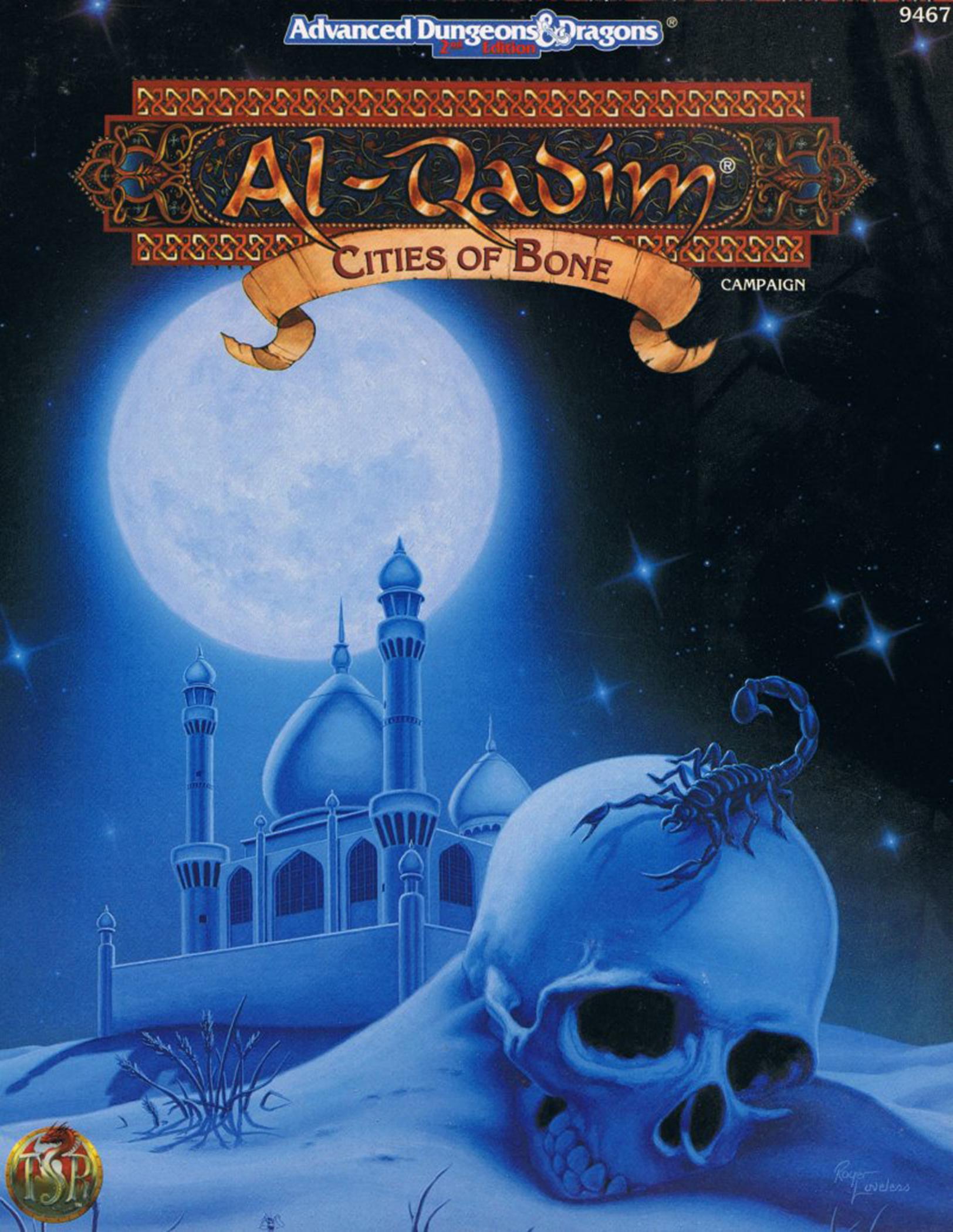


# Al-Qadim

CITIES OF BONE

CAMPAIGN



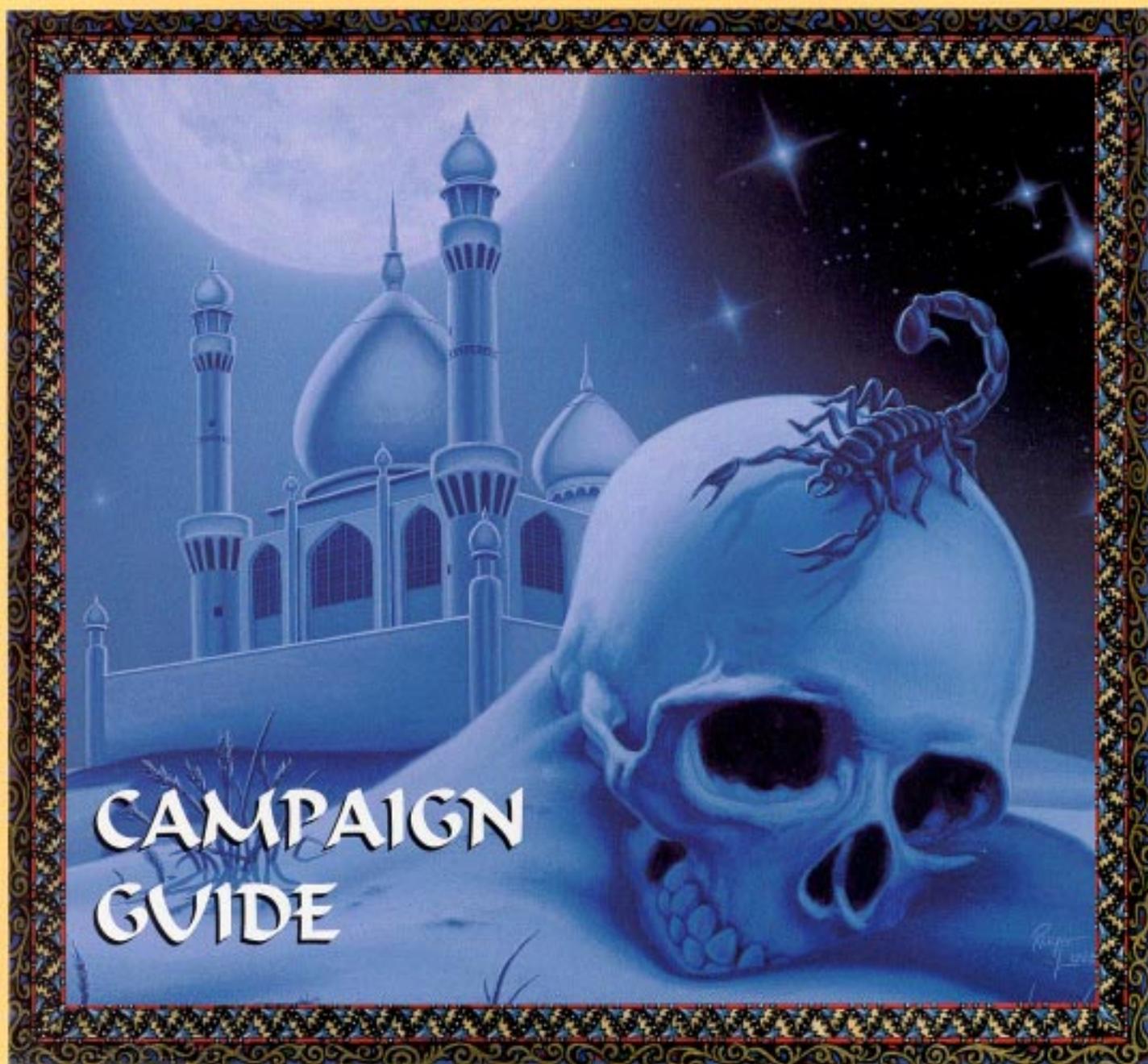
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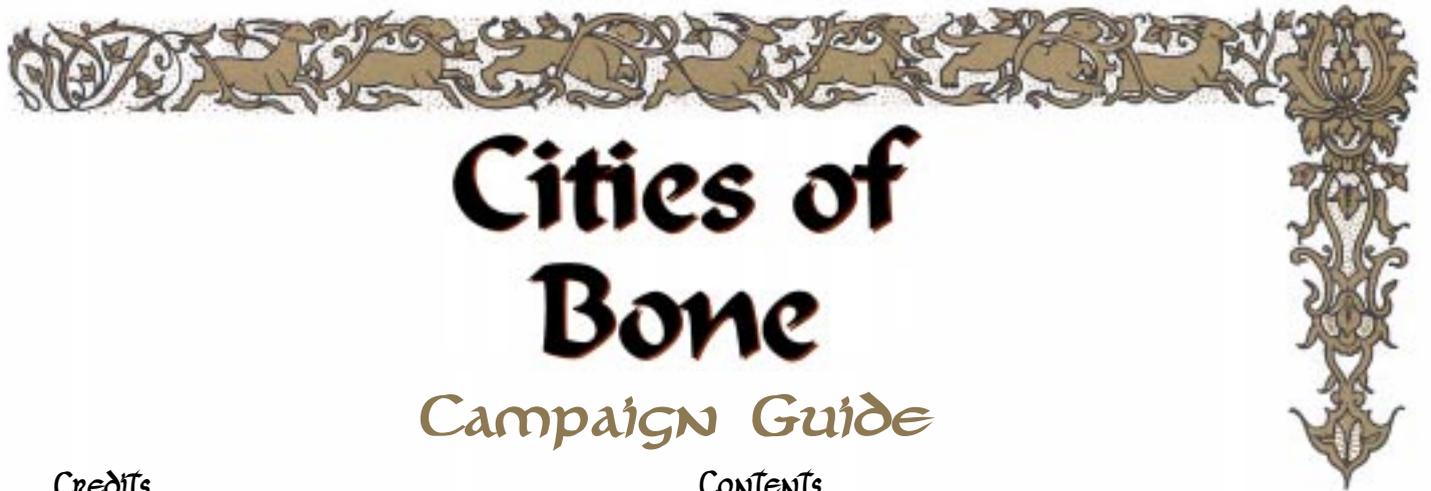
# Al-Qadim<sup>®</sup>

CITIES OF BONE

CAMPAIGN



CAMPAIGN  
GUIDE



# Cities of Bone

## Campaign Guide

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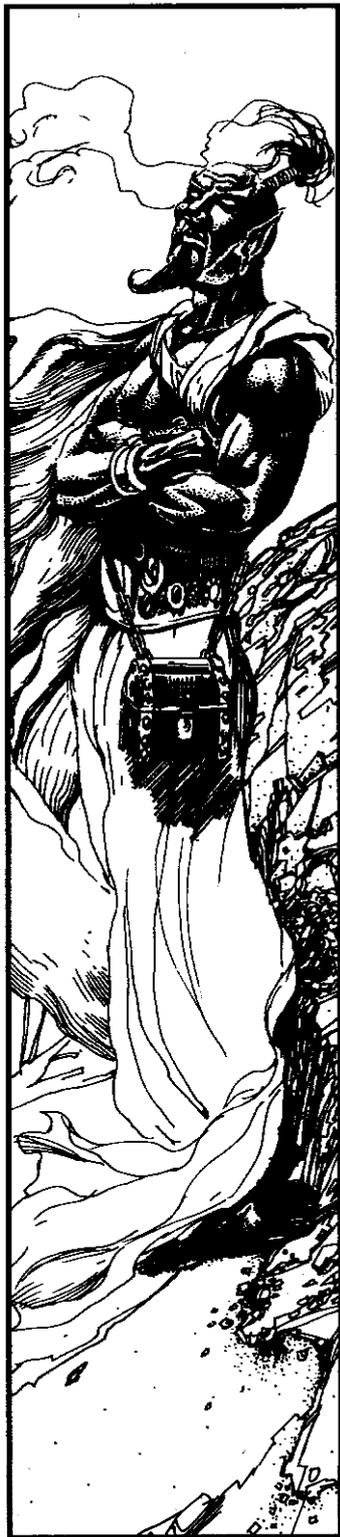


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## Introduction

*They beheld beneath them a city, never saw eyes a greater or a goodlier, with dwellings and mansions of towering height. It was a city with gates impregnable; but void and still, without cheering inhabitant. The owl hooted in its quarters; the bird skimmed, circling, over its squares; and the raven croaked in its great thoroughfares, weeping and bewailing the dwellers who erst made it their dwelling.*  
—“Tale of the City of Brass,” from the *Arabian Nights*

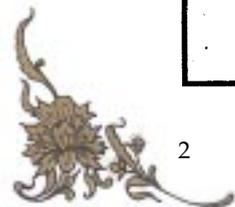
**S**hifting sands conceal much from the eyes of man. Winds howling across the rolling dunes peel back the veil of time to reveal aeonic ruins or crumbling tombs, long preserved by a shroud of sand. Wrecked and forbidding, monoliths command attention in many unpredictable locales. The remnants of antique civilizations litter the Land of Fate, where time-ravaged towers and decaying shrines hide in the arid wastes. I am but a humble efreeti, a creature of fire and spirit, but what little I know of these places of danger and mystery I pass on to you, O Master of Dungeons Unfathomable.

Inside this enchanted box lies my gift to you: an *Adventure Book* holding six plots of deception and many creatures of intrigue with which to challenge and entertain the players under your care; six cards and a poster, all inscribed with carefully drawn maps; and a short booklet detailing new characters to encounter. This *Campaign Guide* lying open before you contains background needed to lead the adventures in the official Land of Fate setting.

A powerful sha'ir once commanded me to guard the treasures in this box from other mortals, but he has passed from the world of the living. Newly freed, I long to return to the warm embrace of the Haunted Lands where I once resided. My former master will not mind if I share this wealth of lore with one as worthy as you. You can, most assuredly, believe me when I whisper to you of the unimaginable wealth just waiting to be claimed by those who venture into these long-forgotten capitals. Imagine-nothing at all stands between the deserving and the riches of the ancients! Would I—a mild, modest efreeti—lead you into danger most foul? Not I!

Now I must leave you to ponder this treasure in the privacy of your own divan. May the Loregiver cause the winds to hasten your journey!

—Kharau of the Elemental Plane of Fire





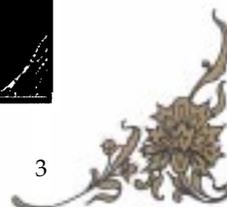
## How To Use *Cities of Bone*

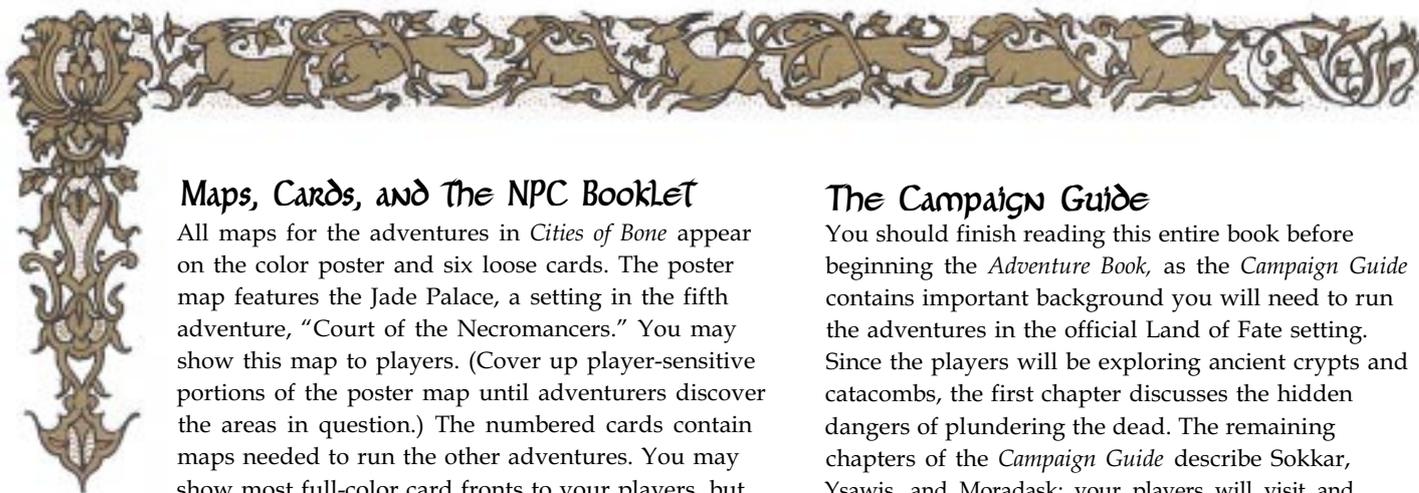
Ancient ruins lie scattered everywhere in the Land of Fate: on uncharted islands, in the arid depths of the desert anvils, and at the heart of verdant jungles. The six scenarios in *Cities of Bone* are intended to serve as stand-alone adventures for a night or two of play, but several can be combined, if desired, for longer sessions. The adventures appear in the 64-page Adventure Book in order of increasing difficulty. The first three are suitable for 1st- to 4th-level player characters (PCs), while the last three call for 5th- to 10th-level PCs.

Most of the adventures have been given concrete locations in Zakhara (although as the Dungeon Master, you can adjust their locales to make them more convenient to your own campaign). Half the scenarios take place in the eastern portion of the Land of Fate, where the continent's truly antique civilizations arose ages ago. Western Zakhara is not as old; the Pearl Cities are in the early stages of infancy compared to the venerable, wicked citadel of Kadarasto, for instance.

This is not to say that western Zakhara has no ruins worth exploring. Indeed, the first three short adventures take place in the vicinity of the Pearl Cities. Rather than centering on ancient cities, however, these scenarios involve crypts, tombs, dungeons, and ruined palaces. Again, do not hesitate to relocate these short quests to fit your campaign; "Suitable Donations," "The Treasure Pit," and "The Genies' Terror" can fit within most settings with minimal effort.

The remaining three adventures take place in forgotten cities in the Haunted Lands and the Ruined Kingdoms. "The Shattered Statue" brings the party to Sokkar, a vast cemetery ruled by rom and surrounded by an eternally raging sandstorm. In "Court of the Necromancers," the group travels to Ysawis, a city of undead ruled by decadent sorcerers who came there searching for a powerful artifact buried somewhere near the palace. During the last adventure, "Idolatry," the party visits Moradask, an abandoned city built over catacombs and filled with living idols and the treasures of their doomed civilization.

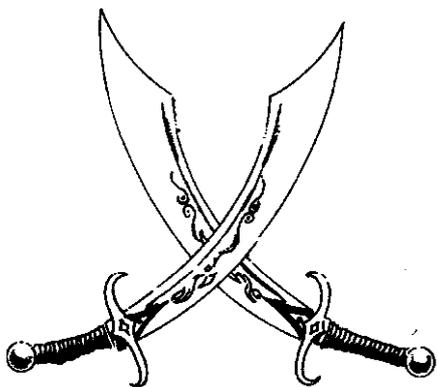




## Maps, Cards, and The NPC Booklet

All maps for the adventures in *Cities of Bone* appear on the color poster and six loose cards. The poster map features the Jade Palace, a setting in the fifth adventure, "Court of the Necromancers." You may show this map to players. (Cover up player-sensitive portions of the poster map until adventurers discover the areas in question.) The numbered cards contain maps needed to run the other adventures. You may show most full-color card fronts to your players, but the back sides are for your eyes only. Card 6 is the only card whose color front you may not show your players, as this reproduction of the Jade Palace contains DM-only information which is missing from the poster. Note that some adventures requiring more than one map have drawings on several cards.

The eight-page booklet contains descriptions for important nonplayer characters (NPCs). As with most of the map cards, the artwork in the NPC booklet should be shown to the players to help bring the characters to life. Don't hesitate to use the art from the *Adventure Book* and *Campaign Guide* as additional visual aids.



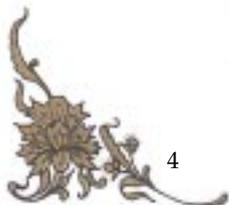
## The Campaign Guide

You should finish reading this entire book before beginning the *Adventure Book*, as the *Campaign Guide* contains important background you will need to run the adventures in the official Land of Fate setting. Since the players will be exploring ancient crypts and catacombs, the first chapter discusses the hidden dangers of plundering the dead. The remaining chapters of the *Campaign Guide* describe Sokkar, Ysawis, and Moradask; your players will visit and explore each of these cities during the final chapters of the *Adventure Book*. (The first three adventures are rather short; all necessary background for their more generic locations is included within the *Adventure Book*.) Feel free to use the information in this *Campaign Guide* to write additional scenarios set in the three detailed cities.

## Other Resources

*Cities of Bone* assumes that the DM has access to the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, *Tome of Magic*, *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, *Monstrous Manual* (or *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* Volumes 1 and 2), the AL-QADIM® appendix to the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* (MC13), and the AL-QADIM *Arabian Adventures* rulebook. The *Land of Fate* boxed set is recommended but not required to run the adventures.

Unless otherwise noted, the spells cited in *Cities of Bone* are described in the *Player's Handbook* or *Arabian Adventures*. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the spell or magical item can be found in the *Tome of Magic*. A dagger (†) designates a magical item detailed in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. If you do not own this title, substitute an appropriate, similar magical item from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.





## Chapter 1

# Forbidding Tombs

*They came upon a palace, imposingly edified and magnificently decorated; so they entered and found therein banners displayed, and drawn sword blades, and strung bows, and bucklers hanging by chains of gold and silver, and helmets gilded with red gold. In the vestibules stood benches of ivory, plated with glittering gold and covered with silken stuffs, whereon lay men whose skin had dried up on their bones...*

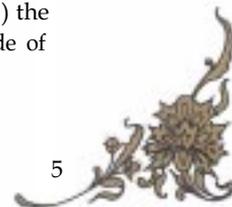
—“Tale of the City of Brass,” from the *Arabian Nights*

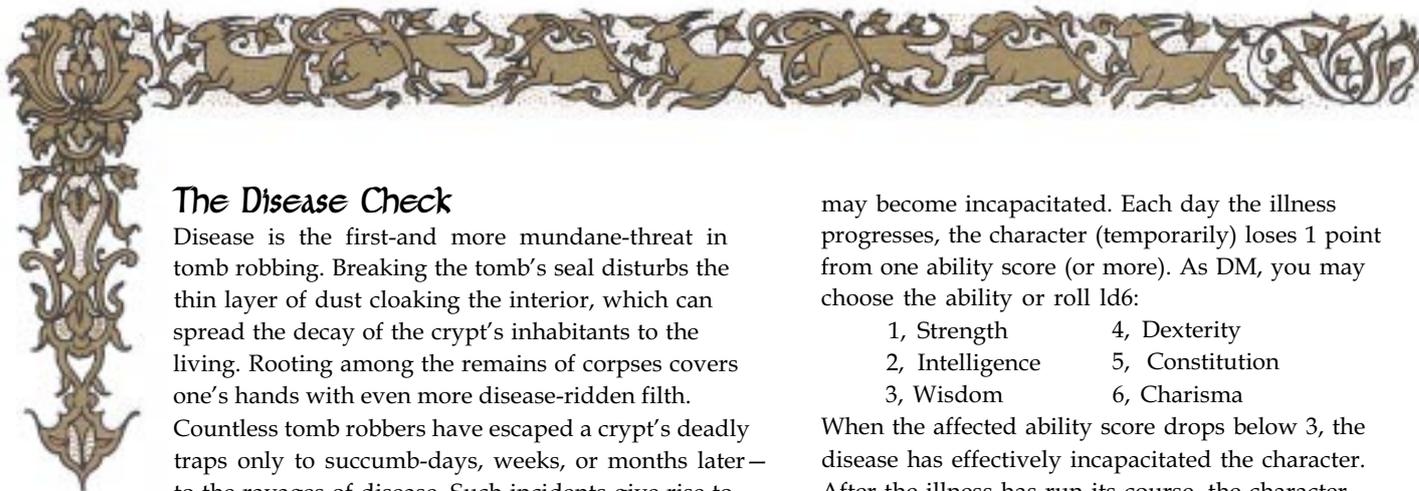
**M**ost players are enchanted and intrigued by ruins. The adventurer in each of us craves knowing what lies beyond the forbidding mausoleum door—the warrior longs to conquer the denizens lurking in the mysterious vaults; the rogue hopes to plunder the cobweb-blackened treasures of a moldering crypt; the wizard seeks the ancient, fell artifact still clutched in a mummy’s withered embrace. Exploring dark and echoing places lies at the core of most adventures in *Cities of Bone*. This chapter contains suggestions for bringing those haunted chambers to life.

### Perils of Plundering The Dead

**B**urial customs vary from city to city across Zakhara, but robbing the tombs of enlightened creatures is considered a base and dishonorable profession. Plundering a cemetery in an enlightened city constitutes theft, pure and simple. Few characters would consider wandering into a local graveyard and ripping open tombs. However, if the PCs discover a large, impressive mausoleum out in the wilderness, far from societal pressures, they may start to wonder what treasures it contains—wealth wasted on the dead, who can never appreciate its luster or enjoy its power.

Clearly, a moral dilemma goes hand-in-hand with the choice of whether to violate a crypt. This is fine, even desirable, as moral tension makes for better role-playing. Don’t force PCs of good alignment to co-operate with plans that violate their principles. Allow the adventure to end without any treasure gain, if necessary; many of the scenarios are designed to show the disadvantages of being too greedy! As the next section will demonstrate, plundering the dead holds two great perils: the danger of contracting a debilitating or deadly affliction and the risk of attracting the ire of those who dwell in (or rule!) the spirit world. Both these dangers can make a party decide to err on the side of caution, but story awards can make up for poor hauls.





## The Disease Check

Disease is the first-and more mundane-threat in tomb robbing. Breaking the tomb's seal disturbs the thin layer of dust cloaking the interior, which can spread the decay of the crypt's inhabitants to the living. Rooting among the remains of corpses covers one's hands with even more disease-ridden filth.

Countless tomb robbers have escaped a crypt's deadly traps only to succumb-days, weeks, or months later—to the ravages of disease. Such incidents give rise to legends of cursed catacombs.

Whenever you, as the DM, feel the PCs have placed their health at risk by investigating an especially filthy crypt, have them each make a disease check: a Constitution check subject to the modifiers on Table 1. Reserve these disease checks for special circumstances, such as exploring major tombs or searching a lot of rotting bodies.

**TABLE 1: Disease Check Modifiers**

+1	Opened a sealed coffin or sarcophagus.
+2	Searched a decomposed corpse+
+2	Tomb is in a humid environment.
+2	Retained garments after emerging.
- 2	Wrapped cloth around mouth and nose.
- 2	Clothing includes gloves and boots.
- 4	Waited for fresh air to circulate in tomb.
- 4	Bathed after emerging from tomb.

If a character fails a disease check (rolls a number higher than the modified Constitution score on a d20), signs of having contracted an ailment emerge within 13 to 24 (1d12+12) hours. Symptoms may include unexplained dizziness, nausea, fever, or coughs. Characters with the healing proficiency can attempt to use their skills on an afflicted PC who then should make a second disease check, this time with a +2 bonus. Otherwise, unless a *cure disease* spell is available, the full force of the affliction descends upon the unfortunate character in 1 to 4 (1d4) days. The characters should not be able to identify the disease by name, due to its ancient origins.

The full course of the illness can last from 5 to 20 (5d4) days, during which time the afflicted character

may become incapacitated. Each day the illness progresses, the character (temporarily) loses 1 point from one ability score (or more). As DM, you may choose the ability or roll 1d6:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1, Strength     | 4, Dexterity    |
| 2, Intelligence | 5, Constitution |
| 3, Wisdom       | 6, Charisma     |

When the affected ability score drops below 3, the disease has effectively incapacitated the character. After the illness has run its course, the character regains 1 lost point every 2 to 5 (1d4+1) days.

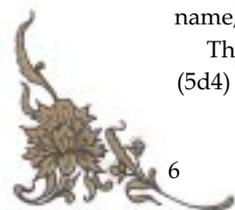
Don't inflict fatal diseases on characters. It is far more interesting when grave robbers suffer inventive, permanent handicaps as a result of their actions. These handicaps can range from minor annoyances (aversion to bright light or certain foods) to permanent 1-point losses in an ability score.

## Threat of The Supernatural

Even out in the wilderness lurk supernatural forces that might not approve of PCs disturbing the dead. This is the second peril awaiting would-be grave robbers: Desecrating tombs of the ancients may attract the attention of malicious spirits, gods, or genies. Unless characters attempt to placate these potentially hostile forces before they break into a tomb, they might suffer the effects of the evil eye, as set forth in Chapter 5 of *Arabian Adventures*. An apology or humble speech might suffice to avert supernatural retribution; otherwise PCs had better cast *avert evil eye* before they start plundering. Note that these precautions will not work after the curse takes effect.

There is a 10 percent chance (cumulative with each disturbing of the dead) that the characters responsible will become afflicted with the evil eye, unless they make saving throws vs. spells (not Wisdom checks, as described in *Arabian Adventures*). Increase this percentage if the characters have performed acts of wanton desecration.

Even if gods or genies do not intervene, the spirits of the dead themselves may object to having their physical remains violated. Souls of those of good alignment in life now reside in the gardens of Paradise and will be unlikely to care if anyone disturbs their graves. But, greed may clip the wings of evil or selfish spirits, trapping them in the places





where they died or were buried. These undead beings, ranging in destructive potential from the hama to the ghost, may try to exact their own retribution on the PCs.

## Crypt and Tomb Dressings

The key to constructing an interesting tomb lies in choosing memorable details, ancient names, strange smells, rough textures, and unexpected sounds. These tidbits are critical to building an atmosphere of dread and suspense.

### The Entrance

The tomb entrance can be blocked by a featureless slab of stone or a massive boulder rolled into place long ago. Unlike individual tombs, family mausoleums are fitted with sturdy iron doors, securely locked to keep out thieves. Doors that are shut (and meant to stay that way) sometimes bear a burial seal—typically a coin-shaped clay disk, roughly 2 to 6 inches in diameter. These seals often are inscribed with prayers for the dead, but they sometimes contain invocations to ward off corpse-feeding ghouls.

If the tomb is currently inhabited by roving undead (or worse), drop some hints at the entrance. Perhaps the doors stand partly ajar or look scratched and battered. PCs also might notice a shard of bone, a broken fingernail, or a torn piece of burial linen and consider themselves warned.

### What's in a Name?

A tomb or crypt must belong to someone! Providing a name reinforces the notion that the PCs are violating the remains of a person and, in addition, highlights the characters' own mortality.

Here are some ancient names taken from Egyptian and Persian sources: Akhet-hotep, Arses, Asclepios, Bardiya, Cambyses, Damiq-Ilishu, Djenhebu, Hernepti, Horemheb, Imhotep, Khabusokar, Kurigalzu, Labashi, Marduk, Mesalim, Mithradates, Nanium, Nebuchadrezzar, Neriglissar, Ninurta, Rimush, Selucus, Sennacherib, Wahib, Xerxes, and Zoser.

The following are Arabic names: Abdalla as-Saba'iyah, Abu Hazim, Erivan al-Ruyan, Habid al-Qastalli, Kairouz al-Mulk, Kamal an-Nasir, Ibn Abi Lesegi, Maruf al-Husri, Nadan Watil Usmara, Reza al-Natawi, Tahir bin Junayd, Talib al-Rahawi, Yunus Safi-ad-din, and Wali al-Ahmar.

### Smells

Once the party is inside, remind the PCs of the putrid stench of the tomb, arising from the decomposing human remains. The more filthy and disgusting the aroma, the better, for it foreshadows the threat of disease. In humid environments, the tomb will have been infiltrated by mold and fungus, which lend their decaying odor to the chamber's already pungent bouquet.

Most entombed bodies have been embalmed, massaged with bitter burial ointments, wrapped in fragrant shrouds, or mummified. Depending on how much time has passed since the burial, traces of these bitter, spicy fragrances may linger, mingling with the stink generated by decomposition.

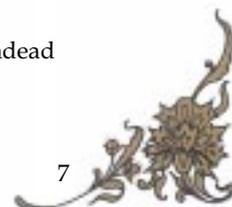
In the crypts of the wealthy, the natural smells of the vault may be completely masked by magical perfumes or oils. The tomb might also be fumigated by magical braziers, which fill the crypt with white, misty clouds of soporific incense.

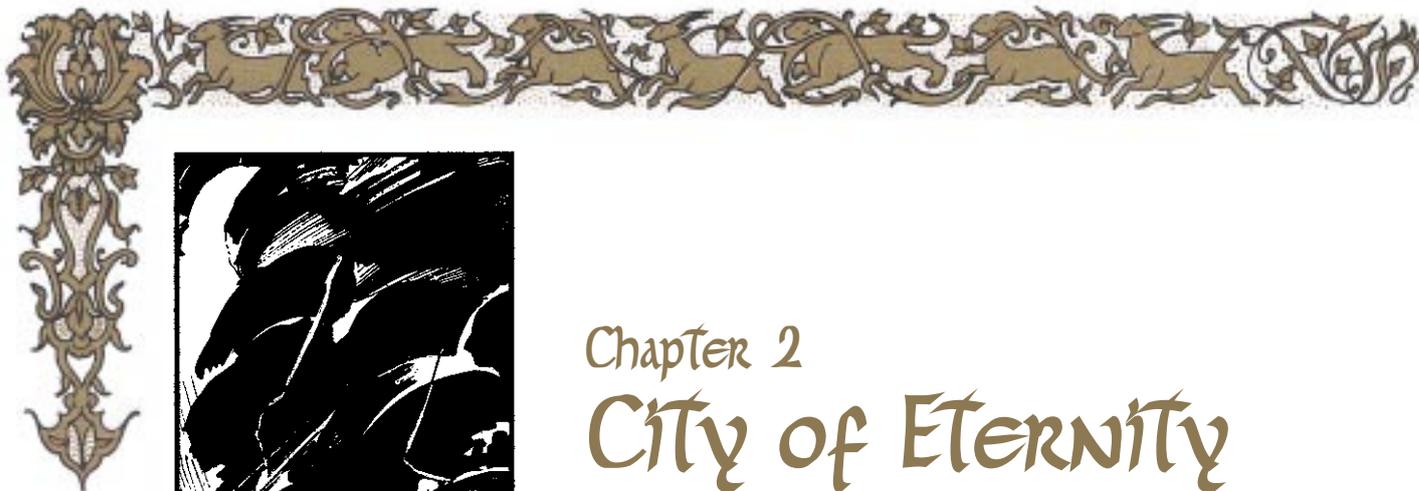
### Textures

Difficult details to add are those evoking the sense of touch. What is the temperature in the tomb? Is it humid or dry? How does the lid of the sarcophagus feel as a character lifts it—is the lid smooth, or is it rough and corroded by time? What is it like to step through deep, powdery drifts of aeonic dust covering the tomb floors?

### Sounds

In the deathly silence of the tomb, exaggerate descriptions of noise. Crypt doors don't simply open—they grate apart, the hinges shrieking, the bottom of the portals scraping loudly across the rough-hewn floor. Don't forget the metallic click as PCs trigger a trap, the twang of hidden ballistae hurling spears at the intruders, and in the background, the low rising moan of scabrous undead that did not wish to be disturbed. . . .





## Chapter 2

# City of Eternity

*There, between the city of the dead and the city of the living, I meditated. I thought of the eternal silence of the first and the endless sorrow of the second. In the city of the living I found hope and despair, love and hatred, joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty, faith and infidelity. In the city of the dead there is buried earth in earth that Nature converts, in the night's silence, into vegetation, and then into animal, and then into man.*

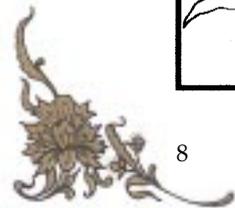
—Khalil Gibran, from “The City of the Dead”

**W**hen the Haunted Lands still cloaked themselves in humid jungle, the city Sokkar thrived, a metropolis at the heart of a fertile valley. Today, the hills south of the Furrowed Mountains are a haunted desert, and all that remains of Sokkar is a vast necropolis shielded from the modern world by Al-Amzija, a Black Cloud of Vengeance generating a titanic sandstorm that never falters, never dies. The tempest has raged around the necropolis for centuries, scattering caravans and devouring those who venture too close to the City of Eternity. Few survive its harsh embrace.

In the eye of the ruin created by this eternal tempest, a city of tombs and mausoleums stretches for miles in all directions. At the center of the necropolis, in a court flanked by forbidding temples and shrines, majestic pyramids rise into the storm-filled sky. Explorers have escaped Sokkar with tales of unbelievable treasures and unimaginable horrors awaiting in the mausoleums.

Perhaps the most disturbing rumor about the city pertains to a mysterious woman claiming to be Ophidia, a legendary princess of Sokkar supposedly buried beneath one of the pyramids. In some tales, Ophidia has saved lost travelers and guided them out of the city safely through the tempest. In others, she has driven explorers out of the city, where they were ravaged by the fury of the Black Cloud. (The NPC booklet contains more details about Princess Ophidia. The Black Cloud is further described in this chapter.)

City-dwelling skeptics argue that tales of the tempest and Ophidia are fabrications, made to deter other adventurers from pillaging the unguarded, treasure-laden tombs of Sokkar. Most desert dwellers, however—even the reckless jann—fear the Black Cloud of Vengeance, Al-Amzija. The true identity of Ophidia, if she exists at all, remains a mystery.





## History of Sokkar

At the dawn of time, giants ruled the jungles that engulfed the now-desolate terrain of the Land of Fate. These magnificent creatures founded the city of Sokkar. The giants governed wisely, and the city's human citizens prospered. But all that is good must pass, for the Destroyer of Delights and Sunderer of Societies visits every giant, every man, every nation. With time, the female giants began to produce only male heirs, and the population of giants steadily dwindled until only a few males remained. Renouncing their rulership of Sokkar, the giants built massive cairns for themselves far outside the walls of the city and shut themselves up inside their necropolis.

Although many giants passed into eternity, the three most powerful and principled members of their race could not rest leaving their beloved city unguarded. Noq the Inspired, Arun the Ever-Vigilant, and Merodach the Deprived all ignored their own deaths. Animated by their forces of will, these giants became rom, the Undying. (See the rom entry in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM appendix for the AL-QADIM setting, MC13.)

After the giants' exodus, humans continued to rule in Sokkar according to their ancient laws. New kings and queens deferred to the memory and traditions of their forbears. Each year, the rulers visited the necropolis to confer with the rom and hear their undying wisdom.

Before long, the rom were praised as noble heroes and worshiped as demigods in Sokkar. Citizens begged to be buried near their sacred cairns. The rom welcomed the expansion of their necropolis and encouraged a reverence for the dead. As the centuries passed, a vast city of tombs expanded around the giants' funerary complex, until even their towering mausoleums were lost in the avenues of vaulted tombs and memorials.

More time passed, and the city of the living dwindled. Wars came and devastated the population; the jungles and fields dried up as the climate changed; and the citizens neglected Sokkar's fortifications, pouring all their wealth and resources into extravagant tombs. Eventually, the curse that had plagued the giants resurfaced, and Sokkar's women began to produce only male heirs. Sokkar fell into ruin and was devoured by the rapidly encroaching desert. The

necropolis, built to last for all eternity, is now the only surviving legacy of Sokkar and its citizens.

## Burial Customs

Encouraged by their legendary rom, citizens of Sokkar loved and worshiped their dead, believing their status in the afterlife depended on their burial trappings. Those interred in paupers' crypts were doomed to eternal poverty, or so they believed. Burials performed according to the proper rituals ensured a comfortable final rest. The Sokkaran nobility lived fairly obsessed with death. Most nobles spent a fortune on the design and construction of their tombs, choosing the decorations and wardings for their houses of eternity with great care. Regardless of the station of the deceased, proper Sokkaran tombs contained two elements: the spirit statue and the stele. These features might be opulent and intricate in a king's pyramid, but humbler versions appear in even a pauper's grave.

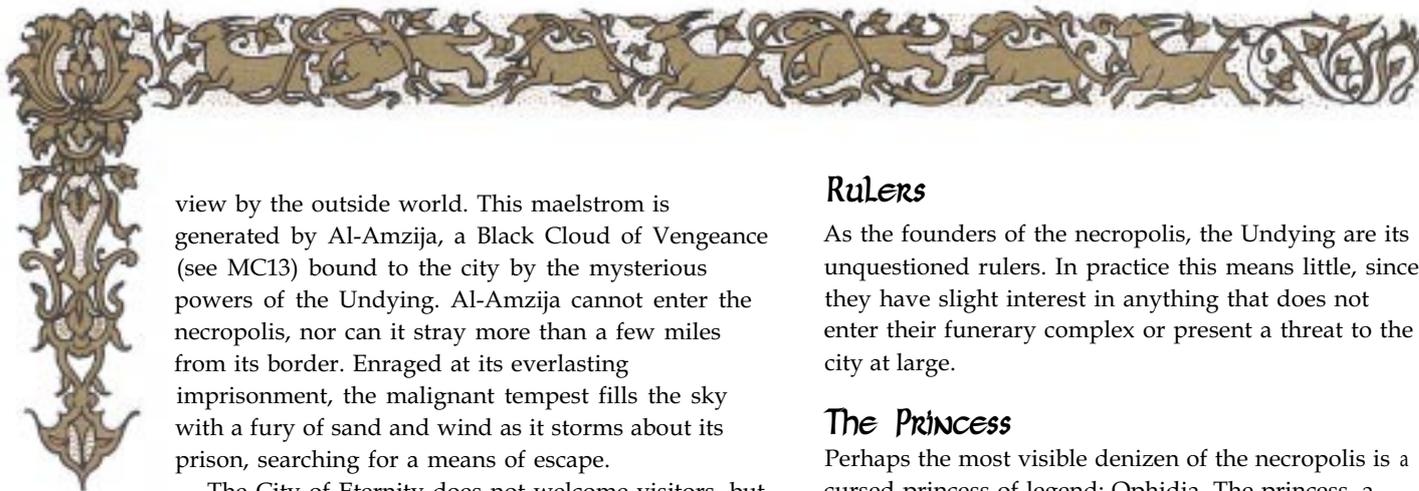
The spirit statue, also called a *ka figure*, is believed to hold a dead person's *ka* (soul) once the body of the deceased was interred formally in the family's house of eternity. The magical and secret arts of mummification, which preserved physical remains of the deceased, ensured the soul's transfer to the incorruptible statue. In the tombs of the rich and powerful, a household of faithful servants might be sacrificed, mummified, and buried with their dead masters, to continue their service in the afterlife. The more elaborate tombs in Sokkar contain vaults upon vaults of *ka* figures depicting wives, concubines, guards, slaves, dancers, musicians, porters—even pets.

While the spirit statue housed the ever-living *ka*, the *stele* allowed this spirit to have a rewarding and enjoyable afterlife. Each *stele*—intricate carvings on stone slabs lining the walls of a tomb—depicted the deceased hunting, dining, sleeping, praying, or playing favorite games and sporting activities. Properly adorning the crypt walls with the steles ensured that the spirit of the deceased could perform the illustrated actions as often as desired throughout eternity.

## AL-Amzija, The Black Cloud

With the death of Sokkar's last citizen, the three Undying—Noq, Merodach, and Arun—summoned a great tempest to encircle their city, shielding it from





view by the outside world. This maelstrom is generated by Al-Amzija, a Black Cloud of Vengeance (see MC13) bound to the city by the mysterious powers of the Undying. Al-Amzija cannot enter the necropolis, nor can it stray more than a few miles from its border. Enraged at its everlasting imprisonment, the malignant tempest fills the sky with a fury of sand and wind as it storms about its prison, searching for a means of escape.

The City of Eternity does not welcome visitors, but, having arrived, newcomers cannot safely depart without the express permission of the Undying. While the perimeter of the city is far too large for Al-Amzija to notice every being entering Sokkar, leaving is another matter. The sound of its own name attracts the cloud; it also senses when beings or objects that have spent a day and a night in the necropolis attempt to pass through the maelstrom. Countless adventurers, fleeing through the stormy border with their plunder, have been intercepted and destroyed by the Black Cloud. Once alerted, Al-Amzija arrives in 2 to 20 (2d10) rounds to exact retribution for theft of Sokkaran artifacts or to chase its quarry back into the city. Only the Undying can call the Black Cloud away from its prey, and they never bother to intercede on behalf of tomb robbers.

#### **Al-Amzija, Black Cloud of Vengeance:**

Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC -3; MV Fl, 24 (E); HD 20; hp 150; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg 6d10/7d10; SA fiery rain, wind; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, resists fire magic; MR 30%; SZ G (storm-sized); ML 19; MC13; XP 20,000.

## **The Necropolis of Sokkar**

**W**ithin the storm-swept prison of Al-Amzija, the City of Eternity rises from the desolate terrain, a quiet, seemingly chaotic jumble of mausoleums, crypts, monuments, temples, and pyramids that extends for miles in all directions. The necropolis boasts no coffee shops, no bazaars, no docks, and no caravanserais. The dead have no need for these features in their city, as their ka figures and steles provide them with ample means to enjoy the hereafter.

## **Rulers**

As the founders of the necropolis, the Undying are its unquestioned rulers. In practice this means little, since they have slight interest in anything that does not enter their funerary complex or present a threat to the city at large.

## **The Princess**

Perhaps the most visible denizen of the necropolis is a cursed princess of legend: Ophidia. The princess, a lamia (see the NPC booklet for complete stats and description), emerges from her pyramid lair only at night, to wander about the tombs and statues of the necropolis in dark despair. She becomes a pivotal character in any adventure in her city.

## **Population**

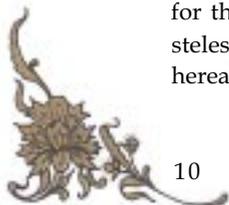
At least 200,000 dead (humans and giants) lie buried in the necropolis, though the number of tombs is probably 10 times smaller. The vast majority of the deceased happily occupy themselves in the afterlife and have no concern for what transpires outside their tombs.

## **Features of The City**

Within the great necropolis, the wind does not rage, as it does near the storm generated by the Black Cloud. Air does not stir on the peaceful streets of Sokkar. The city sleeps, entombed in silence.

Three vast boulevards—the Avenue of the Hama, the Avenue of the Sphinxes, and the Avenue of the Baboons—lead from Sokkar's outskirts to the central Plaza of Eternity, where huge pyramids lean into the troubled sky. (See map on Card 5.) The main avenues are lined with weather-beaten stone statues depicting fierce eagles, winged lions, and somber monkeys, each more than 10 feet tall. Myriad shrines and mausoleums crowd up to the edge of the avenues, and smaller alleys snake away from the main boulevards into an infinite maze of smaller graves and catacombs.

The crypts of Sokkar appear remarkably well preserved. Still visible on their stone surfaces are eroded inscriptions in Chun, a long-dead language shared by the once-fertile nations that withered into desert. Despite their age, many inscriptions still legibly proclaim the title, station, and name of each tomb's owner. A prince's epitaph might cover the entire outer





surface of a mausoleum, while a porter's grave might bear only a few sentences to mark the poor citizen's passing.

### Major Products

Sokkarans buried a wealth of antiquities and magical items with their dead. Since the Black Cloud is attuned to these items (as to everything within the City of Eternity), practically no one stealing from tombs ever escapes the city alive.

### Armed Forces

Sokkar's military is inactive—quite inactive, as most of its citizens are dead and buried. But, although the necropolis has no standing defenses, the storm of the Black Cloud rages continually outside city borders. In addition, the Undying remain perfectly capable of calling up a legion of undead from the city's plentiful crypts if they so desire. Finally, the statues lining the three main avenues can be animated into an army of stone golems. Fortunately, no one ever has been foolish enough to attack the necropolis.

### Major Mosques and Tombs

Most of the city's important temples line the three wide avenues in or near the Plaza of Eternity. All temples and shrines in Sokkar honor the local rom. The largest such edifice stands in the center of the city: the Great Temple of the Undying. Overlooking the pyramids in the Plaza of Eternity, the Great Temple was built on a titanic scale, its massive granite portals open to all visitors. Giant steps lead to cavernous, vaulted halls, whose ceilings rise more than 100 feet. The walls bear inscribed hymns of praise for the faultless and eternal guidance of Noq, Arun, and Merodach. Their grim idols, scattered throughout the temple's dark, echoing chambers, depict the three Undying as somber, mortal giants.

The most impressive tombs in the necropolis await adventurers in the Plaza of Eternity. The city's six huge pyramids range in size from the Great Pyramid of Borsippa, which dwarfs even the Great Temple of the Undying, to the much smaller Pyramid of Tammuz, which measures only 100 feet on each side of its square base. The four remaining pyramids—belonging to Ophidia, Zerebet, Nectanebo, and Kagamemni—measure 100 to 500 feet to a side.

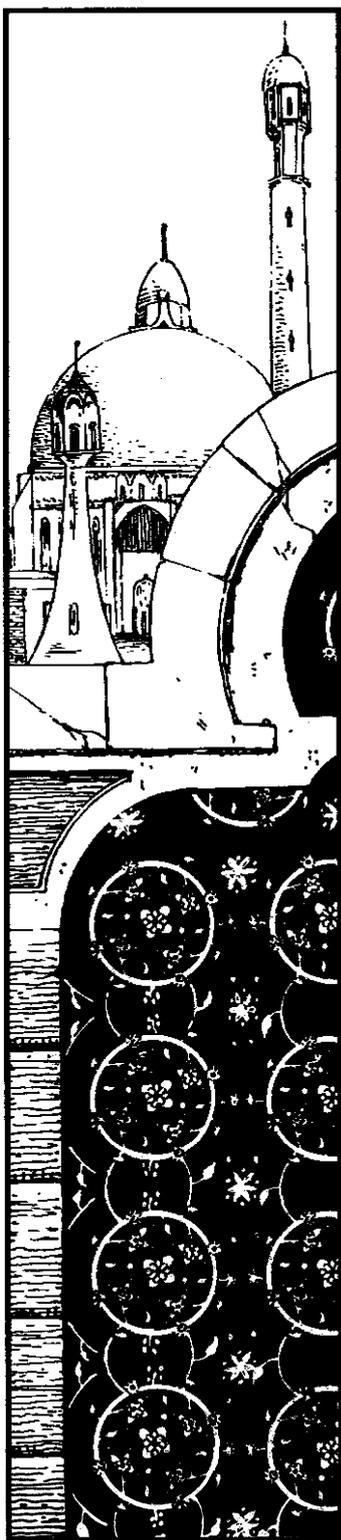
The pyramids with obvious entrances—those of Tammuz and Nectanebo—have been plundered and stripped of any valuables. The tomb robbers perished when their plunder attracted the Black Cloud outside the city, but that seems like small consolation to the restless and troubled spirits now haunting the catacombs beneath these pyramids. The remaining four pyramids in the Plaza of Eternity have no apparent entrances and bear no inscriptions save the epitaphs chiseled on their cornerstones. It is unclear whether these four contain burial vaults or simply stand as monuments to the most powerful human kings and queens of Sokkar.

Far from the Plaza of Eternity and the city's major avenues, lost amid the labyrinth of humans' crypts and mausoleums, lies the funerary complex of the Undying. Beneath a walled, fortresslike compound, guarded by enchanted and unsleeping sentinels (actually stone golems), the Three Who Are Undying rest in their ancient catacombs. Each night, the rom's songs of lamentation drift out of the vaults to the surface. Those who linger nearby to hear the macabre concert risk madness or worse.

### Rumors and Lore

Sokkar is infested with small pockets of undead and scavenging monsters that have slowly desecrated tombs throughout the city. Their unwelcome presence appears minor considering Sokkar's size, so they have not yet managed to attract the attention of Ophidia or the Undying. These dangerous creatures remain concealed during the day, hiding and resting in looted tombs and temples. By night, these monsters emerge and scuttle among the alleys of the city searching for food and booty.





## Chapter 3

# City of The Dead

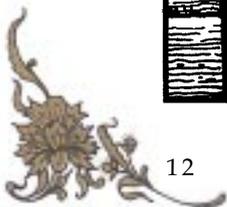
*Behind the painted doors and embroidered curtains there used to be music and dancing. The melodies from various states, and works of art, and rare fish, and horses are all now dead and buried. The young girls, smooth as silk, white as jade with their lips red, now lie beneath the dreary stones and the barren earth.*

—Pan Chao, from *The Ruined City*

Long ago, there lived a princess named Zoraya, who ruled the City of Ysawis in the far southeast of the distant land of Nog. The princess had many consorts, but her favorite was Kasim, a kind man with a radiant smile and a warm heart. Zoraya knew only joy and delight until the tragic day her beloved Kasim died, thrown from his horse not far from her Jade Palace.

Kasim's death devastated the princess. She turned to the clerics of Ragarra, goddess of the jungle, and begged them to raise her lover from the dead. Alas, they could not, for Ragarra had little sway in the afterlife. But they told Zoraya of a talisman in a nearby temple of Shajar, the great god of the river, the Bringer of Life and Death. Shajar's talisman, they explained, could bring Kasim back to life. Blinded by grief, Zoraya sought out the temple of Shajar that housed the small carved hippopotamus-favored creature of the river god. When Shajar's priests refused to give her their most sacred relic, Zoraya and her army swept into the temple, slaughtering the priests and capturing the artifact. Triumphant, the princess returned to Kasim's tomb and used the statue to bring her beloved back to life.

Now, the great river god did not turn a blind eye to Zoraya's sacrilege. When the princess invoked the power of the talisman, as the legend goes, Shajar transformed her into a giant crocodile. As Kasim opened his eyes, he first spied a hideous creature at his tomb's entrance. Disgusted by the sight, Kasim drew his burial sword, an ancient heirloom of Ysawis named *Drinker of a Thousand Lives*. He plunged it to the hilt into the monster's scaly body, and the crocodile princess sank to the floor, black blood pulsing from her mortal wound to pool on the ground. As life was leaving her body, Zoraya murmured the name of her beloved, and Kasim realized his tragic error. He kissed her one last time, his tears mingling with the blood pooled at his feet.





With her dying words, Zoraya cursed the cruel river god and ordered that the talisman be sealed in her tomb, forever depriving Shajar's priesthood of its power. Obeying the command, Kasim constructed a magnificent mausoleum, its entrance cunningly hidden behind one of the countless jade wall panels of Zoraya's palace. Upon the tomb's completion, Kasim joined his beloved in the painted crypts within the bowels of the earth. He still guards the princess today, using the same enchanted blade that slew her.

After the princess was buried in her hidden mausoleum, the priests of Shajar raised an army and conquered Ysawis, thinking their god's talisman lay within the city. Their determined search yielded nothing. In anger and frustration, the priests put all the city's inhabitants to the sword and erected a tall pyramid from their skulls. In their hurry to search elsewhere, they abandoned the empty palaces and temples of Ysawis, thinking to return later to plunder them.

But Shajar's priests never returned, for the crocodile-headed goddess Ragarra (whom some scholars today refer to as "Raggara") had wrapped Ysawis in her verdant embrace, hiding its domed halls and gilded palaces from the river god and his followers. To this day, visitors to the area whisper that, when the Nogaro River floods its banks each spring, Shajar again is searching for his lost talisman.

## Arrival of The Necromancers

The ruins of Ysawis remained hidden for many centuries, until they were rediscovered by Sumulael and Kazerabet, a married pair of corrupt necromancers, whose sorcerous divinations had led them to the city in search of Shajar's legendary talisman. (The magic of necromancy is unavailable to most other Zakharan mages; see the NPC booklet for details on how Sumulael and Kazerabet came to master this dark, ancient art.) Nonetheless, their prize—the talisman—eluded them.

At first, when the sorcerers saw the skull pyramid and other bones of the city's former citizens, they amused themselves by raising the moldering remains to attend them as ghostly servants, skeletal porters, and shadowy messengers. When the quest for the talisman

yielded nothing immediately, the necromancers animated more of the city's dead to help expand their search. Before long, the necromancers' new slaves uncovered royal cemeteries where kings and queens had been buried for centuries before the city's disastrous end. With a wave of her hand, Kazerabet cracked open the tombs' monolithic stone doors. Sumulael, cackling with wicked glee, called forth ancient royalty, commanding even the oldest of padishahs to stumble forth, wrapped in worm-eaten burial robes, from the corrupted depths of the crypts as the sorcerers' slaves. While the dead gave up their age-corrupted treasures, none carried the coveted talisman of Shajar.

Thus were the inhabitants of Ysawis called up from the crypts to serve Sumulael and Kazerabet, their new king and queen. Halfheartedly continuing their search, the necromancers live there still, attended by their dead slaves in the ancient Jade Palace of Zoraya.

## Two Heirlooms of Ysawis

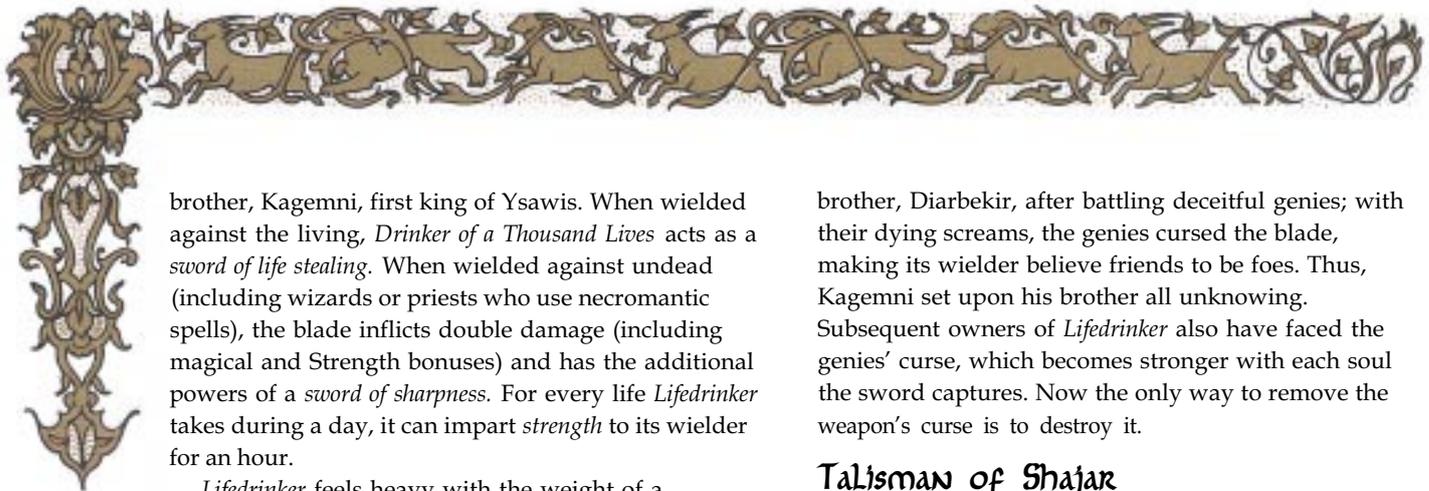
The Tomb of the Crocodile Princess beneath Ysawis contains two legendary artifacts, an ancient sword and talisman, both of frightening necromancy. (Through a secret virtually lost to modern Zakhara, mages of ancient Ysawis could draw on necromantic power.) In an adventure here, one or both of these items might fall into the hands of the PCs. (May the gods help them!) They should not become permanent additions to a campaign. These artifacts are items of *undetectable sorcery* and, as such, cannot be magically detected or identified.

Throughout *Cities of Bone*, an asterisk (\*) indicates that a spell or magical item can be found in the *Tome of Magic*. A dagger (†) designates a magical item detailed in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. If you do not own this title, substitute an appropriate, similar magical item from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

## Drinker of a Thousand Lives

Also called *Lifedrinker* in the ancient tales of Ysawis, the infamous *Drinker of a Thousand Lives* blade was enchanted by the necromancer Diarbekir for his





brother, Kagemni, first king of Ysawis. When wielded against the living, *Drinker of a Thousand Lives* acts as a *sword of life stealing*. When wielded against undead (including wizards or priests who use necromantic spells), the blade inflicts double damage (including magical and Strength bonuses) and has the additional powers of a *sword of sharpness*. For every life *Lifedrinker* takes during a day, it can impart *strength* to its wielder for an hour.

*Lifedrinker* feels heavy with the weight of a thousand souls. When drawn from its ebony sheath, the sword resounds with the cries and lamentations of its past victims, who moan and plead for merciful release. Whenever someone is slain with the sword (even accidentally), the victim's dying screams become part of the lamentations. Until someone breaks the sword (a major task, according to Chapter 10 of the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*), the souls remain imprisoned within the blade, incapable of moving on to the afterlife. As such, the weapon is manifestly evil, although the *undetectable sorcery* enchantments mask its true aura.

*Drinker of a Thousand Lives* also carries a deadly curse. All past owners of the sword have "accidentally" slain dear friends, relatives, or even themselves with the blade. During the chaos of combat, there is a 5 percent cumulative chance per round that wielders will become confused (per the spell) for 1 round and attack allies or themselves, if no allies are present. Anyone struck by the blade in this fashion becomes subject to its horrible curse. A successful Wisdom check negates the confusion; note that the wielder's enemies prove curiously immune to the deadly results of the confusion.

When this scenario unfolds, the victim must make a saving throw vs. death magic or perish immediately. Pick a favorite NPC or a henchman to feel the bite of the blade first; once the cursed sword's powers have been demonstrated, PCs should be fair game. If *Lifedrinker's* bearer draws the weapon from its scabbard and sheathes it again without taking a sentient life, the chances for confusion double the next time it is wielded, with a +4 penalty on the Wisdom check.

