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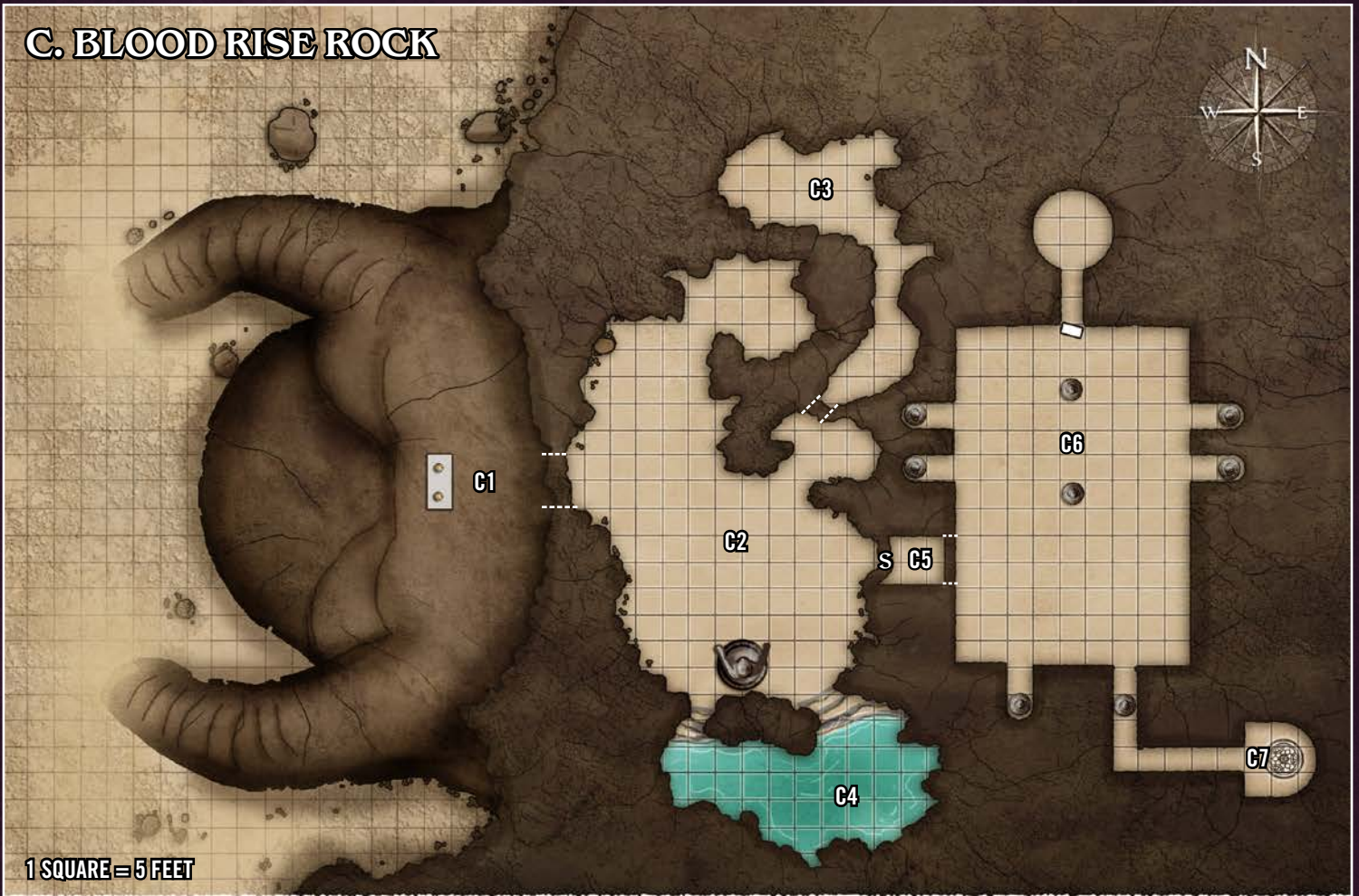


FEAST of DUST

A PATHFINDER RPG ADVENTURE FOR LEVEL 11

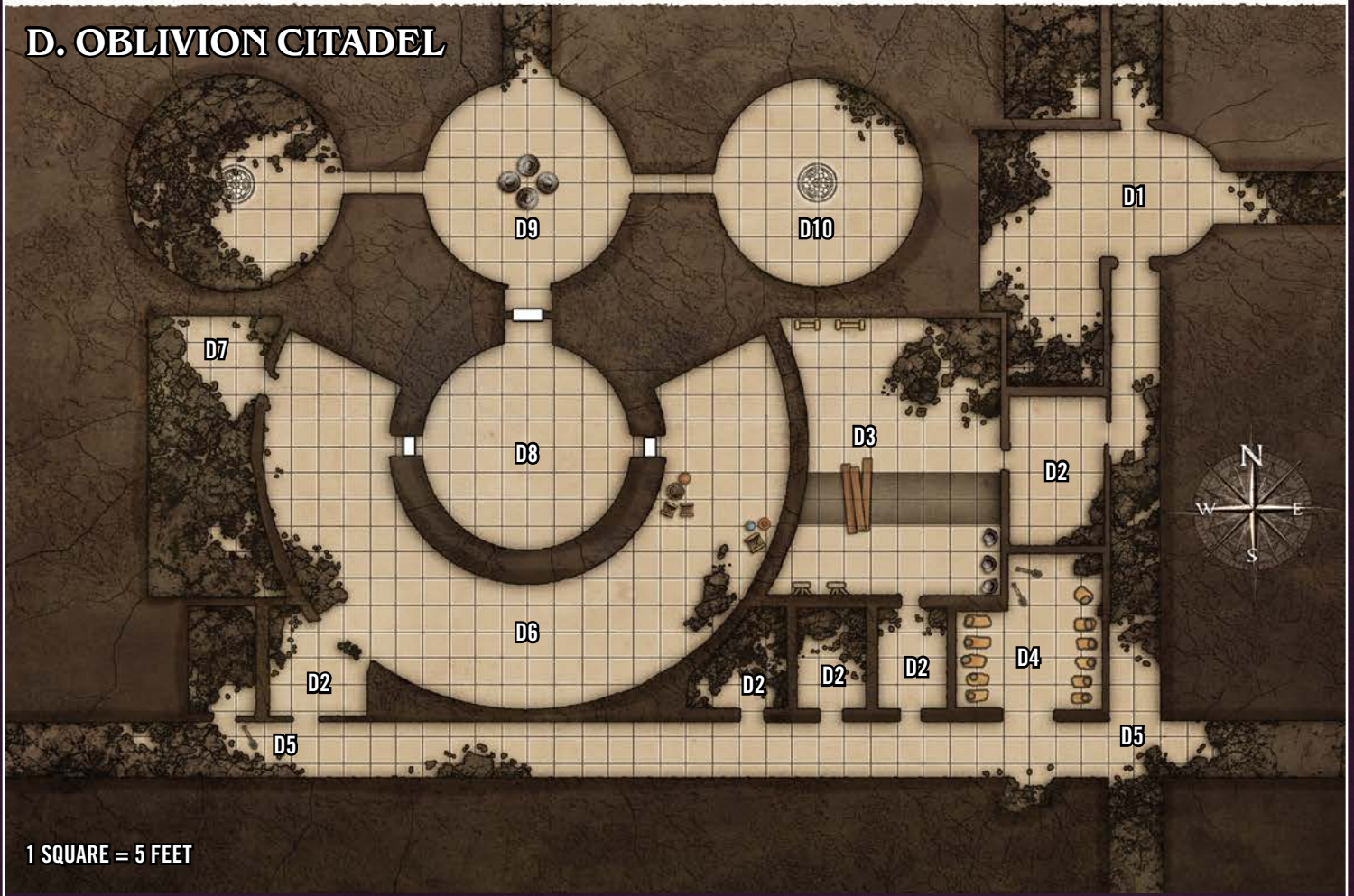
BY NICOLAS LOGUE

C. BLOOD RISE ROCK



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

D. OBLIVION CITADEL



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER MODULE

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ON THE COVER



Illustrator Michal Ivan brings to life the daring battle between the meladaemon Reched and the heroic duo of Kyra and Zadim.



FEAST of DUST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: In the Jackal's Shadow	4
The heroes arrive in the desert oasis town of Dimayen only to find panic and confusion as a strange curse—the Feast of Dust—ravages the city. They investigate, discovering that the town's leadership have secluded themselves in their compound with the only experts who may be able to help.	
Chapter 2: Oblivion and Sand	26
The heroes set out into the Meraz Desert to recover the three remaining <i>Oblivion Keys</i> —evil artifacts that can slay the resurrected demigod and architect of the curse, the Jackal Prince.	
Chapter 3: Flesh for the Famine Prince	44
Armed with the <i>Oblivion Keys</i> , the heroes finally approach the Jackal Prince's tower and face his army of undead and daemons in a final battle to save the Meraz Desert—and the world—from the harbinger before he restores his divine form.	
Appendix 1: Dimayen	58
Appendix 2: New Monsters	61

REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, though these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/prd.

<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Monster Codex</i>	MC
<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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PATHFINDER MODULE



FEAST of DUST

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Feast of Dust is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 11** The PCs begin the adventure at 11th level.
- 12** When they depart Dimayen to seek the *Oblivion Keys*, the PCs should be 12th level.
- 13** By the time they approach the Sunbleached Tower, the PCs should be 13th level.
- 14** The PCs should be 14th level at the end of the adventure, after defeating the Jackal Prince and closing his portal to Abaddon.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In *Feast of Dust*, the heroes come across the isolated desert town of Dimayen, which is in the grip of a strange, supernatural plague. Upon investigating, they discover the handiwork of the Jackal Prince of Famine—a powerful daemon harbinger defeated and imprisoned millennia ago. Now returned to Golarion in a mortal host, the Jackal Prince is gathering his power. To bind him once more, the PCs must race to forgotten corners of the desert to recover three evil artifacts capable of sealing this ancient terror away once again. Their journeys eventually take them to the Sunbleached Tower, where a rend in the fabric of reality connects the Jackal Prince—and all of Golarion—to the nightmare realm of Abaddon.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

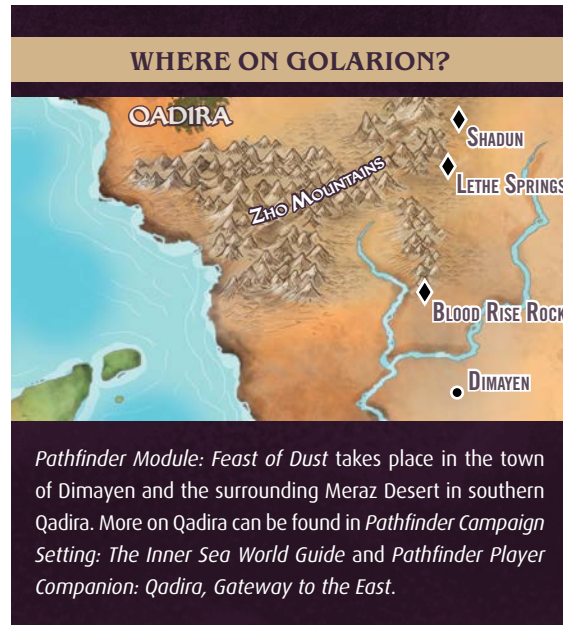
The vast Meraz Desert in southern Qadira hides a glorious lost history—and forgotten evils. The endless desert was once a magnificent, fertile savanna teeming with life. Great city-states and prosperous nomad tribes sprang up in this lush land of plenty at the dawn of the Age of Destiny. Blessed with riches and resources, the savanna and its inhabitants could have grown to dominate human culture centuries before the rise of Qadira or Taldor.

Then came the four Heralds of Dust: the Jackal Prince of Famine, the Rat Princess of Plague, the Raven Princess of Death, and the Vulture Prince of War. Some legends describe the Heralds of Dust as exceptionally loathsome beasts that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse uplifted to harbinger status to serve as their tools of destruction. Others claim that they were evil mortal siblings the gods cast into the dust for their unspeakable crimes. The heralds' true names are lost to history.

Regardless of the heralds' origins, their cults spread as silently as a plague and as ruthlessly as war throughout the region. Their faithful grew steadily more powerful as their enemies withered and fell from the four great blights they wielded: the Breath of Dust, the Plague of Dust, the Blood of Dust, and the Feast of Dust. By the time the siblings pierced the veil between the Material Plane and Abaddon—bringing daemonic armies and the odious Black Tower to Golarion—the people of the Meraz were already falling into chaos. In the century of wicked glory that followed, the savanna turned to dust and sand; verdant forests and lush fields withered into bone-white trees and endless dunes. With the heralds' devastation spreading like wildfire, all bowed in fear, and the heralds gorged themselves on the souls of thousands.

Eventually, the people of the Meraz pushed back. Great scholars and priests, backed by fearless janni warriors, assaulted the Black Tower and slew the demigods. But daemons' evil flows from the mortal soul; though defeated, the four heralds festered within the mortals they had corrupted, and their hoarded power remained. To combat this influence, an alliance of heroes captured the daemonic harbingers' essences in four items of power, imprisoning their evil and preventing their malevolence from overwhelming any of the remaining mortals who had stood against them. Knowing the greatness of the burden, the scant few dozen survivors swore to stand sentinel over the artifacts—called the *Oblivion Keys*—and one another, to prevent the Heralds of Dust from ever returning to resume the destruction they once wrought.

These Sentinels of Meraz, as they named themselves, developed elaborate training regimens to strengthen their martial skills against would-be thieves, and to strengthen their minds against the influence of the *Oblivion Keys*. Their remote desert citadel eventually grew into the thriving city of Shadun. For a time the people of the Meraz knew peace again. But the influence of the *Oblivion Keys*



still drew misfortune to their wealthy community. When the twin volcanoes of Zhonar and Zobl erupted and buried Shadun, the Sentinels escaped with three of the four artifacts in tow. These keys were called the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, the *Shroud of Flies*, and the *Ravenous Blade*. The fourth key, the *Handflower of Genocide*, they left entombed with guardians in the buried city.

Bandits quickly set upon the caravan carrying the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, though the criminals just as quickly succumbed to the bottle's curse. Left upturned for centuries, the calabash's memory-altering waters seeped into the ground, creating a cursed hot spring from which few intruders return.

Meanwhile, the Sentinels carried the *Shroud of Flies* south to a rocky outcropping in the foothills of the Zhong Mountains. Here, they carved a hidden vault and cloaked it with powerful magic. While the shroud's influence attracted plague cultists and Lamashtans to the site over the centuries, none ever discovered its hidden treasure.

Only the *Ravenous Blade* remained mobile, traveling across Qadira as it traded hands among the Sentinels of the Meraz. Twenty years ago, it came to the farming community of Dimayen under the protection of local bookseller, scholar, and Sentinel Sayid Aaban, when he moved to Dimayen along with his shiftless son, Dehlvat.

Recently, though, something has gone horribly wrong. Jackals now walk the dunes with purpose, dropping cursed shards of cracked and bleached bones at the feet of unfortunate souls across the Meraz. Those chosen by the beasts lose themselves to gnawing hunger and madness, eventually stumbling into the desert to answer some silent call that promises to sate their need. It seems that the Feast of Dust has returned, and with it the Jackal Prince.

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS



CHAPTER 1

IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW

For nearly 2 decades now, the isolated town of Dimayen has experienced hardship and hunger. Initially, a series of accidents collapsed its irrigation system, the lifeline of the region's farmers. Afterward, ravenous ankhegs moved in after fleeing some unknown threat in the desert; they quickly made meals of the town's livestock and preyed on careless travelers. But the town's newest problems arrived 3 months ago with the traveling swindler and treasure-hunter Ibhris Akpahl.

Ibhris quickly earned a poor reputation when he drunkenly clashed with the priests of the local Sarenite temple over healing expenses. Still, he managed to endear himself to Dehlvat Aaban, son of the city's only Sentinel of Meraz, Sayid Aaban. Dehlvat shared none of his father's interest in what he called musty old scrolls and foolish superstitions. One

evening, while more than a little inebriated and eager to impress his exciting new companion, Dehlvat bragged to Ibhris about his father's desert artifacts. Ibhris saw profit on the horizon and cultivated a close friendship with the young man. He eventually convinced the gullible youth that his father's collection must be worth a king's ransom. After a particularly bitter argument with Sayid, Dehlvat stole his father's research and the *Ravenous Blade* and fled into the desert with the con artist.

When Dehlvat broke the seals on the *Ravenous Blade*, everything that remained of the Jackal Prince of Famine rushed into him, feasting on his greedy young soul and restoring the harbinger's mind in the unfortunate mortal's body. The Jackal Prince abandoned Ibhris in the desert and returned to his Black Tower—now nothing but a



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

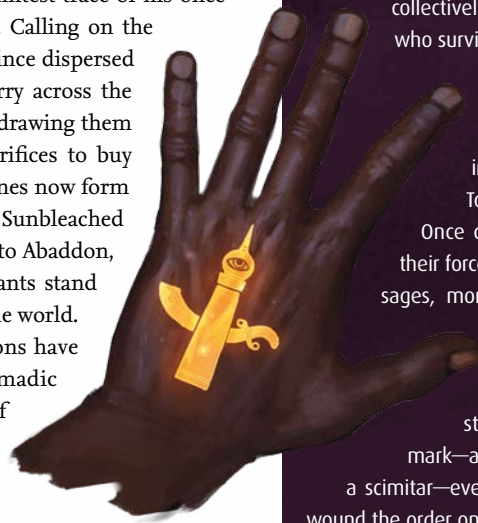
weathered foundation lost amid the endless sea of dunes—and discovered that his planar breach to Abaddon, torn open millennia ago, still remained as a thin veil between worlds. When the Jackal Prince's plea to Trelmarixian, the Horseman of Famine, to restore his grand, horrible form, was met with only silence, he instead clawed into the sand and uncovered the shattered, sun-bleached skeleton of his former body. Within it was the faintest trace of his once-mighty blight: the Feast of Dust. Calling on the canids of the desert, the Jackal Prince dispersed his bones and the curse they carry across the Meraz, enslaving the hungry and drawing them to him. Their souls serve as sacrifices to buy Trelmarixian's favor, and their bones now form the walls of his newly constructed Sunbleached Tower, which reaches ever closer to Abaddon, where throngs of daemonic servants stand ready to pour out and consume the world.

The Jackal Prince's machinations have already claimed a dozen nomadic tribes, and now the Feast of Dust besets Dimayen as well. Wild jackals walk the streets unmolested, for every citizen fears that drawing their attention will cause the beasts to drop an inscribed bone at her feet, and hundreds of citizens now fight the esurient rage the Feast of Dust instills. As panic builds, the city's ruling family, the Whitewater clan, has begun collecting anyone with knowledge of magic or healing spells and securing them behind the walls of the family's lavish compound. Rumors run wild that even the wealthy elite of Dimayen have fallen victim to this ancient blight.

GETTING STARTED

As *Feast of Dust* opens, the PCs approach the town of Dimayen, a farming community deep in the Meraz Desert. A local oasis sustains the town, as does a disaster-ridden series of irrigation channels. The PCs may be visiting as a stopover on their way to a much larger Qadiran outpost, or deliberately journeying to Dimayen to consult with an expert or old friend. Sayid Aaban of the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore may even be a scholarly acquaintance, or the PCs may be responding to a request for help from the Sarenite priest Arakor Shonar, who runs the Shrine of Overflowing Joys (see page 10). Alternatively, the PCs may already be members of the Sentinels of Meraz (see the sidebar), dispatched from Katheer to investigate the strange occurrences in the southern desert.

Regardless of their reasons for coming to Dimayen, the PCs should see evidence of the Feast of Dust long before they arrive: abandoned caravans with no trace of their travelers save for a few gnawed bones, starving vultures fighting over human remains half buried in the sand, or unusually aggressive infestations of desert parasites.



THE SENTINELS OF MERAZ

This small secret society dates back thousands of years, when the scattered peoples of the Meraz Desert rose up against the daemonic heralds despoiling their land. Unable to permanently slay the four Heralds of Dust, these heroes trapped them within four artifacts the defenders collectively dubbed the *Oblivion Keys*. The heroes who survived the ordeal formed the Sentinels of Meraz, a cabal of warriors and scholars that protects the *Oblivion Keys* and stands ever vigilant against daemonic influence in the mortal world.

Today, the Sentinels are a waning force. Once counting thousands of agents among their forces, they now number only a few dozen sages, monks, and explorers who supplement their dwindling ranks by enticing mercenaries with promises of treasure and glory. Daemons still recognize the order's distinctive mark—an eye-capped watchtower crossed by a scimitar—even if most mortals have forgotten the wound the order once dealt to the daemonic hordes.

WATCHTOWER TATTOO		PRICE 9,500 GP
SLOT —	CL 8th	WEIGHT —
AURA moderate abjuration		

A *watchtower tattoo* must be applied to the back of a hand. Once applied, it provides a +4 resistance bonus against the spells and spell-like abilities of daemons, and the bearer cannot be possessed by daemons using *magic jar* or similar effects.

Daemons immediately recognize any bearer of this tattoo as an enemy, even if the mark is covered or disguised. This revulsion may trigger strange reactions in daemonic magic or artifacts.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,750 GP
Inscribe Magical Tattoo, <i>protection from evil</i>	

By the time the PCs reach the outskirts of Dimayen and the Long Whisker mercenary camp, they should already suspect that something unnatural plagues the area.

The two major encounter locations within Dimayen, the Whitewater compound (see page 16) and the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore (see page 11), as well as various minor encounters, can be approached in any order, allowing the PCs to investigate as they see fit. Allow the PCs to attempt Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) checks to see how much they know about Dimayen and its current plight (see Appendix 1 on page 58). Once the players are ready, run the first encounter to begin the adventure.

THE FEAST OF DUST

The Jackal Prince created the devastating curse known as the Feast of Dust to lure people into the desert so he can harvest their bones for his tower and their souls to bolster his power.

A creature that has a cursed bone sigil delivered to it must immediately succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be afflicted with the curse. Other creatures that have not eaten for 24 hours and are within 100 feet of a creature afflicted with the Feast of Dust must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be afflicted with the curse.

FEAST OF DUST

Type curse; **Save** Fort DC 22

Effect Affected creatures can't eat and are immediately fatigued. They regurgitate any food consumed, believing that the food is nothing but ashes, dust, and rot. They remain ravenously hungry for the duration of the curse. 24 hours after the effects of this curse manifest—and every 24 hours thereafter—the afflicted creature takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage from starvation. As long as the curse persists, the nonlethal damage does not heal naturally. Like normal starvation damage, nonlethal damage incurred in this way cannot be healed with magical healing.

Any creature afflicted with the Feast of Dust that takes nonlethal damage from starvation equal to 1/2 its maximum hit points loses the fatigued condition and gains a +4 profane bonus to Strength and a 10-foot bonus to its speed. In addition, it takes a -4 penalty to its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, and gains a bite attack that deals damage according to its size (1d4 if Medium, 1d3 if Small). Finally, any creature so afflicted is compelled to travel toward the Sunbleached Tower; it instinctively knows the tower's location.

An afflicted creature that dies from starvation rises in 1 hour as a ghoul and maintains its compulsion to venture to the Sunbleached Tower. Some particularly powerful or evil creatures that die of starvation instead rise as dread ghouls.

Cure The Feast of Dust can be removed only via *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*. *Break enchantment* removes the effects of the curse for 1 day; *remove curse* has no effect on the Feast of Dust. Magically created food (such as food created

via *create food and water*, *goodberry*, or *heroes' feast*) offers some relief, though it still tastes disgusting to the afflicted. Consuming magically created food provides a cursed creature almost no true nutrition, but halves all starvation damage the creature takes for a number of days equal to the spell's level.

Killing the Jackal Prince, sealing his spirit back within the *Ravenous Blade*, or removing him from the Sunbleached Tower for at least 24 hours removes the curse from all afflicted creatures.

THE MAD MERCENARY (CR 10)

Among miles of rolling desert and sunbaked, abandoned farms, the ramshackle outskirts of Dimayen rise from the sands. More a network of camps than an actual settlement, the so-called Third Circle is an ever-shifting sea of tents erected by nomads, traders, and mercenaries stopping in town to resupply. Wild jackals wander the streets, and citizens give the creatures a wide berth.

A scuffle erupts amid a mercenary camp a mere fifty feet away. A goateed man in armor and officer's stripes struggles as three mercenaries fight to restrain him. A fourth pleads, "Captain, please control yourself!" The struggling man tosses two of his captors aside and sinks his teeth into the third's neck, and the young soldier falls away holding the gushing wound. Blood-soaked and wild-eyed, the captain charges the one soldier left standing.

Khazat Karelem—captain of the Long Whisker Company—recently awoke to find a shard of yellowed bone by his bedroll and a jackal sitting at the entry to his grand tent. After fighting the ravages of the Feast of Dust, he has finally succumbed to insatiable hunger and become lost in madness. His loyal troops hope to restrain the captain before he hurts anyone else. The captain's current target is Salazeh, his lieutenant and closest friend, and unless the PCs intervene, Karelem beats Salazeh to death over the next 3 rounds, tears chunks from her flesh, and finally begins vomiting and fleeing into the desert after 1 minute.

Creatures: Captain Karelem is too lost in the curse to be reasoned with and attacks anyone who approaches. To stop his rampage, the PCs must physically restrain him or knock him unconscious.

The Long Whisker mercenaries respect their leader, even if he has lost his mind. If the PCs restrain him without permanent injury, they earn the mercenaries'



KHAZAT KARELEM



favor, and you can have them come to the party's rescue later in the adventure if the Jackal Prince's forces overwhelm the heroes. If the PCs slay Captain Karelem, they must succeed at a DC 27 Diplomacy check or be set upon by six enraged Long Whisker mercenaries looking to avenge their fallen leader.

KHAZAT KARELEM CR 10

XP 9,600

Male human fighter 11

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 109 (11d10+44) (56 points of nonlethal damage)

Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3 (+3 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +3

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 *halberd* +22/+17/+12 (1d10+13/×3), bite +16 (1d4+7) or

dagger of repose +17/+12/+7 (1d4+8/×3), bite +16 (1d4+7)

Special Attacks weapon training (polearms +2, light blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple, +18 sunder); **CMD** 28 (30 vs. grapple, 30 vs. sunder)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Greater Grapple, Greater Weapon Focus (halberd), Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)

Skills Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +8, Perception +4, Sense Motive +1

Languages Common

SQ armor training 3

Gear +2 *breastplate*, +2 *halberd*, *dagger of repose*

LONG WHISKER MERCENARIES (6) CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Grizzled mercenary (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 268)

hp 51 each

Treasure: While the Long Whiskers wish to bury their deceased leader with his armor and weapons as befits a warrior of his skill, they offer the PCs 1,000 gp—half of their current operating budget—as reward if the PCs assisted while avoiding the mercenaries' ire. If Captain Karelem is restored to lucidity, he offers his *dagger of repose* to whoever ends his suffering.

Development: If the PCs manage to subdue Karelem without killing him (or talk down his angry mercenaries in the wake of his death), the Long Whisker mercenaries can provide them with some basic knowledge. The company arrived less than a week ago to rest and refill their water

DAGGER OF REPOSE

In the Meraz Desert, where ancient curses and strange beasts sleep below the sands, many wanderers carry daggers that can spare themselves and their loved ones from a fate worse than death.

DAGGER OF REPOSE

PRICE

8,902 GP

SLOT

weapon

CL

8th

WEIGHT

1 lb.

AURA

moderate conjuration

This short, curved dagger shimmers with folded layers of iron and steel. It acts as a +1 *undead-bane dagger*. Once per day when the *dagger of repose* is used to perform a coup de grace to slay a living creature, the wielder can bless the victim's corpse, preventing the victim from rising as an undead because of ongoing diseases or curse effects. This protection also prevents the victim's corpse from being animated by necromancy magic such as *animate dead* or *create undead* for 24 hours.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *sanctify corpse*, *summon monster I*

COST

4,602 GP

supplies at the Whitewater Spring; by that point, the townsfolk had already developed superstitions about the jackals, which reportedly carry the curse. Each night, the mercenaries say, they have seen starving, deranged victims running northeast into the desert. Soon after the mercenaries' arrival, the Whitewater family sealed off their compound and the spring within, leaving the Long Whiskers to gather what water they could from the muddy, silt-choked irrigation ditches. They've heard that High Priest Arakor at the Shrine of Overflowing Joys could cure the malady overtaking the town, but he hasn't been seen for days.

If Captain Karelem survives and the PCs manage to alleviate his dementia, he begs them to end his life before the gnawing hunger drives him to violence again. He apologizes to his troops and tearfully says his farewells, promoting Salazeh to captain as his last act.

AVERTING DISASTER

This chapter of *Feast of Dust* allows the PCs some freedom to explore Dimayen and investigate the curse however they wish. Several encounters point curious adventurers toward the Shrine of Overflowing Joys—the local Sarenite temple—and a scholar and bookseller named Sayid Aaban.

Adventurers may also want to speak to the town's leadership—the dwindling farm collective lacks official rulers, but the richest families effectively control Dimayen's development and security. The accepted leaders, the Whitewater family, have closed the gates of their compound and turned away all visitors. Once the PCs get a reputation around town—through saving lives

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW

CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND

CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE

APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS



on the street, volunteering at the temple, or clearing the strange visitors out of the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore—the Whitewaters extend an invitation to the PCs, warmly granting an audience to address the recent troubles (see The Whitewater Storm on page 16).

Dimayen Rumors

The Dimayeni have grown inhospitable in the wake of their newest disaster. Still, with a successful Diplomacy check to gather information, the PCs can learn a few details.

15+: “The desert spat out some new curse: it rides bits of old bone carried by filthy jackals. If a jackal crosses your path, spit on your shadow and turn around, or else food and wine will sour on your lips and eventually a maddening hunger will drive you into the wastes.”

17+: “High Priest Arakor has vanished in our hour of need! I always knew that wobbly-kneed city boy was too young for the job. No guts.”

19+: “This is all the fault of that drunken drifter who tore up the Sarenite temple a few months back. Things have only been getting worse since then!”

21+: “Everyone knows Sayid runs some secret cult out of the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore. His boy told everyone so before he ran off. If Sayid’s not the cause of these jackals, he at least knows who is. He’s smart to keep out of sight, because I’ll string him from the rafters if it means protecting my children from this curse. Or maybe I’ll tie him down and the jackals pull him apart!”

22+: “I hear there’s a holy man out at Blood Rise Rock with the power to cure the curse. Sameer set out to meet him just two days ago when little Ghilana fell ill.”

24+: “I hear no one’s safe from this plague. Even some of the Whitewaters are falling from it.”

Story Award: If the PCs learn anything new from the citizens of Dimayen, award them 3,200 XP.

THE DOOMS OF DIMAYEN

The people of Dimayen are tenacious, but this newest round of disaster has strained even their impressive resolve. While the PCs wander Dimayen, they stumble across dreadful scenes as the citizens grow increasingly panicked and paranoid. The PCs may encounter the following situations at any time in town—before, after, or between their visits to the Sarenite temple, Fabled and Forgotten, and the Whitewater compound.

Dogs at his Heels (CR 10)

Within a collapsed tent, a young boy clings to a woman’s dead body lying in a patch of crimson-stained sand. He alternates between sobbing and swinging a broken length of tent pole at a clutch of large, hungry wild jackals circling the pair.

Mundane disease claimed the mother of young Jala, but his inconsolable crying attracted the attention of the scavengers now wandering the town. Other townsfolk

pointedly ignore the horrific scene, too terrified of the curse the jackals purportedly carry to intervene.

Creatures: Dimayen’s jackals—normally cowardly beasts that paw through trash piles—now feed without fear whether they serve the Jackal Prince or not. While the six jackals pose little threat to the PCs on their own, the pack now follows a pair of shaghals, which are vicious scavengers from the depths of Abaddon.

