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2nd Edition

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Al-Qadim™

ASSASSIN MOUNTAIN

CAMPAIGN

by
Wolfgang Baur

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2nd Edition

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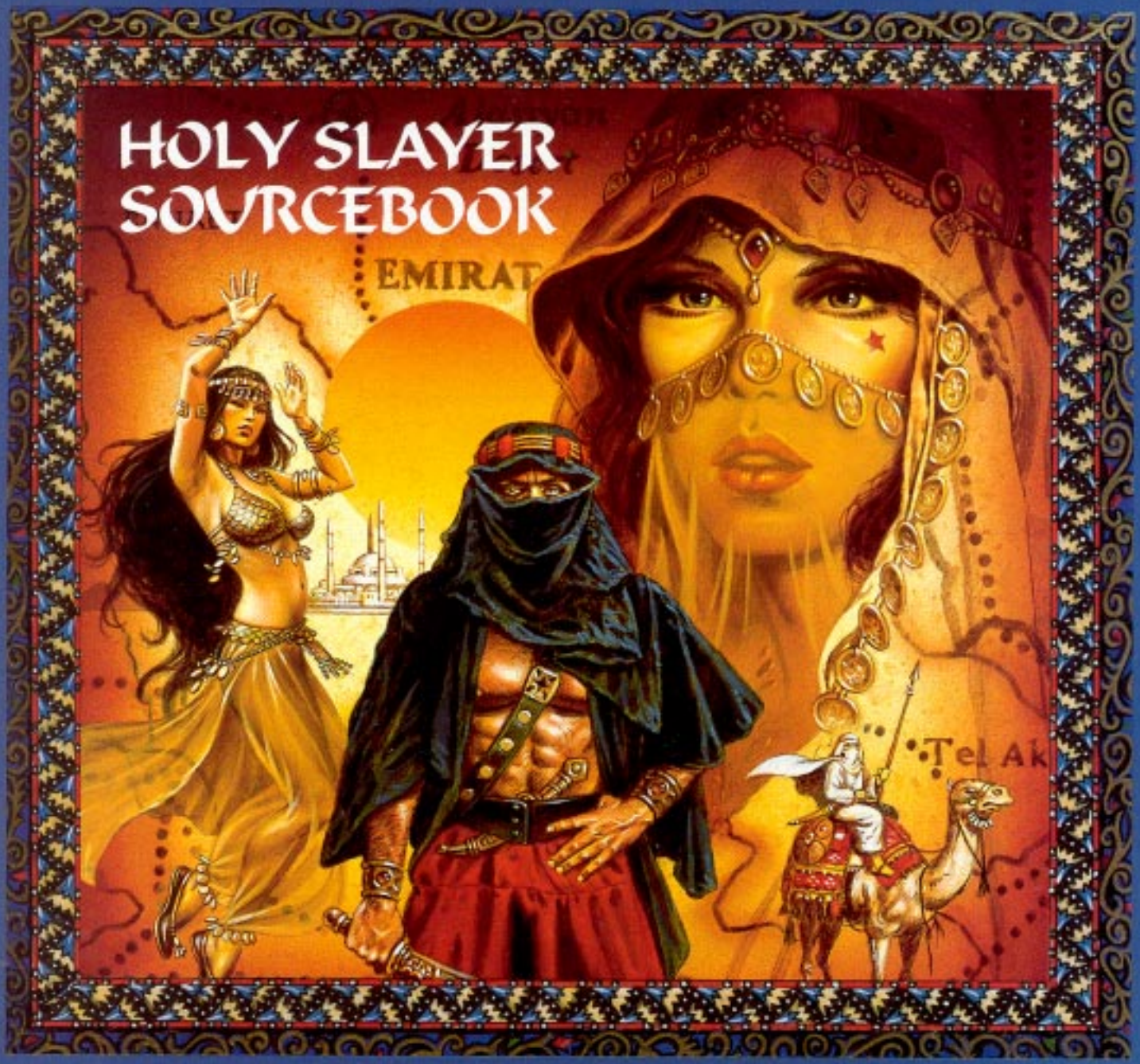
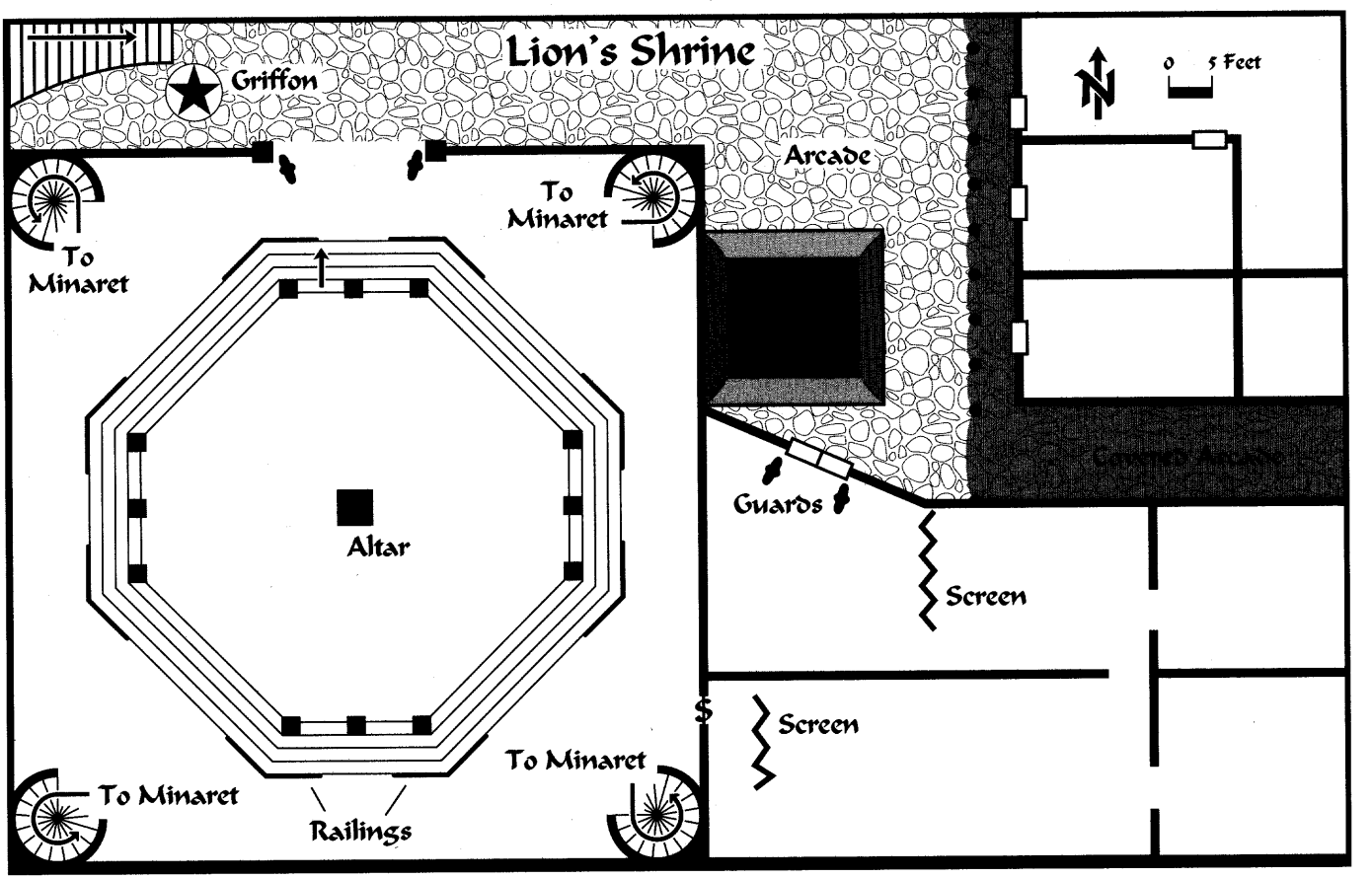
ASSASSIN MOUNTAIN CAMPAIGN

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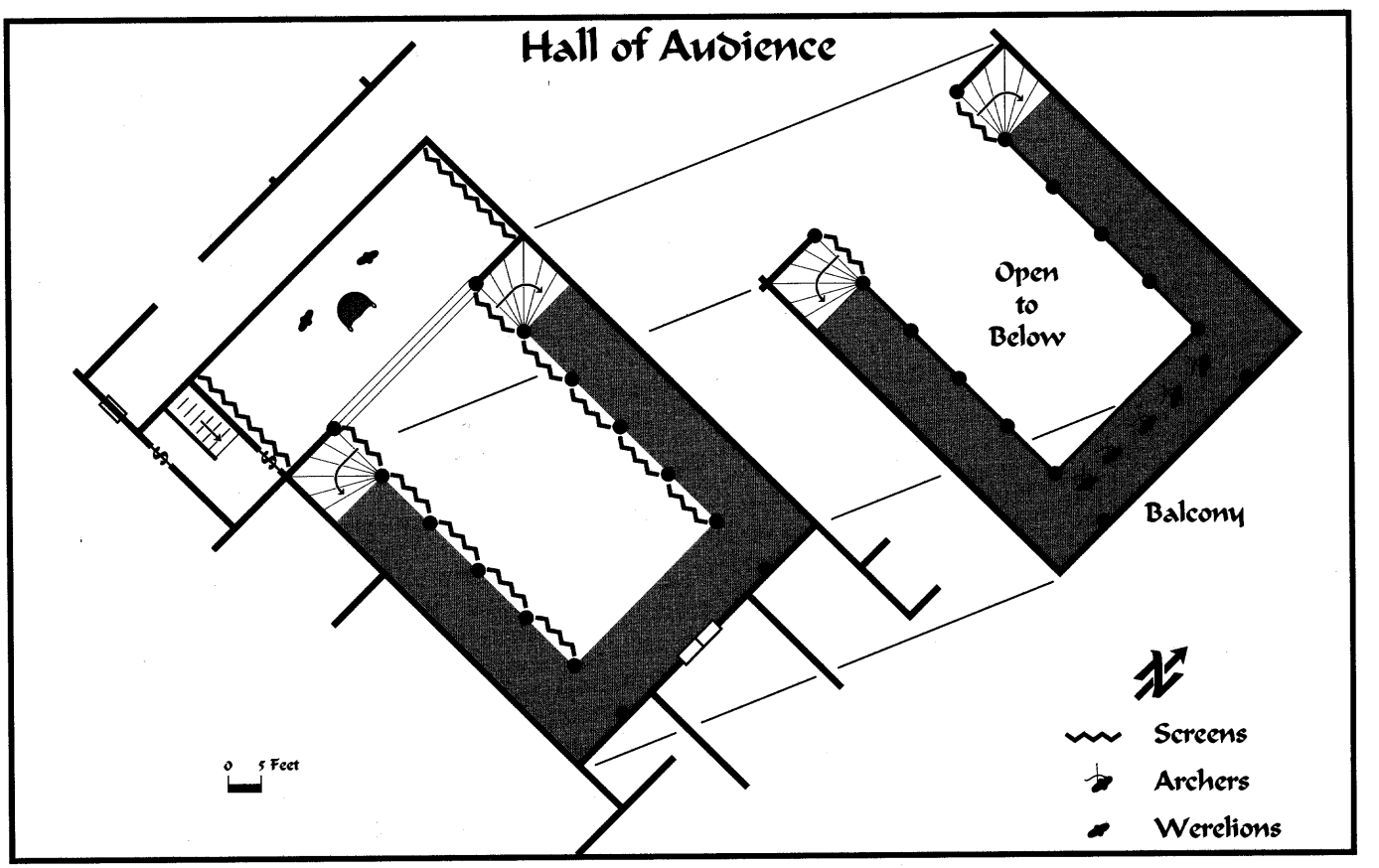
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Assassin Mountain

Adventure Book

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

"Know for certain, that we slay no man in this world for any gain or reward, unless he have first injured us."

Hasan i-Sabbah

Praise be the Caliph, jewel of the world, sword of the righteous, shield of the faithful, gateway to wisdom, lord of justice, friend of mighty Qudra, prince of the true believers, whose blood is of the Grand Caliph, whose words are sweeter than the song of the nightingale, whose verses flow like sweet water, whose mildness and clemency endear him to Selan the Gracious, blessed as the lamb of the fields. May Fate grant him glory, prosperity, and a long life.

Praise be the Grandfather, the Caliph of Shadows, sword of the faithful, master of night, lord of liars, scourge of the unrighteous, old man of the mountain, binder of genies, he whose strength is that of the lion, whose stealth is as the serpent, whose Word is the Law, whose eyes reach and rend the hearts of the craven and the foolish, whose everlasting protection keeps safe the Word of Hajama the Courageous. May we all avoid his notice.

It has reached me, O wise readers, that once there were, among the great city of Liham the Red, the City of Soldiers, those who conspired against Fate and those who stood as a bulwark against the swords of the assassins. Which of these stood to Liham's aid, and which gave her to mighty Qudra?

Against The Assassins

The adventures in this book pit the player characters against the sons of the mountain and their whispering swords. The approach of the assassins is deadly, and can be frustrating because they rarely resort to fair and open combat. Holy slayers may not be able to defeat trained warriors when fighting toe-to-toe, but that isn't their purpose. The assassins are the Hidden Ones, striking from concealment, willing to exploit any method or surrender any number of martyrs for their cause. For the assassins, nothing is true and everything is permitted.

The following adventures demand both an experienced DM and clever players; they require wit, good role-playing, and smart tactics. The DM must be careful not to overwhelm the PCs, and to leave them an escape in most situations. Although progress against the Everlasting may be slow, the adventures can be all the more satisfying for that.

While the adventures provide a framework for storytelling and expansion, not every option can be described; the DM may occasionally need to improvise. With the descriptions of areas and NPCs from the Holy Slayer Sourcebook included in this box, this should be easy.

When the Well Runs Dry: This adventure, designed for characters of levels 5 to 6, provides and introduction to the fanaticism of the holy slayers. It occurs when the PCs spend a night in an isolated merchant outpost. It describes a typical oasis and a bold robbery attempt.

The Heart of a Lion: This adventure pits PCs of levels 6 to 7 against the cult of the Everlasting on Assassin Mountain itself, with the life and reputation of a caliph at stake. Plague threatens the city of Liham, and the PCs' success may save the city. This adventure is divided into three portions. The beginning allows the PCs a chance to improve their station through quick action and clever negotiation in the city of Liham. The middle involves the journey to Assassin Mountain. The end requires PCs to enter and survive a foray into the fortress of the holy slayers.

Death on the Mountain: This adventure is for PCs of levels 8 to 9. After they have won the trust of the fellowship of the Everlasting, the PCs are called upon to dispose of a threat considered too great even for the holy slayers. When the Grandfather dies, the PCs are caught up in the chaos of factional fighting, slaughter, and plots within plots. Only the cautious will survive an ordeal as servants of the Grandfather.

Holy Slayer PCs

The workings of the holy slayers are usually secretive, but a group of players may include a holy slayer PC. The other players will probably already know of his identity as a holy slayer. This is fine in most adventures, assuming the PC doesn't receive "the call" very often and drag his friends with him. It presents a problem, however, when the party faces assassin opposition and the loyalty of the holy slayer PC is called into question.

The best possible situation is for a player to keep his kit secret from the start. This allows him to play his character normally as a rogue of some kind until a critical moment in the adventure, when his true profession is revealed. The DM may want the player to act as a holy slayer informant within the party, rewarding him with XP awards for good role-playing.

It is much likelier, however, that the PC's kit is already known to the other players. This might seem like a problem, but it provides good role-playing fodder because the PCs may not trust their companion. The holy slayer PC will have lots of chances to meet more NPCs, and he can be the center of negotiations with other holy slayers. To perpetuate the mystique, the DM should pass the player mysterious notes from time to time, but forbid him from showing them to the other players.

If the PC is a member of a fellowship other than the Everlasting, he is instructed by his superiors to find out

all he can about the Everlasting's operations and to prevent them from scoring any propaganda coups. After the meeting with the caliph (see "At the Palace of Sly Ravens"), all holy slayer PCs will be contacted and told to meet a comrade (away from the rest of the PCs) for instructions. The DM should take the player into another room and quiz him on everything: people present, food and supplies, numbers of guards, and entrances and exits. The PC should then be told that his fellowship wants him to spy and report on the headquarters of the Everlasting while maintaining complete secrecy about his own affiliations. This should arouse the suspicions of the other players. Again, tell the player of the holy slayer character that he may not reveal his orders or information; XP rewards for good role-playing may be in order.

If the PC is a member of the Everlasting, the expedition against the Grandfather may seem like a sure way to get kicked out of the sect, but all may be forgiven if the PC is drawn into the plots of his superiors. Up until this point, the player has probably had it pretty easy as a fanatic uncommitted to a specific faction of the Everlasting. The DM should make any PC member of the Everlasting choose a faction for his character. He should be given only the barest background about each splinter group (the DM should paraphrase the information in the Sourcebook). If the player doesn't choose a faction, all factions assume that since he is not one of their own, he must be an enemy.

Regardless of which faction he chooses, he is told not to interfere in operations of the fellowship, but is to keep a close eye on his confederates. He will be ordered to report to a factional leader once he gets to Assassin Mountain itself—the fortress known as Jabal Sarahin. At that time, he will be expected to undertake the oathbinding ceremony described in the Sourcebook. If the Grandfather needs leverage against the PCs, he will use the holy slayer PC to intimidate the party into obeying (for an example of how this might work, see the story on p. 13 of the Holy Slayer Sourcebook).

A PC member of the fellowship of the Grey Fire may well be directed to the Al-Farids (see below) by other members of the Grey Fire. Because of the current hostility between the Everlasting and the Grey Fire fellowships, such PCs will be told to kill the Grandfather or one of his lieutenants if they get the opportunity. They have thus received "the call." Whether a player chooses to have his character obey is up to him.

PC holy slayers should be in the thick of the action in these adventures. Slayers of Najm and Hajama are at more risk of dying quickly and violently than are most PCs. This is one of the implicit risks of the kit: it creates martyrs. If things get too difficult for the PC, the DM might suggest to the player that it may be time to abandon the fellowship and suffer the consequences.

Chapter II:

When The Well Runs Dry

The way to kill an army is to chop off its head.

Zakharan proverb

The first of the great masters was no master but a mistress, the Grandmother of the Everlasting, the Iron Princess, the horned viper, the blazing. Even the lion would step out of her path.

In those days, holy slayers were often endangered by their kind, for a few captured slayers might betray the secrets of many. And for this reason the Grandmother despaired of ever hiding herself and her initiates from her persecutors, for her men constantly proved unfaithful and her women only marginally less so.

Now in this time there also lived an efreeti named Mulahid, who loved the Grandmother so that he could barely speak, his head swam, and his magic no longer came quickly to his fiery fingertips. In a word, he was smitten, and as she was just a mortal and he a genie, he resolved he should have her. He came to her swift as a whirlwind. The land heralded his arrival: a sirocco gathered, the sun grew red, and dust rose into the sky.

The efreeti came and said, "Come with me this night and I will spare your followers." Though all protested mightily, the Grandmother agreed to go with him until dawn. The efreeti promised that no harm would come to her, and swept her into the night sky, to a dark cave beneath the Pillars of the World.

The genie and the Grandmother retreated into that cradle of blackness. And there she bound the genie in chains of affection, and he asked how he and his children might serve her.

"O best of efreeti, my followers are unfaithful. Swear them to me and to the silence I long for, and I shall be yours, and you need never awake to a morning without me."

And so a genie became overseer of the silence of Hajama's lions, and he lived with his mistress in safety until the end of their days, when the destroyer of delights and the sunderer of societies came upon them.

The goal of this adventure is to introduce the PCs to the strength and danger of the holy slayers of the Everlasting. This adventure could end in a number of ways, but as long as the PCs are appropriately exposed to the Everlasting, the adventure will be a success.

Although fanaticism rules them, even holy slayers sometimes need money. In this adventure, holy slayers seek to rob the PCs, pure and simple, because they need money to support their cause and are not particular about where they get it. Their ruthlessness in pursuit of this goal makes them dangerous.

The adventure can begin whenever the heroes arrive at a desert inn for the night, whether as guards to a merchant or as travelers on their own.

This particular inn prospers because it adjoins a clear well, the only source of water nearby. A trade route leads very nearly to the door of the inn. This establishment is well known also because its innkeeper doubles as a blacksmith.

The region is arid, either rocky mountains or scrub desert, and the closest source of water other than this well is 75 miles away—three days' travel on horseback.

The PCs may stable their mounts and set up camp or take rooms for the night, if they wish to pay triple normal rates and kick some tired caravan guards out of their rooms. Every room is full because a caravan of seven merchants and their 24 servants, guards, and slaves has stopped for the night. It carries silks, spices, cloth, oil, or whatever the DM desires.

A platoon of thirty tattooed mamluks of the Dauntless is also here, carrying the payroll for an outpost of Qudra.

A group of assassins seeks to rob this entire establishment at once, using the threat of poisoning the well. The assassins are three brothers, Ramas, Harun, and Beyab, who are currently disguised among the caravaneers. Harun is disguised as an impoverished priest, while Ramas and Beyab pretend to be guards.

The assassins prepare thoroughly for their plan. In the small hours of the night, Ramas and Beyab drain all the water bags they can find, and they drill a hole in the storage vat in the kitchen. Only the watering trough for the camels remains full, since the camels are guarded all night.

Just before dawn, the innkeeping smithy runs outside among the camel tenders, clutching a note in his hand and shouting as if to rouse the dead. The note (see boxed text on the next page) was attached to a dagger that Harun stuck into his pillow during the night. Unless the thieves' demands are met immediately, everyone will suffer a slow, lingering death from dehydration.

While the other two brothers secretly wait for a reply, Harun stands straddling the 3-foot opening of the well, dangling a large portion of a heway snake skin (see the AL-QADIM™ appendix to the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*™ for a full description). Beyab remains disguised among the caravaneers, so as to overhear their plans. Ramas looks at the PCs suspiciously, then whispers to others that they might be the brigands. If a situation arises that the assassins did not anticipate, Ramas steps forward to negotiate and to make further threats and demands.

If Harun is slain, he falls into the well (unless precautions are taken to prevent this), taking the snake skin with him and ensuring the death of those at the inn. If he is attacked, he simply drops the poisonous skin into the well and prepares to die bravely, shouting to his brethren that their plan is foiled. If Harun is attacked, his brothers remain disguised, perhaps even rushing to the scene or calling on others to attack him. They take their vengeance as they can, backstabbing and killing their brother's slayers in melee, or taking advantage of their positions as guards to kill trusting fellows or to slay during the night.

Although the PCs may come up with a plan to stop the theft, the mamluks and caravaneers argue that if the plan fails, they all may die. The merchants are particularly worried about themselves; the mamluks worry about the payroll and their steeds. A completely successful plan must remain a secret from the

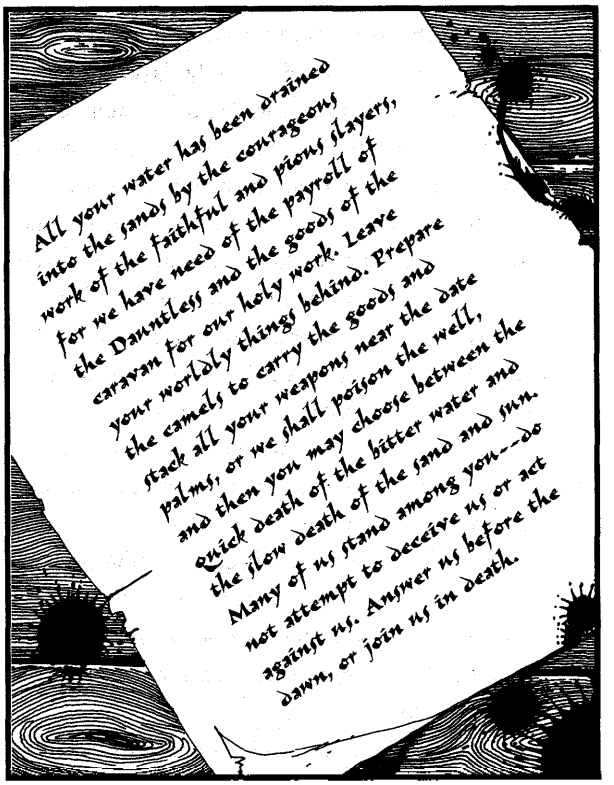
merchants' servants (and thus the brothers), must unveil the hidden slayers, and must prevent Harun from poisoning the well.

If the mamluks and merchants give in to the thieves' demands, Ramas waits until the camels are fully loaded, then collects their assembled weapons and drops them down the well. Ramas then ties up the mamluks in the stables. The merchants, their servants, and the PCs are locked up in the cool cellar beneath the kitchen. Beyab does not reveal his identity until the last moment.

If the PCs or others pursue them, the slayers probably have a good lead. Rather than slowing down to cover their tracks, they attempt to outdistance any pursuers using the superior desert speed of the camels. Note that without water, any horses used in pursuit tire within four hours to half speed, and founder by the end of a single day.

If the well is poisoned, the heway skin contaminates the well for nine days. If the PCs leave the oasis without providing water for the others, many people are sure to die. *Purify food and drink, cleanse water,* or *neutralize poison* will cleanse enough water for a few people, but it will not be enough for all the mamluks, caravaneers, and remaining camels for nine days or the time required to reach the nearest water source. *Create water* provides more help, but even such quantities are probably not sufficient. The mamluks alone require 30 gallons of water per day while traveling, and the merchants and their servants require another 30. Encumbered by weapons or armor, they would need twice as much. Although the well-rested and watered camels can travel for a week without more water (which is why the slayers plan on taking them), the horses of the mamluks require 120 gallons per day.

The holy slayers don't mind dying, but they intend to take everyone with them if their threat doesn't work. They are interested only in things of immediate and portable value: coins, trade goods, camels, etc. Once they have as much as they can carry, they head into the desert with their plunder. They trust their



bravery and wits to see them through the desert heat, but they know Fate favors the prepared mind. They plan to meet with supporters and to live from caches of water they have left for themselves ahead of time. They also don new disguises immediately, clothing themselves as merchants—the better to take "their" goods to town for sale.

If the PCs manage to defeat the slayers, they find a single paper in Harun's pocket—a sketchy map of Liham. The paper details the assassins' story as members of a merchant house and marks the caravanserai in Liham where they planned to take their goods.

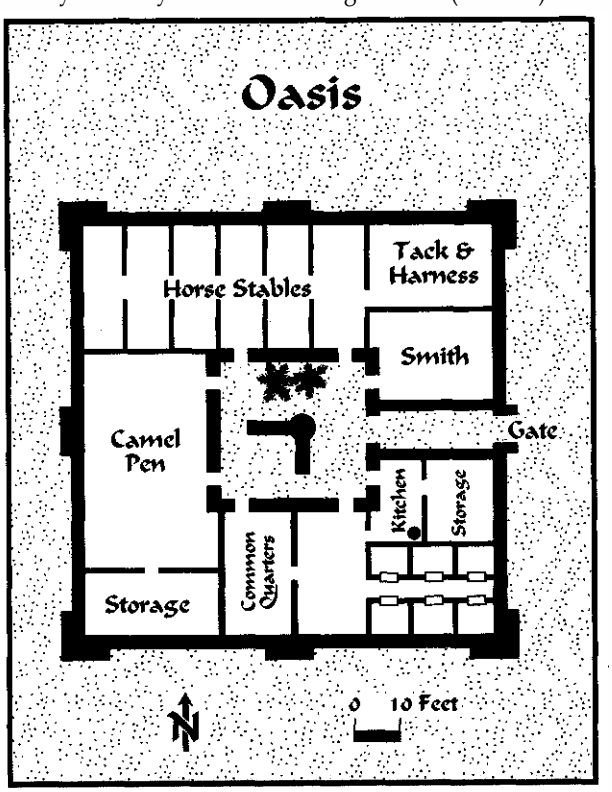
This map can be used as the hook to lead PCs to "The Heart of a Lion." If the PCs follow the map, they will find the caravanserai is abandoned when they arrive, but such a trip will place them in Liham at an appropriate time to begin the next adventure.

The assassins will say anything to gain their freedom if captured, as their doctrine of *taqiyya* allows.

They will swear that they owe allegiance to the Grey Fire fellowship to shift the blame away from the Everlasting. Any members of the Grey Fire will see through the deception immediately, because these slayers know none of the Grey Fire's signs or passwords.

If questioned, the slayers will ask not to be forced to speak. If they are magically or physically compelled to discuss the affairs of the Everlasting with anyone not bound by the vow of secrecy, an oathbinder genie appears to kill the informers.

PCs have only 1-3 rounds to extract information from an oathbreaker—then a genie arrives to enforce the word of the contract between the *fedayeen* and the genies. If the assassins escape or are freed (perhaps a PC holy slayer of the Everlasting in the party convinces the rest of the group to let them go), they will seek to tell their comrades about the party through a carrier pigeon. A retributive ambush follows, meant to slay as many of the interfering infidels (the PCs) as possible. Confederates in Liham are gone by the time the PCs arrive.



The genie Halfana al-Yamini does not wish to interfere in the affairs of others; she must simply kill any holy slayer who has failed to keep the vow of secrecy of the Everlasting (see The Holy Slayer Sourcebook). She uses *hold person* or a *wall of force* to keep others from interfering with this task.

If the PCs prevent the well from being poisoned, grant a story award of 3,000 XP. If they pursue and recover the camels and caravan goods, award an additional 2,000 XP.

Ramas, Harun, and Beyab al-Rashid
5th-level human male thieves (holy slayers)
AL LE; AC 4 (dexterity); MV 12; hp 24, 20, 18; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +2; SZ M; ML 15; XP 1,400; scimitars, grey javelins, short bows, 10 flight arrows each, leather armor, shields.

Halfana al-Yamini, Oathbinder genie: Int Avg; AL LN; AC -1; MV 15, Fl 30 (B); HD 12; hp 52; THAC0 1; #AT 1; Dmg 4-24; SA spells; SD immune to victim's attacks; MR 45%; SZ L (9′ tall); ML 16; XP 12,000.

Captain Zamanyeh bint Salman al-Kahn
4th-level human female warrior (mamluk)
AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; hp 33; THAC0 16 (18 in armor); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 14; khopesh sword, short bow, short sword, lamellar armor, shield.

Typical mamluk (29)
1st-level human female warriors
AL LG; AC 6; MV 12; hp 1d10+Con bonus (25%); THAC0 20 (-1 penalty in armor); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 13; khopesh sword, short bow, scale mail.

Chapter III:

The Heart of a Lion

Fortune aids the brave.

