answers the guard. "You can enter. Apocalypse, the Residence of the Grand Mufti, opens its arms to all of pure heart."

The PCs are pretty much left on their own for the next 4 hours until the Grand Mufti will receive them. This should be enough to get them a good Gather Information check in the compound. Mehmet will be anxious for his audience and will follow the PCs around while they are exploring. Munthir will retire to get himself cleaned up before dinner. Small rooms with cots will be made available to the PCs for their stay. White pilgrim robes are in the rooms and PCs are encouraged to wear them as everybody does. If they do not, they will not be stopped from going anywhere, but they will be given a tense look by everybody they meet. It will be impossible to meet the Grand Mufti fully armed and they will be asked to stand outside of the audience chamber if they insist.

Gather Information check:

DC 5: As periods come and go within the year, this is not an active period, but a lot of people are staying here and have been there for a while.

DC 8: The Grand Mufti is as sad as ever that the situation in Tusmit is not solved and that Muammar Qharan has not met him. This troubles him to no end that the good tusman people cannot get his guidance more openly.

DC 10: There was hope that the tusman situation would be solved last year by the return of Jadhim-Orem, the son of his old friend the former Pasha of Tusmit, but it died down and the Grand Mufti thinks he will not live to see an evolution in that perspective.

DC 12: A group of 50 riders came through about 6 months ago and stayed here under the protection of the Grand Mufti as guests of honor. They seem to be cultists of Azor'alq lead by the highest ranking member of their clergy in Tusmit, Kahzaa Al'Ahran.

DC 13: There have been a lot of talks around here about spiritual matters for those poor exiles. They know they can't stay here forever but cannot seem to find a way out of their predicament. Theological discussions abound about interpretation of texts or some such for both the akbarites and azorites. Even Al'Kafil the Djinn has showed up for the discussions.

DC 15: Kahzaa Al'Ahran has done great steps in forging a friendship with the Grand Mufti, something they were not able to do in their long lives, but it seems to bode well for everybody and their respective clergies.

DC 18: The Grand Mufti is an old wise man, sturdy as an oak, but he is nearing his nineties. Things should be done to ensure that his legacy is not lost. A few are left who would be able to take his place and Sinbad al-Mufti is one of them, but who else?

DC20: An incredible tale came to us about a group of adventurers who did see the re-appearance of the Cup and Talisman further north in Ekbir in a monastery lead by the Immortal of the Mountain, a human being said to have kissed Al'Akbar himself.

DC25: A few clerics, paladins and worshippers from both sides of the akbarite faith have started to preach a reunification of the two faiths. This is very strange coming from virtuous and known individuals that used to defend their own interpretations against the others.

The Audience

After sunset, Mehmet and the PCs will be lead inside the audience chamber where they are going to meet the Grand Mufti, Kahzaa Al'Ahran, Al'Kafil and find Munthir already inside beside Kahzaa. There is an active discussion already occurring because Munthir got a private audience with the individuals in the room before Mehmet. Munthir has been inside the room for half an hour discussing with the Grand Mufti and Kahzaa about the future of the cult of Azor'alq in Tusmit. The PCs have not been introduced at the same time because this does not concern them directly. The Grand Mufti's Second Scribe will have led them inside the room discreetly toward the end of the audience so they are able to know what it was all about. If they want to intervene, allow them to do so even if it does not seem appropriate. The Grand Mufti is like a very wise and kind grandfather who is never disturbed by what his grandchildren are saying or doing and he will listen to them and integrate them in the discussion. For the last two months, these talks about the future of the cult of Azor'alq have been going on with no headway, but the fact that Munthir has come is of great comfort for both church leaders. Little do they know that actually Munthir devised his plan while he was on the road and since he met Mehmet and the PCs. You can read or paraphrase this.

As you are lead to the back row of the audience chamber, the Second Scribe is gesturing for you to be quiet about your entry. After a few moments, your eyes adapt to the ambient light and you can see you entered a 100-foot diameter stone rotunda with a dome for a roof. Everything is made of solid stone, carved and polished by the labor of hundreds of pilgrims over the centuries. You cannot but think of the history these walls have seen and all the Grand Muftis of the past that sat on the center seat made of

black granite, called the Weight of the World, were a small man with a long white beard and red-over-black garb is currently reclining. He is supported by a few modest cushions but no other trappings of luxury. Around him are 3 other seats disposed in a semi-circle and an empty place where a seat should have been. On those are sat Munthir, a sixty year's old man wearing the white-over-dark blue garb of the clerics of Azor'alq and a holy symbol depicting a man on a mountain, a man you figure is the First Scribe because he is taking notes about what is discussed here and a large pale blue humanoid who seem to be floating above the ground, always in motion, and dressed with large pantaloons and a sleeveless shirt of bright colors, a purple turban and a holy symbol of the Cup and Talisman.

A DC 20 Knowledge (Planes) will give you that the humanoid is actually a noble djinn (or at least a DC 17 will give you that is some kind of Genie). A DC 18 Bardic Knowledge, Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Religion) check will identify the individual as being Al'Kafil, the Guardian of the Sacred Maze and companion to Mohammed Fariq al-Khalif.

A DC 12 Knowledge (Local: VTF) check will give you that the cleric of Azor'alq is effectively Kahzaa al'Ahrn, leader of the clergy of Azor'alq in Tusmit.

While they are in the room, the PCs will hear the story of the escape from Sefmur that is described under Kahzaa Al'Ahrn's background that the man will tell to Munthir to explain his whereabouts. Munthir will do the same to explain his travels to everybody present. After that, read or paraphrase the following, but let the PCs intervene if they want to (yes, you will have to improvise if need be).

"So this is what leads me here. I've met the young Mehmet and the 3 priestesses of Istus and it convinced me that here was where I was supposed to be, for good or for bad" said Munthir.

"Yes, yes... of course... you are supposed to be here Munthir...", uttered Al'Kafil, "...but your purpose does not help us directly in our problem... We still have the issue of the finding a safe place for Master Khazaa..."

"I'm afraid Al'Kafil is right my son", replies Kahzaa, "Apocalypse will not be safe for much longer. I fear Muammar will learn eventually of our location and will not tarry in his haste to see me, and everything I stand for, destroyed. He will not be content with my exile and he will come here in his rage and will not respect the sanctity of this holy place." Sighing, Kahzaa's shoulders slump a little and you can see he has been stuck at this point for some time now. He

sought refuge in many places, but nobody cared enough to side with him in his dire need.

Out of nowhere, like a smooth breeze in a hot summer day, you hear a voice coming from the center seat. You had forgotten the old man because he was not moving at all, just listening as wise men do. "Istus is with us still that she did not seem fit for Muammar to discover you or that you have found sanctuary here my friend. Maybe that time has come, maybe not, we can only respect the fact that she just did not seem fit to do so until this very moment. I trust that a most extraordinary moment of clarity of purpose was shown to us in the last few days according to what you said, Munthir. If I take into consideration everything you told me, you have met again a young man who bore a prophecy that lead him here as well as his companions that were bound to him through Destiny or Fate and that some of them you might have met under previous circumstances. This is a tiding for a resolution of events, not a stagnation like we did for the previous weeks, without a solution."

"It seems, Honored Friend, that you are right. Tidings are for the resolution of it all and a decision must be made. But I would suggest that all involved in that situation have a say in this, and especially the young ones we haven't heard yet", replied Kahzaa.

Turning their heads towards you, Mehmet takes a step, putting him in front of the party.

"Wise one, my name is Mehmet bin-Khazzim and I am a paladin in the service of Azor'alq. I am also a son in the service of his House in the Mouqollad Consortium and I am seeking a path that could reconcile both without reneging on one. I've done my research, consulted oracles and brought along companions on this quest for knowledge and self-discovery. Everything discovered pointed me to this place and this time, to this meeting with you all present so I might find a way to continue. I am looking for an old monastery that used to practice a ritual of some sort that helped the supplicant in achieving unity. I was told to look here for that answer."

Looking pretty much surprised by that statement, the Grand Mufti looks around to Kahzaa, Munthir and Al'Kafil. Kahzaa is looking at Mehmet with a stunned look, Al'Kafil seems puzzled but his face is hardly readable due to his nature, looking at Munthir, you see a beginning of a smile showing under his beard.

"I do believe that nobody here is familiar with such a place, forgotten through the ages, that might have

been nearby, but I do think there is something to it we might have overlooked”, replied the Grand Mufti.

“But what about you, Companions of Mehmet?”

At this point, the PCs will be able to introduce themselves to the individuals present. Have them explain the adventure so far according to their eyes and what made them join Mehmet in his quest. You might have to take the roles of Kahzaa, the Grand Mufti or Al’Kafil to push the questions so answers will get out. The idea is to test the PCs into revealing if they were coerced. The individuals will not cast spells to reveal the truth or to discern it because they want everything to be said from the heart. They will try, though, to convince them to tell the truth or pull their lies in the open by their own contradictions. The Grand Mufti and Kahzaa are skilled diplomats with Kahzaa being a little bit pushy and the Grand Mufti being more gentle. Al’Kafil is a roguish character that has been around for centuries and will try to fast-talk the PCs into revealing themselves.

It can be assumed the Grand Mufti and Kahzaa both succeed in their Sense Motive but they will not push it if the PCs do not want to reveal the information; Al’Kafil, on the other side, will.

Have the PCs who are actually trying to hide some of their stories (such as being hired by a third party) roll an opposed Bluff check vs Al’Kafil’s Sense Motive (+20 modifier).

If a PC fails his opposed Bluff check, Al’Kafil will try to win an opposed Bluff check (+20 modifier) vs the PC’s Sense Motive check to have the secret out in the open by using his Master Manipulator feat.

In the matter of revealing the secondary objective of their mission (location of the monastery), this is a chance for the PCs to really know who is working for whom and show conflicting interests in the party. It will introduce them to the dilemma they will be living at the end of the adventure in knowing to whom they have the choice to reveal it and who amongst themselves will be competition or ally. But for now, they discovered sensitive information, meaning the whereabouts of an underground clergy, and it was never part of the original deal with their employer.

After finally finding out who is working for whom and who’s honest (according to the eyes of others), read or paraphrase this to those who it may apply.

The secret is revealed without subterfuge

“Ahhhhh, my child...”, says the Grand Mufti. “You now understand what I was saying earlier about what and when Istus chooses to reveal at the appropriate time.

Don’t be saddened by the fact that you tried to hide this from us. We all understand why you did it and why you might still report what you will find. The pressure of our poor world is a huge burden for such young shoulders. I beg of you though to consider the consequences of your actions and what you reveal if you reveal anything.”

“I find such thing ignominious that they pressured you into service”, said Kahzaa, “for this is some work of Shadows and only evil things can come forth after that. I consider the will of Istus as sacred and if what you were sent to reveal is shown, so be it. But consider your task and decide what you should reveal and to whom.”

The secret is revealed by Al’Kafil

“Ahahahaha.... Such things...they bring me so much laughter...”, said the djinn. “But I forgive you, young one... for you had no prior knowledge of who I am... I am sure that my honored friends the Grand Mufti and Kahzaa agree that the burden is large for such young and inexperienced shoulders... Don’t feel ashamed of losing this “battle of wits” with me... It is what I’ve been doing here in Apocalypse for years, owing it to my old and long departed friend Mohammed.”

“Yes, as good Al’Kafil said”, interrupted Kahzaa, “don’t feel ashamed of what you tried to do. What has to be done will be done nonetheless, but you will have to decide what you say and to whom you say it and live with the consequences of your actions, or run from them...”

“That too sadly is true and also,” replied the Grand Mufti, “one thing that Istus teaches us is that you cannot escape causality, that events will occur, will leave traces and cause more events that will affect you in the long run, for good or for evil, to propel you towards your Fate or your Destiny....”

The secret is not revealed at all or nobody has been coerced into revealing the location of the monastery afterward

“Your quest and your motives are on the right path I do believe”, said the Grand Mufti. “I am content in the fact that young Mehmet is a good judge of character for someone this young to have chosen such fine individuals to accompany him. Might you too find something in this monastery that could strengthen you on your own path of righteousness.”

“And hopefully”, said Kahzaa, “your noble and pure hearts will keep the presence of my clergy in these parts a secret so we might regain our strength,

recover our losses, and eventually reintegrate Tusmit gloriously."

After the Audience

When the PCs are done with telling their stories and received good advice from all, you can read or paraphrase this.

"Ahhhhhhhhh...", said the Grand Mufti. "There might still be hope that Istus did not see fit to reveal your presence here good Kahzaa. But still, we should find you another location, a hidden one that could allow you to reorganize and after negotiate from a position of strength with Muammar."

"Yes, you are totally right", replied Kahzaa, "as we said earlier, Munthir, Mehmet and the other's arrival bring good tidings that we will find a solution for our predicament."

"For that," said Munthir, finally opening up, "I do have one solution that could satisfy Kahzaa as well as Mehmet at the same time. But first I have to tell you a story that never showed in the history books from the days of my previous passage on this Oerth."

You can give **Player Handout #6: Munthir's Story** to the players so one of them might read it. During the telling of the story, if the players ask for the NPCs reaction, you can tell them that you see hope sprouting in the eyes of Kahzaa, avid attention by the Grand Mufti as somebody who loves to learn just learned something very important and, from Al'Kafil, a strange complexion of resignation and recognition shows in his face. If the PCs ask afterward what is the reason for such a frown, roleplay the answer as if Al'Kafil wants to escape the question and not give anything. Actually, Al'Kafil is very much "in the know" about everything Munthir told, but old oaths and wishes granted to Qurell as well as his own dedication to not talk about the place prevent him from answering.

Read or paraphrase the following.

"And such is what I'm proposing as a solution for the clergy's predicament. I am hoping that the monastery is still hidden such as it was in my younger days, free of occupants", said Munthir.

"Ahhhhhhhhh my dear son! You offer such a wonderful balm on an old man's wound", replied Kahzaa. "Blessed was the day when the idea of bringing you back from the dead was suggested. You are giving us hope out of hopelessness. What could we have done without you to show us the way?"

"Grand Master", Munthir said, "I am but a simple pawn in Istus' hand. I follow her will as I have always done."

"Munthir Haddad of the Order of Azor'alq," interrupts the Grand Mufti, "great news you bring but still time passes and never I've heard of such a place so near my home. Mayhaps it has passed back into the hands of Evil and you should go and scout ahead with our young friends?"

"It is a wise suggestion Old One, and one I will not pass. Do you, Mehmet, and you, his friends, want to accompany me in rededicating this ancient place of wonders?"

The offer here is very tangible and if the PCs want to drop out, they can, but the location of the monastery will not be precise enough to give their employers what they need. But still, if they want to, do not stop them and have them decide what they want to do from here (report what they know or not if they need to) and go the **Conclusion**.

Mehmet will, of course continue his quest with Munthir and he will plead with everybody that wants to return to Sefmur to not do so. If everybody else is going, read or paraphrase this.

"Very well then," said Munthir. "Just know that this location has been protected by powerful wards established a long time ago as to reinforce the natural proclivities of the environment that hides the monastery from view. I am not surprised at all that the convergence of events lead Mehmet here to meet me and show everybody the way since I'm probably the only one of 2 people alive on this plane to have gone to the location. Must you all know that having somebody who had been there showing you the way is the only way beside epic magics to go there unannounced so this is an immense honor that, to my knowledge, has not been given to anybody for centuries."

"Then we give you our benediction, Munthir, for the mission you have undertaken in scouting ahead for the rest of the clergy of Azor'alq", said Kahzaa. "May you return with good news and even better tidings for the future."

"And my son," said the Grand Mufti, "takes what you need for transportation and gear for your trek for I know the mountains are not an easy crossing."

"Not to worry, we take your blessing and all the good will you can give us", says Munthir. He then turns around, smiles at you and signals you toward the doors.

Munthir is planning to go on the trek at sunrise and will gather what he needs tonight. He tells the PCs that they should get mounts here if they don't have them, they

should be useful for the most part of the trek. He suggests as well getting anything useful for climbing.

Encounter 5: Pillars of the Faithful

Once they are on the road, Munthir guides them on the other side of the basin of Tash'Ur Gesta•r where they will follow the path that leads north in the mountains.

If they haven't met the Brotherhood of Basharat

At some point after 3 days, Munthir will tell the others he will scout alone about half a day in front of the party because he heard from rumors there was an awful monster nearby. If asked he will reveal it is most likely a nest of many Rocs or perhaps a child of the red Dragon Kerridzar, Munthir will refuse to be accompanied and will not be convinced.

This is the opportunity that the Brotherhood of Basharat has been waiting for since they left Apocalypse. The Brotherhood got their hands on the prophecy in **Encounter Two** but has been stuck since, because they were not in the room when Mehmet received his audience. They just learned that Munthir, Mehmet and the PCs were leaving north. They will try to ambush the party and subdue them to learn where they are going. The Brotherhood is not aware that the PCs know squat. Use the stats and reactions in case of capture as **Encounter Two** since it's the same party that is attacking. In the eventuality that the Brotherhood party wins the encounter and everybody is unconscious, Munthir will arrive after the interrogation and all subdue them and tie them up so they can leave.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Thug doing his initiation (3): male human Rogue 1; Hp 7; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1; Hp 14; Appendix 1

APL 4 (EL 8)

Young Initiate (4): male human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1; Hp 14; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3; Hp 38; Appendix 1

APL 6 (EL 10)

Brotherhood Muscle (2): male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3; Hp 38; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5; Hp 58; Appendix 1

APL 8 (EL 13)

Brotherhood Head Hunter (2): male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5; Hp 58; Appendix 1

Ali: male human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 9; Hp 94; Appendix 1

If they have dealt with the Brotherhood of Basharat

The road continues on for nearly 7 days in the mountains without any incident. You can say to PCs that Munthir is clearly competent in finding his way around the mountains. He looks kind of distant; not talking too much and also seems lost in his memories of his younger days making him sometimes smile for no apparent reason. If asked questions about the past or where they are going, here is what he might include in his answers.

- His memories of the Pillars Monastery are pretty vivid and he hopes it has not been left abandoned. (DC 5 Sense Motive check will show happiness as similar to a young child when talking about the location)
- The 5 pillars are very high and interconnected above and under the ground with bridges and tunnels, making the location a very good training ground for warriors with tendencies for acrobatics. (DC 12 Sense Motive check will give apprehension mixed with relief for memories as if he escaped accidents)
- The ritual of the Unwavering Path is known to Munthir since he went through it himself when he was younger. He had to because his training as a paladin would not allow him to explore other avenues as a warrior. (DC 15 Sense Motive check gives apprehension since he knows the dangers of the ritual, but he does not want to worry Mehmet)
- He has a foolish hope that his old friend Qurell, or Odd-Eye as they used to call him, might still be alive, although a very old elf (DC 8 Sense Motive check will give a sense of longing as for a connection with his past through his friend)
- Qurell was with him when he died, but he will not disclose any other details about his death after Um-Mathar (DC 15 Sense Motive check will give shame for the memories associated with his first death)
- The Host of Light's purpose was to oppose a cabal of Ur-Flan autochthones named the Kas'Tashi Covenant, or Covenant of Lingering Darkness, that lead an assault against the forces of Ulamur, first Pasha of Tusmit, when they decided to try to retake

control of Tusmit and the surrounding lands. (DC 10 Sense Motive check will give pride as from a lifetime achievement goal finally put to rest)

- His wife, Sala, he met when he went after a group of cabalists in the Udgru. She was a beautiful half-elven scout with a wild temper, but a heart of gold. She survived him. (DC 5 Sense Motive check will give unconditional love and fond private memories)
- He had a child, a boy, but he was 2 years old when Munthir died and was kept safe by his sister Maryam. He does not know what became of him. (DC 10 Sense Motive check gives worries, but this is not a priority for him. If a PC played **TUS2-05 Historical Restoration**, he can remember that only his wife's name was written on the stone and buried in the temple, a DC 15 Bardic Knowledge will also reveal the information)

Arrival

When the PCs are through asking questions to Munthir, have them arrive at the Pillars by reading or paraphrasing this.

The days are pretty much the same on the northern path since you left Apocalypse when the trail passes again in front of one of the many crevasses and side passages that have been your regular sights since the last 2 days. Munthir, having been more quiet than usual since the day before, stops and starts to inspect the rocks that are lying near one of them. For 2 minutes, he upturns them and looks at them closer, as if looking for something. The more he looks, the more he smiles for it seems he has found what he was looking for.

"Here", he says. "It is this passage that will lead us to the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery." He takes one of the rocks lying around and shows it to you. "You see, my friends and I came here and we wanted to be able to return here without any problem so we mapped the labyrinth of passages and since yesterday I was counting the number we passed. To be sure we would not be mistaken, we put amongst the rocks at the base of the passage stones we brought back from the Far West." On the stones in his hands, you can see small skeletons of what seems to be fish. "There was never any fish in this region according to my friend Salah Muazir so we knew that only this passage would lead us to the Pillars."

Munthir rises then and starts walking in the side passage.

"Come, but bring your horses by the reins for they are scared of tight places. Further on, there will be a place

where we will be able to tie them up for the rest of the journey."

So he continues, leading you deeper in the passage for the better part of the day when you came upon an enlargement in the passage about 25 feet wide and in the rock, you'll find iron loops to tie the horses as well as old iron mangers where food and water could be left for them.

PCs with the Track feat can make a DC 18 Survival check to spot the tracks that Qurell left when he last came to check on the place about 5 days ago. The check is automatic since the players will take some time to rest there. On a success, tell them they spotted the bare feet tracks of a medium size humanoid that came from the other passage in the back and that he left through the same.

When you come in the enlargement of the passage, you clearly see Munthir wearing a smile of contentment on his face.

"We have almost arrived my friends. This is the Antechamber as we used to call it. I even remember planting the pitons for the horses here myself. We are about half an hour from the Pillars."

And with this, Munthir goes in the back passage, going a little bit faster as he is anxious to see what his old base of operation is looking like today. He does not look back for he knows you are following him.

After a bend in the passage, you see more light coming from what seems to be the end of it. You come out right after Munthir to look at one marvel of architecture or natural wonder or maybe a little bit of both mixed up together.

You are in a small valley maybe a little less than a kilometer wide squeezed by walls of rock on each side. You cannot see another exit from the valley from where you stand but you can see that a small cascade falls from one of the rock walls opposite to the entrance and into a pond that overflows into a small river that goes across the valley's floor and disappear at the base of the central pillar. What you see as being small gardens flanks the river and traces of irrigation can be seen even from your standpoint. About half of the valley is also constituted of a wooden area where a few entrances to trails are visible.

But what is the most striking in that setting is the immense complex of 5 pillars going straight up, pointing at the sky. 4 of them are about 500 feet high, spread out evenly, flanking by pairs a central pillar of 750 feet high. Stones bridges of different width and height links them all together in what seems to be a

random disposition, giving it a very natural feeling. You can see no mortar and no separate stones linked together for all seems to be made of one giant stone that would have grown like that. You see holes in the structure at ends of bridges that might be doors and other smaller ones that might be windows.

Those who can pull off a DC 25 Knowledge (Architecture & Engineering) check will recognize that the construction was based on a natural phenomenon that made the original 5 pillars but it was tampered by intelligent hands many times over the millennia. It looks like a natural structure but at least half of it is in a very good imitation of natural structures. A DC 20 Spellcraft check will give out the fact that strong transmutation magic has been used to mold the pillars like this and especially the bridges.

By the time you come through the valley's entrance and readjusted to the more prominent source of light, you can see Munthir, standing maybe 30 feet in front of you, smiling wide to his ears and crying happy tears.

"Blessed be the Son of Light for showing the way... I am finally home."

Have the PCs roll a DC 12+APL Spot check. They are being observed from very nearby by one individual. If they make it, have them roll a DC 12+APL Sense Motive check. If they make it, they can see that the individual in question is waiting for Munthir's emotion to pass before introducing himself.

"Come, come my friends..." says Munthir. "This is the place where hope returns. There is obviously somebody here, maybe a former student of my old friend..."

"...Or, himself, the old friend, Munthir Haddad", interrupts a voice coming from your left and a little bit higher than you.

"Is it you really old friend?" continues the stranger. "Are you really back from the dead as I heard?"

You can have the PCs react as they see fit and take defensive position. What they see is a very old elf perched on a ledge dressed in a brown loose burnoose and a small beige turban. He is very small, even for an elf and his face in all wrinkled up with a few strands of wispy white hair behind his pointy ears. He somersaults over all of the PCs and lands on his feet at about 10 feet of Munthir.

"Yes, yes, truth behind it, I can see. Back from the dead, you are. And to see Odd-Eye you did..." Then suddenly, the old elf approaches Munthir and throws

his arms around him, crying tears of joy. "Grow back in these old limbs, life can, for long lost friends are back together."

"Ahhhhh Qurell! Friend amongst friends! I knew I should have come to see you sooner! But you know how it is, Duty and the Greater Good always first!"

"Yes, yes, understand I do, for such always has been your way. But come, come with these younglings, your new companions, for tired you must be and stories we have to tell each other about the past, the present and the future..."

The PCs are lead down the valley by the old elf. If they want to check for tracks allow them to do so by saying that a few animals are here (goats, birds, small mammals) and they see tracks belonging to Qurell but no other humanoid. On the way down the path, they can hear Qurell and Munthir talking, but it's mostly Munthir's tale since he came back from the dead (feel free to give your players Munthir's history from previous Tusmit adventures like TUS5-03 *Strands of Faith*, TUS5-08 *Dance on a Volcano* and the fight against Kerridzar in they don't already know it). Then read or paraphrase this.

As you come by the pillars, you see Odd-Eye turning around toward you and, smiling, he describes, pointing at the structure: "The Pillars of the Faithful Monastery, this is. Around you Generosity, Piety, Honor and Family the names of the pillars are, with Righteousness at the center. Old beyond old, used beyond used, occupants following emptiness following new occupants, seen it all, these stones have. But new faces, seen they have not in a long time for alone I have been for near a century. Come, empty rooms for visitors I have maintained and present there is food and water in the Family pillar."

He leads you at the base of the nearest pillar where there is a door. Each pillar has a base of about 70 feet diameter and many windows to let light in. Inside, other sources of illumination comes from globes that radiates light. Everything is dustless and seems well taken care of. A staircase on the other side of the room leads upstairs and another one near you leads down. Clean but used carpets are on the floor as well as some little sculptures and paintings. You go through a refectory on the first floor where there seems to be a well-furnished kitchen and then to the second floor where beds are disposed for your convenience.

Have the PCs roll a DC 15 Appraise check. It will give them that everything here taken individually is no more than the 300-500 gp range but if they are able to do) DC 10 Knowledge (Local: Any check, they will notice that

these works of art comes from everywhere in the Flanaess and even beyond. A DC 15 Knowledge (History) check DC 20 or Bardic Knowledge check will give them that some pieces of art come from a distinct baklunish origin, but not from around the VTF region.

“Refresh yourselves before dinner”, says the old one, “a matter of spiritual enlightenment we have to discuss.”