If the party does not intervene in 2 rounds, the jackals begin picking at the mother’s body, pounce upon Jala, and tear him into gory bits.

SHAGHALS (2) **CR 8**
XP 4,800 each
hp 105 each (see page 63)

JACKALS (7) **CR 1/3**
XP 135 each
Dog (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 87)
hp 6 each

Treasure: While Jala resists being sold to the Whitewaters, if the PCs see him to safety and a better life with either the Sarenites or Sayid, the boy thanks them and offers them his mother’s locket—a *necklace of adaptation* passed down through his family for a dozen generations—after carefully removing his parents’ portraits from the interior.

Development: If left alone, Jala doesn’t last long. He is traumatized over his parents’ deaths, and doesn’t voluntarily leave his mother’s side unless the PCs succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, but bodily carrying away the small boy is simple. While the PCs likely make poor caregivers to a boy, the Shrine of Overflowing Joys takes in orphans. The Whitewaters will buy the boy as a slave for 10 gp. Sayid Aaban may also be convinced to adopt the boy with a little encouragement, hoping to prove himself a better father the second time around.

The Stricken Prophet

“Behold! Behold the fury of the Great Scarab!” A rattling gasp erupts from a wrinkled woman as she points an accusatory finger at each passerby in turn. “Behold his disgust at this soft town that’s forgotten the wandering ways! His disgust at children who turn their backs on their mother desert!”

Poor **Naseem** (female human commoner 4) is one of the many beggars to call Dimayen’s Third Circle home, but thus far she remains unaffected by the Feast of Dust. Fearful of the encroaching plague, she followed rumors into the desert to see the “Great Scarab,” a self-proclaimed god dwelling in the nearby foothills (see page 27) to earn his blessing and protection from the curse. The long journey left her severely sunburnt, while the “god’s” touch gave her horrific visions of a world picked over by carrion



INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

birds and crawling beetles—and a case of cackle fever (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557). Between her sunstroke, visions, and rapidly deteriorating mind, Naseem has concluded that the Great Scarab is an old desert god who inflicts the Feast of Dust as punishment upon tribes that gave up their nomadic traditions to settle and farm. She hopes to save the residents of Dimayen by calling out their sins.

Treasure: If the PCs express sincere interest in what she has to say, Naseem is so overjoyed she offers them a relic: a holy symbol of the Great Scarab she “borrowed” to show the people of Dimayen the god’s sincerity. The treasure is actually a *malleable symbol*^{UE}, currently shaped like a canine skull swallowing the sun. With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check, a character recognizes this as the symbol of Trelmarixian, daemon Horseman of Famine.

Development: Naseem’s Wisdom damage leaves her with an effective Wisdom score of 3, and she grows increasingly aggressive in her proselytizing each day. If the PCs stop to listen, she spins winding tales conflating the faiths of Sarenrae, Gozreh, and several unrelated children’s stories into a gibberish theology. With a successful DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check, a character recognizes her stories as such, but a successful DC 13 Sense Motive check also reveals that Naseem is quite sincere about having met what she believes to be a god.

If the PCs heal some of Naseem’s Wisdom damage or cure her cackle fever, she can provide additional information. She learned of the Great Scarab from a wandering tribe of sulis that recently stopped in town, and can give vague directions to the Great Scarab’s altar at Blood Rise Rock (see page 30). She also mentions that Sayid at the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore—the scholar occasionally left food scraps and palm wine on his back step for the old woman—warned her against traveling to the rock, which he pronounced “dangerous, and beset with disease.” She also recalls how the wall behind the altar “shimmered and shook like it was alive, or a mirage” (referring to the *illusory wall* in area C1), before asking the PCs to escort her to the Shrine of Overflowing Joys.

Naseem’s role in this adventure is largely to highlight the desperation of Dimayen’s people and foreshadow the events of Chapter 2, but she can also provide players with any rumors they may have missed or direction if they feel at a loss for how to proceed.

Story Award: If the PCs learn anything new from Naseem, award them 3,200 XP. If they restore her mind or cure her cackle fever, award them an additional 1,600 XP.

Opportunistic Looters (CR 11)

As the party traverses the town, they happen upon the silk merchant Aren and her family trying to flee the city in a wagon. Sadly, Aren’s finery and her husband’s jewels attracted the attentions of dangerous local criminals—the last remnants of Dimayen’s murderous Brotherhood

of Thieves, who likewise wish to flee the city with Aren’s wagon and wealth.

Creatures: As the PCs arrive on the scene, three of the looters are trying to drag Aren’s husband, Yasr, from the wagon, while the other three beat Aren with clubs.

BROTHERHOOD THIEVES (6) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Freelance thief (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 147)

hp 42 each

Treasure: Aren rewards each PC who helps her and Yasr with 200 gp and a bolt of silk from the back of her wagon (worth 400 gp each). She has a total of 1,300 gp worth of gems and assorted coins, but hopes to save some for traveling and to start over in a new town. She hands it over if intimidated in any way, happy to get away with her life and husband. The silks and belongings in the wagon are worth a total of 3,450 gp.

Mass Grave (CR 11)

In what was once a large, open lot of sand and stone lies a yawning, steep-sided ditch filled with hastily shrouded corpses. Guards unload additional human-shaped bundles from a cart—some still, others wiggling—and unceremoniously throw them into the sandy pit below. An officious woman in captain’s stripes oversees their efforts with a clipboard and torch, standing beside a dozen wooden casks labeled “oil.”

Despite their closed walls, the Whitewater clan (see page 16) is making at least a token effort to contain the Feast of Dust and protect Dimayen’s citizenry. These guards are collecting and disposing of any dead citizens (and some who are not so dead) believed to be afflicted with the curse. They were supposed to transport the bodies far into the desert, but collecting the bodies took longer than expected, so the guards began dumping the afflicted in the foundation of an old tower. The building’s original owners fled shortly after Dimayen’s drought began decades ago, and the abandoned structure collapsed 5 years ago.

At least a half-dozen bodies in the pit are still alive—victims of the curse lost to their insatiate hunger, or poor citizens afflicted with diseases the guards have mistaken for the Feast of Dust. The pit’s steep sides and crumbling surface require a successful DC 20 Climb check to ascend.

Creatures: Six guards challenge the PCs when they approach, demanding to inspect them for signs of infection. An arrogant and legalistic paper-pusher named Dagarma al-Duhl, oversees the guards but considers the task beneath her. Wrongly believing the curse to be a disease akin to rabies or ghoulish fever, she immediately orders the PCs to strip so they can be searched for signs of bites, even using *charm person* to force compliance. If any PCs have visible wounds of any kind, she commands them

to drop their weapons and surrender. If they refuse, the guards threaten—though despite their bluster, the guards have no desire to fight anyone who can fight back, and won't initiate combat unless attacked.

DAGARMA AL-DUHL **CR 8**

XP 4,800

Aloof scholar (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 232)

hp 61

WHITEWATER GUARDS (6) **CR 6**

XP 2,400 each

hp 64 each (see page 16)

Development: The PCs can leap into the pit to save the six victims who are still alive, but their presence begins awakening those the Feast of Dust has killed. This animates eight bodies as ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146). Sickly beggars in life, these creatures pose little threat to skilled adventurers, but they give the PCs some indication of what to expect should this curse continue unchecked. Whether the PCs enter the pit or not, the undead eventually begin tearing out of their shrouds and clambering up the pit wall, at which point the guards douse the pit with oil and set it alight.

SHRINE OF OVERFLOWING JOYS

The wood and masonry walls of this humble temple are worn but clean. The friezes decorating the walls were masterfully executed, but have since been touched up by amateurish hands. Though the gilding of its dome has begun to wear off, heavy layers of wax still give it a blinding sheen in the sunlight.

Dimayen's temple to Sarenrae, the Shrine of Overflowing Joys, is built atop a secondary spring, which the faithful believe the Dawnflower blessed (though its yield is only a fraction the Whitewater Spring's). Here, two dozen of Dimayen's residents—ranting and gnashing their teeth in the final throes of the Feast of Dust—are lashed to cots in the temple's sanctuary, while another two dozen stable victims wander aimlessly. Six acolytes struggle to keep up with their charges, but none have slept well in the days since High Priest Arakor vanished.

Arakor Shonar was the only priest of Sarenrae left in the temple—the rest of his faithful left on a mission into the Meraz to help a tribe rout a rumored undead threat. Arakor stayed behind to tend to the faithful. Soon after, the Feast of Dust struck. Unfortunately, High Priest Arakor vanished 2 days ago, press-ganged into service by the Whitewater family.

The five remaining clergy are nominally led by **Sister Khalidras** (NG female human adept 6), whose yellow robes are tattered where recent bite wounds cover her strong forearms. Like the other acolytes, she has reserved

her healing magic for the afflicted, and her terrible wounds have begun to fester. Khalidras greets newcomers warmly, but if they show no signs of the curse she politely asks them to leave unless they have resources to contribute. Any magical healing, proficiency with the Heal skill, or donations toward the temple capture the beleaguered woman's attention for a few minutes; she then tries to answer any questions the PCs may have. Example questions and Sister Khalidras's answers are provided below.

What is this plague? "We're not sure—Master Sayid from the bookshop referred to it as the 'Feast of Dust,' but we haven't seen him in days. The first victim was Pretty Jambre two weeks ago, I think, but we didn't know what it was. Some thought their loved ones had gone mad or contracted some disease. Then we started finding fragments of bone carved with sigils among the victims, and witnesses began talking about the jackals that would watch the sick."

Where is High Priest Arakor Shonar? "The Whitewaters summoned him a few days ago, and he's been safe and sound behind the walls of their compound ever since. But they've also been sending us clean water and bread ever since. Some of the parishioners believe he's waiting out the storm in luxury. I... prefer to believe he's working with Tianska Whitewater to find a solution."

Who is Master Sayid? "He's a strange old man, a friend of Father Arakor's. He runs the bookshop, Fabled and Forgotten, and he and the high priest sometimes have long, loud conversations about strange matters of faith. But I don't think anyone has seen him in days."

Who is Ibhris Akpahl? "Ibhris Akpahl? That loathsome little man wandered into town with a host of venereal diseases months ago—claimed he'd escaped a pairaka, but given his character, we assume he acquired them the usual way. We relieved the worst of his ailments, and he threw a drunken fit when we required payment for Sarenrae's blessing. Perhaps if he were a regular parishioner—or at least less belligerent—we would have provided our services for free. He... desecrated our holy water, then kicked over the font and stormed out. I understand he eventually left town with Sayid's good-for-nothing son Dehivat, and Dawnflower forgive me, I was glad to see them both go!"

Why haven't you asked for help from the satrap? "Only recently has this curse become an epidemic. We sent word east and west requesting aid, but it may be weeks before the satrap organizes assistance."

What can you tell me about the Feast of Dust? "The victims of the curse suffer a gnawing hunger, but cannot keep food or water down. If left alone, they eventually rush out of doors and strike out for the deeper desert with no care for their well-being. The old and infirm die quickly, but some of them stir and rise again as ghouls, and soon continue their journey into the sands."

What is causing all this? "No one knows! No strangers have arrived recently—aside from that charlatan Ibhris



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

some three months back—at least until the tribes began to arrive, but by then we'd already seen our own cases. The jackals seem to carry it with them—or at least the bits of bone that cause it—but it spreads on its own as well, almost like a plague.”

Sister Khalidras also has a few of the carved bone fragments, some of which still radiate an aura of overwhelming necromancy magic. The tiny symbols carved into each bone are a strange blend of Abyssal and Infernal, and require magic such as *comprehend languages* or a successful DC 25 Linguistics check to decipher. Successful translation reveals variations of the following inscription on the fragments.

“Woe unto those who would hold themselves above the dust, who walk as gods with souls that slither. Woe unto those who feast to stay the hand of blessed oblivion. Woe unto those who rebuff their harbinger, the Maw of the Heralds, the Master of the Flaying Winds: the Jackal Prince of Famine. Slither as the beast and gorge unto bursting, and all shall be ash in your bellies.” A successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals that “The Maw of the Heralds” and “The Jackal Prince of Famine” were honorifics for a powerful evil in the dawn of Meraz’s history, but uncovering more details on such a distant evil would require an expert. The bone fragments have expended their curse and are safe to handle, as the adepts can attest.

Development: If the PCs assist the clergy in any way, the five overworked adepts step aside to confer with one another for a few minutes before Sister Khalidras returns to them. She admits that the temple has very little money left, but in Father Arakor’s absence, they’ve decided to offer the PCs a reward if they can lift the Feast of Dust from Dimayen. They offer the remainder of the temple’s reserves: 2,354 gp—mostly in silver and copper—as well as the Eye of Thalachos. This fist-sized ruby, decorated with gold wire in a flame motif and worth 10,000 gp, is a minor relic of the Sarenite faith. It’s said to be the petrified eye of a Sarenite inquisitor who died saving the people of Gurat from a cult of Rovagug that attempted to summon the Rough Beast’s spawn to Golarion.

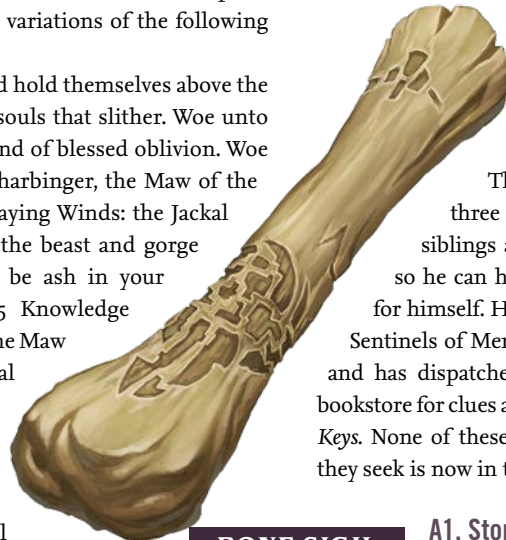
Story Award: If the PCs learn anything new about the Feast of Dust at the Shrine of Overflowing Joys, award them 4,800 XP.

A. FABLED AND FORGOTTEN

It’s likely that the PCs will eventually investigate the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore, either in their search for answers or after they rescue Sayid Aaban and return him home.

Fabled and Forgotten is the oldest bookstore in town, and some of the tomes within are truly ancient—salvaged from the ruins of Shadun nearly a millennium ago. The Sentinels of Meraz hurriedly rescued what they could when they fled the volcanic eruption that destroyed Shadun, including knowledge of the Heralds of Dust, which they passed on for generations. Many of their ancient works and modern translations ended up here. The current owner, Sayid Aaban, is a mild-mannered shopkeep and antiquarian, but each night he trains in combat and studies dusty texts in his cavernous private collection, committing much of the Sentinels’ lore to memory.

Sayid has been an unwilling guest of the Whitewaters for a while, but his shop hasn’t stood empty. The Jackal Prince hopes to find the three remaining artifacts that imprison his siblings and scatter them even farther abroad, so he can hoard the glory of this new apocalypse for himself. He knows of Sayid’s membership in the Sentinels of Meraz and his extensive, secret collection, and has dispatched a few loyal servants to search the bookstore for clues about the locations of the other *Oblivion Keys*. None of these servants yet realize that the material they seek is now in the possession of the Whitewaters.



BONE SIGIL

A1. Storefront (CR 10)

This dark and musty shop is filled with shelves along each wall and stacks of books—new and old. A display of inks, papers, and writing implements covers the low counter to the west.

This front shop offers popular works of fiction, almanacs, and home guides ranging from farming to cooking to medicine, as well as an impressive array of stationary. Anything truly valuable is kept under lock and key in Sayid’s private collection (area A8).

Creatures: A scrawny young woman named Pershphia smiles awkwardly behind the counter, inquiring if newcomers need anything and informing them that Sayid is away on business. She seems blissfully unaware of the ravages tearing through Dimayen, and politely asks anyone looking for anything more complex than stationery or ink to return in a few days “after Master Sayid has returned.”

Despite her helpful facade, Pershphia is a deplorable creature. She was a sly and abusive monster even while alive, and her tribe was among the first to fall to the Feast of Dust. Upon her death by starvation, Pershphia’s powerful soul rose as a dread ghoul. She willingly serves the Jackal Prince as a spy, and oversees the search of the Fabled and Forgotten while deflecting customers’ suspicions. She keeps watch over the front while reading through Sayid’s journal, aided in her vigil by a vicious invisible stalker.

A. FABLED AND FORGOTTEN

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



GROUND FLOOR



BASEMENT

PERSHPIA CR 8

XP 4,800

Female dread ghoul bard 8 (*Advanced Bestiary* 86)
NE Medium undead (human)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 87 (8d8+48)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+3 plus paralysis), 2 claws +9 (1d6+3 plus paralysis) or

+1 scorpion whip +10/+5 (1d6+4/18–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 23 rounds/day (move action; countersong, dirge of doom [DC 19], distraction, fascinate [DC 19], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion [DC 19]), command ghouls, create spawn, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 14)

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +13)

3rd (3/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *haste*, *slow* (DC 18)

2nd (5/day)—*fleshy facade*^{MC} (DC 17), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 16), *magic aura*, *undetected alignment* 0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

Feats Arcane Strike, Deceitful, Dodge, Mobility, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Bluff +14, Climb +10, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +14, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +13, Perform (act) +16, Perform (oratory) +16, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +13, Survival +10, Use Magic Device +16; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Survival

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ bardic knowledge +4, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (act, oratory)

Gear +2 chain shirt, +1 scorpion whip, ring of protection +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Command Ghouls (Su) As a free action, Pershpia can automatically command all normal ghouls within 30 feet (as per the *command undead* spell). Normal ghouls never attack a dread ghoul unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature killed by Pershpia rises the following midnight as a dread ghoul. The new dread ghoul is not under her control. A *protection from evil* or *gentle repose* spell cast on the corpse prevents this.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

FIENDISH INVISIBLE STALKER CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 80 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 181)

Treasure: Most of the books here are of only passing interest to any real collector, but a few interesting titles of value remain: *Ancient Water Caches of the Parched Sands* (worth 100 gp), *Dervishes: Technique and History* (worth 150 gp), *Genealogy of Janni Tribes* (worth 550 gp), *Mating Habits of Gnolls* (worth 50 gp), and *Rise and Fall of the Meraz* (worth 250 gp).

Development: Sayid's accounts ledger sits open on the counter, full of notes scribbled in a different hand where Pershphia has attempted to track his comings and goings. His journal sits nearby. Its last entry, dated a week ago, describes the symptoms of the curse befalling the town and labels it "The Feast of Dust." It notes, "Has he returned!? No! Blade remains safely hidden in the private collection."

A2. Print Shop (CR 9)

A small printing press dominates this cluttered workspace, while tools such as etching hooks, needles, lengths of twine, knives, and pots of glue crowd the counters. Lines of cord run back and forth at chest level in the room's far end. The floor is a mess of torn papers, scattered type, and pools of ink.

Sayid used this space to maintain his aged collection of tomes, bind old scrolls into books, and print almanacs and public decrees for locals. Much of the room is dedicated to drying space, where the Aabans press papyrus or pulp into paper. The whole room has a distinctive sour stink.

Creatures: Pershphia brought a pair of towering greater ceustodaemons for protection, but the clumsy, slow-witted beasts proved a liability in her search, and so she exiled them to this room. They've grown increasingly aggressive from inactivity and leap upon anyone who enters.

GREATER CEUSTODAEMONS (2) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 65)

Treasure: The shop contains masterwork artisan's tools for bookbinding, calligraphy, and etching, as well as a dozen blank books and a single *blessed book* (currently being used to press a number of desert flowers).

A3. Sayid's Room

This simple, unadorned room contains little more than a simple bed, a small washing basin, and a desk. Papers and ash lie scattered across the floor, and the mattress's straw has been torn out through a ragged gash.

Sayid's living quarters stand in stark contrast to his son's lavish tastes. He often keeps a single treatise by

his mattress, but Pershphia's minions already visited this chamber and burned this one to ash. The words "End... Shadun..." are still visible on the cover.

Treasure: The strongbox that contains the bookstore's funds is hidden under a loose brick in the floor (Perception DC 20) and contains 824 gp and 15 notes of credit from various farmers amounting to 366 gp.

Development: Sitting on Sayid's desk is a perfumed note embossed into high-quality paper. It summons him to appear before the Whitewater family in their compound in the First Circle (see Handout #2 on page 17).

A4. Dehlvat's Room

This lavish chamber stands untouched. Bronze braziers, tiny jade statues, a long mirror, and racks of fine silk and samite clothing crowd the floor, leaving barely enough room for a large feather bed bedecked in satin sheets and fine fur blankets.

Dehlvat kept his quarters here, using whatever money he begged off his father to purchase frivolous luxury items (much to Sayid's chagrin). The Jackal Prince's forces have left this room untouched, knowing full well that Dehlvat knew nothing of his father's precious secrets.

Treasure: Dehlvat's fine clothing is worth a total of 450 gp. His small jade figurine collection of desert monsters is worth another 250 gp.

Development: A note from Ibhris to Dehlvat (see Handout #1 on page 14) lies on the bed, plainly visible.

A5. Storeroom

This humble pantry is stocked with rice, olive oil, dried herbs, onions, and a barrel of water.

Development: A hidden trapdoor leads down to the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore's secret Sentinels of Meraz library and training ground (area A7). Uncovering the door normally requires a successful DC 25 Perception check, but Pershphia's agents has tracked food around it, reducing the DC to 15.

A6. Lower Storeroom

This room is warm and dry. It is carved from the sandstone shelf upon which the upper building rests.

A7. Training Room (CR 11)

This wide chamber contains several training dummies along the east wall, a rack of weapons on the south wall, and a pit of sand in the center of the room.

The Aabans and any visiting Sentinels use this chamber to train for combat and ready themselves to delve into ancient ruins in search of lost knowledge.

Creature: A single ghul stands guard here. This wretched creature and its ilk are the remnants of the

Greetings Honored Loremaster of the Ancients,

It is with distinct pleasure that I continue to grow in your acquaintance! Despite your youth, you prove yourself deeply wise and possessed of a brave soul. It is so sad that your overbearing father fails to recognize these qualities. I look forward to hearing more about the impressive secrets you have wrested from the old man's foolishly cloistered collection of knowledge!

I agree with the sentiments you expressed so eloquently during our last meeting. What is knowledge without action? And what is power without a courageous soul to wield it? If only we were possessed of the resources to set out from this wretched, small-minded town of failed farmers and aggrandized vagrants. Ah, the wonders I could show you! Fortune does not bless those such as us, though. We must seize it for our own. If only we had access to some valuable but squandered wealth in this dried-up backwater. But, alas!

Drinks tomorrow shall assuage the pain.

Your friend in confidence,
Ibhris Akpahl

HANDOUT #1

bygone Flying Wind janni tribe that once called the Meraz their home. When the Heralds of Dust ravaged the land, the janni of the Flying Wind promised themselves to the Jackal Prince for eternity, not realizing that their compact consigned not just the living of their tribe to service, but their dead as well. After 7,000 years, the Jackal Prince's return has rekindled this contract, raising the Flying Wind tribe as undead ghuls.

The creatures occupying the bookstore know about the traps in this room, and carefully avoid them while attempting to draw intruders in.

FLYING WIND GHUL CR 8

XP 4,800

Ghul fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 125)

CE Medium undead (shapechanger)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 100 (9 HD; 6d8+3d10+57)

Fort +13, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +16 (1d6+9), 2 claws +16 (1d4+9 plus bleed)

Special Attacks bleed (1), cursed claws, rend (2 claws, 1d6+9)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 28

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Power Attack, Step Up

Skills Bluff +13, Climb +20, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +13, Intimidate +18, Perception +19, Stealth +15, Survival +12 (+20 when following tracks); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +8 Survival when following tracks

Languages Common, Gnoll, Ignan, Infernal, Terran

SQ armor training 1, change shape (hyena; doesn't detect as undead in this form; *beast shape I*), genie-kin

Gear +1 chain shirt, amulet of mighty fists +1

Hazards: Sayid's grandmother constructed numerous training traps here that the Sentinels used to practice their skills at avoiding dangers, including dart launchers, a concealed pit, a magical paralyzing trap, and training dummies that randomly leap forward during practice.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP CR 3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 30-ft.-deep pit (3d6 falling damage); Reflex DC 20 negates; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

CHARGING DUMMIES TRAPS (4) CR 2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 22; **Disable Device** DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect each round a creature steps or stands on a dummy's pressure plate, there is a 25% chance the dummy activates and charges forward, potentially knocking creatures prone and throwing them back; CMB +15 (1d6 nonlethal damage plus bull rush and trip)

HOLD PERSON TRAP CR 4

Type magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** manual

Effect spell effect (*hold person*, Will DC 15 negates)

POISONED DART TRAPS (6) CR 3

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect Atk +10 ranged (1d3 plus large scorpion venom)

Treasure: Hanging on the wall are a dagger, a falchion, flail, a quarterstaff, a scimitar, a siangham^{UE}, a scorpion whip^{UE}, a sling, and a spear, all masterwork in quality, as well as a bag of 10 +2 *vermin-bane sling bullets*. A concealed



compartment in the same wall (Perception DC 25) contains the *wand of hold person* (5 charges) Sayid uses to reactivate the *hold person* trap, as well as a *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (15 charges), a *wand of burning hands* (12 charges), and a *wand of cure serious wounds* (28 charges).

A8. Private Collection (CR 13)

This sprawling chamber contains numerous massive bookshelves that are overflowing with tomes. Alcoves carved into the walls contain a dizzying array of scrolls and bric-a-brac. Stacks of books litter the floor as well, some torn apart and scattered.

This is Sayid's treasure trove, where he keeps anything and everything he and his ancestors found about Shadun, the history of the Meraz, the lower planes, the Heralds of Dust and their subsequent downfall, as well as reports from the Sentinels of Meraz dating back centuries.

Discovering a secret door located here requires a successful DC 30 Perception check. The secret door is made of reinforced iron (hardness 10, hp 90, break DC 30) and secured with a superior lock (Disable Device DC 40). Sayid carries the only key.

Creatures: Pershpia's wretched lieutenant, the meladaemon Vermox, searches through the bookstore's private library for anything of use. He was dispatched primarily to ensure Pershpia's loyalty and kill her in the event of failure, and finds the investigations tedious and frustrating. His research, aided by three Flaying Wind ghuls, amounts to pulling a book down, ripping out their pages, and moving on to the next one.

VERMOX CR 11

XP 12,800

Meladaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 69)

hp 147

FLAYING WIND GHULS (3) CR 8

4,800 XP each

hp 100 each (see page 14)

A9. Ravenous Reliquary

The walls and floor of this chamber are painted pitch black. A silver circle inlaid on the floor and scrawled with twinkling arcane sigils surrounds a sheathed sword bound in chains and tarnished brass seals.

This is where the Sentinels of Meraz hid the *Ravenous Blade*, one of the four *Oblivion Keys* that housed the spirits of the four Heralds of Dust. The blade has remained hidden in Fabled and Forgotten under the care of Sayid's family since their move to Dimayen. Dehlvat and Ibhris gained access to this chamber 3 months ago and stole the

original *Ravenous Blade*, leaving an illusory double via a *scroll of permanent image*. Characters who interact with or scrutinize the image can attempt a DC 19 Will save to recognize the duplicate as a fake.

The magic circle on the ground emanates powerful abjuration magic—anything placed within is obscured from divination magic as per *nondetection* (CL 18th). Such powerful magic circles have kept the *Ravenous Blade* safe for eons, and similar circles protected the *Shroud of Flies* and the *Handflower of Genocide*.

Treasure: In addition to the *Ravenous Blade*, this chamber contains many of the Sentinels' valuables, which Sayid offers the PCs if they agree to stop the Jackal Prince: three *oils of align weapon*, a *scroll of magic circle against evil*, a *scroll of reincarnate*, a *scroll of secure shelter*, and a *cloak of resistance +3*.

Development: Sayid hasn't yet realized the *Ravenous Blade* stored here is a fake, and assumed the curse besetting Dimayen was a clever imitation of the ancient curse. Only if the PCs point out the counterfeit to Sayid does he finally admit to himself that the terrible affliction marks the



FLAYING WIND GHUL

return of the Jackal Prince of Famine, and likely relates to his son's disappearance. Alone, hopeless, and facing his greatest fear, he is finally willing to open up to the PCs (see Speaking with Sayid on page 24).

If the PCs do not discover the fake, or do so but fail to report it to Sayid, he discovers it himself the day after he is rescued and seeks the PCs out.

THE WHITEWATER STORM

Though normally open to the public, the Whitewater compound has been sealed to all visitors for 2 weeks as the chaos increased. Despite their preparations, Tianka Whitewater—the clan's current matriarch—was gifted one of the Jackal Prince's bones and now suffers from the Feast of Dust. In her attempts to cure herself, she exhausted her own magical knowledge the first day, and then the family's supply of divine scrolls and wands over the following week. With no cure in sight, the aging wizard now focuses on preventing her condition from advancing, and to that end invited both Sayid Aaban, Dimayen's resident magical scholar, and Arakor Shonar, the town's high priest to the Whitewater compound. Sayid refused to cooperate, and in frustration Tianka sent him to the Discipline Pit (area B11). Arakor chose a more pragmatic answer, and has used his magic ever since to keep the old woman from succumbing entirely to her curse, in exchange for the Whitewaters providing food and water to the temple.

Honored Guests

The PCs may wish to sneak into the Whitewater compound and rescue Sayid or Arakor once they learn of NPCs' plights. If so, assume they are unexpected and treat their arrival like any other incursion into a hostile location. But once they become a known presence within Dimayen, Tianka takes a keen interest in adding to her stable of imprisoned spellcasters, and assumes any warriors among them will make a fine addition to her house guard in these troubled times. She dispenses an invitation identical to the one she sent Sayid several days ago (see Handout #2 on page 17), and her guards immediately usher in PCs who present the invitation. They are shown first to the reception hall (area B3) to relax and enjoy water, wine, and honeyed dates, and then into the audience chamber (area B5) to meet with Tianka, Ezrisha, and Kardag Whitewater, who represent three generations of the family.

The family leaders calmly explain that important personages such as themselves are to be protected in times of trouble, and that to ensure their safety, they require the PCs to remain as their guests indefinitely. Characters who agree without hesitation are issued a guest room, while those who refuse are imprisoned until they either capitulate or anger the family enough to be thrown into the Discipline Pit.

The Whitewaters are quite certain that the curse is a local problem and will pass eventually. Adventurers who

are unwilling to sit idly by have the option of either battling the Whitewaters and their assembled guards (a CR 15 encounter), playing along and escaping later, or else convincing the family that the Feast of Dust will not end without direct action. PCs who stay as guests must turn over their weapons, which are kept in the guard room (area B8), but they may retain the rest of their equipment. Each PC is assigned a guard to follow him throughout the compound—for his own safety—and may freely visit areas B2–B9 and the spring (area B17).

Persuading the leaders of the Whitewater family to release their prisoners requires convincing all of them that the Feast of Dust won't simply go away if ignored. The requirements for doing so are listed in the Development section of the room where that leader can be found. Even then, the PCs must rescue Sayid from the Discipline Pit themselves.

B. WHITEWATER COMPOUND

The enormous marble palisades adorning this compound attest to the wealth of the Whitewater clan. One of the first families to discover this desert oasis, the Whitewaters claimed the richest spring and have made a fortune over the past century selling the spring's pure water to the thirsty people of the Meraz. While the clan began with noble intentions—protecting the spring from overuse or poisoning—luxury and comfort softened their capacity for empathy, and today Tianka sees Dimayen as little more than a support network for her extravagant lifestyle. The most important members of the clan reside in the complex, guarding the spring and conniving about ever more avaricious means of expanding their influence. Other members of the Whitewater clan live elsewhere in the First Circle, or travel with water caravans to supply distant outposts and tribes.

