



DESTINY OF THE SANDS, PART 1: A BITTER BARGAIN

BY SCOTT FERNANDEZ



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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5–12

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5–12: Destiny of the Sands, Part 1: A Bitter Bargain is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 1st- to 5th-level characters (Tier 1–5; Subtiers 1–2 and 4–5). This scenario is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world.

A Bitter Bargain makes use of the following Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products: the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*, and *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*.

These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd.

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DESTINY OF THE SANDS, PART 1: A BITTER BARGAIN

BY SCOTT FERNANDEZ



With the assassination of the Song Pharaoh, Ancient Osirion declined into a period of self-destructive decadence that marked the end of the nation's golden age. Fearing that Osirion's culture, relics, and technological innovations would fade from memory, a group of scholars convened and swore to preserve these treasures of the past at all costs. The ruling pharaoh, however, did not believe the scholars' efforts were motivated by a selfless desire to preserve the past for posterity's sake, but rather that they were the machinations of dissidents and traitors intent on overthrowing his reign. Accordingly, he sent soldiers to scatter the academics and demolish that which they had gathered. In the face of this ruthless persecution, the surviving scholars fled and reunited at a prearranged location, where they created a number of jewels that could not only store their thoughts and memories but also survive the millennia. The scholars who bore these gems passed them down to chosen successors in their secret society, known as the Jeweled Sages.

The Jeweled Sages continued their work from the shadows, rarely choosing to influence politics directly. Nonetheless, their reputation as custodians of Osirion's past made them targets of attacks by outside forces—most notably the Padishah Empire—that sought to sever Osirion's ties to its glory days and more easily institute a new regime. Scattered by the Keleshite invaders, the members of the Jeweled Sages went into exile, buried their jewels for future generations, or sealed themselves away where they could never be found.

Nearly a century ago, the man known as Amenopheus discovered a magical sapphire that once belonged to one of the Jeweled Sages. The jewel accepted him as its inheritor, imparted to him long-lost secrets of Osirion's past, imbued him with considerable longevity, and slowly changed his appearance (and perhaps his personality) to match that of the first Sapphire Sage. However, the sapphire had sustained damage, and its memories were incomplete. Try as he might, Amenopheus could not remember anything about the other sages or where they might have gone.

WHERE ON GOLARION?

A Bitter Bargain begins in Sothis, Osirion's capital, but most of the action takes place in the desert crossroads city of Eto, an ancient and bustling settlement nestled inside a crater that shelters it from the area's harsh sandstorms. For more information on Osirion, the Pathfinder Lodge in Sothis, and the city of Eto, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Osirion*, *Legacy of Pharaohs*, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pathfinder Society Primer*, available in bookstores and game stores everywhere, and online at paizo.com.



In the years since, he has scoured Osirion and beyond, seeking his lost colleagues, aiding the Forthbringer and his descendants revitalize Osirion, and developing strong working relationships with like-minded organizations—most notably the Pathfinder Society. When the Ruby Prince dismissed Amenopheus from his service, the Sapphire Sage took it as an opportunity to direct more effort into finding the other Jeweled Sages. Several months ago, several of his agents met a servant of the Diamond Sage, and they have traced the sage through his agents every since. Amenopheus now knows that the Diamond Sage resides near the Osirian trade city of Eto. What's more, he has an appointment with an

GM RESOURCES

This adventure makes use of the following Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products: the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* (B), *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* (B2), *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* (UC), and *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* (UM). These rules can be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/prd.

information broker who knows where several more of the sages' jewels reside.

Unknown to Amenopheus, the Pathfinder Society came very close to recovering these jewels when it secretly sent a team called the Scarab Seekers to explore the promising site many years ago. The expedition met a dire end, with all but one of the agents left for dead. The Decemvirate disavowed any knowledge of the mission and sent no aid to the lone survivor of that cursed desert tomb. That agent survived—driven by grit and hardened by the Society's heartless response to his misfortune—to become the information broker that Amenopheus now seeks: Grandmaster Torch.

SUMMARY

Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir and Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage, send the PCs to the city of Eto to meet with an information broker who—in exchange for a few small favors—can provide the Society with information leading to the whereabouts of the Diamond Sage or the lost Sage Jewels. Both Amenopheus and Balentiir believe the broker to be none other than Grandmaster Torch, and the venture-captain cautions the PCs that regardless of their personal feelings toward Torch, they must maintain control of themselves when meeting with him. The scarred broker has betrayed the Society before, but he values his reputation of trustworthiness highly enough that working with him this once is a worthwhile risk.

When they arrive in Eto, the PCs must pass through inspections conducted by a rather talkative customs agent of the Ruby Prince, who is in charge of searching travelers for recovered cultural treasures and applying the appropriate taxes before allowing them to enter the city. Once within the walls, the PCs enter Eto's bustling marketplace, where they meet with Grandmaster Torch to negotiate the terms of his assistance. Torch insists they must first perform several tasks and errands before they can gain his cooperation.

First, the PCs must place a book that acts a scrying focus among the possessions of the Ustalavic Osirionologist Ionacu Lozar without arousing suspicion. The PCs can attempt to sell him the book or slip it into his personal

effects by disguising themselves as porters delivering overdue supplies for the expedition.

Second, the PCs must investigate a cabaret called the Dancing Dunes and discover the means by which its owner, the half-elf dancer Madame Zelekhati, is collecting secrets from merchants in town. Her accurate intelligence comes from a magic ring that allows her to control a sandman to eavesdrop on clients and dull their minds. The PCs can convince her to reveal her secrets, but doing so may invoke the wrath of her bound elemental.

Third, the PCs must find the hiding place of a gang of cutpurses called the Hundredfingers, as Torch believes they have a message for him that they've failed to deliver. In fact, the gang is hiding from a spy contracted by the Red Mantis Assassins, who are trying to track down Torch so they can plan another assassination attempt against him. Once she confirms the PCs' identities, the spy tries to subdue them for questioning, hoping she can learn from them the location of Grandmaster Torch hiding place.

Finally, the PCs must travel outside the city and descend into an abandoned well to recover a stash of Osirian artifacts that Grandmaster Torch wishes to have smuggled into the city. The well opens into a shrine to Apep, the ancient god of snakes, which is guarded by serpents. After defeating the slithering guardians, the PCs must either sneak the artifacts past the customs agent or pay the tax on excavated goods.

Once the PCs have completed their tasks, Grandmaster Torch provides them with maps to the site of the lost sage jewels and encourages the Pathfinders to hurry—other explorers are already on their way to the same site!

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins in Sandswept Hall, the Pathfinder Lodge in Sothis as Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir briefs the PCs on their upcoming mission. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure underway.

Balentiir shutters of the windows in his second-story office overlooking the lodge's tranquil gardens and seats himself behind his writing desk. He nods and introduces a thin, aging Garundi man in an ornately bejeweled and feathered turban. "This is Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage. I trust most of you know of him already. If you don't, know that he has served both the Ruby Prince and the Pathfinder Society for many years, uncovering vast troves of lore from Ancient Osirion and mentoring some of our finest agents. He recently approached my colleagues and me with a request for assistance, and the Society has agreed to step up and aid its ally. The arrangement is, in fact, rather mutually beneficial." He nods to Amenopheus, signaling the elder man to speak.

"Faithful servants of the past, I bid you greetings," the wizened sage says with a shallow bow. "Our esteemed ruler,

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the Ruby Prince, recently released me from his service, which has freed me to learn more about a little-known organization to which I belong: the Jeweled Sages, protectors of Osirion's history and chroniclers of its past glories. Quite by accident, I found myself initiated into this group, and have long believed myself to be its sole surviving member. Each sage in the group possesses a unique jewel—a priceless artifact that contains memories of Osirion's golden age." He pauses as if considering how to express his thoughts "For many years, I have sought news of any other members of the Jeweled Sages. My agents recently learned of the Diamond Sage, whom they traced to the city of Eto in the Osirian Desert. At the same time, I received word from a reliable source that several other jewels in the vicinity. I ask that you travel to Eto, negotiate with my contact in the city for his assistance, and then use what you learn to find the Diamond Sage and these lost jewels."