This lamentable tradition, immortalized in an epic of Nog called *Kinslayer*, began many centuries ago with its first owner, Kagemni. The king mistakenly slew his

brother, Diarbekir, after battling deceitful genies; with their dying screams, the genies cursed the blade, making its wielder believe friends to be foes. Thus, Kagemni set upon his brother all unknowing. Subsequent owners of *Lifedrinker* also have faced the genies' curse, which becomes stronger with each soul the sword captures. Now the only way to remove the weapon's curse is to destroy it.

### Talisman of Shajar

The long-coveted Talisman of Shajar is a turquoise statuette of a hippopotamus, about 9 inches long. Its blue back and snout bear three inlaid symbols of antique ivory, and inscriptions in ancient Noga cover its belly. Created by the priests of Shajar in the bygone empire of Nog, the artifact obsessed the Princess Zoraya, as recounted in her legend.

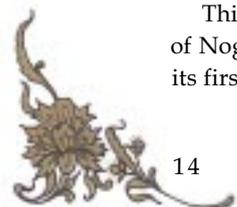
The ivory runes are ancient Noga religious glyphs, common in temples of Shajar. A sage or PC proficient in religion or ancient history of the Ruined Kingdoms will recognize that each symbol represents oppositions inherent in the Land of Fate: life and death, growth and decay, spiritual renewal and devastation.

Translated, the verse on the artifact's belly reads:

*Praise to Shajar, O Great God of the River,  
Bringer of Life and Death,  
Prosperity and Famine,  
Riches and Ruin.  
The high and the low bend knee before thee.  
Raise them up, so they might sing your glory!*

When one intones this verse and traces one of the three ivory symbols with the index finger, this statuette casts one of the following seventh-level priest spells as a 16th-level priest: *resurrection*, *regenerate*, or *restoration* (or one of their baleful conjugates: *destruction*, *wither*, or *energy drain*). The talisman can use each of these spell-like powers once per day. In all cases, the statuette must touch the subject for its power (helpful or harmful) to take effect. Because this item is an artifact, a character has no saving throw to avoid the latter three dangerous functions. Only the talisman (or a priest of at least 16th level) can reverse its magic.

This item was meant to be used only by the clergy and followers of Shajar. In times of antiquity, the god's





ire descended swiftly on unbelievers who used the sacred relic for their own selfish ends. According to the legend, Princess Zoraya succeeded in resurrecting her beloved, but was turned into a crocodile immediately following her sacrilegious use of the artifact. Today, Shajar's power in the enlightened world remains thankfully weak, so his retribution against the user takes effect more slowly.

The talisman's curse makes itself apparent on the idol's owner as soon as its power is invoked, unless the individual has forsaken the enlightened gods completely and turned to the worship of Shajar. (The river god's true believers may call upon the statuette's power without fear of the curse.)

Upon the first use, the back of the user's neck, arms, hands, and body becomes covered with light reptilian scales. (These apply a -1 bonus to the victim's natural Armor Class and, if the skin is not covered, a -1 penalty to the Charisma score.) If a PC stops using the artifact at this point, the curse may be reversed by a priest of at least 16th level.

The second time the talisman is invoked, the owner's scales thicken and spread to cover visible areas of the face, hands, and feet; a 3-foot reptilian tail sprouts from the base of the character's spine; all the victim's hair falls out; and the character becomes colorblind. The character-now essentially a lizard man-may be restored to normal only with a wish.

Anyone foolish enough to use the talisman a third time becomes transformed into a giant crocodile. Characters thus afflicted soon lose all the memories of their previous existence and instinctively head for the nearest body of water to start their new lives.

## The Ruined Kingdoms

Today, most Zakharans know the eastern jungles as the Ruined Kingdoms, for the rain forests conceal hundreds of crumbling buildings, temples, and fortifications. In ages past, the empires of Nog and Kadar spread their influence south along the eastern coast all the way to the Grey Jungle. The city of Ysawis lies in this tropical land of southeastern Zakhara, an area that has remained sheathed in mystery and superstition since the enlightened west discovered it many centuries ago. (See the map on Card 3.)

Foreigners make up an important part of eastern society, though they constitute only a small segment of the total population. Most of the current inhabitants of the east, recently enlightened natives, descend from the small scattered tribes that once dominated the jungles. Distinguished by their tall and muscular build, fast and fluid gait, and superstitious nature, these people claim as ancestors the giants who ruled the jungles long before the first human kingdoms appeared. Though some natives act friendly, they are generally proud and xenophobic. Dwelling in deplorable poverty when compared with enlightened travelers from the west, they have developed a rich cultural tradition of ancient songs, stories, and legends, which sometimes gives insight into their mysterious heritage.

While Midani is the official language of city governments and trade, in the streets and bazaars of the mainland one still hears the strange, alien cadences of an ancient language known as Noga. Today few speak the truly ancient tongue, Kadari, which abounded during the times of past empires as far south as the lower Nogaro River valley.

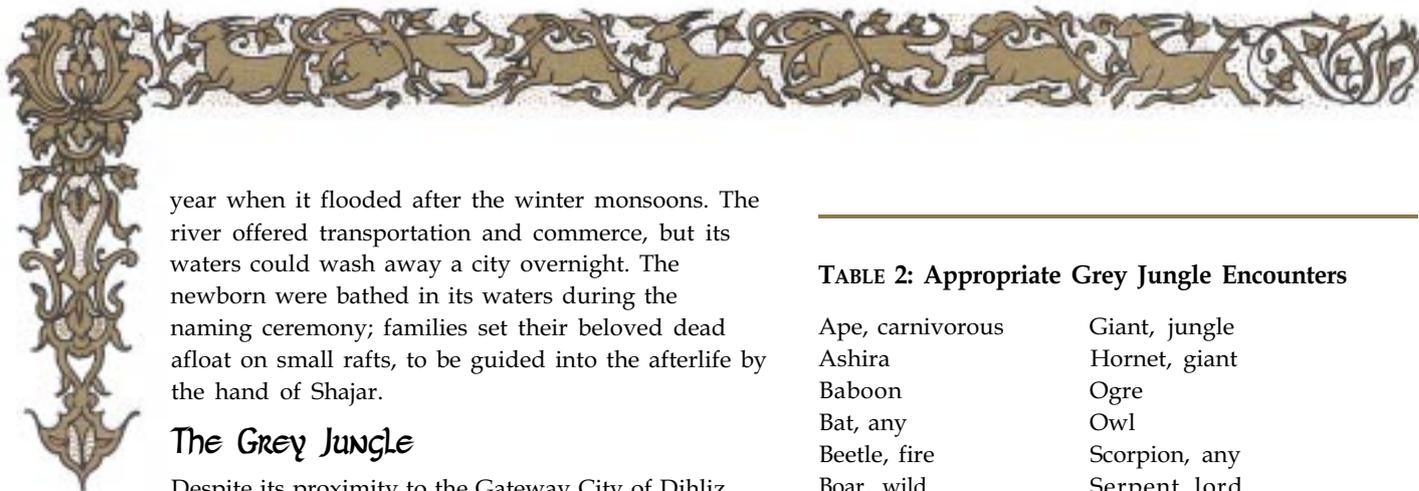
## The Cult of Shajar

The fall of the ancient civilizations came about due to religious conflicts. The wicked khedives of Nog and Kadar vehemently resisted the enlightenment, believing in the strength of their own savage gods. Some would have it that the enlightened deities created genies to punish the Ruined Kingdoms' sacrilege. A more plausible explanation is that the empires declined steadily due to corruption, greed, and exclusion from the prosperous, enlightened west.

Only the religions of Shajar, Ragarra, and Kiga (the Predator) have survived the difficult translation to modern times. With their worship fragmented into a number of small cults, they no longer share the political influence that they once enjoyed. The attainment of temporal power, or at least the right to worship in public, remains the long-term goal of these cults.

Natives of the mainland for centuries have worshiped the Nogaro River, manifested in the god Shajar: a hippopotamus-headed deity embracing life and death, growth and decay. Just as the river provided nourishing food, it also brought death each





year when it flooded after the winter monsoons. The river offered transportation and commerce, but its waters could wash away a city overnight. The newborn were bathed in its waters during the naming ceremony; families set their beloved dead afloat on small rafts, to be guided into the afterlife by the hand of Shajar.

### The Grey Jungle

Despite its proximity to the Gateway City of Dihliz downriver, the portion of the Grey Jungle around Ysawis remains a dense and inhospitable rain forest. (Nearby the jungle recedes into a land of dense scrub and hard soil.) Most human explorers avoid this jungle because of the inexplicable Grey Fever, a fatal disease that often claims travelers before they can be brought back to a village for healing. Again, refer to the map of the jungle and nearby enlightened cities on the front of Card 3.

As if the disease were not bad enough, this forest shelters many carnivorous jungle giants, some of which have developed the habit of eating sentient flesh. In the upper reaches of the rain forest live the dreaded yuan-ti, a wicked race of snake people. Even the ferocious local giants dare not encroach on the domain of these reptilian beasts.

Despite these dangers, the Grey Jungle contains a great number of treasure-laden ruins, including crumbling temples, grand palaces, haunting cemeteries, and princely tombs. The jungle also conceals the frightening city of Ysawis from the eyes of the enlightened world.



**TABLE 2: Appropriate Grey Jungle Encounters**

Ape, carnivorous	Giant, jungle
Ashira	Hornet, giant
Baboon	Ogre
Bat, any	Owl
Beetle, fire	Scorpion, any
Boar, wild	Serpent lord
Cat, great (jaguar, leopard, lion, tiger)	Serpent, winged
Dog, wild	Silat
Elephant, african	Snake, any
Elephant bird	Spider, any
Elf werelion	Toad, giant
	Yuan-ti

### Ysawis, City of The Dead

The ruined city of Ysawis no longer resembles the proud capital of days gone by. Although the sorcerers and their undead work daily to restore some shred of its former grandeur, the battle against time and the jungle will not be won quickly.

#### Rulers

Sumulael (hmW/aj/16) and Kazerabet (hfW/aj/16) preside over their city of undead, reveling in their necromantic luxury. (See the NPC booklet for details on these powerful wizards.) Both have put aside their quest for the lost Talisman of Shajar—for the time being, at least—and are concentrating on enjoying and expanding their necromantic realm.

#### The Court

A mysterious veiled merchant named Barak al-Gani (hmP/o/10) is a favorite visitor to Ysawis, as he provides the wizards with all the amenities the city's unskilled thralls cannot reproduce. The merchant, a pivotal character in the Adventure Book, has his own page in the NPC booklet.

Shalmaneser, a decrepit and senile lich, assists Kazerabet with the routine administration of the palace and city. Everyone at court calls him a harmless buffoon, but he wears his forgetfulness as a clever





facade. This important character is described in the NPC booklet as well.

Netocris bin Shalah, a pureblood yuan-ti (see MC), represents her people as an emissary to the court of the necromancers. Gracious and polite, Netocris appears human; she masquerades as a bored and decadent noblewoman from Kadarasto and dresses in scandalously revealing silks. Despite her benign and civil appearance, Netocris is as wickedly intelligent as the rest of her breed. The charming ambassador flashes her long, viperlike fangs only when enraged. She can spit blinding venom like a cobra, and her bite causes complete paralysis. Though in Ysawis on the pretense of discussing yuan-ti settling rights in the area, she truly aims to gauge the weaknesses of the two human necromancers.

The ambassador is never without her four menacing bodyguards: human-headed yuan-ti half-breeds with thick brown scales, human legs and arms, and long, serpentine tails. Although normally half-breeds enjoy superior status in yuan-ti society, Netocris's human form allows her ambassador rank, despite her lower (pureblood) social standing.

#### **Netocris bin Shalah, a yuan-ti pureblood:**

Int Genius; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12; HD 6; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d3 or by weapon; SA poisonous bite (save vs. poison or paralyzed for 2d4 rounds), spit venom (save vs. poison or blinded for 2d6 rounds), spells (see below); MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; MC; XP 5,000.

Magical items: *ring of protection* +3; *short sword* +1 (+3 against shapeshifters); *philter of glibness*.

Magical abilities (1/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*.

**Yuan-ti half-breed bodyguard (4):** Int Genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 8; hp 55; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon (great scimitar: 2d8+2); SA +2 on damage (18 Strength), tail constriction for 1d4 points of damage; spells (see below); MR 20%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 14; MC; XP 4,000.

Magical abilities (1/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*.

## Population

More than 5,000 animated skeletons and zombies lurk in and around Ysawis. All were animated by the necromancers. The number grows continually, for each day, Sumulael and Kazerabet add 20 to 30 more to the population.

## Features of The City

The most distinctive feature of Ysawis is its wealth of undead inhabitants. By day, they plod along the city streets in morose silence, fulfilling the tasks given them by their more intelligent overseers or by the necromancers themselves. Like mortal city folks, the undead clear away rubble from ruined buildings, cut back vegetation from the structures, tend the public gardens, and erect new roads and buildings.

Each night, the dead cease their labors and shuffle into the nearest structure, usually a ruined house or shop. There they lie down and rest until morning, when they commence their previous day's activity. Though the dead could work all night, the necromancers learned early on that they were less than productive in complete darkness. Kazerabet's long-range plans for Ysawis include setting up a citywide nocturnal illumination system, but for now she believes it more important to restore the city to its former glory.

The city's most striking and vital structure is the magnificent Jade Palace, detailed on the next page.

## Major Products

Ysawis produces no manufactured or cultivated goods, which forces the necromancers to import most of life's necessities. Their items of trade include antiquities and undead slaves.

## Armed Forces

The Jade Palace of the necromancers is guarded by an elite force of undead, including the animated remains of various monsters and several hundred ju-ju zombies. In times of war, the mages can turn their entire population into an army.

## Major Mosques

Temples to Ragarra and Kiga still stand in the city, as well as a small shrine of Shajar.





## Rumors and Lore

The wizards have numerous contacts and spies—both living and dead—in the outside world and are said to quietly manipulate events in nearby Kadarasto and Dihliz.

## Jade Palace of The Necromancers

The focal point for the adventure in Ysawis is the Jade Palace, a grand structure made of white sandstone. Details appear on the poster map. The pages here contain brief descriptions of the palace's major areas; feel free to flesh them out as desired.

### Magical Wards

When the necromancers arrived in Ysawis, the Jade Palace was fairly free of magical wards. Over time, as the necromancers drifted apart and became more reclusive and paranoid, they added antiscrying and antiteleportation wards to their private quarters (specifically the *harim* and the Bone Pavilion). The rest of the palace remains unwarded.

To further ensure their privacy, especially from nosy living visitors, the king and queen have utilized the spell *improved skull watch*, which they learned from Sumulael's foreign tutor. (Details in the sidebar to the right originally appeared in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Adventures* hardcover.)

### Inhabitants and Defenders

At least a thousand undead roam the corridors of the palace, organized in an efficient hierarchy by Shalmaneser. (Since *continual light* illuminates the corridors, scenes of unrelenting activity take place here at all hours.) Most of the palace's inhabitants are animated skeletons and zombies. Some tend the immaculate gardens and bathing pools, and a few act as messengers and body servants in the guest rooms, but the majority make up the strange bureaucracy detailed below.

The palace is effectively maintained and guarded by more than 300 ju-ju zombies, which wear antique banded armor and shields bearing the griffon and vishap, ancient animal symbols of Ysawis. Most have spears and scimitars, but a few carry crossbows and polearms. More intelligent than the lesser skeleton and zombie thralls,

## Improved Skull Watch

(Fifth-level Wizard Spell)

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M

**Duration:** Until activated

**Casting time:** 6

**Area of effect:** 20-foot by 90-foot path

**Saving throw:** None

Necromancers, often those with large, permanent bases like Sumulael and Kazerabet, can enchant a skull sitting on a surface (such as a table) or levitating in a fixed spot to act as a guard. The skull can watch an area in front of it 20 feet wide and 90 feet long. When triggered by a living, sentient creature entering this field, the activated skull lets loose a scream that can be heard a quarter of a mile away (or 1,320 feet).

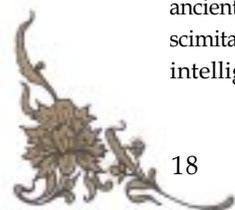
At the same time, it mentally communicates general visual data about the intruder(s) to its creator (race, appearance, visible weapons, etc., but not alignment, level, or magical abilities), if the caster is on the same plane as the skull.

Once the watching skull is in place, it cannot be turned or moved. The skull has AC 5 and 32 hit points (2 for each level of the caster). A skull can be rendered inactive with *dispel magic* or be physically destroyed by normal weapons (but its creator still learns the skull has been deactivated).

The necromancers each can control up to 16 skulls at once—a number equal to their level. Skull watchers' screams all sound alike, but the creator can tell the location of the activated one. The skulls remain active even after the creator dies or becomes undead, but they disintegrate after activating. The material components are earwax and the skull of a humanoid, intelligent being.

they serve as chief lieutenants of the wizards and Shalmaneser. On the DM's palace map on the front of Card 6, icons indicate permanent guard stations for two to five (1d4+1) ju-ju zombies.

The necromancers have an elite guard of jungle giant zombies; in life, these creatures belonged to





the native Silent Arrow Clan, which foolishly attacked Ysawis, thinking to drive away the puny human settlers from the clan's hunting grounds. Now the entire tribe serves Sumulael, protecting his garden and pavilion. Twelve of these powerful zombies patrol the palace. Permanent guard stations for one to two giant zombies are denoted on the DM's palace map by special icons.

Finally, the necromancers have scattered a number of skull watchers around the palace (enchanted with the improved skull watch spell, described earlier) as final security measures against living visitors. The king and queen each have 16 enchanted skulls active at a given time, denoted by symbols on the DM's palace map; the arrow indicates which direction the skull watches.

The "standard undead immunities" mentioned in monster statistics in this chapter are as follows: not affected by *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, nor by cold-based, poison, and paralyzation attacks.

**Skeleton:** Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 1-8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SD edged weapons cause half damage, standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML special; MC; XP 35.

**Zombie:** Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 2-8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML special; MC; XP 65.

**Ju-ju zombie:** Int Low; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d12 or by weapon; SD magic weapons to hit (blunt weapons inflict half damage), standard undead immunities, unaffected by *lightning*, *magic missiles* and mind-affecting spells, fire does half damage; SZ M (6'); ML 20; XP 975.

**Jungle giant zombie (12):** Int Non; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 13; hp 65; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg, 2d8+9; SD standard undead immunities; SZ H (18' tall); ML 16; MC13; XP 7,000.

**Skull watcher (32):** Int Non; AL N; AC 5; MV 0; hp 32; SA piercing scream alerts its creator; SD standard undead immunities; SZ T; ML special; FORGOTTEN REALMS *Adventures*; XP 65.

## Random Encounters

Any party investigating the inner palace on its own risks a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter each turn. With the palace under alert, check twice per turn. During a combat encounter, check to see if the noise attracts a new group to the scene (same chances as a random encounter). Consult Table 3 when a random encounter occurs.

TABLE 3: Inner Palace Encounters (d12)

1	Kazerabet with ju-ju zombies (2d4)
2	Shalmaneser
3-4	Ju-ju zombies (2d4)
5-6	Zombies (2d6)
7-9	Skeletons (4d4)
10	Skull watcher (set up by Sumulael as a practical joke in a public area of palace)
11	Netocris with bodyguards
12	Sumulael with giant zombies (1d4)

In the Jade Palace's public sections, undead usually ignore visitors, unless attacked or directed by their superiors to do otherwise. In ceremonial areas, undead eject snooping guests and make arrests if they meet resistance. The penalty for being caught in a private area of the palace is much harsher, meted out by the necromancers themselves after a painful interrogation.

## Public and Ceremonial Areas

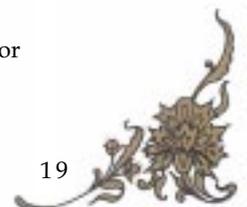
The following locations correspond to the details on the poster map and the DM's version on the front of Card 6.

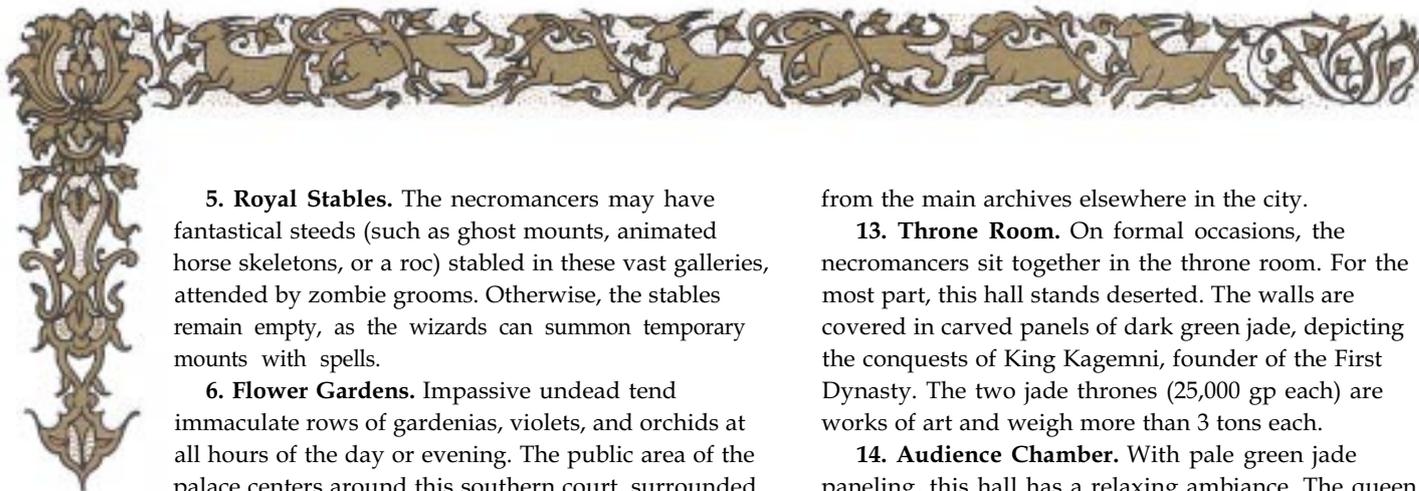
**1. Northern Court.** Originally a first line of defense for the palace, the northern court is covered mostly by manicured grass lawns.

**2. Main Gatehouse.** Ju-ju zombies armed with crossbows fill this two-story fortification. Four roof ballistae can fire within or outside the palace.

**3. Galleries.** Some vaults along the northern court contain gardening supplies or chests holding weapons and armor wrapped in oilcloths.

**4. Riding Court.** The packed-dirt floor of the western courtyard once served as a practice yard for the royal horses.





**5. Royal Stables.** The necromancers may have fantastical steeds (such as ghost mounts, animated horse skeletons, or a roc) stabled in these vast galleries, attended by zombie grooms. Otherwise, the stables remain empty, as the wizards can summon temporary mounts with spells.

**6. Flower Gardens.** Impassive undead tend immaculate rows of gardenias, violets, and orchids at all hours of the day or evening. The public area of the palace centers around this southern court, surrounded by a colonnaded and vaulted walkway.

**7. Guest Rooms and Parlors.** These private sleeping and living areas radiate out from the gardens. Each is lined with intricately carved jade panels, commissioned by more than 10 dynasties of the city's rulers; panels vary from deep green and bone white to dusky rose and vibrant red.

**8. Dining Room.** This long, cavernous hall features many cracked marble columns and decaying tapestries. A rotting carpet (partially hidden by smaller rugs and embroidered pillows imported by the wizards) covers its entire length. Small brass braziers fill the room with sweet incense to offset the scent of mold and decay. The necromancers dine here together at least once a week (more often if they have visitors), but normally the undead servants carry the wizards' meals to their private chambers.

**9. Stairwells.** Spiral staircases lead up to the second floor of guest apartments (identical in plan to those on the first floor in Area 7) and eventually to the flat roof. To expand the palace, let the stairs descend to a basement or dungeon.

**10. Shrine of Shajar.** The wizards maintain this small shrine, as they occasionally worship this forgotten god of necromantic powers. The carved jade panels in this holy chamber depict river scenes, and an alabaster statue of Shajar (a muscular human male with a hippopotamus head) stands against the southern wall.

**11. Royal Gardens.** This small, secluded garden courtyard—one of the queen's favorite spots for a quiet stroll—separates the public section of the palace from the ceremonial and private areas.

**12. Royal Library.** Shalmaneser spends most of his time in the royal library directing the kingdom's massive bureaucracy. Undead secretaries and scribes constantly work here to dispatch and file messages

from the main archives elsewhere in the city.

**13. Throne Room.** On formal occasions, the necromancers sit together in the throne room. For the most part, this hall stands deserted. The walls are covered in carved panels of dark green jade, depicting the conquests of King Kagemni, founder of the First Dynasty. The two jade thrones (25,000 gp each) are works of art and weigh more than 3 tons each.

**14. Audience Chamber.** With pale green jade paneling, this hall has a relaxing ambiance. The queen prefers this intimate chamber to the imperious throne room when receiving visitors.

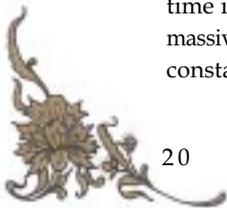
### The Queen's Private Chambers

Kazerabet spends most of her time in the *harim*, which she decorates with priceless treasures exhumed from the royal cemetery outside Ysawis. All the *harim's* chambers contain small braziers breathing faint clouds of rose-scented incense.

**15. Private Bathing Pool.** The *harim* surrounds this hushed, echoing chamber. The huge bathing pool and carved alabaster pillars lie beneath a domed, golden mosaic ceiling. Small alcoves along the perimeter contain plush couches and 12 handsome ju-ju zombies waiting to massage bathers with aromatic oils. (Kazerabet uses her powerful magic to maintain their appearances, as she does so like pretty things.) Currently only the queen enjoys these pleasant waters, though she may extend the courtesy to female visitors.

**16. Queen's Study.** The walls of this chamber are lined with tall bookshelves crammed with tomes on a wide variety of subjects: botany, astrology, magic (many on necromancy), alchemy, religions of the ancient empires, ancient history (of the Ruined Kingdoms, Afyal, and the Haunted Lands), poetry of Afyal and Nog (including the epic *Kinslayer*), Kadari architecture, mathematics, civil engineering, mining, and monster biology.

Kazerabet also keeps a few magical tomes here for reference, including a *tome of mystical equations\**, *manual of dogmatic methods\**, *manual of automata* (similar to a *manual of golems*), and 1 to 8 (1d8) traveling spell books she has acquired over the years. Each book holds 2 to 8 (2d4) spells of first to fourth level from the Illusion and Charm schools, which a necromancer cannot learn. The queen stores her main





spell books in her apartments and the Gallery of Antiquities (Areas 17 and 19).

A few low tables near the shelves hold neat piles of notes about the queen's search for the Talisman of Shajar, which started during her studies at Hilm. On the floor rests a fabulous carpet (worth 5,000 gp) of a quality suitable for enchantment (one of the queen's future projects).

Normally the *wizard locked* door and a skull watcher provide ample protection against intrusion, but Shalmaneser can bypass both (the former with a knock spell and the latter because of his undead status). He secretly copies from minor spell books when Kazerabet is elsewhere.

**17. Queen's Apartments.** Kazerabet spends little time in her opulent apartments, except to study the books containing all the spells she usually has memorized. She keeps these precious tomes in a *fire-trapped* coffer (1d4+16 points of damage, half if save) beneath a mother of pearl *talisman of memorization\** shaped like a crescent moon. Her canopied bed is covered with silken sheets and surrounded by an opalescent curtain to keep out night insects. A *tapestry of disease warding\** (against the Grey Fever) hangs over jade mosaics on the north wall. Adjacent rooms hold hundreds of silk and embroidered dresses, slippers, and veils: a wardrobe worth a fortune (15,000 gp) if transported back to civilization.

Two handsome ju-ju zombies, the queen's body servants, wait patiently in this room to serve their mistress behind *wizard locked* doors. Three strategically placed skull watchers also protect the apartments. Finally, an stuffed albino tiger stands in a neglected corner of the room, one of Sumulael's first gifts to Kazerabet during their courtship in Hilm. It is really a cleverly preserved, cinnamon-scented tiger zombie, which can become animate to attack living intruders.

**Stuffed tiger zombie:** Int Non; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 7+5; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/2d6; SA rear claws (2d4 each); SD standard undead immunities; SZ L (9' long); ML special; XP 2,000.

**18. Eastern Apartments.** Sumulael used to reside in richly decorated chambers when the two

necromancers discovered the Jade Palace. He moved out a few years ago, once his Bone Pavilion was completed-his wife had begun to find his appearance abhorrent and behavior intolerable. The eastern suite has stood empty ever since.

**19. Gallery of Antiquities.** In the treasury of Ysawis, Kazerabet hoards the riches of her realm, carried in from catacombs by servants. The thresholds are warded by *symbols of insanity*, which glow malevolently and discharge when approached within 5 feet. Inside, four skull watchers survey the chamber. Though three are within clear sight of the doors, a fourth enchanted skull is cleverly concealed. (See below.)

The queen has used necromantic runes inscribed on the walls, floor, and ceiling to bind seven spectres in this chamber. These hateful spirits haunted the palace when the necromancers arrived. The wizards quickly subjugated them; now they vent their fury by draining the life energy of any who enter their prison-unless one of the feared necromancers accompanies the visitor.

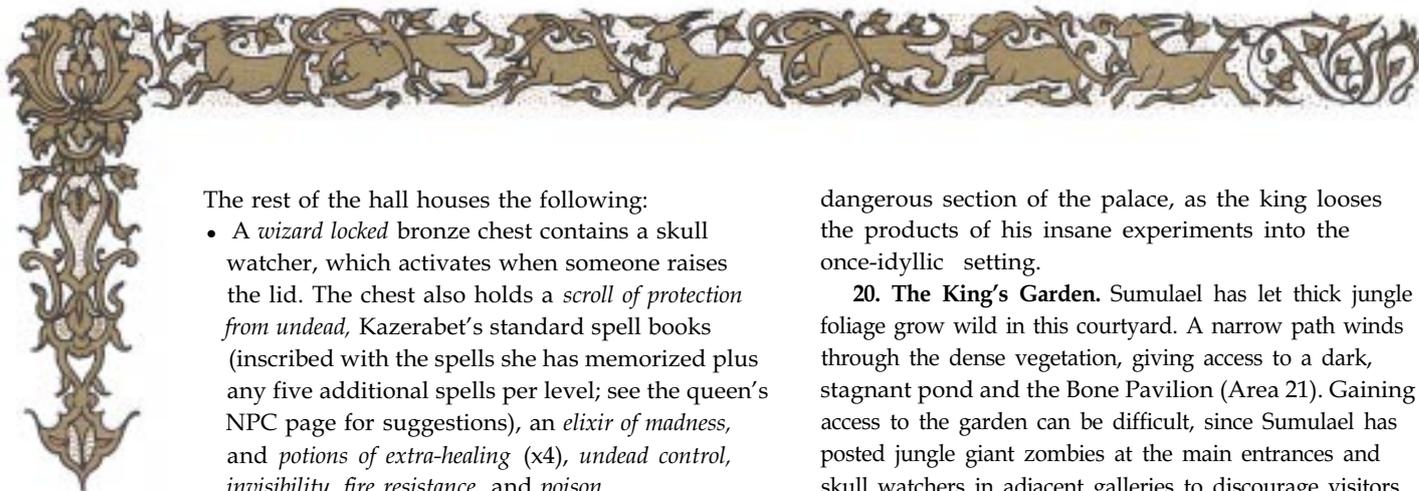
**Spectre (7):** Int High; AL LE; AC 2; MV 15, Fl 30 (B); HD 7+3; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, standard undead immunities; ML special due to binding; SZ M; MC; XP 3,000.

The hall holds 73 ancient bronze urns (250 gp each) covered with detailed reliefs. Each urn but one contains 2,000 ancient coins, minted in Ysawis and stamped with the profiles of historic rulers. Of the urns, 10 contain copper coins, 16 silver, 12 electrum, 30 gold, and 4 platinum.

Note that these coins, if sold in small quantities to dealers of antiquities in nearby cities, might yield much more wealth than one might expect. For instance, some copper coins from the reign of King Kagemni (the first ruler of Ysawis) are worth 1 to 100 gp each, depending on the dealer, the city, and the quantity sold at once.

The king and queen pay Barak the merchant from the remaining urn, piled high with black sapphires, rubies, fire opals, amethysts, and diamonds, in total worth well over 500,000 gp. This urn will be much emptier if the mages recently have had to pay for caravan goods.





The rest of the hall houses the following:

- A *wizard locked* bronze chest contains a skull watcher, which activates when someone raises the lid. The chest also holds a *scroll of protection from undead*, Kazerabet's standard spell books (inscribed with the spells she has memorized plus any five additional spells per level; see the queen's NPC page for suggestions), an *elixir of madness*, and *potions of extra-healing* (x4), *undead control*, *invisibility*, *fire resistance*, and *poison*.
- A locked steel coffer (1,000 gp) bears etchings of a coiled winged serpent. Its lock is trapped with a dreambliss-venomed needle (save vs. poison or sleep for 2 to 8 (2d4) hours, onset time 1 round; see sidebar this page for more on dreambliss). The coffer contains a golden *necklace of strangulation* (worth 7,500 gp if its fatal curse is removed). From it hangs a small crystal vial filled with greenish liquid (potion of longevity).
- The queen has *wizard locked* a polished mahogany chest (1,500 gp) holding 267 jade rings (100 gp each). Seven are magical: *rings of protection +1*, *invisibility*, *delusion*, *feather falling*, *water walking*, *truth*, and *jumping*.
- The four magical weapons in the chamber include: a flanged *horseman's mace* +4 with a rose marble head and bronze handle; a *spear* +3 with a carved ebony haft; a *jamaiya* +3 (+6 against fire-using or -dwelling creatures) with a jade hilt and scabbard, called *Firebane*; and a *scimitar of speed* +2 with crossguards of entwined, biting snakes, and an ivory hilt, named *Sundancer*.
- The treasury boasts a variety of magical armor: a suit of ancient bronze *plate mail* +2, sized for a human child but wearable by a halfling or gnome; hide *armor* +3, sized for a female human (or an elf) and crafted from the hide of a giant crocodile; golden *ring mail* +2, sized for a dwarf; a black medium *shield* +2 with a red falcon insignia; and a heavy bronze gauntlet of ogre power, which provides 18/00 Strength to one arm.

## Sumulael's Domain

After Sumulael estranged his wife, he moved out of the *harim* to a repulsive and perverted pavilion in the east gardens of the palace. This is easily the most

dangerous section of the palace, as the king looses the products of his insane experiments into the once-idyllic setting.

**20. The King's Garden.** Sumulael has let thick jungle foliage grow wild in this courtyard. A narrow path winds through the dense vegetation, giving access to a dark, stagnant pond and the Bone Pavilion (Area 21). Gaining access to the garden can be difficult, since Sumulael has posted jungle giant zombies at the main entrances and skull watchers in adjacent galleries to discourage visitors (see palace map for their fixed locations).

In addition, Sumulael has released a number of his undead creations (the results of his twisted magical experiments) into the garden for his own amusement. Necromantic wards prevent these wandering creatures from escaping his "undead zoo" or approaching the Bone Pavilion.

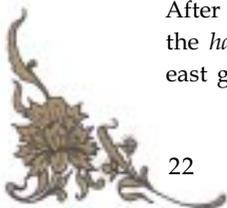
### Dreambliss

Sumulael relies on merchants to replenish his supply of this potent, sleep-inducing poison, most common in the northern Free Cities, where it sells for 200 to 500 gp per tiny dose. The venom costs up to 1,000 gp per dose in Dihliz.

Victims struck by a dreambliss-coated weapon must save vs. poison to resist its effect. Those failing their saves fall into a euphoric "Sleep of Bliss" lasting 2 to 8 (2d4) hours. The poison's onset time depends on the victim's size: S size creatures take 1 round to become affected, M take 1 to 2 rounds, and L or G require 2 to 5 rounds. Upon waking from the poison-induced slumber, most remember dreamlike visions they long to reexperience.

The misguided wealthy, like Sumulael, may use dreambliss to induce the "Sleep of Bliss" in themselves, but the poison quickly drains them of all Wisdom (permanent loss of 1 point per month of repeated use) and wealth. The poison's effectiveness against even large creatures makes it a popular weapon among adventurers in the north.

Details on dreambliss first appeared in *A Dozen and One Adventures* (ALQ3).





Currently, 26 lacedons and 17 shadows roam the garden, though parties will never encounter them all at once. The undead usually wander about the garden in small, independent groups of 1 to 6 (1d6) creatures. During the day, characters face a 1 in 6 chance of randomly encountering a group of lacedons that have emerged from the depths of the murky pool; at night, a party risks a 3 in 6 chance of meeting a pack of shadows from either the dense foliage or the surrounding galleries (depending upon the party's location). Note that the shadows are repulsed by bright light; a *continual light* spell should keep them at bay.

**Lacedon (26):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation lasts 1d6+2 rounds; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; MC; XP 175.

**Shadow (17):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Strength drain; SD +1 weapon to hit, standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML special; MC; XP 650.

**21. The Bone Pavilion.** This nightmarish structure, made of porphyry the color of blanched bones, dominates the eastern courtyard of the palace. Alabaster statues decorate the lofty walls, the outer patio, and the domed roof; the statues depict twisted skeletons in a phantasmagoric dance. The entire pavilion radiates a disturbing aura of anguish, madness, and evil.

Since a party likely will explore this complex thoroughly, detailed plans of the pavilion appear on the poster map. Unless stated otherwise, pale green *continual light* illuminates the interior, and wards against divination and teleportation prevent Kazerabet from visiting her husband's domain.

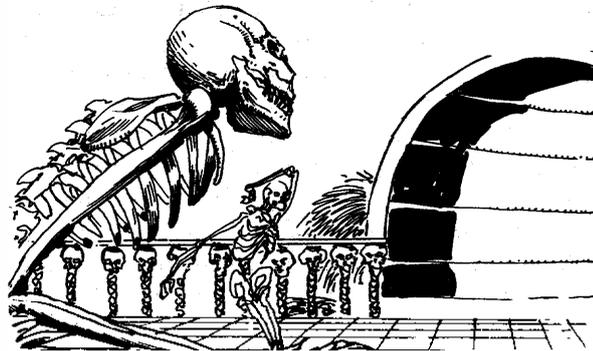
**21a. Patio.** An outer veranda, reached using a white marble set of stairs, surrounds Sumulael's pavilion. The necromancer has adorned this patio with 18 jarring sculptures, each assembled from the parts of up to a dozen human skeletons. For added amusement, Sumulael has animated these monstrosities for use in emergencies. Normally they stand motionless on the veranda awaiting his commands, but occasionally he orders them to turn their heads and stare impassively at visitors.

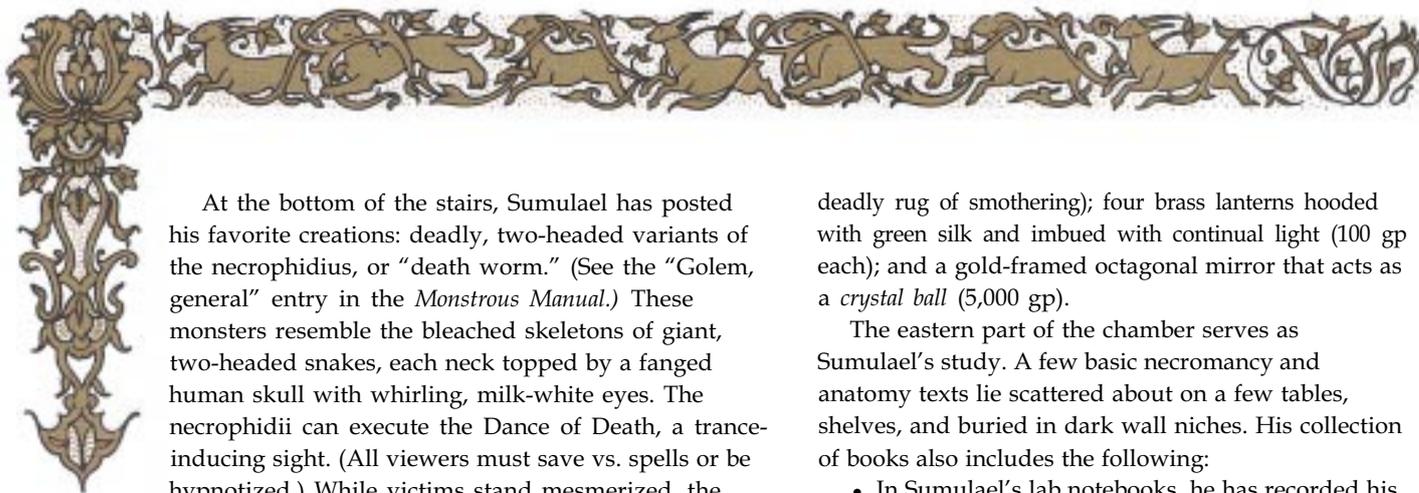
**Skeletal sculpture (18):** Int Non; AL N; AC 6; MV 3; HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6 (x4); SA edged weapons inflict half damage; SD standard undead immunities; SZ L (9' tall); ML special; XP 650.

**21b. Pavilion.** Wide stone archways, hung with silk draperies, lead from the veranda into Sumulael's pavilion. The walls and domed ceiling are lined with bone-white jade, carved to depict skeletal armies laying siege to a human city and slaughtering its defenders. The interior boasts scattered priceless rugs, cushions, hookahs, and low couches-occasionally sprinkled with dark brown splotches (dried blood). In the center of the room lies a 10-foot-square area enveloped in darkness (see Area 21c). This pit of pitch blackness breathes a stench of putrescence.

The pavilion is Sumulael's living area, where he often relaxes with his favorite courtier, Netocris bin Shalah, and her four half-breed bodyguards. The yuan-ti ambassador adores the pavilion and rarely leaves except to accompany the king on public appearances and to deliver messages. The king permits all the yuan-ti to sleep here when he retires below to his own chambers.

**21c. Stairwell.** Sumulael has cloaked the spiral staircase leading down into his private apartments with a magical curtain of darkness, which snuffs out all light meeting its pitch black surface. Magical and normal lights automatically die within the stairwell, but can be recast or relit immediately after the PCs pass through the darkness; the soft glow of magical swords and daggers takes 1 to 10 (1d10) rounds to return after the weapon has passed through this inky barrier. The curtain has no other ill effects; to challenge an experienced party, include a permanent *dispel magic* zone just beyond the curtain of darkness.





At the bottom of the stairs, Sumulael has posted his favorite creations: deadly, two-headed variants of the necrophidius, or “death worm.” (See the “Golem, general” entry in the *Monstrous Manual*.) These monsters resemble the bleached skeletons of giant, two-headed snakes, each neck topped by a fanged human skull with whirling, milk-white eyes. The necrophidii can execute the Dance of Death, a trance-inducing sight. (All viewers must save vs. spells or be hypnotized.) While victims stand mesmerized, the necrophidii advance to deliver their poisonous bites. The bites cause paralysis lasting 1 to 4 (1d4) turns unless another save vs. spells succeeds. Despite their appearance, these creatures are not undead and cannot be turned.

The necrophidii lurk in the shadows under the spiral stairs, springing out at intruders with blinding speed (+2 penalty to the PCs’ surprise). They have orders to immobilize uninvited visitors until Sumulael can “welcome” them. While normal necrophidii may not be instilled with identical purposes, Sumulael placed no such restrictions on the two-headed variety he invented using his own personal necrophidicon.

**Two-headed necrophidius (2):** Int Avg; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8; SA hypnotizing dance, paralyzing bite; SD immune to poison and mind-influencing spells; SZ L (12’ long); ML 20; MM; XP 975.

**21d. Private Chambers.** This spacious apartment reeks of stale sweat mingled with incense. A skull watcher levitates before the *wizard locked* door, and 12 once-beautiful ju-ju zombies stand by the walls, ready to serve their lord or attack uninvited visitors. These myrrh-scented zombies wear the fashion of ancient queens and princesses of Ysawis, including 1 to 4 (1d4) pieces of jewelry, worth 1,000 gp each.

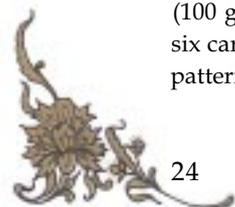
The western half of the chamber contains costly and magical furnishings: a sturdy teak bed carved with dark, leering faces (10,000 gp); six ceramic bowls on mahogany stands (250 gp each), containing tepid water tinged with blood (for Sumulael to wash his hands after his experiments); 10 spherical iron braziers (100 gp each), respiring thick clouds of heavy incense; six carpets woven with elaborate burgundy and black patterns (5,000 gp each—one is an attractive but

deadly rug of smothering); four brass lanterns hooded with green silk and imbued with continual light (100 gp each); and a gold-framed octagonal mirror that acts as a *crystal ball* (5,000 gp).

The eastern part of the chamber serves as Sumulael’s study. A few basic necromancy and anatomy texts lie scattered about on a few tables, shelves, and buried in dark wall niches. His collection of books also includes the following:

- In Sumulael’s lab notebooks, he has recorded his attempts to locate the seat of the life force, or soul, in the organs of the human body. The annotated diagrams clearly represent the work of an evil, depraved mind. The notebooks also contain the forbidden rites for creating ghouls, ju-ju zombies, *igrencherifs* (see Area 21g), shadows, and homonculi.
- The wizard’s necrophidicon, *Tome of the Death Worm*, resembles a *manual of the golems*. Notes Sumulael has scribbled in the margins describe how to extend the recipe to make the two-headed variant necrophidius from Area 21c.
- The king keeps his spell book, Sumulael’s *Grimoire*, in one of the recessed wall niches, obscured by *darkness*, 15’ radius and resting behind an ever-vigilant skull watcher. Perusing the tome would prove extremely dangerous, for Sumulael booby-trapped it with: a tiny *symbol of pain* in the title on the spine; a *fire trap* on the inside and back covers (1d4+16 points of damage, half if save); and *explosive runes* in the table of contents (6d4+6 points of damage, no save).

The book contains the spells Sumulael has memorized (see his description in the NPC booklet) plus *detect magic*, *comprehend languages*, *feather fall*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *mending*, *message*, *Murdock’s feathery flyer\**, *shield*, *unseen servant*; *continual light*, *darkness 15’ radius*, *detect evil/good*, *ESP*, *knock*, *locate object*, *past life\**, *protection from paralysis\**, *shatter*, *web*, *wizard lock*; *blink*, *clairvoyance*, *explosive runes*, *feign death*, *infravision*, *wizard sight\**; *dimension door*, *fire trap*, *polymorph other*, *mask of death\**, *remove curse*; *cone of cold*, *contact other plane*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*; *chain lightning*, *legend lore*, *enchant an item*, *globe of invulnerability*; *Blood-stone’s frightful joining\**, *forcecage*, *lifeproof*; *demand*, *permanency*, *symbol*.





**21e. Laboratory.** The putrid stench from this evil chamber easily permeates its *wizard locked* doors. The room contains the obsidian laboratory tables, ceramic pots of collected blood, racks of grisly scalpels and surgical implements, and horrific restraining devices Sumulael uses in his experiments on unfortunate victims. Once his subjects expire, the necromancer either animates them to become his newest servants or sets loose their twisted remains to roam and prey on visitors in his garden. Sometimes the king allows the yuan-ti ambassador to witness his experiments, but he never permits Netocris to remain for long.

**21f. Cell.** Sumulael houses the subjects awaiting his next experiments in this dank, smelly prison. The only exit, a thick bronze door, is *wizard locked*. Generally the mage uses as subjects members of merchant caravans that visit Ysawis.

**21g. Holding Pen.** A skull watcher surveys this chamber, which encloses Sumulael's most unpredictable creations: six horrid *igrencherifs* (pronounced ee-rench-air-EEFS, meaning "disgusting brutes"), which superficially resemble zombies. Their heads are devoid of skin, and writhing green worms crawl in and out of every skull orifice. These hideous undead will prove difficult for characters to destroy, as they regenerate 2 hit points per round. Only fire, lightning, acid, cold iron, and holy water cause them permanent damage. Priests can turn them as mummies.

During melee, the green worms from the *igrencherifs* attempt to infiltrate the bodies of those nearby. Such victims become *igrencherifs* in 2 to 5 (1d4+1) rounds unless the worm is killed by cold iron, holy water, or a blessed object during the first round or by a *remove curse* or *cure disease* spell after it has burrowed into the victim's skin. Furthermore, the creatures *radiate fear* in a 30-foot radius, and their scabrous touch has a 25 percent chance of inflicting the victim with a disease, which is fatal unless magically cured within six months.

Sumulael has cultivated all these monsters carefully from a single green worm, which he stole from the university laboratory in Hilm. (Rumor has it the green worm had otherworldly origins; see the "Kyuss, Son of entry in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM appendix for the GREYHAWK® setting, MC5.

After his expulsion from the university, the necromancer introduced the worm into a victim in

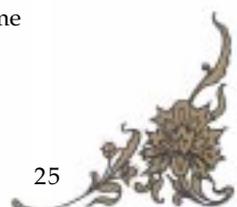
Rog'osto. He observed the subject's development into what he later named an *igrencherif*. Since then, Sumulael has been trying (unsuccessfully) to create a breed of sane *igrencherif* that would follow his commands. The mage has to destroy these undead after each attempt, as ultimately they become too violent and unpredictable for even him to control.

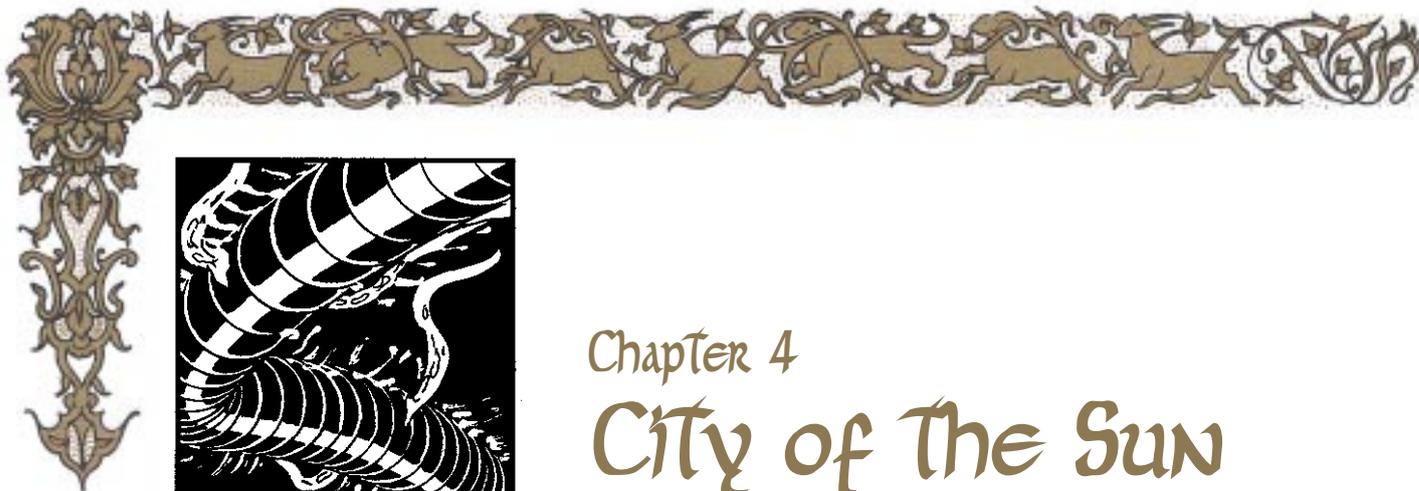
For now, the six *igrencherifs* in the holding pen are untamed but favored pets. They guard (along with the skull watcher) a massive, *wizard locked* bronze trap door. This portal leads to vaults below that contain the necromancer's *lifeproofing* receptacle and the *shadow of his heart*. The trap door weighs 800 pounds and requires a bend bars check to lift once the *wizard lock* is disarmed.

**Igrencherif (6):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 10; MV 9; HD 4; hp 20,24,25,27,29,30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA fear, green worms, touch causes disease; SD regeneration, standard undead immunities; ML special; SZ M; XP 1,400.

**21h. Lowest Vault.** This large, colonnaded hall wraps around the lower gallery and can be reached from Area 21g only via a heavy trap door Sumulael has placed eight skull watchers (arranged at the eight cardinal points of the compass) and four jungle giant zombies in this area to detect and destroy intruders before they can harm the *shadow of his heart*. (See below.)

**21i. Pit of the Heart.** In the center of the lowest vault in the pavilion, stairs descend to a wide, circular altar. The carved porphyry bears inscriptions: dire necromantic runes that cause pestilence, plague, and decay. Each round PCs spend within 10 feet of the altar, have them roll two saving throws vs. spells (-1 penalty) or become affected by the warding *contagion* and *enervation* fields, established by Sumulael as a final defense for his soul. In the midst of the baleful runes on the altar rests a magnificent emerald more than 6 inches in diameter, gleaming with a sickly inner light. This is Sumulael's *lifeproofing* receptacle, the magic vessel containing his life force. If it is smashed, the evil mage immediately dies, and his creations become free willed undead (until Kazerabet subjugates them).





## Chapter 4

# City of The Sun

*The ages passed, crushing with their invisible feet the feeble acts of the civilizations, and the goddess of Love and Beauty left the country. A strange and fickle goddess took her place. She destroyed the magnificent temples of the City of the Sun and demolished its beautiful palaces. The blooming orchards and fertile prairies were laid waste, and nothing was left in that spot save ruins commemorating to the aching souls the ghosts of Yesterday, reputing to the sorrowful spirits only the echo of the hymns of glory.*

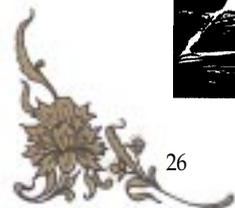
—Khalil Gibran, from “Ashes of the Ages and Eternal Fire”

**M**oradask was built on the shores of an inland salt lake, called the Jacinth Sea for its emerald-hued waters. The city quickly grew into a prospering metropolis, for it boasted mines rich in limestone and gems. Moradask’s stone cutters soon became renowned for their ability to shape rock into graceful creations. Architects raised sky-reaching towers to stand for all eternity, while gem cutters fashioned the greatest jewelry the world has ever known, including such masterpieces as the fabled Tri-Fold Crown of Pure Delight, the Jade Scepter of the Writhing Serpents, and the Peacock Throne.

As decades passed, the wealth and pride of Moradask increased. Eventually, the citizens began to look on their own creations as semidivine achievements. The proud inhabitants began to worship as gods their own beautiful idols, masterfully carved from the finest jade, alabaster, and ivory. Soon the people of Moradask grew corrupted by their own success. When they no longer cared to work to support their own decadence, the cold living idols whispered that they might steal from their undeserving neighbors.

And so the citizens of Moradask prepared for war, turning their attentions from artistic and technological achievements to the practice of bloodshed. Armies swept out of the city and descended upon defenseless neighbors, who were ill-equipped to withstand the onslaught. For one year the skies darkened with black, sooty battle smoke, and streets ran crimson with the blood of innocents. Many Zakharians were captured and brought to Moradask in slavery, but some escaped to tell of the city’s sinister deeds.

This bellicose phase did not last long, for sloth and greed, not imperial aspirations, drove the people of Moradask. The victorious armies returned home laden with booty, and once again the populace grew fat and lazy with success.





But the next year, when the troops departed for another season of looting, they met the prepared armies of the First Grand Caliph, who harried them all the way back to their depraved city. The forces of the enlightenment eventually captured and plundered Moradask, but the most wicked citizens escaped into a network of catacombs beneath the city to continue their idolatrous ways. The Grand Caliph's armies departed, leaving Moradask a gutted ruin.

The sundering hand of Fate assured that Moradask never recovered from its great defeat. First, the beautiful Jacinth Sea dried up into the forbidding Sea of Salt. Moradask's fertile valley soon became a rocky, alkaline desert, incapable of supporting life. The city's few surviving inhabitants could not live off the land and found themselves shunned and distrusted by their neighbors. Before long, the entire city stood abandoned by inhabitants forced by famine and disease to move elsewhere.

Stored underground during the First Grand Caliph's short occupation, Moradask's legendary idols never again graced their aboveground temples and shrines, even after the invading armies departed. Most of the idols' worshipers had barricaded themselves in the farthest reaches of the city's underground catacombs, some of which were rumored to extend beneath the Jacinth Sea. Few of these faithful followers ever emerged from the caverns; they starved themselves in the abysmal depths of the earth and sacrificed themselves to their twisted creations. Their restless spirits haunt the catacombs to this day, despising the light and the life they had foolishly squandered.

## Treasures of Moradask

**D**uring its peaceful early years, Moradask was renowned for its exquisite jewelry, stonework, architecture, and metal working. Today, the catacombs beneath the ruined city conceal ancient, forgotten treasures, which were spirited below to escape the notice of the plundering armies of the First Grand Caliph. The catacombs also contain a variety of unique plants, animals, and monsters, many of which are indispensable components for creating potions and enchanting magical items. This section details an ancient treasure and a rare magical component, both found only in the vicinity of Moradask.

## The Peacock Throne

When Nawal abu Yashid inherited the crown of Moradask many centuries ago, the seven thrones bequeathed by his forbears were not suitably impressive for his ostentatious taste. The young king commissioned a new throne to impress visitors with his limitless power and wealth.

Goldsmiths, jewelry designers, and gem cutters labored for three years to fashion a breathtaking throne encrusted with more than a thousand precious jewels. Twelve pearl-encrusted pillars encircled the throne, each filigreed with electrum designs and topped by a diamond-eyed peacock of wrought gold. The pillars supported an embroidered silk canopy to shelter the throne's solid gold seat, whose platinum back was carved in the shape of long peacock feathers. No throne built before or after (not even that of the Grand Caliph in Huzuz) ever has come close to rivaling the legendary Peacock Throne.

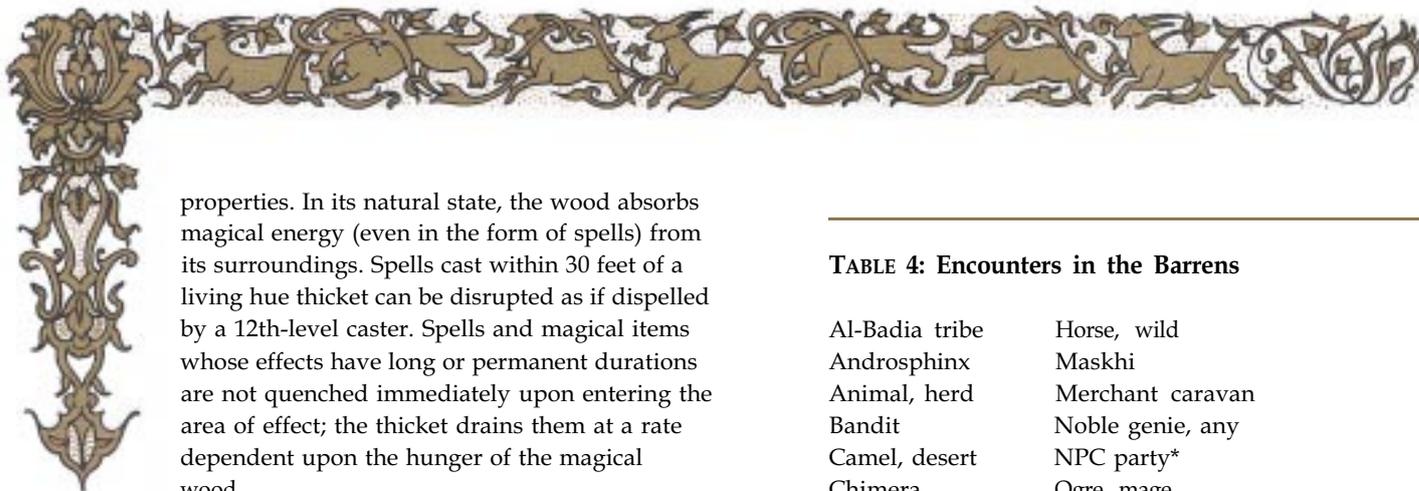
Once it was finished, the seers of Moradask predicted that one day the owner of the Peacock Throne would rule over a proud, unified nation. Alas, this prophecy never came true for King Nawal or his descendants, for, after the First Grand Caliph sacked Moradask, the determined palace slaves dismantled the throne into 15 pieces: the 12 pillars, the canopy, the seat, and the carved back. According to legend, they hid the parts of the throne from the Grand Caliph's invaders in separate locations throughout the catacombs beneath the city.

## Hue of Midnight Darkness

Powerful wizards living on the surface of Zakhara recently discovered the usefulness of hue of midnight darkness, after analyzing a few staves of alien manufacture found by adventurers in the Haunted Lands. This magical wood grows only in the dismal subterranean caverns beneath the catacombs of Moradask. The wood thrives in thickets similar to those of bamboo, except that the solid wooden hue shafts are black and gnarled, supporting a network of pallid and white leaves.