B1. Gates (CR 9)

A 10-foot wall surrounds the entire compound, with gates in the east and west walls. The gates are barred, requiring a successful DC 27 Strength check to open from the outside.

Creatures: The guards have erected makeshift platforms behind each gate, and three guards take watch at a given time. They yell if anyone approaches, and fire warning shots from their crossbows. After the warning, the guards shoot to kill, using their thunderstones to alert other guards if intruders prove especially aggressive.

WHITEWATER GUARDS (3)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Human fighter 7

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 64 each (7d10+21)

Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5 (+2 vs. fear)



INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 falchion +13/+8 (2d4+8/18-20)

Ranged light crossbow +8/+3 (1d8)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10 (+12 bull rush); **CMD** 22 (24 vs. bull rush)

Feats Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Lightning

Reflexes, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack,

Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion)

Skills Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +2, Survival +8

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, holy water, thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** +1 scale mail, +1 falchion, light crossbow with 20 bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +1, 7 gp

B2. Foyer

Visitors and petitioners hoping to speak with a family representative normally wait here, surrounded by comfortable chairs and expensive artwork. The large bronze front doors are locked (Disable Device DC 30) unless the Whitewaters are expecting guests.

B3. Reception Hall (CR 12)

Crystal-clear pillars rise up to meet the domed ceiling 15 feet overhead. Three tapestries adorn the walls here, depicting a beautiful woman adventurer braving various desert trials: giant scorpions, slavering gnolls, and a marid princess among them.

The family holds lavish parties and dinners here for major holidays or when important visitors grace Dimayen, and the rest of the time they receive guests here. The western doors lead to the Whitewaters' private apartments and are usually kept locked (Disable Device DC 25).

The six crystal pillars hold water from the spring, with small spigots in each so guests may refresh themselves at their leisure. Each is magically hardened crystal (hardness 5, hp 5, break DC 20) and holds 200 gallons of water. Breaking a pillar douses all adjacent creatures in water and causes creatures to slip on the marble floors as per the *grease* spell until the spilled water dries.

Creatures: Bored with his apartments, Kardag Whitewater spends his days here, sparring with three guards at a time, unless he's granting an audience to visitors.

KARDAG WHITEWATER	CR 11
XP 12,800	
Male human fighter 12	
N Medium humanoid (human)	

You are cordially invited to the Whitewater compound this morning to discuss matters of security and safety in the town of Dimayen. Know that the hand of the Whitewaters is generous to its friends, and harsh to the disrespectful.

~Tianka Whitewater, mother of Ezrisha, grandmother of Kardag, mother of Dimayen

HANDOUT #2

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+9 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 106 (12d10+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4 (+3 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 falchion +21/+16/+11 (2d4+12/15-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +17/+12/+7 (1d8+5/×3)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +2, bows +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Kardag is skilled but not subtle, attacking with Power Attack and often micromanaging his guards or pets in the field.

Morale Kardag is young and has a lot to live for, and is the most likely Whitewater to surrender if things turn against the family. He surrenders if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, or fewer than half his hit points if his mother and grandmother fall first.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +16 (+18 bull rush); **CMD** 30 (32 vs. bull rush)

Feats Animal Affinity, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (falchion), Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (falchion)

Skills Climb +8, Handle Animal +12, Perception +7, Ride +8, Stealth +10, Swim +8

Languages Common

SQ armor training 3

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +3 breastplate, +2 falchion, mwk composite longbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, gold and tourmaline rings (4, worth 65 gp each)

WHITEWATER GUARDS (3)	CR 6
XP 2,400 each	
hp 64 each (see page 16)	

Treasure: The three tapestries, each depicting a young Tianka, are worth 250 gp each.

Development: Kardag respects strength of arms, and gaining his approval requires a display of combat prowess. If the PCs wish to prove themselves, he insists upon a duel between himself and his beloved “kittens,” Zala and Ti (see area **B17**), either in the spring garden or the reception hall. He insists on a nonlethal duel, and flies into a murderous rage if either of his pets dies. If an adventurer takes the time to heal Zala or Ti, Kardag instantly declares the duel over and proclaims the PCs “honorable enough to brave the desert winds.”

Story Award: If the PCs earn Kardag’s favor without killing him, award them 19,200 XP in addition to any experience awards for defeating him in combat.

B4. Water Office

This tidy and well-appointed office is primarily Ezrisha’s domain, where she meets with caravan leaders, mercenary companies, and private companies to negotiate water rights and draw up contracts. A few fine metalworking tools, springs, and gears clutter one of the desks alongside several schematics; Ezrisha has been tinkering with her clockwork designs.

B5. Audience Chamber (CR 8 or 15)

This impressive audience chamber is home to several statues ensconced within the walls, and carved in the likenesses of proud women of noble bearing. A great ivory chair adorned with sapphires rests on a dais on the north side of the room, flanked by smaller but still impressive chairs of mahogany.

The Whitewater clan meets with most petitioners and guests here, and under less dire circumstances the room serves as the town hall. It is normally filled to capacity in daylight hours as locals and nomads bid on water, argue over property rights, and discuss matters affecting the town.

The western door is locked (Disable Device DC 30), but each guard carries a key.

Creatures: Two guards stand on duty here at all times. When the Whitewater family gathers to greet visitors and make public rulings, an additional guard joins them.



TIANKA WHITEWATER

EZRISHA WHITEWATER CR 12

XP 19,200
hp 100 (see page 23)

KARDAG WHITEWATER CR 11

XP 12,800
hp 106 (see page 17)

TIANKA WHITEWATER CR 11

XP 12,800
hp 105 (see page 21)

WHITEWATER GUARDS (2 OR 3) CR 6

XP 2,400 each
hp 64 each (see page 16)

B6. Private Chambers

The Whitewaters meet with important guests in private in this lush chamber filled with satin pillows, hookahs, and bottles of expensive wine imported from Taldor. The secret door in the west wall requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to discover.

B7. Guest Accommodations

Each of these large guest rooms features a feather bed, a writing desk, and a bookshelf. The doors are locked (Disable Device DC 30) from the outside each night, ostensibly to protect sleepwalking guests from Kardag’s pets; every guard carries a key to these doors.

B8. Guard Barracks (CR 10)

A dozen bunks, each with a simple cedar footlocker at its foot, fill this long hall. To the southeast, a common area holds two wooden tables strewn with knucklebones, playing cards, and a few clay cups and pitchers.

These are the guards’ living quarters where they rest and relax when not on duty.

Creatures: At any given time, four off-duty Whitewater guards are in these quarters, either sleeping or drinking and playing at knucklebones or cards. The sounds of pitched battle elsewhere in the compound draw them all out to the fray.

WHITEWATER GUARDS (4) CR 6

XP 2,400 each
hp 64 each (see page 16)



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

B9. Kitchen

The compound's kitchen slaves prepare three meals each day, and fill their spare time preserving various fruits from the garden in honey or juicing them to make wine. A large oven just outside the kitchen is used for all the baking.

The kitchen door is by far the least secure, as it is left open each day to offer the slaves some relief from the heat, and features the simplest lock in the compound (Disable Device DC 20).

Treasure: The kitchen is stocked with a variety of expensive candies and wines worth 1,500 gp total. They're stored in a secret cupboard in the pantry (Perception DC 25).

B10. Confessional (CR 9)

Rust-colored bloodstains mar the iron floor of this chamber, concentrated around the various restraints, pillories, and leather straps scattered about. A huge variety of well-oiled blades hang from the walls, while a small brazier in the southwest corner quietly warms a dozen brands. A single wooden chair rests against the northern wall.

The Whitewater family acts as Dimayen's government and uses this room to carry out sentencing against the community's criminals—with "criminal" often defined as "those who irritate the Whitewater family." Most punishments involve banishment after some manner of scarification, and the room is filled with restraints, sharp blades, and branding irons for carrying out sentences.

The doors here are kept locked (Disable Device DC 25). A secret door in the east wall requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to discover.

Creature: A single guard stands watch here to keep out intruders and ensure that prisoners (and Reshal) stay put. The guard responds to intruders by jumping onto the wooden chair and pulling a lever to activate the room's trap.

WHITEWATER GUARD **CR 6**
XP 2,400
hp 64 (see page 16)

Trap: One of Ezrisha's clever devices helps secure this room in the event of an attack or a prisoner's escape. It discharges when a lever in the north wall is pulled, shocking anyone standing on the room's floor.

SHOCKING FLOOR TRAP **CR 9**
Type magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26
EFFECTS
Trigger proximity (alarm); **Duration** 1d6 rounds; **Reset** manual
Effect spell effect (*shocking grasp*, Atk +9 melee touch [4d6 electricity damage]); multiple targets (all targets in area **B10**)

Treasure: A large chest in the corner contains goods confiscated from previous visitors: a dozen daggers, four scimitars, a masterwork suit of studded leather armor, a darkwood cane (worth 25 gp), and a pair of *boots of striding and springing*. If the Whitewaters have taken the PCs' equipment, the gear is stored in a chest here.

B11. The Discipline Pit (CR 12)

Three sturdy, cushioned chairs rest on a five-foot ledge overlooking this wide, ten-foot-deep pit dug from the sandstone bedrock. Stinging, writhing insects pick at bones and bits of flesh below, while three bronze cages dangle above on chains. A tattered mess of bones and torn sheets in the southwest corner suggests a bed.

This chamber is the final destination for those who personally insult or endanger the Whitewater family. The nearby springs cause a constant drip of water within the pit, and various nests of stinging insects have flourished there. The family either throws victims into the stinging vermin below, or else suspends them in too-small cages, to be lowered and raised for their entertainment.

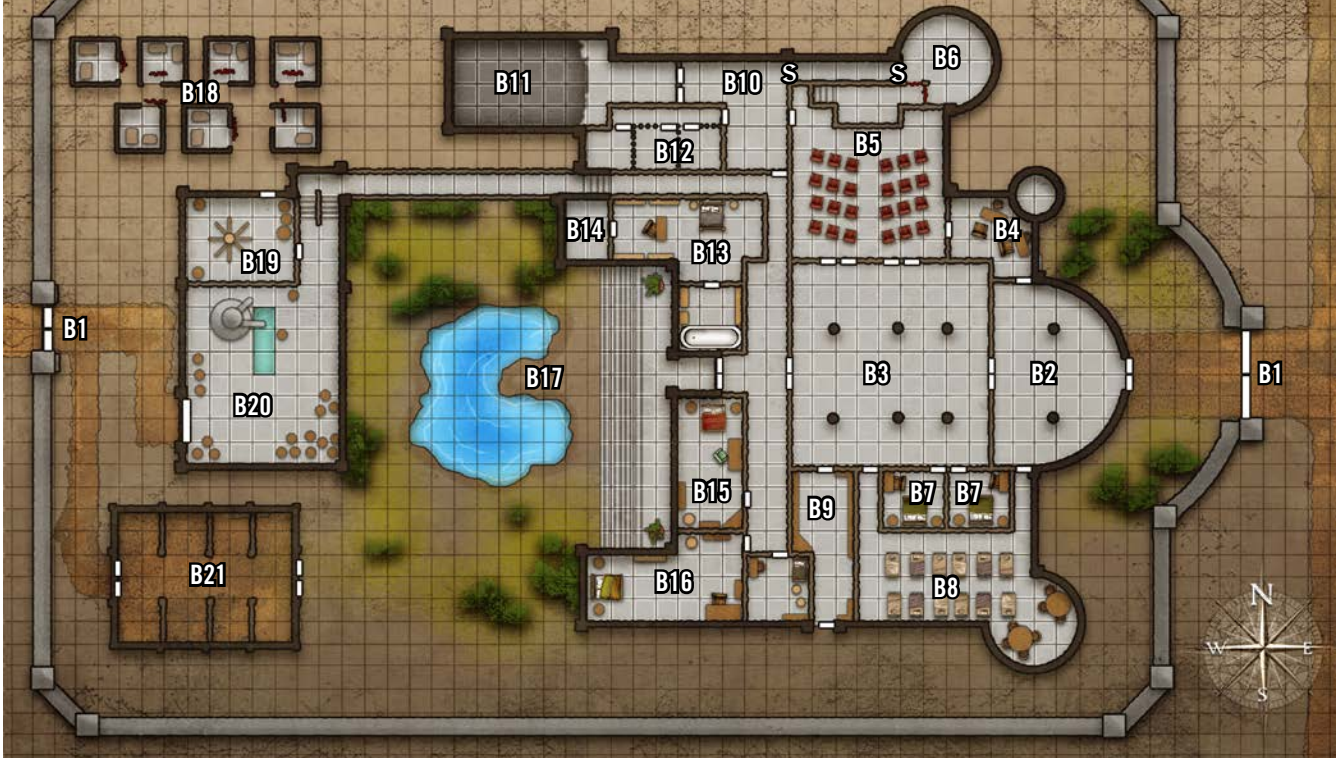
Creatures: Thousands of vile desert pests—ticks, scorpions, giant fleas, and assassin bugs—dwell within the pit, gathered into a roiling swarm. But most disgusting of all is Reshal, Tianka's feral son born from a tryst with a janni. Not all sulis are born noble and beautiful, and Reshal is an example of how horribly the blood of genies may mingle with humans. Twisted in mind and body, Reshal is naturally cruel. Tianka eventually exiled him to the Discipline Pit to prevent the deaths of any additional guards (or family members). With uncharacteristic kindness, Tianka still visits her son daily, bringing him toys and sweet treats from the kitchen, but her gifts usually become feasts for Reshal's pets. With each passing day he recognizes his mother less and less, and her *charm person* spells no longer affect him as they once did.

Tianka no longer has any control over Reshal, and brings him victims as much to sate him as to punish her enemies. Even if the PCs gain the family's blessing to free Sayid, they must still contend with Reshal and his pets, as the Whitewaters only have the ability to raise and lower the filled cages on the far side of the pit and can't extract victims from Reshal's clutches without subduing him.

RESHAL WHITEWATER **CR 9**
XP 6,400
Male suli druid (desert druid) 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide 202, Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide 99*)
NE Medium outsider (native)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10
DEFENSE
AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

B. WHITEWATER COMPOUND

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



hp 98 (10d8+50)

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

Resist acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +11/+6 (1d6+4/18–20)

Special Attacks elemental assault (10 rounds), wild shape 3/day (Small or Medium vermin)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +14)

5th—*insect plague*, *stoneskin*

4th—*cure serious wounds*, *flame strike* (DC 18), *giant vermin*, *ice storm*

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *greater magic fang*, *poison* (DC 17), *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *heat metal*, *lesser restoration*, *summon swarm*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *longstrider*, *produce flame*, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat A small bell on the door alerts Reshal to visitors, and he casts *barkskin* and *bear's endurance* on himself and *greater magic fang* on Yarak.

During Combat Reshal immediately casts *giant vermin* to enlarge two of the pit's many scorpions before wild shaping into a Medium scorpion himself. He casts *stoneskin* on Yarak the first time his companion is struck.

Base Statistics Without his prepared spells, Reshal's statistics are **hp** 78; **Fort** +8; **AC** 19, flat-footed 17; **Con** 12.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Natural Spell, Toughness, Vermin Heart^{APG}

Skills Climb +5, Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +13, Knowledge (nature) +14, Perception +10, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +5, Survival +12; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Diplomacy, +2 Sense Motive

Languages Common, Druidic, Terran

SQ desert native, sandwalker, nature bond (animal companion), nature sense, wild empathy +10

Gear +2 *hide armor*, +1 *scimitar*, *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, granite and diamond dust (worth 250 gp)

YARAK

CR —

Female giant scorpion animal companion (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 37)

N Large vermin

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, –1 size)



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

hp 76 (9d8+36)
Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment spells or effects
Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +13 (1d8+8 plus grab), sting +13 (1d8+8 plus poison)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks poison

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 26 (38 vs. trip)
Feats Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Power Attack, Toughness, Improved Natural Attack (sting)

STINGING SWARMS (2) **CR 9**
XP 6,400 each

Tick swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 265)

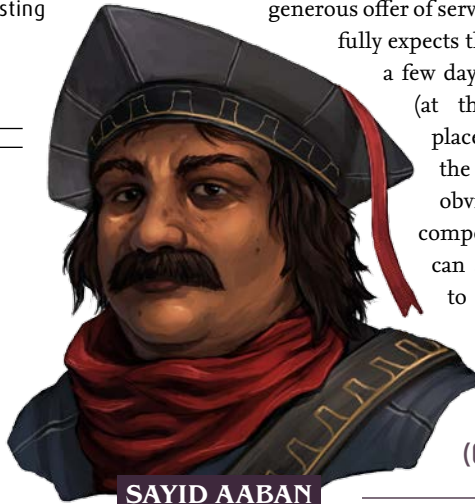
hp 120 each

Treasure: In addition to the mishmash of equipment Reshal wears, additional trinkets from his previous victim—an Absalom lothario named Roland Dorain who found the worst possible side of Ezrisha's delicate heart—remain scattered about the pit: a +1 *sling*, +2 *padded armor*, an *elixir of love*, *pipes of sounding*, a *potion of blink*, a small oak case containing seven platinum tuning forks (worth 250 gp as a set), and a lovingly illustrated picture book entitled *Sordid Women of the Inner Sea*, a surprisingly rare collectible worth 150 gp.

Development: Two of the bronze cages are empty, but the third contains an exhausted, stung, and swollen **Sayid Aaban** (NG human investigator^{ACG} 4/monk 3), put-upon shopkeep and Dimayen's only member of the Sentinels of Meraz. He squirms uncomfortably, 20 feet above the pit's floor, and politely asks for rescue from anyone entering, saying with some conviction that he's changed his mind and is quite happy to be of service to matriarch Tianka.

If rescued, Sayid doesn't wish to say much about his current situation, and asks only to be escorted back home. If the PCs have already explored the Fabled and Forgotten bookstore, Sayid is shocked to learn about daemons and cultists pawing through his collection and grows concerned, but he doesn't trust the PCs entirely until he discovers that the *Ravenous Blade* has been replaced with a fake. See page 24 for additional information about speaking with Sayid.

Story Award: If the PCs save Sayid, award them an additional 19,200 XP.



SAYID AABAN

B12. Cell Block

This hallway contains three 10-foot-square cells for holding trespassers and criminals awaiting trial. While each cell door is locked (Disable Device DC 20), the door leading to the confessional (area **B10**) is not.

Development: PCs who refuse the Whitewaters' generous offer of service are thrown in here. The family fully expects them to be more cooperative after a few days of confinement and starvation (at the GM's discretion, this may place the PCs at risk of contracting the Feast of Dust). While any obvious equipment, weapons, spell components, and armor are taken, PCs can attempt Sleight of Hand checks to conceal small weapons, magical supplies, or tools from the guards' cursory search.

B13. Tianka's Apartment (CR 13)

Equal parts refuge and study, this exquisite bedroom has bookshelves lining its walls. Ancient, leather-bound tomes and expensive statuary crowd the shelves, while a nearby desk overflows with glassware and cages for small animals.

Tianka's private chamber doubles as her arcane library, though it serves as a laboratory now as she struggles to understand the foul curse afflicting her.

Creatures: When not meeting with guests, Tianka Whitewater spends her time in study, alternately resting and experimenting on cursed animals. She keeps the beleaguered cleric **Arakor Shonar** (NG male human cleric of Sarenrae 8) by her side at all times to support her flagging health with divine spells, while her guard captain Shamalaa and two house guards stand by, prepared for any treachery from the young priest.

If the PCs enter her private sanctum uninvited, Tianka flies into a rage, ordering her guards to kill them even as Arakor begs for level heads and patience. Even though the cleric does not participate in the fight, he has already cast *bear's endurance* on Tianka with his *extend metamagic rod* to help relieve her gnawing hunger and aid her in resisting further effects of the curse.

TIANKA WHITEWATER **CR 11**
XP 12,800

Female old human aristocrat 6/wizard 8
 LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 deflection)
hp 105 (14 HD; 8d6+6d8+50) (19 points of nonlethal damage)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +12

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 sword cane +8 (1d6)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (8/day)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +13)

- 4th—*black tentacles*, *greater invisibility*, *resilient sphere*
- 3rd—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *heroism*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18)
- 2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 17), *detect thoughts* (DC 17),
scorching ray, *mirror image* 1st—*enlarge person* (DC 16), *grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *unseen servant*
- 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *prestidigitation* (DC 15),
resistance, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

TACTICS

Before Combat Tianka cast *mage armor* before receiving company, while Arakor provides her regular doses of *bear's endurance* to help manage her curse. If she expects trouble, she casts *shield*.

During Combat Feeling her age, Tianka prefers to hold back, protecting herself with *greater invisibility* while augmenting her companions with *haste* and *heroism* before unleashing her attack spells. She reserves *resilient sphere* for anyone threatening her personally.

Morale Tianka expects to die if this tense situation isn't handled exactly according to her instructions, and if combat begins, she fights to the death.

Base Statistics If not affected by *mage armor*, Tianka has AC 13. Without the effects of *bear's endurance*, Tianka has the following statistics: **hp** 77; **Fort** +6. She has also taken 19 points of nonlethal damage due to the Feast of Dust.

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 21, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Forge Ring, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +11, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (local) +16, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +21

Languages Common, Gnoll, Infernal, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ arcane bond (*ring of protection* +3), metamagic mastery (1/day)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of fireball* (38 charges), *wand of false life* (43 charges);

Other Gear +1 sword cane^{UE}, *belt of giant strength* +2, *bracers of armor* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +3

SHAMALAA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Scheming fencer (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 86)

hp 98

WHITewater GUARDS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 64 each (see page 16)

Treasure: If the PCs manage to free Arakor without violence, he thanks them profusely and offers them his *extend metamagic rod* as a reward.

Development: If the PCs negotiate peaceably with the Whitewaters, earning the final approval of their canny, world-weary matriarch requires the approval of both her daughter Ezrisha (see area **B20**) and grandson Kardag (see area **B3**). If the PCs best Kardag in a duel and recover Ezrisha's clockwork scout, Tianka insists they must still show some capacity for surviving magical assaults. She allows the PCs 1 round to prepare themselves, and then proceeds to rain down 3 rounds of her most impressive spells: *black tentacles*, *glitterdust*, and *lightning bolt*. If any PCs remain standing after her trial, she grudgingly attributes it to luck but lets them leave, even allowing them to take Sayid with them (see area **B11**). If anyone manages to counterspell one of her effects, she instead displays genuine respect and a glimmer of hope. Tianka believes that giving up Arakor will doom her to a horrible death, and won't release the cleric unless the PCs offer her some solution to avert her own fate; scrolls of *break enchantment* are ideal, but more creative solutions, including *flesh to stone* or even the *dagger of repose* received earlier may suffice with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check. Convincing Tianka to release Arakor without offering any way to forestall the Feast of Dust requires a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check.

Arakor Shonar is delighted to be rescued, though appalled by any violence used in the process. He begs to return to his temple to resume caring for Dimayen's sick. While he reserves his spells for those suffering from the Feast of Dust, he freely offers to heal the PCs by channeling positive energy for them as needed.

If the PCs don't manage to save Sayid from Reshal, you may elect to make Arakor a co-conspirator and fellow member of the Sentinels of Meraz rather than just a theological scholar, and allow him to provide the PCs with any direction or information Sayid would have.

Story Award: If the PCs free Arakor Shonar, award them an additional 19,200 XP. If they successfully endure Tianka's trials rather than kill her, award them an additional 38,400 XP.

B14. Whitewater Family Vault

Sealed behind a heavy steel door (hardness 12, hp 120, break DC 28) and securely locked (Disable Device DC 40), the Whitewater vault contains the family's property and genealogical records, as well as whatever money and valuables still remain. Tianka has spent much of the family's wealth on scrolls and wands to treat her curse, and much of the rest has been scattered among the clan's



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

various caravans until Dimayen regains some measure of safety. Little remains here now, but if the Whitewater clan survives the Feast of Dust, they reassemble their wealth and offer incredible riches to their saviors.

Treasure: An operating budget of 2,450 gp remains on one shelf, as well as great-grandmother Sevka's urn (worth 50 gp).

B15. Kardag's Apartments

Fitted with a serviceable bed, weapon and armor racks, and a wide practice space, Kardag Whitewater's private room sees little use during the day. He retires well after sunset, collapsing into bed with a few drinks and handsome guards to ease his slumber.

B16. Ezrisha's Room

This large bedroom contains a tremendous feather bed on the west wall and a long table on the south wall. The bed is covered in pillows and wolf-fur blankets. The table is strewn with the pieces of a half-assembled crossbow, reels of wire, and several gears. The walls of the chamber are mounted with grim trophies: the black claws of a giant scorpion, the head of a dire jackal, and a snakeskin panel of terrifying size.

Ezrisha hasn't been in her chambers since her mother fell ill. She keeps her mother company for meals, but has otherwise thrown herself into managing the family business. By day, she is found in the water depot (area B20).

Treasure: Anyone who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check notices a hidden compartment behind the snakeskin panel that contains a pearl the size of a small fist (worth 650 gp), a pouch of 20 fire opals in the shape of sharpened teeth (worth 150 gp each), 200 gp worth of assorted coins, and 10 +2 *magical-beast-bane bolts*.

B17. The Whitewater Spring (CR 10)

The marble stronghold of the Whitewater clan shelters this sprawling courtyard. Vibrant plants grow here, heavily laden with fruit and blossoms. At the center lies a freshwater spring whose crystalline water laps at the surrounding soil.

The same spring used in the water depot (area B20) feeds the pool here, which slaves carefully tend and cleanse with a combination of Ezrisha's gadgets and Tianka's magic. The ground here is covered in a layer of smooth pebbles that impose a -5 penalty on Stealth checks.

Creatures: On one of his trophy hunts in the desert, Kardag slew a scar-covered smilodon only to discover she guarded a den and two cubs. He brought the cubs home to Dimayen, intending to raise them to be future trophies, but grew to love the enormous beasts and now keeps them as pets and guard animals. Both are well trained and obedient, but they freely make a meal out of anyone not accompanied by one of the Whitewaters or a guard.

ZALA AND TI

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Dire tigers (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 265)

hp 105 each

B18. Slave Quarters

Seven tents hidden in the back of the compound are crowded with humble bunks for the Whitewaters' rotating stock of slaves. The Whitewaters run a disciplined household, with rich rewards and harsh punishments. Most of the surviving slaves bear at least a few scars. Nearly half the slaves have contracted the Feast of Dust in the past week and have been exiled from the grounds.

B19. Pump Room

A large wooden turnstile here connects to a heavy wooden rod that dips deep into the earth. A cool, pleasant dampness fills the room, harshened by the smell of sweat.

This pumping room helps draw water from Dimayen's underground reservoir. Though the family once relied on the spring's natural flow to supply the town, the repeated failure of the irrigation channels has sharply increased demand for their spring water, necessitating this slave-operated contraption that Ezrisha built. The slaves here ignore any intruders and focus on their work.

B20. Water Depot (CR 13)

This chamber contains a large wooden pump that empties into a large water tank extending from the north to south. Numerous clay amphoras filled with cool, clear fluid stand ranked along the south wall.

Though Whitewater spring water is sold all over Dimayen at various outlets, this depot is the first the clan ever operated and remains in operation today, thanks in large part to Ezrisha's ingenious mechanical designs.

Creatures: Ezrisha Whitewater is here, alongside a pair of guards, overseeing the water production for the day the curse ends and business returns to normal. With many of the family's slaves falling to the curse, she has resumed an old project—reproducing a clockwork contraption she studied in Katheer many decades ago in order to eventually replace the dwindling human stock the family relies on too heavily. If interrupted or attacked, she assumes that Dimayen's accursed masses have breached the compound; she then activates her two creations and orders them to kill the trespassers.

EZRISHA WHITEWATER

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female human rogue 8/transmuter 5

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 100 (13 HD; 8d8+5d6+47)

Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +13/+8 (1d6+2/18-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +13/+8 (1d4+1/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +7) 5/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+2 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

3rd—*blink*, *hydraulic torrent*^{APG}

2nd—*cat's grace*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *spider climb*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 13), *grease* (DC 13), *mage armor*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mending*, *message*

Opposition Schools enchantment, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Ezrisha used her physical enhancement arcane school ability to increase her Constitution score by 2. If she has time to prepare for combat, she casts *mage armor*, *shield*, and *mirror image*.

During Combat Ezrisha is more coldly efficient than her mother. She casts *blink*, then flanks with her companions to end threats quickly, using her *quick runner's shirt* to position herself for making full attacks.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, Ezrisha disengages and falls back to Tianka's side. If already fighting beside her mother, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Scribe Scroll, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Climb +5, Craft (traps) +18, Craft (clockwork) +18, Disable Device +20, Knowledge (engineering) +15, Knowledge (local) +15, Perception +12, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +20, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Common

SQ arcane bond (*amulet of natural armor* +2), physical enhancement (+2), rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue, cunning trigger^{APG}), trapfinding +4

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of greater invisibility*, *scroll of geas/quest*; **Other Gear** +1 rapier, mwk daggers (4), *amulet of natural armor* +2,

cloak of resistance +1, *golembane scarab*, *quick runner's shirt*^{UE}, *ring of protection* +2

CLOCKWORK SOLDIERS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 64 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 57)

WHITEWATER GUARDS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 64 each (see page 16)

Development: If the PCs hope to earn Ezrisha's favor and blessing to leave the compound with Sayid, she insists they must prove themselves canny enough to survive the wily desert and show a knack for finding their target. She presents her clockwork prototype—a mechanical beetle the size of a cat—and releases it into the compound to hide. It immediately skitters to the water office where it was created (area **B4**), and hides in a cabinet. If the PCs return the beetle to her whole, she grants them her blessing. The PCs can track the clockwork gadget (Survival DC 12 outdoors, but DC 22 once it moves inside), search room by room (opposing the beetle's Stealth skill bonus of +12 with their own Perception checks), or rely on magic (such as *locate creature*). If discovered, the beetle attempts to flee again, and must be restrained or caged to be returned to Ezrisha; she will accept a damaged beetle as well—if unhappily—as long as the PCs can prevent it from self-destructing.

CLOCKWORK BEETLE

CR 1/2

XP 200

Clockwork spy

hp 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 58)

Story Award: If the PCs earn Ezrisha's favor rather than killing her, award them 19,200 XP.

B21. Stables

The Whitewaters once kept exquisite horses, both for their youthful adventures and to impress visitors. Sadly, Kardag's pets consumed the family's breeding stock years ago, and now use the stables to bed down.

SPEAKING WITH SAYID

By the time the PCs confront Dimayen's challenges and rescue Sayid Aaban, they should realize that the Feast of Dust won't simply pass on its own. The aging scholar can provide them with answers to any lingering questions they still have.

What is this curse? "It is the Feast of Dust, I fear—a terrible affliction unseen for millennia that drove mortals mad, wasted them to bone, and then woke them from death with a cold hand to prowl the desert. It was one of the blights carried by the Heralds of Dust—



INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

terrible daemonic harbingers who sought to unmake the land, turn people against one another, and sow disease in the flesh of thousands. The heralds transformed the Meraz eons ago from a land of bounty into this windblown waste of red sand. The Feast was the tool of one herald in particular: The Jackal Prince.”

Who is the Jackal Prince? “He was... is a powerful daemonic harbinger who came to Golarion alongside his three siblings to unmake the world, in a time so long ago that their true names are forgotten. They laid waste to the land, rendering it into the punishing desert it is today. My ancestors, the Sentinels of Meraz, stopped the harbingers, but found the harbingers’ evil too powerful to destroy. Instead, they locked each herald inside one of four powerful artifacts: the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, the *Handflower of Genocide*, the *Ravenous Blade*, and the *Shroud of Flies*—the *Oblivion Keys*, as we call them. The artifacts couldn’t be destroyed, and it became our duty to keep them safe and hidden.

