

PATHFINDER CHRONICLESTM



DARK MARKETS A GUIDE TO KATAPESH

By Stephen S. Greer and
Amber E. Scott



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DARK MARKETS

A GUIDE TO KATAPESH

A Pathfinder Chronicles Supplement

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Katapesh—Land of Adventure!

There is only one law in Katapesh: “Do as you will, but do not interfere with trade.” Though there are other laws clarifying this concept and parsing out the minutiae of guild rights, property rights, and taxes, this simple concept has allowed Katapesh to grow from a frontier outpost to a great trading port, rivaling even the mighty city-nation of Absalom. All manner of conventional and illicit items pass through Katapesh on their way to other parts of the world, from spices and metals to drugs and slaves, all of them profitable enterprises under the watchful eyes of the mysterious Pactmasters. But there is more to Katapesh than vice and trade. Pilgrims of Sarenrae and Iomedae seek holy sites to commune with their deities. Gnolls and monsters raid farms and besiege walled cities. Strange ruins call to adventurers with promises of lost magic. Surrounded by

formidable mountains and merciless deserts, the country of Katapesh is a fertile ground for commerce, zealotry, magecraft, and conventional battle, with its great capital city the chaotic center of a vast web of money, news, and goods connecting the Inner Sea to strange foreign lands.

THE COUNTRY OF KATAPESH

Citizens of many nations, adherents of many faiths, and observers of many cultures come to Katapesh to barter. The constant climate and predictable geography offers a solid backdrop to the bright mosaic of people and animals that wander across the nation’s face.

Climate: Katapesh enjoys a stable climate year-round, excepting the period of fierce rainstorms in early spring and late fall. For the majority of the year, the sun shines steadily and infuses the land with dry heat. In northern Katapesh,



the barrier of the mountains provides a natural weather blocker that directs rain down onto the savannah and leaves the bordering Osirion lands to the north deprived of moisture. Without the mountains, Katapesh would quickly develop a climate similar to its northern neighbor.

Twice a year, at the turning of the seasons, cold westerly winds coming off the Obari Ocean collide with warm easterly winds from the Mwangi Expanse and create a period of severe rainstorms lasting several weeks. These rainstorms flood the savannah and also refill the many endorheic lakes—earthen basins that collect rainwater but have no connection to rivers—that support desert life, sustaining it for months of drought.

Geography: Several distinct areas make up the vast landmass that comprises Katapesh. To the south, stretches of desert edge the river which forms a natural border between Katapesh and Nex. To the west, the deserts shift into rocky flatland that rises to become the Barrier Wall mountains. Northward, the deserts give way to grassy savannahs interspersed with arid patches. Most wild pesh crops exist in these sandy stretches between the plains. Farther north, the Brazen Peaks loom as they trace the border between Katapesh and Osirion. Finally, the eastern border of Katapesh breaks off in a jagged coastline along the Obari Ocean; frequent natural harbors afford refuge for the many ships that ply the water between Katapesh's mainland and her satellite island, which holds the city of Okeno.

Fauna: Animals of great strength and beauty inhabit Katapesh, but vicious, dangerous monsters also make their homes here. Dhabbas (jackal-like creatures indigenous to the area), basilisks, camels, wild horses, geiers, jackalweres, monstrous vermin of all kinds, and sand eels live in the southern desert areas of Katapesh. On the savannah, herds of camelopards, Katapeshi lions, calopi, and blink dogs roam. In the mountains, gnolls pose the largest threat, but travelers also encounter pugwampis (usually disdainfully referred to as “jackal rats”), behirs, dragonnes, yrthaks, athachs, hares, mountain goats, and mountain lions.

Imports and Exports: Pesh, a narcotic distilled from pesh cacti, is Katapesh's largest export. Merchants from neighboring lands bring pesh to locations as far away as Absalom and Cheliah, sometimes smuggling the drug to avoid import taxes or laws banning addictive substances. Katapesh also deals in slaves, and slave barges from Okeno glide up and down the coast, transferring their living cargo to caravans going overland through Osirion and Qadira. Some countries, notably Andoran, object to Katapesh's lax attitude toward slavery and refuse to engage in any Katapeshi trade. So much commerce flows through Katapesh, though, that few countries can afford such an all-out boycott, and most turn a blind eye to the less savory aspects of Katapesh's industry.

KATAPESHI GARB

Thin, loose robes and matching headscarves called kaftans remain the most popular clothing in the plains and deserts. The loose robes help keep the body cool, while the scarf protects its wearer from the sun. In the past, most kaftans were white, as the bright color reflects sunlight and leaves the wearer cooler. In recent years, pale tints of yellow, green, and blue also became fashionable, and in the Katapesh marketplace today kaftans stitched with magical thread keep their wearers magically comfortable (though not as protected as *endure elements* or similar magic might ensure). These kaftans sell for 50 gp each and come in a wide variety of patterns, colors, and styles.

In the swamps and jungles, tight-fitting clothes that provide no home for insects or lizards are common, as are waterproof cloaks made of oiled canvas. In the mountains, travelers wear thick leather gloves and boots as defense against the sharp rocks and nettles in the area.

The bazaars of Katapesh trade in every material under the sun. Merchants find raw ore, pesh, silk, animal hides, gems, ivory, rare herbs and spices, slaves, artifacts, and artwork available within Katapesh for trade or export. Imports include agricultural products such as wheat, rice, wool, linen, lumber, and alcohol.

Customs: In the desert heat, or in the gnoll-infested mountains, refusing hospitality to a traveler in need is akin to murder. Yet Katapesh is at heart a mercantile nation. Thus, many customs have developed around the concept of hospitality. Wealthy or secure travelers must offer food and shelter to those in need. The recipient of the hospitality must offer to pay for the aid, which the host refuses. The recipient graciously accepts, but then either performs a service for his host or leaves what payment he can hidden somewhere for the host to find after the guest's departure. Guests who leave without payment of any kind find a cold reception from their host and his allies should they ever meet again, and may in time find hospitality refused to him.

Hosts, merchants conducting a business deal, and travelers sharing a campfire often offer to share a pesh pipe with their companions, and to refuse is considered uncouth, if not downright rude.

A host always enters his tent before his guests, on the chance that a dangerous snake or scorpion might have slipped in.

Transportation: Light wagons can cross the flat plains of northern Katapesh, but prove useless in the mountains and the desert. Most people travel by horseback or camelback, with additional horses, camels, and mules in a train to transport goods. Gnomes and halflings



ride mules or calopi, and sometimes befriend blink dogs that serve as willing mounts. Farther east, ships foster much of the trade and travel in and out of Katapesh, and provide the only means of accessing Okeno. Small skiffs carry travelers across some of the swamps, but these generally bog down in mud and are impractical for any significant distances. As the main river in Katapesh crosses the border into Nex many times, it is not suitable for legal travel.

WILDERNESS LOCATIONS

The following locations are curiosities of the wilder parts of the land of Katapesh.

White Canyon: White Canyon is the second-largest gnoll hold in Katapesh. While neither as large nor as dangerous as Pale Mountain, White Canyon still poses

a serious threat to travelers and settlers in the area. **Rath Sandstalker** (NE male gnoll ranger 7) conducts frequent raids on caravans and small settlements, seeking relatively healthy humanoids to sell at the Fleshfairs. Sandstalker's gnolls are experts in the art of nonlethal combat, and make frequent use of nets and saps to subdue their victims.

White Canyon's natural defenses make it a difficult site to assault, though the warriors of Fort Longjaw attempt an attack from time to time. The sheer, chalky walls of the canyon break easily and refuse to hold pitons or other climbing equipment. The gnolls set watchpoints along the canyon to forestall ground assaults, and string nearly invisible nets across the canyon's width to discourage aerial predators. The canyon is not a single passage, but a network of branching gulfs whose walls narrow overhead, often forming a roof over the narrowest areas. The gnolls live in hide tents in the most sheltered areas, or dig burrows at the base of the canyon walls. Sandstalker lives in the largest of these burrows, with sharpened stakes jutting from the burrow mouth to deter attackers.

Pale Mountain: Located near the junction of the Brazen Peaks and the Barrier Wall of northwest Katapesh, Pale Mountain has long been avoided by travelers, as it is well known to be the haunt of numerous tribes of gnolls, many of whom have abandoned the traditional veneration of Lamashtu for the violent teachings of Rovagug. In recent years, a mysterious new ruler has come to lord over the Pale Mountain tribes—the Carrion King. While

he has yet to organize the regional tribes in a coordinated assault on the nearby lowlands, many believe it is only a matter of time before such an event occurs.

House of the Beast: Situated on the barren slopes of notorious Pale Mountain, the House of the Beast is one of the most legendary temples dedicated to Rovagug in Katapesh. Said to have been built by a mysterious fire spirit who rose from the mountain's molten heart, the House of the Beast once sheltered a particularly powerful cult of men, gnolls, and even genies, all of whom venerated the Rough Beast and received strange and horrendous powers in return for their worship. Today, the House of the Beast lies in partial ruins, but rumors hold that a terrible new master has taken up residence somewhere deep within its haunted halls.

Mirazha: Years ago, Mirazha stood as a waypoint for weary travelers. Then an unknown disaster struck the town. Visitors found the buildings vacant, the accoutrements of daily life suggesting their inhabitants had dropped whatever they were doing and abandoned their homes. At first it

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seemed Mirazha was deserted, but the next traveler to visit the oasis on the edge of town made a grisly discovery: the bodies of the townsfolk, each one desiccated and withered, all the moisture seemingly drained from their bodies.

For a time, Mirazha stood abandoned, considered a site of ill fortune. The desert sands eventually covered over the buildings, the oasis dried up, and the town was forgotten. Now, though, some evil has awoken the memory of Mirazha and its doomed inhabitants. Travelers report seeing a welcoming little town sitting on the edge of a sparkling oasis, but the moment a living person enters Mirazha, the town and its new victim vanish from sight, snuffed out like an illusion. Adventurers investigating the area have yet to spot the cursed town, but sometimes turn up the mummified body of one of Mirazha's vanished victims, buried in the sands where the oasis once stood.

Slither Cove: The population of snakes, lizards, and other reptiles gave this village its name. Twelve years ago, an unexpected flood caused the waters of Vargas Swamp to permanently rise to a new level, destroying most of the buildings of Slither Cove. The survivors of the disaster, disgusted by their ill fortune and depressing surroundings, abandoned the ruins.

Eight years ago, rumors surfaced that the flood that destroyed Slither Cove was conjured, a result of dark sacrifices and appeals to some evil god—a ritual possibly tied to the Creeping Watcher (see page 8). Whoever called the flood supposedly did so to uncover a treasure that lay hidden below the town. Whether there really was a treasure, and whether its seeker found it, no one knows. Fortune hunters occasionally venture into the sunken ruins of Slither Cove in search of clues. Those who return report nothing but vicious reptilian predators—which may be the reason some never emerge.

Painted Flutes: A vast canyon filled with pillars of rock—hoodoos, totem-like formations carved by wind—displays layers of brightly colored stone descending more than 30 feet into the ground. A constant whistle fills this canyon as the strong winds grind away at the hoodoos and refine their eerie, elegant forms. When the wind reaches precisely the right speed, haunting music fills the canyon. No mortal composed the songs the hoodoos play, and every time they sing, the tune is different. Dedicated musicians sometimes travel to Painted Flutes to listen to the eerie moans and whistles of the wind sawing at the rock and gather inspiration for their own works. The unusual music also draws the attention of air elementals and jann, who often prowl the deep canyons.

Trackless Storm: This area measures several miles in diameter, and is characterized by the constant shifting sands that bury and uncover landmarks overnight. Regardless of the time of year or surrounding weather conditions, sandstorms always whirl here. At times the

storms might be mild, hardly more than a dusty cloud to annoy travelers. At others, the sandstorms rage wildly enough to scour skin from bone.

Few venture into the Trackless Storm unless ignorant or truly desperate. Some travelers, however, seek the rumored calm within the Trackless Storm, a valley where the winds fall silent and the ground remains still. There, it's said, a thick crop of pesh, exceptionally hardy and pure, grows lush and unclaimed. None so far have found this hidden valley—or if they have, they're not saying anything.

Zolurket Mines: Once called Tar Urkatka, this played-out platinum mine now goes by the name Zolurket, Keleshite for "Dark Death." Zolurket remains abandoned for two reasons: the lack of any worthwhile ores and minerals, and the presence of undead predators.

Exactly what types of undead lurk in Zolurket remains unknown. While several groups of treasure-hunters have since delved below, chasing rumors that Zolurket was abandoned before its wealth was depleted entirely, the stories that emerge remain fragmented and vague.

What is known is that a dwarven ghost appears to every party that descends. The ghost, a miner engulfed in a pocket of poison gas after breaking through into a subterranean chamber, identifies himself only as "Tib," and offers guidance to some but seems infuriated by others. Stories conflict; some say that Tib's ghost is seeking something he lost when he died, such as his pickaxe, while others claim he searches for a worthy individual on whom he can bestow the secret knowledge of a rich platinum vein. Whether Tib's presence is connected to the rest of the undead activity in the area remains unknown.

Lightning Stones: Garundi legends state that this line of 20-foot-tall menhirs which dot the Barrier Wall mountains near the border of Nex mark a staging ground where earth and air elementals meet to battle. In truth, the ancient arcane magic that enchants the Lightning Stones actually draws air and earth elementals to the area. Once in proximity to each other, the elementals almost always enter combat due to long-standing rivalries.

With a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check, anyone spending at least 1 hour examining the Lightning Stones discerns that their purpose is to gather energy. The Lightning Stones accomplish this by attracting lightning from the storms common in the area. When struck by lightning, the menhirs glow briefly, displaying otherwise invisible runes and glyphs. A DC 20 Decipher Script check reveals that the runes share characteristics with ancient Nexian and Katapeshi dialects. A DC 25 Decipher Script check, or a *comprehend languages* spell, reveals that the runes are fragments of prose, rhyming couplets, and metaphorical dialogue all relating to the acquisition of, and benevolent use of, power. There is no indication of



who constructed the menhirs or selected the inscriptions with which to decorate them.

Crouching Jackal: In the desert region of northern Katapesh, a massive stone statue squats in the sands. Its edges worn with time and wind, the nearly 70-foot-tall structure appears, at first glance, to be an enormous crouching cat. Its head, however, clearly resembles a jackal's more than a cat's, with overlarge ears standing straight up. Its tail also displays the shaggy shape of a jackal's rather than a slender cat's tail.

Known as the Crouching Jackal, this statue's origins remain a mystery, but many legends spring from its imposing bulk. The most common rumor states that anyone who sleeps in the shadow of the Crouching Jackal runs the risk of transforming into a fearsome jackalwere. Another claims that the statue is hollow, and that the right ritual opens the way to a hidden treasure chamber full of gold and jewels. Some believe that in past wars, the Crouching Jackal animated and stalked the desert as a giant golem, crushing Katapesh's enemies beneath its stony paws. On clear days, travelers can see the Crouching Jackal from up to 4 miles away, making it a useful landmark by which to navigate.

Creeping Watcher: A twin to the Crouching Jackal, this 70-foot-tall statue reclines in Vargas Swamp. Crafted entirely of stone, the Creeping Watcher displays a sinewy cat-like body covered with carved stone scales, upon which perches a distinctly reptilian head. Unlike the Crouching Jackal, the Creeping Watcher is not a continuous piece; a separate material forms its yellow eyes, which stand out sharply against its stone-gray body. Despite investigators' best efforts, no one has been able to pry so much as a chip of stone from the smooth, staring lizard eyes. The giant monument hides in a murky pool surrounded by thickets of trees and hanging vines, making it difficult to find.

The origins of the Creeping Watcher remain as mysterious as those of the Crouching Jackal. Popular opinion holds that the Creeping Watcher is the more sinister statue of the pair, and some believe the Crouching Jackal is a guardian who holds the Creeping Watcher in check. Others believe the Creeping Watcher serves as a site for dark rituals, sacrifice, and ancient pacts best left unmentioned.

The Steps of the Agate King: In the Sparadyn Jungle, a pyramid lists to the west, partially sunken into the soft ground in the center of the woods. The weathered granite blocks of the pyramid display slender veins of bright red and gold agate, and ripples of iridescent, pearl-colored agate stripe the steps leading up the center of the pyramid.

It's an accepted fact to the citizens of Katapesh that the pyramid bars the way to an underground tomb. Within the tomb, the remains of a long-dead legendary figure known as the Agate King sleeps eternally, along with the

trappings of wealth he attempted to carry with him to the afterlife. Many treasure-hunters naturally sought out the Agate King's wealth, and one found a secret door leading to an underground complex. Inside, every room stands empty of all but dust and a few ancient, now-sprung traps. From time to time an adventurer returns to the Steps of the Agate King in search of a way further down, but nothing so far indicates a second level exists. Bandits, cultists, and savage humanoids sometimes use the pyramid as a lair.

Driftwood: From the water, Driftwood appears to be an inlet ringed by sheer-walled cliffs, inhospitable at best. Jagged rocks protruding from the surf increase its treacherous appearance. Those familiar with the area, though, know how to navigate around the rocks and into the inlet, where the walls fall away to reveal a shallow, sheltered cove.

Driftwood's dangerous appearance and small size make it relatively unknown among the trade ships and slave galleys that ply these waters. Smugglers and pirates, however, spread word of Driftwood among their allies. The cove now functions as a tiny harbor for miscreants looking for a sheltered port from which to stage assaults against wealthy, underprotected ships. Bandits and smugglers sometimes stash their ships in Driftwood while conducting their business on land, but usually leave a heavy contingent of guards behind, as undefended ships left in Driftwood have a habit of disappearing.

Gembasket: A narrow path with a sheer stone wall to the left and a sharp drop-off to the right winds up through the Barrier Wall Mountains. At times the path widens and splits, but experienced travelers know which branch leads to the Gembasket. The Gembasket spans an area nearly a mile in diameter, across razored peaks, unexpected drops, rocky ground, and impassable rises. Within this area, natural resources lie thick and abundant. Nodes of gems and precious metals lie beneath loose shale, lines of shimmering ore run like veins through rocky walls, pockets of pesh grow in the shade, and buried treasures from ancient times rest in the remains of underground chambers.

Though the Gembasket is known to many, the majority of its assets remain untapped. The trip through the Barrier Wall is treacherous at best, and the resources themselves lie in difficult areas. Steep cliffs, bottomless chasms, and unstable rock formations guard most of the treasures. More importantly, the paths that lead to the Gembasket cross through the territory of several dangerous creatures, most notably a nest of manticores and the hunting grounds of a pack of leucrottas (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #17). Rumors also persist that a red dragon has claimed the Gembasket as its territory; while no reliable sightings of the creature exist, badly mauled and burned corpses occasionally turn up on the steep mountain slopes.



Sleeping Dove: Over a hundred years ago, a group of Sarenrae's faithful embarked on a pilgrimage to Solku. Mere days from their destination, they were set upon by bandits—some say gnolls, others insist jackalweres—and foully slain. Their bodies lay in the desert for over a week before travelers came upon the terrible sight, attracted by the fluttering of the pilgrims' white robes. One traveler said he thought white birds had clustered on the ground.

Several paladins from Solku buried the pilgrims in the spot where they lay and erected a shrine to Sarenrae above their final resting place. Ever since, the site has been holy ground to the church of the Dawnflower. Travelers rest here in safety, and evil creatures shun the area. Those of particularly devout bent who spend the night at Sleeping Dove often have prophetic dreams—and, rarely, chosen travelers with no particular religious bent receive extremely clear and pointed dream messages from a nameless figure of light, presumably Sarenrae or one of her servants.

Palace Mortales: The beast that died in the desert years ago might have been an ancient dragon of enormous proportions, or a monster of legend so vast and terrible its name hasn't been spoken in generations. Now all that remains of its corpse is one side of a giant, curving ribcage that rises from the sand like a cresting wave. Over the years, travelers have used the giant ribcage as shelter—a canvas or cloak stretched between two or more ribs makes a quick and solid lean-to that shields against the relentless sun or blowing sand. As more travelers sought out the bony shelter, lean-tos were left behind, new ones were created and overlapped, and now a mosaic of tarpaulins, blankets, shields and sails cover the bones. The permanent shade and shelter attract even more travelers, and experienced caravaners and adventurers sometimes speak of “spending the night at Palace Mortales” on their travels.

Sable Sands: From time to time, travelers approach Sable Sands thinking the dark smudge on the horizon is an oasis. None who stumble upon the area stay overlong, though, for in an area almost a hundred feet in diameter, a black, tarry substance stains the sand in erratic patterns. No matter how hot the day grows, Sable Sands is always cool. No matter how excited, joyful, and confident a person feels upon entering the area, within minutes in Sable Sands he turns lethargic, sorrowful, and paranoid. Creatures in the area suffer a –2 morale penalty to attacks, saves, and checks.

A dozen broken, worn tombstones make it clear that Sable Sands is a graveyard. Who or what lies buried here, though, remains unknown. No one seems to know when Sable Sands came into being, or who laid their dead to rest here. Though no corpses have ever clawed their way out of the ground here, undead seem drawn to the area.

Mindless undead and ghouls that pass within 5 miles of Sable Sands usually make their way toward it, attacking any living creature that crosses their path.

Evergrowth: Not all the swamps in Katapesh are dank, vile places. In Evergrowth, golden sunlight filters down through a lattice of vibrant green vines and furled leaves. Dappled light ripples along the clear, shallow ponds full of multicolored fish, thick fronds, musical frogs, and humming insects. Sunflowers and tropical blossoms as big as a halfling's head sprout alongside the edges of the ponds, and thriving bushes laden with heavy seedpods trail their branches in the water.

Whatever an herbalist seeks, she can almost certainly find it in Evergrowth. Unfortunately, the abundant plant life draws reptiles, birds, and small mammals to the area, which in turn attract predators. Unsavory gatherers, such as gnolls, smugglers, and bandits, also venture into Evergrowth in search of rare plants and herbs. Evergrowth is also the only place in Katapesh where kobolds live; some theorize that the Katapeshe kobolds mutated or were created from the giant lizards that live in the swamp. Beautiful but crowded, Evergrowth is an area full of both risks and great rewards.

The Beehive: Deep within the Barrier Wall mountains, a network of chambers joined by winding tunnels forms a well-protected, easily defendable complex. At least a half-dozen organizations and races have inhabited the Beehive over the last decade: smugglers, slavers, bandits, gnolls, dwarves—even 5-foot-tall anthropomorphic bees, from which the tunnels got their name. Currently a hive of formians inhabits the Beehive. The formians occupy their days carving out new tunnels and chambers, and rarely pay attention to the outside world.

The Beehive's prominent location on the road south to Nex and its widely known entrances contribute to its high rate of population turnover. Smugglers don't dare leave their goods in the Beehive overlong, as another group of criminals might soon come along. The dwarves moved out after it became clear there was nothing valuable behind the rock walls; the gnoll tribe that briefly took up residence here was hunted down and killed by adventurers. The formians have lived in the Beehive as long as they have simply because they possess no valuables and pose no threat to other groups. Rumors persist, though, that smugglers' leftover treasures remain hidden in the Beehive, or that valuable nodes of ore lurk in the deepest recesses of the caverns where the dwarves failed to find them.

Selkelas: Near the western edge of the Katapesh desert, a cracked, headless stone torso lies half-buried in the desert sands. Its size indicates that, had it been a fully detailed humanoid statue, it would have measured at least 20 feet in height. A name engraved on the statue's back, between its shoulder blades—Selkelas—is the only



clue to its origin, and the slightly reptilian touches on the torso lead some to theorize it originally depicted a naga or salamander.

One of the torso's arms remains attached and juts out from the sands, its granite hand hollowed around a now-missing weapon. The size of the statue's empty grip indicates it held a weapon with a hilt, perhaps a sword, and metallic scrapings around the hand suggest the weapon was forcibly pried from the grip. The qualities and fate of this mysterious weapon remain unknown, but many an enchanted blade sold in the markets of Katapesh bears the assumed name "Selkelas's Sword."

The Three Stars: Many legends surround these three strange pyramids that stand on the southeastern edge of the Katapeshi desert. Smooth blocks of yellow stone form the pyramids' sides, each of which stands only 12 feet tall. A pointed block of transparent crystal tops each pyramid like a glimmering star that sparkles and shines with reflected light, glowing with exceptional brightness in the light of the full moon. The crystal itself is hard as stone; some investigators report breaking the crystal, only to see it reform within 24 hours.

No entrance currently leads to the interior of any of the pyramids, but stories abound as to what treasures lie within. Beside the usual tales of buried lords, hidden tombs, undead genies, and dragons' wealth, a persistent tale circulates that the Three Stars are the resting places of three powerful, benevolent, and alien creatures. The story claims that these three beings—sometimes described as living flames, beautiful maidens, or feathered serpents—find peace in the simplicity of Golarion compared to their own home, and created the Stars to guard their bodies while they sleep. Some claim the sleepers will wake when Golarion becomes too chaotic for them, at which point they will either leave or take steps to return Golarion to peace. Others claim the sleepers must be wakened by the right individual. Some even say there is a fourth Star which contains the means to unlock the other three, and whoever finds the fourth Star can wake the sleepers, for good or ill.

The Lost Temple: These sprawling ruins clearly once held a religious site, but what deity presided over the faithful who lived here remains unknown. The orderly structure of the ruins indicates the god was of a lawful or benevolent bent, and abandoned, cell-like sleeping quarters suggest a convent or monastery of some sort, of the type followers of Irori might inhabit. A large underground storehouse seems more in keeping with a temple of Abadar, though, and the spiraling tower in the center of the complex—broken and empty though it is—could indicate the presence of Sarenrae's worshippers. Many priests travel to the Lost Temple to try and determine if their gods once held influence here, but

none can say for sure. A few scholars even claim the Lost Temple was a cloister devoted to Aroden's worship, but cannot offer any strong evidence.

The Lost Temple draws many travelers seeking to uncover its mysteries or simply looking for a safe place to spend the night. Though monsters sometimes move into the ruins, the frequent appearance of armed strangers dissuades most of them from staying.

Suketh'ma: Where the sandy desert gives way to the Vargas Swamp, underground water channels turn the ground to mud. A large patch of seemingly innocuous sand conceals countless quicksand pits interspersed with muddy ditches. Residents of the area know the dangers of Suketh'ma, but travelers and animals frequently become trapped in the sucking pits and disappear forever. Sand eels frequently make their homes here as well.

Storytellers claim that anything thrown into the quicksand pits falls out of Golarion entirely, and that Suketh'ma is one of the few places where heroes can destroy evil artifacts—or where villains can dispose of holy relics. Furthermore, stories tell that heroes of great virtue and purity of spirit can sometimes dive into Suketh'ma and fall through the world into a place of great danger, but also great reward. So far, no living person has dived into Suketh'ma and returned to speak about it.

Vargas Swamp: The Vargas Swamp is the largest swamp in Katapesh, spanning almost 30 miles. Myriad trees, herbs, and grasses grow there, making it a favorite site for plant-eating creatures, and the large number of herbivores draws predators to the area as well, namely alligators, vipers, eels, and chuuls. A small tribe of lizardfolk makes its home here as well.

As one of the oldest swamps in Katapesh, the Vargas Swamp also contains numerous ruins and the skeletons of old villages. The water level in the swamp rises and falls unpredictably—some say a green dragon living there controls the water—and a settlement there one year may be completely submerged the next.

Sabkha: As the word *sabkha* literally means "salt flat" in Garundi, miscommunications have led travelers to believe Sabkha is the proper name of this enormous dry lakebed. A shallow basin filled with gritty, salt-laden sand, Sabkha is the primary source for the nagri salt farmers use to make pesh. Though other salt flats exist in Katapesh, Sabkha is the largest and most popular. Farmers travel to Sabkha once a season to sift salt out of the dirt and carry sacks of it home. Merchants also visit Sabkha to collect nagri salt, which they then sell in the markets of Katapesh. In recent years, merchants have flocked to Sabkha more and more frequently, and many farmers now go directly to Katapesh to purchase their nagri salt—paying inflated prices to offset the cost of labor and transportation, but saving time and effort.



Once a month or so, heavy rains fill Sabkha's shallow basin with trapped rainwater. It takes several days for the water to drain out through the rock, leaving new salt deposits on the surface. Though shallow, the basin can fill rapidly enough to drown animals and unsuspecting travelers; bleached bones sometimes gleam atop the salt flat after a bad storm.

Floater's Pond: This small oasis, fed by an underground stream, formed in the deeply salinated sands of the Katapeshi desert. Though not far from Sabkha, the constant influx of water from the underground stream prevents Floater's Pond from becoming a salt flat. Instead, the salt infuses the waters and makes anyone entering the pond exceptionally buoyant. It is almost impossible to drown in Floater's Pond, but it is also impossible for freshwater plants and animals to live in its waters.

Patient farmers can extract nagri salt from Floater's Pond by soaking linen sheets in the water and spreading them to dry in the sun. The process is tedious, but when Sabkha is flooded or picked clean by others, farmers often resort to drying out Floater's Pond.

The Observatory: A stone platform 20 feet on a side mars an otherwise flat plain in central Katapesh. Four crumbling pillars stand at each corner, and an ornate carving of a butterfly sits in the center of the foot-high platform. No one knows who built the Observatory, but it seems clearly a holy site dedicated to Desna. The stonework appears dwarven, which is unusual in Katapesh let alone in a shrine of Desna, but the carving appears of a different style entirely. Some theorize that the platform is all that remains of a dwarven ruin, which was usurped later to create the Observatory.