The PCs have about an hour to explore a bit of the complex if they are so inclined. Odd-Eye has not put any restrictions to their movement for he believes no danger comes from the structure itself. Feel free to describe it as exotic as you want, but stay vague on details because this location will be better described in the next installment of this serie of adventures.

Before you go

When they join Munthir and Odd-Eye in the refectory, the PCs will find the meal ready. A simple fare made of fresh vegetables and some small birds Odd-Eye has caught. If the PCs are interested in adding things to the meal, such as a bottle of wine gained from a previous adventure, Odd-Eye will be very happy since he has very few occasions to have a refined product in these parts. During dinner, talk will occur around the table and feel free to improvise with the PCs about Odd-Eye asking questions about their previous adventures. Other subjects would be adventures that Odd-Eye and Munthir had together when they were in the Far West and when they came back and formed the Host of Light, but they will not go to the subject of the first death of Munthir. They will skip the subject of the Ritual for Mehmet until after dessert. When you are done with the small talk, read or paraphrase this.

“Now that full and content our stomachs are, matter grave we must consider”, says Odd-Eye, looking at each of you.

“As you remember a few day ago,” says Munthir, “I told you that this place has been protected from discovery or from any magical divinations for centuries. But there always have been a way to find it for those who were looking for it to reach enlightenment.”

“Yes, coming here a serious thing is,” continues Odd-Eye, “for its secrecy is the most valuable thing. A long time ago, grant me a wish from a Noble Djinn I was able to and this place is what I wanted secret. But for special ones, I wanted it to lead here as Munthir told me you were, young Mehmet. For those only who, for pure purpose, wants to find it a way finds here.”

Seeing the confused frown on Mehmet’s face, Munthir smiles and explains.

“What my friend tries to tell you all, is that the way the protection has been laid here made possible your discovery by divinations, but only because you asked to find a ritual for spiritual enlightenment and not for another purpose. You were lead by divinations to find me and we met so I could lead you here toward, what I hope, is your Destiny.”

“Yes,” interrupted Odd-Eye, “but still confidence, by forces unknown to me, might be breached, and by talkative mouths who consequences cannot see. So ask of you a vow to not disclose the location of this secret hideout I must. As Munthir I understood earlier, to come here, other people in need will, and discover, they must not be.”

“The vow is of grave consequences to you if you fail it”, continues Munthir, “but an alternative is available if you don’t pronounce it. You could always say no, but a powerful spell that will erase your memories of the last 3 days will be cast on you so that you will never be able to come back.”

The Odd-Eye continues “That, young friends, you must choose now before explained the Ritual of the Unwavering Path is. So what says you?”

The PCs have a real choice in front of them that will have consequences on the AR and for the rest of the storyline. What you should make very clear to the PCs is that somehow, almost all PCs will have a choice to breach one vow of confidentiality, whether it's to the Royal Investigators, the Tears of the Marid or to Odd-Eye and they must choose now because they will fail otherwise. If no memories are left, they cannot disclose the location to their employers and some of the other PCs might actually give that information to another interested party. And as well, if they have the memories and they disclose the location to the Royal Investigators or the Tears of the Marid, they break their vow to Odd-Eye. They must also figure out a way, with what they know already of the other PCs allegiance, of getting the entire group to go the same way if they disclose the information to the Tears or the Investigators or they will still be on the losing side of the deal. If the characters want a little privacy before disclosing their agreement, Munthir and Odd-Eye will allow them. Mehmet will stay with the PCs but his opinion will be that he stays here and he is taking the vow but does not go against anybody's choice. The idea here also is, as a DM, to never disclose anything about the type of reward or the penalties occurred by accomplishing or failing the mission more than they already know about them so that the PCs will try to take

guesses as to where they are worst off in betraying (wait until conclusion and their meetings with their employers before doing so).

If any of the PCs ask about the level of power of such spells mention that they do not have enough information to be sure of the effects and narrow it down to a specific level.

If any of the PCs have chosen to go for the memory erase, you can tell them that the adventure is not over but read or paraphrase that to them.

“Clouded, your judgment may be, but other circumstances for that, I might not know”, said Odd-Eye, getting a pale blue stone incrusting with gems from under his burnoose. “Don’t be alarmed... The stone your forehead will touch and nothing you will remember when out of this place you will go. Your friends, you will still be able to accompany for the ritual, if such is your wish.”

If anybody cast a *detect magic* spell, they will have a strong aura of transmutation and enchantment on the stone.

For all the PCs who have chosen to take the vow, read or paraphrase this.

“Wisely, I hope you have chosen, young ones. For a light thing the vow of secrecy is not and a terrible price to be paid if you fail. But courageous and full of hope you are and confident in reaching your Destiny, Istus willing”, said Odd-Eye, getting a pale blue stone incrusting with gems. “Put the vow on you, this stone will and latent the curse will be until disclose it you do.”

He then touches you on the forehead, liberating a little part of the stone’s power upon you.

“So be it.”

The Unwavering Path

As soon as all the PCs have made their decision and that the stone has touched their forehead, finalizing the vow or casting a delayed erase memory spell on them, give them **Player’s Handout #7: The Ritual of the Kat’Habâsis**.

After their speeches, Munthir and Odd-Eye will lead Mehmet and the PCs to the Armory where they will be able to see a forge recently used and racks of different weapons and armors. Odd-Eye has been busy and a DC 15 Appraise check will give the characters the idea that Odd-Eye is an accomplished weaponsmith and armorsmith. All weapons here are made of steel, wood cold iron or alchemical silver and of masterwork quality and he will

lend those weapons to those who think they will need them. All weapons available are from the *Player’s Handbook*. If some of the PCs do not want to go through the ritual, they can stay with Munthir and Odd-Eye upstairs and let the others go. Mehmet will be saddened and he will try to convince the PC to join them, but will, at the end, respect their choice. After that, read or paraphrase this.

“So here we are younglings”, says Odd-Eye. “Down the stairs we go.”

With him in front and Munthir at the back, you are going down on ground level and follow the stairs below the floor of the valley. Even underground, you can still see the walls of the pillar on top of you continuing down, enlarging the diameter of the tower sensibly after each level. You hear a rushing of water nearby, but cannot tell from where it comes from. After a few floors, the floor levels are no longer present and the staircase continues down the spiral, at some point having a cavern, a tunnel or a gallery penetrating the rock in what you think is a maze of tunnels. Rope or stone bridges sometimes mark your descent, going over the ever enlarging pit that the walls of the pillar are creating, joining 2 tunnels together.

Munthir, during the descent, is explaining to you that this was the toughest dungeon he ever cleaned and he is reminiscing some encounters he had here. Odd-Eye laughs at some details, contradicting his friend in good humor. You can see the pale attempts by your 2 guides to enlighten your mood.

After what seems hours, but probably closer to 45 minutes, the pit enlarges so much into a cavern that you suddenly see the ground coming close and the walls of the pillar that were probably closer to the other pillars merging and creating an gigantic cavern.

“Here is where we stop”, says Odd-Eye, pointing toward the middle of the cavern “for in that direction you should go. You will come to a place where a pentagram is carved on the rock face. There, meditate you must, and reveal itself a passage will.”

He then goes back up the stairs, joining Munthir.

“Good luck to you all, and may Istus, Al’Akbar and Azor’alq be your light on your path”, said Munthir, going up as well.

Encounter 6: Give and Take

The ground floor of the cavern is a good 500 feet wide and is slightly lightened by phosphorescent fungus on

the walls. During the years past, Odd-Eye also left there everburning torches at regular intervals. If the PCs are not going straight to the direction where Odd-Eye was pointing, you can tell them that the four exterior pillars have similar staircases that goes down to the ground floor. The central pillar walls, connecting to the other pillar walls creates the cavern but it also seems to be supported by 4 colossal size columns that fill a good third of the room. In the middle of the central pillar, there is an immense column of water that is the river that was running across the valley floor that disappeared under the pillar. After a few minutes of exploring around and finding nothing of interest, the PCs come upon the pentagram on one of the walls. Read or paraphrase this.

As you search around for a few minutes, you find nothing of interest except the obvious pentagram carved into the wall. It is of a regular five-sided polygon of about 6 feet width and with runes engraved and some strange writing. Mehmet comes close, wrinkling his nose a bit while studying the characters written.

"Don't you smell this?" he asks, looking at you. "It stinks of brimstone."

PCs coming closer to the pentagram will smell this rank odor of sulfur. If anybody knows Infernal or Celestial, or if they are able to do a DC 10 Knowledge (Religion) check, they will see that those two languages are used on the pentagram. If anybody is able to translate, here is what it says.

"Give and take, take and give back in kind for beyond this gate lies your path to another gate where this will be the key."

If anybody casts a *detect magic* spell, the aura will be of strong abjuration. Any *detect evil* cast will give a distinct aura of moderate evil. Mehmet is not feeling good right now because he just used his *detect evil* ability.

Mehmet looks at the pentagram, looking resigned to go through it all and says:

"So I guess I will be meditating now. Anybody care to join me?"

The offer is serious and any PC who goes to meditate with him will have to do a DC 15 Concentration check to get into a spiritual focus after 1 minute of meditation (yes, the PCs can take 10).

If anybody wins the check, read or paraphrase this.

After one minute of concentrating on the road ahead and of the spiritual journey you have taken here with your friends, you start to feel strange and you look at the pentagram, sensing this might be the cue for

something in the ritual. Looking at it directly, you first see nothing out of the ordinary but then, the inside boundaries of the pentagram seems to be a little more pale, a little bit translucent. At first it is just an impression, but then you see this phenomenon spreading slowly to all the interior of the pentagram. By a trick of the light, you still see the carved face of the pentagram but you are able to see, beyond it, a man made tunnel going into the rock with a fiery red light at the end. You turn to Mehmet and you see him staring back at you all.

"Do you see it? Do you see the tunnel??"

If the PCs failed the check or did not participate in the meditation, read or paraphrase this.

After looking at Mehmet meditate for one minute, you suddenly see his eyes looking at the pentagram, as if fixing on something beyond it. A few seconds later, you see his eyes opening wide and he looks at you.

"Do you see it? Do you see the tunnel??"

Whether they see it or not, at this point Mehmet will rise from his kneeling position and will approach the pentagram, his hand having taken his holy symbol from around his neck and putting it in front of him. Read or paraphrase this.

Mehmet rises from his kneeling position, getting out his holy symbol of the Man on a Mountain from around his neck. Uttering a brief prayer, he puts his hand holding it in front of him and moves forward, toward the pentagram. First his hand, then his arm and the rest of his body go straight through the pentagram without slowing.

"Come, follow me..."

Again the PCs can drop out of the ritual at this point, the portal will be holding for the next minute as long as Mehmet or any PC that has made the Concentration check. Of course, the PCs don't know that and do not tell them. If nobody but Mehmet has done the check, Mehmet will consider that, after 1 minute, the PCs who have not followed him are not going through with the ritual and he will leave them on the other side.

Once everybody has gone through the tunnel, read or paraphrase this.

The smell of brimstone and sulfur are the first sensations that reach you. Smoke hangs in the air at the top of this dark tunnel illuminated only by the glow of fire you see at the other end. The heat starts to gain intensity as you go nearer the end. Mehmet,

still concentrating, tells you that the corridor seems to stretch a very long way for a mile.

Night and day do not exist in this 20-foot large passage as it is a bridging dimension. The temperature condition is “very hot” at the beginning of the corridor (see Heat Dangers in *Dungeon Master's Guide* p.303), natural healing is not possible (and Fast Healing abilities as well), and magical healing restores only half as many hit point. *Detect evil* spell or abilities reveal a landscape that radiates strong evil at this point due to activities by tanar’ri. This goes to overwhelmingly evil as more of the tunnel is covered.

Mehmet and the PCs encounter the occasional skeleton that looks to have died from heat exposure or starvation. In some cases, pieces of metal armor litter the corridor like bread crumbs that eventually lead to a body. The temperature condition becomes “severe heat” after $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile (don't forget to calculate the time the PCs are spending there to get effects of these conditions if they are searching every 5-foot square) and increases to “extreme heat” within 60 feet of the corridor end.

Note: PCs who turn around and double back along the corridor, after even taking one step into the newly formed passageway, discover that it now stretches infinitely behind them into the distance. They can walk forever backward but would always have to go the same distance to reach the end of the corridor.

Once they have cleared the mile-long corridor, read or paraphrase this:

The fire you originally perceived is revealed to be a pair of burning wooden gates, each 10 feet wide and 30 feet tall. Despite the intense heat generated by the flames, the wooden gates, braced with metal, are never truly consumed, continually billowing black smoke into the upper part of the corridor. This distraction, however, is nothing compared to the creatures, most certainly of the demon sorts, standing in front of the gates, smiling calmly as you approach.

Depending on the APL, different kind of devils will wait for them here.

APL 2 (EL 6)

Imp (2): Hp 45 each; *Monstrous Medium Spider Form*; *Monster Manual*/p. 56

APL 4 (EL 8)

Bearded Devils (2): Hp 45 each; *Monster Manual*/p. 53

APL 6 (EL 10)

Chain Devils (2): Hp 52 each; *Monster Manual* p.

54

APL 8 (EL 12)

Bone Devils (2): Hp 95 each; *Monster Manual*/p. 53

The devils are automatically aware of any creature within 100 feet whose thought they can detect, but most otherwise rely on their Spot checks. The devils have been given the opportunity to pass to the Material Plane, but must defeat the PCs without engaging them in battle (but if they are not the initial aggressor and they defeat the PCs, that's okay and they win). The devils will address Mehmet and make only one statement:

“Beyond these gates lies your path.”

The devils gesture toward the gates and allow the PCs to approach uncontested. Any character that approaches the gates notice letters carved into the wooden surface beneath the flames. PCs that succeed on a DC 10 Knowledge (Religion) check or know the Celestial language will recognize letters from the Celestial alphabet. Translation will give them:

“Return any harm given before passing through these gates alive.”

Touching the gates deals 1d6 points of fire damage and 1d6 points of vile damage. Gripping either gate handle to open a gate deals 2d6 of fire damage and 2d6 of vile damage and imposes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, Climb, Craft, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Forgery, Heal, Open Lock, Sleigh of Hand and Use Rope checks until the damage to the PCs hand is healed. The PC can make a Strength check as a full-round action when attempting to open the gate, but no amount of force will do so at this point.

If asked how to open the gates, the devils will address Mehmet and the PCs in common and open both of their hands:

“To follow the Path, accept our gift.”

The statement prompts characters to make a single Sense Motive check opposed by the Bluff checks of each demon present. If the characters win, they receive an unnerving feeling that the offered gift is doubled sided, potentially resulting in harm.

Effectively, they have one chance to do this so they have to announce to you clearly what are their intentions and in what order they want to act upon them.

A PC or Mehmet, depending on what the characters will decide, that places her hands into the hands of the demon is immediately infused with profane energy and must make a DC 10+ APL Fortitude save to avoid becoming permanently shaken. A *restoration* is required

to remove this condition. If the character is already shaken, they are now frightened.

Once the infusion of profanity has been accepted, the PC or Mehmet now has the chance to open the fiery gate with a DC 20 Strength check as a full-round action. Touching or gripping either gate or handle no longer deals any damage to them. Characters that look through the open gate can see light disappearing into impenetrable darkness. For the ritual to work at the end, only one character needs to touch the hands of a demon. Mehmet will offer himself if the PCs propose it, but he will not insist if somebody else wants to go through with it instead.

Results

PC or Mehmet accepts the infusion of profanity, open the gates and walks through.

The characters and Mehmet find themselves Baator's higher layer, gain nothing from the quest (because he did not "give back"), and is greeted by a welcoming party of devils (double the number of devils present at the gate) who are accustomed to adventurers making this mistake. The devils in the corridor may now leave for the Material Plane. Read below for what happens to them.

PC or Mehmet does not accept the infusion of profanity but attacks the demons without provocation.

The characters and Mehmet gains nothing from the quest (because they did not "take" first). The gates open by themselves if the devils are defeated, leading back to the cavern below the pillars where they entered the pentagram. If the devils defeat the PCs, they may use the gates to enter the Material Plane.

PC or Mehmet accepts the infusion of profanity, but attacks and defeats the demons before attempting to open the gates.

The characters have successfully completed the quest. The gates open by themselves once the devils are defeated, leading back to the cavern below the pillars where they entered the pentagram.

Once out...

Success

PCs who have successfully completed this quest will gain the **Unwavering Path** award on the AR.

The way back up is without events. Mehmet is strangely less loquacious than before because of the events he did go through. Everybody will get back to the surface where Munthir and Odd-Eye are waiting for them.

Unsuccessful but not defeated by devils

PCs who have not completed the quest successfully will not gain the **Unwavering Path** award on their AR. Mehmet is totally silent, feeling he has missed something in all this. He will be grim when he comes on the surface. Munthir and Odd-Eye will greet you all and console you in your failure.

Unsuccessful and defeated by devils

PCs have been defeated and left for dead in the Abyss and the devils are out in the Pillars of the Faithful. Munthir and Odd-Eye hear them, draw their weapons and go into "Demon Butt Whupping Mode". They finally defeat them and then go and get Mehmet and the PCs bodies (count 20 rounds before they arrive) from the Abyss. Mehmet will be revived due to favors from his family. PCs will be revived by their own means.

Congratulations

Whether success happened or not in the ritual, Odd-Eye and Munthir will be there to welcome everybody back. Play the scene as you will.

After having done so, Munthir will talk to the PCs and Mehmet. Read or paraphrase this.

"My young friends, it is a great joy to have you back here with us and not in that dreadful place downstairs. While you were gone, I've continued to talk with Odd-Eye about the future and how things should become and here is what conclusions we were lead to."

"First, Kahzaa al'Ahrón and the other members of the Church of Azor'alq will have a safe heaven for the time they wish here. The monastery has a lot of free rooms and enough soil to be able to cultivate everything they need here while they figure out how to proceed with the tusman government. Odd-Eye is ready to get out of his hermit life-style and to start living with the rest of us!"

"Second, I will be joining you on your trip back to Apocalypse so I'm able to escort the clergy back here myself."

"And Third, I'm giving you the opportunity to fight the good fight at my side and benefit from what I can teach you. If you are willing to stay here with me at the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery and convert to the teachings of the Banisher of Darkness, I shall show you the path of the Shadowspy and the Shadowstriker, useful tools for the fight against the Darkness."

What Munthir is offering the PCs and Mehmet is a free *atonement* if they want to change deity as well as access, for a one-time cost of 4 TUs worth of training, to some of the *Complete Champion* feats (Good Devotion, Sun Devotion and War Devotion) and prestige classes (Shadowspy and Shadowstriker) that are generally attributed to Pelor, but are adapted and offered to Azor'alq worshippers in this adventure. Retraining for those feats becomes available (or for clerics, they can use the retraining option to exchange their Domain access for the Domain feats abilities). You can tell that now to the PCs for it may have an impact on their decisions leading to the conclusion. The details of the prestige classes are in the **Appendix Two:New Rules Items** section and you can show it to your players so they might make an enlightened decision.

After those magnificent offers, and the PCs reactions, Mehmet will in turn answer. Read or paraphrase this.

"Munthir, this is extraordinary as offers go and I think I will stay here to study with you and Odd-Eye and help the clergy settle here. A lot of work needs to be done. To you my good friends, here is the compensation for your troubles in accompanying me here. I will not be joining you on your way back. I certainly pray that we will meet again under clear skies and the benediction of the Son of Light. Hopefully you will come here to join us in the good fight against the injustice done to us."

Mehmet gives you bigger purses that you hoped to have and a scrollcase, containing a letter.

"I know there is more than what I told I would give you, but we found more than we were bargaining for anyway. Here is also a letter for my family explaining that I am safe and sound and in good hands."

In the purse is the rest of the gold for the APL minus what he gave them in the beginning if they asked for it. The scrollcase is not magically sealed and contains a letter for his family. Coming near you all, the old elf starts to talk. Read or paraphrase this.

"Much you have learned, more you still have to if to reach your Destiny you want or to your Fate succumb. For those whose memory will vanish, have met under better circumstances I hope we would, and maybe we will, Istus willing. For those who will remember, the waters of human society tread with caution for the shark that eats you anybody could be. Don't forget that a price there is to pay for every treason you do and hopefully, that living with the consequences you will be able to."

As you get out of the valley and leave the Monastery with Munthir toward Apocalypse, you see the old elf and young Mehmet entering one of the pillars.

The journey back to Apocalypse will be uneventful. Now will be a good time to have the PCs discuss what they will do with the information obtained and to give it to whom. Munthir will stay pretty neutral about all that, trusting in the Will of Istus that such conundrum is made for the good of all.

Conclusion

Considerations about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery

To evaluate how the ending will go and what should be done for the Critical Event summary, here are some guidelines. First you have to determine IF and TO WHOM the information is revealed and the consequences of this action. When you ask each PC to give you his decisions regarding this information, tell them to give you one and one organization only where they are going to report it. Roleplay it as if they were talking either to Kabil al-Mullah of the Royal Investigators or Lapa of the Tears of the Marid. They will both explain at that point what the punishment/award would be for your actions (either positive or negative). Consider they kept tabs on the PCs and the other organizations so they know if somebody talked to somebody else about this information.

The PCs know the location, have not been coerced at all or are not working for one interested party at the beginning of the adventure and will not reveal the location.

Pretty unlikely, but if it does happen, you don't have any consideration to take during this adventure. They can enjoy the benefits of taking the **Vow of Secrecy**.

The PCs know the location, have not been coerced at all or are not working for one interested party at the beginning of the adventure but will reveal the location anyway to one or more interested parties.

If they reveal to one interested party with which they had no prior deal the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery, have them do a DC 15 Diplomacy check (to get the interested party from "indifferent" to "friendly"). If more than one PC wants to do the same thing, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +2 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information (important news from unverified source not pressured into service). This will give the **Kudos** or the **Favor** award only if they don't

reveal it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information.

The PCs, or some of them, have had their memories erased of the whole trip to the Pillars.

Those PCs will not have to mess with the vow made to Odd-Eye because they did not take it. They do have the extra large purse that Mehmet gave them though. If they were working for either the Tears or the Investigators, they do not have enough information to disclose the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery and they fail their missions, getting **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** or the **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** or both if it applies but only from who they were working for originally.

The PC has taken the vow of Odd-Eye and will reveal the information (make a report of it) to one or more interested parties.

The PCs in question will get the **Vowbreaker** award on the AR and it will void **Munthir's Offer**. Odd-Eye was not so mean as to ask the PCs to vouch for each other's silence, just on one's conscience and the fact that there are consequences for someone to break a vow.

Some PCs are not working for the same employers and each want to get the information to his own (information will not be exclusive to one party).

This is what is most likely to happen and in that case, if, as a group, they report the information to 2 different parties, each PC will get either the **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** or the **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** or both if it applies but only from who they were working for originally.

The PCs, or some of them, were able to get the information exclusively to their employer at the end of this adventure, no matter if it does not please the other PCs, as long as the others don't reveal it themselves.

That might happen too. In that case, each PC that has gotten the information to his employer exclusively will get either the **Favor of the Royal Investigators** or the **Kudos of the Tears of the Marid** but never both.

And the Brotherhood of Basharat?

They did not ask anything from the PCs and might cover the **Enmity** or the **Anger** awards if the **Encounter Two** went well by using their contacts and their influence to counter, and thus cancel, one of them for each PC in the party (but not both if a PC got both).

So.... Worst case scenario for the PC who decides to report something?

PCs got individually suckered, in the beginning, to work for the Investigators AND the Tears AND accepted the vow from Odd-Eye. Let's say the party cannot decide to whom exclusively give the information to (Tears or Investigators) and both parties get it and the PC chooses at least to report the information to, let's say, the Royal Investigators. He gets **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** for not having done his mission properly (no exclusivity), **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** for not reporting at all and **Vowbreaker** for breaking the vow of secrecy to Odd-Eye and will not get **Munthir's Offer** because he broke his vow.

And worst case scenario for the PC above who decides to never report back?

Same thing as above, he gets **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** and **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** for not completing his mission, but does not get **Vowbreaker** because he did not talk and respected his vow.

Considerations for the whereabouts of the Clergy of Azor'alq

This is actually what you have to do AFTER determining if the location has been revealed or not. The PCs, at that point, know that they are either in trouble or in the clear and might want to reveal this information to save their skin from punishment. The PCs must know at this point what are the **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** or the **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** awards or both if it applies so they will make an enlightened decision but must not know what would be the **Breach of Confidence** or the **Vowbreaker** award. If, at that point, a PC had both the **Enmity** or the **Anger** looming over his head for any reason, he might open talks with both of the organizations and make the according Diplomacy checks to help him save his skin.

Ok, that's all good for the information about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful monastery, but what about the Second Secret, the one about the whereabouts of the Clergy of Azor'alq?

Glad you asked... This sensitive information the PCs stumbled upon was left hot into their hands at the end of **Encounter Four** and, as a DM, you need to know what they're gonna do with it. Actually, this information is way bigger into priorities for all interested parties and that might save them from the **Anger** or **Enmity** award or even turn the situation around and give them the **Favor** or the **Kudos** award. Of course, both Clergies of Azor'alq and the True Faith of Al'Akbar might not like that and any PC that does reveal it get the **Breach of Confidence** award.

So for those poor PCs with the memory wipe that want to remove the Anger or the Enmity?

If they reveal to the employer with which they had a deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq was at Apocalypse for a long time and that they made an alliance with the Grand Mufti of the True Faith, have them do a Diplomacy check DC 25 (to get the employer from “unfriendly” to “friendly”). If more than one PC has the same employer, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +5 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information. This removes the **Anger** or **Enmity** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information.

So for those poor PCs with the memory wipe that want to give this information voluntarily?

If they reveal to one interested party with which they had no prior deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq was at Apocalypse for a long time and that they made an alliance with the Grand Mufti of the True Faith, have them do a DC 15 Diplomacy check (to get the interested party from “indifferent” to “friendly”). If more than one PC wants to do the same thing, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +2 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information (important news from unverified source not pressured into service). This will give the **Kudos** or the **Favor** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information. Note: the Brotherhood of Basharat already knows this so nothing is gained.

So for those PCs with the Enmity or Anger awards that know where are the Pillars and what are the whereabouts of the Clergy of Azor'alq? (2 steps)

- 1- If they reveal to the employer with which they had a deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq was at Apocalypse for a long time and that they made an alliance with the Grand Mufti of the True Faith, have them do a DC 25 Diplomacy check (to get their employer from “unfriendly” to “friendly”). If more than one PC has the same employer, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +5 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information. This removes the **Anger** or **Enmity** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information.
- 2- If they reveal to the employer with which they had a deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq will establish a base of operation in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery, have them do a second DC 20 Diplomacy check (to

get their employer from “friendly” to “helpful”). If more than one PC has the same employer, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +5 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information. This gives them the **Kudos** or the **Favor** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information.

