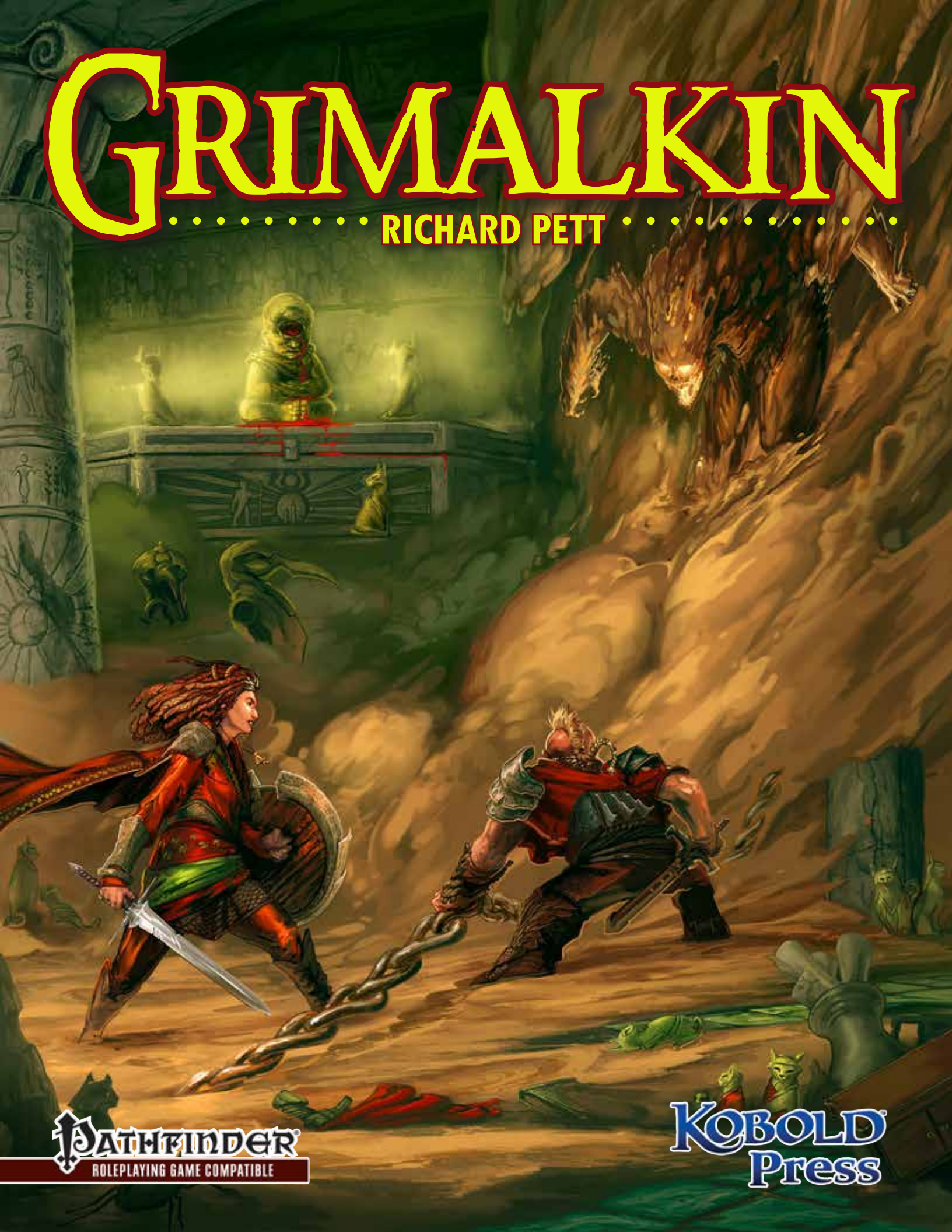


GRIMALKIN

..... RICHARD PETT



Pathfinder
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

KOBOLD
Press

GRIMALKIN

AN ADVENTURE FOR 3RD- TO 5TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS SET IN THE CITY OF
PER-BASTET IN THE SOUTHLANDS CAMPAIGN SETTING.

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Publisher: Wolfgang Baur

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ISBN: 978-1-936781-68-3

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PATHFINDER®
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Cats are curious creatures...

A while ago, a peculiar object slithered out of the River of Sand and caused a minor stir in the Perfume District before vanishing, as such stories tend to go in the spiced city¹. The object—which picked up the name *grimalkin eye* somewhere on the way—gave the owner power over cats. What no one involved in the little caper at the time realized was that if there was an eye, might there not also be a body?

“Princess” Karima Gamila doesn’t miss things like that. She might be a gnoll, but she’s an exception to her species; she’s smart, graceful, attractive (particularly to other gnolls, who literally fall at her feet to get her attention), and cunning. Her mother came to fear that Karima wasn’t a mortal gnoll at all, but some sort of bestial child of Kwansi, and so she was cast out at a very early age, left to wander the desert and never be seen again. The ordeal merely made Karima more independent and resourceful and drove her to the worship of the very god her mother believed she’d been fathered by.

When Karima heard about the *grimalkin eye*, her interest was roused and she began to ask around about it and where it may have come from—surely it didn’t just materialize out of nothing?

The truth—which eluded her—was intriguing. The *eye* actually appeared in the River of Sand after it was stolen by a lowly member of the local Thieves’ Guild in the city of Per-Bastet. His name was Hakkam-nis-Afirr, and he was a tomb robber of minor talent who had a habit of swimming the River of Sand for treasure—a very dangerous game. Hakkam discovered, below the river’s surface, the entrance to a once sacred catfolk tomb long ago forgotten known as the Growling Sanctuary, named on account of the peculiar noises caused by its proximity to the River of Sand.

The Sanctuary, populated by undead catfolk retainers faithful to a wicked sect of the Bastet faith known as the Devourers, held sacred treasures of the cat-god, including an item known as the *grimalkin idol*, within which the *eye* was originally fixed. Hakkam, being resourceful, managed to covertly explore the Sanctuary without alerting the guardians, but was discovered as he stole the idol. Fleeing, Hakkam dashed through the temple but lost his grip on the idol which fell, dislodging the *eye*, which bounced towards the exit leaving the heavy idol behind. As the guardians closed

in on him, he had only enough time to snatch the smaller, lighter *eye* and escape.

Swimming into the River of Sand, Hakkam at last learnt its true perils and suffocated. The *eye* was lost in the sands, even to the searching undead from the Sanctuary, but eventually washed ashore, where it was found by Raheed wa Moi Matiba, an event that began the adventure *Cat and Mouse*.

Karima, intrigued by tales of the *eye* but unable to locate it, turned to a scholar friend of hers named Zubayr. He often roamed the libraries and antiquaries of Per-Bastet and had an unrivalled knowledge of the catfolk and their history. In his research for the *eye*, he found the location of the Sanctuary, detailed in an old two-part rhyming text. What the scholar discovered awoke greed within him, and he vowed to explore the Sanctuary himself. Leaving his cramped lodgings an hour before dawn today and armed with the location of the entrance to the Sanctuary, he lashed himself to a post at the side of the River of Sand and descended, quickly finding the entrance. Unfortunately, not long afterwards he also encountered the guardians, but managed to escape only to meet the same fate as Raheed wa Moi Matiba. Unlike Raheed, his body was seen an hour or so later and retrieved. It now rests in the local charnel house.

This time, the guardians of the Sanctuary decide to strike back. Zubayr had taken an object from the Sanctuary—one of a few he had time to gather—a thing known as the *calling cat*, an item that acts like a beacon to the guardians, broadcasting its exact location to a connected magic item. The undead sent out one of their sacred mummy guardians, the Sister Withering, veiled and swathed in thick robes, to contact ghost followers of Bastet in the city and seek their help in making sure this time all traces of the sanctuary remain hidden. Following the pull of the *calling cat*, the mummy and her ghost consorts are in the city shadows now planning vengeance.

Karima’s beauty and resourcefulness have made her lots of enemies (in truth, jilted lovers and those who rather foolishly thought they should be lovers and found to their cost they were entirely unsuitable), particularly amongst an arm of the local Thieves’ Guild known as the Dogs of Per-Bastet. The Dog’s leader, a fat but cunning werecrocodile gnoll named Abdul-Haqq, *really* hates Karima, and spies on her regularly, jealously

¹These events are detailed in the 1st level adventure *Cat and Mouse*, available from the kobold’s store.



devouring any of her lovers that come into contact with his impressive teeth. When Karima had several meetings with the Zubayr, he had the scholar watched. This morning, Abdul's slimy minion Sweet Hasna, herself insanely jealous of Karima's looks and charm, followed Zubayr and was near the River of Sand when his body emerged. Sadly, she was not quick enough, and his body was taken to the local charnel house. Fortunately, and in a stroke of genius, Hasna swallowed a *potion of invisibility*, stole in and searched the scholar's body while the charnel house watchers were otherwise preoccupied. In her enthusiasm to get back and tell Abdul that she had found a fragment of a rhyme with the Bastet rune that had instructions on how to find the tomb, she failed to search further and find the second part of the scholar's verse. She also failed to tell her employer the whole truth about her corpse robbery, and hanging about her neck now is the very *calling cat* that the mummy Sister Withering is following.

Abdul was, in truth, quite cross when he deduced that there were two parts to the rhyme and sent her back to the charnel house to finish the job properly—and quickly—as bodies are burned within 24 hours of being found to prevent sickness. Just to be sure, he sent his pet imp Sharbit to invisibly follow her to make sure she did the job properly. Unfortunately, when Hasna returned, there were even more guardians at the charnel house and so she sat and thought and very quickly came up with a stroke of genius. Taking out her forgery kit she began to write...

In the meantime, Karima heard about the events and also went to the charnel house, which regrettably is run by another old enemy of hers, the self-named Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatooor who some people say eats the fresher bodies in his charnel house. Sultan runs his own small local cult that does indeed eat flesh, and when Zubayr's corpse came in, he sent some of his followers out to buy some potatoes and herbs for a feast later today.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Karima turns to the PCs, who are introduced to the adventure with a pair of options, and expresses her urgent wish to secure her friend's body to find out what happened to him...

As the PC's arrive at the charnel house, the flesh-eating cult is getting ready for dinner; Zubayr's body has been washed and lots of herbs and vegetables have been prepared. Learning the truth about the cannibals might make the PCs attack the cult, or they may try a more friendly approach, although the gnolls in the charnel house are very keen that the body remain untouched by others and very nervous about the discovery of their little secret—several powerful families who have had their servants come through the area would be very cross if they found out Sultan is a cannibal (for which the penalty on Per-Bastet is quite harsh).

The fragment of the rhyme that the PCs eventually find here only tells them half the story of the location of sanctuary. Without the second fragment, the Sanctuary will remain hidden forever.

