

## PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 2-03

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Pathfinder Society Scenario 2–03: The Rebel's Ransom is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 5th- to 9th-level characters (Tiers: 5–6 and 8–9). This scenario is designed for play in Pathfinder Society Organized Play, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. This scenario is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. The OGL can be found on page 19 of this product.

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BY JASON BULMAHN

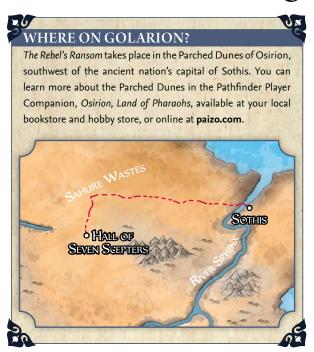




hroughout Osirion's history, there have been many powerful individuals, from pharaohs to robber barons. While many have been erased by the sands of history, some have left behind wonders to behold and treasures to recover. Alkhet Utmari, also known as the Merchant Prince, was one such individual. In the late 1200s, Alkhet founded a mercantile house whose riches rivaled many royal households. Despite all his power and wealth, Alkhet and his six wives never managed to produce an heir. Stubbornly, Alkhet outlived all of his wives and was buried with them in the Hall of Seven Scepters. This legendary tomb was named for the jewel-encrusted scepters possessed by Alkhet and each of his six wives. Soon after it was sealed, a great sandstorm swept through the area, and the tomb was never seen again.

For centuries, the Hall of Seven Scepters was almost entirely forgotten, except for a number of ancient references and carvings dating from the time of its construction. All of this changed 6 months ago when a caravan stumbled across the entrance to the hall, recently unburied in the Parched Dunes in western Osirion. After taking a rubbing from one of the ancient columns, the caravan master brought his finding back to Sothis and sold it, along with a map, on the open market. After changing hands more than once, the rubbing and map found their way into the hands of the Ruby Prince, whose fascination with his country's ancient past borders on obsession. Within a week, he contacted the Pathfinders and sent an expedition to the ancient tomb, hoping to retrieve its riches before anyone else could manage to plunder it.

The group, led by Jilarni Golgarna, was the first to reach the tomb, but unfortunately for them, they were not the last. Word of the hall spread quickly throughout Sothis and eventually found its way to Alarka, a Thuvian water bandit hiding in the slums to avoid capture. Alarka had been looking for a reason to leave town with her men and the thought of plundering an ancient tomb was too much to pass up. Camping just outside the city, the group of bandits followed the Pathfinders right to the tomb. As the Pathfinders began their exploration, the bandits attacked. The ensuing battle resulted in a number of casualties on both sides, and one of the



scepters used to open the tomb was disturbed, causing a portion of the tomb to reseal itself and trapping the survivors inside.

With Jilarni failing to report in, the Ruby Prince has become worried. He has once again turned to the Pathfinders, hoping they might be able to track down their missing brethren and complete the original mission.

## **SUMMARY**

At the start of the adventure, the PCs are asked by Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir of Sothis to travel deep into the Parched Dunes to the Hall of Seven Scepters to locate the missing Pathfinders and to complete their original mission, if possible. After leaving the city, the PCs must travel for a number of days through the desert before they reach the ancient tomb. On the way, they run afoul of a nest of very large scorpions.

The tomb itself is protected by a number of puzzles utilizing the seven scepters. Just after getting inside, the PCs find Alarka and her bandits, sealed behind a stone

## GM TIPS

Desert scenarios can be tough on heavily armored PCs. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the heat dangers section on page 444 of the *Core Rulebook* and specifically pay heed to how dangerous it is to wear armor into intense desert heat. Be sure to ask the players how their PCs handle the heat, what provisions they might bring, and how many days they're prepared to spend in the deepest, hottest deserts on Golarion. Once you know these details, apply the heat dangers rules accordingly.

GMs should also take a moment to review the series of traps and puzzles in the Hall of Seven Scepters. While not overly complicated, the Hall may be confusing to a GM unfamiliar with the scenario.

wall and lacking the necessary scepters to raise it. Alarka is holding Jilarni hostage and is only willing to help the PCs progress through the dungeon if the PCs agree to a deal. Regardless of the deal struck with Alarka, the bandit plans to betray her rescuers once they have the treasure.

With the first four rods gathered, the PCs can continue on to find the fifth and open up the next area of the dungeon. As they locate additional rods and explore deeper and deeper into the dungeon, they face more and more resistance from the ancient traps and guardians. Finally, with all seven scepters in hand, the PCs can enter the last remaining chamber and plunder the final resting place of the Merchant Prince. If they have not already done so, Alarka and her thugs move to strike, hoping to claim the treasure for themselves. After dealing with the bandits, the PCs travel back to Sothis to deliver the treasures and claim their reward.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Read the following to get the adventure underway:

The shifting sands of Osirion have been known to swallow entire communities, wiping them from the face of Golarion. Those same dunes sometimes uncover that which has been lost, revealing secrets from the past. In a nation with a rich and mysterious history, such discoveries set off a rush of exploration, but the deserts are not a safe place, and more than one group of treasure-hunters has donated their bones to the sands. When Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir contacted you this morning in Sothis, the story was a familiar one. A group of Pathfinders has gone missing in the desert and he would like to send you to find them. You have been asked to meet at his office to discuss the rescue.

The adventure begins in Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir's office in the Pathfinder lodge in Sothis. Balentiir asks the PCs to come prepared to depart town immediately and, though he's familiar with the PCs from their previous work, he asks them to introduce themselves to one another. Once everyone is familiar, he informs them of the following.

Just over a month ago, a merchant traveling through the Parched Dunes stumbled across the entrance of an ancient tomb, uncovered by the sands. He sold the location of the tomb to the markets here in Sothis, where the knowledge was quickly brought to the Ruby Prince's attention. He contacted Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir later that same day to arrange for a group of Pathfinders to explore the tomb and bring back its riches. The group left the next morning. They kept in contact via magic for most of the journey, but shortly after entering the tomb itself, they lost contact and have not been heard from since. Balentiir is worried and would like the PCs to travel to the tomb, find the missing Pathfinders, and complete their mission, if possible. Balentiir will answer any questions they might have with the following information.