So for those PCs that know where are the Pillars and what are the whereabouts of the Clergy of Azor'alq and they want to give voluntarily the information to interested parties? (2 steps)

- 1- If they reveal to one interested party with which they had no prior deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq was at Apocalypse for a long time and that they made an alliance with the Grand Mufti of the True Faith, have them do a DC 15 Diplomacy check (to get the interested party from “indifferent” to “friendly”). If more than one PC wants to do the same thing, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +2 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information (important news from unverified source not pressured into service). This will give the **Kudos** or the **Favor** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information. Note: the Brotherhood of Basharat already knows this so nothing is gained but they will be “friendly” toward the PCs after a successful Diplomacy check because they will have shown their good will in confirming the information already in their possession.
- 2- If they reveal to one interested party with which they had no prior deal that the Clergy of Azor'alq will establish a base of operation in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery, have them do a second DC 20 Diplomacy check (to get the interested party from “friendly” to “helpful”). If more than one PC wants to do the same, only one of them needs to do the check and the others can aid. The PC that rolls the check can add a +2 circumstance bonus due to the nature of the information (important news from unverified source not pressured into service). This gives them TWICE the **Kudos** or TWICE the **Favor** award or the **Thanks of the Brotherhood** award only if the PCs do not tell it to anybody else. Note in the Critical Event summary that has got the information.

As for all conclusions possible for this adventure go, you will have to roleplay the report of the information or the absence of it according to whom amongst the PCs got which employer to report to. The texts to read or

paraphrase below are general endings if there was a report to an interested party, an absence of report to an interested party or never been a need of a report to an interested party. Also, don't forget to add the texts about the vowbreaking or the maintenance of the vows for each PC.

Reported information to interested parties

Once you are done roleplaying the interaction with Kabil al-Mullah or Lapa and the PC knows exactly his status related to the Royal Investigators, the Tears of the Marid, the Clergy of Azor'alq and the Church of the True Faith of Al'Akbar (PC knows which awards he got on the AR), read or paraphrase this.

The return to Sefmur was a lonely road, even surrounded by companions for not a lot was said after decisions were made to reveal the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery or the whereabouts of the renegade clergy of Azor'alq.

You left Munthir with a hug at Apocalypse, even going back to receive the benediction of the Grand Mufti one last time without any second thoughts for your decision was not made at that time. But leaving that holy place and returning to the normal world where spiritual matters are mostly a background to the cold hard reality made you realize that you still had your place in the world to protect and a long fruitful life you desperately wanted to have.

And thus the betrayal of good men was seeded...

It grew in your hearts along the river on the Pilgrim's Road to Sefmur and it was decided then that the good of the few would be better than the good of all.

You balanced it's consequences in your head and in your heart, talked about it with your companions, seeding the idea of it in other hearts and you finally did it...

You revealed what you knew, weaving new threads in the pattern and creating consequences.

What those would be, you are starting to feel them breathing on your neck now, and you know there will be more of them coming your way, for such is the Will of Istus.

You know that in the mountains, Mehmet is sleeping well tonight for he has reached a new bend in his road, found a mentor and a purpose, for he will become a great man...

If consequences of your acts do not doom him and the others at the Monastery, bringing you closer to your Fate than to your Destiny.

Did not report information to interested parties

Once you have done roleplaying the interaction with the PCs and one or more of them have decided to not report anything to their employers and that they know which status they have related to Royal Investigators, the Tears of the Marid, the Clergy of Azor'alq and the Church of the True Faith of Al'Akbar (PC knows which awards he got on the AR), read or paraphrase this.

The return to Sefmur was a rocky road, even under such good weather conditions for many heated discussions happened between you and your companions regarding the revelation of the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery or the whereabouts of the renegade clergy of Azor'alq.

You had left Munthir with a hug at Apocalypse, even going back to receive the benediction of the Grand Mufti one last time without any second thoughts for your decision was not made at that time. But leaving that holy place and returning to the normal world where spiritual matters are mostly a background to the cold hard reality made you realize that you still had your place in the world to protect and a long fruitful life you desperately wanted to have.

You knew you had obligations to your employer, you knew you had to go back or feel the consequences of your actions.

But such pressures did not deter you in the mind you had set.

You talked about all that with your companions, finally realizing that most of you had been had in these spy games. Heated argument rose over campfires about the "right" employer to give it to, even if there was some way to bypass the consequences or to double-cross them.

In the end, you made up your mind, you decided that at least your employer would not have the satisfaction of getting the information and that you were ready to carry on with whatever he would throw at you.

You know now that not reporting what you knew would carry consequences, weaving threads in the pattern of your life but in others as well.

What those would be, you are starting to feel them breathing on your neck now, for such is the Will of Istus.

But you know as well that in the mountains, Mehmet is sleeping well tonight for he has reached a new

bend in his road, found a mentor and a purpose, for he will become a great man...

And, by accepting consequences of your actions, you might as well have helped yourself, and another, reach a little closer to a Destiny.

Never needed to report and did not do it

Once you have done roleplaying the interaction with the PCs and one or more of them never had to report anything to the interested parties and that they know which status they have related to Royal Investigators, the Tears of the Marid, the Clergy of Azor'alq and the Church of the True Faith of Al'Akbar (PC knows which awards he got on the AR), read or paraphrase this.

The road to Sefmur was a quiet one for you, but not for your companions for some of them had voiced the idea of revealing what you all had found about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery or the whereabouts of the renegade clergy of Azor'alq.

You had left Munthir with a hug at Apocalypse, even going back to receive the benediction of the Grand Mufti one last time without any second thoughts happy to have seen new things and met such fascinating people. But leaving that holy place and returning to the normal world where spiritual matters are mostly a background to the cold hard reality made you realize that you still had your place in the world to protect and a long fruitful life you desperately wanted to have.

You had felt all along the trip an uneasiness about your companions that gave you the impression they were pressured into going on this little adventure. You were approached, for sure, back in Sefmur, but you did not think these interested parties would go so low as to pressure your companions into getting the information for them under threats of retribution.

They talked about giving information to their employers, trying to figure out which one was the least of two evils. Some of them contemplated the idea of leaving and never going back to Sefmur, "To the Abyss!" with all that.

You were just happy you were not wearing their turbans.

You thought about revealing voluntarily the information in exchange for future considerations, but decided otherwise. You saw Munthir, Odd-Eye, Mehmet, the Grand Mufti and Kahzaa as good persons fighting a good fight and you gave them your word that their secrets would stay with you. You

might even return to say hello if it happens you are in the neighborhood again.

For you, not reporting these secrets will not have the direct consequences as for your companions and you know that, in itself, is weaving a thread in the pattern.

The Will of Istus has, fortunately, left you alone without having to prove yourself by betraying others and you feel better for it.

And you know as well that in the mountains, Mehmet is sleeping well tonight for he has reached a new bend in his road, found a mentor and a purpose, for he will become a great man...

And, by keeping quiet about all this, for now, you might as well have helped yourself, and another, reach a little closer to a Destiny.

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Introduction: Bringing the Sheep into the fold

Not Being Arrested

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	75 XP

Encounter One: Bright Eyed Kid

Solving Mehmet's Prophecy

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	75 XP

Encounter Two: Conflicting Agendas

Defeating the Thugs

APL 2	150 XP
APL 4	240 XP
APL 6	300 XP
APL 8	360 XP

Encounter Three: Conflicting Agendas

Defeating the Ullites

APL 2	180 XP
APL 4	240 XP
APL 6	300 XP
APL 8	360 XP

Escaping the Guard

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	75 XP

Encounter Four: Apocalypse

Getting the Information about Munthir

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	75 XP

Encounter Five: Pillars of the Faithful

Defeating the Thugs

APL 2	180 XP
APL 4	240 XP
APL 6	300 XP
APL 8	360 XP

Encounter Six: Give and Take

Defeating the Devils

APL 2	180 XP
APL 4	240 XP
APL 6	300 XP
APL 8	360 XP

Solving the Puzzle from the gate

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	75 XP

Conclusion

Party agrees to give information to the same organization

APL 2 30 XP

APL 4 45 XP

APL 6 60 XP

APL 8 75 XP

Total possible experience:

APL 2 900 XP

APL 4 1,350 XP

APL 6 1,800 XP

APL 8 2,300 XP

Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of

gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter One: Introduction

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 450 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 650 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 900 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 1300 gp; M: 0 gp

Conclusion

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 450 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 650 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 900 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 1300 gp; M: 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 900 gp; M: 0 gp - Total: 900 gp

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 1300 gp; M: 0 gp - Total: 1300 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 1800 gp; M: 0 gp - Total: 1800 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 2600 gp; M: 0 gp - Total: 2600 gp

Items for the Adventure Record

Benediction of the Grand Mufti: For having kept hidden the alliance between the clergies of Azor'alq and the True Faith of Al'Akbar, the Grand Mufti offers to cast a *resurrection* spell at 50% reduction on behalf of this PC. If you use this favor you will be required to stay for 5 TUs doing temple duties (no cost for lifestyle).

Breach of confidence: For the next 104 TUs, the PC can no longer receive any NPC spellcasting from the Church of Al'Akbar or the Church of Azor'alq. If you are a divine caster of either faith you are in serious need of an *atonement* spell that neither church is interested to cast for you.

Thanks of the Brotherhood: You gain one Influence Point (Underground). You can use this to instead void either the **Enmity of the Royal Investigators** or the **Anger of the Tears of the Marid** on this AR.

Not a Brother anymore: This PC has poorly interacted with fellow Brothers of Bashaarat. He loses his affiliation with the metaorg and can never be a member again.

Favor of the Royal Investigators: This is worth one Influence Point (Social or Military) with the tusman government or can be used for a one-time +20 bonus on a Gather Information check.

Enmity of the Royal Investigators: For the next 104 TUs the PC is considered as a *Tusman Rebel* in the eyes of the government. This voids any *Loyal Subject of Tusmit* certificate and forces the PC to pay triple upkeep (or double if he previously had free upkeep by other means) during any Tusmit adventure.

Kudos of the Tears of the Marid: You gain one Influence Point (Underground). You can instead use this after playing an adventure set in Tusmit to sell one item for 75% of the gp acquisition cost paid.

Anger of the Tears of the Marid: For the next 104 TUs the PC will suffer a -10 penalty on all Gather Information checks made in Tusmit for he was "marked". The PC may never join the *Tears of the Marid* meta-org.

Vow of secrecy: You have taken Odd-Eye's vow of secrecy knowing full well of possible consequences if you break it. This will have consequences in future adventures.

Vowbreaker: You have chosen to talk about what you shouldn't. For the next 10 adventures you suffer a 20% penalty to experience gained.

Munthir's Offer: Munthir offers to train you for 4 TUs at the *Pillars of the Faithful* Monastery to receive access to the following from the *Complete Champion*: *Shadowspy*, *Shadowstriker*, *Good Devotion*, *Sun Devotion* and *War Devotion* (all with Azor'alq instead of Pelor as requisite). If the PC wants to convert to Azor'alq, Munthir offers as well an *atonement* spell at no cost.

Ancient martial arts of the Baklunish Empire: Odd-Eye has deemed you worthy of his teaching. He invites you to stay at the Monastery for 4 TUs to receive access to the *Cleric*, *Monk*, *Favored Soul* and *Paladin* alternate class feature from *Player's handbook II*.

Unwavering path: The PC has completed Mehmet's quest, he gains access to the *Shadowbane Stalker* and *Shadowbane Inquisitor* prestige classes.

Appendix One: NPCs and Creature

All APLs

MEHMET

CR 1

Male Human Paladin 1/Aristocrat 1

LG Medium Human

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, Ancient Baklunish, Flan

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 13

(-1 Dex, +5 Chain Mail, +2 Heavy Metal Shield)

hp 16 (2 HD);

Fort +3, **Ref** -1, **Will** +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares in medium armor)

Melee Mw Scimitar + 2 (1d6 + 1)

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

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Special Atk Smite Evil 1/Day

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

Feats Negotiator, Iron Will

Skills Sense Motive +9, Knowledge [Religion] +7, Diplomacy +11

Possessions Youth, Health, Personal Quest

ENCOUNTER 3

MULLAHS

CR 7

Male Human Monk 2/Cleric 5

LN Medium Human

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Ancient Baklunish

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13

(+2 Dex, +3 Wisdom)

hp 45 (7 HD);

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee Unarmed Strike +6 (1d8+1)

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

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6

Turn Undead 5/Day, Divine Might, Flurry of Blow, Stunning Fist 3/Day

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14

Feats Stunning Fist (b), Deflect Arrow (b), Power Attack, Divine Might, Weapon Focus [Unarmed Strike], Improved Natural Weapon [Unarmed Strike]

Skills Hide +4, Tumble +4, Balance +4, Bluff +5

Cleric Spells Prepared

3rd – ~~dispel magic, invisibility purge, create food and water~~

2nd – zone of truth, aid, ~~augury~~, consecrate

1st – ~~endure elements~~, protection from chaos, bless, comprehend languages, remove fear

0th – guidance, detect magic, ~~purify food and drinks~~, light

Possessions *periapt of wisdom* +2, cloak of charisma +2, Holy Symbol, True Faith in Al'Akbar

BODYGUARDS

CR 6

Male Human Fighter 6

LN Medium Human

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21

(+8 Half Plate +1, +3 Heavy Metal Shield +1)

hp 58 (6 HD);

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares in medium armor)

Melee Sap + 8/+3 (1d6 +2)

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

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

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

Feats Weapon Focus [Scimitar], Power Attack, Toughness, Combat Expertise, Weapon Specialization [Scimitar], Melee Weapon Mastery [Slashing], Improved Disarm

Skills Intimidate +8, Craft [Weapon] +10, Heal +3

Possessions A very personal scimitar they won't use to avoid doing lethal damage, sense of duty towards the Emir

EMIR

CR 6

Male Human Fighter 1/Cleric 3/Aristocrat 4

LN Medium Human

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, Ancient Baklunish

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17

(+4 Chain Shirt +1, +3 Heavy Metal Shield +1)

hp 45 (6 HD);

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 Merciful Scimitar +8/+3 (1d6+2+1d6 Subdual)

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

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

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

Feats Weapon Focus [Scimitar], Power Attack,

Skills Sense Motive +9, Knowledge [Religion] +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +10

Cleric Spells Prepared

2nd – zone of truth, aid, ~~augury~~, consecrate

1st – ~~endure elements~~, protection from chaos, bless, comprehend languages, remove fear

0th – guidance, detect magic, ~~purify food and drinks~~, light

Possessions A very personal scimitar they won't use to avoid doing lethal damage, sense of duty towards the Emir

ENCOUNTER 2: CONFLICTING AGENDAS

THUG DOING HIS INITIATION CR 1

Male Human Rogue 1
LN Medium Human
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14, Dodge (+2 Dex, +4 Chain Shirt)
hp 7 (1 HD);
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Speed 35 ft.(7 squares)
Melee Rapier +2 (1d6+2, 18-20 / x2) or Sap +2 (1d6 +2)
Ranged Light Crossbow +2 (1d8)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Special Atk Sneak Attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Dodge, Dash
Skills Hide +4, Tumble +4, Balance +4, Bluff +5
Possessions rapier, light crossbow, chain shirt
Hook Fear of his superiors, desire for acceptance

ALI CR 2

Male Human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1
LN Medium Human
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14, Dodge (+2 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt)
hp 14 (2 HD);
Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)
Melee Mwk Rapier +4 (1d6+2 18-20/x2) or Sap +4 (1d6+2)
Ranged Light Crossbow +3 (1d8)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Special Atk Sneak Attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (b)
Skills Hide +5, Tumble +7, Balance +7, Bluff +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +8
Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of ebon eyes** (2 x), light crossbow, mwk rapier, sap
Hook Self confidence, Greed
* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ULLITE

CR 2

Male Human Barbarian 2
CN Medium Human
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1
Languages Common, Illiterate

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13, Uncanny Dodge (+1 Dex, +3 Studded Leather)
hp 23 (2 HD);
Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Speed 40 ft.(8 squares)
Melee Improvised Weapon +2 or Unarmed Attack +4 (1d3+2)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Special Atk Rage 1/Day

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Grapple
Skills Intimidate +4
Possessions studded leather
Hook Frustration from a bad day, broken bottle, bar stool, table leg, weapons in his room; it's all in good fun.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE ODD TRAVELER

APL 4

ENCOUNTER 2: CONFLICTING AGENDAS

YOUNG INITIATE CR 2

Male Human Rogue 1/Swashbuckler 1
LN Medium Human

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14, Dodge (+2 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt)

hp 14 (2 HD);

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee Mwk Rapier +4 (1d6+2 18-20/x2) or Sap +3 (1d6+2)

Ranged Light Crossbow +3 (1d8)

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

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Special Atk Sneak Attack +1d6

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +5, Tumble +7, Balance +7, Bluff +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of ebon eyes** (2 x), mwk rapier, mwk chain shirt, sap

Hook Greed, Fear of deals turning sour

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ALI CR 6

Male Human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3
LN Medium Human

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +8

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14, Dodge +2, Combat Expertise, Fight Defensively with 5 ranks tumble (+3 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt)

hp 38 (6 HD);

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee Mwk Rapier +9 (1d6+3 18-20/x2) Sap +8 (1d6+3)

Ranged Light Crossbow +8 (1d8)

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

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Special Atk Sneak Attack +3d6

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, Daring Outlaw*, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +11, Tumble +13, Balance +13, Bluff +5, Intimidate +8, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of ebon eyes** (2 x), mwk rapier, light crossbow, mwk chain shirt

Hook Witty smile, Unshakable self-confidence, Greed

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 3: THE ODD TRAVELER

ULLITE CR 4

Male Human Barbarian 4

CN Medium Human

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

Languages Common, Illiterate

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1

(+1 Dex, +3 Studded Leather)

hp 44 (4 HD);

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Speed 40 ft.(8 squares)

Melee Improvised Weapon +5 or Unarmed Attack +7 (1d3+3)

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

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

Special Atk Rage 1/Day

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

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Grapple, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +6

Possessions Frustration from a bad day, broken bottle, bar stool, table leg, weapons in his room; it's all in good fun, studded leather

ENCOUNTER 2: CONFLICTING AGENDAS

BROTHERHOOD MUSCLE CR 6

Male Human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 3
LN Medium Human

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +8

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14, Dodge +2,
Combat Expertise, Fight Defensively with 5
ranks tumble
(+3 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt)

hp 38 (6 HD);

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee Mwk Rapier +9 (1d6+3 18-20/x2) Sap +8
(1d6+3)

Ranged Light Crossbow +8 (1d8)

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

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Special Atk Sneak Attack +3d6

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, Daring
Outlaw*, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +11, Tumble +13, Balance +13, Bluff
+5, Intimidate +8, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light
wounds*, *potion of ebon eyes** (2 x), mwk
rapier, light crossbow, mwk chain shirt

Hook Greed, Thrust from his superiors, Battle
scars, scraps of wisdom

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ALI CR 8

Male Human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5
LN Medium Human

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +8, Ebon Eyes

Languages Common

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 14, Dodge +2,
Combat Expertise, Fight Defensively with 5
ranks Tumble
(+3 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt, +2 *shield of faith*)

hp 58 (8 HD);

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee +1 *Merciful Rapier* +11 (1d6+4 + 1d6 18-
20/x2)

Ranged Light Crossbow +10/+5 (1d8)

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

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

Special Atk Sneak Attack +4d6, Improved
Flanking, Acrobatic Charge

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, Daring
Outlaw*, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +11, Tumble +13, Balance +13, Bluff
+5, Intimidate +8, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light
wounds*, ~~*potion of shield of faith*~~, *potion of
ebon eyes** (2-x), +1 *merciful rapier*, light
crossbow, mwk chain shirt.

Hook Witty smile, Unshakable self-confidence,
Greed

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 3: THE ODD TRAVELER

ULLITE CR 6

Male Human Barbarian 6
CN Medium Human

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

Languages Common, Illiterate

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13, Improved
Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2
(+1 Dex, +3 Studded Leather)

hp 68 (6 HD);

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

Speed 40 ft.(8 squares)

Melee Improvised Weapon +5 or Unarmed Attack
+9 (1d3+3)

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

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Special Atk Rage 2/Day

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

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved
Grapple, Toughness, Improved Toughness*

Skills Intimidate +6

Possessions Frustration from a bad day, broken
bottle, bar stool, table leg, weapons in his
room; it's all in good fun, studded leather

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 2: CONFLICTING AGENDAS

BROTHERHOOD HEAD HUNTER CR 8

Male Human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 5
LN Medium Human
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +8, Ebon Eyes
Languages Common

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 14, Dodge +2, Combat Expertise, Fight Defensively with 5 ranks tumble (+3 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt, +2 *shield of faith*)

hp 58 (8 HD);

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee +1 *Sap* +11/+6 (1d6+4)

Ranged Light Crossbow +10/+5 (1d8)

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

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

Special Atk Sneak Attack +4d6

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, Daring Outlaw*, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +11, Tumble +13, Balance +13, Bluff +5, Intimidate +8, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light wounds*, ~~*potion of shield of faith*~~, *potion of ebon eyes** (2×), mwk chain shirt, +1 *sap*, light crossbow

Hook Thought about going freelance, ambition, *blazé* approach to life

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ALI CR 12

Male Human Rogue 3/Swashbuckler 9
LN Medium Human
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +8, Ebon Eyes
Languages Common

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 14, Dodge +3, Combat Expertise, Fight Defensively with 5 ranks tumble (+3 Dex, +4 Mwk Chain Shirt, +2 *Shield of faith*)

hp 94 (12 HD);

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft.(6 squares)

Melee +1 *Merciful Rapier* +16/+11 (1d6+4+1d6 18-20/x2)

Ranged Light Crossbow +15/+10 (1d8)

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

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +13

Special Atk Sneak Attack +6d6, Improved Flanking, Acrobatic Charge, Whirlwind Attack

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

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, Daring Outlaw*, Elusive Target*, Whirlwind Attack, Weapon Finesse (b)

Skills Hide +11, Move Silently +18, Tumble +20, Balance +13, Bluff +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +8

Possessions Combat Gear, *potion of cure light wounds*, ~~*potion of shield of faith*~~, ~~*potion of invisibility*~~, *potion of ebon eyes** (2×), mwk chain shirt, +1 *merciful rapier*, light crossbow

Hook Witty smile, Unshakable self-confidence, Greed

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 3: THE ODD TRAVELER

ULLITE CR 8

Male Human Barbarian 8
CN Medium Human

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

Languages Common, Illiterate

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2 (+1 Dex, +3 Studded Leather)

hp 95 (8 HD); DR 1/-

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft.(8 squares)

Melee Improvised Weapon +9 or Unarmed Attack +11 (1d3+3)

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

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Special Atk Rage 3/Day

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

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Grapple, Toughness, Improved Toughness*

Skills Intimidate +10

Possessions +2 *amulet of health*, Frustration from a bad day, broken bottle, bar stool, table leg, weapons in his room; no hard feelings, studded leather

Appendix Two: New Rules Items

FEATS

Domain Feats

Complete Champion

Domain feats are a new category of feats that signify a character's dedication to a particular religious ideal or tenet. You and your DM should determine a reason for this devotion as part of your character's background. A domain feat usually corresponds to one of the domains to which a particular deity grants access, or those representing a set of ideals.

You can select a domain feat at any level. Once you have chosen one, however, you cannot select another unless the second fits thematically with the first. Furthermore, you can never have more than two domain feats (except as specified in Clerics and Domain Feats, below).

Unless otherwise noted, the benefit granted by any domain feat is a spell-like ability with a caster level equal to your character level. All such effects are subject to spell resistance, and you can dismiss any continuing effect as a free action. If a domain feat allows a saving throw, its entry provides the necessary information. If you have the ability to turn or rebuke undead, you can gain additional daily uses of a domain feat's benefit by permanently sacrificing daily uses of that ability.

Usually, domain feats go together only if they correspond to the domains offered by the deity you follow. For example, Kord grants access to the Chaos, Good, Luck, and Strength domains, so a worshiper of Kord could choose the Chaos Devotion, Good Devotion, Luck Devotion, or Strength Devotion feats without going outside his deity's sphere of influence.

For characters who do not worship a particular deity, use the following guidelines for which domain feats allow or preclude the selection of others. This should be done in concert with the DM.

Opposing Domains: The Good and Evil domains, and the Law and Chaos domains are in opposition, so no character should have both Good Devotion and Evil Devotion (or both Law Devotion and Chaos Devotion). In some cases, you might decide that the Healing and Death domains oppose each other, and likewise Destruction and Protection. The Fire domain does not necessarily oppose Water, nor does Air conflict with Earth, since many nature deities (such as Obad-Hai) grant access to all the elemental domains.

Appropriate Theme: If you do not follow any specific deity, your basic system of beliefs should support your domain feat choices. A good rule of thumb is to designate one to three domains (in addition to that corresponding to your first domain feat) that are important to you. These beliefs must also be consistent with your alignment.

Clerics and Domain Feats: If you are a cleric (or any other character class who gains access to a domain), you can choose any domain feat corresponding to the list of domains offered by your deity, even if you do not have access to those particular domains. A cleric of Pelor, for example, can choose to cast spells from the Good and Healing domains but select the Strength Devotion and Sun Devotion feats. In addition, you can choose to give up access to a domain in exchange for the corresponding domain feat. Doing so allows you to select up to three domain feats, but you cannot prepare domain spells or use the granted power of the sacrificed domain. In essence, you trade in a domain for an extra feat slot that you can spend only on a specific domain feat. For example, the above cleric of Pelor could choose to give up the granted power and spells of the Good domain for the Good Devotion feat.

Caster Level: Unless otherwise noted, the benefit granted by any domain feat is a spell-like ability with a caster level equal to your character level. All such effects are subject to spell resistance, and you can dismiss any continuing effect as a free action. If a domain feat allows a saving throw,

Good Devotion [Domain]

Complete Champion

The power of good shields you and your allies.

Benefit: Once per day as an immediate action, you can surround yourself with an aura of good that grants you and each of your allies within 30 feet damage reduction that can be overcome only by evil-aligned weapons. The numeric value of this damage reduction is $1 + 1/\text{five character levels you possess}$ (maximum 5/evil at 20th level). In addition, your and your allies' natural and weapon attacks are good-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times, gaining one additional daily use each time you take it.

Special: If you have the ability to turn or rebuke undead, you gain one additional daily use of this feat for each daily turn or rebuke use you expend.

Sun Devotion [Domain]

Complete Champion

Your weapon blazes with the power of the sun.

Benefit: Once per day as a swift action, you can cause one of your melee weapons to glow with the power of the sun. The illumination radius is the same as that of a torch, but the light is true sunlight and affects creatures within a 10-foot radius as such. This effect lasts for 1 minute. While your weapon glows, it deals an additional 1 point of sacred (if your deity is good or neutral) or profane (if your deity is evil) damage per character level you possess to any undead it strikes.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times, gaining one additional daily use each time you take it.

Special: If you have the ability to turn or rebuke undead, you gain one additional daily use of this feat for each daily turn or rebuke use you expend.