In the meantime, Sweet Hasna is outside the charnel house with her own plan, and soon enters the place as a grieving relative, complete with papers and a coffin with bearers. She demands her beloved kin back. There are ample clues on her to lead the PCs back to the lair of Abdul-Haqq, a crocodile-infested place on the edges of the Perfume District.

Do the PCs ally themselves with the were-crocodile or choose to fight?

And then there is Sister Withering and her ghost rogue followers. Slowly but surely, they are approaching the *calling cat* with only one thought in mind—destruction.

Eventually, the PCs retrieve both fragments and can descend the River of Sand and the Sanctuary. Within, the PCs battle the horrific guardians, finding that parts of the place are drowned in the River of Sand, requiring the PCs to face blind swims across the sands to reach the deeper areas of the Sanctuary, within which lie its greatest treasures.

PART ONE—THE BEAUTIFUL GNOLL

“Princess” Karima Gamila knows a lot of people, and is always keen to know more interesting people, including the PCs. The adventure as written assumes she begins the adventure aware of the PCs and at least something of their exploits. Some suggestions as to why and how are below.

Karima knowing about PCs should be pretty straightforward, unless your PCs have a particular reason for anonymity—which in itself could be a reason why Karima may know about them. The gnoll likes to keep several irons in several fires, asks a lot of questions, and her network of informants is considerable. If you’re uncomfortable with her knowing some basic information about the PCs—enough for her to approach them—you might want to foreshadow this interest in the previous adventure, *Cat and Mouse*. In this case, have Karima simply strike up a conversation with the PCs before that adventure and have her interest in the PCs as genuine—which of course it is, as one never knows when one needs fresh faces. Perhaps a few days go by while Karima and Zubayr look into the Sanctuary. The events detailed above merely trigger her need to bring in some extra muscle—and muscle that is unlikely to know too much about her and her friends to betray her.

Of course, Karima has other friends, mostly gnolls—several of whom are willing to die for her if she so much as snaps her fingers—but when their affections get in the way, they start to behave even more stupidly than usual (see Part Two for some examples of this). She usually only uses gnolls as dupes (which she does later in this adventure as detailed below). She doesn’t want to use any of her closest friends or any lovesick gnolls at the start because her enemies will easily

be able to trace them back to her if things go wrong, but she needs someone capable. As the adventure begins, Karima has a dilemma, Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatooor knows her and really dislikes her, she’s also scared about trying to sneak in as she has heard rumors about Sultan’s eating habits and necromantic talents and doesn’t want to be on the menu. Her mind turns to the PCs, and arranges to bump into them straight away.

Her approach differs depending upon the PCs’ general outlook; these can obviously vary tremendously, but below are two likely scenarios and how Karima approaches the PCs based on them. In each case, Karima is keen to secure help, and also to point out that the city has plenty of untrustworthy people. She says she has heard good things about the PCs and the fact that they and her don’t have a past is a good thing in her eyes, as this is a simple business transaction. She flatters any of the PCs’ positive aspects that she’s aware of, and is keen to stress that she regards herself simply as an employer, but like in all things in her life, Karima is careful and charming. Finally, she points out that she’s attempting to ensure vengeance—which is of course lie—for her old friend and ally.

The PCs are clearly adventurers, and adventurers are greedy. Karima approaches the PCs and tells them that she has just learnt that the scholar Zubayr, a dear friend of hers, tutor, and de-facto father, has been found dead on the banks of the River of Sand. He rests in a charnel house run by a gnoll who doesn’t like her. She’d dearly like to retrieve Zubayr’s body, search it, and arrange for a *speak with dead* spell to be cast so she can learn how her friend died and have vengeance. However, if she appears inside the charnel house, its owner—a vile and allegedly cannibalistic gnoll named Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatooor—is certain to try to kill her as she’s crossed him before. So she’d like some help. If the PCs bring the body to her at dawn tomorrow, she’ll hand over 500 gp, no questions asked.

The PCs are heroic; they may have overtly religious members, have assisted locals in danger, and may have reputations as honest folk. Karima approaches the PCs and tells them that she was working with the scholar Zubayr, a dear friend of hers who was researching information about a hidden temple in Per-Bastet. The temple is said to house a wicked and forgotten aspect of Bastet faith known as the Devourers, and guarded by undead. Sadly, her friend vanished without telling her where he had gotten to and now she’s learned he’s turned up dead in the banks of the River of Sand this morning. She suspects foul play and wants justice. His body now

CAT AND MOUSE

Grimalkin is a direct sequel to the adventure *Cat and Mouse*, and if you ran that adventure with your players, you might enjoy *Grimalkin* even more. If your PCs still have the grimalkin eye, this gives you an even greater reason for Karima to approach them. This adventure’s climax offers details about what happens if the *eye* is reinserted into the *grimalkin idol*, and creates a fitting conclusion to the two adventures. Don’t worry if you haven’t played *Cat and Mouse* though—although you might want to pick up a copy at the Kobold’s website—it’s not needed to run this adventure.

lies in a charnel house run by a gnoll who has tried to force himself on her and who is rumored to have a taste for flesh. She wants Zubayr's body before the gnoll eats it; she wishes to arrange for a *Speak with Dead* spell to be cast prior to burning so she can learn the truth and see justice done. However, if she appears inside the charnel house, its owner—a vile gnoll called Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatooor—is certain to try to kill her as she has faced down his necromantic talents before. So she'd like some help to get the body out; the PCs could claim to be relatives, sneak in and get the corpse, or try another method. She doesn't mind how, but warns the PCs to be careful. If the PCs bring the body to her at dawn tomorrow, she'll pay them 500 gp and praise the PCs across the city as weapons of justice and right.

If the PCs—or at least some of them—do not readily fit into these categories, consider tweaking Karima's approach. Her desire is simple—to have Zubayr's body to talk to. At this stage, she sees the PCs as simple hirelings able to do a job and then be on their way. However, she knows all about treachery, and after meeting the PCs, she gathers a trio of consorts to help her as detailed in the Part Two of this adventure.

Karima tells the PCs the location of the Charnel House—just a couple of streets toward the River of Sand from the Arc of the Sun in the District of the Hyena. She asks the PCs to bring Zubayr's body and possessions to her at the southeastern tip of the Great Sand Pyramid (area 29 in Per-Bastet) at dawn tomorrow. She warns the PCs to beware of the self-styled Sultan.

“PRINCESS” KARIMA GAMILA

Here is a curiosity, and a pleasant one; there is something gracefully feral about this female gnoll; she is lithe, athletic, and walks elegantly. A long loose green cloak covers her slender limbs and a yellow headscarf accentuates her almost beautiful features. She has long dark eyebrows and small bright dark eyes. Her voice is like a song and her downy skin strangely alluring, even to other races.

Karima has a poetic way with words, and a very wide white smile (she obsessively brushes her teeth with birch twigs dipped in wine). To gnolls, Karima is a walking goddess who must be mated with, even many females find her presence and appearance alluring. Though other races might not find her dignity and refinement exciting, but, at the very least, see her as graceful; she walks like a ballerina and speaks with eloquence.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE? TOO SUSPICIOUS TO TRUST?

The PCs may simply dislike gnolls, or smell a rat when Karima appears and weaves her charms. If PCs voice their suspicions or prejudices, Karima rebukes them gently, reminding them that this is a city full of gnolls, and not all of them are “yapping psychopaths who like hurting people and taking slaves.” If the PCs seem more heroic, she adds that she is amazed at such goodly folk judging a possible friend and ally simply by her species. If the PCs are selfish adventurers as detailed above, she reminds them of the reward, and chides them for their distrust. Karima hopes the PCs will agree to perform the task, and is happy to reassure them of her good intentions.

If the PCs do not bite, she recruits three besotted male gnolls and continues her own exploration. Quickly sneaking into the Charnel House, she and two of her followers are overpowered by Sultan and prepared as desert. The PCs can then see the escaped gnoll beside himself with terror nearby the Charnel House and learn what has happened...

Below all this, Karima is steely, yet not hard. She is truly one who wishes to live a good life of adventure. She desires fame and fortune in Per-Bastet and the Southlands, and while she is not wicked, she is driven and a bit selfish.

If the PCs take on her job, she follows them very discreetly to see what happens. Being a consummate stalker, she trails the PCs from a distance of 90 to 120 feet, but is always wary of the old “member of the party splitting off” or the “fake robbery and flight” tricks to discover her. If she thinks the PCs are onto her, she takes to the rooftops, filling the streets below with *obscuring mist* to cover her climb. If finally unmasked, she comes clean; she just doesn't know if she can trust the PCs to carry out her instructions.

LEVELLING THE ADVENTURE

As currently written, *Grimalkin* is a good challenge for a 5th-level party of 4 PCs, and a tough one for 4th-level PCs. If 3rd-level characters attempt to tackle it, consider removing a mummy and reducing the number of all group encounters by at least one monster.

Karima gets three lovesick followers to be near her at dawn when the PCs meet her. These events are detailed in part two of this adventure.

In terms of roleplaying Karima, this adventure offers many suggestions, but go with the flow—if you want Karima to be a future ally or maybe even a charismatic enemy, the choice is yours.

“Princess” Karima Gamila

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female gnoll cleric of Kwansi 3/rogue 2

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

CN Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 40 (7d8+9)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *short sword* +8 (1d6+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +6 (1d6+2/x3)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 15, 2d6), sneak attack +1d6, sudden shift

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5) 5/day—*touch of chaos*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5) 2nd—*enthrall* (DC 14), *hold person* (DC 14), *mirror image*^D

1st—*command* (DC 13), *hideous laughter*^D (DC 13), *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *light*, *mending*, *resistance*

^D Domain spell

Domains Trickery (Deception subdomain), Chaos (Whimsy subdomain)

TACTICS

Before Combat Karima tries to charm her way out of trouble or runs if the odds are against her.

Her first thought if combat is inevitable is to cast *mirror image* and *shield of faith*

During Combat Karima sticks to the edges of fighting. She's seen too many people in the heart of combat slaughtered. She use her combination of sneak attack and spells to stay away from melee, always with a ready eye on escape

Morale Karima flees if reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, but usually tries to escape well before then, usually edging away from combat when reduced to 20 hit points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** 13, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Rogue Talent^{APG}, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +14, Climb +7, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +11, Spellcraft +7, Swim +7

Languages Common, Gnoll

SQ rogue talents (charmer^{APG}, fast stealth), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of delay poison*, *scroll of cat's grace*; **Other Gear** leather armor, +1 *short sword*, mwk composite shortbow (+2 Str), silver wedding ring worth 100 gp carved “with love to K” (not actually hers but good cover against



more hungry pursuit and often worn in public), black wedding veil (to deter would-be suitors), bundle of birch twigs, carved soapstone holy symbol of Kwansi on hemp thong, gourd of fine wine, light leather sandals, long purple abaya, yellow hijab, leather camel purse containing 50pp and 89gp.