Who are the missing Pathfinders? "It was a small group of just three experienced explorers. Led by Jilarni Golgarna, a veteran from Galt, the group also included Jojack Harnast, a dwarven trap expert, and Gilleon Samsil, a human sorcerer of some skill."

What can you tell us about the tomb? "It is called the Hall of Seven Scepters and it is supposedly the final resting place of a powerful merchant prince." Balentiir knows little else about the tomb itself, although a Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check might reveal more.

## **Knowledge (history)**

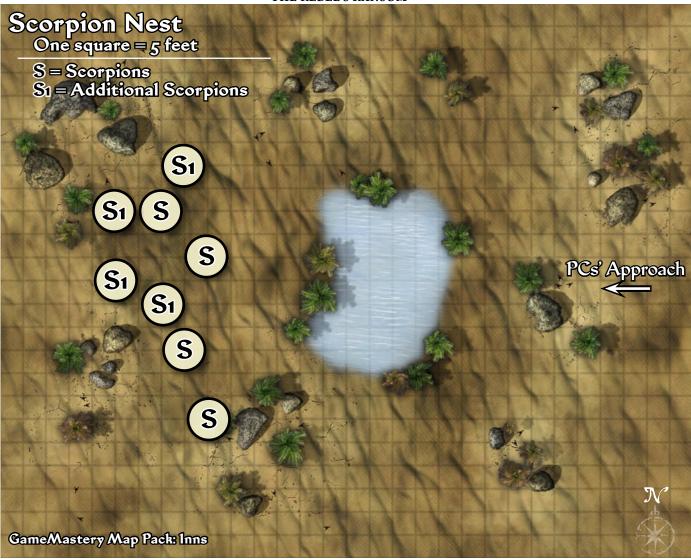
10+ The Hall of Seven Scepters is the resting place of Alkhet Utmari, a powerful merchant prince from the early 1200S AR.

15+ Alkhet was said to have six wives, but no heirs. It is said that he gave each wife a precious scepter as a wedding gift, similar to the one he always carried.

20+ Alkhet outlived all of his wives, and when he died, they were all buried in the same tomb, the Hall of Seven Scepters. Shortly afterward, a great sandstorm blew across the Parched Dunes and the location of the tomb was lost.

**25+** Alkhet was said to have a love for puzzles and traps, and records showed that he paid a great deal to a number of famous architects just before his death.

Where is the tomb? "The tomb is to the southwest of Sothis, in the Parched Dunes. I can provide you with a basic map to the location."



What was expected of the Pathfinders? "They were expected to recover as many artifacts as possible from the tomb and to bring them back to Sothis where they would be properly compensated by the Ruby Prince."

Once the PCs are done questioning Balentiir, he implores them to depart. Time is working against them in this endeavor, and while he is still holding out hope that the Pathfinders might be found alive, he knows that every day lost makes that chance grow smaller.

## ACT 1: JOURNEY THROUGH THE SANDS

The journey to the Hall of Seven Scepters is mostly uneventful. Leaving Sothis behind, the group travels southwest, following an ancient trade route for much of the way there. On this road, they encounter few others, just merchants or travelers making their way to or from the great city. The PCs can cover this part of the journey

in just under 9 days by foot, in 4 days by horse, or 13 days as part of a caravan. Regardless of how many days this portion of the journey takes, each evening there is an oasis or campsite located on the path for easy camping.

On the final day on the trade route, the directions they were given require them to leave the simple trail and venture south into the trackless desert. This sun-baked land has few markers and little in the way of respite from the relentless heat. Fortunately, the journey is relatively simple, but the PCs must make DC 10 Survival skill checks each day to remain on course. Each failed check adds 1 day to their travel time. After two successful checks, the PCs stumble onto a nest of monstrous scorpions looking for an easy meal. After the third successful check, the PCs find the entrance to the Hall of Seven Scepters (see Act 2). The PCs were warned of their travel time through the desert and should have ample water and food for the journey, making dehydration and starvation checks unnecessary, but you should check to make sure that the PCs are properly prepared (see the GM Tips sidebar).

## Scorpion Nest (CR 7 or CR 10)

The rolling dunes of the Parched Desert seem to go on and on, without change. Beyond each ridge is another, and another, and another. But then comes a sudden change. Just over the next ridge lies a nest of bones, rocks, and sand—a very large nest.

This is the nest of a group of monstrous scorpions. The large insects hunt this entire area and happen to be in the area when the PCs approach.

Creatures: The scorpions are quite territorial and move to attack the moment the PCs approach. They are far too large to lie in ambush, but they do approach from different sides in an attempt to confound their victims. The scorpions are quite hungry, and while protecting their nest, they fight to the death.

## Tier 5-6 (CR 7)

## GIANT SCORPIONS (4)

hp 37 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 242)

## Tier 8-9 (CR 10)

## ADVANCED GIANT SCORPIONS (8)

CR 4

hp 47 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 242, 294)

Mission Notes: The venom of a giant scorpion is of some interest to members of the Qadira faction. Recovering a sample requires a DC 10 Heal skill check.

## **ACT 2: THE HALL OF SEVEN SCEPTERS**

After the PC's trek through the desert, the Hall of Seven Scepters is actually relatively simple to find. It lies at the bottom of a narrow ravine of soft pink sandstone. The winds of the desert blew most of the sand out of this ravine, revealing the entrance to the Hall, as well at the narrow stairs leading down into the ravine.