Zakhuran proverb

Long before the time of the Loregiver, a pious youth called Hasan left his home to spread the word of Hajama. He traveled far from his native city and saw many wondrous things, but none more holy than the Lion of Suja, the sacred lion of the temple where Hasan had said his daily prayers. And though bandits waylaid him and the faithless reviled him, Hasan had the courage of a dozen lions and the strength of forty oxen, and he feared nothing. Everywhere he went he preached the word of Hajama.

But as he traveled, Hasan heard rumors of unfaithful priests in the city of his birth, priests who claimed to know the truth but spoke lies. And this enraged Hasan, for those who speak false prophecies are hateful in the eyes of Fate. But they grew rich from their false teachings. Sadly, men call the dog that has money, "My Lord Dog."

In time, the false priests and pragmatists decided to chain the sacred lion, for many people who would otherwise have brought offerings to Hajama feared it, and gave no money to the priests. So the lion was chained, and its teeth and claws were pulled, and the people said, "It is better to be a live dog than a dead lion." And they brought their offerings in peace.

When Hasan returned home, he went to the temple and saw the lion, tooth less and impotent, though its mane was still huge and terrible. Hasan spoke, saying, "O my old companion, I loved your strength, and I will avenge you." Then he tore the heart of the Lion of Suja out with his bare hands, and it was not flesh, but a blood-red stone streaked with black from the treachery of the priests. And he toppled the pillars of the temple for the tomb of the Lion of Suja.

Hasan grieved, and he took the stone into the desert. Alone, he raised each stone of the fortress that became the Lion's Shrine, the home of the Everlasting, and the truth, the courage of the lion, and the strength of the bull.

This adventure pits the party against the allies of the Everlasting and brings them to the heart of the holy slayers' fortress. It begins in Liham, the City of Soldiers, close to Qudra, the City of Power. If the heroes succeed in discouraging the holy slayers' plans, they will make powerful friends. If they fail, they might not want to show themselves near Liham again.

The first section of this adventure provides a brief overview of the city of Liham and its caliph. The adventure begins when assassins attack the caliph—if the PCs act quickly, they may win his favor.

The adventure continues as the PCs gather information in the bazaar while avoiding the assassins themselves. This investigation leads to a journey to the slayers' headquarters, followed by an attempt to gain a reprieve for the caliph and his new imam. A timeline detailing the latter part of this adventure may be found at the back of this booklet.

Liham, City of Soldiers

Liham the Red, the City of Soldiers, is a Free City entirely too close to the might of Qudra. Though it boasts magnificent mosques dedicated to Hajama the Brave, Najm the Adventurous, Vataqatal the Warrior-Slave, and Old Kor, the city-folk rarely assert themselves. They fear reprisals from the rulers of Qudra, who always keep several detachments of Qudran mamluks in town, ostensibly for the protection of the caliph.

The city is built by the sea, on a small escarpment that varies from twenty to thirty feet high. Bluffs lead down to a rocky coastline of jagged rocks. The waterfront stretches along the end of the river gorge and the oceanside; both of these areas are built on stilts, to keep the city safe from the river water, the ocean's tides, and the uneven rocks beneath the bluffs. Terrible things are said to lurk beneath the planks of the docks and wharves, but these are most often tales told to frighten small children away from the rough sailors, corsairs, and longshoremen that frequent the low city. A gate at the top of the bluffs above the wharves, called the Water Gate, is shut every night.

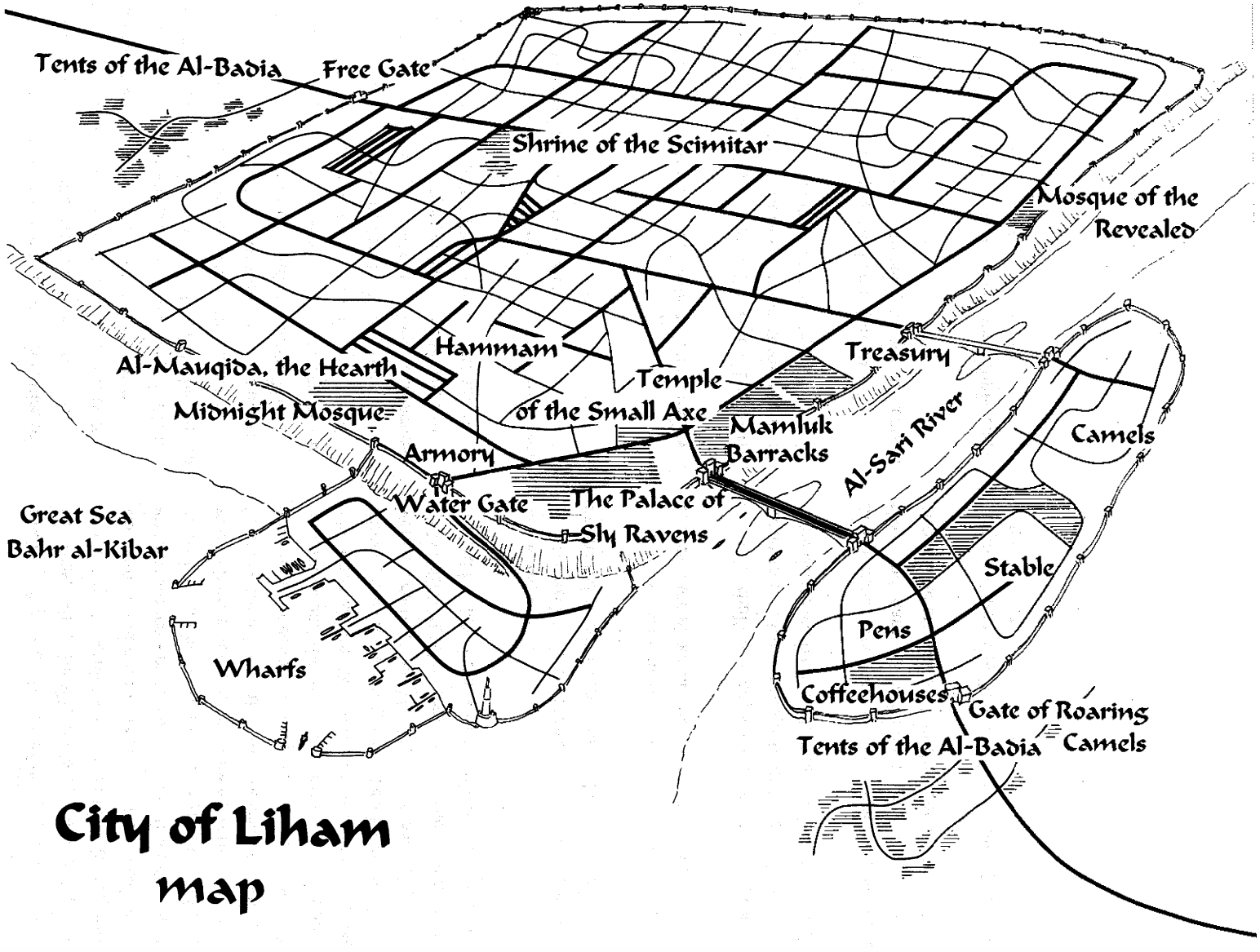
On top of the bluffs, many parts of the city wall and the many buildings in the city itself are made of ancient stones—material collected from the rubble of an earlier city built on the same site. This old city is said to have given Liham its name as the City of Soldiers, for it is said that the ancient city fell sway to a warmonger genie and prepared to make war on its neighbors, and the genie leader swore to slaughter all who resisted him. Before the genie could carry out his threats, the city was razed by a Black Cloud of Vengeance (see the AL-QADIM™ *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*™ appendix), which punished the wicked but left the innocent unharmed. A much smaller Liham was rebuilt on the site after the Black Cloud departed.

The city's walls and towers are given a coat of bright red stucco every year, and many of the town's buildings are roofed with crimson.

The city is divided by the Al-Sari River, which carries trade goods up the valley to the hinterlands and the hill tribes of the Furrowed Mountains. Two bridges cross the shallow valley, each supported by strong stone arches. Rumor has it that these bridges are built to be destroyed by the removal of a key stone, making the city difficult to storm from the south. Nevertheless, most caravanserais are on the southern bank of the river, and many Al-Badia pitch their tents there outside the city walls when they come to trade.

The city's center of power is the palace of Caliph Harin al-Hayif, the Palace of Sly Ravens. This bustling building of whitewashed stucco is adorned with a few modest murals and set with a brightly glazed red tile roof—otherwise, it is almost indistinguishable from the merchants' houses and caravanserais that surround it.

The palace overlooks the sea and is flanked by three graying, drab buildings with ordinary red clay roofs: the treasury, the barracks of the mamluks, and the caliph's stables.



City of Liham map

Liham's central market is called the Hearth, Al-Mauqida, named for the thousand shades of red that the people of the city display there while they barter and haggle. The market areas sprawl along the streets and alleys to lesser squares and courtyards. Caravans often clog the streets and the western bridge.

Liham survives and prospers on the spillover trade from the great caravan routes connecting Qudra to the Free Cities; caravanserais crowd the lanes and suqs, and camel trains often clog the two main trade gates: the Gate of Roaring Camels in the south, and the Free Gate to the north.

The city also produces fine pottery and a hardy mountain coffee that grows on the seaward slopes of the Furrowed Mountains. The marketplace is full of silk spinners and sellers, butchers, weavers, moneychangers, corn chandlers, scavengers and ragmen, greengrocers, and other merchants. Craftsmen and fishmongers cry their wares, and porters, messengers, watchmen, and grooms seek patrons. A bathkeeper declaims the virtues of his oils, mineral waters, and unguents. Carts and mules bring more goods and haul away large purchases. In short, the market is a civilized place, if a turbulent and noisy one.

The Mosques of Liham

The Shrine of the Scimitar, a mosque dedicated to Vataqatal, overlooks the marketplace. The mosque's white marble is stained red with rust, and the pillars of the shrine's portico are inlaid with winding mosaic lines of red. The priests here are fiery and outspoken in their defense of the mamluk societies; they are all moralists. The Shrine of the Scimitar is widely believed to be the center of spy activity furthering the interests of Qudra. The priests of Vataqatal view assassins as the vilest, most craven sort of creatures.

The Midnight Mosque is home to worship of Brave Hajama. This is a black granite building overlooking the river and approachable only along a narrow path over the escarpment. Its walls are thick enough that the interior is pleasantly cool, even during the hottest hours of the day. Its basalt statues are master works, and its floor is inlaid with black marble set with subtle patterns of onyx and black jade.

Despite the richness of this building, the many silver candelabra holding white tapers are tarnished from long years of smoke and neglect. A great chandelier of black iron illuminates the center of the mosque. It is said that its fearful appearance ensures that only the truly faithful worship there.

The priests are almost entirely ethoists, though the pragmatic minority has recently gained the ear of the caliph. The priests here are indignant about the assassins of the Everlasting and deny any loyalty to or relationship with them.

The Mosque of the Revealed is the center of worship for Najm, Hajama's brother, and one of the hot spots for the disaffected to air their grievances about Qudra, their own passive caliph, and everyday complaints and ills. This public dissension is tolerated as a way for the citizens to blow off steam peaceably, but it has also been the site of riots in the past.

A grey, lusterless fire is kept magically burning on the altar of Najm, for use in sacrifices of incense or rare woods. The priests of Najm in Liham are evenly split between ethoists and pragmatists. The priests chortle whenever the subject of the holy slayers of Hajama comes up; they find it an amusing embarrassment with which to tease their brethren in the church of Hajama.

The Temple of the Small Axe with its golden dome lies across the street from the caliph's palace. Its tall walls ensure that the worshipers of Kor the Venerable meditate and pray in relative isolation, though they are also often called upon in the palace.

The altar is in the midst of a garden. The priests' quarters surrounding the garden are stacked high with scrolls and parchments. The priests are all pragmatists, and, like the priests of Vataqatal, they despise assassins, though for different reasons. They consider them ill-informed and misguided, not cowardly. These priests act as sage counselors for those who seek knowledge, accepting donations in exchange for their services.

Blood in the Streets

"Taking courage, she plunged her dagger into his heart quick as lightning, and the scoundrel fell back stone dead."

Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves

The adventure begins whenever the PCs are on the streets of Liham during the day. The crowds are no thicker or noisier than usual—let the PCs run a few errands or meet some local NPCs. When they have a feel for the bustling, mercantile town, tell them that the street ahead seethes with activity.

> Liham is a town of wide streets, crowded with beggars, merchants, ascetics, mystics, and soldiers. All of them clear the street ahead of you, and you can hear the soldiers crying, "Clear the way for the shield of the faithful, Caliph Harin al-Hayif. The Caliph approaches! Clear the way!" Any who aren't quick enough catch the end of a soldier's spear. Close on the heels of the troops comes a press of bright colors.

Ask the PCs what they wish to do. Anyone who stays in the way will be pushed aside by mamluks. Anyone who bares steel will have a lot of trouble, as even the citizens will cry, "Assassin!" and the mamluks will attempt to overbear a PC responsible.

Determine how close to the walls or open path the PCs stand.

> The caliph's procession is led by a phalanx of thirty ogre mamluks in bright ring mail with spears held at attention; followed by the caliph's dwarven mamluk vizier riding an elephant painted in red and gold

designs. The vizier's elephant is followed by six singing priests' of Hajama in orange robes, followed by a group of a dozen temple slaves struggling with a huge, fringed litter. The caliph's pragmatic imam, a recently appointed priest of Hajama named Sirhan, sways in the litter, swathed, in a dozen and one shades of red.

Behind the imam comes a mounted squadron of lancers, a troupe of elven dancers and musicians, two young girls strewing roses and lilies in the street, and finally the Caliph Harin al-Hayif himself, astride a fine black horse and accompanied by the captain of the lancers.

Bringing up the rear are servants bearing fans, portable tents and awnings for shade, and ewers of chilled sherbets and wine. Servants lead three of the caliph's finest camels, bedecked in rich cloth-of-gold and embossed saddles. A few of the servants scatter small coins to the crowd.

Ask if the PCs try to enrich themselves with the coins (copper and silver). Anyone picking them up misses the first strike of the upcoming attack and suffers a -2 penalty to surprise.

The procession has just about passed by when you hear a loud thump and see a greenish explosion near the head of the procession. Two winged archers appear in midair, one at the front and one at the rear of the caliph's entourage. You hear the clash of steel and the snorting of horses. You think you see a merchant draw steel and charge in among the priests, but you can't be sure. The crowd presses in all directions at once and you hear screaming all around, though you can't see much.

Agents of the Everlasting, a group of holy slayers devoted to Hajama, are attacking the procession. They are aided by the marrash, the magical flying archers, and they are fortified by the magic of Essafah al-Qadibi, a sorcerer who has cast *haste* on all of them. The Everlasting are outraged by the caliph's appointment of an imam of the Faith Pragmatic to head the church in Liham, and by the general encroachment of pragmatists at their mosque. They are none too pleased with the caliph's emphasis on poetry over puissance, and his kowtowing to Qudra makes them sick. The caliph has been marked, and this attack is a warning.

The PCs should be allowed to get involved in this battle on their own. Although the holy slayers are targeting the imam, and the caliph will almost certainly survive the battle, there is no reason to let the players know this. Make it seem that the assassins are getting the best of the situation, use the crowd to slow the party down, and let them worry. Roll for surprise (as the PCs have no reason to be unusually watchful), then ask for reactions.

If the PCs stall and wait to see what happens, describe the inhumanly fast onslaught of vulture-headed archers and sword-wielding merchants rolling over the scattered and broken opposition of the caliph's men. If the party hesitates too long, let one of them be wounded by a stray arrow to encourage their involvement.

Each round the PCs delay, one holy slayer and four mamluks die. After five rounds, the two remaining holy slayers are captured and the mamluks begin clearing the street and gathering up their dead. The mage and the circling archers escape.

To aid the caliph's troops, party members must to force their way through the panicked crowd. This requires a Strength ability check at -2; a successful check allows half-speed movement. Spellcasting in the middle of a panicked crowd is a bad idea; unless surrounded by strong, weighty, friendly assistants, any spellcaster trying to cast a spell with a somatic component fails automatically, due to bumping and jostling.

Roll combat normally for any assassins the PCs choose to fight; describe the remainder of the combat without rolling it all. The vizier and half the mamluks have already been slain by the *sunfire* spell cast by the sorcerer Essafah at the head of the procession. Essafah is an ally of the holy slayers, a sorcerer specializing in the magics of fire and sand, and a member of the Loyalist faction of the Everlasting (see "Factions among the Everlasting" in the Sourcebook). He has used his *fez of disguise* to appear as a beggar clad in rags, and has already cast two of his spells, *stoneskin* and *spirit armor,* in preparation for combat.

Essafah is a coward and will flee into the crowd if any mamluks or PCs head his way. As he runs, he uses his *fez of disguise* to further confuse pursuit. Anyone following him must make a Wisdom check each round at a -4 penalty to keep track of his changing disguises. He will try to use *mirror image* to confuse pursuit, or use *jump* to leap onto a rooftop if escape through the crowd fails (assuming he can pause long enough to cast the spell).

Once Essafah has escaped into the crowd or onto a rooftop, he teleports away to report to the Grandfather assassin. He will not teleport while still in the sight of pursuers —it's too risky. If he can be captured, he talks freely about the group's plan to slay the imam and warn off the caliph—he is not bound by the holy slayers' oath of silence.

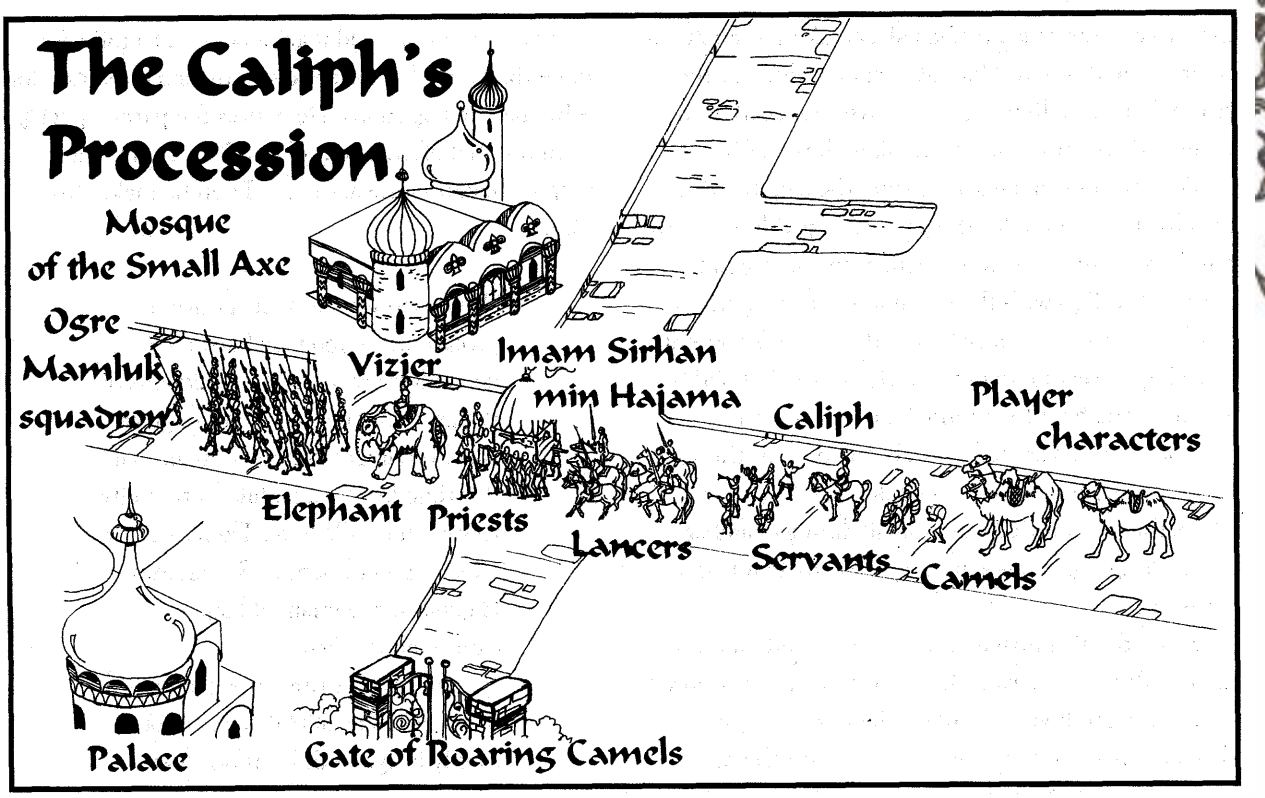
The main attack on the priests and bodyguards of the imam comes from the holy slayer Rashad al-Din and his six accomplices, all disguised as merchants and armed with scimitars. They are under the influence of *haste* spells cast by Essafah just prior to their attack. Although the holy slayers will probably be defeated by the soldiers (hopefully with the help of the PCs), the imam's bodyguards will all be slain and the imam himself wounded, cut on the cheek. The last assassin threatens the imam himself before his capture by the mamluks or the PCs. He loudly suggests that the imam step down immediately, for the "strong hand of Hajama" will surely strike down any heretic who claims to be imam of Liham.

If the PCs capture an assassin, the caliph's mamluks will attempt to take custody of him in 1d3 + 1 rounds, but until then, the party may try to get information from the prisoners. They refuse to talk unless *charm person* spells or other magical means are used to extract information about the fellowship. If a holy slayer fails his saving throw (with a +2 bonus because of the dire consequences described below), he will freely answer the PCs' questions. Give the players 1 to 3 minutes of real time to get answers, then roll for surprise.

As in the first adventure, the oathbinder genie Halfana al-Yamini shows up when the holy slayers break their oath of silence, and she attempts to slay the oathbreaker and any PC mage foolish enough to have coerced the assassin's betrayal (see the Sourcebook section on The Everlasting). She needs only one round to kill one of the fedayeen and two rounds to slay Rashad.

Rashad and his cohort are members of the Loyalist faction of the Everlasting. Rashad carries their funds for the mission: 120 gp, a single 50 gp chip of lapis lazuli, and an exquisite wavy-bladed dagger with a gold pommel, worth 300 gp, symbol of his standing as cohort leader.

The aerial archers, the marrash (see description in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*™ pages included in this sourcebox), circle slowly over the street, firing their plague arrows randomly at the mamluks and into the crowd. These vulturelike creatures concentrate on preventing assistance from reaching the imam, cawing and screeching all the while.



The marrash flee if confronted in the air, to take word to the sha'ir Akim al-Kalaas, their master on Jabal Sarahin in the Haunted Lands (see "Factions among the Everlasting," in the Sourcebook). Otherwise, they wait until the battle on the ground is played out and then head east, flying hard for the mountains. They carry only their weapons, as valuables or provisions would only slow them down. The caliph's entourage is in such disarray that by the time an aerial pursuit is organized, it is haphazard and ineffective. Unless the PCs can bring down the archers, they escape.

Rashad al-Din
7th-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 6; MV 12 (24 under *haste);* hp 30; THAC0 17 (16 with scimitar); #AT 2 (4 under *haste);* Dmg by weapon type (1d8+2); SZ M; ML 18; XP 975. Magical item: *ring of invisibility.*

The Fedayeen
4th-level human male thieves (holy slayers) (6)
AL LE; AC 6; MV 12 (24 under *haste);* hp 21, 17, 16, 15, 14, 12; THAC0 19 (18 with scimitar); #AT 3/2 (3 under *haste);* Dmg by weapon type (1d8+2); SZ M; ML 18; XP 270.

Marrash (2): Int Avg; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Fl 27; HD 7; hp 34, 24; THAC0 13 (12 with missile weapons); #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6 or 1d6+2/1d6+2 or 1d8+2/1d8+2; SA missiles, disease; SZ M; ML 12; XP 2,000.

At the Palace of Sly Ravens

If the party has assisted the caliph's bodyguards in fending off the attack, the adventurers are soon surrounded by an admiring throng. The press of the crowd is too great to move safely at more than a slow crawl. The caliph and his entourage quickly make

their way to the safety of the palace, taking their fallen comrades with them. Mamluks begin to disperse the crowd, but the caliph is grieving over the death of his vizier and does not pause to speak with the PCs.

That evening, a messenger from the caliph arrives to deliver an request for the party to enjoy dinner with him. A servant will call on them at the appropriate hour. Allow PCs with the grooming non-weapon proficiency to coif themselves to their heart's content. The caliph's servant does not arrive until after dark—well after the hour for civilized meals—about ten o'clock. The PCs are led, quickly and quietly, through the dusty, silent streets to a side door of the palace, where they are hustled into a small dining chamber overlooking a garden—certainly not a room for state occasions.

When the PCs arrive, slaves wait upon them, waft them with incense, wash their hands with rose-scented water, and fan them to ward off the heat. They may keep any weapons they have brought with them, a mark of the caliph's honor and respect for them. When the PCs have been cared for, the Caliph Harin al-Hayif arrives, escorted only by two mute bodyguards.

Ask PCs with etiquette skill to make a proficiency check; tell those who succeed that it would be considered impolite to bring up business before the meal is served, and it would be considered good manners to let the caliph bring up whatever subject pleases him until then. If the PCs all lack the etiquette proficiency or fail their rolls, the meal comes to a standstill whenever they mention the attack on the caliph.

The caliph provides a lavish dinner with dozens of courses, including a sherbet appetizer followed by marinated meats, saffron rice, chickens stuffed with mint and sugar, a brace of geese served over peppered rice, colocasia roots fried and soaked in honey, roasted almonds, pistachio nuts, and fruits and conserves. The conversation covers poetry, the trade winds, ethics, the mamluks of the Grand Caliph in Huzuz, riddles of philosophy, and the wonders of the various Free Cities.

The caliph is a timid man, a poet and a follower more than a leader. He speaks softly and often asks for other people's opinions. He praises the party's quick thinking that afternoon and thanks them for their help in defeating the assassins. Then he makes his plea:

> "Esteemed worthies, my position is precarious, as you may know; my councilors are all the wise servants of the great city of Qudra. Any sign of weakness might convince them that it is time for the mamluks of that city to step in to rule here. Therefore; my recent appointment of Sirhan min Hajama as the imam of Hajama cannot be revoked.
>
> "At the same time, the demands of the assassins of Hajama cannot simply be ignored. I was not their target this time; but I have already lost my trusted friend and vizier, and I have no wish to endure further attacks. If I die, the council of Qudra may well rule here next.
>
> "Sadly, my soldiers are useless against the assassins; their lair is said to lie hidden in the mountains or beyond the desert. In any case I need my loyal troops here to bolster my . . . well, these things are perhaps only interesting to politicians. The truth is, I have few choices, and you have shown yourselves to be both strong and good-willed. I trust your abilities, and I trust you more than I trust most of my diwan.
>
> "My spies have not been able to tell me where the slayers' fortress is, only that its location is a magically guarded secret. You are known for

> your skill and valor, and so I ask you to seek out the chief of the assassins and convince him to cease his attacks on me and my worthy councilors."

This is far from a polite request. If the PCs refuse, the caliph banishes them from the city, although the rules of hospitality demand that dessert be served first. If the PCs accept the mission, the caliph leaves them with a few final words before they go:

> "Thank you. A clever ear can learn many secrets in the bazaar, or from the wise priests of Kor. I must warn you, however, that the agents of the Everlasting are said to be every where, and caution is demanded in this matter more than in most. The day has its eyes, the night has its ears. Go in haste, but with care."

The meal concludes, with coffee and pudding flavored with cardamom, then the PCs are free to go. The caliph recommends they speak to the imam of Hajama, but can offer the PCs no other help. If the PCs return to the palace they meet only silent soldiers who will not admit them into the presence of the caliph.

If the PCs go to Sirhan min Hajama, the new imam at the Midnight Mosque, he cheerfully meets with them over coffee and shares the view of the river from his audience chamber. If they tell him of their mission, he tells them that all he knows of the Everlasting and their moralist preachings is a story he came across in the temple writings, a story which claims to explain the origin of a relic dear to the moralist worshippers of Hajama. Sirhan tells the moralist tale of the lion's heart (as given on page 10), and says that he hopes they will be able to bring this relic back to the city. It is more than a relic of his faith—it might give him the station and respect he needs to fend off further attacks by the assassins.

At The Bazaar

The cloth and color of the suq is a dazzling mix of scarlet, saffron, pink, blood, ruby, crimson, and maroon, as shades of the Red City's color are everywhere from the robes of the preachers to the groundcloths of the small dealers and the awnings over the larger stands. In the bright sunlight, it seems as if the whole marketplace is awash with fire.

The bazaar gives you a chance to fill the players in on all the background, rumors, lies, and propaganda you want them to know. Information flows readily here, changing hands almost as often as dinars and goods. Of course, like the coins and merchandise, the information is often clipped, diluted, or counterfeit.

The bazaar is divided into sections by professions, though some are more strictly enforced than others. There are tailors, moneychangers, weavers, vendors with scented water and ices, jewelers and grain merchants, camel traders and ironmongers, all in their separate streets and alleys and squares. Preachers and storytellers can be found on most corners or wherever a bit of shade can be found under a wall. If the players ask for a story, tell one of the tales of the assassins which appeals to you. The storytellers of Liham can relate any of the tales told in either the Sourcebook or this booklet, though the tale of the lion's heart (at the beginning of this section) should not be revealed in the marketplace. Tales from the *Golden Voyages* sourcebox are also appropriate (if that resource is available), and may keep the players guessing.

Role-play the PCs interactions with whatever merchants or hawkers the party chooses to approach. If you wish, use the haggling rules and non-weapon proficiency to speed up simple transactions.

The caliph's advice is correct: informers, sympathizers, and other servants of the assassins do

haunt the court and the bazaar. These spies and servants of the Everlasting include propagandists, barbers, teachers, and soldiers. Some are disguised as merchants, ascetics, holy men, or caravan guards. Characters who bellow about what they seek will find people drawing away and making signs to avert evil. Discretion is advised. Though everyone shares rumors about the attacks of the assassins and the schemers of Qudra, they do it quietly. No one wants to attract the attention of forces best left alone.