ABOUT KARIMA

PCs can attempt Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy checks to gather information to learn the following information about Karima; higher checks reveal the information for lesser results.

-
- | | |
|-------|---|
| DC 10 | “She’s a wild one that Karima Gamila, some say she’s a princess; she certainly has the right poise and fancy words.” |
| <hr/> | |
| DC 20 | “Wild, that’s certain, I’ve seen gnolls fall over their own feet trying to bed her, some say she’s a living goddess, an aspect of Kwansi, god of laughter. She’s a charmer that’s for sure, keeps Kwansi’s symbol nearby and is known as a bit of a rogue.” |
| <hr/> | |
| DC 30 | “Karima may be wild, but she’s got a good heart. She may be unpredictable but I’ve heard how she gives money to beggars and the poor, and has helped folk in trouble, saved them from robbers and such like.” |
-

ABOUT THE CHARNEL HOUSE

PCs can attempt Knowledge (local) or Diplomacy checks to gather information to learn the following information about the Charnel House; higher checks reveal the information for lesser results.

-
- | | |
|-------|--|
| DC 10 | “The Charnel House is run by the self-named Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatoor; the gnoll has a reputation as being a formidable spellcaster.” |
| <hr/> | |
| DC 20 | “He’s not just a spellcaster is Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatoor; he’s a necromancer. Now you tell me if there is a more perfect position for a necromancer than being in charge of a morgue?” |
| <hr/> | |
| DC 30 | “There’s something very odd about Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatoor and the company he keeps. I’ve heard tell that on some days, he has a group of gnolls come into the House, and when they come out they all have big grins on their faces; big grins and fat bellies. Of course, there’s never been any proof of anything amiss, if there was, the guard would be on them pretty quick.” |
-

THE CHARNEL HOUSE

The Charnel House, located in the District of the Hyena as shown on the Per-Bastet inset map, is a mortuary used to store unidentified bodies prior to burning. Unfortunately, this one has lapsed into a darker reputation due to its keeper, the self-named Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatoor, a cannibal who leads a small group of gnolls with similar tastes. Sultan prides himself on (so far) only eating fresh, cooked corpses, and uses the mortuary’s oven as cover for his feasts, which take place in the cellar away from prying eyes. Knowledge of his tastes are just rumor, but those who have come close to him or know have broad contacts—such as Karima on both counts—are aware of more. It is only a matter of time before he and his handful of feasters are unmasked and suffer under the law, but for now, his allies pay him for fresh meat, such as that of the scholar Zubayr, who has been brought in only this morning.

Sultan has sent word out to his gourmet friends that fresh meat is on the menu, and by the time the PCs arrive they are already getting excited. If the PCs play their cards well, they may see the vegetables arriving, and also make the acquaintance of the poorly named Sweet Hasna. How the PCs interact with everyone is up to them—they could readily leave the encounter with all the clues, Zubayr’s body, and a small bribe without having to draw a weapon, but then again the whole episode could quickly lapse into slaughter without dialogue, especially if the PCs put two and two together when the side dishes appear.

When running this section, also be sure to read the section about Sweet Hasna immediately afterward. She’s keeping an eye on the mortuary having already broken in once but only completing half the job. Her arrival is very timely.


CHARNEL HOUSE FEATURES

A single-floor bell-shaped sandstone building without windows, the Charnel House has a single entrance which Sultan locks by night, and rises to an enormous chimney emerging from its conical roof. There is also a cellar below; corpses are kept in this lower room and are burned in a central oven if no one comes to collect them. Sultan gets to keep 50% of all goods on unclaimed bodies and hands the rest over to the authorities—something he’s very careful to do, even if his gnoll blood insists on him pocketing the odd glinting thing as well as a tasty, fat finger or two to tide him over.

The Charnel House is described after the NPCs within it, as the gnolls can be encountered anywhere inside the building.

• All rooms are lit by torches held in iron sconces.

The mortuary is in a fairly busy corner of the district and loud noises are fairly common. Something really



loud would be needed to draw any kind of attention to the building, such as a *fireball* spell exploding outside or an escaping gnoll running down the street shouting “Help! Murder!” at the top of his lungs. How that develops is left to you.

When Hasna first broke in, she climbed through the chimney and searched the room below, including rifling through Zubayr’s possessions before leaving via the main entrance. A series of small sooty footprints and handprints throughout the rooms can be spotted with a successful DC 30 Perception check or a successful DC 20 Survival check to follow tracks. The gnolls have missed these tracks entirely as they have other things on their minds.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTERS

When the PCs arrive, Sultan is in the building with 3 gourmet guests (also gnolls). They have already lit the oven below (area 3) and are carrying a suspicious amount of spices. Anyone coming within 30 feet of any of them and succeeding at a DC 10 Perception check notes the overwhelming smell of varied spices. Those with the Scent feat can readily identify coriander, ginger, nutmeg, and a host of other cooking spices in the bouquet; otherwise a successful DC 20 Perception check identifies the spices successfully. Two more gnolls are out at the market, but should arrive at some suitably amusing point, each carrying a box containing sweet potatoes, eggplants, okra, onions, figs, dates, and pomegranates.

The whole encounter with Sultan should be run as a suspicious event, with Sultan anxious to prove everything is normal; corpses are, of course, he says with honesty, scented with spices, and the vegetables are merely a snack, which he and his companions eat raw if they must to try to cover their sham. However, Sultan and his group know what will happen if they get discovered, and have no intention of being unmasked. They draw weapons very quickly and try to prevent intruders from ever escaping; the PCs might quickly find themselves on the menu if they are overpowered.

Sweet Hasna is outside with her cohorts, and has her own plan to intervene. This should occur when it will have the most impact, as she knocks on the outer door and enters, sobbing with grief and wearing a veil. For more details, see the entry on Sweet Hasna below.

Finally, Karima isn’t that far away either. However, she takes a back seat and observes for now. If things go very poorly, she might try to intervene, but attacking a mourning Sweet Hasna in the street is not one of those actions. If Hasna appears with the body, Karima simply follows, despite knowing in her heart exactly where the thief is heading. Karima then appears at the location she agreed on with the PCs the next day, and the plot develops as listed in Part Two of this adventure.

SULTAN SHUK’RI NILL MO CHATOOR

The beloved cousin of Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor, gnoll slaver, carpet merchant and camel dealer (see *Cat and Mouse*), is a troubled soul. He looks very dour, suicidal almost, but his face occasionally erupts into maniacal joy and laughter, before quickly retreating into dark necromantic thoughts again. He’s used to dealing with visitors, but his gourmet guests less so, so Sultan tries to take over any interaction somberly. He’s very good at name-dropping, and if anyone starts to look suspicious, he mentions the name of his “dearest closest friend” Master Salwar Bashir, Keeper of the City (*Southlands* 49), who in truth he has only met once. He regards “his virtual brother” Bashir as a bastion of law and order and goodness, stating loudly that if any harm comes to a servant of the Council of Sands, those who perpetrated the vile act had best flee or prepare to suffer quite horrible consequences. It’s all bluff, of course. Sultan is desperate to keep a low profile. What he’s not prepared to do under almost any circumstances is let Zubayr’s body go; he’s hungry and salivating over the coming meat feast and attacks anyone who tries to steal the corpse. The PCs can subtly explore the mortuary and bodies therein, and take most things of value, but the meat course stays here.

He is totally unaware that Sweet Hasna has already stolen into the mortuary and (partially) rifled through the corpse’s belongings. However, her arrival (see below) might spectacularly muddle events.

As the PCs arrive, Sultan expresses his sadness for whatever sorrow has befallen the PCs and asks how he can help. If, like Sweet Hasna does below, the PCs pretend to be Zubayr’s relatives, he asks for proof that they are indeed related—he’s not about to give up a free dinner. If proof is not forthcoming, he says helpfully that it is usual that relatives go to the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet (area 15 in per-Bastet) and petition the clerics there, and if the PCs subject themselves to a *discern lies* spell, they can obtain written proof. Other than that, any of the Council of Sands advisors can provide the necessary paperwork at a cost. Sultan uses his familiarity with the costly formal methods of identification used by higher echelons to simply stall affairs so he and his friends can eat. Unfortunately for the gnoll, the arrival of Sweet Hasna scuppers this plan.

Without proof, the smiling gnoll starts to move the PCs towards the exits, backed by his friends. If the PCs behave aggressively weapons are drawn, at which point Sweet Hasna rings the doorbell.

Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatooor**CR 5****XP 1,600**Male gnoll necromancer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

CN Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 natural)**hp** 55 (7 HD; 5d6+2d8+26)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk *punching dagger* +7 (1d4+3/x3)**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; conc. +7)
5/day—*grave touch* (2 rounds)**Necromancer Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; conc. +7)3rd—*aura of cannibalism*^{MC} (DC 16), *fireball* (DC 15)2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *ghoul touch* (DC 15),
*summon swarm*1st—*cause fear* (DC 14), *grease*, *mage armor*, *ray of*
enfeeblement (DC 14), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14)0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *mending*, *ray of frost*, *resistance***Opposition Schools** Enchantment, Illusion**TACTICS****Before Combat** All talk and occasional smiles, Sultan tries to bluff his way through anything, but once all else fails, his face falls into an unpleasant emotionless mask, and he tries to cast *mage armor* before fighting.**During Combat** Sultan casts *fireball* immediately (as it makes him howl with laughter), then tries to blind any spellcasters and summons a swarm of vermin on fighters and other combatants. He attacks with his *ray of enfeeblement* spells as he does so, and then uses his touch spells and poisoned dagger.**Morale** An abject Sultan surrenders if cornered, bereft of all gourmet guests and reduced to 10 hit points or fewer. He offers a bribe of the corpse, then half his goods, then all his goods, if the PCs only let him flee. He claims to be truly penitent and that he found his taste for human meat as a starving beggar boy in the streets of the District of the Hyena when force-fed it by a wicked step-aunt.**STATISTICS****Str** 16, **Dex** 11, **Con** 17, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16**Feats** Craft Wand, Dazing Spell^{APG}, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Turn Undead**Skills** Appraise +6, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +2, Heal +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Perception +2, Spellcraft +12**Languages** Common, Gnoll**SQ** arcane bond (arcane familiar), power over undead**Combat Gear** masterwork punching dagger, *potion of blur*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** bloody apron, loose sandals, keys to any locks on a rusty key ring**Very Hungry Cannibal Gnolls (5)****CR 1****XP 400 each****hp** 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

The gnolls are armed with poorly concealed meat-cleavers (treat them as battle axes). Each gnoll carries a selection of very sharp hidden knives, as well as pots of spices, salt, and pepper.

1 IRON DOORWAY

A large iron door grows in the lime-washed adobe walls of a bell-shaped windowless building that rises to a dark chimney some twenty feet above. A sign hanging above the door reads, "Bashtoor Street Charnel House, Hours of Opening Dawn-Dusk." There is a bell hanging beside the door.