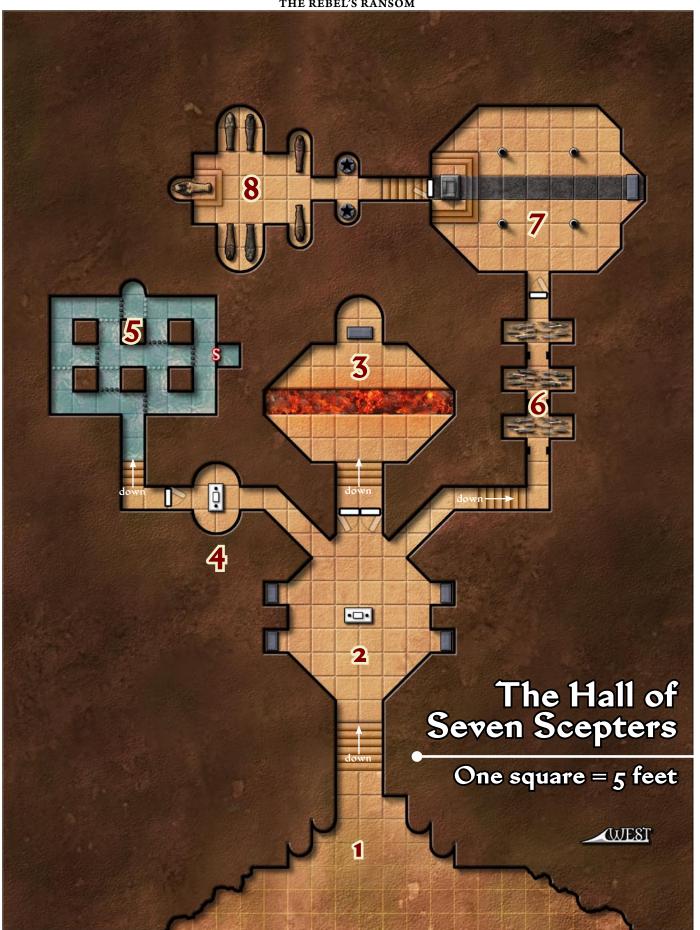
The entire tomb—the walls, floors, ceilings, and doors-is constructed entirely out of stone. Unless otherwise noted, the chambers have 15 foot ceilings and no light source, cloaking the chambers in darkness unless the PCs bring their own light.

Knowing that tomb robbers would find his resting place a tempting target, Alkhet Utmari created a number of



CR 3

THE REBEL'S RANSOM



Scepter of Osomi

## 1. Entrance

Between the ever-rolling dunes of sand is a small patch of stone, in the center of which is a ravine, like a crack in the desert floor. Broad, worn stairs lead down into this ravine, at the base of which is an opening, an entrance in the wall of the ravine. There is a host of nine camels, tethered just outside the entrance.

This is the entrance to the Hall of Seven Scepters. The ravine is over 40 feet deep, but is easily accessed by the broad stairs leading to its base.

The camels at the base of the ravine are tethered to iron spikes driven into the floor. The camels are malnourished and in need of water, but they are otherwise in relatively good shape. A DC 15 Heal skill check reveals that they have probably not been given food or water in several weeks. Three of these camels belonged to the Pathfinders, and all bear brands marking them as belonging to one

particular camel dealer in Sothis whom the Society frequently deals with. The other six camels belong to the raiders and have different gear and markings. A simple DC 10 Perception check by anyone investigating the camels uncovers that

investigating the camels uncovers that they clearly belong to two different groups.

The entrance to the Hall itself is a series of columns leading to a simple stone door that stands open. The columns bear numerous carvings praising the accomplishments of Alkhet Utmari, the Merchant Prince. A DC 20 Perception skill check made by anyone investigating the columns reveals that the number seven holds a great deal of significance, but in all such arrangements, Alkhet is always in the highest position.

**Creatures:** The camels here are far too weak to put up any sort of fight. Those wishing to feed and water the animals can do so without danger.

Mission Notes: In the saddlebags of Alarka's camel are a simple blanket, an empty waterskin, and a journal that might be of some interest to Andoran faction PCs. The latter is a list of routes commonly taken by Thuvian water barons.

Just outside the tomb, a small bloom of blue flowers can be found. These rare flowers are of interest to PCs of the Qadira faction.

## 2. Hall of the Four

Cool silence greets you as you descend the stairs into the ancient tomb. At their base is a spacious chamber with a

large sandstone altar at its center. Set into the walls are four smaller altars, surrounded by ancient writing, each one a little different from the last. On the opposite side of the room are a pair of corridors leading off into darkness and a larger hallway, ending in a great stone door. A trio of rods are slotted into the altar in the center of the room.

This chamber contains the first puzzle that must be solved before any other areas can be fully explored.

Before the first group of Pathfinders arrived, each of the four small side altars in this chamber displayed an ornate scepter. The center altar has four slots in its top, one for each of the scepters. In this case, the puzzle is relatively simple. Each of the scepters has a uniquely shaped base and can only fit into one of the slots. Jilarni and her group figured this out easily, and once all four scepters were in place, the door leading to area 3 opened, allowing them access. Once in that chamber, the raiders attacked and during the struggle, Gilleon used mage hand to pull one of the scepters from the altar, while the battle raged in area 3. This caused the door to close,

locking them all inside.

The three rods still in place atop the altar are described below (along with the altars that once held them), but the fourth is trapped in area 3 along with the

surviving raiders and the unconscious body of Jilarni. Fortunately, a small opening in the door allows for communication and passing of the missing scepter. See the description of area 3 for more information.

Scepter of Osomi: This scepter is made of one large shard of ebony, studded with tiny rubies, and capped by platinum rings. The narrow end of this scepter is triangular. It resided on the northeast altar, which is made of similar materials. The altar bears the name Osomi in ancient Osiriani along with the following inscription: "For my beloved Osomi, the last love of my long life."

Scepter of Kiranna: This scepter is made of iron, lined with long grooves of silver that converge on a diamond tip. The narrow end of this scepter is perfectly square. It resided on the southeast altar, which is made of similar materials. The altar bears the name Kiranna in ancient Osiriani along with the following inscription: "For Kiranna, my right hand, my fifth, the one who brought order."

Scepter of Elea: This scepter is made of sandalwood, but it is not present in this room. It was taken from the central altar by Gilleon just before he was killed, sealing all of the combatants in area 3 (see Iltorian's Vault on page 9 for a complete description of the scepter). This scepter resided on the southwest altar, which is made

of sandalwood and decorated with a fine ivory inlay. The altar bears the name Elea in ancient Osiriani along

Scepter of Kiranna

with the following inscription: "For Elea, my delicate desert flower. May the fourth rest forever at my side."