Venture-Captain Balentiir frowns and adds, "This contact has tried to remain anonymous, but we suspect he is none other than Grandmaster Torch. If you've heard of him—or worse, met him—you may know trading favors is his signature. Regardless of Torch's past treacheries, we need you to deal with him fairly for the information. There is a caravan leaving for Eto in a few hours, so don't delay."



The PCs may have questions for the venture-captain or Amenopheus. The following are likely inquiries and the NPCs' responses.

Who is Grandmaster Torch? Venture-Captain Balentiir sighs heavily. "The man is a charming devil to be sure. He always plays one side of a deal against the other, and usually ends up ahead. You'll recognize him by his burn scars. He suffered some injury that never seems to heal. Whatever you do, never fully trust him."

Where can we find Grandmaster Torch in Eto? Amenopheus says, "He is staying at the House of the White Uraeus, a fancy inn that caters to those in need of healing and rest."

How will he know you sent us? Amenopheus says, "Remind him of the favor still owed to me for past assistance in his grand endeavor. He will know what you mean."

Amenopheus, why are you not coming with us? The Sapphire Sage responds, "My dismissal from the Ruby

Prince's service has left me neither exiled nor truly welcome. I will return to Absalom soon."

I hate Grandmaster Torch! Balentiir raises his hands in a calming gesture. "I assure that much of the Society shares your feelings; however, Torch has leverage that we would rather he not use against us. Any violence directed toward him would be revisited on us a hundredfold, so *don't* be selfish. Save your vendettas for another day."

Do we have to do play fair with Torch?

Such a question brings a mischievous smirk to Balentiir's lips. "I suppose Torch has always enjoyed twisting bargains and words to his advantage. Very well. If you see an opportunity to gain some advantage against the man while doing favors for him, you're welcome to follow through." Amenopheus shoots a pleading look at the venture-captain before Balentiir quickly adds, "If you can get away with it."

Before the PCs depart, Amenopheus pulls a weathered stone from his robes and strikes it once against the wall to break the stone into two crystalline geode halves. He hands one piece to the PCs, instructing them, "If you find one of the jewels of my order or the person known as the Diamond Sage, I ask that you contact me. Concentrate on the stone and speak a message of a few dozen words.

I will hear you and respond with further instructions. It will only work once, so keep it safe."

A. SUNRISE GATE

Venture-Captain Balentiir has arranged for the PCs to travel to Eto as part of a trade caravan of heavily laden camels, and he pays for the cost of their travel. The journey overland is uneventful.

The immense rock walls that ring Eto rise from the horizon like a shimmering mirage that gradually sharpens into focus. The city sits inside an elevated crater with sheer, weathered sides broken only in two places by heavily guarded gates. Long lines of caravans wait in a meandering queue awaiting entrance as officials search their cargos for contraband and calculate taxes. Water sellers, food vendors, and guides march up and down the lines peddling their wares and services to the visitors. Beyond the gates, the main thoroughfares fan out around the various districts of the city before dwindling into the dozens of pathways that flow through the bazaar like the delta of the great River Sphinx.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

The walls of the cliffs rise 60 feet above the city and require a successful DC 25 Climb check to scale. The gates remain open during daylight hours and are closed at night, though a patrol of guards is stationed nearby to review any requests to enter after nightfall.

Each caravan or group of travelers is assigned one or more trios of officials, each of which consists of two guards and a customs agent. Eto is a hub of trade in Osirion's interior, and these officials ensure that no one brings dangerous contraband (such as certain drugs, large quantities of explosives, etc.) into the city. They further confirm that all Osirian relics are documented and taxed; the opening of Osirion to treasure-hunters by the Ruby Prince's decree stimulates the economy, but the Ministry of Culture ensures that the kingdom receives a cut of all finds and withholds artifacts of special importance. If the PCs wish to conceal any of their equipment from the customs agents, allow them to attempt Sleight of Hand checks for each item to be smuggled.

Creatures: As the PCs' caravan approaches the gate, the caravan's leader acknowledges that the PCs are guest travelers, which earns the Pathfinders their own private inspection. Their customs agent is Mahu, a bored Garundi man whose graying beard and tired eyes suggest he's seen it all and heard every excuse at least a few dozen times. As he inspects the PCs' gear, he plies them with questions about where they're from, where they're bound, and what interesting sights they've seen—as much to assuage his own curiosity as to keep visitors talking and possibly catch them in a lie. This also provides the PCs an opportunity to impress the agent with their manners or stories of their travels. Mahu's starting attitude is indifferent, and the Diplomacy DC to improve his attitude is 16; in Subtier 4–5, Mahu has had a particularly bad week and has a starting attitude of unfriendly (despite his attempts to maintain a smiling, professional demeanor), increasing the DC to 21.

After the PCs have an opportunity to converse with Mahu, he finds the communication geode that Amenopheus gave them; if the PCs tried to hide it, Mahu attempts an opposed Perception check to spot it (see his stats below). Should he find it, he inspects it for a moment before announcing that it looks to be of Osirian origin and questioning the PCs about its provenience. So long as Mahu's attitude is indifferent or better, the PCs can try to convince him that the stone is mundane by using Bluff, request that he overlook the stone as a favor by using Diplomacy (treat this as requesting complicated aid), or possibly employ other skills or methods to downplay the stone's importance. Any of these methods can convince Mahu to waive the tariff. If the PCs don't refute its Osirian origin or they otherwise avoid the tariff, Mahu levies a tax on the relic.

Multiply the number of PCs by the group's Average Party Level. If Mahu's attitude is indifferent or better, the tax is 10 times this value. If he's unfriendly or hostile, it is 25 times this value. If the PCs refuse to pay the tax, Mahu confiscates the geode, affixes a tag to it with string, and writes out a ticket for the PCs that allows them to claim the geode from the Ministry of Culture building when they're ready to pay the fine.

Subtier 1–2

MAHU

Male middle-aged human expert 3

DEFENSE

Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4

STATISTICS

Skills Appraise +11, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7

Subtier 4–5

MAHU

Male middle-aged human expert 6

DEFENSE

Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6

STATISTICS

Skills Appraise +15, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10

Development: Mahu is a potential ally that the PCs can call upon during several of their tasks later in the scenario. So long as he is at least friendly by the end of the encounter, he can provide the PCs with help navigating the streets and rumors of the city, granting the Pathfinders a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Knowledge (local) checks to gather information in Eto. He also wishes them a pleasant stay and reminds them to seek him out if he can be of assistance.

B. HOUSE OF THE WHITE URAEUS

The House of the White Uraeus is a two-story, whitewashed stone structure located in one of Eto's more upscale districts. A large brass plaque above its door depicts a snake with two "necks" that split from its body, each with its own head. The servants that manage the inn wear immaculately clean clothing and maintain a quiet but cheerful facility. Although Grandmaster Torch is nowhere to be seen, one of his half-orc bodyguards sits in the common area and constantly scans the room. He stands and approaches the PCs as they arrive, looks them over, and with a grunt waves for them to follow him further into the building to where Grandmaster Torch awaits.

Although its exterior is unassuming, the interior of the White Uraeus is richly decorated with panels of gold-veined marble

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and bubbling fountains in secluded courtyards. Cool breezes carry the scent of blooming desert flowers throughout the clean halls. Two half-orcs keep watch outside one set of closed doors. After a moment inspecting the visitors, they pull open the doors to reveal a tiled bathing chamber beyond.