By night, Sultan locks the door (it has an average lock), and by day it is open, but creeks abominably when opened, drawing Sultan to the draped anteroom beyond. The outer walls are smooth; a successful DC 25 Climb check is required to climb them. The chimney 20 feet above is 8 feet wide and although very smoky, opens into the Charnel House below. Those who move through the chimney suffer the effects of breathing in smoke (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*).

2 UPPER MORTUARY

The front door opens into a tiny draped anteroom barely 5 feet square, and heavy drapes mask the mortuary beyond. This is where Sultan meets his guests. Beyond the drapes, the broad chamber opens up, if PCs move beyond the drapes or enter from above, read or paraphrase the following description.

The mortuary beyond has an unpleasant atmosphere; it's more than just a smell, it's a cloying feeling that one wrong step may take you over the veil of death yourself. The room is lime-washed and spartan, echoing the bell-shape outside. A set of wide stone steps descend like jagged teeth into a whitewashed space some twenty feet below. A large open charcoal oven sits in the middle of that room, its smoke swirling to the chimney hole some forty feet above the floor. A trio of wax-encrusted iron chandeliers hang from long chains above and are level with the upper stair.

The steps are open, so characters can fire between the floors them if they wish. The chandeliers are very robust, and a character can jump onto them and swing acrobatically at most 15 feet to get the drop on foes—the gnolls don't do this as they're too clumsy.

3 LOWER MORTUARY AND OVEN

The lower room is whitewashed, and has a very clean floor with three neat piles of timber. The main feature is a wide fire pit some fifteen feet across which is filled with burning coals and charcoal up the level of the floor. The pit is surrounded by a low wall three feet high which has four openings with iron rails leading from them. Each rail has a human-sized mesh cradle on scorched iron wheels. Rows of arches lead into an outer room, while a door with a stained-glass panel lies shut not far away.

Corpses are put into the cribs and burnt, or in some cases cooked. Characters stumbling near the edge of the pit (or pushed—the gnolls like to do that with bull rushes) must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling in, those who do fall in take 6d6 fire damage per round of exposure. As the inner walls of the pit are covered in soot, a successful DC 20 Climb check is required by any Small creature to escape the pit once in it.

Treasure: Two of the piles of wood are just timber, the third contains a fair amount of high-quality sandalwood. A successful DC 15 Appraise or Knowledge (nature) check is required to note that. This fine wood is worth 600 gp.

4 A TRULY ROTTING CORPSE

The room beyond the pillars is tiled and clean. It splits through arches into five cubicles with stone slabs in each. Two of these have bodies on. Incense burns from within numerous holders fixed into the walls near iron sconces, all of which have lit torches in them.

Two bodies are marked S and R on the map. R is a rotting corpse covered in a damp cloth, it is the body of a young woman found murdered yesterday and is unrelated to this adventure. However, the body is so far gone that if the cloth is pulled back, the odor of foul-smelling rotting flesh fills the whole of area CH4. Those within the area must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 5 minutes. Characters viewing the rotting maggot-bloated corpse must also succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 5 minutes. Characters who are already sickened are nauseated.

The corpse marked S is the scholar Zubayr. He is also under a damp cloth but is far less rotted—fresh almost. If Sultan is nearby when the corpse is uncovered, he involuntarily licks his lips, something noted by any character who is within view of his face and succeeding at a DC 25 Perception or Sense Motive check. Zubayr's body is clothed in a hefty white robe, a shirt, and trousers fixed by a thick leather belt. He wears a red headscarf, and a leather satchel hangs over his shoulder. The gnolls have left his valuables for later having had a tertiary check and seen nothing glinting.

Characters examining the body and succeeding at the noted skill checks can note the clues listed below.

- Perception or Heal check (DC 10)—Zubayr suffocated, presumably in the River of Sand, as his mouth is filled with sand.
- Perception or Heal check (DC 20)—Zubayr had something ripped from his neck; there are signs of abrasions and soot (this is where the *calling cat* was worn which Sweet Hasna tore off).
- Perception (DC 20)—Zubayr's satchel contains a trio of wooden pegs and a hammer; these were extra pegs, part of the set the scholar used when pacing out the location of the Sanctuary on the riverbank (see Part Three for more details). The satchel also contains four iron spikes, flint, and tinder. A PC who exceeds this DC by 5 or more notes the presence of a couple of sooty small handprints outside and inside the satchel. This is where Sweet Hasna stole the first half of the rhyming clue used to locate the Sanctuary (see The Sanctuary Key sidebar for more details).
- Perception (DC 25) or automatic if the PCs take Zubayr's robe and shirt and trousers off—Zubayr wears a silk money-belt. This is a common enough item in this day and age, but Hasna missed it in her glee at discovering the clue she thought was the only one. Within the belt is a purse containing 30 pp, a small silk purse made from a pig-face containing 3 small but very fine jet stones worth 200 gp each, an ancient arcane scroll of *finger of death* sealed with a perverted stylized symbol of Bastet devouring a host of screaming worshippers (stolen from the Sanctuary), and a battered piece of waxed parchment containing the second part of the rhyming clue. For more information, see The Sanctuary Key sidebar and Appendix A.
- Details on the use of the *speak with dead* spell are given in Part Two of this adventure, if the PCs already have access to this spell and cast it here, consult that section for details of what answers the body may give.

The Charnel House



Level One

Basement



S: Scholar

R: Rotting Corpse

11

5 SULTAN'S LAIR (CR 3 AND VARIABLE)

Sultan keeps his door shut and locked with a good lock. The glass window, which is 12 inches square, can be smashed to allow access. A Small character can readily climb through the empty frame, but a Medium character requires a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check; both are full-round actions that provoke an attack of opportunity. Bear in mind that Sultan has left a room guardian bound to this chamber (see below for details).

Beyond is a large semi-circular room roughly split into three areas—the first is a bedchamber, the second is a cramped library and reading desk, the last is a curious museum to necromancy. There are skeletons and mummies in a dozen sarcophagi here shrouded in sand.

Creatures: Sultan has a guardian he keeps inside the room, lurking within the sand at the base of his corpses—an anubian (Southland Bestiary). The creature acts as a guardian for the necromancer when he is in his home, and answers his call.

Anubian

CR 3

XP 800

hp 26 (*Southlands Bestiary* 9)

One of the mummies hosts a swarm of creatures that is held within its chest cavity and which can only be released by damaging its chest. Sultan is aware of this swarm, and has left it alone. The mummy occasionally twitches due to the swarm moving within, and a successful DC 25 Perception check notes a curious

humming from inside the mummy. If the bindings are cut or even a single hit point of damage is inflicted to the host, the swarm within erupts outwards and attacks.

Manabane Scarab Swarm

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 49 (*Southlands Bestiary* 65)

Treasure: One of the mummies has an iron-and-gold trimmed masterwork nurian hook (*Southlands* 70) worth 700 gp hanging on shards of bound human sinews about its neck, another grips a silver owl figurine bound in decayed juniper wood worth 250 gp. The necromancer's spellbook lies within the library area and contains all his listed spells plus *blight* and *waves of fatigue*. Also among the books, most of which are to do with preservation and mummification of corpses, is a lavishly illustrated treatise on embalming worth 300 gp, a fine cloth of gold trimmed map of the Southlands worth 250 gp and a selection of Ishadia poetry bound in a book made of alligator skins with a sold and obsidian carved buckle worth 300 gp.

SWEET HASNA—A WOMAN IN MOURNING? (CR 5)

Hasna has been told not to come back to the Dogs without the other half of the rhyming key, and has hit upon removing the corpse for a fuller examination, possibly with a *speak with dead* spell, by pretending to be Zubayr's niece—and what's more she has the recently forged papers to prove it, as well as being "friends" with local bigwig Akman-Sut—or at least that's her story. If you like you can roll Hasna's Linguistics check if one of the PCs have the skills to detect her forgery, or assume the result of her check is 15.

THE SANCTUARY KEY

The location of the entrance to the Sanctuary was discovered by the scholar Zubayr in a two-part rhyming hieroglyph text written in Ancient Nurian, a translation of which is provided in Appendix A. The location of hidden or secret places was often set down as such keys for those of faith to follow and translate accordingly as a successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check confirms. A character possessing any one of the two keys and succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Linguistics check deduces—as Zubayr and Abdul did—that there are two parts to this rhyme. This check also allows the character to deduce that such clues are common to prevent knowledge being totally lost to the faithful.

A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (Local) or Knowledge (history) check knows that a karam (the unit of length mentioned in the rhyme) is an ancient measurement of length equivalent to three feet. If the PCs do not have the skills to translate the rhyme, scholars within the city of Per-Bastet can be located with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check to gather information. Such scholars may be reluctant to translate what is considered holy text and you may wish to take this avenue of exploration and interaction into a side-trek or roleplaying section.

The consequences of following one half of the rhyme separately are detailed in the section on the Sanctuary later in this adventure.



Hasna's arrival should be used to throw an unexpected spanner in the works, and probably best occurs just as the PCs are about to attack Sultan. The thief rings the bell courteously and has brought a pair of helpers with her to remove her beloved uncle in a coffin.

How this scene develops is up to you—it could become an awkward interaction and bit of roleplaying or a three-way fight. It might work well as a combination of the two. The PCs might browbeat Sultan into letting the body go and then ambush Sweet Hasna—it's totally up to them. If they can, Hasna and her beloved "brothers" (werecrocodiles in Abdul's employ and specifically told to bring back the body or else) take their dear uncle's body straight to the frighteningly defended home of Abdul-Haqq. Suggestions for what happens then are included in Part Two of this adventure. Possible consequences for other actions the PCs might take are also detailed in Part Two. Remember that attacking coffin bearers in the street is likely to lead to outrage from local residents and guards; reckless PCs could get in very hot water very quickly.

Hasna claims local councilman Akman-Sut was a friend of Zubayr and outraged when he heard the body had not been properly respected. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check quickly realizes that Sut does not see just anyone and a waiting period of several days is the minimum generally required for an audience.

Hasna wears the stolen *calling cat* on an ancient leather cord about her neck. A close examination of this curious clay scarab and a successful DC 20 Perception check shows that the object has been buried in sand for some time; its leather cord is very, very old and has been recently re-tied.

Abdul-Haqq's pet and spy the imp Sharbit lurks invisibly in the chimney opening as soon as Hasna enters, and watches what happens. The imp takes no action in any combat and always tries to remain safe. Once he's seen enough, Sharbit flies back to his master and reports what has happened. This is expanded on in Part Two of this adventure.