Scepter of Shasha: This scepter is made of copper, with precious pearls spiraling around its surface. The narrow end of this scepter is circular. It resided on the northwest altar, which is made of similar materials. The altar bears the name Shasha in ancient Osiriani along with the following inscription: "For Shasha, my third wife, who taught me to always seek the best in life."

Central Altar: The central altar is made of the same sandstone as the rest of this place. On the top of it are four holes, one square, one circular, one triangular, and one rectangular. Of these, three of the scepters are already in place (Osomi's, Kiranna's, and Shasha's). Elea's scepter is missing (see area 3). A simple inscription here in ancient Osiriani reads, "Everything in its proper place—such is the Wisdom of Alkhet, the Merchant Prince." Once Elea's scepter is slotted into place, the great stone door opens, allowing entrance to area 3.

Mission Notes: The carvings on the walls of this chamber detail much of the history of the Merchant Prince, including his marriages (except the name of his first wife, which is missing) and much of his business dealings, making them of interest to PCs of the Osirion faction.

Scepter of Elea walls of Elea walls of Elea walls of Elea walls of the Elea walls of this chamber of Elea walls of this chamber detail much of the history of the Merchant Prince, including the Elea walls of the Elea walls of this chamber of the Elea walls o

# 3. Iltorian's Vault (CR 8 or CR 11)

The doorway leading into this chamber is sealed. It is made of stone and a full 2 feet thick, with a core of solid lead, making it very difficult to bypass. The side facing area 2 is carved with the likeness of two princes holding aloft a great throne, atop which is seated the image of Alkhet Utmari, the Merchant Prince. Directly beneath this throne is a pair of holes in the door, that allow a fiery light to spill out, making it look as if the throne sits above the fires of the rising sun.

Inside the chamber are the survivors of the battle between the raiders and the Pathfinders, namely the water bandit Alarka, her minions, and the Pathfinder Jilarni, who remains unconscious. Alarka knows she is in a precarious position, but she also knows that any rescuers or fellow tomb raiders need her help to access the tomb (since she has one of the necessary scepters). To this end, she is ready to bargain, but she is by no means above treachery. When the PCs first approach the doors leading to this chamber, read or paraphrase the following.

A pair of gigantic stone doors bar your way. Carved into their surface is a pair of figures holding aloft a throne, on which is seated a man of regal bearing. In one hand, he holds a scepter, in the other, a merchant boat. Beneath the carving of the throne, a pair of narrow holes in the door let through a flickering light. A woman's voice calls out from beyond the door. "I was wondering when someone else would show up."

This chamber holds the altar dedicated to Iltorian, including her scepter. When Jilarni and her fellow Pathfinders entered this room, Alarka and her bandits rushed in and attacked. The fight was bloody and brutal. In the end, two bandits were slain, along with Jojack and Gilleon, but not before Gilleon used his magic to pull Elea's scepter from the altar in area 2, resealing the door and trapping them all inside. Jilarni is still alive, but she is unconscious and gravely wounded. Alarka would have finished her off, if not for her unfortunate situation. She

cannot escape and needs the unconscious Pathfinder as a bargaining chip to win her freedom.

**Creatures:** Alarka and her bandits are the only ones alive and conscious in this

chamber. When the PCs first enter the tomb, Alarka observes them through the hole in the door, but waits until they approach to speak to them. Alarka hopes to convince anyone who arrives that she and her fellow bandits are just simple explorers who were attacked by

a group that came in after them, sealing them in the chamber. She offers to give the scepter to the PCs in exchange for their freedom. Of course, in reality, she plans on attacking her rescuers as soon as it is convenient to do so, preferring to wait until they have solved the mysteries of this place and recovered all the treasure for her.

If her deceptive bargaining fails, she switches to a more direct tactic. She offers to exchange the life of Jilarni for their freedom. She still promises to leave as soon as she is free, but intends to attack as soon as it is convenient. She will even go so far as to offer to pass their weapons through the hole first if that helps garner trust. This, too, is a deception though, as they are actually passing through spare weapons and the gear of the dead bandits. There is no lie Alarka will not attempt to garner her freedom, but she is hesitant to actually place herself in a disadvantageous position. She knows that she and her men can survive for quite some time in the tomb thanks to her magic and she is relatively confident that if she cannot strike a deal with the PCs,

another more gullible group will come along soon enough.



## Tier 5-6 (CR 8)

## DESERT RAIDER

CR 5

Male human fighter 6

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 51 (6d10+18)

Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; can move at normal speed when wearing Medium armor

Melee mwk scimitar +13/+8 (1d6+7/18-20)

**Ranged** dagger +7 (1d4+4/19-20)

#### **TACTICS**

**During Combat** The desert raider moves to attack the nearest PC, unless a spellcaster presents himself, at which point the raider moves to harass the spellcaster.

**Morale** Having nowhere to retreat to, the desert raider fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 21

**Feats** Diehard, Disruptive, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)

Skills Intimidate +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Ride +6

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Gear +1 breastplate, heavy steel shield, masterwork scimitar,

dagger (2), 2,965 gp

## ALARKA

CR 7

Female human oracle of flame 8

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception -1

#### **DEFENSE**

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 60 (8d8+24)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; +4 vs. disease

Immune sickened condition; Resist fire 10

#### **OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +10/+5 (1d6+3/18-20)

Special Attacks revelation (burning magic, gaze of flames, molten skin)

**Spells Known** (CL 8th, concentration +16)

4th (4/day)—cure critical wounds, divine power, wall of fire

3rd (6/day)—create food and water, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, fireball (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, resist energy, silence, sound burst (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—bless, burning hands (DC 15), command (DC 14), cure light wounds, divine favor, endure elements, shield of faith

o (at will)—create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic, stabilize

#### TACTICS

Before Combat Alarka has used one of her 3rd-level spells each day to create food and water for those trapped in the tomb.