Rumors have run wild lately that an unrecognized son of the caliph exists and will soon step forward—although others claim that he is a mere boy, a puppet, a tool of the holy slayers, of the mamluks, or even of the Pantheon. Other rumors are also circulating widely. The PCs can gather the following rumors from chatting with, haggling against, and cautiously questioning the people of the suq:

- The assassins hope to kill the caliph and install the caliph's unrecognized son, who is their puppet. (false)
- The Everlasting are behind the killing, and they have made a pact with dark forces—their evil servants shoot death from the sky. (true)
- The mamluks called the Dauntless have arrived in town with a string of new recruits for Qudra from among the hill people, but their true aim is to take control of the town. (false)
- The Everlasting ride the winds to find their victims, and they flee on the winds when unveiled, riding back to the Wadi is-Sib, the valley of oblivion. (true, but dangerous to repeat where the Everlasting might hear)
- The caliph has been convinced to give up his station in favor of one of his favorite mamluks—he will announce this as soon as more soldiers arrive to keep the town quiet afterward. (false)
- The holy slayers have become little more than brigands, robbing caravans wherever they can. (said very quietly)

- The Everlasting have done the city a favor by spilling the blood of those not fit to rule. (a dangerous opinion)
- The imam of Hajama has died of his wounds, as he was much too calculating and not nearly pious enough for such a distinguished position. It is Fate. (false)
- A new and lavish mosque to Selan will soon be built here, and the caliph will tax the merchants to pay for it. (true)
- A plague has infected the mamluks of the palace guard. The bodies are being burned on the drill grounds. (true)
- The Grandfather of the Everlasting is immortal, and his schemes go on from generation to generation because he can never die. (false)

The Babbling Barber

Sooner or later, the inquiries of the PCs will lead them to a talented and widely connected goblin barber by the name of Bani Matruj al-Haddar. Bani is a ceaseless and talented gossip, tale-teller, and information broker who is physically unable to keep quiet unless gagged. He expounds on his talents in astrology, phlebotomy, grooming, etiquette, and games of chance while also praising his own shy, quiet nature to anyone who will listen. If he considers a customer a good listener, he may stop halfway through a shave or a haircut in order to keep the customer around a little longer and do a quick astrological chart for him.

Bani (gbT/br/4) rarely stops to breathe—he calls himself the Silent Sheikh and refers to himself as a man of few words, generally in the middle of a constant stream of gossip, monologues, and tall tales. If one of the PCs can be railroaded into putting up with his incessant prattling, they will discover that he knows someone who knows someone who might help them. If paid a small fee for his time, he might be able to find his friend's friend. . . .

A successful etiquette check reveals that *baksheesh* in the amount of at least 3 dinar is required to ensure his cooperation. Less would be an insult to a goblin of his broad talents.

The First Strike

If the PCs give Bani the 3 dinar, he hurries off into the market square. While the PCs wait, they are attacked by Anwar al-Sifr, an agent of the holy slayers. He was tipped off about their mission by a servant among the palace staff. This slayer does not seek to kill, merely to warn the PCs off. He is bound by the oath of silence, but he actually knows very little other than that the PCs have been asked to interfere in something that is none of their business.

Anwar strikes once from the shadows of an ironmonger's shop, then retreats. He chooses his target carefully—an unarmored henchman or spellcaster is preferred, especially one who has wandered a little way off from the rest of the group. He attempts his backstab (see the Sourcebook for details of holy slayer surprise attacks), and the blade Anwar leaves behind is engraved with his message: "Jackals should not seek out lions."

If the PCs pursue, Anwar flees immediately, using his *potion of flying* to zoom low over the stalls but just above the heads of shoppers in the suq's narrow alleyways, heading straight for the river. Any PC attempting to follow on foot must make a Strength check and a Dexterity check each turn to continue pursuit. Once he reaches the river gorge, he flies over it, hoping to lose earthbound pursuers.

The PCs very likely will become suspicious of Bani after the attack—paranoia is healthy, but if they think that Bani has betrayed them to the assassins, the party may leave. If they do leave the market before he returns, Bani searches for them. A barber isn't shaken off just because his clients abandon him! His diligence is rewarded, and Bani finds the party an hour after the attack in the suq. The goblin demands to know why they left—he knows nothing about Anwar's attack and attempts to overcome the party's suspicions, even going to far as to disarm himself (he carries only a

razor) and pleading. If they believe him, proceed with "The Phoenix." If not, Bani runs off to Omar and Fadiya (see below) and brings them to the PCs, apologizing all the while. Make the same introductions as given below with appropriate modifications for wherever the PCs are when Bani finds them.

If the PCs wait, Bani returns after an hour with a scruffy urchin who, he says, will lead them all to the people they seek. Proceed with "The Phoenix."

If the PCs refuse to meet with Bani's friends, after three days, the plague resulting from the disease arrows fired by the marrash in the assault on the caliph has spread throughout the city. The Caliph sends a message to the PCs telling them to find these aerial archers and find some way of slowing the epidemic. The priests of Kor have consulted the oracles and have learned that a woman they call the Phoenix will lead the PCs to what they seek. If the PCs ask about her in the bazaar, they learn where she lives in the coffeehouse (see "The Phoenix" below), but they also learn that she and her brother have left town because of the plague. The party must catch up with her on the road south, and they will have lost three days.

Anwar al-Sifr, Cipher of Liham
9th-level elven male thief (holy slayer):
AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 16 (15 with scimitar); #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type (1d8+2); SZ M; ML 18; XP 4,000; *leather armor +1,* scimitar, jambiya.
PP 50; OL 30; F/RT 20; MS 95; HS 90; DN 15; CW 85; RL 10; backstab x4.
Magical items: *ring of feather falling, potion of flying.*

The Phoenix

Bani and the urchin lead the PCs out of the bustle and cry of the market to the jostling traffic and dust of the side streets, out the Gate of Roaring Camels and into the shacks of the districts beneath the walls. They stop at a tiny coffeehouse in a poor district. Not for one instant during the entire walk does Bani keep quiet.

Sweeping into the cool smoky air of the coffeehouse, Bani takes the PCs to a human couple sitting on worn embroidered pillows around low, round copper tables. The two share a slight family resemblance and are dressed in unobtrusive colors. The woman gives Bani and the urchin small coins and they depart.

Turning to the PCs, the woman introduces herself and her brother as Fadiya and Omar al-Farid (see the cardsheets in this box for stats), the last of the House of the Phoenix. She asks the PCs their business. If they mention the recent assassination or the Everlasting, Fadiya tells the PCs that she knows where the holy slayers have their stronghold, and she is willing to guide them there for a fee. She tries to say as little as possible about herself or her brother.

Fadiya does all the talking; Omar speaks only if asked a direct question, and generally either gives monosyllabic answers or refers questions to his sister.

Fadiya wants at least 1,000 gp for her guidance, half of it up front. If all her expenses are included, she might be haggled down to 800 gp. If the PCs catch up with her on the road after the plague is established, she demands at least 2,000 gp, though she may be haggled down to 1,600 gp:

Fadiya is going to the fortress with or without the PCs, for reasons of her own. She sees this as an opportunity to make the PCs help pay her way, and she doesn't mind the extra company and safety that their numbers will bring. Her opportunism is grounded in the hardships she has suffered. Her family has always risen from the ashes, and she trusts it will do so again.

Omar and Fadiya's Story

Some people are born sheltered under the hand of Fate, but others never seem to avoid the evil eye. Fadiya and Omar al-Farid are a brother and sister team that once served as spies in Liham for the Grandfather of the Everlasting, but they were cast out of the fellowship for cowardice twelve years ago; while traveling through the Furrowed Mountains, they failed to stand firm in the face of raiding debbi at a watering hole. Though their fear and flight were the product of magic, it was reported as cowardice by a enemy. They were marked for punishment by their "comrades" in the Everlasting, though a friend warned them before the first attack could catch up with them. They fled south to the Pearl Cities, where they hid from the retribution they knew to expect. They hid in vain.

The Al-Farids were repeatedly attacked by agents of their former fellowship. Though they felt betrayed, Fadiya swallowed her bitterness and kept her pledge not to reveal any of the secrets of the order, and so she was never judged by the oathbinder genie. The attacks stopped within a year, for the Grandfather had always had a soft spot for Fadiya and soon felt she had suffered enough. The Al-Farids took the respite as an opportunity to consult Zinjir al-Muqi, the Twelvefold Master, the Shackle-breaker, a mage of Hiyal, and gained magical release from the strictures of the oath. Now Fadiya can speak of the Everlasting without fear of the genie, though she must still beware of saying anything where it might be overheard by sympathizers who might pass on word to the *rafiqs.*

Fadiya and Omar knew no trade other than death, so in time they found and joined the Grey Fire, the holy slayers of Najm. With their help, and by beggaring themselves to pay for information and *potions of dreaming,* they have been plotting a trip to visit the mysterious Grandfather and (so they say) regain their standing or take their revenge—and the PCs would make great traveling companions.

They tell the party only that they are willing to guide them to the fortress of the fellowship for reasons of their own. They will not tell the PCs anything else, other than the fact that they were cast out of the brotherhood twelve years ago. The Al-Farids are still devout worshippers of Hajama (who is, after all, Najm's companion), but their zeal is tempered by their desire for revenge against the brotherhood that they feel has betrayed them.

Fadiya is dark-haired and green-eyed, with a rare but bright smile. She has skin the color of coffee with cream, the daughter of a southern archipelago warrior and an ajami mother. She is a dangerous woman when angered, willing to hold a grudge for years. However, she is also clever enough to put on a smile for those who might help her, and even to go to some trouble to assist others who might not be immediately useful. Though she has the fire of belief, it doesn't bum nearly as brightly as her anger at having been cast out of the Everlasting. Fadiya is the elder sibling, and she bullies Omar into helping her with all her schemes.

Omar is a follower, a chubby and genial-looking fellow with a round, moonlike face. His dark hair and dark eyes match his preferred dark blue or black robes. His skin is slightly darker than his sister's. He tends to defer to Fadiya, although his practical skill at theft has allowed them both to survive on a day-to-day level. He has a much more relaxed attitude towards the Everlasting, but agrees to Fadiya's plans out of fear and a sense of family duty.

Although they are willing to show the PCs the way, Fadiya and Omar depend on landmarks to guide them, so magical travel via *teleport* spells or the like is impossible, as is night travel. They refuse to give away more than one landmark at a time; they feel that this way the party will do everything possible to ensure their survival on the trip.

They do know some of the basic workings of the order of the Everlasting, though some of their information is out of date. If the PCs think to ask after several days have passed, or if there is a member of the Everlasting among them, Fadiya and Omar may tell

the party about the Loyalist, Preacher, and Winged Bull factions, the capture of the fortress from the jann (see the tale on page 22 of the Sourcebook), or even the former Grandfather, Anwar al-Nuhas Asfar, Anwar the Bronze.

Both the caliph and the Al-Farids want speed: since the Everlasting's palace spies have already informed the Grandfather Assassin of the party's intentions, delay just gives the holy slayers time to organize and plan. If the PCs mention the attack in the bazaar, the Al-Farids insist on leaving immediately. The route through the mountains is the fastest and least likely to encounter pursuit. The party could travel south to the sea and take a ship to Hiyal, then travel inland. Both Fadiya and Omar argue against it. Although it might be slightly faster if the winds are favorable, it will certainly expose all of them to more danger and more attacks from agents of the slayers. Let the PCs make whatever arrangements they feel best, and allow them to purchase whatever mounts, pack animals, and equipment they require, If the PCs wait more than one day, Anwar meets with the slayers remaining from the attack on the caliph and prepares another attack, this time against Omar. The DM must determine the outcome depending on the general level of the party's precautions.

The Furrowed Mountains

This section describes major landmarks and two possibly hostile encounters. The most recognizable landmark (for the PCs) is the hill people's town of Gurab Sakir. The encounters include the Watcher and a night among the hill people.

Climate and Life

These low mountains of weathered limestone and shale slowly bake under the hot equatorial sun. The mountains prevent the ocean winds from bringing water inland; within a few miles, the fertile mountain ground becomes parched soil where nothing grows. Where nothing grows, the Haunted Lands begin. Few travel into the Furrowed Mountains, for beyond them lies only desert, though the southern mountain passes are valuable trade routes to Hiyal.

Despite the peaks, which range up to 10,000 feet high, the land is hot, tempered only by constant breezes. Few plants thrive, though grass and even thorny scrub sprout each year in the rainy season. Typical animals include small rodents, lizards, insects, hyenas, vultures, and snakes. Giant scorpions, bloodhawks, and even werehyenas are not uncommon dangers.

Trade Routes

Caravans cross the mountains from time to time, generally from the Free Cities to Hiyal. They also skirt south around the mountains and thus arrive in Qudra. Mountain caravans often use a mix of mountain and desert camels, for the terrain varies widely along the route.

Walking movement covers three to twelve miles per day, depending on encumbrance, trails, and the steepness of the terrain. Mounts do not increase this speed appreciably, because they must often be walked over difficult footing. They do allow the traveler to carry more equipment, provisions, or treasure.

The Journey Begins

The party should move quickly through the early stages of the trip; the foothills and mountains are quite civilized near the coast. Irrigated terraces of small banana trees and coffee bushes cover the hillsides, and small muddy villages are common. Fadiya's and Omar's landmarks here are almost all unusual rock formations: pillars, rockslides, and washes in wadis. There is no chance of losing the path.

Ask for a standard marching order along narrow mountain trails, and a standard set of guard shifts for watches. Describe the heat and the dust that come with travel, and the clouds that roll in off the sea, then drop their rain on the mountains. Once the scene has

been established and the PCs have a feel for the land, begin with "The Watcher," below.

The Watcher

After the first four days of travel, the clouds, terraces, and small villages dwindle behind the party. For three days there are no humans and no rains; the only encounters are with vultures, a camel skeleton, and a camp-raiding jackal. After that, there are no encounters at all.

Rangers and desert riders have a definite sense of being watched. While the party rests on the evening of the sixth day into the mountains, they meets the new tenant in these lands: an adult vishap named Safsaf.

Safsaf is a cowardly, willowy dragon which has been investigating and observing the party for the past two days. She has finally gathered enough courage to attempt to take food from the party. Although the dragon can be bargained with, she prefers not to ask for food; she figures forgiveness is easier to get than permission.

If she is lucky, she won't be discovered at all. After scouting the party thoroughly, she attempts a raid by night. Safsaf approaches a watch member by night and uses a *suggestion* spell to hint that the guard might want to take a nap. Since this is an eminently reasonable suggestion, the saving throw is made at a -3 penalty. She will then attempt to quietly make off with a camel or a pack animal of some kind. After getting her meal that first night, the vishap will ignore the party (except for observing from a distance) on the next. On the third night she again tries to take a mount. Since the party may be relying on their pack train to carry water and provisions, she also waits in the vicinity of the camp in the morning to see if they abandon any edible or useful gear.

She is eager and not especially cautious after the party leaves. If they leave bait behind, she is likely to try to grab it and run off as soon as the party is out of sight, so this may be the best way to catch her.

The Everlasting have an agreement with Safsaf, allowing them to pass through her land unhindered and to replenish their waterskins at her well (assuming they have brought their own). Safsaf has been requested by the Everlasting to report the presence of Omar and Fadiya. She is too proud to be anyone's servant, but she is much too greedy to pass up a chance to increase her hoard. Because the assassins never show fear in her presence, she respects them and has only eaten one of their sect's members once, or maybe twice.

The vishap may be bribed, fought, or threatened into letting the party pass. Bribes must be worth at least 2,000 gp total or must include at least one magical item. Losing more than 20 hp is enough to make the vishap flee combat, and a party with at least three strong fighters or an obviously powerful mage is enough to threaten her successfully. Role-play the threats, and then allow the most intimidating player to make a Charisma ability check to see if the threats are successful.

Under no conditions will Safsaf give the PCs access to the watering hole in her lair, as she hopes they will die in the arid mountains or the desert, providing her with another meal. Stealth may gain water for the party if they have ropes and buckets.

Safsaf (adult female vishap): Int High; AL NE; AC 2; MV 18, Jp 6; HD 10; hp 65; THAC0 5; #AT 3 and 1; Dmg 1-4+6/1-4+6/2d6+6 and 2-8+6; SA spells, tail lash, +4 surprise bonus; SD immune to enchantment/charm spells; SZ H (35 feet long with a 40-foot tail); MR 10%; ML 14; XP 11,000.

Safsaf can cast *sleep* twice per day, *invisibility* and *suggestion* once per day. She speaks Midani, the giants' trade tongue, and the languages of the genies, desert centaurs, dragonne, and nagas. Her treasure (kept at the bottom of the well) includes 2500 cp, 4000 sp, 1500 gp, 10 500 gp opals, and a *potion of extra-healing*.

Consequences

If the party has lost camels, food, or water, they may have trouble getting to the next watering hole. Vultures circle overhead. After two days of this, the party comes to a narrow defile where they meet the hill people.

If the party hasn't lost anything to the dragon, the DM may wish to make the next encounter more difficult. Two days after the dragon is left behind, a mountain village of straw and stone huts comes into view in the valley ahead. If the party wishes to avoid it, they must travel by night. Due to the poor light and conditions in the mountains at night, make an animal handling check to avoid losing or laming a mount or pack animal. Parties without any members with the animal handling skill automatically suffer the loss of one beast and lose a second unless their least dexterous member makes a dexterity check.

If the PCs use a light source to guide their animals and themselves around the village they are discovered by a small patrol of six hill people who invite them to their homes in the village of Zayid, Though the PCs' refusal would be rude, the hill folk do not insist.

Among The Hill Tribes

For decades, the blond savages of the Furrowed Mountains have had a healthy dislike for their lowland cousins. Their hatred is fully justified—they are frequent targets of recruiting raids by the mamluks of Qudra, and many of their young men and women never reach adulthood in the villages of their birth. As a result, all outsiders are considered hostile until someone proves otherwise.

Mamluk characters who do not disguise their tattoos, proclaim their hatred of Qudra, or offer some explanation for their presence in the mountains will be the targets of abuse, hostility, and (if they respond violently) lynching. The mob consists of 10-60 barely-trained, unarmored warriors with spears (hmF/a/2).

Assuming the PCs enter Zayid peacefully, the PCs are toasted and treated well at the tribe leader's home. Strangers are rare here, and news is welcome. In exchange for food, drink, and dancing, the hillfolk want to hear travelers' tales. They rumors they know are few: they have heard that the genies of the Haunted Lands have been in such disarray that a few of them have settled in the mountains; they know that something has stolen goats from them over the past few months (this was Safsaf on an extended hunting trip); and they know that there are no longer travelers from Halwa in quite the numbers that there used to be.

As if this were not trouble enough, an agent of the Everlasting lives among the hill tribes—her name is Samia al-Giss. Samia watches over this route to the Haunted Lands to ensure that no spies, hostiles, or undesirables arrive on the Grandfather's doorstep without warning. She recognizes Fadiya and Omar when they first come into town, and she immediately releases a messenger pigeon to her superiors at the fortress. As she is too impatient to wait for a reply (the PCs may well be gone by the next morning!), she will attempt to kill the Al-Farids, hoping to curry favor with her superiors. As allies she has two sandmen, bound to her by the *amulet of dreams.* Samia is a member of the Dervish faction of the Everlasting; the amulet is a gift from Farouk Abd al-Bazan.

The *amulet of dreams* allows its owner to summon 1-3 sandmen once per week. These summoned creatures must each be fed either a 100 gp or greater value jewel or a temporary drain of 1-6 hp from the summoner (unwilling victims are entitled to a save versus paralyzation for no damage). If the owner gives no gems and resists the drain, the summoned sandmen attack for 1-10 rounds and then return to their native plane.

In addition to the *amulet,* Samia carries 100 gp and four 200 gp topazes at all times for use as bribes and as fodder for her amulet.

The goal of this encounter is not to kill the Al-Farids—simply to remind the PCs of the dangers they face and of the Al-Farid's precarious status with the Everlasting. Chances are good that the PCs are paranoid anyway; this encounter should ensure that they keep looking over their shoulders.

Samia's tactics are simple: wait until nightfall, then call upon the sandmen to put her opponents to sleep while she stays out of their range. When they have done their work and been dismissed, she silently enters the room where the Al-Farids are sleeping and attacks each once, hoping to slay them in a single silent blow. She does not attack the PCs. See the Sourcebook for the relevant rules, under "Methods." She leaves the bodies as they are, for discovery in the morning.

It is unlikely that Samia's attempt will be successful. If she is detected, she may be captured and questioned, but like other holy slayers of the Everlasting above 4th level, she is bound by the oath of silence and suffers the attentions of Halfana al-Yamini, the oathbinder genie, if forced to discuss the secrets of the fellowship. She can discuss the properties of the *sand of truth* (see the Sourcebook). She carries a single packet of the dust—the remains of a sandman she summoned to fight a desert giant.

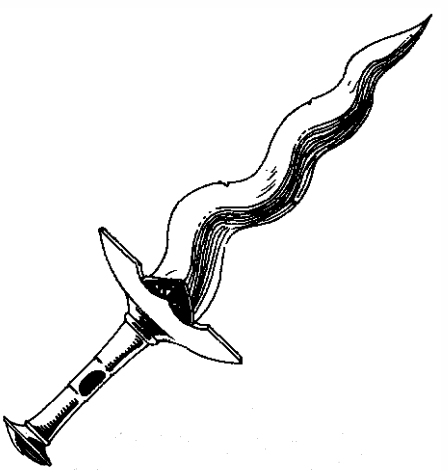
Samia al-Giss
6th level human female thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18 (17 with scimitar); #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 16; XP 975; scimitar, 3 throwing daggers, short bow.
Magical items: *amulet of dreams, dust of truth.*

Sandmen (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 20, 17, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA sleep; SD special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975.

Consequences

If Samia successfully kills either of the Al-Farids, the other sibling is even more determined to continue the mission. If she kills them both, the PCs are stuck without a guide and without information on how to get to Assassin Mountain. If they backtrack, they may be able to bribe Safsaf to tell them the way. If they stay in town, they may either seek out and question Samia to find out the location of the holy slayer's fortress, or they may question the tribesmen. The people of the hill tribes know the passes that the holy slayers use when they travel on foot. If they are convinced that no harm will come to them, they may be convinced to part with the information for *baksheesh* worth at least 100 gp (make an etiquette check to determine the proper amount). A tribesman will guide the party to within sight of the village of Ganam, then return to the mountains.

If the PCs use *speak with dead* to consult Omar or Fadiya, they will gladly answer PC questions, as they still hope someone will carry on their task.



Across The Haunted Lands

"When a roaring Zion is abroad, who will silence him?"

Zakharan proverb

The Haunted Lands are a harsh, rocky desert of a hundred shades of red and brown, with pillars of stone thrusting up through the sands here and there. It is deep enough inland that few come here, and close enough to the lands of the Yak-men and the World Pillars that few who come survive.

The Haunted Lands are the site of three encounters. The first is with the bandit raiders of a major unenlightened "tribe" of the Haunted Lands, the House of Mawli. Next, a romance may develop between Fadiya and one of the PCs. Finally, the party of adventurers comes upon a village of the lay followers of the fellowship of the Everlasting. Their way to the fortress itself is stalled by a powerful genie and other servants of the holy slayers.

The journey across the Haunted Lands is brutal and may be fatal. If the party lacks sufficient resources for the desert crossing, loses some supplies to monster encounters, gets lost, or has poor luck finding oases, they must attempt to eke enough to live from a very inhospitable terrain. The best method for conserving resources is to sleep during the day, keeping out of the sun by using small tents and riding by night.

Getting lost is easy: the chance is 2 in 10 each day of travel. There is a -3 penalty to desert survival checks in the Haunted Lands; if the PCs become lost and wander into even more hostile terrain, they suffer a -6 in the Great Anvil. Water requirements are doubled while on the Anvil. The heat and glare during the day in the Great Anvil cause sun-blindness after 6 hours, unless a saving throw versus death magic is successful. This blindness can only be cured by magical means or staying out of bright light for 2-12 days. Victims of sun-blindness suffer -4 to attack and damage rolls, gain no shield or dexterity adjustments to AC, and suffer an additional +2 penalty to AC.

Walking covers two to twelve miles per day, depending on encumbrance, whether a trail is being followed, and whether the terrain is rocky or sandy. Riding desert camels adapted to rocky terrain increases this to 21 miles per day in the open desert, 42 miles per day if following a trail. Camels adapted to sandy deserts only cover 11 and 21 miles, respectively (see *DMG,* page 123).

The House of Mawli

After two days' travel across the sands, the PCs meet a group of 30 men mounted on camels and carrying a heavy load of fine carpets, spices, and salt for trade in the city. Although they pretend to merely be taking their goods to the market, in fact these tribesmen are outcasts and thieves, desperate raiders of the House of Mawli who are taking goods stolen from a caravan to trade for food and supplies. They are also slavers, and will attempt to take their victims alive if they can. Seeing the small party, they introduce themselves as the men of the merchant Abdullah ben Hassan al-Sayf. Although this is a lie, it may allow them to get close enough to the group to make their demands known. If they ask for the party's goods and are refused, they will attack.

The goods they carry are worth over 15,000 gp, but they are bulky bolts of cloth and other weighty goods and require 24 camels to carry. Even if they are successfully taken back to civilization, they must be sold at the market, and with so many camels, a previous owner in the marketplace may recognize a distinctive marking on one of the animals that bandits stole from him. Unless one of the PCs has connections to a merchant house or fencing network, the party will not be able to sell the goods for more than half their value.

The raiders of the house of Mawli are led by Jaffer al-Mawli, the son of their clan leader, Rashid al-Mawli (hmF/dr/13). If his son is slain or captured, Rashid will gather his tribe and track the party to demand a

bloodprice of 20,000 dinar or a ransom of not more than 10,000 dinar. If his price is not met or if his son is not ransomed to him, he will unleash the entire cohort of 150 dervishes on the PCs' camp. Rashid prefers to fight from a distance. His men are trained horse archers, capable of taking an arrow from quiver to hand to string at a gallop and shooting straight even as they wheel away for another pass.

Jaffer al-Mawli
6th-level human male warrior (desert rider)
AL N: AC 8; MV 24 mounted, 12 on foot; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 13; XP 650; scimitar, short bow.
Magical items: 10 +2 *flight arrows.*

Dervishes (29)
1st-level human male warriors (desert riders)
AL N: AC 8; MV 24 mounted, 12 on foot; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each; scimitar, short bow, leather armor.

The leader of these tribesmen varies. At any one time, there are a dozen "Sheikhs of Mawli" within the desert, each the commander of his own little band of brigands. The individual currently making life unpleasant for caravan drivers in the south and east is known as Al-Barq ("The Lightning") for the speed of her raids. Al-Barq bin Mawli (hfF/dr/14) is a strong warrior whose true identity and base of operations are unknown. What is known is that she and her people can swoop down upon an encampment of travelers at dusk and have it picked clean by dawn.

The last official Sheikh of the Mawli disappeared three hundred years ago in an expedition to the World-Pillars to the far northeast, and his tribe soon disbanded among other peoples. The name was retained by a group of brigands, and as such has spread through the entire Haunted Lands in a loose brotherhood of thieves, robbers, and outcasts. To be of the House of Mawli is to be of no tribe at all.

The tribes of Mawli number no more than 200-500 people each, sufficient to raid the smaller tribes and outposts with minimal losses. They rely on speed and surprise, and will cross long distances to find a new raiding ground if there is major resistance (or if the Grand Caliph's Hunting Dogs, the House of Hanif, show up).

The tribes of Mawli use everything they raid from the caravans, and will readily engage in enslaving enlightened beings for resale in the Ruined Kingdoms, Hudid, and Halwa. Some tribes have contacts with the Brotherhood of the True Flame and with the distant Yak-Men, and sell their human cargo to these groups.

Each clan of the house of Mawli is independent and individual. Except for Al-Barq, none of the leaders and their abilities are particularly well known. If encountering a particular clan, the leader will likely be hmF/dr/11-16th level.

A Blanket Of Stars

After spending days confronting harsh trails and wilderness with the adventurers, Fadiya and Omar have taken the measure of the group and trust them. In fact, Fadiya is rather attracted to one of the PCs. Because she isn't the least bit shy, she asks one of the male PCs to join her in stargazing; the desert night lies under a blanket of stars. In fact, she hopes the PC is likewise attracted and that he will flatter her with attention. Poetry, singing, and dancing proficiencies are all appropriate here, although a priest might wish to debate the nature of the heavens or a sha'ir might wish to tell tales of the night based on genie lore. Astrology might be used to tell Fadiya her fortune.

If the player has played his role reasonably well, allow any reasonable use of a proficiency to succeed with the usual check. If the check succeeds and Fadiya is flattered, the girl tells the PC the tale of the Heart of the Lion, a relic of the Everlasting, provided at the beginning of this section (the party may already have heard this tale from Sirhan min Hajama in Liham). Fadiya mentions that the Heart is kept in a shrine

within the fortress, guarded by genies and brought forth only on holy days by Batina, the imam and leader of the priesthood among the Everlasting.

Fadiya knows that if the new imam of Liham were to possess it, he would have power over the holy slayers' brotherhood, because possession of the Heart of the Lion is said to confer sanctity and bravery on its owner.

If the PC is especially convincing, the DM may allow Fadiya to share a secret with the PC. She knows a secret tunnel into the fortress, and has recently learned the secret to passing through it safely. If the PC praises her cleverness or otherwise compliments her, she tells the PC that keeping one's shield hand (left hand) on the wall leads to death, while keeping the sword hand on the wall leads into the fortress.

A PC's romantic entanglements with Fadiya may have further repercussions when the party reaches the fortress. See "The Death of Omar" and "An Audience with the Shadow Caliph."

The Mirages of Ganam

As the party approaches the lands of the Everlasting, they encounter the small village of Ganam, not much larger than 100 people in about a dozen houses. The villagers gladly point the way to the mountain and the fortress of Sarahin, though they will also smile and refuse to answer any questions of "unbelievers," those who do not worship Hajama exclusively. After all, "The path to Paradise is open only to those who believe." They will not provide water, food, lodging, or equipment of any kind; no amount of money or bluster will sway them, and they are careful to keep several people watching the PCs at all times. Their embargo is strictly enforced by the village head priest, Salman bin Salman. Salman is also the villagers' only source of protection against the playful but cruel tricks of Ibrihim, Akim al-Kalaas' tasked deceiver genie.

Salman is a protective and skeptical man with no love for strangers. His mistrust is so strong that he will not even meet with the PCs unless he is bribed with

gifts (donations to the villagers in his care are especially effective) or flattered skillfully. In conversation he is gruff, curt, and blunt. He is quick to accuse the PCs of any wrongdoing and always knows the letter of the Law.

The villagers are glad to point out the mountain because they are aware of the magical protections that encircle it. Their directions to the Tower of the Martyrs are very clear; beyond that, they suggest that the PCs simply march up the dry riverbed to the mountain. The PCs' presence is immediately reported to the Grandfather via messenger pigeon or runner whenever they show up in the village. However, the Grandfather allows them to continue, because if they are clever and daring enough to gain entrance, they may well become useful in a plot of his own, as explained in "Death on the Mountain." Unless they threaten the villagers, the party is not harassed by the assassins so long as they remain here.