War Devotion [Domain]

Complete Champion

You can control your abilities more effectively in combat.

Benefit: Once per day, when fighting defensively as a standard or full-round action, you take a –3 penalty on all attack rolls in a round and gain a +3 dodge bonus to AC in the same round. When you attain 7th level, your penalty on attack rolls drops to –2 and your dodge bonus increases to +4. When you attain 15th level, your penalty on attack rolls drops to –1 and your dodge bonus increases to +5. This bonus stacks with the bonus to AC granted by the Combat Expertise feat. This benefit is an extraordinary ability.

Normal: When fighting defensively, you take a –4 penalty on all attacks in a round and gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC for the same round.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times, gaining one additional daily use each time you take it.

Special: If you have the ability to turn or rebuke undead, you gain one additional daily use of this feat for each three daily turn or rebuke uses you expend.

Daring Outlaw

Complete Scoundrel p. 76

You combine grace and stealth to deadly effect

Prerequisite: Grace +1, Sneak attack +2d6

Benefit: Your rogue and swashbuckler levels stack for the purpose of determining your competence bonus on Reflex saves from the grace class feature and the swashbuckler's dodge bonus to AC. For example, a 7th-level rogue/4th level swashbuckler has grace +2 and gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, as if she were an 11th level Swashbuckler.

Your rogue and swashbuckler levels also stack for the purpose of determining your sneak attack bonus damage. For example a 7th level rogue/4th level swashbuckler would deal an extra 6d6 points of damage with her sneak attack, as if she were an 11th-level rogue.

Spells

Ebon Eyes

Spell Compendium p. 77

Transmutation

Level: Assassin 1, cleric 1, Sorcerer / Wizard 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 Standard Action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature Touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell resistance: Yes (harmless)

The subject of this spell gains the ability to see normally in natural and magical darkness, although it does not otherwise improve the subject's ability to see in natural dark or shadowy conditions. The subject ignores the miss chance due to lack of illumination other than total darkness. While the spell is in effect, a jet-black film covers the subject's eyes, a visual effect that gives the spell its name.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Shadowspy

Complete Champion

Shadowspies were the covert arm of the Church of Azor'alq in Tusmit during its glory days of the Host of Light. Now, due to Munthir Haddad's willingness to train a new generation, the group is revived. Members of this subject work individually or in small groups to locate hidden sources of evil and to infiltrate different levels of the tusman government, waiting for their time to act. Although they often lead double lives, masquerading as normal folk who are simply trying to get by, shadowspies never forget their duty to their

deity, to their church, and to the multitude of innocents who unknowingly depend on them.

Becoming a Shadowspy: Only priests and paladins of Azor'alq with the proper skills and demeanor are permitted to join the shadowspies. The vast majority of shadowspies are drawn from the shadowstrikers (page 108), though it is not unheard of for ordinary priests of Azor'alq to be inducted as shadowspies. Clerics or paladins with levels in bard, monk, ranger, or rogue are ideal candidates because they have the stealthy skills to use the shadows as a tool against the forces of darkness.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any good.

Skills: Gather Information 6 ranks, Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

Feat: Good Devotion, Sun Devotion or War Devotion.

Spellcasting: Able to cast 1st-level divine spells.

Special: Must be a cleric or paladin of Azor'alq.

CLASS FEATURES

The abilities you gain as a shadowspy of Azor'alq allow you to seek out sources of wickedness that are all too often hidden from view. You gain the ability to blend into the throngs around you, create shadows to mask your presence by manipulating light, make your thoughts impossible to read, and force even the most corrupt persons to speak the truth in your presence.

Spellcasting: At each even-numbered level, you gain new spells per day and an increase in caster level (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in a spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one divine spellcasting class before becoming a shadowspy, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

Aura of Anonymity (Su): You leave few impressions upon those you meet, and even fewer upon those unexceptional souls you pass in the street. When you are walking in a crowd of ten or more individuals, you gain a divine bonus equal to your shadowspy level on Disguise and Hide checks.

Radiance of Azor'alq (Su): Azor'alq has granted you the power to enhance sources of light so that they shine as brightly as the sun. As a swift action, you can augment any or all light sources within 60 feet (including torches, lamps, lanterns, and campfires, as

well as objects that are the target of a light spell and magic weapons that glow). The range of any light source so affected doubles, and the effect lasts a number of hours equal to your shadowspy level, or until the light source is extinguished, whichever occurs first. This ability can be used a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum once).

Bonus Feat: At 2nd level and every 3rd level thereafter, you can select a bonus feat for which you meet the prerequisites from the following list: Acrobatic, Alertness, Athletic, Combat Casting, Deceitful, Extra Turning, Improved Turning, Investigator, Good Devotion (see page 58), Persuasive, Stealthy.

Immunity to Blindness (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, you cannot be blinded by magical effects, spells, or bright light. Physical barriers to sight, such as blindfolds and solid objects, still prevent you from seeing. Additionally, any wounds that cause the destruction of your eyes still blind you.

Veil of Azor'alq (Sp): When you attain 3rd level, your motives and morality become almost impossible to determine. As an immediate action, you can use *undetectable alignment* as the spell (caster level equals your character level). This ability is usable at will.

Personal Eclipse (Su): Beginning at 4th level, you can manipulate the direction and intensity of light. By redirecting and dimming ambient illumination, you can cast shadows around your body to better conceal your presence. Doing so grants you a circumstance bonus equal to one-half your shadowspy level on Hide checks. This ability can be used at will but is effective only in areas where light is present.

Truth of the Light (Sp): When you attain 6th level, creatures in your company find it difficult to tell deliberate untruths. At will, you can use *zone of truth*, as the spell (caster level equals your character level). You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your shadowspy level.

Blinding Light (Su): At 7th level, you learn to blind nearby foes with a brief but intense flash of light. Twice per day, you can project a beam of light from your palm in a cone-shaped burst with a range of 15 feet. Any creature in the area that fails a Reflex save (DC 10 + shadowspy level + Wis modifier) is blinded for 1d6 rounds. Sightless creatures are not affected by this ability.

Sun's Revelation (Su): At 8th level, you become adept at detecting untruths spoken in your presence. At will,

you can use *discern lies*, as the spell (caster level equals your character level).

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): Beginning at 9th level, you can use the Hide skill even while being observed, as long as you are in a sunlit location. See the ranger class feature (PH 48).

Vision of Azor'alq (Su): At 10th level, you can see through even the most potent illusions. Three times per day, you can use *true seeing* at will, as the spell (caster level equals your character level).

The Shadowspy				Hit Die: D6		
Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1 st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Aura of anonymity, radiance of Azor'alq	-
2 nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Bonus feat, immunity to blindness	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3 rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	<i>Veil of Azor'alq</i>	-
4 th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Personal eclipse	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5 th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Bonus feat	-
6 th	+4	+2	+5	+5	<i>Truth of the light</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7 th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Blinding light	-
8 th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Bonus feat, sun's revelation	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
9 th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Hide in plain sight	-
10 th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Vision of Azor'alq	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Decipher Script, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Search, Sense Motive, Speak language, Spot, Tumble.						

Shadowstriker

Complete Champion

The elite group known as the shadowstrikers was the military arm of the Church of Azor'alq in Tusmit during its glory days of the Host of Light. Now, due to Munthir Haddad's willingness to train a new generation, the group is revived. Its members usually make little attempt to hide their presence because they prefer to stand as constant reminders to the minions of evil and decay that divine consequences await their vile actions. But for now they are biding their time until the time to strike comes.

Becoming a Shadowstriker: Shadowstrikers come from all walks of life. Most are drawn from the clerics and paladins who serve in the ranks of the clergy of Azor'alq, though any member of the church with strong faith and a needed skill, regardless of vocation, is welcome to apply.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any good.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skill: Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks.

Feat: Good Devotion, Sun Devotion, or War Devotion.

CLASS FEATURES

You are a weapon of Azor'alq given humanoid form. As a shadowstriker, you have learned to channel your faith into a well-honed weapon and become especially proficient at dealing with undead creatures.

Badge of Office (Ex): Upon your induction into the shadowstrikers, you were given special holy symbol of Azor'alq. This item is crafted from gold, inlaid with platinum lightning motifs, and encrusted with sunstones. In areas where the Church of Azor'alq holds political power, this badge allows you access to prohibited areas and gives you the right to detain and questions suspects in the pursuit of your deity's will. Due to the rogue status of the church, this feature is void until announced otherwise in a story award.

Luminous Weapon (Su): You can imbue your melee weapon with the power of the Son of Light. When you do so, your weapon glows as if affected by a light spell and gains a bonus equal to twice your shadowstriker level on damage rolls against evil and/or undead creatures. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum once), and the effect lasts for 10 rounds.

smite evil attempt, or spell slot (if you are a spontaneous caster) that you sacrifice.

Surge of Piety (Su): When you attain 3rd level as a shadowstriker, your touch becomes infused with positive energy. Any undead creature that touches you (by hitting you in melee or for any other reason) is shaken for 1 round or until it is no longer in physical contact with you, even if it normally can't be affected by this condition. Once per day as a full-round action, you can channel this energy into a single burst of positive energy, which manifests as a flash of bright, warm sunlight. In addition to functioning as a consecrate spell, this wave of energy deals 1d6 points of positive energy damage to every undead creature within 30 feet (no save). You can increase the damage this effect deals by 1d6 points (maximum +5d6) for each daily turn attempt, smite evil attempt, or spell slot (if you are a spontaneous caster) that you sacrifice.

The Shadowstriker				Hit Die: D10	
Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Badge of office, luminous weapon
2 nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Smite evil 1/day, sun's blessing
3 rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Surge of piety
Class Skill (2 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (religion), Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Spot.					

Smite Evil (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, you can smite evil once per day (see the paladin class feature, PH 44). Smite evil attempts/day attained from multiple sources stack.

Sun's Blessing (Su): When you reach 2nd level, you can cause your weapon to flare with the fires of the sun. As long as the sun's blessing remains upon your luminous weapon, it deals an extra 1d6 points of fire damage. Additionally, the blinding light spilling from the weapon counts as a daylight spell for the duration of the effect. The sun's blessing can be used once per day, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to your shadowstriker level. You can gain an additional use per day of this ability for each daily turn attempt,

Appendix Three: The law in Southern Tusmit

Although the laws of Tusmit are supposed to be the same throughout the nation, the southern sheikdoms are much more rigorous in their following and application of the laws than the northern ones. In the sheikdoms of the north, justice is often swiftly served in the name of the True Faith and without any consultations or regards to the civil laws of the nation.

Sentences range will vary depending on the circumstances of the offense and/or the status of the person being judged. Each week represents 1 Time Units (TU) in game play.

Please note that the laws outlined here do not comprise of the entire list of laws in Tusmit. For a more complete list consult the Tusmit Gazetteer. For any crime not listed please contact the Tusmit triad at tusmittriad@yahoogroups.com.

LASHINGS

All lashings are given in public where the criminal can be showered by manure and rotting vegetables. The number of lashes given should be noted on the AR.

HORSES

A horse qualifies as a person for the charges wherever it might be applicable (murder, assault).

HIGH FINES

If the guilty party cannot pay a fine, it can be worked off at a value of 50 fountains (gp) per week in the mines.

Full responsibility of the law is expected and enforced by the Qadi and Mullahs, regardless of the circumstances.

The military and the nobles, however, understand the concept of excessive force used in self-defense.

THE SELF-DEFENSE CLAUSE

A clause of self-defence can be claimed and the good military or noble presiding official(s) will hear your plea.

A Diplomacy check (or Bluff) can be made, at 20 + the APL to convince the presiding official that the act was done in pure self-defence.

Failure to convince the presiding official (but the truth being that the crime was unintentional) will incur a penalty of one hundred fountains per death plus

twenty-five fountains per point below the Bluff or Diplomacy DC. 1d10 lashes will also be given per point scored below the DC. The total penalty will be one week of imprisonment, lashes and a fine (as listed above) per death. Lashes and fines (as listed above) are still applicable to assault (major).

Ignorance of the law is no reason to call upon this clause.

LEGAL AUTHORITIES

The Pasha's influence in the northern sheikdoms is rather weak and local authorities tend to interpret the laws as they see fit. Minor offenses will most often be dealt with by the Military as in the southern sheikdoms. Major offenses are usually taken care of by the local ruler or a high ranking priest of Al'Akbar. Most grievous offenses are rarely put in the hands of the Pasha since the people of the northern sheikdoms don't usually like to deal with him. In this case, a high-ranking priest of the True Faith will be entitled to judge the offense. In some cases, a person who has been wronged will take matters in his own hands without any intervention from the militia or the Church. No one will ask any questions if justice has been served in the name of the True Faith.

THE OFFENCES

Assault (Noble, Church or Government official)

Threat or use of lethal force that results in bodily harm upon a person a lawful representative of the Tusman Government, a Tusman noble or member of an organized Tusman Church.

Sentence: Confiscation of weapon used and imprisonment of up to 1 year (52 TUs).

Assault (Major)

Threat or use of lethal force that results in major bodily harm reducing the victim's hit points to between 0 and -9.

Sentence: Confiscation of weapon used and imprisonment of up to six weeks and 10d10 lashes.

Assault (Minor)

Threat or use of lethal force that results in major bodily harm without reducing the victim's hit points past 0

Sentence: Confiscation of weapon used and imprisonment of three weeks and 5d10 lashes.

Assault (Negligible) *Threat or use of non lethal force against a victim.*

Sentence: overlooked (left off with warnings).

Blackmail

Obtaining currency, services, or information, by illegal means such as by force or coercion.

Sentences:

- Government official, noble, military, or church official: Imprisonment of four weeks and loss of seventy-five percent of property.
- Other: Fine of one and a half times the blackmail price

Illegal use of magic

Any target or area effect spell that requires a save, causes any change in state, causes damage, or produces an otherwise unwanted effect by the victim.

Sentence: Fine of fifty fountains per spell level and 1d10 lashes per spell level.

Manslaughter

Use of lethal force that unintentionally results in major bodily harm reducing the victim to below -9 hit points.

Sentence: Sent to the mines for up to 10 years, plus loss of all property to be given to the family of the victim.

Murder

Use of lethal force that intentionally results in major bodily harm reducing the victim to below -9 hit points.

Sentences:

- Mass murder: torture in public and death.
- Any other: Death

Spying

Any activity that results in foreign powers learning secrets or information about the nation of Tusmit.

Sentence: Death

Theft

Possession, sale, or acquisition of an object without permission.

Sentences:

1. Less than 100 fountains stolen: 2d10 lashes per 25 fountains stolen.

2. 100 to 500 fountains in value: Imprisonment for 1 week per 100 fountains' worth of goods, and 5d10 lashes.

3. 500 fountains in value or more: Sent to the mines for 1 week per 100 fountains stolen, followed by severance of main hand.

4. Horse theft: Death.

Treason

Any activity that weakens or gives an edge to a foreign power against the good of the nation of Tusmit.

Sentence: Torture and death

Vandalism

Willful destruction or defacement of any structure, object, thing, or place.

Sentence: 1d10 lashes per one hundred fountains and a fine equaling three times the cost of reparation.

Worship of a banned religion

Holding worshiping ceremonies to gods banned in Tusmit: the Fire God, the Elder Elemental Eye, Hextor, Iuz, Pyremious, Tharizdun, Vecna

Sentence: Death.

Appendix Four : Textes Français

(Synopsis page 1)

Les tensions montantes suivant la fin de rébellion ouverte à Tusmit n'empêcheront pas un jeune paladin sur une quête spirituelle de demander de l'aide pour atteindre un monastère oublié dans les Yatils. Allez-vous l'aider? Allez-vous dire à quiconque ce que vous avez trouvé? Allez-vous être obligés de révéler un secret perdu depuis un millénaire? Une aventure prenant place dans le territoire de Keruz et dans la chaîne de montagnes des Yatils pour des personnages de niveau 1 à 9 (APL 2 à 8).

(Introduction pages 7 et 8 : Before we begin)

Sefmur, Joyau des pays bakluni et capitale de Tusmit a jadis apparut plus invitante. Maintenant, alors même que vous approchez la cité, vous comprenez que la vérité était apparente derrière les rumeurs et les commentaires chuchotés que vous avez entendus lors des dernières nuits passées dans les caravan-sérails. Le goût amer de la tension peut être même goûté dans l'air alors que vous arrivez, un nuage épais d'yeux fixés sur l'arrière de votre nuque, en faisant hérissier les poils, comme si vous vous attendiez à y voir la hache du bourreau s'y abattre. « Les Investigateurs sont sortis de leur tanière ces jours-ci », vous avez entendu quelqu'un dire, « et ils veulent du sang, n'importe quel sang, mais surtout... du sang de Rebelles. »

Vous avez entendu les nouvelles terrifiantes au travers du moulin à rumeurs, qu'il y avait eu, et qu'il y avait toujours, des exécutions publiques en masse dans le but de faire sortir les rebelles de leurs trous, indiquant une ferveur de la part de sa Splendeur Exaltée de se débarasser de la menace rebelle une bonne fois pour toutes. À l'extérieur des murs de la capitale, vous avez entendu parlé d'un nombre effroyable d'innocents assassinés, mais plus vous approchiez de Sefmur, plus ces commentaires étaient dits à voix basse et discrètement.

L'emploi de garde que vous occupiez pour le Maître de Caravane allait se terminer et vous alliez rentrer dans l'endroit que plusieurs de vos amis, ou vous-même, appelez demeure.

(Introduction page 9: At the Gate)

La ligne est longue pour passer les portes de la cité et se diriger vers le Quartier des Entrepôts. Au moment où

vous commencez à vous rapprocher des portes elle-mêmes, vous sentez les conversations diminuer en volume alors que la tension commence à avoir des effets néfastes sur les gens se tenant dans la file. Personne ne veut être pris à l'écart pour ne plus jamais être vu sauf sur le bloc du bourreau. Alors que votre tour arrive, trois gardes commencent à fouiller le chariot sur lequel vous êtes assis et un quatrième, probablement un officier supérieur, regarde dans vos possessions personnelles et commence à poser des questions.

(Introduction page 10: At the Inn)

L'auberge du *Whirling Sand Devil* est en tout aspect une auberge comme on en rencontre partout où un bon repas et une boisson forte peuvent être servis sur une base régulière. Elle est située dans le Quartier des Entrepôts et sa clientèle est composée d'employés des entrepôts et autres journaliers. Quelques alcôves privées peuvent être vues à l'arrière, de nombreux rideaux gardant un *modicum* d'intimité. Les escaliers mènent au deuxième étage où des chambres sont disponibles pour le voyageur exténué et pour des rencontres privées. Les patrons nocturnes de l'auberge arrivent alors que la nuit tombe sur la cité, la plupart d'entre eux ayant obtenu avec leurs contacts un laisser-passer les exemptant du couvre-feu. Les autres, comme vous, ont une chambre à l'auberge pour la nuit. D'une atmosphère distincte de travailleurs honnêtes venant manger durant le jour, celle-ci change alors que la soirée arrive sournoisement. Une foule plus bruyante se glisse progressivement et des gens peu recommandables se fauillent de leurs trous où ils dormaient durant le jour. Votre employeur est venu avec votre paye et il est reparti avant que le couvre-feu ne tombe, vous laissant avec les fontaines qu'il vous devait pour avoir gardé sa caravane. Alors que vous commencez à sentir la pesanteur de la nuit sur vos paupières et le désir de rencontrer votre oreiller en face-à-face, une demi-elfe en vêtements de cuir usés et portant ses cheveux longs en dreadlocks s'approche de votre table et négligemment et sans aucune considération pour votre bon plaisir, s'assied sur la chaise en face de vous et vous regarde, un sourire cynique sur son visage.

(Encounter One page 11)

Le matin vous trouve à peine endormi alors que tout ce que vous avez vécu hier n'a pas arrêté de vous revenir à l'esprit durant la nuit. Ayant pris votre décision de travailler pour votre employeur d'une manière plus ou moins volontaire, vous vous dirigez vers le Quartier des Temples pour midi où vous savez que Mehmet bin-Khazzim va se trouver : en face du temple d'Azor'alq détruit, chez le marchand de kava au *Dancing Kukri*.

Le marchand de kava du *Dancing Kukri* est un des respectables cafés qui ont été ouverts dans le Quartier des Temples depuis plusieurs générations, depuis même plus longtemps qu'il n'y a eu un officiel Quartier des Temples à Sefmur. Le propriétaire actuel, Pasquale Kegbottom, est un hobbit tallfellow avec les cheveux couleur sable et un visage tanné par le vent et le soleil. Il semble être plein d'énergie et toujours en mouvement dans son établissement, mais il prend la peine de venir à l'avant et de rencontrer ses clients et de les asseoir lui-même sur la terrasse. « Bienvenue mon ami, tu dois être un des futurs compagnons de mon bon ami Mehmet. Tu as l'air de l'aventurier en toi ! Viens, viens, n'attends pas sous le soleil de midi ! Mehmet devrait arriver d'un moment à l'autre et il a réservé ma meilleure table à l'ombre pour vous accueillir. » Pasquale court pratiquement vers la table sur ses petites jambes et la monte avec des ustensiles et des verres d'eau fraîche avant même que vous n'y arriviez. « J'apporte des olives, des dattes et des figues tout de suite », dit-il, courant vers la cuisine. L'apparence de joie-de-vivre du hobbit accroche l'ombre d'un sourire à vos lèvres, oubliant presque ce qu'on vous a demandé d'accomplir, et vous regardez le décor qui s'offre à vous. Vous reculez presque perceptiblement en horreur face à la destruction qui a eu lieu il y a quelques mois en face de vous. L'immense propriété où se tenait le principal lieu de culte du Fils de la Lumière à Tusmit complètement détruit, des armes, éparpillées par terre, des ossements, des vêtements, des armures ici et là, juste au-delà des limites des anciens murs à demi-détruits. Vous pouvez observer aussi un édit officiel sur parchemin annonçant aux passants que tout passage sur le terrain de l'ancien temple serait punissable de mort.

(Encounter One page 13: Here Comes Mehmet)

“ Mes amis, vous avez répondu aujourd'hui à une honnête demande d'aide et je suis reconnaissant. Je recherche un vieux monastère qui semble être à l'intérieur des frontières de Tusmit, mais que le temps a

oublié. Je ne veux pas atteindre cet endroit pour un quelconque avantage économique pour ma Maison qu'une telle découverte apporterait, mais bien pour la croissance spirituelle que cela pourrait emmener, à moi et tous ceux qui m'accompagnent. Je recherche la convergence des Voies qui m'habitent en une seule qui me permettrait qu'elle soit réellement unique et individuelle, une « Voie de Droiture » qui permettrait de réconcilier en moi-même les traditions marchandes de ma famille et la Voie du Guerrier Sacré sans sacrifier l'une pour l'autre. Des recherches dans de vieilles bibliothèques poussiéreuses aussi loin que Zeif, pleines de savoirs oubliés, m'ont appris qu'il existe un rituel qui pourrait être trouvé dans ce monastère que je cherche et qui pourrait m'aider, ainsi que qui m'accompagne, à atteindre cet état de grâce. À travers les contacts de ma famille, j'ai été en mesure de converser avec une grande Divinatrice du clergé d'Istus nommée Perna al-Istus, et la dame me donna une prophétie qu'elle a écrite et que je suis supposé décrypter pour commencer cette quête. Bien sûr, je ne veux pas forcer votre main en demandant votre aide à résoudre cette énigme, et ma famille est prête à vous dédommager pour votre temps et vos troubles. Alors qu'en dites-vous ? »

(Encounter Three page 15)

Après que vous aviez quitté Sefmur pour quelques jours, vous avez suivi la large route qui bordait la rivière qui devenait de plus en plus étroite au fur et à mesure que vous montiez dans les collines. De temps à autres, vous avez vu fermiers et marchands labourer leurs terres et transporter leurs marchandises sur des mules et des charrettes. De plus petites rivières joignaient celle que vous suiviez, quelques barijajs menées par quelques marins de rivière les dirigeant en aval, d'où vous veniez. Des petits temples de Fharlanghn ici et là sur le bord de la route où des camps ou habituellement été établis depuis des générations. D'autres de Geshtai près des docks où les bateaux de rivière d'amarrent pendant la nuit. Les villages, disposés régulièrement le long de la rivière semblent fleurir et amplement approvisionné par les routes des commerces établies il y a des décennies et des siècles par le Consortium Mouqollad.

Alors que vous faites votre chemin à travers ces petites bourgades, vous ne semblez pas être en mesure de détacher vos yeux de toute cette iconographie religieuse que vous y trouvez. Chacun des villages exhibe fièrement un superbe temple d'Al'Akbar qui semble faire ombrage à tous les autres édifices. Les villageois prennent un soin extraordinaire de le maintenir en place, repeignant une couche

supplémentaire de peinture où nécessaire et maintenant un incroyable nombre de petites échoppes vendant icônes, des images religieuses et des pendentifs de la forme de la Coupe et du Talisman. La perplexité, pour un moment, obscurcit votre visage jusqu'à ce que vous compreniez que vous êtes sur une des grandes routes de pèlerinage de la Vraie Foi qui s'étend entre Sefmur et les Yatils. Des pèlerins abondent dans les auberges qui offrent leurs services à tous, des plus pauvres aux plus riches. Vous voyez des mullahs ketites portant le traditionnel noir et rouge des prêtres de leur pays voyageant ensemble, ne parlant qu'entre eux, quelques emirs paynims aux couleurs flamboyantes avec quelques uns de leurs fidèles et des Ullites venant de très loin par les routes du sud, tous venant pour la sagesse du Grand Mufti.

Mehmet vous demande d'arrêter dans une de ces petites villes pour la nuit comme vous avez fait la nuit d'avant, disant aussi que même s'il ne partage pas le zèle des fidèles de la Vraie Foi envers le Haut Clerc, il serait bon de demander sa bénédiction dans les stations de la Sainte Route.

(Encounter Three: the Unending Hajj p.16)

Comme vous entrez dans le *Unending Hajj* ("Pèlerinage Sans-Fin"), vous pouvez automatiquement sentir la tension qui sévit aux différentes tables. La place est pleine de gens et vous pouvez voir des gens de différentes origines nationales assis sur des chaises alentour de tables ou debouts, argumentant avec véhémence entre eux et les avec les autres tables.

(Encounter Three: Aftermath p.18)

"Mehmet bin-Khazzim, j'ai besoin de votre aide", dit l'étranger de sous sa cape, tenant dans ses bras une des prêtresses d'Istus qui semble s'être blessée à la tête en tombant sur la table au début du combat.

Mehmet, perplexe en entendant son propre nom prononcé par un étranger, hésite une seconde puis le regarde. "Nous avons besoin de les sortir d'ici avant que la Milice ne vienne. Laissons les Ullites et le reste de ces pauvres fous répondre en face de la loi", continue l'étranger. Mehmet le regarda alors, plissant les yeux comme s'il essayait de percer un déguisement ou de se rappeler où il avait entendu cette voix, puis reconnaît le besoin d'une sortie expéditive. Mehmet se retourne vers vous puis dit "Mes amis, nous devons partir. Maintenant!"