Once she hands over the scepter, allowing the door to be opened, she casts divine favor, shield of faith, and bull's strength on herself, just in case the PCs betray her. Otherwise, she waits to cast these spells, along with divine power, before ambushing the PCs later (these are not factored in to her stats).

**During Combat** Alarka is a brutal combatant, using her spells and revelations to incinerate her foes. She opens with wall of fire to separate the group, before moving on to fireball and sound burst to burn and cripple those on her side of the wall. She only heals the desert raider if it proves convenient.

### STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 19

**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +12, Intimidate +15

Languages Common

**SQ** oracle's curse (wasting)

Gear +1 chain shirt, heavy steel shield, +1 scimitar

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

Burning Magic (Su) Whenever a creature fails a saving throw and takes fire damage from one of Alarka's spells, it catches on fire. This fire deals 1 point of fire damage per spell level at the beginning of the burning creature's turn. The fire lasts

for 1d4 rounds, but it can be extinguished as a move action if the creature succeeds on a Reflex save (using the spell's DC). Dousing the creature with water as a standard action grants a +2 bonus on this save, while immersing the creature in water automatically extinguishes the fire. Spells that do not grant a save do not cause a creature to catch on fire.

Gaze of Flames (Su) Alarka can see through fire, fog, and smoke without penalty as long as the light is sufficient to allow her to see normally. She can also gaze through any source of flame within 10 feet per oracle level, as if using clairvoyance. She can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to her oracle level, but these rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Molten Skin (Ex) Alarka gains resist fire 10.

## Tier 8-9 (CR 11)

## DESERT RAIDERS (3)

CR 5

**hp** 51 (use the stats from Tier 5-6)

#### ALARKA

CR 10

Female human oracle of flame 11 NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception -1

#### **DEFENSE**

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield)

**hp** 82 (11d8+33)

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +6; +4 vs. disease

Immune disease, sickened condition; Resist fire 10

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 scimitar +12/+7 (1d6+3/18-20)

Special Attacks revelation (burning magic, firestorm, gaze of flames, molten skin)

Spells Known (CL 11th, concentration +19)

5th (4/day)—flame strike (DC 21), mass cure light wounds, slay living (DC 19), summon monster V (fire elementals only)

4th (7/day)—cure critical wounds, divine power, freedom of movement, spell immunity, wall of fire

3rd (7/day)—create food and water, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, fireball (DC 19), invisibility purge, prayer

2nd (7/day)—bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, hold person
 (DC 16), lesser restoration, resist energy, silence, sound burst
 (DC 18)

1st (7/day)—bless, burning hands (DC 17), command (DC 15), cure light wounds, divine favor, endure elements, shield of faith
 o (at will)—create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic, stabilize, virtue

## TACTICS

Before Combat Alarka has used one of her 3rd-level spells each day to create food and water for those trapped in the tomb.

Once she hands over the scepter, allowing the door to be opened, she casts divine favor, prayer, shield of faith, and bull's strength on herself, just in case the PCs betray her. Otherwise,

she waits to cast these spells, along with *divine power*, before ambushing the PCs later (these are not factored in to her stats).

During Combat Alarka is a brutal combatant, using her spells and revelations to incinerate her foes. She opens with wall of fire to separate the group, before moving on to fireball and flame strike to burn and cripple those on her side of the wall. She reserves slay living for anyone who dares to challenge her in melee combat. She only heals the desert raiders if it proves convenient, preferring instead to help them with prayer and the occasional mass cure light wounds.

#### STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +8; CMB +10; CMD 21

Feats Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +15, Intimidate +18

Languages Common

SQ oracle's curse (wasting)

Other Gear +1 chain shirt, heavy steel shield, +1 scimitar

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

Burning Magic (Su) Whenever a creature fails a saving throw and takes fire damage from one of Alarka's spells, it catches on fire. This fire deals 1 point of fire damage per spell level at the beginning of the burning creature's turn. The fire lasts for 1d4 rounds, but it can be extinguished as a move action if the creature succeeds at a Reflex save (using the spell's DC). Dousing the creature with water as a standard action grants a +2 bonus on this save, while immersing the creature in water automatically extinguishes the fire. Spells that do not grant a save do not cause a creature to catch on fire.

Firestorm (Su) As a standard action, Alarka can cause fire to erupt around her. She can create eleven 10-foot cubes of fire, arranged in any pattern, but each cube must be adjacent to another and one must be adjacent to her. Any creature caught in these flames takes 11d6 points of fire damage. A DC 19 Reflex save halves this damage. The firestorm lasts for 4 rounds. This ability can be used once per day.

Gaze of Flames (Su) Alarka can see through fire, fog, and smoke without penalty as long as the light is sufficient to allow her to see normally. She can also gaze through any source of flame within 10 feet per oracle level, as if using clairvoyance. She can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to her oracle level, but these rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Molten Skin (Ex) Alarka gains resist fire 10.

**Developments:** Once Alarka gives them Elea's scepter, the PCs can place it in the slot on the altar in area **2** to open the door. The scepter is made of sandalwood and studded with simple garnets. The narrow end is rectangular in shape.

This chamber is large, and bisected by a pit filled with burning coals. Alarka disposed of the bodies of the dead Pathfinders and raiders in the pit shortly after the fight.

While the remnants of their bones are below, any gear of value has been collected and placed in a heap next to the unconscious Jilarni. On the far side of the room is an altar, on top of which rests a scepter made of pure silver. At its tip is a large emerald. The altar bears the name Iltorian in ancient Osiriani, along with the inscription, "For Iltorian, the blessed second who taught me faith in the gods, but reliance only in oneself." This scepter is required to solve the puzzle in area 4, opening the way to area 5.

Jilarni Golgarna (NG female human fighter 3/rogue 3, hp 45 [currently -9]) can be revived, but she is in no condition to aid the PCs overly much. She has not been properly fed in a week and requires a good deal of rest before she will be ready to adventure again. If revived, she tells her side of what happened, but by this time, Alarka and her men are already gone, preparing to ambush the PCs when they attempt to depart (see area 8). Jilarni's largest contribution is her ability to read and translate ancient Osiriani if none of the PCs possesses

the ability. She also has in her gear a trio of scrolls of sending which she can use via Use Magic Device to send messages back to Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir in Sothis.