Sweet Hasna**CR 4****XP 1,200**Human rogue 3/witch 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +8**DEFENSE****AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)**hp** 35 (5 HD; 2d6+3d8+12)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Ranged** javelin +6 (1d6) or

mwk composite shortbow +7 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks hexes (cursed wound, flight^{APG}), sneak attack +2d6**Witch Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +3)At will—*feather fall* (self only)**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +3)1st—*burning hands* (DC 13), *burning hands* (DC 13), *command* (DC 12)0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 11), *guidance*, *mending*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 11)**Patron** Shadow**TACTICS****Before Combat** Hasna sobs copiously and demands justice for her beloved uncle.**During Combat** Hasna wants to avoid combat, and knows her two “brothers” are not up to much but may provide cover. She’ll play at fighting a little, trying to get into a flanking position, but really just wants the body.**Morale** If it’s obvious she’s overwhelmed, Hasna flees using her *potion of spider climb*, but stays near enough to witness any fallout. For more information, see Part Two. If captured, Hasna is more than keen to point out her story up to this point and that she may be useful to the PCs. Afraid for her own safety, she goes to extraordinary lengths of betrayal and duplicity to remain alive—even if this means helping the PCs assault her bosses home. Bear in mind that Hasna is as cowardly as she is selfish.**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 7**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16**Feats** Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Spell Focus (evocation)**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Climb +8, Escape Artist +11, Fly +8, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (local) +9, Linguistics +5, Perception +8, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +11**Languages** Common**SQ** rogue talent (distracting attack^{APG}), trapfinding +1, witch’s familiar (parrot named Whistling Hesk)**Combat Gear** *feather token* (whip), *oil of flame arrow*, *potion of barkskin* +2, *potion of spider-climb*, javelin, mwk composite shortbow; **Other Gear** *calling cat* (see page 16), black mourning veil, black robe, forged papers (stating that Zubayr is Sweet Hasna’s uncle, signed by Akman-Sut, Guardian of Coin), goatskin purse containing 52 gp and 43 sp.**Whistling Hesk**Parrot (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*)

N Tiny magical beast (animal)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13**DEFENSE****AC** 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)**hp** 17 (1d8–1)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6**OFFENSE****Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)**Melee** bite +7 (1d3–4)**Space** 2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.**STATISTICS****Str** 2, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 6, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 9**Feats** Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse^B**Skills** Acrobatics +10 (+2 when jumping), Climb +10, Escape Artist +7, Fly +11, Perception +13, Spellcraft +3, Stealth +18**SQ** improved evasion**Sweet Hasna’s Brothers (2)****CR 3****XP 800 each**Werecrocodiles (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4*)**hp** 27 each

The werecrocodiles both appear as very fat men with overly broad grins who bear a simple wooden casket between them. Each has a battle axe over his shoulder held in place by a leather handle. They shed copious crocodile tears as they manhandle Zubayr’s body away while others discuss the matter. In truth, they like fighting and hope they can use their death roll ability today.

Sharbit**CR 2****XP 600**Imp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)**hp** 16

PART 2—THE PLOT THICKENS

The PCs may or may not have Zubayr's body and part of the rhyming text describing the location of the Sanctuary, but they should know by now that there is more to this situation than meets the eye. They may have had to take drastic action to complete this mission or may even have totally failed it, possibly deliberately. Whatever happened in the charnel house, the Karima is outside watching them and Sharbit—Abdul's pet spy—is likely to be winging his way back to tell his master what has happened, and a third interested party is about to enter the fray.

You therefore need to be flexible in your use of this pivotal second part of the adventure as the PCs are suddenly a party of interest to three very different groups—the Dogs, the Princess, and—if they have the *calling cat*—a hunting party of undead who left the Sanctuary and are looking to punish intruders and prevent any further attacks.

The PCs, of course, can trust anyone they please or go it alone and make enemies of everyone else here.

This requires you to use your judgement, as well as deciding how you want the NPCs' actions to play out—always be prepared to pause or even stop a session if you want to think things through. Juggling these groups may be easier when you bear in mind the entirety of the plot.

- The Dogs of Per-Bastet have part of the rhyming text, and want all of it. The Dog's leader, a fat but cunning gnoll called Abdul-Haqq is used to getting his own way and expects Hasna to come crawling back with the second part of the rhyme before feeding her to his crocodiles. He's not used to failure and can be harsh, he throws his followers lives about like dust. He knows all about Karima and is likely to assume that whoever the PCs are, they are just the latest in a long line of blind followers. Whatever happens, he acts wisely and cleverly.
- Karima is desperate to find out what happened to Zubayr and find the Sanctuary, but uses her wits more than her sword. She's far more likely to try to feed the PCs morsels of information than fight or flee and follow if betrayed. She knows all about Sweet Hasna and where Abdul-Haqq lives, and she also knows he takes security very seriously. She's seen his crocodile pits up close and doesn't want to again.
- The undead followers on the path to the *calling cat* are desperate to destroy anyone and anything near it. By day, they have to move very carefully, but by night they move fast and with great purpose.

The most likely series of events sees the PCs going to Karima with or without the body, and that's the first event we detail in this part of the adventure.

THE PRINCESS—WHERE'S THE BODY? (CR 6)

Karima follows the PCs after their exploits, watching where they go to lodge, and is exactly where she promised she would be—at the southeastern tip of the Great Sand Pyramid (area 29 in Per-Bastet)—at dawn the next day. If the PCs don't turn up, she starts asking questions about them and immediately becomes their enemy. She heads to Abdul's, picking up her gnoll followers on the way, and watches for the rest of the day. If she sees the PCs enter, she waits outside with her lovesick gnolls, who would do anything to impress Karima. When the PCs emerge, the whole group briefly tails them and then attacks well out of sight of Abdul's. Karima uses her lovers to great effect, always ready to escape, and does so if injured to a point you think she is in serious danger. She then heals up and quickly rushes to the PCs' lodgings; if they aren't there, she starts walking along the River of Sand, asking for information and watching. Unless the PCs are clever, it is only likely a matter of time before she finds them, or traces of them, and this time waits until they emerge from the Sanctuary (where she assumes they are) to have one final confrontation.

If the PCs don't appear by the River of Sand and the trails grows cold, she gives up after three days, unless you feel something untoward brings the PCs to her attention.

If the PCs arrive with the body, she asks for it and hands the cash over as promised. She heads to a nearby temple and arranges for a casting of *speak with dead*, during which she learns about the rhyming text and the very briefest of information about the Sanctuary. Getting exact information from Zubayr's spirit about distances and lengths of rope is very unlikely, but if the PCs work out a way of doing it, don't stop them from heading directly to the Sanctuary. If Karima has only one part of the rhyme, she approaches the PCs and suggests that Abdul may well have the other part (if the PCs don't already know or suspect that). If she must, she feeds the PCs more information about the Sanctuary—particularly its wealth or evil-tainted objects—and suggests an attack upon Abdul's headquarters. She is careful to keep what she knows about that place to herself, only hinting vaguely at threats, but happy to negotiate rewards.

If they have neither part of the rhyming text, Karima suggests an attack upon Abdul as he is Sweet Hasna's employer.

Whatever the PCs choose to do, Karima is keen to get started immediately.

There are, of course, other ways that this can go. These are your players and you know how many unexpected tricks and ideas they've thrown at you before. Ultimately, you are the final arbiter, so try to have some fun with your PCs and don't try to bring all the threads together too soon. However, ensure that Karima doesn't allow herself to be stupidly drawn into a trap—she's too smart for that.

"Princess" Karima Gamila

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 40 (see page 6)

Besotted Advanced Gnolls (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

The besotted gnolls are here to out-do each other, so have fun with their ridiculous displays of bravado. Have them try skill checks they have no chance of succeeding, have them laugh and cheer and sing as they fight, or tear their shirts open and growl in a thoroughly manly gnollish way whenever Karima is watching.

SINISTER FOLLOWERS (CR 6)

Before the PCs make their move on Abdul, consider the final group that have emerged blinking into this adventure: the followers of the Devourers—an ugly aspect of Bastet that is determined that this time the secret of the Sanctuary remains a secret. Sister Withering, a fearful mummy, lumbers into the city above and immediately contacts a group of ghost followers of this aspect of Bastet. She instructs them to help her in

punishing the defilers of the Sanctuary, and follows the *calling cat* (see sidebar). Sister Withering is a vengeful spirit in this adventure. She seeks out the one wearing the *calling cat* and destroys her and anyone with her or is destroyed in the attempt. The mummy is not selective in her foes, simply attacking the one with the magic object and instructing the ghosts to do the same before turning on their friends. The undead are not mindless, and act sensible while ensuring that whomever has the cat is going to die. Clever characters in possession of the item and able to identify its properties might be able to use the magic item in an inventively vengeful way. In such a case, consider awarding XP for any foes they conveniently overcome in this way.

Use your judgement about the undead group. They can't just brazenly walk down unfamiliar streets by day, but the ghosts know secret quiet alleyways. They can attack whenever you wish, but it's suggested that this combat occurs on the first night of the adventure.

You might find yourself in the joyful position of the PCs having outwitted their enemies and planting the *calling cat* on their foes. In this case, you can play out the combat or use the CRs of the fighting groups to predict an outcome. For example, if the mummy and ghosts (a CR 6 group) attack Sweet Hasna and the werecrocodiles (a CR 5 group), Sister Withering wins, but she and her ghosts suffer damage that leaves them approximately 85% injured.

With her work done, Sister Withering returns to the Sanctuary by night. The PCs may be able to follow her and save themselves the trouble of having to work out the rhyme. If she escapes in this way, the mummy is with the other two in area 8 in Part Three of this adventure.

THE CALLING CAT (WONDROUS ITEM)

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 300 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

A simple clay cat figurine with a single searching eye in its bloated feline face, this object hangs on a dried ancient leather thong that has recently been snapped and re-tied.

A *calling cat* is one of up to 13 such objects created at the same time as the wondrous item's anchor object—a cat's cradle (see below). A *calling cat* has no powers of its own.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *locate object*;
Cost 150 gp.

CAT'S CRADLE (WONDROUS ITEM)

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 300 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This clay figurine appears to be an amalgamation of cat features placed in a random array.

A *cat's cradle* is created at the same time as a number of *calling cats* (see above). The cradle is magically linked to each of the *calling cats* and is able to locate any of these linked objects as though the wearer had cast a *locate object* spell, except that the *calling cat* is located over any distance, providing the two objects are on the same plane of existence.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *locate object*;
Cost 150 gp

Sister Withering

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female mummy (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

hp 60

Assume the mummy only generally attacks at night. She is careful to lurk about the shadows by day, slowly approaching the *calling cat*. When she spots her prey, she orders her ghast followers in and follows them, focusing her attacks upon the one wearing the *calling cat*, then moving to any friends or allies nearby.

Treasure: The mummy wears a *cat's cradle* (see sidebar) on leather thong about her neck, hefty fine silk robes worth 120 gp, a pair of enamelled gold earrings with floral motifs worth 600gp, and a gold scent bottle with incised foliate motifs with a glass liner worth 600 gp.