Alors que vous vous dépêchez vers la rue, vous pouvez voir des gens regardant à travers leurs fenêtres vers le *Unending Hajj*, espérant voir de quoi il en retourne. L'étranger, toujours tenant la prêtresse d'Istus et flanqué par les deux autres, se retourne et dit "Allez chercher vos chevaux, j'ai un endroit caché dans les bois et nous ferons les présentations là-bas." Sur cette note, les 2 autres prêtresses d'Istus détachèrent leurs chevaux et l'étranger se concentra, chuchotant quelques paroles alors qu'il touchait quelque bijou ou amulette sous sa cape. Une superbe jument blanche apparût alors de nulle part et vint directement vers lui, se positionnant pour qu'il puisse avoir un accès facile à la selle. Gracieusement, il enfourcha sa monture, tenant encore la prêtresse dans ses bras. Il attendit alors que les deux autres prêtresses le rejoignent puis piquèrent vers les bois.

(Encounter Three: Destiny calling p.18)

Alors que vous approchez d'une rivière, l'étranger s'arrête et descend de cheval de même qu'il emmène la prêtresse inconsciente près du feu de camp. Les deux autres prêtresses s'approchent de leur sœur inconsciente, tenant leur symbole sacré et effectuant la gestuelle des prières de guérison, et, alors qu'elles la déposent confortablement sur un matelas de sol, une d'elles regarde l'étranger et lui dit "ceci n'est pas normal, elle aurait dû se réveiller maintenant." L'étranger, l'air perplexe, lui répond "N'y a-t-il rien que l'on puisse faire?". "Non", répond-t-elle, "ma soeur et moi pensons que le traumatisme qu'elle a reçu qui lui a fait perdre conscience n'était pas dû à sa chute, mais à quelque chose d'autre. Elle ne dort pas maintenant, elle est dans une Transe Sacrée, filant le Trame." À cela, l'étranger se retourna et vous regarda chacun, tentant de se rappeler si l'un d'entre vous était un visage familier. Il enleva alors la capuche de sa cape et vous pouvez voir le visage ordinaire d'un homme portant un bandeau. Sa main monta vers celui-ci et il l'enleva. Ses traits changèrent immédiatement et vous pouvez voir alors un homme vers la fin de la quarantaine, ayant perdu légèrement ses cheveux sur le dessus mais les portant libres et longs jusqu'aux épaules. Il porte aussi une barbe pauvrement entretenue, comme s'il avait passé beaucoup de temps loin de la civilisation.

"Mon nom est Munthir Haddad, paladin d'Azor'alq. Honoré de tous vous rencontrer."

(Encounter Three: Destiny calling p.19)

“Noble Guerrier, notre soeur s’est éveillée et demande votre présence de même que celle des autres qui vous ont suivi, car tous ont besoin d’entendre quelle Trame le Filage a révélée.” Munthir regarda alors la femme, inclina la tête vers elle et révérentieusement dit dans une manière réminiscente des répons dans un service religieux “Sort et Destin obligent.” Il se retourne alors vers vous et dit “J’imagine que nous allons savoir maintenant.”

Vous trouvez la femme, maintenant consciente, assise, une tasse de thé fort dans les mains, vous regardant vous approcher. “Je croyais pas que vous alliez être là. Istus m’a montré de grandes choses dans ma vie, mais jamais quelque chose de si soudain et de si dramatiquement introduit. Le Temps doit être pressant. Nous avons été menées jusqu’ici par la Trame que nous filions, mais obscur était le chemin et les individus que nous allions rencontrer. Nous pensions que ces pauvres fous que nous essayâmes d’arrêter à l’auberge étaient ceux avec qui nous devions parler, mais de petitesse d’esprit ils étaient et de petitesse d’esprit nous étions à penser que nous pouvions anticiper la Volonté d’Istus. Maintenant nous sommes ici et tout est clair, le Dessein se montre et vous vous êtes montrés où vous deviez le faire. Mais vous,” dit-elle, pointant Munthir, “êtes pourquoi nous sommes ici. Car la Trame qui a été filée jadis vous est encore attachée et vous êtes prêt d’accomplir tout ce que nous pensions qui allait arriver. Les rencontres prévues se sont passées, l’espoir est assuré, mais le désespoir se mijote toujours dans les Ténèbres. Votre Sort ou votre Destin vous attend comme il l’a toujours fait et vous avez la chance de défaire ce qui a été fait.”

Entendant cela, Munthir ferma les yeux, brièvement sentant la douleur que seul un souvenir peut amener, mais il ne répond pas. La femme ensuite s’adresse à tous et dit “Cependant ce n’est pas le temps de parler de toute cette Noirceur parce que la Lumière eswt présente par mi tous ces jeunes gens. Venez vous asseoir près de moi afin que nous échangions de petites perles de sagesse.”

(Encounter Four: Apocalypse p.21)

Hier, vous avez laissé derrière la rivière au pied de la montagne; elle sportait majestueusement et avec puissance de l’intérieur d’une grande caverne. La route que vous suiviez depuis Sefmur était devenue un sentier qui montait directement dans le col. Tôt ce matin, vous êtes entrés dans le Labyrinthe de Al’Kafil, une grande formation rocheuse de passages interreliés qui étaient supposés vous rendre à destination. Le

sentier avait été bien marqué par des générations de pèlerins et les autorités du Temple pour que personne ne se perde en route, venant à la Résidence du Grand Mufti. Après avoir pris la plus grande partie de la journée sur le sentier à suivre des flèches, vous avez encore pris un tournant entre 2 murs de roche naturels qui flanquaient la route à 10 pieds l’un de l’autre. Seulement cette fois, vous voyez la lumière à la fin du passage au lieu d’un autre mur de roches, là où ils finissent abruptement.

(Encounter Four: Apocalypse p.21)

Alors que finalement vous trouvez la sortie du labyrinthe, vous découvrez la merveille de Tsh’Ur Geshtair, ou l’Oasis de Montagne de Geshtai, un des grands lacs des Yatils. Le labyrithe actuellement fini dans le milieu d’une falaise, à peu près au milieu entre le haut de la falaise et le lac en dessous, à environ 300 pieds de la surface. Un petit sentier de pas plus de 5 pieds de large permet d’aller à l’entour du bassin par la gauche ou la droite.

(Encounter Four: Apocalypse p.21)

Sur votre gauche, le sentier de falaise continue jusqu’à ce qu’elle finisse et abouti sur une pente moins abrupte qui descend régulièrement jusqu’au niveau du lac, à peut-être un mille de distance. Sur votre droite, le sentier de falaise s’étire sur la falaise et, à peu près où sur la gauche il rencontre le plateau, et continue sur un plateau. Vous pouvez voir le sentier devenir plus large sur le dessus de la falaise, continuant pour environ un demi-mille jusqu’à ce qu’il arrive au bout, où la falaise plonge dans le lac sur tous ses côtés sauf de la direction d’où vient le sentier. Vous pouvez deviner que le lac a probablement une baie de l’autre côté de la falaise ou peut-être il s’étend encore plus loin, mais vous n’avez aucun moyen de voir pour l’instant parce que votre vue est cachée par une des plus belles structures que vous n’avez jamais vues.

Aucune tour ou ziggourat ne perce le paysage, mais une très large enceinte entourée de larges murs de pierres, sous toute réserve d’origine khund, peints en blanc. Vous voyez un large dôme dans le milieu et deux plus petits qui brillent sous le soleil couchant comme s’ils étaient faits d’or. Cependant ce qui est la plus impressionnante qualité de tout cela, parce que les dômes en eux-mêmes ne sont rien que vous n’avez déjà vu ailleurs, est que les fondations sous l’enceinte sont actuellement creusée dans la falaise, avec des passages qui mènent dehors et dedans. Vous pouvez voir des

fenêtres, balcons, vérandas et même des rues qui semblent suspendues à l'extérieur de la falaise.

(Encounter Four: Apocalypse p.22)

Alors que vous prenez un moment pour observer toutes ces merveilles étalées devant vos yeux, Munthir finalement, prend la parole.

“Je crois, Mehmet, que vous êtes arrivés à la prochaine étape de votre quête.” Il sourit, regardant tout cela d'un air satisfait.

Mehmet se retourne, vous regardant tous, et vous sourit aussi. “Poursuivons-nous mes amis?” Et il commença à marcher, prenant la voie de droite vers la Résidence du Grand Mufti.

Alors que vous cheminez le long du sentier, vous pouvez voir une quantité très appréciable de graffitis écrits sur les murs de la falaise, exprimant de courtes prières, des images relatant les stations du pèlerinage, des icônes représentant les Saints de la Migration et les Saints de la Colonisation de la Flanaess qui suivirent. Vous arrivez finalement aux massives portes de fer de l'enceinte. Des gardes dans les uniformes traditionnels rouges sur noir de la Vraie Foi attendent les pèlerins qui arrivent et les accueillent à l'intérieur. Vous n'êtes pas seuls sur la route et beaucoup d'autres ont atteint cet endroit où vous êtes maintenant, mais vous n'avez pas à attendre votre tour longtemps.

“Que les Quatre Pieds du Dragon vous guident dans votre Voie, vous êtes finalement arrivés à la prochaine étape”, dit le garde. “Que votre but soit clair et les réponses encore plus évidentes lorsque vous partirez.”

“Je recherche le conseil du Grand Mufti en matière d'une prophétie qui m'a été révélée et qui m'a menée ici”, demande Mehmet.

“Une audience vous sera accordée ce soir avant le repas car la liste n'est pas très longue de ce qu'il reste comme suppliant aujourd'hui. Après cela nous allons tous partager le repas avec le Très Sage”, répond le garde.

“Vous pouvez entrer. Apocalypse, la Résidence du Grand Mufti est ouverte à tous ceux au cœur pur.”

(Encounter Four: The Audience p.23)

Alors que vous êtes menés vers la dernière rangée de sièges, le Deuxième Scribe vous fait signe d'être silencieux pendant que vous entrez. Après quelques moments, vos yeux s'adaptent à la lumière ambiante et vous pouvez voir que vous êtes entrés dans un rotonde

de pierre d'environ 100 pieds de diamètre couverte d'un dôme. Tout est fait de pierre solide, sculpté et poli par le labeur de centaines de pèlerins depuis des siècles. Vous ne pouvez faire autrement que penser à l'histoire que ces murs ont vue et tous les Grands Muftis du passé qui se sont assis sur le siège central fait de granite noir, appelé aussi le Poids du Monde, où un petit homme avec une longue barbe blanche et une robe rouge sur noir est présentement adossé. Son dos est supporté par quelques modestes coussins, mais aucun autre complaisance de confort. Autour de lui il y a 3 autres sièges disposés en demi-cercle et une place vacante où un autre siège aurait dû être. Sur ces sièges sont assis Munthir, un homme dans la soixantaine portant les robes blanches sur bleu-foncé des prêtres d'Azor'alq et un symbole religieux montrant un homme sur une montagne, un autre homme que vous figurez être le Premier Scribe parce qu'il prend des notes à propos de tout ce qui se passe et un humanoïde large à la peau bleue qui semble flotter au-dessus du sol, toujours en mouvement, et habillé de larges pantalons bouffants et d'une chemise sans manche de couleurs vives, un turban violet et d'un symbole religieux de la Coupe et du Talisman.

(Encounter Four: The Audience p.24)

“Alors c'est ce qui m'a mené ici. J'ai rencontré le jeune Mehmet et les 3 prêtresses d'Istus et cela m'a convaincu qu'ici était l'endroit où je devais me trouver, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire”, dit Munthir.

“Ouiiii, oui... bien sssûr... vous êtes sssupposé être ici Munthir...”, murmura Al'Kafil, “...mais votre but ne nous aide en aucune façon à régler notre problème... Nous devons quand même trouver une ssssolution dans la perssspective de trouver un endroit sssecret pour Maître Kahzzzaa...”

“J'ai bien peur que Al'Kafil n'ait raison mon fils”, répondit Kahzaa, “Apocalypse ne sera pas sécuritaire pour bien longtemps. Muammar va éventuellement apprendre où nous sommes et ne va pas tarir dans sa hâte à me voir, ainsi que tout ce pourquoi je me bats, détruits. Il ne sera pas satisfait de mon exil et il va venir ici dans sa rage et ne va pas respecter l'Asyle que me donne ce lieu saint.” Soupirant, les épaules de Kahzaa s'effondrent un peu et vous pouvez voir qu'il a été pris dans ce cul-de-sac depuis un bon bout de temps. Il a tenté de trouver refuge dans beaucoup d'endroits, mais personne n'a été assez compatissant pour s'associer avec lui dans son heure de misère.

Sortie de nulle part, comme une brise fraîche dans un chaud jour d'été, vous entendez une voix venir du siège

central. Vous aviez oublié le vieil homme parce qu'il ne bougeait pas, il écoutait comme souvent les hommes sages font. "Istus est encore avec nous qu'elle n'a pas jugé qu'il était temps pour Muammar de te découvrir ou que tu avais trouvé un sanctuaire ici mon ami. Peut-être ce temps est-il venu, peut-être pas? Nous ne pouvons que respecter le fait qu'Elle n'a pas jugé juste qu'il le sache jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Je crois qu'un extraordinaire moment de clareté dans ses Desseins nous a été montré depuis les derniers jours, conformément à ce que tu nous as dit Munthir. Si je prends en considération tout ce que tu nous as dit, tu as rencontré de nouveau un jeune homme porteur d'une prophétie qui l'emmenait ici ainsi que ses compagnons qui étaient liés à lui par le Sort ou le Destin et que, parmi eux, tu en avais déjà rencontré quelques-uns sous d'autres circonstances. Tout cela est un présage pour la résolution d'événements, pas pour la stagnation comme nous avons subi les dernières semaines, sans solution."

"Il semble, Ami Très Honoré, que vous êtes sur le bon chemin. Les présages sont pour la résolution de tout cela et une décision doit être prise. Néanmoins, je suggérerais que toutes les personnes concernées puissent dire leur mot à ce propos et spécialement les jeunes gens que nous n'avons toujours pas entendus", répliqua Kahzaa.

Tournant leurs têtes vers vous, Mehmet s'avança, se mettant en tête du groupe.

"Très Sage, mon nom est Mehmet bin-Khazzim et je suis un paladin au service d'Azor'alq. Je suis aussi un fils au service de sa Maison du Consortium du Mouqollad et je suis à la recherche de la voie qui réconcilierait les deux sans renier l'autre. J'ai fait mes recherches, consulté des oracles et emmené des compagnons dans cette quête de savoir et de découverte de soi. Tous les indices m'ont dirigé ici et en ce temps et en cette rencontre avec tous ici présents pour que je puisse trouver une manière de continuer. Je cherche un ancien monastère qui pratiquait un rituel quelconque qui aidait le suppliant à parfaire l'unité. On m'a dit de chercher ici pour cette réponse."

Ayant l'air passablement surpris par cette déclaration, le Grand Mufti regarda autour de lui vers Kahzaa, Munthir et Al'Kafil. Kahzaa regardait vers Mehmet, sans pouvoir comprendre, Al'Kafil semblait perplexe, mais son visage était difficile à lire de toute façon à cause de sa nature, mais regardant vers Munthir, vous voyez l'ombre d'un sourire sous sa barbe.

"Je crois bien que personne ici n'est familier avec un tel endroit, oublié à travers les âges, qui aurait pu de

surcroît, être aussi proche, mais cependant je crois qu'il y a quelque chose là-dedans que nous avons pu ignorer sans nous en rendre compte", répliqua le Grand Mufti.

"Mais qu'avez-vous à dire, Compagnons de Mehmet?"

(Encounter Four: The secret is revealed by Kahzaa or the Grand Mufti p.25)

"Ahhh, mon enfant...", dit alors le Grand Mufti. "Vous comprenez maintenant ce que je disais plus tôt à propos du "quoi" et du "quand" Isus décide de révéler à un temps approprié. Ne soyez pas attristés par le fait que vous ayez tenté de nous le cacher. Nous comprenons tous pourquoi vous l'avez fait et pourquoi vous pourriez encore rapporter ce vous allez trouver. Les pressions de notre pauvre monde sont un poids énorme pour de si jeunes épaules. J'insisterai toutefois afin que vous reconsidériez les conséquences de vos actions et ce que vous allez révéler si vous révélez quoique ce soit."

"Je trouve ces choses ignobles qu'ils vous ont pressé à leur fournir un tel service", dit Kahzaa, "car ceci est l'œuvre des Ombres et que seulement des choses malignes ressortiront de tout cela. Je considère la Volonté d'Istus comme sacré et si ce pourquoi vous avez été envoyés pour révéler est mis au grand jour, ainsi soit-il. Cependant considérez votre tâche et décidez fermement ce que vous devez révéler et à qui."

(Encounter Four: The secret is revealed by Al'Kafil p.25)

"Ahahahahah... Ces choses... Me font tellement rire..." dit le djinn. "Mais je vous pardonne, jeunes gens... car vous n'aviez aucune connaissance préalable de qui j'étais... Je suis sûr que mes très honorés amis le Grand Mufti et Kahzaa sont d'accords que le fardeau est grand pour de si jeunes et inexpérimentées épaules... Ne ressentez aucune honte à avoir perdu cet "affront des esprits" contre moi. C'est ce que je fais ici à Apocalypse depuis des années, le devant bien à mon vieil et longtemps disparu ami Mohammed."

"Oui, comme le bon Al'Kafil a dit", interrompit Kahzaa, "ne vous sentez pas coupable de ce que vous avez tenté de faire. Ce qui a à être accompli, va être accompli de toute façon, mais vous allez avoir à décider ce que vous allez dire et à qui le dire et vivre avec les conséquences de vos actions, ou de vous en échapper..."

"Ceci est trop malheureusement vrai et aussi," répondit le Grand Mufti, "une chose qu'Istus nous enseigne est qu'on ne peut échapper à la causalité, que des événements vont arriver, vont laisser des traces et

causer d'autres événements qui vont vous affecter au bout de la ligne, pour le bien ou pour le mal, vous propulsant vers votre Sort ou votre Destin..."

(Encounter Four: The secret is not revealed at all or nobody has been coerced into revealing the location of the monastery afterward p.25)

"Votre quête et vos motifs, même s'ils comprennent un aspect monétaire, sont sur le droit chemin je crois", dit le Grand Mufti. "Je suis satisfait de savoir que le Mehmet est un excellent juge de caractère pour quelqu'un d'aussi jeune d'avoir choisi d'aussi exceptionnelles personnes pour l'accompagner. J'ai l'espoir que vous trouviez aussi quelque chose dans cette quête qui pourra renforcer votre voie vers la vertu."

"Et espérons," intervint Kahzaa, que vos nobles et purs cœurs vont garder secret la présence de mon clergé dans ces environs pour que nous puissions regagner des forces, récupérer de nos pertes et éventuellement réintégrer Tusmit glorieusement."

(Encounter Four : After the Audience p.26)

"Ahhhhhhhhhh...", dit le Grand Mufti. "Il semblerait qu'il y ait encore de l'espoir qu'Istus n'ait pas encore l'intention de révéler ta présence ici mon bon Kahzaa. Néanmoins, nous devrions quand même se charger de vous trouver un nouvel endroit pour vous cacher, qui vous permettrait de vous réorganiser et, par la suite, de négocier d'une position de force avec Muammar."

"Oui, vous avez bien raison", répliqua Kahzaa, "comme nous l'avons dit plus tôt, l'arrivée de Munthir, Mehmet et des autres amène avec eux d'excellents présages que nous allons trouver une solution à notre situation facheuse."

"Pour cela," dit Munthir, finalement décidant de prendre la sellette, "j'ai une solution qui pourrait satisfaire autant à Kahzaa qu'à Mehmet en même temps. Mais tout d'abord, je dois vous raconter une histoire qui n'est jamais apparue dans les livres d'histoire et qui date de mon premier passage sur cette terre."

(Encounter Four : After the Audience p.26)

Et ceci est ce que je propose comme solution pour la situation du clergé. J'espère que le monastère est toujours caché comme il l'était dans ma jeunesse, libre de locataire", dit Munthir.

"Ahhhhhhhhhh mon cher fils! Vous offrez un si merveilleux baume pour la blessure d'un vieil homme", s'exclaffa Kahzaa. "Triple fois Béni fût le jour quand l'idée de vous ramener des morts a été suggérée. Vous nous donnez l'espoir sorti du désespoir. Qu'aurions-nous pu faire sans vous pour nous montrer la Voie?"

"Grand Maître", dit Munthir, "je ne suis qu'un simple pion dans les mains d'Istus. Je suis sa Volonté comme je l'ai toujours fait."

"Munthir Haddad de l'Ordre d'Azor'alq," interrompit le Grand Mufti, "de grandes nouvelles vous apportez, mais encore le temps est passé et nous n'avons jamais entendu parler d'un tel lieu si près d'ici. Peut-être a-t-il passé entre les mains du Mal et, en éclaircur, vous devriez aller là-bas avec nos jeunes amis?"

"C'est une excellente suggestion Grand Sage, et une que je ne vais pas passer. Est-ce que toi, Mehmet, et vous, ses amis, voulez m'accompagner et reconsacrer cet ancien lieu de merveilles?"

(Encounter Four : After the Audience p.26)

"Très bien alors," dit Munthir. "Sachez seulement que ce lieu a été protégé par de puissantes protections établies il y a longtemps pour renforcer les attributs naturels et l'environnement qui cachent le monastère de la vue. Je ne suis pas du tout surpris que la convergence des événements a dirigé Mehmet ici pour me rencontrer et montrer à tous le chemin car je suis probablement la seule de 2 personnes vivantes sur ce plan d'existence à être allé là-bas. Vous devriez tous savoir que se faire mener par quelqu'un qui y ai déjà allé est la seule manière, sauf quelques magie épique qui me dépasse largement, d'y aller non-annoncé alors c'est un immense honneur qui, à ce que je sache, n'a pas été accordé depuis des siècles."

"Alors nous vous donnons notre bénédiction, Munthir, pour la mission que vous allez entreprendre for le reste du clergé d'Azor'alq", dit Kahzaa. "Puissiez-vous retourner avec de bonnes nouvelles et de meilleurs présages encore pour le futur."

"Et mon fils," dit le Grand Mufti, "prenez ce que vous avez besoin pour le transport et l'équipement pour votre voyage car je sais que ces montagnes ne sont pas très hospitalières."

"Ne vous inquiétez pas, nous prenons votre bénédiction et toute la bonne volonté que vous voulez nous donner", dit Munthir and ensuite il se tourna vers vous, souriant, et vous indique la porte.

(Encounter Five: Pillars of the Faithful, Arrival p.27)

Les jours sont à peu près identiques aux précédents sur la route du nord depuis que vous avez quitté Apocalypse quand le sentier passe encore devant une des nombreuses crevasses et passages secondaires qui ont été votre festin visuel depuis déjà deux jours. Munthir, ayant été plus silencieux qu'à son habitude depuis la veille, s'arrête et commence à inspecter les roches qui sont à la base d'un de ceux-ci. Pendant environ 2 minutes, il les retourne et les regarde de plus près, comme s'il cherchait quelque chose. Plus il regarde, plus il sourit car il semble qu'il ait trouvé ce qu'il cherchait.

"Ici", dit-il. "C'est le passage qui va nous mener au Monastère des Piliers des Fidèles." Il prend alors une des roches qui traînait par terre et vous la montre. "Vous voyez, mes amis et moi sommes venus ici et nous avons voulu pouvoir y retourner sans problème alors nous avons installé des indicateurs dans le labyrinthe de passages et, depuis hier, je comptais le nombre que nous avons passé. Pour être sûr que nous ne nous trompions pas, nous avons mis parmi les rochers à la base du passage ces pierres que nous avons ramené de l'Extrême-Occident." Sur les pierres dans ses mains, vous pouvez voir de petits squelettes de ce qui semble être des poissons. "Selon mon bon ami Salah Muazir, il n'y a jamais eu de poissons dans cette région, alors comme ça nous pouvions être sûr que c'était le bon passage pour nous mener aux Piliers."

Munthir se releva alors et commença à marcher dans le passage secondaire.

"Venez, mais tenez vos chevaux par la bride car ils ont peur des endroits étroits. Plus loin, il va y avoir un endroit pour les attacher pendant le reste du chemin."

Alors il continua, vous menant plus profondément dans le passage pour la plus grande partie de la journée quand vous tombâtes sur un élargissement du passage d'environ 25 pieds de large. Dans la roche se trouvaient des anneaux de fer pour attacher les montures et de vieilles mangeoires en fer pour y laisser la nourriture et l'eau.

(Encounter Five: Pillars of the Faithful p.28)

Quand vous êtes arrivés dans l'élargissement du passage, vous pouviez voir clairement le sourire sur le visage de Munthir.

"Nous sommes presque arrivés mes amis. Ceci est l'Antichambre comme nous l'appelions à l'époque. Je me rappelle même avoir planté les pitons pour les

chevaux moi-même. Nous sommes à environ une demi-heure des Piliers."

Et avec cela, Munthir s'enfonça encore plus dans le passage, allant un peu plus vite cette fois dû à sa hâte de voir comment sa vieille base d'opération à l'air aujourd'hui. Il ne regarde pas en arrière car il sait que vous le suivez.

Après un autre coude dans le passage, vous voyez plus de lumière venant de ce qui semble être la fin. Vous sortez immédiatement après Munthir et vous regardez la merveille d'architecture ou de la nature ou peut-être un peu des deux.

Vous êtes dans une petite vallée peut-être un petit peu moins d'un kilomètre de largeur nichée entre des murs de roches sur chaque côté. Vous ne pouvez voir une autre sortie de la vallée d'où vous vous trouvez, mais vous pouvez voir une petite cascade qui tombe d'un des murs de roches à l'opposée de l'entrée dans une mare qui déborde dans une petite rivière qui descend dans la vallée et qui disparaît à la base du pilier central. Ce que vous voyez être des petits jardins flanquent la rivière et des traces d'irrigation peuvent être vues même d'où vous vous tenez. Environ la moitié de la vallée est aussi constituée d'une zone boisée avec quelques entrées visibles pour des sentiers.

Cependant ce qui est le plus frappant dans tout cela est l'immense complexe de 5 piliers absolument droits et pointés vers le ciel. 4 d'entre eux sont d'environ 500 pieds de hauteur, espacés régulièrement et flanquant par paires un pilier central de 750 pieds de hauteur. Des ponts de pierre de différentes largeurs et hauteurs les relient ensemble à ce qui semble être une disposition au hasard, lui donnant un aspect très naturel. Vous ne pouvez voir aucune trace de mortier et aucune pierre collée contre une autre car tout semble avoir été fait d'une seule et géante pierre qui aurait poussé comme ça. Vous voyez des trous dans la structure au bout des ponts qui semblent être des portes et d'autres plus petites qui ont l'air de fenêtres.