Mission Notes: Alarka and her bandits all wear a simple copper bracelet that bears curious markings. Such an identifying object is of some interest to Andoran faction PCs.

The daggers carried by the raiders are of some interest to Taldor faction PCs.

**Rewards**: If the PCs defeat Alarka and her bandit(s), reward each tier thusly:

Tier 5-6:

Give each player 934 gp.

Tier 8-9:

Give each player 2,203 gp.

## 4. Weight Puzzle (CR 5)

The corridor ends in a small chamber, dominated by an altar at its center. Atop the sandstone altar is a row of five silver trays, each one larger than the last.

The door leading to area 5 will not open unless the correct five scepters are placed on the trays in the correct order. Placing the scepters on the trays in the incorrect order sets off the trap, as noted below.

On the side of the altar, a simple inscription in ancient Orisiani reads, "The final five combined did not weigh upon me as heavily as the first." This is a clue to help the PCs solve the puzzle, indicating that the scepters must be placed on the trays in

ascending order of their weight. This is not as simple as

it sounds, unless the PCs happen to have a merchant scale on them, or some means of fabricating one to determine their weight. Clever PCs might very well come up with clever ways of determining this order (which should be encouraged). If they cannot come up with a way, and instead want to rely on rolls, secretly make a DC 10 Strength or Intelligence check for each scepter, using the PC's higher modifier. Failure puts that scepter out of order by one place. The correct order of the scepters (from lightest to heaviest) is: Elea, Shasha, Iltorian, Osomi, and Kiranna.

**Trap:** If the PCs fail to place the scepters on the trays in the correct order, the trap is set off. The trap can only be set off if the PCs possess all of the first five scepters. Placing fewer than five scepters on the trays has no effect in any way.

## SILVER LIGHTNING TRAP

CR 5

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

**EFFECTS** 

Scepter of Iltorian

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** automatic reset **Effect** electricity arc (4d6 electricity damage,
DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); multiple

targets (all characters in the chamber, as well as those within 5 feet of the entrance to the chamber)

## 5. Watery Grave (CR 6 or CR 9)

Turning the corner, the corridor begins to descend down a flight of stairs, right into a pool of still, black water.

To retrieve the sixth scepter, the PCs must navigate the watery maze and deal with its deadly inhabitant. On the wall above the stairs leading down into the maze is an inscription written in ancient Osiriani. It reads, "Let the first rest forever in a dark abyss. Let none speak her name."

The maze down below is a cunning one. When the PCs first enter, all of the locations marked with bars (a series of black dots) are blocked by ancient, rusted portcullises. Due to the filth in the water, normal vision is limited to a distance of 10 feet. Anything between 10 feet and 20 feet has concealment, whereas anything beyond 20 feet has total concealment. These ranges assume that the PCs have a source of light with them or possess darkvision. Swimming through the maze is relatively simple, requiring only a DC 10 Swim skill check. Make sure to note the total number of rounds spent underwater and how long the PCs can hold their breath.

The sixth scepter is made of rusted metal and is in very poor condition. It is partially fused to the altar and can

only be removed with a DC 10 Strength check. Note that there is no inscription

**Unnamed Scepter** 

on this altar other than a single word in ancient Osiriani: "Irian." Once the scepter is removed, two things happen simultaneously. First, all of the portcullises sink into the floor and new portcullises rise in all the locations marked with a row of blue dashes (reconfiguring the maze). Second, the secret door in the east wall opens, allowing a sea hag (or two sea hags in Tier 8–9) into the chamber to harass the PCs as they attempt to leave.

Creature: The sea hag is a dangerous threat to the PCs, especially if the group decided to send one PC into the watery depths alone. The sea hag has been in a suspended state for many years and has gone quite mad. She fights to the death. If a PC fails two saving throws against the hag's evil eye power and lacks the ability to breath underwater, he immediately begins to drown. Note that the CR of this encounter is increased due to the extreme nature of the surroundings and the danger that they pose.

Tier 5-6 (CR 6)

SEA HAG

CR 4

**hp** 38 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 243)

Tier 8-9 (CR 9)

ADVANCED SEA HAGS (2) CR 5

**hp** 46 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 243, 294)

**Mission Notes:** The name Irian is of interest to Osirion faction PCs.

## 6. Hall of Blades

The short corridor takes a turn, revealing a wall of whirling blades that blocks your path. Built into the wall on both sides of the corridor are small stone tablets made from marble, each bearing an inscription.

This corridor is dangerous, but not trapped. The walls of blades that block the way are magic in nature, and they cannot be bypassed without all six scepters that can be found thus far in the dungeon. These walls combine a blade barrier and a wall of force effect (both at CL 15th). Anyone touching the walls takes 15d6 points of damage and cannot penetrate the barrier. Attacks targeting the wall must survive this damage before their damage can be applied to the wall of force effect.

Each of the three walls can be dispelled for one day
by touching the proper scepters to the marble panels
that accompany each wall. Each panel bears a clue,
written in ancient Osiriani, as to which
scepter must be touched to it in order to

Scepter of Alkhet

disable the wall. There are two such clues for each wall. The clues are as follows.

**First Wall:** The eastern panel reads, "The first and worst" (solution: the unnamed scepter from area **5**). The western panel reads, "The last of my hopes" (solution: Osomi).

**Second Wall:** The eastern panel reads, "My right hand" (solution: Kiranna). The western panel reads, "The bringer of faith" (solution: Iltorian).

**Third Wall**: The eastern panel reads "The desert flower" (solution: Elea). The western panel reads "The luxurious one" (solution: Shasha).

When each scepter is touched to the correct panel, that panel glows for just a moment, but nothing happens until both scepters are touched to the correct panel at the same time. Doing this brings down the corresponding blade wall, allowing access to the next one in line. Once the final wall is brought down, the PCs can move on to explore the chamber beyond.