"Welcome to Eto, Pathfinders," rasps Grandmaster Torch as he lounges in a steaming tub. "I didn't imagine we would meet again under such heart-warming circumstances, yet the White Uraeus certainly knows how to make a traveler comfortable. What can a humble secret monger such as I do for you?" he asks as he leans forward in the tub and flashes a knowing smile.

Grandmaster Torch politely brushes off any hostile remarks and focuses on the PCs' business. He nods amenably as he listens to their request. "Amenopheus may have overlooked the fact that he owed me several favors before I ever asked for his help, but I don't mind extending a discount to repeat customers," he remarks with a rasping chuckle as he snaps his fingers to summon one of his bodyguards, who arrives carrying a folded piece of paper. "Let's see what's on today's schedule," he murmurs as he examines the paper's contents. "Yes, all of this will do. Consider this my price—all of these tasks completed to my satisfaction in return for what I know of the sages' jewels. Do we have a deal?" He holds out the paper for the PCs to review it. Give the PCs **Player Handout** on page 20.

The PCs can ask questions about their job, and Torch is willing to provide minimal clarifications so long as it does not reveal any of his motivations for accomplishing the tasks. Once the PCs agree to his terms, Torch wishes them luck and instructs them to visit him after completing a task or in the event of an emergency.

Faction Notes: Members of the Qadira and Sczarni factions have opportunities to bargain for additional information. Qadira faction leader Aaqir al'Hakam seeks an introduction to one or more of Torch's contacts in a trade city with few Qadiran connections, suspecting that a few streetwise allies in the region would help considerably in setting up a new trade route. Torch considers such a request from a PC for a moment before agreeing to it in exchange for an extra condition in the Pathfinders' deal (see below).



GRANDMASTER TORCH

SEEKING REVENGE

The same events that led to the dissolution of the Shadow Lodge faction may inspire one or more PCs to seek revenge for Torch's betrayal. Attacking him outright is out of the question, yet the PCs can undermine Torch's influence in the region in more subtle ways. Each of his tasks can be twisted to Torch's disadvantage, and possible means are referenced here and described in greater detail in their respective sections. These are only suggestions, and the players might devise clever and equally devious plans that would disrupt Torch's plans and reputation in the region.

- The PCs might convince Ionacu Lazar to accept the journal after explaining Torch's mission, allowing the scholar to feed Torch misinformation.
- The PCs might commission a fake rod from area **D** and pass it off as a real magic item.
- The PCs might inform Madame Zelekhati of Torch's intentions and collaborate with her to mislead Torch.
- The PCs might strike a deal with the Red Mantis's spy and sell out Grandmaster Torch's location.

Grandmaster Torch keeps tabs on the PCs and listens to them carefully whenever they report back. Tricking Torch into believing that the Pathfinders completed a task in good faith requires a successful DC 20 Bluff check (DC 25 in Subtier 4–5), and a successful DC 25 Sense Motive check allows a PC to know whether or not Torch believes their lies. Each task the PCs perform in this way requires its own Bluff check. The Conclusion section details further consequences of these actions.

Sczarni faction leader Guaril Karela knows that Grandmaster Torch has worked as an intermediary between Guaril's unknown rival and the assassins the rival has been hiring. Sczarni faction PCs can bargain with Torch to add information about Guaril's rival to the deal. Torch is not keen on selling out his allies, but a former client who has already paid for and received Torch's aid is a business proposition he's willing to entertain. If a Sczarni faction PC succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check while negotiating this part of the deal, Torch agrees to discuss what he knows in exchange for an extra condition in the Pathfinders' deal (see below). Grant up to a +3 circumstance bonus on the check if the PC is

particularly polite or stylishly deferent while making the request, as Torch appreciates a professional who doesn't let bad temper spoil a good pitch. He doesn't entertain such a deal negotiated by a non-Sczarni PC; he wants to know that Guaril's worth preserving, and doing that means testing the mettle of Guaril's agents.

Three of Grandmaster Torch's tasks have a special condition that he might add in exchange for answering a Qadira or Sczarni faction PC's questions. Typically, these represent doing an especially good job or taking extra care to avoid notice. As the GM, avoid choosing a condition that will be impossible for that faction PC. Each faction-related request requires its own condition. The three options include planting two books among Iocanu Lozar's belongings, smuggling the relics from the abandoned well into Eto without any customs agents knowing, or securing Zelekhati's cooperation without resorting to violence. Additional details for each condition appear in the respective area's faction notes section (see page 19).

C. THE ETO BAZAAR

The sprawling bazaar at the heart of Eto is a riot of colorful tents, ramshackle stalls, and haphazardly parked carts and wagons surrounding the only permanent structure, the tall stone Government House home of the governor Asep Ma. With an influx of foreign explorers fueling economic growth, the city's merchants, laborers, and artisans can provide nearly everything an adventurer could need for exploring lost ruins and tombs. Nothing in the bazaar comes without a price, though, and the Eto's inhabitants are renowned for their ability to haggle. During the day, buyers and sellers pack this busy public area, crowding the narrow pathways between shops. Allow the PCs an opportunity to buy any equipment they may need for the mission. This is also a good place for them to pick up the local rumors in town or learn about the targets of their tasks.

Diplomacy (gather information) or Knowledge (local)

The PCs might learn valuable information as they explore Eto and meet its locals.

10+ Madame Zelekhati recently began hiring more workers at the Dancing Dunes, though she sends away most who don't have at least some elven blood. Also, most merchants recommend avoiding Beggar's Alley, which is home to a gang of pickpockets known as the Hundredfingers.

15+ The Osirionologist Ionacu Lozar is in a terrible rush to get his expedition underway, but he is exceedingly stingy and has no patience for haggling. As a result, the few merchants who are willing to do business with him

are taking their time delivering supplies to his caravan's marshaling area.

20+ Something has the Hundredfingers gang spooked. The normally ubiquitous thieves have been avoiding the bazaar for a few days.

25+ Mistress Zelekhati of the Dancing Dunes is a collector of magical dusts and always accepts them as payment for her house's services or her artwork. Some say that's the secret of her magnificent tranquility garden. It may even have given the sand life as one customer claims he saw the patterns shift of their own accord.

An upcoming holy day of Sarenrae has people remembering how a cleric of the goddess tried to purge the land of evil over a hundred years ago; however, the ruins of the old city beyond the cliff walls still hide shrines to the old faiths, especially the serpent cult of Apep. The serpent god's slithering children are blessed with the ability to go unnoticed by eyes accustomed to the Dawnflower's light.

C1. The Caravanserai

More than a dozen camels are tethered outside a large pavilion tent while a score of porters pack supplies for what looks to be a grand archeological expedition. Crates of tools, coils of rope, and sacks of dried food lie in piles waiting to be divided up among the beasts of burden. Within the sumptuously appointed pavilion, stacks of scrolls and hand-drawn maps lie strewn across a canopied bed. A tall, dark haired northerner with a thick eastern accent and persistent scowl supervises the storm of activity while checking over an inventory scrawled in a well-worn ledger. "Where are those amphorae of water? This expedition won't last a week in the Pillars of the Sun without water!"

Ionacu Lozar (LG male human expert 7) is a member of the secretive Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye and a regent of Ustalav's Sincomakti School of Science. He has chosen to lead an expedition to the Pillars of the Sun in order to find the lost pyramid of An Hepsu XI, a powerful pharaoh who embraced lichdom and has been imprisoned for over 6,000 years. In doing so, he hopes to glean some insight into how the lich was imprisoned and pass that knowledge to the Esoteric Order so it might use the information to strengthen the wards around Gallowspire, prison of the Whispering Tyrant. However, getting his caravan supplied and out into the field has proven more time-consuming and costly than the Ustalav had anticipated. Every nuance of buying supplies in Eto is wrapped in layers of local customs that baffle the no-nonsense scholar, leading him to offend some of the merchants in the bazaar. As a result, delivery of his supplies has been delayed, and his frustration is clearly evident.