(Encounter Five: Arrival p.28)

Après le peu de temps nécessaire à sortir de l'entrée de la vallée et à se réajuster à la source de lumière dominante de l'endroit, vous pouvez voir Munthir, se tenant à 30 pieds en avant de vous, un sourire fendu jusqu'aux oreilles et pleurant des larmes de joie.

"Béni soit le Fils de la Lumière pour m'avoir montré le chemin... Je suis finalement chez moi."

(Encounter Five: Arrival p.28)

“Venez, venez mes amis...”, dit Munthir. “Ceci est l'endroit où l'espoir revient. Il y a manifestement quelqu'un ici, peut-être un ancien élève de mon vieil ami...”

“... Ou, lui-même, l'ami, Munthir Haddad”, interrompt une voix venant de votre gauche et un peu plus élevée que vous.

“Est-ce vraiment toi mon vieil ami?”, continua l'étranger. “Es-tu vraiment, comme je l'ai entendu, revenu d'entre les morts?”

(Encounter Five: Arrival p.29)

“Oui, oui, la vérité derrière, je peux voir. D'entre les morts, tu es de retour. Et voir Odd-Eye tu es venu...” Puis soudainement, le vieil elfe s'approcha de Munthir et l'embrassa, pleurant des larmes de joie. “De la vie dans ces membres, je peux ravoïr, car des amis longtemps séparés sont de retour ensemble.”

“Ahhhhh Qurell! Ami entre les Amis! Je savais que j'aurais dû venir te voir plus tôt! Mais tu sais comment ça se passe, le Devoir et le Bien avant tout!”

“Oui, oui, comprendre je dois, car toujours ta voie cela a été. Mais viens, viens avec des jeunes gens, tes nouveaux compagnons, car fatigués vous devez être et des histoires nous avons à nous conter à propos du passé, du présent et du futur...”

(Encounter Five: Arrival p.29)

Alors que vous arrivez près des piliers, vous voyez Odd-Eye se retourner vers vous et, souriant, il décrit, pointant la structure: “Le Monastère des Piliers des Fidèles, ceci est. Autour de vous, Générosité, Piété, Honneur et Famille, les noms des piliers sont, avec la Vertu dans le centre. Plus ancien qu'ancien, plus usé qu'usé, des occupants suivant le vide, suivant d'autres occupants, tout cela, ces murs ont vu. Mais de nouveaux visages, ils n'ont pas vus depuis longtemps car seul j'ai été depuis près d'un siècle. Venez, des chambres vides pour les visiteurs j'ai maintenues et présente est la nourriture et la boisson dans le pilier de la Famille.”

Il vous emmène à la base du plus proche pilier où se trouve une porte. Chaque pilier a une base d'à peu près 70 pieds de diamètre et un nombre important de fenêtres pour laisser entrer la lumière. À l'intérieur, d'autres sources d'illumination sous la forme de globes irradient de la lumière. Tout est sans poussière et

semble en excellent état. Un escalier de l'autre côté de la pièce mène à l'étage et un autre mène en bas. Des tapis propres, mais usés de même que des bibelots et des peintures sont dans la pièce. Vous traversez un réfectoire sur le premier étage où il y a une cuisine bien équipée et ensuite vous allez au deuxième étage où des lits sont disposés à votre convenance.

(Encounter Five: Arrival p.29)

“Rafraîchissez-vous avant dîner”, dit le vieil elfe, “car d'illumination spirituelle, nous avons matière à discussion.”

(Encounter Five: Before you go p.29)

“Mais que plein et contents, nos estomacs sont, d'un grave sujet, nous avons à discuter”, dit Odd-Eye, regardant chacun d'entre-vous.

“Comme vous vous rappelez il y a quelques jours,” dit Munthir, “je vous ai dit que ce lieu a été protégé de toute découverte fortuite ou de divinations magiques depuis des siècles. Cependant, il y a toujours eue un moyen de le trouver pour qui cherchait l'illumination.”

“Oui, venir ici une chose sérieuse est,” continua Odd-Eye, “car son aspect secret est son plus admirable atout. Il y a très longtemps, un *souhait* d'un noble djinn j'ai réussi à me faire accorder et cet endroit est celui que je voulais secret. Mais pour des êtres spéciaux, je voulais qu'il dirige ici comme Munthir m'a dit que tu avais été, jeune Mehmet. Car pour ceux qui, pour un motif pur, veulent le rechercher un chemin vers ici trouve.”

Voyant l'aspect confondu du visage de Mehmet, Munthir souria et expliqua.

“Ce que mon ami cherche à expliquer à vous tous, c'est que la manière dont ont été érigés les protections magiques a permis sa découverte par des divinations, mais seulement parce que vous avez demandé à trouver un rituel pour atteindre l'illumination spirituelle et non pas pour un autre but. Vous avez été dirigé vers moi par vos divinations et nous nous sommes rencontrés pour que je puisse vous diriger vers, ce que j'espère, être votre Destin.”

“Oui”, interrompt Odd-Eye, “mais encore la confiance, par des forces inconnues de moi, pourrait être ébréchée, et par des bouches parlantes que les conséquences ne peuvent pas voir. Alors un vœu de silence à propos de révéler l'endroit où se trouve cette base secrète, je dois vous demander. Comme Munthir

j'ai compris plus tôt, de venir ici, d'autre gens dans le besoin vont, et découverts, ils ne doivent pas l'être."

"Ce voeu aura de graves conséquences pour vous tous si vous échouez à le maintenir", continua Munthir, "mais une alternative existe si vous ne le prononcez pas. Vous pourriez toujours dire non, mais un enchantement puissant qui effacera les souvenirs des derniers trois jours sera jeté sur vous pour que vous ne puissiez jamais être capable de revenir."

"Cela, mes jeunes amis, vous devez choisir maintenant avant que le Rituel du Chemin Sans Détour ne vous soit expliqué. Alors qu'en dites-vous?"

(Encounter Five: Before you go p.30)

"Obscur, votre jugement peut être, mais d'autres circonstances pour cela, je pourrais ne pas connaître", dit Odd-Eye, sortant une pierre bleu pâle incrustée de gemme de sous son burnous. "Ne soyez pas alarmés... La pierre votre front touchera et rien vous ne vous rappellerez quand de ce lieu vous partirez. Vos amis, vous allez être capable d'accompagner pour le rituel, si tel est votre désir."

(Encounter Five: Before you go p.30)

"Sagement, j'espère que vous avez choisi, jeunes gens. Car une chose légère un voeu de silence n'est pas et un terrible prix à payer si vous faillissez. Mais courageux et plein d'espoir vous êtes et confiants d'atteindre votre Destin, Istus voulant", dit Odd-Eye, sortant une pierre bleu pâle incrustée de gemmes. "Mettre le voeu en vous, la pierre fera, et latent la malédiction sera jusqu'à ce que le silence de votre part ne soit plus."

Il vous toucha alors le front, libérant une petite partie du pouvoir de la pierre sur vous.

"Ainsi soit-il."

(Encounter Five: The Unwavering Path p.31)

"Nous sommes à l'endroit jeunes gens", dit Odd-Eye "En bas des escaliers nous allons."

Avec lui en avant et munthir à l'arrière, vous descendez au rez-de-chaussée et vous continuez à descendre sous le niveau du sol de la vallée. Même sous terre, vous pouvez encore voir les murs du pilier dans lequel vous êtes entré continuant vers le bas, le diamètre de la tour s'élargissant peu à peu à chaque étage. Vous entendez une chute d'eau tout près, mais vous ne pouvez la voir. Après quelques étages bien définis, vous ne pouvez

plus voir de planchers au fur et à mesure que vous descendez et l'escalier ne fait que continuer à descendre en spirale, en quelques points ayant une caverne, un tunnel ou une gallerie pénétrant dans le roc et croisant votre chemin créant un dédale de tunnels. Des ponts de pierre ou de corde vous voyez quelques fois, traversant le chasme toujours s'agrandissant.

Munthir, pendant la descente, vous explique que ceci a été le donjon le plus difficile à nettoyer de toute sa carrière d'aventurier et il vous conte quelques anecdote à ce sujet. Odd-Eye ria et contredit son ami en toute bonne humeur sur les détails. Vous pouvez voir les tentatives infructueuses de vos guides pour alléger vos appréhensions.

Après ce qu'il sembla des heures, mais probablement plus proche de 45 minutes, le gouffre s'était agrandi tellement en caverne que soudainement vous avez pu voir le sol s'approcher et les murs des autres piliers qui se fondaient ensembles, créant une titanesque caverne.

"Ici est là où nous arrêtons", dit Odd-Eye, pointant vers le milieu de la caverne "car dans cette direction vous devriez aller. À un pentagramme gravé dans la roche, vous allez arriver. Là méditer vous devez et se révéler lui-même un passage va."

Il remonta alors en haut des marches, rejoignant Munthir.

"Bonne chance à vous tous, et qu'Istus, Al'Akbar et Azor'alq soient la lumière sur votre chemin", dit Munthir, remontant aussi.

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.31)

Après avoir cherché pendant quelques minutes, vous n'avez rien trouvé d'intéressant sauf le très remarquable pentagramme gravé dans le mur. Il est un polygone à 5 côtés réguliers d'une largeur d'environ 6 pieds avec des runes gravées dans une langue aux caractères étranges. Mehmet se rapprocha, plissant le nez et étudia les écritures.

"Ne sentez-vous pas cela?", dit-il, en vous regardant. "Ça pue le souffre."

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.31)

"Donner et prendre, prendre et donner en espèce car au-delà de ce portail se trouve votre chemin vers un autre portail ou ceci va être la clé."

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.31)

Mehmet regarde le pentagramme, semblant résigné à accomplir le rituel et dit:

“J’imagine que je vais méditer maintenant. Quelqu’un veut se joindre à moi?”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.32)

Après vous être concentrés sur la route à parcourir et sur l’aventure spirituelle que vous avez entreprise ici avec vos amis, vous commencez à vous sentir un peu étrange et vous regardez le pentagramme, sentant que c’est peut-être un indicateur dans le rituel. Le regardant directement, vous ne voyez rien à prime abord d’extraordinaire mais ensuite, les bordures intérieures du pentagramme commencent à pâlir, commencent à devenir translucide. Au début cela est juste une impression, mais ensuite vous voyez le phénomène s’étendre à tout l’intérieur du pentagramme. Par un jeu de lumière, vous voyez encore la face gravée du pentagramme, mais vous pouvez maintenant voir, au-delà, un tunnel creusé dans le roc avec une lumière flamboyante au bout. Vous vous tournez vers Mehmet et vous le voyez vous regarder.

“Le voyez-vous? Voyez-vous le tunnel?”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.32)

Après avoir regardé Mehmet méditer pour une minute, vous voyez soudainement ses yeux regarder le pentagramme, comme s’il fixait sur quelque chose au-delà. Quelques secondes plus tard, vous voyez ses yeux ouvrir très grand et il vous regarde.

“Le voyez-vous? Voyez-vous le tunnel?”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.32)

Mehmet se leva de sa position à genoux, enlevant le symbole religieux de L’Homme sur la Montagne de son cou. Murmurant une brève prière, il mit la main qui le tenait devant lui et avança vers le pentagramme. En premier sa main, puis son bras et le reste de son corps passèrent au travers du pentagramme sans même ralentir.

“Venez, suivez-moi...”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.32)

L’odeur de soufre est la première sensation qui vous atteint. De la fumée se trouve à flotter au plafond dans le haut de ce tunnel sombre illuminé seulement par la lueur du feu que vous percevez à l’autre bout. La chaleur commence à gagner en intensité alors que vous approchez de la fin. Mehmet, encore en pleine concentration, vous dit que le corridor semble s’étirer jusqu’à un mille de distance.

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.32)

Le feu que vous avez originalement perçu est en fait une paire de solides portes en bois d’une dimension de 10 pieds de largeur par 30 pieds de hauteur qui brûlent. Malgré la chaleur intense générée par les flammes, les portes de bois, renforcées de métal, ne sont jamais complètement consumées, continuellement rejetant de la fumée noire dans la partie plus élevée du corridor. Toutefois, cette distraction n’est rien comparée aux créatures, très probablement des démons, qui se tiennent devant les portes, souriant calmement alors que vous approchez.

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.33)

“Au-delà de ces portes se trouve votre chemin.”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.33)

“Rendez toutes injures données avant de passer au-delà de ces portes vivants.”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.33)

“Pour continuer votre Voie, acceptez ce que nous vous donnons.”

(Encounter Six: Give and Take p.33)

“À mon avis, nous n’avons qu’une seule chance de faire cela de la bonne façon et toutes les autres options vont nous mener à notre perte. Je ne veux pas prendre cette décision seul et vous mettre tous en danger... On devrait arriver à un commun accord avant de faire quoi que ce soit.”

(Encounter Six: Congratulations p.34)

“Mes jeunes amis, c’est une immense joie de vous revoir ici avec nous et non dans ce terrible endroit dans la caverne. Pendant que vous étiez partis, j’ai continué ma discussion avec Odd-Eye à propos du futur et ce que nous devrions faire et voilà quelles ont été nos résultats.”

“Premièrement, Kahzaa Al’Ahron et les autres membres du clergé d’Azor’alq vont recevoir asile ici pour le temps qu’ils veulent. Le monastère a beaucoup de chambres libres et assez de ressources agricoles pour répondre à leurs besoins pendant que les plans vont s’échafauder en vue d’interagir avec le gouvernement tusman. Odd-Eye est même prêt à sortir de son hermitage et de recommencer à vivre parmi nous!”

“Deuxièmement, je vais vous accompagner sur le chemin du retour jusqu’à Apocalypse afin de ramener moi-même ici le clergé.”

“Troisièmement, Odd-Eye a vu en vous tous le potentiel d’apprendre ce qu’il a à enseigner. Et pour ceux qui le désirent, si vous voulez rester ici pour un moment ou revenir un jour ou l’autre, il commencera à vous enseigner ce que nous avons appris là-bas dans l’Extrême-Occident à propos des anciens arts martiaux de l’Empire Bakluni.”

“Et quatrièmement, mais non le moindre, je veux vous donner l’opportunité de vous battre à mes côtés pour le bon droit et la vertu et de bénéficier de ce que je peux vous enseigner. Si vous voulez bien rester ici avec moi au Monastère des Piliers des Fidèles et vous convertir aux enseignements du Banisseur des Ténèbres, je vais vous vous montrer la voie des Espions de l’Ombre et des Terrasseurs de l’Ombre, des outils utiles contre les Ténèbres.”

(Encounter Six: Congratulations p.34)

“Munthir, toutes ces offres sont extraordinaires et je pense rester ici, étudier avec vous et Odd-Eye et aider le clergé à s’installer ici. Il y a beaucoup de travail à faire. À vous mes bons amis, voici la compensation pour la mission que vous avez entreprise à mes côtés. Je ne vais pas me joindre à vous dans votre retour. Je vais certainement prier que nous nous rencontrions de nouveau sous des cieux cléments et la Bénédiction du Fils de la Lumière. J’espère sincèrement que vous allez nous rejoindre dans le combat pour le bon droit et la vertu contre l’injustice qui a été commise contre nous.”

Mehmet vous remet une bourse plus grosse que ce que vous aviez espéré et un étui à parchemin, contenant une lettre.

“Je sais qu’il y a plus que ce que je vous avais promis, mais nous avons découvert tellement plus que ce que nous cherchions. Il y a aussi une lettre pour ma famille expliquant que je suis sauf, en sécurité et entre de très bonnes mains.”

(Encounter Six: Congratulations p.35)

“Beaucoup vous avez appris, beaucoup plus vous avez encore pour que votre Destin, vous atteigniez, ou qu’à votre Sort vous succombiez. Pour ceux qui vont voir leur mémoire disparaître, vous avoir rencontré sous d’autres circonstances, j’aurais voulu, et peut-être nous allons, Istus le voulant. Pour ceux qui vont se rappeler, les eaux de la société des humains naviguer avec caution, car le requin qui vous dévore quiconque peut être. N’oubliez pas qu’un prix il y a payer pour toute trahison que vous accomplissez et que, espérons-le, capable de vivre avec les conséquences vous soyez.”

Alors que vous vous dirigez hors de la vallée et quittez le Monastère avec Munthir en direction d’Apocalypse, vous voyez le vieil elfe et le jeune Mehmet entrant un des piliers.

(Conclusion: Reported information to interested parties p.37)

Le retour à Sefmur a été une route solitaire, même entouré de vos compagnons, car peu fut dit après que la décision de révéler le lieu où se trouvait le Monastère des Piliers des Fidèles or les déplacements du clergé renégat d’Azor’alq.

Vous avez laissé Munthir avec une solide embrassade à Apocalypse, allant même voir le Grand Mufti pour ravoir une dernière bénédiction avant de partir sans arrière-pensée car votre décision n’était pas prise à ce moment. Cependant, quittant cette endroit saint et retournant dans le monde normal où de telles considération spirituelles sont surtout un arrière-plan à la dure réalité, vous réalisez que vous avez encore une palce dans le monde à protéger et une longue vie fructueuse que vous voulez désespérément avoir.

Et aïsni, la trahison des Bons était plantée...

Elle grandit dans votre cœur tout au long de la rivière surla Route des Pèlerins vers Sefmur et il fut décidé alors que le bien de quelques uns serait mieux que le plus grand bien de tous.

Vous avez balancé ses conséquences dans votre tête et dans votre cœur, en avez parlé avec vos compagnons,

plantant l'idée dans les cœurs des autres et vous l'avez finalement fait...

Vous avez révélé ce que vous saviez, filant de nouvelles trames dans le Dessein d'Istus et créant des conséquences.

Ce qu'elles seraient, vous commencez à le sentir soupirant dans votre cou, et vous savez qu'il y en aura plus qui viendront vous chercher, car telle est la Volonté d'Istus.

Vous savez que dans la montagne, Mehmet dort paisiblement ce soir, car il a pris un nouvel embranchement dans sa route, trouvé un mentor et un but, et il va devenir un grand homme...

Si les conséquences de vos actes ne le condamnent pas lui et les autres au Monastère, vous emmenant plus proche de votre Sort que de votre Destin.

(Conclusion: Did not report information to interested parties p.38)

Le retour à Sefmur a été mouvementé, même si les conditions atmosphériques étaient excellentes, car de nombreuses discussions houleuses entre vos compagnons et vous se produisirent à propos de la révélation de l'endroit où se trouve le Monastère des Piliers de Fidèles ou les déplacements du clergé renégat d'Azor'alq.

Vous avez laissé Munthir avec une solide embrassade à Apocalypse, allant même voir le Grand Mufti pour ravoir une dernière bénédiction avant de partir sans arrière-pensée car votre décision n'était pas prise à ce moment. Cependant, quittant cette endroit saint et retournant dans le monde normal où de telles considération spirituelles sont surtout un arrière-plan à la dure réalité, vous réalisez que vous avez encore une palce dans le monde à protéger et une longue vie fructueuse que vous voulez désespérément avoir.

Vous saviez que vous aviez des obligations face à votre employeur, vous saviez que vous aviez à revenir or de ressentir, par la suite, les conséquences de vos actions.

Néanmoins, de telles pressions ne vous écartèrent pas de votre décision lorsqu'elle fut prise.

Vous avez parlé de tout cela avec vos compagnons, réalisant finalement que vous vous étiez tous fait prendre dans ces jeux d'espions. Des discussions houleuses s'élevèrent au dessus des feux de camp à propos de qui était le "bon" employeur à qui remettre toute cette information, et même s'il y avait quelque

moyen d'éviter les conséquences ou de les tromper tous.

À la fin, vous avez pris votre décision et avez déterminé qu'au moins votre employeur n'aurait pas la satisfaction d'avoir l'information qu'il désirait tant et que vous étiez prêt à vivre avec peu importe ce qu'il enverrait à vos trousses.

Vous saviez que de ne pas rapporter ce que vous saviez allait entraîner des conséquences, filant de nouvelles trames dans le Dessein de votre vie de même que dans celle des autres.

Ce qu'elles seraient, vous commencez à le sentir soupirant dans votre cou, et vous savez qu'il y en aura plus qui viendront vous chercher, car telle est la Volonté d'Istus.

Vous savez que dans la montagne, Mehmet dort paisiblement ce soir, car il a pris un nouvel embranchement dans sa route, trouvé un mentor et un but, et il va devenir un grand homme...

Et en acceptant les conséquences de vos actions, vous avez probablement aidé d'autres, ainsi que vous-même, à vous approcher un peu de leur Destin.

(Conclusion: Never needed to report and did not do it p.39)

La route de Sefmur a été une route tranquille pour vous, mais non pour vos compagnons car quelques-uns d'entre-eux ont proposé l'idée de révéler l'endroit où se trouvait le Monastère des Piliers des Fidèles ou les déplacement du clergé renégat d'Azor'alq.

Vous avez laissé Munthir avec une solide embrassade à Apocalypse, allant même voir le Grand Mufti pour ravoir une dernière bénédiction avant de partir sans arrière-pensée car votre décision n'était pas prise à ce moment. Cependant, quittant cette endroit saint et retournant dans le monde normal où de telles considération spirituelles sont surtout un arrière-plan à la dure réalité, vous réalisez que vous avez encore une palce dans le monde à protéger et une longue vie fructueuse que vous voulez désespérément avoir.

Vous aviez senti tout au long du voyage un désagréable sentiment à propos de vos compagnons qui vous donnait l'impression qu'il avaient été obligés de participer dans cette aventure. Vous avez été approché, bien sûr, alors que vous étiez à Sefmur, mais vous ne pensiez pas que ces organisations descendraient aussi bas que de menacer des gens afin de leur soutirer leur assistance dans le but d'avoir des informations

Ils ont parlé de donner l'information à leurs employeurs, essayant de déterminer lequel était le moins grand des deux maux. Quelques-uns ont même contemplé l'idée de partir et de ne jamais revenir à Sefmur, "À l'Abyse tout cela!"

Vous étiez juste content de ne pas porter leurs babouches

Vous avez pensé révéler volontairement l'information en échange de futures considérations, mais vous en avez fait autrement. Vous aviez vu Munthir, Odd-Eye, Mehmet, le Grand Mufti et Kahzaa comme de bonnes personnes combattant pour le bon droit et la vertu et vous leur avez donné votre parole que leurs secrets resteraient avec vous. Vous allez même peut-être retourner leur dire bonjour quand vous allez repasser dans le coin.

Pour vous, ne pas rapporter ces secrets ne va pas avoir de conséquences directes comme pour vos compagnons et vous savez que cela, en lui-même, est filer une trame dans le Dessein d'Istus.

La Volonté d'Istus a, par chance, passé sur vous sans que vous aviez à vous prouver en en trahissant d'autres et vous vous en sentez mieux à cause de cela.

Vous savez que dans la montagne, Mehmet dort paisiblement ce soir, car il a pris un nouvel embranchement dans sa route, trouvé un mentor et un but, et il va devenir un grand homme...

Et que, en gardant le silence à propos de tout cela, pour l'instant, vous avez probablement aidé d'autres, ainsi que vous-même, à vous approcher un peu plus de leur Destin.

Appendix Five: Solution to an Enigma

Again another prophecy by Perna al-Istus... The solution (EN)

There is nothing worse than letting a judge in the dark when you have an enigma. So here is the answer. The players must get rid of all small letters within the words and keep the capitals. They need, after that, to count them and put them side-by-side from left to right and top to bottom so they will have a perfect square. They will probably figure it out by separating the capitals from the small letters and writing them on a separate sheet of paper. The first words of the answer (the 2 sentences) will appear clearly but the rest will be gibberish until they figure out they have to count them in order to place them in a perfect square. The first sentence starts with the letter “W” and it reads clockwise. The second sentence starts with a “T” and it reads counter-clockwise. So it should appear like this:

W	A	L	K	T	O	W	A	R
E	O	F	H	E	A	R	T	D
R	A	T	Y	O	U	F	F	T
U	H	E	M	A	D	O	O	H
P	T	B	N	E	E	L	R	E
N	S	L	O	S	A	L	T	S
A	H	L	I	W	W	H	O	U
M	T	A	P	O	W	T	E	N
G	N	U	O	Y	E	S	I	R

Walk toward the sunrise young man, pure of heart, for the two paths that you follow will be made as one.

T	I	F	R	U	O	Y	D	N	A
H	R	I	W	K	E	E	S	O	S
E	S	S	O	B	A	N	I	T	P
J	T	D	D	H	P	R	A	E	E
O	D	O	E	O	S	Y	T	B	T
U	E	M	O	R	O	P	N	L	S
R	S	A	F	T	H	E	U	L	Y
N	T	T	T	H	E	M	O	I	N
E	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	W	A
Y	W	I	L	L	T	A	K	E	M

The journey will take many steps and your first destination will be to seek wisdom at the mountain abode of the Pyrphoros.

Encore une autre prophétie de Perna al-Istus...La solution (FR)

Il n'y a rien de pire que de laisser un DM dans le noir lorsqu'il y a une énigme à résoudre. Alors voilà la réponse. Les joueurs doivent se débarrasser des minuscules dans les mots et garder les majuscules. Ils ont besoin, par la suite, de les compter et de les mettre côte-à-côte de gauche à droite et de haut en bas pour qu'ils puissent former un carré parfait. Ils vont probablement y arriver en les séparant et en les écrivant sur une feuille de papier. Les premiers mots vont apparaître clairement mais le reste va être un imbroglio total jusqu'à ce qu'ils trouvent qu'il est possible de mettre toutes les lettres dans un carré parfait (9X9 et 10X10). La première phrase commence par la lettre « V » et se lit dans le sens des aiguilles d'une montre et la deuxième commence par un « L » et se lit dans le sens contraire.