## 7. Alkhet's Throne (CR 6 or CR 9)

The door slowly swings open to reveal a large chamber made mostly from the same sandstone that dominates this place. A strip of black marble runs from an altar on the east end of the room, through the floor, to a throne that sits on the west end of the chamber.

This chamber contains the final puzzle needed to unlock the final door that allows access to the resting place of Alkhet Utmari, the Merchant Prince. It also contains a deadly trap if the puzzle is solved incorrectly.

On the west side of the room is a throne. Resting on the arm of the throne is the seventh, and final, scepter. This scepter is made of simple sandstone and appears older than all the rest. It is Alkhet's scepter and it is relatively unadorned. An inscription on the throne in ancient Osiriani reads, "The throne of the Merchant Prince—those who would seek audience must sit and judge the worth of all things." This clue is in reference to the altar on the opposite end of the room.

On the east side of the room is an altar made of the same black stone as the strip running through the room and the throne on the opposite side. Atop the altar are seven depressions, each one large enough to fit any one of the rods. On the left side of the altar, just outside the row of depressions, is a small piece of quartz, embedded into the stone. On the right side, opposite the piece of quartz, is a beautiful diamond. Combined with the clue from the throne, the PCs must discover that the secret to opening the final chamber is to place the scepters on the altar in order of their worth, starting with the least valuable on the

left, moving to the most valuable on the right. Unfortunately, there is a deception



here, making this puzzle slightly more difficult. While the value of the scepters can be determined with simple Appraise skill checks, Alkhet's scepter must be placed in the most valuable position, regardless of its worth. It has been hinted many times throughout this dungeon that he placed himself over everything, regardless of his actual stature.

The value of each scepter can be determined with DC 15 Appraise skill checks. These checks should be made in secret, but they can be made once by each character. Failure causes a deviation in value of the scepter by 5% in one direction or the other by each point by which the check was failed. This may or may not be enough to put a scepter in the wrong spot. The value of each scepter, in order by which it must be placed on the altar, is as follows:

Unnamed Scepter from area 5: 100 gp

Elea's Scepter: 700 gp Shasha's Scepter: 2,000 gp Kiranna's Scepter: 3,500 gp Osomi's Scepter: 3,700 gp Iltorian's Scepter: 4,000 gp Alkhet's Scepter: 500 gp

There is one last problem as well. The altar radiates a powerful repulsion effect that can only be dispelled by a character sitting on the throne. This effect only targets the scepters, meaning anyone bearing one cannot approach to within 10 feet of the altar. The moment a character sits on the throne, this effect is dispelled for as long as he remains seated—should he stand before the seven scepters are placed, any scepters on the altar are flung across the room. Once all seven scepters are placed in the correct location, the throne sinks into the floor, and the wall behind it shifts to reveal a corridor leading to the final resting place of Alkhet Utmari, the Merchant Prince.

**Trap:** Unfortunately, trial and error here is not an option because there is a trap that is set off whenever all seven scepters are placed atop the altar and any one of them is out of sequence. Placing the scepters atop the altar in the incorrect sequence causes black flames to spring forth from the altar, race across the room, and burn the PC sitting on the throne. The intensity of this flame depends entirely on how many rods are in the incorrect

location, meaning that clever PCs might be able to puzzle out how close they are to the solution by the amount of damage they are taking from setting off the trap.

Tier 5-6 (CR 6)

## BLACK FLAME TRAP

CR 6

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

**EFFECTS** 

Trigger touch; Reset automatic reset

Effect black flame (2d4 fire damage for each scepter in an incorrect location, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage, character on the throne does not receive a saving throw); multiple targets (anyone standing on the black stone or seated on the throne)

Tier 8–9 (CR 9)

#### BLACK FLAME TRAP

CR 9

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

**EFFECTS** 

Trigger touch; Reset automatic reset

Effect black flame (2d8 fire damage for each scepter in an incorrect location, DC 24 Reflex save for half damage, character on the throne does not receive a saving throw); multiple targets (anyone standing on the black stone or seated on the throne)

# 8. Crypt of the Merchant Prince (CR 7 or CR 10)

Behind the throne is a narrow set of stairs, leading to a low, cramped chamber. Large stone sarcophagi are arranged around this chamber, seven in total. One of them is truly special, lined with glimmering gold and set on a small dais.

This chamber holds the final resting place of Alkhet Utmari and his six wives. Each is placed in a stone sarcophagus, arrayed around the central dais, which holds the remains of the Merchant Prince. In addition to the sarcophagi, there are small mounds of canopic jars, ancient scrolls, dust-covered sculptures, and other pieces of valuable history.

Creatures: Alkhet placed one final protection over his resting place: his wives. Although when he was interred, all of his wives were transformed into mummies, some of them have completely decayed over the years, leaving behind nothing but dust and bones. Those that remain can open their tombs from the inside and emerge to attack the moment the PCs enter the chamber.

## Tier 5-6 (CR 7)

## MUMMIES (2)

CR 5

**hp** 60 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 210)

## Tier 8-9 (CR 10)

#### ADVANCED MUMMIES (4)

CR 6

**hp** 76 each (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 210, 294)

**Development:** Once the mummies are defeated, the PCs are free to plunder the room for all of its valuable artifacts. This should seem like the end of the adventure, but if Alarka and her minions are still alive, they are more than likely waiting in area 7 or area 2 for the PCs, preparing to ambush them and take their treasure for themselves.

**Treasure:** Alkhet left behind only his most valued possessions in this chamber. For Tier 5–6, the PCs find 1,000 gp worth of gems, jewelry, silverware, and art objects; a dagger of venom, red dragon hide full plate, lesser metamagic rod of silent, dust of illusion, and a golembane scarab. For Tier 8–9, increase the gold piece value of the gems, jewelry, and so on to 3,000 gp. In addition to the items in Tier 5–6, Tier 8–9 PCs find slippers of spider climb and a rod of the python.