Anyone who lies face-up on the platform learns its purpose: within the square of sky framed by the pillars, the heavens seem enormously magnified. Stars pulse like heartbeats, comets streak by like flaming arrows, and the sky slides past in an ever-changing show of cosmic wonder. The Observatory holds no mystic powers beyond its ability to amplify the sky—or, at least, none that any have discovered yet—but it remains a popular draw for astronomers, prophets, and faithful of Desna hoping for divine inspiration.

Pyre Crest: A single mountain in the Brazen Peaks remains uninhabited by the gnolls that otherwise litter the range. No scrub or brush grows on the scorched sides of Pyre Crest, though the eruption that covered the sides of the volcano in lava occurred centuries ago. Blackened tracks of hardened magma cover the now-dormant volcano's slopes in rivulets, like veins of pitch. Its forbidding appearance aside, real dangers await those who brave the heights of Pyre Crest.

A company of efreet, genies from a world of fire, smoke, heat, and death, make their home in Pyre Crest.

Reports of their presence go back at least 200 years, and it appears they are trapped in Katapesh for some reason—or some powerful goal keeps them from wanting to leave. What that goal is remains anyone's guess, as the efreet rarely leave their lair, though they viciously attack any who dare approach. The efreet do not appear tied to the mountain, as three have left the peak from time to time over the last hundred years. Of the three, only one left his name behind: calling himself Amir E'temaad, he used his influence to coerce a tribe of gnolls into attacking a merchant caravan on its way to Katapesh. One of the merchants revealed himself to be a djinni in disguise, and the two engaged in an epic battle. The djinni's companions, seasoned adventurers, slew the gnolls and turned the tide of battle, and Amir E'temaad fled back to Pyre Crest. Who the djinni merchant was and what the efreet hoped to gain from the conflict remains unknown.

CIVILIZED REACHES

The following are all settlements of civilized people or business ventures which rely on civilization rather than raiding and banditry.

Solku: The walled city of Solku stands as a bastion of safety against the perils of Katapesh. As the second-largest city in the land, Solku attracts travelers and traders on their way to the capitol. A great many stay longer than they had anticipated; some find the city's size and safety more attractive than chaotic Katapesh, while others cannot leave due to sandstorms or gnoll raids.

Over 10,000 people call Solku home, but the number of residents swells and ebbs with the season. During the cooling weather of fall, when overland travel seems more appealing than in the blistering heat of summer, Solku's population swells by as many as 2,000. The traders coming east across the Mwangi Expanse reach Solku exhausted and grateful for a waypost on the way to Katapesh; some sell their wares in Solku and return home, but most push on to the better prices available in Katapesh. The population ebbs again in spring as the days begin to heat up.

Though large, Solku is a well-governed city with low crime rates and a generally lawful populace. The crime that does exist tends to be petty and disorganized. Pickpockets, muggers, sneak thieves and cat burglars, prostitutes, pimps, and con artists are the most common criminal types in Solku. Rarely do murderers, rapists, gangs, or serial killers set up in the orderly streets, and those that do are quickly brought to justice. Lord Hazic Kel-Kalaar, Solku's ruler, holds a reputation for being a levelheaded man who thinks long term and makes decisions based on keeping Solku secure and prosperous. Lady Chanar Cynore, head of an order of Sarenrae's



paladins, publicly supports Lord Kel-Kalaar and keeps the peace on Solku's streets.

Solku's position near the Barrier Wall mountains makes it a constant target for gnoll slavers. Throughout its history, Solku has repelled numerous gnoll attacks—at times, the city has stood under siege from the gnolls. Solku's thick walls and abundant reserves allow it to withstand such attacks for weeks. The worst attack occurred in 4701 AR. Called the Siege of Solku, the vicious assault pitted waves of gnolls against guardsmen and citizens led by paladins of Sarenrae and Iomedae. The paladins of Iomedae all died in the siege's culmination, the terrible Battle of Red Hail. Their sacrifice allowed Solku's remaining defenders to drive off the gnolls. Since then, Solku has rested in a period of relative peace.

Three notable buildings stand in Solku: the Archive of Eminent Tomes, the Lambent Citadel, and Breakstride. The Archive of Eminent Tomes serves as a repository of ancient knowledge, particularly tomes, scrolls, and documents found in Katapesh's tombs and ruins. The

curator, **Menthis Talp** (N male human wizard 7) rarely leaves the building. Rumor attributes all sorts of strange powers and dark motivations to Talp, but in reality he treats visitors with grave politeness and seems to have no goal but the preservation of the archives. Menthis Talp has been known to commission expeditions into Katapeshi ruins in search of long-lost scribings.

The Lambent Citadel, a sandstone building of graceful architecture and abstract, multicolored windows, houses Sarenrae's faithful. Lady Cynore oversees the temple's activities and distributes its collected tithes to support the poor and needy in the city, in addition to maintaining the temple and securing weapons and magic items with which to defend the settlement. Visitors to Solku are encouraged to stop by the Lambent Citadel and make a small donation. As Lady Cynore's paladins train guardsmen in military exercises and defend the city, citizens see support of the temple as support of the city.

Breakstride holds a reputation for being the largest, most comfortable, and best-stocked inn in Solku. Its



location on the western edge of the city makes it easy to spot for those traveling along the river. **Erilene Finch** (CG female halfling expert 4/rogue 4), Breakstride's owner, dispatches runners to Solku's eastern gate whenever caravans approach. The friendly Breakstride staff meets weary travelers at the gate with a complimentary half-mug of ale, a voucher for one free breakfast, and directions to Breakstride's open doors. Finch, an angular and plainspoken retired adventurer, is justly proud of her inn and spares no expense in securing fine bedding, exotic foods, and rare wines to serve. She feels that the more Breakstride has to offer, the more revenue her investments will bring—and so far, her business plan has succeeded.

The Current Runners: Transporting goods across Katapesh usually requires overland caravans, as the main river often crosses the southern border and empties into Nexian waters. Particularly daring smugglers load small cargo onto fast-moving dhows and sail down the river at night. Experienced guides known as current runners memorize the river's twists and turns and steer these mildly illegal river caravans so that they end each night in Katapeshi waters. When a river caravan has no safe harbor, current runners guide the boats to sheltered banks and cover the cargo with camouflage vine-nets.

Some current runners operate with extreme professionalism; they reimburse clients for merchandise lost to anti-smuggling patrols, take half payment on advance and half on completion, and stand and fight to defend their river caravan. Others are little more than charlatans with a rudimentary knowledge of the river. These shysters tend to drop their cargo and flee at the first sign of trouble, and sometimes take both their advance payment and the smuggled goods and disappear completely. River caravans typically load and unload at the last bend of the river that touches Katapeshi soil, due north of Quantum, and docking areas change often to avoid unwanted attention.

The Obelisk Trail: Most trade comes to Katapesh from across the sea, but caravans do come south from Osirion, north from Nex, and east from Solku, the Mwangi Expanse, and countries farther west. The relatively flat and featureless land, in combination with deep

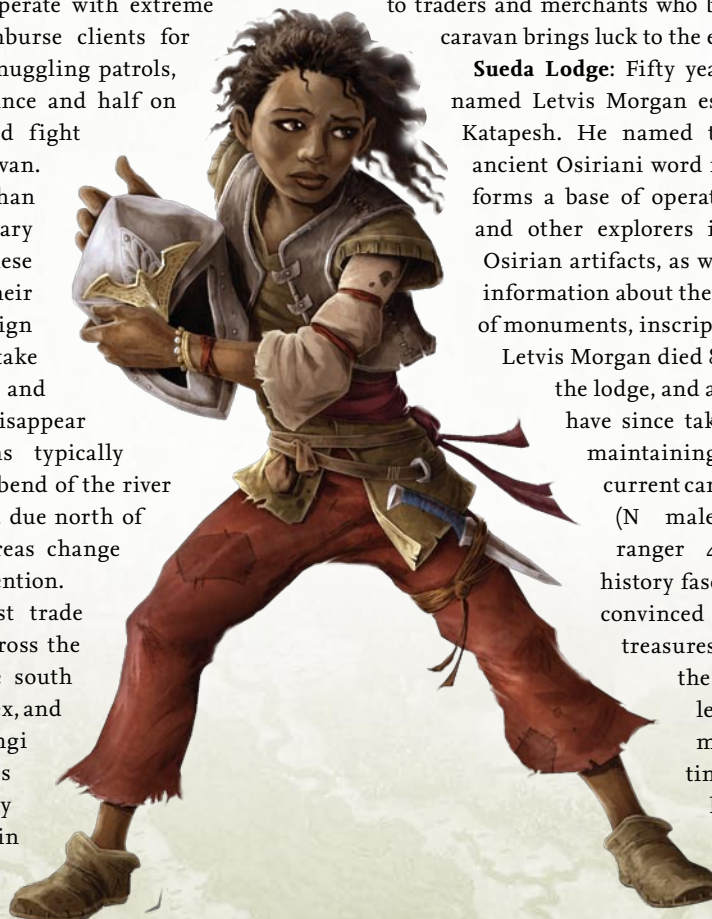
dunes, sandstorms, and obscuring dust clouds, makes travel across the face of Katapesh difficult. Sandstorms bury the roads, and a route passable last year may have vanished last week.

Many years ago, the Pactmasters ordered the commission of dozens of black obelisks to assist caravans en route to Katapesh. These obelisks rise 12 feet into the air and bear inscriptions for the word "trail" in 10 languages: Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Kelish, Osiriani, Polyglot, Taldane, Terran, and Vudrani. Recently, an unknown hand has scribed the word "death" in Gnoll on at least half the obelisks; whether this is a warning to travelers or to gnolls remains unclear. Anyone navigating by the Obelisk Trail receives a +5 bonus to Survival checks made to follow tracks, to get along in the wild, and to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards.

Halflings have a long history in Katapesh, having been tied to ancient Osirian families for generations as indentured servants. These halfling families rarely joined the revolts during the collapse of ancient Osirian society and the influx of Keleshite influence, but often found themselves adrift after the families they served died, broke apart, or fled. The halfling slaves left behind migrated south and settled in relatively peaceful Katapesh. Today, local halflings command good wages as hired servants to traders and merchants who believe a halfling in a caravan brings luck to the expedition.

Sueda Lodge: Fifty years ago, a Pathfinder named Letvis Morgan established a lodge in Katapesh. He named the lodge Sueda, an ancient Osirian word for "discovery." Sueda forms a base of operations for Pathfinders and other explorers in search of ancient Osirian artifacts, as well as a repository for information about the location and purpose of monuments, inscriptions, and tombs.

Letvis Morgan died 8 years after founding the lodge, and a series of Pathfinders have since taken responsibility for maintaining the location. The current caretaker, **Var Pinderven** (N male dwarf expert 3/ranger 4), finds Katapesh's history fascinating and remains convinced that great historical treasures lie buried beneath the plains. Pinderven leaves the lodge for as much as a week at a time to explore various leads, but cannot commit to longer excavations. He





CARAVANS IN THE DESERT

Katapesh's geography is not the dry desert of Osirion, but the two nations share similar traits. Level plains form the expanse between Solku and Katapesh, but stretches of desert infringe on the plains and sandstorms often rage across the seemingly placid grasslands. Shallow valleys offer shelter from the winds and sand, forming natural moisture collectors—however, these areas are most likely to contain pesh fields and their defenders.

Hiring adventurers as caravan guards is a time-honored tradition in Katapesh. Caravans rarely take the form of large, overlaid wagons, though, as unexpected dunes can bog down wagon wheels or force wide detours. Thus, most caravans are strings of package-laden camels or horses flanked by guards, guides, and caravaners. Each traveler carries a large square of oiled canvas that can form a tent, shape the side of a lean-to, cover a horse in a storm, or tie up a bundle of packages to relieve a sick or injured mount.

Guides who know Katapesh's geography and perils command top prices, and most caravaners consider the cost both necessary and reasonable. Lost caravans fall prey to gnoll slavers, natural hazards, pesh squatters, or worse, and lost merchandise is lost profit.

primarily focuses on cataloguing and preserving the artifacts brought to Sueda, offering shelter and supplies to Pathfinders in the area and purchasing or trading knowledge with the adventurers drawn to the region. Pinderven sometimes asks talented adventurers to perform small tasks for him—those who prove themselves capable and trustworthy may receive more information from Pinderven on promising excavation sites. The dwarf asks only that any discoveries made be brought to Sueda first, before they are offered for sale anywhere else.

The lodge itself is a low stone building containing six guest rooms, a kitchen, a pantry, a library, and a dining hall. A separate building serves as living quarters for Pinderven, and the archives rest in an underground chamber accessible through a secret door in the main lodge. A small well in the courtyard taps into an underground stream. A wall of clay bricks surrounds the enclosure; Pinderven holds the key to the metal gate that grants access through the wall.

Okeno: The third-largest city in Katapesh, Okeno boasts 6,500 permanent citizens and up to 1,000 slavers, buyers, and travelers—along with their human merchandise—at any given time. The Fleshfairs of Okeno are the largest slave markets in the Inner Sea region, and peddlers of human flesh flock to the harbor city.

Newcomers to Okeno often find the city intimidating. The city sprawls away from Yellow Harbor and forms

a jigsaw of smaller districts. No wall or guard towers surround Okeno, as the biggest threats in the area—gnolls—come to the city as customers. Okeno holds a reputation as a lawless, dangerous city and crime is surprisingly low as a result. No one wants to be the first to start trouble, as there's always someone tougher and more ruthless on the street, and the losers of conflicts wind up on a block at the Fleshfairs.

Three pesh fields grow on steads just outside the city, but slavery provides Okeno's main source of income. Some slavers, mainly gnolls, chain their “merchandise” together, but most lock distinctive yellow collars around their slaves' necks. The collars mark individuals as slaves, and a collared slave without an apparent master is considered unclaimed, and draws a great deal of attention. Collared slaves know that attempting to escape simply leads them to different, potentially worse, prisons.

Fully half the slaves at the Fleshfairs are human, with halflings making up almost a quarter and the remainder consisting of half-elves, half-orcs, gnomes, and goblins. Dwarves are considered poor slaves, despite their physical strength, due to their rebellious natures and strong mental fortitude. Elves are often considered too frail to make good slaves, and unlucky to purchase.

Okeno's ruler, **Morio Midasi** (NE male human rogue 9), enforces the few laws with ruthless consistency. His primary concerns are keeping the Fleshfairs operating, defending Yellow Harbor and the slave galleys that operate out of it, and protecting his reputedly vast wealth. The most bizarre creature ever to be sold at the Fleshfairs serves as his bodyguard—a gug (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #11), for which Midasi reputedly paid 23,000 gold.

Fort Longjaw: Northeast of Solku, near the Brazen Peaks, a wooden stockade stands as a symbol against gnoll aggression. The proud red flag that flaps above the fort displays a bleached white jawbone divided by a silver sword. The men and women of Fort Longjaw dedicate themselves to driving back gnoll raiding parties and destroying gnoll settlements wherever they lurk. Led by **Giana Secondstride** (CG female human ranger 8), the residents of Fort Longjaw perfect their gnoll-fighting abilities every day by scouting the area for miles in every direction, hunting for slaver tracks, setting up false “lost caravans” to act as decoys, and interrogating travelers about any signs of gnoll activity.

Travelers who come upon Fort Longjaw are met with guarded hospitality. Giana Secondstride allows travelers to spend a night in the fort, but asks for donations to offset the cost of maintaining the stockade. She waives this fee for those in obvious distress, particularly any who have fallen afoul of a gnoll ambush. Giana subjects travelers who report such attacks to extended interrogations—she demands specific details on where the attack occurred,



how many gnolls there were, what the gnolls wore and what weapons they used, and anything else that might be of use in hunting the attackers down. If Giana suspects a visitor is lying to gain her hospitality, she furiously strips them of their weapons and provisions and sends them out into the desert alone.

Although the locals, especially those in Solku, respect and admire the fighters of Fort Longjaw, they tend to avoid the stockade. Giana reputedly has a short temper, a thirst for blood, and a passionate hatred of the creatures she hunts. Her intense personality can come off as frightening to strangers, and tales of her outbursts keep casual visitors from approaching the stockade. Giana cares little for her lack of visitors, and in fact enjoys the solitude. The well-stocked fort has dried rations, barrels of water and ale, bushels of arrows, and stockpiled weapons and armor taken from dead gnolls—enough to keep the fort self-sufficient for at least 2 months.

Commonfield: Less a town than a collection of homesteads, Commonfield boasts the highest concentration of pesh crops in Katapesh. Though some of the three dozen fields measure no more than 30 feet on a side, others stretch to almost an acre. All in all, twenty-two farmers, their families, and their hired hands call Commonfield home, which brings the population up to over a hundred.

The farmers of Commonfield are, for the most part, honest and hardworking. Their precious crops, however, mean they welcome strangers with caution. Most of the Commonfield folk have been targets of steady thieves in the past, and all must post guards outside their crops at night. Occasionally, travelers pass through Commonfield and offer to trade a day's work in the fields for a night's lodging and a home-cooked meal. Commonfield farmers prove receptive to such offers, provided the traveler puts in an honest effort in the field and agrees to leave his weapons in the kitchen at night.

No single individual rules over Commonfield. By tradition, the five wealthiest farmers meet weekly to discuss coordinating guard patrols, how the season fares, any insect or rodent pests affecting the crop, expected weather in the next month, and other such relevant topics. Of the five current council members, two are at bitter odds. **Richele Gerst** (NG female half-elf commoner 3) is a sullen, socially awkward woman with a head for business and a world-weary attitude that puts others off. **Kerek Cullstone** (N male halfling commoner 2/expert 2) is the boisterous patriarch of a sprawling household. Richele makes no secret of the fact that one of Kerek's smaller fields would add immeasurably to her own land by consolidating two separate crops she maintains. Kerek sees no reason why he should sell to Richele, and the resulting tension has made recent council meetings uncomfortable.

KATAPESHI FEATS

The following feats can be taken by any character, but are most common among the varied denizens of Katapesh.

LUCKY HALFLING

You bring luck to those with whom you travel.

Prerequisite: Halfling.

Benefit: Once per day, when one of your allies makes a saving throw, you may roll the same saving throw as if you were the one subject to the effect requiring it. You may use this ability after your ally has rolled, but before the GM declares if their roll was a success or failure. Your ally may choose to use your saving throw in place of his own.

JACKAL BLOOD

A jackalwere crouches somewhere in your family tree.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on saving throws to resist spells or effects that would cause you to fall asleep. You also gain a +2 bonus on Listen checks.

Bug Harbor: A gathering of huts perched on stilts at the edge of Evergrowth form the town of Bug Harbor. So named because of the many dragonflies, water striders, mosquitoes, and black flies that buzz over the surface of the swamp, Bug Harbor holds only a few hundred permanent residents but does a brisk trade in herbs and plants. Alchemists, herbalists, wizards, and druids travel to Bug Harbor in search of rare components or the seeds of plants nearing extinction. For its small size, Bug Harbor entertains a lot of visitors.

The secret behind Bug Harbor's economy is a field of false pesh hidden inside Evergrowth. These slimy, bulbous plants release a milky sap that appears identical to pesh but, instead of pleasant euphoria, instead induces vomiting and fever and sometimes even causes death. The residents of Bug Harbor who make use of the false pesh work hard to conceal their crime, for interfering in the pesh trade could bring the attention of the Pactmasters. Most engage in honest work and turn a blind eye to the few opportunists dealing in false pesh.

Bastin Irriden (N male half-elf commoner 3/ranger 1), a half-elf wanderer, came to Bug Harbor years ago in search of something new to break the grip of the terrible ennui plaguing him. He found a strange beauty in the wildness of Evergrowth, and a refreshing lack of pressure from the hard-working citizens of the town. Irriden settled in Bug Harbor and now serves as its unofficial mayor. Publicly, Irriden admits knowledge of the false pesh but claims neither he nor the town's residents harvest it. Privately, no one is certain how much Irriden knows of the false pesh trade and if he indulges in it himself.



FALSE PESH

False pesh looks much the same as real pesh, but the genuine plant is a spined cactus that grows in desert areas, while the imposter is a sticky, more bulbous plant that requires extra moisture to flourish. A character can make a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check to tell the real plant from the fake.

Imitation raw pesh formed from the false pesh plant is much harder to differentiate from the real drug. Both appear as milky white, cheese-like blocks; the false pesh has a milder odor and a stickier gloss to its surface, but the differences are minor. A DC 25 Alchemy check discerns true raw pesh from false.

Anyone ingesting false raw pesh must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or become nauseated for 10 minutes. After 1 minute they must make another DC 25 Fortitude save or suffer the secondary effect of 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

For refined false pesh, the save DC is 30 and the secondary effect is 1d6 points of Constitution damage. The Alchemy check to distinguish it from true refined pesh is DC 30.



El-Fatar: This sprawling ruin of a city stood crumbling and uninhabited for centuries before an intrepid Pathfinder discovered an enormous set of catacombs beneath it. In the years that followed, more adventurers came to the ruins to explore the ancient tunnels, and emerged with tales of foul undead, monstrous inhabitants, and incredible treasures—or did not emerge at all.

Over time, a small town sprang up in the ruins. A questing rogue discovered a second level below the catacombs, and more treasure-seekers arrived. A third level, discovered last year, secured El-Fatar's presence as a permanent settlement. Though the catacombs remain El-Fatar's strongest draw, the number of intriguing but valueless artifacts discovered pulls many researchers and historians to the surrounding area as well. El-Fatar's residents trade in food and water, spelunking gear, maps of the catacombs (of varying degrees of accuracy), and bits of pottery, carvings, paintings, and other scavenged relics from the catacombs.

Who built the catacombs, and for what purpose, remains unclear. Two adventuring groups make El-Fatar their home, and each remains dedicated to eventually uncovering the reason for the catacombs' existence and discovering what vast treasure hoard undoubtedly lies at its core. The members of the Band of the Blazing Way wear glass amulets containing *continual flames* to mark their allegiance. Their leader, a displaced Chelaxian named **Ruther Fandaran the Unswervable** (LE male human fighter 7), obsesses about the potential wealth hidden beneath the sands more than anything. His rival, a Vudrani explorer named **Aruna Riki** (N female human wizard 7), claims to be more concerned with the knowledge awaiting discovery than passing wealth—though she is as quick as any to secure her share of the bounty retrieved by her adventuring group, the Stars of the Earth.

Finderplain: The gnome city of Finderplain holds almost 2,000 residents, but the constant influx and departure of those residents means that the citizenry changes completely every few years—and sometimes every few months. Families rarely establish permanent homes in Finderplain; the lure of adventure and the desert beckons, and the gnomes move on, leaving their houses empty for the next travelers. A visitor to Finderplain can leave, return a year later, and find he no longer recognizes anyone.

Visitors who arrive in Finderplain can settle in any of dozens of unoccupied houses. Accepted law states that any house unlivid in for a week becomes free property that any can claim. Personal items left behind become the property of the new owner; residents who leave and return cannot expect to find their old house available, and new owners have no obligation to return items or property to returning citizens. Newcomers bring with them supplies



and items of value that they trade with current residents, and inevitably leave behind for the next traveler.

The transitory nature of the gnomes means that no individual consistently rules over Finderplain. The current ruler, a charismatic bard named **Wexlis Bean** (NG male gnome bard 4), assumed leadership of the city 2 months ago and is expected to last at least another week.

RACES OF KATAPESH

Although Garundi, Keleshites, and Vudrani are the most common races found in Katapesh, the country is a mishmash of races, all come to trade in the markets. In the large cities of Katapesh, Solku, and Okeno, the hodgepodge of cultures is constant and yet ever changing, as traders leave and new ones arrive. Outside the cities, only a few races make established homes in Katapesh.

Dwarves came to Katapesh centuries ago to mine the rich ores found beneath the Barrier Wall mountains, and countless dwarven settlements—some abandoned, some still occupied—dot the mountainsides.

Gnomes played an important role in ancient Osirian history, and their presence still makes itself known

in present-day Katapesh. While most live in the city of Katapesh, the gnome settlement of Finderplain has stood for 300 years as a waypoint for gnomes traveling south of the Inner Sea.

Elves do not have a formal presence in Katapesh, but half-elves seem drawn to the area. Their natural social ability, their curiosity about the world, and their inclination toward melancholia and wanderlust makes Katapesh seem an enticing place—somewhere creatures from many races serve as distractions, and the constant trade offers unending opportunities for translators and diplomats. Half-orcs remain a small but constant presence in Katapesh. No orc tribes live in the area anymore, but in ancient times a race of desert-dwelling orcs made Katapesh their home. Their descendents form the bulk of the half-orc population, but half-orcs from other regions sometimes travel to Katapesh to join the slave trade. While gnolls are the most common slavers in the area, bands of half-orcs also make their living capturing travelers to sell or raiding caravans.

Gnolls are native to Katapesh, and most citizens recognize them as the most widespread threat in the



nation. Gnolls consider Katapesh the birthplace of their race, and do not take kindly to the intrusion of outsiders. Gnolls attack settlements and raid caravans not only for the joy of the kill and the profit it brings, but because they see Katapesh as their homeland and their actions as justified defense—as if they needed an excuse.

The largest gnoll settlements exist in the mountains, most notably White Canyon and Pale Mountain. Hundreds of gnolls make their homes in these areas, under the rule of Noor, the Red Sultana, in White Canyon or the Carrion King in Pale Mountain. In addition to these settlements, dozens of smaller gnoll encampments litter the Barrier Wall mountains and the Brazen Peaks. Bands of gnoll nomads roam the plains and deserts in search of prey as well. No region of Katapesh is entirely free from gnoll influence.



Despite their ferocity, Katapeshi gnolls possess their own unique culture and occasionally enter cities peacefully. Gnoll slavers appear in Okeno and Katapesh with slaves for sale, and generally behave themselves long enough to purchase weapons, supplies, poison, and drugs. Occasionally, a gnoll may lose control in a city and attack a tempting target—someone who appears weak, alone, lost, or overly aggressive—but for the most part gnolls are accepted as buyers and traders like any others in these two cities.

Katapeshi gnolls live in the wilderness, and as such are well suited to the challenges of nature. Most gnolls with character levels favor the ranger or barbarian classes, though a rare few pursue the paths of the druid, fighter, or rogue. Gnoll priests tend to be adepts in the service of Lamashtu, though actual clerics do rise to prominence from time to time. Both male and female gnolls possess powerful builds and savage bloodlust, fighting side-by-side against their enemies. The one exception is the Spotted Hide pack, in which the females are notably larger than the males.

Gnolls in Katapesh belong to one of five packs:

Carrion Tribe: The gnolls of the Pale Mountain region consist of several smaller and mostly disorganized tribes united under the rule of a powerful and mysterious figure known as the Carrion King. The Carrion Tribe gnolls have mostly abandoned the worship of Lamashtu for that of Rovagug.

Duenas: The Duenas, a nomadic pack, prefer the desert areas of Katapesh. In addition to raiding villages and capturing slaves, the Duenas are grave robbers.

Razor Fang: The gnolls of the Razor Fang pack prefer using their natural attacks (unarmed strikes) over manufactured weapons, and sometimes go so far as to coat their fangs with poison, even at the risk of poisoning themselves.

Sandstalkers: Leadership of this pack is currently hotly disputed between Noor—known as the Red Sultana—and Rath Sandstalker. It makes its lair in White Canyon. Sandstalkers favor stealth more than other packs, and contain a disproportionately large number of rogues.

Spotted Hide: The Spotted Hide pack is a matriarchy run by the significantly more powerful females of the tribe. Priestesses of Lamashtu are more common in the Spotted Hide pack than in any other pack.

MONSTERS OF KATAPESH

Much of Katapesh is wild, and it has many exotic creatures that live nowhere else, as well as large numbers of common monsters.

Calopi: The calopus, a creature native to Katapesh and strongly resembling an antelope, is prized for its tender meat as well as the great beauty of its horns. Some

believe the calopus was originally a cross between an antelope and a unicorn, though current animals bear no sign of heightened intelligence, mystical abilities, or other unicorn traits. The four-legged animals stand 3 to 4 feet tall and weigh up to 200 pounds. Two spiraling ivory horns extend back from their skulls; in rare cases, a calopus displays gold-tinted horns, which sell for large amounts in the Nightstalls.

Camelopards: The camelopard, an animal that first appeared in ancient Osirion, resembles an extremely tall, small-humped camel covered with a mottled pattern similar to a leopard's spots. Over time, camelopard herds migrated to the plains of Katapesh, possibly in search of fresh grazing grounds. Camelopards feed on ground vegetation as well as the twigs and leaves of upper tree branches, and so stick to the grassy plains of Katapesh. Their great height—up to 15 feet tall—makes them unwieldy mounts, but big-game hunters sometimes seek their hides. Camelopards exhibit calm, peaceful personalities and sometimes allow travelers to camp nearby. As camelopards can see predators more quickly than other animals thanks to their great height, camping near a camelopard herd provides some security.

Dhabbas: Scavengers and predators, the diminutive dhabbas might be seen as distant, bothersome relatives of the jackal but for their poisonous bite. Though their bite rarely kills—more often it induces weakness, shivering, and vomiting—the poison combined with the beast's unusual appearance causes many travelers to fear the ubiquitous dhabba packs that roam across the land.