“This is one of them—the *Ravenous Blade*, which tore the Jackal Prince’s tongue from his throat. But this... this forgery... I’ve been such a fool. Oh, Dehivat... my poor, sweet Dehivat. I have failed as a Sentinel and as a father.”

Who is Dehivat? “My son. He had more of his mother in him—no taste for books or study—and I refused to accept that. Aabans have a duty to the world as Sentinels of the Meraz, but the more I pushed him toward greatness, the more eagerly he embraced debauchery. I never went into enough details about our legacy, though. I never felt like he was ready. Perhaps I should have. Perhaps he’d still be here if I had trusted him.

“He left after a fight, three months ago. He’d befriended some filthy con artist, Ibhris something-or-other. I knew he’d taken a few books when he moved on, but now I see he stole the *Ravenous Blade* when he left. Which can only mean one of them—Ibhris or... or Dehivat—now serves as a vessel for the Jackal Prince of Famine.”

Who are the Sentinels of Meraz? “It is an ancient order, founded by those who originally imprisoned the four heralds over seven millennia ago. We watch for signs of their return, or other stirrings of daemons in Qadira. I am one of the last. My son was supposed to follow in my place, but he has forsaken the old ways, seeks profit, makes trouble... wants to be an adventurer... No offense intended, of course.”

How can we stop the Feast of Dust and the Jackal Prince? “Even seven thousand years later, his bones still carry this dread power. I fear the only way to stop the curse of famine is to slay the Jackal Prince again and force him back into the *Ravenous Blade*. But those rituals have been lost for millennia. The only witnesses to those rituals are—

“Oh my.

“It is possible that the other Heralds of Dust, still locked into their *Oblivion Keys*, would know how to imprison their brother again.”

JOINING THE SENTINELS OF MERAZ

Before setting out into the desert, the PCs may elect to have Sayid induct them into the Sentinels of Meraz. Membership in this order offers some protection from daemons and their influence (see the sidebar on page 5) and may trigger unique magical effects near daemonic magic (such as the momentary bursts of awareness they inspire in the *Oblivion Keys*, which help guide the PCs towards the Jackal Prince’s final end). If the PCs agree to join, Sayid tattoos the Sentinels’ crest into the back of their right hands as part of an hour-long ritual. If no PCs wish to join the secret society, Sayid instead provides them with an amulet bearing the distinctive eye, tower, and blade, “for protection.” The amulet confers none of the special bonuses provided by membership, but its lingering magic is still enough to stir the spirits within the *Oblivion Keys* when brought close.

Why would the Heralds of Dust help us imprison their brother? “Daemons are petty, hateful creatures, and the heralds especially were backstabbing, scheming, jealous beasts who succeeded in spite of their cooperation rather than because of it. The original Sentinels of Meraz were able to defeat them only because they fought alone and constantly undermined one another. If the other three knew the Jackal Prince is free, and has left them to rot, their petty jealousies might be enough motivation to help us against him.”

Where are the other Oblivion Keys? “Scattered, when ancient Shadun was buried in volcanic ash a thousand years ago. We know one—the *Handflower of Genocide*—remained in the city, but the place is now a gnoll-choked ruin, buried under a hundred feet of ash, and guarded by a being of horrific evil that was invoked as the city burned.

“The *Shroud of Flies*, according to my research, came to rest in a concealed stronghold in the plague-choked foothills of the Zho Mountains—a place dubbed Blood Rise Rock by the Lamashtan cultists who frequent it now.

“But the *Calabash of Last Draughts* has been lost since that awful day. It’s possible that finding the other two will help point you to the bottle’s final resting place.”

Where is the Jackal Prince now? “Likely wherever those cursed souls are heading, somewhere out in the desert, but I’d be loathe to confront him without the other *Oblivion Keys*.”

How do we prevent the other Heralds from controlling us like the Jackal Prince? “I can induct you into the Sentinels of Meraz. The symbols in our tattoo forbid these specific daemons from entering our bodies. But even without membership, each of the *Oblivion Keys* is bound in brass seals that keep the beasts within dormant and contained. Do not remove the seals and you should be safe.”



CHAPTER 2

OBLIVION AND SAND

Having discovered the source of the plague tormenting Dimayen, the PCs set off into the Meraz Desert with leads regarding the locations of two of the three *Oblivion Keys* they need to slay the Jackal Prince and end his Feast of Dust. Sayid's suspicions were correct; the *Shroud of Flies* was indeed hidden at Blood Rise Rock in the nearby foothills of the Zho Mountains, and has recently been uncovered by Ibhris Akpahl, the same treasure hunter and con man who convinced Dehlvat to steal the *Ravenous Blade*, and the *Handflower of Genocide* remains entombed within the ash-covered ruins of Shadun. After reading Sayid's notes, the Jackal Prince dispatched agents to these locations—the Trelmarixian cultist Jambre Oloto to Blood Rise Rock and the Flaying Winds' warlord Nul Kraz Basheen to Shadun—to recover

the artifacts and spread them farther afield to prevent his jealous siblings from thwarting his glory.

The final *Oblivion Key*, the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, was lost not far from Shadun and now rests in the center of the accursed Lethe Springs—a hot spring in the shadows of the Zho volcano that robs curious travelers of their identities. Although the caravan transporting it for the Sentinels of Meraz has been lost for centuries, the PCs can find records in Shadun that trace the Sentinels' route.

TRAVELING THE MERAZ

The Meraz Desert is an intimidating sea of dunes and mirages even when not beset by apocalyptic curses. Extreme heat, confusion, and wild predators—as well as lack of food, shelter, and water—may hamper the PCs' journey.



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

Of the two destinations, Blood Rise Rock is significantly closer to Dimayen. It is a mere 50 miles over the desert, and easy to find as a slow trickle of pilgrims and the sick journey from Dimayen to the rock and back. The ruins of Shadun lie farther north, nearly 200 miles beyond Blood Rise Rock, though Sayid offers the party a map of the area to help them find their way.

The PCs should come across the following situations on their journeys. The Tribal Conflicts encounter (see page 28) should take place during their journey to Blood Rise Rock, but the Waylaid Caravan encounter (see below), can take place at any point or serve as a random encounter.

Random Encounters

For every 6 hours spent traveling the Meraz, or 12 hours spent resting outside a settlement, there is a 40% chance the party encounters a random monster (roll on the table below to determine the encounter). Each time the PCs recover an *Oblivion Key*, the Jackal Prince's grip wanes and the chance for random encounters is reduced by 10%.

d%	Encounter	Avg. CR	Source
1-7	2d6 fiendish dire hyenas	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 294, 179
8-18	1d6 greater ceustodaemons	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 292, 65
19-29	1 ruhk	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 228
30-40	1d6 shaghals	11	See page 63
51-60	1 seps	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 237
61-70	2d4 Flaying Wind ghuls	12	See page 14
71-80	1d6 Trelmarixian cultists	12	See page 32
81-90	1 meladaemon and 1d4 shaghals	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 69; see page 63
91-100	1d4 giant emperor scorpions	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 232

WAYLAID CARAVAN (CR 12)

At the base of a dune rests an overturned cart and a well-appointed palanquin. Brilliant orange-hued stems litter the ground around both, and lying in the sands nearby is the partially chewed body of a woman in extravagant garb.

Creatures: The saffron merchant Mujhala al-Kitra set out for Blood Rise Rock 3 days ago, after a jackal delivered a shard of bone that afflicted her with the Jackal Prince's curse. With her servants, guards, and a rich payment of saffron in tow, she set out for Blood Rise Rock hoping to be cured, but the desert sands slowed the merchant's progress, and when the caravan ran low on supplies, her servants succumbed to the curse as well. Less than an hour before the PCs stumble across this scene, a heated argument between Mujhala and her litter-bearers turned deadly, and one ravenous servant finally succumbed to his dark urges and tore a chunk from his master's face. Many of the remaining caravaneers lost control as well, turning on their fellow travelers and draft camels. Now crazed with hunger, the group attacks anyone who approaches.

CURSED CARAVANEERS (8)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Human fighter 7

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 71 each (7d10+28) (36 points of nonlethal damage)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1 (+2 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk battleaxe +13/+8 (1d8+8/x3), light spiked shield +10 (1d4+2), bite +12 (1d4+7)

Special Attacks weapon training (axes +1)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 6, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

Feats Improved Shield Bash, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe)

Skills Climb +10, Handle Animal +6, Perception +5, Ride +6, Survival +6

Languages Common

SQ armor training 2

Other Gear +2 *breastplate*, +1 *light steel shield*, mwk battleaxe

Treasure: Mujhala's body still wears a richly embroidered silk scarf set with semiprecious stones (worth 750 gp total). The cart was originally loaded with 120 pounds of saffron as payment for the Great Scarab, though one of the casks has been smashed on the ground, leaving only 110 pounds of the precious spice (worth a total of 1,650 gp).

CHARLATANS IN THE SANDS

Located in the winding, rocky canyon at the base of the Zho Mountains, Blood Rise Rock has been sacred to Lamashtan cults for centuries for the plague-bearing spring contained within. Over the eons, gnoll and human hands alike have carved the natural rock formation into an enormous likeness of Lamashtu's swollen torso, creating a unique temple honoring the natural caves beyond. Unbeknownst to these worshipers of the Mother of Monsters, however, this site is suffused not with Lamashtu's blessing, but with daemonic power. When the Sentinels of Meraz fled with the *Shroud of Flies*, they retreated into the maze-like canyons here, eventually carving a small shrine within one of the countless caves. The *Shroud of Flies*, prison of the Rat Princess of Plague, remained undetected in this shrine for millennia—until Ibhris Akpahl came along.

Angered at being robbed and abandoned in the desert by his companion, Ibhris followed Sayid's notes to this ancient site and discovered the shrine within. Quite by accident, he subverted the shield guardian golem left to protect the

artifact, and discovered that touching the ragged cloak it protected somehow relieved the gnawing hunger that had been growing within him. Wary of the brass seal acting as the cloak's clasp, he has left it in place, keeping the Rat Princess sealed within. By the time Ibhris heard rumors of the Feast of Dust, he'd already begun a plot to have his new clay golem pose as a savior. By swathing it in the *Shroud of Flies* and an insectoid mask scavenged from the temple, Ibhris reinvented this construct as a god!

The foolish and the desperate flocked to his side, coin in hand. Some simply wanted purpose, which Ibhris's illusions provided, while others came looking for a cure to their curse, which the shroud itself provided—at least for a time. What Ibhris doesn't yet realize is that his most loyal cultists worship different masters: Trelmarixian and the Jackal Prince. The Jackal Prince dispatched a handful of famine cultists to recover his sister's prison, but Ibhris's scam and the false hope it provided the people of the Meraz so delighted the daemon that he has allowed the deception to continue under close supervision. Ibhris knows nothing about this daemonic oversight, nor does he know his assistant, Jambre Oloto, plans to murder him at the first sign of trouble and flee into the desert with the shroud.

TRIBAL CONFLICTS (CR 15)

The PCs arrive at Blood Rise Rock as other pilgrims begin to leave. The day prior, two well-armed tribes—the Stormbrides and the Spiral Winds—arrived seeking the Great Scarab's blessing. The Stormbrides are suli wanderers who track big game to sell trophies in Qadiran markets, and they demanded that the Great Scarab protect them from the Feast of Dust, which is slowly claiming their neighbors. The Spiral Winds are a clan of girtablilu—a race of scorpion-folk divinely inspired to care for lost ruins. They are still reeling from a vicious attack by the Sat'un gnolls of Shadun, and they hope to recruit the Great Scarab as their patron for a retaliatory strike. A departing pilgrim, **Jahdrak** (N human warrior 3), can explain the basic situation to new arrivals as he prepares to return to Dimayen.

Both clans are prideful and stubborn, and demand the Great Scarab's sole attention. Both made camp at the foot of Blood Rise Rock and refuse to allow anyone else access until their needs are addressed—each tribe has injured several pilgrims to prove its point. The situation makes Ibhris nervous; he rightly expects that no matter which tribe he hears first, the other clan will fly into a violent fury, and so he has decided to wait until one clan leaves or kills the other.

Tribal Approval: No one can approach the Great Scarab without winning the favor or at least one tribe, and with the two inhuman bands so evenly matched, each is looking for an advantage over the other and is willing to grant audiences to newcomers who can ensure that its needs are addressed first. Either clan leader—Maralet Stormbride and Chief Sakargo—readily accepts an offer of alliance from anyone who promises to wipe out her rival.

Unless the PCs are prepared to push through both tribes by force, they must gain approval from at least one of the tribes in order to move forward at Blood Rise Rock. Each tribe's attitude toward the PCs is tracked by points of approval, which the PCs can gain or lose through various actions; see Tables 2–1 and 2–2 on page 31 for more information about these actions and the effects of the tribes' changing attitudes. The PCs begin with 1 point of approval from each clan, and you should track each tribe's approval separately. Each skill check represents a single character's efforts over the course of an entire day.

The Spiral Winds (CR 15)

Only eight Spiral Winds girtablilus have come to Blood Rise Rock; the tribe's sick and injured remained safely hidden in the desert. The clan has tried for generations to claim the ruins of Shadun from the Sat'un gnolls, but never with success. Their most recent skirmish left a dozen girtablilus seriously injured, and the tribe hopes to recruit a living god to heal their people and bless their retaliation against the gnolls. The Spiral Winds chief, Sakargo, is a historian and warrior-poet who dreams of securing a worthy home for her people. The PCs can gain an extra 1d6 points of approval from the Spiral Winds by befriending her and sharing her vision. This requires successful DC 20 checks in at least three of the following skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Linguistics, and Spellcraft. A PC can attempt a given check only once.

PCs who attack the Spiral Winds must face Sakargo and her girtablilu warriors. The scorpion-folk have bigger dreams for the future, and retreat into the desert if their chief or half of the warriors fall.

SAKARGO CR 13

XP 25,600

Female girtablilu fighter 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 130)

N Large monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.;

Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, +2 shield, -1 size)

hp 192 (15 HD; 10d10+5d10+110)

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee +2 *scimitar* +25/+20/+15 (1d6+12/18–20), 2 +1 *claws* +17 (1d8+4 plus grab), +1 *sting* +17 (1d6+4 plus poison)

Ranged mwk spear +19 (2d6+7/×3)

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

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+5), poison, weapon training (heavy blades +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +10)

1/day—*summon nature's ally V* (1d3 giant scorpions)



STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11
Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 38 (50 vs. trip)
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)
Skills Climb +18, Craft (armor) +9, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (history) +6, Perception +23, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +11, Survival +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth
Languages Common, Girtablilu, Gnoll
SQ armor training 1, scorpion empathy +10, undersized weapons
Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +2 *hide armor*, +1 *arrow deflection*^{IE} *light steel shield*, +2 *scimitar*, *mwk spear*, *amulet of mighty fists* +1, 159 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

SPIRAL WIND WARRIORS (7)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Girtablilu (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 130)

hp 105 each

The Stormbrides (CR 15)

Two dozen sulis make up the Stormbrides camp. Most of them are rangers, but six make up the Stormbride Reavers, Maralet Stormbride's elite guards. The Stormbride tribe respects strength, knowledge of the desert, and combat prowess. The chief has begun to feel that it is time to expand the tribe's numbers, and any PC (regardless of gender) who can successfully woo them immediately gains 1d6 additional points of approval with the Stormbrides. This requires successful DC 20 checks in at least three of the following skills: Acrobatics, Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), or Survival. A PC can attempt a given check only once.

PCs who attack the Stormbrides must face Maralet and her reavers. Convinced they're doomed without the Great Scarab's aid, the Stormbrides fight to the death.

MARALET STORMBRIDE CR 13

XP 25,600

Female suli ranger 14
(Pathfinder RPG Bestiary
 3 258)

CN Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +1 shield)

hp 123 (14d10+42)

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *shortspear* +14/+9/+4 (1d6+4), +1 *shortspear* +14/+9 (1d6+4)

Ranged *mwk shortspear* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon), elemental assault (14 rounds), favored enemy (fire outsiders +4, humans +4, magical beasts +2), quarry

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +13)

4th—*bow spirit*^{APG}

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*

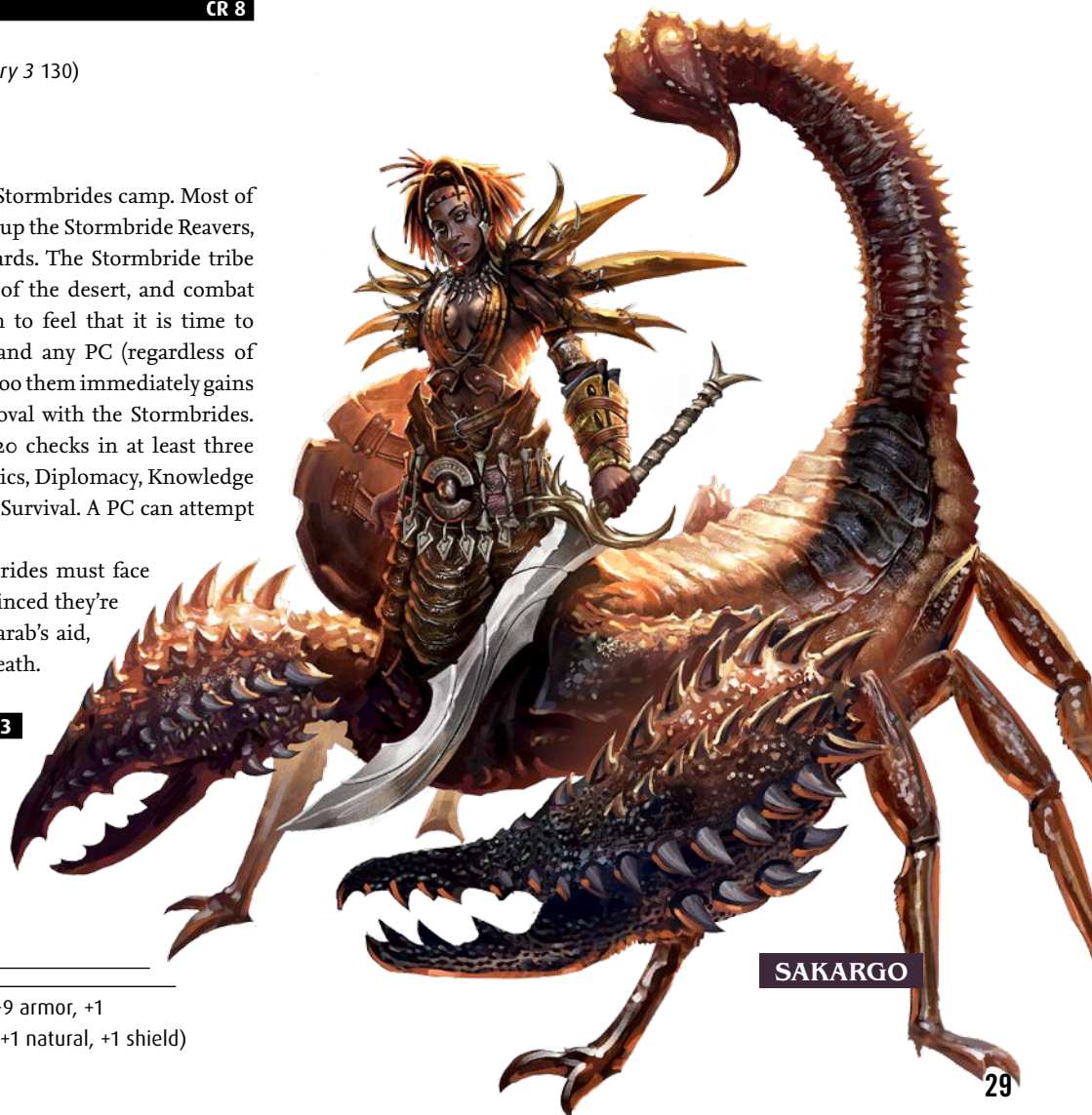
2nd—*barkskin*, *stone call*^{APG}, *wind wall*

1st—*delay poison*, *entangle* (DC 13), *lead blades*^{APG}, *longstrider*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32



SAKARGO

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Rend, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +5, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +18, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +12, Survival +15, Swim +5;

Racial Modifiers +2 Diplomacy, +2 Sense Motive

Languages Auran, Common

SQ camouflage, favored terrain (desert +4, mountain +4, plains +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +7, wild empathy +14, woodland stride

Combat Gear +2 arrows (20); **Other Gear** +3 steel lamellar^{UE}, +1 shortspears (2), mwk shortspears (4), amulet of natural armor +1, blinkback belt^{UE}, cloak of resistance +1, headband of inspired wisdom +2, ring of protection +1, 72 gp

STORMBRIDE REAVERS (6)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Suli ranger 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 258)

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+8 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 81 each (9d10+27)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +13/+8 (1d6+3/18-20)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +14/+9 (1d8+4/19-20/x3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), elemental assault (9 rounds), favored enemy (evil outsiders +2, humans +4)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +7)

2nd—*summon nature's ally II*

1st—*animal messenger, delay poison, longstrider*

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Endurance, Improved Critical (composite longbow), Improved Precise Shot, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)

Skills Climb +8, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +13, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +11, Survival +13; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Diplomacy, +2 Sense Motive

Languages Auran, Common

SQ favored terrain (desert +4, urban +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

Gear +2 steel lamellar^{UE}, mwk scimitar, +1 composite longbow with 20 arrows, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +1

Conflict Resolution

If the PCs gain enough approval with the Spiral Winds to change that group's attitude to reverent, they receive a girtablilu guide named Mokshasa, who leads them to Shadun (preventing any chance of getting lost) and fights alongside them if they confront the gnoll queen Julkar (see page 36). If the PCs gain enough approval with the Stormbrides to change their attitude to reverent, the sulis teach them the safer routes through the desert and the secrets of avoiding desert predators; reduce the chance of random encounters while traveling the Meraz Desert by 10%. If the PCs manage to negotiate peace between the tribes, the two become long-standing allies; in gratitude, the Spiral Winds offer a *minor ring of spell storing*, while the Stormbrides present the PCs with *Storm's Mate*, a +2 *defending scimitar*.

If the PCs have not resolved this tribal conflict within 3 days, Jambre receives word of the PCs' actions in Dimayen from the Jackal Prince and declares them enemies of the Great Scarab, promising to grant first audience to whichever tribe eliminates them. At this point, any tribe with which the PCs have gained fewer than 11 points of approval turns against them.

Story Award: If the PCs gain enough approval to change either tribe's attitude to allied or reverent, award them 25,600 XP. Award this only once, even if the PCs ally with both tribes.

C. BLOOD RISE ROCK

Once the PCs have made their way past the feuding clans at the rock's base—whether through force or diplomacy—it is a simple matter to climb the wide staircase to area C1.

C1. The Blood Rise Altar (CR 12 or 15)

Built atop a rocky outcropping carved into the belly, bosom, and torso of an enormous pregnant figure, the altar and brazier of this shrine show untold years of erosion and dark stains.

Ibhris has used *illusory wall* (Will DC 22 to disbelieve) to conceal the entry to the old cavern beyond the altar. Each night at dusk, the Great Scarab appears in a puff of smoke (actually a smokestick lit before stepping through the *illusory wall*) at the Blood Rise Altar to address the gathered pilgrims. He is flanked by his sniveling assistant Ibhris and his chief priest Jambre, as well as by several guards. The gray-skinned, 10-foot man speaks eloquently, preaching of the "great evil that seizes the nonbelievers of this world." He beseeches the fearful to "cast aside their plague-tainted material wealth and embrace the Great Scarab's divinity." A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies his sermon as fiction, but a carefully assembled one.

In reality, the Great Scarab is a clay golem and shield guardian bound to Ibhris Akpahl. Ibhris used the *Shroud of Flies* and a beetle-like mask to disguise the golem as a



INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

living creature. He also uses *ventriloquism* to make the thing appear to speak. The end result is a striking figure of a man who speaks with Ibhris's charisma and is immune to magic. Uncovering this deception proves difficult, though. The PCs must make all their observations from at least 60 feet away until they resolve the tribal infighting that bars anyone from approaching the false god. Recognizing the golem for what it is requires a viewer to succeed at a Perception check opposed by Ibhris' Disguise modifier (+12); even then, those questioning or attacking the "great ancient god" are publicly denounced before being targeted with his "deadly burning gaze of judgment" (actually a *scorching ray* spell Ibhris stores within the golem each day).

While the Spiral Winds and Stormbrides continue to argue, the Great Scarab merely appears to proselytize, then vanishes in another puff of smoke. If one or both tribes back down, he resumes allowing pilgrims to approach the altar, accepts their donations, and brushes the supplicants with his shawl (see the sidebar on page 35), removing whatever affliction troubles them.

Unless he is interrupted, the Great Scarab and his servants vanish in another plume of smoke after 30 minutes, leaving only the three cultist guards on watch.

Creatures: During a sunset ritual, the Great Scarab, Ibhris, Jambre, and his three cultist guards all stand in attendance, and respond viciously if attacked.

If only the three guards stand on watch, they order any curious visitors away. Their job is to minimize suspicion, and they don't attack unless attacked or repeatedly ignored.

THE GREAT SCARAB CR 12

XP 19,200
Shield guardian clay golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 158, 159)
N Large construct

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

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (-1 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)
hp 101 (13d10+30); fast healing 3
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4
DR 10/adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee 2 slams +20 (2d10+7 plus cursed wound)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
Special Attacks berserk, cursed wound, haste
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)
1/day—*shield other* (Ibhris can activate this as a standard action if he is within 100 ft.), *spell storing* (the Great Scarab contains *scorching ray*)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 30
SQ controlled, find master, guard
Gear *Shroud of Flies* (see page 35), beetle mask

TABLE 2-1: APPROVAL MODIFIERS

Action	Approval Modifier
Attack members of the tribe	-5
Propose an alliance between the tribes	-2
Meet with the rival tribe's leader for the first time	-1
Meet with the tribe's leader for the first time	1
Succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check	1 ¹
Succeed at a DC 25 Intimidate check	1 ¹
Succeed at a DC 20 Perform check	1 ¹
Offer a gift worth at least 1,000 gp	1 ²
Offer food or drink worth at least 1,000 gp	2 ²
Demonstrate knowledge of the Feast of Dust (Stormbrides only) or the city of Shadun (Spiral Winds only)	3
Demonstrate knowledge of Ibhris's criminal past	3
Attack the rival tribe	5
Offer some proof of the Great Scarab's fraud (e.g., unmasking the golem or publicly disproving its supposed healing powers)	5

¹ +1 point for every 5 by which the check result exceeds the DC.

² +1 point for every additional 1,000 gp of the gift's value.

TABLE 2-2: TRIBAL ATTITUDES

Approval	Attitude
-1 or below	Hostile: The tribe openly attacks the PCs.
0-5	Indifferent: Tribal leaders agree to meet with the PCs.
6-10	Amused: The tribe considers the PCs no threat, and lets the PCs use its camp.
11-15	Allied: The tribe openly welcomes the PCs, offering them food and healing, and allows them to meet with the Great Scarab so long as they are quick.
16+	Reverent: The tribe deeply trusts the PCs, and follows their advice to leave, attack an enemy, or even ally with the rival tribe (both tribes must have this attitude to agree to an alliance).

IBHRIS AKPAHL CR 9

XP 6,400
Male human sorcerer 10
CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 67 (10d6+30)
Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9; +4 vs. poison

Resist fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +5 (1d8-1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19-20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)

8/day—corrupting touch (5 rounds)

1/day—hellfire (10d6 fire, DC 20)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +15)

5th (4/day)—*dominate person* (DC 21)

4th (6/day)—*charm monster* (DC 22), *greater invisibility*, *illusory wall* (DC 20)

3rd (7/day)—*fireball* (DC 18), *haste*, *major image* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 19)

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *hideous laughter* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *misdirection* (DC 18), *scorching ray*

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 19), *mage armor*, *magic*

missile, *protection from good*, *shield*, *ventriloquism* (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *guidance*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation* (DC 15), *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

Bloodline infernal

TACTICS

Before Combat Ibhris casts *mage armor* every day.

During Combat Ibhris remains adjacent to his golem at all times. He casts *dominate person* on the strongest-looking enemy if attacked, then activates the Great Scarab's *shield other* ability before unleashing *fireball* and *hideous laughter*. He loves using *illusory wall* to simulate higher-level wall spells, such as *wall of iron* or *wall of stone*.

Morale If reduced below half hit points, Ibhris casts *greater invisibility*, and he and the Great Scarab retreat back to the Sentinel Shrine (area **C5**). If already in the shrine, he fights until reduced below 20 hit points, then casts *greater invisibility*, hoping to snatch up an armload of treasure before fleeing into the desert.

Base Statistics If not under the effect of *mage armor*, Ibhris has an Armor Class of 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 11).

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Casting, Deceitful, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Point-Blank Shot, Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Bluff +22, Disguise +12, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Use Magic Device +13

Languages Common

SQ bloodline arcana (+2 DC for charm spells)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of permanent image*, *wand of charm monster* (7 charges);

Other Gear mwk light crossbow, mwk morningstar, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1



THE GREAT SCARAB

JAMBRE OLOTO

CR 10

XP 9,600

NE chameleon (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 34)

hp 75

TRELMARIXIAN CULTISTS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Human warpriest of Trelmarixian 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 60)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 shield)

hp 78 each (10d8+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities sacred armor (+2, 10 minutes/day)



OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +8/+3 (1d6+3/19–20), mwk spiked gauntlet +6 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks blessings 8/day (evil: battle companion, unholy strike; madness: control madness, madness supremacy), channel negative energy (DC 19, 5d6), fervor 9/day (4d6), sacred weapon (1d10, +2, 10 rounds/day)

Warpriest Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +14)
 4th—*divine power*, *unholy blight* (DC 18)
 3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *contagion* (DC 17), *prayer*, *searing light*
 2nd—*bull's strength*, *death knell* (DC 16), *owl's wisdom*, *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*
 1st—*command* (2, DC 15), *murderous command*^{DM} (2, DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Casting, Double Slice, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Focus (spiked gauntlet), Weapon Specialization (short sword), Weapon Specialization (spiked gauntlet)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common

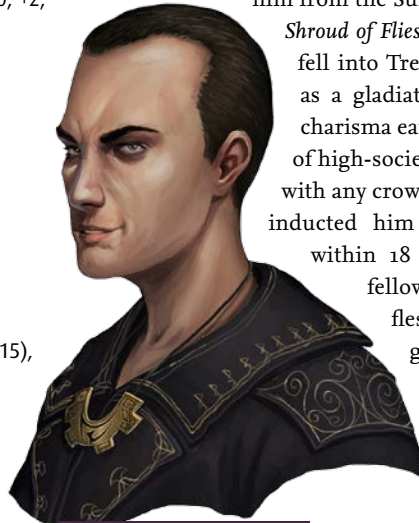
Gear +2 *horn lamellar*^{UE}, mwk short sword, mwk spiked gauntlet, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +1, unholy symbol

Story Award: If the PCs observe the rituals of the Great Scarab and detect something amiss, award them an additional 3,200 XP.

C2. The Lamashtan Cave (CR 12 or 13)

Many hands have worked this natural cavern over the years, digging out shelves and niches, carving lewd pictures into the sandstone walls, and constructing an enormous statue of a pregnant, jackal-headed woman that occupies the southern side of the room.

This large cavern has served as a shrine to Lamashtu off and on for centuries; a successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the statue here as a depiction of the Mother of Monsters herself. Ibhris has used *illusory wall* (Will DC 20 to disbelieve) to conceal both the primary



IBHRIS AKPAHL

Jackal Prince.

entrance to this cave as well as the northernmost room. The secret door in the eastern wall was once plastered over, making it all but undetectable, but Ibhris's frequent comings and goings have reduced the Perception DC to discover it to 25.