Mission Notes: The canopic jars and sarcophagus of Alkhet both contain remains of this long dead merchant, making them of supreme interest to Cheliax faction PCs. If any of these jars are brought back to Sothis, such a PC might seek to contaminate them.

There are a host of ancient trinkets in this room, any one of which is of great interest to Taldor faction PCs.

**Rewards**: If the PCs recover Alkhet's hoard, reward each tier thusly:

Tier 5-6:

Give each player 1,609 gp.

Tier 8-9:

Give each player 3,259 gp.

## CONCLUSION

After finishing their exploration of the tomb, the PCs can easily make their way back to Sothis, presumably with Jilarni and the bodies of her companions in tow. There are more than enough camels (taking them from the bandits) to carry all of the PCs, the recovered Pathfinders, and the loot.

On returning to the capital city, Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir is eager to hear their report and examine all that they have recovered. He is saddened to learn of the death of two of his members, but grateful that Jilarni survived and that their bodies were recovered. After cataloging all that was found, he sends a runner to the palace to inform the Ruby Prince of the success. Servants come to collect the artifacts shortly thereafter. Balentiir is quite pleased with the PCs performance and invites them all to stay for dinner so that he might hear more of their journey, the treacherous Alarka, and the dangers of the tomb.

## **FACTION MISSIONS**

Andoran Faction: PCs from the Andoran faction who find the book on Alarka's camel in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Andoran faction who also recover a brooch from Alarka or one of her raiders in area 3 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Cheliax Faction: PCs from the Cheliax faction who recover a piece of the Merchant Prince in area 8 earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Cheliax faction who also ensure that any samples of the dead are contaminated from area 8 without being seen earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Osirion Faction: PCs from the Osirion faction who get a rubbing of the writing in area 2 earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Osirion faction who also learn the name in area 5 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

**Qadira Faction:** PCs from the Qadira faction who get a sample of the scorpion poison in Act 1 earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Qadira faction who also recover one of the blue flowers from area 1 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

Taldor Faction: PCs from the Taldor faction who recover a dagger from one of the bandits in area 3 earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Taldor faction who also recover a trinket from area 8 earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

## **Andoran Faction Handout**

Champion of Freedom.

It has come to my attention that there are events unfolding in the western deserts of Osirion, not far from the border with Thuvia. We have long wished to get a better foothold in those lawless deserts, where slavery and banditry are rife.

Should you happen to run afoul any of Thuvia's agents, be vigilant for any information that you might be able to gather on their movements or activities. We have heard that some groups from the region have been known to carry brooches or other jewelry to identify their allegiance. If you could acquire such a piece, it would greatly assist our future endeavors.

Copt Colson Mald For Andoran and Freedom

## Cheliax Faction Handout

Infernal Succulent,

We learned that there is to be another expedition into the desert, exploring the ancient tomb of a powerful Osirian merchant. We have arranged for you to be part of this expedition and demand your service. It is in our interest to recover a sample of the remains from this merchant prince, be it a finger or the dust from his withered entrails.

We also would like you to ensure that any remains that are returned become contaminated, with sand, soil, the dust of other corpses, it matters not, so long as they are not pure. In Secrecu, Muda

Paracountess Zarta Dralneen

## **Osirion Faction Handout**

Blessed Salutations.

Word reached me that the Ruby Prince located the tomb of a powerful merchant prince, thought long lost. We also heard that the first group sent to explore it has not returned and that another may be sent. Should you be asked to serve on this mission, we would like you to secure a copy of any historical records, usually kept in the form of wall carvings. A simple rubbing will do. In addition, this merchant prince was said to have six wives, but the name of the first has been lost to history. If you could discover this name and deliver it to us, it would be most appreciated.



Tread Carefully, menopheus

Amenopheus, The Sapphire Sage

## **Qadira Faction Handout**

Servant of the Satrap,

There are many mysteries in the desert and it has come to our attention that you will be soon exploring them. One of the Satrap's naturalists has taken a keen interest in the life of the desert, particularly when it comes to toxins. If you could recover samples of any such poisons, it would be of interest. Of course, it need not be from a creature. There is a rare blue flower that only seems to grow around tombs that also contains a deadly poison if properly prepared.

> Sincevely, Pasha Muhlia Al-Jakvi Muhlie Al-Jah

**Taldor Faction Handout** 

Glorious Agent,

I hope this missive finds you well and in sublime comfort. Such hope is fleeting, since my informants tell me that you are in Osirion, so may you instead find shade and a chilled wine. While you are there, however, you might be of some use to me. There is a Lady in my confidence that is looking for a gift

for her father, a collector of antiquities. If you might procure some ancient trinket, such as

a ring or locket, while you are there, I would be in your debt.

I have another small matter that is of some interest. I am looking to procure an authentic dagger from the region. Not the kind you might find in a shop, but one made by the natives. It is best not to discuss it any further here.

Baron Jacquo Dalsine





## PLAYER HANDOUT #1

## **SCEPTER OF OSOMI**

This scepter is made of one large shard of ebony, studded with tiny rubies, and capped by platinum rings. The narrow end of this scepter is triangular.

Notes



## PLAYER HANDOUT #2

## **SCEPTER OF KIRANNA**

This scepter is made of iron, lined with long grooves of silver that converge on a diamond tip. The narrow end of this scepter is perfectly square.

Notes:



## PLAYER HANDOUT #3

## **SCEPTER OF ELEA**

This scepter is made of sandalwood. It resided on the southwest altar, which is made of sandalwood and decorated with a fine ivory inlay.

Notes:



## PLAYER HANDOUT #4

## **SCEPTER OF SHASHA**

This scepter is made of copper, with precious pearls spiraling around its surface. The narrow end of this scepter is circular.

Notes:



## PLAYER HANDOUT #6

## THE UNNAMED SCEPTER

This scepter is made of rusted metal and is in very poor condition. **Notes:** 

PLAYER HANDOUT #7

## **SCEPTER OF ALKHET**

This scepter is made of simple sandstone and appears older than all the rest. **Notes:** 



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## SCENARIO #2-03: The Rebel's Ransom

Scenario Chronicle #

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