The curious make-up of hue of midnight darkness requires a combination of salt, moisture, utter darkness, and a constant low-level influx of magical energy for the growing wood to retain all its unusual





properties. In its natural state, the wood absorbs magical energy (even in the form of spells) from its surroundings. Spells cast within 30 feet of a living hue thicket can be disrupted as if dispelled by a 12th-level caster. Spells and magical items whose effects have long or permanent durations are not quenched immediately upon entering the area of effect; the thicket drains them at a rate dependent upon the hunger of the magical wood.

Once harvested and dried, hue of midnight darkness loses its ability to drain magic, though it becomes the ideal receptacle for magical enchantments (for either wizards or priests). Wizards currently seek hue of midnight darkness to fashion rechargeable rods, staves, and wands. Not only are magical items created from this wood easier to enchant (+6 on the caster's save during the *enchant an item* spell), but, in their fully charged state, they can hold 50 percent more charges than normal wood. Thus, a hue-fashioned rod might hold a maximum of 75 charges, rather than the customary 50. Users of magic far and near dream of happening upon a hue thicket.

## The Haunted Lands

The city of Moradask lies in the Haunted Lands, the home of spirits and mournful winds. A map of this desolate region appears on the front of Card 2. The Haunted Lands encompass a mixture of all terrain types, though the arid barrens and rocky wastes remain the most abundant. This section describes some of the area's distinctive topography and also offers options for encounters the player characters might experience while adventuring here.

Bounded to the north by the range of the Furrowed Mountains, the lonely, sizzling Haunted Lands encompass shifting dunes and dry salt washes. In centuries past, various warring kingdoms and city-states—like Moradask—dominated the region, but they have passed into time. The remaining inhabitants, a few of whom are enlightened, belong to tribes of nomads or of wild beings such as the jann.

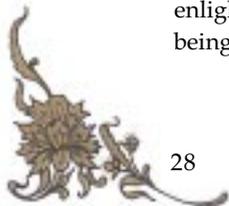
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**TABLE 4: Encounters in the Barrens**

Al-Badia tribe	Horse, wild
Androsphinx	Maskhi
Animal, herd	Merchant caravan
Bandit	Noble genie, any
Camel, desert	NPC party*
Chimera	Ogre mage
Debbi	Scorpion, any
Giant, desert	Snake, any
Giant, ogre	Silat
Genie, djinni	Vishap
Genie, dao	Vulture, normal
Genie, efreeti	War party**
Genie, janni	

\* *NPC parties* often resemble the adventuring group in number, level, and equipment. There is a 50 percent chance that an NPC party consists of disguised holy slayers answering "the call." (If you own the *Land of Fate* boxed set, refer to Chapter 3 in *Fortunes and Fates* for details on the slayer group known as the Everlasting.) Otherwise, the typical NPC party should be 7th to 10th level, with henchmen of approximately half (round up) character level. Such parties are 90 percent likely to be mounted. (See "NPC parties" in the *Monstrous Manual* or MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM appendix.)

\*\* *War parties* from desert strongholds (typically organized by the Brotherhood of True Flame) consist of 10 to 40 light cavalry armed with bows and lances, 10 to 40 light infantry with spears, 10 to 30 medium infantry with spears and scimitars (all 1st-level fighters), three to six sergeants (2nd-level fighters), one to three fire mages (4th to 7th level), and one to two lieutenants (4th-level fighters), all under the command of one captain (7th- to 9th-level fighter). They are supported by a pack train of 110 to 160 laden camels and/or horses.





## The Furrowed Mountains

The Furrowed Mountains form the border between the Haunted Lands and the Free Cities. The rough, arid hill country, so verdant in spring, dries up and turns barren the rest of the year. The hated mamluks of Qudra raid the savage local hill tribes for new recruits. The unenlightened tribesmen have suspicious outlooks and show hostility to travelers—at least until visitors prove they have no affiliation with Qudra.

**TABLE 5: Furrowed Mountains Encounters**

Animal, herd	Hill tribe*
Bandit	Merchant caravan
Debbi	NPC party**
Dog, wild	Roc, any
Dragonne	Snake, any
Elephant birds	Spider, any
Genie, dao	Vishap
Ghul, great	War party***
Heway	

\*Hill tribe encounters in the Furrowed Mountains typically involve 5 to 20 (5d4) poorly armed and equipped barbarians (1st-level fighters) commanded by a fighter of 2nd to 8th level.

\*\* See *NPC parties* in TABLE 4.

\*\*\* See *War parties* in TABLE 4.

## Great Anvil

South of the mountains, the deadly wasteland boasts temperatures that exceed 130 degrees at midday and plummet to freezing after nightfall. The Great Anvil never sees rain, and dust storms continually sweep savagely across its barren face. Even the boldest and most experienced desert riders think twice before venturing into the Anvil. The jann claim the area as their homeland, dwelling there with the elemental peoples amid the great ruins of ancient Zakharan civilizations.

## Sea of Salt

North of the Great Anvil lies all that remains of the ancient, inland Jacinth Sea. The long, shallow basin now contains only waves of salt. Though much of the basin floor is solid enough to safely traverse, a large number of ravines,

filled with fine salt powder, pock its surface. These hazards offer greater peril to characters than quicksand. For this and many other reasons, parties frequently prefer to circumvent the Sea of Salt, even if avoiding it adds many days to their journey.

Traveling across the Sea of Salt is far from pleasant. During the day, the sun turns the Sea into a blazing, blinding glare. The wind lifts and spins the fine salt powder, which stings the eyes and nose and burns the throat and lungs. Few travelers cross the basin at night, because the likelihood of stumbling into a salt-filled ravine increases dramatically in the dark. Quite a few crafty predators lurk along the border of the treacherous Sea, just waiting to surprise travelers still blinded and bereft of sense of smell from traversing the salt plain.

**TABLE 6: Great Anvil, Salt Sea Encounters**

Genie, dao	Lizard, fire
Genie, efreeti	Mason wasp, giant
Genie, janni	Noble genie, any
Giant, desert	NPC party*
Ghost mount	Purple worm (variant)
Ghul, great	Remorhaz (variant)
Hatori	Scorpion, any

\*See *NPC parties* in TABLE 4.

## The Genie's Garden

North of the Great Anvil, sheltered between two mountains, spires of red rock tower above the valley floor. The tall columns form many narrow alleys through the mountains, each barely a dozen feet wide.

Noise does not carry far in the Genies' Garden, where the red sandstone formations and natural arches absorb all sound like a vast sponge. Cool shade lies at the base of the crowded rock spires, beckoning weary travelers.

Small pools of water accumulate here, and vegetation grows abundantly in the protection the Garden offers from the sun's oppressive glare. Unfortunately, a great many unenlightened monsters—including a few genies—consider the Garden their home.





**TABLE 7: Encounters in the Genies' Garden**

Animal, herd	Maskhi
Debbi	Mason wasp, giant
Dog, death	Noble genie, any
Dog, wild	Ogre mage
Genie, any	Roc, any
Ghul, great	Scorpion, any
Giant, desert	Silat
Giant, ogre	Snake, any

## Moradask, City of The Sun

Today, the devastated city draws quite a few caravans and adventurers, who think to plunder the ruins for ancient artifacts and treasures. Most of these expeditions turn back after encounters with dangerous jann in the Haunted Lands, but some reportedly have made it to the legendary City of the Sun. On their arrival, such adventurers doubtless were surprised to find Moradask not as deserted as the bazaar tales would have it.

### Ruler

A wizened mystic named Imam Sa'ib al-Banu (hmP/my/13) has appointed himself ruler of Moradask. Imam Sa'ib, "the Great Hairless One," has a large group of followers called "the Shorn," who hang on his every word and obey his slightest command. He is detailed in the NPC booklet.

### The Court

Perhaps more frightening than the Great Hairless One is Imam Jurash (hmP/my/9), the First Disciple of the Shorn and the son of Imam Sa'ib. Imam Jurash is a firebrand and a zealot who once claimed that the Path of the Shorn should be expanded to embrace all of Zakhara. Unlike his father, who shaves and plucks his body hair, Jurash also eats his shorn hair in a bizarre weekly ritual. He is offended by the sight of hair on others, sometimes to the point of violence.

Six minor disciples assist Sa'ib and the First Disciple in the day-to-day deployment and administration of the Shorn. Having followed Imam

Sa'ib from as far as Talab in the Pantheon, they are fanatically loyal to their leaders.

### Population

Imam Sa'ib and Jurash call their strange sect "the Path of the Shorn." As a group, the 400 Shorn are armed and dangerous. Ostracized by most mainstream mystic cults and wanted renegades from the Pantheon Cities, the Shorn live like exiled royalty in the abandoned alcazars of the Noble Quarter.

### Features of The City

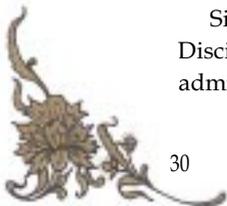
The ruins of Moradask resemble an island in the Sea of Salt, which sends currents of fine salt powder howling into the streets during the day to sting the eyes and bum the lungs.

Refer to the front of Card 4 for a map of the city's upper ruins. The outer walls still stand, displaying the battering they received from the First Grand Caliph's army. Parties can enter the city easily through a number of wide breaches in the outer fortifications near the main causeway (1) connecting the ruins to the mainland.

Inside the sheltering walls, examples of the city's architecture remain intact-remarkable, given the centuries of neglect. Most buildings are constructed of large, limestone blocks fitted together without mortar. The vast majority of the city appears deserted-from the wide, grand bazaar (2) to the dark, echoing covered markets (3) and the salt-strewn warehouses near the shipyards (4). These lonely places now shelter birds and the occasional predator up from the catacombs or the Salt Sea's powdery depths.

The most impressive structures in Moradask are the four monolithic towers in the center of the city (5). A narrow, spiraling ramp built into the massive outer walls of these spires gives access to two dozen upper levels. Each tower contains enough living space to house a small army. The Shorn currently inhabit the northern tower (6) in the Noble Quarter, which has a commanding view of the ruins and the surrounding wasteland.

Most large buildings, including all the monolithic towers, contain a hidden staircase or pit-sometimes only wide enough for a single person to squeeze through-descending to the network of caverns and





vaults beneath the city. Secret doors conceal many of these entrances; others have been barricaded or shored up from the opposite side. The full extent of the dark corridors beneath the city is unknown.

### Major Products

Antiquities are the only items for “export.”

### Armed Forces

The Shorn currently engage in frequent training exercises, both in Moradask and the surrounding wastes. While all in the sect carry and use the scimitar and bow, the backbone of its militia is an elite company of disciplined warriors called the Deprived, who operate under the strict leadership of Jurash and the minor disciples.

### Major Mosques

The Shorn have consecrated a bizarre pantheist mosque (7) in the Noble Quarter, but it is fortified and accessible only to the faithful.

A number of empty shrines and impressive temples also lie scattered throughout the city. Adorned with alien altars and small stone idols to strange gods (like Ishistu the Albino Rat and Ur the Great Squid), these temples (8) were stripped of valuables long ago by citizens on their way to refuge or by the First Grand Caliph’s invaders.

### The Catacombs

The seemingly endless galleries beneath the city are hewn into Moradask’s red rock foundation, decorated only by recessed shelves for receiving the dead. The dry, salty air tends to desiccate corpses rather than promote typical rot. In addition to these innumerable graves, the catacombs play host to a vast, quiet darkness.

The sides of the graves typically are covered by a thin marble slab or by tile mosaics mortared together with stucco or cement. While bodies occupy many graves, some shelves stand open, their contents scattered by curious adventurers or ghouls. Concerned refugees may have relocated ancestors’ graves to safety deeper within the catacombs during the First Grand Caliph’s attack.

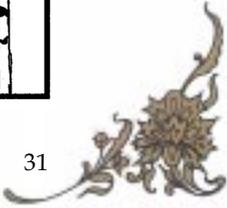
Most of these graves are simple affairs. Intact marble

slab lids or tile coverings bear a few plain inscriptions in the ancient language Chun, once widely spoken in the vanished, warring kingdoms that preceded the Haunted Lands. Most epitaphs record only the names of the deceased, but a few are slightly more elaborate. (Choose names from among those listed in Chapter 1.) Certain inscriptions read, for instance, “Sharakhnazi sleeps in peace,” or “Bakhtiar now dwells in Paradise with his beloved wife, Semiraramis.” Rarely, graves bear faded blue decorative, wavelike patterns or abstract, triangular designs. Some more elaborate shelves depict bestial images: bone-white rats, dog-headed men, and twining networks of twisted tentacles.

If opened, any grave contains little more than skeletal remains, along with pots of incense and a small vial containing bits of the deceased’s hair and blood. The former citizens of Moradask usually did not waste their riches on the dead.

### Key to The Upper Catacombs

Since an adventuring party invariably will explore the upper catacombs, a detailed map of these galleries appears on Card 5. The following key should help you,





the DM, expand the area, if players want to explore it further.

**C. Family Crypt.** The galleries are spotted with a number of larger vaults, sometimes reserved as mausoleums for generations of beloved dead. Horizontal, recessed graves (like those seen elsewhere in the catacombs) line the walls of these chambers, though in many cases, the ceiling rises 20 or 30 feet for added wall space to accommodate larger families. These crypts usually contain the most intimate epitaphs, describing the deceased's role in the family and in Moradask. Such vaults also have a better chance of containing valuable treasure (types J to R) than the simpler graves found along the galleries.

**S. Secret Shrine.** During the First Grand Caliph's occupation, citizens fled to the more secluded family crypts, fitted them with doors, and converted them into private chapels and meeting rooms for Moradask's outlawed religions. Plans for relocating worship to larger temples deeper in the catacombs in most cases went unrealized, due to the exodus of the citizenry. The shrines benefit from *continual light* and boast elaborate wall paintings and inscriptions, many of which are much better preserved than those in aboveground temples. The chapels also tend to hold heaps of ancient treasures (type H), salvaged from the city after its capture. Mechanical guardians—cunningly fashioned by the city's renowned smiths—watch over some shrines; visitors to the catacombs may chance across golems, copper automata, and of course, strange living idols, still craving worship.

**M. Lurking Monster.** In these areas of the map, one of the many cunning predators of the catacombs lurks to feast on unwary wanderers, sometimes hiding in an emptied grave along the wall to spring out at prey. Choose monsters from Table 8.

**P. Pit.** Covered or open pit traps (10 to 20 feet deep) await unwary adventurers. Feel free to adapt one or more pits into deeper wells, fitted with stairs or a ladder, that lead to a lower level of catacombs or even—eventually—Zakhara's own Underdark. The lower catacombs have been left for you, the DM, to develop if desired.

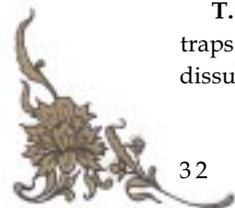
**T. Trap.** After the fall of Moradask, survivors laid traps in many sections of the catacombs, in an effort to dissuade exploration of the galleries and to protect a

**TABLE 8: Catacomb Monsters**

Ammut	Mimic
Behir	Mind Flayer
Beholder	Mummy
Bugbear	Oozes, slimes, jellies
Carrion crawler	Osquip
Cave fisher	Otyugh
Copper automaton	Piercer
Doppleganger	Poltergeist
Dwarf, duergar	Pudding, deadly
Elf, drow	Rat, any
Gargoyle	Roper
Genie, any	Rust monster
Ghost	Shadow
Ghoul, any	Skeleton
Ghul, great	Slithering tracker
Giant-kin, fomorian	Spectre
Golem, any	Spider, any
Groaning spirit	Umber hulk
Guardian daemon	Wight
Haunt	Will o' wisp
Heucuva	Wraith
Jermlaine	Xorn
Lich	Yak-men
Living idol	Zombie, any

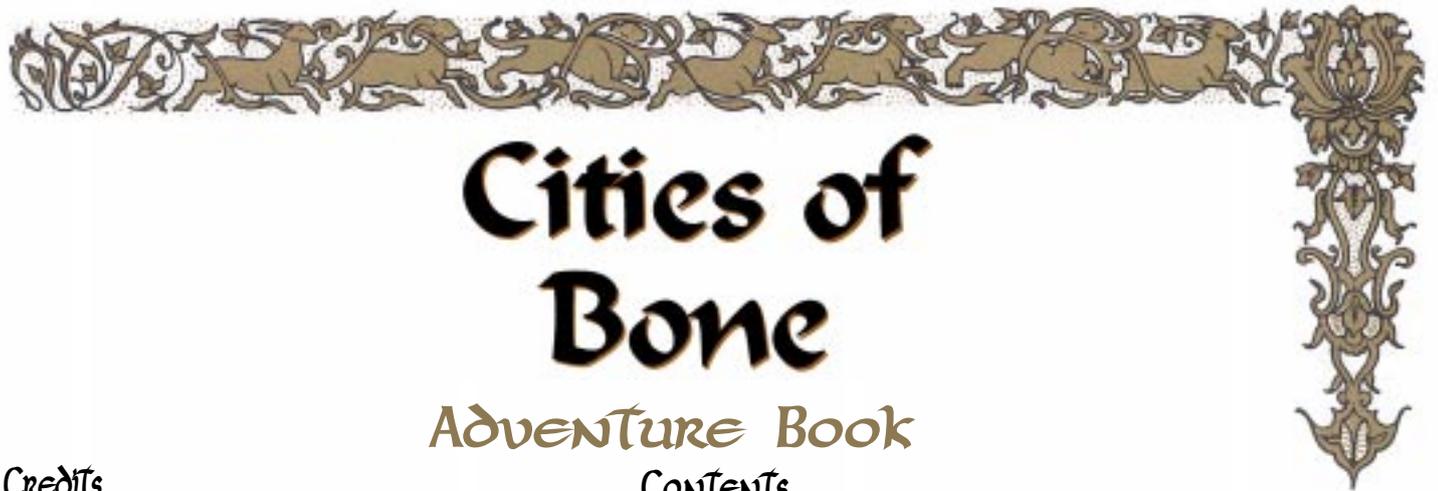
few secret shrines. These areas each contain a single, straightforward trap, such as a concealed reloading ballista that discharges its missile (one per round) though a narrow wall opening when an explorer triggers a pressure plate in the floor (THAC0 13). The ballista can fire spears, arrows, daggers, poisoned darts, and orbs filled with liquid star, green slime, or black pudding. Magical protections, such as *glyphs of warding*, *sepia snake sigils*, *fire traps*, and *symbols* all make ideal traps, since they often can remain invisible until discharged. Review the priest spells from the sphere of Wards in the *Tome of Magic* for more inspiration.

**U. Up.** Here, stairs or ramps lead up into the basements of city buildings. The stairs at (N) emerge in an upper level of catacombs beneath the Noble Quarter; this level can be expanded.





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# Cities of Bone

## Adventure Book

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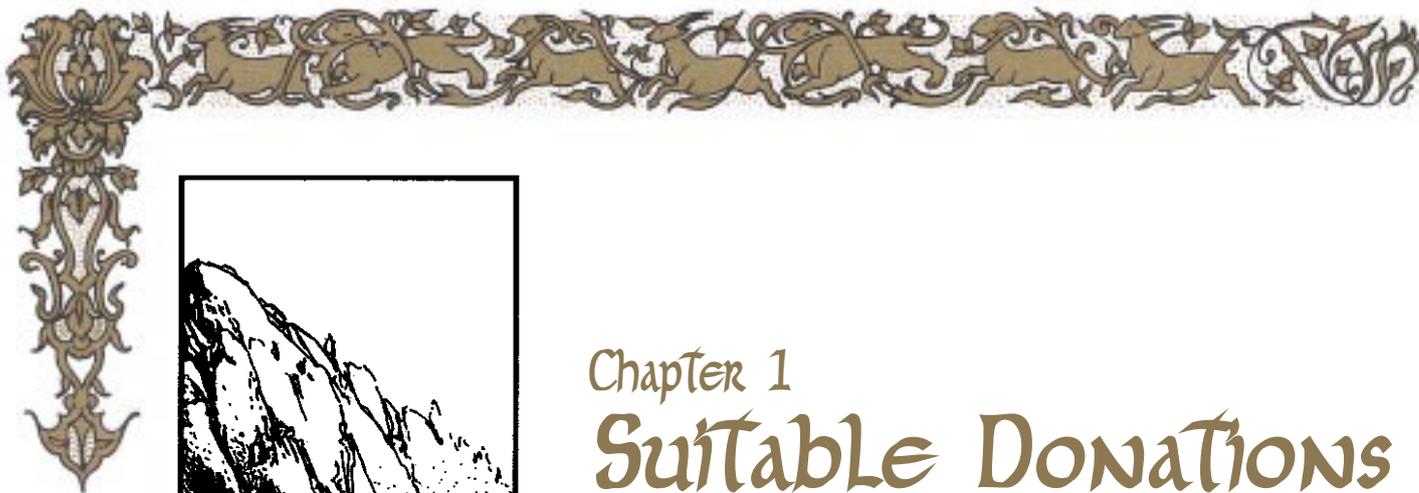
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## Chapter 1

# Suitable Donations

**I**t is doubtless true, as I have heard my muster say it, that few people in Tajar mourned the passing of Jabir bin Hayyan, a notoriously tight-fisted money-changer from the City of Trade. Jabir was so miserly that when he became advanced in years, he refused to divide his inheritance between his two sons, Anwar and Kalib. He feared they might squander his precious wealth on extravagant food, fine horses, and the irresponsible gambling habit they adopted soon after their mother's death several years earlier. "Work hard, and you will be rewarded as you are due," Jabir told his sons. Yet, he watched as they paid no heed to these sacred words, the First Principle of Jauhar the Gem Studded. So, instead of giving his sons their share of his fortune, the old man maintained strict control over the family finances until the day he died.

In his will, which was ministered by the scrupulous priests of Jauhar the Gemmed ("May her smile ever grace our coffers!"), the niggardly money-changer disinherited his "unworthy" sons, ordering that all his wealth be converted into gold and interred with him in his tomb. Paranoid of theft his entire life, Jabir refused to be buried in Tajar's public cemetery—he insisted on a private mausoleum, hidden somewhere out in the wilderness where robbers could never find it. As Jabir had ordered, so was it done by the priests of Jauhar, in exchange for a suitable donation. Thus, the old miser's remains were interred secretly in the northern reaches of the desolate Al-Yabki Mountains.

Upon learning of their disinheritance, Anwar and Kalib felt both appalled and enraged. Jabir's body was not even cold before they sought to overturn their father's "unjust" will before the qadi, or local judge. After receiving a suitable donation, the qadi allowed himself to be convinced by their arguments. He ruled that Jabir's two sons could claim his property lawfully and divide it equally between them—should they ever recover it.

Of course, Anwar and Kalib didn't have the slightest idea where their father and his wealth were buried. They couldn't afford to pursue the matter further with the priests of Jauhar, so they departed the city several months ago to search for their fortune in the wilderness. Jabir's two sons will need the kind hand of Fate to show them their lost inheritance!

Or, will Fate smile upon fortunate adventurers instead?

—Kharau of the Elemental Plane of Fire



## Starting The Adventure

"Suitable Donations" is designed for a relatively inexperienced party of player characters (1st through 4th levels) and illustrates all the perils of plundering the dead, as outlined in the *Campaign Guide* (which you, the Dungeon Master, should have read completely by now). Be sure to review Chapter 1 in that book, as well as Card 1, before running this adventure.

The action begins when the party arrives in the Pearl City of Tajar (or any other convenient city or town). While the characters are unloading their mounts at the local caravanserai, a gregarious and outspoken barber named Yakub Abu Yusuf approaches them, searching for business among newly arrived travelers. He carries all the tools of his trade wrapped in a small bundle on his back: a small carpet for his customer, a collection of six razors, a leather sharpening strap, a full water skin, and a tarnished copper basin in which to prepare lather.

For the price of a shave and a wash (3 sp), Yakub gladly relates the Tale of the Lost Inheritance, presented by the efreeti in this adventure's introduction. Yakub has a rather low opinion of both the deceased and his two sons. The late money-changer owed the barber 42 sp (and a few copper bits), but Yakub despairs of ever being paid, since the irresponsible sons left town several months ago without clearing their father's debts.

**Yakub Abu Yusuf (hmT/br/2):** AC 9; MV 12; hp 7; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (razor: 1d2); Str 8, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11; SA surprise backstab for double damage; PP 30%; OL 26%; F/RT 22%; MS 21%; HS 15%; DN 10%; CW 86%; AL NG; THAC0 20.

## Finding The Lost Inheritance

News of a nearby treasure-laden tomb should inspire most low-level characters to investigate the matter more closely. However, if the party members eagerly head for the hills after hearing only Yakub's rumors, they will have no better luck locating Jabir's tomb than the money-changer's desperate sons. After a few days of fruitless searching in the arid

highlands south of the city, the party will be forced to try other methods of finding the tomb.

There are two fairly obvious ways of finding Jabir's lost inheritance, though a creative party may devise unique new strategies. The most straightforward way: simply make a "suitable donation" of 500 gp to the priesthood of Jauhar the Gemmed, whose members arranged the money-changer's secret burial in the first place.

Otherwise, the party will have to use divination spells, such as *locate object*, *divination*, and *legend lore* to find the tomb. Since the party is unlikely to have access to such high-level spells, characters probably will have to hire a more powerful priest or wizard to cast the spells; this service likely costs more than bribing the priesthood of Jauhar.

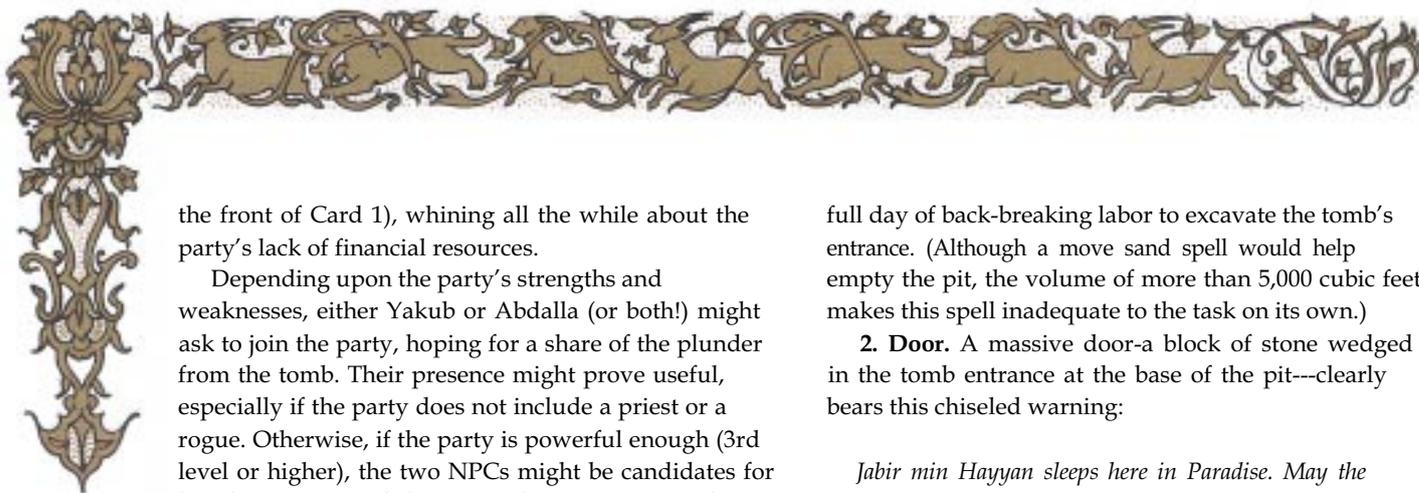
## Bitter Meal at The Golden Oasis

If the party is strapped for cash (but the players want to continue with the adventure anyway), perhaps Yakub the barber might be persuaded to help, provided the PCs pay off the moneychanger's fairly modest debt. That evening, over an excellent meal at an intimate restaurant called the Golden Oasis, the barber introduces the party to Abdalla, a disgruntled dwarf acolyte of Jauhar.

Abdalla makes it clear from the onset that he never was properly compensated by his superiors for his labor during Jabir's burial. Throughout the elegant meal of passion fruit, saffron rice, braised partridges, and roasted pork with cardamom, the dwarf complains about all the hard work required to haul Jabir's remains up into the mountains, braving the savage beasts of the wilderness and cutting a tomb out of the living rock for the corpse of the greedy, paranoid man. In fact, the more the party listens to him, the more it becomes clear that Abdalla is not really satisfied with much in life. He calls the sumptuous repast at the Golden Oasis terrible, the weather unbearably stifling, and the government of Tajar useless and corrupt.

After the meal, the party members can get down to business. In exchange for all that the party can currently afford (plus the 10 sp for Yakub's and Abdalla's meals), the obnoxious priest reluctantly draws them a map leading directly to Jabir's tomb (see





the front of Card 1), whining all the while about the party's lack of financial resources.

Depending upon the party's strengths and weaknesses, either Yakub or Abdalla (or both!) might ask to join the party, hoping for a share of the plunder from the tomb. Their presence might prove useful, especially if the party does not include a priest or a rogue. Otherwise, if the party is powerful enough (3rd level or higher), the two NPCs might be candidates for henchmen. Expand these two characters to suit the needs of the party and the campaign.

**Abdalla min Jauhar (dmP/e/1):** AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (staff: 1d6); Str 14, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8; AL N; THAC0 20. Spells: *command, cure light wounds, protection from evil.*

## Into The Al-Yabki Mountains

Use the front of Card 1 to illustrate the journey to Jabir's tomb, hidden about 50 miles due south of Tajar in a small valley of the Al-Yabki Mountains. The first portion of the journey should prove relatively uneventful, as the party travels through the inhabited and heavily patrolled Al-Adib River valley. The last 20 miles of the trip covers desolate wilderness. The reddish, sandstone peaks of the Al-Yabki Mountains rise from wide, sand-filled valleys, blocking the settled coast from sandstorms that rage across the High Desert. The northern reaches of the mountains are rugged, low, and unsettled, save for a pair of small forts maintained by mamluks of the sheikh of Tajar.

### The Money-Changer's Tomb

After one to four (1d4) days of searching in the mountains with Abdalla's map (not as accurate as the dwarf claimed it would be), the party discovers an unnatural, cairnlike mound of rubble in a secluded valley. The money-changer was buried in an underground crypt hewn into the sandstone of the valley floor. (See the map of Jabir's sepulcher on the back of Card 1.)

**1. Entry Pit.** Clearing away the stones from the burial mound, the characters uncover the opening of a rectangular pit, which the burial party had filled with loose rubble and sand. Unless the PCs devise a magical means of entering the crypt, it should take at least one

full day of back-breaking labor to excavate the tomb's entrance. (Although a move sand spell would help empty the pit, the volume of more than 5,000 cubic feet makes this spell inadequate to the task on its own.)

**2. Door.** A massive door—a block of stone wedged in the tomb entrance at the base of the pit—clearly bears this chiseled warning:

*Jabir min Hayyan sleeps here in Paradise. May the fleas of a hundred camels infest any who plunder his remains. Let the oasis drain at the robber's approach, may his children wither from hunger, and may he lie down and die in his sleep after a thousand nightmares.*

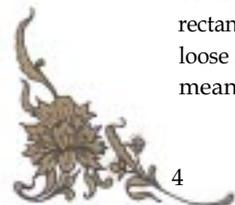
The sandstone door is sealed with a golden, coin-shaped holy symbol of Jauhar. This burial seal is designed to repel ghouls and other tomb-raiding undead, but it has no effect on the living. (Jabir was much too cheap to pay for traps or more expensive wards.) A priest or wizard with the spellcraft or religion nonweapon proficiency will understand the significance of the burial seal after making a successful ability check.

The gold seal is worth 500 gp, assuming the plunderer can find a buyer interested in the symbol in its current coin-shaped form. A rogue should have little difficulty selling it for closer to 100 gp to a disreputable money-changer in a distant town. (It would rile the priests of Jauhar to find a character trying to sell the seal in Tajar.)

The stone door weighs some 500 pounds. PCs must apply magic, tools, or 50 or more combined Strength points to it before they can dislodge it.

**3. Crypt.** The burial chamber is hewn roughly out of unadorned, reddish sandstone. The crypt smells like a mixture of rose-scented oil and myrrh, masking the stench of decay. The tomb contains only a single sarcophagus, bearing the name "Jabir min Hayyan." The stone coffin is carved out of imported yellow marble and inlaid with red and white flower patterns.

Everyone in the crypt when the sarcophagus is opened must make a disease check, as outlined in Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide*. Beneath the coffin's heavy stone lid, Jabir's mummified remains lie alongside considerable wealth and a few curiosities: four urns containing aromatic burial oils (25 gp each);





Jabir's mummified cat (its mini-sarcophagus labeled "my dear Mansouri"); even a deck of ivory playing cards (250 gp). A gem-studded mask of gold (1,500 gp) covers Jabir's desiccated face, and the corpse wears six heavy gold necklaces (500 gp each).

## The Hama

Jabir was a greedy man who never lost his lust for gold, even after death. If the PCs take any treasure from his tomb, his troubled soul returns from the afterlife to haunt the party as a hama, or spirit bird, in the form of a ruffled black raven.

The hama appears the night the PCs plunder the tomb. Play this up to be as spooky as possible: the bird vanishes mysteriously when the characters turn their heads for a minute, then reappears suddenly, regarding them with a discerning, disapproving glare. Unless the party members have means to become ethereal (unlikely at low levels), they have no real way to harm the spirit bird. Although it looks foreboding enough—and can make an occasional angry squawk—the hama is an immaterial creature of spirit. If characters try to attack it, the hama blinks out, only to return when they least expect (or want) it. The hama itself never physically tries to harm the PCs.

Jabir cannot talk in this form. Those with the religion nonweapon proficiency can identify the hama as a troubled spirit, but unless spellcasters employ *tongues*, the party members may not be able to communicate with Jabir. If guilt does not force characters to return their stolen treasure, Jabir really starts to plague them. Everyone suffers the effects of the evil eye unless they protected themselves with an *avert evil eye* spell before they plundered Jabir's tomb.

**Jabir bin Hayyan, a hama:** Int Avg; AL N; AC 2 (7); MV 1, Fl (30); HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1d3/1d3; SA fear; SD immaterial; SZ S; ML 8; MC13; XP 120.

## The Heirs

If the party does not return his treasure that night, Jabir seeks his two sons, Anwar and Kalib, who are also searching the mountains for the tomb (quite unsuccessfully, as they did not have the good fortune to run into Abdalla). Initially, neither can understand

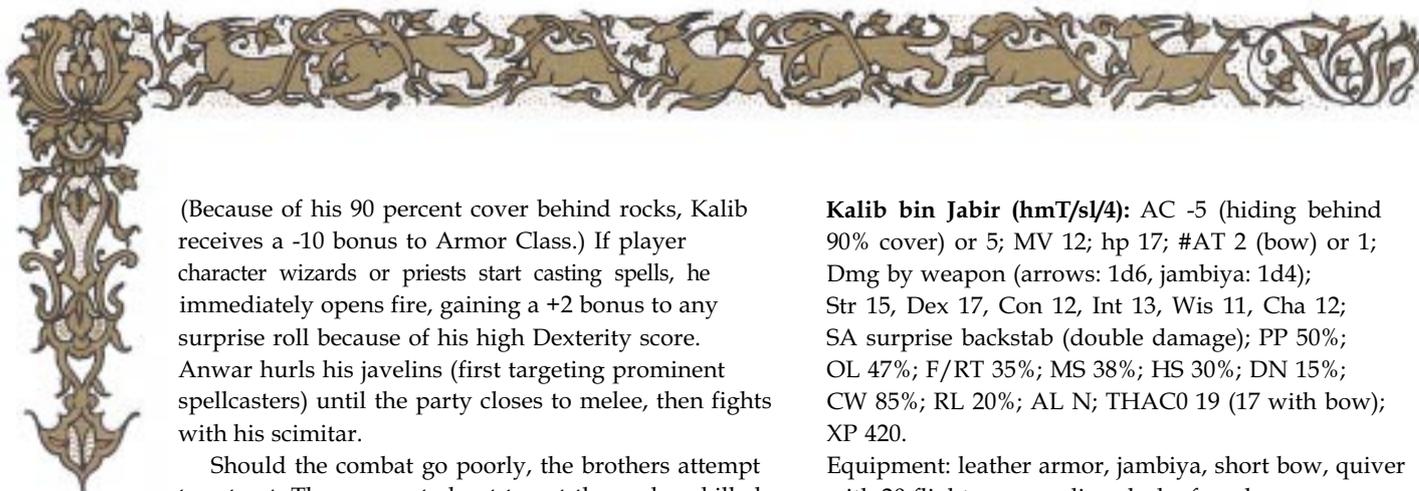
the spirit bird, but when the hama leads the pair to the plundered crypt, Anwar and Kalib at last understand the spirit's identity. After this realization, the hama easily leads Anwar and Kalib straight to the party.

The two brothers, while not overly intelligent, are crafty. With the hama's help, they select a narrow ravine to ambush the party (detailed on the back of Card 1). Kalib, a good shot with his short bow, hides behind rocks near the top of a rise (K), while Anwar conceals himself near the floor of the ravine (A) and prepares his javelins.

When the party approaches (P), Anwar shows himself and curses the PCs for stealing his inheritance from his father's grave. Anwar promises he will not harm the characters if they hand over the treasure. Otherwise, he threatens, his "score of retainers" hidden along the top of the ravine will cut them down with a hail of arrows. While Anwar is shouting his challenge, the party members note the winged form of Jabir's hama circling overhead.

Of course, Anwar is simply bluffing about the "score of retainers." However, his younger brother, Kalib, lies watching the party closely from his hiding place.





(Because of his 90 percent cover behind rocks, Kalib receives a -10 bonus to Armor Class.) If player character wizards or priests start casting spells, he immediately opens fire, gaining a +2 bonus to any surprise roll because of his high Dexterity score. Anwar hurls his javelins (first targeting prominent spellcasters) until the party closes to melee, then fights with his scimitar.

Should the combat go poorly, the brothers attempt to retreat. They are not about to get themselves killed over their inheritance and surrender if wounded below 5 hit points and prevented from escaping back into the mountains.

Take note: The brothers are not evil, merely desperate and a little wild from months of deprivation in the wilderness. They do not want to murder the party for the inheritance. If the characters suffer defeat, the brothers knock them unconscious and strip them of all valuables (including their mounts, if any). If the party members simply surrender the treasure, the brothers let them leave in peace.

Strong and handsome, Anwar, 21, has the common sense of a goat and the temper of a camel. He also deludedly believes he makes a good gambler. Kalib, 18 and still emerging from adolescence, has a tall, gangly frame and stutters awkwardly in social situations. He idolizes his older brother but admits Anwar has much to learn about gambling.

The two brothers always disappointed their father. Sadly, neither developed the quick wit, financial savvy (or the interest, for that matter) necessary to run their father's money-changing business.

Feel free to augment (or trim back) their statistics to properly challenge the party members' abilities and experience.

**Anwar bin Jabir (hmE/a/3):** AC 6; MV 9; hp 21; #AT 3/2 (scimitar) or 1; Dmg by weapon (scimitar: 1d8+3, dagger: 1d4+1, javelin: 1d6+1); Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 15; SA specialized in scimitar; AL N; THAC0 17 (16 with scimitar); XP 420.

Equipment: studded leather armor, scimitar, shield, dagger, four javelins, scroll bearing list of gambling debts.

**Kalib bin Jabir (hmT/sl/4):** AC -5 (hiding behind 90% cover) or 5; MV 12; hp 17; #AT 2 (bow) or 1; Dmg by weapon (arrows: 1d6, jambiya: 1d4); Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12; SA surprise backstab (double damage); PP 50%; OL 47%; F/RT 35%; MS 38%; HS 30%; DN 15%; CW 85%; RL 20%; AL N; THAC0 19 (17 with bow); XP 420.

Equipment: leather armor, jambiya, short bow, quiver with 20 flight arrows, dice, deck of cards.

## Concluding The Adventure

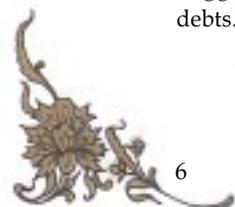
Even if the party defeats Anwar and Kalib, Jabir does not cease to plague the PCs. The spirit bird alerts all hostile creatures nearby, leading them to the party. (Table 5 in Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide* offers a list of mountain-dwelling monsters.)

After the party has suffered enough, have one character dream that the raven appears, introduces himself as Jabir, and explains that he cannot rest in his tomb without his gold and his favorite deck of cards. (The afterlife can be boring, and he loves playing with the spirit of Mansouri, since he always wins.) The jewelry is especially important to Jabir. He didn't leave any wealth to his sons for a reason—the lazy ingrates would squander it gambling!

Jabir's hama will continue to harass the PCs until they return his treasure and restore his crypt to its original condition. If the PCs manage to slay the hama, the curse of the evil eye will linger until they have properly atoned for their deed (perhaps by performing a small quest for a mosque of Jauhar). Alternatively, they can hire a priest to rid them of the spirit bird—for a suitable donation, of course.

Allow the party to share a story award of 2,000 XP for completing the adventure, plus 1 XP for every gold dinar retained (adjusted after all the contributions to mosques in Tajar, of course).

Naturally, neither brother has any intention of returning the wealth to Jabir's grave, should they claim it. They take it back to Tajar at once; there they make a suitable donation to the mosque of Jauhar, have their father's spirit exorcised, and embark on the gambling spree of their lives.





## Chapter 2

# The Treasure Pit

**A**t the southwestern end of the Gogol Pass through the Al-Yabki Mountains there stands the wreckage of an old stronghold named Kruk al-Shidda, a reminder of the bygone wars between nearby Jumalt and Gana. Many years ago, before I became an indentured servant, I observed that this tiny *qal'at* on the border stood as a bone of contention between the two Pearl Cities. Late each winter, as the monsoon season was tapering off, armies of Jumlat and Gana would besiege the fortress. Because of the incessant warfare, the fort newer could be properly refortified to withstand an approaching army.

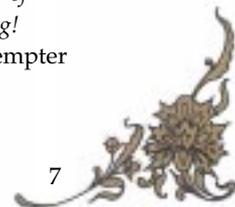
Finally, a wise old general ordered the stronghold razed so he would not have to recapture it again after the monsoon season the following year. With *Krak al-Shidda* destroyed, Jumlat and Gana found they had nothing left to fight over, and the senseless warfare between the two cities ended. But to this day, desert nomads sometimes find old swords and bits of armor near the ruins, a few broken remnants that remind us of those ancient battles.

Today, the ruined *qal'at* remains in its commanding position, guarding the southwestern entrance to the Gogol Pass. Often, visiting *marids* waste hours standing atop the crumbled keep on clear days, surveying the blue mantle of Gana Bay spread along the southern horizon. Brave travelers (like yourselves) sometimes stop at the ruins for a night or two, seeking shelter from the winds or looking for water among the overgrown wells of the fort. A young goatherd, the son of my former master's brother, once said he saw the glitter of gold at the bottom of a pit in the ruins. But he was a timid boy, searching for a lost goat, and he did not investigate. (O, that he may newer realize his loss!)

As may be expected, my master's brother fiercely reprimanded the child for wandering among the lonely ruins by himself. Who knows what vile robbers or hungry beasts might have been waiting to ambush him in that desolate place? Humans tell stories of sheep and lone travelers disappearing near the ruins—I modestly believe that they simply stepped into one of the *qal'at*'s overgrown wells and, like fools, broke their necks in the fall.

Of course, human children all tell stories to gain attention from their parents. Gossips in the bazaars of Gana call the boy's tale of a treasure pit an example of just such a story—but think of the riches awaiting those who prove them wrong!

—Kharau the Tempter





## Starting The Adventure

The Treasure Pit," designed for a mid-level party of player characters (4th to 6th level), takes place in the highlands east of Gana, though it can be relocated easily to suit an ongoing campaign. If the party is prone to combat, it will probably need at least one magical weapon or the ability to generate fire (using torches, lamp oil, liquid star, or magic) to successfully complete the adventure. A hakima, with the ability to perceive truth in the spoken word and pierce disguises, or a paladin, with the ability to detect evil intent, also would prove useful. Before beginning this adventure, assemble Cards 1, 2, and 3.

Krak al-Shidda recently has become the hunting ground for a pack of six werehyenas, led by a clever female named Kamalla. While exploring the basement of the ruined keep, Kamalla discovered a deep pit lined with a strange and deadly plant called yellow musk creeper. She recognized the plant immediately, since it sometimes grows in the shady fissures and sheltered overhangs of the Al-Yabki Mountains where she grew up. Kamalla also noticed a few coins and the twisted remains of a once-curious traveler lying at the bottom of the pit. She suddenly realized how she could turn the creeper's lair into "bait" to lure more visitors up to the secluded ruins-visitors who would make a delightful feast for Kamalla and her pack.

First, Kamalla needed to spread word of the "treasure pit," so she allowed a few lone shepherds to see the creeper's lair. The lycanthropes refrained from snacking on them, hoping the children would carry news of the pit back to their families. Kamalla even assumed human form and entered a few nearby towns, dropping hints about the hidden treasure of Krak al-Shidda among the gossip-mongers in smoke-filled tobacco houses and coffee shops.

Thus far, her plan has worked wonderfully. A slow but steady stream of travelers has begun to arrive at the ruins, where they are greeted by Kamalla in her human form. Once she has gained the confidence of the treasure seekers, she leads a few of them away from their compatriots to a secluded area within the ruins. There, the remainder of her pack ambushes the victims. Kamalla then disposes of the evidence of their feast in the "treasure pit," feeding the creeper with the pack's scraps and adding further wealth to the plant's

lair (which only makes the ruins more enticing to adventurers).

From the party's perspective, the-adventure begins once the player characters arrive at the ruins of Krak al-Shidda. How they get there is up to you, the DM. Perhaps they hear the Tale of the Treasure Pit (related on the previous page) from a wandering rawun in the High Desert or from a traveling pearl merchant in Gana. If the hints of treasure in this tale do not motivate the PCs sufficiently to set out to investigate the ruins, they simply may stumble across the crumbling fortress during their travels.

## Meeting The Lycanthrope

Once the party arrives at the ruins and has enough time to poke around the crumbling outer walls of the qal'at, members of the group notice a rugged but attractive young woman equipped as an adventurer (leather armor, scimitar, dagger, crowbar, backpack with thieves' picks and tools, torches, etc.). Kamalla wears her long, reddish hair loose down her back to conceal the mark of a polymorphed werehyena: a frightening second mouth, filled with canine teeth, located at the base of her head. The lips of this second orifice mimic the shape of her first mouth when she speaks, but the orifice produces no sound. Kamalla keeps this monstrous mouth carefully hidden underneath a fine silk scarf wrapped around her neck.

Kamalla initially appears to be inspecting the partially intact remains of the stronghold's great keep. Though wary at first, she explains that she wandered here from a nearby village after hearing tales of a wondrous "treasure pit." If the party hasn't already heard the story—perhaps the characters stumbled across the ruins by accident—Kamalla gladly relates the tale. Already she claims to have found success in searching the ruins, showing characters a pouch with 10 tiny blood-red garnets (worth 50 gp each and supplied by one of her past victims). Kamalla suggests that they join forces so they can better search the fort's ruins for the treasure pit.

Kamalla seems charming, smooth, and gracious. As proof of her good will, she offers the party her garnets, saying she can get "plenty more where those came from," with a wide, theatrical gesture to the ruins around her. Beneath her generous facade, Kamalla





quietly sizes up the characters, trying to discern their strengths and weaknesses. She knows the exact location of the treasure pit (described next page) and helps the characters find it to gain their trust. Kamalla also can take the party to the entrance to the qal'at's dungeons, though she has not explored them herself—they seemed unlikely to yield anything especially edible or entertaining.

Unlike the other five members of her pack, Kamalla can cast *charm person* (once per day). Since this ability is natural to Kamalla and not a spell, she can invoke it with nothing more than a smile and a knowing glance at her target. She waits until the most opportune time to *charm* the weakest (preferably male) member of the party. If the character meets her gaze, ask the player to roll a d20. (Don't reveal that it is a saving throw vs. spells.) If the roll fails, pass the player a note explaining Kamalla's *charm*, but instruct the player to keep it secret until the unfortunate character's "most intimate friend and beloved confidant" needs his assistance.

Tell players who make their saves merely that something about Kamalla seems pleasantly familiar—perhaps they grew up in the same town! Kamalla might cover up her failure by making an offhand comment to a character: "I'm sorry, but haven't we met somewhere before—the bazaar in Gana, perhaps?"

**Kamalla, a werehyena:** Int Very; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+1; hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 or by weapon (scimitars: 1d8); SA lock jaws; SD iron or +1 weapons to hit, immune to enchantment/charm spells; SZ M; ML 8; MC13; XP 1,400.

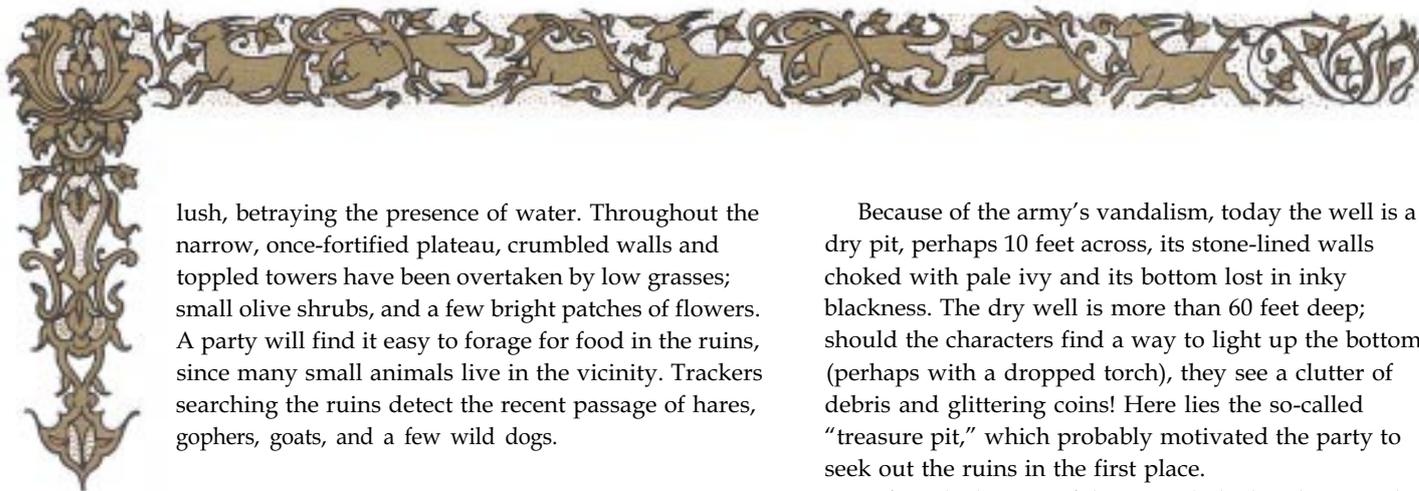
Magical abilities: can cast *charm person* once per day and friends once per round.

Equipment: bag with 10 garnets (50 gp each), backpack holding thieves' picks and tools, wine flask, scimitar, dagger, and torches.

## Krak al-Shidda

The aboveground ruins of the fortress appear romantic and picturesque by day, affording a breathtaking view of the Al-Sabiya River, which eventually pours into Gana Bay to the south. Unlike the rest of the mountains, the site is comparatively





lush, betraying the presence of water. Throughout the narrow, once-fortified plateau, crumbled walls and toppled towers have been overtaken by low grasses; small olive shrubs, and a few bright patches of flowers. A party will find it easy to forage for food in the ruins, since many small animals live in the vicinity. Trackers searching the ruins detect the recent passage of hares, gophers, goats, and a few wild dogs.

Throughout *Cities of Bone*, a dagger (†) designates a magical item detailed in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. If you do not own this title, substitute an appropriate, similar magical item from the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*.

## Within The Ruins

A map of Krak al-Shidda appears on the back of Card 2. The overgrown rubble obscures quite a bit of the upper fortifications, making it difficult to identify some of the main buildings. Most of these structures lack noteworthy features, but several parts of the ruins deserve special mention.

**1. Outer Well.** The 40-foot well is particularly dangerous; it lies partially overgrown by grasses, its protective, surrounding wall long since crumbled away. Characters crossing the outer courtyard of the ruins might fall into it (10 percent chance by day, 25 percent at night), unless they know the well exists and attempt to circumvent it. Since 5 feet of water stands at the bottom, characters falling into the well suffer only 1 to 6 (1d6) points of damage. The water in the well is rank and polluted, as a result of wandering goats with poor night vision. This well contains no treasure.

**2. Great Keep,** Only the lower walls of the keep remain standing, affording shelter from the sun and wind. Gana's troops demolished its roof and upper galleries when they abandoned the qa'at years ago. Recessed in the massive wall, a rubble-strewn spiral staircase winds down into the keep's basement (Area 3).

**3. Treasure Pit.** Two gaping holes in the wall, which once contained arrow loops, illuminate the basement of the keep. The old general's retreating army knocked out the embrasures to further devalue the castle, dumping most of the rubble into the main well in the center of the basement.

Because of the army's vandalism, today the well is a dry pit, perhaps 10 feet across, its stone-lined walls choked with pale ivy and its bottom lost in inky blackness. The dry well is more than 60 feet deep; should the characters find a way to light up the bottom (perhaps with a dropped torch), they see a clutter of debris and glittering coins! Here lies the so-called "treasure pit," which probably motivated the party to seek out the ruins in the first place.

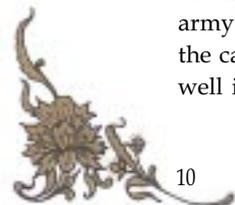
In fact, the bottom of the pit is choked with a mixed hoard of treasure: 5,243 copper bits, 3,365 silver dirham, and 682 gold dinars. Most of the valuable coins lie buried in the dry, packed earth and rubble at the base of the pit, however, taking 2 to 5 (1d4+1) turns to uncover.

If the PCs poke around the pit's floor, they uncover a dented bronze lamp; a cracked helmet; a barber's kit containing a *razor of truth*; the hilts and rusted blades of four daggers and scimitars; a number of corroded metal buckles; a tortoise shield; and the skeletal remains of at least five humans, their cracked skulls and bones mingled with the network of secondary roots belonging to the pale ivy carpeting the stone walls of the well.

The pale ivy-actually a species of the deadly yellow musk creeper-sprouts eight fingerlong buds, which normally conceal themselves amid the pale leaves. When an animal or person approaches within 10 feet, the buds silently open into mauve, orchidlike flowers. Each bloom reeks of sickly sweet perfume and every round releases a murderous cloud of spores, which transform victims into yellow musk zombies in less than a turn unless they save vs. poison. (See the *Monstrous Manual* or *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* Vol. 2 for more details.)

Note that, while the vines and flowers are destroyed easily (especially by fire), they will grow back within a month unless characters uncover and destroy the main root of the creeper colony in the base of the pit. The ivy's main root, a pale sausage-shaped bulb more than 6 feet long, lies under 2 to 3 feet of hard-packed dirt, beneath the treasure and grim human remains.

**Yellow Musk Creeper:** Int Non; AL Nil; AC 7; MV 0; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 8; Dmg special; SA gas; SD can be destroyed permanently only by targeting roots, immune to enchantment/charm spells; SZ L (20' square); ML 20; MC; XP 650.





## The Dungeons

Behind a pile of rubble in the basement (Area 3) lies a staircase that descends still farther to the dungeons, which are mapped on the back of Card 3. These chambers largely escaped destruction by Gana's army, since most of the underground vaults had little strategic importance. The dungeons normally stay dark, not frequented by random monsters.

**4. Wine Cellar.** The jugs of wine in here are all cracked, and their contents has long since evaporated. Behind a stack of jugs, the characters find a strange skeleton, that of a hunched humanoid creature with a long, thin tail. A sha'ir or party member with the genie lore nonweapon proficiency can identify these bones as the remains of a winemaker genie. The genie's skull was split by a sword blow, but the skeletal arms still cradle an empty wine jug.

**5. Office.** This chamber clearly has been visited before. Two scroll cabinets stand wide open, their contents strewn across the floor. If the characters search, they have a 1 in 10 (1d10) chance of locating a small key hidden on a ledge inside one of the cabinets. The key unlocks an ancient armory, whose location PCs can glean from the scrolls (Area 7, below).

**6. Storeroom.** Place all kinds of intriguing knick-knacks in this storage area: broken bits of bronze plate mail, faded brocade, weapons with useless scabbards and hilts, pipes, dented lamps, tobacco, dried meats, piles of sandals, dried herbs, pottery, eating utensils, plates, vases, fractured sculptures, small dolls, and other toys. Intersperse minor treasure with the junk to keep characters interested: perhaps a few dinars lie at the bottom of an empty water jug, or a forgotten purse (containing a *brooch of shielding* or a *ring of feather falling* and 25 gp) sits on a top shelf.

**7. Armory.** Weapon racks containing swords, maces, spears, and crossbows line the walls of this chamber. A chest stands opposite the door, flanked by a pair of tarnished suits of archaic armor—these are actually copper automatons. The locked chest contains a quiver of 24 silver-tipped arrows and a suit of *armor of the desert evening*.

**Copper Automaton (2):** Int Low; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; hp 24, 32; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/2d6; SA heated fists, can heat iron weapons; SD as golem; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; MC13; XP 650.

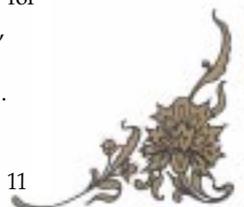
**8. Study.** The party finds the sturdy door to this chamber *wizard locked*. This was a small reading room for the army's battle wizard. Illuminated with *continual light*, the walls hold shallow, recessed shelves (now empty). Characters who search the shelves have a one in six (1d6) chance of detecting three words in an ancient language written on the roof of the recess. The three words are: *Al-Afaz*, *Al-Mirish*, *Al-Kazad*, but whether they are command words, place names, or family names is up to you, as the DM. Decayed carpets cover the study's floor.

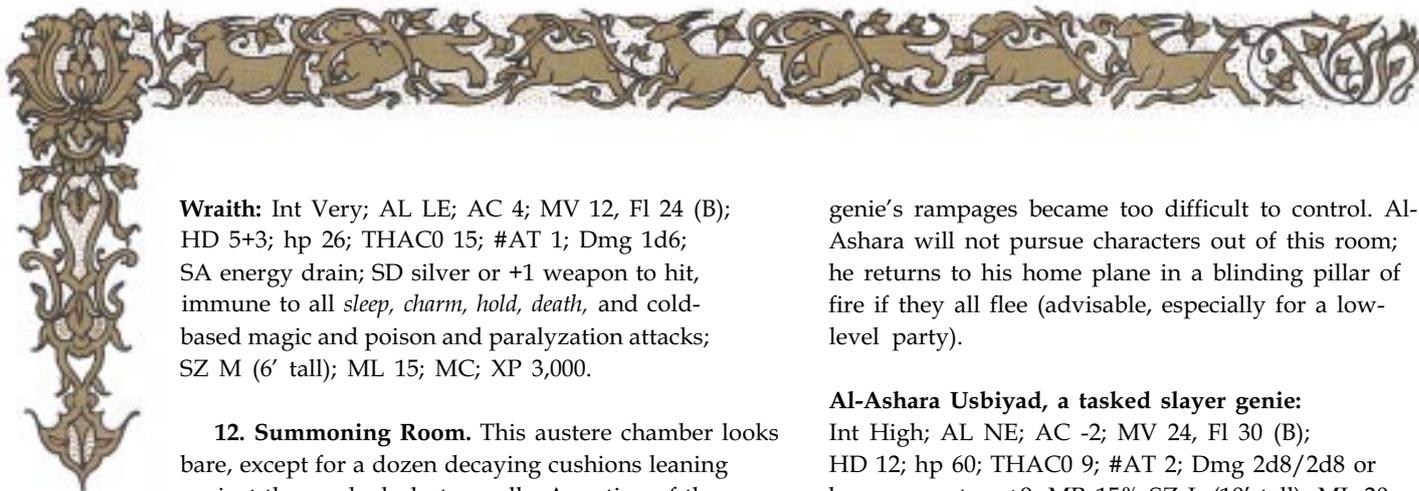
**9. Buried Room.** A partial ceiling cave-in left this room mostly filled with a great pile of earth. Characters notice a pair of legs protruding from the rubble. Excavating the pile uncovers the remains of an elf. Most of the belongings are corroded and useless, but the corpse still clutches a *jambiya* +1 in its right hand.

**10. Hall.** This grisly chamber is stacked high with bodies, dragged here to rot after a long-forgotten battle. The desert heat has mummified the corpses, leaving their dying expressions discernable. The bodies appear to have been stripped of valuables already. If the PCs move the remains, they may discover underneath the pile a secret trap door leading to a small "safe room," where wives and young slaves tried to hide—from the invading army. The safe room had been stocked with enough food and water for those hiding within to wait out a short siege, but the piling of the bodies atop the trap door doomed them to a slow death by starvation. A search of the skeletons uncovers 2 to 24 (2d12) pieces of jewelry, each worth 10 to 100 gp (10d10).