Ghast Rogues (3)

CR 2

XP 600

Ghast rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

CE Medium undead

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

Aura stench (10 ft., DC 15, 1d6 + 4 minutes)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 **Dex**, +4 natural)

hp 26 (3d8+13)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d6+3 plus disease), 2 claws +5 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks ghoul fever, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 15), sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat The ghastrs are cattle. Left to their own devices, they fight with cunning but Sister Withering uses them as expendable brutes. They seek to get into flanking positions, but are so afraid of the mummy that they do anything they are told.

Morale The ghastrs fight for as long as Sister Withering tells them to, even until they are destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Lookout^{APG}, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +10, Climb +9, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +10, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +10, Swim +8

Languages Catfolk, Common, Gnoll

SQ trapfinding +1

THE DOGS OF PER-BASTET

Abdul's lair lies near Jackal's Run in the north of the District of the Hyena as shown on the location map. Abdul keeps information about himself deliberately brief; he tends to kill anyone who learns too much about him. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information or Knowledge (local) check finds out that he has a reputation as a gourmet and has a thing for crocodiles, as well as the location of his crumbling townhouse with an elaborately tiled onion dome on top. He doesn't like visitors.

ABDUL'S LAIR FEATURES

The townhouse is actually a squat, fat-looking building some 50 feet in diameter, and rising over two floors. The lower part collapsed some time ago and now only parts of its mosaic floor remains, the rest is flooded. This suits Abdul, who has filled this area with crocodiles, leaving his nervy non-crocodile followers to use planks of wood to cross the watery gaps between what is left of the floor. Above, Abdul has a chained assemblage of larger crocodiles and amuses himself with the knowledge that the merest flick of his wrist enables the beasts to feed.

The walls are adobe and lime-washed inside and out, and can be scaled with a successful DC 25 Climb check.

INTERACTION WITH ABDUL-HAQQ

Abdul is not the PC's enemy, as he is keen to point out if he meets them. PCs arriving at his house that are known to him are escorted over the crocodile-infested ground floor and into the crocodile menagerie where Abdul talks down to them from the floor above. He has one part of the rhyme, and is willing to enter a partnership with anyone who has the second part, providing they don't also work with Karima, who clearly has gotten very much under his skin. Such a three-way alliance is impossible, and if he learns that the PCs are in league with Karima, he instantly releases his beasts and orders his followers to attack.

Abdul is very charming, however, and if an alliance is suggested, he accepts. If Sweet Hasna is alive, he only allows the rhyme to go if she accompanies it with two of his werecrocodile brothers. If the PCs killed her, it isn't a deal-breaker (he never liked her much), and he just sends the two werecrocodiles. In both cases, Abdul intends to betray the PCs. He has them followed by an invisible Sharbit, who soon reports back any descent into the river. When the PCs emerge from the Sanctuary later, Abdul and his remaining followers are almost certain to be outside waiting for them.

1 THE GREAT GONG DOOR

(CR 7)

You stand before a great weathered door wreathed in beads and glass shapes. There is an iron-grilled viewing hatch in the door, while an archway above depicts people being eaten by crocodiles. Nearby hangs a great gong and mallet.

A werecrocodile peers through the hatch in response to those who ring the gong. He politely says that Mr. Haqq is busy. Visitors are only allowed entry if they convince the lycanthrope that they have the second part of the rhyme, in which case the planks within are laid out to allow access.

Trap: The door is horribly trapped. Abdul has a key, but those who attempt to open it without it trigger the trap.

SUMMON MONSTER VI TRAP

(Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook)

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*summon monster VI*, summons 1d3 Large fire elementals)

2 CROCODILE TEARS

(CR 6)

Beyond the door is a ruined chamber, its floor broken and swamped with murky water. Fragments of mosaics depicting men being eaten by crocodiles litter small sections of the floor. A large pile of timbers is stacked nearby. The outer sagging wall slips to the waters below. A large hole opens in the ceiling some twenty feet above.

The waters are between 8 and 12 feet deep and are very still (Swim DC 10). The pile of planks (on the marked area) used to cross the area by non-lycanthropes consist of eight 12-foot planks just under a foot wide (DC 10 Acrobatics to cross). Moving a plank over the linking raised areas is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The sloping outer wall is dusty and requires a successful DC 7 Acrobatics check to walk along.

A rope ladder hangs from the floor above but is usually coiled up unless visitors are invited, in which case it is lowered to allow access to the room above.

Creatures: Four crocodiles swim in the murky waters. In general, they only attack anything that falls into the water, but if attacked they emerge.

Crocodiles (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

3 THE CROCODILE MENAGERIE

(CR 6)

Twenty feet above is a wide dirty chamber, its only feature—beyond the matching holes in the floor and ceiling—are three huge crocodiles on chains.

Haqq loves his menagerie, and particularly that the merest twist of his hand on the controls above unleashes 5 feet of the chain around their necks. The chains when fully released (which they can be as a move-equivalent action) extend to 15 feet.

A rope ladder extends from this room into the chamber below, it is usually rolled up and is quite awkward to use (Climb DC 5).

Creatures: These crocodiles are nasty, they attack anyone that comes into their reach except the werecrocodiles, whom they fear enough to avoid.

Advanced Crocodiles (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 28 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary)

4 THE ONION DOME OF WIND-CHIMES

(CR VARIABLE)

This is a curious room. One section is smothered in silk cushions, while all about the chamber hang wind-chimes—hundreds of them. They tinkle in the slight breeze wafting through the upper dome, which is made of metal mesh.

Abdul spends all his time here and receives all his visitors while stood here. A small metal lever near a rolled-up rope ladder identical to the one in the room below allows control of the chains in the chamber below.

Creatures: Abdul, his imp Sharbit, and his two brothers remain here, but if Sweet Hasna is still alive, she is also here with any of the other two werecrocodiles she took to the Charnel House who made it back.

ABDUL-HAQQ

A very, very fat gnoll indeed, and what a mouth! He's got at least twice the number of teeth a normal gnoll should have, and all so clean and bright. He wears heavy dark robes.

Abdul is used to getting his own way. He's confident, often wildly so, and prone to wild rages. He isn't stupid,

The Dogs of Per-Bastet

Level 3



Level 2



Level 1

Lv: Lever
Lu: Ladder Up
Ld: Ladder Down

but getting there. He loves to hear his victims scream as his crocodiles eat them.

Abdul-Haqq

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male gnoll natural werecrocodile rogue 3/slayer 1
(*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4)

CN Medium humanoid (gnoll, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 43 (6 HD; 5d8+1d10+15)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *anarchic greatsword* +10 (2d6+7/19–20) or

Ranged thrown spear +6 (1d8+6/x3)

Special Attacks curse of lycanthropy, sneak attack +2d6 +2 bleed, studied target +1 (1st, move action)

TACTICS

Before Combat Abdul drinks his *potion of barkskin* and smiles broadly.

During Combat Abdul is pretty reckless in combat. He likes to use his Two-Handed Thrower feat to hurl his spears at those below, and directs his imp ally to flit in and out of combat and poison foes. He considers all of his followers expendable.

Morale Abdul is like any bully, and if wounded, he backs down. If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, he tries to withdraw from any combat, suggesting to any foe that those who kill him will pay when the other Dogs find them. If cornered, he fights to the death, very reluctantly but fiercely.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Iron Will, Two-Handed Thrower^{UC}, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Appraise +8, Bluff +3, Diplomacy –2 (+2 to change attitude vs. crocodiles), Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +7, Linguistics +4, Perception +10, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Gnoll, Undercommon

SQ change forms, lycanthropic empathy, rogue talent (bleeding attack +2), track +1, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +4, *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *anarchic greatsword*, 3 spears, magenta-colored robe

Werecrocodiles (2 to 4)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 27 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4)

Sweet Hasna

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 35 (see page 14)

Sharbit

CR 2

XP 600

Imp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

hp 16

Treasure: The wind-chimes weigh a total of 47 pounds, and all but one are fairly nice but standard. As a group they are worth 750 gp. One particularly fine chime is made of gold-bound cylinders set with small obsidians and carved with hieroglyphs; it is worth 400 gp. A cobalt blue pottery ewer depicting cocks fighting basilisks (worth 250 gp), a very fine silver-lined ostrich egg-shaped goblet (worth 600 gp), and four warm crocodile eggs sit upon several small trays and stands around the room. The floor is covered with a Bastet pictorial carpet depicting the goddess surrounded by attendees (worth 1,200 gp).



PART 3—THE GROWLING SANCTUARY

By securing both parts of the rhyming key (see Appendix A), the PCs have the exact location of the entrance to the Growling Sanctuary, which lies 303 feet northwest upstream of the bridge that carries the Way of Bastet. The top of the eye entrance detailed below is 46 feet below the location given for the fixing peg. The figures don't need to be totally exact but bear in mind how difficult it is to swim and impossible to see in the River of Sand.

PCs finding this exact location and examining it closely with a successful DC 25 Perception check see the hole left by the peg Zubayr used to secure his rope. The peg was subsequently stolen by children. This DC increases by 1 for every foot the PCs are away from the exact spot.

From there, the PCs can descend to area 1.

THE FALSE ENTRANCE

(CR 5)

If the PCs only have the first half of the rhyme and measure 360 feet along the River of Sand from below the bridge for the Way of Bastet they find the false entrance some 50 feet below the river surface. If the PCs reach this point, read or paraphrase the following description.

A curious circular opening lurks in the riverbank, the river of sand kept at bay by its angle to the river.

The opening leads to a short corridor which enters a 15-foot wide circular space covered in images of stylized cats.

Trap: The chamber is trapped. A trigger stone lies just within the door, marked X on the map. Stepping on it triggers a falling block trap (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). The blocks seals off the entrance, and those caught under it are targeted by a +15 melee attack. Characters in the trapped area can escape the block by attempting a Reflex save (DC 20 or DC 25 if at the point marked X); characters who succeed are injured but can fling themselves into the river outside, but those who do not are sealed within by the block.

Those within this foul chamber after the block seals it find that the raging river outside scraping along the outer walls make a curiously unsettling steady noise resembling a deep satisfied purr.

GROWLING SANCTUARY FEATURES

The Growling Sanctuary sits at a two-way tributary of the River of Sand. As the river plays such a significant role in this part of the adventure, it's worth reiterating the rules given in the Southlands campaign guide.

The River of Sand carries objects and creatures along at 30 feet per round. Those caught in its flow must attempt a DC 10 Climb or Swim check as a move action each round to remain on the surface. To move 5 feet in a chosen direction (except for against the river's current), they also must attempt a DC 15 Climb or Swim check as a standard action. Those with a burrow speed can move in any direction at their full burrow speed (except against the current). Air-breathing creatures cannot breathe under the river and begin drowning if submerged.