Although the prayer book that Grandmaster Torch gave to the PCs is mundane, the metal scarab clasp acts as a focus for divination spells like *locate object* and *screaming*. A PC can discern this use with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check. Lozar is sufficiently flustered that he has little patience for strangers, and if the PCs wish to address him directly, they must make their case quickly. His starting attitude is unfriendly, and his Charisma, Perception, Sense Motive, and Will save modifiers are -1, +8, +5, and +6 respectively. In Subtier 4–5, increase his Perception and Sense Motive modifiers by 2 each, and increase his Will save modifier by 1.

Giving Lozar the book as a gift is difficult, requiring one either to improve his attitude to friendly and then request that he accept it as a favor or to improve his attitude to indifferent and convince him of the PC's good faith with a successful Bluff check opposed by his Sense Motive check. Even on a success, Ionacu Lozar takes the book and flips through a few of its pages before initiating an academic dialogue as he asks the PC about the prayers within and her perspective on the worship of Khepri. Unless a PC can demonstrate at least a rudimentary understanding of the Osirian gods with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history or religion) check or cover for her lack of understanding with an opposed Bluff check, Lozar is disappointed and admits that he cannot accept the gift but appreciates the gesture. Selling Lozar the book is equally difficult, though a PC might receive a +2 bonus on her skill checks by convincing Lozar that the book contains clues to navigating the Pillars of the Sun, solving some riddle therein, or uncovering a long-lost treasure.

Sneaking the book into Lozar's belongings is also tricky, for the Ustlav is brimming with nervous energy and rarely steps away from the tent that shelters his supplies. A PC must sneak among the porters and avoid Lozar's notice, requiring first a successful DC 20 Disguise or Stealth check followed by a Sleight of Hand check opposed by Lozar's Perception check. Failing either check causes Lozar to chase the PC off, calling for the guards if she's unwilling to leave. Failing this check arouses Lozar's suspicions, and his attitude is considered one step worse when he's around that PC.

Finally, the PCs can try to help Lozar secure supplies, which they might use as a way of getting on his good side or as an opportunity to handle his luggage without arousing suspicion. This requires first convincing Lozar that the PCs are trustworthy enough to help him track down his purchases—a task that requires either a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or a successful Bluff check opposed by Lozar's Sense Motive check. Once they've earned his trust, they can either track down the merchants who promised to sell him supplies (convincing them to forget their petty grievances with a successful DC

15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check) or find new suppliers with the high-quality goods necessary for an extended excavation with a successful DC 15 Appraise or Survival check. Helping Lozar in this way improves his attitude by one step, grants the PCs a +2 bonus on any other skill checks made to place the book among his belongings, and give the PCs an opportunity to slip the book among the fresh supplies with a successful Sleight of Hand check opposed by Lozar's Perception check.

The players may devise yet other schemes that could work, and the GM is encouraged to adapt to the players' plans using the above options as guidelines. As a rule of thumb, completing the task should involve approximately three skill checks. The PCs might also remember that they befriended Mahu, the customs agent. Asking Mahu to perform an unannounced inspection counts as asking for lengthy or complicated aid, but his presence as an official grants the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Stealth, and similar skill checks to plant the book among Lozar's belongings.

PCs interested in undermining Grandmaster Torch might reveal their motives to Lozar, which gives him a start and causes him to regard the PCs with suspicion as he tries to determine whether they are friends or foes. Convincing him that they are trustworthy and that he should join them in misleading Torch uses the same guidelines for giving the book to Lozar as a gift (see above), except the skill check DCs and Lozar's skill check modifiers all increase by 2 to reflect his discomfort with the entire situation.

Faction Notes: In exchange for information, Qadira or Sczarni PCs might need to plant a second scarab-marked book elsewhere among Lozar's belongings. Doing so requires a second Sleight of Hand check if the PC uses subterfuge. If the PC instead tries to convince Lozar to accept or buy the books, Lozar only accepts the second book if the PCs exceed the final Bluff or Diplomacy DC by 2 or more.

C2. The Dancing Dunes (CR 3 or CR 6)

Madame Zelekhati was raised among a family of guides in the strange Underdunes region of Osirion's eastern desert. She was not with her family when one of the region's infamous sand-slides buried them, but what she took from them has served her well over the intervening years. Her half-elven heritage has driven her both to explore the lands across the Inner Sea and later to return to her dune-ridden homeland. There her sorcerous powers manifested, simultaneously awakening the ring that she kept as a memento of her deceased family, when she encountered a sandman, a sinister elemental creature. Her ring—a mostly dormant *ring of elemental command*—allowed her to command the sandman, which she has

C2. The Dancing Dunes



First Floor

1 square = 5 feet



Second Floor

N



used as a spy and an instructor ever since. Despite their best efforts, Zelekhati is unable to coax greater powers out of the ring beyond its elemental control feature and the ability to cast *meld into stone* three times per day.

Passing off the sandman's skill at sculpting its own body as her own sorcerous abilities, she accumulated considerable wealth as a performance artist and invested the gold in acquiring performance space of her own at the edge of the booming Eto Bazaar. The Dancing Dunes serves as a teahouse by day, a cabaret in the evening, and a den of ill repute in the latest hours of the night. Local movers and shakers employ the Dancing Dunes as a meeting place to discuss important deals, and the half-elven owner has learned that what her sandman is unable to subdue in the evening, she can eavesdrop upon from just inside the building's stone walls.

A spectacularly groomed garden of colorful sand occupies most of this two-story cabaret's ground floor. A narrow wooden bridge winds about a trio of decorative obelisks dotting the miniature desert. A lavish sitting area filled with divans occupies the second-floor balcony granting a magnificent view of the garden below. Private curtained chambers encircle the garden, where lush rugs, soft mattresses, or piles of

throw pillows serve to cushion the repose of clientele in each chamber. A door off the northern balcony opens to a staircase leading down to the street, while another set of stairs to the east leads down to the garden.

The garden covers an area 40 feet to a side, and the second story sits 15 feet above the ground floor. In the evening, servants set up a small stage in the northwest sand garden where performers can sing, dance, and play instruments. Everburning torches provide normal light during the evening performances. The self-styled Madame Zelekhati draws like-minded entertainers, though it is rare that she hires anyone without elven heritage; anyone else would be vulnerable to her pet sandman's sleep aura.

Entering the Dancing Dunes during the day is free, but staying for a performance or entering after sundown costs one gold piece. The servants insist on weapons being peace-bound, increasing the time it takes to draw a weapon to a full-round action. If the PCs ask for Madame Zelekhati, the servants respond that she is presently with a client but will be available shortly, and they inquire about the PCs' reason for visiting so that they might pass the information along to their employer; allow the PCs to

A BITTER BARGAIN

attempt a DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy to present themselves as nonthreatening visitors, granting a +2 bonus on the check if they claim to have magical dust for sale or have elven members seeking employment. Minutes later, Madame Zelekhati invites the PCs to stroll with around her garden to talk business. Her starting attitude is indifferent and she chats amenably to understand who it is she's dealing with.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 17 Perception check while speaking with her notices the garden's patterns shifting subtly; exceeding the check by 5 or more reveals that a roughly 5-foot-wide patch of sand seems to be moving about the surface, leaving behind new patterns as it travels. A PC can identify this as an outsider with the earth subtype with a DC 13 Knowledge (planes) check or as a sandman with a DC 18 Knowledge (planes) check. If the sandman notices anyone watching it, it burrows below the surface and hides, awaiting further instructions from Madame Zelekhati.