**11. Barracks.** This hall contains the spirit of an evil lieutenant sealed alive in the chamber ages ago when the qal'at was besieged. As soon as a party member opens the barracks door, the wraith bursts out and attacks everyone nearby. After the characters defeat the undead creature, they find the lieutenant's mortal remains sprawled near the door. (The body wears weapons and armor, including a *scimitar* +2.)

Otherwise, the chamber seems unremarkable, decorated with faded pillows, lamps, decayed rugs, and sleeping mats. In one corner, behind a low table, the party may discover a secret compartment the lieutenant used for storing his personal valuables. Detected as a secret door, the niche contains 16 gp, 46 pp, 4 small pearls (100 gp each), and a tiny jeweled tobacco box (500 gp).





**Wraith:** Int Very; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA energy drain; SD silver or +1 weapon to hit, immune to all *sleep, charm, hold, death*, and cold-based magic and poison and paralyzation attacks; SZ M (6' tall); ML 15; MC; XP 3,000.

**12. Summoning Room.** This austere chamber looks bare, except for a dozen decaying cushions leaning against the cracked plaster walls. A section of the stucco has crumbled away, revealing elaborate runes inscribed on the stones beneath the plaster surface. The runes radiate strong summoning magic (which a successful spellcraft ability check confirms); investigation reveals a good reason why someone plastered them over.

Removing all the crumbled stucco-uncovers the complete ritual for a *gate*. The spell summons a being named Al-Ashara Usbiyad (meaning "Ten-Fingered Hand"). Unbeknownst to the party, Al-Ashara is a tasked slayer genie with a vile, malignant disposition. Battle wizards once called upon him to slay the generals of invading armies-until the

genie's rampages became too difficult to control. Al-Ashara will not pursue characters out of this room; he returns to his home plane in a blinding pillar of fire if they all flee (advisable, especially for a low-level party).

#### **Al-Ashara Usbiyad, a tasked slayer genie:**

Int High; AL NE; AC -2; MV 24, Fl 30 (B); HD 12; hp 60; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8 or by weapon type+9; MR 15% SZ L (10' tall); ML 20; MC13; XP 11,000.

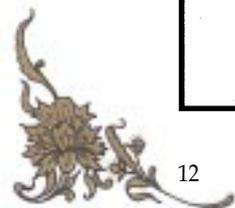
Magical abilities (1/day): *blindness, silence 15' radius, darkness, improved invisibility, ventriloquism, misdirection, assume gaseous form, polymorph self, dimension door.*

#### **Kamalla's Tactics**

At first, Kamalla tries to divide up the party at the treasure pit. She offers to hold the rope while any characters investigate the dry well, anticipating that a few of the daring party members will become infected by the creeper. When pressed to help search the pit, she blatantly refuses to go near its gaping mouth, claiming she is terrified of heights. If the party seems annoyed by her timidity, she tries to appear useful by searching the basement walls for secret doors and picking through the rubble in the northern quarter of the chamber.

Should the PCs recognize the creeper or destroy it before anyone becomes infected (a fireball spell cast into the well should do the job nicely), Kamalla points out the stairs leading down into the dungeons. Investigating these vaults will give her more time to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the party members-she is very cautious. When the party encounters something dangerous, Kamalla fights with her scimitar, hoping to further endear herself to the group.

While Kamalla pretends to be terrified of heights, she—like most werehyenas—is genuinely afraid of naked flame. Though she hides this fear better than most lycanthropes, she subtly avoids any characters lighting up a torch or using flame-producing spells. (Kamalla does not feel uneasy about lanterns, as long as their flames remain covered.) When the other party members are not looking, she will try to charm a fire-wielding PC so the character can't use fire against her.



## Concluding The Adventure

Assuming the party plunders the ruins of the qal'at successfully, Kamalla pulls out her wine flask and suggests that in the morning they set out for Gana, where they can celebrate their find. Later that evening, when the characters' guard is down, Kamalla uses her natural feminine (and inherent magical) charms to romance one of the more powerful male members of the party. She leads him to a secluded part of the ruins on the pretext of viewing a secret treasure she doesn't want to show the rest of the party.

Try to give the victim some clue about her wicked nature as she leads him to a prepared ambush with the rest of her pack. The most obvious omen is the second mouth at the base of Kamalla's neck. Perhaps he feels it when embracing her for a kiss; walking behind her in the moonlight, he might glimpse it when her hair and scarf swing out of the way. On a different tack, the character might notice the five werehyenas hidden nearby, spying on the party as they have been doing all along.

When the party member discovers her true identity, Kamalla transforms into a hyenalike monster and calls for the rest of the pack. They try to occupy the party long enough to cover Kamalla's escape. Keep in mind that Kamalla and her pack seek easy prey. She only orders an all-out attack if certain her pack will triumph. If victory is in question, or if characters brandish fire, she does not hesitate to call a withdrawal, leaving behind her small collection of garnets and other plundered treasure, if necessary. She

can always rebuild her collection of "adventurer bait" from future, less militant, victims.

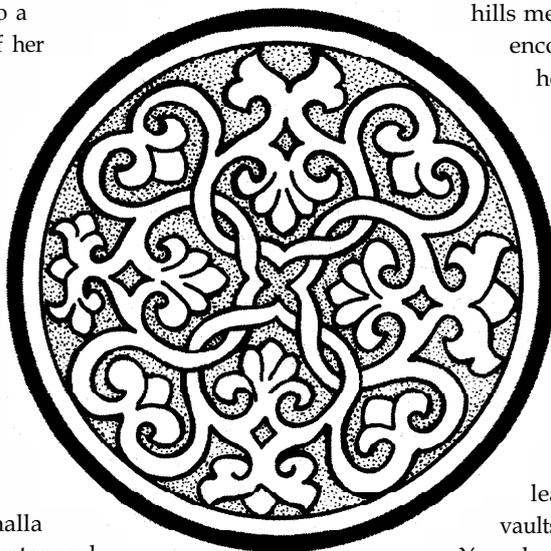
**Werehyena (5):** Int Very; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+1; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 or by weapon; SA lock jaws; SD iron or +1 weapons to hit, immune to enchantment/charm spells; SZ M; ML 8; MC13; XP 1,400.

Magical abilities: can cast *friends* once per round.

Once Kamalla has been driven off, the party members still need to haul their booty back to civilization. All the rumors of treasure in the hills means a high likelihood of random encounters during the journey home. Table 5, suggesting monsters and NPCs suitable for mountain encounters, appears in Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide*.

When running this adventure, feel free to expand the role of the fortress. First, enlarge the dungeons under Krak al-Shidda; perhaps the PCs discover under the rubble of the outbuildings a trap door that leads them to even more hidden vaults and subterranean passageways.

You also might have one of the party members inherit (or purchase) the ruined stronghold. At first, the group would have to deal only with the occasional opportunistic predator, like Kamalla. If the qal'at were refortified, however, the sultan of Jumlat would soon learn about it-and he probably would not react well to the news. The sultan of Gana might extend protection to the characters, providing they swear fealty to him. . . .





## Chapter 3

# The GENIE'S TERROR



**T**hough you may find it hard to believe, the genies of Zakhara—mild though we may be in these enlightened times—were quite arrogant when the world was young. It was only their right, after all.

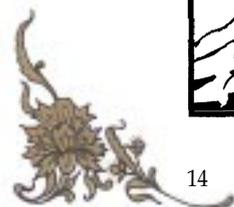
And in those long-ago days, mankind actually presumed to question the actions of the genies! The four most powerful elemental mages from the Al-Badia tribes of the High Desert gathered to forge a weapon against these “marauding” genies. (Indeed, you are right to be appalled at the audacity of these humans, O wise adventurers!) Binding together fire, wind, sea, and air, these wizards enchanted a scimitar, Cyclone of the Four Quarters, with the power to harm genies from any elemental province. The four entrusted the wicked blade to an unworthy sheikh known as Shaddad and departed to a distant land.

Armed with this enchanted scimitar, Shaddad sought out the noble genies in the lonely places of the desert: the djinn on the mountaintops, the dao in the dark caves, the marids in the secluded oases—even the efreet in the heat of the anvils! Brandishing his blade, in a voice foolishly devoid of fear, the human ruler ordered the mighty genies to cease their . . . excursions against the Al-Badia. He even dared challenge them to single combat if they refused! The noble genies were rightfully amused by this mortal’s impertinence. As their response, the djinn enveloped him in a whirlwind; the dao enclosed him in a block of stone; the marids engulfed him in a waterspout; and the efreet enfolded him grandly in a pillar of flame. But Cyclone of the Four Quarters protected Shaddad from the genies’ attacks. To their amazement, the Al-Badia champion stepped through their obstacles utterly unharmed. (I, too, fail to comprehend such a thing.)

Shaddad’s continued resistance only enflamed the genies further. The noble genies drew their towering blades of steel and launched attack after attack at the human. But, as the sheikh parried all their blows with Cyclone of the Four Quarters and riposted with painful accuracy, their arrogance turned to fear, I am ashamed to say.

Surrendering to this “Terror,” they promised the miserable human countless wishes if only he would spare their lives. Shaddad accepted, demanding that the genies restrict themselves and their kin to the uninhabited wilderness, away from the migration paths of the Al-Badia. The genies too hastily agreed, and the sheikh returned to his people—unharmed! He lived out his puny days in peace, until the Sunderer of Societies, the Destroyer of Delights, came upon him, none too soon. Why my former master felt compelled to include this story in his collection, I cannot fathom.

—Kharau of Righteous Rage





## Starting The Adventure

The Genies' Terror" is designed for low- to mid-level player characters (3rd to 6th level). The adventure takes place during the course of a party's journey along a wadi. In general, these seasonable riverbeds remain level and clear of obstacles, making travel along them easy and much faster than traversing rugged wilderness. This scenario makes a perfect interlude for PCs as they journey to Krak al-Shidda (described in the previous adventure, "The Treasure Pit"). The party needs at least one silver or magical weapon to complete this adventure successfully. A priest who can turn undead will prove useful also. Refer to Card 3 and Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide* when necessary.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Travel along the wadi has been much swifter than crossing other regions of the wilderness, as the firm, sun-baked clay of the riverbed supports even the heavy weight of camels and horses without shifting. This morning, the wind is blowing unusually strong from the direction of the sea, pushing before it a bank of gray clouds.

Any characters with the weather sense nonweapon proficiency should recognize the approaching storm automatically. (Have others make Wisdom checks.) By mid-morning, clouds have filled the sky. Soon rain starts to fall in a blinding torrent, drumming upon the hard surface of the riverbed and forming tiny pools that quickly flow together into a small stream. The sky darkens as thunder crackles ominously overhead.

Have PCs make Wisdom checks if they don't realize the potential danger of a flash flood; they should seek higher ground immediately. Build up the drama of the thunderstorm and the driving rain, but, if the characters make any attempt to leave the wadi at this point, allow them to escape to safety on the riverbanks before floodwaters hit.

Should the party remain in the ravine despite the storm, a 10-foot-high wall of water—the flash flood—rushes down the wadi at frightening speed, carrying everyone away downstream. Normal mounts are slain outright, and all equipment and rations are lost or

ruined. The player characters each take 2 to 40 (2d20) points of battering and tumbling damage (half for those who save vs. breath weapon) before they can escape the churning waters of the strong current.

The storm passes in a few hours, and soon the floodwaters sweeping down the wadi have decreased to a trickle, making travel along the length of the ravine safe once again.

## Return of The Terror

In addition to disturbing the party, the abrupt torrent also has uncovered a wide flight of marble stairs, which rises to a thick stone portal recessed into the wall of the ravine. The twilight glare of the setting sun makes it hard to discern the stairs from the surrounding rocks. Initially, only those with the awareness nonweapon proficiency spot the steps (provided they succeed at proficiency checks).

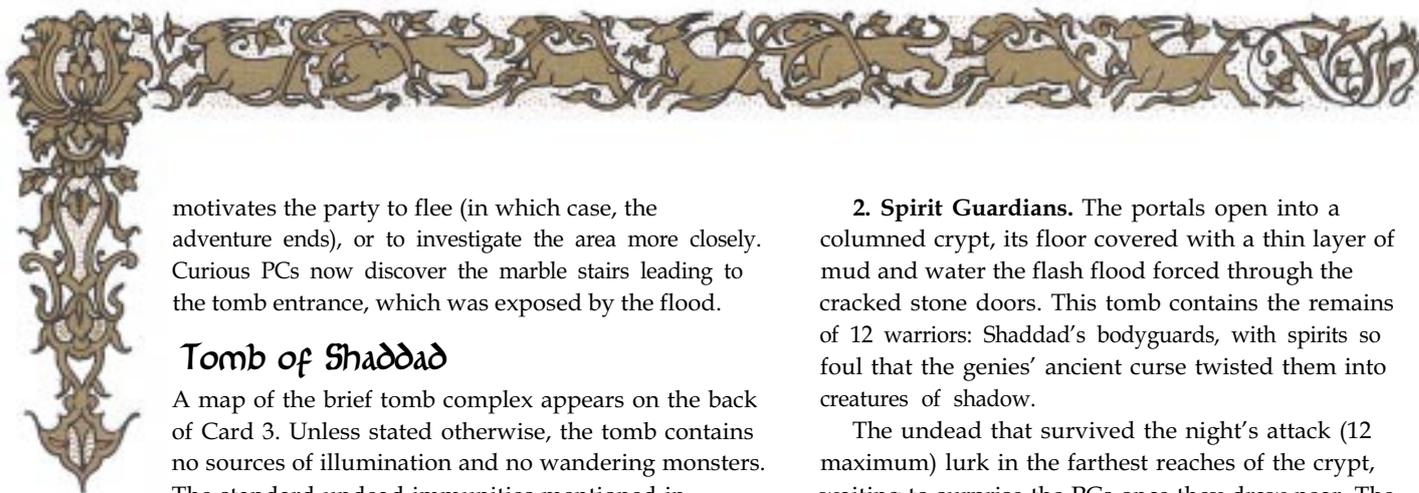
### Night by The Marble Stairs

Should the party members overlook the tomb's entrance (or decide to wait until the following morning to investigate), the rapidly approaching sunset almost certainly will force them to camp nearby. Make sure to ask the party about guard shifts during the night, since six shadows from the tomb (see Area 2, below) will slip out to attack the PCs before sunrise. Because of the shadows' inky hue and utter silence, all guards check for surprise with a -2 penalty.

If the sentries are alert, they notice shadowy, unnatural forms gliding eerily across the rocky ground, not the results of any light source. Should the guards prove lax in their watch, the shadows slide across the ground into the camp to attack the sleeping party, enveloping PCs with their icy embrace for a round before the characters note their presence. The shadows battle the party in mindless, undead fury until they are either destroyed, driven off by continual light, or turned by a priest. Statistics for the shadows are included in the description of the tomb (Area 2, below).

After the party has resolved the attack, characters with the religion nonweapon proficiency realize that shadows—malignant, unnatural creatures—almost never wander randomly in the wilderness, except near ruins or ancient burial grounds. This knowledge either





motivates the party to flee (in which case, the adventure ends), or to investigate the area more closely. Curious PCs now discover the marble stairs leading to the tomb entrance, which was exposed by the flood.

## Tomb of Shaddad

A map of the brief tomb complex appears on the back of Card 3. Unless stated otherwise, the tomb contains no sources of illumination and no wandering monsters. The standard undead immunities mentioned in monster statistics in this chapter are as follows: not affected by *sleep*, *death*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, or cold-based, poison, and paralyzation attacks.

**1. Entrance.** At the summit of a muddy marble staircase, two reddish marble doors stand deeply recessed into the rocky ravine wall. The portals are cracked with age and separated by a hairline gap (wide enough to have allowed the shadows from Area 2 to escape). The marble's chiseled surface bears the following inscription:

*Be warned, O Faint of Heart:  
I am Shaddad, Son of Ad,  
Terror of the Genies,  
He who never yielded in battle,  
Defeated only by Time –  
the Great Destroyer of Men and Societies.*

Since Shaddad is legendary to both the desert peoples and the genies, either a rawun or a sha'ir might have heard the Tale of Shaddad the Terror, presented in this adventure's introduction. The rawun needs to make a successful ancient history nonweapon proficiency check to recall the story; the sha'ir must succeed at a genie lore nonweapon proficiency check. (Most likely, a PC will relate the tale without the partisan embellishments the genie lent the story in the introduction.)

Of course, most legends have happy endings, but such was not the case for the sheikh, a dark and brutal man in life—not the shining hero a party member probably would describe in the tale. Using *Cyclone of the Four Quarters*, Shaddad murdered a great many genies for perceived crimes against his people. Ultimately, the genies cursed him so that neither he nor his trusted followers ever would rest in death.

**2. Spirit Guardians.** The portals open into a columned crypt, its floor covered with a thin layer of mud and water the flash flood forced through the cracked stone doors. This tomb contains the remains of 12 warriors: Shaddad's bodyguards, with spirits so foul that the genies' ancient curse twisted them into creatures of shadow.

The undead that survived the night's attack (12 maximum) lurk in the farthest reaches of the crypt, waiting to surprise the PCs once they draw near. The creatures are 90 percent undetectable unless one of the party members casts *light* or *continual light* on the crypt. The presence of the shadows then becomes obvious. Once detected, they attack the party relentlessly until destroyed.

The crypt itself contains 12 tall stone biers, carved with the warriors' names—pick favorites from Chapter 1 in the *Campaign Guide*. Decrepit armor sheaths the corpses, whose hands lie folded atop corroded scimitars. Each body wears a gold ring (100 gp) inscribed with a scimitar design. The only visible egress stands opposite the main entrance, blocked by a stone portcullis.

**Shadow (up to 12):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17, #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Strength drain; SD +1 weapon to hit, standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML special; MC; XP 650.

**3. Unexpected Pit.** The thin layer of river mud on the floor of the warriors' crypt makes detection of this covered pit trap difficult (-20 percent on a rogue's find traps check). When a character investigates the stone portcullis in the rear of the crypt, a 10-foot-wide section of the floor drops open, casting the character 20 feet down into a pit, showered with mire. Others nearby may make Dexterity checks to escape the hazard. The heavy stone lid of the pit trap (triggered by a weight of at least 50 pounds) is reset by a powerful spring mechanism, which forces the lid closed in 2 to 8 (2d4) rounds. PCs can wedge it open only with a heavy metal implement; the force of the mechanism snaps wooden items.

Those falling into the pit suffer 2 to 12 (2d6) points of damage, landing amid a wreckage of decaying human remains, foul-smelling dust, and corroded and useless equipment (no treasure). The lower walls of the





pit shelter four man-sized alcoves, which contain the shriveled and mummified corpses of Shaddad's wives. These figures lurch to attack anyone in the pit, crushing victims in a putrefying embrace. Should this occur, have the players make disease checks as outlined in Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide*.

Don't necessarily let players know these are only zombies! They will worry much more if they don't realize what the characters are up against. (Of course, you, the DM, can always substitute more dangerous undead for the zombies.)

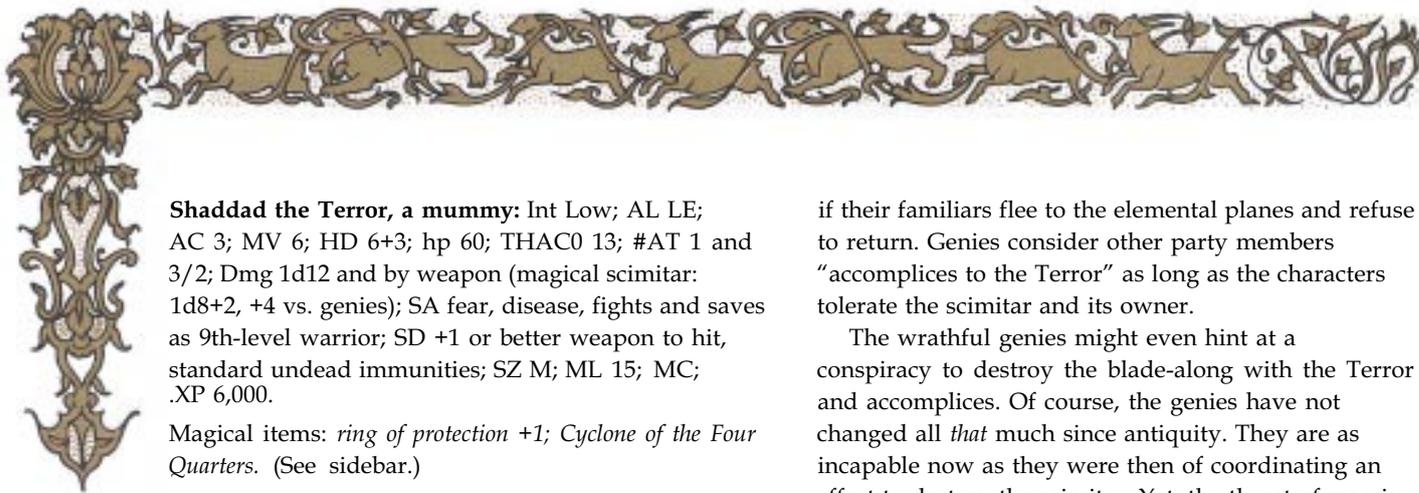
**Zombie (4):** Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 6,9,12,15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML special; MC; XP 65.

**4. Crypt of the Terror.** The crypt's entrance is blocked with a thick marble slab, lowered along recessed grooves in the wall, like a portcullis. Tall letters chiseled into this red surface spell out an ancient name that remains visible today: *Shaddad, Son of Ad*. To gain entry to the chamber beyond this stone gate, the characters will have to lift it somehow (difficult with no handle to grab) or circumvent it, perhaps by chiseling into the soft sandstone walls. The wide pit trap (Area 3) directly before the entrance complicates either strategy.

Beyond the gate, the party discovers a square burial chamber. In its center, the mummified corpse of the sheikh sits proudly on a stone throne draped in embroidered cloth of gold (500 gp). The corpse itself wears a heavy gold crown (1,000 gp), a ruby *ring of protection +1* (1,000 gp), and tattered red brocade robes (50 gp). *Cyclone of the Four Quarters* rests in a gold sheath (500 gp) on the dead man's lap, gripped by withered hands.

If the party breaks into his crypt, the spirit of Shaddad—driven by the genies' curse—awakens and animates his remains. The mummy's eyes glow with anger as he whisks *Cyclone* out of its golden sheath. Shaddad attacks and saves as a 9th-level fighter, but his statistics otherwise match those of a mummy. He wields *Cyclone* in his right hand; his left possesses the power to cause disease with one scabrous touch. Once all intruders are destroyed, Shaddad closes the entrance to his crypt and returns to his timeless slumber.





**Shaddad the Terror, a mummy:** Int Low; AL LE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 1 and 3/2; Dmg 1d12 and by weapon (magical scimitar: 1d8+2, +4 vs. genies); SA fear, disease, fights and saves as 9th-level warrior; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML 15; MC; .XP 6,000.

Magical items: *ring of protection +1*; *Cyclone of the Four Quarters*. (See sidebar.)

## Concluding The Adventure

**W**ho knows what else lies buried along the wadi's eroded shores? As the DM, you can expand this adventure to include other ruins or tombs exposed by the flash flood. While the party continues its journey along the riverbed, PCs may discover barbaric living idols, corroded copper automata, the bones of an impossibly large reptile, or perhaps even a stoppered genie bottle containing something better left buried.

No genie ever will associate voluntarily with anyone wielding *Cyclone of the Four Quarters* (assuming a PC captures the scimitar). This might not appear to be too much of a disadvantage at first. But, in a land full of genies, the weapon will draw a lot of negative attention from the most powerful—and unpredictable-magical forces in Zakhara. The blade has been buried for millennia, and the genies will not be pleased to learn of its rediscovery. During every encounter with the weapon, the genies vilify the owner; one who wields the scimitar assumes the title of the Terror as well as the Terror's curse—to one day answer for crimes against genies just as Shaddad did. The genies will not rest until they destroy the blade.

Traveling companions of the sword bearer are affected by the scimitar's very presence in their company, though to a lesser extent. Gens' fear of Cyclone could spell disaster for party sha'irs, especially

if their familiars flee to the elemental planes and refuse to return. Genies consider other party members "accomplices to the Terror" as long as the characters tolerate the scimitar and its owner.

The wrathful genies might even hint at a conspiracy to destroy the blade—along with the Terror and accomplices. Of course, the genies have not changed all *that* much since antiquity. They are as incapable now as they were then of coordinating an effort to destroy the scimitar. Yet, the threat of massive genie retribution should always loom over anyone who owns Cyclone.

### Cyclone of The Four Quarters

**T**his legendary weapon, a *scimitar +2 (+4 against genies)*, bears its name inscribed in runes along the flat of the blade. Unlike modern swords of this type, *Cyclone of the Four Quarters* inflicts double damage (including magical and Strength bonuses) against common efreet, djinn, dao, marids, noble genies, tasked genies—even gens. The sword does not affect the jann, who do not dwell in the four quarters of the elemental planes. Finally, the blade, unsheathed, makes its wielder immune to magical attacks of all genies.

The scimitar, though not sentient, is sensitive to the presence of genies. When one approaches within 60 feet, the scimitar thrums and vibrates violently in its scabbard (if sheathed) or howls and glows with bright green fire (if brandished).

During the few decades Shaddad wielded Cyclone, it gained a nasty reputation. As genies immediately sense and recognize the blade, one cannot surprise them with it. Lesser beings, such as gens and minor tasked genies, flee in terror from the scimitar; greater genies either display undisguised hostility (and attack) or seek to escape, depending upon their morale checks.





## Chapter 4

# The Shattered Statue

**T**he master used to tell of a man who lived long ago and of his love for Edimu: a fine, cunning stallion of purest white, faster than the winds, stronger than the mountains. The man loved racing – the thrill of bounding up the fertile hills outside his city of Sokkar, the exultation of thundering across the finish line far ahead of the pack in the yearly competitions.

Throughout his life, the man devoted his time, his wealth, and all his waking passion to ding and training with Edimu. He lavished priceless gifts on the horse, such as a bit and bridle of wrought gold, studded with diamonds and sapphires. He shared his very deepest thoughts and most private secrets with his beloved mount. Each day the man ate all his meals with the steed, and at night he lay down in an adjacent stall, reading Edimu engaging stories until both man and beast fell asleep in peaceful contentment.

*Humans always have been so prone to obsession, do you not agree?*

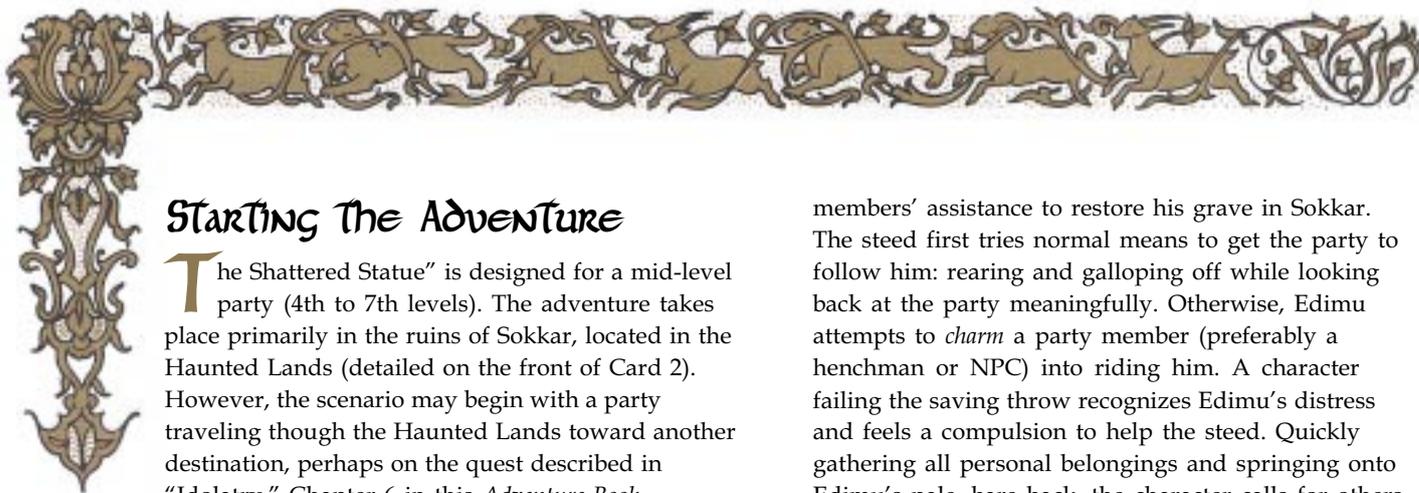
So the days passed happily for the man and his stallion. When the Destroyer of Joy, the Bringer of Despair, arrived to claim him, naturally the man wanted to be interred with Edimu, his trusted confidant and constant companion. I imagine he thought they could ride through the boundless landscape of the afterlife forever (or some such mortal nonsense). In his will, the man ordered a house of eternity prepared not only for himself, but one for Edimu as well: a stylized stable of eternity for his favorite steed.

Thus were man and horse embalmed, mummified, and buried in the necropolis of Sokkar, among the mausoleums of countless generations and dynasties. Months became years, years turned into decades, and decades matured into centuries before the ghouls discovered Sokkar, City of Eternity. Slowly, methodically, the corpse-ravaging undead began their ceaseless devourings, methodically plundering the crypts of the vast cemetery. Eventually, the ghouls reached the tombs of the man and Edimu, cracking open their portals and sarcophagi with iron claws, feasting on the grim delicacies contained in their dust-ridden coffins.

In Edimu's mausoleum, the capricious ghouls behaved especially wickedly, dashing the steed's rune-inscribed spirit statue onto the tomb's cold marble floor. As the ghouls departed, they looted Edimu's prized bit and bridle of wrought gold and gems. That act shattered the stallion's peace in the afterlife, returning his troubled spirit to the world of the living.

–Kharau, Teller of a Thousand Tales





## Starting The Adventure

The Shattered Statue" is designed for a mid-level party (4th to 7th levels). The adventure takes place primarily in the ruins of Sokkar, located in the Haunted Lands (detailed on the front of Card 2). However, the scenario may begin with a party traveling through the Haunted Lands toward another destination, perhaps on the quest described in "Idolatry," Chapter 6 in this *Adventure Book*.

Gather up Cards 2, 4, and 5, page 1 in the NPC booklet, and the back cover of the *Campaign Guide* in preparation for this adventure. In addition, read Chapter 2 in the *Campaign Guide* before running this scenario, as it contains important background about the vast necropolis. Decide how much information about Sokkar (if any) to reveal to players before starting the adventure. Beware: Giving away too much lore will diminish the importance of interacting with NPCs once the party arrives in Sokkar.

The adventure begins anywhere in the wilderness of the Haunted Lands. One afternoon, the party notices a white horse galloping across the barren waste. The majestic stallion approaches the party, his muscled flanks gleaming with sweat. The steed has a wild, frantic look in his eyes.

This is the illusory form of Edimu, an undead ghost mount. In life, he was a magnificent steed of the rare Sayyad bloodline, distinguished by unparalleled speed, fierce loyalty, and spirited personality, and raised only on the distant island of Jazirat al-Sayyad in the Crowded Sea. Tasked genies carefully bred the Sayyads with magical steeds from the ocean to make them much more headstrong and intelligent than normal horses.

After Edimu was sold to a nobleman in Sokkar, his new master taught him all the customs of the city, including the elaborate burial rituals that enriched existence in the afterlife. Soon Edimu came to embrace his master's customs as his own. When ghouls defiled his grave, Edimu became a ghost mount, his Sayyad heritage giving him unusual intellectual and magical powers. Unlike most ghost mounts, Edimu can enforce his will on others, employing *charm person* (once per day) with a -2 penalty on the victim's save.

Despite his undead nature, Edimu is not evil and has no intention of harming the party. He needs the

members' assistance to restore his grave in Sokkar. The steed first tries normal means to get the party to follow him: rearing and galloping off while looking back at the party meaningfully. Otherwise, Edimu attempts to *charm* a party member (preferably a henchman or NPC) into riding him. A character failing the saving throw recognizes Edimu's distress and feels a compulsion to help the steed. Quickly gathering all personal belongings and springing onto Edimu's pale, bare back, the character calls for others to follow.

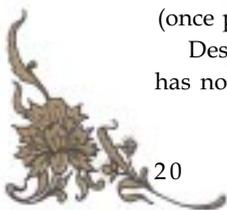
After communicating his message in one way or another, Edimu gallops off toward Sokkar, preferably with one of the party members riding on his back. Because he needs the party's help, Edimu does not drain the life energy of his rider. The steed can outrun even the fastest of normal camels and horses, so he stops periodically on the crests of dunes, waiting for the party to catch up.

**Edimu, a ghost mount:** Int Very; AL N; AC 5; MV 30; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d6; SA *charm*, energy drain; SD immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *hold*, *death*, cold-based magic, poison, and paralyzation; SZ L; ML 16; MC13; XP 1,400.

## Storm of The Black Cloud

As the party follows Edimu, the horizon darkens in the face of an approaching sandstorm, which envelops the party with unnatural speed and ferocity. This storm is the angry breath of Al-Amzija, the Black Cloud of Vengeance, described in Chapter 2 of the *Campaign Guide*. Howling winds kick up blinding sheets of sand and dust. As the sky darkens further, the party hears the crash of approaching thunder. Bursts of fire and lightning illuminate the sky, outlining a deeper darkness behind the PCs, driving them forward.

Edimu recognizes the storm as the product of a malignant being that guards the city from intruders. As an undead creature, the ghost mount does not attract its fury, but the party is a different matter entirely. They cannot afford to tarry in Al-Amzija's domain; they will be pelted with a rain of fire (6 to 60 points of damage) and bolts of lightning (7 to 70 points of damage) if they remain. Through the raging storm, the





PCs catch a glimpse of Edimu leading them onward. If they sprint after the ghost mount, they can cross Al-Amzija’s domain before the Black Cloud can immolate them in a downpour of fire and lightning. A party choosing to stay and fight most likely will be slaughtered.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The malign storm rages, hungry for destruction. The white stallion up ahead remains only barely visible through the blinding winds. This wanton tempest can whip people and horses into the air as though they are nothing but grains of rice.

Time seems to grind to a halt. But suddenly, the winds abate, and the malignancy of the storm recedes. It seems unable to pursue any farther.

Outside the storm’s violent embrace lies a mind-numbing panorama of graves and mausoleums stretching for miles in all directions. The sepulchers increase in stature and apparent importance deeper into the necropolis before you. At least six lofty pyramids rise above all other structures.

The white stallion waits impatiently on a wide boulevard lined with looming granite statues of stem-faced sphinxes. The avenue leads directly into a city as still as the dead.

Edimu leads the party down the Avenue of the Sphinxes to his despoiled crypt near the Plaza of Eternity. (Show players the front of Card 5.) During their journey into the city, the PCs pass hundreds of tombs and unusual, pillared shrines containing towering statues of humans. Most of the mausoleums and graves are inscribed with epitaphs in Chun, the ancient language of the Haunted Lands. The runes also cover a few buildings, including the shrines; those with the ancient languages nonweapon proficiency can make out that the verses laud the unknown Noq, Arun, and Merodach for their eternal leadership and protection. Despite the storm along its borders, the city of graves is eerily quiet and seemingly deserted.

Sokkar appears to be a tomb robber’s dream, but

several formidable obstacles deter thieves. First, the Sokkarans built these tombs to last for all eternity against the ravages of time and invaders (like the PCs). Most tombs—especially the big ones—were sealed with granite blocks and plugs weighing 3 to 30 (3d10) tons each, moved into place by teams of countless slaves and beasts of burden. The spells needed to circumvent these obstacles (such as *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, *dimension door*, etc.) should be beyond the ability of most player characters in this scenario.

Of course, one can always excavate around these obstacles—but that requires considerable patience and time. Even if characters evade the barriers, traps, and guardians of these tombs, all items from these crypts will attract the attention of the Black Cloud as soon as the characters attempt to leave the city with them. Al-Amzija will be waiting for the defilers outside the borders of the city; let the characters find out this fact for themselves. Furthermore, Edimu will become exasperated with PCs who wander off to explore Sokkar on their own. The ghost mount bites at their clothes in annoyance and tries to drag them toward his crypt, *charming* them only if necessary.

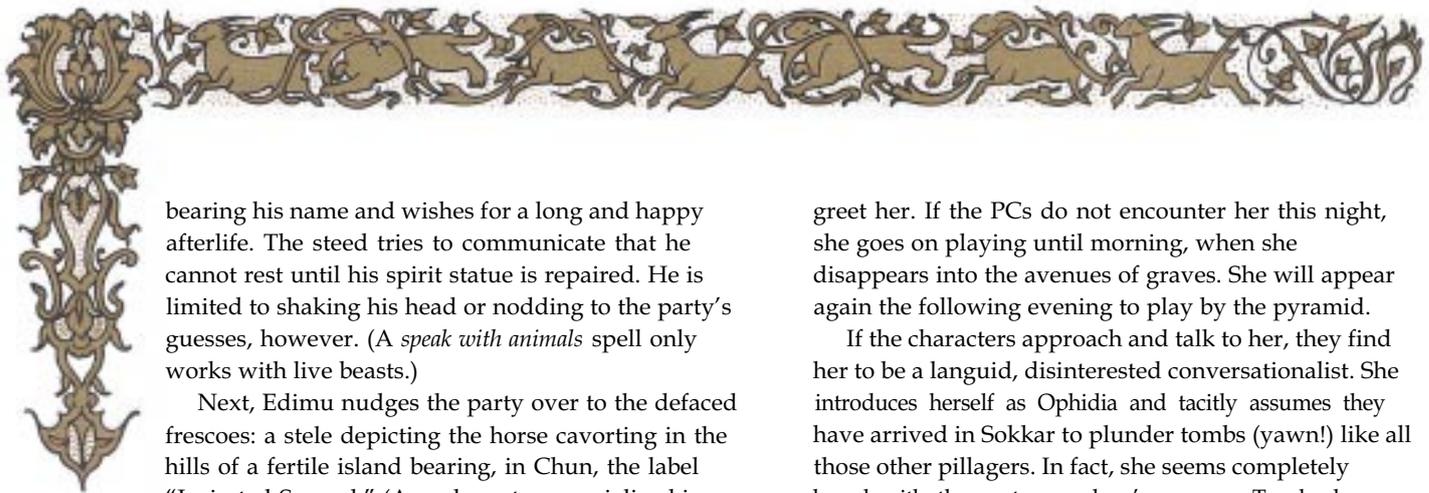
### **Stable of Eternity**

Edimu eventually leads the party to a mausoleum whose doors are heavily scratched and slightly ajar. Trackers will notice signs that clawed humanoid (ghouls) entered and exited the tomb in the past 24 hours. Inside, the tomb’s horse-sized sarcophagus has been ripped open. Its stone lid lies shattered on the dust-piled floor, which clearly displays the imprints of clawed humanoid feet. The crypt has been pillaged by monsters who feasted on Edimu’s remains, stole everything of value, and defaced nearly everything else.

The party should recognize that, curiously enough, Edimu’s hooves leave no tracks across the dusty crypt floor. If the PCs haven’t figured out the horse is dead—have a priest or character with the religion nonweapon proficiency roll a Wisdom check—Edimu drops his lifelike illusory appearance, revealing a spectral, mummified image (his natural, spiritual form).

Edimu takes care to show the party his broken spirit statue: the life-sized alabaster ka figure of a horse with a golden bit and bridle, inscribed with Chun runes





bearing his name and wishes for a long and happy afterlife. The steed tries to communicate that he cannot rest until his spirit statue is repaired. He is limited to shaking his head or nodding to the party's guesses, however. (A *Speak with Animals* spell only works with live beasts.)

Next, Edimu nudges the party over to the defaced frescoes: a stele depicting the horse cavorting in the hills of a fertile island bearing, in Chun, the label "Jazirat al-Sayyad." (Any characters specialized in land-based riding will have heard of the legendary breed of horses from that isle.)

Show players the back cover of the *Campaign Guide*. The stele pictured there includes panels showing Edimu traveling on a ship and being purchased by his master, a warrior or hunter. In another panel, the master presents him with a golden bit and bridle. Edimu points to this panel with his nose over and over again, going back to the bit and bridle on his shattered ka figure (which is only a shard of painted terra-cotta). Edimu wants the party to recover his bit and bridle, which the ghouls stole. Having communicated his desires to the party to the best of his ability, the ghostly steed slips into a blank wall, which becomes transformed into a grand mural of Edimu rearing on a grassy plain.

Even if the party understands the meaning of Edimu's requests, the difficulty of the tasks should be daunting. Who stole the Edimu's bit and bridle, and where did the thieves take them? How does one put together a shattered spirit statue—more than a thousand ceramic pieces—without cement? The PCs probably will not fully comprehend Edimu's dilemma—that is fine for now. The next encounter provides them with an appreciation of Sokkar's history, burial rituals, and rulers.

## A Lonely Lover

When night falls and the stars seem dim and distant through the stormy haze that surrounds Sokkar, the party hears the faint song of a flute, a melody of bittersweet melancholy. Characters who investigate spot a lone young woman seated on the wall of the Pyramid of Ophidia, playing a strange, hourglass-shaped flute made of amber. Easily distracted, the flutist stops as soon as she spots the party. The woman just watches them wordlessly, unless they approach and

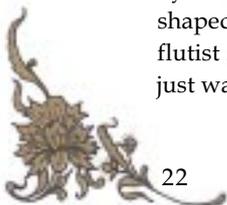
greet her. If the PCs do not encounter her this night, she goes on playing until morning, when she disappears into the avenues of graves. She will appear again the following evening to play by the pyramid.

If the characters approach and talk to her, they find her to be a languid, disinterested conversationalist. She introduces herself as Ophidia and tacitly assumes they have arrived in Sokkar to plunder tombs (yawn!) like all those other pillagers. In fact, she seems completely bored with the party members' presence. To shock them, perhaps, she confesses that she is a lamia (see the *Monstrous Manual* or the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* Volume 2) as well as a creature of the night. Her statement does not explain the whole truth; she once ruled as a princess of Sokkar, long ago, before she became subject to a priest's curse. Ophidia is further detailed on page 1 of the NPC booklet.

Ophidia will not assist the PCs unless they appear to be genuinely lost, confused, or reveal they are helping Edimu; she has no interest in wasting her time aiding mere tomb robbers, who will be slain by the Black Cloud, anyway, once they attempt to leave Sokkar with plunder. Should the characters assure her that they seek to help an inhabitant of Sokkar, Ophidia's opinion of them changes entirely. Her mesmerizing eyes light up with interest as she asks the party to describe the encounter with Edimu. If the characters seem confused by the ghost's reason for bringing them to Sokkar, she might even go with them to the horse's mausoleum to interpret the frescoes and explain the importance of the shattered statue.

The lamia's assistance does have its price. She becomes romantically interested in one of the PCs—preferably a melancholy loner, like herself, perhaps a musician or a poet (a desert bard would be perfect). She reveals her interest in him by dropping casual hints during conversation and answering his questions over those of his fellows. The character will feel inexplicably drawn to her—she is, after all, a lamia—but Ophidia initially rebuffs any romantic attempts, saying that he would not long survive her affection.

Ophidia spends the rest of the evening telling her beloved about the history of Sokkar, the Black Cloud, and the Undying, concluding with remarks about the city's recent and disgraceful inhabitants—disgusting ghouls. As a night creature, Ophidia is all too familiar with their behavior and has watched many undead





enter and leave the unfinished pyramid of Kagamemni in the Plaza of Eternity. Unless the party thinks of it first, she suggests that her beloved and his friends look there for Edimu's bit and bridle.

The lamia promises to return on another night to visit her beloved. Just before sunrise, Ophidia bids her chosen lover a fond farewell and slips swiftly away into the twilight. She soon disappears into the City of Eternity.

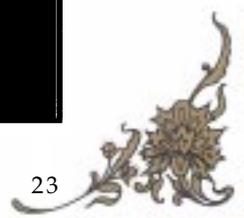
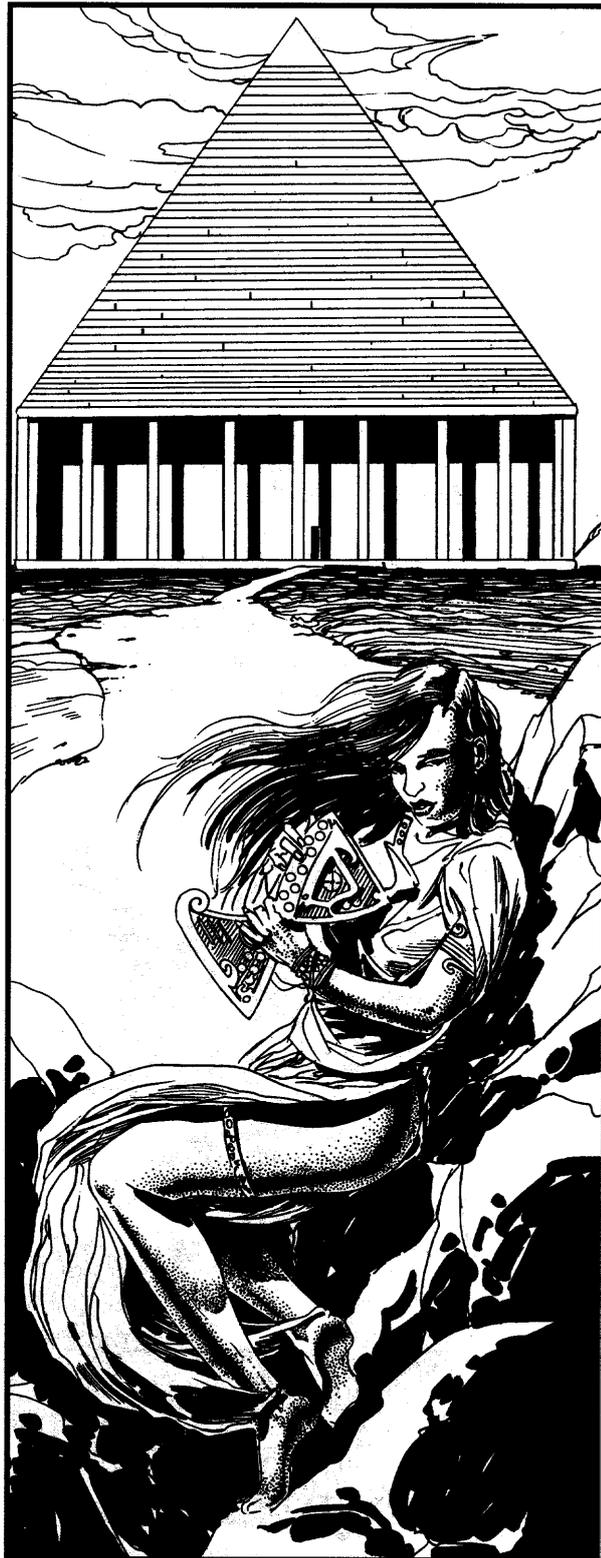
## Pyramid of Kagamemni

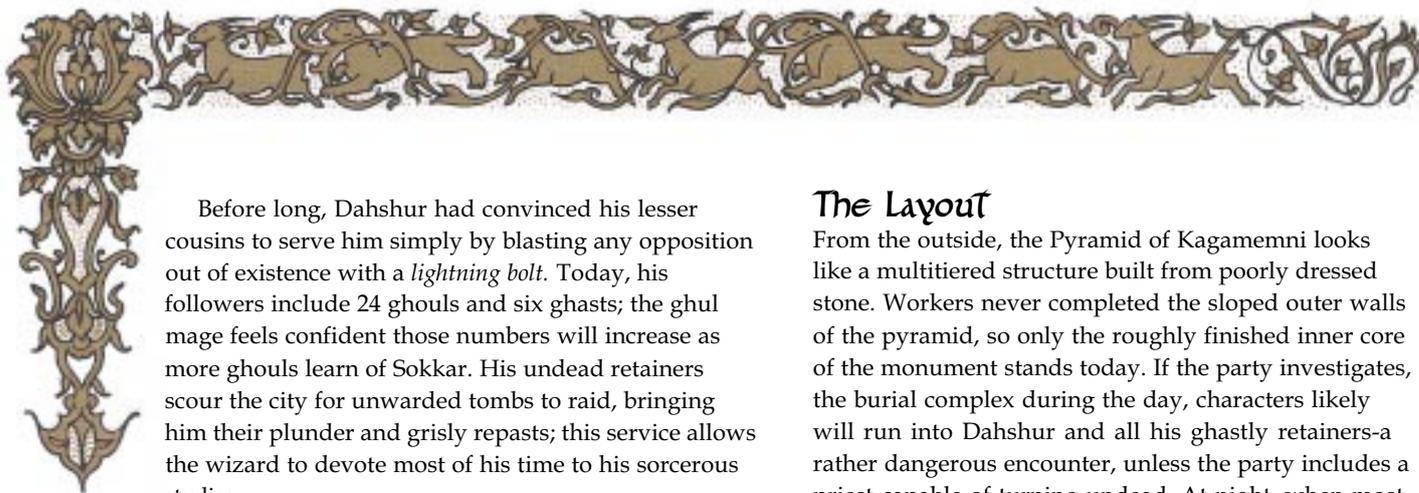
**E**dimu's tomb was raided by ghouls, but inexperienced characters are unlikely to realize this unless they have encountered these undead before or are familiar with ghoulish behavior. Of course, the ghouls have ravaged more tombs than just the stallion's; many mausoleums bear the mark of their relentless iron claws. The ghouls' plunderings have increased lately, though the undead rarely surface during daylight hours, when they prefer to hide in their lair: the Pyramid of Kagamemni. Even if the party does not heed Ophidia's advice, it should not prove difficult for a ranger to track the ghouls to their lair. Minor divination spells (such as *augury* and *locate object*) might confirm the lamia's counsel.

Refer to the map of the unfinished pyramid on the back of Card 4. The structure was commissioned by one of the last kings of Sokkar, who died long before his burial chamber was finished. Rather than further deplete the city's already bankrupt treasury, Kagamemni's heirs decided to bury their father in a more modest mausoleum. Workers promptly abandoned the grandiose project, and the king was never laid to rest in the pyramid bearing his name chiseled on each cornerstone and over every doorway.

### Ghoulish Inhabitants

Recently, the pyramid has become the lair for a reclusive great ghul sorcerer named Dahshur, who retired to Sokkar so he could have an unlimited food supply and research his spells in complete seclusion. He easily gained access to the city, since his undead state protected him from the Black Cloud's ever-vigilant attention. Over the past few months, he has gained the service of the few ghouls and ghastrs arriving in the desolate city.





Before long, Dahshur had convinced his lesser cousins to serve him simply by blasting any opposition out of existence with a *lightning bolt*. Today, his followers include 24 ghouls and six ghosts; the ghul mage feels confident those numbers will increase as more ghouls learn of Sokkar. His undead retainers scour the city for unwarded tombs to raid, bringing him their plunder and grisly repasts; this service allows the wizard to devote most of his time to his sorcerous studies.

**Ghoul (24):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA paralyzation (2'-5' radius); SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175.

**Ghost (6):** Int Very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 20 (x5), 25; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA paralyzation (3'-8' radius); stench (save vs. poison or attack at -2); SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M (6'); ML 14; XP 650.



## The Layout

From the outside, the Pyramid of Kagamemni looks like a multitiered structure built from poorly dressed stone. Workers never completed the sloped outer walls of the pyramid, so only the roughly finished inner core of the monument stands today. If the party investigates, the burial complex during the day, characters likely will run into Dahshur and all his ghastly retainers—a rather dangerous encounter, unless the party includes a priest capable of turning undead. At night, when most of the ghouls wander the city, only a few token servants guard the great ghul.

**1. Outer Trench.** PCs can enter the pyramid most easily by means of a wide, long trench that descends into the structure at a steep angle. Had the pyramid been completed, Kagamemni's sarcophagus would have been slid down the ramp, through a sloped passage, to the burial chamber (Area 4). After the burial, the trench and corridor would have been filled with packed earth.

**2. Shaft.** A rectangular opening in the ceiling at this point in the sloped trench forms the bottom of a chute going all the way to the top of the pyramid. After Kagamemni's burial, a granite portcullis weighing several dozen tons would have been lowered down the shaft to block entrance to his burial chamber permanently. Afterward, the shaft would have been filled with rubble and the outside covered with a layer of dressed stone to conceal it. A relatively small pyramid, this house of eternity contains only one stone portcullis. Larger pyramids have as many as four or five of these monolithic barriers blocking all access to the burial chamber except by persistent, properly equipped, or magically inclined robbers.

Luckily for Dahshur, Kagamemni's stone portcullis was never inserted—nothing impedes the ghul's entrance to the burial chamber. Today, the shaft meant to guide the portcullis into place is clear of debris and provides a second entrance to the pyramid, sometimes employed by the ghouls during their nightly sorties.

**3. Upper Galleries.** These extensive, alcoved galleries were to have been surfaced in tile and painted with mosaics to honor Kagamemni, but the artwork never was commissioned, and the limestone blocks remain unadorned. Now the galleries serve as lairs for Dahshur's retainers: a purpose far less noble than their



intended function. These interconnected chambers reek of carrion and ghoulish stench. The walls are smeared with filth and scratched with obscenities.

During the day, all Dahshur's retainers will be found here; at night, only 2 to 12 (2d6) ghouls and 1 to 4 (1d4) ghosts will be present. Unless the PCs remain completely silent, the beasts attack relentlessly, swarming into the angled corridor to fight to the death. The great ghul in Area 4, buried in his research, most likely will not notice this melee.

Searching these filthy alcoves takes hours (Have each PC make a disease check as discussed in Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide*.) but uncovers the following treasure: six fire opals (500 gp each); an ivory comb (100 gp); a jade statuette of a man gripping a snake (250 gp); and two pale green potions of clairvoyance, contained in tear-shaped crystal vials (100 gp each).

Throughout *Cities of Bone*, an asterisk (\*) indicates that a spell or magical item can be found in the *Tome of Magic*

**4. Lair of the Great Ghul.** The ghul sorcerer has claimed these chambers and covered the floor with a foot of sand so he may easily employ sand-based spells in his lair. Dahshur has converted the former burial chamber into his private library, where he spends most of his time on spell research. For instance, he has just finished modifying the spell *Maximilian's earthen grasp*\* to work in sandy surroundings. Of course, the ghul renamed the spell *Dahshur's sandy grasp*. The ghul's tomes lie spread out in the center of the chamber on a raised dais (originally intended for Kagamemni's sarcophagus). Normally, the ghul can be found here, squatting ignobly with an open book on the floor in front of him.

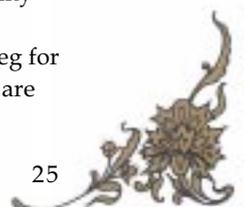
The books contain all the information necessary to research general and sand-related wizard spells of first to fourth levels. They can bring 4,000 gp if transported to a large city. One of the tomes is Dahshur's spell book, warded only by a sepia snake sigil on the first page. The grimoire holds all the spells Dahshur currently has memorized, plus mending and one to four extra spells per level. (Choose appropriate spells)

The ghul mage takes very little care of his appearance. An explosion of thick black hair on his head droops down over most of his face. The creature stands at more than 10 feet tall and has white, clammy skin. Dahshur's hands taper into long, terrible claws, and his legs end in hooves like a donkey's. The ghul wears baggy black pantaloons and has wrapped around his waist a wide sash, which holds a metal baton (*wand of paralyzation* with 42 charges), a lapis lazuli brooch (*amulet of proof against detection and location*) a rolled-up parchment (*scroll of protection from elementals*), and a long, thin vial (containing *oil of slipperiness*).

Dahshur raises his head to stare as characters enter. The party has two options here: members can attack or attempt to parley, depending upon their Strengths and inclinations. Fighting the ghul most likely will involve a painful struggle. While his *stoneskin* still protects him, Dahshur calls for his ghul retainers—any surviving undead from Area 3 arrive in 2 to 5 (1d4+1) rounds—and *conjures a sand lion* to hold back the party. He promptly casts *mirror image*, which creates 3 to 6 (1d4+2) images, and *pillar of sand* as further magical defenses. Note that he can raise himself on a *pillar of sand* only 20 feet high, because of the chamber's 30-foot ceiling. From the top of the pillar, he blasts the party with his remaining spells and wand.

When the PCs close for melee, he combines *fist of stone*\* with his innate *shocking grasp* ability. He gains only one combined attack per round (THAC0 12 because of *fist of stone*\*, which lasts only 7 rounds), but a successful hit inflicts 7 to 12 (1d6+6) points of crushing damage plus 8 to 15 (1d8+7) points of electrical damage. Should he suffer 20 points of damage, Dahshur surrenders, asking the party to name any service or deed he can perform in exchange for his life.

A low-level party almost certainly will be decimated by the ghul's onslaught, so tact and humility might prove the only survivable option. If the party doesn't attack, the ghul slams shut the book he was reading. Replacing it on the sandy floor, he bellows, "Before I eat your flesh and crack your bones, pitiful humans, I would know why you have interrupted my studies!" Unless the party members greet the ghul politely, grovel profusely at his donkey feet, and beg for his mercy (even though they, as "pitiful humans," are





unworthy), Dahshur probably will lose patience with the arrogant mortals and kill them all.

Presuming the characters get on Dahshur's good side and explain their search for Edimu's bit and bridle (a good job for a charismatic priest or sha'ir), they stand a better than fair chance of persuading the ghul to relinquish the items, as he already has plenty of monetary treasure in the vault (Area 5). The ghul would trade the bit and bridle gladly for a new spell or useful magical item, but a clever party can devise countless other options. A silver-tongued barber might win the ghul's appreciation (and the bit and bridle) with a decent haircut and a song. A smart rogue might engage the ghul in a contest of riddles, chess, checkers, cards, even astrological trivia, with whatever stakes seem appropriate.

If the party reveals meeting Ophidia in the ruins, the ghul's expression changes immediately- his face shows concern and a trace of fear, despite his best attempts to hide these weak emotions. Dahshur has not lived in Sokkar long, but he and Ophidia have had "polite discussions" when she noticed his ghouls trying to break into her pyramid. Needless to say, Dahshur

lost that "discussion" and trembles at her innate Wisdom draining ability. In exchange for some schooling in wizardry, Ophidia spared the ghul's life, and he has been careful to stay out of her sight ever since. When the characters mention Ophidia, the ghul automatically assumes the lamia sent them as her *charmed* messengers and, therefore, treats them with fawning respect.

Once the party persuades Dahshur to surrender (or trade) Edimu's bit and bridle, he retrieves it from his treasury (Area 5). If characters have intimidated him properly, he also fetches a jeweled anklet for their "mistress" Ophidia, as but a token of his continued affection.

**Dahshur, a great ghul sand mage:** Int High; AL NE; AC 0; MV 18, Br 3, CI 12; HD 4; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d6; SA magic use, sand spells he casts inflict + 1 point per die of damage; SD *stoneskin* blocks 6 attacks, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold-based magic, poison, and paralyzation, unaffected by sha'ir's binding, +1 weapons to hit, +2 bonus on saves against sand-related attacks, which



have a penalty of -2 points per die of damage (min. 0 damage); SZ L (10'); ML 16; MC13; XP 3,000.

Magical abilities (1/round, at will): *bestow invisibility, shocking grasp, polymorph self*.

Spells (as 7th-level sand mage): *fist of stone\**, *magic missile*, *sand slumber*, *spider climb*, *mirror image*, *pillar of sand*, *Maximilian's earthen grasp\**, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *conjure sand lion*.

Magical items: *amulet of proof against detection and location*, *wand of paralyzation* (42 charges), *scroll of protection from elementals*, *oil of slipperiness*.

**Sand Lion:** Int High (as creator); AL NE; AC 6; MV 12, Leap 3 (9 as steed); HD 6+2; hp 50; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d12; SA rear claws (2d4 points of damage); SD necromantic and enchantment/charm spells have no effect; SZ L (7' long); ML special; XP 975.

**5. Treasury.** Piles of nonmagical treasures salvaged from Sokkar's ghoulish-plundered tombs rise to the ceiling. Painted ceramic jars and slender terra-cotta urns overflow with a total of 15,000 sp and 5,000 gp, minted in ancient Sokkar. Two *wizard locked* chests together contain 45 pieces of golden funerary jewelry, including burial masks, rings, bracers, necklaces, anklets—and Edimu's bit and bridle (100 to 1,000 gp each).

Note that, with the exception of Dahshur's books and personal magical items, all monetary treasure in the pyramid was salvaged from Sokkar. In the stormy border outside the city, these items will attract Al-Amzija's fury like magnets.

## Repairing Edimu's Tomb

After the PCs recover Edimu's bit and bridle, they return to his mausoleum to find the stallion waiting in his burial chamber. The steed nuzzles them affectionately for succeeding in his quest. Taking the bit and bridle from the party with his teeth, the stallion lays the treasures in his empty sarcophagus and gestures to his shattered ka figure, which the party must repair to lay Edimu's spirit to rest.

Fitting together the thousand pieces would take an intelligent person at least a month and require some sort of adhesive or glue. Spells such as *mending* or stone shape might also succeed, if a party wizard or priest can

access such spells. If the characters defeated Dahshur and captured his spell books, they will find the necessary *mending* spell among its pages. Otherwise, the party probably will have to convince the ghul to help them (again). If they know the ghul fears Ophidia, persuading him should not prove too difficult.