The side tributaries are calmer, moving characters at 15 feet per round, and characters succeeding at a DC 15 Swim check can move up to 10 feet in any direction—including against this current.

Movement in this adventure is likely to be a case of PCs finding an outer wall to pull themselves along with; this requires a successful DC 15 Climb check. This DC also applies to characters moving along the main river bank.

Within, the Growling Sanctuary echoes loudly with the movement of the river, increasing the DC of all Perception checks related to sound by 4, and granting a +4 circumstance bonus to all Stealth checks. Where outside walls abut the river tributaries, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check can deduce that the river runs immediately behind the wall.

The interior walls are seething with blasphemous carvings depicting a foul aspect of Bastet worship—scenes depict felines feasting on living people. A character succeeding a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies this blasphemous aspect of worship for the cat-god, and one that is shameful to true worshipers of Bastet. The whole dungeon is under the effects of a *desecrate* spell.

1 THE EYE

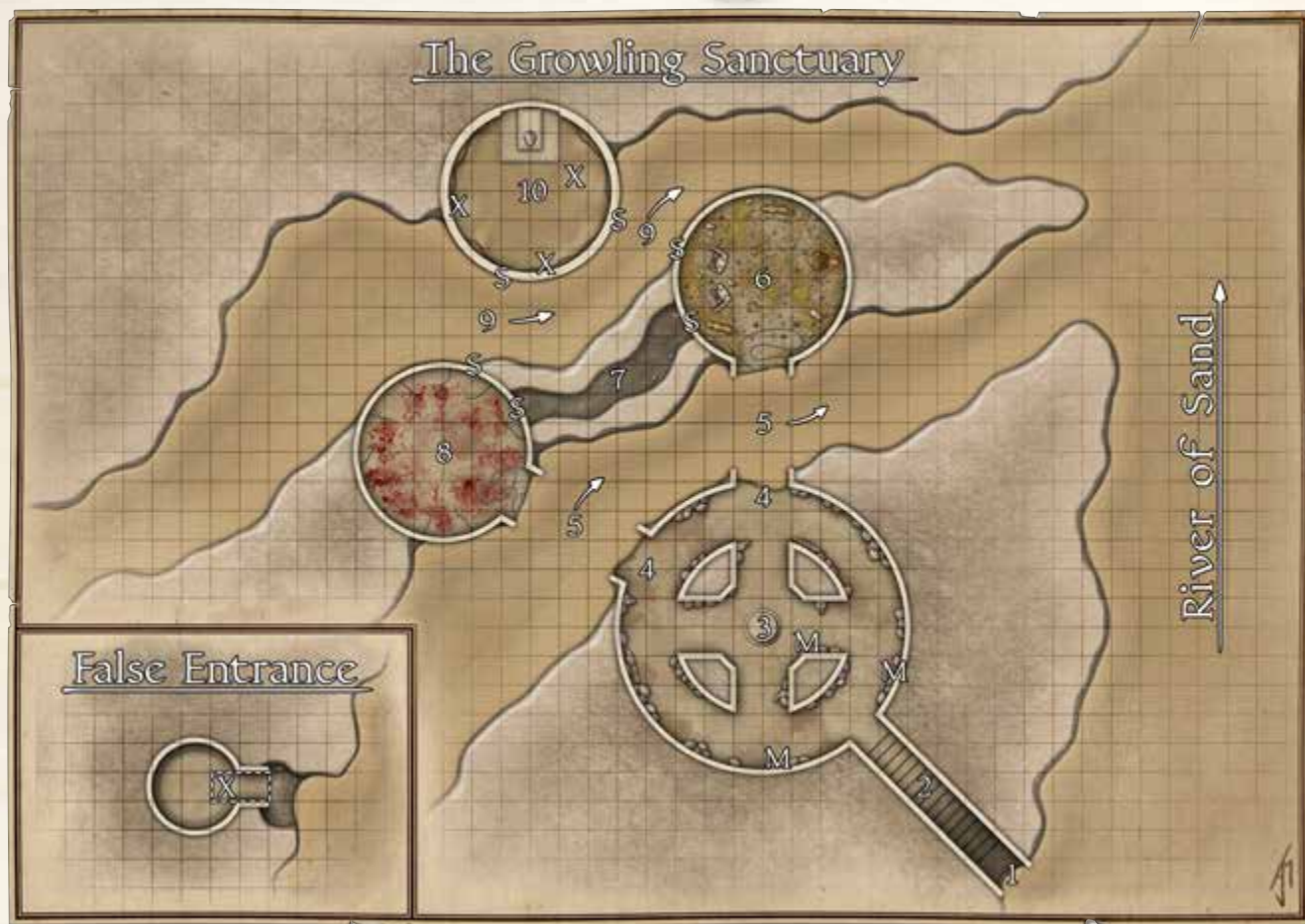
An overhanging opening is free from the sand river. The opening has a carved recess resembling a feline eye, and a corridor slithers away upwards from this opening.

The overhanging entrance is a tight squeeze, and a successful DC 10 Climb check is needed to clamber into the space from the river.

2 THE ARCHED BRIDGE

(CR 5)

The corridor ahead rises sharply, towering out of sight up a series of very deep steps. The whole air is caressed with sand.



The steps are angled at almost 135 degrees, and while a Climb check is not required, movement beyond a 5 foot step per round requires a successful DC 7 Acrobatics check.

Creatures: Having now suffered two incursions in their domain, the elders of the Sanctuary have positioned a pair of guardians at the crest of the steps, a place marked by a pair of cat-headed statues. The two creatures—anubians—are able to use the abundant sand around the steps using their *sand step* and *haboob* attacks on intruders. The creatures are expecting the return of Sister Withering, and if any of the PCs are dressed or appear as the mummy, they do not attack, bowing in deference.

Anubians (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 26 each (*Southlands Bestiary* 9)

3 THE OUTER SANCTUM (CR 6 OR VARIABLE)

The steep steps end before an archway formed of carved sandstone panthers facing each other with opened mouths. The corridors beyond are crammed with mummies, which form a guard of honor.

Mummies cram every outer wall of this area, creating an eerie watch of figures, which slump or stand in honor of the former location of the *grimalkin* idol, which previously sat upon a 5-foot wide dais some 2 feet high at the center of the chamber. It has been moved from its resting place to area 10.

Creatures: The elders placed a trio of guardians here, imy-ut ushabti clockworks that resemble mummies and which stand at the points marked X. The mummies only animate if an outsider passes them, at which point they watch their prey. If looked at directly, a successful DC 25 Perception check is required to see that they have indeed animated (until they attack). The clockworks have been instructed not to attack until intruders move into area 4, at which point they slowly move in for the kill.

Imy-ut Ushabti Clockworks (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Southlands Bestiary* 25)

Treasure: A few of the mummies retain personal effects dear to them in life, a successful DC 25 Perception check is required to locate each in this confusing mass of bodies. The items are an iron ring of *mind shielding* with a jackal-headed crocodile on it, a silver and lapis-lazuli

and ebony ceremonial barb-toothed mouth piece (worth 200 gp), a decaying wood and cloth headdress set with iron figurines depicting the scattered parts of human bodies each with a simple yet fine amethyst feline eye as a soul (worth 600 gp), and a crocodile mask with a masterwork punching dagger hidden in cloth inside the face. Hanging from five of the mummies are *calling cats* on leather thongs or hemp twine.

4 THE INVITATION

A low semicircular opening yawns from knee height here. A vast churning mass of sand oozes past and partially spills into the corridor here, its swift movement spilling a large quantity into the chamber as it passes.

The elders use this access as a link between the various small aspects of the Sanctuary, crossing the river by means of the fixed chains in areas 6 and 8. An iron ring hammered into the stone is hidden under the sands here (DC 20 Perception check to notice), but the elders removed the hooked chains attached to them when they retreated to the inner sanctum and attached areas.

The sands beyond are part of the river, their currents pulling swimmers as detailed earlier.

5 THE GROWLING RIVER

This tributary separates the outer and inner sanctums. The occupants of the Sanctuary move through using the iron fetters in areas 6 and 8.

6 THE INNER SANCTUM

(CR 7)

Beyond the sand river, you climb upward through an opening similar to the one you left and into a strange chamber. Every inch is covered in cats; many mummified, many skeletal, but some horribly stylized statues, carvings and creations of a disturbed mind. The figures spill deeply into the room and each face away from you. An iron chain lashed to a ring lies near the entrance.

The mummified and skeletal cats do not impede movement but crashing through them destroys them, leaving seething masses of yellow mold, a substance encouraged at preservation to fester within them. A character moving beyond a 5-foot step per round disturbs the mold in every square she walks through unless she succeeds at a DC 15 Acrobatics check. The figures are approximately 2 feet in height, so flying characters can easily pass over them. Characters disturbing the figures must attempt a Fortitude save against the mold's effects. The spores

then fall inert the round after unless stirred up by a spell such as *gust of wind*, in which case their effects occur in that square again.

The ring has 35-foot length of chain and ends in a hook. It is used by the undead to move through the river safely.

Creatures: Among the countless cats are three bastet temple cats. These creatures are cunning, and move between the other cats, using them to hide as though they had the ability hide in plain sight.

Bastet Temple Cat (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 35 each (*Southlands Bestiary* 17)

The remaining two elders in area 8 expect intruders and are alert for any signs of them. If the elders hear any combat in this area, one crawls along area 7, and briefly shows itself to inflict despair on the PCs to aid the cats. The mummy quickly returns along the linking corridor leaving the guardian there in place.

Treasure: Among the cats are a large Bastet pottery lion decorated with ochre glaze with gold teeth (worth 250 gp). Forced into the mouth of a dead mouse inside the lion's stomach is a pale blue ioun stone—the only likely way to reach the item is to break the figurine. In one corner, there is a fine brass torch stand with incised



decoration showing mice being swallowed by the moon (worth 400 gp). Set within the cat carvings are three pottery tiles set with gold and platinum figures showing cats devouring crocodiles; each tile is worth 120 gp. Two *calling cats* hang on stuffed cheetahs from vine and hemp ties.

A secret door links this chamber to area 8 via area 7. The opening lies behind a figure of a cat-headed man facing away from the room. The small door (DC 25 Perception to locate) is a semi-circular opening barely 2 feet at its arch. It centrally pivots into the cramped corridor beyond.

The cat figures all face toward area 10. The secret door to area 9 also shows a cat-headed human facing away. This one is set in the floor and is a semi-circular trapdoor. Below is a crawlspace with an iron ring similar to the one in area 4.

7 THE THROAT (CR 4)

This corridor is arched and very low, barely two feet high at its apex.

The Throat connects areas 6 and 8 and allows the two remaining elders to move between them. Medium and larger creatures can only move through this corridor while prone.