Creatures: Jambre Oloto makes his home here, along with the five Trelmarixian cultists who accompanied him from the Sunbleached Tower to investigate the *Shroud of Flies*. A bitter and hateful man, Jambre fell into Trelmarixian's cult during his tenure as a gladiator—his victories and undeniable charisma earned him invitations to all manner of high-society events, where he learned to fit in with any crowd. His most prominent supporters inducted him into their doomsday cult, and within 18 months Jambre had invited his fellow cultists to dine upon his patrons' flesh. Upon hearing rumors of a great power of famine arriving in the Meraz Desert, the young half-orc gathered the small cult and journeyed into the desert, where the cultists pledged their undying loyalty to the delighted

Jambre brought an additional servant with him on this journey: a cantankerous hydrodaemon. Though miserable in the Sunbleached Tower, the creature has discovered some respite here in the plague spring (area C4); by remaining near the fetid waters, it has stayed hidden even from Ibhris. The daemon prefers to remain concealed in a fight, keeping out of reach and summoning water elementals to fight on its behalf.

During the nightly ceremony, only two guards and the hydrodaemon can be found here, but Jambre joins them at any other time.

JAMBRE OLOTO **CR 10**

XP 9,600
 NE chameleon (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 34)
hp 75

TACTICS

Morale Jambre fights until reduced to below 20 hit points, at which point he flees using *dimension door*. If he escapes, the PCs may face him again at the Sunbleached Tower, where he commands his cultists alongside Shemkar Shellish in area F1.

TRELMARIXIAN CULTISTS (2) **CR 9**

XP 6,400 each
hp 78 each (see page 32)

HYDRODAEMON **CR 8**

XP 4,800
hp 95 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 67)

FACING THE JACKAL PRINCE

The words that the spirit within each *Oblivion Key* utters are more than empty threats—they are actually specific instructions meant to help the PCs determine how to eventually use each artifact to force the Jackal Prince back into the *Ravenous Blade*. You should subtly encourage players to pay careful attention to what each spirit says. If they don't, a successful DC 22 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals how they can use the artifacts in their final battle against the Jackal Prince. For more information about this, see *Slaying the Jackal Prince* on page 56.

C3. Treasure Cave

Concealed behind an *illusory wall* (Will DC 20 to disbelieve), this side cavern contains the various treasures loyal followers have donated to the Great Scarab.

Treasure: Much of the stored wealth here is food, wine, and home sundries, but several large clay jars overflow with 1,324 gp, 5,124 sp, and 19,230 cp, and a silver-capped ivory tusk (worth 550 gp) lies nearby.

C4. The Plague Spring

The influence of the *Shroud of Flies* over many centuries eventually tainted the cave's water supply with a variety of strange diseases. Although the waters here appear clear and cool, anyone drinking or bathing in them must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or contract blinding sickness (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557).

C5. The Dead End

A few silver coins lie scattered across the floor of this small brick room.

Ibhris used an *illusory wall* to seal one end of this short hall and scattered a dozen silver coins near some empty chests, making it appear to be a dead end from which the treasures had already been looted. Though the *illusory wall* blocks sight, a successful DC 22 Perception check allows a character to notice airflow and noises from the east.

C6. The Sentinel Reliquary (CR 11 or 14)

This sprawling chamber of dusty marble and tarnished brass suggests a once-grand shrine. Statues of heroes fill alcoves along the wall, while a heavy metal door stands ajar in the northern wall. A few makeshift beds fill one corner, and hand-drawn maps are pasted on the walls.

A thousand years ago, the Sentinels of Meraz used this chamber to conceal one of the *Oblivion Keys*—the *Shroud*

of *Flies*. Abandoned for centuries, the chamber eventually fell into disrepair.

The large vault to the north once required a successful DC 40 Disable Device check to open, but Ibhris blasted it open with several days' worth of *scorching ray* spells. Inside he discovered the elaborate *cloak of resistance +1* he now wears—a decoy planted by the Sentinels to confuse any invading daemon-cultists.

A secret door rests in a southern alcove, behind a statue. Though discovering it normally requires a successful DC 30 Perception check, Ibhris now leaves it ajar.

Creatures: Ibhris spends most of his time here, talking to his mindless pet clay golem about the riches in store for them. He has spent the last few weeks deciding where to travel next and gathering reports about the surrounding area from pilgrims as they arrive. He loves that his new partner never talks back or threatens to abandon him in the desert. He has begun to form an almost brotherly bond with the mindless figure.

Before Ibhris's arrival, the Bone Splinter gnoll clan controlled Blood Rise Rock. He dominated the tribe's champions, using them to drive the other gnolls away, and has kept the pair as mind-controlled guards ever since. The Bone Splinter gnolls remain in the shrine at all times, bored but too cowed by Ibhris and too afraid of the famine cultists to leave.

THE GREAT SCARAB

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 101 (see page 31)

IBHRIS AKPAHL

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 67 (see page 31)

BONE SPLINTER CHAMPIONS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Gnoll packlord (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 94)

hp 124 each

C7. The True Reliquary

Here, in this humble chamber, the Sentinels of Meraz hid this shrine's true treasure: the *Shroud of Flies*. A silver protective circle (identical to the one in area A9) conceals everything within from divination magic, while mosaics on the walls depict the violent final struggle between the Sentinels and the four Heralds of Dust. A wooden dummy has been shoved into the corner to make room for Ibhris's bedroll, as the protective circle inspires a deep sense of calm in the normally paranoid man.

Claiming the Shroud of Flies

Once Ibhris is defeated and the PCs claim the *Shroud of Flies*, the spirit within the artifact flinches at the presence of Sentinels of Meraz. Read or paraphrase the following.



A pall of sickly, green light seeps from the shawl. Broken wisps congeal into the form of a petite, rat-faced woman. "That wretched dog runs lose," a voice echoes. "And dares leave me bed-bound and convalescing? Bring me forth to my gnawing brother, that I might embrace him. Bring me and I shall bind his limbs and shatter his bones."

Story Award: Once the PCs claim the *Shroud of Flies*, award them an extra 9,600 XP.

THE RUINS OF SHADUN

After procuring the *Shroud of Flies*, the PCs strike out into the deeper desert toward Shadun to seek information on their dread foe and reclaim the *Handflower of Genocide* and the *Calabash of Last Draughts*. They may wish to return to Dimayen to rest and resupply before their harrowing journey into the sands, but time is of the essence. If they dally, the Feast of Dust increases in intensity, and as more and more of the town succumbs to the curse, even basic needs such as food and water go ignored, leaving crops and food stores to wither, rot, and mold.

Shadun lies almost 200 miles north of Dimayen, in the shadow of the twin volcanoes Zhoobl and Zhonar. Both are sporadically active, occasionally belching plumes of ash and toxic gases that devastate local wildlife and prevent any one group from controlling the ruins for long.

GUARD PATROL (CR 11)

As the PCs approach Shadun, a guard patrol of gnolls circling the area sets upon them. Less aggressive than usual, they inform trespassers that they "don't want any part of the man holding Queen Julkar's leash," but they attack nonetheless if the intruders don't turn back immediately.

Creatures: Four Sat'un gnolls and a pair of trained dire hyenas make up each patrol. If more than half their number are killed, the remaining guards retreat to Queen Julkar's lair.

SAT'UN ELITES (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

Gnoll barbarian 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 155)

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+7 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, -2 rage)

hp 99 each (8 HD; 2d8+6d12+46)

Fort +13, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +3 vs. magic

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2

THE SHROUD OF FLIES

This delicate-looking shawl houses the Rat Princess of Plague, bound in place by ancient wards.

SHROUD OF FLIES

MAJOR ARTIFACT

SLOT shoulders

CL 18th

WEIGHT 1 lb.

AURA strong conjuration and transmutation



Crystal baubles that resemble insect wings line the edge of this luxurious but fraying cloak. The garment was once a *cloak of displacement*, but the harbinger spirit trapped within has warped and twisted it—now it offers false hope rather than security. The *Shroud of Flies* grants its wearer a +2 profane bonus to Constitution and +4 resistance bonus on Reflex and Will saves, but imposes a -6 penalty on Fortitude saves against disease.

Three times per day, the wearer can brush another creature with the shawl to remove all lingering effects caused by a disease, poison, or curse, as per *break enchantment*, *remove curse*, or *remove disease*. These effects are not eliminated, and return immediately with all accrued penalties after 24 hours. Any creature embraced in this way must immediately succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or be infected with one of the following diseases: blinding sickness, cackle fever, devil chills, or leprosy. Any creature the wearer touches while offering medical aid, such as casting cure spells, administering a potion, or using the Heal skill, must likewise succeed at this Fortitude save or become infected.

The *Shroud of Flies* can be wielded as a net as well, but only against daemons. Any creature that has worn the shroud for at least 24 hours is considered proficient in its use as a weapon.

DESTRUCTION

While wearing the *Shroud of Flies*, a creature must infect itself with seven distinct plagues, then bathe in the cosmic fires of creation on the Positive Energy Plane.

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk spear +16/+11 (1d8+10/18-20)

Ranged mwk spear +9 (1d8+7)

Special Attacks rage (17 rounds/day), rage powers (guarded stance [+2 dodge vs. melee], superstition +3, surprise accuracy +2)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarians' statistics are **AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; **hp** 83; **Fort** +11, **Will** +1; **Melee** mwk falchion +14/+9 (2d4+7/18-20); **Str** 20, **Con** 17; **CMB** +12, **CMD** 23; **Skills** Climb +7, Swim +7.

THE SAT'UN

Shadun's most populous inhabitants are the Sat'un, a vicious clan of gnolls. According to legend, these gnolls descend from the Shadun survivors who turned to cannibalism and human sacrifice in the wake of the eruption that destroyed the city; as punishment, these survivors were cursed with monstrous forms. Whether this is true or not, the tribe considers Shadun its exclusive territory, and battles mercilessly with neighboring janni, girtablilu, and suli clans to keep it.

The gnolls' most recent skirmish with the Spiral Wind girtablilu tribe had left them licking their wounds when an emissary of the Jackal Prince arrived: Nul Kraz Basheen, warlord of the Flaying Wind ghuls. Nul Kraz and his daemons, sent to secure the *Handflower of Genocide*, cowed the tribe with overwhelming violence, slaughtering one of Queen Julkar's daughters and infecting the other with the Feast of Dust to ensure the monarch's cooperation. In the weeks since, Nul Kraz and his army of gnolls and ghouls have tunneled through the volcanic ash entombing most of the city, finally uncovering the original fortress of the Sentinels of Meraz—Oblivion's Citadel.

Queen Julkar, meanwhile, sulks on her throne of skulls. Her followers play at civility, embracing human fashions and courtly intrigue so long as their attention spans hold out, but the gnolls excel at maintaining neither.

recognizes this tendency as typical of gnoll behavior in the wake of a leader's defeat or humiliation.

Queen Julkar herself, disgusted by her tribe's behavior and enslavement by Nul Kraz, eventually seeks out the trespassers, hoping that a brutal slaughter will rekindle the gnolls' bloodlust.

Creatures: Queen Julkar is a massive and terrifying gnoll, clothed in the poorly maintained regalia of human nobility. She once ruled the Sat'un by virtue of her physical and divine strength, but age has begun to weaken her body. She relies on her divine spellcasting, leaving physical confrontations to her daughters. Now with one daughter dead, the other a slave to the ghul interloper, and her people scraping like beaten dogs, she hungers to feel important again. Julkar is accompanied by one of Nul Kraz's detestable "nannies," a meladaemon named Reched assigned to ensure that the old Lamashtan remains cowed.

Queen Julkar confronts outsiders as she assumes any human queen would, commanding respect and informing the party that they have violated her sovereign borders. If the PCs show any amount of deference or respect, she eagerly bathes in the attention and parleys as long as they remain deferential. Savvy adventurers may easily learn about Nul Kraz and his excavations. Regardless of any feigned civility, though, Julkar ultimately wants nothing more than to eat the tender morsels visiting her. Even an offer of forming an alliance against Nul Kraz requires a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check before she will consider it. Once she grows bored with the conversation, or her guests become irreverent, Julkar and her guards attack.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 12, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 23

Feats Cleave, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +9, Perception +10, Survival +10, Swim +9

Languages Gnoll

SQ fast movement

Gear +2 *scale mail*, mwk spears (2)

DIRE HYENAS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16

hp 26 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 179)

Treasure mwk studded leather barding

QUEEN JULKAR (CR 14)

Once the PCs best at least one guard patrol, word of their presence spreads through Shadun. With Queen Julkar's recent defeat at the hands of warlord Nul Kraz Basheen, the tribe has grown aimless and passive, giving a wide berth to powerful strangers. Countless scouts watch them from bluffs and ash-strewn steppes, but none approach. A successful DC 17 Knowledge (local) or Sense Motive check

JULKAR

CR 12

XP 19,200

Chosen of Lamashtu (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 98)

hp 95

RECHED

CR 11

XP 12,800

Meladaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 69)

hp 147

SAT'UN ELITES (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 99 each (see page 35)

Treasure: In addition to her listed gear, Queen Julkar wears around her neck a battered brass key, its bow shaped like a scimitar. The treasure, discovered in the ashes, has been a symbol of the Sat'un's nobility for generations. It also allows PCs to unlock the Oblivion Vault (see area **D9**).

Development: Once the PCs defeat Queen Julkar, the remaining Sat'un gnolls not involved in Nul Kraz's excavations flee into the desert, eventually fracturing into a half-dozen new clans that take years to reassemble into the Sat'un once again.



D. OBLIVION'S CITADEL

Most of Shadun consists of ash-covered valleys, stony bluffs, cooled lava flows, and the occasional ruined tower or collapsed monument breaking through the surface. Many of these half-buried ruins have served as monster lairs or been looted by human and gnoll scavengers over the centuries, but 10 times as many buildings remain buried beneath a hundred feet of volcanic ash.

At the heart of Shadun lies Oblivion's Citadel, the fortress the Sentinels of Meraz constructed to protect the *Oblivion Keys*. The Sentinels trained recruits here as an army; they did not skulk in the shadows as a secret society. The citadel has lain undisturbed since the twin eruptions that buried the city a thousand years ago, forcing the Sentinels to move most of the keys. Much of the building's cavernous interior, including its vaults, survived the city's destruction.

Nul Kraz Basheen arrived in Shadun with a small party of ghoul slaves and the daemon assistant Reched, on orders from the Jackal Prince to locate the *Handflower of Genocide* and cast it into the sea. Divining the location of Oblivion's Citadel proved more challenging than the warlord had imagined, however, so he enslaved the Sat'un gnoll tribe to expand his workforce. Only in the past week have the ghul's forces broken through into the citadel's ruins and begun to explore it, finally encountering the Oblivion Vault. Unable to open the door or bash his way through, Nul Kraz grows increasingly angry, unaware that Queen Julkar holds one of the keys and his gnoll workers unearthed the other.

A dozen dig sites are scattered throughout Shadun. Locating the right one requires a successful DC 14 Survival or DC 24 Perception check. The Citadel is buried, with nothing on the surface except a yawning, black pit and rough wooden scaffolding surrounding it.

D1. Excavation Camp

A rope descends from a hole in the roof to the rubble-strewn floor twenty feet below. Faded mosaics cover the walls, depicting a variety of desert animals, as well as other beasts frolicking in a lush savanna. The sound of metal striking against stone and earth fills the chamber with a ceaseless racket.

A dozen ghouls, all victims of the Feast of Dust, labor here mining away at rubble-filled portions of the citadel. Battered by Nul Kraz's rage and fearful of Maldarga's hunger for dead flesh,

they ignore any intruders, and cower or flee deeper into the complex if attacked.

Creature: A single ghoul named Vuhlte struggles in the northwest corner of the room. Torn in half by Queen Julkar's daughter, Maldarga, then pinned beneath a slide of rubble 5 days ago, Vuhlte has been abandoned and forgotten by his comrades. Animalistic hunger has reduced his mind, and he claws futilely to reach his dismembered legs just out of reach, desperate for even the smallest morsel of flesh. The mangled ghoul begs the party to drag its legs near so it can feed. In exchange, he offers information on the citadel's interior, warning the PCs about Nul Kraz and his servants, the gnoll workers, and the newly undead gnoll princess. He describes the warlord's fury over the vault entrance he can't open, describing it as a locked door with three keyholes. He notes that the ghul leader has discovered "only one key, shaped like a minaret, that fits within." He retains only vague memories of his former life, before the Jackal Prince called him to service, and even those are tainted by hunger.

VUHLTE **CR 2**

XP 400

Ghoul (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 (currently 2)

Story Award: Vuhlte offers no real threat, and the PCs receive no XP for destroying the pitiful creature. If the PCs learn anything about the citadel's interior from Vuhlte, though, award them 3,200 XP.

D2. Sentinel Barracks

When it served as an active fortress, Oblivion's Citadel housed hundreds of troops to repel daemon worshipers, and eventually to maintain peace in this region of the desert. Today, little evidence remains of these soldiers beyond dry-rotted bunks and moldering uniforms and personal effects. The gnoll workers have scavenged most items of value from these rooms (see area D4).

D3. Sentinel Training Room (CR 12)

Dry-rotted armor racks and ceramic training dummies fill much of this room, while dusty bits of machinery poke from the floor and walls. A wide pit divides the chamber, bridged by a rickety-looking wooden scaffold.



JULKAR

The Sentinels trained their recruits in this wide room, which was once outfitted with traps and mechanisms similar to the ones Sayid's family still uses. A handful of the devices were still in functioning condition when Nul Kraz's expedition arrived, and killed two gnoll workers before Maldarga ripped them to shreds.

The channel dividing the room is part of an old pit trap sometimes used in siege exercises. It descends 10 feet onto now decayed and useless padding. The bridge spanning it only support only 300 pounds at a time before collapsing.

Creature: The exertion of her tantrum greatly accelerated Princess Maldarga's curse, and within hours she fell victim to the Feast of Dust and rose as a dread ghoul. Outraged but now totally under the Jackal Prince's sway, she deals with her frustration here, battering what remains of the equipment and devouring ghoul slaves while she waits for Nul Kraz to complete his mission and guide her to the Sunbleached Tower. She welcomes any distraction, especially fresh meat. She spends her time in the southern half of the room.



MALDARGA

MALDARGA **CR 12**
XP 19,200

Female dread ghoul gnoll fighter 10 (*Advanced Bestiary* 86, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 155)

CE Medium undead (gnoll)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 110 (12 HD; 2d8+10d10+46)

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6 (+3 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities bravery +3; channel resistance +4;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +14 (1d6+2 plus paralysis), 2 claws +13 (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+7/×3)

Special Attacks command ghouls, create spawn, weapon training (bows +2, axes +1)

TACTICS

During Combat When intruders enter, Maldarga immediately bellows for any ghouls in area **D1** to assist her, then kicks aside the rough bridge her workers use. Ghouls arrive at a rate of 2d4 per round, and while the weak undead likely offer no challenge for the adventurers, Maldarga hopes to stymie the PCs' advance

while she unleashes a hail of arrows. If anyone crosses the gap, she smears her *oil of darkness* on herself and switches to melee combat. She always attacks using Deadly Aim or Power Attack.

Morale If reduced below half hit points, Maldarga withdraws to join Nul Kraz in area **D6**.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 31

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +10, Intimidate +17, Perception +15, Stealth +15, Survival +15; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Survival

Languages Common, Gnoll

SQ armor training 2

Combat Gear *oils of darkness* (2);

Other Gear +1 *composite longbow*, with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Command Ghouls (Su) As a free action, Maldarga can automatically command all normal ghouls within 30 feet (as per the *command undead* spell). Normal ghouls never attack a dread ghoul unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature killed by Maldarga that lies undisturbed until the next midnight rises as a dread ghoul at that time. The new dread ghoul is not under Maldarga's control. A *protection from evil* or *gentle repose* spell cast on the victim's corpse prevents this.

D4. Gnoll Camp (CR 9)

Eleven rough bedrolls made from animal furs and tattered blankets cover the floor here, while a pile of picks and shovels and a battered old chest occupy the northern wall.

The gnoll slaves bed down here when not digging out more of the complex. They gather whatever valuables they uncover that don't attract Nul Kraz's attention in the battered chest in the back of the room.

Creatures: The taskmaster has already worked two of the gnolls here to death, but a half-dozen common brutes and two Sat'un elites remain. They are angry and hungry, but also sickly—many suffer from the early stages of the Feast of Dust. They whoop and cackle at any intruders, and attack after 1d4 rounds (or sooner, if attacked), but they can be convinced to simply leave with a successful DC 28 Diplomacy or Intimidate check if the path out has been cleared.



SAT'UN ELITES (2) **CR 7**

XP 3,200 each
hp 99 each (see page 35)

SICKLY GNOLLS (2) **CR 1**

XP 400 each
hp 11 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 155)

Treasure: The gnolls' chest contains 21 tarnished silver holy symbols for various good faiths (worth 25 gp each), a platinum etching of lions (worth 700 gp), an enormous garnet (worth 300 gp), 22 spinel eyes from various mosaics (worth 30 gp each), an *ioun torch*^{UE}, and 18 clay cups. In addition to these treasures, the gnolls' chest contains a battered brass key with an eye-shaped bow, similar to the one Queen Julkar carries and important for opening the vault door in area D8.

D5. Excavation Sites

Nul Kraz keeps the gnolls digging out more of the citadel here, partly in the hope of uncovering other entrances to the Oblivion Vault and partly to keep the slaves too exhausted to fight back.

D6. Plaza of the Sun (CR 14)

Faded mosaics surround this rubble-strewn circular chamber. In them, four grotesque animals—a rat, a vulture, a raven, and a jackal—drain the life and color from a verdant wilderness. Eventually, the scenes transition to men and women clad in bronze armor rising up and slaying the creatures, sealing them within a cloak, a bracelet, a bottle, and a sword, respectively.

Ballistae and bulwarks once filled much of this chamber, which was a hall of death for any intruders who penetrated this deeply into the citadel. Today, little remains of these emplacements but scorched wood and dry rot.

Creatures: Nul Kraz Basheen, warlord of the Flaying Wind ghuls, organizes the excavation from here. After Nul Kraz's humiliation at the Sunbleached Tower (see area F7), the Jackal Prince exiled him to Shadun on what he feels is a pathetic errand, and his failure to understand and open the Oblivion Vault only increases his anger. Worse, Nul Kraz and his minions can't even approach the door to investigate properly—all they can do is hope for divine inspiration.

Nul Kraz examines all trespassers who approach, and if he detects any of good alignment, he offers them a generous chance to serve Trelmarixian and the Jackal Prince. If the adventurers approach the Oblivion Vault and open its door for him, he'll allow them to live, at least until his master's reign of terror reduces the world to dust. Should the intruders refuse his offer, he attacks.



NUL KRAZ BASHEEN

NUL KRAZ BASHEEN **CR 12**

XP 19,200
 Male ghul antipaladin of Trelmarixian 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 125, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 118)
 CE Medium undead (shapechanger)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20
Aura cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 163 (13 HD; 6d8+7d10+98)

Fort +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25

Immune disease, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +19 (1d6+8), 2 claws +19 (1d4+8 plus bleed) or
 +1 *unholy falchion* +20/+15/+10 (2d4+13/18-20), bite +14 (1d6+8)

Special Attacks bleed 1, channel negative energy (DC 19, 4d6), rend (2 claws, 1d6+8), cursed claws, smite good 3/day (+6 attack and AC, +7 damage), touch of corruption (3d6, 9/day)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities

(CL 7th; concentration +13)

At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +10)

2nd—*desecrate*, *silence* (DC 18)

1st—*death knell* (DC 17), *inflict light wounds* (DC 17), *protection from good*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nul Kraz casts *desecrate* every day, covering a 40-foot-wide area encompassing the chamber's entrance. He and his ghuls attempt to remain with its comforting aura; if Princess Maldarga is present, she does likewise while keeping her distance from melee.

During Combat Nul Kraz activates his fiendish boon, improving his falchion to a +2 *unholy falchion*, then lashes out with his touch of corruption against fellow warriors to fatigue and stagger them, and attempts to sunder any holy symbols wielded by spellcasters. He uses smite good against the first good creature that manages to hurt him.

Morale Nul Kraz and his minions fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +19 (+21 sunder); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. sunder)

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Step Up, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Climb +15, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +13, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +20, Stealth +11, Survival +9 (+17 when following tracks); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +8 Survival when following tracks

Languages Common, Gnoll, Ignan, Infernal, Kelish

**FINDING THE CALABASH OF
LAST DRAUGHTS**

Nul Kraz Basheen's notes are intended to point the PCs toward the Lethe Springs and the final *Oblivion Key*, but players eager to move forward into the vault may overlook them. If your players miss this clue, you can instead have Nul Kraz's notes scattered around the outer vault instead, or have the PCs encounter the warlord's scouting expedition—confused but still clutching a waterlogged map—as the heroes prepare to leave Shadun. Finally, the *Calabash of Last Draughts* is the only *Oblivion Key* not protected by one of the Sentinels' anti-divination circles, allowing the PCs to search for it with spells such as *find the path* or *scrying* (targeting the daemon within the calabash).

SQ change shape (hyena; doesn't detect as undead in this form; *beast shape I*), cruelties (fatigued, staggered), fiendish boon (weapon +1, 1/day), genie-kin
Combat Gear unholy water (2); **Other Gear** +1 full plate, +1 unholy falchion, silver dust (worth 25 gp)

FLAYING WIND GHULS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 100 each (see page 14)

D7. Nul Kraz's Camp

While the ghuls have no need for sleep, Nul Kraz selected this half-collapsed smithy as a place to rest and meditate, leaving his few possessions here.

Treasure: A small rosewood case (worth 150 gp) resting on an obsidian slab contains Nul Kraz's orders, signed by the Jackal Prince, commanding him to recover "the wretched resting place of my equally wretched brother, and cast it into the sea," as well as notes and maps of the area. A well-preserved copy of *The Legacy of Shadun* (worth 350 gp) rests below it all, alongside a silk bag containing four *potions of inflict moderate wounds* and 325 gp worth of silver dust. A successful DC 25 Perception check also reveals an ancient *bronze griffon figurine of wondrous power* in the room's rubble.

Development: Gathered on an obsidian slab are all the documents Nul Kraz's slaves have recovered thus far, mostly consisting of clay tablets and etched plates of beaten bronze. One tablet in particular highlights the route of the two caravans that fled Shadun with the *Ravenous Blade* and the *Calabash of Last Draughts*. The ghul's own hurried notes estimate that the final *Oblivion Key* is a mere 40 miles northeast of Shadun in a feature labeled the Lethe Springs. He has dispatched one of his Flaying Wind ghuls and a handful of ghouls to investigate. Despite not yet hearing from his scouts, Nul Kraz has been preparing an expedition to recover the artifact, hoping doing so will blunt his master's rage at his failure in his current mission.

D8. Outer Vault

Thousands of eyes etched into the walls and domed ceiling of this chamber stare down toward a massive, golden door. Three keyholes mar its otherwise smooth surface, while a dozen brass keys—each shaped into a different symbol—litter the floor.

The Oblivion Vault is protected by a permanent *consecrate* effect filling the outer vault. In addition to the spell's usual effects, it also deals 1d6 points of damage to any daemon or daemonic servant touching the vault door to area **D9** or inserting one of the keys.

The vault door itself is a simple puzzle, requiring three specific keys be inserted to unlock it—the minaret, the sword, and the eye, all features of the Sentinels' insignia. The Sentinels complicated this by crafting dozens of keys, each one's bow in a different shape, which they then scattered throughout the citadel. Nul Kraz has gathered all the keys uncovered so far, but remains unaware that his gnoll slaves stole the eye key, and that Queen Julkar wears the sword key. The door weighs 1,500 pounds and is magically reinforced (hardness 30, hp 120, break DC 45). Each lock can be picked individually (Disable Device DC 40), but failing one check resets any previously opened locks.

Story Award: However the PCs open the vault door, award them 9,600 XP.

D9. Oblivion Vault (CR 13)

For millennia, the Sentinels of Meraz kept their four charges locked away here in a vault of four separate chambers to keep the terrible artifacts isolated. They weathered dozens of attacks by daemon cultists and power-hungry warlords, but never did the citadel fall or an intruder set foot within the Oblivion Vault. When Zhobl and Zhonar erupted and Shadun was destroyed, it soon became obvious that the Sentinels of Meraz lacked enough time or reliable souls to secret away all four of the *Oblivion Keys*. Instead, they sent their best agents with three of the artifacts, and sealed the *Handflower of Genocide* back within the vault, intending to return for it once the ash settled. By then, though, not enough of their numbers remained to retake the city from the cannibals and monsters that came to claim the ruins.

The Vault of Plague to the west has partially collapsed, while the hall leading north to the Vault of Famine and the Vault of Death has been completely blocked by an ancient lava flow.

Creatures: The Sentinels did not leave their charge unguarded. Desperate and left with treasures captured from dark cultists, volunteers sealed themselves within the vault, and then used a *scroll of gate* to call two devourers as guards. The horrifying extraplanar undead consumed the souls of the unfortunate Sentinels sealed within the vault alongside them, and over the eons have slipped



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW

CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND

CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE

APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

into a catatonic state, leaving them with only 7 essence points apiece. The approach of fresh souls revives the foul undead, which leap to attack.

DEVOURERS (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 133 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 82)

D10. Vault of War

The icons decorating the golden walls of this chamber repeatedly depict a red-eyed vulture being stabbed, shackled, and buried. In the room's center, a single circle, scribed in silver, wards a small pedestal.

Lost for a millennium, the *Handflower of Genocide* resides here, awaiting a new master. Like the other *Oblivion Keys*, it is bound with heavy brass seals to minimize the influence its imprisoned harbinger may exert. As the PCs draw near, the Sentinel symbols scribed on their hands begin to glow and burn, and seem to kindle some shred of purpose within the artifact. Read or paraphrase the following.

A crackle of pale, red light seeps from the bracelet. Broken wisps congeal into the form of a hulking, vulture-winged man. "What is this stink?" a voice echoes. "My simpering jackal brother runs free, but leaves me a prisoner? Bring me forth to the shivering coward. I shall crush the breath from his very throat and silence his prattling once more."

Treasure: The *Handflower* rests on a solid-gold cast hand (worth 3,000 gp). The eyes of each figure in this mosaic (49 eyes in all) are large spinels (worth 30 gp each).

Story Award: Once the PCs claim the *Handflower of Genocide*, award them an additional 9,600 XP.

THE LETHE SPRINGS

North of the ruins of Shadun, nestled in sprawling volcanic wastelands on the Zho Mountains, lie the Lethe Springs. Meraz's wandering tribes and even many of its common monsters avoid these notorious hot springs. Stinking, sulfurous waters, heated to boiling by geothermal activity, percolate here in bubbling mud pits and wide, steaming pools of poison. Few visitors ever return, and those who do are profoundly changed, often unable to recognize their friends, loved ones, and children. This, coupled with the strange and horrible noises that sometimes pierce the endless banks of fog, has given rise to the rumor that the Lethe Springs are haunted. Certainly enough half-submerged carts testify to more than a few unhappy deaths that have occurred in these springs.



THE HANDFLOWER OF GENOCIDE

This elaborate gold bracelet linked to rings and claws houses the Vulture Prince of War, bound in place by ancient wards.

HANDFLOWER OF GENOCIDE		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT hands	CL 18th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA strong enchantment and transmutation		

Fine links spread from this gold bracelet to rings and finger-capping claws. This ornament was once a *vambrace of the genie*^{UE}, but its magic has been warped and corrupted by daemon spirit trapped within.