If the PCs leave the village and follow the directions they have been given, they will discover that near the mountain, the wastes are riddled with mirages created by Ibrihim. His illusions and deceptions lead every intruder away from the path to the mountain. His favorite tricks include casting *misdirection* on the party whenever they reach a fork in the path, using *distance distortion* to slow their progress when fleeing giants, hounds, or marrash, or even placing *permanent illusions* that a path is closed by a rockslide, crumbly and unstable, or simply nonexistent. Other favorite illusions include a gathering sandstorm on the horizon, circling vultures, and a cloud of dust like that raised by galloping horsemen. *Banish dazzle* and *dispel mirage* spells will remove these effects temporarily, and, if she thinks to look, the true eyesight of a hakima of at least 6th level can see through his trickery as well. Likewise, a sha'ir of at least 3rd level who searches for the effects of genie-work can see through Ibrihim's illusions.

Although he enjoys hindering the PCs to no end, the terms of Ibrihim's service do not allow him to hinder the villagers or anyone else who is a member or associate of the Everlasting. If the PCs begin to blame the citizens of Ganam for their confusion, they vehemently deny any involvement.

If pressured or questioned under the influence of magic, the villagers reveal that Salman and some of the men and women of the village occasionally go up to the mountain. Salman always carries a phylactery with him when he goes, to ward off the influence of evil genies that haunt these lands. The phylactery contains the writings of Hasan, the founder of the Everlasting, and the villagers believe that its virtue is proof against all forms of evil spirits. In fact, the phylactery is a religious relic that Ibrihim and the guards at the gates recognize and respect—it serves as a pass for villagers to enter the sanctified mountain lair. PCs disguised as Salman and villagers and bearing the phylactery will be able to go up to the mountain unhindered. Anyone trying to enter the gates without it will be harried by Ibrihim and attacked by the guardians of the gates.

Though he defends the surrounding terrain, Ibrihim is not allowed onto Assassin Mountain itself except on special occasions because he might begin to play tricks with the faction leaders there just for fun. Marwan and Akim would not find this amusing,

Salman bin Salman
3rd level human male priest (moralist)
AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175.
Salman's spells: *Command (x2), cause fear, cure light wounds, draw upon holy might*, enthrall, hold person.*

Ibrihim: Int High; AL NE; AC 4 (0); MV 12, Fl 18; HD 9; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-20; SA Spells; SD Displacement; SZ L; ML 6; XP 10,000.

The Fever

Once past the Ibrihim's tricks, the only easy path to the fortress is through a regions of washes, gullies, and narrow wadis. The fortress itself sprawls along a ridge accessible only from a narrow trail winding up from the wadi—the other sides are steep slopes of shifting shale. Climbing the shale can be done at a penalty as for rough, slightly slippery surfaces *(PH,* pg. 123).

The long, dusty climb up to the fortress is not only tiring but also dangerous. As soon as Ibrihim flees or is defeated, two of the three marrash which watch over the castle stop their circling and attack. Their first two shots are with *taklif* arrows, and one of them strikes Omar. By the time the combat is over, Omar is already suffering from chills and cold sweats and is unable to climb the sloping path up the ridges without help. He dies within a day unless the appropriate healing spells are available.

Fadiya and Omar both insist that Omar be taken back to the village so that he can pray for a cure from his god and so that the mission can continue. Brother and sister part tearfully—the fever or upcoming events at the fortress may prevent them from ever seeing each other again.

Any PC who is near Omar for more than an hour must make a saving throw versus petrification or catch the lesser form of the fever. While such a PC will not be transformed into marrash, he will suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls the first day of the illness, -6 the next, and will be unable to do more than lie in bed (or a bedroll) on the third day. The PC is also contagious; other PCs who are near the infected PC must make saving throws or catch the fever.

Omar will die at the village a day later. The villagers will bury him, for there is not enough wood available to build a funeral pyre.

Omar rises from the grave two days later as a marrashi and joins the others of his kind in the skies. His body will not be disturbed by the ghouls of the Pit as long as Akim is alive, as he wants as many marrash under his control as possible.

The lands near the keep are well guarded both day and night. One of three marrash (plus any that survived the attack on the caliph in Liham) always circles high overhead. They are sentries whose job is to keep any creature from entering the stronghold from the air, but from the ground, they seem to be just ordinary vultures or buzzards. PCs with the animal lore nonweapon proficiency may discover that they are not natural birds on a successful check.

By night, a pack of saluqi greyhounds roams the area. They generally see or smell all intruders, and will howl if they spot airborne visitors.

Once past these dangers, the party must climb the wadi for half a day before reaching the outer reaches of Sarahin, near the lower gate. The path is too steep and the footing is too treacherous to ride; horses must be walked. If any PC has the fever, the climb will take a full day.

Throughout the hot plodding travel up the narrow switchback trail, the mountain opposite the fortress of Jabal Sarahin is visible. Although it initially seems to be simply a jumbled heap of stone rising from the desolate terrain of the Haunted Lands, after the first few hours it seems to vaguely resemble a skull, with caverns and overhangs for eyes, nose and mouth. The effect is most startling at sunrise and sunset, when the caverns' shadows are longest.

Marrash (3): Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Fl 27; HD 7; hp 36, 32, 25; THAC0 13 (12 with missile weapons); #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6 or 1d6+2/1d6+2+disease or 1d8+2/1d8+2; SA missiles, disease; SZ M; ML 11; XP 2,000.

Saluqi greyhounds (9): Int Animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 2; hp 14, 13, 12, 10 (x2), 9, 8 (x3); THAC0 varies; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA overbearing; SZ M; ML 13; XP 120.

A Den of Wolves

In the Haunted Lands, the hottest winds grow cold.
Zakhuran proverb

Course of The Adventure

The player characters have two major goals on Assassin Mountain: to gain a reprieve for the caliph, and to stop the spread of the epidemic of the marrash. The first goal is obvious, but unless some of the PCs themselves become infected, or unless they have learned through magic that the epidemic has hit Liham, the second goal may not be apparent.

By the time the events of this section occur, Omar dies. Omar returns as a marrashi and tells the tale of the Lion's Heart, which might cure the plague. Upon the death of her brother, Fadiya is driven to seek revenge. She is likely to fail in exacting her revenge, (barring extensive help from the party).

If the PCs manage to steal the Heart of the Lion, they gain leverage to use against the holy slayers. Akim attempts to steal the gem from them, and the PCs may be captured. They are asked to recover the gem and thus win their freedom. If they succeed, they are asked to pass tests to win the respect of the Grandfather and a reprieve for the caliph.

Getting In

Once past Ibrihim's barriers of illusion, the PCs must get into the fortress of Sarahin. There are three ways to do this. The party may opt for the direct approach using Salman's phylactery. More likely, however, they will try to sneak over the walls or through the tunnel that Fadiya knows.

All three methods could work. The phylactery works as a pass, but only if the PCs have some good reason for coming to see the Grandfather—the death of Salman, for instance.

If they sneak in, they must first pass the desert giants of the lower gate and then must fool the jann at the Gate of the Bulls. However, chances are they may have to kill at least a few guards before getting in, thus alerting the fortress.

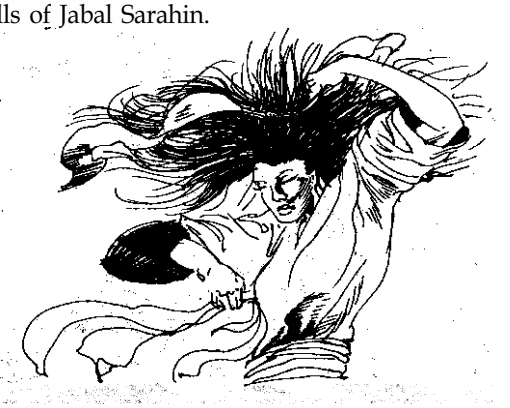
Coming in through the tunnel is dangerous, but may give the PCs the most latitude because none of the assassins will know of their arrival.

Knocking at The Gates

If the party bears the phylactery of Hasan and asks to be let in, they are received with courtesy and asked to stay for an evening's entertainment. Walk the party through the lower and upper gates with descriptions, then across the courtyards and on to the Halls of the Faithful, where they will be quartered. As in "Death on the Mountain," Bismallah is chosen from the fellowship to be the guests' guide and servant (and to spy on their every move, of course). He is not allowed to leave their company. See "Getting Around the Mountain" in the Sourcebook.

Climbing The Walls

The PCs are unlikely to come knocking at the gate and are likely to attempt to scale the walls of Sarahin. This is not recommended, as the marrash quickly spot climbers and fire on them freely while squawking warnings to the soldiers within. By night, the wind walkers and the saluqi greyhounds can sniff out most intruders in the same way. Dwarves of the Courageous and members of the Eagles will cluster at the site of any attempted break-in. Wise parties will withdraw. Foolish ones will die screaming, outnumbered on the walls of Jabal Sarahin.



The Tunnel

Fadiya and Omar claim to know a secret route into the holy slayers' fortress, a dry and sandy tunnel that leads from the dry riverbed below the ridge straight to the heart of the compound via the Pit of a Thousand Voices. This is the best way to get the PCs in undetected, but it is risky because the tunnels are inhabited by a gibbering mouther and a pack of ghouls that serves a living idol (for detailed statistics of these creatures, see "The Pit of a Thousand Voices" in the Sourcebook).

The tunnel begins under a sandstone arch, where the soft rock was worn away by the river's rush long ago. The dry sand and natural cave floor soon gives way to a set of artificial passages dug through the soft stone. Many of these passages circle around to dead ends or steep shafts going down into the cooler reaches of the dark earth, but the passages between the wadi and the fortress are clear (though Fadiya and Omar don't know exactly which passages lead to the top).

From the lower entrance, Bakbuk—the gibbering mouther within the tunnels—sounds like distant voices muttering. As the party moves farther in, its sounds change to a gabbling crowd, then an angry mob, and finally a howling, baying pack.

The gibbering mouther knows that food comes to and from the Pit of a Thousand Voices, so it always blocks those passages. Unless the party lures it out with food or a diversion of some kind, they must pass it to get into the fortress. The ghouls tend to stay in the cavern of the idol until nightfall. If the PCs hesitate too long near the mouther, however, the ghouls catch their scent them and hunt the PCs as prey for themselves. Unlike the gibbering mouther, their pursuit is completely silent.

Death Before Dishonor

When Omar dies as a result of the *taklif* arrow, Fadiya loses her grip on her rage. She curses the assassins and vows to seek vengeance, and at first she insists that the PCs come with her. If they refuse, she storms off alone. Her plan is to go to the Caliph of Shadows and pretend to beg for forgiveness, asking to be accepted back into the fellowship. When she is close enough, she will strike.

If the player characters go along with this, they are in big trouble. Stress Fadiya's wild, rolling eyes, keening wail, constant talk—her grief has made her desperate and dangerous. If any of the PCs do go with her, the other players should be directed toward "An Audience with the Shadow Caliph."

If the PCs prevent her from going, she calms down after a day and acts normally until the party gets into the fortress. During her watch on guard, she seeks out the Grandfather for an audience without the PCs, and she betrays their location to him as a sign of her "sincere" repentance. Mamoud ibn Asra Abd al-Jari, two sergeants, and twenty footsoldiers of the Courageous arrive there thirty minutes after Fadiya leaves.

If Fadiya and one of the PCs are still starry-eyed for each other, all of her reactions change. Fadiya absolutely refuses to allow anyone who won her heart in the desert to go with her (see "A Blanket of Stars")—she feels that she is unworthy of such help, and she does not want to put her PC beloved at risk. If necessary, she will sneak off without him when she thinks no one is watching, to meet her fate alone.

An Audience with The Shadow Caliph

The Grandfather of the Everlasting does not grant audiences to strangers—after all, there are fanatical killers roaming the world who would like nothing better than to see him dead. Therefore, he gives this disagreeable task to the man he is considering to succeed him as Grandfather, Yusuf bin Ayyub, as a test of his worthiness.

Regardless of whether the PCs sneaked in (and were captured) or are being treated as guests as a result of Fadiya's ploy of seeking forgiveness, the tension and apprehension surrounding the situation should be about the same. Fadiya and the accompanying PCs are led into the entrance of the Hall of the Faithful, where Yusuf sits on a simple stool. The hangings on the wall behind him are rich silken tapestries.

Yusuf is not pleased to be talking to another group of wayward pilgrims, supplicants, or infiltrators, but he is devoted to his work and carries on despite the fact that he doesn't think much of the PCs. Hospitality is a virtue, and he practices it.

Marwan's right-hand man is a zealous and dangerous fellow with an eye for the ladies. His faith always comes first, and he treats his followers well.

Bodyguards stand to either side of Yusuf—to his right stands the short-haired Jamila; to the left stand Jezeed and Aziz with their long golden hair pulled back.

The bodyguards are three werelions, hired but also converted. Their leader is Jamila, an exotic, short-haired blonde with dark, nut-brown skin and the skills of a 7th-level thief. All three are armed with scimitars

and jambiyas. Jamila keeps the group's pay and valuables on her person at all times: a copper bracelet worth 15 dinar, 300 dinar, two 50 gp agates, and a *shield of quality +1*.

Betrayal

Fadiya has been waiting for this moment for a long time. When she arrives seeking forgiveness, she is surprised to see Yusuf rather than Marwan (whom she remembers as the leader of 12 years ago), but she accepts the fact that the leadership has changed. Unless the PCs have managed to question a holy slayer and learn the name of the current Grandfather, they will probably accept Yusuf's word that he is the new leader of the fellowship. Though the leaders may be different, the stain on her honor remains.

While the PCs dine or parley with their host, Fadiya slips into the shadows and takes up a position behind Yusuf, awaiting the chance to redeem her shattered honor and to kill Yusuf. When the conversation takes a tense or amusing turn, Fadiya strikes from the darkness, shouting out the scriptures of Najm and reviling the brotherhood of Hajama.

If the PCs join her in a full-scale attack, she promises them her eternal trust and blessing. Any PC who has become romantically involved with her may well spring to her aid. If she succeeds in killing Yusuf (who she believes is the new Grandfather), Fadiya quickly reveals that she wants more than just redemption for her family name, though—she wants to become the new Grandmother of the Everlasting.

If Fadiya succeeds with the help of the PCs, she is extremely grateful and immediately attempts to consolidate her power, starting with an oath from the PCs that they never reveal the location of her fortress. She wants to talk the fellowship into accepting her as successor by right of assassination; oddly, it doesn't work. . . .

If Fadiya succeeds without the PCs (or with only a little help), she berates them for not helping her or not aiding her quickly enough. Regardless, three rounds after her successful assassination, the real Caliph of the Shadows, Marwan al-Jaba1 al-Hiyali, shows up with his vizier, the dwarven priestess Batina. Two dozen of the citadel's guards also arrive.

If Fadiya's attack fails, her PC accomplices will have made their situation with the Grandfather very precarious, and they will have made a life-long enemy in Yusuf. While the DM should strive to be sure that Fadiya's blade is the one that delivers the final blow to Yusuf ("He's mine! I claim my revenge, son of a camel-driver!"), the PCs involved are all accomplices. As before, Marwan, Batina, and the contingent of the citadel guards, the Courageous, arrive when it's all over.

Consequences

Fadiya is sentenced to death at dawn. She will be thrown from the Tower of the Dawn to her death on the rocks below while the crowds gathered along the wall of the mosque courtyard watch. The PCs are likewise arrested and kept in the Tower of the Dawn, but their fate depends on how heavily involved they were and what story they tell the holy slayers. They will be confined to their rooms with Bismallah and Mamoud watching over the door.

If the PCs side against Fadiya, the task of the PCs will be easier because the Grandfather owes them a debt of honor. Helping Fadiya fight an entire fortress full of assassins is not a wise move. If the party attempts it, allow them to fight as long as they wish. Since each of the other faction leaders (see the Sourcebook) hopes to take over and as Akim has very little loyalty to the fellowship in any case, none of them come to Yusuf's aid.

The party will probably be captured unless they beat a hasty retreat—the PCs are soon outmatched as groups of slayers, farisan, and priests continue to arrive. If the Everlasting feel they have the upper hand, they will begin calling for the player characters to surrender. Honorable surrenders will be accepted, though the survivors will be questioned using Essafah's *fire truth*

spells. Unless the PCs give foolish answers, Fadiya's role as the ringleader will quickly come out.

If the PCs did not protect Yusuf when Fadiya attempts to run him through, they have made permanent enemies of the werelions. From this time forward one of them will always be stalking the party in the gardens and courtyards. If they catch a PC alone, they will leap from walls or towers to the attack, hoping to take the PC by surprise. Use them to keep the party on its toes throughout the rest of the adventure.

Yusuf and the holy slayers see this audience with the PCs as no more than an opportunity for them to figure out what the PCs want, how powerful they are, and what can be done to get rid of them without upsetting any of the mamluks in Qudra or any powerful genie or sha'ir. If the PCs put their feet in their mouths, they are likely to be tossed into the Pit of a Thousand Voices.

If Yusuf dies in the assault in the Hall of Audience, the new and confused leader of the Loyalists is Sayida ibn Afa, Marwan's niece. As a bard, Sayida always entertained Marwan and Yusuf during their plottings and protected them from eavesdropping with her *qanun of quiet.* She knows all the secrets of the Loyalists, though she will have to work hard to retain control if the leadership falls to her.

Jamila, Jezeed, and Aziz (werelions): Int Average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 15, Jp 6; HD 6+6; hp 48, 34, 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg by weapon type or 1-6/1-6/2-1 2; SA leap, rear claws; SD silver or magical weapon to hit, -2 on surprise rolls; SZ M or L (6' long); ML 14; XP 2,000.
PP 20; OL 30; F/RT 5; MS 90; HS 80; DN 75; CW 90; RL 0; Backstab x3.

Captured!

At some point in this adventure some or all of the PCs may be captured by the hordes of holy slayers and soldiers. Their captors will politely but firmly disarm them and take whatever magical items they possess (one of the priests will be summoned to determine this). Then they are taken to the Rock of Fasting until Grandfather Marwan chooses to grant them an audience. For the audience, they are taken to the Cavern of the Everlasting, under the watchful eye of thirty Loyalist holy slayers and Essafah, the sorcerer.

Grandfather Marwan is a grim and ruthless man, though he is also learned and unfailingly polite. He questions the PCs to learn their intentions and abilities, and he makes it clear that they will live only so long as they are useful. If Omar has already died and the plague is spreading throughout the ranks of the slayers, this is a good time for Marwan to give the PCs a dirty little job. See "Gaining the Heart," below. If the PCs are reluctant, or if the plague is not yet prevalent among the holy slayers (see the "Events" timeline), Marwan tells them that the plague is ravaging Liham (true, if slightly exaggerated—the epidemic is worsening).

Omar's Return

Whether the PCs are captured with Fadiya or are still roaming free, Omar returns three nights after the assault of Yusuf to warn the party about the power of the sha'ir Akim al-Kalaas. Omar now appears as a marrashi, but he can still croak and squawk well enough to be understood. He feels his human side fading, so he is desperate to communicate. He scouts out the PCs location by day and tries to contact them at night, landing outside their window and croaking quietly until he is noticed. If the noise brings no response, he fires an arrow wrapped with a strip of his burial shroud into the room.

Omar knows very well that the marrash are entirely Akim's servants, and he knows that Akim hopes to see all the assassins dead so that he may leave without

breaking his word. Omar also tells them that the Lion's Heart can cure the plague, though it is too late for him, and that Akim is very worried about the stone.

If Omar's body was abandoned to the ghouls, he returns as a hama.

In the morning, the tests begin (see "Gaining the Heart" and "The Tests," below).

Batina's Treachery

After the slayers are initially exposed to Omar or an infected party member, the plague spreads rapidly in the close quarters of the desert stronghold. By the end of the day, it is dangerously close to an epidemic.

Batina al-Shaat, the moralist Preacher leader, sees this as a grand opportunity. She does not refuse to heal the sick, but she uses her healing powers only on those who swear their loyalty to the church moral, which she represents. It is a subtle distinction, but the slayers who swear loyalty feel they must obey her—they are obliged and indebted to her for their very lives. Their loyalty to the Grandfather or other factional leaders declines, and Batina seems poised for a takeover of the Everlasting in everything but name.

The situation is intolerable, and Batina's arrogance seems to know no bounds. And yet no one dares to kill her, for her skills are needed to stem the course of the disease. The Grandfather plays his only hand. Proceed with "Gaining the Heart."

Gaining The Heart

If the PCs are still roaming free, they are visited by the Grandfather alone. If they are captured, refer to the audience scene above in "Captured!" The Old Man of the Mountain needs to get his hands on the Heart of the Lion, the gem resting in the shrine of Hajama; because the holy gem can cure the sick. He can't steal it, because that would be sacrilege. But he can ask some infidels to steal it for him.

The Grandfather of Assassins is not a subtle man. He will speak to the PCs from the shadows, never letting them see his face, and telling them outrageous lies about what powers he commands and the men at his disposal. If the PCs fail to do what he wants, he will make them very, very sorry. He begins reciting the names of their acquaintances, their relatives, and their associates. The Old Man of the Mountain has grown impatient with his advancing years; he wants the gem immediately. The PCs are to make their preparations and get to work at once, before their enemies can strike.

The adventurers must now somehow get into the Lion's Shrine to get the gem residing there, so that Marwan may eliminate the strongest element of Batina's chokehold. He suspects Akim's hand in all this, but hesitates to move against such a powerful and valuable ally.

The PCs are told that the guards are loyal to Batina and cannot simply be replaced by Loyalists without arousing suspicion. Marwan asks them to get in and out with minimal bloodshed (these are all his followers, after all), but getting the gem is more important than his followers' lives. The PCs may kill if absolutely necessary, though he warns them that wholesale slaughter will require some retaliation on his part.

Once the gem is in Marwan's hands, its magical powers (see the Sourcebook, "The Lion's Shrine") allow him to cure seven people per day of the disease, which is enough to keep the plague from spreading and eventually enough to bring it under control.

If the PCs succeed, Marwan decides that they can be trusted, but they must still prove themselves to the rest of the Fellowship by passing the tests of the fellowship. Continue with "The Tests."

If the PCs fail to steal the gem, Marwan denies all knowledge of them and casts them into the Pit of a Thousand Voices. Ajami characters may, at the DM's option, be sold into slavery instead. They are marched south through the brutal conditions of the edge of the Great Anvil and brought to market in Halwa's underground slave trade.

Akim's Offer

As soon as the PCs have the gem, Akim arrives in a swirl of wind and dust with Nikolai, Ali Abdal Akim, five holy slayers, and two wind walkers summoned by the *lamp of the four winds* (who carry this entourage). He is aware of what transpires near the gem through his dao servant. He offers the party money (up to 20,000 gp), magic (his carpet and wand), and aid (directly against anyone other than Marwan and the Everlasting, who he is bound to serve) in exchange for the gem. If the PCs accept his offer (or fail to get the Lion's Heart), they may still satisfy Marwan's request with the fragments of the Heart that are in the shrine (described in the Sourcebook). The fragments mean nothing to Akim.

Akim sees the theft of the gem as a power play by Marwan, an attempt to enslave him utterly through his *lifeproofing* spell, barring all his hopes of escape. At the same time, it foils his plans of using the plague to bring about his release from his sworn oath. He will stop at nothing to keep it from falling into Marwan's hands—he will even overcome his hatred of Batina long enough to warn her if the PCs do not accept his offer or agree to his demands.

If his offer fails, Akim resorts to force. He uses his servants to provide a screen while he casts his *time stop* spell. He uses the time he gains to take the gem and retreat. He has no desire to be caught anywhere near the PCs when the spell expires. Thereafter he uses his *soundstaff* and *carpet of fighting* to cover him while his gen searches for a *lightning bolt,* and he retreats with his servants to his tower.

If Akim is reduced to 0 hp, he does not die. His *lifeproofing* keeps him going, and he retreats to send Ali for curative spells to restore his full hp. Then he goes after the PCs and the gem, this time to cast revoke *lifeproof.*

Holy slayers (5)
4th-level male human rogues
AL LE; AC 4 (dexterity); MV 12; hp 20, 19, 18, 17, 10; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +2; SZ M; ML 15; XP 975; scimitars, short bows, 10 flight arrows, leather armor, shields.

Wind walkers (3): Int Very; AL N; AC 7; MV 15, Fl 30; HD 6+3; hp 29, 24, 23; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6; SA attack in series; SD spell immunitites; SZ L; ML 14; XP 2,000.

The Tests

If the PCs survive the theft and the encounter with Akim, they must then deliver the goods to Marwan. To gain the acceptance of the fellowship and thus be given freedom to leave, they must make a deal with the chivalrous Marwan by impressing him with their bravery and fortitude (he scoffs at their theft as hardly indicative of courage). Each PC does this by passing one of the tests of the faithful: the Lion's Mouth, the Bridge of Birds, the Serpent's Kiss, the Unbearable Light, and Dancing Over the Moon.

The tests should be enough to make the PCs work. No party member should undertake more than one test. Holy slayers of Hajama are exempt; their loyalty has already been proven.

If a PC holy slayer has not told his companions of his true loyalty, the holy slayer PC is expected to repeat one of the tests he undertook when he was a novice, so as not to arouse the suspicions of the other PCs.

All party members may rest and prepare for their ordeals, though they will be closely watched both by guards and by magical wards of the genies while they remain in the assassins' fortress. If they succeed in the tests, Marwan will acknowledge that they are honorable adversaries and will allow them to live and to depart Award individual PCs 500 XP for each test successfully completed.

Before they are allowed to leave, however, they must swear an oath backed by the might of the

oathbinder genie never to reveal the location of the brotherhood's fortress (see the Oathbinding Ceremony in the Sourcebook). If they refuse to swear this oath, the Grandfather will remind the PCs that they have friends and relations in the outside world, and if the location of the fortress were ever to be revealed, these friends and relatives might find it very unhealthy.

If they fail in any test, the PCs are made forced "guests" of the Everlasting, kept locked, guarded, and warded in their rooms and watched by Akim's deceiver genie. They are exposed to the daily teachings and instruction of Sayida, and converts will be treated somewhat less harshly, though the strength of their conversion will remain in doubt for some time. This forced stay on the mountain is a good time to spring "Death on the Mountain" on the party.

The Lion's Mouth

The test of the Lion's Mouth requires a PC to cross a pit containing a sleeping lioness. Weapons and armor are not allowed, though if the PC tries to conceal a weapon, no one will search him. Yusuf (or his successor) tells the chosen person to climb down a ladder, which will then be withdrawn and placed on the opposite side of the pit, past the lioness. The test does not go as the PCs expect.

As soon as the ladder is withdrawn, Yusuf throws a small stone at the hungry lioness and wakes her. Roll normally for surprise; the lioness may not wake up quickly or may merely have been dozing lightly. The poor PC in the pit must either escape or defeat the lioness in combat. Climbing checks are made with a -5% modifier for each point of damage that a PC sustains in the round he tries to climb out.

Killing the lioness is considered a bad omen (Hajama watches these initiations and events, and slaying a lion on his sacred ground brings the *evil eye* upon the killer). No slayer will speak with anyone so cursed. Wrestling or pummeling the lioness into submission is a sign of Hajama's favor (+1 to charisma and saving throws for one week).

On a successful Dexterity check, a PC who wishes to may spring forward, onto the lioness, and use her as a stepping stone to get up the opposite wall. Let PCs think of this themselves. Anyone using the lioness as a springboard to jump up to the edge of the pit wins huge applause from the rafiqs.

A spellcasting PC is not prohibited from *flying* or *levitating* out of the pit. Magical items (other than weapons or armor) may likewise be used to advantage.

Lioness: Int Semi; AL N; AC 5/6; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10; SA Rear claws 2-7 each; SD +2 surprise; SZ L; ML 9; XP 420.

The Bridge of Birds

There is a proverb among the Everlasting: "Modesty is a bridge of birds, lifting us to paradise." In the Land of Fate, humility is not only wise, but crucial to avoiding the evil eye. This test is meant for PCs such as paladins, farisan, mendicant priests, or holy warriors—characters who may be expected to display humility. It is not recommended for players who do not enjoy a role-playing challenge, as there is no option for combat.

In this test, the PC must resist temptation and exhibit modesty, thus avoiding both the evil eye and more immediate dangers. The test is not announced. On some public occasion, perhaps during one of the other tests, the sha'ir Akim al-Kalaas praises the PCs as powerful, wise, or otherwise outstanding, more like the genies than mortals. He piles on the compliments, then offers the PC the wishes of a genie he summons up in a quick but flashy ceremony.

Allow the PCs the freedom to direct the role-play of this encounter. If some help is required, use the following game mechanic. Direct the test at a character of high station (10+). If the PC makes a successful etiquette check, he knows that such a gift cannot be taken unearned or without giving a greater gift in return.

If the PC accepts Akim's offer, he has failed to display due modesty and has attracted the evil eye—the wishes of the genies are all show and no substance, and nothing permanent comes of them, though there may be some temporary effect if the DM is feeling generous. If the PC offers some other gift in exchange, it must be one of greater value: a major magical item, for instance, or an outstanding piece of jewelry. If he modestly declines and denigrates his own abilities, he is considered humble, modest, and wise, and he passes the test.

The Unbearable Light

The Unbearable Light demands a feat of firewalking, walking over white-hot coals with bare feet while carrying a second person on one's back. The bed of coals is 15' long, and the test is always done at night, when the firelight is more impressive.

Firewalking causes a total of 1d6 hp damage to the firewalker. A successful Constitution check is required to keep from passing out from the pain. Passing out results in the walker taking 3d6 hp damage per round from the coals; the person carried suffers 1d6 from being flung onto the coals temporarily. Magical protections are not allowed; *dispel magic* is cast on the participants before the test begins.

Unless the PC being tested is a gnome, dwarf, or halfling, the person to be carried is the largest of the PCs. Short characters are allowed to carry one of the dwarven farisan instead. A successful strength check is required to keep the passenger the whole distance. Failure indicates the dropped victim takes 1d6 hp damage, and the test is failed. Being a passenger does not count as a PC's test.

To pass successfully, the initiate must carry his passenger the whole distance and not pass out from the pain. Wounds suffered from firewalking may cause blistering or scarring at the DM's option, taking a PC off his feet for several days.

Dancing over The Moon

In this test, the PC must bribe the wind. This can be done by convincing a wind walker to carry him through the air from the Tower of the Martyrs to the fortress of Sarahin. Sha'irs of at least 9th level may do this as if calling a genie for aid, with a bonus of 20% because wind walkers are servants of the djinn. Other characters must use their wits and skills, including bribery and flattery.

If the character chooses to try to bluff, bribe, threaten, or cajole service from the wind walker, role-play this encounter as necessary. Successful negotiation allows the character to attempt a Charisma check with whatever modifier the DM feels is appropriate; since this is a test of bravery, the best modifier should be reserved for superlative bluffing or threats, especially those made when the character is in dire need of negotiation (suspended in mid-air over a void, perhaps). Give a -2 to the die roll if the PC has the Debate, Etiquette, or Haggling skills. Exceptional role-playing should gain the PC as much as a -3 penalty to the wind walker's saving throw. Angering the wind walker simply agitates it to the point that it will attempt to toss the offender off the top of the tower.