A dhabba measures up to 2 feet from nose to tail and weighs 20 to 30 pounds. Their lustrous red fur looks much like a fox's pelt, but their tails are bony protuberances that resemble scorpion tails. This strange appendage causes many travelers to fear a tail strike, but it is actually the dhabba's jaws that hold its venom. Dhabbas hunt small rodents and sick or injured animals, and scavenge for carrion and trash. As omnivores, they can eat vegetation as well, and sometimes gnaw on canvas tents or leather boots. Dhabbas never attack larger creatures unless desperate and in a group which vastly outnumbers the prey. For game statistics on dhabbas, see page 60.

Dragons: Ancient, greedy, ferocious, and sullen, the dragons of Katapesh guard their territories jealously. No one is certain of the exact number of dragons in the land, but at least one—a great red near the Barrier Wall—has been spotted, and evidence of others exists in the form of clawed tracks, vague sightings, and large herds of animals vanished with only a few shattered bones and gobs of blood remaining.

Scholars of dragonkind theorize that dragons come to Katapesh to find solitude. The vast mountain reaches and lonely, empty deserts offer fine lairs for red, gold,

GNOLL KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge (Local) DC Result

| | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Gnolls are a menace in Katapesh; they attack travelers, raid caravans and settlements, and capture slaves to sell at the Fleshfairs. |
| 15 | Gnolls are cruel and vicious predators. They eat intelligent beings as well as animals, and travel in packs led by the strongest member. Gnolls revere the goddess Lamashtu. |
| 20 | Five major gnoll packs exist in Katapesh: Spotted Hide, Sandstalker, Carrion Tribes, Razor Fang, and Duenas. |
| 25 | Rath Sandstalker leads the Sandstalker pack, but a vicious gnoll called the Red Sultana is forming her own offshoot. |

GNOLL RELIC: THE BRAZEN CLAW

Almost all gnolls agree that their race came from Lamashtu, but the gnolls of Katapesh have a unique genesis story. When Lamashtu created the gnoll progenitor out of earth, the tip of one of her claws broke off and sank into the ground. Later, gnolls living in the Brazen Peaks found the tip of Lamashtu's claw and fashioned it into a jagged sword. Gnolls consider the *brazen claw* a holy relic, though its powers are moderate. Rath Sandstalker wielded the *brazen claw* at the Siege of Solku, but rumor whispers that he has since lost the sword to unknown forces.

THE BRAZEN CLAW

Aura moderate transmutation; CL 9th

Slot weapon; **Price** 18,315 gp;

Weight 4 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This jagged piece of curved brass with a razor-sharp edge functions as a +2 *vicious scimitar*. If a gnoll wields the *brazen claw*, he takes no damage from the sword's vicious ability.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *enervation*, *magic weapon*, creator must be a gnoll; **Cost** 9,158 gp, 733 XP

blue, brass, and copper dragons. The few dank jungles and swamps might hold a young green dragon, but would probably prove too small for an adult. Katapesh's citizens cling to the densely populated cities and towns, leaving stretches of wilderness that prove perfect for a creature who needs to secret his hoard. The many hidden treasures of Katapesh provide a strong lure for dragons as well.



HOW LAMASHTU BIRTHED THE GNOLLS

In the early days, Katapesh was a wild, unclaimed place. Harsh winds screamed down from the north and killed all life that tried to make a home in Katapesh. Lamashtu looked on this savage land with pleasure. "I will create a new race," she said. "One strong and fierce enough to claim this land."

Lamashtu reached a clawed hand into the dirt and formed an earthen hyena bitch, big enough to block the sky from horizon to horizon, and swollen with life. She breathed into the bitch's mouth and brought her to life. For 5 days the hyena birthed the gnom race, and the gnolls clustered around her side and suckled on her teats. Her milk sustained and strengthened the gnolls; by the end of the fifth day, the fully grown gnolls thronged around her.

Her job done, the bitch rolled on her back and Lamashtu turned her back into stone. She became the mountain range now called the Brazen Peaks, and her presence softened the harsh north winds and created the fertile plains of Katapesh. The gnolls make their home there to this day.



Rumors surface regularly that a dragon dwelling in the mountains captures slaves that he sells at the Fleshfairs while in human guise. What sort of dragon would wish to sell slaves, especially one powerful enough to change its shape, remains unknown, and the rumors always fade after a time.

Geiers: The scavenging geiers patrol Katapesh's skies in search of carrion on which to feast, and natives regard geiers as birds of ill fortune. This superstition derives from the bird's habit of leaving healthy creatures alone but preying on the obviously weak, sick, or dying. Geiers flock to battlefields and circle silently overhead, waiting to gorge themselves on the bodies of the slain.

Geiers are large birds with a wingspan of almost 5 feet. Small, close-lying red feathers cover their heads and give them a bald, bloody appearance. Despite their unlucky reputation, geiers provide a useful service. Their hardy systems allow them to devour rotting carrion that would otherwise fester in the heat and breed disease that could infect local wildlife or travelers.

Jackalweres: While lycanthropes are humanoids that transform into animals, jackalweres are jackals that transform into humanoids. A plague on Katapesh, packs of jackalweres thrive in every nook and cranny of the country, no matter how remote or seemingly uninhabitable. Though solitary jackalweres sometimes prey on travelers—usually in the dead of night, after sneaking into their campsite—most Katapeshi jackalweres travel in packs of two to four, plus ordinary jackals who serve as guards and companions. Jackalweres seem to believe they have a special connection to Katapesh; perhaps they consider it their birthplace, or perhaps they simply feel comfortable in the wild, arid environment.

Stories abound of jackalweres who disguise themselves as human travelers, or survivors of a gnom ambush. In this guise they join caravans, only to transform after their companions have gone to sleep, and rip out the throats of those around them. Then the jackalweres' companions descend on the caravan, leaving behind only empty wagons and a few bloodstained bones for the dawn to find.

Full game statistics for jackalweres are in *Tome of Horrors, Revised* from Necromancer Games. If you do not have access to that book, use standard werewolf statistics, except that jackalweres have DR/cold iron rather than DR/silver and a supernatural sleep gaze attack that functions as the *sleep* spell but without an HD limit.

Jann: The jann are not native to Katapesh, but consider themselves guardians of the wild lands. As such, jann are rarely seen in civilized areas. Their tribes wander through the unsettled mountains and plains of Katapesh, safeguarding what untamed wilderness remains in the land. Jann do not react with immediate hostility when encountering travelers, but they have no incentive to offer



friendship either. Jann treat mortal visitors with distant caution, and prefer to vanish in the face of conflict rather than make war against other races.

Travelers rarely recognize jann for what they truly are. The jann of Katapesh travel in nomadic tribes, wandering through the harshest and most uninhabitable areas of the country. Most bands contain no more than two dozen members, along with small herds of camels, goats, or sheep. Jann appear human to most outsiders, and only an experienced planar traveler or one learned in genie lore (DC 30 Knowledge [arcana] check) recognizes the jann as a genie rather than a human.

The natural wonders of Katapesh create a strong draw for the jann, who are by nature elemental creatures. The normally reticent jann may attack with uncharacteristic vigor if they believe a unique formation or unblemished natural area is in danger of destruction. Some may even see the actions of ordinary travelers or adventurers as potential threats if their route takes them through previously undiscovered areas. Jann have no wish to see tales of fertile and unclaimed wilderness making the rounds in local taverns.

Because of the jann's strong connection to the elements, they have a particular knack for finding large areas of singular elements—in Katapesh, this means they easily locate swamps, marshes, and oases. This ability makes the jann valuable as guides, but it takes an extremely worthy cause or a large reward to convince a jann to serve in such a capacity.

Katapeshi Lions: These great beasts, native to the plains of Katapesh, form packs in which to hunt small game. Measuring up to 10 feet long and weighing up to 1,000 pounds, the ferocious predators attack anything that seems small and vulnerable, even lone humanoids. Particularly hungry Katapeshi lions might attack a group of two or three humanoids, but rarely more than that. While the males are larger and heavier than females, it is the lionesses that do the majority of the hunting for their pack. Their burnished golden fur and nearly white manes make the Katapeshi lions prized targets for big-game hunters.

Pugwumpis: Halfway between the dhabbas and the gnolls, pugwumpis live a pathetic and short existence. These small, stupid creatures lack the cunning of a gnoll and the animal instincts of a dhabba; though their stature belies their ferocity, pugwumpis have little more than ill tempers and sharp teeth with which to make a place for themselves. As a result, pugwumpis live brutal, meaningless lives until they meet their

end on a traveler's blade or in the belly of a sand eel. Most civilized folk disdainfully call them "jackal rats."

A tribe of eight or more pugwumpis tends to live longer than a solitary creature, and so the doglike gremlins usually band together for survival. Jackal rats see gnolls as the pinnacle of greatness, and fawn at the paws of the larger creatures. Gnolls sometimes keep a pack of pugwumpis in their settlement to act as fodder and servants, but frequently decide that their utility isn't worth the irritation.

Razorscales: Razorscales are large, generally harmless lizards that inhabit the mountainous areas of Katapesh. Despite their size of up to 6 feet in length (an adult male razorscale can weigh up to 200 pounds), these carnivores prefer carrion, rodents and birds, and dhabbas. When provoked, however, razorscales do not hesitate to attack larger creatures. Female razorscales guard their nests jealously, and may attack travelers who come too close to a clutch of eggs.

The razorscale gains its name from the thin, sharp-edged scales that cover its body. Anyone touching a razorscale with bare skin risks injury, and hunters take care to wear thick gloves before coming close to one of the creatures.





Sand Eels: Though not actually fish—technically, these desert creatures are oversized snakes—the sinuous, translucent bodies and delicate fins of the sand eels give them the appearance of marine creatures. Sand eels live in the desert areas of Katapesh, where they slither rapidly along the hot sands in search of small animals to consume.

Sand eels hunt alone, but sometimes return to a nest in the evening. Sand eels dig pits in which they sleep in nests of two to 10. Unfortunate travelers stumbling upon a sand eel pit can disappear as if sucked into quicksand. Reports of travelers who saw companions swallowed by the sand, and moments later witnessed a half-dozen sand eels erupt from beneath the earth, are the most likely source of rumors that sand eels can “swim” through dirt and rock. In reality, sand eels only glide along the surface until they burrow for the night.

PESH

Pesh is the life force of Katapesh, the eponymous plant that drives trade and provides farmers with crops year after year. The word “pesh” refers both to the bulbous, vibrant green cacti that flourish in the Katapesh deserts and to the narcotic distilled from their milk.

Most travelers have heard tales of bitter, milky pesh, but the drug actually exists in several forms. The easiest way to make pesh is to remove one of the cactus’ flat, thorn-studded leaves and milk the liquid within. The thin, pungent milk begins to curdle after 3 days in a cool, dry place. An additive called nagri—a bitter salt mined from dry lakebeds such as Sabkha—is stirred into the spoiled milk at this point and allowed to sit for another day. Large white lumps form in the mixture, like butter in churned milk, and a fine mesh strains the lumps (the raw pesh) from the liquid whey.

Pesh in this raw solid form can be eaten plain for a narcotic dose, or more commonly smoked in a water pipe or hookah. To make refined pesh, farmers must wait for the 2 months a year when the cacti bloom. Fat seedpods swell on the plants, and the farmers carefully score the pods with sharp blades. Sap oozes from the score marks and hardens into resin. Farmers must spend weeks of delicate work scoring the pods, harvesting the dried resin after a day, and scoring fresh marks until every pod is dry (save for a few to allow fertilization). The farmers then add the resin to the raw pesh to form sticky black

blocks which can be eaten, rolled into leaves for smoking, or mixed into drinks. Refined pesh is much more potent than raw pesh and is considered a high-quality item for nobles and rich traders. On the opposite end of the quality spectrum is the weak liquid pesh whey, which is rarely found outside of Katapesh. Poor folk add pesh whey to tea, pack whey-soaked gauze against their gums, or sop it up with hard bread and eat it.

Nearly every settlement in Katapesh that holds more than a few houses has a pesh field somewhere in the vicinity. The poorest farmers may own only two or three cacti, carefully fenced in their yard, while rich farmers may own fields crammed with dozens of the plants. Pesh is the nation’s main export, and linen-wrapped

blocks of raw and refined pesh can be found for sale in places as far away as Absalom, Cheliax, or Varisia. Because pesh is so vital to the nation’s economy, as well as individual citizens’ livelihoods, pesh jumping is one of the most severe crimes under Katapesh law, akin to murder. Pesh jumping occurs when an individual usurps another’s pesh fields by violence or other illegal activity. Pesh farmers tend to develop strong friendships with their neighbors out of mutual protection, and thus pesh jumping is difficult in a community.

In the markets of Katapesh, a single dose of raw pesh costs 1 sp, a dose of refined pesh costs 10 gp, and a dose of pesh whey is a mere 1–2 cp.

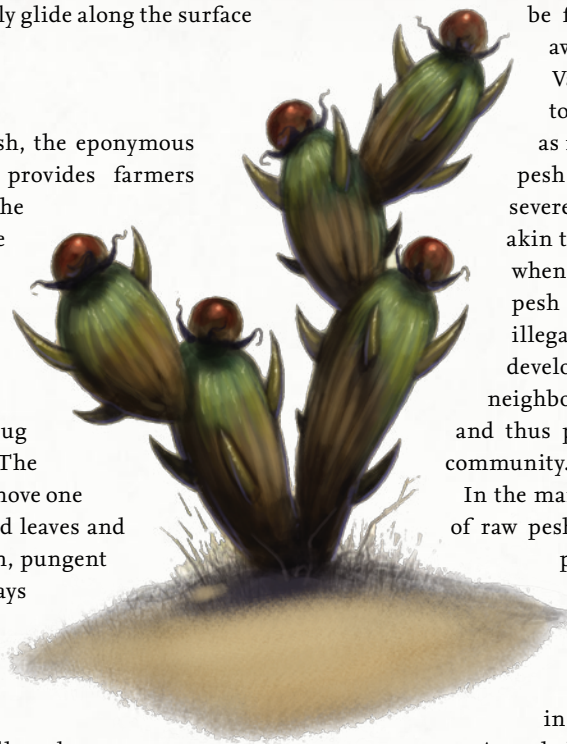
Outside of Katapesh, these prices double along the Inner Sea, and triple or more in lands farther from the source.

A pesh brick measures 3 inches by 2 inches by 2 inches and contains approximately 20 doses. Raw pesh has a mildly euphoric, narcotic effect on an individual and acts as an analgesic as well, which makes it valuable to healers administering long-term care, and pesh whey gauze sees use within the country for people with toothaches, as it numbs the mouth. Refined pesh has the same effect, but far more pronounced.

ORGANIZATIONS

The influx of trade, people, and culture makes Katapesh a hotspot for religious and secular groups.

Abadar: As the god of merchants and commerce, Abadar is easily the most visible deity in Katapesh. Ornate keys hang from the walls of many merchant stalls and tents



in homage to the Master of the First Vault. Almost every establishment holds a tithe box on its counter, and many more stand scattered throughout the city—some manned, some nailed to walls or set atop short posts. At the end of transactions, customers generally drop their change into one of these tithe boxes, and merchants often place a handful of coins in a box on their way to a business deal. Abadar's clergy routinely collects the tithes to fund the temple's daily routines, but take few security precautions. No one in their right mind would rob a tithe box of Abadar in the city of merchants.

Abadar's clergy perform several extremely important functions in Katapesh. **Aakif Ashad** (LN male human cleric of Abadar 7), a Garundi priest, oversees the Temple of Measured Weights. For a fee, the clergy notarize documents, prepare business contracts, and—most importantly—certify scales. A gold ribbon, marked with a date and name and affixed to a scale, affirms that a cleric of Abadar measured the scale and confirmed it weighs even and true. The clergy of Abadar routinely visit merchants on surprise inspections to re-certify scales. The gold ribbons stick magically to scales, and few forgers dare risk the wrath of the church by creating false ribbons. Aakif Ashad ruthlessly investigates any suspected forgeries personally, with the full backing of the Pactmasters.

The clergy of Abadar also identify magic items and write documents certifying their powers, for a fee.

Sarenrae: Sarenrae's faithful played an important part in the founding of Katapesh, particularly in the city of Solku. In such a hot climate, sun worshipers are not uncommon, and prayers to Sarenrae flow freely, asking for respite from the killing desert sun and pleading for the gentleness of the Dawnflower.

Sarenrae's shrines and worshipers are more common in small towns and lightly populated wilderness areas than in the large cities' crowded streets. Temples to Sarenrae definitely exist in Katapesh and even in Okeno, but their call to truth and light often gets lost in the whirl of commerce and barter. In large cities, clerics of Sarenrae are seen as mediators and healers, and are often sought to counsel stubborn merchants unable to strike a reasonable bargain.

Solku holds the strongest presence of Sarenrae's clergy; **Lady Chanar Cynore** (LG female human paladin of Sarenrae 8) coordinates her paladins' actions from her residence in the Lambent Citadel. Paladins and clerics of Sarenrae sometimes take vows to travel the plains and deserts of Katapesh for a year or more, praising the life and strength the sun brings to the land and safeguarding those who choose to make their home in such a bright and challenging place. These itinerant faithful also seek out news of any cults of Rovagug and report such findings back to the Lambent Citadel.

EFFECTS OF PESH

Pesh is an addictive narcotic that has a mild analgesic effect. Anyone ingesting a dose of raw pesh takes a –2 penalty to Dexterity and Wisdom for one day. Pesh smokers enter a pleasant, dreamy state of bliss in which pain seems less severe but pleasant feelings are amplified. Multiple doses within a 24-hour period do not inflict additional ability penalties but may intensify the narcotic effects, depending on the individual. In addition, anyone ingesting a dose of raw pesh receives 10 temporary hit points, which last for 1 hour, and gains a +1 morale bonus to saves versus fear effects for one day. Multiple doses within a 24-hour period do not bestow additional hit points or renew the saving throw bonus.

Refined pesh has the same effects as raw pesh, but the ability penalties increase to –4, and one dose grants 15 temporary hit points and a +2 morale bonus to saves versus fear. The narcotic effects are also more pronounced.

Pesh whey has the same effects as raw pesh, except no Dexterity penalty, no bonus against fear, and only 1 temporary hit point for 1 hour.

ADDICTION

Pesh is an addictive substance (Fort DC 10 to avoid addiction, 5 days satiation, 1d4 Dex and 1d4 Wisdom withdrawals), but as the GM you can ignore this if you don't want to deal with addiction in your game. The benefits granted by pesh aren't significant enough to offset the penalties it imposes, and as such allowing the characters to indulge in pesh without ill effects should not disrupt the power balance of a game. Many individuals in Katapesh, especially those native to the region, are able to enjoy pesh recreationally without risking dangerous addiction.

In a darker campaign, however, or one that explores more adult themes, pesh can be significantly more dangerous. While the drug's effects are at first pleasant and innocuous, repeated pesh use can create a dependence that is both physical and psychological, leaving the user with a desperate craving for more. An individual who uses pesh may need to make a Will save at increasing difficulties until he is unable to resist the call of pesh; he may also find himself growing immune to pesh whey and raw pesh's effects and may have to seek out the more expensive refined pesh. Pesh addiction causes otherwise stable individuals to lose fortunes, destroy their families, and in many cases, lose their lives. Slavers, pimps, and gang leaders may use pesh as a tool for controlling others, and the Pactmasters or the Aspis Consortium might have sinister plans in motion to bring all Katapesh under the control of the drug.

Most campaigns probably fall somewhere between these two extremes. Players might appreciate the roleplaying possibilities a pesh addiction affords, or they may consider pesh background material inconsequential to their travels.



Rovagug: The Rough Beast has a small but strong following in Katapesh. The ever-present sun burning overhead throws Rovagug's faithful into a frenzy, as it reminds them of their nemesis Sarenrae. Cults of Rovagug come to Katapesh with a fierce desire to blot out that smug sun—though their goal is mad and likely unreachable, the power of Rovagug spurs his followers to try again and again.

Cults of Rovagug hide in the wildest areas of Katapesh: the jagged mountain slopes, the flat and featureless deserts, and the deepest parts of the stinking swamps. For this reason the cults come into conflict with jann more than other organizations—jann are also drawn to the wild lands of Katapesh, and consider the destructive cults of Rovagug a great affront. One cultist, a charismatic and indisputably insane half-orc priest named Brigid Zelegan, believes the country of Katapesh itself holds the key to blotting out the sun forever, a ritual or spell lost in an ancient tomb. She directs her followers to excavate old ruins and explore caves, often based on mad visions or dreams she receives.

Gozreh: Gozreh enjoys limited worship in inland Katapesh, though some of his faithful serve as guides or operate caravans. Gozreh's main centers of worship remain the coastal cities of Katapesh and Okeno, where the clergy blesses ships about to leave port and caravans about to strike out west into the desert. Gozreh's priests are generally regarded as helpful and able to offer advice on crops, the weather, and travel. Many pesh farmers seek out priests of Gozreh in times of drought or blight.

In Okeno, two priests oversee Gozreh's shrine. The aged priests, a Tian brother and sister, are well known in the city, and most hold them in high regard. **Niharo** (N male human cleric of Gozreh 8), the brother, walks with the aid of an oak staff almost as gnarled and twisted as his body. His white beard hangs almost to his knees and bands of agate and bronze bind it into a braid. He cautions travelers headed to Katapesh about the dangers of the land and offers advice on cross-country journeys. **Owayu** (N female human druid of Gozreh 8), the sister, wears her white hair long and wild, so tangled and besnared with dried seaweed, broken shells, and coral barrettes that it resembles a massive tangle of flotsam. She spends most of her time on the docks, welcoming ships and advising of coming storms. Despite their fiery personalities, Niharo and Owayu get along perfectly and have lived in the shrine together for almost 20 years.

Lamashtu: The gnolls worship Lamashtu openly and with great enthusiasm, but other races also pay homage to the Mother of Monsters. Jackalweres venerate Lamashtu as their progenitor with as much dedication as the gnolls, but less openly. Jackalweres are more likely to perform rites to Lamashtu quietly in their lairs, while gnolls

tear living sacrifices apart on the battlefield, screaming their devotion to their goddess. In the foothills at the base of the Brazen Peaks, a tribe of three-armed giants supposedly maintains a crude shrine to Lamashtu, but relentlessly attacks any who dare come to worship.

In the cities, Lamashtu is rarely worshiped openly. A jackalwere priestess who goes by the name Faithful Daughter occasionally makes an appearance in Katapesh. She prowls through the marketplaces in human form, tightly wrapped in tattered brown robes rent over her abdomen to display an almost armor-like mass of scar tissue. A drape of cloth covers her features; some say she is hideously deformed, others that she possesses a rare beauty, and a few claim she wears a jackal's face whatever form she takes. Faithful Daughter does not preach on the street, but makes herself available to those who choose to seek her out.

Nethys: Many adventuring wizards and students of arcane lore come to Katapesh in search of ancient temples of Nethys. There, they believe, long-lost secrets and spells lie waiting for worthy students to claim them. Copies of *The Book of Magic* left in these tombs and temples are a lure for those already in search of power. Many come to Katapesh in search of Nethys's treasures, but leave a new devotee of the god himself. Nethys has few modern temples in use in Katapesh. A tower in the desert reportedly holds a great library maintained by **Imaru Shamoan** (N male human wizard 3/cleric of Nethys 3/mystic theurge 2), a Garundi wizard-priest of the All-Seeing Eye. Small shrines exist in Solku and the city of Katapesh as well.

Pharasma: Pharasma enjoys a unique following in Katapesh. The large number of ruins and tombs in the country, many undiscovered and highly sought-after, draws tomb raiders and grave robbers of every breed. These seekers often request aid from Pharasma's clergy—advice on dispelling a troublesome spirit or communicating with those who once inhabited the ruins, or guidance on disposing of undead guardians. While Pharasma's faithful aren't often moved by such pleas, they may dispense wisdom or aid for a just cause or a persuasive donation to the temple.

Though Pharasma's worshipers aren't known as crusaders, in Katapesh a few rare knights of Pharasma exist. One of these knights, a Keleshite named **Parnak Kabardan** (LN male human fighter 7), lived in Solku with his wife until she died giving birth to a deformed, stillborn child. Rather than see the tragedy as a sign of displeasure from Pharasma, Parnak blamed his wife's and child's deaths on interference from Lamashtu. Parnak dedicated himself to eradicating Lamashtu's followers in Katapesh. Given the rate at which gnolls breed, this vow is likely to become Parnak's life's work. Parnak's fervor

has led others to follow his example. Though itinerant, Parnak often visits the rangers of Fort Longjaw to share intelligence on gnoll activity, and occasionally assists in raids led by the Severed Paw.

Aspis Consortium: Were the Aspis Consortium a religious organization, Katapesh would be its mecca. The Pactmasters' influence ensures trade runs smoothly in the capital city, and the mercenary nature of most of Katapesh's inhabitants means the Aspis Consortium finds fertile ground for its many schemes.

In the city of Katapesh, a handful of agents work to control the ebb and flow of trade. The most prominent is **Fatima Jel-Abar** (NE female human rogue 3/expert 2), a Garundi trader with a vast fortune. Fatima deals in exotic artifacts and unusual goods that she places for sale in the Nightstalls, and she is never seen in public without her two silent, heavily robed bodyguards. The next most visible agent, a Chelaxian who goes by the name **Skorn Dal** (NE male human aristocrat 1/rogue 3), traffics in pesh. His impressive memory allows him to keep track of every supplier and distributor in the country, and his obsession with growing conditions leaves him preoccupied with the weather.

Rumor has it that both Fatima and Skorn work for an unknown and invisible higher-ranking agent, who makes use of the immense amounts of trade flowing in and out of the city to estimate supply, demand, prices, and margins in other regions, and transmits this information back to the Consortium to fuel future plans. Aspis Consortium members must step carefully in Katapesh, though. The city provides a tempting target, but the faceless Pactmasters take great care to ensure trade proceeds smoothly in its shops. A Consortium member whose grasp grows too greedy may find himself garnering unwanted attention from the mysterious city masters, and disappearing soon after.

The Severed Paw: The Severed Paw is a specialized group of gnoll hunters who operate out of Fort Longjaw. Giana Secondstride, the stockade's de facto leader, also heads this organization of elite trackers and fighters. Fort Longjaw's denizens work to supply, maintain, and defend the stockade, but only the most experienced and proven warriors—ones who display a deep and unswerving hatred of gnolls—join the ranks of the Severed Paw.

Membership is left entirely for Secondstride to decide, and she is also the one who trains and directs the Severed Paw. The organization undertakes small, specific, and highly dangerous raids on key gnoll settlements. Severed Paw members must display singular stealth, patience, and combat prowess to contribute to the group. Secondstride rarely trusts anyone, but she routinely places her life in the hands of the Severed Paw.

PACTMASTERS IN KATAPESH

The mysterious robed Pactmasters run schemes and maintain operations outside the eye of the average citizen of Katapesh. While all know of the Pactmasters' existence, the day-to-day operations of the city are left to Pactbroker Hashim ibn Sayyid. The Pactmasters' influence, however, extends beyond the city limits.

Events that occur in Katapesh's plains, deserts, and small towns have the potential to affect the city's business. The Pactmasters maintain a network of spies, informants, and scrying devices that report back on incidents that may upset Katapeshi transactions. The pesh trade funnels much business and gold into the city, and the Pactmasters are keenly interested in any incidents that may disrupt pesh harvests. Likewise, the Pactmasters sometimes send agents to investigate missing caravans or tales of waylaid travelers.

In their trademark mysterious fashion, Pactmasters do not interfere with these events directly, but work through proxies instead—many of whom may not even suspect who their patrons truly are.

Notable Characters

Katapesh is home to many interesting characters, some more infamous than respectable.

Hazic Kel-Kalaar: This man came to Solku 8 years ago in search of a reputed treasure-trove of ancient scrolls, and made Solku his base of operations. After almost half a year of dedicated research and exploration, Kel-Kalaar found the treasury, only to discover he was not the first to raid it. By that time, he had fallen in love with the city of Solku—its order, its stubbornness, and its obvious need for strong leadership.

Kel-Kalaar bought a house in Solku and set to work constructing a research lab to further his arcane studies. He had lived in Solku barely a year when the gnolls attacked in the Siege of Solku. While it was the paladins of Iomedae and Sarenrae who turned the tide of the Battle of Red Hail, Kel-Kalaar offered his powers to protect the city. He fought alongside the paladins and led forces of guardsmen and armed citizens against the gnolls. His levelheaded tactics, composure, and arcane ability led him to victory several times over. Once the siege had ended, Kel-Kalaar stated his desire to take the place of Solku's slain leader. The people supported his bid, and the church of Sarenrae pledged to work with him to deliver Solku into a bright, secure era.

Kel-Kalaar likes to talk and engages anyone who asks to speak to him. His diminutive form, clad in regal blue or burgundy robes, often appears at public gatherings, drinking houses, and the like, discussing the events of the



day with Solku's citizens. Despite his gregarious nature, Kel-Kalaar remains reticent about his personal life. He forges few friendships and has no family to speak of.

Many support Kel-Kalaar, including the church of Sarenrae. Despite their alliance, Kel-Kalaar often comes into conflict with Lady Cynore of Sarenrae. While both are concerned for the city's welfare, Kel-Kalaar prefers taking a long-term view and makes decisions slowly after considerable thought. Lady Cynore prefers a more aggressive approach to the city's defense.