The *Handflower of Genocide* grants its wearer a +2 profane bonus to Strength and a +4 profane bonus on checks to perform dirty trick^{APG} and grapple combat maneuvers. The wearer can cast *murderous command*^{UM} at will by caressing a target with the *Handflower* (reducing the spell's range to touch and requiring a melee touch attack). Once per day as a full-round action, the wearer can concentrate to locate the nearest source of mass death within 500 miles, the *Handflower* directs her unerringly toward the death as per the *find the path* spell.

If the wearer touches a creature without casting *murderous command*^{UM}, the wearer must immediately succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be compelled to strangle the creature touched. If the wearer fails, she must attempt a combat maneuver check against the target's CMD, including any bonuses to grapple. If successful, the target must immediately begin holding its breath, and every subsequent successful combat maneuver check reduces the time remaining until it suffocates by 1d6 rounds. The wearer can attempt a new Will save each round to stop strangling her victim, but she takes a cumulative -1 penalty for each prior failed check.

DESTRUCTION

While wearing the *Handflower of Genocide*, a creature must foster a romance between a protean and an inevitable, and have each kiss the bracelet to grant its blessing.

Once the PCs arrive at the Lethe Springs, a small feature barely a half-mile across, locating the missing *Oblivion Key* is a matter of patient searching. It lies lodged in a mineral deposit in the springs' largest pool, and can be spotted easily when a PC approaches within 5 feet (Perception DC 15). A perpetual fog surrounds the area, obscuring sight beyond 5 feet as per the *fog cloud* spell. Despite the hostile climate of the Lethe Springs, several pernicious creatures call them home.

WASHING AWAY THE SOUL

The magic of the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, combined with the naturally occurring sulfur springs and volcanic activity, has spiked the waters of the Lethe Springs. The entire area reeks of rotting eggs, but sufficiently desperate travelers stranded in the desert still attempt to drink its boiling waters.

The boiling waters of the spring deal 1d6 points of fire damage per round of exposure, or 4d6 points of fire damage per round of immersion (such as if knocked into a pool). This damage continues for 1 round after exposure ceases, dealing half the normal amount of damage. In addition, the waters act as a magical poison when ingested, washing away drinkers' memories and eventually twisting them into mindless, base, fiendish versions of their former selves. Creatures immersed in one of the springs' pools are affected as if exposed to 2 doses of Lethe water. The steam suffusing the area is likewise tainted, and every 2 hours spent within the roiling clouds affects a creature as a single dose.

LETHE WATER

Type poison, ingested; **Save** Will DC 16
Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds
Effect 1d4 Int and Cha damage (cannot reduce a creature's Int or Cha below 1); **Cure** 2 saves
Special Creatures reduced below 3 Intelligence gain the fiendish creature simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294) and a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution; these effects vanish if a creature's Intelligence score rises above 3.
 Lethe water loses its magical potency 24 hours after being removed from the hot springs, but remains mildly poisonous thanks to its mineral content (treat as bloodroot, but ingested rather than injury; *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 558).

THE LOST ONES (CR 12)

Many desperate travelers stumble across the Lethe Springs, both human and animal, and lose their pasts and identities to its strange properties. Some eventually stumble out, but many remain in the warm, foggy embrace of the only life they can recall, descending into an animalistic state and attacking intruders.

Creatures: The Pawns of Prophecy mercenaries found themselves at the edge of the springs after a fierce sandstorm forced their caravan into the mountains for shelter. After restocking their water, they quickly lost sight of their destination and even their names, becoming half-starved beasts that attacked anyone who drew too close to the pools and feed on the strange fish and creatures that survive in the scalding waters. These wretched souls

are far from the apex predators of the area, so only four survivors still prowling the steaming pools, hungry and fiercely territorial. The lost ones prefer to bull rush opponents into the hot springs' boiling pools, but turn to their swords if enemies seem particularly intractable.

THE LOST ONES (4)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Fiendish human warrior 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294)
 NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 103 each (9d10+54)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

DR 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +15/+10 (1d8+5/19–20)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+0 attack, +9 damage)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 3, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 3

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +14 (+18 bull rush); **CMD** 26 (28 vs. bull rush)

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Skills Climb +11, Perception +2, Swim +11

Languages Common

Gear chainmail, mwk longsword

Treasure: The lost ones still stay close to their decaying wagons, now little more than a few splintering boards and sun-bleached horse bones. With 10 minutes of searching and a successful DC 20 Perception check, a character unearths a leather satchel containing the leader's logbook, which details how they came to the springs and met their end. In addition to the journal, the satchel contains 3,450 gp, a gilded copy of *The Birth of Light and Truth* (worth 500 gp), a gold holy symbol of Sarenrae (worth 150 gp), a scroll of heal, and a scroll of plane shift. Nearby lie the gnawed remains of the Sarenite priest the mercenaries were escorting across the desert.

EATERS OF THE LOST (CR 12)

Humans and animals confused by the springs' fiendish waters find themselves vulnerable to far more dangerous predators.

Creatures: A trio of yrthaks, blind aerial predators, use the Lethe Springs as their hunting ground. Their sonic lance ability creates a 60-foot void in the fog, and their favored tactic is for one to blast open a clearing in the fog while the other two dive onto confused creatures within. While the yrthaks' blindsense allows them to locate prey in the mist, they lost one of their own to the springs' memory-wiping qualities several years ago, and remain cautious of the billowing clouds.



YRTHAKS (3) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

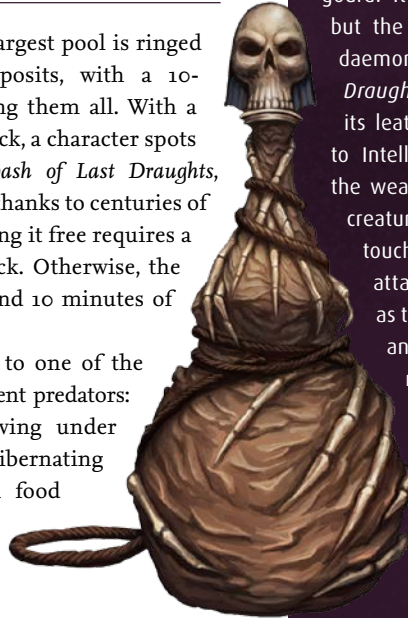
hp 114 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 290)

THE CALABASH POOL (CR 14)

The largest of the springs' bubbling pools stretches nearly eighty feet from end to end, but it is less than ten feet deep. Colorful orange and yellow mineral growths decorate the pool's edge, while a steaming tower of blue, red, and green stones stands at its center.

The hot springs' oldest and largest pool is ringed with magnificent mineral deposits, with a 10-foot tower at its center dwarfing them all. With a successful DC 15 Perception check, a character spots an elaborate bottle, the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, firmly cemented into the tower thanks to centuries of flowing mineral deposits. Yanking it free requires a successful DC 20 Strength check. Otherwise, the PCs need to use proper tools and 10 minutes of work to chip it free.

Creature: The pool is home to one of the Lethe's strangest and most resilient predators: a goezspall. Capable of surviving under nearly any conditions and hibernating for centuries at a time when food grows scarce, the goezspall is constantly foraging, and considers anything within reach of its claws a meal.



GOEZSPALL CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 200 (see page 62)

Treasure: While the calabash pool dissolves most valuables, the intellect-draining waters of the springs have formed a unique precipitate of human memories at the bottom of this pool, which radiates a strong aura of universal magic. Imbibing this chunky, gray, swirling muck provides a creature a permanent +1 inherent bonus to Intelligence. A given creature can benefit from this bonus only once, and the bottom of the pool contains enough memory precipitate to affect up to three creatures. The precipitate loses all of its magical properties 1 hour after being removed from the springs unless consumed before then. The memory precipitate lacks the memory-stealing ability of the water in the rest of the Lethe Springs.

Claiming the Calabash of Last Draughts

Once the PCs recover the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, the spirit within the artifact flinches at the presence of Sentinels of Meraz. Read or paraphrase the following.

THE CALABASH OF LAST DRAUGHTS

This sturdy clay jug houses the Raven Princess of Death, bound in place by ancient wards.

CALABASH OF LAST DRAUGHTS		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT chest	CL 18th	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA strong necromancy and transmutation		

An elaborately carved stopper caps this black gourd. It was once a *decanter of endless water*, but the bottle's magic has been warped by the daemon spirit trapped within. The *Calabash of Last Draughts* can be slung over a creature's chest with its leather strap, and grants a +2 profane bonus to Intelligence when worn. Five times per day, the wearer can unstopper the bottle and splash a creature with the tainted water within as a ranged touch attack with a range of 30 feet. A successful attack deals 1d4 points of Intelligence damage as the waters wipe away a creature's memories and sense of self. A successful DC 18 Will save reduces this Intelligence damage by half. If a target is helpless or willing, the wearer can instead unstopper the calabash and feed the target its tainted waters, either dealing 2d4 points of Intelligence damage or allowing the wearer to change or eliminate the target's memories as per the *modify memory* spell.

The *Calabash of Last Draughts* also erodes an outsider's connection to the physical world. If a possessing creature's Intelligence is reduced to 1 or lower in this way, it is immediately exorcised from its host's body.

Upon picking up the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, a creature must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or immediately drink from the accursed gourd.

DESTRUCTION

The *Calabash of Last Draughts* must be filled with water from the Progenitor Wave at the heart of the Sea of No Shadows in Nirvana, then dashed against the shores of the Mere of Broken Angels in Abaddon.

A quivering gray glow seeps from the bottle. Broken wisps congeal into the form of a raven-headed woman. "That filthy cur bounds free," a voice echoes. "And yet I sit, entombed and mourned by none? Putrid child! Bring me forth to my shameful sibling, and I shall teach him of grief! Drown him in me, and I will wipe away his ties to anything he loves, anything he holds dear, anything he needs. And he will know loss."

Story Award: Once the PCs claim the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, award them an extra 9,600 XP.



CHAPTER 3

FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE

At this point in the adventure, the PCs should have recovered the remaining three *Oblivion Keys*—the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, the *Handflower of Genocide*, and the *Shroud of Flies*. They are now ready to journey into the Meraz Desert to confront the risen harbinger of Abaddon and end the Feast of Dust.

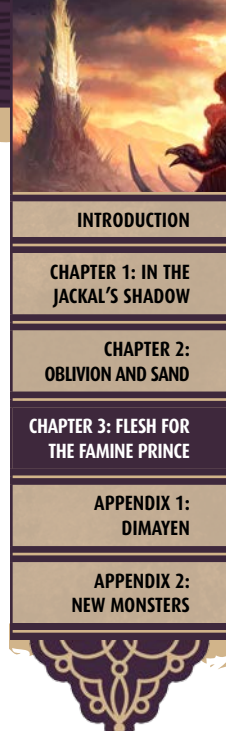
The Sunbleached Tower stands 250 miles northeast of Dimayen, and 250 miles southeast of Shadun, deep in the wastes of the Meraz Desert, but reaching this unmapped corner of the world is no simple task.

JOURNEY INTO MADNESS

The deepest, least hospitable reaches of the Meraz Desert still drip with the heralds' corruption. This dread landscape confounds even experienced travelers.

Strange, fetid winds nauseate living creatures, and the dunes shift endlessly to conceal landmarks and reveal previously hidden features. Otherworldly creatures from Abaddon prowl the wastes, attracted by the lingering evil. The shimmering heat casts strange mirages, leading explorers astray, often to their doom.

The most obvious means of locating the Jackal Prince's stronghold would be following or tracking the hundreds of victims that the Feast of Dust draws into the wastes, but the Meraz's supernatural terrain complicates even this simple task; winds obscure any trails in minutes, and mirages and blowing dust blot out the sight of Medium-sized creatures traveling the desert more than 100 feet away. Frequent sandstorms obscure any vision beyond 5 feet (although those called by the Feast of Dust



seem to walk through them without problem). The PCs can attempt to follow afflicted victims, but the desert conditions increase the DCs of any Perception or Survival checks to maintain pursuit by 20.

Without a guide to follow, each day of travel requires the PCs to succeed at a DC 35 Survival check to continue in the proper direction. Failure means that the PCs lose their way and make no progress toward the Sunbleached Tower.

The easiest means of tracking the Sunbleached Tower is to use the *Handflower of Genocide*. Its ability to locate the closest site of mass killing immediately homes in on the Jackal Prince's continual sacrifices, guiding the PCs unerringly to the tower while that function of the item is in effect. Once used, the artifact grants the PCs a +10 circumstance bonus on all Survival checks made to remain on course for the rest of the day.

As they draw nearer to the tower, the PCs spot hordes of gibbering, enthralled victims of the Feast of Dust lurching through the sands on burned, bleeding feet, lips cracking to bloody shards, gums receding, eyes bulging from dehydrated madness, and hair and skin sloughing from sun-seared scalps. Some of these accursed souls have already succumbed to the desert's deadly grasp and now lope along as slavering ghouls and ghosts.

E. THE SUNBLEACHED TOWER

As the PCs draw close to the Sunbleached Tower, read or paraphrase the following.

A massive structure of interlocking human bones, bleached white in the unforgiving sun, rises like a skeletal claw from the desert sands. Buttresses and broad corners support its wide base, while the top three hundred feet vanish into a dizzying haze above. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of humanoid figures crowd around the tower, sunburned, gaunt, and staring transfixed at the structure before them.

Built atop the ruins of the four heralds' original Black Tower, the Sunbleached Tower is a 300-foot-tall feat of grotesque architecture. It consists of the remains of hundreds of humanoid bodies culled from surrounding desert tribes and towns, called to the ruins and woven together as they died. Jackals and vultures have picked their flesh clean, leaving only their bones and ligaments to make up the tower itself. The original structure was a rickety, fragile affair, but through the work of the Jackal Prince's throngs of famine cultists and daemons, it has evolved into a solid and defensible fortress.

The tower itself reaches up to the site of the planar instability the Heralds of Dust created millennia ago, to a stable gate the Jackal Prince has created to channel his sacrifices to Trelmarixian. The four separate floors of the tower function as an assembly line, with daemons sorting, cleaning, and preparing the gaunt, sunken-eyed chattel for their grisly fate. Below the sands lies

the original Black Tower's foundation, hewn from ancient and profane stone. The Jackal Prince lairs within, skimming the choicest souls from his sacrifices and reworking them through foul rituals to restore his beautiful, horrible, daemonic form.

To save the region from the Feast of Dust, the PCs must slay the Jackal Prince and close his gate to Abaddon—for even if the herald is slain, the daemonic energy pouring through the portal is enough to sustain the curse.

Most of the Jackal Prince's ghul minions are currently scouring the desert for supplies, victims, and leads as to the whereabouts of the *Oblivion Keys*. The assembled masses here are simply petty sacrifices, fascinated by the Sunbleached Tower, and pose no threat to the PCs (there is no XP reward if the PCs destroy some of those assembled). A small encampment of cultists stands a mile from the tower, appearing outwardly to be an abandoned nomad camp. Fewer than a third of the Jackal Prince's mortal cultists rest there at any given time.

General Features: Each floor of the Sunbleached Tower is a cathedral-like affair, featuring soaring, 50-foot ceilings with grand, steep staircases running between them. Unless the PCs take steps to stem the tide of sacrifices (such as closing the doors in area E1 or using some sort of wall-creating or crowd-dispersing magic), the floor is crowded with starving, somnambulant humanoids who hamper movement. This prevents any Small or Medium creatures from taking 5-foot steps, and the throngs are likely to be injured or killed in any large area-of-effect spells.

The walls of the tower are constructed from bones magically hardened to be as resilient as reinforced masonry (hardness 8, hp 180), rendering them immune to spells such as *stone shape* and *transmute rock to mud*.

The desert heat and planar portal above create a staggering heat within the tower despite the open spaces. The temperature of the tower's interior qualifies as severe heat (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444), requiring PCs to attempt Fortitude saves every 10 minutes to avoid taking nonlethal damage. This damage manifests not just as heat stroke, but also as a growing hunger and slow starvation.

The Sunbleached Tower's magic enhances the effects of the Feast of Dust, and any creature transformed by the curse (developing a bite attack and gaining a Strength bonus) must succeed at a DC 21 Will save once per hour or quietly proceed into the tower and ascend the stairs toward the portal above to Abaddon. In addition, within the tower, any creature transformed by the Feast of Dust must succeed at a DC 21 Will save to resist any daemon's firmly stated command, or else obey as if affected by *suggestion*.

A *desecrate* effect suffuses the entire tower thanks to the evil ritual used to open the portal above, granting all undead within a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, and granting any ghouls or ghosts created by the Feast of Dust an additional 1 hit point per Hit Die.

E1. The Wasting Doors (CR 10)

Four arches open at the base of this ivory spire, showing hundreds of cracked skulls that serve as tiles in the floor beyond. Thousands of teeth cover the ground here like gravel.

The four entryway arches allow access to the Sunbleached Tower, but at a ghastly price.

Hazard: Anyone passing through one of these doors who hasn't been transformed by the Feast of Dust is mangled by the countless teeth of past victims, as the ravenous impulse left behind in these bones drives them to sate their abominable hunger.

GNASHING TEETH HAUNT CR 10

XP 9,600

NE haunt (15-by-15-ft. area in each entrance)

Caster Level 15th

Notice Perception DC 25 (to notice teeth chattering in anticipation)

hp 20; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, the scattered teeth fly into a gnashing, swirling swarm, obscuring all vision for 1 round and dealing 6d6 points of slashing damage to all creatures in the entryway.

Destruction The teeth become inert once the portal to Abaddon is closed (see area E6) or Savedrah is able to resurrect (see area E5).

E2. The Feasting Hall of Famine (CR 14)

This yawning hall extends the length of the tower. To the east, a grand ivory staircase wraps up and around to the floors above, while fountains overflowing with wine stud the walls. Two massive tables flank an altar on a raised dais. The tables hold an impressive feast of roast meats, fresh-baked breads, honeyed fruit, and fine vintages. The altar on the western wall bears a cornucopia at the feet of a gaunt, jackal-headed man, but only a steady stream of dust pours from its feasting horn, gathering in a pile on the floor.

A 30-foot-tall statue of his former daemonic form overlooks this shrine to the Jackal Prince. It welcomes the victims of his curse, though none of the starving masses approach the set tables. The feast and wine are infused with the power of Trelmarixian, and crumble to ash and sand in a creature's mouth, dealing 2d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Creature: A single acrididaemon protects this shrine. Once the most trusted minions of the Jackal Prince, these dread servants scuttled into the darkest corners of Abaddon after the Heralds of Dust fell. The acrididaemon that infests the feast here emerges if any of the entering humans and ghouls show any willfulness

or resistance. This vicious fiend protects its master's shrine to the death.

ACRIDIDAEMON CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 200 (see page 61)

Treasure: While the food itself is worthless, the etched silver platters it rests upon are worth 50 gp apiece. There are 20 platters in all.

E3. The Holding Pens (CR 12)

Row after row of bone cages line the walls here, stacked four levels high to the vaulted ceiling overhead. Each is crammed full of moaning, gaunt humanoid figures begging for oblivion.

While most of the sacrifices destined for Abaddon simply march past, particularly lively or interesting mortals who survive the trek into the desert are kept here for the ghouls and ghosts to examine, or simply to allow the Feast of Dust to finish its work.

Creatures: In addition to the hundreds of humans trapped here, a pair of ghoul overseers and a pack of ghosts supervise their captives and sort the ripest new victims. They quell prisoner dissent and tolerate no resistance from the living. One overseer augments the ghost minions with inspire courage and *haste*, while the other targets enemies directly with her dirge of doom and *slow* and *suggestion* spells.

These undead are augmented by the tower's unnatural *desecrate* effect.

GHOUL OVERSEERS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 95 each (use the statistics for Pershpa on page 12)

GHOSTS (12) CR 2

XP 600 each

Advanced ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 146)

hp 19 each

Development: Each cage is lashed shut with sinews (hardness 2, hp 10, break DC 15). Two-thirds of the cages contain living humans, while another third contain dead bodies or newly risen ghouls. If released from their cages, the prisoners resume their march up the stairs.

E4. Hall of Doomed Souls (CR 14)

Statues line the walls of this otherwise barren hall of cracked bone. A few work tables set with leather straps and iron restraints sit between the matching sets of stairs leading down. A pair of spiral staircases on the opposite side of the chamber lead up.

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

The Jackal Prince's daemon servants perform their final inspections of sacrifices here, weeding out any undead, looting any valuables, and occasionally pulling aside victims for their lord's own needs.

Creature: The Jackal Prince requires mortal souls for his own needs, not just to buy favor with Trelmarixian. He is using human essence extracted by ancient rituals to reshape Dehlvat Aaban's frail flesh into the form of a true daemonic being. The process shows slow but steady progress, and requires huge amounts of sacrifices skimmed from those dedicated to the Horseman of Famine.

To acquire his souls, the Jackal Prince has contracted a rogue thanadaemon named Golimba and her flock of cacodaemons to cull mortal souls and deliver them to him in the Garden of Desolation deep below. Golimba is a mercenary without scruples, and while she loves the idea of claiming the souls of would-be heroes, she holds no loyalty to the Jackal Prince; she simply works with him because he allows her to gorge on souls. She tries to goad the PCs into suicide, waxing poetic about the futile brevity of life and the arbitrary cruelty of the world. She refuses to allow them to pass or harm the portal above (which she values far more than she does the Jackal Prince). If attacked, she attempts to summon 1d4 hydrodaemons and falls back to waylay enemies with spells, ready to flee to her skiff in the corner and use *plane shift* to return to the River Styx. Golimba is titillated by the *Calabash of Last Draughts* if the PCs carry it openly, and offers to leave immediately without incident in exchange for the bottle, even offering them the password to reach the returned harbinger. Doing so saves the PCs from a difficult fight, but ultimately complicates their efforts to kill the Jackal Prince.

Golimba's dozen cacodaemons are just as mercenary, and if combat breaks out, they scatter and hide.

GOLIMBA CR 14
XP 38,400
 Advanced thanadaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 74)
hp 202

Treasure: Golimba's soul-distilling setup includes a bone eyepiece over one of her worktables inset with a *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone*.

Development: Golimba knows the password to open the Doors of the four (see area **F8**), and frequently loans a piece of paper with the phrase scrawled on it to her cacodaemons so they can access the door and deliver souls to the Jackal Prince. These dim-witted daemons travel through the entire tower invisibly running errands, and at the GM's discretion, a party able to see invisible

creatures may encounter and defeat a cacodaemon carrying this key, even if Golimba teleports away and the PCs fail to rescue the psychopomp Nan gib Verrox (see area **F12**).

Story Award: If the PCs learn the password to the Doors of the four from Golimba, award them an extra 19,200 XP.

E5. Upper Landing (CR 13)

The bones of some enormous bird are pinned to the wall of this chamber, just above a yawning doorway that leads west into open air. The bones themselves seem to shudder, barely restrained by hundreds of nails forged from sickly black iron.

The bones here belong to the phoenix Savedrah, who came to investigate the rising curse deep within the Meraz Desert and engaged the Jackal Prince in personal combat. The daemon defeated and restrained the phoenix, then sacrificed the noble creature as part of the ritual to reopen the portal to Abaddon. The ritual also created the powerful *desecrate* effect that suffuses the entire tower, empowers many of the undead within, and prevents Savedrah's restless remains from resurrecting. The PCs can identify the remains as the skeleton of a phoenix with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check.

Savedrah saw the Jackal Prince many months ago, before the Sunbleached Tower was even complete, and is



MELADAEMON

unaware of the herald's slow transformation. If rescued, the phoenix can confirm that he wields the *Ravenous Blade*, however, and describes a man similar to Dehivat, if hungrier and more feral.

Creatures: A pair of slaving meladaemons stand guard here.

MELADAEMONS (2) CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 147 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 69)

Development: The PCs can free Savedrah's bones from the wall, a process that requires some basic tools and 120 minutes. Each character can attempt a single DC 15 Strength check; each success reduces the total time by 20 minutes, to a minimum of 20 minutes. Pulling the phoenix's remains from the wall immediately cancels the *desecrate* effect on the tower and dungeon below, but does not deactivate the portal in the next room. With the *desecrate* effect ended, Savedrah is able to resurrect.

Savedrah's prolonged death and exposure to the warping energies of Abaddon have imposed 10 permanent negative levels, severely limiting his usefulness in direct combat. Though he can remove this burden with time, he prefers to use his *greater restoration* and other spell-like abilities to reward his rescuers before retreating to heal himself.

Story Award: If the PCs free Savedrah award them an extra 19,200 XP.

E6. Abaddon Gate (CR 15)

A bridge of bone and sinew reaches out three hundred feet above the sandy wastes below to a wide platform. A vortex of churning, dark energies belches forth stinking, howling winds that carry the tortured screams of souls. A black orb rests on a pedestal at the center of platform.

The vortex here is a gateway to Abaddon. Those unfortunate victims of the Feast of Dust who stagger through it become petitioners on that forlorn plane of soul-consuming devastation. The screams borne on the hot winds that belch from this vortex foreshadow the Jackal Prince's apocalyptic agenda.

The portal is a weak breach between worlds. The Jackal Prince can funnel mortals into Abaddon, but daemons cannot come to Golarion without copious amounts of mortal souls sent through the other way—this maintains the planar balance. Twenty Hit Dice of living souls must be exiled through the gate for each Hit Die of daemons that cross through to Golarion. The otherworldly minions now serving the Jackal Prince were all brought to the Material Plane in this manner.

The scorched-black bone orb in this room controls this portal to Abaddon. Any daemon can activate it as a standard action any time, changing the portal to any of

the settings listed below. A non-daemon can activate the orb by succeeding at a DC 40 Use Magic Device check as a full-round action; holding one or more *Oblivion Keys* grants a character a +10 circumstance bonus on this check. The portal can be tuned to the following settings.

- **Exile:** The portal is currently on this setting, creating a one-way gate from this chamber on the Material Plane to Abaddon; creatures on Abaddon can't enter this area through the gate.
- **Summon:** This setting allows creatures to step through from Abaddon to Golarion as if called via a *greater planar ally* spell, as long as the proper number of living souls has been exiled through the gate (see above). Such creatures are under no compulsion to obey or bargain with the caller; thus far, the Jackal Prince has limited his summons largely to meladaemons and acrididaemons, which are more inclined to serve his legacy.
- **Vortex:** This setting causes the gate generate hurricane-force winds (*Core Rulebook* 439) that pull Medium and smaller creatures within 100 feet into Abaddon. Daemons aren't affected by this storm.
- **Flood:** This setting causes the gate to expel fetid, hurricane-force winds (*Core Rulebook* 439) from Abaddon, pushing Medium or smaller creatures away. Daemons are not affected by this storm.
- **Close:** The portal deactivates completely; no passage is possible in either direction.

Creatures: Another of the Jackal Prince's acrididaemons and a pack of his loyal ceustodaemons guard this final gateway. If intruders approach, the acrididaemon uses its first turn to set the portal to its vortex setting, hoping to trap the intruders in Abaddon.

ACRIDIDAEMON CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 200 (see page 61)

GREATER CEUSTODAEMONS (4) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

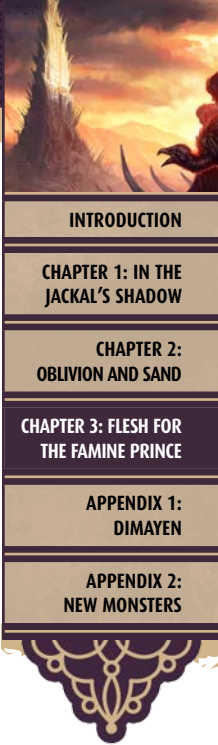
Advanced ceustodaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 65)

hp 84 each

Treasure: The control sphere is a 12-inch sphere of burnt bone carved in intricate relief, depicting the arrangement of the outer planes and inlaid with gold, platinum, and lapis. Once the portal is closed, the orb loses all magical properties, but is still worth 3,500 gp to a collector.

Development: The portal can be deactivated by switching it to the close setting or by breaking the control orb (hardness 10, hp 45, break DC 25). If the orb is destroyed, the Jackal Prince must spend 2d4 weeks constructing a replacement before he can reopen the portal to Abaddon.

Story Award: If the PCs close the portal to Abaddon, award them an additional 38,400 XP.



F. GARDEN OF DESOLATION

Far older than the Sunbleached Tower or even the Black Tower that preceded it, the Garden of Desolation is where the Heralds of Dust first pierced the veil between Abaddon and Golarion. According to their own legends, a millennium before the heralds emerged, four damned creatures—their names and even their natures now lost to history—crawled into the caverns below this rocky shelf to die. When they did, they planted seeds of evil that one day blossomed into a twisted fig tree that grew without soil or sunlight, and whose roots dug into the crevices between worlds and opened the first cracks to Abaddon. Daemons then stepped through these cracks to nurture this profane tree, which would produce fruit only once the rest of the Meraz was rendered into dust.

Whether this is true or not, the Heralds of Dust did nurture a grotesque tree in these dungeons long before building their tower above, and their connection to it strengthens their hold on the Material Plane, preventing them from being banished back to Abaddon and empowering them to survive the destruction of their bodies.

The Jackal Prince now spends much of his time in these chambers, working stolen soulstuff into a new daemonic form so he can abandon his current vessel of fragile flesh and lead his armies from the front. In the intervening ages, half of the complex has collapsed upon itself, but enough remains to serve the Jackal Prince's purposes.

General Features: Unlike the tower above, the Garden of Desolation is preternaturally cold; its tainted stones suck all life and heat from the world. This environment counts as cold weather (*Core Rulebook* 442), requiring creatures to succeed at a Fortitude save once per hour or begin taking nonlethal damage. This effect also mutes colors and bright lights. Light sources brighter than dim are automatically reduced to dim light.

The ceilings here are 15 feet high and the walls are carved from cool, gray limestone, magically reinforced and worn smooth over the countless centuries. Any secret door requires a successful DC 30 Perception check to discover.

F1. Ruination's Temple (CR 14)

Something between a cathedral and a prison, this chamber has limestone walls that lean in toward the top, lending the room a claustrophobic air. Manacles, some still bearing skeletal arms, line the pews and face a massive statue looming large from the west wall, its face shattered. Four short corridors leading to smaller chapels open to the north and south.

This temple complex deep below the desert housed the four harbingers' original cult eons ago. The Jackal Prince's new followers are now busy restoring it. The 12-foot-tall statue here once depicted the Oinodaemon, Lord of the Forsaken, but it cracked long ago when the Four Horsemen betrayed and locked away the lord of all daemons.

PLANAR MISADVENTURES

It's entirely possible that this encounter ends with PCs sucked into one of the least hospitable of the Outer Planes: Abaddon. Upon the PCs' arrival, the GM may elect to have them ambushed by additional daemons waiting beyond the portal, or they may simply find themselves alone in the howling, windswept barrens of the plane of torment.

This adventure offers several possible escape routes from the Outer Planes, turning this journey into a minor delay rather than derailing an entire campaign. The *scroll of plane shift* found at the Lethe Springs can be used to escape quickly, while the collection of tuning forks recovered from the Discipline Pit in the Whitewater compound (area B11) provides the material component for high-level PCs to cast their own *plane shift* spells. Likewise, both *dismissal* and *banishment* can exile mortals from the Outer Planes, sending them back to the Material Plane. Finally, adventurers can simply wait by the portal—undoubtedly battling daemon patrols in the meantime—for operators on the Material Plane to reset the portal to “summon” in 1d4 days. While summoning humanoids requires no sacrifices, those in the tower perform them anyway, as they expect daemons.

The Raven Princess of Pestilence fell here to the Sentinels of Meraz, and the Jackal Prince ordered her bones carefully collected and interred beneath the altar in the Shrine to Famine (area F5).