If the Charisma ability check is successful, the wind walker agrees to carry the PC wherever he wishes within the lands of the Everlasting. This allows a single party member to leave, but the consequences for his companions might be grim. The holy slayers view this as a betrayal of trust. The test is considered failed, and they send a messenger to the departed PC, telling him that his companions will be executed one by one each day until he returns.

A PC wins the test by convincing the wind walker to carry him anywhere, then traveling no farther than the boundaries of the fortress.

The Serpent's Kiss

This test requires a PC to succeed in snake handling —with a giant cobra. The ritual of the serpent's kiss requires the devotee to handle a cobra with a crooked

stick and his bare hands, with the goal of charming the cobra so that it can be given a quick and careful kiss without injury. Normally, this requires a successful Dexterity check. Priests and wizards are allowed to use magic to charm the snake, and any PC with animal handling proficiency may use that ability check instead. Alternatively, a PC with animal handling gains a +4 to the Dexterity roll. Failure means the PC is bitten; a saving throw versus poison at -2 is required to avoid death in 2-8 rounds

Giant cobra: AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison, charm; SZ M; ML 15; XP 270.

Epilogue

Any PCs who pass the tests are brought into the fellowship (whether they want to be or not; if they ever hope to leave the mountain, they must enter the fellowship). They must swear under the sight of an oathbinder genie that they will never reveal the location of the fortress of the Everlasting to anyone by word or deed. At this point, the assassins let them leave to pursue their own goals, and the adventurers should have the knowledge (and perhaps the fragments of the Lion's Heart) that they need to stop the plague from overrunning Liham. The party should share a story goal award of 10,000 XP.

If the PCs pass the tests, they have won the respect and admiration of Grandfather Marwan, and he will not order the death of the caliph of Liham or his imam. However, the subject is embarrassing for him; it is rare for the Grandfather to change his mind. If the PCs ask about the status of the caliph, all they should get are cold stares. Only a divination spell or a private talk with the Grandfather will reveal that the caliph is safe. Grant the party an additional story award of 15,000 XP.

If the PCs failed the tests, the caliph of Liham refuses to revoke his appointment of the imam, and Harin al-Hayif dies at the hands of the Everlasting during a celebratory feast when receiving a new envoy from Qadib. Since the PCs failed to protect him, they are best off leaving Assassin Mountain as quickly as possible and not returning to Liham.

If the PCs stay long enough, they may become involved in other plots. If the PCs send one of their number back to Liham to stop the plague from spreading, when he returns the Grandfather invites them all to dinner one night. "The Heart of a Lion" can flow smoothly into the next adventure, "Death on the Mountain," with a few minor changes. In this case, make the PCs the honored guests of the assassins after they stop the plague and pass the tests. To keep them on the mountain, Grandfather Marwan simply refuses to grant their request that he stop his attacks on the caliph and his imam. They may or may not gain a reprieve for him in "Death on the Mountain."

Chapter IV:

Death on the Mountain

A proud man will claim he was bearded by an efreeti, rather than admit he was cheated by a merchant.

Zakharan proverb

Not so very long ago, when the Word of the Loregiver had been spread among the tribes and nations of the civilized world, some chose to obey the outward forms of piety and yet their hearts rotted within them. The worst of these false children of Zakhara was named Ayesha al-Aziz, a beauty with eyes that held a dark spark, like the light in an eagle's eye when it surveys its prey. So great was her talent at deception that soon she ruled from just behind the Palace of the Enlightened Throne in the City of Delights, and she plotted to replace the Grand Caliph.

But one man, an old mystic who came down from the Ghost Mountains to advise the Grand Caliph, saw through her outward seeming and shuddered at her black and baleful soul. Try as he might, none would believe ill of her, and all his counsel against her came to naught.

So the old man sought the *sand of truth* and found it in a place where all might see it but few looked. He took the sand back to *Golden Huzuz,* and there he went to the *diwan.* Before all the assembled people, he sprinkled the dust upon foul Ayesha, and her fair form vanished, and the Grand Caliph returned to his senses and banished her. She was never heard from again.

The mystic was a hero, but he let the city people toast him in his absence, for he returned to the mountains. When he died, the birds lamented and tore feathers from their breasts in grief.

It is written that the *sand of truth* is found in dreamers' eyes, for are not dreams visions of the truth? Others have said that truth is found in the dust of time, for all things meet death, the destroyer of delights, only dust remains, and this dust is truth as well. And yet others say that the sand is none of these things.

For years, Grandmaster Marwan has put off naming a successor—doing so would indicate his willingness to retire from leadership permanently and irrevocably, and essentially sign his death warrant. But for the past few years, he has known that a traitor among his followers is setting his lieutenants and zealots against one another. With the PCs present, he hopes to unmask the agitator and rid himself of the feuding factions he rules.

Exploring The Mountain

To successfully run the open-ended exploration of the places and the inhabitants of Jabal Sarahin, be prepared to give the players hints and a wide range of options, somewhat like a city adventure. A large amount of role-playing of guards, devotees, and aloof jann may be required. Use Bismalla (see below) to prod the PCs when they are stuck or when an important event is coming up, but otherwise let them find their way around. Let the players learn what they want to know, but make them earn it—they'll appreciate scraps of useful (or at least apparently useful) information more than they'll appreciate a tidal wave of trivia.

Don't tell the players which areas are off-limits—let them find out from the giant cobras or the platoon of guards that watches over the entrance. Let them invent their own stratagems for gaining admittance to these forbidden rooms and areas. The less they know about them, the more they will want to get in! Just because guards know what they are protecting doesn't mean they will tell a group of strangers. Even guests are entitled to only so much hospitality.

Describe areas gradually as the PCs enter them, and let them pursue blind alleys as long as they wish. If play bogs down in a wild goose chase, throw in one of the programmed encounters to speed things along. Don't worry too much about a single attack seeming too random or the PCs becoming confused. There are wheels within wheels and plots within plots here, and the players will probably figure that out soon enough. If there is no explanation why the guards showed up at a particular time (when they had to keep the PCs from going somewhere you didn't want them to go yet), the players may well point the finger of blame at one of the NPCs. If it seems appropriate, let them be right about their adversary.

Keep track of the enemies that the party makes, then set up ambushes or nonviolent confrontations when the PCs enter those NPCs' home territories. These enemies don't want to be seen breaking the bonds of hospitality, so they will strike when and where they think no one will see them: at night, in abandoned sections of the fortress, or in their or the PCs' chambers. They will strike fast and retreat before citadel guards arrive. If a melee continues until guards show up (and Bismalla will warn characters to flee), everyone present will be taken to the Rock.

Allow the PCs to steal and snoop, but make them pay the price if they are not cautious. Give foolish players a hint by allowing Bismalla to ask embarrassing questions: "Masters, why does this stone so much resemble the most holy relic of the Shrine of the Lion?" Rogues who can't exercise discretion may well be arrested (consult the "Law and Justice" section of the *Land of Fate* boxed set for details on crime and punishment). They will be left on the Rock of Fasting until the Grandfather decides that they may stand before him and be judged.

Fighting an enemy in an ambush is self-defense, but on Jabal Sarahin, the Grandfather's rulings favor his devotees unless there is strong evidence against his own people. The statements of other PCs carries little weight; the statement of Bismalla carries a little more.

That said, avoid trials if at all possible. Allow friendly factions a chance to help the PCs escape confinement, allow the PCs to cook up plans of their own, and let the trial be forgotten in the larger flow of events.

If the PCs want to split up, let them. However, after the first ambush on a lone party member, the players

may rethink this strategy.

Most of all, let the PCs explore and piece things together for themselves. Don't let them be captured or accused too early, as half the fun is letting them get themselves into trouble. The other half is seeing them get back out.

Divination Magic

Clever players will want their PCs to use divination magics to tell them what's on the mountain. Let them try to their heart's content. As a result of the ancient genie-wards put in place when the fortress was built, no scrying or divination from outside the fortress is successful against those within.

Within the walls, scrying operates only fitfully. Since the stronghold is sacred to Hajama, priestly magic of other faiths functions correctly only 70% of the time. Sha'irs may try to use spells like legend lore; only the Grandfather, the Lion's Heart gem, and the fortress itself are of the legendary stature that brings any results from this spell. Also, bear in mind that the information this spell provides is cryptic and fragmentary at best. The Al-Farids know the full name of the fortress, and Bismalla will gladly and proudly name the grandfather and his titles.

Farouk's amulet shields him completely from all scrying and divination magic, as well as from the prying eyes of hakimas and sha'irs looking for geniework (reason enough, probably, for the PCs to suspect him of something).

Note that Akim has powerful enemies and has used *wishes* to protect himself from snoopers. This magic may carry over to some of the other faction leaders who were in his favor at some time or another; Marwan in particular has been an ally of Akim's during several Preacher faction attempts to try the sha'ir for foul practices. Akim and Marwan are both invulnerable to scrying, though divination spells may reveal some information about them (such as whether they are alive or dead, or whether their intentions at a given time are good or ill).

While clever use of divination magics may help the PCs figure out who's who and may even help them choose the correct course of action, in the long run, it does not constitute proof. In "Death on the Mountain," these spells tell them who to watch, but the final proof must come from some other source.

Beginning The Adventure

After the party has won the trust of Marwan (or his successor) in "The Heart of a Lion," the PCs may be invited to stay a few days at the mountain. They are given rooms in the Halls of the Faithful and are invited to attend a feast in their honor. If they have failed a test and are being held here, Marwan still feels a duty as their host to attempt to show them the error of their craven ways; they are invited to the feast but are brought there with an escort of the entire honor guard of the Courageous.

Alternatively, if the party has played through "The Heart of a Lion" portion and then left Jabal Sarahin, they could be summoned some time later by a messenger sent by the Grandfather, mounted on a roc or carried in the palm of a genie. The messenger will not discuss the reason for this request and attempts to convey that refusing the invitation could be fatal, but if the party decides not to return to Sarahin, no harm comes to them.

What Marwan really wants to do is to force the hand of a traitor in his ranks. The traitor has escaped Marwan's best-laid traps, has been poisoning his food, and presumably wants to seize control. The Grandfather has hunted this mole for years; since all his own servants are suspects, he sees the PCs as an opportunity. They will make good tools for forcing the traitor out in the open, especially since Marwan's declaration of his will and the honors he has shown the PCs have already put them under suspicion by all the factions. If the adventurers die, he won't be terribly upset. After all, they are just pawns. When he fakes his own death, the heroes' protective patron is

"dead" and they must act carefully to clear themselves. Marwan learns much while risking little.

If the attacks continue, Marwan reasons, then his successor is not the one who poisoned him. He suspects Batina, Farouk, and Akim-Marwan knows that the Winged Bulls can be dismissed, and he knows the Loyalists well enough to know Yusuf is not fool enough to try to poison him.

Getting Around

Bismalla bin Ala'i (see cardsheet) is a member of the Winged Bulls faction; he isn't very good at his job, but because the Grandfather wants the visitors to incriminate themselves, he assigned Bismalla the job. Bismalla is a middle-aged holy slayer who has been put out to pasture, for despite having the strength of an ox, Bismalla also has the brains of an ox and thus never received "the call."

Bismalla might initially appear to be no more than a burden that the PCs have to drag around. However, as an old man with time on his hands, he does gather a remarkable amount of gossip. Use him as an NPC information conduit for the party—Bismalla can always nudge the PCs about the upcoming events, and he can provide some background (usually only partly accurate—make up whatever fanciful details appeal to you) on the various leaders of the factions. He can tell the PCs as much or as little about anything. Be careful not to use him as your own thinly disguised voice: if the players don't figure out Bismalla's lack of common sense from his slow, plodding speech, they will certainly figure it out the first time he tells them that, yes, it would be a grand scheme to sneak into the tower of Akim al-Kalaas, that unclean son of an infidel!

Bismalla always appears polite and deferential, but he is quite canny about what the PCs may and may not do. He speaks slowly and carefully, as he has to think very hard about what to say. He warns the party away from the Lion's Shrine, the Tower of Martyrs, and other areas open only to devout believers of Hajama. He knows a thousand dull aphorisms and proverbs common among the Everlasting, almost all of them completely useless to the adventurers. Feel free to select an inappropriate one at any time when the PCs are considering a course of action and consult Bismalla for advice.

Bismalla's bits of wisdom include:

It is better to have the heart of a lion than the bruin of a bull.
Fortune favors the brave.
Draw water while you may.
Eagles soar but chickens walk.
Fools rush in where genies fear to tread.
The word of a preacher is a swallow, the blade of a rafiq is a hawk.
Never try to outspit a camel.
Modesty is a bridge of birds, lifting us to paradise.
Honor the brave and the fallen.
Beware the smile of a genie.
It is better to be a dead lion than a living dog.

Make up more sayings as needed, or repeat some of these until the players start joining in every time Bismalla has a few words of advice for them.

Giving Bismalla The Slip

Sooner or later, the PCs will want to attempt something that they'd just as soon not have Bismalla reporting to the Courageous, Akim, or the Grandfather. Giving Bismalla the slip is easy: simply splitting up the party is enough to do the trick, as is locking a door behind oneself, going to the restroom and leaving out a window, putting on a disguise while behind some shrubbery in a courtyard, or running down a hall and ducking into a side passage. *Staying* out of his sight is hard; Bismalla is doggedly stubborn in his tasks and tends to show up at awkward moments ("We were just looking at this nice jewel here on the altar. Wonderful inclusions in that. Really.")

The Old Man of the Mountain is not the only resident of Sarahin who wants to keep tabs on the party of adventurers. Akim sets a wind walker to constantly watch the PCs whenever they are outdoors. If the PCs search, it may be detected as a breeze in the trees of the orchard, or a gust ruffling the robes of the guards on the walls looking out over the desert. Depending on the PCs involvement in Fadiya's assault during the "Audience with the Shadow Caliph," they may also have werelion watchers.

Hawking on The Cliffs

Before Marwan's plots even really begin, Farouk, the disguised efreeti leader of the Dervishes, invites the PCs to join him for a dawn hunt along the ridge. They are, to meet at the Tower of the Dawn, and every PC is welcome to come. Even sha'irs and hakimas are invited, as Farouk's amulet protects him from discovery by the sight of these spellcasters.

Assuming the party accepts, hobgoblin guards provide them with chairs near the low guarding wall. Dawn steals over the desert like a blush, softening the outlines of the hills, reddening the pale sands. Farouk is late.

As soon as the sun clears the horizon, the Dervishes arrive. Farouk and his three falconers have brought four peregrine falcons for the morning's activities, and a number of pigeons for them to bring down. There are as many pigeons as there are party members. Farouk discusses his need for allies in the "troubled time which surely lies ahead for us all," and makes thinly veiled references to how generous he would be if the PCs were to bring him information. At some point, Farouk forgets himself for a moment and refers to another leader of the Everlasting (perhaps Marwan himself) as a "mortal" or a "human." If the PCs question him on it, he laughs it off, saying he was speaking in broad terms: after all, "we are all mortal." While this is not enough proof for use against Farouk later, it should make the PCs very suspicious of him.

During their conversation, Farouk releases the pigeons, one at a time. Then the falcon's hood and jesses are removed, and the chase is on. The pigeons are remarkably strong fliers, able to tumble in midair, turn quickly, and climb well. But the falcons are much faster, and after gaining altitude, they plummet onto their prey, stunning it in midair and then circling around to catch it as it falls.

Farouk speaks to the PCs in a friendly, concerned tone. He is trying to win their confidence by looking out for their best interests, by warning them of the dangers of the mountain. He mentions the fact that only pigeons who flee are caught, though he is hinting that leaving the mountain is a bad idea. Those who sit quietly in their nests survive and fly free when the hawks have all gone away—making a fuss and poking around will only drag the PCs into the thick of things, where they are likely to become targets. Far better for them not to get involved.

Witnesses

When the PCs arrive or are made guests of the Grandfather, they are given suitable clothes, cleaned and groomed. They brought to the Halls of the Faithful, where Sayida ibn Afa is playing her qanun at the head table. It seems that every assassin in the entire fortress is here. Grandfather Marwan is already at the table, listening intently to the music. The PCs are kept standing in the back of the hall—the eyes of every assassin seem to be on them.

When the music stops for a moment, Marwan summons them to eat at his right hand, a place of honor usually reserved for special guests and close companions. There are some mutterings in the ranks, but the voices disappear when the Old Man looks out over the hall. In the sight of all his followers, he offers to share salt with them if they wish; if they. refuse, he laughs it off. Bread and olives are served, and Marwan tells the PCs the story of the *sand of truth* (see page 43).

Just as the first courses enter the hall, Marwan off-handedly mentions that he has lost two food tasters in the past six months; His food has been laced with phoenix powder, a sticky blue poison derived from the root of a desert plant. It is a particularly painful poison (Type J) that first causes a searing pain in the victim's mouth, then his stomach, then his nerves, finally reaching the heart and killing the victim. If the victim's saving throw succeeds by less than four, it blinds the unfortunate victim for 1-20 hours. It is used as a last resort by the Everlasting against the Flamedeath Fellowship when the two sects are at cross purposes. Only those bound by the Oath know the secrets of its manufacture.

Marwan waits for the PCs to eat. Let the PCs take whatever precautions they feel are necessary, but no one attempts to poison them this evening. As soon as the PCs have eaten, he digs in with a will.

The meal begins slowly, as a few trifles are set out first: candied persimmons, tangerines, and bananas, then palm hearts. The main courses come in huge tureens: curried rice with onion and raisins, a lamb ragout with cumin, and roasted chicken flavored with musk and rosewater. A black wine is served; it is chilled, earthy, and heavy.

Over dinner, the Grandfather talks fatalistically about "The good works I have left behind," "The reward for my toil draws near," and even "I have faith that the good company I must soon leave behind me will easily overshadow my humble achievements." He sighs and cheerfully relates how he expects that these goods works will outlast him, and that he expects to be well-remembered. He eats heartily and drinks deeply, then picks at figs and dates when the meal concludes.

At the end of the evening, when his niece Sayida begins to play again, Marwan mentions to the PCs that he intends to make them witnesses of his will and also that he plans to name his successor tonight. The music builds, and some of the soldiers take up drums and tambourines. Robes of honor are brought out for the PCs. Each adventurer is given a well-made garment of silk embellished with silver and gold threads and edged with the symbols of the Everlasting: a scimitar and a phoenix. The robes fit each PC perfectly, though no one has measured them.

As soon as Marwan announces that he intends to name a successor, the increase in tension in the room is almost palpable. Marwan goes on to other topics while the news flies from mouth to mouth and the buzz of conversation and dissection and gossip increases. Naming his successor, Bismalla gladly informs the party, is equivalent to signing his death warrant, but Marwan seems to derive great pleasure from drawing out the actual process of giving a name, talking on and on about the many good rafiqs and the strength of the fedayeen in unity and the remarkable courage of so many assembled here tonight. He grins enormously and winks atone of the female PCs.

Finally the moment comes. The musicians stop playing, Marwan motions for silence that has already descended on the room, and he tells the assembled notables his choice. He gives the most charismatic PC

two *figurines* of wondrous power, golden lions, which are symbols of his rule. Read the following:

> O strong arms of the Everlasting, I want you to take notice of these words of mine, because I know I am soon to die. I, Marwan al-Jabal al-Hiyali, give these golden lions of the fellowship to our honorable guests, to hold in trust. Hajama will soon send for me, and the priests will say their prayers over me within the year.
>
> Esteemed guests, stay with us a few days, then return to your business. You will receive the call when my fate catches me, and I meet the destroyer of delights. Return then, and observe the proper week of mourning before installing the new leader of the Everlasting in my place. After a week, give the golden lions to . . .

Marwan then names his favorite, the presumed heir to the power of the fellowship. Assuming Yusuf is still alive, he is named Marwan's choice for the next Grandfather. If he is dead, Farouk is the anointed successor. The next Grandfather is to be officially installed seven days after Marwan's death, the usual mourning being observed in the meantime. In fact, Marwan hopes that Aida al-Irrahman al-Qudra will be the Grandmother of the Everlasting after him, but as this proclamation is part of his larger plot to rid himself of some of his followers, the name he gives is not crucial.

After the Grandfather's proclamation, the feast degenerates into wild celebration; the dwarven farisan toast the grandfather's long life, his successor, the fellowship, their courage, their weapons, the moon, and themselves. The slayers sing and dance themselves into a frenzy. Bismalla takes the PCs back to their quarters.

DM Note: If the PCs try to give the lion figurines away, no one on the mountain will accept them.

Poisoned?

The PCs are constantly watched by all the factions, and any attempt to go anywhere they are not permitted is quickly intercepted. Everyone is waiting for them to make a mistake that can be exploited, or for them to fall into a faction's hands. For example, if unbelievers are caught trespassing in the Lion's Shrine, Batina and her crew will try to pry out of them what the PCs really want, who they are really working for, and why they have come. No one dares try to take the golden lions.

Farouk doesn't trust the PCs a bit—they are a wild card, and he wants things kept orderly for him to grab power smoothly. Just for the sake of tidiness, a cook loyal to the Dervishes named Ali ben Rajem attempts to poison their midday meal with blue phoenix powder, a magical poison described above in "Witnesses." All the PCs who eat must make a saving throw versus poison type J. The poison cannot be traced, as Farouk took the cook's place for the evening, using his *polymoroh self* ability. Ali is found the next morning, dead at the bottom of the rocks near the orchard, killed by Farouk.

Farouk hopes to eliminate a threat, but unless the PCs have not been properly cautious, he will only antagonize them and put them on their guard.

The Body in The Garden

On the third day, just as the bond of salt is wearing out, the body of the Grandfather Marwan is found, slain in the garden. In fact, this body is magically transformed, low-ranking holy slayer that Marwan slew and left here. The *polymorph* spell was cast by Essafah (or a similar mage brought in from one of the Everlasting's cells in Hiyal). As soon as the corpse is discovered, the castle is thrown into an uproar.

Speculation about the probability of Yusuf's or Farouk's or even Aida's succession runs rampant. The

appointed successor clearly didn't kill Marwan personally; Yusuf was in the village of Ganam the entire day before the body was discovered, Farouk was leading *lasiqs* on the training grounds, and Aida is not even on Assassin Mountain. Of course, faction members are rumored to have done it at their leader's orders.

Others suspect Akim's genies, for he is known to be on much better terms with genies than with *ins.* His foul practices and dark knowledge are widely rumored, though few have actually seen Akim work magic.

Batina is also under suspicion; her attempt to seize power when the plague struck in "Heart of the Lion" has not been forgotten. Many slayers are willing to serve her if she does seize command—all of them respect her.

All the factions and their leaders are much too busy worrying about seizing power to concern themselves overly much with the PCs, except insofar as they might become useful scapegoats for the murder. For the most part, the PCs are left to their own devices for a time, as rumors and accusations fly.

Grandfather Marwan plans to sit back and watch the fun. He uses his *wand of size alteration* and his disguise abilities to pose as one of the dwarven faris who serve Batina. He plans on staying very close to the dwarven priestess and observing what goes on.

Trouble at The Gate

As soon as he hears of the death of Marwan, Akim decides that this is a good time to leave. Since he was only bound to the Everlasting for Marwan's lifetime, his contract with the slayers is over, and he feels he will do much better for himself one his own than in service to the new Grandfather. He climbs to the top of his tower and lets out a mighty shout, calling for his jann allies to come and help him. A sha'ir PC will immediately recognize the shout as a call to the jann—let the party take whatever precautions it will, but try to steer them toward the outside or the courtyards. The summoned janni arrives at the lower gate shortly thereafter, but he is slain by the desert giants.

Trouble immediately erupts between Akim and Batina—Batina accuses Akim of the murder of Marwan, breaking the bonds of the Law, conspiring with genies, immodesty, theft, and heresy. In the face of mounting hostility, Akim rethinks his plans and decides to stay a few days until the real culprit is apprehended, at which time he can leave without arousing suspicion.

The false body of Marwan is taken to the Shrine of the Lion to await burial. Ten farisan and ten slayers keep a vigil over it.

The Second Victim

The body of Essafah al-Nisr (or his replacement) is found at the bottom of the cliffs. Although Marwan swore his helper to silence, he didn't trust him to keep quiet about the plot. The ruthless Grandfather finished him off himself so that he is the only one who knows what has really happened. Essafah's body is also taken to the Shrine of the Lion.

By this time, Yusuf (if he is still alive) is very suspicious of the PCs, since he knows that they fought Essafah in the streets of Liham and they hope to gain a reprieve for the caliph (though he doesn't tell them what he knows). He has his Loyalists bring them in for an audience, and he grills them. Make the players sweat, and if their PCs don't satisfy Yusuf's curiosity, Yusuf says he intends to protect them with an honor guard. Of course, these four poor souls are intended to help Bismalla keep watch over the PCs and watch for foul play; Bismalla is all too happy to explain to the charming and earnest young women what dangerous and tricky rogues the PCs are, and how he has outsmarted them.

Bodyguards (4)
2nd level human female thieves (holy slayers)
AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 15, 8, 5, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8+2 or by weapon; SZ M; ML 14; XP 35; scimitars, black leather armor.
PP 25; OL 10; F/RT 10; MS 40; HS 10; DN 20; CW 50; RL 5; backstab x2.

Leaving So Soon?

Akim couldn't leave without stirring up trouble; the heroes have almost no chance of leaving. If PCs try to flee they are hunted down and tried as the murderers: strangers make good scapegoats, and, to the holy slayers, their flight confirms their guilt. To make sure that they face justice, Yusuf sends a small army after them: seven saluqi hounds, three marrash, both desert giants, and Ibrihim. He wants to establish his authority by putting the mystery to rest as soon as he can. An allied mage's *firetrack* spells, the airborne pursuit of holy slayers and farisan carried by wind walkers, and the hunting abilities of the marrash and the saluqi hounds will make escape difficult. The assassins are very persistent.

If the PCs won't come quietly, they will have to be kept quiet. The slayers offer them every opportunity to surrender; if the PC won't surrender, or if the holy slayers take more than ten casualties, the Everlasting will keep after the PCs as long as they know where to find them. As long as there is a single marrashi to search the desert from the sky, the PCs are targets.

Marwan's Secret Servants

At midnight of the third day, when the PCs are in their chambers, they hear a knock at their door. When they answer it, they find a dark-skinned, bald dwarf, apparently one of the Courageous, holding a lit lantern. He winks at them and bids them to follow him to meet his mistress. If the PCs agree, he takes them to the abandoned quarters near the Tower of Akim al-Kalaas. Then he tells them why he has brought them here. He claims to be Marwan's secret lieutenant and most trusted henchman, and he tells them of his plan:

> "The leader of the Everlasting has long suffered from the feuding of his lackeys. This must stop, and you would be wise to help us accomplish this. Will you?"

If the PCs refuse, they have made a powerful enemy, and they will receive no further assistance from Marwan (who is the dwarf, disguised), though he still hopes to use them as his pawns. He ushers them out of the abandoned rooms and disappears into the shadows.

If they agree, he tells them what he plans and what their rewards might be. He shows them the secret stairs down into the bedrock. Once the whole group is down in the Heart of the Eagle, Marwan reveals that the Grandfather is not really dead.

> "Though there have been many attempts on the most esteemed Grandfather's life, the most recent one did not succeed. The body in the mosque is a false one, placed there through Marwan's magic as a ruse to draw out his enemies.
>
> "I am Mustapha ben Salome Abd al-Jari, servant of Batina and Marwan's greatest and most trusted spy. Marwan is in hiding and cannot show himself, for obvious reasons. You must find out who has used poisons against members of the Everlasting, and who plots to take the leadership away from Marwan's appointed successor. Well, everyone plots to gain the leadership, but someone is willing to poison their comrades for it.

"Batina has a traitorous heart; remember that she refused to heal the plague victims who would not swear loyalty to her. I will be watching her, but she will be watching you. Akim knows far too much about the Everlasting, but he wishes merely to leave us. However, he may be willing to help you find the killer, if you can convince him that doing so would make it safe for him to leave. Farouk is weak but not to be discounted. If he dies or is falsely accused, he will become a martyr to his followers. This must not be allowed to happen. Nusrah is no threat. Ignore the Winged Bulls.

"If you must contact me, speak to Bismalla. He will know where to leave messages for me.

"When you are sure of the traitor, give his name to Bismalla. I will speak with you thereafter."

Mustafa/Marwan warns the adventurers that they are now his accomplices, and they must not reveal him to the factional leaders, upon pain of death. If they can find the traitor, they will win the Grandfather Assassin's gratitude and respect, and great rewards will be theirs.

If they fail, the Old Man of the Mountain will arrange a show trial. The adventurers will be formally charged with Marwan's murder, tried by whatever factional leaders are still alive, found guilty, and flung from the parapets at dawn.

Working with Mustafa/Marwan gives the players a powerful and canny guide to solving the mystery. Don't let them depend only on his advice. Mustafa/Marwan does not want to see the PCs at all after their initial meeting—it is too dangerous for him, as the PCs are constantly being spied on by other factions. He may meet them, grudgingly and in disguise if time passes and they get nowhere, to prod them along. Each time he meets with them he winks as a signal to reveal himself in whatever disguise he has adopted.

Some players may have trouble with the role-playing and mystery aspects of this adventure, and they may get frustrated. At the DM's option, Marwan may run into them when they are exploring somewhere they shouldn't be, and give them some advice. Don't do this unless absolutely necessary.

Marwan is glad to use the PCs as tools, but if they turn against him he is merciless, and he will be very disappointed if they can't make any progress without his advice. Very, very disappointed. Make it clear that unless the PCs gain proof or confessions of a traitor on their own, the PCs will wish they were lucky enough to die a clean death, plummeting from the parapets.

The PCs have the power to accuse, and they can use it to devastating effect if they so choose. If they can find Farouk's cache of poison, or if they assume that Yusuf is behind the killings when he gives them the blue powder (See "The Dervishes' Deceptions," below), they can seal these leaders' death warrants. Marwan is reluctant to kill Farouk, because his followers would be whipped into a frenzy. He demands that the PCs find a way to discredit him. In Yusuf's case, Marwan will kill him as soon as the PCs point the finger—leaving it until later for someone to figure out that they accused an innocent man. Whether the PCs accuse her or not, Batina will suffer soon enough (see "The Death of Batina" below). Unless the PCs are very foolish, Nusrah should be immune from suspicion, though Marwan will dispose of him if the PCs present any vaguely credible evidence against him.

If the heroes accuse Akim after the events of "The Dance of Naomi," Mustafa requests the PCs bring the sha'ir to the Heart of the Eagle by using the gem of *lifeproofing* to force him to obey them. Akim suspects what is about to happen, and when he sees the

disguised Marwan, he makes a break for it. Marwan tells Akim that he knows too much about the Everlasting to be allowed to leave, and he cannot be trusted to stay. Then he drops the *gem of lifeproofing,* killing the sha'ir.