With a successful DC 17 Sense Motive check (DC 19 in Subtier 4–5), a PC notes that Zelekhati has a nervous habit of twisting the large stone ring on her hand, particularly whenever she glances at her garden. A PC who detects the ring's magic and succeeds at a DC 20 Spellcraft check identifies the ring's *meld with stone* feature; a successful DC 30 check identifies that it is a ring of elemental command.

Zelekhati feigns amusement at any insinuations that she spies on clients or has any special means of learning information beyond the rumors she overhears during the day. She knows nothing of Grandmaster Torch and takes umbrage at anyone trying to bully her around—especially on what she claims are false charges. The PCs can try to pressure Zelekhati into revealing her secrets. Only a well-delivered threat can rattle her nerves while she's in her own business; if a PC succeeds at a DC 22 Intimidate check (DC 24 in Subtier 4–5), she capitulates to the Pathfinders' demands. Demonstrating knowledge of Zelekhati's ring's powers and her elemental servant each grant a cumulative +2 circumstance modifier on this check. If the PCs fail this check, she pretends to be scared, using the moment to call her sandman to attack the unwelcome guests.

The PCs can also try to discover Madame Zelekhati's secret by spying on her, such as by staying at the Dancing Dunes overnight, hiring on as a performer, or

sneaking in after the performances end. Before dawn, Zelekhati stands in the middle of the garden's bridge and converses quietly with the sandman, giving it new instructions and listening to what it has observed. Zelekhati is willing to hire performers who succeed at a DC 25 Perform check (elves and half-elves receive a +10 circumstance bonus on the check). Climbing the outer walls requires a successful DC 20 Climb check, and any

Stealth checks are opposed by Zelekhati's and the sandman's Perception checks. Slipping Madame Zelekhati's ring off her finger is very difficult, and she receives a +10 circumstance bonus on opposed Perception checks to notice any such attempts; once she no longer has the ring, she loses control of the sandman, which begins destroying the Dancing Dunes. The GM can use these values and the information above to adapt the encounter based on the PCs' plans.

Convincing Madame Zelekhati to collaborate with the PCs is difficult, for she sees little advantage in helping strangers and may be affronted by the PCs' attempts to uncover her personal secrets. She only agrees to collaborate with the PCs if they improve her attitude to helpful and take the initiative in misleading Grandmaster Torch. She has little reason to embroil herself in what is clearly a

feud between others yet finds the whole matter amusing enough to play along.

Creatures: Madame Zelekhati conducts business strolling around the tranquility garden conversing with potential clients until she gets a good idea of their intentions. If she ever feels threatened, she leads them onto the footbridges that cross the garden to expose potential assailants to the sleep aura of the hidden elemental.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 4)

MADAME ZELEKHATI

CR 1

Female half-elf sorcerer 2

N Medium humanoid (elf, human)

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

DEFENSE

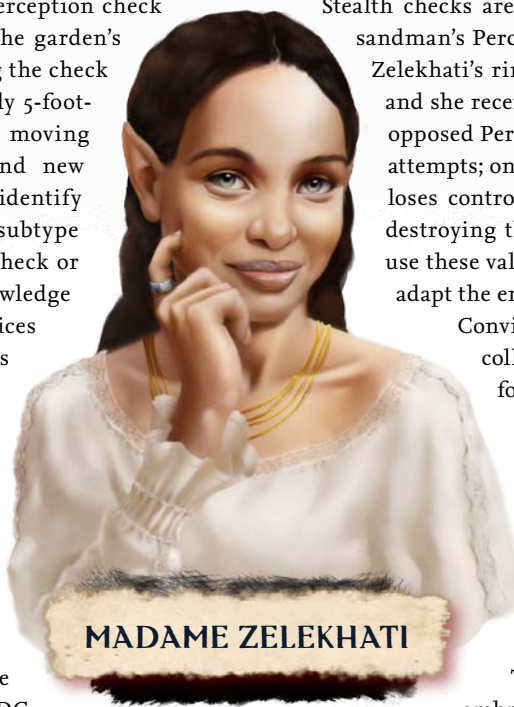
AC 12, touch 12, flatfooted 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 11 (2d6+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantments; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.



PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

Melee dagger +0 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4-1/19-20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +5)
6/day—elemental ray (1d6+1 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

1st (5/day)—*color spray* (DC 14), *mage armor*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*,
message, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

Bloodline elemental

TACTICS

Before Combat As her servants believe the PCs might be dangerous, Zelekhati casts *mage armor* before meeting with them.

During Combat Zelekhati tries to keep away from the PCs, attacking them with her elemental ray bloodline power and augmenting her defenses with spells. If threatened by a melee combatant, she casts *color spray* to disable her foes.

Morale If the sandman falls, or if she is reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, she casts *invisibility* from a scroll and flees.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Acrobatics)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5,
Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +2, Perform (dance) +5,
Sense Motive +1, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common, Elven, Osiriani

SQ bloodline arcana (change energy damage spells to match bloodline energy), elf blood

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of invisibility*,
scroll of shield, *wand of share memory*^{um} (5 charges),
sneezing powder; **Other Gear** dagger, *ring of elemental*
command (dormant), entertainer's outfit, 43 gp

SANDMAN

CR 3

hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 236)

TACTICS

Before Combat The sandman hides in the sand and reverts to humanoid form if it expects combat.

During Combat The sandman moves to get as many opponents as possible in its sleep aura, readying an action to attack any creature that approaches. It then concentrates attacks on any creature not sleeping or those attempting to awaken others.

Morale The sandman fights to the death to protect Madame Zelekhati.

Subtier 4–5 (CR 7)

MADAME ZELEKHATI

CR 3

Female half-elf sorcerer 4

N Medium humanoid (elf, human)

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

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flatfooted 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 22 (4d6+6)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantments; **Immune** sleep

Resist acid 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4-1/19-20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +8)
7/day—elemental ray (1d6+2 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd (4/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 15),
color spray (DC 15), *mage armor*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *light*,
message, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

Bloodline elemental

TACTICS

Before Combat As her servants believe the PCs might be dangerous, Zelekhati casts *mage armor* before meeting with them.

During Combat Zelekhati tries to keep away from the PCs, attacking them with her elemental ray bloodline power and augmenting her defenses with spells. If threatened by a melee combatant, she casts *color spray* to disable her foes.

Morale If both of the sandmen fall, or if she is reduced to 9 hit points or fewer, she casts *invisibility* from a scroll and flees.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative,
Skill Focus (Acrobatics)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6,
Knowledge (planes) +6, Perception +2, Perform (dance) +9,
Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common, Elven, Terran

SQ bloodline arcana (change energy damage spells to acid),
elf blood

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *scroll of*
invisibility, *scroll of shield*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *wand of*
share memory^{um} (10 charges), sneezing powder (2); **Other**
Gear dagger, *ring of earth elemental command* (dormant),
entertainer's outfit, 53 gp

ADVANCED SANDMEN (2)

CR 4

hp 38 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 236, 292)

Faction Notes: Grandmaster Torch prefers that Zelekhati serve him as a contact without ruining her entirely. As a result, he may have instructed Sczarni or Qadira faction PCs to earn Madame Zelekhati's cooperation without resorting to physical violence.

C3. Beggars' Alley



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Kura Shehr

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Hired Thugs

1 square = 5 feet

Pathfinder Map Pack: Slums

Successfully resolving the encounter without combat fulfills this condition.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to learn Madame Zelekhati's secrets or fail to defeat her and her sandman in combat, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows. In addition, cross the dormant *ring of earth elemental command* off the Chronicle sheet if the PCs did not acquire it.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 139 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 353 gp.

Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 568 gp.