Of course, Ophidia herself could always lend a helping hand. The lamia (in human form, of course) eagerly visits her new paramour the night after the party recovers the bit and bridle. With her small talent in magic, she might be persuaded to learn and cast mending from Dahshur's spell books, if the party captured them. Should Ophidia's lover ask her sweetly, she even might accompany the party on a second visit to Dahshur, though she claims she doesn't know how to aid them in recruiting the ghul's help. However, as soon Ophidia enters Dahshur's presence, the ghul's eyes widen in abject terror, and he stammers polite greetings to the lamia. She just smiles sweetly and lets the PCs do all the talking. Dahshur repairs the broken spirit statue and does anything else the party asks of him, hoping to please Ophidia with his eagerness.

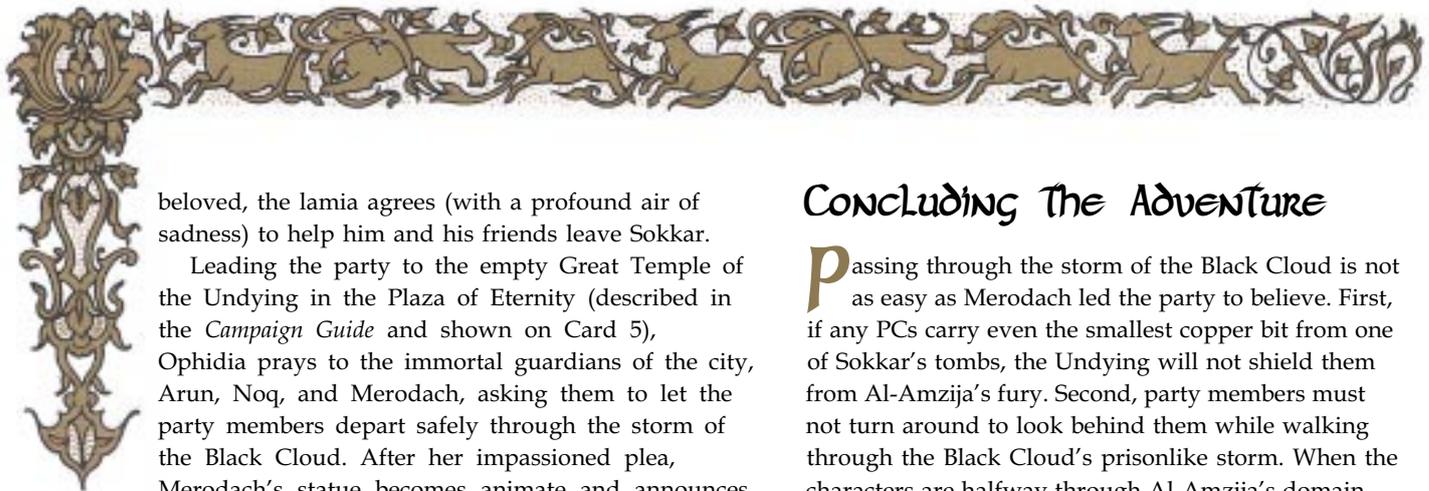
Unless the party requires the ghul to swear that neither he nor any of his lesser cousins will trouble Edimu's mausoleum again, their repairs will be undone as soon as the party leaves and Dahshur sends out his ghouls to search for treasure. If the party doesn't think to require this oath from Dahshur, Ophidia tells the ghul in a coy voice that it would displease her if any of his servants were to trouble Edimu's tomb again. Not that she cares about the stallion's eternal rest—she certainly hasn't opposed the ghouls' other plunderings. She intervenes only to display her sensitivity to the feelings of her paramour.

As soon as the party installs Edimu's repaired ka figure properly back in his mausoleum, the spirit horse nuzzles them affectionately one last time. His spirit steps into the statue and vanishes.

## Undying Permission

Sooner or later, the party members will want to leave Sokkar, especially once Ophidia explains that the Black Cloud of Vengeance is attuned to burial treasures that leave the city. Out of affection for her





beloved, the lamia agrees (with a profound air of sadness) to help him and his friends leave Sokkar.

Leading the party to the empty Great Temple of the Undying in the Plaza of Eternity (described in the *Campaign Guide* and shown on Card 5), Ophidia prays to the immortal guardians of the city, Arun, Noq, and Merodach, asking them to let the party members depart safely through the storm of the Black Cloud. After her impassioned plea, Merodach's statue becomes animate and announces to the group:

"I am Merodach the Undying. My companions and I have heard your pleas and are moved with compassion. As the foreigners are not thieves, the Black Cloud of Vengeance will let them pass, providing they walk out of our fair city and never look back.

"Ophidia, the three of us have watched your suffering for many centuries and feel convinced that you have atoned for your past misdeeds. We lift your curse. You, also, may leave Sokkar in peace.

"I, Merodach the Undying, Guardian of Sokkar, have spoken. So let it be done."

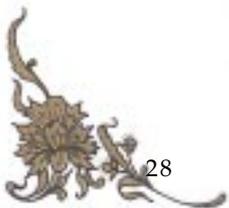
After Merodach's proclamation, his statue assumes its former, stem expression, and Ophidia becomes a human woman again, with the powers of a 9th-level sorcerer of wind and sand. The party is probably curious about her curse (described in the NPC booklet), but Ophidia refuses to discuss it—for the time being, at least. If she joins the PCs, she might tell them the story later. Should her paramour reject her continued advances, Ophidia departs Sokkar alone for a distant, mortal, city.

## Concluding The Adventure

Passing through the storm of the Black Cloud is not as easy as Merodach led the party to believe. First, if any PCs carry even the smallest copper bit from one of Sokkar's tombs, the Undying will not shield them from Al-Amzija's fury. Second, party members must not turn around to look behind them while walking through the Black Cloud's prisonlike storm. When the characters are halfway through Al-Amzija's domain, the Black Cloud comes up behind them, blasting their footsteps with fire and lightning. These mischiefs do not harm them as long as they do not turn and fight. Al-Amzija blasts any offender into oblivion, as well as those who turn to defend their foolish comrade.

While the PCs do not get to escape with much (if any) treasure from this first visit, unless they destroyed the ghul sorcerer they earn a hefty story award of 50,000 XP, to be divided equally among the survivors. If they obtained the bit and bridle from Dahshur using guile or intimidation (i.e., without destroying the great ghul), award them an extra 3,000 XP; award Ophidia's lover an extra 200 to 2,000 XP if role-playing merits.

The party members might want to return to Sokkar, now that they know a little more about how those tombs are constructed. (Remember, only the pyramids of Tammuz and Nectanebo have obvious entrances.) With the aid of magic to block divination (such as *nondetection*, *mind blank*, or an *amulet of proof against detection and location*), powerful characters should have no trouble evading Al-Amzija, providing they do not leave the city carrying more than their own body weight in treasure. PCs also could teleport into the ruins, although that spell has a weight restriction as well. Plenty of treasure awaits them in Sokkar, but characters must be resourceful (and patient) to transport it all out of the City of Eternity.





## Chapter 5 Court of the Necromancers

**B**efore my former master's death, news reached him that the unconventional wizards Sumulael and Kazeruabet had taken up rule in Ysuwis, a ruined city deep in the Grey Jungle. Since their ascendancy to the throne of the ancient capital, however, the self-proclaimed king and queen have drifted silently apart. Samulael seeks only to satisfy his gluttonous hungers and vices, while Kazerabet, on the other hand, has devoted herself to rebuilding Ysawis's former glory. Both are said to hold incredible powers of ancient magic at their disposal.

The sorcerers often entertain visitors in their empty, echoing court—a once exquisite structure called the Jade Palace, surrounded by cracked columns and decayed tapestries. They welcome all who appear at their court, if only to fend off the boredom and loneliness that accompanies their solitude. One of their frequent guests is Barak al-Gani, an established merchant (and suspected smuggler) from the nearby city of Dihliz. It is said that the two wizards reward the mysterious trader well for catering to their . . . eccentric appetites.

My late master named the caravans of Barak us among the richest in the east. Reportedly, the merchant's train of elephants leaves frequently for Ysawis, heavily laden with silk-wrapped bundles of aromatic spices, tobacco, and coffee; casks of succulent, vine-ripened fruit; tall ceramic jars of sweet wine; bolts of the finest gold-embroidered silk; jewels and other adornments of remarkable splendor; and ancient tomes of strange and mysterious arts. Surely these rulers must possess heaping coffers to afford such luxuries! Barak so I hear it, invests a major share of his business in these rare commodities.

But travel to ancient Ysawis through the Grey Jungle has become increasingly dangerous of late, ever since the unpredictable Hayya-nas took notice of the wizards' arrival in their jungle domain. These folk, also known as yuan-ti or snake people, seem to pay particular attention to the comings and goings of Barak's merchant train. Their staunch defense of their territory is well known, but I do believe stories of their ferocity are much exaggerated.

Yet, many call Barak an overly cautious man. A reliable adventuring company could protect his costly merchandise during the treacherous journey to the ruins of Ysawis. I imagine, my brave friend, that the good merchant would gladly offer a share of his profits (or perhaps some interesting antiquities and treasure from the ancient city) in exchange for such services.

Are you available?

—Kharau, Maker of Opportunities





## Starting The Adventure

This adventure, for characters of 6th to 9th level, revolves around the search for a powerful necromantic artifact—the Talisman of Shajar—buried in a secret tomb under the ruins of Ysawis. Before reading any further, review the poster map, Cards 3 and 6, pages 2 to 5 in the NPC booklet, and Chapter 3 in the *Campaign Guide*.

The necromancers Sumulael and Kazerabet reside in Ysawis, using undead slaves to hunt for the talisman. These wizards are not the only group after this artifact, however. The cult of Shajar, serving a god of the ancient kingdom of Nog, has been searching for this sacred relic for centuries. One of the cult's high priests, the mysterious Barak al-Gani, has served Kazerabet and Sumulael as a dealer in commodities. Using his *scarab of deception*, Barak has misled all their attempts to divine his true identity and purpose.

Throughout *Cities of Bone*, an asterisk (\*) indicates that a spell or magical item can be found in the *Tome of Magic*. A dagger (†) designates a magical item detailed in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. If you do not own this title, substitute an appropriate, similar magical item from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

Barak will employ the PCs for a couple reasons, the lesser of which is guarding his most recent caravan to Ysawis. Certainly, he expects trouble from the *Hayyanas*. The merchant tried hiring regular bodyguards, but found none brave enough to accompany him into the jungle, thanks to the snake people's nasty reputation. Only a seasoned, hardened, and—above all—professional band of adventurers can withstand both the *Hayyanas* and the city's undead horrors.

More importantly to Barak, though, the party may aid in locating the Talisman of Shajar. It has thus far eluded the necromancers but, indolent in their power, they remain content to wait for their undead slaves to uncover the artifact. Barak is not that patient. He feels confident that, if he brings professional treasure hunters to Ysawis, sooner or later they will discover the relic. Even if the PCs' search ends in failure, their presence in Ysawis will distract the necromancers, who crave diversion in their solitary and tragic lives.

## Meeting Barak

Use this adventure's introduction (previous page) to concoct a series of rumors the party hears after arriving in Dihliz or any other city near the Grey Jungle, such as Kadarasto, Mahabba, or even Hilm. If the PCs lack the curiosity to investigate these rumors, Barak comes to them, posing as a mysterious merchant who conceals his face behind elaborate, dark blue veils.

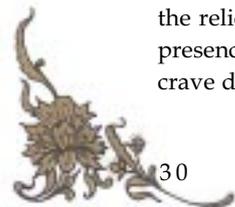
Go over Barak's statistics and description in the NPC booklet before introducing him to the party. Note that, because of his *scarab of deception*; any divination spells cast on Barak (including the divinatory powers of a paladin, hakima, or sha'ir) reveal only what he wants revealed. For instance, a character casting *know alignment* on him might detect a false aura of neutral good. The scarab has an abnormally high number of charges (50), since the disguised priest enchanted it himself.

Upon meeting the characters, the veiled merchant gets down to business quickly. If they seek monetary gain, Barak offers them a share of his profits once they successfully escort his caravan of rare merchandise to Ysawis. He drives a hard bargain, opening his bidding with 10 percent of the profit, but haggling PCs may persuade him to go as high as 25 percent. Since profit is not Barak's primary motive for hiring the party, he can afford to make this concession. Should the party members already command wealth enough, Barak mentions that the decadent rulers of Ysawis (he fails to bring up their necromantic bent) have plundered most of the city's ruins and amassed quite a collection of magical antiquities. Of course, Barak assures the party members that they will have the opportunity to search through the ruins for their own treasures.

## Traveling To Ysawis

Use the map on the front of Card 3 to illustrate the journey to Ysawis from the nearby cities of Dihliz, Kadarasto, Mahabba, or Hilm. It should take two to three weeks for the caravan to reach its destination, depending upon its starting point. The "merchant" says he hopes to spend only a few days in Ysawis before returning home.

The caravan consists of six elephants heavily laden with rare commodities, as outlined in the introduction. Four of the elephants carry supplies and the caravan goods, the fifth bears a teak howdah for Barak, and the





sixth elephant is reserved for the PCs, if they choose to ride. The merchant allows the party-as his professional security team-to decide the marching order and deployment of those comprising the caravan.

In addition to the party and Barak, the merchant train includes 27 0-level humans (2 to 6 hp each): a dozen porters, a dozen animal handlers, an excellent cook (Tahir), and a pair of beautiful dancers (Azra'il and Miriam). Sumulael specifically requested the last three retainers. These innocents, the descendants of impoverished immigrants to Dihliz, are not technically slaves, but Barak paid their families lavishly for their indentured service. He does not expect any of them to survive Sumulael's "employ."

The men and women in the caravan, all less than 18 years old, sound naive and overly optimistic about the trip's outcome. Play up the presence of these young and innocent NPCs during the journey—especially the cook and the dancers. Their chief role will be to haunt and horrify the characters later in the adventure.

Since party members receive a generous salary to protect the valuable caravan-make them earn it! Stage a few minor encounters during the trip to keep the PCs on their toes, in addition to the major encounters in the pages that follow.

## The Giants' Riddle

Several months ago, the Silent Arrow Clan of jungle giants noticed that a ruined city in their hunting grounds was being settled and cleared without their permission. Clan Chief Abash and his twin brother A'tesh became furious at this encroachment on their territory. Leading a war party into Ysawis, the giants destroyed recently erected buildings and scattered the city's seemingly mindless citizens.

Then the pair of sorcerers appeared, and a dozen of the clan's strong warriors died screaming, enveloped in clouds of steam that left behind only desiccated husks. Before long, Abash and A'tesh found themselves captured by their slain brethren, whose limbs and souls had been enslaved to the wizards' unspeakably foul sorcery completely. The male wizard told the giants that instead of killing them, he had cursed them with a command to wield two heavy stone tablets until a traveler solved the riddle inscribed upon them.

The encounter begins when the two towering giants step out of the jungle, each carrying a massive granite slab

high over his head. The twin giants apologize profusely for having met the party, for, according to Sumulael's curse, they must destroy any who cannot solve their riddle.

Abash and A'tesh explain that the curse demands that everyone they meet make a single attempt to solve their riddle. If the characters succeed, the giants will be freed from the curse; if they fail, the giants must devour them. The giants seem in no hurry to tell the party their riddle, for they expect the outcome of the exchange will force them to dine on sentient flesh, an act even the unlightened giants find abhorrent. To pass the time, the giants engage in small talk and tell the PCs about Sumulael and Kazerabet. (Here is a chance to drop some hints about the two wizards, foreshadow future events, and set the tone for the upcoming adventure.)

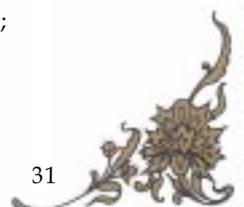
The giants' riddle consists of four lines:

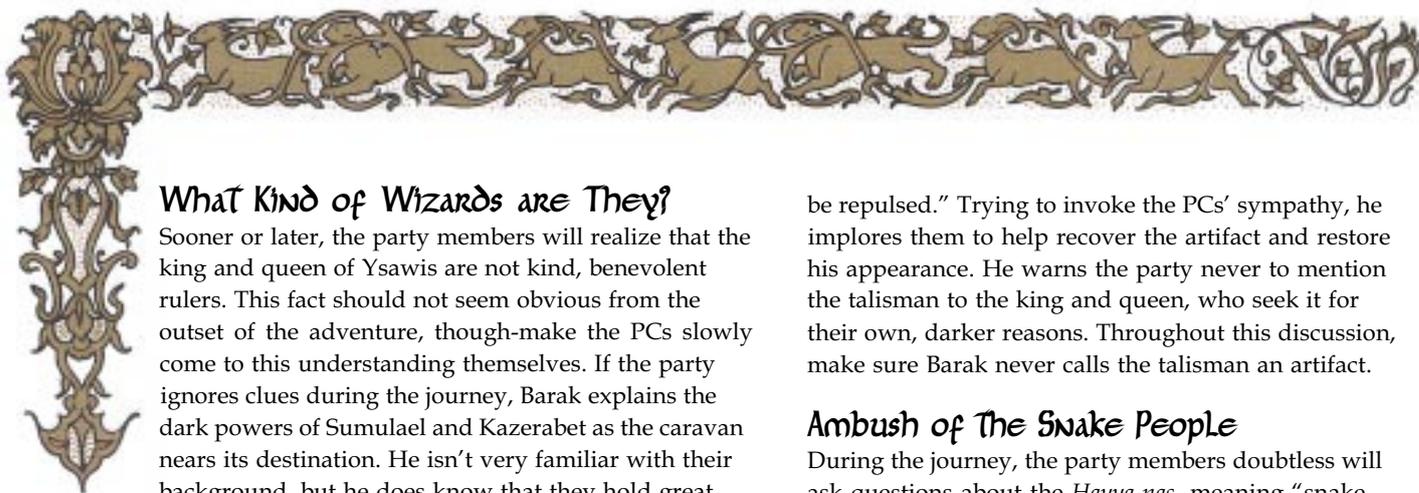
*Ever running but never tiring,  
I link all empires, new or dying.  
I grant new life, true faith inspiring.  
Speak my name, or die in trying.*

The best answer to this riddle is "the Nogaro River." (A more general answer, such as "any river," might be acceptable from PCs unfamiliar with the background of the Ruined Kingdoms.) Should the party members fail to answer this rather easy riddle, the giants regretfully attack, swinging their stone slabs with terrifying force. While the party might be able to escape the giants' fury by fleeing into the jungle (along with the caravan handlers), the valuable merchandise they were supposed to guard invariably will be destroyed by the time they return.

If the party solves the riddle, the giants shout a cry of triumph, dashing their stone tablets to pieces on the ground. Thanking the party, they reveal their intent to return to Ysawis and exact revenge. Before they can discuss their plans further, however, the giants start to wither and age before the characters' very eyes. The giants have, in fact, been dead since their capture, and remained preserved only through Sumulael's wicked necromancy. Soon after their curse ends, the giants crumble to dust, shouting their incredulous protests at Fate and the gods.

**A'bash and A'tesh, jungle giants:** Int Avg; AL N; AC 3; MV 15, Cl 6; HD 11; hp 77,84; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+9; SA surprise; SD camouflage; SZ H (18' tall); ML 16; MC13; XP 6,000.





### What Kind of Wizards are They?

Sooner or later, the party members will realize that the king and queen of Ysawis are not kind, benevolent rulers. This fact should not seem obvious from the outset of the adventure, though—make the PCs slowly come to this understanding themselves. If the party ignores clues during the journey, Barak explains the dark powers of Sumulael and Kazerabet as the caravan nears its destination. He isn't very familiar with their background, but he does know that they hold great magical power and came to Ysawis to search for the lost talisman.

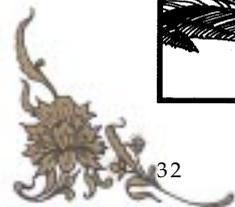
To win the party back into his confidence, Barak tells them the Legend of the Crocodile Princess (see the *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 3) and at last reveals his *real* reason for hiring the player characters. The Talisman of Shajar, he says in a conspiratorial tone, lies buried somewhere in Ysawis, in the tomb of Princess Zoraya. Barak truthfully reveals that the magical statuette can regenerate the disfigured face he hides behind his veil, “so that my wives, children, and all the world may look upon my countenance and not

be repulsed.” Trying to invoke the PCs' sympathy, he implores them to help recover the artifact and restore his appearance. He warns the party never to mention the talisman to the king and queen, who seek it for their own, darker reasons. Throughout this discussion, make sure Barak never calls the talisman an artifact.

### Ambush of The Snake People

During the journey, the party members doubtless will ask questions about the *Hayya-nas*, meaning “snake people” in Midani. In their own detestable tongue, snake people call themselves “yuan-ti”: loosely, “Children of Perfection.” In general, they are a wicked, xenophobic race.

Barak tells the PCs that many yuan-ti (like the tragic jungle giants) feel enraged that the wizards have set up residence in Ysawis, so near their homeland. Hearing of the giant clan's violent demise, the wiser and more cautious yuan-ti have opened negotiations with Sumulael and Kazerabet. However, members of an intolerant faction have decided to take matters into their own hands. These unpredictable and violent





yuan-ti cannot be reasoned with, or so Barak claims, adding that the extremists have threatened his life more than once. During Barak's last visit to Ysawis, the snake people's ambassador to the necromancers (Netocris) warned him never to return to the Grey Jungle, as she "couldn't be held responsible for any actions perpetrated by my violent, less diplomatic brethren." Though only a pair of *Hayya-nas* ambushed him on his next trip, their assault proved vicious enough to motivate him to hire the party for this journey.

Indeed, during the last week of the current trip, nine yuan-ti attack the train. (Increase their numbers as desired to challenge a powerful party.) These half-breeds have the form of a giant snake from the waist down, but appear roughly human from the waist up. Their thick, dark green scales (AC 0) help them hide in their verdant surroundings and give them a +2 bonus on surprise during their ambush. These creatures can spit a painful, blinding venom 10 feet (save vs. poison or be blinded for 2 to 12 [2d6] turns) and can cast these spells once per day: *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*.

The snake people, once again making good on Netocris's threat, prepare the ambush while the caravan crosses a sluggish, narrow river. When the train appears most vulnerable, the yuan-ti hiding on the opposite riverbank envelop the elephants in *darkness 15' radius*. The overlapping areas of effect ensure that all the beasts and those riding them become effectively blinded. During the following round, while the O-level humans accompanying the caravan run screaming in terror into the jungle, the yuan-ti emerge from hiding, approach the elephants, and attempt to dispatch any defenders in the darkness. They receive no penalty for fighting in the dark, having trained in this ability since childhood. If PCs dispel or leave the darkness (centered on the elephants), they might intercept the snake people before they reach the elephants and Barak.

During the attack, Barak slams shut the sliding doors of his sturdy teak howdah. Since it's the party's job to defend his goods, he readies his poisoned weapons and casts *aid*, *bless*, and *protection from evil* on himself. Those guarding Barak's elephant may hear him quietly mumbling; if questioned afterwards, he

admits "calling upon the benevolent gods to deliver us from peril," but neither confirms nor denies casting any spells.

The intelligent yuan-ti do not waste valuable time in subduing powerful defenders; the creatures disable them with blinding poison or *polymorph* them into harmless snakes if they prove too challenging. Should the battle go badly, they attempt to create a distracting stampede by *causing fear* in the elephants. They can further thwart pursuit by casting *sticks to snakes* on fallen branches behind them to cover their retreat.

After the yuan-ti have been defeated or driven off, the frightened elephants recovered, and the terrorized porters and animal handlers tracked down, Barak praises the party members for their skill and prowess in battle. Though Barak gladly provides them with his *potions of extra-healing*, he refrains from casting any of his healing spells, as he does not want to call attention to the fact he is a priest. However, if the yuan-ti slew some of the PCs, he might consider *raising* them, since he needs their help in locating the Talisman of Shajar once they reach Ysawis.

**Yuan-ti half-breed (9):** Int Genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon (great scimitar: 2d8, javelins: 1d6); SA tail constriction for 1d4 points of damage, blinding venom, spells; MR 20%; SZ L (10' long); ML 14; MC; XP 3,000.  
Magical abilities (1/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*.

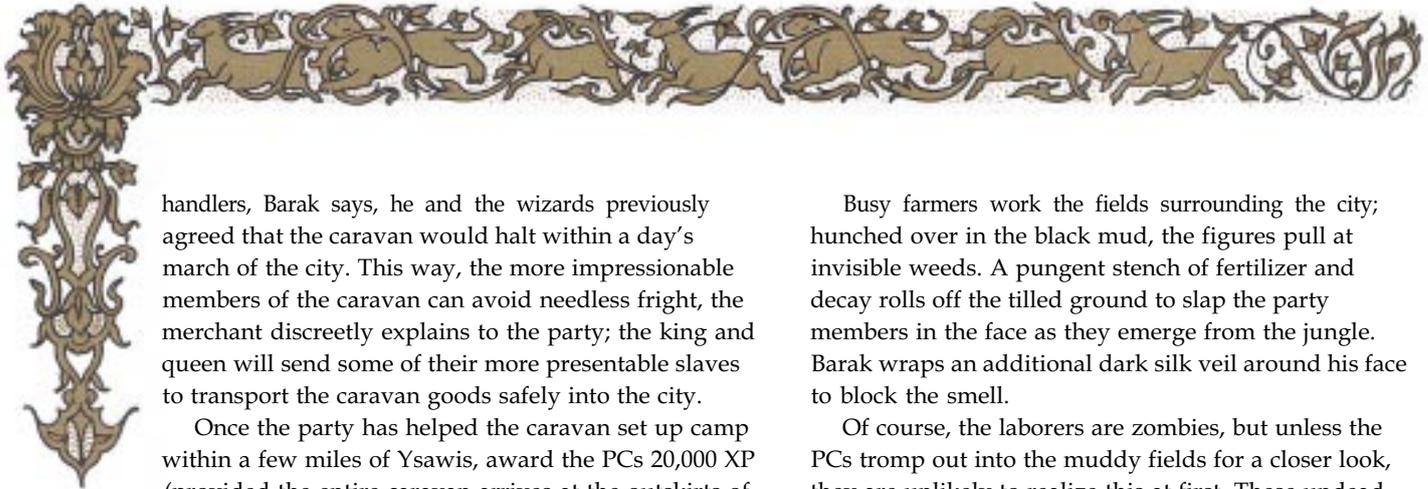
## Ysawis

Use Chapter 3 in the *Campaign Guide* to help describe the daily routine and lifestyle of the city's undead inhabitants, should the party care to investigate them in detail. PCs who get sidetracked exploring can be herded back to the Jade Palace easily by a platoon of ju-ju zombies the necromancers sent. Also check the *Campaign Guide* for game statistics for all the undead common to Ysawis.

## For Their Own Good

Since the sight of the necromancers' undead servants in Ysawis would terrorize the elephants and caravan





handlers, Barak says, he and the wizards previously agreed that the caravan would halt within a day's march of the city. This way, the more impressionable members of the caravan can avoid needless fright, the merchant discreetly explains to the party; the king and queen will send some of their more presentable slaves to transport the caravan goods safely into the city.

Once the party has helped the caravan set up camp within a few miles of Ysawis, award the PCs 20,000 XP (provided the entire caravan arrives at the outskirts of Ysawis intact). Decrease this award if the party members neglected their duties or if the caravan was severely damaged by hostile encounters on the journey.

Although the caravan no longer needs the party's protection, (The merchant seems strangely silent on his plans to get the handlers and animals back to the city.) Barak renews his request for help locating the Talisman of Shajar in Ysawis. He reminds PCs to keep this purpose strictly secret. They should pretend to be his mercenary bodyguards if questioned by the necromancers.

The next morning, the veiled "merchant" accompanies the party on foot into the city, leaving the caravan safely camped. The porters have unloaded the cargo from the elephants (now wandering contentedly about a hastily constructed pen) in preparation for transfer to the expected Ysawis contingent. Play up the departure; though PCs expect to rejoin the handlers in a day or two, they will not see them again (alive, at least).

As soon as Barak and the party set out, Sumulael dispatches a company of ju-ju zombies to surround the camp, capture the handlers, and transport the cargo to Ysawis. Barak "provides" the caravan handlers to fill the wizard's frequent requests; the merchant did not want the PCs to witness this spectacle, however, as it might distract them from their true purpose in the City of the Dead-finding the talisman.

### ***Through The City of The Dead***

Leaving the caravan behind, Barak and the PCs push through the jungle for a few hours before it opens into a wide clearing, a mile or two across, of arable fields bounded on one side by the distant gray walls of Ysawis. The Mountains of Desolation loom to the west, the nearest peaks shrouded in the jungle's verdant mantle.

Busy farmers work the fields surrounding the city; hunched over in the black mud, the figures pull at invisible weeds. A pungent stench of fertilizer and decay rolls off the tilled ground to slap the party members in the face as they emerge from the jungle. Barak wraps an additional dark silk veil around his face to block the smell.

Of course, the laborers are zombies, but unless the PCs tromp out into the muddy fields for a closer look, they are unlikely to realize this at first. These undead, the animated remains of Ysawis's ancient farmers, have been set at the only task they knew while alive. They produce great amounts of food, only a fraction of which is consumed in Ysawis. (Only the queen really likes vegetables.) The vast majority of the harvest rots in the city's warehouses, though the wizards utilize the entire straw crop in the manufacture of bricks with which to rebuild the city.

From a distance, the outer walls of Ysawis look abuzz with activity. Wood scaffolding covers the crumbled surfaces, and hundreds of masons and laborers swarm about, repairing the ruined structure. Foul-smelling pits all around house laborers busy mixing the pungent black mud from the fields with straw to make dark bricks. Beehive kilns dot the field; more laborers tend to the firing of the bricks. The city walls, when completed, have an inner core of brick and rubble, faced in dressed limestone.

As the party approaches the city, however, something appears increasingly wrong with the masons and the farmers. Perhaps it is the slow, almost mechanical jerkiness in their movements, or the way the locals focus their attention on their monotonous tasks and notice little else. Close up, the true nature of these folks becomes gruesomely apparent. Decay has eaten away at extremities, exposing the pale white of bone through gaping holes in time-gnawed flesh. Faces sag in blank, emotionless expressions. Those few who still have eyes are the worst, for in their vacant stares the most astute observer can detect a glimmer of sorrow, the faint hint of regret.

Pressing the double veils to his mouth and nose to keep out the stench of the undead, Barak motions for the party to follow him as he presses through the wall construction into the wide, stone-paved streets of Ysawis. Signs of building and growth are everywhere, as undead carpenters fix roofs, monstrous engineers





repair the roads, and zombie artists chisel decorative friezes on fountains at every street corner. Skeletal horses and elephants draw wagons of bricks or worked stone from the outskirts for inner city construction projects. Unless attacked, all undead in the city ignore Barak and the PCs, concentrating their feeble intelligences on completing the tasks given them by their dark masters. The party members ought to understand now why the rest of the caravan didn't accompany them into the city.

The sight of thousands of undead wandering about the city streets should dissuade the party from exploring Ysawis, which is fine, since this adventure centers on the necromancers' Jade Palace, at the heart of the city. Party members determined to poke around find the only major attractions to be the pockmarked cemeteries surrounding the city; the granaries filled with rotting produce; the city archives, packed with bureaucratic paperwork and records; and untold thousands of hideous zombies and skeletons.

## Jade Palace

**B**arak leads the party through narrow streets crowded with the corrupted remains of the city's former inhabitants to a beautiful white sandstone palace ringed by gardens and fountains and trimmed in soothing green jade. The layout of this palace appears on the poster map; the version on the front of Card 6 is for you, the DM, only. Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide* details the individual numbered areas.

## An Impromptu Tour

The veiled merchant takes the party through the main gatehouse (Area 2), where the characters see the impassive faces of armored ju-ju zombies staring down at them through arrow slits and murder holes. Make sure to mention that these undead appear much less decomposed than the more common zombies and skeletons. This fact should suggest that the necromancers created these thralls more recently than the lesser undead.

The party next passes through the north and riding courts (Areas 1 and 4) to enter the public area of the palace, where the group meets Shalmaneser, the senile lich chamberlain. (His statistics and character description appear in the NPC booklet.) Shalmaneser

introduces himself in a slow, somnolent voice and asks Barak (obviously not recognizing the frequent visitor) and the PCs to do the same. He carefully inscribes their names in one of his scrolls.

After periodically reorienting himself, Shalmaneser eventually leads the party members to their chambers, where cool, refreshing baths and clean clothes have been prepared by skeletal maids, courtesy of the queen. Alternatively, the lich might guide the PCs through the public and ceremonial parts of the palace (providing an impromptu tour) before stumbling across their rooms, in Area 7. Barak receives private apartments adjacent to the party's.

The lich assigns a few skeletal servants to help the party bathe and dress for a dinner with the king and queen, scheduled for midnight. Characters are free to relax or explore the palace and city until this audience. Remember: Any party investigating the inner palace on its own risks a 1 in 10 (1d10) chance of an encounter each turn. (See the *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 3, Table 3.) Barak might use this time to steal away to the Shrine of Shajar (Area 10) to pray and regain spells (or he may visit the shrine late some night). After welcoming the party, the lich returns to his bureaucratic duties in the Royal Library.

## Serpentine Convolutions

While the party members prepare for dinner, they receive an unannounced visit from Netocris, the (seemingly human) yuan-ti ambassador to the court of the necromancers. (Statistics and a brief character description for her and her bodyguards appear in Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide*.) Leaving her four towering half-breed bodyguards hissing in the corridor, Netocris gracefully enters the party's chambers in a clinging dress of Kadarasto silk that leaves little to the imagination.

Netocris first makes small talk with the party, expressing her condolences and regrets over the yuan-ti ambush, which she says was organized by "an unwise, rebellious faction" of her people. She calls the attack "an isolated incident, completely unsanctioned by the high priests of the yuan-ti," who have sent her to Ysawis to arrange settling rights within the city. Her words, while not completely true, are not outright lies. Specifically, the yuan-ti assault was not an isolated incident, but an ambush Netocris planned to prevent Barak from returning to Ysawis.





Though she wears a gracious smile and has impeccable manners, Netocris is far from pleased at the party's presence. The newcomers might distract the necromancers from the yuan-ti's plots. Netocris has Sumulael eating out of her hand—she encourages his experiments in the Bone Pavilion and his self-indulgent vices. Her greatest threat, Kazerabet, views the ambassador (rightly) as her enemy. But, as long as Netocris remains in Sumulael's favor, the queen dares not harm her.

Netocris feels that Barak and the PCs will upset the delicate balance of power, whether they ally themselves with the king or the queen. If they side with the king, Netocris's influence over him might diminish; if they take the queen's part, she could utilize her expendable new intermediaries to inconvenience the yuan-ti. In either case, Barak and the party constitute a danger to the yuan-ti influence at court. Netocris's first ploy is to scare the party into leaving. She has no need to lie: the truth is frightening enough.

Before leaving, Netocris warns the party members to depart immediately, calling her desire to help them preserve their lives a sign of her good intentions. Pointing out the fresher appearance of the ju-ju zombies guarding the palace, she reveals that the PCs are not the first visitors the veiled merchant has brought to Ysawis; Barak has delivered several caravans of slaves for Sumulael's deadly experiments. Netocris adds that the king will not wait long before taking pretty female characters into his Bone Pavilion, from which they will never emerge alive. With a disarming smile, she then excuses herself to let the party ponder the implications of her words.

### CONFRONTING Barak

Netocris's visit probably will provoke characters to visit their employer. If they confront Barak with the ambassador's accusation, the veiled merchant readily admits that the caravan handlers of previous expeditions have been used by the king for his experiments. Adopting a businesslike tone, Barak states that the families of the handlers were all well paid for their children's services. The family members signed the contracts of their own accord and received cash up front. If the party expresses concern about the innocent NPCs camped outside Ysawis, Barak shrugs and says that nothing the party does now can save





them—Sumulael likely captured them hours ago.

Barak assures the characters he means them no harm-detection magic will confirm this-as he hired them as his protectors. Unless the party members have figured it out already, Barak tells them that this crisis is just the first of Netocris's attempts to alienate them from their employer. If the PCs revoke their contract, Barak warns, they will have played directly into her hands.

### **An Invitation**

At some point before dinner, Shalmaneser knocks at the party's door. As soon as the PCs admit him, he announces that he has a message from the queen. The lich rifles through the various scrolls bursting out of his pockets ("I was holding it just a minute ago . . .") until he withdraws a small, rolled-up piece of parchment. At first, it seems inscribed with meaningless skull-and-crossbones scribblings but, as the party inspects the writing, the symbols glow and writhe on the page, forming this message:

*My dear guests,*

*Please meet me in my private library after dinner, that we may discuss a mutually profitable enterprise.*

*Shalmaneser will show you the way.*

*Sincerely,*  
*Zaribel*

*P.S. The veiled merchant is not invited.*

The party should notice that the queen used her familiar name, Zaribel, as opposed to her more formal name, Kazerabet. Only Sumulael dares address her in a familiar fashion-the PCs will draw surprised looks from Barak and the yuan-ti if they refer to the queen by her "pet" name. As soon as the party finishes reading, the writing bursts into greenish flames, which quickly consume the parchment.

### **The King's and Queen's Day**

While the party was relaxing after the travel to Ysawis and preparing for the meal at midnight, the king and queen have not been idle.

Having captured the caravan handlers, Sumulael spent most of the day reviewing the experiments he plans to conduct on them. In the early evening he turned the caravan's cook, Jahir, into a ju-ju zombie, so this newest servant could prepare dinner by midnight. He also transformed pretty Azra'il and Miriam, so they might perform gruesome dances during the meal. The remainder of the caravan handlers Sumulael imprisoned in his Bone Pavilion. He intends to start experimenting on them right after dinner, with the help of his charming and inspirational ambassador, Netocris.

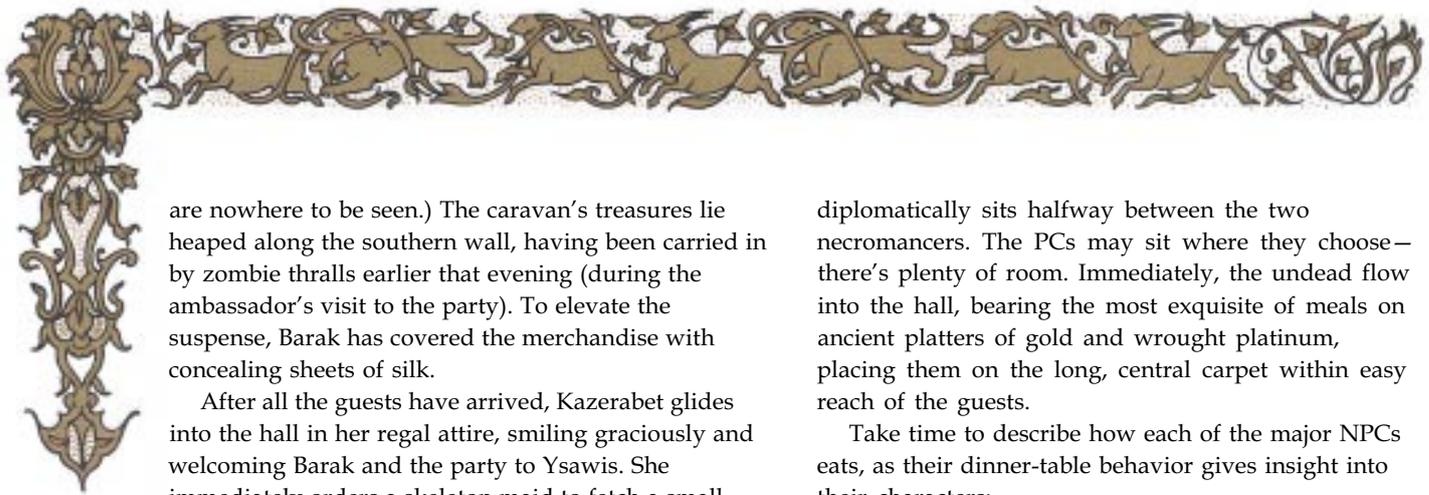
Kazerabet has finished a busy day too, but her work was decidedly less sinister than her husband's. She spent the morning going over historical records of Ysawis and completing some personal research; afterward, she supervised building efforts in the city and dictated orders to her undead lieutenants. She behaves more like a monarch than her husband, who seems much more intent on indulging his own dark passions than on improving Ysawis. While Kazerabet knows Sumulael has captured the caravan attendants, she prefers not to think about what her husband is going to do to the innocents.

### **Dinner at Midnight**

This encounter introduces the party members to their hosts: the necromancers Sumulael and Kazerabet. (These characters are fully detailed in the separate NPC booklet.) The king and queen have not seen each other in more than a month. The arrival of Barak's caravan and the prospect of seeing the treasures he has brought forces them into contact. By the end of the meal, the PCs should realize the estrangement between Sumulael and Kazerabet. They also should learn that the king has captured the porters, animal handlers, and dancers from the caravan, and that he plans to experiment on them after dinner.

Right before midnight, Shalmaneser arrives at the party's chambers to escort the group to the grand dining room (Area 8). There, the PCs are seated beside Barak and Netocris. (Her yuan-ti bodyguards





are nowhere to be seen.) The caravan's treasures lie heaped along the southern wall, having been carried in by zombie thralls earlier that evening (during the ambassador's visit to the party). To elevate the suspense, Barak has covered the merchandise with concealing sheets of silk.

After all the guests have arrived, Kazerabet glides into the hall in her regal attire, smiling graciously and welcoming Barak and the party to Ysawis. She immediately orders a skeleton maid to fetch a small dish of salt. After it arrives, she completes a formal salt ceremony (described in *Arabian Adventures*) with Barak and the PCs, inviting them to stay for three days of luxurious relaxation at the palace. This offer should put the party somewhat at ease, as Kazerabet seems to take the salt ceremony very seriously. Netocris, as a longtime guest of the king, does not take part in the ceremony but watches it with amusement—the yuan-ti do not adhere to the salt bond, except when doing so suits their purposes.

Since the king is late (as usual), Kazerabet asks Barak what treasures the caravan has brought her from Dihliz. She laughs in childlike delight as the veiled merchant pulls the silk covers off the perfumes, the rare spices, the bolts of cloth, and the scrolls and tomes of ancient arts. The items clearly please the queen, a clap of her hands summons an undead slave carrying a red leather box reinforced with bronze edges and filled with dusky topazes, green-black emeralds, and blood-red rubies (worth 100,000 gp total). After accepting the box of jewels, Barak graciously thanks the queen and praises the party, whose valiant security efforts made the journey a success.

Before the party members have a chance to discuss much with the queen, Sumulael makes his grand entrance, floating into the room on a levitating throne guided by his zombie slaves. Buri, Sumulael's impish homonculous, clings to his master's throne, watching the visitors intently. The necromancer is frightfully obese, with rolls of flesh hanging from his arms and at least half a dozen flabby chins. His beady eyes survey the assembled guests briefly before he bellows, "Bring in the food, there is much work to be done tonight!"

Sumulael and Kazerabet quickly seat themselves on cushions at opposite ends of the 100-foot-long carpet. Netocris sits near Sumulael; Barak

diplomatically sits halfway between the two necromancers. The PCs may sit where they choose—there's plenty of room. Immediately, the undead flow into the hall, bearing the most exquisite of meals on ancient platters of gold and wrought platinum, placing them on the long, central carpet within easy reach of the guests.

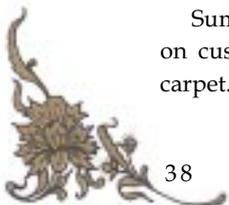
Take time to describe how each of the major NPCs eats, as their dinner-table behavior gives insight into their characters:

**Barak.** This should be the first time the party members see their employer eat, since he always dined in private during the journey to Ysawis. For dinner, Barak covers his face with a shorter veil, under which he carefully passes food in small portions. A second veil conceals his chin and neck. Despite such precautions, he sometimes lifts the shorter veil to bring food to his lips, briefly revealing horribly scarred flesh around his mouth,

**Netocris.** The yuan-ti takes great delight in shocking characters by feeding on live birds and rodents. Throwing her head back and opening her mouth wide (revealing two viperlike fangs), she swallows her prey whole. An alarming bulge slides down her throat as the food descends. When a course becomes unruly, she quickly bites the helpless creature before swallowing it. (The venom paralyzes her prey almost instantly.)

**Kazerabet.** From the moment her husband arrives, Kazerabet ceases to be the center of attention. She doesn't say another word for the rest of the meal; if the PCs try to strike up a conversation, she tells them to wait until later. The queen, a gourmet, eats quite slowly. She appears very meticulous and fussy about her food, which includes mainly vegetables prepared in a variety of light, spicy sauces. She takes time to admire the presentation of each dish and relishes every bite. When she tastes the wine Barak's caravan brought, she savors each mouthful.

**Sumulael.** The obese mage eats like a pig. He shovels the food into his mouth in big handfuls and takes enormous draughts of wine (much of which spills out of his overflowing mouth onto his clothing and the floor). He has the disgusting habit of talking with his mouth full, spraying food everywhere. During the meal, Buri scrambles for Sumulael's discarded scraps, laps up his spilled wine, and picks pieces of food off his clothes.





Here's the party's chance to chat with the king and learn more about this repugnant character. The PCs will find him more than willing to discuss his plans for the caravan attendants. He drools noticeably when mentioning the two young dancers; Kazerabet contains her rage and disgust masterfully; Netocris looks amused; and Barak's veil hides all hint of emotion. The king invites any female characters to watch his experiments in the Bone Pavilion. Sumulael is king and he knows it. A rude bully, he will punish disrespectful guests with his frightening spells if angered.

To scare and horrify the party, he calls Tahir (the caravan's former cook) out from the kitchen "to compliment him on the superb meal." When Tahir arrives, the PCs can clearly see he has been transformed into a ju-ju zombie: his flesh is gray, his lips blue in death. Tahir remembers the party vaguely, as if through a dream. The same applies to the two zombie females Sumulael summons: Azra'il and Miriam, the young dancers who accompanied the caravan to Ysawis. Neither recalls much of her former life, though they might recognize a party member who took the time to befriend them on the journey. Later, they might give the party useful information about the Bone Pavilion (Areas 21e, 21f, and 21g), provided the king is not present. The three tragic figures obey Sumulael's commands utterly, leaving the dining hall after the king has made his point.

At the end of the meal, Sumulael levitates back to the Bone Pavilion with Netocris to commence his experiments. (Her bodyguards show up at the end of the meal to escort her.)

### Spies of The Veiled Merchant

Barak says the journey and stressful dinner have exhausted him and returns to his chambers to get a good night's sleep. However, the veiled merchant is not about to let the party wander unobserved about the palace. Unlike the overconfident necromancers, Barak understands the PCs' abilities, having hired them for their reputations and witnessed their skills on the trip to Ysawis. He also realizes that they might not trust or respect him—especially if they are of good alignment—now that they know he arranged to deliver the caravan handlers to Sumulael,

Using his special influence as a high priest of

Shajar, Barak commands two of the wizards' own semi-intelligent ju-ju zombie guards to trail the PCs at a respectful distance and monitor their actions while he sleeps. If Barak feels threatened by the party members (who might have plans to steal the coffer of gems), Barak orders six ju-ju zombies to stand guard over him and his treasury.

The zombies shadowing the party are not very adept at their art—they make no attempts to hide; if noticed, they merely stop and wait for the party to continue. The PCs probably will blame one of the necromancers for the undead spies.

So many undead populate the Jade Palace that the party is unlikely to notice Barak's spies at first. If the characters investigate less frequented parts of the palace, any PC with the awareness nonweapon proficiency should detect the two zombies following them automatically. Those lacking this skill notice the spies after successful Wisdom checks. Should the party attack the zombies, they fight to defend themselves. Other palace undead do not interfere in the melee.

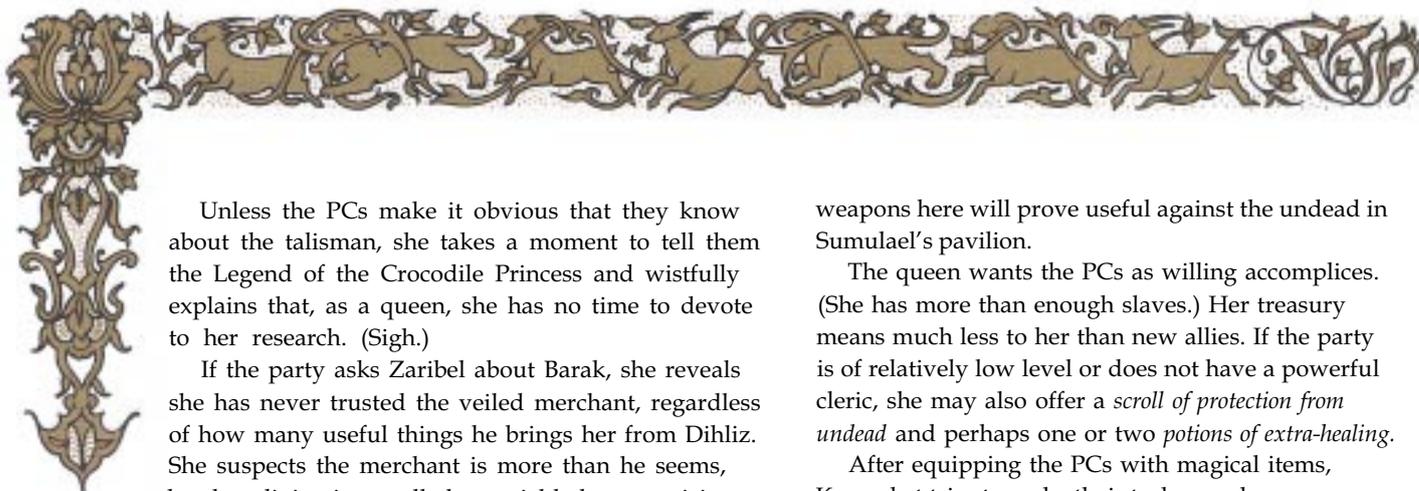
If the PCs destroy the zombies' bodies or hide them, Barak will learn nothing of their actions for the evening—except that they noticed his spies. Otherwise, Barak finds his agents' remains the next day, gleaning a partial report of the party's nocturnal activities with a *Speak with Dead* spell.

### An Appointment with The Queen

After dinner, the queen retires to the *harim* and awaits her appointment with the characters. Review Kazerabet's entry in the NPC booklet and the *harim* description (Areas 15 to 19) in the *Campaign Guide* before running this encounter. The sorceress disarms the skull watchers and other magical wards in Areas 15, 16, and 19 before the PCs arrive, to keep them from learning about her defenses. She will rearm them later.

Shalmaneser guides the party to the *harim*, where the queen is receiving a massage from a handsome but macabre ju-ju zombie servant beside the warm, clear waters of the bathing pool (Area 15). In the intimacy of her private chambers, the queen urges the party to call her Zaribel. After some small talk (in which she may reveal the meaning of her two names), she changes into a more relaxing, informal dolman and invites the party into her private study (Area 16).





Unless the PCs make it obvious that they know about the talisman, she takes a moment to tell them the Legend of the Crocodile Princess and wistfully explains that, as a queen, she has no time to devote to her research. (Sigh.)

If the party asks Zaribel about Barak, she reveals she has never trusted the veiled merchant, regardless of how many useful things he brings her from Dihliz. She suspects the merchant is more than he seems, but her divination spells have yielded no suspicious results. She knows he supplies the king with dreambliss and heartlessly arranges for his caravan handlers to be handed over to Sumulael. The queen finds him a loathsome but necessary visitor to her court.

When the undead servants have poured goblets of wine from jeweled decanters and lit the hookahs filled with aromatic tobacco, the queen dismisses her thralls to discuss private matters with the party members. Sooner or later, she gets down to the real reason for the appointment. With the following words, the queen tries to portray herself as an abused and neglected wife, weighed down by a brutal husband with disgusting habits—a husband she wants dead.

“When I first met Sumulael, he was not as he is now. Then he acted kind and generous to me and did not humiliate me in public with his rough manners and foul allusions. Things are so different now.

“You must understand that he and I are not alike. I studied necromancy to improve the quality of life—not decrease it others, as my husband does. He finds only one kind of life precious—his own.

“He began to resent the fact that I would not take pleasure in his detestable pursuits. Since I can defend myself from his magic, he has discovered other ways to torment me. His poor victims . . .

“Please, help me destroy Sumulael and end his wickedness forever.”

Allowing the characters some time to mull over her request, she takes them for a tour of the Gallery of Antiquities (Area 19). There she shows them the treasures her undead have uncovered from the city’s cemeteries. She invites PCs who have agreed to help her oppose Sumulael to pick one item; the magical

weapons here will prove useful against the undead in Sumulael’s pavilion.

The queen wants the PCs as willing accomplices. (She has more than enough slaves.) Her treasury means much less to her than new allies. If the party is of relatively low level or does not have a powerful cleric, she may also offer a *scroll of protection from undead* and perhaps one or two *potions of extra-healing*.

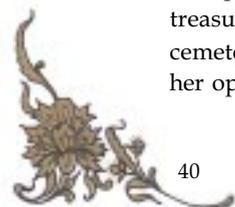
After equipping the PCs with magical items, Kazerabet tries to make their task sound easy:

“My husband fears death. To safeguard his life, he has cast his soul into a magical receptacle—a jewel hidden somewhere beneath his Bone Pavilion. Crushing the gem will extinguish his life force immediately. So long as this Shadow of his Heart remains safe, Sumulael’s body will not die.

“Fortunately, he relies upon dreambliss for sleep each night, so you can catch him unawares shortly after dawn, when he has tired of experiments.”

If the party decides to ally with Zaribel, she asks one more favor: to bring her the contents of the private library in Sumulael’s bedchamber, so she can check if he has made progress in locating the Talisman of Shajar in the past few months. She promises to let the PCs keep Sumulael’s magical items if they perform this additional task. (If they prove successful the party members also might gain valuable information or training in wizardry from Zaribel.) If the characters ask why she does not go herself to destroy her husband’s lifeproofing gem, she tells them Sumulael has mounted many wards against her and her magic. Then she breathes a little sigh and adds, “I could never bring myself to kill my own husband. . . .”

If the characters refuse the queen’s generous proposal, her benevolent smile turns to ice. She calls in a few dozen ju-ju zombies to hold them down while she uses a *lifeproof* spell and more threats to compel them to undertake her quest. Whether they agree willingly or not, the party members have until noon on the third day of their visit (when their salt bond expires) to complete the queen’s mission.





## Shalmaneser's Insurrection

After the meeting with the queen, Shalmaneser guides the PCs back to their rooms, where they can rest or prepare for their assault on Sumulael's pavilion. However, the lich returns a few hours before dawn—before the party can embark on the queen's task—and scratches at their door. Putting aside his facade of forgetfulness, the lich assumes a quiet, conspiratorial demeanor. In his slow, somnolent voice, he whispers that he knows a way to defeat the necromancers: the ancient sword, *Lifedrinker*. He promises to lead the party to the entrance of the tomb where the PCs can find the weapon, if they swear to destroy both necromancers with the sword, thus allowing the city's dead to return to their graves. Shalmaneser explains that he would recover the sword himself, were the entrance not warded against undead.

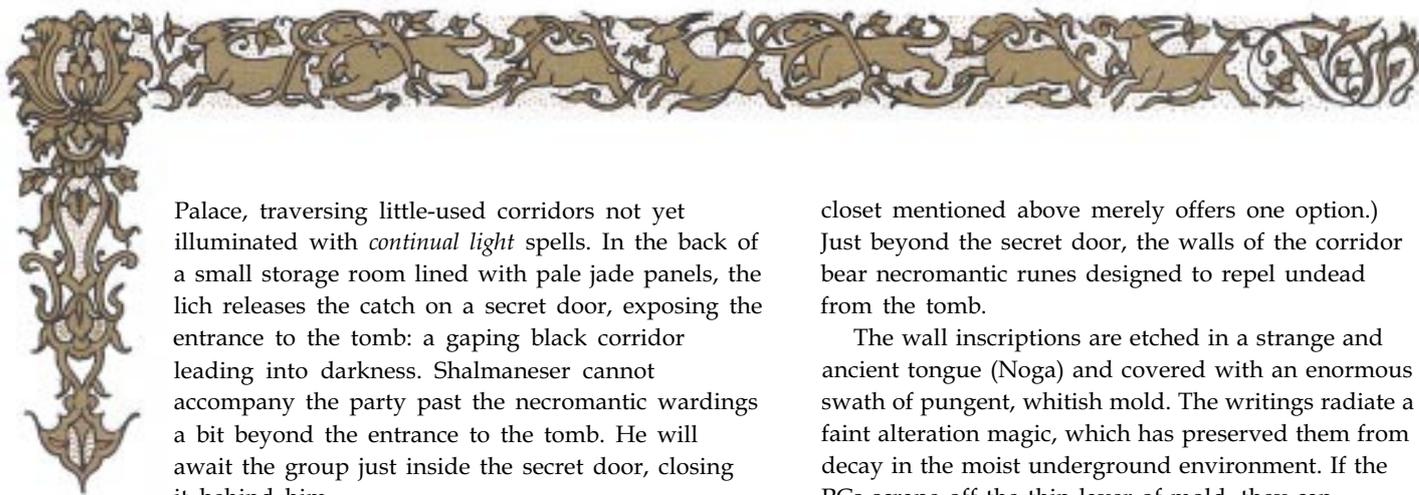
Not wanting to dissuade the party members from attempting to obtain *Lifedrinker*, the lich neglects to discuss the legend of the tomb, particularly the parts about the blade's curse and its connection with the

Talisman of Shajar. (See Chapter 3 in the *Campaign Guide*.) If the party questions him about the tomb's owner, Shalmaneser feigns ignorance, saying its occupant was born long after he died. The lich's motives for enlisting the PCs are further detailed on his page in the NPC booklet. He offers only the minimum of information about these motives and the tomb—just enough to get the party to assist him.

After the lich has revealed his hatred of the necromancers, the party members really have no choice but to go along with his plan. In fact, they must undertake Shalmaneser's quest *immediately*. The desperate lich cannot take the chance that the party will reveal to either mage the location of the tomb or the mounting undead rebellion in Ysawis. If the party refuses to help, he calls in a horde of the palace honor guard (ju-ju zombies) to slay the PCs and quietly dispose of their bodies so they cannot be animated by the necromancers for questioning. Sharp characters, however, will realize that the lich's quest will help them complete the queen's mission.

When they accept, Shalmaneser leads them through the dark outer galleries (Area 3) of the Jade





Palace, traversing little-used corridors not yet illuminated with *continual light* spells. In the back of a small storage room lined with pale jade panels, the lich releases the catch on a secret door, exposing the entrance to the tomb: a gaping black corridor leading into darkness. Shalmaneser cannot accompany the party past the necromantic wardings a bit beyond the entrance to the tomb. He will await the group just inside the secret door, closing it behind him.

A complete description of the tomb and its contents follows. Once the characters recover *Lifedrinker*, they probably also will have figured out that a second artifact, the Talisman of Shajar, still awaits discovery somewhere in the tomb. Whether they continue exploring or retreat to the surface at this point depends on the extent of their wounds, their fear, and whether they intend to combat Sumulael that evening using *Lifedrinker*. Now that they know the talisman's location, they can always return to claim it later.

## Tomb of The Crocodile Princess

The poster map illustrates the layout of the tomb for the players; your DM's version on the front of Card 6 includes the locations of skull watchers and zombie guards. The tomb contains no wandering monsters or sources of illumination. The standard undead immunities referred to in monster statistics in this section are as follows: not affected by *sleep*, *charm*, *death*, and *hold* spells or by cold-based, poison, and paralyzation attacks.

**1. Entrance.** The party enters the tomb through a secret door somewhere in the palace. (The storage

closet mentioned above merely offers one option.) Just beyond the secret door, the walls of the corridor bear necromantic runes designed to repel undead from the tomb.

The wall inscriptions are etched in a strange and ancient tongue (Noga) and covered with an enormous swath of pungent, whitish mold. The writings radiate a faint alteration magic, which has preserved them from decay in the moist underground environment. If the PCs scrape off the thin layer of mold, they can decipher the inscriptions using magic or a character with proficiency in the language of ancient Nog:

*Beware!*

*Within these halls dwells Zoraya of the Sixth Dynasty,  
the fair Princess of Ysawis. Dare not disturb her sleep,  
or be damned and accursed for an eternity of despair!*

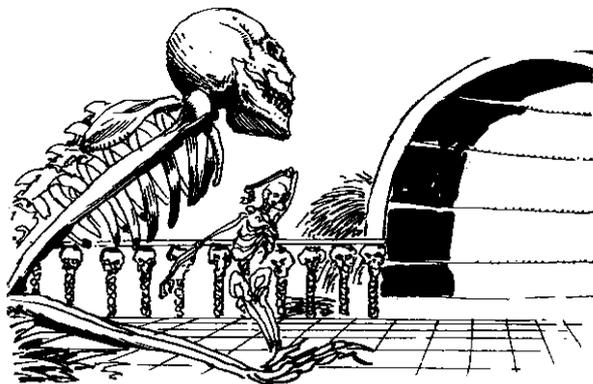
(Have the characters make disease checks, per Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide*.)