Creature: The linking corridor is guarded by a disgusting guardian forged by perverted magic long ago. It is a human ghast, but its limbs have been dislocated and broken and remade so that it now walks on four limbs instead of just two. The ghast, called the Hobbled One by the elders, is able to move with impunity through the narrow corridor, which it has never left. The creature emits pitiful nursery rhymes and voices its terrors about what is beyond its corridor. Its ankles and shoulders still bear the fetters used to break its body into its currents shape. If it can be taken out of this room it falls prone and whimpers in terror until returned to its home.

Because of the impediment of the corridor, the CR of this encounter is increased by 1.

OPTIONAL ENDING

If you like, consider having the mummies retreat to area 10 to fight a last battle with the PCs using the *grimalkin idol* to summon a dire lion. This protracted chase through the River of Sand and to the final item might make a more satisfying ending than having the mummies destroyed in this area. Be careful, however, with how tough this final event would be.

The Hobbled One

CR 3

XP 800

Advanced ghast (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

hp 19

8 THE DARK FEAST

(CR 8)

Dragging yourself from the sand river via an opening identical to the one on the other shore, you find yourself in a foul chamber. This place has been used for countless feasts of flesh, its walls and floors are littered with manacles and fetters. A storm cloud of rusting chains hangs from the ceiling, some fifteen feet above. An iron chain lashed to a ring lies near the entrance.

The Devourers cast *unhallow* in this location in a ceremony here many scores of years ago by devouring a hundred and one people over thirteen nights. The elders have made their main lair here, dispatching their beloved third—Sister Withering—to the surface in vengeance. The chain is identical to the one in G6 and is used by the elders to move through the river safely.

Creatures: The two mummies herein use the main temple guardian, an obscenity called a rotting wind (*Southlands Bestiary* 82), to protect themselves. The mummies control the undead wind and use it to confuse their opponents while they attack using their despair and slam attacks.

Rotting Wind

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 39 (*Southlands Bestiary* 82)

Sister Feline and Leonine

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Mummies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

hp 60

Treasure: Among the gnawed and broken bones, stretched sinews, and smashed jaws are a lacquer wristband shaped like a rampaging elephant and set with polished crocodile teeth (worth 75 gp) and a bronze ankle clasp carved with hieroglyphs showing the sun being pulled to the ground by a false king (worth 75 gp).

The secret doors to areas 9 and 7 are identical to those in area 6.

9 THE LAST RIVER

(CR 5)

This final part of the River of Sand is not just dangerous because of its nature, as an undead thing lurks here. The creature—an edimmu (*Southlands Bestiary* 49)—is able to fly through the river with impunity, its undeath enabling it to scent life as though it had a permanent

detect thoughts spell. The creature immediately attacks, and then withdraws, playing with its prey like a cat with a mouse.

Edimmu

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 47 (*Southlands Bestiary* 49)

10 THE SANCTUM OF SECRETS

(CR 8)

The two secret doors into this chamber are fairly easy to spot (DC 15 Perception) and angled at 45 degrees to the floor of the room so that those who move through them (a simple matter of pushing forwards) rise into the chamber from below. The iron chain beyond allows safer access back across the river for the elders to worship the objects herein.

Beyond the secret entrance lurks a stale-aired chamber, its recesses and floors littered with cat figures. Sand caresses every surface and mounds by the walls, which themselves hold hundreds of scrolls, tablets, and ceremonial tiles. The largest of these objects—a great bloated idol the size of a watermelon, squats on a sarcophagus which fills a large part of the chamber. The idol has a striking feature—where a single central eye should be on its forehead is a large ugly, bloody hole. An iron chain lashed to a ring lies near the entrance.

Creature: The sarcophagus holds one of two guardians within this final repository, a sarcophagus slime. The second guardian, a bound undead called a sand silhouette, rises from the sand if any intruders enter. The undead is a brute thing that does not have the power to open the sarcophagus. However, if the slime is released the undead keeps well away from it as the slime is a mindless guardian.

Sand Silhouette

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 57 (*Southlands Bestiary* 84)

Sarcophagus Slime

CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 42 (*Southlands Bestiary* 86)

Development: Areas marked X are pits filled with a curiously airy sand, which has the same qualities as quicksand. These sandy areas are slightly paler than the others, a successful DC 25 Perception check or DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check reveals something odd about them.

Treasure: The *grimalkin idol* (see page 26) is only one object of note here. Among the scrolls are an arcane scroll of *animate dead* and *waves of fatigue*, a divine scroll of *summon monster V*, and a partial arcane spellbook in the form of a series of bone-bound tablets and scrolls containing the arcane spells *cat's grace*, *dimensional anchor*, *ghoul touch*, and *vampiric touch*. The other tomes, scrolls and writings are profane but worth 2,500 gp to the right collector. A +1 *icy burst greatspear*; a bronze begging bowl worked in with depictions of revellers which functions as a bowl of sustenance; a Bastet scribe's table decorated with mother of pearl, bone, and ebony with a three-partitioned drawer each of which is lined with human tongues (worth 800 gp); a fantastically illustrated folding backgammon table complete with warring forces of camels and crocodiles, with ebony and silver figures and a platinum dice (worth 1,100 gp); a wax-sealed jar containing opaque water that is hundreds of years old, in the base of which is a fine diamond worth 800 gp; and a massive pottery tiger stuffed with ancient vine leaves and gold thread (worth 250 gp) can all be found here.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Locating and looting the temple might only be the start of the PCs adventures near the river—who or what is waiting for them is a matter of their actions and your judgement.

If the PCs openly brag about their horde, they soon come to the attention of the more legitimate aspects of Bastet worship: followers of the High Priestess Nafrini. A triad of clerics (CN female catfolk clerics of Bastet 7) take an overt interest in the PCs' affairs. If they have sold the foul objects collected in the Growling Sanctuary, the clerics instruct the PCs to get them back so the clerics can destroy them. If the PCs hand over the objects voluntarily, they see their stock rise in the city, as well as receiving the value of the items in letters of credit usable at the various temples about the city. Advisers to the High Priestess seek out the PCs with a series of adventures aimed at removing wickedness in Per-Bastet. If the PCs succeed at these quests, other, more lofty goals await them at the behest of the Council of Sands.

The fate of the *grimalkin idol* is a different matter. Do the PCs use it, donate it, or sell it? And if they try to sell it, how many interested collectors might there be who are keen to save their hard-earned cash...

APPENDIX

THE SANCTUARY RHYMING KEY

PART ONE

Great knowledge must secrets necessitate hiding for the learned

*The ignorant may not witness such gifts and be burned
But those who have need should always be able to find the Secrets*

If they have the gift of wisdom

A wise man will take a length of rope eighteen karams in length, and a stout iron stake a karam long

For the mistress river sand is fickle and her hungers always wake

The Wise would walk one hundred and twenty karams from the shadow of the bridge of the Way of Bastet

*With his back to the sun along the bank of the Sand River
To cast his line and seek the fish of understanding below...*

PART TWO

*...He would then be wise show his obedience to Bastet
and crawl backwards from her sight*

A wise man would crawl away, averting his eyes from her holiness and hunger and might

Nineteen karams back he should crawl

Then in offering to the goddess, cast a karam of rope into the river with a prayer

That done, he should offer one karam to the goddess of the river in a stout knot about his stake, the stoutest his strength can bear

For the goddess is fickle and hungry and aware

Make the stake cast a shadow across half its length from the noon's shadow upon the river's western shore before he secures it with all his might

Casting the rope into the river with a prayer, he should take courage and descend in thought

That secrets below are his to be caught.

GRIMALKIN IDOL (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong enchantment; **CL** 18th

Slot none; **Weight** 14 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A bloated idol designed like a smug cat whose flesh is distended with weight. The head has a stylized space for a single eye, but the socket is empty and bloody.

The *grimalkin idol* affects feline creatures—domestic cats, leopards, lynx, lions, tigers, servals, and any local variants thereof, including dire versions of these animals. Unlike the *grimalkin eye* (see below), the idol also affects those creatures that have feline ancestry—including feline lycanthropes, rakshasa, catfolk, and any other type of creature appropriate to your campaign.

The idol allows the holder to control all feline creatures within a 300-foot radius as per a dominate animal spell. The idol can be used to cast the following spells three times per day: *animal growth* and *greater magic fang*. Once per day, it can be used to cast *summon nature's ally V* (dire lion only). Once per week, the idol can be used to cast *mass cat's grace*.

If the *grimalkin eye* is reinserted into the *grimalkin idol*, the combined item can also be used to cast the following spells at will: *animal messenger*, *animal trance*, *calm animals*, and *charm animals*. The idol extends this ability to any feline or feline-related creature within 300 feet.

The idol is not an evil artefact, but an unaligned one.

DESTRUCTION

After the *grimalkin idol* is washed in the water of 100 rivers, it can be destroyed like a normal magic item by a canine or canine-related creature (gnoll, hound archon, werewolf, etc.).

GRIMALKIN EYE (WONDROUS ITEM)

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 5th

Slot neck; **Price** 2,800 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This fist-sized spherical tiger's-eye gem contains a dark slit, making it appear like a real feline eye. Threads of a sand-eroded leather thong hang from the glowering eye.

The *grimalkin eye* affects feline creatures—domestic cats, leopards, lynx, lions, tigers, servals, and any local variants thereof, including dire versions of these animals. It does not affect any feline creature without the animal type, such as weretigers and rakshasa that have feline appearance but aren't true cats.

Once per day, the *grimalkin eye* allows the wearer to cast *dominate animal* as a spell-like ability, but only to affect a cat. Three times per day, the wearer can use the following spells; *animal messenger*, *animal trance*, *calm animals*, and *charm animals* on any feline animal.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animal messenger*, *animal trance*, *calm animals*, *charm animals*, *dominate animal*; **Cost** 1,400 gp

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Strange Doings in the Sultan's Charnel House...

Lo! The corpse of poor, departed Scholar Zubayr, washed up on the shores of the River of Sand, lies in the charnel house...destined to become dinner for a cult of cannibals. Though distasteful in the extreme, this isn't your concern—except that Princess Karima Gamila, the most beautiful gnoll in Per-Bastet, has begged you to rescue her friend's body and help discover his fate.

Still unmoved to action? Know then, adventurer, that the Scholar was hot on the trail of lost treasure! If you can claim his body from the cult and decipher the clues he left behind, long-buried riches and powerful magic might be yours.

But nothing is simple in this city of dark wonders: others converge on the charnel house in pursuit of wealth, vengeance, or both. Can you out-fight and outwit vile cultists, undead catfolk, a cunning werecrocodile gnoll, and the deadly secrets that lie buried beneath the River of Sand?

Grimalkin is a level 3-5 Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible adventure in the city of Per Bastet in the Southlands Campaign Setting. Play it as the thrilling sequel to *Cat and Mouse*, or as a standalone treasure hunt!

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