C3. Hundredfingers Hideout (CR 4 or CR 7)

Two rows of decrepit wooden shacks are separated by an alley that serves more as a filthy runnel than a pathway. Broken wooden doors do little to keep the elements or vermin out, but there is little within to steal. Few of the shacks boast more than a chair or two and several threadbare bedrolls.

SCALING ENCOUNTER C2

Make the following adjustments to accommodate a group of only four PCs.

Subtier 1–2: The sandman remains in sand form for the encounter.

Subtier 4–5: Remove one advanced sandman from the encounter, and grant the remaining sandman 10 temporary hit points.

This collection of hovels and lean-tos serve as the official hideout for the Hundredfingers gang, a band of cutpurses and beggars comprised of human orphans and a handful of adolescent halflings that pose as human children. Several days ago, a boy from the Hundredfingers gang overheard a conversation between a Thuvian apothecary and a local purveyor of medicinal

SCALING ENCOUNTER C3

To accommodate a group of only four PCs, give the thugs the sickened condition. They have shown up to the job drunk.

salves about a possible miracle cure for terrible burns, necrosis, and withering—even such ailments caused by magical or supernatural means. When the apothecary noticed the curious eavesdropper, she asked the waif if he'd seen anyone with terrible burns or scars. The naive orphan revealed that sometimes his gang worked for "the scarred man in a tub," prompting the Thuvian to ask the child to pass along word to the scarred man that she had something special for him.

When **Naleth** (N female halfling commoner 1/rogue 1), the oldest cutpurse of the Hundredfingers gang heard the story, she knew it sounded suspicious. After finding where the apothecary was staying in the city, the halfling rifled through the contents of the room and found a praying mantis preserved in amber. As virtually everyone around the Inner Sea has heard of the legendary Red Mantis assassins, Naleth immediately feared for safety of her gang. She put word out that every member of the Hundredfingers needed to lie low and made it known in the bazaar that her gang had important news for the scarred man. She certainly wasn't ready to stick out *her* neck for Grandmaster Torch (especially not after seeing the Thuvian casing the area), but perhaps he would risk the neck of one of his agents. It might not be the best plan, but her fear of the legendary assassins keeps her from risking anything more creative.

Creatures: The Thuvian Kura Shehr is not a Red Mantis Assassin but spies for the organization. For the past 2 days, she has kept a close watch on the Hundredfingers gang, hoping that a member would run to Grandmaster Torch and reveal his hiding place. Her plan hasn't worked, and she has hired a pair of thugs to maraud about the slums and flush out the young thieves. As the PCs arrive in Beggar's Alley, Kura Shehr is ambling up and down the street selling herbal remedies and keeping watch for fleeing halflings.

She passes by the PCs, advertising salves that she claims can restore flesh as readily as the legendary *sun orchid elixir* restores youth—a sales pitch she has been using to lure out the agents of Grandmaster Torch. Adventurers rarely have reason to visit Beggar's Alley, so she tries to initiate small talk to learn more about them. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check while she's speaking notices her amber talisman, and can identify its significance as a token of the Red Mantis Assassins with a successful DC 12 Knowledge (local or religion) check.

Unless the PCs ask about the Hundredfingers or reveal some connection to Grandmaster Torch, Kura concludes any sales and walks on and slips between some hovels to wait for her hired muscle to arrive. If the PCs do mention

interesting information, Kura encourages them to share what they know as subtly as she can. In her estimation, the PCs might lead her back to Torch willingly or unwillingly, and if the PCs are true allies of the scarred man, then their deaths in the upcoming fracas would be to her patrons' advantage; in fact, leaving the PCs dead is best, as it means no one can report back to Torch about her espionage. She would rather procure an address than an escort to Torch, as she tries to avoid possible ambushes. If the PCs seem sincere in their desire to sell out Grandmaster Torch and succeed at a DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check, Kura Shehr decides that the PCs are more useful alive than dead and does not participate in the imminent combat encounter. Instead, add a third hired goon to the encounter.

Once Kura and the PCs have had an opportunity to talk, Kura's hired goons arrive and begin breaking down shacks, pushing over tent poles, and causing enough ruckus that several of the Hundredfingers gang break from hiding and begin to flee. The goons have been looking forward to this assignment and include the PCs in their attack, even if Kura tries to call them off.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 3)

HIRED THUGS (2)

CR 1/2

Human rogue 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flatfooted 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 13 each (1d8+5)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sap +2 (1d6+2 nonlethal) or
dagger +2 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The hired thugs scatter caltrops at the ends of the street.

During Combat The hired thugs flank a target and use Sap Adept to increase their nonlethal sneak attack damage.

Morale If a hired thug drops to 3 or fewer hit points, he flees or surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Sap Adept^{uc}, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Climb +6, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +7, Heal +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

A BITTER BARGAIN

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, tanglefoot bag, bag of caltrops; **Other Gear** leather armor, sap, dagger, thieves' tools, 23 gp

KURA SHEHR

CR 1

Female human expert 1/rogue 1

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 15 (2d8+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee short sword +1 (1d6+1/19–20) or
sap +1 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +3 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Kura stealthily climbs on top of a shack and readies her hand crossbow.

During Combat Kura throws a thunderstone among the PCs to deafen them and scare the Hundredfingers to flight. She snipes at the PCs from the relative safety of the roof, leaping to nearby roofs to escape a melee threat.

Morale If both of the hired thugs fall or flee, Kura attempts to flee, disappearing among the shacks.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +6, Climb +5, Craft (alchemy) +6, Disable Device +7, Disguise +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +4, Profession (herbalist) +3, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), tanglefoot bag, thunderstone; **Other Gear** leather armor, short sword, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, sap, alchemy kit, disguise kit, thieves tools, 43 gp

Subtier 4–5 (CR 6)

HIRED THUGS (2)

CR 2

Male human rogue 3

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flatfooted 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 26 each (3d8+9)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sap +6 (1d6+2 nonlethal) or
mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The hired thugs drink their *potions of blur* and scatter caltrops at the ends of the street.

During Combat The hired thugs flank a target and use Sap Adept to increase their nonlethal sneak attack damage.

Morale If a hired thug drops to 7 or fewer hit points, he flees or surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Sap Adept^{uc}, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +9, Appraise +7, Climb +8, Disable Device +11, Escape Artist +9, Heal +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +6, Stealth +9

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of blur*, bag of caltrops, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** mwk studded leather armor, mwk sap, mwk dagger, dagger, mwk thieves tools, 83 gp

KURA SHEHR

CR 5

Female human expert 1/rogue 5

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 47 (6d8+17)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20) or
sap +4 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged +1 *hand crossbow* +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Kura stealthily climbs on top of a shack and readies her hand crossbow.

During Combat Kura throws a thunderstone among the PCs to deafen them and scare the Hundredfingers to flight. She snipes at the PCs from the relative safety of the roof, leaping to nearby roofs to escape a melee threat.

Morale If both of the hired thugs fall or flee, Kura attempts to flee, disappearing among the shacks.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (hand crossbow), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +10, Climb +7, Craft (alchemy) +9, Disable Device +12, Disguise +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +8, Profession (herbalist) +6, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, fast stealth), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of blur*, tanglefoot bag, thunderstone; **Other Gear** mwk mithral chain shirt, +1 hand crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk short sword, sap, alchemy kit, disguise kit, thieves' tools, 37 gp



Development: If Kura escapes the PCs, she immediately prepares to leave the city—that night if possible. Once Naleth Hundredfingers believes the coast is clear, he emerges from his hiding spot, greets the PCs, and asks if they're friends of the scarred man. He requests that the PCs either escort him to Grandmaster Torch to deliver a message or deliver the message for him. His message is that "The Red Mantis is searching Eto for a scarred man." When Torch hears this, he gives a noncommittal grunt and remarks that persistence does not guarantee a successful assassination.