If the PCs initially refuse to follow Mustafa from their doorstep to the meeting in the Heart of the Eagle, Marwan adopts another disguise, perhaps as one of the kitchen staff, or (using the wand again) as a towering and imposing janni servant of Akim's, and tries again, perhaps to search for a missing saluqi during daylight, or offering the party a phony invitation to dine atop the tower with Akim. Sooner or later, curiosity will win out.

The Blue Phoenix

At breakfast on the fourth day, Yusuf's coffee is poisoned by an *invisible* Farouk, but he survives. Yusuf begins using a food taster for everything, and sends a slayer to follow the PCs, since they are suspects. Farouk returns the remaining poison to his cache in the griffon statue.

Bismalla discovers a small vial of blue phoenix powder planted in the PCs' guest rooms by Grandfather Marwan, who wants the PCs to find the real poisoner. The Bull promptly takes the poison to Nusrah, who defers to Yusuf. The PCs are taken to Yusuf in the Cavern of the Everlasting and questioned about their loyalties, origins, skills, relationship with Marwan, and so on. Role-play this interrogation to make the PCs sweat. Bring up past enmity, and emphasize the growling werelion bodyguards. When the PCs begin to think of bolting or reaching for weapons, Yusuf lets them go.

Batina's food is poisoned at the same time and in the same way, but because she always uses *purify food and drink* before her meals, she doesn't even notice it. She is upset by the attempt on Yusuf's life, however, and she delivers a small sermon to the Preachers at the Lion's Shrine, blaming the poisoning on the Winged Bulls.

The Dervishes' Deceptions

Farouk intends to fully discredit the PCs and take the figurines out of their hands. He sends one of his holy slayers, disguised as human party member, to attack Yusuf before the funeral. He strikes on the stairs up to the Lion's Shrine, coming out from behind one of the griffon statues.

The attack fails, Yusuf's werelion bodyguards savage the face and body of the slayer, and he is unrecognizable. The fact that all the PCs can be accounted for seems to indicate that the body is not, in fact, one of them. Batina confidently dismisses the whole thing as the work of Akim's evil genies, but Yusuf is not so sure. He suspects the party of a magical trick of some kind. Batina absolutely forbids questioning the dead with magic; attempts to do so will be punished.

The lions that suddenly appear to defend Yusuf are taken as a sign of Hajama's favor by the fanatical slayers, and most of them agree that he will make an excellent leader, a worthy successor to Marwan. The werelions themselves, now convinced that the PCs are working against their master, begin planning a counterstrike.

At midnight, the werelions arrive and tell the PCs' guards that they are being relieved by Yusuf's orders. When the bodyguards leave, the werelions (stats on p. 37) enter the PCs' chambers and attack.

In fact, Yusuf knew nothing about his guards' plans. If he hears of this (and if the adventurers don't mention it, Bismalla does), he summons them to appear before him in the Hall of Audience. He declares that the werelions exceeded their authority. To make amends to the adventurers, he offers them a small vial of gritty blue powder, said to have belonged to the jann who built the castle, and tells them to "Use it well." Then he tells the tale of the assassins' conquest of the castle (see page 22 of the Sourcebook). Although the PCs may mistake Yusuf's gift for the phoenix poison, it is the *sand of truth,* which a janni once gave to Yusuf. Yusuf

always carries it on his person until he bestows it on the PCs. Bismalla, always one to make the wrong assumption, looks at the vial and tells the PCs about phoenix powder, as described in "Witnesses" above.

The Funeral

The second day after "Marwan's" body is found, the funeral services are held and the body is cremated. The fuel has been painstakingly gathered from desert scrub and distant palms over the past two days and laid out in the middle of the training and drill grounds. Batina's eulogy and the firing of the pyre are to take place at noon, and attendance is mandatory for all members of the fellowship.

The cremation proceeds on time. All the faction leaders stand around eyeing one another suspiciously while Batina delivers the service, praising Marwan's good works and exhorting those present to continue to remain true to the word of the Loregiver and to the teachings of Hajama.

The faction leaders have various responses to the Grandfather's death. Yusuf seems both pleased and a little nervous—he has a lot of work ahead to maintain his new position of authority, and the risks are enormous. Farouk is quiet, outwardly saddened, inwardly scheming. Nusrah bin Kerim seems genuinely moved—he owes his position to Marwan and was always wise enough to realize that he would never have achieved any station of authority without his uncle's help.

Batina is trying to contain her happiness—she has waited many years for Marwan's death and she isn't about to miss a chance to gloat. Despite the pleading of her hierarchs and underlings, Batina refuses to raise Marwan from the dead because he was not pliable enough, and she hopes to have more influence with his successor. She has passed this refusal off as the result of a vision, wherein an asuras told her that Marwan has gone to his heavenly reward. She claims that he should be allowed to rest, as his work for the faith has been long and arduous. Of course, she mentions her glorious vision in her eulogy.

"Marwan, on his mention be peace . . ." While Batina drones on, Akim is struggling to maintain his own peace. When he sees the body, he recognizes the use of magic. He is a very clever man, clever enough to keep quiet. He assumes that the body is a fake and Marwan probably isn't really dead. Although he doesn't want to interrupt the ceremony, he wants to get out of the area as soon as possible—if he is still around when the Grandfather returns, he will be forced to serve the holy slayers for the rest of Marwan's years. It is to his advantage to make sure everyone thinks Marwan is dead. PCs coming to him and claiming otherwise will find that he disagrees with them, and at the DM's option he may try to silence them with force.

Akim decides to skip the funeral feast and the dancing genie, and uses his ring to sneak back to his tower before the pyre has been lit, hoping to leave that very night. It is too late. During the confusion of the ambush on Yusuf, Marwan, realizing that Akim may leave now that the Grandfather is "dead," steals the *lamp of the four winds* and hides it in the Heart of the Eagle. As soon as he begins packing Akim notices it is gone, and he won't leave Assassin Mountain without it, so he plans to attend the feast after all and asks his servants to search for the lamp. Ali Abdal Akim is ordered to fetch a locate object spell (and has a 90% chance of finding it in 1d6+2 rounds), but Akim will not use it while the feast is in progress. Afterwards, he uses the spell to triangulate the lamp's position—and discovers that it seems to be in solid rock! He sets his servants to searching (stealthily) for secret passages, but it will be long hours before they are even close.

After the service, Batina announces that the funeral feast for Marwan and Essafah will be delayed until the next night.

The Dance of Naomi

If the PCs have managed to stay out of trouble so far, Batina insists that they join the funeral feast, and Akim invites them to watch his servant genie dance before the assembled company. Although the funeral feast is a time of mourning, the atmosphere in the wake of the unexpected and sudden succession is wild, tense, almost hysterical. The major NPCs are all present with 2d6 bodyguards each, and the feast is held in the Caverns of the Everlasting so that all the fellowship can attend.

The evening begins with a performance by a pet of Akim's, a bound and ensorcelled tasked genie named Naomi. The artist genie is a dancer, and her movements are both quick and flowing by turns. Using her *mirror image* ability, she fills the room with dancing copies of herself, each one of them a perfect twin, each one perfectly in time with the others.

Food and wine flow generously at the wake. Many people get up to speak of their leader and his great deeds, and many more join in the dance. The frenzy of the dancers is infectious; the Dervishes of the Court of Rhythm are in full swing, with drums working furiously.

While everyone is watching the dancers, finishing the meal, and tapping their feet in time to the music, Farouk plans on disposing of the weakest of his competitors, Yusuf bin Ayyub. Just before he goes to attend the wake, Farouk conjures an earth elemental using his staff, and he commands it to wait underground until he is in place. When the moment is ripe, he has an initiate of the Dervishes release four salamanders that he has trapped in an *iron flask.* One of the salamanders immediately attacks the poor fool who opened the flask; the other three attack Yusuf and his werelion supporters. The earth elemental rises up out of the floor and keeps others away from the melee.

Farouk is careful to be seated near the PC guests at the front, but he plans on savor Yusuf's death unfolding before him. Farouk's servants work without any direction or assistance on his part; he concentrates on directing the earth elemental, but since he only needs to be touching the staff to give commands to the elemental, it appears as if he is doing nothing. If Yusuf was killed by Fadiya and the PCs, Farouk's minions strike at Batina, who presents the second greatest political threat.

The PCs have an opportunity to reveal the traitor behind the attack by capturing and questioning one of the elemental creatures. The earth elemental is very difficult to capture other than by magic, and as soon as it is secured, Farouk silently dismisses it to the Elemental Plane of Earth. The salamanders, while difficult to capture by overbearing, netting, or other physical means, cannot be magically dismissed.

Farouk knows that once they are out of his sight, the salamanders will reveal his secret. To stop them, he offers his thanks and his help to the PCs when they have the salamanders under control. He promises to bind the salamanders into a magical ring as a reward for the PCs' assistance. This is a lie, but if the PCs agree he takes the salamanders away to his chambers and imprisons them in the flask again. If the PCs later ask about the ring, he tells them that he is working on it. He doesn't expect them to last long enough to realize that he is stalling.

Batina, meanwhile, congratulates the PCs for slaying the elemental and the salamanders. She insists that the summoning can only be the work of the unclean sha'ir, Akim al-Kalaas. She rails against the sha'ir as long as anyone listens, then notices that he has left the feast. Suspicion of Akim is running high, and Batina begins inciting the faithful into a frenzy against the sha'ir.

If the PCs agree with Batina and accuse Akim of being the traitor, Bismalla goes off with their message and returns almost immediately. In private and with ludicrous security precautions (doubling back and walking in narrow corridors to shake off pursuers, turning off the lights in a locked room, whispering,

requesting spells to detect magical or invisible spies, writing down Akim's name instead of speaking it, etc.) Bismalla tells the PCs that they are to steal the Lion's Heart that very night and use it to force Akim to the Heart of the Eagle, where Mustafa will meet them. If the PCs don't know that the gem is Akim's weak point, Bismalla explains it to them in a rambling, confused way. Several times, he stresses the point that he is not to accompany the PCs (probably to their great relief). Since Akim is waiting for an opportunity to use his locate object spell, he cannot simply retake the gem by casting a *time stop.*

Naomi: Int Genius; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 26; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA spells; SZ M; ML 6; XP 975.

Salamander (4): Int High; AL CE; AC 5/3; MV 9; HD 7+7; hp 42, 35, 30, 29; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12, 1-6 (weapon); SA Heat 1-6; SD +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML 13; XP 2,000 each.

Earth Elemental: Int Low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6; HD 16; hp 64; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 4-32; SA smash constructions; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ H (15' tall); ML 17; XP 10,000.

The Death of Batina

Grandfather Marwan is not inactive while the PCs are doing his work; he watches, and he also uses the chaos to dispose of rivals who are a little too close for comfort. In particular, Batina has grown too strong and must be appeased too often. Her refusal to freely cure the plague in "Heart of a Lion" made Marwan furious, but obviously she was too useful to be punished. When she refuses to raise him from the dead, claiming to have had a vision of him resting in peace, her guilt and impiety are confirmed in the Grandfather's mind. Batina must die. Unless she has already been brought low by the hands of the PCs or Farouk, Batina will quietly disappear during the chaos after the feast.

After the funeral feast on the sixth day, the pace of events slows down. Marwan's suspicions that Batina is the poisoner are confirmed in his own mind by the fact that she refuses to raise him and she burns "his" body (an unusual funeral for the wood-starved desert), although he did not die of plague. He has watched as a faris for long enough; it is time to strike.

When Batina goes for a stroll out from the Lion's Shrine to the terrace over the orchards, Marwan sees his chance. He slays her by surprise, and then he uses the stolen *lamp of the four* winds to call up wind walkers that scatter the other guards and cover their cries. He knows how much Batina hated the works of Akim and his summoned creatures, so as a form of cruel revenge he dumps all the bodies into the Pit of a Thousand Voices. Since the bodies are never discovered (the gibbering mouther and the ghouls fight over them and devour them entirely), her fate is a bit of a mystery to the holy slayers, but the pattern is familiar. The decline in the number of powerful

leaders leads to a power vacuum. Farouk's status among the Everlasting increases, and many of the Preacher faction dwarves become his followers. Yusuf and Nusrah also benefit, if they are still alive.

The following morning, Marwan changes his disguise. The wand returns him to his normal size, and he takes on the trappings of a novice human holy slayer and seeks out the party. Since a new group of lasiqs has just arrived, Marwan may move freely in his new disguise. Marwan is convinced that he has disposed of the threat, and he asks the PCs to return the figurines to him. By this point, they may not trust him to truly be the Grandfather. He answers questions as needed, and if the PCs suspect Farouk, Yusuf, or Akim, now is the time for them to mention it. Marwan plans to return to rule, and unless the PCs refuse to return the figurines and explain who they suspect and why, Marwan is now their enemy. If the PCs are arrogant enough, he may even try to take the figurines back by stealth. To succeed, he must make a pick pockets roll. If that fails, he tries to retake them by force, using the *lamp of the four winds* for backup.

If the PCs do convince Marwan that one of the factional leaders is the traitor, see "Marwan's Secret Servants" for the result.

Removing The Veil

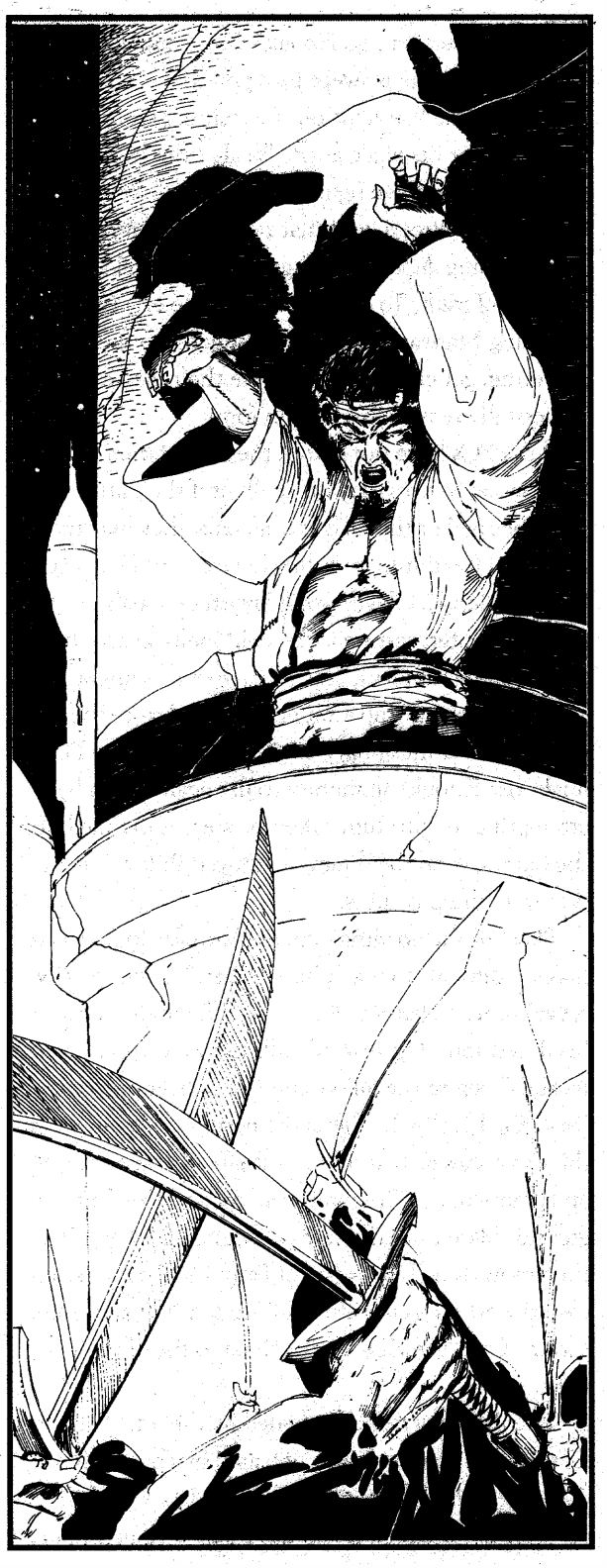
One the day that the succession is to be announced, Farouk calls a gathering to commemorate the slain assassins on the training grounds just after sunset. If Farouk succeeded in killing Yusuf, he stands ready to assume the leadership. When the comrades of the fellowship gather, he tells a number of richly embellished lies about his fondness for the deceased and offers his services as the leader of the Everlasting. The Dervishes are all on hand, cheering madly. Nusrah has been bought off to support him, and the Winged Bulls do as they are told. Akim has been promised freedom for similar support, and uses *sunwarp* to increase the number of apparent supporters. Everything seems to go Farouk's way, and, unless the PCs intervene, he is swept into power.

By the time Farouk is on the training grounds, about to take his place as the head of the holy slayers, the PCs should have figured out that he is responsible, that he is an efreeti, and that he can be stripped of his disguise using *dispel magic* (against 15th level magic) or the *sand of truth.* To convince everyone else (possibly including Marwan), the PCs must get into the gathering, get close enough to use their magic, and successfully remove his human form.

If the PCs have not gotten the *sand of truth* or do not have access to a *dispel magic* spell, or if their attempt with the spell or the *sand of truth* fails, they may try to goad the efreeti into revealing his true form by angering him sufficiently. Clever wordplay isn't enough; dousing him with water, casting ice or cold spells against him, or drenching him with cups of sherbet ices might work, as might conjuring up a water elemental from the well or even clever illusionary magic. Best of all, the PCs might use Farouk's immunity to fire against him by attempting to burn him; when he steps unharmed from the flames, even the dimmest Winged Bull will realize that something is amiss.

Play out the goading, and use Farouk's followers to make it difficult to reach him. When he does finally reveal himself, Farouk does not deliberately cast aside his deceptions, but instead calls the PCs "foolish mortals" before the fellowship in the heat of battle. Realizing his slip, he fights the party largely alone, for the Dervishes retreat from their efreeti leader in fear and amazement. The torches all around the drill grounds blaze from the roofs of the barracks and halls, then grow dim. This is one of Farouk's illusions as an efreeti, and it has the effect of frightening off the holy slayers. Only the PCs are involved in the ensuing fight.

The PCs may be so weakened by the attacks of the Dervishes that they are all defeated by Farouk. If so, he cows the holy slayers into obedience (for who will cross an angry efreeti?) and has them tried and found



guilty. Run the PCs through a show trial, with witnesses stacked against them and a set of rigged and trumped-up charges. Regardless of argument or logic, the verdict comes down that the PCs are to be executed by being tossed off the Tower of Dawn.

Allow the party to attempt to escape from the prison of the Rock of Fasting. If they don't succeed, describe the morning of the execution, the long march up the steps, and the breeze at the top. When the first PC is flung from the tower onto the rocks below, Grandfather Marwan rescues them using the wind walkers from the *lamp of the four winds.* He snatches the PCs from mid-air and takes all of them to the tunnels within the Pit of a Thousand Voices.

Farouk knows about the *lifeproofing* spell on Akim's gem and will try to use this information to his advantage. If Akim is still alive and Farouk's circumstances become extreme, he uses this information to keep the sha'ir on his side by claiming that a Dervish is at the shrine, ready to destroy the gem if Farouk should die. As a result, wind walkers and other creatures loyal to Akim side against the party. If the PCs reveal Farouk's genie disguise before his followers, he is discredited but unrepentant. Despite all the evidence, he continues to deny that he is an efreeti, claiming that the foul magic of the PCs is at work against him. The raging, half-mad Farouk must be bested in combat.

If brought to less than 15 hp, Farouk surrenders to the esteemed and worthy PCs, proclaiming himself an abject efreeti completely at their mercy. He promises to perform a single service for them in exchange for his freedom and his life. No *wish* should be allowed unless the DM feels the party deserves one to return a party member to life. Even then, the PCs must pressure Farouk severely, and it will take time to browbeat him into compliance, time the party does not have.

As soon as his surrender is accepted and he has a moment's peace, the efreeti makes a last attempt against the life of the Caliph Harin al-Hayif, as a

spiteful stroke of vengeance against the PCs. He breaks free of his guards for a moment, and, quick as thought, he releases a fiery violet bird with talons like brass hooks. It races into the night sky like a comet, surrounded by a trail of purplish-red fire and sparks. The bird is a messenger to his agent in Liham, and it tells the Dervishes there that they should slay the caliph. Farouk will not grant a *wish* calling back his bird—his claims it is beyond his power. Though this is a lie, he will not relent.

Unless the PCs already have missile weapons readied, the fire bird is gone before they shoot. PCs with missile weapons readied may take one shot at long range. Spellcasters must win initiative in order to strike the bird with a spell. The fire bird's aura of flame protects it from non-magical missiles; they burst into flame before reaching it, doing no damage. Fire attacks are likewise useless. Magical missiles do full damage, then burn up. Creatures approaching within 20 yards of the bird suffer 2d6 hp damage per round from the sparks and flames.

The marrash leave the fire bird alone (their missiles have no effect anyway), and the hawks and falcons won't attack such an obviously supernatural creature. The bird flies without stopping and takes 18 hours to get to the city.

Fire bird: Int semi-; AL N; AC 4; MV 42 (B); HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Drug 1-4/1-4; SA aura of flame; SD immune to fire; MR 30%; SZ S; ML 15; XP 1,400.

Race To Liham

The fire bird is off and nothing will stop it—the heroes must pursue it. If they have discovered and befriended the Pegasus in the stables, it agrees to carry two of them. The adventurers may chase the bird on the breezes of the wind walkers, if they have spoken to Marwan and know how to use the *lamp of the four winds.* They may *enlarge* or *polymorph* one of the birds of prey in the falconer's mews into a suitable steed (it

lasts long enough for the trip). They may have magical means of their own for getting there: a flying carpet, a flying mount, or magic spells.

If he is still alive, Akim steadfastly refuses to help them because the affairs of the holy slayers only interest him insofar as they lead to freeing him from his oath. If Farouk holds Akim's *lifeproofing* gem, he refuses help of any kind unless the gem is recovered first. Marwan remains on the mountain, as he has sworn to do.

Farouk's agent at the palace is in disguise as a Qudran mamluk in Caliph Harin al-Hayif's honor guard, and although "the call" has probably reached him before the PCs arrive, he is waiting for a moment when the caliph is relatively unguarded before he strikes. He wears a *ring of the holy slayer,* so that he may not be questioned, even in death.

The PCs return to find that the Old Man of the Mountain thanks them for their help in rooting out the traitor in his ranks. At last, the Grandfather of the

Everlasting agrees not to slay the caliph or to ask for a new imam in Liham because he owes the PCs a debt of honor for their assistance.

Farouk's Mamluk
8th level human male holy slayer
AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+2 or by weapon; SZ M; ML 18; XP 2,000; *scimitar +1, ring of protection +2, ring of the holy slayer,* 3 throwing daggers, leather armor.
PP 35, OL 50, F/RT 10, MS 80, HS 10, DN 40, CW 70, RL 15; backstab x4.

Epilogue: The Caliph of Shadows Returns

When he returns from hiding, Marwan exposes the lie of Batina's "vision"' about his going on to his reward, and thus gains power over her leaderless faction. Whether the Unclean remain a power depends on whether or not Akim was slain by the destruction of his *lifeproofing* gem. If Akim dies, the Winged Bulls begin to reassert themselves as couriers and guardians of travelers to and from the cities of the coast. With Farouk discredited, the Dervishes collapse; most of them join the Loyalists. The Loyalists are, ironically, the only faction that the Old Man of the Mountain no longer has much power over; they feel cheated of what they thought they had rightly inherited and are furious at his return. Though they were faithful to his memory, they aren't happy to see him in the flesh. Yusuf may want things to return to the former state of affairs. . . .

Assuming their behavior has not provoked any blood feuds, the PCs may leave in peace. The Grandfather has a soft spot for the PCs by now, and will override the wishes of his followers (some of whom will make the PCs feel very uncomfortable—Yusuf in particular, because he feels that the PCs must have been accomplices of Marwan's in making him look like a fool) and let them go free. Furthermore, he declares before the leaders of all his factions that he cannot refuse the request of such honorable men, and he will grant them whatever might be within his power for their assistance.

If the party did not gain a reprieve for the caliph after "The Heart of a Lion," this is the PCs' chance to force the Old Man of the Mountain to leave Liham alone. If anyone asks politely, the Caliph of Shadows cannot refuse without seemingly dishonorable before his followers. He is pleased and amused by the clever request. He agrees, and suggests that the PCs leave the next morning, for surely their Fate awaits them. Although this parting should leave the PCs jumpy and nervous for quite a while, they will not be harassed by the holy slayers on the way back to Liham. Whatever other dangers they might encounter are up to the DM. The PCs should split a story goal award of 30,000 XP among the party.

If the PCs don't think to ask about the caliph, there are several possibilities for resolving the adventure. If you think your players will accept it, the PCs may simply fail. Alternatively, Marwan may choose to grant the caliph immunity but may send the PCs to the caliph as messengers with a letter threatening the life of the imam; this is not bluster, unfortunately, and the imam will not live out the year unless he is kept under constant guard, a humiliation that even a pragmatic priest of Hajama is unwilling to undergo. If the PCs jump the gun, plead for mercy for the caliph of Liham, or point out that throwing the city into chaos now might just provide a pretext for Qudra to seize power, the Grandfather will grant their request on the condition that they undertake a small project for him. This is an excellent opportunity for the DM to insert a lead-in for the party's next adventure.

If the PCs did rescue the caliph's life in "Heart of a Lion," they may ask for gold, spells, or magical items. Marwan will part with up to 10,000 gp worth of silks, spices, incense, and other fine treasures for each factional leader that the party helped him to destroy. This may include Farouk, Akim, and Yusuf. Spells must be taken from Essafah's spell list, and magical

items are limited to those belonging to dead faction leaders. Otherwise, the Old Man of the Mountain may grant the PCs leave to adopt henchmen from among his followers. These may include one or both of Akim's new apprentices, members of the Dervishes or other disbanded factions, or even farisan of the Courageous that the PCs may have befriended or impressed in the Tests of Valor. In addition, the PCs may keep one of the golden lion *figurines of wondrous* power.

Hail! Hail! Finished is our tale!

Events of "Heart of a Lion"

Days refer to time after the PCs arrive at Jabal Sarahin.

Day 0

Party forces its way past Ibrihim. Omar is shot by the marrashi, and the PCs reach the walls of the fortress.

Day 1

Omar dies. PCs enter via tunnel or over the walls. Fadiya attacks Yusuf, mistaking him for the Grandfather.

Day 2

Fadiya is executed. The disease spreads among the ranks of the party and the holy slayers; Batina cures the slayers and calls for Akim's head. The PCs may still be at large or they may be languishing on the Rock of Fasting. Akim steals the phylactery of Hasan.

Day 3

Omar rises as a marrashi and returns to tell the PCs the powers of the Lion's Heart. Batina refuses to heal those who do not bow to her.

Marwan comes to the PCs and asks them to steal the Lion's Heart from Batina; if they are caught, he denies all knowledge of them. Batina and Akim unite to demand their deaths, and they are thrown into the pit. If they succeed, the tests of honor may begin.

Day 4

Unless they have been caught, the PCs take the tests and are sworn to secrecy. They may steal the Lion's Heart and take it with them to Liham.

Events of "Death on the Mountain"

Day 1

6 pm. The adventurers are honored guests of the assassins, with feasting, gifts of robes, and the bond of salt established. The Grandfather announces his will, tells the PCs the legend of the sand of truth, and gives them the lion figurines.

Day 2

The PCs are closely watched; any attempt at speaking to the leaders is stymied.

Farouk invites the PCs to join him in falconry; he lets slip that he is not human. If they are recalcitrant, the Dervishes poison their midday meal.

Day 3

8 am. The body of the cook is found.

Noon The false body of Marwan is discovered; Marwan disguises himself as a dwarf.

Bodies are carried to shrine and prepared for burial; a vigil is held over the bodies.

1 pm. Akim attempts to leave. After trouble at the gate, Akim decides to wait until the murderer is revealed.

2 pm. The body of Essafah is found. PCs are fiercely questioned by Yusuf.

Midnight. Marwan contacts the PCs and explains their task.

Day 4

7 am. Yusuf's and Batina's food is poisoned by Farouk but both survive.

8 am. Poison is planted in the PC's possession.

8:30 am. Poison is discovered by Bismalla; PCs are held under suspicion and given "honor guard."

Holy slayers spend all day gathering fuel for the funeral pyre.

Day 5

11 am. Yusuf is attacked before the funeral by a holy slayer disguised as party member. The attack fails, and the werelions savage the victim.

Noon. The funeral is held, "Marwan's" body is burnt, but the feast is delayed.

1:30 pm. Akim returns to his tower and again prepares to leave—but his lamp is stolen.
6:30 pm. Werelions attack the PCs.

Day 6

8 pm. The funeral feast is held. When the dancing genie performs, Farouk's servants ambush Yusuf. If the PCs accuse Akim, Marwan asks them to bring the sha'ir to him, using the gem of lifeproofing to do so. If the PCs bring Akim in to the Grandfather, he is slain.

Day 7

1 am. Batina is slain by Marwan; her body is not found, as she is cast into the Pit. Marwan removes his disguise, and the guards spread the tale of a turncoat dwarven bodyguard who attacked Batina. The Preachers are in disarray and search the compound by torchlight for their leader.
7 am. If the PCs have been imprisoned for some offense, Farouk generously frees them from confinement, hoping to win them over.
10 am. A new set of trainees arrives; Marwan hides himself among them.
Noon. If Yusuf is dead, Marwan finds the PCs and tells them that the threat is over—Batina is dead. The Grandfather lets them keep one of the figurines for their assistance.

Day 8—Succession Day

8 pm. Farouk assumes control. If he is unveiled, the bird flies to Liham. If not, the traitor is revealed through the process of elimination. The PCs are asked to join Marwan in slaying the efreeti, then rewarded and sent home using the *lamp of the four winds.*

Day 9

Farouk's mamluk attacks and kills the caliph, unless the PCs can warn or protect him.

Story Appendix

The following tales may be used as red herrings, as tales told in the bazaar or bedestan, or simply as background for the city of Liham and the dragons of the Furrowed Mountains.

The Wise and Foolish Sultan

May the gods give you the courage of a stallion, for the world is full of both the terrors made at the hands of men and the terrors of the genies and the seas. In courage lies the way of both the victor and the fool, and who shall reckon which is which?

It is written that there once lived a brave sultan, who gathered his hosts and went forth to do battle with enemy mamluks under bright, snapping banners. Fate was not with him, his hosts were destroyed, and his body was carried back to his city, for the mamluks were wise in the art of war. They installed a court of traitors to advise the new sultan.