The secret door behind the statue is locked (Disable Device DC 40), as are the double doors to the east (Disable Device DC 35) that lead to area F6. Shemkar Shellish (see below), Varlaikal (see area F11), Jahara Shar (see area F7), and the Jackal Prince all carry keys to the double doors, but only Jahara and the Jackal Prince himself carry the keys to the secret passage.

Creatures: The Jackal Prince's return has attracted a small following of Trelmarixian cultists, who hope to see a cruel world wiped clean in preparation for the arrival of the Four Horsemen. Most peculiar among them is Shemkar Shellish, a devout Sarenite from Dimayen who volunteered to lead an expedition to investigate undead uprisings in the desert. Unfortunately, the expedition encountered jackals that spread the Feast of Dust, and after its members fell upon one another in a cannibalistic orgy, only Shemkar was left alive. Unable to cope with the horror he had witnessed, Shemkar's mind broke, and he convinced himself that Sarenrae personally spared him—a man too righteous to succumb to the evil that wiped out the others—as her herald on Golarion. He further concluded that the world was too sick to survive, and that the Dawnflower wanted him to prepare it to be wiped clean so she could birth a purer civilization. Now he assists the Jackal Prince's cult—a cult he firmly believes serves Sarenrae and her “loyal hound.”

F. GARDEN OF DESOLATION

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



SHEMKAR SHELLISH

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human oracle 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 101 (13d8+39)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

Resist fire 20

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +9/+4 (1d6/18–20)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +19)

6th (5/day)—*blade barrier* (DC 22), *fire seeds* (DC 22), *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds*

5th (7/day)—*break enchantment* (DC 21), *mass cure light wounds*, *slay living* (DC 21), *true seeing*, *summon monster V* (fire elementals only)

4th (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *dismissal* (DC 20), *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *spiritual ally*^{APG}, *wall of fire*

3rd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *searing light*, *fireball* (DC 19)

2nd (8/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *death knell* (DC 18),

hold person (DC 18), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 18), *sound burst* (DC 18), *spiritual weapon*

1st (8/day)—*bless*, *burning hands* (DC 17), *command* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}, *virtue*

Mystery flame

TACTICS

Before Combat If Shemkar hears outsiders approaching the temple, he casts *divine favor* on himself. The cultists working alongside him know Shemkar's tactics, and cast *resist energy* (fire) on themselves as combat begins.

During Combat Shemkar begins by surrounding the battlefield in a wall of fire, then unleashes a *fireball* and *scorching ray*, and turns to *blade barrier* and *slay living* if his fire spells seem ineffective. He still considers himself a good parish priest, and heals his cultists as needed.

Morale Shemkar is convinced that he is Sarenrae's prophet on Golarion and cannot be slain. He fights to the death.

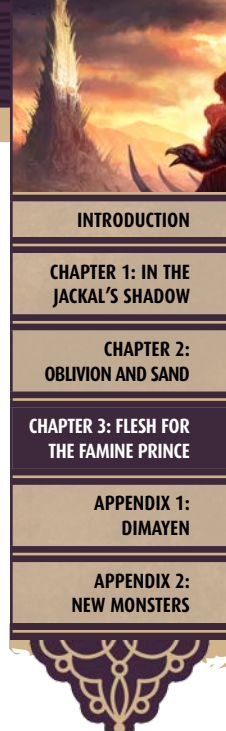
STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar)

Skills Diplomacy +22, Heal +17, Knowledge (planes, religion) +10, Perception +3, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +16



Languages Common, Ignan, Terran; *tongues* (understand only)
SQ oracle's curse (tongues [Ignan]), revelations (firestorm [1/day, 13 cubes, 13d6, DC 22, 6 rounds], form of flame [1/day, Huge fire elemental, *elemental body IV*, 13 hours per day], gaze of flames 13 rounds/day, molten skin, wings of fire [fly speed 60, 13 minutes/day])
Gear +2 *breastplate*, +1 *scimitar*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +1, key to area **F6**, 335 gp

TRELMARIXIAN CULTISTS (3) CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 75 each (see page 32)

F2. Shrine to Death

A crumbling altar in the center of this chamber supports a stack of human and animal skulls and recently burned candles. A ten-foot-tall statue of a hunched man in robes and a wide-brimmed hat stands at the far end.

This shrine once honored Charon, the Horseman of Death, and served as a nursery to the Jackal Prince's sister, the Raven Princess of Death, until the completion of the Black Tower above. The Jackal Prince's cult has given some cursory attention to restoring it and making half-hearted prayers—just enough to avoid the daemon lord's ire.

When the Jackal Prince discovered his sister's remains, he ordered his followers to collect and inter them here. A successful DC 30 Perception check reveals that the altar has been moved recently. Moving the 1,500-pound stone again exposes the Raven Princess's rough stone sarcophagus. Her bones still carry the potential for a powerful blight, the Breath of Dust, but as long as her spirit remains trapped within the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, the curse is powerless and inert.

Treasure: A sharpened bone knife rests at the feet of the Charon statue: a *necromancer's athame*^{UE} that once belonged to the Raven Princess. While it sits at Charon's feet, the athame is charged with negative energy and deals 5d6 points of negative energy damage (Will DC 18 half) to any living creature that touches it.

F3. Shrine to Famine (CR 12)

A tidy altar here overflows with rotting food, burning candles, and animal sacrifices in varying stages of decay. A ten-foot-tall statue of a gaunt man bearing three jackal heads stands at one end of the chamber.

This shrine to Trelmarixian is the only one to see any real use or attention from the Jackal Prince or his cult; they offer sacrifices and prayers to the Horseman of Famine to curry favor so he'll restore the prince's lost status.

The altar here contains a secret alcove beneath it (identical to area **F2**), save that it contains the few remaining bones of the Jackal Prince: a fractured scapula, three vertebrae, and a femur.

Creatures: A pair of shaghals watch over the shrine here, feasting on leftover bits of sacrificial offerings and tended by a lone cultist, an ulcerous, chronically hungry cultist named Femaar who possesses a natural kinship with the beasts. If Femaar hears combat in the main temple, he fumbles with the shaghals' chains for 1d6 rounds before he and the beasts rush to join the combat.



SHEMKAR SHELLISH

FEMAAR CR 8

XP 4,800
 Trelmarixian cultist (see page 32)
hp 75

SHAGHALS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each
hp 105 each (see page 63)

F4. SHRINE TO WAR

A dusty altar supports a few cheap swords and candles before this ten-foot-tall statue of a sword-wielding man with vulture wings spread wide.

This shrine is nearly identical to area **F2**, save that it honors Szuriel, the Horseman of War.

The altar here contains a secret alcove beneath it (identical to that in area **F2**), except that it stands empty. The Vulture Prince of War engaged the Sentinels of Meraz in the Black Tower above, and his bones—still infused with the potential for the Blood of Dust curse—have long since been scattered across the desert.

Treasure: Though the Vulture Prince's remains have been cast to the winds, his followers interred his *staff of dark flame*^{UE} here, beneath a secret panel in the sepulcher (Perception DC 25).

F5. SHRINE TO PLAGUE

A single bloated human corpse rests atop the stained altar here alongside recently burned candles. At the far end stands a ten-foot-tall statue of a bulky man with a skeletal ram's head.

This shrine is nearly identical to area **F2**, save that it honors Apollyon, the Horseman of Plague.

The altar here contains a secret alcove beneath it identical to that in area **F2**, save that it contains the bones of the Rat Princess of Plague. The Rat Princess's bones contain the potential to spread the Plague of Dust, but remain inert while her spirit is trapped within the *Shroud of Flies*.

Treasure: Alongside the Rat Princess's remains in the sepulcher lies a battered tunic: her *corset of dire witchcraft*^{UE}.

F6. Hall Intersection (CR 12)

This large, circular alcove is lined with a low stone bench, but is otherwise unremarkable.

Hazard: Powerful daemonic runes carved into the walls and floor of this room detect the entry of nonevil creatures and unleash a sliver of Abaddon's misery upon those who enter.

SOUL SIPHON TRAP CR 12

Type magic; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*detect good*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*energy drain*, Atk +12 ranged touch, 2d4 temporary negative levels, Fortitude DC 23 negates after 24 hours); multiple targets (all nonevil creatures in the 20-ft.-diameter chamber)

F7. Guard Stations

Four small rooms line the hallways leading deep into the complex. Areas **F7b** and **F7c** house Jahara Shar and the five cultists who lie in wait in area **F8**; Jahara and two cultists are quartered in area **F7b**, while the other two dwell in area **F7c**. They can be encountered there if the PCs make it to area **F8** without attracting attention or setting off any traps.

F8. Hall of the Harbingers (CR 15)

Countless scorch marks and gashes in the stone here mar an ancient mural. Four statues stand against the west wall, flanking two corridors that lead to heavy bronze doors. One statue depicts a fearsome vulture-headed man wielding an axe. Another depicts a drooling woman with a raven's beak. The third depicts a petite, rat-faced woman. The final statue depicts a tall, gaunt man with a jackal's head.

This shrine served the four Heralds of Dust directly, and here two of them—the Jackal Prince and the Raven Princess—met their ends at the hands of the Sentinels of Meraz. Their cultists once conducted vile sacrifices and rituals here to help breach the barrier between worlds, and much of the floor is stained with humanoid blood.

Creatures: Jahara Shar remains ever vigilant here. Her family believed her mute nature was a burden, and so they abandoned her in the desert as a child. The young Jahara wandered for weeks until she fell into a sinkhole

and discovered the Garden of Desolation. She found the skeleton of the once-mighty warlord Nul Kraz Basheen clutching two opal-encrusted scimitars and a hefty case of scrolls. Jahara pried the bony fingers loose and, upon reading the assembled scrolls—Nul Kraz's journals and personal combat manuals—found her voice: the singing of blades and the screams of her people as she extracted revenge and sowed fear, her young mind twisted by the warlord's insights.

Jahara spent years as a raider and murderer until the Jackal Prince's return and Nul Kraz Basheen's reawakening. The fiery young woman beat the ghul warlord senseless when he attempted to reclaim his ancient blades, and her fury and skill so amused the Jackal Prince that he retained her services as his personal bodyguard and allowed her to keep the scimitars. The fact that Jahara's muteness means she can never speak the password to the Doors of the four (and consequently slit his throat while he is lost in prayer) only strengthens the Jackal Prince's trust in the mortal girl.

Jahara is utterly in the thrall of her master, and adores the power and strength her service affords her. Though a more likely servant to War, she genuinely enjoys serving the Maw of the Heralds and longs to see the weak wiped from the world.

Jahara and five cultists lie in wait here for intruders, and pour out of the secret passage from area **F7b** and the southern hallway shortly after the PCs enter.

JAHARA SHAR CR 12

XP 19,200

Female human ranger 13

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 15, flat-footed 29 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +1 shield)

hp 115 (13d10+39)

Fort +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *Urtuuk* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+5 plus 1d6 electricity/18–20), *Akraal* +15/+10 (1d8+5 plus 1d8 sonic/18–20)

Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon), favored enemy (gnolls +2, humans +6, magical beasts +2), quarry

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +11)

2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*

1st—*animal messenger*, *lead blades*^{APG}, *longstrider*, *sun metal*^{UC}

TACTICS

Before Combat If Jahara hears combat in the temple, she casts *barkskin*, *cat's grace*, and *lead blades* on herself.

During Combat Jahara is an unobtrusive warrior, closing on an opponent and tearing at it until it falls.

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

Morale If reduced below 15 hit points, Jahara falls back to the laboratory (area **F11**) to heal and make her last stand.

Base Statistics Without her spells, Jahara has the following statistics: **AC** 22, touch 13, flat-footed 24; **Ref** +14; **Melee** *Urtuuk* +15/+10/+5 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 electricity/18-20), *Akraal* +15/+10 (1d6+5 plus 1d8 sonic/18-20); **Dex** 22; **CMD** 33.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 20, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 33

Feats Dodge, Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Intimidate +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +17, Stealth +17, Survival +14

Languages Common

SQ camouflage, favored terrain (desert +4, mountain +2, urban +4), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +6, wild empathy +13, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +2 chainmail, *Akraal* (+1 thundering scimitar), *Urtuuk* (+1 shock scimitar), *belt of giant strength* +4, *cloak of resistance* +1; key ring with keys to areas **F6**, **F10**, **F12**, and the secret passage in area **F1**.

TRELMARIXIAN CULTISTS (5) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 75 each (see page 32)

Development: The secret door in the northeastern wall is locked; only Jahara and the Jackal Prince carry keys. The doors to the west, however, are minor artifacts collectively known as the Doors of the Four. These magically reinforced bronze doors (hardness 45, hp 250, break DC 50) have no exterior locks or handles and can be opened only by uttering a short prayer to the Four Horsemen in a dialect of Kelish unheard on Golarion since the *Starstone* fell. Originally, only the Heralds of Dust knew this password, and it died with them, leaving the Sentinels of Meraz unable to open the doors and unaware of the Tree of Desolation. Only with the Jackal Prince's return has knowledge of how to open the doors returned to the world. He has thus far shared the passphrase only with the thanadaemon Golimba (area **E4**), so her cacodaemons can deliver the souls necessary for his divine evolution. One additional

creature knows the password, though: the Jackal Prince's captive psychopomp Nan gib Verrox (see area **F12**). Either of these outsiders can teach the PCs the way to open the Doors of the Four; otherwise, the heroes must wait in ambush for the Jackal Prince to emerge to issue orders or extract further secrets from Nan, as he does every 1d6 days.

Additionally, the Jackal Prince has taken a liking to his human defender. If the PCs kill Jahara but retreat afterward, he uses the *scroll of resurrection* from his vault to restore his favorite guard to life.

F9. The Jackal's Den

Ancient, once-plush furnishings fill this room in a haphazard style, creating the impression of an expensive private apartment allowed to decay.

The Jackal Prince slept and took meals here when he was still beholden to filthy, weak human needs, and still rests here on occasion. More and more, though, he spends his time locked away with the Tree of Desolation, praying and gorging on souls.

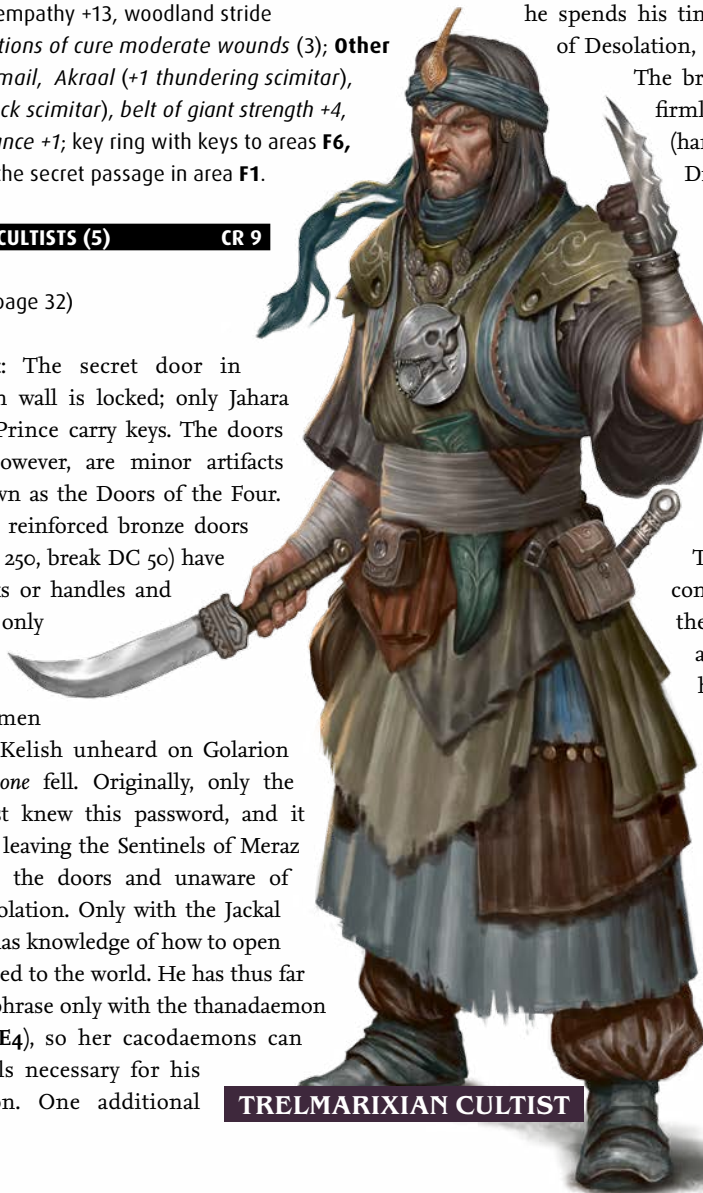
The bronze doors leading north are firmly locked and magically secured (hardness 20, hp 120, break DC 48, Disable Device DC 45).

Treasure: Most of the furnishings here are too faded and battered to be worth much, except for a pair of well-worn gold and lapis bowls (worth 450 gp each) on one table that are filled with 149 pieces of cut obsidian (25 gp each).

F10. Treasure Vault

The Jackal Prince's ghouls confiscate anything of value that the Feast of Dust's victims bring, and they take these valuables here, to the Jackal Prince's personal coffers. Though he has no need for material wealth, he knows humans will fight and kill one another over these baubles, or fight by his side in exchange for a handful of shiny metal. On rare occasions, a victim brings him magical treasures that actually prove valuable.

Treasure: This extensive hoard contains 12,012 cp, 2,745 sp, 288 gp, 21 pp, a *ring*



TRELMARIXIAN CULTIST

of *spell knowledge II*, a *corset of the vishkanya*^{UE}, *eyes of the eagle*, a *potion of blur*, a *potion of greater magic fang*, a *wand of remove paralysis* (17 charges), a topaz ring (worth 500 gp), a diamond bracelet (worth 900 gp), a large pink sapphire (worth 300 gp), a bag of 10 tourmalines (worth 80 gp each), and a kawala flute carved from sphinx bone (worth 300 gp).

F11. Laboratory (CR 13)

This chamber is appointed as a grim laboratory, with scattered tables bearing straps and manacles, as well as numerous glass jars, flasks, and tubes of strange fluids—some smoking, others concealing dark, disturbing shapes floating within. Hooks and blades of every imaginable metal hang about the walls, and a strange, gray bird adorned with a ceramic mask is pinned under glass.

In his effort to unlock the secrets of outsider life and death, the Jackal Prince has transformed this spacious chamber into a well-appointed laboratory for experimenting on outsiders and extracting secrets from his extradimensional captives. Though he began by studying daemons and other summoned fiends, his work truly began to advance once he branched out into researching psychopomps. The small bird under glass is a *nosoi* (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 220), and is identifiable as such with a successful DC 12 Knowledge (plane) check. It was part of a brigade dispatched to investigate the sudden surge of undead in the Meraz, but was captured by the Jackal Prince's daemons. The tiny scribe perished quickly, but Varlaikal managed to preserve its body. He has been unable to question it magically or to raise it as an undead.

Creatures: The Jackal Prince was not alone when he left Ibhris's side. He also absconded with the con artist's partner, a devious Thuvian poisoner named Varlaikal. Varlaikal had long ago realized he was likely bound for Abaddon eventually. Being a practical man, he decided he would arrive with its rulers owing him a few favors. While the Jackal Prince does not trust his tag-along servant, he finds the warped man's skills useful.

One of the Jackal Prince's meladaemons observes and assists the alchemist with his twisted work.

VARLAIKAL CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human alchemist 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 16, flat-footed 25 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 101 (13d8+39)

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

Immune poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sickle +14/+9 (1d6-1 plus poison)

Ranged +1 *blowgun* +15/+10 (1d2+1 plus poison)

Special Attacks bomb 18/day (7d6+5 fire, DC 21)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 13th)

5th—*dust form*^{UC}, *languid bomb admixture*^{UC} (DC 20)

4th—*cure critical wounds*, *detonate*^{APG} (DC 19), *stoneskin*, *viper bomb admixture*^{UC}

3rd—*absorb toxicity*^{UM} (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *fly*, *haste*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*, *defensive shock*^{UM}, *invisibility*, *touch injection*^{UC}, *transmute potion to poison*^{APG}

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *enlarge person* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *reduce person* (DC 16), *shield*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat Varlaikal keeps his sickle coated with a concentrated dose of purple worm poison, which lasts for five attacks. If he hears combat, he drinks his *barkskin* extract and his mutagen to augment his Dexterity.

During Combat Varlaikal begins by consuming his *dust form* extract, then throwing poison bombs to blanket the room in toxic gas. He then consumes his *viper bomb admixture* extract and reverts to standard bombs.

Morale If reduced below 20 hit points, Varlaikal attempts to flee.

Base Statistics Without his *barkskin* extract and his mutagen, Varlaikal has the following statistics: **AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18; **Ref** +11, **Will** +8; **Ranged** +1 *blowgun* +12/+7; **Dex** 14, **Wis** 12; **CMD** 22; **Skills** Disable Device +17, Fly +17, Heal +17, Perception +17, Sleight of Hand +17, Survival +17.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24

Feats Brew Potion, Dodge, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (blowgun)

Skills Craft (alchemy) +21, Disable Device +19, Fly +19, Heal +16, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Perception +16, Sleight of Hand +19, Spellcraft +21, Survival +16

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Kelish

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +13, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 130 minutes), discoveries (concentrate poison, poison bomb [13 rounds/level], poison conversion^{UC}, preserve organs^{UM}, smoke bomb, sticky poison [5 strikes]), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Combat Gear deathblade poison (2 doses), giant wasp poison (2 doses), purple worm poison (4 doses), wyvern poison (1 dose); **Other Gear** +4 *chain shirt*, +1 *blowgun* with 40 blowgun darts, mwk sickle, *cloak of resistance* +1,

ring of protection +1, alchemist's lab, keys to areas **F6** and **F12**, diamond dust (worth 250 gp)

MELADAEMON **CR 11**

XP 12,800

hp 147 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 69)

Treasure: Among the tools hanging here are masterwork daggers constructed from each of the following materials: adamantine, alchemical silver, cold iron, mithral, and noqual, as well as a *dagger of venom*, a *wand of cure critical wounds* (24 charges), and six *potions of cure serious wounds*.

Development: The southern doors here are locked and magically secured (hardness 20, hp 120, break DC 48, Disable Device DC 45). Varlaikal carries the key.

F12. The Captured Reaper (CR 7)

Binding circles and cold iron walls have transformed this former vault into a makeshift prison.

The Jackal Prince converted this chamber into a prison after he captured a flock of psychopomps dispatched to investigate the sudden surge of undeath in the Meraz. Versed in the ways of life and death, the Jackal Prince has teased glorious secrets from the vanths imprisoned here as he tortured each one to death, learning profane mysteries he is now using to rebuild his lost body.

Creature: Only a single angry, trembling vanth—Nan gib Verrox—remains alive, though it's bound in *dimensional shackles* and chained, bowing, to the cold floor. Though unconcerned with most mortal forms of torture, the psychopomp has repeatedly been impaled upon the Tree of Desolation, exposing it to the miseries of Abaddon and the overwhelming corruption of the Horsemen. The most recent experience drove Nan to eat its own fingers in a fit of famine-inspired madness. Now bound and helpless, it awaits the release of death that took the three other vanths with which it arrived.

Without fingers, Nan cannot wield its scythe and wishes only to return home. If freed from its shackles, it offers some faint thanks as well as a gift: it has listened to the Jackal Prince open the Doors of the Four three times now, and memorized the password needed to do so. It gladly shares this secret in exchange for its freedom.

NAN GIB VERROX **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Vanth psychopomp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 221)

hp 76 (currently 12)

Story Award: If the PCs learn the password to the Doors of the four from Nan gib Verrox, award them an additional 19,200 XP.

F13. The Tree of Desolation (CR 16)

The branches of the broken, twisted tree that dominates this black-streaked natural cavern are heavy with oozing, unripened fruit. Dozens of glittering gems stud the trunk, with hints of frantic motions writhing in each. A single branch has been sharpened into a spike from which drips some unholy ichor.

This ancient cavern marks the point where the four Heralds of Dust first crossed into Golarion, and hosts the twisted tree that helps anchor them into the world. The sickly-sweet stench of rotting flesh overwhelms the chamber's stale air, causing any non-outsiders who enter to be staggered for 1d6 rounds. A successful DC 22 Fortitude save reduces the duration of this effect to 1 round.

Each of the 24 jewels studding the Tree of Desolation is a soul gem (see *cacodaemon*, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 64) that the Jackal Prince embedded into the trunk as he slowly nurtured the putrid plant. Living creatures who approach within 10 feet of the tree must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or immediately approach the tree, pluck an unripened fruit, and eat it (this is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity). Eating one of the tree's fruits infuses a creature with the misery of Abaddon, causing wracking pain and maddening visions (dealing 4d6 points of damage and 1d6 points of Wisdom drain; a successful DC 18 Fortitude save halves the damage and changes the Wisdom drain to Wisdom damage). A daemon eating the fruit takes no damage and instead gains fast healing 2 for 10 rounds.

Being impaled upon the Tree provides deeper exposure to the unfiltered nature of Abaddon. The initial injury deals 2d6 points of piercing damage; afterward, the victim takes 6d6 points of damage and 2d4 points of Wisdom drain every round thereafter until no longer impaled. A successful DC 20 Fortitude save halves this damage and changes the Wisdom drain to Wisdom damage. An impaled creature can pull itself free with a successful DC 18 Strength check or DC 25 Escape Artist check.

Creature: Here, the Jackal Prince has plotted to rebuild his armies and his glorious daemoniac form to resume his destruction of Golarion. The Jackal Prince has twisted the young, once-handsome frame of Dehlvat Aaban with his unwholesome rituals, the consumption of human souls, and the Tree of Desolation's foul magic. The Jackal Prince is now a horrifying amalgam of human and meladaemon.

JACKAL PRINCE **CR 16**

XP 76,800

Male unique meladaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 69)

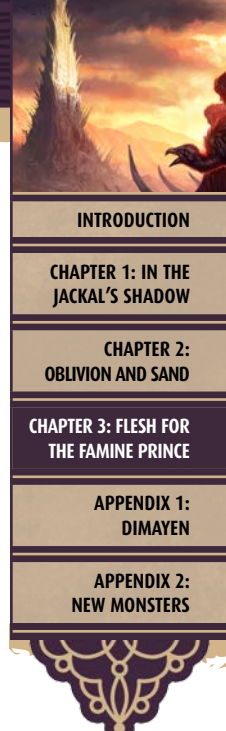
NE Medium outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

Aura consumptive aura (20 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +6 Dex, +12 natural)



hp 243 (18d10+144); fast healing 5
Fort +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15
DR 10/good; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison;
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee *Ravenous Blade* +27/+22/+17/+12 (2d4+12/18–20 plus 1d6 nonlethal and 1 nonlethal bleed), bite +21 (2d6+3 plus disease) or
 2 claws +26 (1d10+7/19–20 plus hunger), bite +26 (2d6+7 plus disease)

Special Attacks corrupted weapons, disease, hunger

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +22)

Constant—*true seeing*
 At will—*feast of ashes*^{APG} (DC 18), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)
 3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 20), *dispel good* (DC 21), *displacement*
 1/day—*horrid wilting* (DC 24), *summon* (level 8, meladaemon^{B2} 45%), *unholy aura* (DC 24), *waves of exhaustion* (DC 23)

TACTICS

Before Combat If aware of an imminent attack, the Jackal Prince casts *displacement* and devours a fruit from the Tree of Desolation, gaining fast healing 2.

During Combat The Jackal Prince begins combat with *waves of exhaustion* to weaken his foes. He then uses another of his powerful spell-like abilities before closing to melee range and allowing his aura to further weaken anyone not affected by his previous effects. The Jackal Prince tries to grapple weak characters and impale them on the Tree of Desolation.

Morale Unwilling to give up now, the Jackal Prince fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 22, **Con** 24, **Int** 16, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 41

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Bluff +28, Diplomacy +16, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana, history) +15, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +27, Survival +15, Use Magic Device +24

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear +2 *leather*, *Ravenous Blade* (+2 wounding falchion; see sidebar on page 57), *minor ring of energy resistance (acid)*, *ring of evasion*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Consumptive Aura (Su) Like a normal meladaemon, the Jackal Prince radiates an aura of hunger to a radius of 20 feet. Every round a creature begins its turn within this aura, it must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become fatigued from extreme hunger. Creatures that don't need to eat are immune to this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Corrupted Weapons (Su) The Jackal Prince's natural weapons—as well as any weapons he wields—are treated as evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

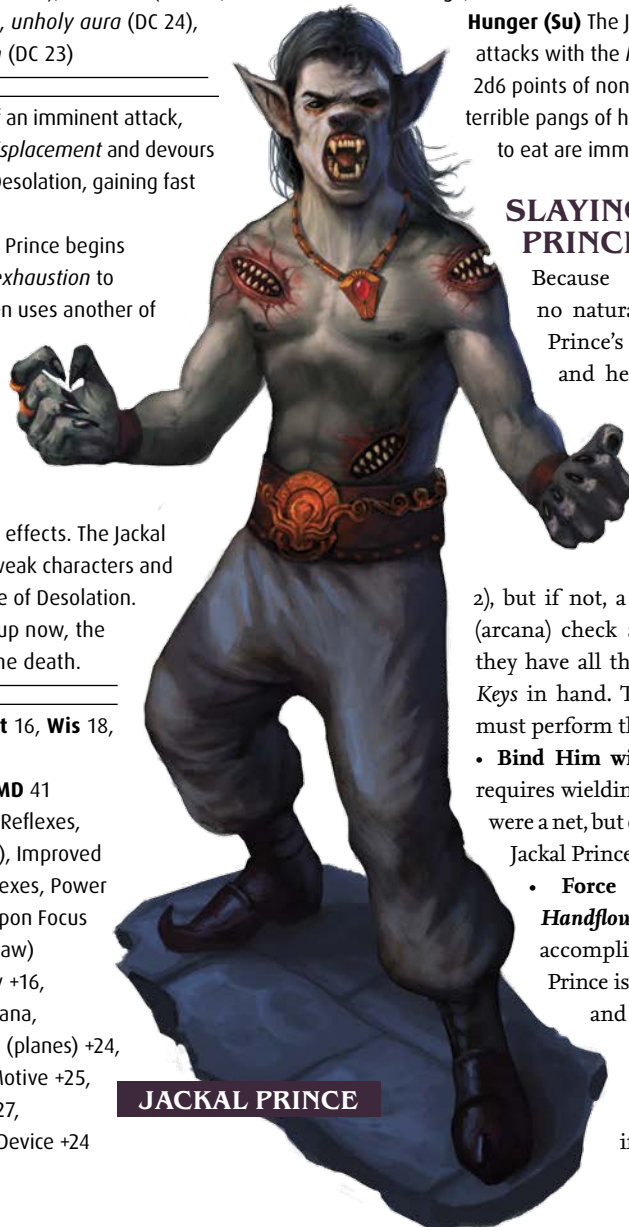
Disease (Su) *Daemoniac Wasting*: bite—injury; save Fort DC 26; onset 1 day; frequency 1 day; effect 1d4 Con and 1d4 Cha damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Hunger (Su) The Jackal Prince's claw attacks and attacks with the *Ravenous Blade* deal an extra 2d6 points of nonlethal damage as it causes terrible pangs of hunger. Creatures that don't need to eat are immune to this additional damage.