Rath Sandstalker: The cruel and cunning leader of the White Canyon gnolls, Sandstalker is not quite as clever as he thinks he is, but a great deal luckier. Sandstalker

takes terrific pride in his gnolls' accomplishments and is convinced they deserve to rule over Katapesh. On a more practical level, however, he is mostly concerned with ensuring his followers' survival and establishing a strong gnoll race that will last for generations. If, in pursuit of these noble goals, Sandstalker can make a tidy profit, he considers that an excellent bonus.

Sandstalker supports his followers' desire to raid, ravage, and enslave the general populace of Katapesh. Selling slaves garners revenue to fund any scheme he comes up with, while the raiding creates an aura of fear and respect among outsiders. His rivalry with Noor, the Red Sultana, has led to a division in the White Canyon tribe, with most supporting him and some leaving to join his rival. Though as yet this has not turned into a military conflict, it is certain that eventually these two leaders will have to settle their differences with blood. The question is how many other White Canyon gnolls will die because of this feud, and if this will give another pack of gnolls the advantage it needs to drive out or take over the survivors.

Sandstalker's plans are often grandiose and far beyond his abilities, yet those he follows through on usually meet with a degree of success. He has a reputation for cleverness among the gnolls, but more often than not, his plans succeed due to luck more than skill. Some whisper that Sandstalker has the favor of a powerful entity, perhaps even a god. Others think his luck can only take him so far, and sooner or later Sandstalker will misstep and fall.

Red Sultana: While gnolls in general have a reputation as bloodthirsty, savage creatures, none inspire terror like Noor, the Red Sultana. She gained her title during the Siege of Solku, when she fought next to Rath Sandstalker at the head of his small army of rabid gnolls. The siege was a painfully long series of vicious battles, and right up until the Battle of Red Hail, Noor was on the front lines of the worst conflicts. She eviscerated enemies with her sweeping falchion swings and screamed with delight every time a splash of gore bathed her red armor.

After the gnolls failed to hold Solku, Noor left the band of gnoll survivors and disappeared into the desert. Some spread rumors that she had died in the Battle of Red Hail, others claimed Sandstalker had killed Noor when he realized he could not control her, and still others claimed she went in search of Lamashtu. Two years passed before Noor returned, with no indication of where she had been in the time she was away.

When Noor reappeared, she did so as the Red Sultana. Her enchanted hide armor shines





with a slick red sheen; in battle, it grows dripping wet with crimson gore, and her eyes burn with an intense light. She displays her yellow fangs in a constant grimace of anticipation, and her scarred body seems always poised for action. The Red Sultana drew to her the most depraved, sadistic, desperate, and violent gnolls in the region. Sandstalker lost some from his tribe; others came from small packs in the mountains to march under the crimson banner.

The Red Sultana cares nothing for preserving or defending gnoll settlements—she seems not even to care for the lives of her followers. She does not march for gold or power, nor (despite rumors about her disappearance) does she ever speak of a legacy or divine destiny. The Red Sultana cares only for slaughter, and seeks to begin with the upstarts who resisted her last time she bared claw and tooth at the city of Solku. It is only a matter of time before she again clashes swords with “Yellow Hair.”

Chanar Cynore: One of the most respected figures in Solku, Lady Cynore has made her home here for almost 20 years. A veteran of many sieges, including the Battle of Red Hail, Lady Cynore has forged a reputation as a fierce warrior as well as a dedicated champion for Sarenrae and Solku. The people look to her for spiritual guidance, but also for impassioned speeches and concrete plans of action. Lady Cynore always knows the right course of action for Solku to take, and wants to implement those plans immediately.

Before Red Hail, Lady Cynore devoted herself to Solku’s spiritual maturity and entered battle with the grim reluctance of one approaching an unwanted duty. After the Siege of Solku, her bloodthirst awakened. She made many speeches on the dangers of inaction—even going so far as to blame her earlier reluctance to enter battle for the escalation of gnoll attacks that culminated in the siege. She often speaks of protecting Solku’s interests and the people within its walls, as well as earning accolades for Sarenrae. Lord Kel-Kalaar’s policy of careful, considered action strikes her as dangerously slow and overly cautious, despite his similar agenda.

Lady Cynore makes her home in the Lambent Citadel, where she oversees the training of guardsmen, city patrols, and services at the Citadel. She maintains a policy of welcoming travelers, encouraging them to leave donations to further the city’s defenses. Lady Cynore believes any who stay within Solku’s walls, even for a night, bear a shared responsibility for defending the city. Almost everyone in town, and many who have passed through Solku in their travels, are familiar with Lady Cynore’s commanding appearance; though past the prime of her youth, Lady Cynore still possesses a beautiful face and ashy blonde hair just on the cusp of gray, and she walks with a determined stride.

Lucky Farouq: Katapesh is renowned as a city of con artists and impresarios, and none were so renowned as Farouq Tawfiq, known as “Lucky Farouq.” Farouq always had a trick up his sleeve and always came out with a profit. After every adventure he would spend some of his gains in the bars and clubs of the Souk, regaling those around him with tales of his most recent exploits. Enjoying his own celebrity too much to let it rest, Farouq made the bargain of his life by pretending to be an agent of the Pactmasters—and then vanished, presumably at their hands. Wild rumors sprung up about his disappearance, and opportunists took advantage of his absence to publish the stories of his adventures, which became very popular. A decade later he returned, much older than his actual years but wise in planar travel. Bitter about years of stolen profits, he now sells information about the creatures of other realms, with his *amulet of the planes* constantly visible as evidence of his knowledge.

Var Pinderven: Pinderven is a dwarf more concerned with knowledge than gold. He quickly points out to anyone who will listen that information is the most valuable treasure—and, more pragmatically, that knowledge often points the way to the kind of treasure one can spend.

Pinderven has lived as the caretaker of Sueda Lodge for almost 2 years, and greatly enjoys desert life. He boasts of a practical nature, and exults in the fact that he can stay within the lodge walls, “comfy and cozy,” while others venture into the reaches of Katapesh to uncover artifacts for him. In truth, Pinderven dearly loves spelunking and exploring on his own behalf, and rarely stays in the lodge for more than a week at a time. His pragmatism wars with his love of adventure, but for all that, Pinderven never shirks his duties as the lodge caretaker. He ensures the lodge always possesses ample supplies and defenses, and that any threat in the area is investigated and dealt with. If Pinderven ever appeared to abandon the lodge, it would be great cause for alarm.

In his time in Katapesh, Pinderven has made several important discoveries. His greatest find to date is the tomb of an ancient Osirian prince filled with gold statues, heavily jeweled rings, and an enchanted sword. Pinderven kept a few small art objects to display in the lodge and sent the rest to the Grand Lodge in Absalom, with a full report. Despite their moderate value, he cherishes these clay pots and copper urns more than almost anything.

Pinderven is a stout dwarf with sunburned skin and close-cropped black hair. His thick beard makes the Katapesh heat difficult to tolerate, but rather than shave he chooses to swath himself in billowing white robes that cover his head. He usually carries a book or ledger, ready to make notes with a charcoal stick.



History of Katapesh

Katapesh's history stretches back over 2,000 years, though the earliest parts actually predate its current name and reputation.

AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT

- 2214 Traders carrying wares to Nex report attacks by gnoll raiders, led by a vicious marauder named Kinroth.
- 2216 A band of heroes tracks down and slays Kinroth and his band; gnoll pressure eases for a time.
- 2217 Sarenrae's faithful flee the pogrom in Osirion, led by a devout priestess named Vedic (said to be an ancestor of Lady Cynore of Solku). Once in the desert, Vedic instructs her followers to build a settlement they call Sarenrae's Bastion, but a splinter group breaks off to search for a "golden land."
- 2218 The splinter group of Sarenrae worshipers finds a lush valley surrounded by golden sands and full of thriving plant life. A massive sphinx stands at the center of the valley, but there is no other sign of habitation. They settle in the valley and name it the Golden City.
- 2375 A band of raiders of all races and backgrounds attacks and overthrows the Golden City, stealing the wealth of its inhabitants and claiming its rich resources and prime location for themselves.
- 2515 Dwarves arrive in search of rare minerals. A few settle in Sarenrae's Bastion, but most make for the lawless but wealthy Golden City.
- 2518–2550 Walls and fortifications are built around what later becomes known as the Inner City. Magic and engineering are used to erect wondrous monuments and a number of titanic statues.
- 2589 The Year of Scouring Winds: A sandstorm lasting 33 days destroys almost all the plant life in the Golden City's valley, kills hundreds, and nearly buries the city. Survivors flee, some to Sarenrae's Bastion, where priests proclaim the sandstorm a "judgment" against the city's evil populace.
- 2689 A mysterious woman named Nimhar walks out of the desert and begins clearing the ruins of the Golden City. Others join her in her task.
- 2692 Nimhar takes control of the new Golden City and renames it Sandstar. Explorers, alchemists, and researchers flock to the new city, but their presence reignites banditry in the area.
- 2693–3248 The Oasis Age: Settlements grow and flourish with no major conflicts.
- 3249 An alchemist named Atoru discovers that the cacti growing near Sandstar have mutated since the Year of Scouring Winds. Atoru's experiments produce a narcotic substance he calls pesh.

- 3250 News of pesh spreads across the land, drawing criminals and merchants of all kinds to the city. A bandit named Jade-Eye slaughters Nimhar and takes control of the city. Nimhar's body is never found. Jade-Eye renames the city Katapesh, and the region soon adopts that name.
- 3256 Gnoll slavers begin raiding Sarenrae's Bastion. For 2 years the gnolls relentlessly sell slaves from Sarenrae's Bastion to Katapesh before the slaving tribes break apart beneath a series of concentrated rebuttals.
- 3257 Citizens in Sarenrae's Bastion, feeling betrayed and abandoned by their goddess, rename the town Solku.
- 3721 Year of Rent Sails: Another rash of slave raids hits Solku, this time by human raiders. City guards drive off the attacks from Okeno in a series of skirmishes.
- 3725 The Pactmasters take over Katapesh, and construction begins on the city's new palace and outer walls.
- 3730 The infamous Nightstalls open in Katapesh.
- 3750 The city's outer walls are completed.
- 4112 Paladins of Sarenrae return to Solku to establish a base of operations to combat regional slavery.
- 4115 Paladins of Sarenrae begin covert raids out of Solku to free slaves being sold in Katapesh. They have moderate success, but many are captured and enslaved.
- 4363 The Fleshfairs open in Okeno.
- 4418 A pack of rabid dhabbas, driven mad by some unknown illness, savages campsites near the Nexian border.
- 4604 Quaid Robilad, a Chelish nobleman, visits Katapesh and disappears among the Nightstalls, never to be seen again. His wife offers a large reward for information regarding his disappearance, but the reward is never claimed. The incident nearly incites a war.

AGE OF LOST OMENS

- 4701 Gnolls from White Canyon, led by Rath Sandstalker, besiege Solku. Paladins of Iomedae arrive to reinforce the established faithful of Sarenrae. The siege breaks but the paladins of Iomedae all perish in the Battle of Red Hail. Sandstalker escapes.
- 4705 The Gray Corsairs, a small navy made up of Andoren freedom fighters, sink three Katapeshi slave galleys. The Pactmasters offer a large reward for the destruction of the Corsairs' fleet.
- 4706 The city of Katapesh reaches a population of 210,000 people, including slaves and long-term visitors.
- 4709 The current year.





Katapesh—City of Trade

South of most civilized lands, sprawling across a valley of blazing-hot sand, is one of the most incredible and wondrous cities in all of Golarion—the great desert metropolis of Katapesh. Within its sandstone walls, anything one wishes can be bought, sold, or traded... for the right price. Katapesh is a city of organized chaos, where gold is king and commerce is the greatest god.

From its early beginnings as the Golden City, Katapesh was a land rich in natural resources, fortuitously located on the shores of the Obari Ocean. Even after it was blasted by hot stinging sands for over 30 days during the Year of Scouring Winds, Katapesh retained its mercantile importance no matter who or what occupied the city. Some believe that it is the city's divine purpose; that one day Katapesh will be the greatest mercantile power in all of Golarion, overshadowing even Absalom.

Katapesh overlooks the Obari Ocean from a sandy promontory above a series of black, glass-like cliffs called the Obsidian Wall. Beneath the cliffs a flat stretch of ground extends to the sea, and many of the busiest portions of Katapesh are found within this strip. The city is surrounded by 40-foot-high sandstone walls, topped by ramparts and interspersed with crenellated towers. A small standing army called the Zephyr Guard patrols the walls and towers surrounding Katapesh.

The city is divided into five separate areas: Dawn Gate, Docks, Inner City, Lower City, and Twilight Gate. In addition to these large sections of the city, three smaller communities shelter in the shade of its tall walls. Dog Town huddles around the Dawn Gate. The Daystalls, a collection of vendors and beggars, sits outside of the Serpent Gate. Separate from the other two in many ways, a community of craftsmen, vendors, farmers, and



fishermen make up a settlement called the Sprawl near the Twilight Gate. Castle Clarion, just south and east of the Sprawl, has attracted neighbors and a few shops that just barely qualify it as a fourth community outside of Katapesh's walls.

The River Scorpius wends its way through part of the city, passing through the Serpent Gate, exiting into the Sprawl, and flowing out into the Obari Ocean. Numerous bridges span its width and small watercraft traverse its length, transporting people and goods to where they need to go.

The people of Katapesh are dedicated to their professions and take great pride in them. Every line of work, down to the humblest beggar, is part of a guild. Membership in a guild safeguards each member's economic well-being, even if that means having just enough to feed oneself each day. It also protects members from the harsh penalties for unsanctioned business practices and the equally harsh (and often deadly) vigilante "guild justice" which smolders under the surface.

Drug use and poison are part of everyday life in Katapesh, and in fact help its economy thrive. Rather than drain the city coffers and put its law enforcement personnel in harm's way in a war against them, as is the practice in many other major cities, the Pactmasters of Katapesh have embraced these elements as part of the city's economic and cultural identity. Of course, as with most products, they are closely monitored, and a sales tax accompanies the sale of all drugs and poisons sold within the city, no matter how vile or dangerous.

Beyond the trade laws that form much of the city's identity, Katapesh is a chaotic hodgepodge of numerous cultures colliding to form something new. The people of Katapesh say and do whatever they like so long as it doesn't hurt or interfere with business. For example, while drawing a sword and stabbing a vendor for overpriced goods is illegal and likely to carry a harsh sentence, spitting in that vendor's face and shouting obscenities at him is perfectly fine—so long as it doesn't scare away other customers.

KATAPESH

Size metropolis (conventional); **AL** N

GP Limit 100,000 gp; **Assets** 1,000,000,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 212,300

Type mixed (80% human, 6% dwarf, 5% half-elf, 2% half-orc, 3% halfling, 3% gnome, 1% other races); approximately 70% of the population is free, 25% are permanent slaves, and 5% are temporary debt slaves or criminals serving time as slaves.

AUTHORITY FIGURES

The Pactmasters (unknown); **Pactbroker Hashim ibn Sayyid** (N male human expert 6); various guildmasters.

ABADARAN FEES

The following services are available from clerics of Abadar for a set fee. Outside of the city of Katapesh, these services may be unavailable, or available at inflated prices.

| Service | Fee |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Simple contract | 5 gp |
| Complex contract | 10 gp |
| Notarization of documents | 1 gp |
| Identify spell | 125 gp |
| Document a magic item's power | 10 gp |
| Business license | 5 gp |
| Scale certification | 10 gp |

Scale certification marks the scale with a gold ribbon announcing the scale's evenness, and allows the clergy of Abadar to make a minimum of six, but potentially unlimited, surprise visits over the next 12 months to reconfirm the scale's accuracy.

DAWN GATE

Like the Lower City, this portion of Katapesh grew up around the original city walls during the Oasis Age when the city was flooded with newcomers attracted to the city. Dawn Gate is home to many of Katapesh's wealthy business owners as well as numerous upper-middle-class residents.

1. The Immaculate Repository: As Abadar is the god of merchants and commerce, his temple is easily the most visible faith in Katapesh. Ornate keys hang from the walls of many merchant stalls and tents in homage to the Master of the First Vault. Almost every establishment holds a tithe box on its counter, and many more stand scattered throughout the city—some manned, others nailed to walls or set atop short posts. At the end of transactions, customers generally drop their change into these tithe boxes, and merchants often deposit handfuls of coins into boxes on their way to business deals. Abadar's clergy routinely collects the tithes to fund the temple's daily routines, but take few security precautions. No one in his right mind would rob a tithe box of Abadar in the city of merchants.

Abadar's clergy perform several extremely important functions in Katapesh. Master of the Vault **Jalal Abdul-Abadar** (LN male human cleric of Abadar 7), a Garundi priest, oversees the temple. For a fee, the clergy notarize documents, prepare business contracts, and—most importantly—certify scales. A gold ribbon, marked with a date and name and affixed to a scale, affirms that a cleric of Abadar measured the scale and confirmed it weighs even and true. The clergy of Abadar routinely visit



GILDED SHELL EXOTIC ARMOR

| Armor | Price | Equivalency |
|----------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Giant scorpion shell | 250 gp | Masterwork breastplate |
| Blink dog hide | 25 gp | Masterwork leather |
| Gorgon hide | 350 gp | Masterwork banded mail |
| Gray render hide | 50 gp | Masterwork hide |
| Naga scale | 200 gp | Masterwork chain shirt |
| Bone mail | 75 gp | Masterwork scale mail |
| Wood lamellar | 250 gp | Masterwork splint mail |
| Wyvern hide | 250 gp | Masterwork chainmail |
| Turtle shell | 2,000 gp | Masterwork half-plate |

merchants on surprise inspections to recertify scales. The gold ribbons stick magically to the scales, and few forgers dare risk the wrath of the church by creating false ribbons. The Master of the Vault ruthlessly investigates any suspected forgeries personally, with the full backing of the Pactmasters.

The clergy of Abadar also provide other services for a fee (see sidebar on previous page).

2. The Gilded Shell: An enormous tortoise-shaped structure covered in gleaming metal plates is the workplace for an accomplished armorer by the name of **Malthus Feyhew** (LN male half-elf fighter 4/expert 2). His team of apprentices and journeymen are skilled at working all manner of materials into beautiful and highly protective suits of armor under his expert guidance. All of Malthus's suits of armor are of masterwork quality. He is also interested in working new materials into serviceable armor. He has a standing offer to discount any suit of armor by 50% if his clients bring him new and exotic material from which to make it. For characters that like to have something a little different and stand out from the crowd, the Gilded Shell has many unusual suits of armor from which to choose (see sidebar above).

3. Truther & Trathis Mining and Excavation Company: This humble building is nothing more than a dusty office from which two grizzled old dwarves—Gravlet Truther and Kipp Trathis—operate an industrious mining and excavation enterprise. Shelves behind the front counter are filled with scores of tattered parchment scrolls covered in spidery mechanical drawings and specs that detail the company's various mining interests, as well as drawings of many of the strange landmarks scattered throughout the country. Ledgers stacked atop the two dwarves' desks detail the company's accounts, shipments, employees, and other bookkeeping details. Though the dwarves could hire help to take care of the office work, they are famously tight with their coin and won't hear of paying someone else to do the work they can do themselves.

The company has recently begun work on reopening the Zolurket Mines in spite of—or perhaps because of—the rumors of undead and other vaguely described horrors lurking there. They are also busy at work excavating the area around the Crouching Jackal and studying the statue itself. The two dwarves claim to have come into possession of an ancient scroll drawing depicting other structures surrounding the statue, and believe their efforts will uncover these lost structures buried beneath the sands. Perhaps they will provide answers to the questions surrounding the mysterious statue, or even find the secret entrance into the hollow interior which they firmly believe exists inside the Crouching Jackal.

Unknown to any but Gravlet and Kipp, the dwarven ghost that haunts the Zolurket Mines is their dead business partner Tibbler (“Tib”) Rocksledge, whom they abandoned decades ago during a mummy attack when they first plumbed the mines' depths. The incorporeal spirit now haunts the mines in anticipation of the dwarves' return so that he may exact his revenge on them for leaving him to die.

They have returned several times to try to find the rich platinum deposits that drew them to the mines in the first place, but Tib has attacked and nearly killed them every time. The crafty ghost has allowed a few other explorers to pass upon occasion so that they may spread word of the fortune waiting below, knowing that his traitorous partners cannot resist the siren call of so much raw platinum waiting to be mined.

The two dwarves' current effort is their most elaborate yet. They have hired diggers to try to tunnel through the rock around their incorporeal enemy. The work is slow going, though, and the dwarves are growing impatient. They have hired adventurers to slay Tib's ghost in the past, but none of them have ever permanently destroyed it. Recently they have discussed the merits of hiring a group of specialists—ghost hunters—to take care of the hateful manifestation, though the extra gold they'll have to shell out has put the two into rotten moods. They don't realize it yet, but their plan may backfire on them, as the only way to destroy the ghost of Tib is to satisfy its need for revenge by bringing Gravlet and Kipp to justice.

4. Zulran's Equines: This sprawling horse ranch is the property of An'Aldane Zulran, the current guildmaster of the Imperial Union of Breeders. He breeds some of the finest horses and camels in all of Katapesh. An'Aldane's horses are bred for speed; all of his horses move at a speed 5 feet faster than their normal counterparts. However, potential buyers should be aware that An'Aldane is a legendary haggler. It is said that he once haggled with a customer all morning, stopped to treat the man for lunch, resumed haggling, and didn't reach an agreement

until early in the evening. His prices are at a 50% markup from the listed prices in the PH, though if a customer can beat him on an opposed Diplomacy check he can be brought down to a 30% markup (he has a +12 Diplomacy check modifier).

In addition to selling equines, An'Aldane runs one of the finest riding schools in the world. He charges a small fortune for his lessons (5,000 gp, though he can be haggled down to 4,000 gp), but those that complete his training course gain a permanent +2 competence modifier on all Ride checks.

An'Aldane is infuriated with the recent loss of one of his finest long-tailed chargers. The culprit is a gnoll bandit named Bristleman. He was seen riding the horse out into the Hinterlands to an armed camp of his gnoll henchmen. An'Aldane is offering a 1,000 gp reward for the return of his horse and Bristleman's head to mount on his wall.

5. The Golden Scarab:

This grand building sits in the shadows of the Dockside Giant. Alabaster walls covered in sparkling seashells and gold-painted scarabs crawling across its surface set it distinctively apart from its neighbors. The Golden Scarab is among the most famous and popular gambling halls in Katapesh. Its proprietor, **Krebbel-Jeggle** (CN male goblin rogue 4) obsessively adds new games to the Golden Scarab as fast as he can discover them. Card games, dice games, roulette tables, dart boards, and other games fill the Main Hall. More exotic and disreputable games are run upstairs in the Upper Hall. One such game is the Stump, which involves reaching one's hand blindly into a small hollow log full of venomous spiders to draw a specific object out without getting stung. Another, called Knick Tickle, is a game of marksmanship between two knife throwers; the object is to tag an opponent without drawing blood (slicing a piece of clothing, nicking a lock of hair, and so on).

The infamous Basement is home to the most bloody and violent games in all of Golarion. Krebbel-Jeggle adds new games to this area of the Golden Scarab every month. Games such as Mig-a-Mug-Tug and Hatch-a-Catch (*Pathfinder Chronicles: Classic Monsters Revisited*), Knivesies (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #7), and Killgull

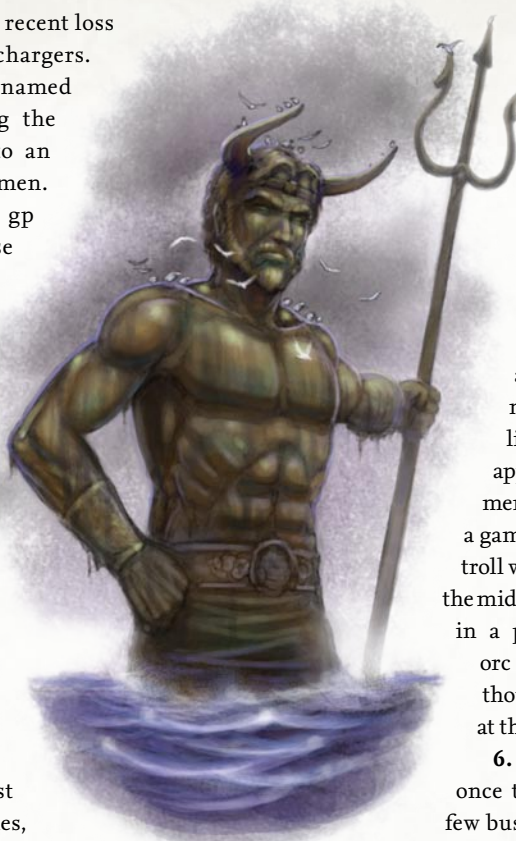
(*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #1) are a few examples of some of the games Krebbel-Jeggle has gathered from the far corners of Golarion and instituted, in some cases merely from hearsay. Others include Jackal Box, in which a group of unarmed competitors attempt to be the first to cross a long sandy pit without being attacked by a pack of hungry jackals at the center (use the stats for a hyena). Zombie Melee is a simple brawl-until-they-fall game in which necromancers and death priests pit a team of their zombies against an opposing team.

Visitors to the Golden Scarab may find it surprising that there are no pit fights or other forms of duels held in the Basement. This is because the Pactmasters have given the Guild of Gladiators exclusive rights to such events, thus making it illegal for anyone else to sponsor them without the guild's consent.

The Golden Scarab is a fun place to add some exotic flavor to a campaign and allow the PCs to make a bit of extra gold. There is no limit to the odd things that might appear in Krebbel-Jeggle's gambling menagerie. Perhaps the PCs are up for a game of tug-of-war against a mountain troll with a pit full of poisonous snakes in the middle, or eager to test their constitution in a poison-drinking game against an orc with an iron gut. If someone has thought of it, chances are it has a place at the Golden Scarab.

6. The Smoking Ruin: This area was once the site of many residences and a few businesses. No one really knows how or why, but one night a rift to the Elemental Plane of Fire opened atop one of the shops and a group of elementals came through. The creatures laid waste to all of the surrounding buildings and residents before they were finally sent back to their home plane. Local witnesses called the event the Dawn Gate Apocalypse and the name has stuck. Since the tragedy, no one has made any attempt to rebuild or clear the wreckage and the area has become known as the Smoking Ruin.

The restless souls of many of the victims of the Dawn Gate Apocalypse haunt the Smoking Ruin, jealous of those among the living, particularly those that escaped the conflagration. Locals give the area a wide berth. They complain of an unnatural chill in the air and the sounds of weeping coming from within the ruin. Those closest to the ruins would gladly pool their resources as a reward





WHAT'S ON TAP

Below is a list of Jerikal Ashworth's most popular drinks and their prices. This list is not comprehensive.

- Blood Ale** (4 cp): salty and bitter, mild potency
- Cinnamon Stout** (4 cp): spicy, mild potency
- Fish Oil Whisky** (1 sp): bitter and oily, strong potency
- Goblin Turpentine** (4 cp): sour with bitter aftertaste, strong potency
- Hair of the Dog** (5 cp): fizzy, mild potency
- Hammer Head** (1 sp): mildly spicy with a bitter aftertaste, very strong potency
- Jerikal's Private Reserve** (1 sp): sweet and mildly spicy, mild potency
- Orange Peel Ale** (5 cp): citric, moderate potency
- Morning Constitutional** (4 cp): fruity, mild potency
- Pesh Brandy** (2 sp): sweet and warm, strong potency
- Purple Dragon Spit** (1 sp): bitter, strong potency
- Rabid Squirrel** (8 cp): foamy and bitter, moderate potency
- Thileu Lager** (15 cp): extremely spicy and often painful, moderate potency
- Wolfberry Wine** (1 sp): sweet and bitter, moderate potency
- Acolyte Ale*** (250 gp): *potion of cure light wounds*, 5 doses
- Little Bishop*** (900 gp): *potion of remove paralysis*, 3 doses
- Blue Priest*** (1,500 gp): *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 5 doses
- Night Light Stout*** (250 gp): *potion of remove fear*, 5 doses
- Red Cardinal Wine*** (3,750 gp): *potion of cure serious wounds*, 5 doses
- Shelyn's Nectar*** (2,250 gp): *potion of remove curse*, 3 doses

*a type of "Priest in a Bottle," sold by the bottle

for anyone brave enough to venture into the ruins and put the souls of the burned victims to rest by finding their bones and giving them a proper burial.

THE DOCKS

Over a dozen long, maze-like piers jut out from Katapesh's sandy eastern shore, each of them capable of holding numerous seagoing vessels. Facing the Inner Sea, warehouses, stores, and a few sizeable inns cater to the city's bustling sea trade. Rising from the shoreline, a massive copper statue of a horned giant stares menacingly out to sea as if to ward away enemies. The statue's features are worn and covered with years of droppings from the seagulls that use it as their aerie.

Huge crenellated towers flank the Docks, the city walls spreading out from them in either direction to surround the city. The Zephyr Guard maintains squads of sentries atop the towers with bored dutifulness; invasion from the sea is low on their list of threats, though the possibility keeps them at their posts.