If the PCs flee the combat, Naleth and the other Hundredfingers try to flee, though the thugs subdue and interrogate several of them to learn of Torch's whereabouts. Finding Naleth or the other cutpurses after this happens is virtually impossible.

Faction Notes: Although Grandmaster Torch could not instruct Qadira or Sczarni faction PCs to capture Kura Shehr to keep her from reporting to the Red Mantis Assassins, he appreciates the PCs' capturing her or killing her to keep the assassins in the dark. If the Qadira or Sczarni faction PCs fail in their assigned mission, Grandmaster Torch considers silencing Kura Shehr as an equally worthy favor in place of his assigned task. If both Qadira and Sczarni faction PCs are present, and neither group succeeded at its assigned goals, Torch chooses one faction at random to reward in this way.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to retrieve Naleth's message and fight off the hired thugs, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 138 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 355 gp.

Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 572 gp.

D. WELL OF SERPENTS (CR 3 or CR 6)

Before Eto began taxing those who entered its gates, this low ruin was a way station for water sellers. A century ago, the water in the well fouled and all but disappeared, a phenomenon the church of Sarenrae traced to a local guide who secretly led a small cult of Apep. Church inquisitors rid Eto of the cult and sealed the well, never realizing that the shrine to the snake god existed at its bottom. After the passage of many years, the seal has crumbled, opening the way to the treasures of the dark shrine. A recent string of snakebite deaths has plagued the immediate area around the outpost, and the people of Eto avoid the area.

Wild grasses hug the low walls surrounding the wide mouth of the well. The opening is 15 feet wide at the top but narrows to a width of about 5 feet at the bottom 30 feet below. A DC 15 Climb check is required to safely descend the well. About 2 feet of sediment-laden water occupies the bottom of the well, obscuring a submerged



D. Well of Serpents

1 square = 5 feet

horizontal shaft large enough for a Medium creature to crawl through. When the PCs reach the underground shrine, read or paraphrase the following.

A dark pool fills the center of this vast chamber spilling out of its cracked basin. The trickle of water flows west through a short tunnel of rough-hewn stone and pools at the bottom of a collapsed well. Alcoves set in the walls give the illusion of staring at the flared hood of a cobra. Two altars face each other across the pool in the chamber's northwest and southeast corners. A statue of a robed human male stands in the northeast corner, and what must have been its twin lies toppled in the southwest corner.

The shrine is completely dark. A lingering blessing placed on the shrine by worshipers of Apep dampens any light source, reducing the radius of its illumination by half. In addition, the blessing grants snakes and serpentine creatures in the area darkvision 60 feet. A PC can identify the area as an unholy shrine to Apep, a snake god of Ancient Osirion whose portfolio included dangerous rapids, drowning, and darkness that consumes all light.

SCALING ENCOUNTER D

To accommodate a group of four PCs, remove one venomous snake or amphisbaena from the encounter and apply the advanced simple template to the remaining serpent.

Creatures: Two venomous snakes (Subtier 1–2) or a pair of amphisbaena (Subtier 4–5) call this shrine home and instinctively protect the twin altars of Apep. The serpents instinctively recognize holy symbols of Sarenrae and other gods with the sun domain, all of which cause the snakes to hiss irritably.

Subtier 1–2 (CR 3)

VENOMOUS SNAKES (2)

CR 1

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 255)

TACTICS

During Combat The snakes attack anyone who approaches either altar—especially those carrying light sources or holy symbols of sun gods.

Morale These snakes fight to the death to defend Apep's shrine.

Subtier 4–5 (CR 6)

AMPHISBAENA (2)**CR 4****hp** 45 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 25)**TACTICS**

During Combat The amphisbaenas attack anyone who approaches either altar—especially those carrying light sources or holy symbols of sun gods.

Morale The amphisbaenas fight to the death to defend Apep's shrine.

Treasure: With a successful DC 20 Perception check, the PCs can find a secret compartment in the intact statues base. The compartment contains several items, including a burial mask carved from lapis lazuli worth 500 gp, three clay tablets describing funerary practices, and a *rod of the viper* carved from a single piece of petrified wood to look like a fanged serpent. In Subtier 1–2, the third clay tablet is a scroll with the spells *deathwatch* and *false life*. In Subtier 4–5, the second tablet is also a scroll with the spells *gentle repose* and *speak with dead*.

Development: Once the serpent guardians are defeated, the shrine presents no further immediate threat to the PCs; however, the darkness enchantment continues to shroud the area, attract more serpents over time, and taint the water. A PC can dispel the lingering magic by casting *bless*, *consecrate*, or any 2nd-level or stronger spell with the light descriptor.

Bringing the relics here to Torch in Eto requires dealing with the customs agent Mahu or devising some way to sneak them over the walls without the gate guards noticing. Mahu inspects the PCs' gear unless convinced not to with a successful Bluff check (at least an unlikely lie) or Diplomacy (a favor that could result in punishment). If the PCs improved Mahu's attitude to friendly or helpful, he is much more willing to expedite the PCs' passage into Eto, and he takes a –2 penalty on Perception and Sense Motive checks to spot the relics or see through any ruse. If Mahu finds the relics, he levies a tax of 15 gp per relic he found (25 per relic in Subtier 4–5), though he might be convinced to waive the fee—just this once—as another favor (treat this as complicated aid).

Faction Notes: Grandmaster Torch would prefer that nobody know these artifacts ever entered the city, and he may have instructed Qadira or Sczarni faction PCs to smuggle them back undetected. If the PCs return the items to Torch without Mahu or other Eto authorities detecting them, these PCs fulfill this condition.

Rewards: If the PCs fail to deliver the hidden relics to Grandmaster Torch, reduce each PC's gold earned as follows.

Subtier 1–2: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 239 gp.

Out of Subtier: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 474 gp.

Subtier 4–5: Reduce each PC's gold earned by 710 gp.

CONCLUSION

Once the PCs complete (or at least attempt) all of Grandmaster Torch's tasks to his satisfaction, he fulfills his part of the bargain by giving them several old maps. One is a map of Osirion, clearly marking Eto and an unnamed site to the north. The second map has a much smaller scale and marks the route between Eto and the mystery location. The last sheet has a charcoal drawing that depicts two large rock outcroppings connected by a smooth wall with a single gate. It is entitled "Seeker's Folly" and signed "V.L." With a successful DC 15 Linguistics check, a PC can recognize that the writing on the map and the writing on the list of tasks Torch assigned are identical; Torch sneers if the PCs comment on the similarity, remarking, "There are some parts of my past that I'd rather not revisit. Thank you for picking at old wounds, Pathfinders."

Once the PCs have had an opportunity to review the papers, Torch explains, "Those will take you where you want to go. Deviate from the path only if you know what you're doing. Otherwise, stick to the landmarks." He pauses to consider another thought. "Normally this is where I would say 'pleasure doing business with you.' However," he adds with a grisly grin, "I'm going to throw you something extra for free—just because I'm such a caring individual. You're not the only ones who know about that site. I hear a group of foreigners set out from Totra not too long ago and are after the same prize. Sounds like there's no time to waste."

If the PCs attempted to undermine any of Torch's errands (see the Seeking Revenge sidebar on page 7) but failed one or more of the skill checks to conceal their treachery, Torch comments aloud about it as the PCs leave (for example, "Very clever how you tried to sabotage my rivalry with Ionacu. I'm sure he'll have a *most* interesting trip, thanks to you."). Give the PCs the Reckless Revenge boon on their Chronicle sheets. If the PCs successfully undermined one or more tasks and were never caught by Torch, instead give them the Subtle Revenge boon on their Chronicle sheets.