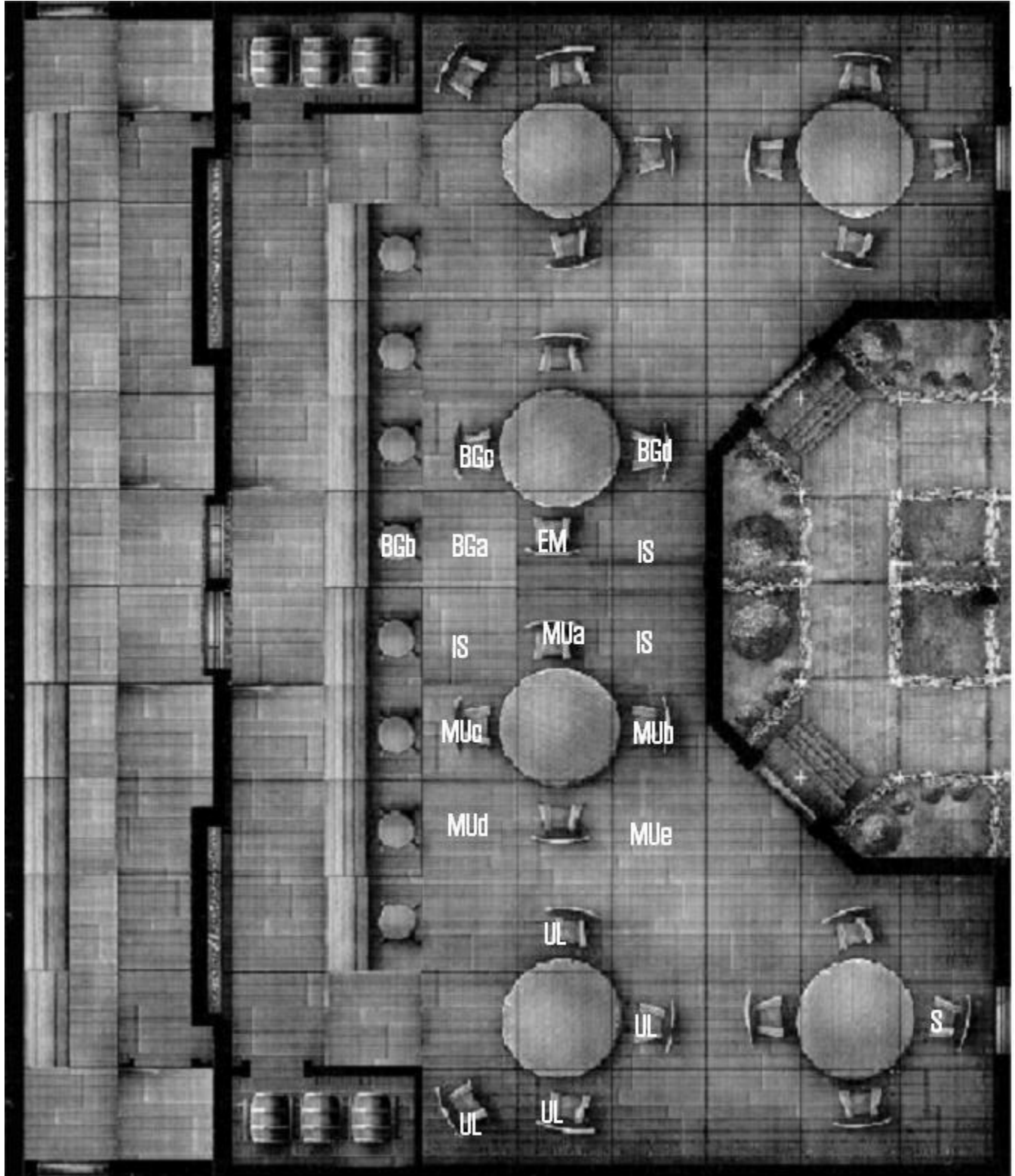
V	A	V	E	R	S	L	E	S
U	C	O	E	U	R	P	U	O
A	E	R	S	O	U	T	R	L
E	I	S	E	R	O	U	C	E
M	T	E	U	N	N	M	A	I
M	N	N	U	Q	T	A	R	L
O	E	S	E	H	C	R	L	L
H	S	X	U	E	D	S	E	E
E	N	U	E	J	T	N	A	V

Va vers le soleil levant jeune homme au cœur pur car les deux sentiers où tu marches ne sera qu'un.

L	R	P	A	L	T	E	S	E	P
A	E	D	E	S	S	E	G	A	A
Q	M	U	I	S	E	R	A	S	T
U	I	P	D	N	G	A	S	A	E
E	E	Y	E	E	E	T	S	L	S
T	R	R	N	U	S	N	N	R	R
E	E	P	S	E	M	O	A	I	U
S	S	H	O	R	O	S	D	R	E
E	E	R	A	D	E	Q	U	E	I
F	E	R	A	E	N	P	L	U	S

La quête se fera en plusieurs étapes et la première sera de quérir la sagesse du pyrphoros dans sa résidence montagnaise.

Appendix Six: The *Unending Hajj*



MU: Mullahs **IS:** Clerics of Istus **EM:** Emir **BG:** Bodyguards **UL:** Ullites **S:** Stranger

Player Handout #1: Bad Side Royal Investigator (EN)

As you were waiting for what seemed like hours, tied to a chair with a sack on your head in what smelled like a rank, hot, humid room, you felt a light approaching, as if somebody, or some people, entered the place. Your face was itching from the contact of the cloth on your new wounds that swelled under your left eye. That guard had a nasty punch. You felt that the blood had stopped trickling from your nose and probably from the other cuts as well. The ribs were giving you pain, but nothing seemed to have been broken, a lot of bruises maybe, but nothing a cleric could not patch up with a few prayers. You fell unconscious maybe a few hours ago... or was it minutes... but your senses were getting sharper by the second now, fuelled by your fear and hopelessness of being tied up, at the mercy of the individual that was approaching a chair from where you were sitting.

Somebody from behind you that you never heard coming, brusquely removed the hood that was covering your face. Your eyes, slowly adapting to the new light in the room, fixed themselves on the person in front of you. The Royal Investigator, for that was surely the function that he was occupying, was dressed in fine black clothing with gold trimmed sleeves and a red symbol illustrating the Cup and the Talisman with an open eye superposed embroidered over his heart. He was about a tall human of 40 to 45 years of age, a very short well trimmed black beard and a set of deep black unblinking eyes.

"Hello there," he said to you in a very cold controlled voice. "It seems that you just made your latest mistake in returning to Sefmur. You adventurer-types are so gullible and predictable in your flimsy behavior. You think that because your previous mistakes were done a while ago that you can fade into the background and work behind the scenes unnoticed by your betters. But you should know better. You should know that nobody at the Royal Investigators Office forgets anything and that we keep tabs on all of you thrill seekers. You get noticed in doing something stupid successfully, we take note. You get approached by organizations to join their ranks because you have now notoriety, we take note. You come in a number of tuman towns, throwing money around living in luxury while we know that you are just peasants in disguise, you can make sure we take good note. You display fancy magics that we know you've gotten from outside of the country, you can always make sure we keep our eyes on you. You think we don't notice, but we do.... Yes indeed we do."

"But now you know it seems, since we are talking to each other, that we are not just watching you and that we have to act when we see seditious activities going on around the capital. But today is your lucky day. Today I will make you an offer that you cannot refuse. I will make you an offer so good that you will be thanking me for having THIS chance of never seeing me again. The Office of the Royal Investigators is in need of you and a few of your other adventuring-type friends to gather a little piece of information outside of these comforting walls of Sefmur. What I need from you is simple: follow Mehmet bin-Khazzim, a deluded paladin and one of the heirs of House Khazzim of the Mouqollad Consortium on a quest for the location of a forgotten monastery in the Yatils. Bring me back this information without revealing it to anybody else and your slate should be wiped out clean. What I mean by that is that all previous offenses and crimes against His Exalted Splendor's government shall be amnestied and forgotten, your past as a rebel and offender removed from our files, free to go back to a normal life and hopefully... to never meet me again. The Royal Investigators' Office will give you its favor on the condition of never divulging or having the other members of your party divulge any details about the location of the monastery or anything there might be inside of it to ANY other organization that might want it. Failure to do so would bring upon you the wrath of His Exalted Splendor's government and my personal enmity. Should you accept the mission, you are of course not to disclose your true motives behind the help you will be providing to bin-Khazzim and you will be presenting yourself as a fellow adventurer that heard his call for assistance at the destroyed temple of Azor'alq tomorrow morning. Others like you will be showing up but never talk about your objective, because other groups might have wanted to infiltrate the bin-Khazzim party."

"What says you?" asks your interrogator.

After giving it a final thought, you tell your answer to the Royal Investigator. He gets out of his robe a holy symbol of the Cup and Talisman, utters a small prayer to Al'Akbar and puts his hand on your head. You start to recoil at the touch but when he reaches it, you feel the beneficial energy that you've been accustomed to know as a cure spell. Your bruises disappear very quickly and you feel rejuvenated and you hope that the mission will be over quickly.

Player Handout #1 (FR.): Le Mauvais Investigateur Royal (FR)

Vous attendiez pour ce qui a semblé être des heures, attaché à une chaise avec un sac de jute sur la tête dans une salle chaude, humide et sentant le renfermé et vous avez senti une lumière approcher, comme si quelqu'un, ou plusieurs personnes, étaient entrées dans la pièce. Votre face piquait à cause du contact du tissu râpeux sur vos nouvelles blessures qui avaient enflées sous votre œil gauche. Ce garde avait tout un jab. Vous aviez senti que le sang avait arrêté de couler de votre nez et probablement des autres coupures aussi. Vos côtes vous causaient quelques douleurs, mais rien ne semblait être brisé, beaucoup de bleus, mais rien qu'un prêtre ne pourrait pas soigner avec quelques prières. Vous êtes tombé inconscient il y a peut-être quelques heures... ou il y a quelques minutes... mais vos sens se réveillaient à l'instant, carburés par votre peur et votre désespoir d'être attaché, à la merci de l'individu qui approchait une chaise d'où vous étiez assis.

Quelqu'un en arrière de vous, que vous n'aviez jamais entendu s'approcher, retira brusquement le sac qui recouvrait votre tête. Vos yeux, d'adaptant lentement à la nouvelle lumière dans la pièce, se fixèrent alors sur la personne en face de vous. L'Investigateur Royal, car il c'est sûrement la fonction qu'il occupe, était habillé de robes d'office noires d'excellente qualité avec des manches brodées d'or et un symbole de la Coupe et du Talisman rouge avec un œil ouvert superposé brodé sur son cœur. Il était grand pour un humain, de 40 à 45 ans, avec une très courte barbe noires taillée avec art et une paire d'yeux noirs qui ne semblaient jamais cligner.

“Salutations”, dit-il dans une voix très froide et contrôlée, « Il semble que vous venez juste de faire votre dernière erreur en retournant à Sefmur. Vous, les aventuriers, êtes si manipulables et prévisibles dans vos actes ridicules. Vous pensez que parce que vos autres erreurs ont été faites dans le passé, que vous pouvez vous évanouir dans la nature et travailler à l'arrière plan sans être remarqués par vos supérieurs. Mais vous devriez le savoir maintenant. Vous devriez savoir que personne dans le Bureau des Investigateurs Royaux n'oublie rien et que l'on garde un dossier ouvert sur chacun d'entre vous, chercheurs de troubles. Vous vous faites remarquer en faisant bien quelque chose de stupide? On en prend note. Vous vous faites approcher par des organisations pour rejoindre leurs rangs parce que vous êtes maintenant célèbres? On en prend note. Vous venez dans des villes tusmanes, jetant de l'argent par les fenêtres en vivant dans le luxe alors qu'on sait tous que vous êtes des paysans parvenus? Vous pouvez être sûrs qu'on en prend note. Vous montrez en public vos magies exotiques que l'on sait que vous avez obtenues à l'extérieur du pays? Vous pouvez être certains que nous gardons nos deux yeux sur vous. Vous pensez que nous ne remarquons pas ça, mais nous le faisons... »

« Mais maintenant vous savez, puisque nous discutons, que nous ne faisons pas seulement que vous regarder et que nous devons agir quand nous voyons des activités séditeuses autour de la capitale. Et pourtant, aujourd'hui est votre journée chanceuse. Aujourd'hui je vais vous faire une offre que vous ne pouvez pas refuser. Je vais vous faire une offre si avantageuse que vous allez me remercier d'avoir cette chance de ne jamais me revoir. Le Bureau des Investigateurs Royaux a besoin d'opérateurs indépendants comme vous et quelques autres de votre genre d'aventuriers pour récolter quelques informations en dehors des solides murs de Sefmur. Ce que j'ai besoin de votre part est simple : suivez Mehmet bin-Khazzim, un petit paladin de rien du tout et un des héritiers de la Maison Khazzim du Consortium du Mouqollad en quête du lieu où se trouverait un monastère oublié dans les Yatils. Ramenez-moi cette information sans la révéler à quiconque et notre dossier à votre sujet sera détruit, prêt à repartir à zéro. Ce que je veux dire, c'est que tous crimes et offenses contre le gouvernement de sa Splendeur Exaltée seront en amnistiés, votre passé comme rebelle et criminel effacé, libre de retourner à une vie normale et... espérons-le... de ne jamais se rencontrer de nouveau. Le Bureau des Investigateurs Royaux vous offrira sa faveur à la condition que ni vous, ni aucun de votre groupe ne révèle jamais aucun détail à propos du lieu où se trouve le monastère ou ce qui pourrait se trouver à l'intérieur à AUCUNE organisation qui pourrait la désirer. Ne pas réussir jetterait sur vous la colère du gouvernement de sa Splendeur Exaltée et mon inimitié personnelle. Accepteriez-vous la mission que vous ne devriez pas révéler à votre groupe vos vraies motivations derrière l'aide que vous allez apporter à bin-Khazzim et vous allez devoir vous présenter comme un aventurier qui a entendu parler de son appel à l'aide au temple détruit d'Azor'alq demain matin. Qu'en dites-vous? », demande votre interrogateur.

Après y avoir réfléchi, vous dites votre réponse à l'Investigateur Royal. Il sort alors de sa robe un symbole religieux portant la Coupe et le Talisman, adresse une courte prière à Al'Akbar et mets sa main sur votre tête. Votre première réaction est de reculer, mais lorsqu'il vous touche, vous sentez l'énergie bénéfique que vous êtes accoutumé à identifier comme une prière de guérison. Vos blessures superficielles disparaissent très rapidement et vous vous sentez mieux, espérant que cette mission finira bientôt.

Player Handout #2: Good Side Royal Investigator (EN)

After having gone through the ordeal of answering those disagreeable questions at the gate of Sefmur, but not out of the building yet, you see a young man in his late teens coming toward you. He wears a black robe with gold trimmed sleeves and sports some kind of red insignia over his heart, shaped like the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar but with an open eye superposed on top of it.

"Greetings." He says, doing a small reverencious bow in front of you. "My name is Ishmet and I'm sent by Kabil al-Mullah of the Royal Investigator's Office to greet you upon your arrival and invite you for a cup of kava with my mentor. He has a very interesting proposition for you and would like to discuss it privately."

Not knowing what to expect but still curious and still under scrutiny by the guards that did interrogate you 5 minutes ago, you can hardly refuse such an offer. You follow your guide to the next building where he leads you to the second story where a large covered terrace gives you a splendid view of the city and its wonderful spires and marvels. Your guide excuses himself and tells you that he will be back shortly with his master. Refreshments and food have been put to your disposal on the table, he said, and that his master would consider it an honor and a pleasure to partake into a meal with you. Finding it pretty much impossible by virtue of the Four Feet of the Dragon to refuse such a delicate invitation by such a gracious host, you find yourself being drawn to the table and feel your stomach, more than your mind, make your decision. The food looks absolutely delicious and you are starving. The road to Sefmur has been long and you were just longing to go back to civilization just for that kind of pleasure.

As you were looking for your first pick of baklava, a man in his early forties, wearing the same kind of robes than Ishmet but of a much richer quality comes into the room. He is tall, probably you would say in his early forties, and sports a short trimmed black beard and has very deep-set black eyes that seem impossible to blink.

"Welcome", the man says, "to my humble abode. I am Kabil al-Mullah, Royal Investigator for His Exalted Splendor Muammar Quaran. I must apologize for the way you have been treated on your way inside our magnificent city, but I'm sure you can understand the reasons why we do such things. These rebels are still present in our midst and we must root this ulcer out for it to never fester again. But look at me talking and talking and talking again... I'm pretty sure you already know of our efforts here and are sided with the rightful ruler of Tusmit. I've put your name and description at every gate of our city because I knew I would have an urgent need of your service upon your return. As you probably know, the powers of the Royal Investigators are second only to the Pasha's inside Tusmit, but still we have some need of informants outside these walls and in the wilderness. It has come to our attention that an old monastery in the Yatils, forgotten in the last centuries, was sought out for personal reasons by a young heir of House Khazzim of the Mouqollad Consortium. This place is supposed to be inside our borders but is not included into any of our registries for settlements and His Exalted Splendor's government, as an outpost in the future, could use it. We thought that you might be interested in this mission of a delicate nature for you would need to infiltrate the group of adventurers young Mehmet bin-Khazzim is recruiting. He posted a lot of notes on many billboards throughout the city in search of companions to join him in his "holy" quest so this should not be too much of a stretch for one such as yourself. Of course, all information should be brought back to us directly so we may use it. There may be other groups interested in this matter and they may infiltrate the group as well. His Exalted Splendor would be very well disposed towards you if you would bring us back the location of this monastery and any other details that you could find on the way there. Of course, remuneration is dependent on the fact that nobody else should receive this information beside us and any indiscretion, by you or your party, would be punished accordingly."

As you ponder the weight of the proposal and the very interesting rewards that such a service for the Pasha's government would do for you, your host looks at you with not a little bit of greed behind his eyes, knowing he just made a very tempting and difficult to refuse offer. "I will let you think it over for the rest of the day", he says, rising from his chair, "I must leave for now since I have other urgent matters to take care of before the sun sets. I suggest that you go to your inn where I think my informants told me you were supposed to meet your previous employer to receive your pay. Just make sure to make your decision known to us before noon tomorrow. We know that Mehmet bin-Khazzim has set his meeting point near the former temple of Azor'alq for that time of the day."

The man turns around and exits the terrace, leaving you to your thoughts and the fact that you must go to the *Whirling Sand Devils' Inn* to receive your pay.

Player Handout #2 (FR): Le Bon Investigateur Royal (FR)

Après avoir passé l'épreuve de répondre à toutes ces questions désagréables aux portes de Sefmur, mais pas encore sorti de l'établissement, vous voyez un jeune homme à la fin de l'adolescence venant vers vous. Il porte une robe noire avec des manches brodées d'or et un insigne rouge sur son cœur, de la forme de la Coupe et du Talisman d'Al'Akbar, mais avec un œil ouvert superposé. « Salutations », dit-il, faisant une courte révérence à votre égard. « Mon nom est Ishmet et je suis envoyé par Kabil al-Mullah du Bureau des Investigateurs Royaux pour vous saluer à votre arrivée et vous inviter pour une tasse de kava avec mon mentor. Il a une proposition très intéressante à vous faire et souhaiterait en discuter en privé. » Ne sachant pas à quoi vous attendre mais quand même curieux et encore observé par les gardes qui vous ont interrogé il y a 5 minutes à peine, vous pouvez difficilement refuser cette offre. Vous suivez votre guide jusque dans l'édifice voisin où il vous emmène au deuxième étage, sur une large terrasse ayant une vue splendide de la ville, de ses coupes et de ses merveilles. Votre guide s'excuse et vous dit qu'il va revenir dans quelques minutes avec son maître. Des rafraîchissements et de la nourriture ont été mis à votre disposition sur la table, dit-il, et que son maître considérerait un honneur et un plaisir de partager un repas avec vous. Vous trouvant dans l'impossibilité, en vertu des Quatre Pieds du Dragon, de refuser une invitation si délicate faite par un hôte si gracieux, vous vous sentez attiré, malgré vous, par la table et votre estomac plus que votre esprit prendre la décision. Les mets semblent absolument délicieux et vous êtes affamés. La route vers Sefmur a été très longue et vous n'attendiez que le retour à la civilisation pour en profiter de cette façon. Alors que vous étiez en plein dilemme pour choisir votre premier baklava, un homme début quarantaine, portant le même genre de robe qu'Ishmet, mais d'une qualité grandement supérieure, entre sur la terrasse. Il est grand et porte une courte barbe noire taillée avec grand soin et a une paire yeux noirs profondément enfoncés dans son visage qui ne semblent jamais cligner.

« Bienvenue », l'homme dit, « dans mon humble demeure. Je suis Kabil al-Mullah, Investigateur Royal pour sa Splendeur Exaltée Muammar Quaran. Je dois m'excuser pour la façon dont vous avez été traité alors que vous passiez les portes de notre magnifique cité, mais je suis sûr que vous pouvez comprendre les raisons pourquoi nous faisons de telles choses. Ces rebelles sont encore présents parmi nous et nous devons purger cet ulcère pour qu'il ne revienne plus jamais. Mais regardez-moi parler et parler et parler encore... Je suis assez certain que vous connaissez nos efforts qui ont été fait ici et que vous êtes du côté du dirigeant légitime de Tusmit. J'ai mis votre nom et description à chaque porte de la ville car je savais que j'aurais un urgent besoin de vos services à votre retour. Comme vous le savez probablement, les pouvoirs temporels des Investigateurs Royaux sont deuxièmes derrière ceux du Pasha à l'intérieur du pays, mais encore il arrive que nous ayons besoin d'informateurs hors des murs et dans la campagne tusmane. Il est venu à notre attention qu'un très vieux monastère dans les Yatils, oublié dans les derniers siècles, était recherché pour des raisons personnelles par le jeune héritier de la Maison Khazzim du Consortium du Mouqollad. Ce lieu est supposé être à l'intérieur de nos frontières, mais n'est pas inclus dans aucun de nos registres des communautés en existence, et il pourrait être utilisé par le gouvernement de sa Splendeur Exaltée comme poste avancé dans le futur. Nous croyons que vous pourriez être intéressé par cette mission délicate car vous auriez à vous infiltrer dans le groupe d'aventuriers que le jeune Mehmet bin-Khazzim recrute. Il a mis beaucoup d'annonces à travers la ville à la recherche de compagnons pour l'aider dans sa «quête sacrée» alors ceci ne devrait pas être trop difficile pour une personne comme vous. Bien sûr, toute information devrait nous être rapportée directement et à nous seul. Il se pourrait fort bien qu'il y ait d'autres groupes intéressés et ils pourraient infiltrer le groupe aussi. Sa Splendeur Exaltée serait très bien disposée à votre égard si vous nous rapportiez le lieu où se trouve le monastère et tous autres détails que vous pourriez trouver en vous rendant là-bas. Bien sûr, la rémunération serait dépendante du fait que personne d'autre ne devrait recevoir cette information mis à part nous et que toute indiscretion, de votre part ou de votre groupe, serait punie sévèrement. »

Pesant le pour et le contre de cette proposition et de la très intéressante récompense que le gouvernement du Pasha donnerait pour un tel service, votre hôte vous regarde de façon intéressée, sachant très bien qu'il vient de vous faire offre tentante très difficile à refuser. « Je vais vous laisser y penser le reste de la journée », dit-il, se levant de sa chaise, « Je dois m'absenter pour l'instant puisque j'ai d'autres urgences à régler avant que le soleil ne se couche. Je vous suggère de vous rendre à votre auberge où mes informateurs m'ont dit que vous deviez rejoindre votre précédent employeur pour recevoir votre paie. Juste soyez sûr de rendre votre décision avant midi demain. Nous savons que Mehmet bin-Khazzim a donné son rendez-vous près de l'ancien temple d'Azor'alq à cette heure. »

L'homme se tourne et sort de la terrasse, vous laissant à vos pensées et devant le fait que vous devez aller au *Whirling Sand Devil* pour recevoir votre paie.

Player Handout #3: Lapa's Offer

"As you know me or who I'm working for, which you may or may not really know, I'm here to make you some kind of business proposition. And as such, there is the offer part, and the demand part. As it is, my sweet boss's demand something and I've been tasked to talk to those who could offer that same something. Now, that is not too complicated for me to do. We've met, you know my name, you even paid me a drink.... oh no... that's true, not yet... but you will in a minute because what my bosses offer for your demands in exchange for what YOU can offer for our demands will probably be a very good deal for you in any case, more than probably you would think at first looking at what we demand for what you can offer. Dig it?"

She turns the chair around, makes herself more comfortable and puts her booted feet up on the table in what seems to be a very cozy posture.

"What I offer you can be a loooooooooooooooooot of stuff, but mostly help when offers for your head are a little too high for your demands that it should be kept on your shoulders. My bosses are also ready to compensate a few expenses for your trip for it is a trip that we demand you to do and for which you will offer report. Also, we are ready to offer you our thanks, which is a lot in this unsavory world we live in, if our demands are expressively met with utmost diligence and care from your part. The thing is, care is what you must offer the most for our demands to be satisfied because without that TLC, the offer to send you on this little errand will not respond at all to our demands and even more, might completely reverse the situation for you. For if this care should turn into carelessness, and by "care" I absolutely mean discretion, discretion and more discretion, the offer will no longer stand and on top of that, other offers would effectively be coming to existence to have bigger offers on your head that you could possibly want to comfortably live with."

In a swift and very graceful gesture, her booted feet get off the table and to the ground and she sits straight, coming closer to your face as if to press a point.

"So you see... the idea of offer and demand is simple: We demand you to go where we tell you with whom we tell you and you offer to report to us, and only too us, what you found and where you did find it. Don't ever think to double-cross us by offering to other people what we demand to exclusively come to us. The importance behind all that is that we MUST be sole possessor of this offering so that we might demand a lot more than what we will offer you to get us what we demand. Dig it? The idea behind that is that you are not enabled in anyway to negotiate for us the matters of offer and demand with other interested parties that might have a lot of resources we might demand for what we can offer. Now, like they say, if you can't take the heat, don't go conjuring fire elementals, so before we continue this interesting discussion, I need to know if you can offer what we demand and in the way we demand it or if this is too much for you."

She leans back once more in her chair, never leaving her gaze off of you.

"Well you know that time passing is opportunities lost. You have to give me an answer right now or I will leave this fine establishment with you never knowing what we demanded. What do you say?"

You think it over and finally you offer your answer.

Player's Handout #3 (FR): L'Offre de Lapa

« Tu me connais ou tu connais pour qui je bosse, ou peut-être tu l'sais pas vraiment, je suis ici pour te faire une genre de proposition d'affaire. Et dans ces choses-là, eh bien il y a l'offre, et il y a la demande. Comme c'est là, mes ti-patrons d'amour demandent quelque chose et il m'ont donné la job de parler à ceux qui peuvent l'offrir. Là, c'est pas quelque chose de compliqué à faire pour moi. On se rencontre, tu connais mon nom, tu m'as même payé un verre... naon... c'est vrai, pas encore... mais tu vas l'faire dans 2 minutes parce que ce que mes boss offrent pour tes demandes en échange de ce que tu peux offrir pour leurs demandes va probablement être un très bon deal pour toi anyway, plus que ce que tu peux probablement penser d'un coup regardant ce qu'on demande pour ce que tu offres. Tu catches? »

Elle retourne sa chaise pour se rasseoir avec le dossier dans le bon sens, s'installe plus à son aise et met ses pieds bottés sur la table dans une position globale qui semble très confortable.