7. Annexa Palanthea's Fishy Menagerie: For an admission fee of 1 sp, visitors to Annexa Palanthea's Fishy Menagerie are treated to displays of hundreds of rare and exotic creatures of the seas, lakes, and ponds of Golarion. Some are mounted on the walls, others are displayed in amber blocks, and many live specimens are kept in large aquariums. Some of the most popular non-living specimens stuffed and on display include a young kraken, several skum and sahuagin, a mermaid, a locathah, a water naga, an aquatic purple worm, an aboleth, and an exceptionally large shark. Her live attractions include a mated pair of sea cats, a tank full of piranha from the Mwangi Expanse, electric eels, octopi and squid, and a corpulent bunyip.

Annexa (NE female human expert 4) is known to pay large sums of gold for rare finds to add to her collection. There aren't many kinds of fish she hasn't seen, so they need to be truly exotic to hold her interest. She frequently funds expeditions to the Inner Sea in search of new species to add to her menagerie.

Annexa is interested in recent news about a sea monster that sunk the *Star Runner*. She has had bad blood with Darg Jexler and Wilbur Young for many years over monster sightings on the Inner Sea, and hopes to beat them to the wreck of the *Star Runner* so she can capture the rumored sea monster for her menagerie. To that end, she has snuck a saboteur into the crew of the *Iron Mermaid* that will allow her to get there ahead of them if all goes according to plan. Annexa has been discreetly approaching adventurers to join her expedition, but insists that the expedition be kept a secret long enough to get a head start on her competition.

8. Dockside Giant: This massive copper statue is nearly 40 feet tall and depicts a horned, bearded man glaring menacingly out to sea as if to ward away evil. He holds a large trident in one hand while his other is balled into a fist and rests on his hip. It is said that the statue is an effigy of a long-forgotten sea god, or perhaps a celebrated hero. The statue dates back to before the Year of Scouring Winds, when much of the city's history is vague and shrouded in mystery. Seagulls have taken to roosting atop its head, shoulders, and the many other nooks and crannies along its surface. Weather and seagull droppings have not been kind to the Dockside Giant. The folk of Katapesh fight an ongoing battle to keep it clean, as it represents good luck and safety at sea for them, but thus far the weather and birds are winning.

9. Jexler & Young Salvage Company and Deep Sea Exploration and Retrieval: One of numerous warehouses clustered along the bustling docks, this building bears the names of **Darg Jexler** (CN male half-orc ranger 6) and **Wilbur Young** (N male human druid 5) painted in huge red letters along the face of the building. The two



adventuring sailors have settled here in Katapesh. These days they limit their adventures to salvage operations and escorting tourists on “treasure hunts” below the waves.

When news of sea treasure, sunken vessels, and sea monsters in the area reaches these docks, Jexler and Young are among the first to investigate. Their ship, the *Iron Mermaid*, is a common sight for locals as it comes and goes on one job after another.

Aside from their primary profession, Jexler and Young also sell both magical and mundane equipment useful for aquatic adventuring, such as customized crossbows that ignore the normal penalty for ranged weapons underwater, tridents, spears, and various potions mimicking the effects of *endure elements*, *freedom of movement*, and *water breathing*.

News recently reached the docks that a merchant vessel named the *Star Runner* was attacked and sunk by an enormous sea monster, possibly a kraken. The *Star Runner*'s holds were filled to capacity with rare woods, spices, and totemic relics plundered from the Mwangi Expanse. Jexler and Young are preparing to set out in search of the wreck before competitors for the salvage rights reach it first. They've put the word out in Katapesh that they're looking for able-bodied sailors and adventurers to join them.

10. Trillia's Bathhouse: For many a traveler, this tall, narrow building with its copper tub sign over its doors is a welcome sight after months at sea or trekking across the desert. **Trillia** (NG female half-elf expert 3) maintains over a dozen private bathing chambers where a dirty traveler can enjoy a hot relaxing bath with scented oils and aromatic soap. Trillia charges 1 sp for a 15-minute bath. Specific soaps, scented water, and other amenities may be obtained at an extra fee.

Her staff does not perform lewd services. Trillia is quick to inform clients up front that there are over a dozen brothels in Katapesh. If they've come for anything other than a nice hot bath, she suggests they seek entertainment elsewhere.

Since Trillia gets so many visitors from all over, her staff hears plenty of news, rumors, and gossip. Visitors to her establishment gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Gather Information checks made there. Trillia herself is a fount of knowledge about everything going on in Katapesh and the surrounding hinterlands. For triple the normal suggested cost, Gather Information checks have a +10 circumstance bonus when conversing with Trillia.

11. Jerikal's Ales: This popular cantina serves a plethora of ales, beers, and wines. Its owner, **Jerikal Ashworth** (NG male halfling cleric of Shelyn 5/expert 1), is a retired adventuring priest of Shelyn now turned brewmaster. He lovingly crafts each batch of his signature beverages like an artist painting a masterpiece. The common room

THE BRIDGES AND GATES OF KATAPESH

Each of the walled sections of Katapesh has its own gate or gates. In addition, numerous bridges span the River Scorpis as it wends its way through Twilight Gate and the Inner City. The locals of Katapesh have names for each gate and bridge and often use them as landmarks when providing directions or reference points.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Dawn Gate | M. Two Penny Bridge |
| B. Eagle Gate | N. Oasis Bridge |
| C. Palace Gate | O. Temple Span |
| D. Beggar's Gate | P. Warrior's Bridge |
| E. Day Gate | Q. Cherub Bridge |
| F. Night Gate | R. River Gate Span |
| G. Jackal Gate | S. Pathfinder Bridge |
| H. Twilight Gate | T. Shady Palm Span |
| I. River Gate | U. Twilight Gate Bridge |
| J. Serpent Gate | V. Toiler's Bridge |
| K. Broke Plank Bridge | W. The Grand Arch |
| L. White Bridge | |

reflects Jerikal's Shelyn worship with tablecloths of blue and red, attractive statues, bright flowers, and minstrels to serenade his patrons while they relax with a tall mug of their favorite spirits.

The nature of Jerikal's cantina also attracts many worshipers of Cayden Cailean. A few of the Drunken Hero's worshipers are regulars here. **Tomlin Orlof** (CG male human cleric 7) has been trying to convert Jerikal to the faith for months. So far, he hasn't had much success, but the two priests enjoy the friendly banter and occasional arguments that ensue.

Aside from alcoholic beverages, Jerikal also brews specialty concoctions with curative qualities he's dubbed “Priest in a Bottle.” They combine the drinking pleasure of a bottle of spirits with the restorative quality of a healing spell. Each bottle is the equivalent of several doses of a potion, and thus are more expensive (and taste better!) than simply buying a single draught from a potion vendor. Drinking multiple doses from these bottles requires multiple standard actions.

Jerikal still thinks of himself as an adventurer, and loves to talk shop with adventurers that patronize his cantina. PCs that succeed on a DC 30 Diplomacy check may gain all sorts of useful tips and information about local adventuring sites, legends, and rumors. He has a map he never got around to exploring that he willingly parts with if any PCs are interested. The map is drawn with coded



THE PESH CULTURE

The sheer number of pesh parlors and tents within the city of Katapesh makes detailing any particular one unnecessary, with the exception of Zandrek's Pesh Palace (area 21). Many vendors that sell an assortment of other goods usually provide a limited supply of the popular drug as well. Make up whatever name you wish for each individual shop—the end result is the same. Pesh is virtually everywhere. Because the Pactmasters and the Council of Guilds strictly set and regulate sale prices on goods, one vendor's shop is little different from another when it comes to obtaining the drug. The current price for pesh is 10 sp per ounce.

Though a few variations of the drug exist, Pesh is usually a sticky powder sold in 1-ounce tubular vials of sun-baked clay, ceramic, or decorative glass. Regular pesh users keep their own unique vials that they can attach to necklaces and wear around their necks like charms. They are available from the same vendors that sell the drug, though the more extravagant containers are sold by jewelers and metalworkers that specialize in making them. A decorative vial may be made of colored glass, bone, ivory, or precious metals such as silver and gold. Some are encrusted with gems or have the individual's name or artwork etched into its surface. Hundreds of variations exist, each one providing a sense of individuality to pesh users. The cost for any particular vial varies with its craftsmanship. A simple clay vial costs 1 cp, ceramic 1 sp, and glass 1 gp. The most extravagant containers can reach sale prices as high as 500 gp.

symbols that Jerikal has been unable to figure out. The symbols are a form of thieves' cant, which a DC 30 Decipher Script allows a PC to decode. It reveals a secret entrance to catacombs beneath Pale Mountain and a secret chamber where "the loot from a thousand raids" is stashed. Map notes indicate that the catacombs are trapped and patrolled by gnoll raiders and other guardians.

INNER CITY

Surrounded by ancient sandstone walls covered in faded, time-worn carvings and curious designs, the Inner City is the oldest of Katapesh's districts. The Inner City is also home to the walled palace of the Pactmasters, its soaring towers easily seen from anywhere in the city. Many ancient marvels dating back to the city's earliest existence 2000 years ago rival each other in their size, grandeur, and mystique. From the Grand Coliseum, the Marble Sphinx, and the Golden Oasis to the Glass Pyramids and the Screaming Obelisk, all of these and more can be found in the Inner City.

12. College of Dimensional Studies: This domed building serves as an institution for arcane practitioners and

students of the cosmos, alternate dimensions, and interdimensional travel. A massive telescope, which students use to study the stars at night, juts through an opening in the dome. The observatory is also open to the public on certain nights for a fee of 1 sp per person.

The college contains numerous dormitories and classrooms for its students and an array of teleportation circles and devices. One of the building's features is that most of the chambers within have no doors. Students and instructors alike must rely on teleportation magic (usually *blink* or *dimension door*) to move around from room to room. Students are also required to scribe scrolls of *dimension door* for use by the instructors as part of their training and payment for their education.

13. Al'Faran's Steel Restaurant: This curious shop has the look and feel of a small restaurant. Visitors are seated at a cloth-covered table, served their choice of chilled beverages, appetizers, and a light meal, and given a "menu" of Master Weaponsmith Diyab Al'Faran's list of available weapons. Each of his creations is custom designed specifically for the individual buyer. This provides that individual with a +2 competence bonus to all opposed rolls made with that weapon. In addition, all of Diyab's weapons are of masterwork quality and from fine Druma steel. Due to the quality of Diyab's weaponry, he charges a 25% markup from the standard prices for all of his products. He also sells a few magical enhancement items such as *silversheen* and oils of *magic weapon* and *keen edge*.

14. Glass Pyramids: These two identical pyramids are actually made of transparent metal plates. They house the mortal remains of two powerful dwarven wizards that arrived in the Golden City in 2219 AR in search of a powerful magic essence. No other records exist about the two mages, and virtually nothing is known about them other than their names—Gezbria and Tralvar.

Tomb raiders and archaeologists have been trying to study the contents of each pyramid for years, and a few of them have disappeared mysteriously during their attempts. Rumor is that they learned the secret for gaining entrance, but never came out again. Like so many of the ancient landmarks of the Inner City, the Glass Pyramids regularly draw scholars and adventurers hoping to unravel their secrets.

Gezbria and Traldar discovered a confluence of powerful ley lines running beneath the Golden City and hoped to harness its power. They built two structures atop it, but in time they discovered that the raw magic was uncontrollable and corrupt. To safeguard their discovery from those who would use it for evil, they had the Glass Pyramids built over the twin structures and entombed themselves within after warding them with powerful spells. In time, the magic they swore to protect corrupted



them and transformed them into liches obsessed with hoarding the power to themselves. The resourceful few that bypassed the magical wards to gain entrance into the pyramids fell victim to the imprisoned liches.

15. Golden Oasis: After the Year of Scouring Winds ripped through the Golden City, this single oasis—once one of several dozen just like it—was all that remained to attest to the lush beauty that once dominated this land. Fed by the River Scorpius that flows from the west and continues onward to the south, tall date palms surround a large pond of clear water, with dozens more clustered to the east. Many shops, homes, and inns flank the pool in the shade of the palm trees. For many travelers, it is their first sight as they enter through the western gate beyond the Daystalls.

The groundskeepers of the Golden Oasis also maintain a healthy population of several types of fish and aquatic plants within the pond and harvest the dates from the palms for sale in the Lower City Bazaar.

Legends say that those with true purpose of heart who sit near the pool in the shade of the palms may gain inspiration from the gods if they are patient and steadfast. Many pilgrims occupy spots around the pool,

where they sometimes wait for days on end for some kind of personal sign from the heavens. Some of them leave with what they came seeking; others, tired and hungry, simply leave.

Occasionally, a dying palm near the pool at the center of the Golden Oasis gathers patches of spirit moss (see page 217 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*). Many pilgrims come fasting and praying in their attempts to commune with the gods. Sometimes, rather than give up their places near the pool to seek better nourishment, desperately hungry pilgrims have nibbled from patches of spirit moss mistaken for normal moss. Such incidents have brought pilgrims into communion with the resonant spirit stuff lingering near the pool, often mistaken for contact with divine messengers. A PC that succeeds on a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check may recognize spirit moss on a dying palm.

16. The Grand Coliseum: Some things never change throughout mankind's history. The need for entertainment has remained constant from the early years of the Golden City to modern-day Katapesh. This enormous stone coliseum is filled with rows of tiered benches easily capable of seating some 10,000 spectators.



Various games, parades, and gladiatorial matches take place on the sandy arena floor 10 feet below the lowest tier of benches.

Though bloody gladiator matches pitting free men and slaves alike against one another are always popular, it is a sport called *ruk* that has become the greatest attraction to the Grand Coliseum in recent years. In *ruk*, two teams of 10 athletes contend with each other to toss a sand-filled leather ball the size of a man's head through the other team's hoop at the opposite end of the arena, striking a brass gong behind it. Whichever team scores the most points by putting the ball through the other team's hoop after 1 hour of play is declared the winner. *Ruk* most closely resembles a cross between rugby, soccer, and mixed martial arts. A *ruk* player has to be strong enough to throw and catch the *ruk* ball, have the stamina to endure the long matches, and the toughness to take the beatings rival players dish out.

No specific rules other than the object of the game have been provided, so as to give each GM the freedom to design variants for individual campaigns. Adventurers make ideal *ruk* players. After arriving in Katapesh, it shouldn't take long for the burliest of the PCs to be approached by at least one or two *ruk* guilds offering them a place on their team. The benefits can be very attractive, but players that stand out on their teams may also find themselves targeted by rival guilds.

Nearly every one of Katapesh's numerous guilds has its own *ruk* team, and the competition can be very fierce. On the field, *ruk* is violent and bloody, often leading to cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Off the field, the game can turn deadly as rival guilds attempt to sabotage each other's teams. Back-alley pummeling, poisoning, kidnapping, and assassination are not uncommon practices. The most successful *ruk* athletes are often protected by bodyguards and sequestered in private training compounds under constant guard.

Ruk season lasts for 3 months. During that time, each team plays 24 matches. The season culminates in a five-game tournament between the two teams with the most wins. The winning team gains special privileges, honors, and monetary rewards in addition to bragging rights.

17. Marble Sphinx: This enormous statue rises to a height of 120 feet. It depicts a sitting creature with the body of a lioness and the head of a longhaired female human with sharp tusks jutting up from the corners of her mouth. Contrary to its name, the Marble Sphinx is not made of marble, but of sandstone. When the first settlers arrived to found what later became known as the Golden City, and eventually modern-day Katapesh, they discovered the titanic statue of a sphinx sitting there as if guarding the valley. Their initial fear eventually faded and gave way to curiosity when the gigantic stone effigy

failed to animate and attack them. After much debate, they theorized that the stone sphinx harked back to a lost age and that the statue itself was harmless. In time, the sphinx became yet another mysterious landmark that attracts its share of sightseers and scholars to Katapesh.

Known only to the most faithful of Lamashtu is the fact that the Marble Sphinx is actually a powerful creation of the Mother of Monsters—the very first sphinx to have trod Golarion's soil. Titanic in size and appetite, the creature was turned to stone long ago by powerful enemies of the goddess, and has remained so ever since.

18. Nexian Embassy: Katapesh and Nex have long maintained good relations with each other. The two nations share many of the same views and business models, making them natural allies. Nex maintains an embassy here where its current ambassador, **Narlaguut Haraxis** (NE male human aristocrat 6), resides with his entourage of slaves and advisors.

The walled estate is modeled after the architectural designs common in Quantum—domed buildings topped by narrow spires, each capped by a Nexian flag, surround a central courtyard where shrines to the gods of Nex form a central ring.

Ambassador Haraxis spends much of his time in court at the Palace of the Pactmasters and watching the council meetings, offering advice when asked or simply listening to the notable events being discussed. His main duty is to maintain goodwill between his country and Katapesh, which he does with bored dutifulness. He spends much of the rest of his time at Zandrek's Pesh Palace and the Golden Scarab.

Several attempts have been made on Haraxis's life since he took up residence in Katapesh. Haraxis has numerous magical protections on him at all times, plus an entourage of mages, priests, and warriors all devoutly loyal to him and Nex. A member of the Steel Falcons (see page 40) has infiltrated his staff of servants in an attempt to gain Nexian secrets and hinder the slave trade upon which both Katapesh and Nex thrive. Haraxis has learned of the infiltration, and while the spy is unaware of this, it has come to the attention of the other Steel Falcons ensconced in the city, who are desperately trying to get word to the spy that he is in danger. They have been seriously contemplating hiring an outsider to deliver a coded message to him in order to safeguard the cell. Visiting adventurers that have no affiliations or ties with anyone in the city would be the most logical choice, though getting them into the embassy is problematic.

19. Sand Dragon Inn: This sprawling inn sits along the southern side of the Golden Oasis. A long serpentine dragon made of brass perches above the inn's main entrance. Their food is reasonably priced, if a bit heavy



on the curry. Travelers often stop here before moving on to explore the city further, as the large common room is cool and clean. The Sand Dragon Inn charges normal rates for their rooms, which are clean and relatively vermin-free.

20. The Screaming Obelisk: This massive spire is made entirely of smooth carnelian and rises to a staggering height of 380 feet. Numerals engraved along its base indicate times, days, and years. Other symbols along its surface have attracted astronomers, linguists, and engineers to study it. Despite extensive research, none have yet come to any reliable conclusion as to the meaning of the more archaic symbols. Its ominous name is due to the numerous narrow holes piercing its surface near its apex. These create a series of harmonic whistling sounds in high winds, which only adds to the mystery of the obelisk's purpose.

Aside from the mysterious meaning of the indecipherable symbols, the Screaming Obelisk acts as a timekeeper similar in function to a sundial. Three bell towers flank the obelisk, forming a triangle around it—the Morning Tower, the Day Tower, and the Night Tower. Timekeepers stationed at the bell towers maintain watchful vigil of the obelisk, ringing out each hour from the appropriate tower (though more quietly at night).

21. Zandrek's Pesh Palace: Pesh parlors are a dime a dozen in Katapesh. However, Zandrek's stands out as the most popular den of iniquity in a city full of sin and vice. This round, domed building is surrounded by serpentine colonnades of bronze. Its massive copper door is an oval, sculpted face of a laughing man. It is the only door in the building, as all other thresholds within are barred by silk and bead curtains. Multiple private chambers line the first ring of the building's interior. A second ring is filled with statuary, cushions, couches, and wandering minstrels and dancing girls. The center of the building is a courthouse filled with flowering plants, marble flagstones, and a central pool full of colorful fish.

The popularity of Zandrek's Pesh Palace stems from the almost mystical ability of **Master Zandrek** (LE male human sorcerer 6) to satisfy all of his customers' needs and desires. He owns a small army of exotic slaves specially trained to see to the needs of his guests, whatever they may be.



LOWER CITY

This is easily the largest section of Katapesh, and the most densely populated. The Lower City contains the city's sprawling docks and possibly the world's largest bazaar—a collection of kiosks, tents, huts, carts, or simply rugs on open spaces of ground displaying a few odds and ends. The Lower City Bazaar stretches the entire length of the city, and nearly anything can be bought or sold there.

22. Aandrik the Chirurgeon: This nondescript tent bears a simple sign with the business's name. While its proprietor is skilled at treating illnesses and injuries through the wonders of “modern” medicine, such tasks are mere side projects for his true talents as a gifted illusionist. With the help of his two beautiful assistants, **Leinriss** and **Denjal** (CN female human expert 1), the doctor specializes in using a combination of magic and surgical alterations to provide beauty where none existed before, and the best disguises money can buy.

In addition to illusion spells, **Aandrik** (N male human rogue 2/illusionist 4) has numerous potions, scrolls, powders, and magical pigments to accomplish his tasks.

His fees range from 15 gp for simple non-magical disguises to 1,000 gp for complex makeovers involving surgery and his most powerful illusions.

23. Ahkmed's Carpets: The owner of this shop is **Ahkmed** (LN male human expert 5), a high-ranking member of Katapesh's Guild of Weavers. His rugs and tapestries are renowned all across the world, and his area of the Lower Bazaar is a maze of hanging rugs, tapestries, sleeping pallets, and other woven creations. He roams his woven lair each day like a small, sharp-eyed minotaur, quickly sorting serious buyers from curious browsers.

An intelligent *carpet of flying* named **Cloud Cutter** has ensconced itself here among the rest of the carpets hoping to evade its former owner, a gnoll assassin simply known as **Spider**. The gnoll and a few of his cronies have been searching Katapesh for the carpet for the last 2 days and are far from ready to give up. **Cloud Cutter** is eager to find a new owner that looks tough enough to deal with **Spider** and his henchmen.

24. Aromas and Aphrodisiacs: This large pavilion tent is tie-dyed in a dozen different colors. The banner over the tent flap entrance bears the name “Aromas and Aphrodisiacs” in large, elegant letters. A wizened old



tiefling herbalist named **Chiaong** (CN male tiefling expert 6) offers patrons relaxing herbs that may be inhaled from extravagant hookahs, absorbed through the skin via organic wraps, or drank as a variety of tasty and relaxing teas within small private booths inside the tent. Chiaong is assisted by a small army of slaves. For an extra fee, they may be reserved for other forms of entertainment as well.

Chiaong recently bought a new decorative censer for one of his smoke rooms to replace one that was broken. Neither he nor the vendor he purchased it from is aware that it is a *censer of controlling air elementals*. If filled with incense or any incense-like substance that is then lit, it will summon an enraged large air elemental.

25. Azure Star: Deep in the heart of the Lower City, Azure Star reigns supreme as the most popular cantina for visitors and locals alike. From the outside it looks like a large gray tent covered in sky-blue stars. Inside, silk partitions create private rooms surrounding a large open common room with overlapping carpets and rugs covering the floor. Patrons lounge around small polished tables on soft, comfortable pillows. A soft breeze created by a bound air elemental wafts through the tent, rippling its walls. At the top of every hour, musicians and singers entertain the guests with haunting and entrancing songs and melodies brought to Katapesh from the remotest corners of the world.

Many visitors come to Azure Star to sample the exotic cuisine served there such as honeyed loci, curdled camel milk, pesh-sprinkled dhabba liver, pickled scorpion, grilled adder, thrice-poisoned oysters, and many more.

26. Cindra's Exotic Pets: Cindra is a purveyor of rare and difficult-to-obtain animals. Her tent is filled with an eclectic collection of caged animals—monkeys, apes, and birds from the Mwangi Expanse; dhabbas from the nearby deserts; small dinosaurs and lizards from Mediogalti; warp snakes from the Mana Wastes of Nex; baby Osirion crocodiles; Hyrantum geckos and toads from the Sodden Lands; white and gray crows from Irrisen; wolves, badgers, foxes, and pygmy elks plundered from the forests of Nirmathas; and many other rare and unusual animals.

For GMs that like to spice up their campaigns by allowing their players to take on unusual familiars or animal companions, Cindra's Exotic Pets is a great place to find just the right creature when the normal list of animals doesn't quite fit the bill.

27. Council Hall and Gaol Block: Once known as Aktep Keep, this walled compound squats atop a low bluff overlooking the rest of the Lower City spread around it. About 8 years ago, this was the estate of Massein Aktep, an extremely wealthy businessman who had his hands in nearly every enterprise in Katapesh. He became

the center of a huge scandal implicating him for tax evasion, fraud, and masterminding the murder of several prominent guildmasters over the course of 3 years. Rather than execute Massein, the Pactmasters seized all of his holdings and turned his expansive personal dungeon into the city's new gaol, where he is currently spending the rest of his days in a 5-foot-square cell. The estate has been converted into the Council Hall, where the city's guildmasters and other officials meet. It is also a barracks for the Zephyr Guard.

Each year the Pactmasters bring Massein out of his cell and parade him through the city to remind the populace how even the mightiest are brought low when they break the law. The locals have taken to calling the yearly event the Gaol Parade, and it has become a major holiday for them. Puppets of Massein Aktep are sold everywhere, food vendors sell "gaol rations" of bread and water, locals don their rattiest and dirtiest clothing, and street-side performers reenact the trial and sentencing of the fallen businessman. The Pactmasters do nothing to dissuade the citizens from their revels, and in fact encourage it, as it bolsters the economy.

After almost 4 years of careful manipulation and planning, Massein's loyal retainer Selnton Blout has infiltrated the Gaol Block under the guise of a prison guard. The two men have been plotting Massein's escape for several months. They are ready to make good on their plan during the next Gaol Parade with help from the Unseen Hand, who have long despised the government of Katapesh and the Pactmasters in particular.

28. The Doomsayers' Stand: Among the tangle of tents and kiosks, this circular two-step dais was once used by bards and musicians to entertain the throngs of shoppers milling through the Lower City Bazaar. Approximately 1 year ago, self-proclaimed prophets espousing the tenets of obscure faiths and cults began using it as their own stage from which to preach to passersby and vendors in the area. At first, their presence was an annoyance, but in time they began to draw crowds of bemused or genuinely interested listeners.

Because competition to be heard and an ever-present spirit of religious contention has led to many a fistfight or even magical duels between the "prophets," the Zephyr Guard has been forced to post a few guards nearby at all times to intervene when necessary.

29. Jangley's Shop: A simple tent with a sign reading "Jangley" perched over it is all that marks this dealership of rare, hard-to-find, and mysterious merchandise. The brothers, **Pasker** and **Trill Jangley** (N male halfling expert 6), have a staggering network of associates through which they can sell some of the oddest and most puzzling items one can buy. Each day may bring some new trinket to the Jangley tent, and one never knows what may be on



sale here. Yet each item always has an extravagant and astounding history, with which the Janglely brothers are more than happy to regale passersby.

Recent acquisitions include a tarnished medallion dredged from the bottom of the Inner Sea, which radiates an indeterminate magical aura, a tribal spear made of ivory shipped all the way from the Crown of the World, and a rusted iron chest full of ancient wooden coins with a flower on one side and a strange insect on the other.

The Jangleys have recently come into possession of several large chunks of skymetal plundered at great risk from Silver Mount in Numeria. Several Numerians disguised as traders have tracked the plundered metal to Katapesh, and will stop at nothing to obtain the stolen metal and return it to their masters. The Jangleys are keeping the scraps of metal in a lockbox and only bring them out to show “serious” customers. They have a similar policy for a few other rare finds.

30. The Ramps: Katapesh’s Inner and Lower City districts are connected via ramps that ascend the heights of the Obsidian Wall to the Night Gate and the Day Gate. Each of the ramps is constructed of stone and timber. In the event that it is ever necessary to defend the Inner City from invaders, each ramp is designed so it can be toppled by removing a series of massive linchpins.

Residents distinguish the two ramps from each other by the gates they are associated with—Night Ramp and Day Ramp. The two see heavy traffic all day long. Each is over 50 feet wide, easily accommodating nearly anything brought onto them. Rails at each side of the ramps protect travelers from falls. Yet in spite of these safety measures, at least three or four fatalities occur each year when travelers plunge over the sides. Whether or not they are accidents is always widely speculated upon.

Many illicit exchanges take place in the shadows of the Night Ramp where it meets the Obsidian Wall. For those seeking particular locations in the Nightstalls, an informant may usually be found there to provide directions for those that can afford the information and don’t look like they mean to cause trouble. The size of the bribe depends entirely upon how much the informant thinks he can get. Members of the Unseen Hand lurk nearby to mark possible troublemakers and prey on the rich and foolish.

31. The Scorpion’s Sting: The sides of this large tent are embroidered with patterns resembling large scorpions. The tables that line its interior walls are covered in jars, bowls, bottles, vials, and pouches of powders, pastes, soluble tablets, liquids, and dust. Some of them are vile smelling, others pleasantly fragrant, while still others are completely odorless. All of these substances make up the vast array of poisons available at the Scorpion’s Sting.

DOOMSAYER PROPHETS

Here are a few of the regulars visitors may expect to find at the Doomsayers’ Stand.

Argoist, Messenger of the Death Clock: Argoist is perceived by most as a raving lunatic. Loud, brash, and aggressive, he claims that all of creation moves to the rhythm of a series of heavenly clocks. However, one clock—the Death Clock—measures the time of all the lesser clocks and the things and beings they represent. He claims that the Death Clock has reached its final hour and that all of creation will come to an end when the last second ticks. When not raving about the Death Clock, he simply points at individuals that have stopped to listen, says, “Tick, tock!” then laughs maniacally.

Gorggus, the Bloated Prophet of Glut: In his youth, Gorggus tried to learn the ways of an arcane group called hemotheurges (or “bloatmages”), sages who push their bodies beyond normal limits in order to draw magical strength from their own blood. Unfortunately for Gorggus, he quickly discovered that he had no magical talent whatsoever. Unwilling to let that stop him, he immediately gorged himself into morbid obesity and began covering himself in leeches, extolling his nonexistent powers to all who would listen. Gorggus spends his days on the Doomsayers’ Stand, luridly describing repulsive blood rites of his own invention.