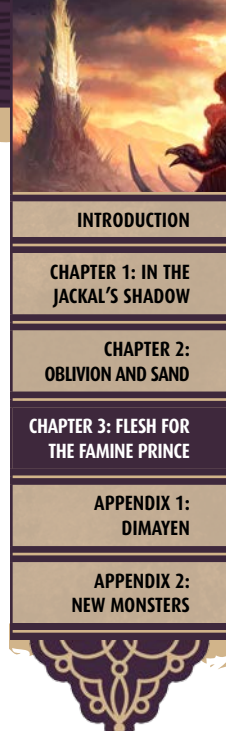
SLAYING THE JACKAL PRINCE

Because of his demigod-like status, no natural force overcomes the Jackal Prince's fast healing permanently, and he must be bound back within the *Ravenous Blade* to end his threat to Golarion. The PCs likely surmised the process to do so from the tirades of the harbinger's angry siblings (see Chapter 2), but if not, a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check also reveals the process once they have all three of the remaining *Oblivion Keys* in hand. To end the Jackal Prince, they must perform the following actions.

- **Bind Him within the *Shroud of Flies*:** This requires wielding the shroud in combat as if it were a net, but can be done automatically if the Jackal Prince is unconscious or paralyzed.
- **Force Open His Mouth with the *Handflower of Genocide*:** This can be accomplished only while the Jackal Prince is entangled by the *Shroud of Flies*, and requires a successful grapple combat maneuver check. A PC gains a +10 circumstance bonus to pry open his mouth if he's unconscious or paralyzed.



JACKAL PRINCE



- **Drown Him with the Calabash of Last Draughts:** The tainted water from the calabash washes away memories and can erode the Jackal Prince's ties to his current host. As a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, a PC can pour the vile liquid down his throat, drowning him and chasing the daemon spirit from the body and back into the *Ravenous Blade*.

If the PCs lack some of the *Oblivion Keys*, they can still attempt to grapple the Jackal Prince and drive his spirit out using only the *Calabash of Last Draughts*, but if they have lost the calabash or traded it away (such as to the thanadaemon in area E4), then they have no way of permanently slaying the Jackal Prince and instead need to find a way to contain the beast.

The *dimensional shackles* from area F12 are the most immediate means of binding the Jackal Prince, and sturdy, lost ruins such as the Garden of Desolation or ancient Shadun make fitting prisons. The vaults of the Oblivion Citadel would serve especially well as a prison, as their binding circles can hide the daemon harbingers from divination magic. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) or appropriate Craft check is sufficient to collapse either of the ruins around the Herald of Dust, which with luck will remove his threat to Golarion for another 7,000 years.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the Jackal Prince defeated, his ghul followers return to the sands, and the Feast of Dust fades from Golarion without its master to empower it. Victims still suffering regain their senses and can once again act and eat without consequence, while those raised as ghouls crumble, their spirits finally free to move on. Only those the Feast of Dust has resurrected as dread ghouls survive their prince's defeat, forming the backbone of a weak, dispersed cult. Dimayen and the other nearby desert communities slowly return to normal, and the removal of the *Ravenous Blade* helps slow the farming community's drought.

Defeating the Jackal Prince does not destroy him permanently; it merely binds his spirit back into the *Ravenous Blade* and leaves him too weak to attempt possessing another mortal for decades. By the end of the adventure, the PCs find themselves in possession of four evil artifacts containing the spirits of ancient daemon harbingers. Permanently destroying the *Ravenous Blade*, any of the other *Oblivion Keys*, or the Tree of Desolation requires specific quests beyond the scope of this adventure. However, the Sentinels of Meraz are willing to take on the burden of safeguarding the artifacts, scattering the four *Oblivion Keys* to the edges of the desert once again.

Rewarding the PCs

If the PCs consulted with the Shrine of Overflowing Joys, the temple offers them their promised reward of 2,354 gp and the *Eye of Thalachos* (worth 10,000 gp), though the temple of

THE RAVENOUS BLADE

This vicious falchion once bound the Jackal Prince of Famine, and even now retains a shred of his daemonic power.

RAVENOUS BLADE		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT —	CL 18th	WEIGHT 8 lbs.
AURA strong necromancy and transmutation		

Jagged teeth stud the length of this falchion's blackened steel blade. Warped and twisted by the daemonic spirit trapped within, this former +2 *merciful falchion* now tears the life's essence from its victims. The *Ravenous Blade* acts as a +2 *wounding falchion*, and grants its wielder a +2 profane bonus to Charisma so long as it remains in her possession. Bleed damage dealt by the *Ravenous Blade* takes the form of nonlethal starvation damage, as the blade slowly consumes the fat and meat of creatures it has tasted. Anyone who takes nonlethal damage from the sword's *wounding* property becomes fatigued, just as if he had begun starving normally.

Whenever the wielder kills or subdues a creature in combat (whether she does so with the *Ravenous Blade* itself or not), she must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or she is overcome by hunger pangs, and is compelled to consume the flesh of her victim. Sating this compulsion is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

DESTRUCTION

The *Ravenous Blade* must be driven into the heart of a good cleric, who must then gorge herself for 3 days and 3 nights uninterrupted until the sword has eaten its fill, at which point it rusts and crumbles.

Sarenrae in Katheer immediately sends word, offering to purchase the relic back from the PCs for 11,000 gp.

So long as the Whitewaters remain alive, they send their gratitude as well, allowing each PC to select a single treasure from their family vault. This may include (at the GM's discretion) a single magic shield or suit of magic armor with an effective enhancement bonus of +5, a specific magic weapon with an effective enhancement bonus of +4, or a single rod or staff worth up to 33,000 gp.

Finally, the Sentinels of Meraz find themselves in the PCs' debt for accomplishing their secret society's goal of protecting the world from these four ancient evils. Though far removed from their former grandeur, the society offers to imbue the ritual tattoos given to those who became members of the Sentinels of Meraz with permanent magical effects to help the PCs in their future battles against evil. Each PC with the ritual tattoo can select any one of the following spells to apply permanently to his tattoo, as if by the *permanency* spell: *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *magic fang*, *read magic*, or *resistance*.



APPENDIX 1

DIMAYEN

At just over a century old, Dimayen is one of Qadira's youngest settlements and its latest attempt to recolonize the endless Meraz Desert that renders so much of the satrap's land useless. When the nomadic Whitewater clan discovered a spring among the rolling dunes, the standing vizier granted the family exclusive dominion over its waters, so long as its resources went into transforming the oasis into a viable community. To the Whitwaters' credit, their first few decades were both well intentioned and lucrative—they sold the spring's water to farmers for a reasonable price and invested their growing profits into an ever-expanding irrigation project to connect the community with the distant Meraz River. But with each subsequent generation born into greater wealth, the family's concern for the community waned.

When her ancestor's irrigation canal collapsed nearly a decade ago, matriarch Tianka Whitewater responded by raising the price of her family's spring water. Once a promising boom town, Dimayen is now caught in a vicious cycle as desperate farmers, unable to afford to water their crops, flee to greener pastures, followed by many of the town's merchants and traders. The price of food and other necessities has risen sharply as a result. Half of Dimayen's buildings stand empty; the desert has crept in to reclaim once-thriving fields, while large desert predators such as ankhegs have begun preying on the last floundering farms.

Dimayen's remaining residents are a bizarre collection of stubborn farmers, the wealthy elite, scavengers exploiting whatever gets abandoned, and a constantly rotating transient population of traveling caravans,



- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

merchants, and mercenaries who rely on the spring's waters to see them across the Meraz. Sharing exaggerated tales of the town's lost glories is a popular pastime, and nearly all residents have stories of the wonders of their youths or schemes to restore lost comforts. Most of these plots revolve around repairing the irrigation channels, but to date all engineering solutions have fallen flat, thanks to both ankheg attacks and a seemingly supernatural streak of bad luck.

DIMAYEN

LN large town
Corruption +2; **Crime** -3; **Economy** +1; **Law** +4; **Lore** +2;
Society -3
Qualities insular, rumormongering citizens, strategic location
Danger +5

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord
Population 4,890 (4,590 humans, 201 sulis, 47 halflings, 18 half-orcs, 34 other)

- Notable NPCs**
- Arakor Shonar** (NG male human cleric of Sarenrae 8)
 - Malzan Kitram** (LN female human aristocrat 10)
 - Sameer the Water Carrier** (NG human expert 5)
 - Sayid Aaban** (NG male human investigator^{ACG} 4/monk 3)
 - Tianka Whitewater** (LE female old human aristocrat 6, wizard 8)
 - Vhal Shimam** (LE male human sorcerer 11)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 2,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 10,000 gp;
Spellcasting 5th
Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d4

Dimayen is divided into three distinct circles defined by economics and how recently they were settled.

FIRST CIRCLE

The first families—the descendants of those who originally settled Dimayen—reside in the First Circle, a small fortified district surrounding the oasis. While the Whitewaters command the primary spring, the remaining first families control a number of secondary springs, and most of the city refers to these families collectively as the Water Gods. Dimayen's economic hardships have yet to impact the First Circle, and as the outer circles crumble, its relative wealth becomes ever more obvious. The Whitewater clan ostensibly governs the city, both by the satrap's decree and by virtue of controlling the largest standing force of guards. However, the Whitewaters dabble in politics only enough to maintain a steady flow of gold.

SECOND CIRCLE

Those who came to populate the town later were forced to purchase water rights from first families, and settled farther from the Water Gods' high walls and aggressive guards.

The farmers and traders who made up the second wave of settlers created a neighborhood of modest homes and shops offering their services to travelers stopping for water, as well as catering to the ever-more extravagant demands of the town's elite. An aggressive merchant council now runs the Second Circle and maintains monopolies in the oasis. More than one family has arrived with dreams of attaining quick profits, only to end up under the yoke of crushing debt.

As the largest circle, the Second Circle has the widest variety of buildings. Limestone and wooden structures dominate the neighborhoods. Nearly a third of the district has been abandoned, however, and those stubborn locals who remain behind are quick to scavenge what remains. Vacant structures, rubbish, and the abandoned possessions of those who have fled clutter the once-lovely streets.

THIRD CIRCLE

Those new to Dimayen, simply passing through, or devastated by the drought make their homes in the squalor of the Third Circle, a hodgepodge of tents, caravanserai, and mud-brick shanties. The luckiest get backbreaking work as water-carriers, but most beg, steal, or scrounge to survive. Those hardy enough to survive the dangerous, crime-ridden camps of the Third Circle occasionally find employment as mercenaries accompanying caravans and expeditions into the perilous Meraz. The town's notorious Brotherhood of Thieves—a gang of thieves and extortionists—once controlled every aspect of life in the Third Circle, but as more and more of the town collapses, the parasites find fewer helpless citizens to exploit.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Despite its fading glory and crumbling structures, Dimayen remains a sharply divided community with a huge variety of residents.

1. Whitewater Spring: The first (and officially only) spring of Dimayen lies at the town's lush, green center. For more information on the spring and the Whitewater estate that surrounds it, see page 16.

2. Longmarchers Market: Named for the tendency of traveling merchants to arrive in the late afternoon, Dimayen's oldest market sells a dizzying variety of goods, from linens and wine to potions and armor. Each of the permanent shops—some of the busiest in town—belongs to one of the 12 members of the merchant council, while stall space within the market itself goes to whatever caravans and artisans stand in the council's good graces. With Dimayen's steady economic collapse over the past decade, the council's membership has changed repeatedly, and at any given time one of the shops here is empty, awaiting its next master.

3. Shimam Baths: One of the first families and the Whitewaters' closest rivals, the Shimams control the Pure Heart spring, which produces mineral-laden water with



a more distinct, less palatable flavor. While they sell their water in the Third Circle, most of their respectable income comes from this elaborate bathhouse, which the first families all frequent and respect as neutral ground. The family claims to descend from efreeti, and produces at least one sorcerer each generation. Rumors claim Vhal Shimam dotes on a salamander lover who helps maintain the baths' heated waters without the danger or expense of wood fires.

4. Fabled and Forgotten: This well-stocked bookstore is detailed on page 11.

5. Lion's Roar Barracks: The reputation of the Lion's Roar mercenaries, led by **Captain Izlesha "Lion's Roar" Tamaar** (LN female suli^{B3} cavalier^{APG 12}), has descended just as steadily as Dimayen's fortunes. Once respectable soldiers of fortune, the members of the Lion's Roar have turned to scavenging and common banditry to maintain the comfortable lifestyle to which they've grown accustomed. The gang operates entirely outside of the city, and pays hefty bribes to the Whitewater clan to avoid scrutiny.

6. Red Sands Caravanserai: The Red Sands are a band of nomadic wanderers who relied on the Dimayen spring for centuries before the Whitewaters "discovered" it. They maintain a permanent home here to collect resources and allow the sick or old to rest. Overseen by the one-legged **Ghazal** (CN female human ranger 8), the Red Sands are hardly warriors, but they know the desert better than most travelers, and maintain good relationships with many other tribes of humanoids and monstrous humanoids.

Most of their income comes from serving as traders and messengers for the Meraz's many far-flung communities.

7. Kabahsi Reservoir: Dimayen's floundering irrigation system draws water from the Meraz River through the grand canal, collecting it in this large reservoir before distributing it through the city and out to the surrounding farms. But with the grand canal's collapse, only a slow, silty trickle of water now feeds this muddy basin. Several entrepreneurs have dug deeper below the artificial lake hoping to strike whatever underground source feeds the oasis's spring. However, every attempt has resulted in a deadly collapse. **Kamahn the Precise** (LN human adept 9), a local mathematician and astrologer, claims to have developed a safer excavation method, but locals have grown wary of his projects.

8. House of Nabulsi: This eclectic inn and stable has been a part of Dimayen longer than anything beyond the Whitewaters' estate, beginning as a small paddock and growing in complexity and scope ever since. The Milakesh family—a well-intentioned and excitable band of halflings—runs the inn under the eye of **Nanny Milakesh** (NG female venerable halfling slayer^{ACG 1}/expert 8), while her son Durham oversees its constant construction. The family also maintains a small herd of goats and loves to support local business ventures, but it sometimes hires adventurers or mercenaries when those endeavors fall through and the family needs to recollect its investments.

9. Shrine of Overflowing Joys: Dimayen's temple to Sarenrae is detailed on page 10.

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

DAEMON, ACRIDIDAEMON

This wicked creature has the claws and mandibles of an enormous insect, and its lower body is made entirely of swarming locusts.

ACRIDIDAEMON

CR 14



XP 38,400

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 200 (16d10+112)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +18, **Will** +11

Immune acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** bite +20 (2d6+5/19-20), 2 claws +20 (1d8+5)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (5 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks biting locusts, distraction (DC 25; biting locusts attack only)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +19)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*

At will—*feast of ashes*^{APG} (DC 17), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *putrefy food and drink*^{APG}

3/day—*sirocco*^{APG} (DC 21), *summon swarm*

1/day—*horrid wilting* (DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 23, **Con** 24, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Skills Bluff +20, Fly +15, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception +23, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +21, Survival +20, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** swarmlike

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abaddon)**Organization** solitary, pack (2-5), swarm (6-12)**Treasure** standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Biting Locusts (Ex) An acrididaemon's lower body is composed entirely of buzzing and biting locusts. Medium or smaller creatures can share the space of an acrididaemon. An acrididaemon automatically deals 6d6 points of damage to any creature that begins its turn in the acrididaemon's space.

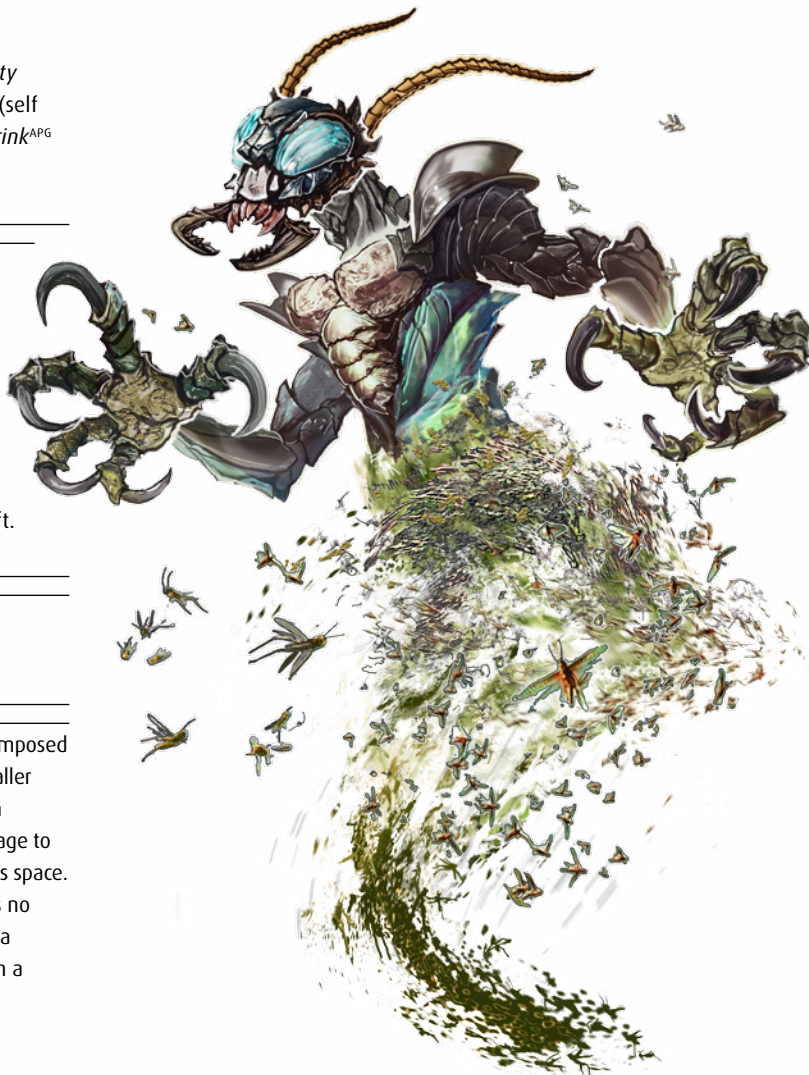
SwarmLike (Ex) Much of an acrididaemon's body has no discernible anatomy. Any time a creature confirms a critical hit against an acrididaemon or hits one with a

sneak attack, there is a 50% chance that the critical hit or sneak attack is negated and damage is instead rolled normally. An acrididaemon takes half again as much damage (+50%) from damaging area effects such as *fireball* and splash weapons.

Servitors of the Horseman of Famine, acrididaemons travel in sky-darkening swarms that spread abject terror into the hearts of mortals they encounter. Part humanoid and part swarm, acrididaemons devour everything they can.

These roaming terrors call no place home aside from the desolation of Abaddon. They wander the planes ravaging everything in their wake, and quickly abandon their ruined targets, like the parasitic paragons they were created to be.

Acrididaemons delight in the suffering their predations bring. Though they often favor tactics that result in the devastation of whole settlements, it is not uncommon for one of these daemons to take a single creature prisoner. They enjoy slowly starving captives to death in forlorn redoubts where rescue is beyond hope.



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW

CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND

CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE

APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

GOEZSPALL

A long, plate-covered body with a protruding mouth and clawed limbs emerges from beneath this creature's meteor-like bulk.

GOEZSPALL

CR 14



XP 38,400

N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +18 natural, -1 size)

hp 200 (16d10+112); fast healing 5

Fort +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Immune cold, disease, fire, poison, pressure damage; **Resist** acid 15, electricity 15, sonic 15

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 4 claws +23 (1d8+8)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d8+12), scalding spray

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 15, **Con** 25, **Int** 6, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 38 (50 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Lunge, Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +20, Perception +15, Stealth +8, Swim +20

Languages Aklo

SQ compression, no breath

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

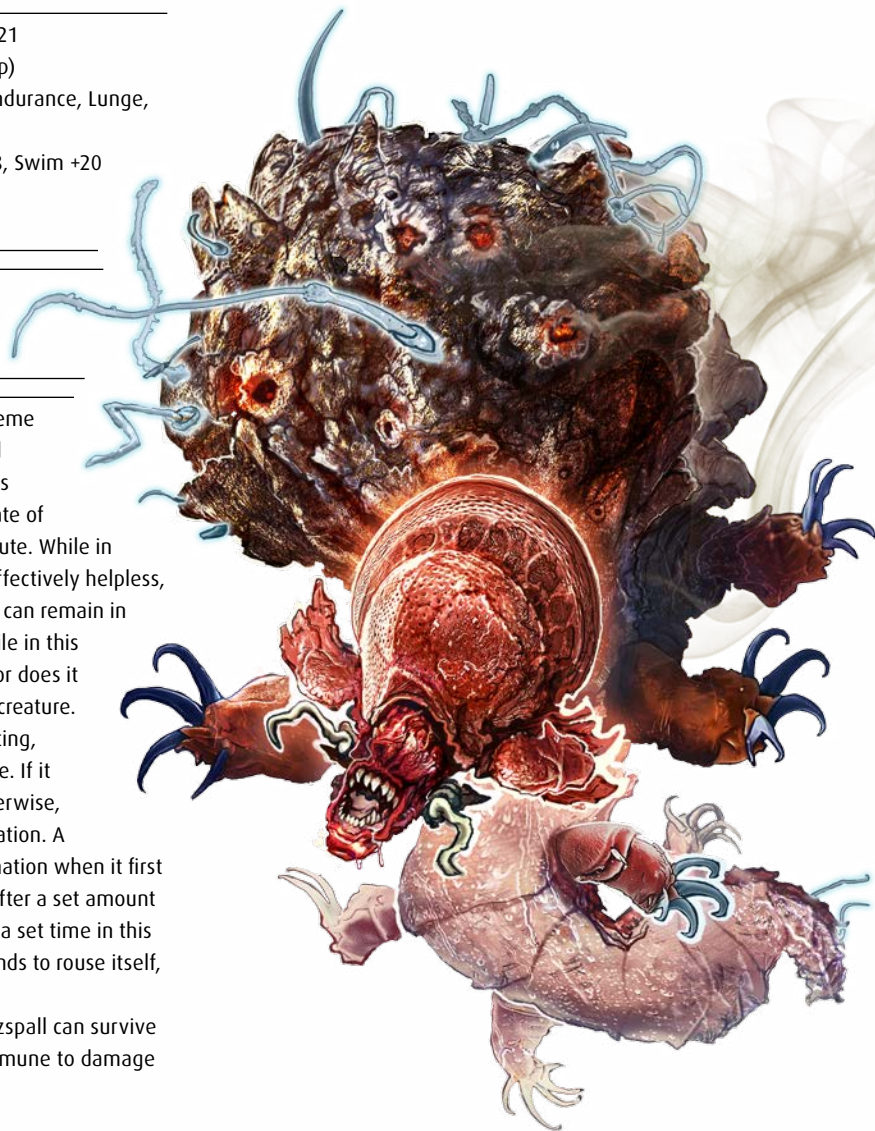
Hibernate (Ex) Although it can live in extreme conditions, a goezspall still requires food and water. To survive when sustenance is not available, a goezspall can enter a state of hibernation at will; doing so takes 1 minute. While in this state, it can take no actions and is effectively helpless, as if it were in a deep sleep. A goezspall can remain in hibernation for as long as it wishes—while in this state, it does not need to eat or drink, nor does it age. Time effectively stands still for the creature. If it is jostled or damaged while hibernating, a goezspall can attempt a DC 20 Will save. If it succeeds, it awakens in 2d4 rounds. Otherwise, it takes 24 hours to awaken from hibernation. A goezspall can set the length of its hibernation when it first enters this state, so that it can awaken after a set amount of time has passed. When awakening at a set time in this manner, a goezspall needs only 1d3 rounds to rouse itself, with no Will saving throw necessary.

Immune to Pressure Damage (Ex) A goezspall can survive in extreme conditions. A goezspall is immune to damage

caused by high- or low-pressure environments, such as deep underwater or in the void of space.

Scalding Spray (Ex) As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, a goezspall can spray a 60-foot line of scalding water at its enemies that deals 12d6 points of fire damage. Against creatures, this stream acts as a bull rush. A goezspall can bull rush creatures of any size with its spray. When using this ability, a goezspall attempts a combat maneuver check and applies its results to each creature within the area. This bull rush does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Though rare, goezspalls have been observed living in extremely varied locations. From the Crown of the World to the depths of the Darklands, these bizarre, segmented creatures thrive in any environment, including the depths of the sea, boiling hot springs, and even, some claim, the void of space. Though not typically hostile, these omnivores hunt aggressively when hungry, especially after months or years in hibernation. A goezspall is over 12 feet long and weighs 3,500 pounds, though some lore describes smaller and larger specimens.





- INTRODUCTION
- CHAPTER 1: IN THE JACKAL'S SHADOW
- CHAPTER 2: OBLIVION AND SAND
- CHAPTER 3: FLESH FOR THE FAMINE PRINCE
- APPENDIX 1: DIMAYEN
- APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

SHAGHAL

This predator resembles a brawny jackal with a dark, red-and-gray mottled coat covered in ash and dust.

SHAGHAL CR 8

XP 4,800

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 105 (10d10+50)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Immune acid, disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +17 (1d8+10/19–20 plus disease, hunger, and trip)

Special Attacks disease, dust breath, hunger

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 6, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30 (34 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +16, Perception +19, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +16, Survival +15

Languages Abyssal (can't speak), Infernal (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abaddon)

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) A shaghal's bite delivers bubonic plague (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 557). If the target fails its saving throw, it contracts the disease immediately; the onset period doesn't apply.

Dust Breath (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a shaghal can cough forth a 15-foot cone of ash and dust. Any creature that is caught in the area must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or cough uncontrollably for 1d6 rounds. A creature can attempt a new saving throw each round at the beginning of its turn to end its coughing fit. Any creature that spends 2 consecutive rounds coughing takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and is nauseated for 1d4 rounds.

Hunger (Su) A shaghal deals an additional 2d6 points of nonlethal damage with each successful bite as it leaves its target wracked with hunger pangs. Creatures that don't need to eat are immune to this effect.

Packs of shaghals roam the desolate plains of Abaddon, where they serve various daemons as guard dogs and sentries. Though not as intelligent as an average human, shaghals are cunning creatures that work with one another to chase down prey, and they are smart enough to understand complex orders from their handlers. Shaghals don't have the ability to speak, but they can understand the languages of fiends. Those who converse with shaghals via telepathy report that the creatures communicate morose and fatalistic messages, and that their only wish is to witness and partake in death and ruin.

On the Material Plane, shaghals often find themselves called to the same desert locations populated by jackals. When shaghals encounter packs of jackals, they intimidate and cow them, bringing the animals under their influence. Shaghals bolster the confidence of these otherwise cowardly beasts, and take over control of their packs in order to lead them to remote villages, protected oases, and even defended settlements to terrorize the humanoid populaces.

With each step, ash and dust fall from shaghals' coats like dander, and the beasts can cough forth clouds of this grime to incapacitate their enemies. As servitors of daemons, shaghals spread disease, hunger, death, and savagery wherever they go. While they are most plentiful in the wastelands of Abaddon, shaghals may occasionally find themselves on the Material Plane, where they doggedly hunt down mortals. They believe, falsely, that the souls of all the mortals they kill and devour are sent directly to Abaddon.



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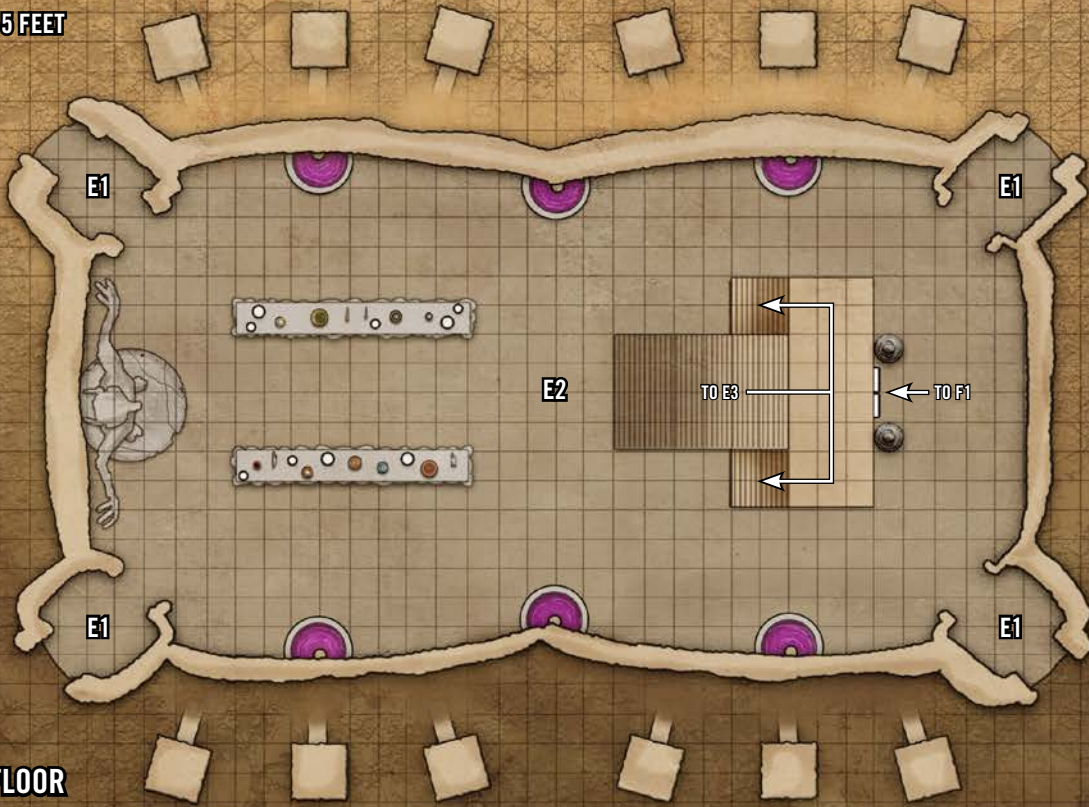
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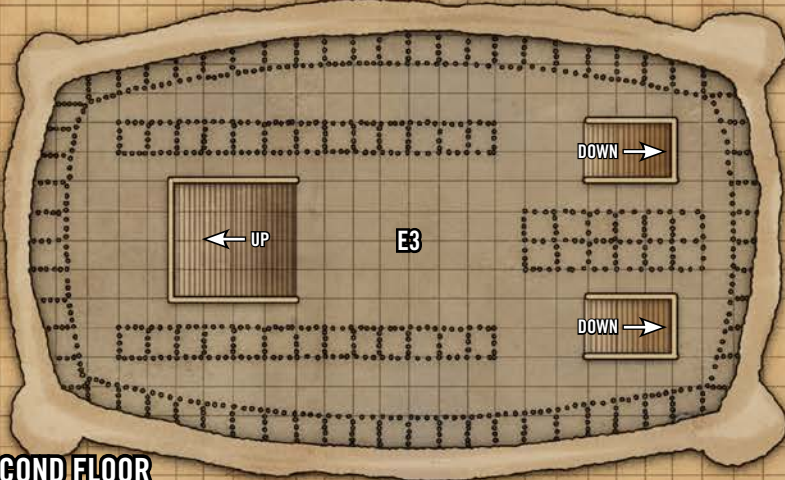


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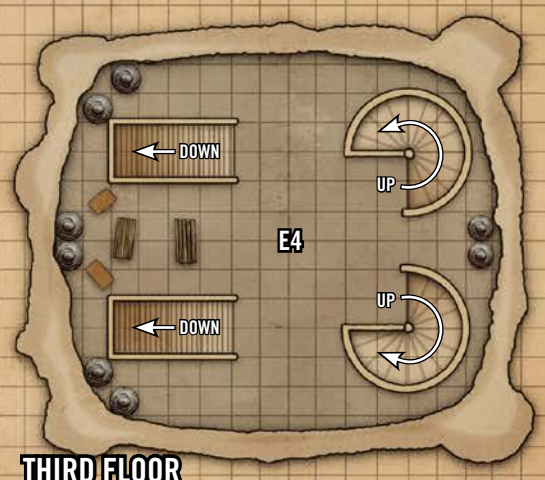
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