« Ce qu'on peut vous offrir peut être bii des affaires, mais plus de l'aide quand l'offre sur ta tête devient un ti-peu trop grosse pour la demande que t'as de la garder en sécurité sur tes épaules. Mes boss sont aussi prêts à compenser les quelques dépenses pour le voyageant car c'est un voyage qu'on te demande de faire et que pour lequel tu vas offrir un rapport. Aussi, on est prêt à t'offrir nos remerciements, ce qui n'est pas rien dans le genre de monde qu'on vit, si nos demandes sont satisfaites dans leur entièreté, avec diligence et avec beaucoup de soin et d'attention de ta part. L'affaire c'est que, de l'attention est ce que tu dois offrir le plus pour que nos demandes soient satisfaites parce que, sans la p'tite dose d'attention en extra, l'offre de t'envoyer faire cette tite commission ne va pas répondre pantoute à nos demandes et même plus, pourrait complètement renverser la situation pour toi. Parce que si cette tite dose d'attention vire en manque d'attention, et par « attention » je veux dire discrétion, discrétion et encore plus de discrétion, l'offre ne sera plus valide et plus d'offres pourraient effectivement « poper », mais directement pour ta tête, que tu ne pourrais vivre confortablement avec. »

Dans un mouvement rapide et très gracieux, elle enlève ses pieds bottés de la table et se remet droite sur sa chaise, se rapprochant de votre visage comme pour mettre un accent sur ce qu'elle va dire.

« Alors tu vois... L'idée de l'offre et de la demande est simple : On te demande d'aller où on veut que tu ailles avec qui on veut que tu ailles et tu nous offres de rapporter à nous, et seulement à nous, ce que tu as trouvé et où tu l'as trouvé. Ne met pas dans ta tite tête de nous double-crosser en offrant à d'autre monde ce qu'on demande exclusivement pour nous autres. L'importance derrière tout ça c'est qu'on DOIT être les seuls propriétaires de cette offre pour qu'on puisse demander beaucoup plus que ce qu'on va t'offrir pour ce qu'on te demande. Tu catches? L'idée derrière ça c'est qu'on ne te donne pas la permission en aucune manière de négocier pour nous les questions d'offres et de demandes avec d'autres intéressés qui pourraient avoir beaucoup de ressources qu'on pourrait demander pour ce qu'on peut offrir. Là, comme ils disent, si t'endures pas la chaleur, va pas conjurer des Fire Elementals. Alors avant qu'on continue cette intéressante discussion, j'ai besoin de savoir si tu peux offrir ce qu'on demande, de la manière qu'on le demande ou si c'est trop hot pour toi. »

Elle se penche de nouveau par en arrière sur les deux pattes de sa chaise, sans jamais arrêter de vous regarder.

« En tout cas, tu sais que le temps qui passe c'est des opportunités manquées. Tu dois me donner une réponse right now ou j'vais quitter ce charmant petit établissement sans que jamais tu saches ce qu'on demandait. Kessé t'en penses? »

En y repensant deux fois plutôt qu'une, vous vous rapprochez d'elle et vous lui donnez votre réponse.

Player Handout #4 : Again another prophecy by Perna al—Istus...(EN)

On top of a fine looking velum, you see a note written in common with, below it, what seems like words with capital and small letters, separated in what looks like 2 sentences or paragraphs.

“The spindle spins in a squared frame.”

*WAh L'KaTOh WiARh ElO FisHE AlaRikT'D
RAj TaYOUF'FaT UrHEMA al'DOOH PariahT
BiN EjELdREi NarS ahLO SiALTeS AHLIWat
WHO'Ur huMTA'r POWind TiENa GaNU
Or'YE SaIRi*

*TIF'RUh OriYeD'NAi aH'RlWa KELESinOS
ES'SOl BANIT irP'JaTriD DaHPiRAnEE
Or'DiOnE Ol'SYbiT aBTUrEM OR'OPiNeLS
RhiSAF TaHir El'oULY NaTTiT HEr'MOlIN
Er'INA TImON'WAr YgWILLdTArKE'M*

Player Handout #4 : Encore une autre prophétie de Perna al—Istus...(FR)

Sur du velum magnifiquement confectionné, vous voyez une courte phrase écrite en commun avec, en dessous, ce qu'il semble être des mots avec des majuscules et des minuscules, séparés en ce qu'il paraît être 2 phrases ou paragraphes.

« Le fuseau tourne dans un cadre carré »

*VAh'VE RiSaLE'S Ur COReb UR'PUtOhl
AvER StOUTah RaL EInSt'ER OUrCEd
MeTE'UN NaMA'I MaNo'N Ur'Q'TARiL
Ol'ESEH CiRyL'La HaSeX'UtE DiSaLE'E'EN
Ul'EJeTNiAVa*

*LaR'PAL TESEPh AgEDeS SElGA'A
Q'MUISE RiASTe'd Ur'IPeD N'GA SArrE
El'EYEv Er'ETeS LaS'T RaReN US'NiNeRh
REvEPH CEr'MOsAIrU SaSH'OR O'SiDRE
El'ERADE Q'UrEphI FEL'RA ENiPL'US*

Player Handout #5 : Heated Discussion at the *Unending Hajj* (EN)

As you are taking account of the scene, you stumble upon this heated discussion between a vocal Paynim emir, backed up by 4 bodyguards, and 5 mullahs. In the middle of it all, 3 women wearing the Shawls of Istus who are hopelessly trying to calm things down but, as usual, nobody listens to the voice of Istus.

Emir: "What do you mean in telling me that my path is obsolete and it only leads me and my people to destruction? Didn't I just told you that we were prosper and that our tribe had never faired better in following the Way of the Hegira, the way we TAUGHT Al'Akbar when he asked for succor and help?"

Mullah A: "Your old ways are prone to corruption by coming into contact with all other peoples on your meanderings throughout the lands. Your ways have changed and you don't even know it. You claim having taught all of this to Al'Akbar, but that happened centuries ago and you have abased yourselves in accepting and forging foreign gods with our gods together!"

Mullah B: "You even have merged Azor'alq with the cult of Pelor and made him the Sun God, which he is NOT! He's a hero-god, a servant of the Baklunish Pantheon and The Honorable Warrior, and your people made him a Sun God and first among the Pantheon, which is the Oeridian way"

Mullah C: "You soon would have told us that Azor'alq was creator of Oerth if he we let you continue like this!!! This is sacrilege and should be worthy of Anathema!!!"

Mullah A: "You have no business going to the Grand Mufti for counsel and guidance for you have left the flock a long time ago. Whatever kinship you had with the remainders of the Baklunish Empire is long gone and you are not welcomed at holy sites!"

Emir: "Our ways are the Old Ways and the Good Ways. Al'Akbar is a righteous and holy guide that was wise enough to take guidance from us first. Azor'alq is the Banisher of Darkness and the Light of Day, the Holy Crescent that illuminates his enemies in Darkness and the Holy Sphere that guides us through the day. Al'Akbar was the Holiest of the Worshippers of the Old Gods. Never forget that! My tribe worship the Old Gods like our ancestors did, doing what they did for centuries and like Al'Akbar did himself. What a better guide to do that than Him! We worship Azor'alq first because that's what we need to survive in the Land of Enemies."

Cleric of Istus A: "Stop your bickering or you are all doomed to fail!!! Both of you are right and wrong!!! The Great Darkness can only be purged by the Righteous in-tuned with his Destiny, but *hubris* will only show you your Fate."

Cleric of Istus B: "The Great Darkness is on the Footsteps of Pride, pushing people further away on the Path of Doom. Accept your differences, follow your heart, honor the Gods of the Baklunish and stop arguing your life away!"

Mullah C: "Shut up you Doomsayer! Your works have never been more than gibberish for the weak-minded, only to scare children and elders! Get away from here where you have no Sanction to deal on spiritual matters."

Emir: "Retract your words, Scum!! You should never speak like this to a Thread Weaver! No Sanction is ever needed for a Priestess of Istus to speak! They have and will save us all!!!"

Mullah C: "Retract? Why would I retract words of Truth? Be gone from my face Heretic!"

Emir: "You will regret that on the edge of my scimitar!!!"

Player Handout #5 : Discusion effrénée au *Unending Hajj* (FR)

Alors que vous entrez et observez la scène, vous tombez sur une discussion endiablée entre un emir paynim emporté, soutenu par 4 gardes du corps, et 5 mullahs. Dans le centre de tout cela, 3 femmes portant le Châle d'Istus essayant sans succès de calmer les choses, mais comme d'habitude, personne n'écoute la voix d'Istus.

Emir: "Que voulez-vous dire en tonitruant que ma voie est obsolète et qu'elle me mène ainsi que mon peuple à la destruction? Ne vous aie-je pas dit que nous étions prospères et que notre tribu ne s'était jamais mieux portée en suivant la Voie de l'Hégire, la Voie que NOUS avons enseignée à Al'Akbar quand il nous a demandé aide et assistance?"

Mullah A: "Vos voies anciennes sont prédisposées à la corruption en entrant en contact avec les autres peuples lors de vos errances à travers les landes. Vos voies ont changé et vous ne le savez même pas. Vous affirmez avoir enseigné tout cela à Al'Akbar, mais c'est arrivé il y a des siècles et vous vous êtes abaissés à accepter et à forger des dieux étrangers avec les nôtres!"

Mullah B: "Vous avez même fondu Azor'alq avec le cult de Pélor et en avez fait un Dieu-Soleil, ce qu'il n'est pas! C'est un héros divin, un serviteur du Panthéon Bakluni et Le Guerrier Honorable, et votre peuple en a fait un Dieu-Soleil et premier entre tous les autres, comme les Oeridiens font!"

Mullah C: "Vous allez bientôt nous dire qu'Azor'alq est le créateur de Oerth si nous vous laissons faire!!! Ceci est un sacrilège et devrait mériter l'Anathème!!!"

Mullah A: "Vous n'avez rien à faire à aller voir le Grand Mufti pour ses conseils et sa sagesse car vous avez quitté le troupeau il y a très longtemps. Les liens que vous aviez avec le reste des héritiers de l'Empire Bakluni sont depuis longtemps effacés et vous n'êtes pas les bienvenus dans les sites sacrés!"

Emir: "Nos coutumes sont les Anciennes Coutumes et les Bonnes Coutumes. Al'Akbar est un saint et vertueux guide qui était assez sage pour venir chercher notre sagesse en premier. Azor'alq est le Banisseur des Ténèbres et la Lumière du Jour, le Saint Croissant qui illumine ses ennemis dans les Ténèbres et la Sphère Céleste qui nous guide le jour. Al'Akbar était le Plus Grand Bénit des Fidèles des Anciens Dieux. Ne l'oubliez jamais! Ma tribu vénère les Anciens Dieux comme nos ancêtres l'ont fait, faisant ce qu'ils ont fait pendant des siècles et des siècles et comme Al'Akbar l'a fait lui-même. Quel meilleur guide pour cela que Lui! Nous vénérons Azor'alq en prédominance parce que c'est ce que nous avons besoin pour survivre dans le Territoire des Ennemis."

Cleric of Istus A: "Arrêtez vos verbiages inutiles ou vous êtes tous condamnés à fallir à la tâche!!! Vous êtes tous les deux dans l'erreur et dans le bon droit!! La Grande Noirceur ne peut être purgée que par le Vertueux en symbiose avec son Destin, mais l'*hubris* ne vous montrera que votre Sort."

Cleric of Istus B: "La Grande Noirceur marche sur les Traces de l'Orgueil, poussant devant elle les peuples sur la Voie de la Perdition. Acceptez vos différences, suivez votre cœur, vénérez les Dieux des Bakluni et arrêtez de gaspiller votre vie en paroles futiles!"

Mullah C: "Tais-toi Oiseau de Malheur! Ce que tu fais n'a jamais été autre que des paroles sans queue ni tête qui impressionnent les faibles d'esprit, seulement pour faire peur aux enfants et aux vieillards! Sors d'ici où tu n'as aucune Sanction pour discuter d'affaires spirituelles."

Emir: "Retire tes paroles, Mécréant!! On ne devrait jamais parler ainsi à une Fileuse de la Trame! Aucune Sanction n'a jamais été nécessaire pour qu'une Prêteresse d'Istus parle! Elles nous ont déjà tous sauvés et vont le refaire encore!!!"

Mullah C: "Retirer mes paroles? Pourquoi retirerais-je des paroles de Vérité? Hors de ces lieux, Hérétique!!!"

Emir: "Tu vas regretter cela sur le fil de mon cimetière!!!"

Player Handout #6: Munthir's Story

Munthir stands and look at you all, straightening his shoulders and taking a deep breath. You suddenly don't seem to be able to get a glimpse of the powerful leader of men this warrior has become. You only see the man, the warrior with a long past, a fellow adventurer further down the path of life. He takes a long breath and starts to speak.

"Long before any of you was born, I've been a leader of men, the leader of the so-called "Host of Light". But before that, I was a simple adventurer, not much younger than young Mehmet here, with friends and allies and no cause to fight for. I was a worshipper of the Son of Light and as such defended his principles that I took for my own. I also had no enemies to fight other than the occasional monster that such a life throws in your path."

"Wandering around, that's what we did and we followed our friends in their own little quests as to not leave them alone in the face of danger. When we were still very young in our adventuring career, we went west, beyond the fledgeling sultanate of Zeif that was not then the power it is now. We ventured even further, amongst the remains of the extreme colonies of the Baklunish Empire, for the benefit of my good friend Salah Muazir, a young wizard that would one day become one of the most famous mages of the baklunish west. Him and a few others of our group were looking for knowledge, my warrior friends and I were looking for adventure and fun, but we found more... We found a mentor."

"I will not go into the details of this wonderful period of my existence, for that is for another day, but let's just say that I received teaching in the ancient martial arts of the Baklunish Empire. My master was, against all prejudice, a very old and wise goblin that was able to defeat us all many times over the 3 years we spent there. Alas... He was old and he knew he was the last possessor of the secret techniques in a long line of students and masters and that nobody had seemed worthy of taking the mantle of master."

"My very good friend Qurell, an elf from the Sorrow Woods, had become very close to our master and he was a gifted student, catching on at an extremely rapid rate and almost intuitively what he was showing us. He even made the supreme compliment one student can make to a master by not only defeating him, but surpassing him in inventing new techniques. That is to say, my friend Qurell was the finest warrior I ever knew and the best friend one could have."

"After our old master died of old age, we were all ready to go back here in Tusmit. Our friends the wizards had learned what they had to and we all had become better persons because of that trip. Qurell was saddened as elves are when a good life passes away but he had gained more than just training when we left. He had got himself a vocation."

"Returning to Tusmit, we found it in turmoil. Undeads were sprouting up from everywhere and Ur-Flan bases with unspeakable monsters were discovered and the beasts set free amongst other things. It was a time of Darkness but it only is in Darkness that Light can show it's mighty power and heroes were needed badly. By happenstance, we became what was needed of us and I became the leader of this "Host of Light" that finally repulsed the last waves of Darkness to the shadow where they came from."

"For years we fought and my group of friends lost very few of our numbers and gained a few more; I even got married to my beautiful Sala, one of those additions to the group. My friend Qurell continued to fight with us, continuing our training in the ancient martial arts when we could, but mostly he continued training on his own, wanting to reach perfection of Form and Substance."

"At one point in the war against the Darkness, we finally tracked one of their main hideouts in the Yatils, maybe a tenday from here due north and we arrived at one of their fortresses. There were huge pillars 500-feet high that were sprouting up from the ground of a hidden valley between the mountains. We went in and destroyed their forces with just our little party of adventurers and we found out that the pillars were actually a very ancient structure even back in the day. Network of bridges between the pillars and networks of tunnels below them were explored by us and finally, once it was purged of all the evil that we pursued there, Qurell suggested that we keep it for ourselves so that he might rededicate it as a training ground."

"We've found out different things in the structure, and traces of the old order of monks that used to be there that probably invented the ritual that Mehmet wants to pursue. The location is probably still there, still hidden, and hopefully it could be used as a refuge for the clergy of Azor'alq."

"We used to name it the "Pillars of the Faithful."

Player Handout #6 : L'Histoire de Munthir (FR)

Munthir se leva et regarda tous présents, redressant ses épaules. Soudainement, vous ne semblez plus être en mesure de voir le puissant Chef de Guerre que ce guerrier est devenu. Vous ne voyez que l'homme, le guerrier avec un lourd passé, un compagnon d'aventure plus avancé dans sa Voie. Il prit une longue inspiration et commença à parler.

“Il y a longtemps, avant même qu'aucun de vous ne soit né, j'ai été un meneur d'hommes, le chef de ce qu'on appelait l'«Ost de Lumière». Mais avant cela, j'étais un simple aventurier, pas tellement plus jeune que Mehmet ici présent, avec des amis et alliés et aucune cause à défendre. J'étais un vénérateur du Fils de la Lumière et je défendais ces principes que j'avais faits miens. Je n'avais aussi aucun ennemi à combattre autre que l'occasionnel monstre qu'une vie tel que celle que j'ai choisie nous met dans notre chemin. Errer, c'est ce que nous avons fait et nous avons suivi nos amis dans leurs propres petites quêtes afin de ne pas les laisser seuls face au danger. Quand nous étions très jeunes dans nos carrières d'aventurier, nous sommes partis vers l'Ouest, au-delà du tout nouveau Sultanat de Zeif qui n'était pas, à ce moment, la puissance qu'il est maintenant. Nous nous sommes même aventurés plus loin, vers les extrêmes colonies de l'ancien Empire Bakluni, pour le bénéfice de mon bon ami Salah Muazir, un jeune mage qui allait un jour devenir un des plus fameux de l'occident baklunien. Lui et quelques-uns de notre groupe recherchaient le savoir, mes amis guerriers et moi-même recherchions l'aventure et le plaisir, mais nous avons trouvé tellement plus... Nous avons trouvé un mentor.”

“Je n'irai pas dans les détails de cette merveilleuse période de mon existence, car ce récit est pour un autre jour, mais disons seulement que j'ai reçu un entraînement dans les anciens arts martiaux de L'Empire Bakluni. Mon maître était, envers et contre tout préjudice, un très vieux et très sage goblin qui a été capable de tous nous battre maintes fois durant les 3 ans que nous avons passés là-bas. Hélas... Il était vieux et il savait qu'il était le dernier possesseur des techniques secrètes dans une longue lignée de maîtres et de disciples et que personne n'avait semblé digne de prendre le titre de maître. Mon très bon ami Qurell, un elfe des Sorrow Woods, était devenu très proche de notre maître et il était alors un élève très doué, apprenant à un rythme effréné et presque intuitivement ce qui nous était montré. Il a même fait le compliment suprême qu'un élève peut faire à son maître non seulement en le battant, mais en le surpassant en inventant de nouvelles techniques. Ce qui vient à dire que mon ami Qurell était le fin guerrier que je n'ai jamais connu et le meilleur ami qu'un homme puisse avoir. Après la mort de notre maître, nous étions tous prêts à revenir ici à Tusmit. Nos amis les mages avaient appris ce qu'il y avait à apprendre là-bas et nous étions tous devenus meilleurs à cause de ce voyage. Qurell était attristé comme les elfes le sont quand une bonne vie s'éteint, mais il a plus gagné que seulement de l'entraînement. Il s'est trouvé une vocation.”

“Retournant à Tusmit, nous l'avons trouvé en état de crise. Des morts-vivants sortaient de partout et des bases Ur-Flan avec des monstres innommables furent découvertes et les bêtes relâchées parmi la population. C'était un temps de Ténèbres, mais c'est seulement sous les Ténèbres que la Lumière peut montrer pleinement son pouvoir et de héros il y avait un grand manque. Par les circonstances, nous sommes devenus ce qui était requis de nous et je suis devenu le général de cette «Ost de Lumière» qui a finalement repoussé les dernières vagues de Ténèbres vers les ombres d'où elles étaient sorties. Pendant des années nous nous sommes battus et mon groupe d'amis a perdu très peu de membres et en a gagné quelques uns; je me suis même marié à ma belle Sala, une des additions à notre groupe. Mon ami Qurell a continué à se battre à nos côtés, continuant notre entraînement dans les anciens arts martiaux quand nous le pouvions, mais surtout il continua à s'entraîner seul, voulant atteindre la perfection de la Forme et de la Substance. À un moment donné dans la guerre contre les Ténèbres, nous avons finalement découvert une de leurs bases secrètes dans les Yatils, peut-être à dix jours de marche d'ici vers le nord, et nous sommes arrivés à leur forteresse. Il y avait d'immenses piliers de 500 pieds de hauteur qui sortaient du sol de cette vallée secrète cachée dans les montagnes. Nous l'avons attaquée et nous avons défait leurs forces avec seulement notre petit groupe d'aventuriers et nous avons découvert que les piliers étaient en fait une très ancienne structure même à cette époque. Un réseau de ponts entre les piliers et un réseau de tunnels en dessous ont été ensuite explorés par nous et finalement, une fois purgé de tout le Mal qui y résidait, Qurell a suggéré que nous le gardions pour nous et que nous le reconsacrons en lieu d'entraînement. Nous avons découvert différentes choses dans la structure, et des traces de l'ancien ordre de moines qui y résidait et qui avait probablement inventé le rituel que Mehmet veut poursuivre. Le lieu est probablement encore là, encore caché, et espérons qu'il pourrait encore servir comme refuge pour le clergé d'Azor'alq.”

“On l'appelait alors les «Piliers des Fidèles» ”

Player Handout #7: The Ritual of the Kat'Habâsis (EN)

"Now listen and listen to me good young ones", said Odd-Eye, "for repeat I shall not. Kat'Habâsis is the name of the ritual you are looking for. From the Ancient Baklunish language, it is descended, and "Descent into Hell" it means today. In an hour, lead you I shall to the depths of the Pillars, where the earth they meet and beyond, for there it is where your Fate or your Destiny will lie."

"Now, both through it, Munthir and I went in our times, when known it was to the outside world, but no longer such enlightenment is desired and for the last century nobody tried to. Give to you all the secrets, we cannot, but advice we do have and useful it will be."

"For unity in your path, you are searching, yet doubt remains and doubt down there you will find. Always to paladins and monks, "don't stray" we say, and such you shall not do on the Path Below. Tempted to go back, you will be because you cannot see, but return you cannot until you do. The End of the Ritual is it's beginning for back to a path previously taken you will now be able to."

"Give, in all manner, what you receive but of the tricks the Abyss beware."

Odd-Eye, looking a little bit tired, stops talking and looks at you all.

"For those who accompany Mehmet, the same the results will be. Act as one, you have to, and together without wavering, you must decide what to do or all will have lost their way beyond this plane."

"What you will go through will be challenging," said Munthir, "but you may need some extra help. Everybody I have seen proceed with the ritual was able to bring his possessions and even was given some weapons of Cold Iron that are still here in the Armory. There you shall find anything that you need. Healing, down there will not work as efficiently as it does here and the heat will be very intense and full of smoke. Also, it is a Domain of Evil where no humanoid should go."

"You might wander for a few hours or a few days there before reaching the end and you might not return. This Gateway to the Abyss that you will go through has been there since the days before the Kas'Tashi Covenant and probably has been there since before the Twin Cataclysms. Built by way more enlightened hermits that we could ever hope to be, it has stayed stable, but there is a dark twist to it all. It seems that the devils from the Abyss have made a deal they are still respecting after all these years. If you fail their test and they win, they will be able to breach the Gate and come to the Material Plane unhindered."

Player Handout #7 : Le Rituel de Kat'Habâsis (FR)

“Maintenant écoutez et écoutez-moi bien jeunes gens”, dit Odd-Eye, “car répéter, je ne ferai pas. Kat'Habâsis est le nom du rituel que vous cherchez. De l'Ancien Baklunien, il est descendu, et “Descente en Enfer” est sa signification aujourd'hui. Dans une heure, vous mener dans les profondeurs des Piliers je ferai, où la terre ils rencontrent et plus loin, où votre Destin ou votre Sort vous attend. ”

“Maintenant, tous deux au travers, Munthir et moi étions allés dans notre temps, quand connu il était aux yeux du monde extérieur, mais plus maintenant cette illumination n'est recherchée et, pendant le dernier siècle, personne ne s'y est essayé. Vous en donner tous les secrets, nous ne le pouvons, mes des conseils nous en avons et utiles ils seront.”

“Pour l'unité dans votre Voie, vous cherchez, mais le doute reste et le doute en bas vous trouverez. Toujours aux moines et paladin, «ne vous écartez pas» nous disons, et comme tel sur la Voie Infernale vous ne le ferez pas. Tentés de retourner, vous le serez car vous ne pourrez voir, mais retourner vous ne le pourrez tant que vous ne le pouvez pas. La Fin du Rituel est son début car dans une Voie préalablement entreprise retourner vous allez être capable.”

“Donnez, en toute chose, ce que vous recevez, mais des ruses de l'Abyse faites attention.”

Odd-Eye, ayant l'air un peu épuisé, arrête de parler et vous regarde tous.

“Pour ceux qui Mehmet accompagneront, identiques seront les résultats. Agissez comme un seul être, vous devez, et tous, sans flancher, devez décider ce que faire vous devez, ou hors de ce plan d'existence, tous seront perdus.”

“Ce que vous allez vivre sera un défi,” dit Munthir, “ et vous devriez avoir besoin d'aide. Tous ceux que j'ai vu passer au travers du rituel ont emmené avec eux leurs possessions et même se sont fait prêter des armes de Fer Froid qui se trouvent dans l'Armurerie. Vous devriez y retrouver tout ce que vous avez besoin. De la guérison, au-delà du Portail ne fonctionnera pas aussi bien qu'ici et la chaleur devrait être très intense et remplie de fumée. Aussi, c'est un Domaine du Mal où aucune personne ne devrait aller. ”

“Vous pourriez errer pour quelques heures ou quelques jours avant d'arriver au bout du chemin et vous pourriez ne pas revenir. Ce Portail des Abysses où vous allez passer s'est tenu là depuis les jours avant l'Alliance Kas'Tashi et probablement bien avant le Double Cataclysme. Bâti par des hermites beaucoup plus sages que nous ne pourrions jamais n'espérer le devenir, il est resté stable, mais il y a un aspect malin à tout cela. Il semble que les démons de l'Abyse ont contracté un arrangement qu'ils respectent encore après toutes ces années. Si vous échouez à leur test et qu'ils gagnent, ils vont être en mesure de franchir le Portail et entrer dans le Plan Matériel sans problème.”

Critical Event Summary

Once you are all done with the damage to the PCs on their ARs, please give answers to those questions so that the next installment in this serie is written according to the PCs choices. Take good note that the **Vowbreaker** award on the AR is something that might be rewarded on any Tusmit regional adventure or metaregional adventure set in Tusmit if the PC that has taken the **Vow of Secrecy** reveals the secrets implied in this adventure under any circumstances.

- 1- Did the Royal Investigators get the information about the Alliance between the Grand Mufti and the Church of Azor'alq?

- 2- Did the Royal Investigators get the information about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

- 3- Did the Royal Investigators get the information about the fact that the clergy of Azor'alq is residing now in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

- 4- Did the Tears of the Marid get the information about the Alliance between the Grand Mufti and the Church of Azor'alq?

- 5- Did the Tears of the Marid get the information about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

- 6- Did the Tears of the Marid get the information about the fact that the clergy of Azor'alq is residing now in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

- 7- Did the Brotherhood of Basharat get the information about the location of the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

- 8- Did the Brotherhood of Basharat get the information about the fact that the clergy of Azor'alq is residing now in the Pillars of the Faithful Monastery?

Once you complied everything, please send the results to goldo@hotmail.com with the heading being "Critical Event Summary for **TUS7-03**".