Hiss, the Serpent Revelator: Easily recognized by his tarnished silver headdress and jewelry, Hissarok (usually called “Hiss”) is a lizardfolk priest who claims that every night he dreams of a race of snake men called the Ydersians from which his people descended. He talks of an ancient empire that slumbers beneath the earth and sea and will soon awaken from its long sleep to take its rightful place as the most powerful empire of Avistan.

Rathocles, the Star Gazer: Rathocles calls himself Prophet of the Red Star, though the locals refer to him as the Star Gazer. Instead of the maniacal ramblings that many of his fellows use to proselytize, Rathocles locks his audience with a piercing gaze and warns in a soft voice that a great chunk of star will collide with Golarion in the next few years and that Katapesh will be utterly destroyed. He does not call his listeners to repentance or demand that they conform to new bizarre conventions. He simply warns that when the Red Star appears, they will know that his prediction is about to come to pass and that the world as they know it will come to an end. At times he falls silent and simply stares into the heavens as if searching for the dreaded sign of the Red Star. Because of the similarities in their messages, Argoist and Rathocles often come into contention with each other. The Zephyr Guard has had to break up several fights between the two, much to the amusement of the crowds that stop to listen and watch.



POISONS OF KATAPESH

Katapesh is considered by many to be the poison capital of the world. The Guild of Poison Makers is continually concocting new toxins and improving or altering the qualities of others. Provided below are just a few of the poisons one may expect to find (or be subjected to) in Katapesh.

Purple Pesh: The poison makers of Katapesh have discovered that the rotting milk of a dead Pesh cactus can be harvested to create a highly effective poison for incapacitating an enemy. Ingested, Fortitude DC 18, initial 1d2 Con and Str, secondary unconsciousness for 1 hour. Cost 200 gp per dose (paste).

Dhabba Spittle: Harvested from specially drugged dhabbas, this poison burns the flesh around where a victim is injured while also sickening the creature. Injury, Fort DC 12, initial 1d6 acid damage and nauseated, secondary 1d4 Dex. Cost: 50 gp for 1 dose (liquid).

Insanity Pill: This extremely rare and difficult-to-make poison comes from a special gland harvested from chaos beasts. When mixed with stabilizing reagents and chemicals, an odorless and flavorless poison is the end result. When ingested, the elixir induces temporary insanity that lasts for 1 minute. While the effect lasts, the creature suffers terrifying hallucinations of his own body melting away and transforming into a variety of hideous shapes. An affected creature is treated as if under the effects of a *confusion* spell. Ingested, Fort DC 14, creature affected as if by a *confusion* spell for 1 minute. Cost: 1,500 gp (soluble tablet).

Flayleaf Spider Venom: Harvested from the venomous spiders that infest the narcotic flayleaf plant (*Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* 216), this poison is an inexpensive but seldom-lethal means of debilitating an enemy. Injury, Fort DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Con. Cost: 100 gp per dose (liquid).

Mage Bane: The Mana Wastes of Nex produce a dark crimson orchid called a bloodspike. When dried and ground into a powder and mixed with striped toadstool, it creates a poison that makes it extremely difficult for a creature under its effects to perform any task requiring concentration. Contact, Fort DC 20, initial and secondary +10 to all Concentration DCs for 1 hour. Cost: 500 gp per dose (powder).

Jacenia Daleeb (LE female human rogue 5/assassin 1) runs the Scorpion's Sting with a sharp-eyed attention for details and a shrewd attentiveness to her customers. Her assistant **Manphir** (LE male half-orc rogue 4) keeps things meticulously ordered and protects his mistress's wares from any accidental demonstrations. Each table bears a sign that states, "The staff of the Scorpion's Sting is not responsible for the results of unsupervised sampling of any of their products. Please ask for assistance." All of the

standard poisons are available at the Scorpion's Sting at their listed prices.

In addition to being a proud and accomplished member of the Guild of Poison Makers, Jacenia is also one of the biggest poison suppliers for members of the city's underground Guild of Assassins, and acts as a point of contact for obtaining their services. For a small fee she can arrange meetings, drops, and relay messages. All of the above require a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check to earn her trust and willingness to help.

32. The Slave Block: A long rectangular block of stone with a set of wooden steps leading up to it serves as a platform for slaves to be displayed for sale. A member of the Auctioneers' Guild runs the daily sales here while two squads of the Zephyr Guard keep a watchful eye for any trouble from the crowds or the slaves.

Nearly any specimen of intelligent life may be purchased here, but sales all depend on the buyers' needs and tastes, as well as what they can realistically manage. For example, ogres and trolls frequently make it to the block, but not everyone can handle such powerful and brutish creatures. Nevertheless, buyers are found, be they generals in need of shock troops for some far-off country's war efforts, or some necromancer who needs such creatures as living components for a horrific spell, or an arrogant noble looking for an impressive bodyguard.

A cell of Andoren freedom fighters known as the Steel Falcons operates out of Katapesh to target individual slavers for assassination, sabotage, and guerilla attacks designed to disrupt their business. The Slave Block is a frequent target for many of their guerilla attacks. These efforts have forced the Zephyr Guard to maintain the tightest security possible around the auction block and slave traders to use decoys and proxies to conduct public business. The Pactmasters have offered a huge reward for the capture of Steel Falcon operatives or information leading to their capture.

33. Temple of Nethys: This stepped, pyramid-like building towers over every nearby structure like a brooding giant. A multicolored flame that burns endlessly without fuel hovers over the topmost tier, marking this as a house of Nethys, god of magic. The interior is a vast open chamber with walls covered in arcane glowing glyphs espousing the tenets of Nethys. Pillars curl upward to a ceiling of roiling prismatic mist punctuated with flickering lightning and goutts of flame—at times calm, at others raging with elemental fury. Robed templars (fighter 4/wizard 1) stride the temple grounds, wary of thieves, infidels, and visitors looking to make trouble. Wearing porcelain masks painted black on one half and white on the other, they are armed with masterwork quarterstaves and various types of battle wands.



Branching chambers contain hundreds of volumes of arcane texts, scrolls, and etched plates that hold the knowledge of hundreds of years of magical research and divinations. The faithful of Nethys—aspiring mages, hedge wizards, and master magicians alike—often tithe minor magic items for the use of their fellows and to aid in researching the world of magic.

The temple workers are all accomplished spellcasters, and they regularly provide *detect magic*, *read magic*, *identify*, and *divination* spells for the appropriate offerings. For many adventurers, this temple is their first stop after returning from lucrative adventures with bags bulging with magical loot. Rare magic items brought to the temple may garner a reward for allowing the temple mages to study the items for a short period.

The temple is presided over by **Bale Politiz** (N male human wizard 9). He spends most of his time within his extradimensional living quarters in study or creating new magic items. However, he takes time each day to monitor the activities of his fellows and occasionally addresses complex issues brought to the temple that his lesser brethren and sisters are unable to resolve.

The temple is open to the public for those that wish to research certain magic items, spells, or magical phenomena. Doing so requires a small offering of no less than 5 gp per hour of study, and visitors are closely monitored to ensure that texts aren't removed or copied from the temple libraries. PCs working in the temple add a +5 competence bonus on any Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft checks made during this period.

34. House of Whips: Sadoomasochists visiting the city invariably find their way to the House of Whips, where they can fulfill their unusual cravings. The House of Whips is operated by a woman who calls herself the Red Lady; she is actually a disguised succubus (though this is a public secret). Adorned head to toe in tight-fitting red leather, she carries a bloodstained whip and personally administers the punishment that her wealthiest submissive patrons flock to her to receive. She keeps slaves on hand to satisfy the needs of her clients that prefer doing the whipping rather than receiving it. She uses layers of *charm monster* spells on her slaves to convince them that the punishment they receive is actually desirable. Her shop is a maze of mirrored chambers hazy with incense burning in censers to mask the strong smell of blood and sweat. Each room has its own rack or similar equipment, and range in price from 1 gp for a few stripes to 50 gp for a session of near-fatal strapping.

The Red Lady doesn't always relinquish her patrons when they've had enough. Her slave stock is often limited in its appeal, and when a particularly attractive or noteworthy customer comes calling she has a hard time resisting the impulse to simply keep them as her

toys, flaying them and stealing their life energy. At any given time, she may have one or two such victims in her stock, ensorcelled with multiple charm spells and kept under lock and key. She may be persuaded to release them should friends or family come seeking them out, but her price is always high and has its own risks.

35. Ivory Wands: This tent shop in the Lower City Bazaar is run by members of the Kerzalik family, who are all accomplished wizards and wand crafters. Nearly any variety of wand (made of ivory or otherwise) may be purchased here at a 10% markup of the standard price.

The Kerzalik family is extremely paranoid about theft. At any given time, several *unseen servants* bound to their tent lurk near their wand stands watching for potential thieves, and the few items on display are warded by magical traps. Probably the most effective deterrent is the Large fiendish monstrous centipede kept in a tank in a corner. It is common knowledge throughout the bazaar that the Kerzaliks fed would-be thieves to the centipede on at least two occasions.

TWILIGHT GATE

The outer walls that ring the southern portion of Twilight Gate date back to 3725 AR when the Pactmasters reshaped Katapesh to their own vision. However, the walls that separate it from the Inner City are over 2,000 years old and bear sculptures and faded frescoes that hint at their antiquity. During the era of the Golden City, this portion of the city was actually a brick and adobe shantytown built up around the southern walls. When Nimhar began the arduous task of digging the city out from the sands that had buried most of it, this was the first area she unearthed. When others attracted by the excavation began arriving, Twilight Gate was quickly repopulated. Initially the buildings that were too damaged were destroyed to make way for new structures, but Nimhar ordered a stop to this in order to preserve them. Today Twilight Gate is a mixture of ancient and modern architecture and the site of many ruins that have become tourist attractions.

36. Pathfinder Society Lodge: Nestled among cyclopean ruins and other ancient marvels from more than 20 centuries ago, this elegant three-tiered building is the local base of operations for the world-spanning Pathfinder Society. It also serves double duty as headquarters for Katapesh's local Explorers' Guild (mainly due to city ordinances that require Pathfinder Society members to also be members of a guild).

Venture-Captain Aurora Steelbloom (NG female half-elf rogue 6/pathfinder chronicler 2) oversees the operations of several teams of Pathfinders that operate out of and within the city of Katapesh. The lodge maintains a library full of field agent's chapbooks, historical treatises, maps, geographical data, and a few



rare tomes collected from diverse places that members are free to peruse or copy.

Aurora has managed to sway the Pactmasters to post two aluum outside of the lodge to help protect it in case of unwanted guests or would-be thieves. The golems are mostly for show, though, as the building is thoroughly warded against intrusion by spells designed to hinder, harm, or in some cases slay those that do not belong within its walls.

37. Red Pyramid: This ancient three-sided pyramid dates back to the Golden City era. It is made of red bricks and once housed the remains of a noble-born wizard. The pyramid was plundered of its treasures long ago—possibly during the period in which the city still lay buried under the desert sands prior to Nimhar's efforts at reclaiming it. The pyramid is now a busy tourist attraction. For 1 sp, curious sightseers are escorted through the pyramid, where they are shown some of the traps sprung by the tomb raiders that plundered its treasures, skeletons of those that failed, numerous false burial chambers, and the real one.

Not all of the tunnels riddling the Red Pyramid have been discovered. A secret passage (Search DC 30) lies hidden beneath a statue of an enormous frog weighing over 2 tons. At one time, the statue was moved along a hidden track by a complex device built into the walls. The gears are now rusted and coated with sand, making the device nigh impossible to operate. The lever that once jutted from the wall to operate the mechanism was broken long ago, leaving nothing but a metal nub on the wall that most people have simply assumed is part of one of the numerous disabled or broken traps within the pyramid. If the giant frog is moved and the passage located, it reveals a steep staircase descending 50 feet to a chamber full of ivory and platinum statues depicting simian creatures with tentacled faces and scorpion tails. The set of statues would be worth a fortune if found.

38. The Grand Alchemist's Tower: This soaring crenellated tower is home to Katapesh's most accomplished alchemist and the guildmaster of the Order of Alchemists and Potion Makers.

39. Ruined Monastery: When gnoll bandit lords controlled the city, most of them paid homage to Lamashtu, Mother of Monsters. This winding stone building was built as a temple of worship to her. It bears numerous three-eyed jackal engravings and other pictographs depicting sacrifices made to her. Though it now stands empty and in disrepair, it draws numerous visitors who enjoy the creepy atmosphere of the demon-goddess's place of power. It is rumored that the temple has not been completely abandoned—that there are still those that worship Lamashtu who come here to pay homage on the darkest nights of the year. Guides from

the Guild of Historians escort groups through the ruins each hour from midmorning to dusk for a fee of 1 sp.

40. Sisters of the Quill: This two-story building is the home and workplace for over a dozen cloistered women who have dedicated themselves to the preservation of the written word. They spend their days surrounded by ink pots, quill pens, and stacks of parchment, books, and scrolls as they translate writings into different languages or reproduce written documents for the organization's various clients. **Sister Masequa** (LN female human bard 6) runs the business side of things and oversees the work performed by the rest of the sisters. The usual fee for using their services is 3 sp per day or portion thereof.

41. Gladiators' Guildhall: This massive structure is made of a framework of bones and stretched hides. Inside, numerous chambers surround an arena and multiple fighting pits. Members of the Gladiators' Guild train here each day to perfect their art and master new and exotic weaponry and armor.

Each week, the guild hosts public pit fights. The events attract many gamblers and fighters who hope to make a name for themselves or impress the guild enough to gain membership. The greatest gladiators eventually get offered work at the Grand Coliseum. The guild is constantly gaining new members, but because of high mortality rates its numbers tend to stay about the same.

DOG TOWN

Easily the dirtiest, most rundown area of Katapesh, Dog Town is home to many of the city's indigent citizens, ne'er-do-wells, and small-time business owners. It is also home to the largest portion of Katapesh's gnoll population, giving it its name. Many transient workers such as prospectors, miners, herbalists, and drug traffickers find their way to Dog Town as well, taking up residence in the low-income housing available there for as low as 1 sp per week.

42. The Rabid Dog: This tall, ramshackle tavern sits amidst a jumble of equally decrepit warehouses and mining offices east of the road through the Dawn Gate. It is owned and operated by an old gnoll named **Moss Pelt** (CN male gnoll warrior 1/expert 5) who caters to gnoll visitors and locals. A few members of other races who carry on business relations with some of the Rabid Dog's regulars visit the tavern on occasion as well, though they usually limit their indulgences to what's on tap since the food served there is distinctly "gnollish" in nature.

The Rabid Dog is a dangerous place to frequent. However, for visitors seeking to do some exploring outside of Katapesh, a gnoll named **Shank Whitelock** (CN male gnoll ranger 4) is said to be one of the greatest guides in the city. He spends much of his time in the



Rabid Dog when not out in the wilds. For a fee of 5 gp per day he can guide his clients to just about anywhere they want to go from Katapesh all the way to Solku. A good relationship with Shank can make for a safe and quick journey to where one needs to go. Disrespecting or insulting him in any way can make for a long and uncomfortable trip and, if he's been seriously offended, possibly a fatal one.

43. Charred Meats: This butcher shop sits among the other warehouses clustered in the eastern portion of Dog Town. **Chargut** (CE female gnoll cleric of Urgathoa 3), the gnoll who runs this unpleasant-smelling business, makes chum and meat slurry from cast-off meat portions bought from the city's butchers. She, in turn, sells her products to fishermen, farmers, and anyone desperate or indifferent enough to eat them.

Chargut's true profession is that of a corpse peddler. She collects the carcasses of all kinds of different creatures and sells them to anyone interested in their purchase. Humanoid corpses sell the best and are thus

the most costly to obtain—usually about 50 gp for an intact Medium-sized corpse. Of course, she keeps the choicest specimens for her own studies. This means that the meat she sells often includes humanoid flesh.

A cadre of four ghouls is never too far from Chargut, though usually out of sight. They are shrouded in concealing gray robes and mask any unpleasant odor with fragrant ointments. They serve Chargut's day-to-day business needs and protect her interests from visitors that don't approve of her profession. She also sends one or two of them out on "collection" missions every few days. When corpses aren't readily available, her ghoul minions often improvise by hastening the process a bit.

THE DAYSTALLS

For travelers making the long overland trek from Solku to the capital city, this shantytown of vendor stalls, tents, and kiosks is their first sight of the grand city. Many of the folk that live and work in the Daystalls have been here for at least two generations. Others have abandoned this



area in favor of setting up shop in the much busier and highly lucrative Lower City Bazaar. The Daystalls are merely a sampling, a hint of what visitors will find within the much larger bazaar. However, for those eager to spend their gold, the Daystalls can seem quite attractive and the goods and services very tempting.

44. Datorro's Brewery: Alchemist-turned-brewer **Ano Datorro** (LN male human expert 5) runs a brisk business here selling casks, bottles, skins, and mug samplings of his various ales from this extravagant stall. His workspace is filled with a huge, elaborate combination still and alchemist's lab. It puffs, smokes, and hums with activity all day long, churning out several varieties of bitter yet tasty ales every day. Ano also sells standard alchemical items.

45. Cheeho the Talking Dog: This small stall is the daily performing venue for Cheeho, a small black dog with a white spot around his left eye, and is not just a trick to con tourists—the dog can actually talk. Cheeho and his tall, muscle-bound companion **Torlac** (N male half-orc barbarian 5) used to be adventurers. **Cheeho** was at one time human (NE male human rogue 4/fighter 2), but when he stole a pendant off a mummified body at an ancient gnoll burial site, Cheeho was cursed to live the rest of his days as a dog.

Cheeho and Torlac have tried nearly everything to lift the curse, but nothing has worked so far. They have come to the realization that only when the pendant is returned to the burial site and placed on the mummy from which it was stolen will the curse be lifted. The problem is that they have been unable to locate the burial site again. So here they spend their days earning their coin performing several well-rehearsed routines and eagerly questioning explorers and adventurers returning from the desert for any hint of its location.

46. Alseen's Camels: This place breeds and sells Katapeshi camels. They are some of the best mounts and pack animals one can find for this region of Golarion. Perfectly suited for long treks and expeditions out into the desert, they are also calm and docile, making them perfect for even the most unskilled rider. The owner, **Alhamad Alseen** (LN male human warrior 4/expert 2), is a veteran traveler and explorer of the kingdom of Katapesh. He settled here in the Daystalls only recently to breed and sell his camels. A few of his camels are trained for battle (war camels are more difficult to handle than horses, and all Ride checks to control a war camel are at a +2 to their DCs). A war camel has the same statistics as a heavy warhorse except that it only has a bite attack.

In addition to his stock of dromedaries, Alhamad sells all of the gear (saddles, blankets, bit and bridle, riding crops, and light barding) needed to ride them at standard

prices. Camels cost the same as light horses and a war camel is the same price as a heavy warhorse.

47. The Smoke Lady: This black-and-purple-striped tent sits just to the north of the road. A child sits atop a stool near the closed tent flap crying out invitations to visit the legendary Smoke Lady for divinations and future readings. The **Smoke Lady** (NE female human wizard 7) never actually shows herself. She sits behind a curtain through which she can view her clients, but they cannot see her. She uses illusions to create an image of a woman composed entirely of swirling smoke and tells the fortunes of her paying clients through intuitive guesswork and an occasional stab in the dark.

A reading from the Smoke Lady usually costs 1 gp. Locals enjoy taking visiting friends there for the novelty of it and recommend her tent in the Daystalls to anyone asking for fun places to visit. The "child" working the crowds is actually her business partner **Clavesh Tittletop** (NE male halfling rogue 4), an adult halfling gifted at disguises and acting. Clavesh also acts in the capacity of bodyguard for his partner when clients get too aggressive or curious.

THE SPRAWL

Of the three communities outside the city walls, the Sprawl probably has the least to interest visitors looking for flash and exoticism. The Sprawl is mainly a residential area where local laborers have settled outside of the bustle and chaos prevalent beyond the city walls. Fishermen, carpenters, masons, chandlers, brick layers, and thatchers make up the majority of the populace here, and their wares may be purchased here at the standard rate.

48. Jerg's Repair Shop: This shop sits along the eastern bank of the River Scorpius south of the Twilight Gate. A short pier juts out into the river to accommodate the numerous watercraft that stop by Jerg's Repair Shop for their repair needs. The shopfront bears a large sign over its doors depicting a pair of crossed hammers.

Jerg Alshelner (LG male dwarf wizard 5) runs a brisk business here performing minor repairs (and sometimes major ones) for anyone who needs it. He spent years exploring ruins, dungeons, and the wild places of Golarion with a band of heroes called the Redsteel Raiders. Eventually he retired here and has lived off the spoils of his adventures for many years while supplementing his income performing magical repairs via *mending* spells. However, his "fixing" skills aren't limited to repairing broken tools or weapons. With spells such as *remove curse* at his disposal, he's gained a reputation as the person to go to for magical "cures." Jerg also sells scrolls, oils, potions, and other single-use forms of these repairing and restorative spells for those that like to be prepared for things ahead of time.

49. River Inn: The River Inn stands prominently among the lesser buildings of the Sprawl. When its first owner built it in 3748 AR, he thought this community would attract a higher caste of locals and visitors, so he constructed his inn to fit in with the neighbors and businesses he thought he would have. The three-story inn is made of river stones and mortar with stout timber beams. Lanterns flanking its wide front doors are lit by magical flames and the interior of inn was made to accommodate nobles and rich merchants.

Ironically, the community the designer anticipated never arrived, and the inn has changed ownership several times since its construction. Though it has seen better days, the River Inn is still a magnificent building and has some of the best rooms in the city for a great deal less than its competitors. Current owner **Marvius Anquen** (N male human expert 3) does an admirable job of keeping the place in good condition.

Caravans, laborers, and adventurers are the most common sort to frequent the River Inn these days. Patrons enjoy the variety of fish on the menu caught daily from the River Scorpis and the Inner Sea by Marvius's son Eldron. Many of them also enjoy having a nice place to stay without actually entering the city. Outdoor types such as rangers and druids often find the River Inn an enjoyable alternative to the hustle and bustle of the inns inside the city walls.

CASTLE CLARION

Castle Clarion was built just over a century ago by retired explorer Oslynn Clarion. At the bottom of a switchback trail wending down the cliff upon which the castle perches, a private series of docks serves the Clarion family's shipping needs and swells with nearly a dozen black-sailed vessels that make up the Clarion fleet.

The castle is made up of slender towers rising to staggering heights and connected by covered flyway bridges. The sparkling porphyry walls and red slate roofs of Castle Clarion make it an easy landmark to spot from land or sea.

Lord Clarion is a loyal subject to the government of Katapesh and

dutifully adheres to all of the city's laws and ordinances. He is also one of the city's greatest suppliers of slaves. His black-sailed ships strike fear in many coastal towns and villages along the Inner Sea as their raiding missions gather new "crops" for the slave markets of Katapesh.

50. Cliffside Tavern: Perched at the edge of the cliffs overlooking the Inner Sea, the Cliffside Tavern is a popular place for locals looking for a quiet place to eat and enjoy a drink with a pleasing view of the sea. It is also a romantic spot for couples and lovers, who usually rendezvous here in the evening and late at night. Cliffside isn't always so seren; it isn't uncommon for cheating lovers to get caught in the act and be beaten or killed in a murderous rage.

The owner and barkeep is **Azhmeer Murlawden** (NG male human bard 1/expert 2), and he regularly treats his customers to soft music, strumming on his dulcimer while he wordlessly hums along.

51. Castle Clarion: For all its elegance, beauty, and lack of fortifications, Castle Clarion is well defended against Lord Clarion's many enemies, most notably agents or affiliates of the Gray Corsairs. Magical and mundane traps riddle the castle, and his servants include accomplished warriors, monks, and mages. Lord Clarion's firm ties with the Pactmasters mean he has several aluum that guard his demesne from interference, trespass, and assassins.

The castle dungeons teem with the spoils of slave-gathering raids where they are held until their sale either in the Nightstalls or at the Slave Block, depending on what manner of creatures they are. Agents of the Andoran-based freedom fighter cabal known as the Steel Raptors have been trying to infiltrate the castle for years, but have thus far only succeeded in gaining access by allowing themselves to be captured during Lord Clarion's slave runs. While an effective tactic for getting inside the castle's walls, whatever plans





CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN KATAPESH

Before considering breaking any of the laws of Katapesh, one should be familiar with the penalties. Of course, with the right attitude and a handful of coins, the Zephyr Guard may just let the offending party off with a warning.

Murder of guild member, Zephyr Guard, or government official: Execution

Murder of unaffiliated person: 6 months imprisonment, 100 gp fine, and official warning

Assault of guild member, Zephyr Guard, or government official: 1 year imprisonment

Assault of unaffiliated person: 1 gp

Destruction of Property: Fine equal to the value of the property, or slavery (time varies)

Tax Evasion: Fine equal to the unpaid taxes and 6 months imprisonment

Theft: Loss of a hand, branding, and 25 gp fine, or death (second offense)

Unsanctioned sale prices: Fine equal to the value of the item, official warning, and/or loss of guild membership

Disorderly conduct: 5 gp

they hoped to spring once on the inside appear to have failed miserably.

GOVERNMENT

An organization of rarely seen, robed and masked merchants called the Pactmasters rule over Katapesh. Their sudden appearance in 3725 AR is widely speculated upon. Some say they marched into the city by night at the head of an army of highly disciplined soldiers and simply crushed the leaders of the various bandit gangs occupying the city before any form of resistance could be organized. Others say the Pactmasters arrived in airships that so utterly terrified the city's bandit populace they fled into the desert and never returned. Strangely enough, there is no actual record documenting exactly what happened, and the five Pactmasters quietly rule the city from their palace, away from the public eye and inquiring minds. The truth of their arrival to Katapesh may be hidden somewhere between the various tales commonly held as tenuous historical fact.

The Pactmasters are known as Angruul, Jivnar, Krimiltuk, Morvithis, and Tzandarkon. Despite their great height, their form and speech are clearly humanoid, but they go to great lengths to conceal their features with voluminous robes, shrouds, and masks, often standing in the shadows or behind obscuring veils when required to make public appearances or attend council meetings, thus making the truth of their heritage a subject of much debate.

While the Pactmasters maintain control over the city, day-to-day business and governance is left to Pactbroker Hashim ibn Sayyid. Ibn Sayyid has a reputation for upholding the Pactmasters' judgments and enacting their laws, whatever his personal feelings. Some suspect ibn Sayyid has a personal agenda that will someday come to light, but for now he enjoys a stable and respected position. Ibn Sayyid also presides over the merchant council, which makes decisions about Katapesh's trade policies and ensures the market remains free. In practice, the merchant council rarely interferes in the everyday lives of citizens; their attitude is laissez-faire, if not downright apathetic.

The laws of Katapesh revolve almost exclusively around the city's commerce, ensuring that nothing impedes its daily business. If something can be bought, sold, or traded—no matter what it is—individuals are free to do so as long as they belong to one of the guilds most closely associated with their stock-in-trade. Membership is not hard to obtain, usually costing no more than 1 gp. Each guild has its own representatives that monitor the business activities of its members to ensure that they pay the appropriate taxes on goods sold there. Negligence to these strict observances is met with harsh guild retribution.

The Pactmasters hold council with the city's Guildmasters each month to arbitrate disputes between rival guilds, approve fee schedules, and administer punishment for deviance from the city's rigid trade laws. The punishment may take the form of loss of property or fines, imprisonment, or even slavery and guild dissolution for more serious crimes.

Theft is punished severely. First-time offenders are brought before the Pactmasters to be tried. Both sides of the matter are heard, and if found guilty the offending party loses a hand and is branded. Second-time offenders are always executed on the spot by the Zephyr Guard, Katapesh's city watch. Other crimes, such as public disorderliness, fighting, and murder, are usually met with a fine or overlooked unless they impede commerce in some way. Usually a bribe is enough to clear oneself of any wrongdoing in these kinds of altercations.

Destruction of property is one of the more serious crimes, as it means the complete loss of a profit-producing commodity. Punishment is forfeiture of an item of equal value. Offending parties incapable of producing such an item are enslaved until they have made restitution for their crimes.

Though the Pactmasters are rarely seen outside their palace walls, they are keenly aware of all that transpires within Katapesh through their network of spies and active patrols of the Zephyr Guard. The Zephyr Guard is made up of diverse ethnic groups and races, but mostly



humanoids such as humans, half-elves, and half-orcs. Their unifying feature is their expertise in combat and the precision with which they carry out their duties. A Zephyr Guard squad is usually composed of five elite soldiers (LN fighter 4) and their squad leader (LN fighter 6). Each squad leader carries a *charm of aluum control* which is magically bound to them, making it useless to anyone else. Aluum are powerful golems created to maintain order in Katapesh when other forms of authority fail (see the Bestiary for statistics). Dormant aluum are scattered through the city in key locations for the Zephyr Guard. They stand silent vigil at street corners, in the shadows of buildings, around busy squares, and throughout the numerous bazaars. No matter where one goes in Katapesh, an aluum is never far away.

GUILDS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Where the trade is the highest priority of the law, trade guilds are the political powers in the city.

Aspis Consortium: If the Aspis Consortium were a religious organization, Katapesh would be its mecca. The Pactmasters' influence ensures trade runs smoothly in the capital city, and the mercenary nature of most of Katapesh's inhabitants means the Aspis Consortium finds fertile ground for its many ventures.