Faction Notes: As part of this last meeting, Torch also provides Qadira and Sczarni faction PCs with the information they requested—so long as they fulfilled the extra condition that he named. He informs Qadira faction PCs that he has a contact that his friend Aaqir al'Hakam may not have considered before, and Torch is willing to send details directly to the faction's leader. "From what I recall," he muses, "al'Hakam tried to set up shop in the ports of Varisia, but he never paid much attention to the true trade hub on the Storval Plateau. Let him know to expect word from Kaer Maga."

He admits to Sczarni faction PCs that he worked with several of Guaril's enemies—in a professional capacity

with no malice intended, he insists matter-of-factly. He finds wry amusement in Guaril's confusion as to who wants him dead, rhetorically asking if Guaril even remembers the Gael family that he humiliated and ruined not even a year ago. "Guaril ruined the Gaels reputation and finances, but they've called in several favors and accepted several large debts in the interest of tearing apart the Karela family. "I'll admit that Sczarni honor remains a puzzle to me, but it's good business," Torch remarks with a sneer. "The Gaels are hiding in the one place where any refugee is welcome, nobody asks too many questions, and it's rather easy to hire some extra help: Kaer Maga, The City of Strangers."

Reporting Notes

If the PCs successfully sabotaged at least one of Grandmaster Torch's tasks, check box A on the reporting sheet. If Grandmaster Torch never learned of the PCs' sabotage, also check box B. If Kura Shehr survived the scenario and was able to report back to the Red Mantis Assassins, check box C. If members of the Sczarni faction learned the identity of Guaril Karela's enemy, check box D.

Primary Success Condition

The PCs successfully complete their main mission by fulfilling Grandmaster Torch's tasks and receiving the maps to Seeker's Folly. Doing so earns each PC 1 Prestige Point.

Secondary Success Condition

The PCs successfully complete their secondary mission if they finish the scenario in possession of Amenopheus's geode and are not caught sabotaging one of Grandmaster Torch's missions more than once; he finds a single show of rebellion amusing but begins to act against the Society if he senses any further insubordination.

Faction Notes Members of several factions have the opportunity to learn important information or contribute to ongoing goals during this scenario.

Qadira Faction: Qadira faction PCs can learn of new contacts for Trade Prince Aaqir al'Hakam by bargaining with Grandmaster Torch for the information and fulfilling an additional condition for him over the course of the scenario. Fulfilling this objective earns Qadira faction PCs the No Stranger to the City boon on their Chronicle sheets.

Osirion Faction: Completing this scenario contributes directly to the Osirion faction's goals, and Osirion faction PCs have no additional conditions to fulfill. Give all Osirion faction PCs who complete this scenario the Seeking the Sages boon on their Chronicle sheets.

Sczarni Faction: Sczarni faction PCs can learn who is seeking faction leader Guaril Karela's death and where they're hiding by bargaining with Grandmaster Torch for the information and fulfilling an additional condition for him over the course of the scenario. Fulfilling this objective earns Sczarni faction PCs the Armed to the Teeth boon on their Chronicle sheets.

PLAYER HANDOUT: TORCH'S TASKS

- ☐ The academic Ionacu Lozar from the Sinomakti School of Sciences is preparing for an expedition to a site in the Pillars of the Sun. I have a scarab-marked prayer book dedicated to the god Khepri that needs to be placed among his personal effects without him suspecting anything is amiss.
- ☐ An associate has delivered a shipment of valuable Osirian artifacts to just outside Eto. She claims that the objects are hidden inside a dry well southeast of the Sunrise Gate. Retrieve these and bring them to me. The magic rod is of particular importance; everything else is expendable.
- ☐ The half-elf Madam Zelekhati, owner the establishment called the Dancing Dunes, is most adept at acquiring secrets, and I need you to find out how she does it—no doubt it's something she'd rather keep hidden from authorities. Further, convince her to share what she already knows with me. Threaten to reveal her secret if she's stubborn. End the scheme if all else fails.
- ☐ I recently heard that the leader of the Hundredfingers gang had an important message for my ears only. Track them down, get the message, resolve any loose ends, and report back to me.

A BITTER BARGAIN

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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-12 *Destiny of the Sands, Part 1: A Bitter Bargain* © 2014, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Scott Fernandez

Pathfinder Society Scenario #5-12: Destiny of the Sands, Part 1: A Bitter Bargain

Event		Date	
GM #		GM Character #	
GM Name		GM Prestige Earned	
<input type="checkbox"/> Andoran	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheliah	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Lodge	<input type="checkbox"/> Osirion
<input type="checkbox"/> Qadira	<input type="checkbox"/> Sczarni	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade	<input type="checkbox"/> Taldor
<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D

Character #	<input type="text"/>	Prestige Points
Character Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Andoran <input type="checkbox"/> Cheliah <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Lodge <input type="checkbox"/> Osirion <input type="checkbox"/> Qadira <input type="checkbox"/> Sczarni <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Crusade <input type="checkbox"/> Taldor	

Character #	<input type="text"/>	Prestige Points
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Pathfinder Society Scenario #5–12: Destiny of the Sands, Part 1: A Bitter Bargain

Character Chronicle #

Player Name

A.K.A.

Character Name

Pathfinder Society #

Faction

This Chronicle sheet grants access to the following:

Armed to the Teeth (Sczarni Faction): Now that Guaril knows where his enemies hide, he is sparing no expense to ensure his agents are prepared for anything. The next time you travel to Kaer Maga for a Pathfinder Society mission, Guaril Karela gives you a single item worth up to 250 gp. You don't have to choose the item until the mission begins.

No Stranger to the City (Qadira Faction): The Trade Prince Aaqir al'Hakam has turned his gaze upon Kaer Maga, and he quickly draws on available research to ensure you are well acquainted with the City of Strangers. You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (local) checks regarding Kaer Maga, and can make such checks even if untrained. You may cross this boon off your Chronicle sheet to reroll a single Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check made to influence a citizen of Kaer Maga.

Reckless Revenge: You chose to undermine Torch's schemes in Osirion, but he easily identified your plans. You have developed a reputation as one who seeks Torch's downfall, even if you are not always successful.

Seeking the Sages (Osirion Faction): You are in pursuit of the legacy of the Jeweled Sages, which Amenopheus believes is very close at hand. Having this boon contributes to events later in the *Destiny of the Sands* storyline and does not grant any benefits at this time.

Subtle Revenge: You chose to undermine Torch's schemes in Osirion, and it seems he never found out about your sabotage. This may lead him to miscalculate a risk or fail at an important scheme in the future.

All Subtiers

Dormant ring of earth elemental command (casts *meld with stone* [CL 5th] once per day on command; fully activating the ring may require a special task and the expenditure of additional gold; 5,400 gp)
Scroll of false life (150 gp)
Scroll of invisibility (150 gp)
Wand of share memory (5 charges; 450 gp, limit 1; *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 238)

Subtier 4-5

Scroll of gentle repose (375 gp)
Scroll of see invisibility (150 gp)
Scroll of speak with dead (375 gp)
Wand of share memory (10 charges; 900 gp, limit 1; *Ultimate Magic* 238)

Notes

SUBTIER ☐ Slow ☐ Normal

1–2 258 516

SUBTIER ☐ Slow ☐ Normal

Out of subtier 591 1,183

SUBTIER ☐ Slow ☐ Normal

4–5 925 1,850

SUBTIER ☐ Slow ☐ Normal

— — —

MAX GOLD

EXPERIENCE

FAME

GOLD

Starting XP

+ GM's Initials

XP Gained (GM ONLY)

=

Final XP Total

Initial Prestige Initial Fame

+ GM's Initials

Prestige Gained (GM ONLY)

=

Prestige Spent

Current Prestige Final Fame

Starting GP

+ GM's Initials

GP Gained (GM ONLY)

+ GM's Initials

Day Job (GM ONLY)

=

Gold Spent

=

Total

For GM Only

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Pathfinder Society #