The sultan's nephew and heir was a foolish, dissolute poet, but the clever mamluk ministers acclaimed him, and they forced the priests to anoint him and give him the robes of office. The foolish sultan spent his days in idleness and drink, and his judgements echoed his ministers. The ministers were pleased that they had a malleable pawn. When the mamluks came to him demanding tribute, he offered them all his greatest riches in exchange for the right to appoint his own ministers, and the mamluks cheerfully accepted, for the sultan agreed to render his tribute to them in forty days. The sultan proceeded to spend those days in wild debauchery and abandon, and even his people frowned, for he seemed to care nothing for them and the dishonor he heaped upon himself and the city.

When forty days had come and gone, the Grand Caliph arrived to oversee the transfer of riches. The grim and pious mamluks surrounded the sultan as he called for his treasures. And his servants brought forth a richly illuminated scroll, and the sultan began to declaim his poetry before the assembled notables. He praised the wisdom of the Loregiver, and the majesty of the Grand Caliph, and the passage of time and the doings of Fate. The Grand Caliph applauded and asked for more, but the mamluks were silent, for their barren hearts were unmoved. The grand marshal of the mamluks came forward stiffly and demanded the

sultan's riches, but the sultan made it clear that his poetry was all he had, for he had spent the rest in idleness and drink, but he would gladly share his verses, which he assured the grand marshal were indeed sublime. The Grand Caliph laughed and agreed—the sultan's Words were pearls beyond price. He decreed that the bargain must be enforced: the court of mamluk ministers was dismissed and returned, angered, to their fortresses.

Tell me now, is it braver to raise the sword or to throw oneself in its path?

The Serpent

It is written that across the sands and the rivers, where the Al-Badia roam, there are wanderers who speak of the purity of that which has been burnt and tempered by the sun.

The Al-Sadib were such wanderers, herding goats among the Furrowed Mountains. A youth tended his flock among them, but the work was dull and the goats never obeyed him and he wished for company, so he went to his wise and beautiful aunt, who gave him a small figurine that could transform into a lion. The youth often called his lion and wrestled with it, and the stench of lion on his clothes made the goats fear him and all was well—until one day, when two vishap came to the valley where the Al-Sadib had settled for the season. The vishap are cowardly snakes with lying tongues, and they wanted to eat the men and the women and the children and the goats, even the smallest of them. The younger vishap came upon the youth as he lay beneath a cedar, and it crept closer and closer, higher and higher up the slope, thinking that if it killed the youth it would then get all his goats as well.

But the birds in the cedars were alarmed and cried warnings, and the youth woke and saw the vishap hiding in the grasses below. He quickly grabbed up a stone and threw it, killing the dragon. His mother and all the tribe praised him and gave thanks to Fate that he had survived.

The elder vishap was angered when it found the body and determined to wait there and see what creature had done this. The next day when the youth returned to tend his flocks, the elder vishap hid among the rocks and grasses and spoke in the voice of a man: "O fair youth, why are you here? Did you kill that terrible serpent?"

"I am here to tend the goats, and I killed that creature for their sake."

"Oh, your friends must have helped you slay it. Where are they now?" said the vishap.

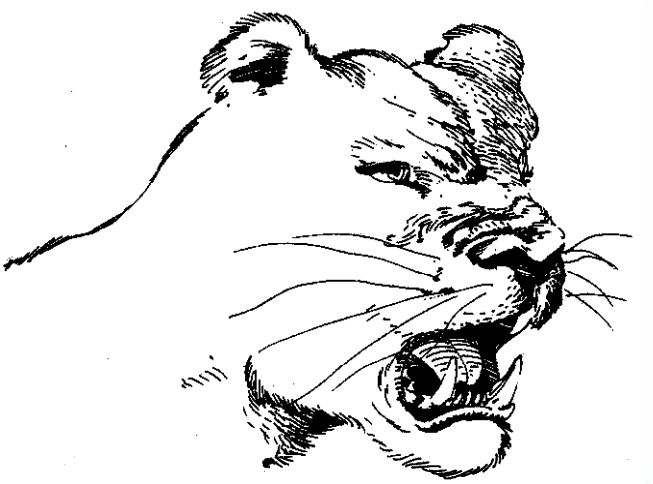
"No, I slew it all by myself. My friends are all in the camp, tired from our feasting," said the youth.

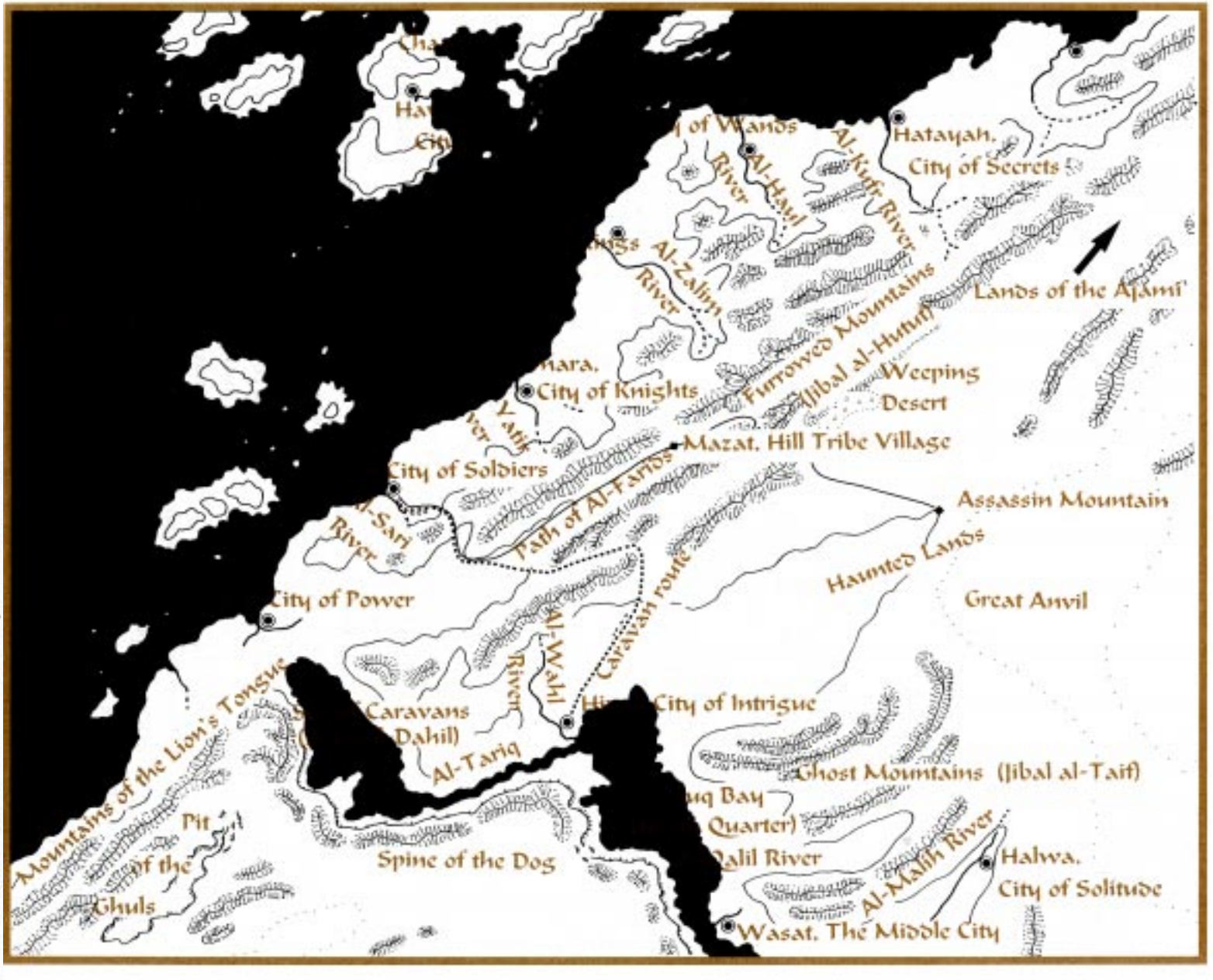
"Did you slay it with a sword? Surely your hands are not big enough."

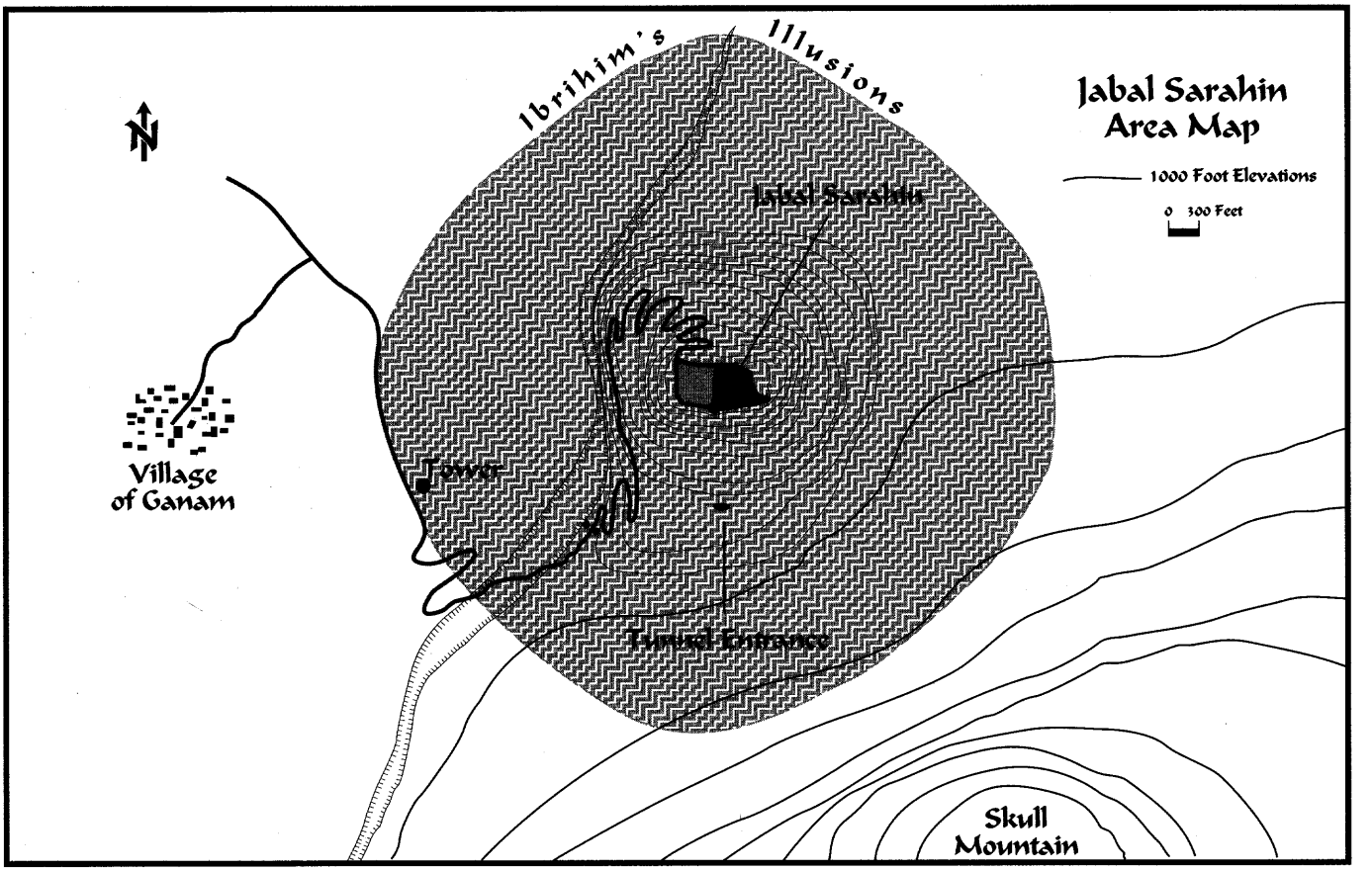
"Oh, no, I have no sword yet. I slew it with a stone."

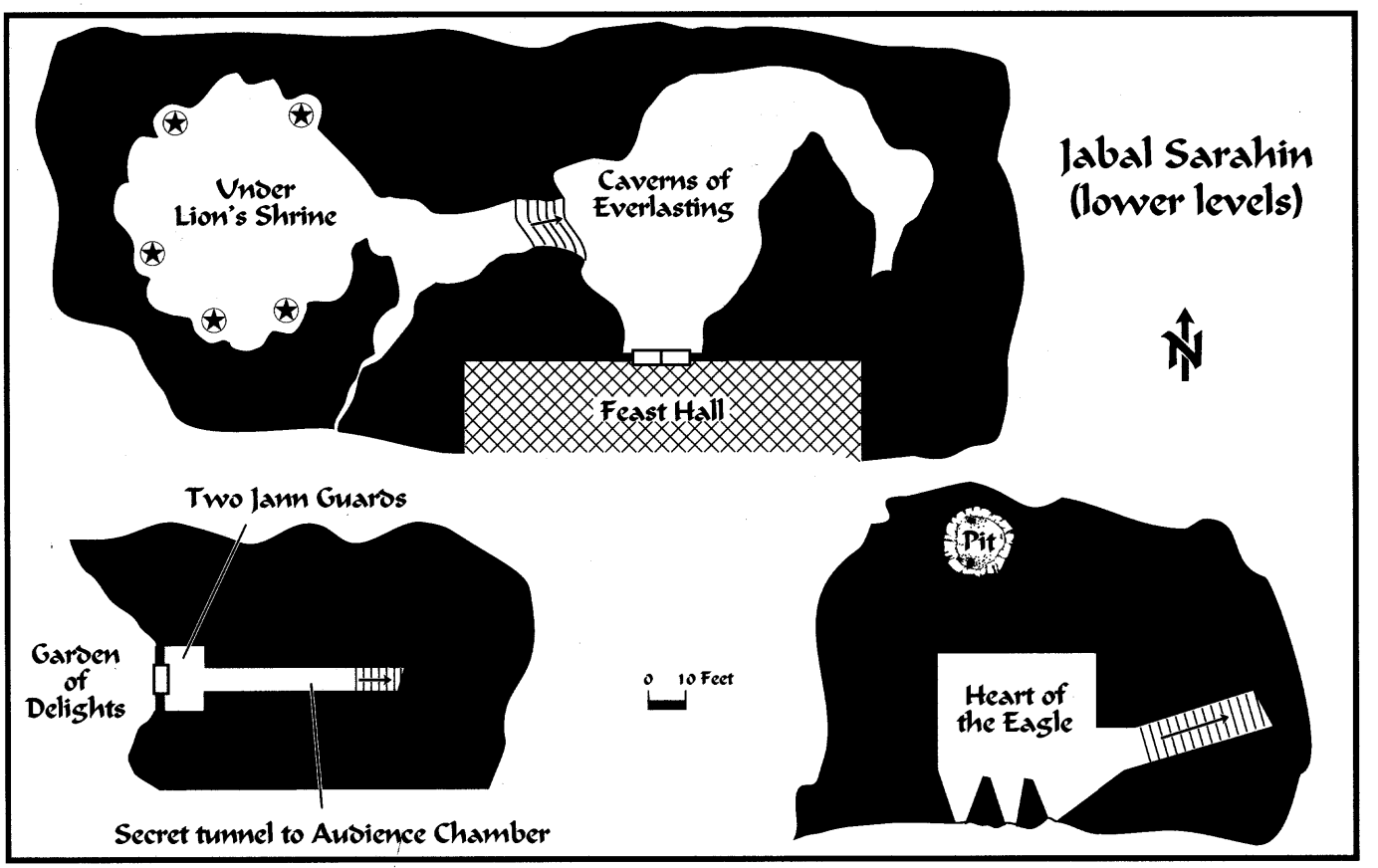
"No sword? Then I think I will eat you, for it is my brother you slew." And with that the vishap leapt out from among the rocks and prepared to rend the youth into portions fit only for salting, But the youth called upon his lion figurine, and the lion roared and fought the vishap, pinning it to the ground so that the youth could take another stone, and slay this beast as well.

Thus did the Al-Sadib conquer the serpents, and to this day they dwell in the Furrowed Mountains. If you do not believe me, go among them yourself, and may the vishap find you as well.




Hatayah,
City of Secrets
Al-Kuft River
Al-Hawl River
Lands of the Ajami'
Furrowed Mountains
Jibal al-Hutuf
Weeping Desert
City of Knights
Mazat, Hill Tribe Village
City of Soldiers
Assassin Mountain
Haunted Lands
Great Anvil
Path of Al-Farids
Caravan route
City of Power
Al-Wahl River
City of Intrigue
Caravans
Dahil)
Al-Tariq
Ghost Mountains (Jibal al-Taif)
Mountains of the Lion's Tongue
Pit
Ghuls
Spine of the Dog
Halwa,
City of Solitude
Al-Malih River
Wasat, The Middle City


Ibrihim's Illusions
Jabal Sarahin
Area Map
1000 Foot Elevations
0 300 Feet
Jabal Sarahin
Village of Ganam
Tower
Tunnel Entrance
Skull Mountain


Under Lion's Shrine
Caverns of Everlasting
Feast Hall
Jabal Sarahin
(lower levels)
Two Jann Guards
Garden of Delights
Secret tunnel to Audience Chamber
0 10 Feet
Pit
Heart of the Eagle

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Assassin Mountain

Holy Slayer Sourcebook

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Part I:
The Holy Slayers

In his lectures to his students in Hilm, the City of Kindness, the great elven alim and theologian Mehmet al-Nassar made a special point of refuting and reviling the Everlasting. Hearing of this, the Old Man of the Mountain decided to put a stop to it and sent a fidai to Hilm. There he enrolled as a student and attended Mehmet's lectures daily for many months, until he found an opportunity to see his teacher alone in his room, on the pretext of discussing a knotty problem. The fidai at once drew a knife and threatened the alim with it.

Al-Nassar jumped aside and said, "What do you want?"

The fidai replied, "I want to slit your belly from the breast to the navel, because you have cursed the Everlasting from the pulpit." After a tussle, the student threw the alim to the ground and sat on his chest. The terrified theologian blubbered, wept, and pleaded with the fidai to spare him. The elf promised to repent and to refrain from such attacks in the future.

The slayer knew the value of spreading the word, and so he allowed himself to be persuaded. He accepted a solemn oath from Mehmet to mend his ways, and to insure his cooperation, produced a bag containing 365 dinars. This sum, he said, would be paid to the theologian yearly if the elf spoke well of them. In addition, each year he refrained from cursing the fellowship, his life would be spared.

Thereafter, in his lectures on the various gods and their followers, Mehmet took great care to avoid offending the Everlasting. Always known as a coward himself, Mehmet began praising the courage of Hajama and his followers. One of his students, noting this change, asked the reason for it.

The professor replied, "It is not advisable to curse the Everlasting, for they have sharp, weighty, and trenchant arguments, and a pointed theology."

This is my tale, I've told it, and in your hands I leave it.

Introduction

" . . . treacherously tracking and cunningly catching their quarry, and killing them with terrible tortures and a dreadful death; multiple murders beginning with the notables of the court and the elite of the land; shedding more than can be counted or measured of invioluble blood . . ."

Ibn al-Qalanisi, listing charges against the Assassins

From the back streets of Hiyal to the Pearl Banks and from the Pantheon to the Free Cities, rulers shudder at the mention of the zealots who watch them for signs of impiety or unrighteousness—the holy slayer fellowships whose methods bring fear to sultan and beggar, general and hakima. They strike by daylight, in the marketplaces, in the mosques, and even on holy days. Viziers cannot erase their bloody deeds through cleverly planted rumors or falsehoods. Sultans wear mail under their robes for fear of the blades that might be hidden in the robes of supplicants and petitioners.

The holy slayers' cries of vengeance and holy wrath ring out for all to hear in the suq or the diwan, and the people know that the slayers' martyrdom at the hands of bodyguards assures them a place at their god's side. The threat of death only inflames their zeal.

Assassin Mountain is a sourcebox for player characters using the AL-QADIM™ rulebook. It details the holy slayer fellowship of the Everlasting and contains a set of special adventures centered on holy slayers. The adventures are set in the north of Zakhara, among the Free Cities and the Haunted Lands of the Burning World. Drawing from the great dramatic traditions of the assassins in stories and movies and Hasan i-Sabbah and Rashid al-Din Sinan, the greatest of the historical Grand Masters of the assassins, these adventures carry PCs from the bustling docks and markets of the seafaring cities to the silent deserts, through the chill valleys of the Furrowed Mountains to the genie-dominated reaches of the Haunted Lands.

Assassin Mountain includes two booklets. Read this booklet first, which details the holy slayers of the Everlasting, their methods, beliefs, tools, and powers, their activities in the Free Cities, and their headquarters in the Haunted Lands. The second booklet contains three adventures that can be played separately or as a continuing story. Special DM tips for handling holy slayer PCs are provided.

Techniques of The Assassins

Although they rely on their faith for their ultimate success, holy slayers are not such fanatics as to forget the mundane necessities of a mission. Mid- and high-level slayers are unusually well equipped to avoid detection, to gain access to targets, and to slay their victims quickly. Some of their tools and methods of organization are described in this section.

Clothing

The holy slayers of the Everlasting believe that their assassinations are sacred affairs—killings performed with the consent and blessings of their god. When the Everlasting seek to slay an infidel, they often wear white clothes as a token of the purity of their faith. In addition, blood shows more vividly on white cloth, which adds to the impact of a public slaying. The assassins are also known to wear formal clothes, such as a sash and turban. Among the Everlasting, these items are red, while the Grey Fire's are black.

Holy slayers seeking simply to dispose of an enemy and not to incite fear in the public typically affect the dark clothes of a burglar.

Female holy slayers generally take the veil, but not simply because they are devout. Veils make excellent disguises and conceal most expressions, making them doubly useful when approaching a victim.

Weapons

Holy slayers employ a number of weapons not common among city warriors or desert tribesmen.

In conjunction with "oil of liquid stars" (Greek fire), the members of the Flamedeath Fellowship employ a wavy-bladed dagger called a flame knife. This weapon is often smeared with pitch or oil of liquid stars and set aflame. A successful hit causes dagger damage plus 1d8 the first round, 1d6 additional damage the second round, and 1d4 additional the third round. The flame knife is often used in nighttime holy slayings or is left behind as a warning to those straying from the path the fellowship endorses.

The garotte is a strong wire (sometimes with leather or hardwood handles) used to choke a victim to death and is generally used to strike from behind. Surprise provides a +3 attack roll bonus; no surprise provides a -3 penalty. Holding a victim in the garotte for 3 consecutive rounds kills the victim. A THAC0 roll is needed to hit the victim on round 1; successful THAC0 rolls are needed on rounds 2 and 3 to hold the victim. On rounds 2 and 3, the victim's armor class is calculated using only magical armor and Dex bonuses; physical armor offers no protection.

Example: Irfan the warrior wears plate mail, a *ring of protection* +2, and has Dexterity 17. His normal armor class is -2. On rounds 2 and 3 of the garotte attack, his armor class is considered to be 5.

The victim of a garotte assault can still attack, but with a -2 penalty to his THAC0.

The garotte cannot be used on targets that are size L or larger.

A sap or blackjack is a weapon used to knock out a bare-headed opponent. When striking from concealment or with surprise at an unarmored head (AC 10), the attacker inflicts normal damage and knocks the victim out on an attack roll of 4 or more than the required number.

The whip sash is a leather sash with a metal wire core and a steel tip, covered with silk to disguise its true nature. It varies in length from 8 to 20 feet and may be used either as a horsewhip or as a garrote. It is the weapon of the Moon-spinners.

Name	Cost	Weight	Size	Type	Speed	S/M	L
Flame knife	2 gp	1	S	P+fire	2	1d4+fire	1d3+fire
Garrote	3 sp	1	S	Special	2	1d4	Nil
Sap	2 sp	2	S	B	5	1d6	1d3
Whip sash	6 gp	2	M	S	5	1d3	1d2

Poisons

Although some fellowships (notably the Wind of Fate and the Soft Whisper) will use poisons in holy slayings, most assassins of the Land of Fate avoid them. Poisons are commonly guarded against by public figures, and the existence of magical protections and *neutralize poison* spells makes them unreliable at best. Among the Grey Fire, the Everlasting, and the Flamedeath Fellowship, using poison is also considered impious in all but the most extreme circumstances.

Those fellowships that do use poison rarely use simple mineral- or vegetable-based poisons or the quickly-decaying venom of poisonous animals, which may not be enough to kill a hardy subject. The holy slayers of Zakhara have mastered the art of creating magical poisons, and each fellowship has its distinctive trademark.

The Everlasting, despite the group's opinions about the use of poison, has developed a unique substance called phoenix powder, which is described in "Death on the Mountain" in the Adventure Book.

The Flamedeath Fellowship occasionally uses an extremely rare magical brew called the Infernal Death, derived from the ichor of fire elementals. It is a slow-acting poison that causes death in 12-48 hours unless a saving throw is successful. *Neutralize poison* alone is ineffective against it; this spell must be cast simultaneously with *protection from fire, 10' radius* for the Infernal Death to be neutralized. Thus, two clerics are required to rid the victim of this poison. *Slow poison* merely prolongs the agony.

Infernal Death is said to be highly reactive and can

be served to a victim only in spicy dishes because of its sharp, acidic flavor. Victims who make their saving throws at a -2 penalty suffer severe, debilitating rashes for 1-4 days, resulting in a temporary six-point reduction in Dexterity.

The Soft Whisper is said to use Silver Spark—a luminescent liquid said to be derived from distilled moonlight and bottled passion—a heady, gaseous poison that is so rich and musky that victims cannot resist breathing deeply when a holy slayer offers it. This perfume-poison takes effect in 1-6 rounds and causes ten points of damage each round for the next 2-8 rounds. Victims who breathe it voluntarily suffer a -4 penalty to their saving throws. If the save is made, there is no effect.

The Wind of Fate uses several ordinary venoms for their blowgun darts, especially giant scorpion or giant cobra venom taken from beasts captured or killed in the wild. Their only enchanted poison is called khamsin, and it functions as a contact poison as well as an injected one, so an envenomed dart need only touch the skin to be effective.

Khamsin acts almost instantly, with an onset time of 1-3 rounds, and it causes the victim to literally turn to dust in a single round if a saving throw versus death magic fails. Khamsin is sometimes applied to the hilts of daggers, jambiya, or scimitars given as gifts. It is said to smell like honey.

Whether other holy slayer groups have enchanted poisons, or use poison at all, is up to the DM.

Magical Items

In addition to their special venoms and weapons, assassins use a number of magical items particular to their profession. These items are all quite uncommon, and possessing them is enough to bring a death sentence to their owner in many civilized cities. They are rare even among the holy slayers, and generally are only found in the hands of the *da'is,* or, in rare cases, of the *rafiqs* (see below).

Blade of Forgetfulness: These weapons vary in size from scimitars to jambiya and katar. They give the wielder no bonus to hit or damage, but anyone who weaves the blade in a figure-eight pattern can induce amnesia in those who view it. This forgetfulness includes everything the viewer has seen in the past three rounds, the round of use, and the following three rounds. The viewer may make a saving throw versus spell at a -3 penalty to avoid the effect.

An attack with such a blade entitles the victim(s) to another saving throw with a +3 bonus to shake the effect entirely. These blades are very useful for bypassing guards, bodyguards, servants, and sentries.

Lamp of the Four Winds: Once every three days, this lamp can be used to summon 1-3 wind walkers, which must obey the owner of the lamp for three days or until the task assigned by their master has been completed, whichever comes first.

Tapestry of Folded Existence: These tapestries always show an interior space such as a palatial room, the cavern of a genie's hoard, or the interior of a ship. The viewer can enter or leave the magical room of a *tapestry of folded existence* simply by speaking a command word and walking into or out of the tapestry. The threads of the tapestry depict in great detail everything (including people) brought into or out of it. They are generally used as treasuries, prisons, or workrooms.

These tapestries always measure at least 6 feet by 10 feet and are of the finest craftsmanship. They require at least two people to carry. The interior room can vary from 5,000 to 10,000 square feet. Creatures and items within a *tapestry of folded existence* require neither food nor drink and suffer no aging effects while they remain in the tapestry. These tapestries function only when placed on a wall or floor. They are items of concealed wizardry (see *LOF* boxed set, Chapter 5) and cannot be discovered with *detect magic* spells.

Phylactery of Righteousness: This collection of sacred writings allows the wearer to strike the Unenlightened (those who reject or are ignorant of

the Law of the Loregiver) with a +4 bonus to attacks and damage, and to strike those who have offended the wearer's god at +2 to attack and damage. The phylactery is worn on the user's weapon arm.

Sand of Truth: This coarse, blue-grey sand is a magical dust formed from the dusty remains of a slain sandman. It can reveal illusions, geniework, false auras, and polymorphed or otherwise altered creatures—in short, it acts as a gem of seeing, but it physically returns things to their true shape when thrown into the air or sprinkled on objects, rather than merely revealing them to a single viewer. *Sand of truth* can be applied to creatures or objects only once, and its enchantment fades thereafter. In combat, the wielder must make a successful attack against AC 10 to coat an unwilling target.

Shimmering Sash: This brightly-colored sash is always embroidered with layers upon layers of holy texts of protection and warding. It allows the wearer to appear as a blur, often indistinguishable from the shimmering heat of the desert air. The effect is equal to a *blur* spell with a 10-round duration and can be called upon at will up to three times per day.

Sleeping potion: This tart liquid lets the imbiber sink into restful sleep for 2d6 turns, during which time the sleeper feels a sense of well-being and peace. The potion mimics the effects of normal sleep, so hit points are regained as for a full night of rest, and spellcasters can drink this potion instead of resting before memorizing spells. Upon waking, the user can memorize spells as if he had slept a full night. Unwilling victims are not entitled to a saving throw. The recipient of this magical slumber always wakes up instantly if attacked. This awakening nullifies any benefit of the potion.

Turban of Multiplication: This turban is permanently enchanted to create *mirror images* of the user once per day as if cast by a 12th level mage.

Turban of Silence: This turban is enchanted to radiate a permanent *silence, 15' radius,* around the wearer. This magical silence can be activated up to three times per day and can be canceled by the wearer's mental command.

Magical Item Values

Item	XP Value
Blade of forgetfulness	1,000
Lamp of the four winds	3,000
Tapestry of folded existence	7,000
Phylactery of righteousness	1,400
Sand of truth	900
Shimmering sash	600
Sleeping potion	300
Turban of multiplication	400
Turban of silence	600

Organization of The Assassins

No man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his Ashishin. There was a fortress at the entrance to the Garden strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering. . . . Then he would introduce them into his Garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke they found themselves in the Garden.