**2. Trapped Stairs.** The corridor soon turns into wide stairs, which descend in three tiers. The carpet of white mold and small, budding fungi on the steps smells strongly of rotting leaves and corrupted flesh. The mold conceals a pressure plate in the second landing, which releases two heavy bronze portcullises when more than 50 pounds is applied. The gates lower in less than a round to block the head and foot of the stairs, effectively trapping the party in the stairwell.

While the party searches for an escape, take time to describe the intricate stone reliefs on the walls, which illustrate the Legend of the Crocodile Princess, as recounted in Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide*. The murals depict Zoraya as a giant crocodile wearing a distinctive crown.

While the characters can lift the decayed bronze gates, they will find that the extreme age of the portcullises makes it much easier to bend or break them (25 percent bonus to bend bars check). A *shatter*, *shout*, or similar spell also will crack the corroded bars.

**3. Hall of Laborers.** The corridor opens abruptly into the southern wall of this chamber, where the floor, as the PCs discover, drops 10 feet from the corridor's level. The ground is covered with charred timbers and hundreds of disintegrating skeletons—the remains of the tomb's laborers and architects. Zoraya's





consort Kasim slew them so that no one would ever learn the secret location of the tomb's entrance. The party need not worry about the bodies coming to life; their presence merely adds to the deterring atmosphere. An iron portal, set in the eastern wall 10 feet above the floor, is the only exit.

Soot covers the walls and ceiling, and the horrific room smells like a charnel pit ought to; PCs must make saving throws vs. poison or retch uncontrollably for 1 to 4 (1d4) rounds from the stench. Those wading through the rotted remains should make disease checks. A wooden scaffold once connected the exit corridor to the iron portal. After slaying all the laborers, Kasim burned the supports before sealing himself in Area 4.

**4. Consort's Tomb.** The iron door stands locked and barred from the inside. It bears the simple inscription (written in Noga, of course): *Kasim, Beloved Consort of Zoraya.*

Inside, the walls are recessed into long, shallow niches filled with 20 ceramic jars (10 gp each), containing dry rice. A golden couch (10,000 gp) rests in the center of the room, surrounded by a decayed silk curtain. The remains of an armored warrior in ornate jewelry sprawl across the rotted upholstery: one skeletal claw grasps a golden chalice (1,000 gp) that once held a necromantic potion, while the other clutches a long sword sheathed in carved ebony. This is Kasim, who transformed himself into an undead being with a skeleton warrior's power and ability. Wracked with guilt for slaying his beloved Zoraya, Kasim vowed to guard her tomb forever.

As soon as the characters enter the chamber, Kasim's skeleton stirs, snarling something in his ancient language. (Those who understand Noga hear him say, "None may trespass here or disturb the repose of my beloved!") He slowly unsheaths his sword; sinister whispers and lamentations ring from the blade as it clears the scabbard. This is *Lifedrinker*, the goal of Shalmaneser's quest.

Kasim fights to the death to defend the entrance to Zoraya's crypt; he will pursue characters to the entrance of the tomb (Area 1). He will not follow them into the halls of the Jade Palace. If the party defeats Kasim, his skeleton and armor crumble into dust, leaving only the moaning sword and its scabbard.

Afterward, a search of the room uncovers the contents of the ceramic jars and a sturdy trap door, concealed beneath Kasim's couch, leading to Area 5.

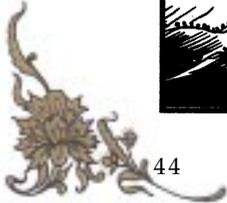
**Kasim, a skeleton warrior variant (formerly 13th-level fighter):** Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 9+12; hp 89; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon (*Lifedrinker*: 1d8+2); SA energy drain on a natural attack roll of 20 (*Lifedrinker*); SD standard undead immunities, +1 weapon to hit; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 20; MM; XP 6,000.

**5. The Crocodile Princess.** After the characters lower themselves down the 100-foot stone shaft from Kasim's tomb, they find themselves at the apex of a vaulted cylindrical chamber more than 40 feet high. PCs can see no ladder or other means to span the distance to the floor. Strangely, the room seems free of the mold and decay seen elsewhere in the crypt, and it smells faintly of rose blossoms. A cylindrical black granite sarcophagus, about 15 feet in diameter and 5 feet high, dominates the room. Its coin-shaped lid, 6 inches thick, weighs at least a ton. The party will need crowbars or magical means (such as levitation) to move it. Some spells, such as *transmute rock to mud*, also might dislodge it.

Treasures surround the coffin: 1,000 tarnished silver trade bars (weighing 1 pound and worth 10 gp each), stamped with the ancient seal of Kadarasto; 10 red glass urns covered with porcelain and gold leaf decorations (500 gp each) and containing a total of 6,000 gp in old Ysawis currency; a locked ebony box inlaid on the sides with lapis panels depicting a flock of birds in an orchard (2,500 gp), which contains 40 large amethysts (250 gp each); and four cursed magical items (effective traps): a cursed scroll, afflicting readers with weakness that halves their Strength scores until removed by a spellcaster of at least 12th level; a *philter of drunkenness*† contained in an exquisite tear-shaped crystal vial (200 gp); a gold *ring of folly and invisibility*† set with a smoky topaz (750 gp); and a *dagger of the evil eye* -2†, inscribed with Zoraya's name on the blade in Noga and sheathed in a gold scabbard (250 gp).

Removing the lid of the sarcophagus reveals a magnificent crystal inner coffin, cylindrical in shape and 12 feet in diameter. Through the transparent walls, one easily can see the shriveled and blackened form of a







mummified reptilian creature with a crocodile's head but a coiled, segmented body and a dozen legs. Party members who have ever faced a behir will recognize the wrapped remains of one before them now. This is the true appearance of the cursed Crocodile Princess, hardly as glamorous as portrayed in the frescoes in Area 2. The 40-foot-long corpse is twined protectively around a small turquoise statuette of a hippopotamus, about 9 inches long and covered in strange ivory runes.

Zoraya's form has been twisted completely by the necromantic powers of the artifact and the curse of Shajar. When her consort Kasim struck her down with *Lifedrinker*, the god Shajar did not allow the sword to capture her soul—she instead became an undead creature, similar in appearance to a mummified behir. She has all the natural abilities of a mummy, combined with the form and physical attacks of a behir (no breath weapon, however). The touch from any of her natural attacks can inflict mummy rot.

On the round after the outer lid is opened, the shriveled eyelids of the creature in the crystal coffin snap open, revealing bloodshot eyes. Human eyes. Have everyone in the party roll a saving throw vs. fear or flee screaming out of the tomb. Meanwhile, Zoraya launches herself from the coffin, showering everyone within 5 feet with shattered glass (2 to 12 [2d6] points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half).

The creature clutches the statuette in her two forepaws, screeching in Noga: "You can't have it, it's mine!" Zoraya is deranged, her sanity shattered long ago by the artifact she covets. She does not attempt to use the statuette against the party in combat—with her curse-ravaged intellect, she no longer remembers how. She strives only to keep it out of the hands of the party members, attacking savagely until she has destroyed them all. Since two of her talons constantly clutch the talisman, she attacks only with her four remaining offensive claws. If someone uses *Lifedrinker* against Zoraya, the blade bursts into ghostly green fire, and the moans and screams of its past victims crescendo to terrifying proportions. Finally, should the Talisman of Shajar be physically separated from Zoraya during combat, she collapses and writhes in horrible pain, her body disintegrating into foul-smelling powder within 1 to 4 (1d4) rounds.

**Zoraya, a mummified behir:** Int Low; AL NE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 18+3; hp 128; THAC0 9; #AT 2 or 5; Dmg 2d4/1d6+1 or 2d4/1-6 (x4); SA fear, disease, swallow whole on a natural attack roll of 20; SD standard undead immunities; ML 15; SZ G (40' long); XP 20,000.

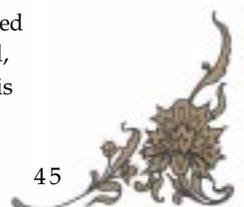
## Into The Bone Pavilion

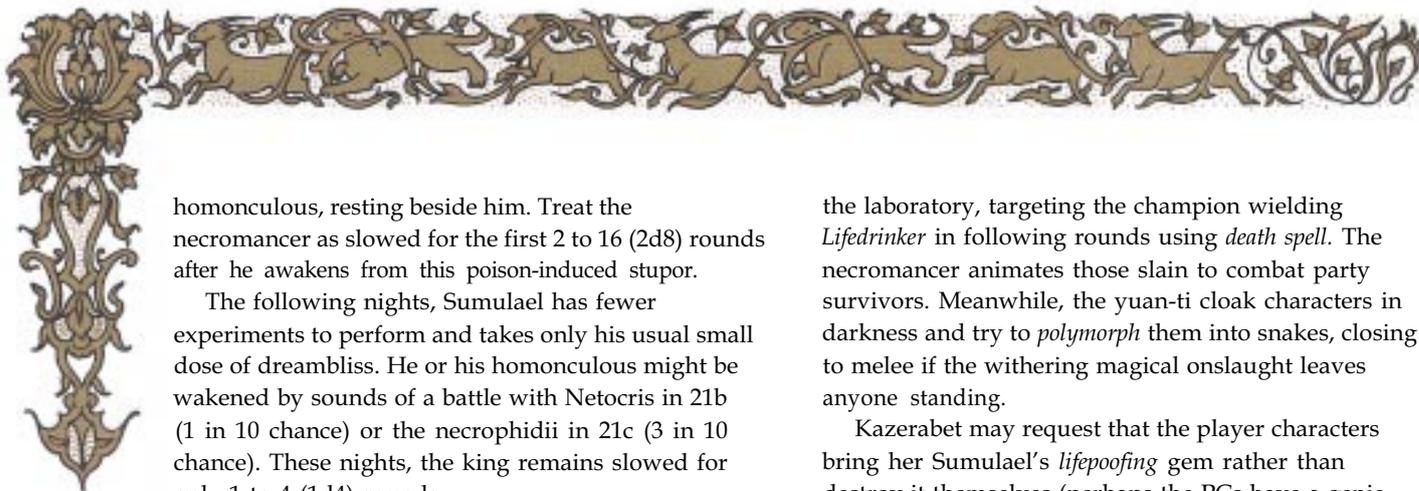
While the party members have up to three nights to complete the queen's mission—to slay her repulsive husband—they have the highest chance of success the first evening. The longer the party waits, the more time Sumulael has to complete his experiments with the caravan handlers. Once he finishes with those innocents he will move on to the party members, stealing them away to his laboratory one by one, starting with a favored NPC henchman. Secondly, his ally Netocris will dissuade the PCs from remaining by poisoning their food or having her bodyguards ambush lone characters wandering the palace.

Carefully review Sumulael's entry in the NPC booklet and the description of the King's Garden and Bone Pavilion (Areas 20 and 21) in Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide* before running this part of the adventure. (Refer also to the poster map.)

Provided the party members attempt to enter the pavilion just after dawn as Kazerabet suggested, they should find the areas as detailed in the *Campaign Guide*. Netocris and her bodyguards will be sleeping in the upper pavilion (Area 21b), where they may be surprised (+2 penalty) if the PCs used Kazerabet's *scroll of protection against undead* to steal past the guardians in the garden (Area 20) and on the patio (Area 21a). Once wakened from their light sleep, the yuan-ti fight using strategies outlined in a previous section, "Ambush of the Snake People." If badly wounded, Netocris abandons Sumulael and her bodyguards, attempting to flee the palace into the jungle. The yuan-ti woman can anticipate Kazerabet's plans for her, should she be caught in Ysawis after Sumulael's demise.

Dealing with Sumulael at night should prove difficult, but not impossible. Now that he has a new supply of dreambliss from Barak, Sumulael takes a larger dose than usual: a special evil treat after completing his experiments just before dawn that first night (as Kazerabet predicted). As a result, he will be wakened only by the scream of a skull watcher (in Areas 21d, 21g, and 21h) or by the frantic screeches of Buri, his





homonculous, resting beside him. Treat the necromancer as slowed for the first 2 to 16 (2d8) rounds after he awakens from this poison-induced stupor.

The following nights, Sumulael has fewer experiments to perform and takes only his usual small dose of dreambliss. He or his homonculous might be wakened by sounds of a battle with Netocris in 21b (1 in 10 chance) or the necrophidii in 21c (3 in 10 chance). These nights, the king remains slowed for only 1 to 4 (1d4) rounds.

Sumulael should have only the following spells remaining the first night, after a full day of experiments: *chill touch*, *detect undead*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *spectral hand*, *stinking cloud*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*, *contagion*, *enervation*, *Eoard's black tentacles*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *wall of ice*, *magic jar*, *summon shadow*, *claws of the umberhulk\**, *death spell*, *reverse gravity*, *Abi-dalzim's horrid wilting\**, and *trap the soul*.

Even with these handicaps, the necromancer makes a devastating opponent, especially once his initial grogginess subsides. The party's best course of action involves breaking into his chamber and immobilizing his body so he cannot attack or cast spells. After the party members neutralize him, they can find and break his *lifeproofing* receptacle at their leisure. Otherwise, they invariably will wake Sumulael when they activate one of the many skull watchers in the pavilion. For a climactic final battle, the wizard can encounter the PCs just as they discover his receptacle in the Pit of the Heart (Area 21i), protected by necromantic guardians and magical wards. If Fate smiles upon the characters, they might overcome the gem's defenses and destroy it before Sumulael obliterates them with a torrent of lethal magic.

Attacking the Bone Pavilion during the day is tantamount to suicide. The party members will find Sumulael, Netocris, and her bodyguards waiting for them in the laboratory (Area 21e). The necromancer will have the full selection of spells detailed on his page in the NPC booklet, and when he is awake, his magical robes prevent him from being surprised. While the PCs battle the necrophidii in the stairwell (Area 21c), Sumulael releases the undead from the holding pen (Area 21g) and casts *summon Shadow*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, and *spectral hand*. He hits the characters with *Abi-dalzim's horrid wilting* as they enter

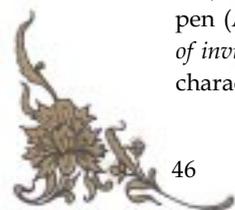
the laboratory, targeting the champion wielding *Lifedrinker* in following rounds using *death spell*. The necromancer animates those slain to combat party survivors. Meanwhile, the yuan-ti cloak characters in darkness and try to *polymorph* them into snakes, closing to melee if the withering magical onslaught leaves anyone standing.

Kazerabet may request that the player characters bring her Sumulael's *lifeproofing* gem rather than destroy it themselves (perhaps the PCs have a genie ally, spell, or magical item that can deliver the receptacle directly to her). In this case, the party still has to combat the enraged king after he discovers the theft. Kazerabet can arrive on the scene during the final rounds of this battle (assuming the party disarmed the wards against her), brandishing the *lifeproofing* gem the party stole for her. After some triumphant gloating (ending with the snappy comment, "I want a divorce!"), the queen shatters the stone, becoming the person to destroy her repulsive husband after all.

## To The Victors

Sumulael's death has little effect on the majority of Ysawis's undead inhabitants. Even though the late king animated half of the city's citizens, he did so in Kazerabet's presence and commanded them to follow instructions passed along by the palace bureaucracy; this efficient, hierarchical institution is controlled ultimately by the queen. As a result, the party will notice hardly any change in the daily operation of the city and palace when the king dies.

After the battle, Kazerabet ("Please, call me Zaribel.") praises the party members for their success and gives them two potions of *extra-healing* (if she has not already done so) for their most serious wounds. Later, the queen surveys the garden and the interior of the Bone Pavilion, destroying all her husband's special undead servants. Though she animates the bodies of any NPCs slain in the battle (including all the yuan-ti), the queen does not harm any surviving human victims, whom Sumulael imprisoned in the small cell near his laboratory (Area 21f). Zaribel craves the company of the living and spoke the truth when she told the party she valued life more highly than her husband did. The queen orders chambers prepared for all surviving caravan handlers and sees they are fed and well cared for.





Searching through her husband's grisly research notes in Sumulael's private chambers (Area 21d), Zaribel discovers little information of value regarding the Talisman of Shajar. But, if she witnessed a character wielding *Lifedrinker* against her husband, or even hears the drawn blade howling for new lives, she immediately realizes the party has already discovered the tomb containing the Talisman of Shajar. A scholar of the literature of Nog, the queen recognizes *Lifedrinker* from the epic *Kinslayer*, which describes how the blade was enchanted for the first king of Ysawis and subsequently cursed. (See the *Campaign Guide* for details.)

If *Lifedrinker* was wielded by a male PC who distinguished himself in battle against Sumulael, Zaribel declares that the gods have chosen this character as a successor to the Throne of Ysawis; Fate has given him the skill to use the blade to rule as king at her side. The queen behaves in an especially kind and gracious manner to this party member, whom she regards as a potential husband, perhaps offering him the two *potions of extra-healing* for his personal wounds. As an added favor, she leaves in the party's chambers a copy of *Kinslayer*, which contains much of the background lore about *Drinker of a Thousand Lives*.

Zaribel covets the talisman, but she does not steal it from the party if the characters already recovered it. Such an action hardly befits a queen, and she has no desire to harm or insult the only living allies she has met after years of isolation in Ysawis. To prove her trustworthiness, Zaribel allows the party to keep all the treasure from the pavilion, including Sumulael's magical items, as she promised earlier. The queen allows female PCs to revel in the luxury of her private baths and even disarms the wards on her husband's *Grimoire* so party wizards can have access to Sumulael's spells. Only then does she politely ask that the characters give her the talisman (or find it, if they have not yet done so), offering more treasures from her Gallery of Antiquities in exchange. She allows the party until the salt bond expires to decide whether to honor her request.

### Plotting Against Kazerabet

After the party's success against Sumulael, Shalmaneser expresses his satisfaction and urges the PCs to rest and recover until their salt bond with Kazerabet expires before they move against her. The





queen's fatal weakness, the lich reveals, lies in her predictable lifestyle. Shalmaneser suggests they surprise her in the evening when she takes her nightly swim in her private bathing pool, leaving her magical items and spell components in her distant bedchamber. The lich offers to accompany the party and dismiss any ju-ju zombies protecting the entrance to her *harim*.

As for Barak, Sumulael's death amazes him, for the veiled merchant never seriously considered the party capable of destroying the powerful necromancer. The disguised priest quickly realizes that if Kazerabet were to meet a similar fate, he would have eliminated all his competitors in the search for the Talisman of Shajar. Even at this late stage in the adventure, Barak does not reveal to the PCs his true identity as a high priest of Shajar, as he does not fully trust them. However, since the party might have witnessed him casting a few minor spells during the journey to Ysawis, Barak does admit to once having served as an acolyte of Shajar. (This is true.) He can cast a few first- or second-level spells to benefit the party after the battle with Sumulael, but the "merchant" remains careful not to cast spells above second level

or to command undead in the party's presence.

Soon after Sumulael's death, the trader approaches the party members with a new offer: If they recover the talisman, he will employ it against Kazerabet. Furthermore, Barak may reveal that, as a priest and follower of Shajar, only he can call upon the talisman's powers without invoking its terrible curse. (See the *Campaign Guide*.) The merchant readily agrees to restore or resurrect wounded or slain party members with the talisman as a sign of good faith. He will *not* show the PCs how to invoke its sacred powers, however. Barak promises them up to 75,000 gp in gems (profit from the caravan goods) and all the treasure from the queen's Gallery of Antiquities if they agree to undertake this mission. Depending upon the circumstances, Barak and Shalmaneser might form an alliance and approach the party together with a combined proposition—or threat.

Slaying the queen raises grave practical concerns. First of all, despite the assistance of Barak and Shalmaneser, only a powerful party should consider attacking Kazerabet with hope of surviving. The party also should consider what will happen to the



thousands of undead in Ysawis when the last necromancer dies. (Shalmaneser assures the party Ysawis's former citizens want only to return to their graves and rest in peace.)

Finally, conspiring to murder Kazerabet poses a serious moral dilemma. Barak and Shalmaneser will attempt to blur any distinction between Kazerabet and her depraved husband by arguing that both necromancers practiced dark and sinister magic forbidden by the Laws of the Loregiver. The priest and the lich play on the party's fears about the extent of the queen's frightening power once she gains the talisman. While this may be true, Kazerabet never savagely threatened the party members; she always treated them honestly and graciously. In short, by conspiring with Shalmaneser and Barak to murder Kazerabet, PCs embrace the same wicked, dishonorable ideals they have sought to overcome throughout the entire adventure.

## Concluding The Adventure

At the end of the scenario, the party has to be very, very careful in dealing with Kazerabet, Barak, and Shalmaneser, each of whom has the power to destroy the PCs if crossed or betrayed. There are many different endings possible for this adventure. The two most likely outcomes (below) depend upon whether party members decide to ally themselves against the queen ("Conspiracy") or with her ("Let's Make a Deal").

### Conspiracy

Because of the adventure's dark tone, even player characters with noble intentions might allow Barak and Shalmaneser to manipulate them, through fear, into slaying Kazerabet. Should they decide to enact their conspiracy against the queen, carefully review Kazerabet's page in the NPC booklet and the description of her private chambers in Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide* before running this final encounter. There is a very good chance that the party, with the help of Barak and Shalmaneser, can surprise Kazerabet while swimming in her baths. Give the queen a +2 penalty on her surprise roll. Note that her *stoneskin* should protect her from immediate damage, and a contingency will *teleport* her to her bedchamber if

she is seriously harmed.

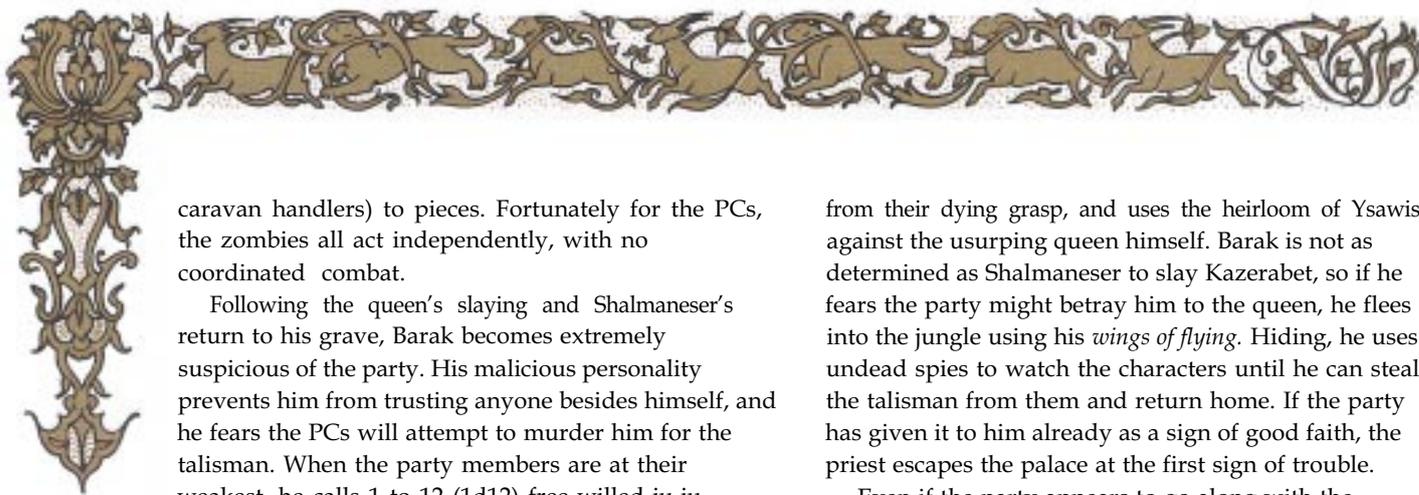
Kazerabet will not wait for the *contingency*, however, and will attempt to use *dimension door* or *teleport* to the bedchamber before she is badly wounded. She first activates her three *figurines of wondrous power* to defend her while she prepares a counter-attack. After casting *homonculous shield\** (which lets her cast one additional defensive spell per round), the queen prepares *mind blank*, *spell turning*, *globe of invulnerability*, *levitate*, and *summon shadow* before drinking her *potion of invisibility* and seeking out her enemies.

When she spots the party for the first time, she *levitates* 10 feet off the ground and casts *slow*. While the figurines and the summoned shadows attack, she tries to vaporize Shalmaneser with *disintegrate* and attempts to slay Barak next using *finger of death*. On subsequent rounds, she hits the party with *chain lightning* and *death spell*. For amusement, she might animate fallen characters and send them against the rest of the party. She casts her remaining spells at the party as combat dictates. Like the PCs, the queen shows no mercy. If combat goes badly, she attempts to lure the party members into the Gallery of Antiquities (Area 19), where the *symbols of insanity* and the trapped spectres may decimate them further.

Even with all her precautions, Kazerabet might be slain by a powerful and resourceful party (especially if they *dispel* her *stoneskin* and *contingency* while she is surprised). Considering the PCs and their allies also have access to two powerful necromantic artifacts, they might succeed in their conspiracy. When the queen dies, the former citizens of Ysawis start shambling toward the cemeteries on the outskirts of the city, just as Shalmaneser predicted. If the lich survived the final battle with Kazerabet, he leads a long, somber procession of rotting kings and skeletal queens to the royal mausoleums. The dead of Ysawis reenter their yawning graves, sealing themselves up again—they hope—for all eternity.

Not all the undead in Ysawis resided in the city when alive, however. Many ju-ju zombies guarding the Jade Palace, for instance, are recent victims of the necromancers. Fifty to 300 ju-ju zombies become "free-willed" after the queen's death. Like regular undead, they hate the living and attempt to tear the party and any surviving NPCs (including any rescued





caravan handlers) to pieces. Fortunately for the PCs, the zombies all act independently, with no coordinated combat.

Following the queen's slaying and Shalmaneser's return to his grave, Barak becomes extremely suspicious of the party. His malicious personality prevents him from trusting anyone besides himself, and he fears the PCs will attempt to murder him for the talisman. When the party members are at their weakest, he calls 1 to 12 (1d12) free-willed ju-ju zombies still wandering about the palace and commands them to attack the party.

Meanwhile, Barak reveals his true power as a high priest of Shajar. He invokes the deadly Talisman of Shajar and casts his nasty attack spells (like *cause serious wounds*) against the PCs. Finally, he sends dreambliss-venomed darts at them, hoping to slay them after they succumb to the sleep-inducing poison. If the battle appears to be going badly, he takes to the sky with his *wings of flying*, escaping to Kadarasto (the center of his priesthood) or back to Dihliz with the talisman and as much of the profit from the caravan as possible. He will not bother the characters again unless they turn up seeking revenge.

Ysawis and the Jade Palace remain dangerous for one to four (1d4) weeks after the queen's death because of the wandering ju-ju zombies. By then, the majority of them will have left the deserted city, staggering randomly into the jungles toward their undead destinies. Only 5 to 30 (5d6) will remain in city, a constant—if minor—menace to plunderers. Of course, undead physically prevented from either reaching their graves or leaving the city—such as those trapped behind *wizard locked doors* and *symbols* in the queen's private chambers—remain in these locations until released by explorers.

## Let's Make a Deal

A mid-level party alone has no hope of surviving a final confrontation with Kazerabet. The members of a good-aligned and honorable group should not want to go along with the nefarious plan of Barak and Shalmaneser, since Kazerabet has been such a generous hostess, but they had better conceal their misgivings from the priest and the lich. If Shalmaneser suspects the party may betray him to the queen, he immediately calls in ju-ju zombies to slay the PCs, pries *Lifedrinker*

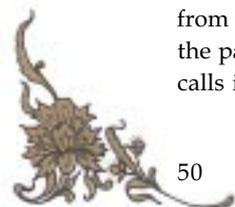
from their dying grasp, and uses the heirloom of Ysawis against the usurping queen himself. Barak is not as determined as Shalmaneser to slay Kazerabet, so if he fears the party might betray him to the queen, he flees into the jungle using his *wings of flying*. Hiding, he uses undead spies to watch the characters until he can steal the talisman from them and return home. If the party has given it to him already as a sign of good faith, the priest escapes the palace at the first sign of trouble.

Even if the party appears to go along with the conspiracy at first, betraying the priest and the lich to the queen later will not be an easy task. Right after Sumulael's death, Shalmaneser beefs up palace security and orders all ju-ju zombies to slay PCs wandering alone in the ceremonial and private areas of the palace. He also assigns up to six ju-ju zombies as "escorts" for the party, with orders to follow characters in the public areas of the palace and to slay them if they enter the ceremonial and private chambers of the queen. In short, make the party members overcome (or at least evade) a healthy number of powerful zombies before they can reach the queen to report the treachery of Barak and Shalmaneser.

As soon as she learns of the conspiracy, the queen countermands all orders that had given Shalmaneser authority over undead in Ysawis's bureaucracy. Though it will take several hours for the new edict to filter down the chain of command in the city, Shalmaneser learns of his discovery quickly, when the order hits the palace.

Meanwhile, the queen orders the party to bring Barak before her in the audience chamber. When the party finds him in the palace, he answers Kazerabet's summons willingly, confident in his ability to lie his way out of any trouble using his *scarab of deception*<sup>†</sup>, as he always has done in the past. However, when Barak enters the audience chamber, Kazerabet orders her undead guards to strip him of all clothing, jewelry, and magical items. Realizing that his ability to deceive Kazerabet will end as soon as he surrenders his magical scarab, Barak removes his veil in a grand, theatrical gesture. The priest's hideously scarred face temporarily distracts the queen, and he uses this moment to turn the dozen zombies in the room against her. (Modify the number of zombies to appropriately challenge the party.)

Just as Barak drops his veil, Shalmaneser sneaks into the audience chamber using his minor spells,





hoping to get close enough to paralyze her with his touch while the priest continues his wonderful distraction. Note that the queen's *stoneskin* spell does not protect her from this attack; the party should defend Zaribel against the desperate final assault of Shalmaneser and Barak. Both fight to the death, concentrating all their attacks against the queen and foiling all her attempts to cast spells, while the ju-ju zombies try to keep the party busy. Once the queen is paralyzed, or her *contingency* whisks her to safety, Shalmaneser and Barak turn the zombies against the party, neither giving nor expecting quarter.

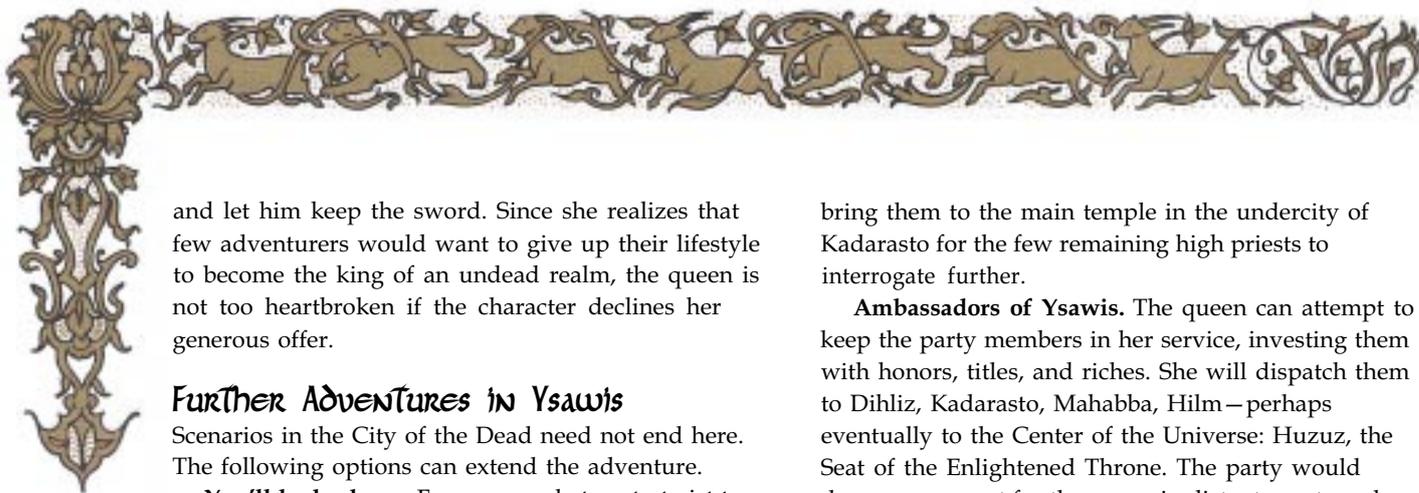
After the final struggle, the queen rewards the party with appropriate treasures. (They all must come from the Gallery of Antiquities or the personal possessions of Shalmaneser and Barak.) She welcomes the characters to remain in the Jade Palace for as long as they desire (probably until they recover from the battle). The queen is glad to tutor them in Noga, poetry, ancient history of the Ruined Kingdoms, religion, and spell craft. She might even train any PC wizards aspiring to learn the forbidden necromantic arts.

Sooner or later, the party will bring up the matter of leaving Ysawis. The queen, having lost all her allies in the city since the party's arrival, is loath to release the PCs. However, she promises to let them depart in peace on one condition: that the talisman (and perhaps *Lifedrinker*) remains in Ysawis with her.

While the party might feel reluctant to give up both artifacts to the necromancer, she insists that her interest in the talisman remains purely academic and that she has no desire to use its powers herself (thereby invoking its curse). As a scholar, Zaribel wants only to study its secrets, perhaps with the help of party priests or wizards. She insists it will remain safely locked away in the Gallery of Antiquities and invites the PCs to use it if its powers can aid them. Of course, she can always *reincarnate* slain characters, if the group does not want to risk the curse of the talisman.

As for *Lifedrinker*, Zaribel hints that the sword rightfully belongs to the King of Ysawis. If she finds any of the PCs worthy candidates for the throne of her city, she might propose an alliance of marriage





and let him keep the sword. Since she realizes that few adventurers would want to give up their lifestyle to become the king of an undead realm, the queen is not too heartbroken if the character declines her generous offer.

### Further Adventures in Ysawis

Scenarios in the City of the Dead need not end here. The following options can extend the adventure.

**You'll be back.** . . . For a somewhat nasty twist to the ending, Kazerabet might also require that one member of the party submit to a *lifeproof* spell and allow his or her life force to be stored in a magical receptacle like Sumulael's. She swears to keep the gem safe with her spell books in the Gallery of Antiquities, but claims she needs to take this measure as insurance against future treachery on the part of the PCs about to leave her realm. This way she also can call upon the party if she ever needs its services in the future. Of course, a character who has promised to marry her becomes the natural choice for the *lifeproof* spell. The queen assures her betrothed the spell will protect his life in her absence, but he may interpret it as a rather harsh prenuptial contract.

**Beneath the Jade Palace.** The palace stands upon an elaborate network of storage rooms, sewers, oubliettes, torture chambers, and dungeons, built by all dynasties of Ysawis. The queen might send the PCs to investigate these seemingly endless vaults, where they could stumble across secret treasure chambers or hidden tombs containing ancient heirlooms . . . and darker riches better left undisturbed. PCs also might uncover the machinery and pump rooms that drive the fountains throughout the city and palace, or find the boiler room holding imprisoned fire elementals (or a bound efreeti) to heat the enormous bathing pool in the *harim*.

**Cult of Shajar.** If Barak does not survive the adventure, the members of the Cult of Shaiar will not cease the quest for the talisman. As soon as the party members return to civilization, disguised members of the cult will question them, seeking to learn what befell Barak and the sacred relic. If the PCs seem unhelpful, the cult will attempt to capture them and

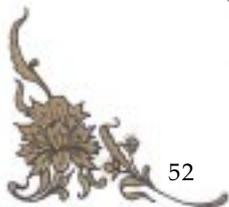
bring them to the main temple in the undercity of Kadarasto for the few remaining high priests to interrogate further.

**Ambassadors of Ysawis.** The queen can attempt to keep the party members in her service, investing them with honors, titles, and riches. She will dispatch them to Dihliz, Kadarasto, Mahabba, Hilm—perhaps eventually to the Center of the Universe: Huzuz, the Seat of the Enlightened Throne. The party would drum up support for the queen in distant courts and persuade foreign powers to recognize Kazerabet's ascendancy to the throne of Ysawis. PCs also might organize more caravans to Ysawis from these cities. With Sumulael gone, yuan-ti present the only danger to caravan handlers.

**Snakes in the Hills.** This adventure has introduced the party to the wicked snake people, who inhabit an underground temple complex somewhere in the upper reaches of the Grey Jungle near the Mountains of Desolation. If the party destroyed both necromancers, the yuan-ti will send several dozen of their kind to claim the ruins in the name of their reptilian god, hoping to turn Ysawis into their second base in the jungle. Regardless of the adventure's outcome, however, they probably will send pureblood assassins after the party (and Kazerabet, if she survived). These yuan-ti easily pass as human in enlightened society and will strike in a carefully planned attack once PCs are vulnerable.

If the PCs don't think of it first, Kazerabet suggests they plan a massive attack against the yuan-ti. The queen even offers to come along with a few ju-ju zombies for extra firepower. Of course, this plan plays directly into the hands of the snake people's high priest, an evil genius. When the party arrives at the temple (with or without Kazerabet), the yuan-ti will be ready and waiting.

**City of the Sun.** Kazerabet has another research project, which has languished for lack of attention; she wants to enchant a *staff of the magi*, but the extraordinarily rare material component, hue of midnight darkness, grows only in the deep passages of Zakhara's own version of the Underdark. The next adventure discusses this quest in greater detail.





## Chapter 6

# Idolatry

**S**ome time ago, a story reached my master of a time in years and ages long gone, when Moradask, a city of jewels and of light, shone as the City of the Sun. Renowned for its beautiful architecture and accomplished gem cutters, the city experienced a success such as had never been known throughout the Land of Fate. The men and women of Moradask went, smiling, about their daily affairs in brightly colored clothing, knowing that with every day's work they each contributed to the blossoming of their fabulous home city.

However, as you are well aware, my friends, humans cannot hold merely joy and beauty in their hearts. Eventually, the wonders of life in Moradask led to decay of the spirits of its citizens. These misguided inhabitants scorned the enlightened ways and instead embraced a religion based on decadence and vain idolatry. Moradask's residents, wanting to do nothing more than worship their own fine works, slowly developed a new way of life, free from toil. Slothful and indolent, they turned their passion for the gentle, creative arts into a thirst for war and pillage, bloodshed and destruction.

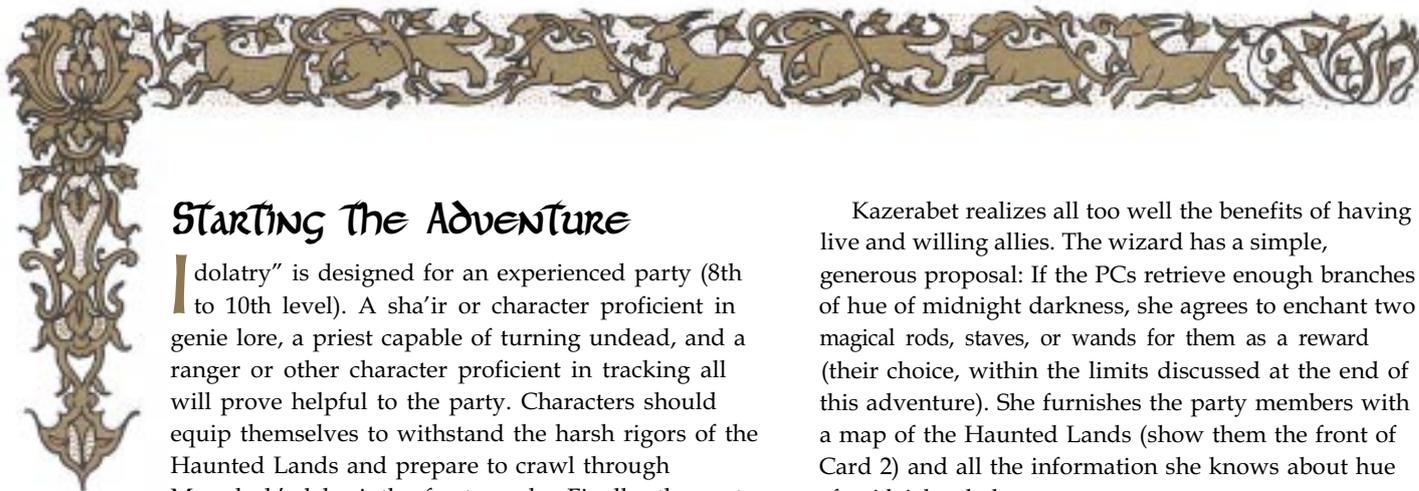
When the spirit has begun to decay, can physical deterioration be far behind? No one knows what terror descended upon Moradask and ended its reign of depravity. Perhaps it was, as the legends suggest, a fiery wind sent by the gods that immolated the citizenry in a single night of terror. Some tales relate that the armies of the First Grand Caliph stamped out Moradask's baneful existence when he swept across Zakhara, spreading the Law of the Loregiver. Others say it was the evil eye of geniekind that punished the city for its mortal pride and arrogance. (But, I ask you, O wise adventurers, if genies were to punish in such a fashion every mortal city guilty of pride and violence, would even one human metropolis remain standing today in the Land of Fate?)

Moradask's ruins now overlook the acrid Sea of Salt. Sand and wind have eroded most traces of its former beauty and glory, but the city's jeweled idols still remain hidden in ancient temples deep beneath the Sea of Salt, past winding corridors and vaults heaped with the treasures of the doomed civilization. A wise and holy man once told me that the catacombs still echo with the whispers of ghosts and the ramblings of darker beings, but I believe his is just a tale spread by the jann to keep caravans from encroaching on their privacy.

A group of brave adventurers – such as yourselves! – could discover otherwise. . . .

–Kharau, Baiter of Hooks





## Starting The Adventure

**I**dolatry" is designed for an experienced party (8th to 10th level). A sha'ir or character proficient in genie lore, a priest capable of turning undead, and a ranger or other character proficient in tracking all will prove helpful to the party. Characters should equip themselves to withstand the harsh rigors of the Haunted Lands and prepare to crawl through Moradask's labyrinth of catacombs. Finally, the party needs a weapon of +3 or greater enchantment to complete the scenario.

Before running the adventure, gather together Cards 2, 4, 5, and 6, as well as pages 6, 7, and 8 in the NPC booklet. Also, you should thoroughly review Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide* before beginning.

## Getting There

**K**azerabet of Ysawis (see "Court of the Necromancers") has decided she wants to enchant a *staff of the magi*, the consummate totem of wizardly power. (If the necromancer was slain during the previous adventure, substitute another wizard of similar level and ability, using Kazerabet's entry in the NPC booklet as a guide.) After completing some preliminary research, the sorceress has learned the staff requires an exotic material component called hue of midnight darkness, described in the *Campaign Guide*.

Kazerabet promptly cast *legend lore* to learn more about the location of the wood, but the spell only returned the cryptic advice: "Seek the hue of midnight darkness beneath the Sea of Salt." Subsequent study placed the Sea of Salt in the Haunted Lands, but the sorceress could learn nothing more about hue of midnight darkness, for most of her spells are devoted to the forbidden art of necromancy, not divination.

Rather than pour more of her own precious time into the project, the wizard decided to hire a party of mercenaries to bring back a sample of the wood for her. If she isn't already acquainted with the party from "Court of the Necromancers," she *teleports* to a distant city where she inquires discreetly about reputable adventuring companies and quickly learns of the party members.

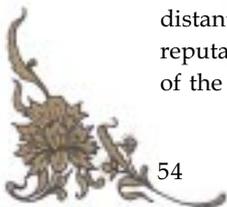
Kazerabet realizes all too well the benefits of having live and willing allies. The wizard has a simple, generous proposal: If the PCs retrieve enough branches of hue of midnight darkness, she agrees to enchant two magical rods, staves, or wands for them as a reward (their choice, within the limits discussed at the end of this adventure). She furnishes the party members with a map of the Haunted Lands (show them the front of Card 2) and all the information she knows about hue of midnight darkness.

The necromancer does not take rejection lightly. If the party refuses to help, Kazerabet sends three invisible stalkers to kidnap a PC and bring him or her to the Jade Palace, where she binds the character's life force with a *lifeproof* spell. Withdrawing her previous, gracious offer, the queen now orders the unfortunate character to retrieve hue of midnight darkness within a year and a day, threatening to crush the trapped Shadow of the Heart if the party member misses the deadline. She then teleports the character back to the rest of the party so the group can prepare for the journey. If the party aided Kazerabet in the previous adventure, such dire coercive methods should not prove necessary.

If the party is exploring the Haunted Lands already, this adventure can begin without Kazerabet's involvement. In this case, skip the following brief section and proceed directly to "A Sheikh's Hospitality."

Reaching the Sea of Salt should involve an epic journey across the barren expanse of the Haunted Lands, in which the party rides a train of smelly, cantankerous camels across the burning face of Zakhara's most famous wasteland. During their journey, the PCs should brave all the hardships of the desert: relentless thirst, marauding bandits, unpredictable sandstorms, and, of course, the dangerous genies inhabiting this lonely wilderness. Pertinent background on the Haunted Lands and appropriate random encounters are included in the *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 4. A previous adventure, "The Shattered Statue," offers a perfect desert interlude during this odyssey.

Time constraints may force the introductory portion of this adventure to be cut short or even cut out. In this case, Kazerabet might offer to transport the party magically to the northern shore of the Salt





Sea, summoning a spectral, vulturelike steed to convey the party members to their destination in one day, regardless of their initial location. (The bird could deposit them just south of the Salt Sea, near the camp described below.) Riding this undead beast constitutes a far-from-pleasant experience. Many of its feathers and withered flesh have fallen away to expose the parched bones beneath. The steed's revolting stench abates only once it takes flight. (The rushing wind disperses the smell.) Kazerabet promises to scry the PCs and send the ghastly bird to collect them once they complete her mission.

### A Sheikh's Hospitality

While cresting a low-lying ridge in the Haunted Lands, the party discovers a small camp with three expansive tents, the same off-white as the nearby Sea of Salt. (PCs smell the acrid odor of the Salt Sea carried on the wind, so they know they draw near.) Wrought brass eagles top the tent poles.

From a distance, characters can see that two of the tents bare an open face to the wilderness, sheltering a dozen sturdy camels and 10 tall men, respectively. The third and largest tent is closed on all sides. A woman's harmonious singing drifts out of the biggest tent, accompanied by the soft chords of a stringed instrument.

The sweet, gentle music rises in a strange, lyrical language above the camels' snorting and the wind's railing. A player character with the genie lore nonweapon proficiency can identify the foreign language as Jannti, the tongue of genies. If translated (by magic or by a character proficient in the language), the sweet and joyful ballad recounts to listeners the tender reunion of lovers separated by lengthy travels in the open desert.

From this vantage point, the 10 guards appear clothed in black abas and armed with composite bows and scimitars. Kiffiyehs wrap their faces to block out the sun and the stinging wind. They stand once they notice the party, but make no move to ready their weapons-yet! Without a word, one of the guards raises his hand, acknowledging the party's presence, and enters the largest tent, from which the singing emanates. In a few seconds, he emerges and approaches.

Read or paraphrase the following:

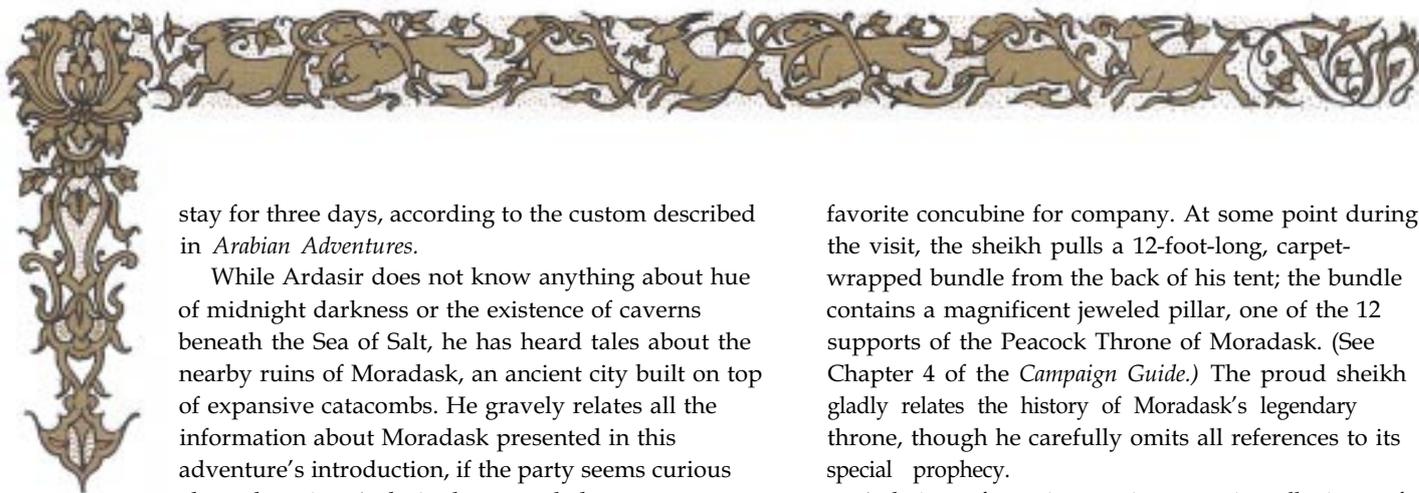
As the black-robed guard draws near, you quickly realize you earlier underestimated his size. The man towers almost seven feet tall! You also notice that his robes conceal heavy lamellar armor and a massive, muscular body. The scimitar sheathed across his back is a heavy, two-handed blade, typically used by executioners.

Despite his encumberment, the guard gracefully kneels and kisses the ground beneath his hands in a traditional Al-Badian welcome. "I greet you in the name of my most honorable master, Ardasir al-Darah, the Incomparable, Sheikh of the Jann. He welcomes you to his encampment and requests that you honor his humble tent with your illuminating presence, that you may take shelter from the elements and relax from your long and arduous travels."

Of course, declining the invitation would insult the generous sheikh and his followers, who would not take the refusal lightly. Assuming the party members accept the invitation, the guard ceremoniously admits them to the shiekh's tent, scented with tiny, aromatic balls of musk and ambergris, its floor covered with thick, costly carpets. Sheikh Ardasir reclines in the center of the tent on a majestic pile of embroidered pillows, his sun-blackened skin, proud features, and pointed ears clearly marking him as an "incomparable" leader of the jann. Behind him, a female tasked genie named Safia perches on a single cushion. When the party enters, she modulates her angelic voice into a Midani hymn of welcome as her long, delicate fingers caress the strings of a sandalwood lute, inlaid with mother of pearl. The sheikh and his retainers are further detailed on Ardasir's page in the NPC booklet.

The sheikh's guards bring copper bowls for the party members to wash their hands; goblets of cool, sweet wine to sate their thirst; and fragrant platters of aromatic food to ease their hunger. Safia plays captivately in the background throughout their meal, lost in her own intricate melodies and accompaniments. As a polite host, Ardasir does not inquire into characters' personal affairs, though he gladly listens to any tales they may care to relate. He shares the bond of salt with them, welcoming them to





stay for three days, according to the custom described in *Arabian Adventures*.

While Ardasir does not know anything about hue of midnight darkness or the existence of caverns beneath the Sea of Salt, he has heard tales about the nearby ruins of Moradask, an ancient city built on top of expansive catacombs. He gravely relates all the information about Moradask presented in this adventure's introduction, if the party seems curious about the ruins. Ardasir also vaguely knows a strange religious sect currently inhabits Moradask. From afar, he has watched the cult's heavily armed patrols scour the wastes surrounding the ruins. While the sheikh has been observing their sorties for some time, he knows very little about the sect, save that they clearly follow the Pantheon. (He saw the tell-tale pentagon on their shields and armor.)

The party may be curious about Ardasir's lone presence near the Sea of Salt, but the sheikh conceals his true motives. It would breach the code of etiquette for the party to question him too closely on this matter, but he does admit to being on a brief vacation from his people, with only a few retainers and his

favorite concubine for company. At some point during the visit, the sheikh pulls a 12-foot-long, carpet-wrapped bundle from the back of his tent; the bundle contains a magnificent jeweled pillar, one of the 12 supports of the Peacock Throne of Moradask. (See Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide*.) The proud sheikh gladly relates the history of Moradask's legendary throne, though he carefully omits all references to its special prophecy.

Ardasir professes interest in recovering all pieces of the Peacock Throne, which he thinks are hidden beneath Moradask. If the party members mention they plan to investigate the ruined city, Ardasir asks to accompany them. He offers to assist them in their explorations if they help him recover pieces of the throne. If characters seem reluctant, the sheikh insists on joining them, so he may discharge his obligations as a host. As the Jann of the Haunted Lands are extremely prone to insult, wise PCs will not refuse his company.

Before Ardasir and the party members leave the comfortable encampment, the sheikh disguises himself as an ogre, hoping to keep a low profile should they encounter the militant Pantheists in Moradask. His efforts at disguise prove no more successful than usual; chalk up his conviction in this ogre persona to the erratic nature of the Jann of the Haunted Lands. Despite his silly "disguise" and proud demeanor, Ardasir's impressive Strength, knowledge of the Haunted Lands, and battle prowess make him an asset to the party.

The sheikh is loath to draw any of his retainers away from guarding Safia and the pillar of the Peacock Throne. If a sha'ir PC asks for additional protection (and makes a call upon jann ability check), Ardasir assigns one of his personal bodyguards (named Adil) to protect the esteemed wizard. If the sha'ir calls upon the jann again during the adventure, another retainer arrives to inquire about the sheikh's safety. This new addition remains only if the sha'ir convincingly speaks of a threat to Ardasir's life. The jann cannot answer a summons if called from underground.

### **A Nocturnal Hunt and Celebration**

Unless the PCs think of it, Ardasir insists they travel to the ruins by night. Not only can they traverse the desert and Sea of Salt more comfortably after sunset, but most inhabitants of Moradask will be asleep. Once





the sun dips below the western mountains, the pale face of Selan the Beautiful Moon rises into a diamond-studded sky, casting her gentle regard across the barren landscape. The moonlight provides enough illumination at night to discern movement at 100 yards, distinguish stationary objects at 50 yards, and recognize detailed features at 30 yards. Ardasir knows a few safe paths across the treacherous Sea of Salt, but the characters may wish to extend their journey and circumvent the caustic basin entirely. Feel free to stage any number of encounters at this point, drawing upon the suggestions in the *Campaign Guide*.

Once the party members approach to within a few miles of the ruins, they suddenly hear the approaching thunder of hooves. Before they can see a thing (at about 200 yards), they hear the twang of countless bowstrings. From the darkness, a rain of long, black-shafted arrows pelts the ground at their feet. As the party stares at the arrows, a female voice rings out across the waste:

“In the name of the Khawati Clan, on whose lands you are now trespassing, I command you to lay down your arms immediately!”

Remembering his supposed disguise, Ardasir grunts once like an ogre (“Ugrh!”) and waits for the party to decide on a course of action. Combat is not really a viable option. If the PCs attempt to fight, a volley of 60 arrows descends upon them with terrifying accuracy. The archers remain almost 200 yards from the party, well beyond the limits of infravision and offensive spells. After this painful barrage, the female voice calls once again for the characters to lay down their weapons.

Provided they comply, the party members soon hear the clatter of hooves, and the form of a female rider coalesces from the darkness. As she approaches, they note that the spokeswoman of the Khawati is not a mounted human after all, but a proud desert centaur. She has nocked an arrow in her bow, but politely points the weapon at the ground (for the time being, at least). Any character familiar with the Haunted Lands (such as a desert rider or rawun) can identify centaurs as an honorable people. Ardasir confirms this

fact, if the party is new to the ways of the desert.

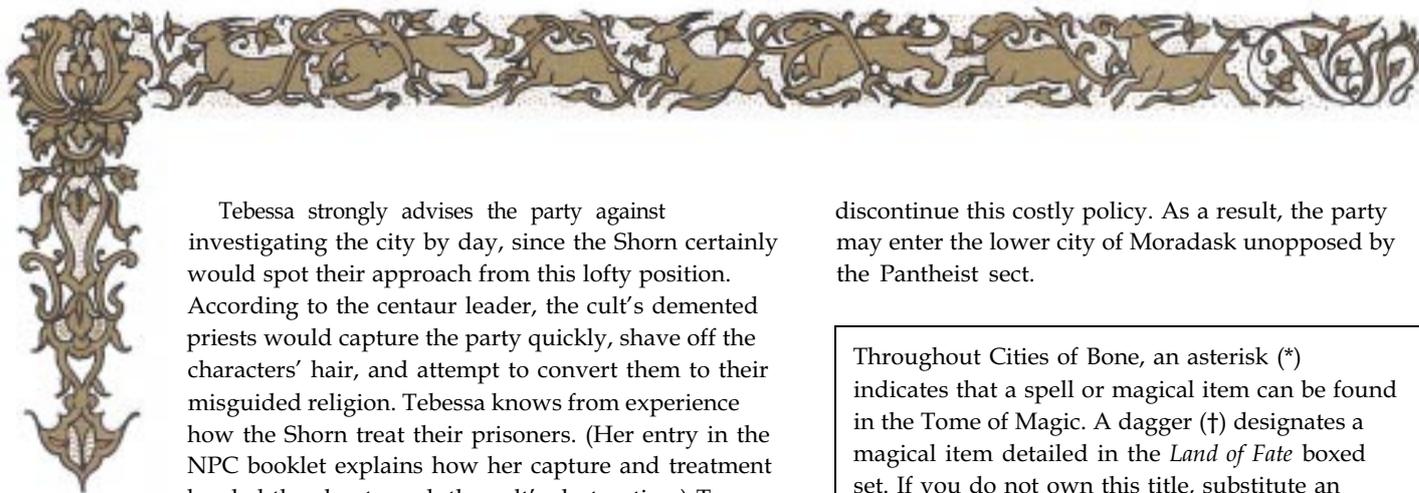
The female centaur demands to know the party’s reason for crossing her clan’s domain. In particular, she asks if the PCs are transporting supplies for the Shorn (the militant religious order inhabiting the ruins of Moradask, described in Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide*). She orders them to remove their headgear so she can examine their hair; she accuses any bald characters of belonging to the Shorn unless they prove otherwise—a simple display of body hair somewhere on their persons should suffice.

Once the PCs have convinced the centaur they do not follow the Path of the Shorn, she apologizes for her earlier brusque manner and introduces herself as Tebessa, leader of Clan Khawati. With a whistle, she calls the other centaurs to approach and greet the party. Descriptions and statistics for the centaurs appear on Tebessa’s entry in the NPC booklet.

The clan waterfinder, named Narur, attempts to soothe any ruffled feathers among the party members. With Tebessa’s consent, Narur offers to share water with the PCs, the clan’s equivalent of the salt bond ceremony. To cement the trust between host and guest, Tebessa invites the party to join them hunting for the rest of the evening, followed by a feast of welcome. The centaurs seek the moon snakes: lean, tasty reptiles that emerge from their subterranean lairs only by the light of the full moon to bathe in Selan’s pearly glow. The snakes are small and timid, quick to dart back into their rocky holes when they sense the ground vibrations from approaching hooves or footsteps. Have fun with this nocturnal hunt, which culminates in an unusual feast of roasted moon snake and cactus fruit back in the sheltered lair of the centaurs, miles from the Sea of Salt.

During the celebration, Tebessa expresses great interest in the party’s travels, marveling at the curiously silent ogre in the company. (Ardasir grunts appropriately.) Of all the centaurs, only Narur is bright enough to pierce the janni’s ridiculous disguise, though she does not reveal the shiekh’s identity to her sister. Though Tebessa knows nothing about the catacombs of Moradask, she has become acquainted with the ruined city and its strange inhabitants. Should they desire, she draws the PCs a map of the ruins (the front of Card 4), pointing out the domain of the Shorn in the ruins’ fortified upper reaches.





Tebessa strongly advises the party against investigating the city by day, since the Shorn certainly would spot their approach from this lofty position. According to the centaur leader, the cult's demented priests would capture the party quickly, shave off the characters' hair, and attempt to convert them to their misguided religion. Tebessa knows from experience how the Shorn treat their prisoners. (Her entry in the NPC booklet explains how her capture and treatment has led the clan to seek the cult's destruction.) To save the guests from a similar fate, the clan insists upon accompanying the party to Moradask the next night. (The centaurs rest during the day.)

In the early hours of the morning, before Ardasir succumbs to exhaustion and falls asleep, he drinks a *potion of dreaming*†, wishing to learn how to reach the Peacock Throne. Upon waking, he remembers a treacherous path through the catacombs to the golden seat of the fragmented throne. He can recollect no details as to the seat's whereabouts, however, only how to reach it.

**Moon snake:** Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours, onset time 1d3 rounds); ML 10; SZ S (5' long); MC; XP 175.

## City of The Sun

As soon as the sun sets the following evening, the centaurs mobilize to escort the party to Moradask. During the brief journey, Tebessa remarks that the Shorn used to post a watch along the outer reaches of the city. The centaurs' night vision and excellent marksmanship enabled them to inflict enough casualties on the Shorn to make cult leaders



discontinue this costly policy. As a result, the party may enter the lower city of Moradask unopposed by the Pantheist sect.