In the city of Katapesh, a handful of lesser agents and at least two mid-ranking agents work to control the ebb and flow of trade. Rumor holds that one senior agent makes his home in Katapesh, but whom that individual may be remains unknown. The most prominent ranked agent is **Fatima Jel-Abar** (NE female human rogue 8), a Garundi trader with a vast fortune. Fatima deals in exotic artifacts and unusual goods she places for sale in the Nightstalls, and she is never seen in public without her two silent, heavily robed bodyguards. The other ranked agent, a Chelaxian who goes by the name **Skorn Dal** (NE male human rogue 5/wizard 3), traffics in pesh. His impressive memory allows him to keep track of every supplier and distributor in the country, and his obsession with growing conditions leaves him preoccupied with the weather.

The senior agent, whomever he may be, undoubtedly makes use of the immense amounts of trade flowing in and out of the city to estimate supply, demand, prices, and margins in other regions, and transmits this information back to the Consortium to fuel future plans. Aspis Consortium members must step carefully in Katapesh, though. The city provides a tempting target, but the faceless Pactmasters take great care to ensure trade proceeds smoothly in its shops. A Consortium member whose grasp grows too greedy may find himself garnering unwanted attention from the mysterious city masters, which the Aspis leaders do not want.

Carpenters' Guild: This guild includes all those professionals who work with wood, be they lumberjacks, whittlers, or actual carpenters. They are for the most part quiet in council meetings, never really demanding much other than fair payment for their work. As long as that requirement is met, they have little interest in meetings and other government affairs. Their current guildmaster is a venerable woodworker named **Torbin Dooly** (NG male half-elf expert 6). His quiet no-nonsense demeanor speaks volumes for the outlook of the rest of the guild.

Farmers' Union: The guild of farmers extends far beyond the wall of Katapesh and out into the hinterlands beyond the city. Led by the young **Alager Jermell** (NG male human commoner 2), the union quietly maintains a steady flow of food to Katapesh at reasonable prices.

Fraternal Order of the Anvil: Blacksmiths, armorers, weaponsmiths, and metalworkers make up this hard-working organization. Guildmaster **Agler Cruwen** (LE male human fighter 2/expert 4) retired from a short career as an adventurer after he lost sight in his right eye. He took up residence in Katapesh as an apprentice weaponsmith and, years later, assumed ownership of the Iron Hide Smithy as a master at his craft. Agler is a pitiless man who runs his personal affairs with a heavy, malicious hand. When it comes to guild matters, however, he is stringently fair and fiercely protective of his fellow guild members.

Gladiators' Guild: The leader of this group of professional fighters is **Magnus Boldheart** (CE male half-orc fighter 10). Magnus demands only the best from his associates and rarely thinks of anything besides training and fighting. Magnus is the current undefeated Champion of the Pits. His signature weapon, the Stumper—a *vorpal/unholy orc double axe*—is known throughout all of Katapesh for the numerous heads it has cleaved from his opponents. His axe haft is riddled with notches he's tallied there from all of his kills.

Anyone who wishes to compete in the various guild-approved matches must join the guild. Magnus has worked hard to gain exclusive rights to them for his guild and administers fast and bloody justice to anyone who ignores it. A prospective member must demonstrate proficiency in at least two exotic weapons, and must best a current member in a nonlethal fight. If they succeed at both of the requirements, they are made members and gain all the privileges and training that membership entails. The only requirement of them thereafter is that they fight in at least one arena match per month and contribute a small portion of any rewards for matches won to the guild.

Guild of Bakers and Butchers: Katapesh's numerous bakers, food vendors, cooks, and butchers are all loosely



organized under this name. **Orvious Daltry** (LN male halfling expert 2) serves as guildmaster, though he regrets ever agreeing to take the post and as such is constantly dodging his duties. His reluctance stems from a schism within the guild between bakers and cooks and the butchers and meat mongers. The two sides have gained the nicknames Pattys (bakers) and Choppers (butchers), though they don't use those names themselves except when referring derisively to each other.

Guild of Street Sweepers and Dung Carters: The unheralded street sweepers and dung carters of Katapesh ensure that the city stays relatively clean from day to day. While the dung carters usually make their way through the streets and alleyways of Katapesh by day with their donkeys and two-wheeled carts, the army of street sweepers is normally found performing its tasks during the night when most people have long since found its beds.

As the city's trash collectors, the street sweepers often come across interesting finds in the course of their work, or witness things transpiring in the nocturnal hours that weren't meant to be seen. Because of this, they can be a great source of seedy gossip and news for Gather Information checks.

Guild of Weavers: Basket makers, thatchers, rug makers, and clothiers all belong under the aegis of the Guild of Weavers. At one time each profession had its own guild, but their small numbers often led to a very small presence in the Council of Guilds. By joining together as a single guild, they have gained much more power in council meetings and have become a more prosperous group of individuals. The guild is led by **Demetrius Farlong** (CG male gnome expert 3), a merry and well-liked clothier who owns a small shop in Lower City called the Second Skin, where he and his wife craft and sell the latest fashions in clothing and many popular garments from overseas.

Imperial Union of Breeders: Katapesh is home to some of the greatest stocks of horses, camels, ponies, and mules in the Inner Sea region. The breeders of these fine animals all belong to this elite organization. Their opinion of themselves is a source of amusement throughout all of Katapesh—or ire if one has to do business with them. They demand top coin for their livestock and are famous hagglers no matter which one you deal with. Their elected guildmaster is **An'Aldane Zulran** (LN male human expert 5), an obese, oily-haired man whose riding skills are legendary despite his tremendous bulk (see Zulran's Equines).

Jewelers' Guild: Gem cutters, jewelers, appraisers, or simply those that sell precious gems are all members of this guild. Their guildmaster, **Exavisu Kerndallion** (LN female gnome expert 6), is a very small but vocal force within the Council of Guilds. Her manipulation

of current price regulations of all gems and jewelry has made her and her associates very rich. Gems, jewelry, and purveyors of such goods currently sell their wares and services for 25% more than anywhere else. These inflated prices have attracted a lot of attention to cut gems and jewelry crafted within the city, making them more attractive to potential buyers as a sign of quality.

THE NIGHTSTALLS

Though slavery is legal in Katapesh, kidnapping is not—a distinction that makes it easy for the Pactmasters to keep their own citizens safe while still allowing the sale of human flesh. As long as someone enters the city as a slave—meaning they're taken captive outside of the city's holdings—they remain so in the eyes of the law, and are treated as property.

Yet just because something is legal doesn't mean it's popular, and such conventions often break down in the face of strong emotion. Most citizens in Katapesh either ignore or actively engage in the slave trade, but it's not unheard of for a slaver to be beaten and robbed of his "property" when vengeful friends or family discover a loved one in chains.

For this reason, the Nightstalls were created. Here, those merchants who deal in evil wares likely to elicit strong negative reactions—everything from slaves to unicorn horns to the finger bones of elven children—maintain mundane storefronts, only revealing their true wares to interested parties and often packing up and switching to new locations on a nightly basis. Those who deal regularly with these merchants generally have little trouble locating them again, but those customers searching for taboo items for the first time often need to show a little coin to prove they're serious and not out to cause trouble.

Order of Alchemists and Potion Makers: All of Katapesh's numerous potion makers, vendors, and alchemists belong to the Order of Alchemists and Potion Makers, which is often confused with the Poison Makers' Guild, much to the chagrin of both groups. Their guildmaster, **Mwalaji Din'Jalhari** (CN male human wizard 6), goes by the title of Grand Alchemist.

Poison Makers' Guild: The organization of poison makers comprises one of the largest and most prosperous guilds in Katapesh. Officially recognized and involved in matters of capital punishment, they are among the most influential members of the Council of Guilds. When criminals are sentenced to execution, the Poison Makers' Guild administers the substance used to put the offender to death. Such occasions are sources of great excitement within the guild, as it provides members an opportunity to test their newest creations before a huge audience.

The Sword and Shield: This organization is loosely made up of professional mercenaries—bodyguards, caravan guards, and any other hired swords. Often mistaken for a



“fighters’ guild,” the Sword and Shield includes members from a broad range of professions, many of which are currently or were at one time adventurers.

Rather than a single guildmaster, the Sword and Shield is governed by a triad of appointed guild leaders—**Rae Dawn the Black** (LN female elf wizard 6), **Zaxion Earthfire** (NG male dwarf cleric of Torag 6), and **Bennet Marl** (LE male human fighter 7). Due to divergent ethical views, the three don’t see eye to eye on many things, but they keep the guild running smoothly and see to it that members get work.

Potential members are interviewed by the Triad, where they must give a demonstration of their skills or knowledge as it may apply to guild jobs. If a majority of the Triad gives its consent, the candidate is given membership. Members then pay monthly dues equal to a percentage of their pay from guild work, with a minimum of 1 gp even if they’re not doing any work for the guild. Jobs are posted in the guild common room—anyone who wants that job enters his or her name down in a guild log, with jobs assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Unseen Hand: This guild is made up of thieves, assassins, and anarchists dissatisfied with the state of affairs of Katapesh. Though they have no place in Katapesh as a formal guild, they still find ways to make their wishes known in the Halls of the Council through blackmail, terrorism, and subtle threats.

The leader of the Unseen Hand is known simply as Ghost. Nothing is known about him, even by members of the organization, as he acts through intermediaries and proxies who in turn deal with still other intermediaries. Members of the Unseen Hand rarely ever deal with more than one or two other members, which helps to maintain its secrecy and continued existence. If asked, no one really knows what the overarching purpose is for the Unseen Hand. Members perform limited tasks and may not know the reasons why they are doing them. Most members simply believe that they are working to undermine the system. Whatever the case, everyone knows that Ghost has a plan and they are all doing their part to see that it reaches the desired end result.

The Zephyr Guard: Katapesh’s elite fighting force is made up of a diverse mix of races from many backgrounds and cultures. What unifies them is their combat expertise and their discipline. Most of them are former gladiators, mercenaries, and soldiers from other kingdoms attracted to Katapesh by the promise of good wages and the best retirement pay in all of the Inner Sea region.

Not just any soldier or warrior that can swing a blade can get into the Zephyr Guard. Commander Osafa Al’Kez demands the utmost discipline and physical perfection from his troops. Candidates are put through a grueling

series of physical tests and conditioning exercises. Those that make it beyond this initial phase of testing must then pass a second series of tests to measure their mental acuity. The tests serve to cull those found lacking from the rest of the candidates. The few that make it beyond the testing period are brought into the fold of the Zephyr Guard. Even the lowest-ranking member makes nearly 10 times what other soldiers do. After serving 15 years’ honorable service, members qualify for retirement. They continue to draw pay from the Zephyr Guard for the rest of their lives on the condition that they continue to reside in Katapesh and perform occasional service when they are needed.

ZEPHYR GUARD





Adventures in Katapesh

This chapter contains adventure hooks, locations of interest, remarkable people, and secret information intended to spice up your game and provide you with inspiration for further exploration into this mysterious nation. What follows is specifically intended for GMs only—if you are a player, you should stop reading now to avoid major spoilers.

TAVERN TALES

These rumors may be the starting points for quick one-shot adventures, springboards for full campaigns, bad information planted by the PCs' enemies, or simply gossip and flavor to enhance an ongoing game.

Auspicious Birth: In Solku, the PCs hear rumors about a two-headed gnoll born in White Canyon. Theurgists believe the two-headed gnoll may be an avatar of Lamashtu

and bodes great ill fortune for the city. Soon word spreads that Lady Cynore plans an expedition into White Canyon to slay the cursed whelp, and is calling for brave individuals to accompany her.

Belligerent Boss: An enormous red dragon approaches the PCs while they travel through the mountains. Rather than killing them, the dragon demands their assistance. Jackal rats infiltrated the dragon's lair while he hunted and made off with several small treasures. The furious dragon tracked the pugwampis to their burrow, but the tiny tunnels are too small for his enormous bulk. The dragon insists the PCs retrieve his treasure, or suffer his displeasure.

Blood Key: A bard in Katapesh sings of how the blood of a martyred paladin, dribbled on the paws of the Crouching Jackal, opens a doorway into an ancient stronghold. A merchant listens with rapt attention, and later approaches

the PCs. He asks them to accompany him to the Crouching Jackal, promising that he will acquire the requisite blood and split any profits found in the stronghold. The merchant is who he seems—an opportunist with more ambition than common sense—but the blood splashed on the Jackal's paws frees an ancient horror locked away within the statue: a mummy lord, a glabrezu, or even a havoro (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #10).

Dawnflower Dream: A priestess of Sarenrae dreams every night of a doorway opening on the savannah. Beyond the open door, she sees a bright light and feels a sense of peace—but then the light goes dark and a terrible howling emanates from within. A figure steps up to the doorway and places one hand on the frame, then the dream ends. When the PCs stop at the priestess's temple (for healing, information, or other reasons), the priestess recognizes one of them as the figure from her dreams.

Howls in the Night: Giana Secondstride receives word that a pack of gnolls is preparing for an assault on Fort Longjaw. The PCs, overnight visitors, offer their abilities in defense of the fort—that, or Secondstride recruits their aid by any means necessary. When the attack comes, all plans go awry as a half-dozen individuals within the stockade reveal themselves as gnoll infiltrators in disguise. After the carnage ends, the PCs must determine how the gnolls were able to enter the fort and fool even Secondstride.

Legacy of the Sandstalker: The Red Sultana launches an attack on a merchant caravan, and only two of caravaners survive. They report that the Sultana wielded Rath Sandstalker's lost weapon, the *Brazen Claw*. Though the powers of this item in Sandstalker's hands were moderate at best, in the Red Sultana's grasp it was a terrible instrument of death, able to disintegrate foes with a well-placed swing and glowing an unholy red the entire time. The PCs must steal the *Brazen Claw* from the Sultana's side and bear it to Suketh'mah, where they can destroy it forever.

Lost Ruin Found: A fierce sandstorm rages across a stretch of desert, forcing the PCs to take shelter in a cave. After defeating the giant scorpion living within, the PCs hunker down to wait out the sandstorm. When they emerge from the cave 2 days later, they find themselves in the center of a vast ruin revealed by the shifting sands. The PCs make their way out of the ruins but encounter the long-dead inhabitants along the way—mummified when the area was buried, and now awakened and very angry.

Maddening Pitch: Reports surface that sand eels in a particular region appear to be going berserk. The creatures zip around, writhe as if having fits, and relentlessly attack anything they meet. When the PCs investigate the area where the attacks occur, they hear a high-pitched hum. The hum emanates from a nearby pyramid, sealed up and possibly unexplored. The PCs must breach the pyramid and find the source of the noise to stop the sand eel attacks.

Missing Wanderer: An elf visiting from Kyonin allows his fascination with city life to lure him into a shady gambling-house. When his companions come to collect him hours later, no one in the gambling den remembers an exotic elf visitor. The elves ask the PCs to investigate their friend's disappearance. After some research, the PCs learn that the gambling house is a front where visitors are drugged and loaded onto slave galleys bound for Okeno. The vessel containing the elf has already set sail, but a fast ship might catch it before it reaches the Fleshfairs.

Perfect Seasoning: A struggling chef asks the PCs to enter the Evergrowth and retrieve a rare herb. The chef explains she has secured a contract to serve a dinner for Pactbroker Hashin ibn Sayyid and his guests, and the herb adds such flavor and depth to dishes that her dinner is sure to be a success. Though the chef cannot afford much payment, her desperation is real.

Scarred Jackalwere: A distinctive jackalwere with a scarred muzzle, accompanied by a band of followers and a host of jackal rats, attacks four groups of travelers over the course of 2 weeks. When the PCs investigate, they learn that the scarred jackalwere bit one person from each group and then ordered his pack to retreat. Furthermore, each bitten individual was part of an adventuring group that ventured into the catacombs beneath El-Fatar a year prior to the first attack. The bites have festered despite all healing efforts, and now nightmares plague the victims.

Scavengers Wait: A flock of geiers, scavenger birds that feast on dead travelers, circles patiently in the sky over empty terrain. A day later, the remnants of a lost caravan stagger into view and collapse. The geiers descend on the scene, but the arrival of the PCs spooks the birds. One of the caravan survivors reports that the birds appeared to be waiting for them. Back in civilization, the PCs overhear a similar story from another group of travelers. Somehow, the birds know where people are going to die—and now another flock circles over the desert.

Squatters' Rights: A group of pilgrims builds a new settlement in the desert at a seemingly unclaimed spot, burying a *decanter of endless water* in the sand to form an oasis and constructing houses there. Months later, farmers arrive at the salt flat to collect the nagri salt and find the area permanently flooded. By now the pilgrims are well established and have no intention of moving, but their magical oasis threatens to disrupt pesh production. A farmer or pilgrim asks the heroes to act as mediators.

Tainted Delirium: A dangerous batch of tainted pesh surfaces in Katapesh. The drug is genuine raw pesh, not false pesh, but contains some contaminant that induces violent feelings and frightening hallucinations. Merchants made paranoid by the contaminant close up shop, and shoppers randomly attack nearby individuals while in the grip of the drug's delirium. Someone known to the PCs



falls victim to the tainted drug, requiring an investigation into the source of the contaminant and a cure.

The Golden Horn: A desperate caravaner begs the PCs to assist her in transporting an unusual cargo across the plains: a herd of calopus, including a rare gold-horned calopus. After the PCs agree, the caravaner confesses the herd broke loose just outside the city. The team managed to recover all the animals save the gold-horned prize. A team of hunters also seeks the rare creature.

Tomb of the Magus: Recently recovered documents reveal that the well-pilfered tomb of a dead wizard contains a secret level. The merchant who sells the PCs these documents is a follower of Rovagug intent on luring them into a trap. The tomb contains a cult, aided by a gray render, waiting to ritually sacrifice the PCs, believing that enough deaths will wake the Rough Beast.

Valuable Target: A Pactmaster, on a rare departure from the city of Katapesh, is accompanying a caravan across the sands to Solku. An unnamed crime lord offers a huge bounty on the Pactmaster's head. The PCs may act as caravan guards, set out to warn the Pactmaster, or even attempt to collect the bounty themselves. All is not as it seems, though; the Pactmaster brings with him formidable defenses, including a stone golem swathed in voluminous traveling robes. The Pactmaster's destination holds surprises as well. Near Solku, the caravan veers into the mountains, where a mysterious vessel capable of traveling through the planes waits for its precious cargo.

Withering Pesh: A strange blight, resistant to usual treatments, strikes a crop of pesh in Commonfield. The neighboring fields contract the blight, and soon the entire town finds its livelihood imperiled. Kerek Cullstone blames the blight on a wandering hermit who passed through town not long ago, but PCs who investigate quickly determine the hermit's innocence. Cullstone then confesses he purchased fungal spores and a treatment on

his last trip to Katapesh, intending to purchase blighted crops from his neighbors at reduced rates and then salvage the pesh to resell, but found that the treatment didn't work. The PCs must track down the original salesman and find a true cure for the blight.

Zolurket Crusade: A band of dwarves stops in Sueda Lodge, intent on reclaiming the Zolurket Mines. The dwarves believe the mine was not played out, as previously thought, but rather that the miners left after uncovering a cursed shrine to Norgorber and releasing a flight of shadows. The dwarves carry holy relics and travel with a cleric of Torag. Pinderven wants to accompany the expedition but is unable to leave the lodge, and asks the PCs to go in his stead.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following expanded adventure hooks provide further guidance for the creation of longer adventures and campaigns in Katapesh.

Lamashtu's Secret Temple

While everyone in Katapesh believes that the Ruined Monastery in Twilight Gate is merely a creepy remnant of one of Lamashtu's horrid temples, the truth is that her followers still practice their abhorrent rites deep beneath the surface ruins.

A secret door hidden under the sand (Search DC 30) within the ruins allows entrance for followers that know the password to the magically sealed portal. Once every 4 months, priests led by **Gnarlpaw the Black** (CE male gnoll cleric 7) descend through the secret portal to the hidden temple chambers below. There they spend several hours in prayer and frenzied orgy, after which a live sacrifice is offered to the goddess in a bloody ritual that ends only after they consume the victim, bones and all. If they are lucky, an abomination embodying all the terrifying aspects of their goddess is conceived during the night's activities.

Recently, Gnarlpaw and his acolytes kidnapped Ezler Palmatorian (a popular ruk player of the Fraternal Order of the Anvil's team). Ezler is held captive within the secret temple chambers and will be sacrificed during the next

Dark Night—mere days away. The Order believes their guild rivals kidnapped Ezler as an attempt to weaken their team in their upcoming ruk match.

However, a pair of Ezler's teammates suspect otherwise after finding a few tufts of black animal hair in Ezler's room following the kidnapping, and have pooled their resources to find him.

A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that the hair belongs to a black-haired gnoll. Gnarlpaw the Black is one of only two



gnolls living in the city of Katapesh that fit the description. If the PCs act quickly, they can follow the gnoll cult leader through the secret entrance on the night of the sacrifice to save the unfortunate Ezler. Yet abominations lurk in the temple's depths to guard it against intruders, and Gnarl paw and his cult are quite formidable within their secret lair.

The Maze of Thaldarran

A student from the College of Dimensional Studies recently spent several hours at the Temple of Nethys researching an item called the *maze amulet of Thaldarran*; he absconded with the text he was studying and has gone missing. Bale Politiz has offered a reward of 500 gp for the return of their property and an additional 500 gp for the capture of the young thief.

A search of the student's room at the college doesn't turn up any physical clues, but *detect magic* reveals a fading dweomer of powerful conjuration magic. Consulting with the student's friends and succeeding on a DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check turns up the book and a time-worn amulet with a swirling maze-like design on its surface. The book is marked up with notes and a circled command word keyed to the book and amulet, and according to the text, the two items are the key to a maze full of magical wonders and trinkets heretofore unheard of by mortals.

The student discovered too late that the maze contains traps, minotaurs, and a powerful lich named Thaldarran who dwells in a tower at its center. If the PCs follow the student into the maze, they can capture or rescue him and figure out how to escape. Greedy PCs might like to obtain some of the magical treasure mentioned in the book; brave or heroic ones might fight the lich at the center of the maze for even greater rewards.

The Petrified Shrine

Recently, a group of adventurers that had been exploring near the Stairs of the Agate King returned to Katapesh after running afoul of a nest of basilisks. Within the basilisks' nest the adventurers found dozens of petrified humanoids that had obviously fallen victim to basilisk gaze attacks, all of them composed of unusual minerals rather than the common stone that normally results from these transformations. The nest also contained a strange shrine that appeared to be dedicated to some tentacled mosquito-like horror. The glyphs and pictographs engraved in the stonework of the shrine were indecipherable to any of the explorers who saw it.

Jergen Alshelner (see Chapter 2) heard news of this place and has decided to sponsor a "rescue" mission to the location, offering a reward of 100 gp for each petrified humanoid brought back to him in one piece. The Pathfinder Society has also taken an interest in this place. Venture-Captain Aurora Steelbloom offers 100 gp bonus for rubbings of the glyphs and pictograms.

Adventurers that explore the shrine have their work cut out for them, as it is home to a family of six basilisks. The shrine was once a place of worship for a cult of Ghlauder nearly 1,000 years ago, and a successful DC 30 Decipher Script check (or other methods, such as *comprehend languages*) allows readers to translate the symbols. They espouse the tenets of Ghlauder's parasitic faith and hint at a secret entrance to a subterranean temple beneath the shrine.

A DC 30 Search check reveals a passage that leads several hundred feet beneath the earth to a humid cavern dominated by a stagnant pool of water. The cavern is home to mosquitoes, leeches, patches of violet fungus, and other parasitic creatures. A massive statue depicting Ghlauder—a bloated mosquito—sits atop a small island at the center of the pool, and an army of large phantom fungi wander the cavern ready to attack any who dare enter their demesne. For those that brave the hidden cavern and make it past its guardians, offerings of fungus- and mold-covered coins, jewels, gems, and other valuables lie strewn around the mosquito statue.

The Pactmasters

The Pactmasters are one of Katapesh's greatest mysteries. Innumerable rumors and legends surround this group of beings, but the one that is the most outrageous and hardest to believe is actually closest to the truth. In 3725 AR, five creatures known as witchwyrd descended from the heavens in a craft designed to travel between planets and throughout the multiverse. It was no mere happenstance. These creatures had discovered Golarion decades before and saw in this world a place ripe for them to establish a mercantile empire of their design. The Golden City was fortuitously located along the Inner Sea, making trade with other nearby nations easy to establish.

When they felt that the time was right, the witchwyrd descended with a small army of minions and construct guardians and easily overcame the brutish humanoid bandit lords occupying the city. The conquerors named themselves the Pactmasters and assumed leadership of the city. Over the course of a thousand years, they have patiently built up a powerful nation of merchants and trade.

Most residents of Katapesh believe that the Pactmasters are something other than human, but their subtle manipulation of the city's affairs and lax governing of the city has engendered a spirit of minding one's own business and looking out for one's self. Those that are unsatisfied with the government find a means of rebelling through association with and membership in the Unseen Hand. Unknown to any of its members is the fact that the Pact Masters actually founded the Unseen Hand—its leader, the mysterious Ghost, is one of the Pact Masters, allowing the witchwyrd to keep a close eye on their potential enemies and eliminate any threat before it becomes too strong.



Prestige Class

BALANCED SCALE OF ABADAR

Balanced scales of Abadar fulfill a specialized role in Katapesh. In addition to utilizing their powers of mercantilism, balanced scales seek out lost, unclaimed, or wrongly seized wealth among the many tombs and ruins of the Katapesh desert. Balanced scales of Abadar develop unique powers that afford them the ability to enter dangerous areas where lost treasure can be restored to the light or hidden goods can be returned to their rightful owners. A balanced scale finds the most satisfaction in discovering long-lost treasures hidden in unmarked strongholds, owned by now nameless individuals of the past. A balanced scale can claim such wealth for her own and use it to further the strength of her church.

For more information about Abadar, see *Pathfinder Chronicles: Gods and Magic* and *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #8.

Requirements

To qualify to become a balanced scale of Abadar, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Deity: Abadar

Skills: Appraise 4 ranks, Open Lock 4 ranks

Spellcasting:
Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells

Class Features

The following are class features of the balanced scale of Abadar prestige class.

Spellcasting: At levels 2–6, the balanced scale gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class she belonged to before. She adds the level of balanced scale of Abadar to the level of whatever other spellcasting class she has for the purposes of determining her caster level.

Bypass Ward (Ex): Ancient ruins often contain locked and sometimes warded doors; as such, a balanced scale can pick the lock of even a magically locked door (such as one sealed by *arcane lock* or *hold portal*). The Open Lock DC for the door is considered 10 higher than normal due to the effect of

the warding spell. A balanced scale also gains a +2 sacred bonus to Open Lock checks. As a full-round action, a balanced scale can make an Open Lock check to disable a magical trap (such as a *glyph of warding*) for 1 minute.

Appraising Eye (Ex): A balanced scale must estimate value quickly and accurately, particularly when in a dangerous environment such as an underground tomb. She gains a +2 sacred bonus to all Appraise checks, and can appraise an item with 1 full-round action, instead of 1 minute, if she takes a –10 penalty.

Bottomless Bag (Su): Sometimes a balanced scale finds an unexpected treasure too large to transport. Once per day she can turn any ordinary sack, backpack, or other container into a *bag of holding* type II. The container remains a *bag of holding* for 1 hour per class level; after the duration expires, the container resumes its normal properties, and any items too large to fit within its true dimensions immediately and harmlessly fall out of the opening. Unlike a permanent *bag of holding*, the bag created by this ability cannot be overloaded or ruptured, nor does it have any special interaction with other kinds of extradimensional spaces.

At 6th level, the balanced scale's bottomless bag increases to the size of a *bag of holding* type III. Alternately, she can create two *bags of holding* type II, though their extradimensional spaces are not linked in any way.

Eloquent Bargainer (Ex): Getting permission to enter treasure-laden ruins sometimes requires talking to the right people and handing around a few coins for bribes, “finder’s fees,” and so on. At 4th level, a balanced scale learns which palms to grease and what promises to make, gaining a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks when she offers an appropriate bribe (minimum 10 gp × the level of the





BALANCED SCALE OF ABADAR

HIT DIE: D6

| Level | Base | | | | Special | Spells |
|-------|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | | |
| 1 | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | Bypass ward | — |
| 2 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +3 | Appraising eye | +1 level of divine spellcasting class |
| 3 | +1 | +1 | +1 | +3 | Bottomless bag (type II), access the Vault (non-magical item) | +1 level of divine spellcasting class |
| 4 | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | Eloquent bargainer | +1 level of divine spellcasting class |
| 5 | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | Access the Vault (magic item) | +1 level of divine spellcasting class |
| 6 | +2 | +2 | +2 | +5 | Vault jump, bottomless bag (type III) | +1 level of divine spellcasting class |

Skills (2 + Int bonus per level): Appraise, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Heal, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), Open Lock, Profession, Search, Spellcraft.

recipient) during the interaction. In addition, she receives a +2 sacred bonus on Charisma checks made to compel a bound creature to perform a service when using the *lesser planar binding* and *greater planar binding* spells.