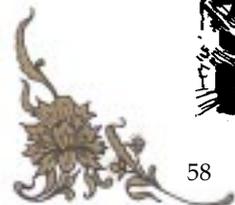
Throughout *Cities of Bone*, an asterisk (\*) indicates that a spell or magical item can be found in the *Tome of Magic*. A dagger (†) designates a magical item detailed in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. If you do not own this title, substitute an appropriate, similar magical item from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

When the party members draw near the moonlit ruined city, they can clearly discern its lofty outline against the light background of the Salt Sea and the brilliant, starry sky. The city's ancient inhabitants hewed these towering structures from impossibly large blocks of limestone, fitted together without mortar. Tall, arched openings lead into the echoing interiors, now bereft of any furnishings or adornments.

The centaurs accompany the party to the vacant bazaar in the center of the city (Area 2). Foreboding temples surround the marketplace, obsidian columns supporting their vaulted entrances. Waving farewell, the centaurs hurriedly depart to hunt on the acrid plains.

Allow the party members to search the ruins of Moradask for the catacombs at their leisure, guided by the city map on the front of Card 4 and the description in Chapter 4 of the *Campaign Guide*. Everywhere they search, the PCs find empty, wind-blasted buildings, effaced of all inscriptions and dusted by a fine layer of salt and sand. Despite the vacant appearance, though, the ruins are far from uninhabited-especially at night, when hungry, malevolent beings crawl up from the catacomb depths to sate their limitless hunger.

Slowly, subtly, let the party members know of the other nocturnal explorers of Moradask. For instance, when they enter a tower, they might hear a faint skittering noise retreating swiftly into the darkness. At the limit of their vision they see, reflecting their lantern light, a pair of gleaming eyes that blink once then disappear. Large, three-toed tracks litter the dust-piled floor, disappearing near a yawning window at the point where the nameless creature took flight. Perhaps





the beast landed on the top of an adjacent building, where the PCs spot, for an instant, a homed silhouette against the luminous moon. With the ruffle of batlike wings, the image vanishes. Maybe it was never there at all: merely a mirage fabricated by overactive imaginations. Then again, maybe not.

In many of Moradask's cavernous buildings, the catacomb entrances were collapsed or sealed off long ago, but the party's persistent searching pays off when the group enters a temple in which frightening, rat-headed statues adorn the vaulted interior. The PCs soon notice a dry slithering noise approaching from the farthest reaches of the temple, as if a large, leathery sack were being dragged across the floor. As it closes, they hear claws clicking on the floor tiles; they behold a pair of glowing, greenish eyes long before they can see the monster's bloated, reptilian body; its lion head; hippopotamus torso; and crocodile tail. When the beast pulls itself across the floor with ivory talons, its stomach and tail brush against the tiles, making the slithery, dragging sound.

If the party members defeat this ammut (and perhaps one or two of its brethren lurking elsewhere in the temple), they discover a hidden ramp behind the temple sanctuary, which descends into Moradask's catacombs. The ammut's trail might lead the party down into the twisting corridors beneath the city; feel free to have this trail end wherever convenient.

**Ammut (1d3):** Int Avg; AL NE; AC 3; MV 9, Sw 12, Br 3; HD 6; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2d8 or 1d8/1d8; SA swallow whole, roar; SZ L (12' long); ML 14; MC13; XP 650.

## Into The Catacombs

Maps of a small section of these galleries appear on the back of Card 5. Keep in mind that the catacombs are much more extensive than this small map can depict; they reach nearly every part of the city and descend many levels into the depths of the earth. All regions of the catacombs have similar features, primarily the long, tall galleries lined with graves of the city's dead, as described in the *Campaign Guide*. Ardasir understands Chun and can translate one or two of the grave inscriptions if none of the PCs know the dead language of the Haunted Lands.

The limitless galleries beneath Moradask hold more

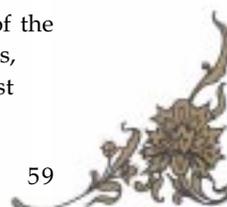
dangers for the party than the aboveground ruins, for their many foul inhabitants continually wander up from the catacombs' lowest levels. These abysmal layers connect at various points with Zakhara's own Underdark: a network of caverns and corridors that has never seen the light of day, home to monsters of unfathomable depravity. Random encounters in the catacombs occur frequently (1 in 20 chance per turn), especially at night (1 in 10 chance per turn), when these roaming predators are most active.

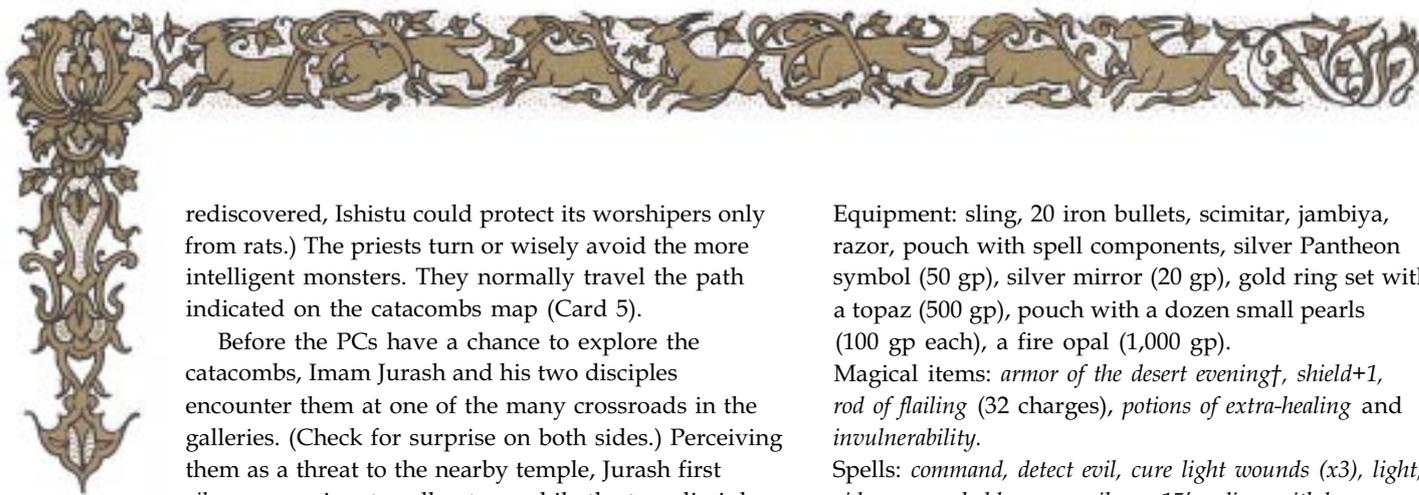
Given the characters' surroundings, even the most mundane dungeon monster can become a unimaginable terror if you, the DM, give the random encounter a sinister tone. A persistent, low scratching approaching along the ceiling could turn into a group of tentacular carrion crawlers or a gelatinous cube seeking prey. An amorphous black pudding might drip silently down onto the party members when they turn a corner, burning off their clothes and armor with an audible sizzle from its acid touch. Characters could spot faint lantern light (actually a will o' wisp), which tries to lead them past a slithering tracker to a pack of hungry ghouls and ghouls. Throw dangerous encounters like this at the PCs regularly, giving them barely enough time to rest or recuperate.

## The First Disciple

The leaders of the Shorn, Imam Sa'ib and Jurash, discovered the catacombs soon after their arrival. During their explorations, they came upon a great underground temple dedicated to Ishistu, a hairless rat idol of ancient Moradask. While translating the inscriptions on a great ivory statue in the temple, the priests realized Ishistu's tenets closely matched those of their outcast order, which also celebrated perfection as embodied by a rat god whose pelt was unsullied by fur. They felt an overwhelming desire to worship and protect the antique statue. Now, Imam Sa'ib and Jurash take turns guarding the living idol in the underground temple, assisted by their followers.

Imam Jurash and his two disciples enter the catacombs at the same time as the PCs, intending to travel to Ishistu's temple and relieve the Great Hairless One from his vigil. Because of their devotion, Ishistu protects the Shorn from the unintelligent beings of the catacombs. (As its worshipers grow more numerous, the living idol's powers likewise increase; when first





rediscovered, Ishistu could protect its worshipers only from rats.) The priests turn or wisely avoid the more intelligent monsters. They normally travel the path indicated on the catacombs map (Card 5).

Before the PCs have a chance to explore the catacombs, Imam Jurash and his two disciples encounter them at one of the many crossroads in the galleries. (Check for surprise on both sides.) Perceiving them as a threat to the nearby temple, Jurash first silences prominent spellcasters, while the two disciples cast *hold person*, attempting to immobilize four with each spell. Unless the party surrenders immediately, the disciples draw their scimitars next round to keep the group from attacking Jurash, who casts *flame strike* on those who resist. During the third round, the priests simultaneously cast *unearthly choir\** (2 to 8 [2d4] points of sonic damage in a 120-foot by 40-foot area, half if save). On the fourth round, Jurash activates his rod of *flailing*, wading into melee. The priests fight with unyielding concentration; none fears death, since each expects to be *raised* from the dead by the Great Hairless One. If the priests defeat the party, they bind and gag survivors and drag them to the Temple of Ishistu for interrogation, purification, and conversion. (Imam Sa'ib's page in the NPC booklet gives details about the strange rituals of the Shorn.)

Should the party members, with Ardasir's prowess in arms, manage to defeat the Shorn, they must think quickly, as Imam Sa'ib will not wait long for his normally punctual son to relieve him. A search of the gallery intersection where the battle began reveals a fairly worn trail leading deeper into the catacombs. The sheikh, a skilled tracker, can follow the trail easily to the Temple of Ishistu, as can any ranger PC.

The janni urges this course of action, as he remembers following this subterranean trail in the nocturnal visions he experienced after imbibing the *potion of dreaming*. He feels quite certain that the trail leads to a large collection of fragments of his Peacock Throne. If the party members are too badly damaged from their battle with the Shorn, he offers them all his *potions of extra-healing* so they can press onward.

**Imam Jurash (hmp/my/9):** AC 4; MV 12; hp 69; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon (rod: 1d6+6) or spell; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 14; AL N; THAC0 12.

Equipment: sling, 20 iron bullets, scimitar, jambiya, razor, pouch with spell components, silver Pantheon symbol (50 gp), silver mirror (20 gp), gold ring set with a topaz (500 gp), pouch with a dozen small pearls (100 gp each), a fire opal (1,000 gp).

Magical items: *armor of the desert evening*, *shield+1*, *rod of flailing* (32 charges), *potions of extra-healing* and *invulnerability*.

Spells: *command*, *detect evil*, *cure light wounds* (x3), *light*, *aid*, *augury*, *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*, *withdraw*, *wyvern watch*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *unearthly choir\**, *cure serious wounds* (x2), *flame strike*.

**Minor disciple (2, hmp/my/5):** AC 5; MV 12; hp 32, 40; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (scimitar: 1d8+1, sling bullet: 1d4+2, mace: 1d6+2) or spell; Str 16, Con 15, Wis 15; AL LN; THAC0 18.

Equipment: lamellar armor, shield, scimitar, sling, 20 iron bullets, footman's mace, razor, pouch with spell components, silver Pantheon symbol (50 gp), silver mirror (20 gp), 2d10 gp, gold ring (100 gp).

Spells: *command*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect evil*, *light*, *aid*, *augury*, *hold person*, *wyvern watch*, *unearthly choir\**.

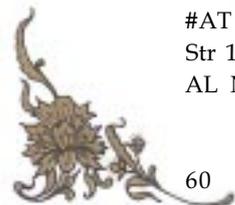
## The Temple of Ishistu

Once in the twisted depths of the catacombs, the party can reach the temple either by following the trail of the Shorn or by consulting with Ardasir, who has traveled to the temple in his dreams.

Throughout the temple complex, walls are adorned with reliefs of sculpted porphyry and alabaster, depicting the fall of Moradask to invaders and the withdrawal of Ishistu's idolatrous worshipers to the catacombs. The yellow *continual light* illuminating the temple's interior reflects off the relief sculptures with a pale, jaundiced glow.

The following description assumes the PCs investigate the temple immediately after defeating Imam Jurash and his attending priests. If they arrive much later, alter the deployment of the cult members and augment their defenses. (Refer to the temple map on the back of Card 6.)

**1. Foyer.** Reached directly from the catacombs, this antechamber contains a damaged portcullis, stuck halfway down in its grooves. Characters could duck under this obstacle easily, had not the Great Hairless One placed a fairly obvious pentangular *glyph of*





warding over the entrance (cast at 13th level at the location [G] on the map). This glyph flares ominously whenever a being not allied with the Shorn approaches within 5 feet. Nonintelligent beings naturally shun it, but more curious denizens of the catacombs have died painfully, as it inflicts 13 to 52 (13d4) points of fire damage to all in the foyer when triggered (half if save).

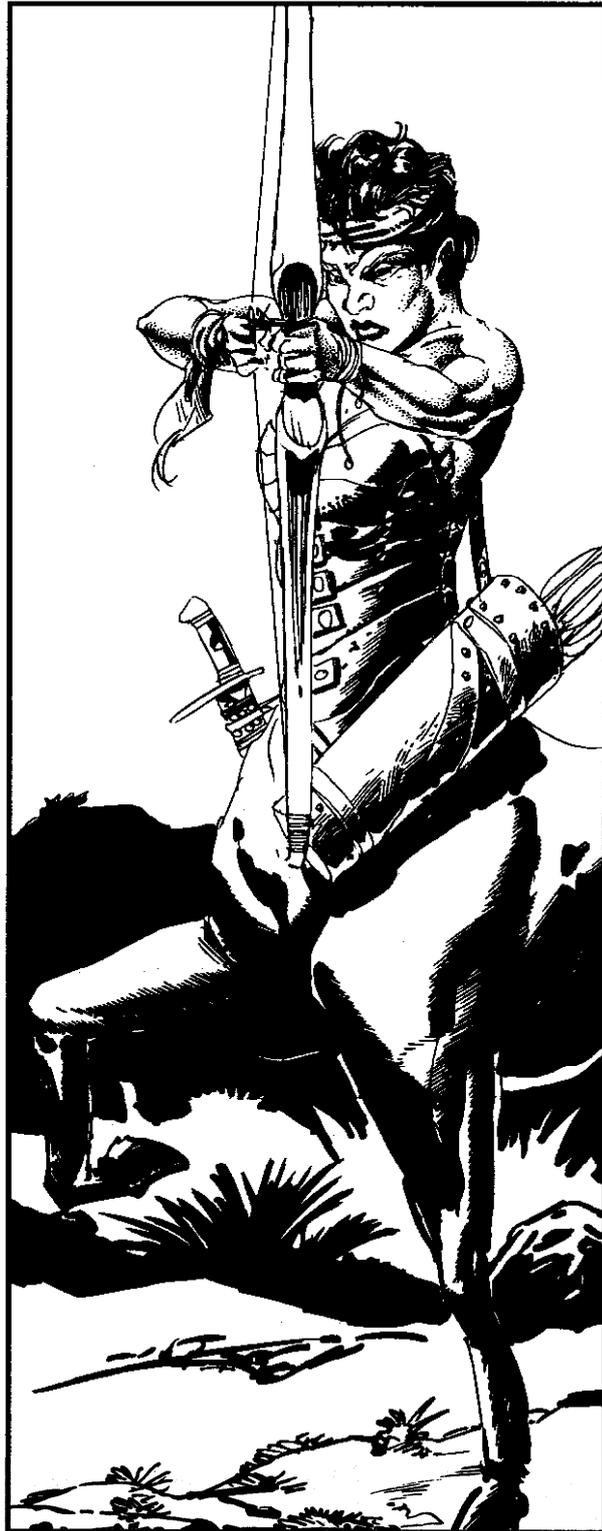
**2. Guard Room.** A dozen members of the Deprived-elite Shorn warriors stand in the upper galleries of this guard room, prepared to fire down on intruders from locations (A) on the map. Two minor disciples of the cult stand at positions (C) on the map; their statistics are the same as those in the preceding section (hp 28, 36), and they have memorized the following spells: *command*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *endure heat*, *protection from evil*, *aid*, *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*, and *prayer*. Earlier in the evening, before the Great Hairless One retreated into the main temple to meditate alone, these priests placed *wyvern watch* spells near the only exits (cast at 5th level at locations [W] on the map).

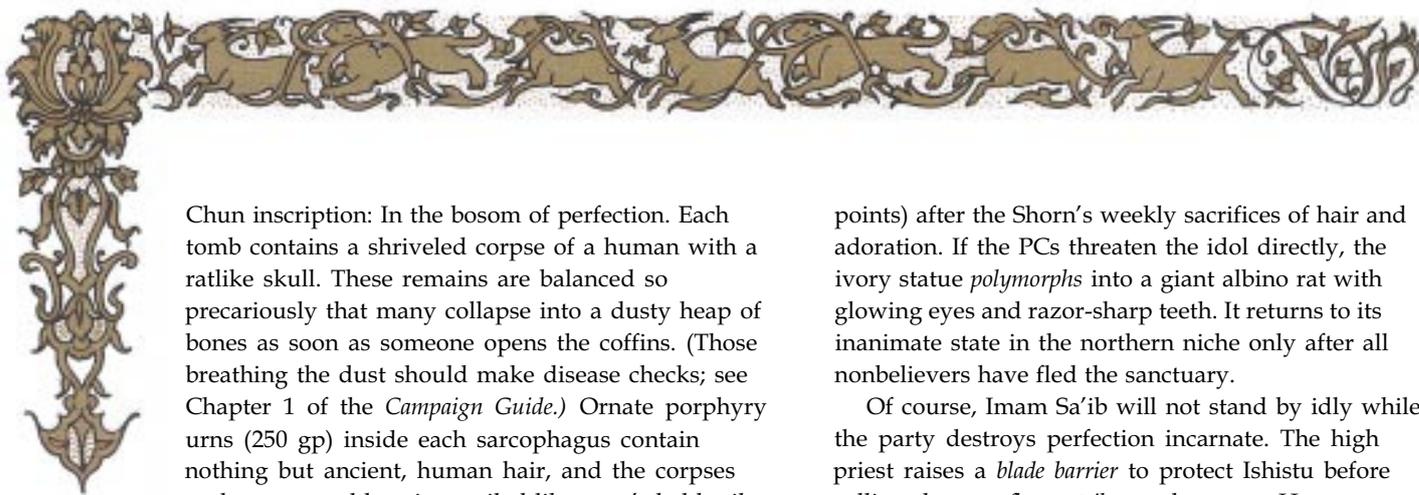
The priests and the Deprived stand ready for danger and are alerted to trespassers by the glow of the glyph in the foyer. When PCs set off the glyph, the priests cast *prayer*, *aid*, and *protection from evil* in quick succession until the intruders enter the guard room. Then, those bursting through the entrance will be subject to a hail of 24 arrows (from the Deprived) and *silence 15' radius* and *hold person* spells (from the priests). Missile fire and spells continue as long as combat dictates. The Shorn fight fearlessly to the death, as they expect their leader to *raise* the fallen.

**The Deprived (12, hmF/fa/2):** AC 5; MV 9; hp 16; #AT 2 (bow) or 1; Dmg by weapon (sheaf arrows: 1d8 or scimitar: 1d8+1); Str 17, Con 15; AL LN; THAC0 19.

Equipment: lamellar armor, shield, scimitar, composite long bow, quiver with 20 sheaf arrows, jambiya, razor, silver mirror (20 gp), 1d6 gp.

**3. Priests' Tombs.** Walls of these chambers house 26 vertical sarcophagi containing the remains of the Ishistu's most devoted priests. The alabaster lids, each carved with a grotesque rat-headed emblem, bear the





Chun inscription: In the bosom of perfection. Each tomb contains a shriveled corpse of a human with a ratlike skull. These remains are balanced so precariously that many collapse into a dusty heap of bones as soon as someone opens the coffins. (Those breathing the dust should make disease checks; see Chapter 1 of the *Campaign Guide*.) Ornate porphyry urns (250 gp) inside each sarcophagus contain nothing but ancient, human hair, and the corpses each wear a golden ring, coiled like a rat's bald tail (350 gp). Any who disturb the graves risk contracting the evil eye, as described in the *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 1.

**4. Ishistu's Sanctuary.** The doors to this chamber are barred from the inside and further protected by an invisible *glyph of warding*, similar in effect to the one in the foyer. On a four-stepped dais in the temple sanctuary, Imam Sa'ib meditates upon the golden seat of the Peacock Throne. The priest sits in the shadow of a rat-headed idol of solid ivory with huge diamond eyes (10,000 gp each). Beside him, a gaping pit yawns into abysmal darkness. Piles of human hair and various tools rest on a marble altar near the pit.

As soon as the PCs enter, Imam Sa'ib stands and asks them, "Why do you hate perfection?" The lycanthropic high priest smiles as he turns into his half-human form, his face twisting into the muzzle of a hairless, albino rat. (See his page in the NPC booklet.) "I mean you no harm," Sa'ib insists, his human voice the model of patient forgiveness. "After you are purged of impurities, you will have embraced the Path of the Shorn and the essence of Ishistu." He gestures to the altar, littered with razors, tweezers, and piles of braided human hair.

While Sa'ib speaks, the living idol named Ishistu attempts to charm members of the party into worshipping it. PCs may make saving throws vs. magic to resist the effect, and those making the save remain forever immune to Ishistu's call. (A *protection from evil* spell blocks the possession completely.) Otherwise, characters become convinced that Ishistu, and all its worshipers, must be preserved as guides to holiness and perfection. The party can break this charm by destroying Ishistu or casting *dispel magic* or *remove curse* on the victim.

Destroying Ishistu will prove difficult, as its power has expanded to legendary proportions (maximum hit

points) after the Shorn's weekly sacrifices of hair and adoration. If the PCs threaten the idol directly, the ivory statue *polymorphs* into a giant albino rat with glowing eyes and razor-sharp teeth. It returns to its inanimate state in the northern niche only after all nonbelievers have fled the sanctuary.

Of course, Imam Sa'ib will not stand by idly while the party destroys perfection incarnate. The high priest raises a *blade barrier* to protect Ishistu before calling down a *flame strike* on the party. He casts other spells or engages in melee, depending on the flow of combat. Receiving his first significant wound, Sa'ib casts *heal* on himself; the second time, he *withdraws* and casts *cure serious wounds* and *cure light wounds* on himself.

The PCs have access to two weapons that might damage Ishistu—Jurash's *rod of flailing* (if they thought to pick it up) and Ardasir's scimitar, Final Arbiter. The sheikh loans the blade to a PC if the party does not have weapons powerful enough to damage the idol; the janni prefers to fire arrows at the high priest during the melee. If the group destroys the living idol, Sa'ib's fragile hold on sanity shatters irrevocably. Screaming, "You can't destroy perfection!" the demented mystic commits suicide by hurling himself into the inky depths of the gaping pit, whose bottom is so distant that the party never hears his body hit.

If the party members search the temple after the battle, they discover three more pillars of the Peacock Throne (in addition to its golden seat) concealed in the alcove Ishistu the idol used to occupy. In addition, they find a locked iron box protected by a *glyph of warding*. When triggered, it inflicts 13d4 hp of electrical damage and causes all the victim's hair to fall out. Once opened, the chest yields 5,000 gp, 1,000 pp (all ancient coins of Moradask), 10 small emeralds (1,000 gp each), a multi-hinged sandalwood box (actually a *folding boat*), a ridged metal sphere (*iron bands of bilarro*), and a gold feather (*Quaal's feather token*).

**Ishistu, a living idol:** Int Semi; AL LN; AC 4; MV 6; HD 16; hp 128; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 4d8; SA charm, can *polymorph* into giant rat; SD immune to most spells, +3 or better weapon to hit; SZ L (12' tall); ML 20; MC13; XP 17,000.





## The Abysmal Pit

This pit descends for a mile straight into the depths of the earth. Its rough-hewn walls bear numerous ledges, making a downward climb a possible, though herculean, undertaking. Ardasir is willing to carry a passenger down (invisibly, of course) for reconnaissance; otherwise, the party may use *fly* or *levitate* spells to investigate the pit.

The descent is long and nerve-wracking, as a number of small, interconnected caverns open out into the walls of the pit. These apertures lead to the barrows of roaring ammut and the crawl spaces of ghouls and umber hulks. The party should come across Sa'ib's broken remains, along with his magical items, on one of the wall ledges. Feel free to stage incidental encounters around the ledges and side caverns, but gently steer the party back to its downward journey.

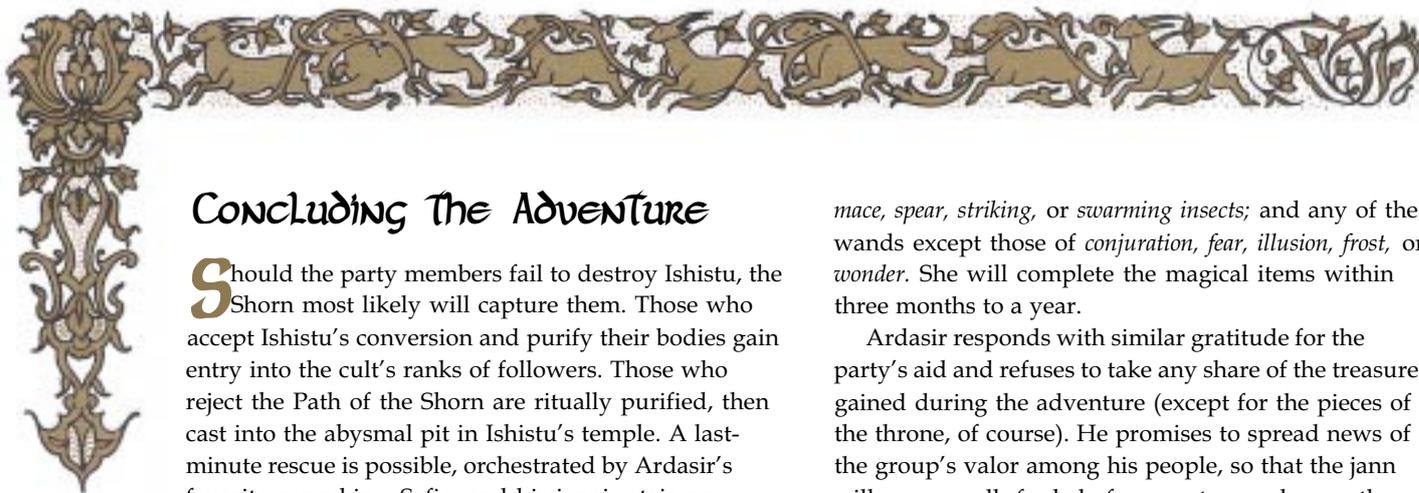
Finally, the pit expands into an enormous underground cavern, miles in diameter, lit by pale blue glowing lichen in the ceiling. At the center of this cavern—in a smelly, underground swamp—the party at last discovers the object of Kazerabet's quest: a thicket of hue of midnight darkness, described in Chapter 4 of

the *Campaign Guide*. Let the party members enjoy their success (momentarily) and trim one or two long stalks of the magical wood before they hear movement in the swampy waters behind them. Suddenly, a wave breaks the surface, and a huge black tentacle whips out of the murk, swiping blindly at them.

This is Ur, the Great Squid, a malignant kraken of supra-genius Intelligence that masterminded the draining of the Jacinth Sea on the surface to make its vast subterranean abode. The PCs had better flee for the exit with their prize, or else Ur will enslave them as it did the thousands of refugees from Moradask who sought refuge in the Zakharan Underdark after their city collapsed. Build up a final surge of tension as Ur's impossibly long, black, slippery tentacles flail about in the air for the escaping characters. Roll a few dice for show, but let the party make a clean escape back to the surface. If they stand and fight, however, feel free to make them pay.

**Ur, the Great Squid, a kraken:** Int Genius+; AL NE; AC 5/0; MV Sw 3, Jet 21; HD 20; hp 160; THAC0 5; #AT 9; Dmg 3d6(x2)/2d6(x6)/7d4; SD ink; SZ G (100' long); ML 18; MC; XP 23,000.





## Concluding The Adventure

Should the party members fail to destroy Ishistu, the Shorn most likely will capture them. Those who accept Ishistu's conversion and purify their bodies gain entry into the cult's ranks of followers. Those who reject the Path of the Shorn are ritually purified, then cast into the abysmal pit in Ishistu's temple. A last-minute rescue is possible, orchestrated by Ardasir's favorite concubine, Safia, and his janni retainers. Alternatively, the PCs' mangled bodies might be discovered, barely alive, by benevolent deep gnomes on one of the many ledges lining the mile-deep pit. The deep gnomes tend to their wounds, helping them back to the surface after their recovery.

Assuming the party defeats the priests of the Shorn, their fragile society falters and disperses as their supplies dwindle. Furthermore, without the protection of Ishistu and the high priests, denizens of the catacombs no longer ignore the Shorn. Lacking the charismatic leadership of Sa'ib and Jurash, the demoralized cult departs for the Free Cities, more hospitable to unusual religions. For a second time in history, Moradask's inhabitants abandon the City of the Sun.

As for Clan Khawati, the centaurs appear ecstatic about the Shorn's departure and do not hamper the retreat. Praising the PCs as heroes, the centaurs make them all honorary members of the clan—even the quiet ogre in their company. (Ardasir gives an appreciative grunt.) They invite the party members to stay, hunt, and feast with the clan for as long as they like, while Tebessa teaches them archery and the ways of the desert. In gratitude for their service, Tebessa promises to come to their aid, should they ever require assistance from her or the clan.

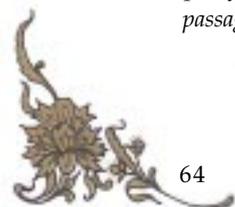
Once the PCs emerge from the catacombs with hue of midnight darkness, Kazerabet series them and sees their success. She arrives the following day (or whenever the busy wizard gets around to it) on her giant, spectral vulture to transport them back to their point of origin. True to her word, she offers to enchant two of the following rods, staves, or wands for the party using hue of midnight darkness: *rods of flailing, passage, security, smiting, splendor, or terror; staves of the*

*mace, spear, striking, or swarming insects; and any of the wands except those of conjuration, fear, illusion, frost, or wonder.* She will complete the magical items within three months to a year.

Ardasir responds with similar gratitude for the party's aid and refuses to take any share of the treasure gained during the adventure (except for the pieces of the throne, of course). He promises to spread news of the group's valor among his people, so that the jann will answer calls for help from party members as they would a call from any sha'ir (base 25 percent chance +5 percent for each level over 5th). Sha'irs among the group gain a -4 bonus on future reaction rolls with the jann, and their chances for calling upon these genies for aid improve dramatically (base 25 percent chance + 10 percent per level over 5th).

While Sheikh Ardasir will have recovered a total of four pillars and the golden seat of the Peacock Throne by the conclusion of the adventure, eight pillars and the back support for the throne remain undiscovered. For a quick and easy end to this quest, have Ardasir drink his *potion of treasure finding* and discover the remaining pieces scattered throughout the city catacombs under the ever-vigilant protection of guardian daemons, golems, and perhaps even another living idol (though not as powerful as Ishistu). The PCs may help in this search if they desire, but Ardasir and a few retainers can handle the search on their own—provided the party promises to guard Safia and the throne pieces in his absence (a great honor, though a boring one).

For a more ambitious ending, perhaps launching a brief campaign in Zakhara's own Underdark, locate the remaining pieces of the Peacock Throne somewhere in the immense caverns of Ur's lightless lair within the pit in the Temple of Ishistu. Even nastier, some pieces of the throne might have been stolen by the insidious yak men and carried to the roots of the World Pillar Mountains to languish in gloomy vaults, guarded by enslaved noble genies and their hideous pets. These explorations into the darker regions of Zakhara, as well as the possibility of Ardasir's ascendancy to the leadership of the jann (explained in his NPC entry), serve as adventure hooks for the development of a full campaign.



# Princess Ophidia as-Sokkari

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## Lamia Noble

9th-level Sorcerer of Wind and Sand

STRENGTH:	15
DEXTERITY:	12
CONSTITUTION:	13
INTELLIGENCE:	16
WISDOM:	14
CHARISMA:	18
ARMOR CLASS:	3
THAC0:	10
MOVEMENT:	12 (as human), 9 (as lamia)
HIT POINTS:	75
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	By spell or magical item; kiss drains 1 point of Wisdom; magical abilities
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Polymorph</i> into human form at will; <i>stoneskin</i> (blocks 7 attacks)
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	5'3" (as human) 12' long (as lamia)



**Equipment:** *Wand of magic missiles* (72 charges), *ring of free action*, *necklace of missiles* (10 HD, 8 HD [x2], 6 HD [x2], 4 HD [x4]), *flute*, *potions of extra-healing* and *speed*.

**Magical Abilities:** (once per day) *Charm person*, *mirror image*, *suggestion*, and *illusion* (as wand).

**Spells:** *Change self*, *magic missile*, *sand slumber*, *traceless travel*; *ESP*, *insatiable thirst\**, *invisibility*; *dispel magic*, *wraithform*, *wizard sight\**; *conjure sand lion*, *wind blade*; *teleport*.

**Physical Description:** Ophidia typically appears as a human woman of astonishing beauty and indeterminate age with long, midnight black hair and dark, liquid eyes. Near home, she wears antiquated clothing and clinging, silken veils.

Ophidia may reveal her true lamia noble form if her life is in danger. Although her upper body remains unchanged, her legs and lower torso change into a giant serpent, covered with black and gold scales. Thus far, no one who has beheld Ophidia's true form has survived long enough to tell others.

**Background:** Countless years ago, in the long-forgotten city of Sokkar, Ophidia ruled as crown princess. Rather than marry and become queen, as was custom, Ophidia preferred to take many lovers, executing them when she grew bored or could no longer trust their fidelity. One of her lovers was Imnezzar, the son of the most powerful priest in the city. When Imnezzar died, his father cursed the princess to live forever as an abomination that emerged only at night-until she could find a man to love her for her true self. None of the princess's viziers could remove the curse, and, though the priest died screaming, he would not reverse it.

To this day, Ophidia searches out a suitable husband, one who will accept her despite her monstrous flaws. Over the centuries, the princess has taken countless lovers from those who have stumbled across the desert ruins of Sokkar. All of them have proved sadly

disappointing, concerned more with wealth and plunder than her happiness. Despairing of ever finding her one true love, she now prefers to haunt the remains of her ancient city, playing mournful songs on her flute and reveling in her sorrow and self-pity. For the time being, at least, Ophidia has even foresworn taking any more lovers, as she knows all too well the power of her kiss.

**Role-playing Notes:** Despite her beauty and poise, Ophidia carries herself with an aloofness that borders on disdain. She speaks with a voice wistful and melancholy. Tragedy has not robbed Ophidia of her air of royalty, however, and she has become a mistress of innuendo and equivocation.

If her veiled threats do not dissuade unwanted attention, Ophidia has perfected many ancient and deadly arts over the centuries of her cursed existence. With her spells, she can fly through air, walk through walls, and travel vast distances in a heartbeat. She can charm with her whisper, bring oblivion with her kiss, or conjure a lion from a handful of sand. None who offend Ophidia live very long afterward.

Despite her deadly talents, Ophidia no longer acts wickedly, as she did in her youth. Centuries of loneliness and introspection have cleansed that aspect of her personality entirely. Today, she prefers sweet words (or, failing that, intimidation) to gain her ends, rather than physical violence, which she now employs only for self-preservation.

**Sand lion (conjured by spell):** Int High (as creator); AL CN; AC 6; MV 12, Leap 3; HD 6+2; hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d12; SA rear claws (2d4 points of damage); SD immune to enchantment/charm and necromantic spells; SZ L (7' long); ML special; XP 975.

\* denotes a spell or item described in the *Tome of Magic*.

# Barak al-Gani, The Ugly

## Veiled Merchant and High Priest of Shajar the Forgotten

10th-level Human Outland Priest

STRENGTH:	12
DEXTERITY:	13
CONSTITUTION:	12
INTELLIGENCE:	15
WISDOM:	16
CHARISMA:	5
ARMOR CLASS:	4
THACO:	14
MOVEMENT:	12 (Fl 15 [E] with wings of flying)
HIT POINTS:	44
ALIGNMENT	Neutral evil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	By spell or magical item; command or turn undead
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	5'9"



**Equipment:** *Bracers of defense AC 5, ring of protection +1, scarab of deception*<sup>†</sup> (50 charges), *wings of flying, scroll of protection from undead, potions of extra-healing (x4); jambiya and 9 throwing darts envenomed with dreambliss.* (Save vs. poison or sleep for 2d4 hours, onset time 1 round. See *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 3 for details.)

**Spells:** *Bless, cure light wounds (x2), detect magic, invisibility to undead, protection from evil; aid, hold person (x2), silence 15' radius, slow poison, withdraw; animate dead, negative plane protection, water walk; raise water, cure serious wounds, cause serious wounds; raise dead, transmute rock to mud.*

**Physical Description:** As a priest of a forgotten and savage god, Barak takes great pains to disguise himself as a merchant in enlightened society. Tall and sturdy, he wears the gold-embroidered clothing of a rich merchant, a jeweled dagger, fancy pointed slippers, and a dark blue turban.

Barak always hides his horribly disfigured and pockmarked face behind silk veils, revealing only his emotionless eyes.

**Background:** Barak was born into a poor family in Kadarasto. To escape his impoverished background, young Barak joined the cult of a forbidden god: Shajar, the ancient Noga god of life and death. For years he has completed secret missions for the cult, disguised as a veiled merchant. His reputation as a shrewd dealer has grown in Kadarasto, Dihliz, and Mahabba. Though rumors say he smuggles antiquities, the same is said of half the area's merchants.

Barak learned of the legendary Talisman of Shajar when he became a high priest. He has dedicated his life to finding this sacred relic, which has been lost for centuries. After tracing the artifact to the ruined city of Ysawis, he discovered the City of the Dead had been claimed by pair of necromancers, Sumulael and Kazerabet (described in this booklet). Using his *scarab of deception*<sup>†</sup> (which leaders of his ancient cult taught him to enchant), Barak has misled all their attempts to divine his true intent beyond merely dealing commodities.

From the onset, Barak has sought to earn the trust of the necromancers and distract them from their quest for the talisman. Sumulael—a slave to his hunger for exquisite food, sweet wine, and live innocents for his magical experiments—has proved easy to please. Kazerabet, however, still views the “merchant” with suspicion. She has warmed to his presence slowly as each visit brings new embroidered silk clothing and interesting additions to her extensive library. In short, Barak has exploited the mages' weaknesses to maintain his position in their court.

Arranging the shipments for the necromancers has not been easy, especially since none of the caravan handlers ever survive the expedition. (They become the latest undead servants for the terrible Sumulael.) The merchant typically enlists recruits for his caravan from the poor quarters of Dihliz and Kadarasto, paying the victims' families a generous sum for their service to the city of the necromancers. Once the caravan goods and the handlers have been delivered to the wizards, they magically transport Barak to a distant city of his choice, where he hires another caravan with his payment and returns home with new merchandise.

**Role-playing Notes:** Crafty, cold-hearted Barak cares for little else besides Shajar and finding the sacred talisman. People matter only as pawns to be manipulated. Though *Arabian Adventures* does not allow native Zakharans as outland priests, Barak's status is permitted, as Shajar's faithful would not fall under any enlightened priest kit.

Though sometimes called the Ugly Merchant, Barak is not very sensitive about his appearance. In contrast, he uses it to arouse sympathy in others. He tells new acquaintances a sad (false) tale of how his impoverished parents could not afford donations for the local priests to cure a childhood jungle disease. In reality, his disfigurement results from a near-fatal attack in Kadarasto's undercity when he was an acolyte.

<sup>†</sup> denotes a spell or item described in the *Land of Fate* boxed set; substitute a similar spell/item, if desired.

# Shalmaneser The Senile

## Arch-Vizier of The Fourth Dynasty and Undead Chancellor

4th-level Lich Sorcerer

STRENGTH:	7
DEXTERITY:	9
CONSTITUTION:	8
INTELLIGENCE:	15
WISDOM:	16
CHARISMA:	-3
ARMOR CLASS:	0
THACO:	10
MOVEMENT	6
HIT POINTS:	43
ALIGNMENT	Neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Paralytic touch (1d10 points of damage); spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Magical weapon to hit; immune to <i>charm, sleep, polymorph, enfeeblement, cold, electrical, mind-altering, and death magic</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	6'1"

**Equipment:** Rotting turban set with a huge emerald (5,000 gp), *slippers of soft movement*<sup>†</sup>, *robes of many pockets* (analogous to a *girdle of many pouches*) containing 9 crystal vials of ink (125 gp each), a red jade figurine of a woman (250 gp, actually a *stone of good luck*), a number of long writing quills, and hundreds of nonmagical scrolls.

**Spells:** *Burning hands, change self, detect magic, invisibility, knock.*

**Physical Description:** Shalmaneser is a corpse animated by ancient necromancy. His eyes gleam like two cold points of light in a mummified face, and his body resembles a wreck of decayed flesh and bones. The undead chancellor dresses in the embroidered silken robes of a vizier. He stuffs his pockets with dozens of dusty scrolls and long peacock quills.

**Background:** The chancellor served as vizier in Ysawis centuries ago during the Fourth Dynasty. As a dabbler in necromancy, he thought he'd discovered the lich formula, but his transformation into undead only partially succeeded. The former arch-mage drank a *potion of immortality* and fell into a deep sleep, lasting hundreds of years and interrupted only by the call of the necromancers, Sumulael and Kazerabet (detailed in this booklet). The lich's centuries of repose practically destroyed his memory, but his self-awareness has grown since his reawakening, and he has proved an invaluable and obedient servant to his new king and queen. However, he hates his bondage.

Shalmaneser recalls from the cobweb-clouded depths of his faded memory that the ancient kings of Ysawis once wielded a powerful sword named *Lifedrinker*, capable of destroying his cruel masters. For months he has been secretly questioning the city's undead servants, a time-consuming task for which neither mage has enough patience. After midnight, when the dead citizens would lurch indoors to rest and the necromancers would fall into their debauchery, the lich probed the moldered minds for the legendary



blade's location. He learned it had been buried in the secret tomb of Princess Zoraya, in catacombs the wizards had not discovered. The lich could find none of the tomb's builders, though, so its location eluded him at first.

One day, while Sumulael was constructing his Bone Pavilion in the palace gardens, Shalmaneser approached its undead architect, Moqtafi, an engineer in the court of Princess Zoraya's father. Moqtafi had been intimately acquainted with the palace's structure just before Zoraya's rule. The lich ascertained from Moqtafi's corrupted memory which palace additions were built after the engineer's death.

Before long, Shalmaneser discovered the tomb's secret entrance in palace back corridors. The lich longed to press forward, but the entrance was warded against undead to prevent ghouls from plundering the crypt. He needs help to recover the sword, but trusts no one at court—except his dead compatriots, who want only to return to their sleep.

**Role-playing Notes:** The forgetful lich is terrible with names and places. He recalls only the names of his masters—all others he must write down. Leading visitors around the palace, he pauses at every intersection, slightly confused.

Shalmaneser is smart enough to conceal the extent of his sentience from his masters. He even has remastered a few spells (by studying Kazerabet's spell books when she leaves them unattended) but, because of his worm-eaten memory, spells he attempts have a 25 percent chance to fail.

As the lich relies on his scrolls as his memory, he protects them fiercely. Treat him as an 18th-level character, should a PC attempt to pick-pocket him. If his scrolls ever were destroyed, he would be as helpless as the day the necromancers called him forth reluctantly from his tomb.

<sup>†</sup> denotes a spell or item described in the *Land of Fate* boxed set; substitute a similar spell/item, if desired.

# Kazerabet (Zaribel)

## Queen of Ysawis, formerly Inanna az-Khunjhati al-Hilmi

16th-level Human Ajami Mage (Necromancer)

STRENGTH:	12
DEXTERITY:	15
CONSTITUTION:	10
INTELLIGENCE:	16
WISDOM:	18
CHARISMA:	17
ARMOR CLASS:	1
THACO:	15
MOVEMENT	12
HIT POINTS:	42
ALIGNMENT	Lawful neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	By spell, magical item; foes save at -1 vs. necromancy
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Stoneskin</i> spell withstands 10 attacks; <i>contingency</i> spell teleports her to safety if wounded to 10 hp; has combined permanency spells with <i>comprehend languages</i> , <i>protection from normal missiles</i> , <i>read magic</i> , and <i>tongues</i> ; +1 on saves against necromantic attacks.
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	5'6"

**Equipment:** *Wand of fear* (58 charges), *bracers of defense AC 2*, *ring of regeneration*, *scarab of protection*<sup>†</sup>, *figurines of wondrous power* (three ivory goats, two uses remaining for each), *scroll of protection from undead*, *potions of invisibility* and *extra-healing* (x2), *oil of romance*<sup>†</sup>.

**Spells:** *Chill touch*, *detect undead*, *hold portal*, *magic missile*, *spider climb*, *unseen servant*; *continual light*, *ESP*, *knock*, *levitate*, *spectral hand*, *web*; *dispel magic*, *infravision*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*, *wizard sight*\*; *contagion*, *dimension door*, *enervation*, *magic mirror*, *mask of death*\*, *polymorph other*; *animate dead* (x4), *summon shadow*, *teleport*; *chain lightning*, *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *globe of invulnerability*; *finger of death*, *lifeproof*, *spell turning*; *mind blank*, *homunculus shield*\*.

**Physical Appearance:** Kazerabet has a forceful personality and an intellect so commanding that at first one fails to notice her beauty. When she is angered, her steel gray eyes flash like drawn daggers, and her ruby-painted lips curl into a contemptuous sneer. For state occasions, she dons a diamond-studded platinum tiara (10,000 gp) and an aba encrusted with emeralds (7,500 gp). More intimate audiences find her in a semitranslucent gown, vaporous and sheer, like a shroud of mist.

**Background:** Reared in the restrictive moralist Pantheon Cities, Inanna az-Khunjhati has always been curious about the forbidden. While studying sorcery at the university in Hilm, she was attracted to Ezarhaddon, a handsome genius in the taboo necromantic arts. She developed a talent for the dark magic as well, married Ezarhaddon, and fled with him to the Ruined Kingdoms, where she adopted the name Kazerabet ("Angel of the Dark" in Kadari). Friends sometimes call her Zaribel, meaning "Angel." Her husband (described elsewhere in this booklet) chose the new name Sumulael.



If the party allies with Kazerabet, she might teach an interested spellcaster the dark arts of necromancy. Her spell books include the following: *chill touch*, *detect undead*; *cloak from undead*\*, *cloak undead*\*\*\*, *spectral hand*, *undead mount*\*\*\*, *feign death*, *hold undead*, *mummy touch*\*\*\*, *paralyze*\*\*\*, *revenge*\*\*\*, *vampiric touch*; *contagion*, *enervation*, *mask of death*\*; *animate dead*, *death smoke*, *disguise undead*\*\*\*, *improved skull watch*\*\*\*, *magic jar*, *Nulathoe's ninemen*\*\*\*, *summon shadow*; *death spell*, *imbue undead with spell ability*\*\*\*, *legend lore*, *lich touch*\*\*\*, *reincarnate*; *control undead*\*\*\*, *finger of death*, *lifeproof*; *death link*\*\*\*, *homunculous shield*\*.

Kazerabet is a scholar; studying death teaches her about life. She gains a greater knowledge of life by studying death through necromancy. Her reading uncovered references to an ancient necromantic artifact—the Talisman of Shajar. Divinations led her to Ysawis, but the talisman has eluded her for years. With her husband, she raised a horde of the city's dead residents to search the ruins for the artifact, to no avail.

**Role-playing Notes:** Kazerabet's ambition as a queen of a growing nation of undead has delayed her quest. She enjoys the service of her undead (too much) and plans to expand Ysawis into a thriving metropolis. The lonely mage, who carries herself with a sultana's dignity, sees flattery for what it is, but craves it nonetheless. Of late, her husband has neglected her for his gluttony.

If endangered, she will first invoke *homunculous shield*\* to prepare her defensive spells while she readies necromantic attacks. She will not hesitate to *teleport* away from a lost battle, so she can prepare her own ambush.

\* denotes a spell or item described in the *Tome of Magic*.

\*\* denotes a spell listed in FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Adventures*, allowable here thanks to the teachings of Sumulael's outlaw mentor.

† denotes a spell or item described in the *Land of Fate* boxed set; substitute a similar spell/item if desired.

# Sumulael

**King of Ysawis, formerly  
Ezrhaddon bin Kior al-Hilm**  
16th-level Human Ajami Mage (Necromancer)

STRENGTH: 11  
DEXTERITY: 9  
CONSTITUTION: 16  
INTELLIGENCE: 18  
WISDOM: 16  
CHARISMA: 7  
ARMOR CLASS: 2 (with *spirit armor\**) or 8  
THACO: 15  
MOVEMENT: 12  
HIT POINTS: 66  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: By spell, magical item; foes save at -1 vs. necromancy  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Never surprised (robe of eyes); *contingency* spell invokes *spirit armor\** if attacked; soul protected by *lifeproof*; has combined *permanency* with *unseen servant*; +1 on saves against necromantic attacks.  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil  
SIZE: 5'11"

**Equipment:** *Robe of eyes*, *wand of lightning* (28 charges), *ring of protection +2*, *pipes of pain*, *periapt of proof against poison*, *oil of impact*, *scroll of protection from possession*, *potions of fire resistance*, *healing*, and *speed*; 15 throwing darts coated with *dreambliss*. (Save vs. poison or sleep for 2d4 hours, onset time 1d2 rounds. See *Campaign Guide*, Chapter 3.)

**Spells:** *Chill touch* (x2), *detect undead*, *magic missile* (x2), *shocking grasp*; *darkness 15' radius*, *levitate* (x2), *spectral hand* (x2), *stinking cloud*; *dispel magic*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *vampiric touch* (x2); *bestow curse*, *contagion*, *eneration*, *Ezard's black tentacles*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *wall of ice*; *animate dead* (x4), *magic jar*; *summon shadow*; *Bloodstone's spectral steed\**, *claws of the umber hulk\**, *death spell*, *flames of justice*; *finger of death* (x2), *reverse gravity*; *Abi-dalzim's horrid wilting\**, *trap the soul*.

**Physical Appearance:** Once handsome, Sumulael is now obese, ravaged by his many vices. Sweaty flesh hangs in white, pasty rolls all over his repulsive body. His royal blue magical robes scarcely cover his bulk. Sumulael usually wears 2 to 8 (2d4) pieces of jewelry (1,000 gp each). His beady eyes glint with malevolent intellect from under a jewel-encrusted gold crown (25,000 gp). His smile, a wreckage of yellow teeth, emits breath that reeks of sickly-sweet wine.

**Background:** Death has always fascinated Ezrhaddon bin Kior. Educated at the university in Hilm, Ezrhaddon's life changed when he met a foreign mage from the North, known only as Al-Nasr, the Vulture. This outland mage instructed him in the dark arts of necromancy, forbidden in Zakhara since long before the enlightenment took hold of the land. (This magic's foreign nature explains why these statistics treat the necromancers as ajamis rather than as members of a native Zakharan mage kit.) Hilm's moralist clergy drove Ezrhaddon (and his wife Inanna) from the city when



they discovered his magical vivisection experiments. In exile in the Ruined Kingdoms, he adopted the new name Sumulael ("Harvester of Death," in Kadari). His wife chose the name Kazerabet (see her entry in this booklet).

When his wife's research led her to ruined Ysawis in search of a necromantic artifact, he followed, glad to be free of restrictive society. Reveling in his dark art, he raised a city of undead to rule; his coffers grew full of burial treasures. Wealth and power soon made Sumulael lazy, and before long, he withdrew to an isolated palace pavilion, content to be served by undead and his pet homonculus, Buri.

**Buri, a homonculus:** Int Genius; AL CE; AC 6; MV 6, Fl 18 (B); HD 2; hp 14; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA poison bite (sleep 5d6 minutes, onset time 1 round); SD saves as 16th-level wizard; SZ T (18" tall); ML 13; MC; XP 420.

**Role-playing Notes:** Depraved Sumulael delights in using necromancy to control both the dead and the living. He enjoys living among the dead and welcomes visitors to his court only to gain fresh delicacies and new experiment subjects.

Sumulael's great weakness is *dreambliss*, a sleep-inducing toxin described in Chapter 3 of the *Campaign Guide*. The veiled merchant Barak (detailed elsewhere in this booklet) encourages Sumulael to ingest the poison, without which he can no longer sleep. Because his body has grown used to the venom, he has a +4 bonus on his saving throw vs. *dreambliss*. He may be surprised only while sleeping under its effects.

In battle, though Sumulael might first try immobilizing foes with magic (saving them to torture later), he soon resorts to powerful necromancy to decimate his victims.

\* denotes a spell or item described in the *Tome of Magic*.

# Ardasir al-Darah, The Incomparable

## A Sheikh of The Jann of The Haunted Lands

STRENGTH:	19
DEXTERITY:	14
CONSTITUTION:	16
INTELLIGENCE:	17
WISDOM:	12
CHARISMA:	17
ARMOR CLASS:	2
THAC0:	10 (7 with scimitar, 8 with bow)
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 30 (A)
HIT POINTS:	58
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic good
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Magical abilities (see below)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	7'1"

**Equipment:** Gold-hilted *great scimitar* +3; *long bow* +2; *gem of seeing* (set in a blue quartz necklace worth 3,000 gp); *potions of dreaming*<sup>†</sup>, *treasure finding*, and *clairaudience*; gilded lamellar armor (500 gp), platinum star sapphire ring (6,000 gp), electrum bracers carved with lions (1,000 gp each), quiver with 24 sheaf arrows, 4 throwing daggers, pouch with 60 pp and 12 tiny emeralds (1,000 gp each).

**Magical Abilities:** At 12th level of experience: *Speak with animals* once per day, *Enlarge* or *Reduce* twice per day, *Invisibility* three times per day, *Become ethereal* (1 hour maximum) once per day; at 7th level: *Create food and water* once per day; fly and breathe underwater at will.

**Physical Description:** Ardasir al-Darah, the Incomparable, looks like a statuesque human with a tanned face, dark hair, and the genie's distinctive pointed ears. His skin has been tanned black by the sun, and his cerulean eyes appear to sparkle when he becomes excited. He wears the black desert robes of the al-Badia, hoping to pass as a human (or ogre).

**Background:** Ardasir is the nephew of Amir Heidar Qan, former leader of the Jann of the Haunted Lands, who disappeared mysteriously decades ago. Believing his uncle will not be returning to restore order among the jann, Ardasir has been amassing favors among other sheikhs, hoping to assume his uncle's vacant position.

A few years ago, Ardasir drank from the magical waters of the Well of Destiny in the Weeping Desert and had a vision of himself as amir, ruling from a magnificent throne adorned with peacocks. Spirits of the desert told Ardasir he had seen the fabled Peacock Throne of Moradask. (See Chapter 4 in the *Campaign Guide*.) Ardasir secretly believes he will become amir only after he recovers and reassembles the 15 pieces of the Peacock Throne. To date, he has one piece.

Due to his station, Ardasir rarely travels without at least 10 loyal, noble janni retainers. These bodyguards have the sheikh's magical abilities and each owns lamellar armor, a great scimitar, composite long bow, and quiver with 20 arrows.



**Janni retainer (10):** Int Very; AL NG; AC 2; MV 12, Fl 30 (A); HD 6+2; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2 (bow); Dmg by weapon type (great scimitar: 2d8+5, sheaf arrows: 1d8+5); MR 20%; SZ M; ML 15; Str 18/95; XP 3,000.

The beautiful artist tasked genie Safia, Ardasir's favorite concubine, has devoted her life to singing and the lute. She never ceases playing in front of guests.

**Safia the Light-Fingered, an artist tasked genie:** Int Genius; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; ML 6; SZ M (6'10"); MC13; XP 975.

Magical abilities: Twice a day: *duo dimension*, *mirror image*, *illusion*, *polymorph self*, *stone shape*.

**Role-playing Notes:** Perhaps because he has seen his future, the sheikh displays an amusing over-estimation of his own importance. He insists on travelling incognito; wrapping his muscular armored form in a plain desert robe, Ardasir hunches over and grunts menacingly, "Arrggh! Now everyone will think I am but a harmless ogre, not Sheikh Ardasir al-Darah, the Incomparable!" Safia and his retainers nod, assuring their master of his faultless disguise. Though clearly he appears to be nothing more than a janni trying (unsuccessfully) to impersonate an ogre, all had better be at least polite and attempt to flatter the proud sheikh. Like all the Jann of the Haunted Lands, Ardasir (though less dangerous than most) is prone to insult and erratic behavior.

Despite his arrogance, the fun-loving sheikh prides himself on his hospitality and generosity. His interest in ruling stems from a desire to end the violence of his people in the absence of strong leadership. With his enchanted great scimitar, *Final Arbiter*, Ardasir inflicts 2d8+10 points of damage because of his incredible Strength and magical bonuses. With his magical bow, *Steel Ruin*, he fires twice per round, inflicting 1d8+9 points of damage with each sheaf arrow, adjusted for his Strength and magic bonuses.

<sup>†</sup> denotes a spell or item described in the *Land of Fate* boxed set; substitute a similar spell/item, if desired.

# Tebessa al-Khawati

## Desert Centaur Leader

STRENGTH:	18/64
DEXTERITY:	18
CONSTITUTION:	15
INTELLIGENCE:	10
WISDOM:	11
CHARISMA:	15
ARMOR CLASS:	1
THAC0:	15 (11 with axe or bow)
MOVEMENT:	21
HIT POINTS:	30
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Specialized with the bow, front hooves
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	6'1"



**Equipment:** *Battle axe +2, ring of protection +1, potion of hill giant strength, composite long bow, 2 quivers with 20 flight arrows each; purse with 54 gp, 2 amethysts (100 gp each), a tourmaline (100 gp), topaz (500 gp), pearl earring (500 gp).*

**Physical Description:** Like all desert centaurs, Tebessa is a fusion of mount and nomadic tribeswoman. The clan leader has a weathered face and fiery green eyes. Her hair is short and ragged, as if recovering from a barber's butchery. At the waist, her slim and rugged human torso merges into that of a stout pony, with the long, thin legs of a gazelle. She wears an ornate leather harness around her upper body, from which hang her weapons, quivers, pouches, and jewelry. Though she appears young, Tebessa has lived 80 years.

**Background:** As the leader of the Khawati Clan, Tebessa has guided hunts along the barren shores of the Sea of Salt for decades. One night, a priest of the religious cult called the Shorn (based in nearby Moradask) captured her while she was bathing alone at an oasis. The priest, named Jurash, inexplicably infuriated by her luxuriant dark curls, ordered his followers to shave her immediately. Tebessa escaped from Jurash's clutches with the help of her sister, Narur, but not before the priest had cut off her warrior's braid. Now Tebessa hates the Shorn, especially Jurash. To avenge this insult, the entire clan has devoted itself to destroying the Shorn. Though the clan numbers 30 to the Shorn's 500, the Khawati remain determined to fulfill the demands of honor.

Narur, Tebessa's older sister, acts as waterfinder and diviner for the Khawati clan. Her auguries have warned that the Shorn present a deadly threat to the centaurs, but lately the enraged clan has largely ignored these cautions in favor of conducting surprise raids against the cult.

**Narur, Waterfinder of the Khawati clan (a desert centaur priestess):** Int High; AL NG; AC 6; MV 21; HD 5; hp 34; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 and by weapon (jambiya: 1d4); ML 13; SZ M; MC13; Wis 15; XP 450.

**Equipment:** Jambiya, pouch with spell components, purse with 23 gp, 3 pieces of jasper (50 gp each), a polished hunk of petrified wood (10 gp), an amber necklace (250 gp), *wind fan, scroll of protection against genies*<sup>†</sup>.

**Spells (as 5th-level kahin):** *Bless, cure light wounds (x3), pass without trace; charm. person or mammal, flame blade, heat metal, obscurement; dispel magic.*

**Desert centaur (30):** Int Avg; AL NG; AC 6; MV 21; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 4 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 and by weapon (sheaf arrow: 1d8 (x2), light lance: 1d6+1); SA missile fire or lance charge (double damage); SZ M; ML 13; MC13; XP 120. **Equipment:** Composite long bow, quiver with 20 sheaf arrows, jambiya, light lance, purse with 2d4 gp and 1d4 polished tiger eye agates, pieces of turquoise, lapis lazuli, or malachite (10 gp each).

**Role-playing Notes:** Blunt and honest, Tebessa prefers a simple existence and is easily misled by deceit. The clan leader is not a great thinker—the waterfinder is that. Like most of her kin, Tebessa admires swift, decisive action. Yet, for all her bravery, she fears the ruins in Moradask. Her clan members shun the area, except to familiarize themselves with the ruins enough to inflict losses on the Shorn.

Tebessa, a consummate huntress, can track as an 8th-level ranger. She is a dead shot with a bow, which she can fire three times a round because of her specialization and natural centaur talents. She gains +2 to hit targets in short range (70 yards) and +1 for medium range (140 yards). Like all centaurs, she can fire on targets at long range (240 yards) without penalty. As her bow is adjusted for her Strength, her arrows inflict 1d6+3 points of damage. Those who learn the bow from Tebessa do not expend a weapon slot for the long bow proficiency. In melee, Tebessa fights with her magical axe, *Windbiter*, (1d8+5 points of damage) and strikes out with her sharp forehooves (1d4+3 points of damage each).

<sup>†</sup> denotes a spell or item described in the *Lund of Fate* boxed set; substitute a similar spell/item, if desired.

# Imam Sa'ib al-Banu

## The Great Hairless One, High Priest of The Shorn

13th-level Wererat Mystic

STRENGTH:	17
DEXTERITY:	12
CONSTITUTION:	16
INTELLIGENCE:	15
WISDOM:	18
CHARISMA:	15 (18 with armor)
ARMOR CLASS:	2 (human), 6 (wererat)
THAC0:	9 (10 with armor)
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT POINTS:	84
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spells (as wererat, harmed only by silver or magical weapons)
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	5'5"



**Equipment:** *Armor of command, shield of the holy, scimitar +2 (Giant Slayer), ring of spell turning, potion of extra-healing, sling, 20 iron bullets, footman's mace, razor, jambiya, pouch with spell components, silver Pantheon symbol (50 gp), silver mirror (20 gp), gold ring set with an emerald (1,000 gp), diamond earring (1,000 gp), pouch with 10 tiny rubies (500 gp each) and a large cobalt blue sapphire (5,000 gp).*

**Spells:** *Bless, command, cure light wounds (x4), detect evil, endure heat, light; aid, augury, continual light, hold person (x2), know alignment, silence 15' radius, withdraw, wyvern watch; create food and water, dispel magic (x2), glyph of warding (x2), prayer, protection from fire, starshine; cure serious wounds (x3), divination, protection from evil 10' radius; flame strike, raise dead; blade barrier, heal.*

**Physical Appearance:** Imam Sa'ib, a short, sturdy man approaching middle age, has a heavily muscled physique from years in the Haunted Lands. He ritually shaves his body daily. Sa'ib rarely travels far without his armor and scimitar. In his half-human wererat form, he looks like a hairless, albino humanoid with a rat's tail and pointed snout.

**Background:** Sa'ib al-Banu grew up in the city of Talab, where he gained his mystic training and began his career as an adventurer. After one early foray into the dark wilderness of the Ruined Kingdoms, Sa'ib emerged with a vision from the five Pantheon gods that he believed represented a new path to spiritual perfection. The gods revealed to him, in cryptic oracles, that hair was a filthy excrement of the body, distracting man from lofty, holy pursuits. The key to inner peace, the gods told him, was to remove all hair from the body. Sa'ib called this philosophy "The Path of the Shorn."

Despite initial ridicule, Sa'ib shaved off all his hair and preached his new beliefs to all who would listen in Talab. He gained a loyal group of followers, the Shorn, who emulated his model of perfection.

Sa'ib quickly armed himself and his devotees against the often violent opposition in the streets. Hearing that Shorn were smuggling weapons into Talab, and appalled by Sa'ib's increasing popularity, the high priests of Talab exiled him from the city.

One night, after ritually purifying his body, Sa'ib learned of a distant city in the vast Haunted Lands. There, the gods promised, the Shorn could grow without the scorn, jealousy, and opposition of mainstream religion. After the cult members suffered years of despair on the journey, Fate swelled the numbers of the Shorn and guided them to the ancient, abandoned city of Moradask, which they currently inhabit.

While exploring the city's catacombs, Sa'ib stumbled upon the temple of Ishistu, an albino rat god of old Moradask, whose idolic representation, coincidentally, lacked hair and bore inscriptions to the glory of perfection. The living idol promised to protect Sa'ib and the Shorn from the monsters of the catacombs if they would adorn its altar with their hair. The priest agreed tentatively at first, but as Ishistu's power grew with the sacrifices, Sa'ib began to see his discovery of the idol as the culmination of his life's work. Soon all the Shorn had sworn to serve the rat god.

The idol has given Sa'ib a gift: It made him a wererat. While in human form, Sa'ib gains none of the benefits of lycanthropy (immunity to normal weapons, for instance); in half-human form, he gains the advantages of both forms (i.e., spellcasting and weapon immunity), but his armor falls off. As a giant rat, he cannot cast spells. Since his lycanthropy is a gift from Ishistu, Sa'ib cannot infect others.

**Role-playing Notes:** Sa'ib, a quiet man, nevertheless can speak with wisdom and authority. After his conversion to Ishistu's worship, Sa'ib developed a single-minded outlook on life. He reacts poorly to criticism and, though generally patient, lashes out swiftly, decisively, and violently against perceived enemies of Ishistu and the Shorn.

# The Pearl Cities

Card 1



**Tajar**  
City of Trade

Turab

Maribar Island

Samak

Hakim Oasis

**Sikak**  
City of Coins

**Al-Yabki**  
Mountains (Mountains of Tears)

Al-Fadir River (Tepid River)

Gogol Pass

Krak al-Shidda

Ta'am

**Jumlat**  
City of Multitudes

**Gana**  
City of Riches

Gana Bay

Safaq

Scale: One inch equals 30 miles



Card 2

The Haunted Lands

Furrowed Mountains

Solkar

Morabask

Weeping

Desert

Genies' Garden

Sea of Salt

The Birning Lands

Great Anvil

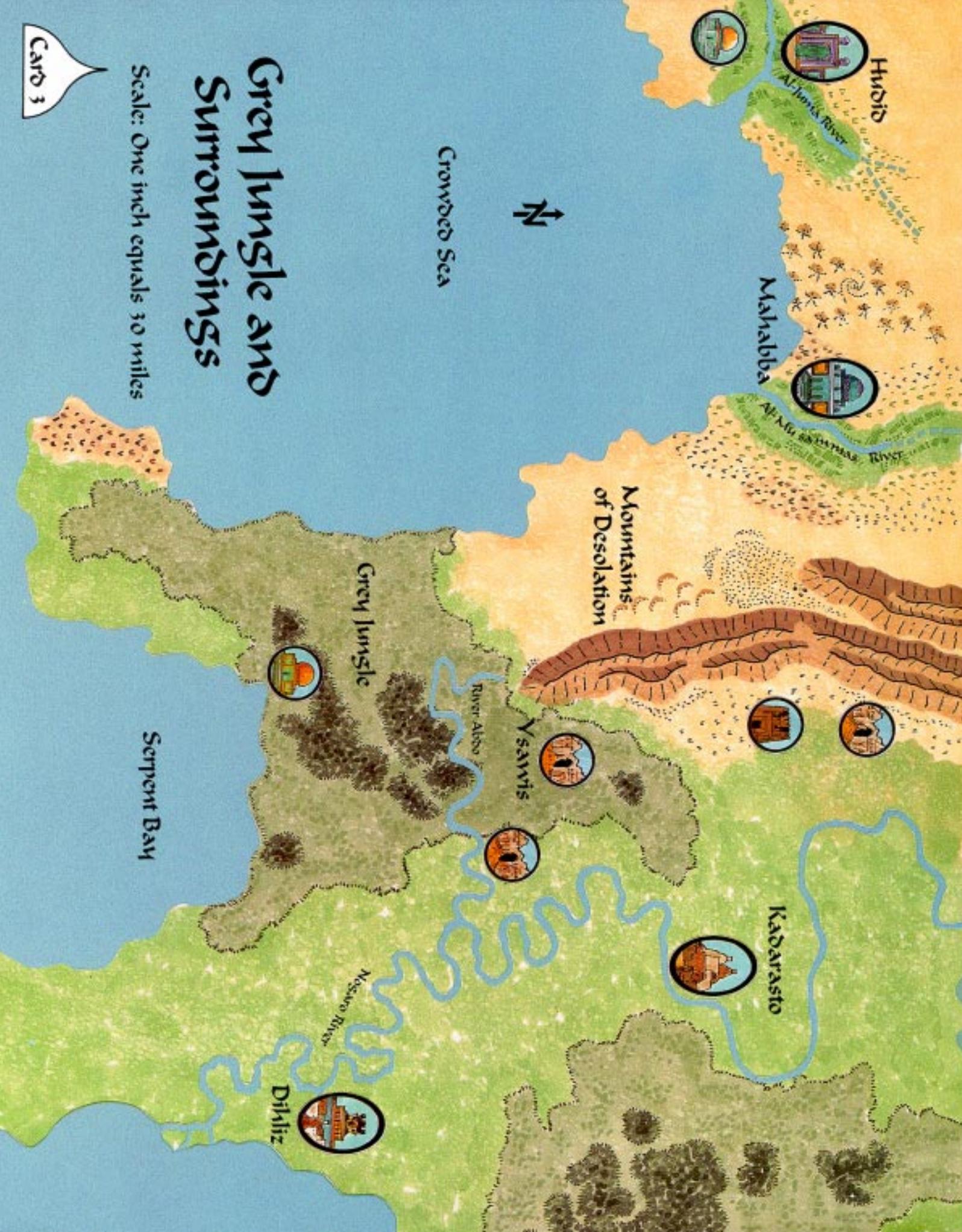


Scale: One inch equals 30 miles

# Grey Jungle and Surroundings

Scale: One inch equals 30 miles

Card 3



Hudis

Mahabba

Mountains of Desolation

Grey Jungle

Serpent Bay

Kadarasto

Ysavits

Dihliz

Crowded Sea



River Abso

Nesaro River

Al-Nu River

Al-Nu Saharbas River

# The Ruins of Moradask



Card 4

Sea of Salt

Noble Quarter

Crumbled walls

Key

- 1: Main causeway
- 2: Grand bazaar
- 3: Covered markets
- 4: Shipyards
- 5: Towers
- 6: Northern tower
- 7: Pantheist mosque
- 8: Temples

Scale: One inch equals 1300 feet



Card 5

# Plaza of Eternity

Scale: One inch equals 600 feet

Avenue of the Hama

Pyramid of Tammuz

Pyramid of Zarabet

Avenue of the Baboons

Great Pyramid of Borsippa

Avenue of the Sphinxes

Pyramid of Kasamenmi

Great Temple of the Undying

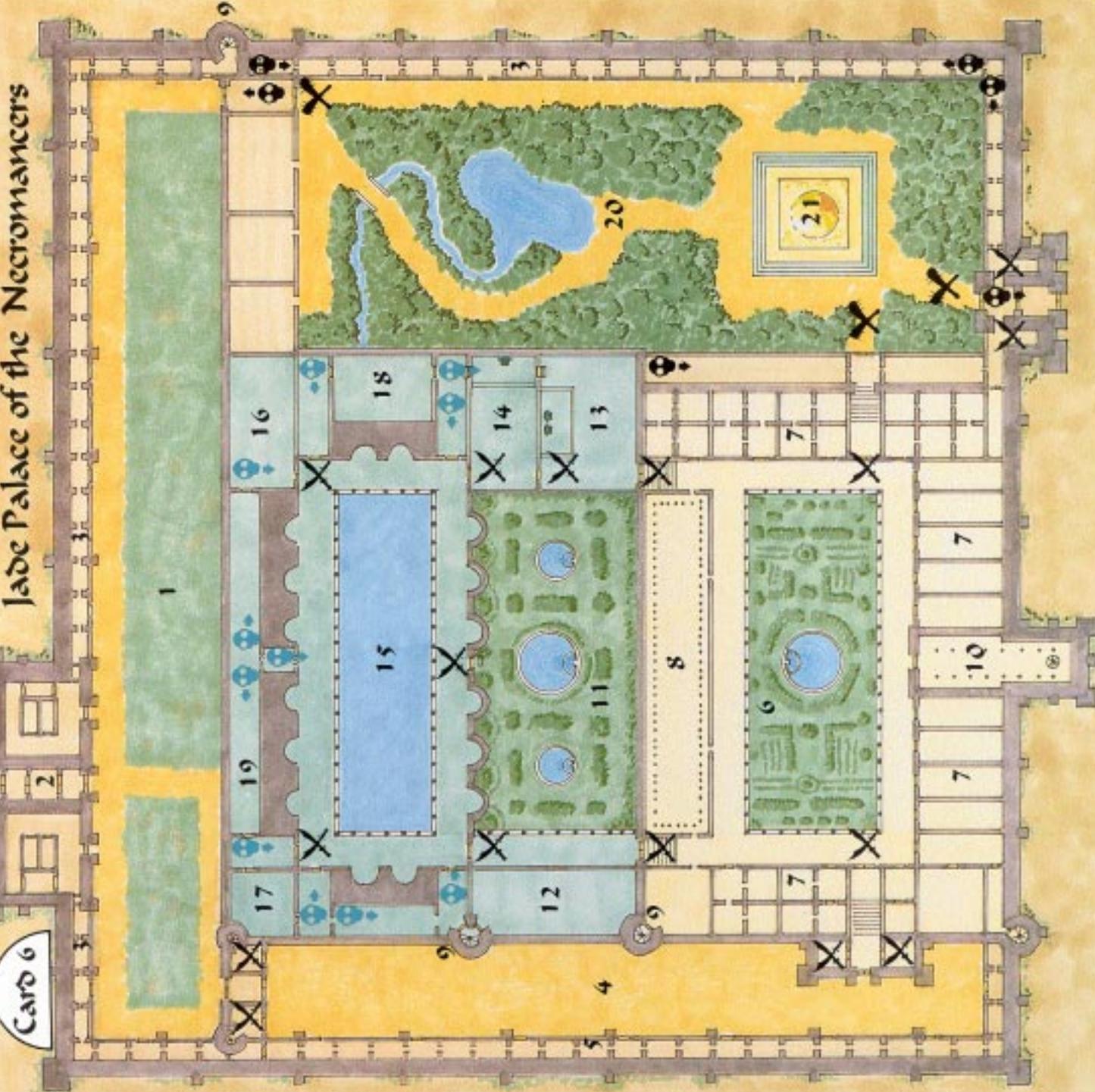
Pyramid of Ophidia

Pyramid of Nectanebo

Edimu's Mausoleum



# Jade Palace of the Necromancers



## Key

- 1: Northern court
- 2: Main Gatehouse
- 3: Galleries
- 4: Riding court
- 5: Royal stables
- 6: Flower gardens
- 7: Guest rooms, parlors
- 8: Dining room
- 9: Stairwells
- 10: Shrine of Shajar
- 11: Royal gardens
- 12: Royal library
- 13: Throne room
- 14: Audience chamber
- 15: Private bathing pool
- 16: Queen's study
- 17: Queen's apartments
- 18: Eastern apartments
- 19: Gallery of Antiquities
- 20: King's garden
- 21: Bone Pavilion

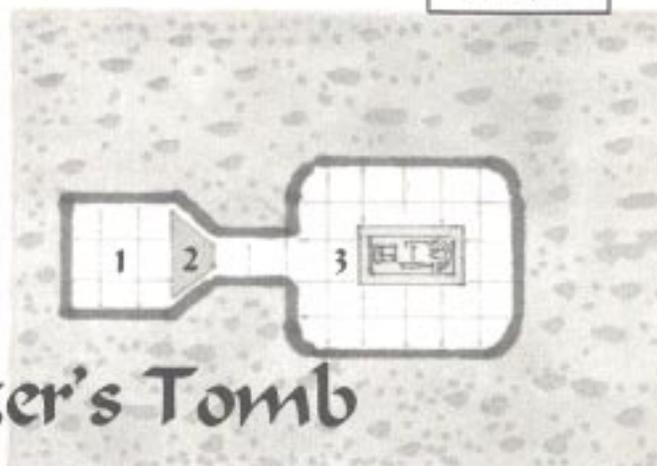
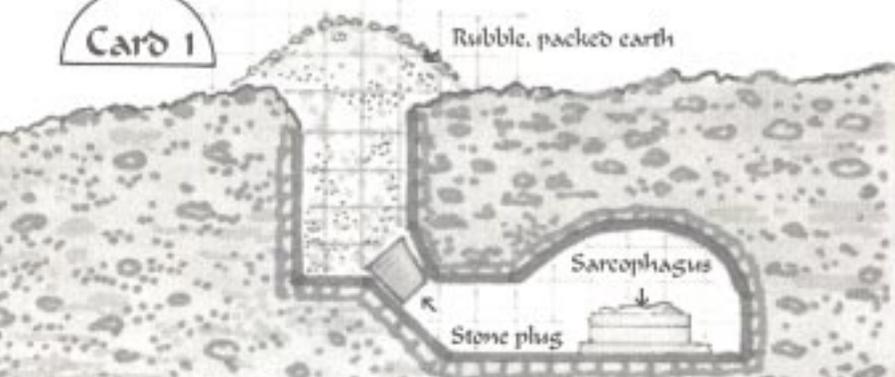
- Queen's skull watcher
- King's skull watcher
- Ju-ju zombies
- Jungle giant zombies
- Stairs
- Spiral staircase
- Doorway
- Door
- Double door
- Secret door
- Pillar
- Battlement
- Stream
- Bridge



Scale: One square equals 5 feet



Key  
1: Entry pit  
2: Door  
3: Crypt



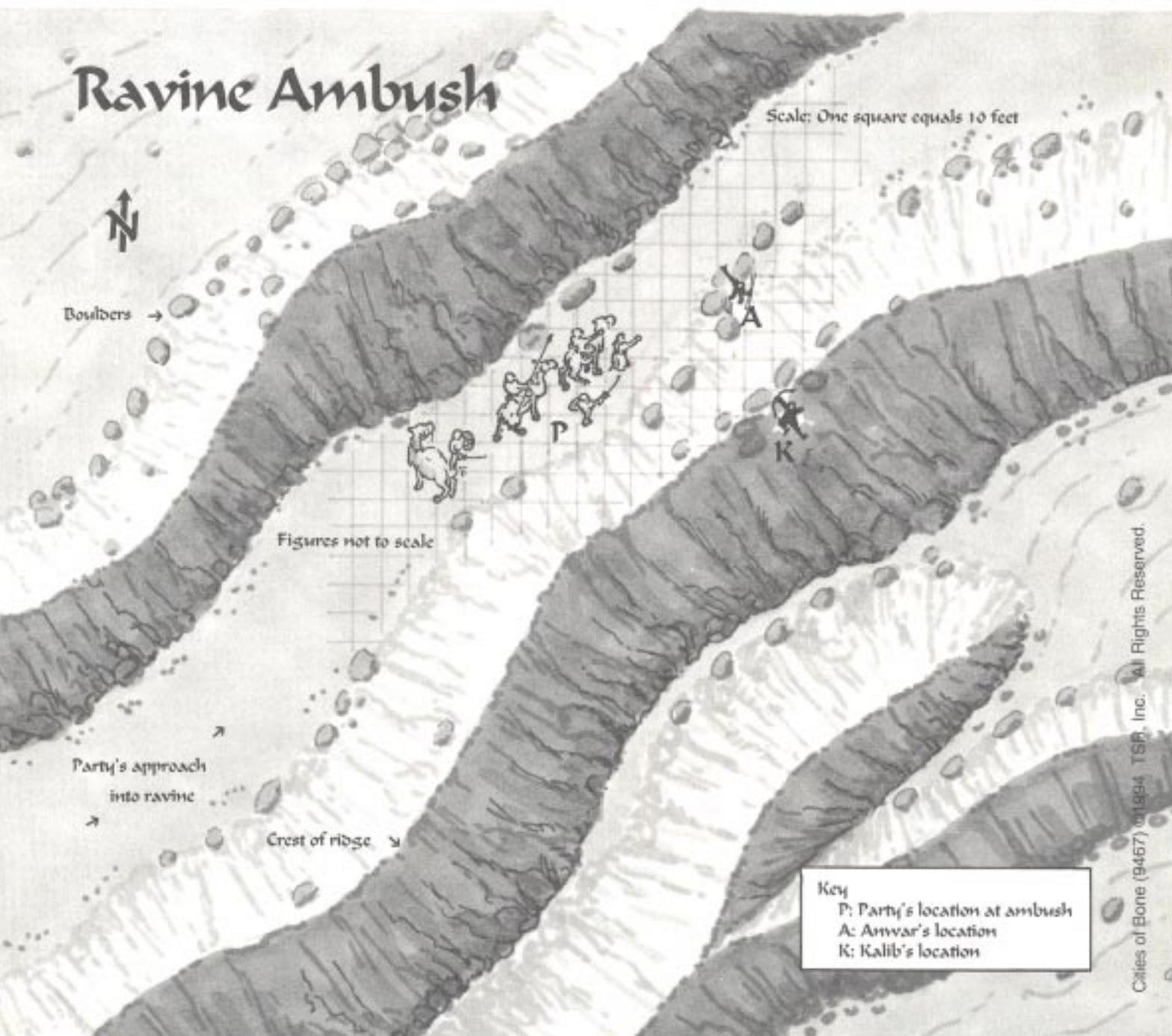
## The Money-Changer's Tomb

## Ravine Ambush

Scale: One square equals 10 feet



Boulders →



Figures not to scale

Party's approach  
into ravine →

Crest of ridge ↘

Key  
P: Party's location at ambush  
A: Amvar's location  
K: Kalib's location

Card 2

Main entrance to ruins

# Krak al-Shidda

1

Rubble

Scale: One square equals 10 feet

Crumbled walls, ruined outbuildings

See Adventure Book for key

Goat's trail

2

Entrances to Area 3



See back of Card 3 for dungeon level



Keep  
Basement

Up to castle ruins

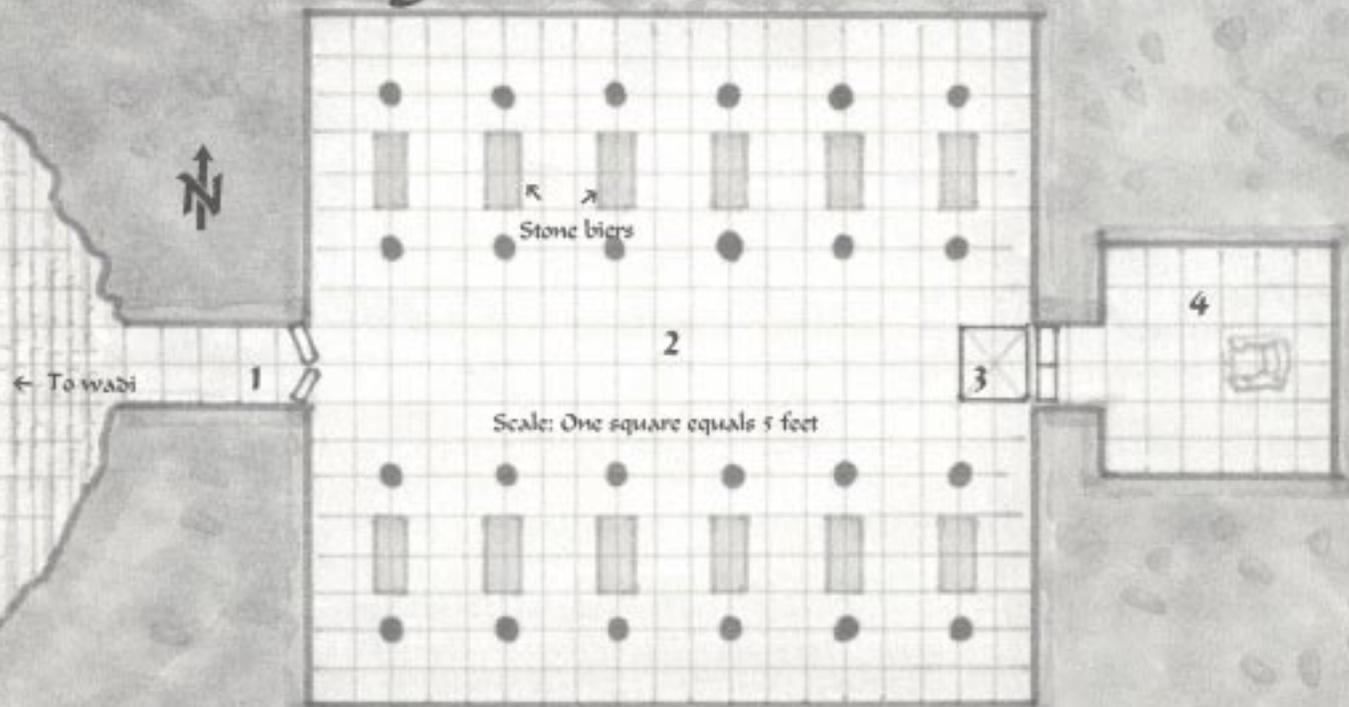


# Dungeons of Krak-al-Shidda



See Adventure Book for key

# King Shaddad's Tomb



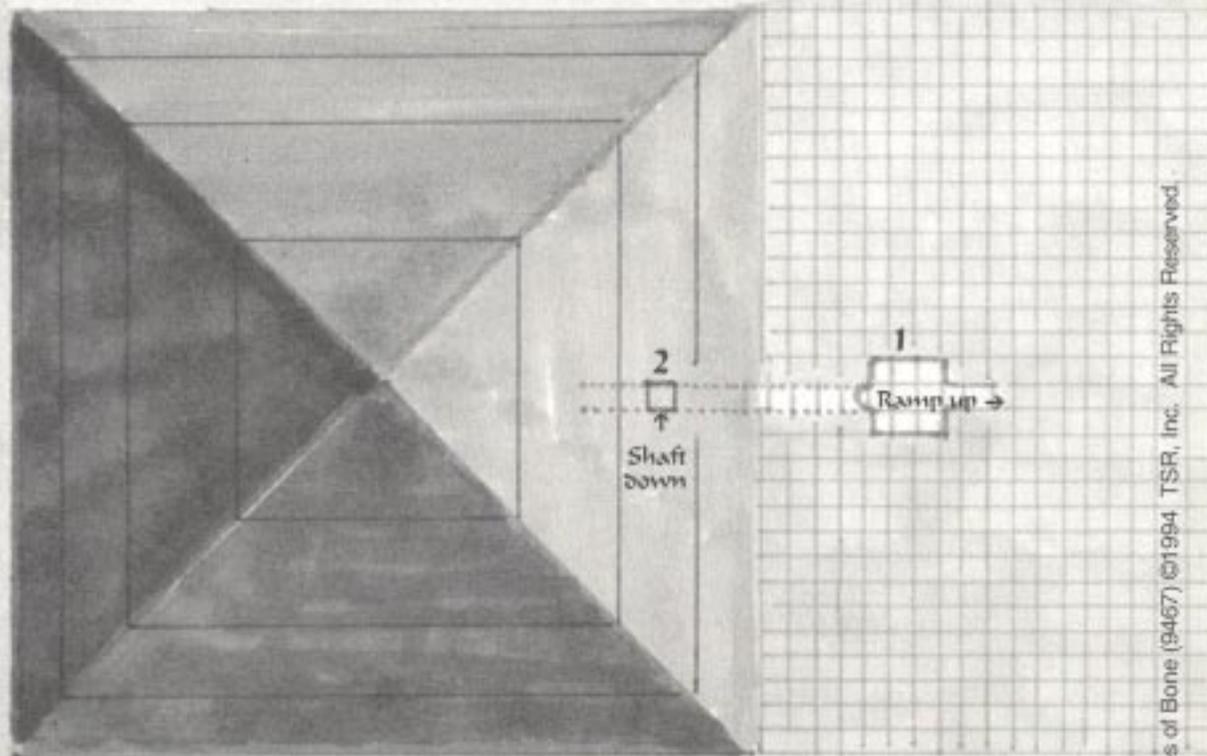
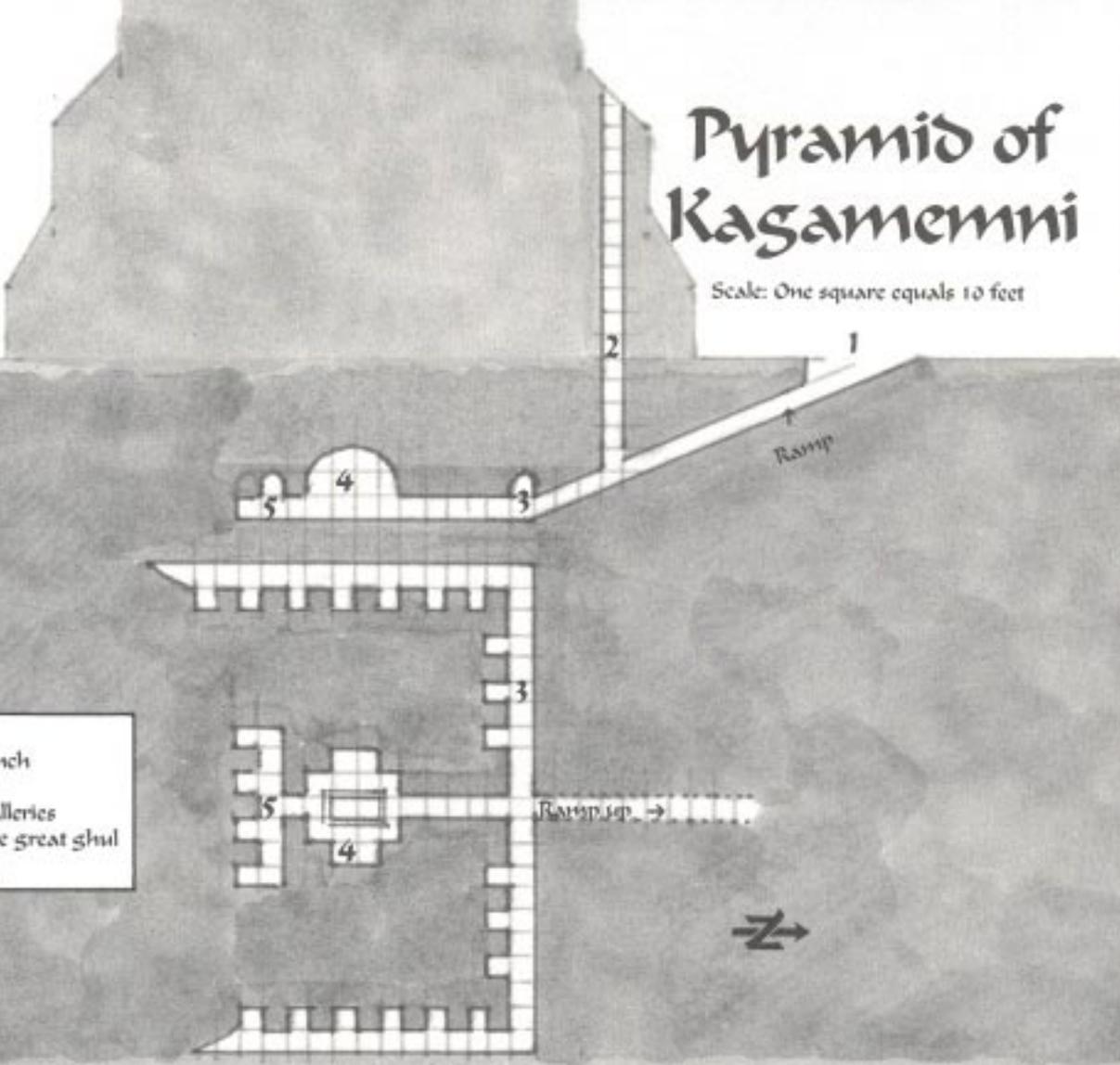
See Adventure Book for key

Card 4

# Pyramid of Kagameenni

Scale: One square equals 10 feet

- Key
- 1: Outer trench
  - 2: Shaft
  - 3: Upper galleries
  - 4: Lair of the great ghul
  - 5: Treasury



# Catacombs of Moradask

Card 5

Side passage  
to Ishieta's  
temple

Path  
of the Shorn

Players  
start  
here

Secret door

Scale: One square equals 10 feet

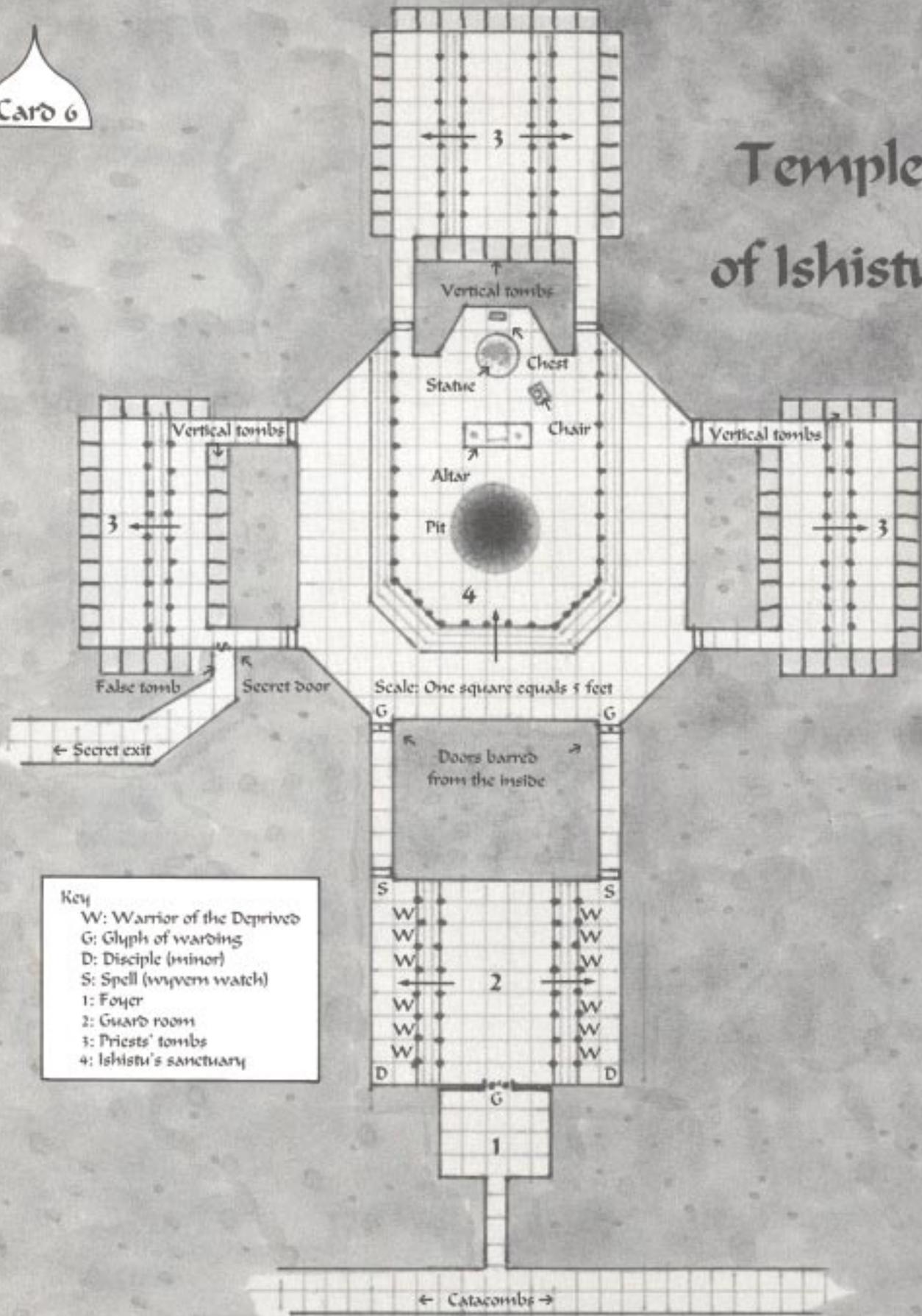
## Key

- C: Family crypt
- M: Lurking monster
- S: Secret shrine
- T: Trap
- P: Pit (or opening to lower levels)
- V: Up (stairs or ramp to surface)
- N: To catacombs beneath Noble Quarter



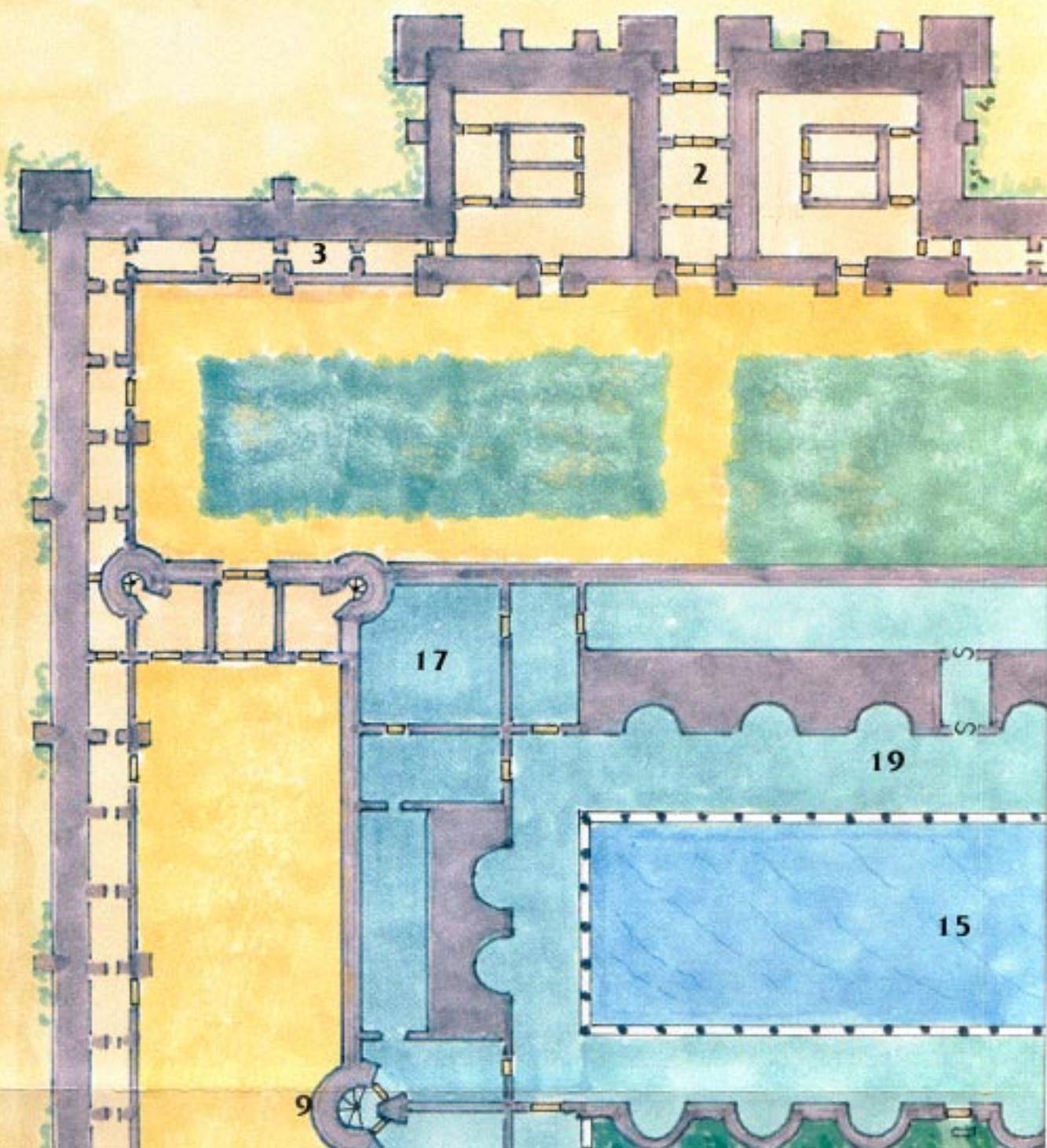
Card 6

# Temple of Ishistu



**Key**  
 W: Warrior of the Deprived  
 G: Glyph of warding  
 D: Disciple (minor)  
 S: Spell (wyvern watch)  
 1: Foyer  
 2: Guard room  
 3: Priests' tombs  
 4: Ishistu's sanctuary

# Jade Palace of the Necromancer

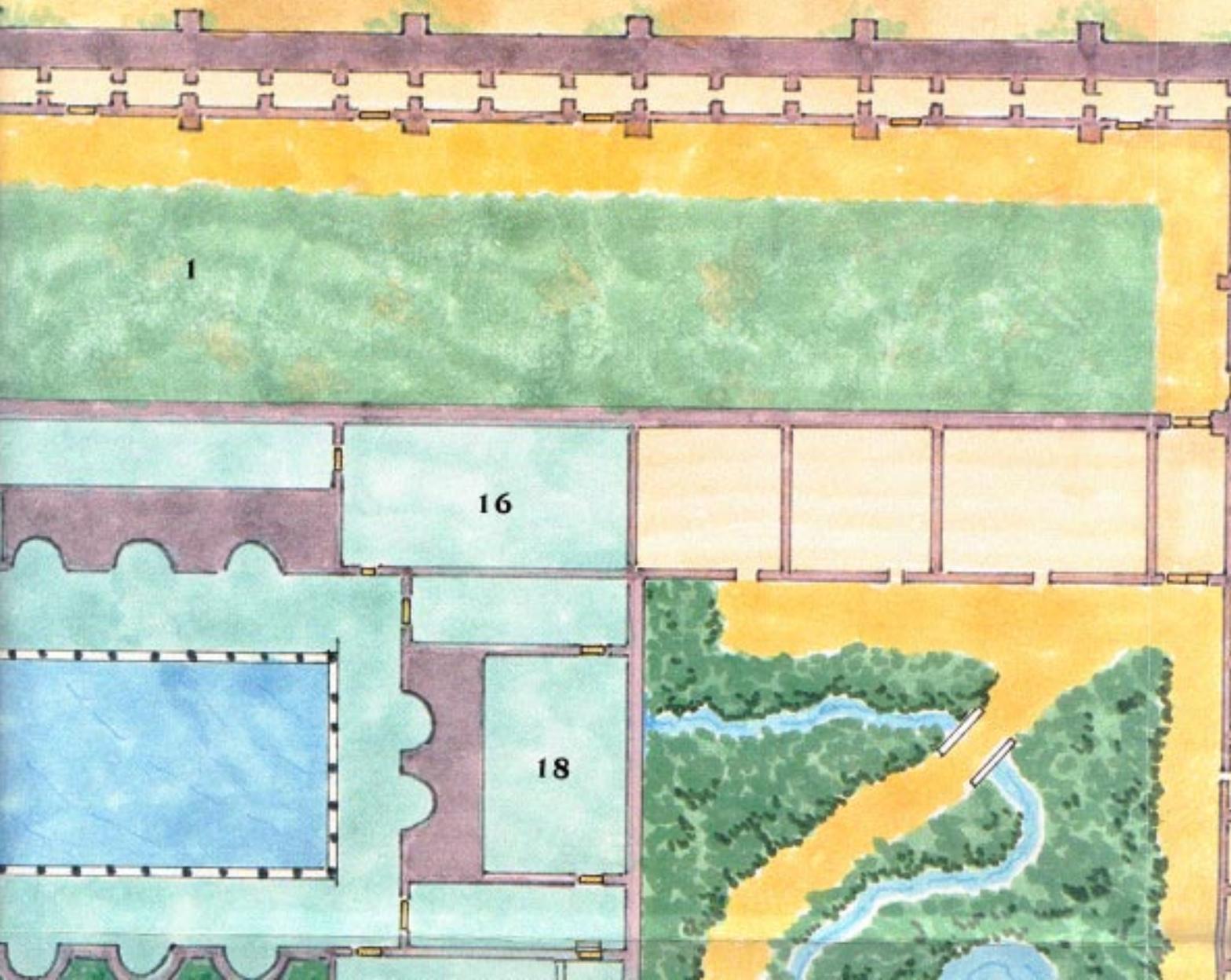


ancers



# Al-Qa

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## Key

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- 11: Royal gardens
- 12: Royal library
- 13: Throne room
- 14: Audience chamber

## Key

- 1: Entrance
- 2: Trapped sta
- 3: Hall of Lab
- 4: Consort's to
- 5: The crocod

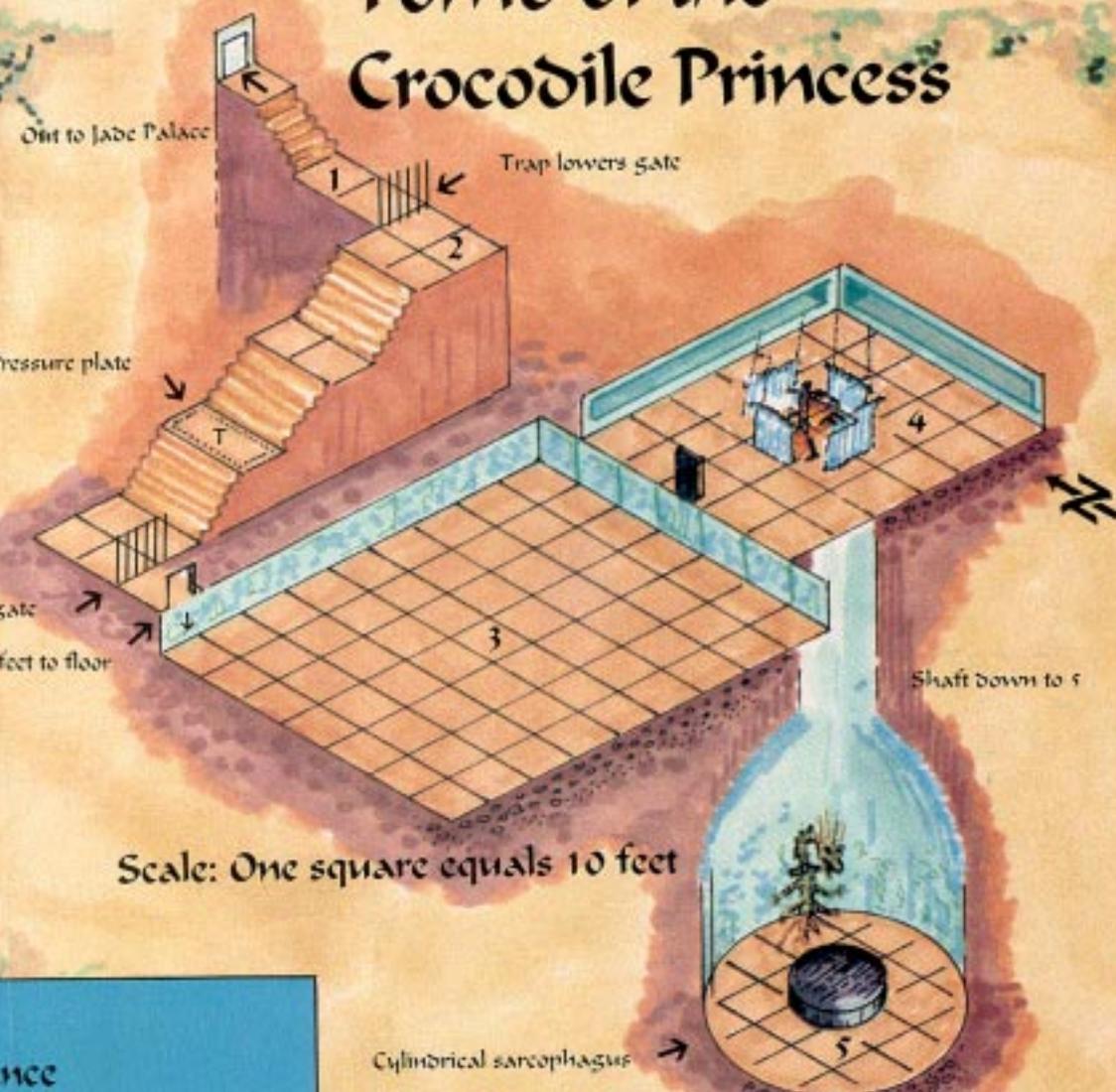
Trap lowers gate

Down 10 feet to flo

Pressure p

Old to

# Tomb of the Crocodile Princess

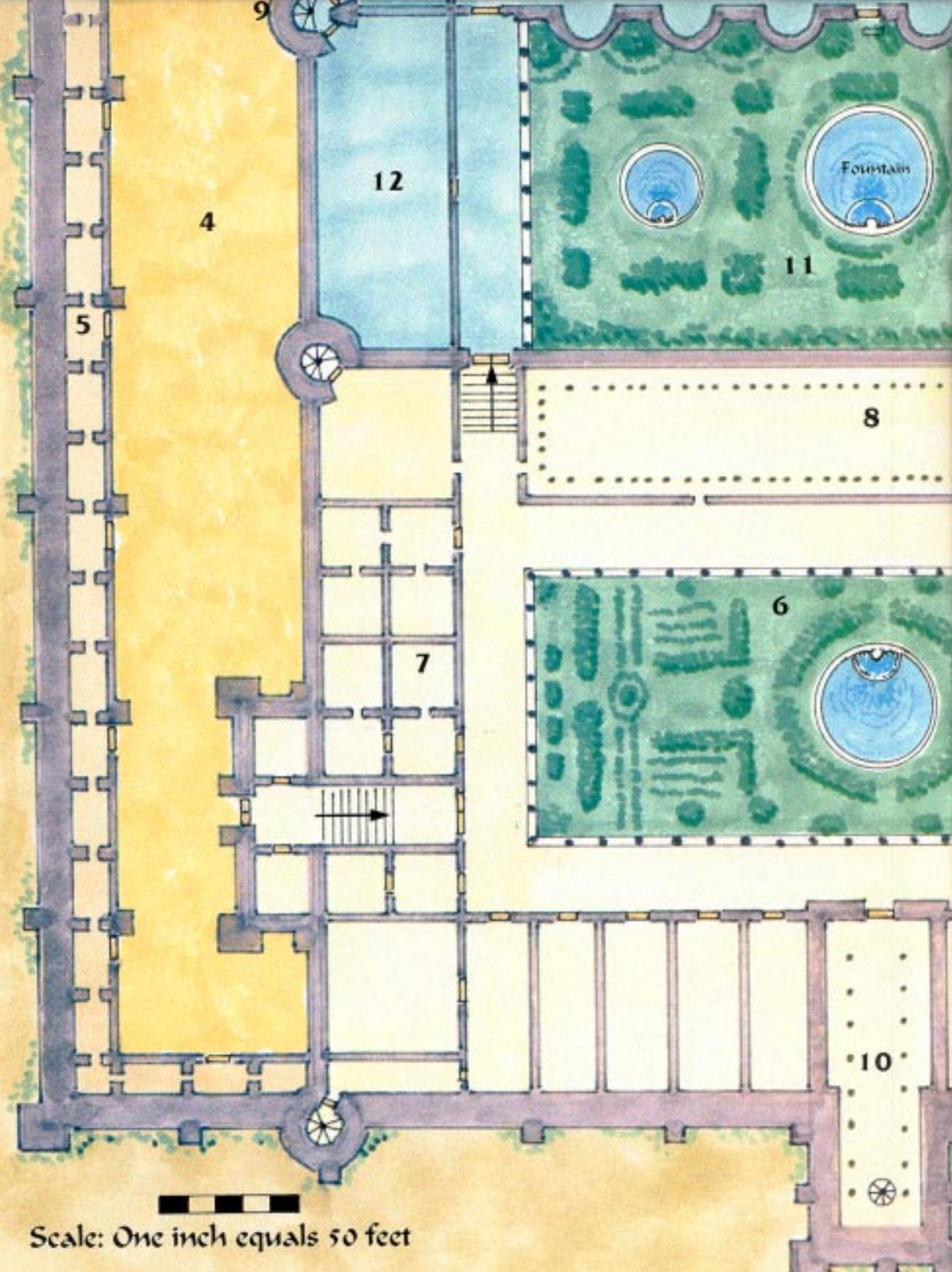


Scale: One square equals 10 feet

ance  
ed stairs  
of Laborers  
ort's tomb  
crocodile princess

Cylindrical sarcophagus

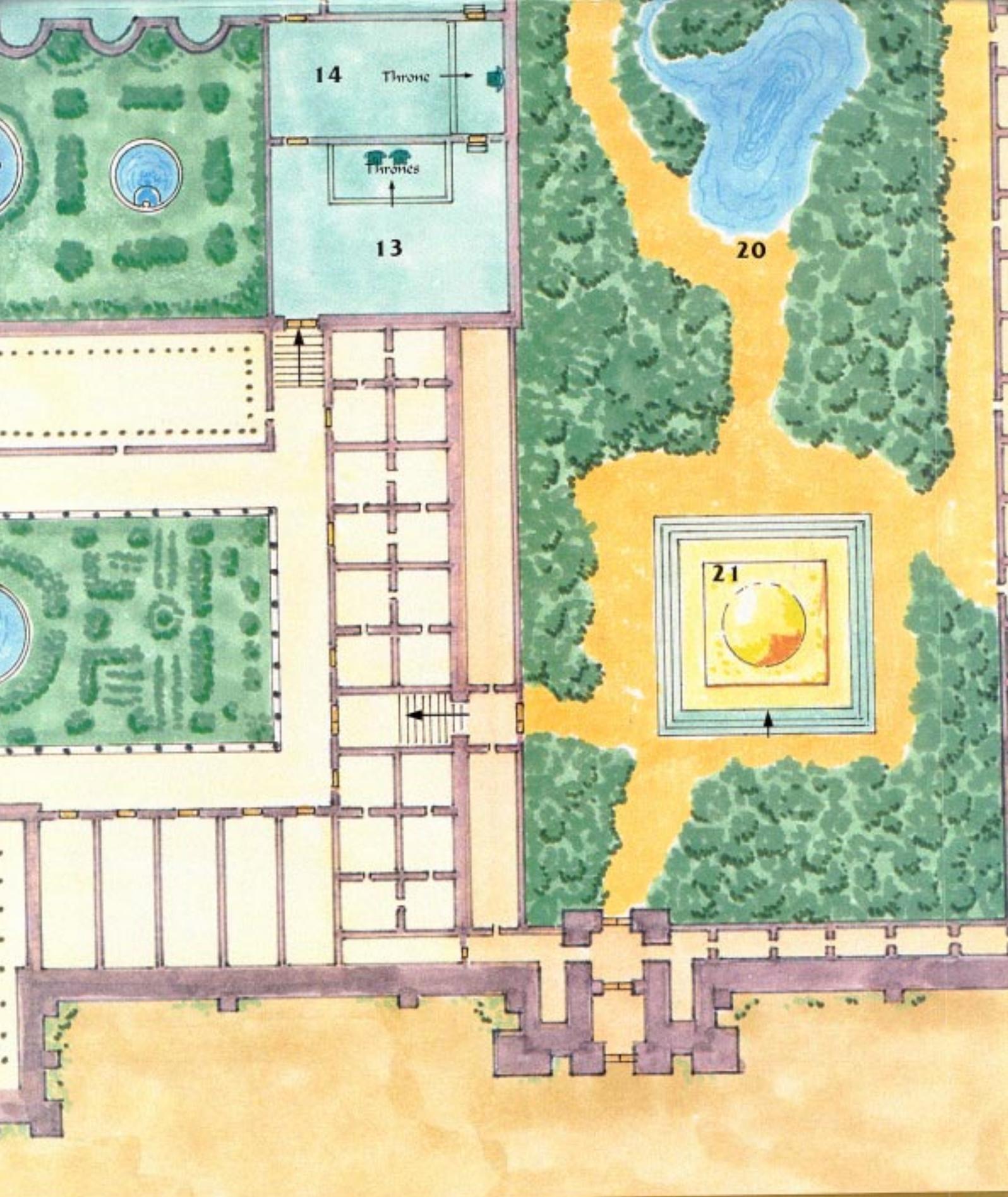




9467XXX0701



Scale: One inch equals 50 feet



- 14: Audience chamber
- 15: Private bathing pool
- 16: Queen's study
- 17: Queen's apartments
- 18: Eastern apartments
- 19: Gallery of Antiquities
- 20: King's garden
- 21: Bone Pavilion
- ||| Stairs (→ goes up)

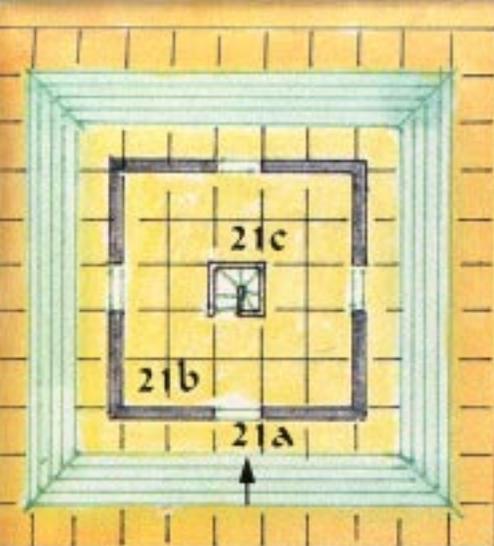
Scale: 0

## Talisman of Shajar



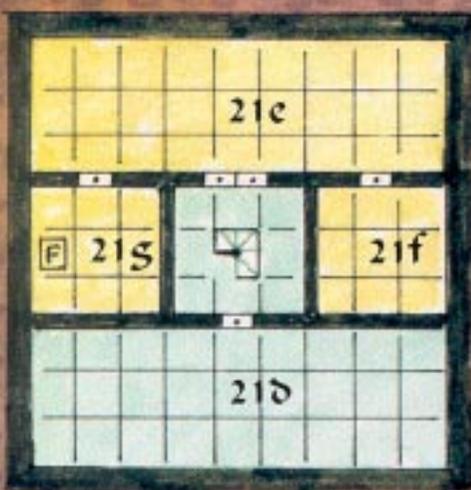


# The Bone Pavilion

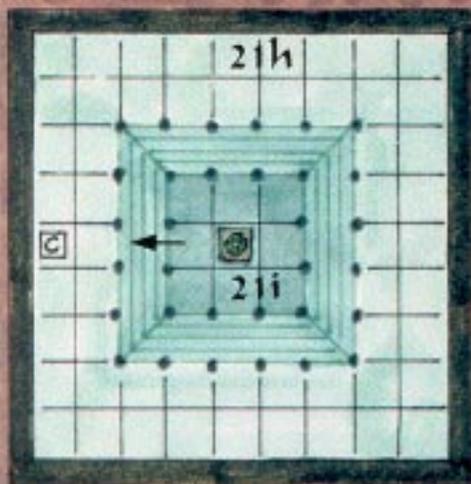


← Level 1

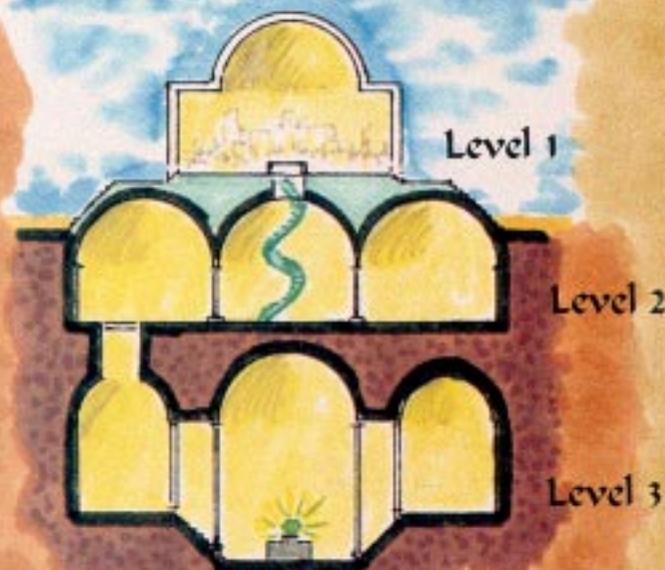
Scale: One square equals 10 feet



← Level 2

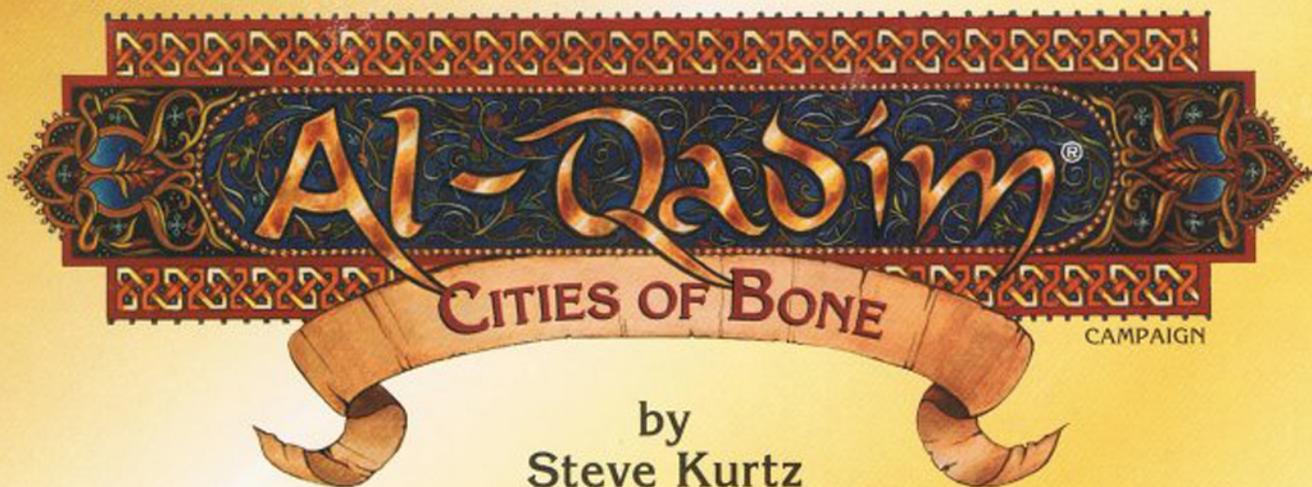


← Level 3



## Key

- 21a: Veranda
- 21b: Pavilion
- 21c: Stairwell
- 21d: Private chambers
- 21e: Laboratory
- 21f: Cell
- 21g: Holding pen
- 21h: Lowest vault
- 21i: Pit of the Heart



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