Access the Vault (Su): At 3rd level, a balanced scale gains the power to access the First Vault, Abadar's planar repository for perfect versions of every item ever made. Once per week a balanced scale can summon a copy of any one nonmagical item (normal or masterwork) as long as its market price is equal to or less than 500 gp per divine caster level and its volume is less than 1 cubic foot per caster level. The item remains with the balanced scale for 1 minute per class level, after which it returns automatically to the First Vault. Consumable items vanish once used but function for their normal duration or 1 minute per class level, whichever is less. Even if an item is destroyed while in the balanced scale's possession, a new copy appears in the First Vault. At 5th level, a balanced scale can use this ability to summon a magic item from the First Vault. Items with charges always arrive fully charged, and the price limit applies to this fully charged version (for example, a fully charged *wand of cure serious wounds* costs 11,250 gp, putting it out of reach of anyone caster level 22 or lower).

Items taken from the First Vault are obviously of exceptional quality and radiate magic (even if not normally a magic item, such as a chair or table), and their unearthly perfection is enough to make any intelligent potential buyer suspicious. The church of Abadar frowns on selling items from the First Vault, as it is essentially stealing from the buyer (as the items vanish shortly thereafter), which disrupts faith in fair trade and the church; balanced scales who abuse this ability lose access to the First Vault until they have atoned for their transgression.

Because there is only one perfect copy of each item in the First Vault, there is a remote chance (approximately 1%) that the item the character wants is unavailable because another person has borrowed it. If this happens, it does

not expend the balanced scale's ability, and she may try again next round to summon that or another item.

Some religious scholars theorize that this power does not actually draw items from the First Vault, as Abadar would not lend out his true perfect copies, and that the items are actually copies of the perfect items, perhaps placed in another divine vault created for this purpose or as a backup.

Vault Jump (Sp): Those who drive hard bargains and search for lost treasures sometimes bite off more than they can chew, and a quick exit is often the only way to escape a bad situation alive. Once per day, a balanced scale can create a one-way portal through the First Vault, which has one of two effects. First, she may use the portal as if it were a *dimension door*, but can only travel to areas within range and to which she has been (for example, she cannot use it to get past a sealed door into the unknown room beyond). Second, she may use the portal as if she were casting *word of recall*, but instead of returning to her sanctuary she always returns to the closest active temple of Abadar. The balanced scale's caster level for this ability is equal to her divine caster level, and she can bring others with her as defined in the spell descriptions.

Travel through the First Vault is uncomfortable and disorienting, possibly because the Vault rejects imperfect mortal flesh in an attempt to protect itself, or because the aura of so much perfection is overwhelming to mortal senses. Regardless of the distance traveled, the balanced scale (and anyone traveling with her) arrives 1d4+1 rounds later and is nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds after arriving (Fortitude DC 15 negates).

As with the balanced scale's ability to access the First Vault, some scholars believe this ability transports the user through a space other than the First Vault. Their reasoning is that, if a balanced scale were mind-controlled or otherwise compromised, this ability might allow thieves to access the First Vault and steal the priceless, perfect items stored there.



Pesh Magic

Those who use pesh walk a fine line between delirium and death, chasing the euphoria of the drug but risking addiction and sickness from excessive use. A few rare spellcasters use their knowledge to explore hidden pathways revealed by the drug, expanding their awareness of their own flesh and learning how to manipulate the minds and bodies of others. Pesh addicts call these wise ones *sahir-afiyun*, a Katapeshi phrase meaning “sorcerers of sleep,” and seek them out for advice on ways to heighten their own euphoria or stave off the ravages of addiction.

Sahir are usually mages, though a few druids or priests of Norgorber skilled in the lore of herbs study pesh-magic. Most sahir use their powers to manipulate and control others, and wealthy pesh-traders often have a sahir on the payroll to manage the quality of the drug. In lands outside of Katapesh where pesh is restricted or illegal, sahir are usually leaders of smuggling rings or associated with thieves’ guilds that traffic in pesh. Very rarely, a sahir uses his knowledge to help free others from pesh, though their own use of the drug makes them hypocrites in this practice. Sahir can use their knowledge to teach addicts how to tap into additional benefits of the drug, but a lucky few addicts discover these abilities on their own.

Sahir are always regular users of pesh; their spells and special abilities rely on it. Powerful sahir carry numerous vials of pesh and refined pesh, and many wrap their bodies in linens soaked in pesh whey, eventually resembling bizarre mummies with multiple layers of these linens. Though the drug gives them the haggard appearance of an addict, they can never overdose on pesh (though they can become addicted).

Because pesh magic relies on the risk of addiction as a balance for its power, any campaign using pesh magic should determine concrete effects for pesh addiction, such as Dexterity, Wisdom, and Constitution damage for extended withdrawal, much like a disease.

PESH EUPHORIA

Your pesh-addled mind is difficult to influence.

Prerequisites: Pesh addict or sahir-afiyun.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Will saves if you have used pesh in the past hour. If you fail a saving throw against an enchantment effect while you are under the effects of pesh, you can attempt it again 1 round later at the same DC; this feat only gives you one extra chance to succeed on the saving throw (though if you have other reroll abilities, such as a rogue’s slippery mind, you may attempt them this round).

PESH HEALING

You heal whenever you use pesh.

Prerequisites: Pesh addict or sahir-afiyun.

Benefit: When you take a dose of raw pesh, you heal 1 hit point. When you take a dose of refined pesh, you heal 5 hit points. The pesh still has its normal effects on you (temporary hit points, and so on).

PESH REJUVENATION

When you are close to death, your body can convert pesh into lifesaving medicine.

Prerequisites: Pesh addict or sahir-afiyun.

Benefit: If you have used raw pesh or refined pesh in the past hour, and you are brought to 0 or fewer hit points, you may immediately gain 10 temporary hit points as a swift action. You may use this ability even if you are unconscious, but it cannot save you from an attack that immediately kills you.

Using this ability makes you sickened for 24 hours. You can end the sickness by using raw pesh or refined pesh. Using this ability while you are sickened makes you exhausted. You can end the exhaustion by using pesh or refined pesh; this leaves you only sickened, and another dose can end the sickness.

SAHIR-AFIYUN

You have intertwined your familiarity with pesh and magic to unlock strange powers of enchantment and necromancy.

Prerequisites: Able to cast 2nd-level spells, pesh user, and Spell Focus (enchantment) or Spell Focus (necromancy).

Benefit: Add the sahir-afiyun spells to the spell list of your casting class. If you have more than one spellcasting class, choose one and add the sahir-afiyun spells to that class’s spell list.

You can easily recognize all forms of pesh, including tainted or false pesh, and gain a +5 competence bonus to Appraise checks made to determine the value of pesh or realize that a substance is not true pesh.

You gain a +1 bonus on Fortitude saving throws and a +2 bonus on saving throws against poison.

This feat counts as the Endurance feat for the purpose of qualifying for the Diehard feat.

Sahir-Afiyun Spell List

1st—*lesser confusion*, *night blindness*, *pesh vigor*, *ray of sickening*, *remove fear*, *sleep*

2nd—*calm emotions**, *euphoric cloud*, *slow suffocation*

3rd—*lesser pesh addiction*

4th—*confusion**

5th—*pesh addiction, instant suffocation, symbol of sleep*

* As the standard spell, but requiring a dose of pesh as a material component.

EUPHORIC CLOUD

School conjuration (creation); **Level** sahir-afiyun 2

CASTING

Components V, S, M (1 dose of pesh)

DESCRIPTION

You create a bank of fog like that created by *stinking cloud*, except that the vapors are intoxicating. Living creatures in the cloud become fascinated.

Affected targets are considered to have taken a dose of pesh for the purpose of addiction and withdrawal effects.

NIGHT BLINDNESS

School necromancy; **Level** sahir-afiyun 1

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions similarly to *blindness/deafness*, except it only affects living creatures, and only causes blindness. The target's pupils constrict as if they were in bright sunlight, rendering them blind except in conditions of bright light, even if they have darkvision or low-light vision. The target gains a +4 to saving throws to resist blindness caused by bright light (such as *flare*, *sunbeam*, and *sunburst*, though in the latter two spells it is possible for a creature to fail its save against the damage while successfully resisting the blindness due to this bonus).

PESH ADDICTION, LESSER

School necromancy; **Level** sahir-afiyun 3

CASTING

Components V, M (a dose of pesh whey)

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions like *lesser geas*, except the only allowed command is "use pesh or refined pesh."

PESH ADDICTION

School necromancy; **Level** sahir-afiyun 5

CASTING

Components V, M (a dose of pesh whey)

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions like *geas/quest*, except the only allowed command is "use pesh or refined pesh."

PESH VIGOR

School necromancy; **Level** sahir-afiyun 1

CASTING

Components V, S, M (a dose of refined pesh)

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions similarly to *false life*, except it only affects living creatures, and when the spell ends the target takes a –2 penalty to all ability scores for 24 hours. The target is considered to have taken a dose of pesh for the purpose of addiction and withdrawal effects.

RAY OF SICKENING

School necromancy; **Level** sahir-afiyun 1

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions like *ray of exhaustion*, except the target is sickened if she fails her save and unaffected if she makes her save. Using any form of pesh immediately negates the effects of the spell.

SUFFOCATION, INSTANT

School necromancy [Death];

Level sahir-afiyun 5

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions like *slay living*, and kills by immediate suffocation. Creatures that do not need to breathe are immune to this spell. The target is considered to have taken a dose of pesh for the purpose of addiction and withdrawal effects.

SUFFOCATION, SLOW

School Necromancy [Death]; **Level** sahir-afiyun 2

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration 1 minute/level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

DESCRIPTION

The target is unable to breathe and is treated as if she is holding her breath (see the rules for suffocation). Strong stimulants, effects that increase the target's Constitution, or physical trauma (such as taking 10 or more points of damage from a single attack) negate the spell immediately. Creatures that do not need to breathe are immune to this spell. The target is considered to have taken a dose of pesh for the purpose of addiction and withdrawal effects. Canny sahir use this spell to subtly kill enemies, as the spell mimics a pesh overdose.





Bestiary



ALUUM

This giant man-like creature is made of metal and stone. Its crystalline eyes glow with blue eldritch light. Rune-covered bracers encircle its forearms and a long tabard bearing the coat of arms of Katapesh cover the rest of its spindly frame.

ALUUM

N Large construct

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

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (+1 Dex, +15 natural, –1 size)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities construct traits; **DR** 10/adamantine;

Immune magic

CR 10

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +9 (2d10+12 plus paralysis) or
2 melee touches +9 (paralysis)

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

Special Attacks soul shriek

TACTICS

During Combat An aluum making lethal attacks simply pounds its opponent until it no longer moves. When making nonlethal attacks, an aluum uses its paralyzing touch to disable opponents.

Morale An aluum fights until it is destroyed or ordered to stop.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +25

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or squad (2–4)

Advancement 13–18 HD (Large), 19–24 HD (Huge)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immunity to Magic (Ex) An aluum is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature. A magical attack that uses negative energy (such as *inflict light wounds* or *enervation*) deals no damage, but speeds up the golem's attacks and movement as if it were under the effects of a *haste* spell, lasting 1 round per spell level of the attack (attacks that do not have a spell level have no effect on the aluum). A magical attack that uses positive energy slows the aluum as if by a *slow* spell and dispels any haste effect currently affecting it. A *magic jar* spell confuses the creature for 1d6 rounds.

Paralysis (Su) The touch of an aluum paralyzes living creatures that fail a Fortitude save (DC 16). The effect lasts for 1d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Soul Shriek (Su) As a free action every 1d4 rounds, the aluum's enslaved souls may emit a keening wail in a 15-ft. cone in front of the aluum. Creatures in the cone take 6d6 points of sonic damage and are stunned for 1 round. Creatures that make their save (Will DC 16) take half damage and are not stunned. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An aluum is a magical construct created from metal and stone native to Katapesh. They are the fighting juggernauts that maintain order within the city of Katapesh when the city's normal means of doing so fails. Unlike other golems, aluum are powered by the souls of Katapeshi slaves and prisoners bound into glowing gems



in their chests. The larger, more powerful aluum require more slave souls. Aluum are unique to Katapesh. The secret to their creation and control is closely guarded by the Pactmasters, who do not teach it to others.

An aluum stands approximately 14 feet tall and weighs over 2 tons. It resembles a thin man of giant proportions made of stone and metal. It wears a tabard bearing the coat of arms of Katapesh; this symbolizes its servitude.

Aluum are controlled by magical pendants called *charms of aluum control*. High-ranking officers within the Zephyr Guard and the Pactmasters of Katapesh are the only ones who carry these pendants. The charms are magically attuned to their owners as safeguards against unauthorized persons obtaining them and using the aluum in ways they were not intended.

Slaves in service to Katapesh remain so even after death. During the creation process of an aluum, the souls of a dozen slaves are siphoned from their bodies as they die. The souls are placed within the inert body of the aluum and imprisoned there when magically etched bracers are sealed around the golem's forearms. During this process, the soul stuff loses its sense of identity and memories of its former life. The process is not entirely without flaw, though. Occasionally one of the souls has a momentary flashback of its former life, causing the aluum to behave oddly and sometimes disobey orders.

Though residents of the city of Katapesh are familiar with aluum and their role as peacekeepers, the Pactmasters have created other varieties for less benign purposes. The exact number of these variants, where the Pactmasters keep them, or if there is some way to convert one type of aluum to another is unknown. Each unusual type of aluum has a unique amulet tied to a specific construct, and the standard *charm of aluum control* has no effect on these rarer kinds.

Darksoul Aluum

Darksoul aluum have black or dull blue gems that do not glow. Powered by the souls of murderers and other violent criminals, these golems are the Pactmaster's unsubtle assassins or bodyguards when a threatening impression is more important than civil discourse. Though the black-gemmed aluum only make appearances in Katapesh every few decades, folktales and legends about them convince people to give them wide berths.

Darksoul aluum have an evil alignment. They may use *locate creature* at will, tracking whatever prey their master designates. If it kills or incapacitates its intended target, it absorbs the creature's life force into its chest gem as if using *soul bind*, causing the gem to glow with a sickly gray hue. It then returns to the Pactmasters with the body and trapped soul, presumably for use in some experiment or to be made into an aluum. Darksoul aluums are keyed to specific charms available only to the Pactmasters.

Lifebond Aluum

Lifebond aluum have green, amber, or brown gems. Normally seen only when the Pactmasters have an important visitor whom they want to keep safe, the lifebond aluum is a passive protector unless something attacks its master.

Unlike common aluum, each lifebond aluum is bound to a specific amulet, and has the *shield other* and *spell storing* powers of a shield guardian for the creature wearing its amulet. A lifebond aluum has fast healing 1 and grants this ability to whomever wears its amulet so long as that person is within 100 feet. As they have been seen carrying protesting dignitaries away from danger, it is possible they have preset instructions to bring their wards to the Pactmasters should combat occur, regardless of the subject's wishes.

Helltempered Aluum

Helltempered aluum have vivid green or red glowing gems and smell faintly of brimstone. Believed to be an early experiment using fiendish energy or larvae as a power source instead of mortal slaves, they were too destructive and prone to going berserk. Most were destroyed by the Pactmasters, but at least three are known to have escaped into the wildlands; explorers who discover them give contradictory reports of still-raging or completely passive golems that only act if touched.

These aluum have an evil alignment as strong as a demon or devil. Their attacks deal acid or fire damage instead of paralysis. They appear to be just as unintelligent as normal aluum, but their fiendish power source may make them vulnerable to possession by infernal or abyssal magic. They seem immune to *charms of aluum control*.

CHARM OF ALUUM CONTROL

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 20th

Slot neck; **Price** 20,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

This pendant holds a glowing crystal exactly like that of a Katapeshi aluum. If you are attuned to the charm, when you wear it you may give orders to any generic aluum within 100 feet; the construct obeys you as if you were using *dominate person* on a humanoid creature. If multiple aluum are within range, they all obey unless you specify which construct you are commanding.

The aluum cannot resist your commands, though they will not harm other aluum, the Pactmasters, or an attuned person wearing a *charm*. Unlike *dominate person*, you cannot use an aluum's senses. If multiple people give orders to the same aluum, you make opposed Will saves to control the golem. Only the Pactmasters can re-attune a charm.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, *soul bind*; Cost 10,000 gp, 800 XP



DHABBA

A canine form slinks from the shadows. Thick, russet fur covers its sleek form. Two large ears top its narrow, dog-like face, and it opens its jaws to reveal pointed ivory teeth. Instead of a bushy tail, a bony whip extends from its hindquarters, almost like a scorpion's tail.

DHABBA

CR 1

N Medium animal

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +2, Spot +2

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

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

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6+1 plus poison)

TACTICS

Before Combat Dhabbas avoid situations where other predators (particularly those larger than a dhabba) hunt, and even avoid most other scavengers.

During Combat A dhabba repeatedly launches itself at a single target, usually one that seems weak or sickly compared to the others. It snaps constantly, hoping to decimate its foe with its poisonous bite.

Morale Most dhabbas flee after their first injury, but starving or diseased dhabbas fight to the death. An injured dhabba that cannot flee may assume a submissive posture.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 5

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

Feats Alertness

Skills Hide +8, Listen +2, Spot +2

ECOLOGY

Environment desert and warm plains

Organization solitary, gang (2–7), or pack (6–24)

Advancement 3–6 HD (Medium)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage nauseated for 1 round, secondary damage 1d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dhabbas are scavenging predators that prefer to raid garbage pits and battle sites for food, but sometimes hunt small creatures to supplement their diets. Mice, rats, hares, and toads make their favorite prey.

Native to Katapesh, dhabbas survive in the warm climate by benefit of their bushy red coats which insulate them against the heat. Most dhabbas are the size of small dogs or foxes, and have both fox and jackal features. They measure 4 feet long and weigh up to 100 pounds. Their most distinctive feature is their bony, hairless tails.

Ecology

Dhabbas are carnivores, but eat grass and leaves to aid in digestion. Although many travelers fear the dhabba's curved scorpion tail, it is actually the creature's bite that is poisonous. Dhabba venom rarely kills, but can incapacitate small, wounded, or infirm foes long enough for the pack to land a killing blow.

Female dhabbas give birth to litters of 4–6 pups, and half usually die in infancy as the pups compete with each other for milk. The strongest and most aggressive pups survive and learn to hunt and scavenge after a month. Within 3 months, dhabba pups are strong enough to leave their pack and hunt independently, sometimes never returning.

Habitat and Society

Dhabba females in heat flee from male partners, forcing a chase. The strongest and fastest male dhabbas catch the females and mate with them, ensuring a swift and persistent race. The male stays with the female until the litter is born, but loses interest and leaves soon after the birth. Dhabba females are very protective of their pups, and many drive the fathers away even before they lose interest.

Weaned dhabba pups hunt insects and mice in packs. They learn how to function in a group but squabble over their kills. Once a dhabba grows strong enough to hunt and scavenge, it strikes out on its own to avoid having to share its dinner. Dhabbas reunite to mate and occasionally form packs that hunt together for protection.



EEL, SAND

A long and sinuous form slithers across the sand. Glistening, iridescent skin stretches over its 8-foot-long frame. As it glides along, it opens its narrow mouth to reveal needle-like nubs of bone protruding from the soft flesh of its mouth.

SAND EEL

CR 5

N Large animal

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +7

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size)

hp 47 (8d8)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d8+7)

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

Special Attacks erupt

TACTICS

Before Combat Sand eels take little note of their surroundings, as their size and speed make them poor targets for other predators. A sand eel expecting combat buries itself in the sand and waits for its prey to approach, at which point it uses its erupt ability.

During Combat A sand eel begins combat by erupting from the sand the moment another creature enters its range. The sand eel attacks its victim ferociously, but severe attacks can distract it. Throughout combat the sand eel may switch targets several times, attacking whichever foe injured it most recently.

Morale Sand eels have a strong bloodthirst and find it difficult to break from combat. A badly injured sand eel may attempt to flee, but most fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +15

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +11*, **Spot** +6.

SQ sandwalking

*Sand eels receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when in a desert environment.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (5–10)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Erupt (Ex) A sand eel that has buried itself in the sand can quickly erupt from the ground and attack. This counts as a charge, except the sand eel can only move its speed (not twice its speed), and it gains a +2 on its attack roll (in addition to the normal bonuses and penalties for charging).

Sandwalking (Ex) Sand eels travel across sand, quicksand, gravel, and other areas with loose, small debris as if traversing normal ground rather than difficult terrain.

Advancement 9–11 HD (Large); 12–16 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

Sand eels are unusual creatures native to Katapesh. They gain their name from the way they slither across the sand; unlike snakes, which must wriggle in wide S-shapes, sand eels slide along with the help of dozens of tiny feelers that sink into the sand and propel them forward, giving them a weirdly smooth movement.

Sand eels measure 6 to 12 feet long and can weigh several hundred pounds. Their tiny bones and thin skins make them very light for their size.

ECOLOGY

Sand eels hatch from eggs. After mating, a female lays dozens of clutches of eggs and covers them with sand. Newly hatched sand eels consume their shells and then glide out on their own, possessing a hunting instinct at hatching. Newborn sand eels are 6–12 inches long and hunt insects and small rodents. They grow to their full size within 2 months and begin hunting larger creatures, such as jackals, dhabbas, snakes, and sometimes humanoids. Sand eels are cold-blooded, active during the day and sleeping in burrows during the cold hours of the night.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Sand eels usually hunt alone, though sometimes a pair forms a partnership and hunts together. Sand eels seek out others of their kind at night for warmth and burrow together under the sand in clusters of five or more, separating at sunrise. In breeding season they may mate with many of their kind, thus each clutch may have many fathers. They take no interest in rearing their young.



GHUL

This ragged creature has decayed skin drawn taut over corded muscles and bony limbs. Its lower jaw is oversized and lined with jagged, bloodstained teeth. Its hands end in black, viciously curled claws, and it has donkey hooves instead of feet. The stench of the grave is strong around it.

GHUL

CE Medium undead (shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +11

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 55 (8d12+3)

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

DR 5/good; **Immune** undead immunities; **Resist** fire 10

CR 5

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +10 (2d6+6) and

2 claws +8 (1d6+3 plus bleed)

Special Attacks cursed claws, rend 2d6+6

TACTICS

During Combat Ghuls prefer to approach their foes unnoticed—for instance while in hyena form—and then suddenly attack with surprise. They focus on trying to tear apart one opponent at a time with their powerful bite and wounding claws.

Morale A ghul retreats if clearly overmatched, often changing into a hyena to blend in with any other such animals nearby. However, they never surrender and will fight viciously to the end if cornered.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +10

Feats Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Toughness, Track^B

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting, +16 when shapechanged), Hide +13, Intimidate +6, Listen +12, Move Silently +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +7, Spot +11, Survival +13 (+23 following tracks)

Languages Common, one elemental language (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran), and one planar language (Abyssal, Celestial, or Infernal)

SQ change shape, genie-kin, undead traits

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts

Organization solitary or pack (2–8)

Treasure standard

Advancement 8–16 HD (Medium)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bleed (Ex) Any living creature damaged by a ghul's claws continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. A critical hit does not multiply this bleed damage. Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to the bleed damage. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check.

Change Shape (Su) A ghul's natural form is that of a donkey-hoofed undead janni. It always has the same appearance and traits in this form. It can also assume the form of a hyena. A ghul remains in one form until it chooses to assume the other one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, nor does a ghul revert to its natural form when killed. A ghul does not detect as undead while in its hyena form. A *true seeing* spell, however, reveals its undead form if it is in hyena form.

Cursed Claws (Ex) A ghul's wickedly curved claws are as hard as steel and count as both cold iron and magic for the purpose of bypassing damage reduction.

Genie-Kin (Ex) For all effects related to race, a ghul is considered a genie even though it is no longer an outsider.



Rend (Ex) A ghul that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+6 points of damage.

Skills A ghul has a +4 racial bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Survival checks when following tracks. They have a +8 racial bonus to Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 while climbing, even if rushed or threatened.

Sometimes a janni dies in a state of disfavor with Fate; as a parting curse from their race's age-old enemy Ahriman, lord of the divs, such an ill-favored genie may come back from the dead as a ghul, a ghoulish version of genie-kind. Ghuls are easily recognized as inhuman by their donkey hooves, which shame them greatly; most ghuls take great pains to hide their hooves from view.

Ecology

Ghuls feed upon carrion much as their lesser ghoulish kin, but prefer the fresh blood of mortals, especially children and innocents. They haunt desolate cemeteries and necropolises feeding upon the interred as well as any mourners and gravediggers they can catch. They despise the light of the sun (though it does not harm them), so such locations are usually safe during the day, though there are no guarantees that a hungry ghul might not brave the dreaded light to obtain a tasty-looking morsel.

Habitat & Society

Ghuls live in the desert wastes in isolation or in small packs. Sometimes a pack of ghouls is led by a great ghul (see below) or a single ghul leads a company of ghouls.

Great Ghuls

Jann are not the only victim's of Ahriman's curse; djinn, efreet, marids, and shaitains may rise as great ghuls, though this is much rarer than with jann. Stripped of most of their elemental powers, they hate themselves and all living things, seeking solace in murdering and corrupting mortals. Great ghuls like to follow passers-by invisibly before revealing themselves in suitably isolated locales. If they find potential victims particularly interesting, they may engage them in a battle of wits or some challenge in order for them to spare their lives. A common challenge is to provide the ghul with a certain number of fresh corpses within a certain number of nights. Sometimes a great ghul will take the form of a beautiful maiden or cherubic child in order to tempt a foolish mortal into corruption and murder.

One sect of particularly powerful great ghuls dwells in the Ghoul Court of Nemret Noktoria in the Darklands where they serve as advisors and priests attending to Kortash Khain, the Ghoul King. Some of these ghul-lords are rumored to have the heads of animals and climb by

secret ways from the Darklands up to the surface world where they dance and cavort by a gibbous moon in homage to Him Who Gnaws.

Great ghuls have all of the powers and abilities of normal ghuls, plus the following: DR 10/cold iron and good, Improved Initiative and Toughness as bonus feats, *greater invisibility* (CL 11th, self only) as a spell-like ability, change shape (allowing any humanoid forms in addition to ghul and hyena form), create spawn, plus one ability related to its original genie type (heat, metalmorph, water's fury, or whirlwind).

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid slain by a great ghul becomes a ghoulish on the next moonrise. Likewise, a slain janni becomes a ghul and a slain genie becomes a great ghul. Blessing or destroying the body (such as with acid or fire) prevents this reanimation.

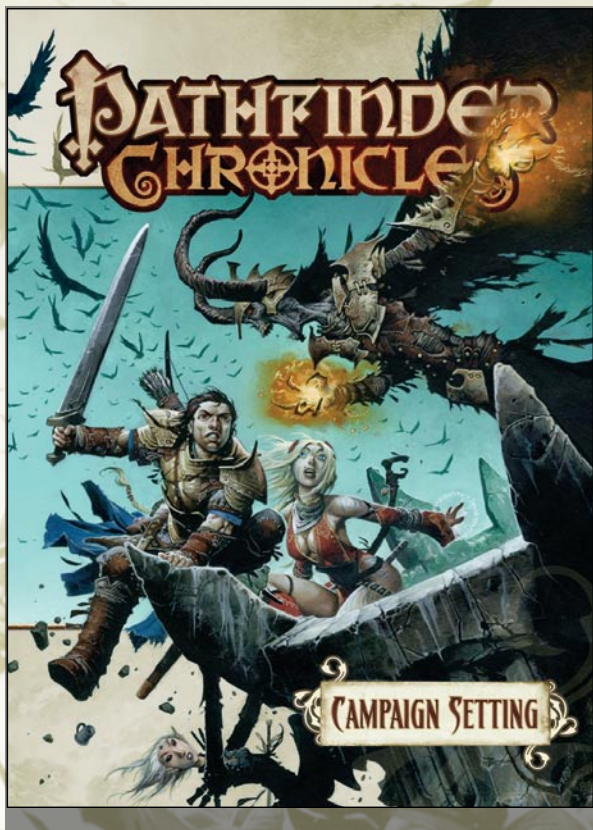
Heat (Ex) As a free action, a great ghul can raise its body temperature to that of molten iron or lower it to that of cold, undead flesh. A great ghul's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling. Only a great ghul that was once an efreeti can have this ability.

Metalmorph (Su) As a standard action, a great ghul may warp and deform any one metal object within 20 feet. This functions like *warp wood*, but affects only metal objects that fail a DC 18 Fortitude save (attended objects use their wielder's saves). Armor or shields lose half their bonus to AC (enhancement bonuses are unaffected), and weapons are rendered useless except as improvised clubs. The transformation lasts 1 minute, after which the affected metal reverts to its normal state. The save DC is Charisma-based. Only a great ghul that was once a shaitain can have this ability.

Water's Fury (Su) As a standard action, a great ghul may fire a jet of water in a 60-foot line. The water deals 1d6 hit points of damage and blinds anyone it hits for 1d6 rounds. A successful Reflex save (DC 18) means a creature takes half damage and is not blinded. The save DC is Charisma-based. Only a great ghul that was once a marid can have this ability.

Whirlwind (Su) As a standard action a great ghul can transform itself into a whirlwind of air, bone shards, and pieces of gristle, with its head floating about. A great ghul's movement while in whirlwind form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the great ghul enters the space another creature occupies. Any creature sharing a space with the whirlwind or attacking it with natural weapons takes 1d6 hit points of damage. Any living creature that begins its turn in the whirlwind's space must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based. Returning to its normal form is a standard action. Only a great ghul that was once a djinni can have this ability.

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