Marco Polo

The greatest tools of the assassins are their terrorist tactics and guerilla organization. These operations require careful recruitment, richly nurtured fanaticism, vows of secrecy, and a clear chain of command. This section covers these aspects of the Everlasting.

Vow of Secrecy

One of the most powerful tools of the assassins is the silence that surrounds them. Assassins never speak of

their affairs, and most holy slayers prefer death to capture. Among the Everlasting, this secrecy is enforced by a magical oath overseen by a tasked oathbinder genie. The Soft Whisper and the Grey Fire use the same system. The Storm Which Destroys and the Flamedeath Fellowship use *rings of the holy slayer* to enforce silence among members. Most smaller groups have no magical system for enforcing silence, and some, like the Friendly Word, require none, as they rarely engage in combat.

All groups have some ceremony of initiation that includes a vow of secrecy and silence. If broken, the offender is usually hunted and killed. For smaller groups, this is usually enough.

Among the Everlasting, the oath is not usually demanded from a devotee immediately, as not all holy slayers are ready for such a commitment. In addition, the fellowship must pay the genie for its services. A member must be proven as valuable, tried, and tempered before being asked to join the *fedayeen* —the elite, magically bound holy slayers who are the core of the organization. Initiates are almost always slayers of at least 4th level. These slayers sometimes call themselves Al-Ahd, "of the Oath."

At the DM's option, members of the Everlasting who accept the magical vow gain additional powers, as the ceremony grants the assassins privileges as well as obligations. Once they are drawn into the mysteries of the fellowship, they may *change self* once per week (beginning as soon as they have taken the oath and for as long as the secret is kept). At 8th level, they may become *invisible* for 1 turn per week, and at 12th level, they may cast *blur* and *pass without trace* once per day. At 16th level, they may cast *nondetection* at will. Members of the Everlasting not bound by the oath do not gain these powers.

Holy slayers of other fellowships may gain slightly different powers than those above if they use a different oathbinding ceremony. All such powers are lost if the oathbinder genie is slain.

Details of the oathbinder tasked genie are given in the *Monstrous Compendium* description included with this sourcebox.

Oathbinding

And may Hajama betray him who betrays this oath.

Conclusion of the Oath

Being asked to swear the Oath of Secrecy among the Everlasting is the ticket to the inner circles of power among the fellowship, and few who are offered the Oath ever refuse. The ceremony is always held in a cave two days' march south along the Wadi is-Sib, the very cave where the Grandmother of the Everlasting captured the first oathbinder genie with her beauty. Candidates are blindfolded before being escorted there.

Once the candidate arrives, he or she is expected to present an offering to the da'i overseeing the ceremony, usually something of great value: a magical item, an art object such as a book of illuminated sacred writings, expertly crafted and embellished weapons, or a set of gems. The value of the donation must exceed the cost of the oath to the fellowship—usually 1,000 gp per level of the candidate.

If the offering is sufficient, the candidate is surrounded by eight rafiqs who begin intoning prayers to Hajama. The da'i then lights the Lamp of Devotion and fills it with rich (possibly magical) incense. Halfana al-Yamini, the current oathbinder genie of the Everlasting, arrives within 10 rounds. The da'i sets forth the conditions of the Oath, asks the supplicant if he enters into this contract of his own free will, and, if he agrees, the agreement is considered sealed.

The conditions of the Oath state that the candidate will reveal no detail of the Everlasting to anyone not bound by the Oath, upon pain of death. The Oath is binding for the time that the candidate's hama resides in Zakhara; if he is summoned back from Paradise by magic, the Oath is again in force and overrules *speak with dead* and similar necromantic magic.

Vengeance

The vengeance taken against those who fall from the path is swift and final. Those who betray the Oath first suffer the oathbinder's attentions, and few survive that. Those who do survive are hunted down by powerful assassins, generally *da'is* (see below). If the oathbinder genie is slain, the Grand Master assassin may come down from the fellowship's stronghold to deal with the heretic personally.

Structure

Men and women are housed and trained separately among the holy slayers and are seldom allowed to marry. The rare exceptions are matches within the faith, and these must be approved by the Grandfather. Orders that depend on the children of their own converts are liberal in allowing marriage. Men and women are generally trained for differing roles, with men generally responsible for public slayings and women for secret ones.

Men and women are both employed for gathering intelligence. Women are more often propagandists in the cities, and men are enforcers and "tax-collectors" among those sympathetic to their cause.

The chain of command in holy slayer fellowships is always clearly defined. The Grandfather or Grandmother assassin rules absolutely, and generally appoints ministers or generals to marshal the fellowship's actions in different areas. These ministers are called *da'is,* or missionaries. Some typical positions include the ministers of the faith, of propaganda, and of devotion.

The minister of the faith is responsible for finding and training new recruits and for gathering funds. The minister of propaganda is responsible for maintaining morale, preaching to the Unenlightened, and passing swift, accurate, and secure communications to the order. The minister of devotion is responsible for counter-espionage to prevent infiltration of the order and to ensure defense of headquarters and the secrecy and security of all members. Most da'is are at least 10th level.

Below the da'is are the *rafiqs,* or comrades, who owe complete obedience to the da'is and the Grandfather. These are generally section leaders; they are responsible for a stronghold of the fellowship or for its operation in a city. They arrange meetings, disseminate propaganda, follow the orders of the Grandfather, consult the Grandfather for guidance, and run the affairs of a city or region. Section leaders command the *fedayeen* and *lasiqs* (see below) to collect alms and donations, to watch suspicious characters or potential targets, and to carry goods, orders, or money from one point to another. The rafiqs are always bound by the Oath of Secrecy, and thus are always at least 4th level.

Below the rafiqs are the *fedayeen* (sing. *fidai),* who are the active members, the couriers, and those asked to perform most holy slayings. They are the devoted, willing to give their lives for their god's cause. The rafiqs vary from 2nd to 5th and even 6th level.

At the lowest level of the hierarchy are the *lasiqs,* or novices. They are active cell members, but new initiates are rarely told more than they need to know and are expected to obey without hesitation. They are rarely greater than 1st level holy slayers.

Recruitment

Recruitment varies from one branch of a fellowship to another. Few holy slayers will begin training any human after the age of ten or eleven, after which fanatical devotion is harder to instill. In some regions, a member must be be born into a holy slayer cult. Most fellowships, however, are open to all comers. The strictest are the slayers of the Final Chord, which accepts only local children, generally freely given up by their parents so that they may be raised by the fellowship.

Some isolated groups will steal children and raise them at their headquarters, far from the world other than that which their foster parents provide; the fellowship of the Moon-spinners is known for this. These extreme techniques guarantee greater loyalty and fanaticism.

Recruitment is always open to all the faithful; holy slayers may be of either sex, from any race, clan, or region. All that is required of them is obedience and a willingness to kill for their god. Humans, dwarves, hobgoblins, and ogres are the most common holy slayers. Elves, gnomes, halflings, werecreatures, and even giants are much less common, but have been successful holy slayers.

The Call

Holy slayers spend their lives hoping and training for the moment when they will be called to make the ultimate sacrifice. Trained in the hidden strongholds of their fellowship, they are sent out into the world to observe and infiltrate courts, mosques, and other institutions. There, they take on mundane trappings, but they serve as the eyes of their god, watching and waiting for an opportunity.

"The call" can be given only by the Grandfather or Grandmother Assassin. Ministers can request that certain foes of the faith be slain, but the final decision always lies with the fellowship's leader. The actual slaying is purely a matter for the holy slayers to plan and execute, within the limits of the fellowship's weaponry and beliefs.

"The call" always comes at night. A rafiq speaks a word or phrase to the chosen slayer, followed by a meeting time and place. The code phrases used to alert a comrade or an entire cell to prepare themselves vary from group to group. Examples include, among the Everlasting, "The hour knows your name"; among the Wind of Fate, "May the spirits of the air guard your coming, and may the spirits of the earth guard your going"; and, among the Final Chord, "Shall the song be stilled forever?"

At the meeting for the chosen, the target is named and a deadline is set for completion of the holy slaying. There is no debate. Failure to either meet the conditions or die in the attempt is grounds for expulsion from the order, which usually means death.

Many holy slayers kill themselves rather than face capture, and those who escape often attempt to vanish, cutting all ties to the fellowship they have failed. Those who die in the attempt, whether successful or not, are martyrs to the cause and are venerated as near-saints. Those who succeed and survive are considered heroes, and they are expected to serve again in the same capacity. They may take the title "Al-Nasab," for they have been proven and found worthy in the war for the faith.

Targets

The holy slayers' terror tactics are ineffective against institutional hierarchies like those of the mamluks, for slaying their leaders merely results in promotion for others. It's hard to get results with public killings in Qudra or against societies like the Dauntless, and attempting to slay such leaders is a waste of valuable men and resources

Since some mamluks are trained almost from birth, it might seem that their societies are difficult to infiltrate. While holy slayers do concentrate on converting mamluks in positions of power within the hierarchy, they are more likely to simply choose one of the rafiqs to gain the appropriate facial tattoos when a spy among the mamluks is called for. This strategy has been somewhat successful: the Everlasting have converted a few of the followers of Hajama within the mamluk societies to their cause, and their tattooed imitators serve admirably to inspire chaos by disrupting orders, misdirecting troops, misappropriating funds, and freeing captured slayers who are valuable to the cause.

Beliefs

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So-and-So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, nevertheless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise."

Marco Polo

Holy slayers are fearless and dangerous, not because of their skill or their numbers, but because of their willingness to die for the cause. Their eyes are set on paradise, and death is the key to the gate. The Everlasting fear nothing but their own cowardice in the face of death.

Assassins have no word for failure; if they die in service of their god, they are martyrs, but they have not failed. When they die, they go to live under the eye of their god.

The holy slayers of the north are in many ways more open and more violent than their counterparts elsewhere, for they feel the Free Cities are greatly in need of bravery, daring, and piety. The surrounding land is wilder and more prone to ajami incursions.

Holy slayers hope to do more than simply withstand the trespasses of ajami gods; they hope to take the battle to the outlanders, and to win there, they must be pure and stout-hearted. Obviously, there is no room in the ranks for those who oppose what they see as the will of the gods. Killing these cowardly, stubborn, blasphemous fools is not murder, but an act of enlightened piety, a purification of the body politic.

Some might say (though not to their faces) that the Everlasting, the holy slayers of Hajama, are cowards for living in a stronghold so far from civilized reaches. To this they merely shrug and reply that even the most stalwart defender of the righteous needs to learn and practice and perfect his skills somewhere. They see their time on the mountain as a retreat from the world, a time to gather strength.

There is no hatred quite so rich as that between rival branches of the same faith. Pragmatic and moderate followers of Hajama call the difference between courage and daring the difference between a strong will and a soft head. The moralists disagree, and see the slayers as a noble army of martyrs. Less pious commoners see them as a gang of terrorists.

Methods

Holy slayers prefer to strike in public, such as when a target is praying, presiding in the diwan, attending or performing a wedding, dining, walking the streets, or shopping in the market. When a target is heavily guarded, assassins sometimes strike in a private place, such as a hallway, a bedroom, or a rural path.

Holy slayer assassinations are treated as backstabbing attacks as per the thief class. Thus, the relatively weak fighting strength of the holy slayers is enhanced by the element of surprise. If they disguise themselves and strike unexpectedly, they usually gain the element of surprise.

Surprise

All holy slayers may hide their weapons successfully by making a successful sleight of hand/pick pockets roll. They palm small weapons like jambiyas or katars until the last moment; scimitars and blowguns are kept hidden in the folds of their aba or robes. Even a holy slayer standing in a crowd can attack by surprise.

As many as three holy slayers may attempt to attack a target by surprise at the same time. A single die roll is made for surprise attempt. The slayers suffer no penalty as long as they operate in relatively crowded conditions. Three killers cannot creep up on a victim unawares on an empty street!

If the streets are empty and more than one holy slayer seeks to ambush a victim from the shadows, all the other holy slayers involved must successfully conceal themselves. If any of the slayers fails to hide successfully, the victim cannot be surprised, and the

attempted assassination fails unless the holy slayers can defeat their victim in ordinary combat.

Table 1: Surprise Modifiers for Holy Slayers

Successfully disguised	+1
Weapon concealed	+2
Striking from a crowd	+1
Striking from shadows	+3

The first three of these modifiers are cumulative; the last is not cumulative with other modifiers. See also the surprise modifier table (Table 57) in the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide.*

In some cases, such as when striking down traitors to their fellowships or especially well-guarded targets, holy slayers may attack helpless opponents—those who are asleep, bound, or magically held, for instance. In this case, attacks hit automatically for maximum backstabbing damage on the first blow. Thereafter, combat proceeds normally.

High-level holy slayers of the Everlasting may double or triple more than just weapon damage. Holy slayers of 7th level or higher know how to use the full force of a blow, even when their strike is by stealth. They may apply the backstab multiplier to their strength bonus when figuring damage. Holy slayers of 14th level or higher are aware of the arcane strength of their weaponry and may multiply their weapon's magical energies when attacking from concealment. They may apply the backstab multiplier to the magical damage bonus on a successful backstab. These modifers may be applied only to pre-planned, coordinated attacks, and then only when the holy slayer is summoned by "the call."

The strength and skill to gain these bonuses is granted to the slayers by their god, in return for remaining true to his Word. However, this skill is theirs only as long as" they do not use poisons, which adherents of Hajama universally denounce as a coward's weapon.

Other holy slayer fellowships may also be granted this special ability, if the DM wishes. However, it should be granted only to those holy slayers who forsake the use of poisons.

Infiltration

Assassins are trained not only in combat skills, but also in foreign languages and the tenets of other gods. This enables them to blend smoothly into any regional background, from the Free Cities to the Pantheon to the barbaric islands of the distant south.

Holy slayers are rigorously trained in the arts of disguise, diversion, and deception. Mamluk tattoos can be faked or imitated by the truly fanatical. Many holy slayers take positions as accountants, tutors, foremen, merchants, and so on to gain access to powerful houses. These are usually spying missions, and the slayers assigned to these positions are only expected to report to their leaders, not slay a target.

Others take on disguises as Free Priests, market vendors, camel drivers, caravan guards, mendicants and beggars, entertainers and storytellers, kitchen help, musicians, grooms, servants, students, and horse trainers. These positions are usually temporary in nature, and they are used simply to gain a target's trust prior to slaying him or her.

Part II:

The Brotherhood of The Everlasting

"Our men seek the intimacy of death."

Rashid al-Din Sinan

In the first days of the holy slayers, the Grandfather sent a messenger to the Grand Caliph, gods have mercy on him, and ordered the messenger to deliver his message only in private. The Grand Caliph was suitably cautious and had the messenger searched, and when his servants found nothing dangerous on him he dismissed the assembly, leaving only a few advisers, and asked him graciously to deliver his message. But the messenger said: "My master, the Old Man of the Mountain, ordered me not to deliver the message except in private."

The Grand Caliph then emptied the assembly of all save two mamluks, and then said: "Give your message."

"I have been ordered to deliver it only in private," said the messenger.

The Grand Caliph frowned. "These two never leave my side. If you wish, deliver your message, and if not, leave now," said the Caliph.

"Why do you not send away these two as you sent away the others?" asked the messenger.

"I regard these two as my own sons, and they and I are as one," said the Grand Caliph.

Then the messenger turned to the two mamluks: "If I ordered you in the name of my master to kill this turbaned prince, would you do so?" They answered yes, and drew their swords, saying: "Command us as you wish."

The Grand Caliph was astounded, and the messenger left, taking the two mamluks with him. And thereupon the Grand Caliph inclined to make peace with the holy slayers and to enter into friendly relations with them.

The bird of this tale has flown—and a good evening to all!

Reports from The Faithful

The comrades of the Everlasting have an extensive net of supporters, informers, and operatives in all of the Free Cities as well as in Qudra, Hiyal, Hilm, and Talab. A long-standing agreement between the Everlasting and the Grey Fire asserts that the Free Cities and Qudra are the province of the Everlasting, and Huzuz, the Pearl Cities, and the south belong to the Grey Fire, though each fellowship is granted access to the lands and resources of its ally.

This agreement has broken down somewhat recently, but the two groups still use one another's networks and operatives to increase their reach. Thus, both fellowships seem able to reach targets almost anywhere in Zakhara. A few plots and operatives of the Everlasting from throughout the Land of Fate are detailed below.

In Qudra, the Everlasting have a hard time getting close to the reins of power, as they are held by the almost unbribable mamluks. Nevertheless, not everyone in the city is a slave soldier, and many prominent merchants, scholars, tax collectors, and others are, in fact, holy slayers. These holy slayers rarely act directly against the mamluks, but they frequently cause trouble that simultaneously gains them some advantage. For instance, slayers posing as tax collectors have roamed the streets lately, and they have taken to imprisoning the children of those who cannot pay. Many of these unfortunates become unsuspecting recruits of the Everlasting, spirited away to their bases in the Furrowed Mountains by night and then indoctrinated.

Liham is a melting pot of Everlasting activity. Anwar al-Sifr (see statistics in the Adventure Book) is the leader of the holy slayers in town. During the day, he serves as chief constable, reporting to the caliph and his mamluk council. This allows him considerable power, as he can frequently obtain information from mamluk societies that are affiliated with Qudra, where information is much harder to come by. Many of the Everlasting's traitorous informants or exiled members have fallen into his hands; when they do, they disappear in the dungeons beneath the palace.

Hawa is a city of so many adventurers and rogues and so little law and order that members of the Everlasting recruit openly on the streets here. It is said that they offer a bounty to anyone willing to sign their children on as "apprentices" to the assassin masters. Of course, this bounty is a thin excuse for selling children into their ranks.

In Qadib, a number of mages have recently disappeared or been murdered, causing a minor panic among the remaining mages. These disappearances have been secret operations by the Everlasting as they attempt to recruit new mages to aid their cause. The da'i responsible for recruitment has approached several sand and wind sorcerers, sha'irs, and flame mages. Though two have accepted (and been spirited away), all those who refused have been slain by magical creatures or weapons striking in the night. Lawful neutral or lawful evil PC mages who worship Hajama or Najm might be approached with a similar offer.

Umara has been the site of two recent slayings attributed to the Everlasting. The death of a corrupt and cowardly captain of the customs officers has been celebrated by the merchants and dockworkers, and the Everlasting's slaying of a extortionist priest of Jisan has further raised their popularity.

Muluk has recently been the scene of much friction between the Everlasting and the Flamedeath Fellowship, though Farouk Abd al-Bazan has been trying to make contacts there for his faction, the Sword Dancers (see "Factions among the Everlasting"). A number of the Everlasting and their sympathizers have been found dead in the streets, at the hands of the Flamedeath Fellowship. These were members of other factions who interfered with Farouk's plans for the Sword Dancers.

Hiyal is a hotbed of activity for the Everlasting, the Soft Whisper, the Flamedeath Fellowship, and the Storm Which Destroys, but it is also a very dangerous

place to operate, because few plots escape the notice of Tocka, the gnomish master of the Gilded Palm in that city. Few schemes that Tocka does not approve of come to fruition in Hiyal.

One of the most infamous members of the Flamedeath Fellowship, Matruda ai-Muhif (hfT/hs/13), is rumored to have fled the city of Hiyal. Recent reports have placed her in Muluk, where she is said to be gathering a large supply of oil of liquid stars.

Halwa is a dumping point for slaves taken by the Everlasting and for initiates who fail to pass the tests to come into the lowest ranks of the fellowship. These slaves are usually mute when they arrive in Halwa; their tongues have been removed to ensure that the secrets of the fellowship are kept.

Hilm has been the site of recent activity by Aida al-Irrahman al-Qudra, the minister of propaganda of the Everlasting. The mistress of disguises has robbed a number of moneylenders by imitating the manner and dress of various well-known merchants and getting large loans secured with their property. This has led to legal chaos as the moneylenders attempt to take possession of shops, caravan goods, warehouses, and even slaves when the merchants default on "their" loans. There is, of course, no trace of Aida and the money. The qadi of Hilm has posted a large reward for her capture.

Factions Among The Everlasting

Each of the five main factions among the Everlasting is detailed below. The most powerful are the Loyalists (hand-picked favorites of the Shadow Caliph), the Preachers (loosely representing the moralist priesthood of Hajama), and the Unclean (feared by everyone for their master's influence with genies). The Sword Dancers, a charismatic cult of dancers, are a rising power. The sect of the Winged Bull, a faction once responsible for communications, propaganda, discipline, and transport of material, is a fallen power. They are currently little more than the bully-boys of the Loyalists in the inner circles of the fellowship. Each faction has holy slayers among its members. The leaders of these factions are only cursorily presented here; full details may be found on Cards 1-6.

The Grandfather

Grandfather Marwan al-Jabal al-Hiyali (hmT/hs/15), the Caliph of Shadows, rules over the fellowship of the Everlasting. That is to say, he manages to keep control over a seething vipers' den, where plots are constantly hatching like serpents' eggs and venom seeps forth to stain the sands. Competing claims to the succession are constantly in motion, and somehow, deftly, played off against one another. The Old Man of the Mountain is both wise and wicked, and even so barely manages to keep ahead of his followers.

The Grandfather is a widower, and he has sworn never to leave the precincts of the mountain. He killed his own son for cowardice; he acts as mercilessly as he does because he believes that he acts not for himself, but for the sake of others.

Marwan rarely appears the same way twice, for he enjoys using the arts of disguise to walk among his followers undetected, the better to pick up plots against him and the rafiqs' true feelings. When he holds audience he wears tightly-fitting garments of dark blue silk and a dark blue silk turban set with a small egret's feather and a large opal.

His servants are the Loyalists, who obey him without question. He is also the master of Halfana al-Yamini, the oathbinder genie. His command of the genie will pass to his successor upon his death.

The Loyalists

The Loyalists have always supported the Shadow Caliph, but in the wake of his death they will strive to consolidate the power they have begged and scraped for. Grandfather Marwan has been their ultimate leader for so long that they no longer quite know what

to do without him. There are currently 142 Loyalists in Jabal Sarahin.

The leader of the Loyalists is Yusuf bin Ayyub (hmT/hs/9), a brownnoser who plans on lording it over a great number of people the day he assumes power. He has been planning for Marwan's death for years—planning it very thoroughly and very, very carefully. He is the minister of devotion for the Everlasting.

Yusuf is paranoid that everyone envies his position at the Grandfather's right hand, and so he is constantly accompanied by three werelion mercenaries, Jamila al-Zahab, Jezeed al-Kadarosti, and Aziz al-Asra. Jamila is an exotic woman, powerful and willing to flaunt the strictures of Zakharan society. She is rumored to be Yusuf's lover, though others say this is merely jealousy. She is very diligent in the performance of her duties as a bodyguard. The werelions are detailed further in the Adventure Book.

Marwan and Yusuf share a confidant, Marwan's niece, Sayida ibn Afa (hfT/r/6). Though she knows all their secrets and serves as a sort of vizier to the Everlasting, she has no stomach for killing. She knows that if Yusuf dies or takes Marwan's place, she will become the new leader of the Loyalists, so she fully supports Yusuf's bid for the mantle of Grandfather. Sayida is suspicious of Farouk's (see below) romantic overtures towards her; her intuition tells her that a plot might be growing against Marwan.

Several of the loyalists are the jann who built Sarahin and were converted by the efforts of the holy slayers. They are completely loyal to Marwan and his anointed successors. They are unable to see through the illusions of Farouk, and they rarely mix with the mortals who now overrun Sarahin. They hold important posts, including the master of the hounds, the guardians of the Gate of the Bulls, and the guardians of the Garden of Delights.

The Preachers

This powerful group is the self-appointed arm of the moralist mosques of Hajama and their imams, a group that the Grandfather must always at least appear to defer to if he is to retain the loyalty of his followers. In fact, Batina al-Shaat, the moralist priestess who leads the faction (dfP/m/11), is a bit of a rogue. Most moralist priests are not willing to support the holy slayers who kill enlightened people in the name of their god; though the most rabid priests may cheer them in private, they denounce them publicly. A number of the faction's members are priests, though most of the citadel guards are also loyal to the Preachers (insofar as anyone cares about their opinion), usually because their officers are supporters.

Since few human priests, even moralists, enjoy distant, blazing hot mountain postings, the task has fallen to a single (and singularly powerful) dwarf, Batina, who has surrounded herself with dwarven followers of the faith. Her desire is clear: to guide the hand of the assassins and keep it striking, hard and often, at anyone she sees as an enemy. If this includes those among the Everlasting who don't meet her standards, so be it. She smiles broadly and often at her followers, but her smile is not pleasant—she seems to be constantly contemplating how much loyalty, fervor, and service she can wring from the faithful. No matter what subject comes up in conversation, her interpretation must always be right.

Batina is a hard woman, never satisfied with her followers. For some reason, the way she goads them only inspires them with an even greater desire to please her. She has thin white hair and a thin beard, a source of some aggravation to her. She tends to yawn often, widely, and unattractively at all hours of the day. This does not indicate disinterest or scorn, though her followers (and the PCs) may see it that way.

Batina enforces ideological purity among the faithful and advises the Grandfather in all things. She is the minister of the faith for the Everlasting. She has never had designs on the rulership itself; she views her

position as almost as powerful and a great deal safer than actually seizing control. She views all political maneuvering as transitory; only the teaching of Hajama and the Loregiver are eternal. She does have two great enemies: one is Emir Hatit Abd al-Wajib, the dwarven leader of the council of mamluks of Qudra, who once rejected her for a powerful post there among the slave soldiers' societies. She has never forgiven him. Batina also hates Akim al-Kalaas (see below) passionately and hopes to convince others that he must be driven away during the confusion of the succession.

Batina's faction includes two 5th-level and six 4th-level dwarven priests, and three 3rd-level, seven 2nd-level, and 15 1st-level dwarven farisan of the Courageous, also called the Abd al-Jari. The dwarves are all darkly tanned from hours spent staring from the ramparts at the horizon. Their thick beards are bleached completely white from the sun, but the dwarves are entirely bald.

Batina's closest ally is Mamoud ibn Asra Abd al-Jari (dmF/f/7), her chief enforcer among both the human guards and the warrior dwarves. He is specialized in the use of the scimitar. Mamoud commands not only Batina's dwarves, the Courageous, but also the citadel's hobgoblin defenders, called "the Eagles." Typical stats for each are given below. The six commanders of the Courageous are 3rd level. There are ten honor guards and 70 citadel guards.

The warriors of the Courageous have high self-esteem, excellent training, and an unbreakable loyalty to Mamoud. Many of them crossed the desert with Batina, but their loyalty to Mamoud has been forged in battle against the desert tribes.

The Eagles, the hobgoblin footsoldiers of Sarahin, are quality troopers with a fair amount of discipline and a lot of fervor, but they are not battle-hardened—no one has assaulted the castle in living memory. There are only 20 hobgoblin troopers, and they spend most of their time drilling or on watch. Use them as decoration to remind the players that their characters are in a fortress, with soldiers watching, drilling, telling stories, dicing, and generally standing around bored a great deal of the time. In any real combat, the party should send them to their reward by the score. Use them as cannon-fodder and as screens for the major NPCs. If the head of an important faction needs help, the guards are just a shout away.

Hierarchs
Tariq Seljun, Rashid al-Arzran
5th level male dwarven priests (moralists)
AL N; AC 7; MV 6; hp 25, 14; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 650.
Spells: *cure light wounds, detect magic, remove fear, continual light, enthrall, hold person, dispel magic, payer.*

Preachers
4th-level dwarven priests (moralists)
AL N; AC 7; MV 6; hp 24, 21, 20, 17, 16, 13; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 270; short swords.
Spells: cure *light wounds, detect magic, sanctuary, aid, hold person.*

Sergeants of the Courageous (Abd al-Jari)
3rd-level dwarven warriors (farisan)
AL LN; AC 6; MV 6; hp 18, 15, 14; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 175; studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, jambiya, throwing axe.

The Courageous Honor Guard
2nd-level dwarven warriors (farisan)
AL LN; AC 6; MV 6; hp 22, 20, 19, 18, 15, 13, 11, 10, 9, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 120; studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, light crossbow.

The Courageous Footmen
1st-level dwarven warriors (farisan)
AL LN; AC 7; MV 6; hp 1-14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 35; leather armor, shield, scimitar.

The Eagles
Hobgoblins: AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1 + 1; hp 2-9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35; studded leather armor, spear.

The Unclean

The Unclean are a quiet and unassuming faction, recent but powerful arrivals to the plots and schemes of Assassin, Mountain, and ruled by the half-mad sha'ir Akim al-Kalaas (hmW/sh/14). They are the smallest faction in Sarahin, with only fifteen members, four of whom are sha'irs. The others are the sha'irs' five genie servants and six holy slayers who hope to gain a martyr's death through close work with the sha'ir.

In fact, the holy slayers are little more than information sources for the other factions, which is why the sha'irs never tell them anything of importance. Three of the assassins are willing spies for the Preachers, Loyalists, and Sword Dancers. The other three are merely foolish holy slayers who are pumped for information on a regular basis. In addition, Akim has created a pack of ghouls and a gibbering mouther which currently live under the mountain.

Although the priests of the church moral vehemently preach against the sha'irs and all of the works of genie-kind, Grandfather Marwan has found them very useful, even indispensable, allies here in the Haunted Lands. He was delighted to gain the services of Akim al-Kalaas, a zealous follower of Hajama and the only sha'ir ever to be exiled from the city of Hiyal. The uneasy peace between the Jann of the Haunted Lands and the Everlasting is Akim's doing. Although he is a follower of Hajama, he prefers to express his fanatical devotion to the ideal of bravery by foolishly tempting the patience of genies. He has also flirted with secret knowledge best left undiscovered; the gibbering mouther in the Pit is the result of one such summoning.

Akim is a tall, unnaturally thin man with a dark scraggly beard, hooked nose, and wild eyes. He wears robes of either dark green or maroon samite and silk, and always wears a deep yellow turban set with an ox-blood red ruby. He always carries a teak staff, carved with two interlocking spirals and topped with a brass figurine of a capering monkey. He cultivates his reputation as a madman.

When he was younger, more foolish, and slightly less powerful, Akim attempted to magically coerce the sultana of Hiyal to marry him, with an eye to having her cede the throne to him, but his plot was uncovered and he took to his heels. Since Marwan is a native of the City of Intrigue, his spies and sources there are excellent—when Akim fled, Marwan was immediately informed of the most recent development at court. The Everlasting saw their opportunity and offered him sanctuary and all the materials he might require—for a price.

Akim was welcomed like a brother returned from the desert, feasted, honored, and given free rein in the fortress—but he swore an oath bound by an oathbinder genie to put his not inconsiderable services at the disposal of Marwan al-Jabal al-Hiyali until such time as the Old Man of the Mountain dies or passes on his mantle to a successor. At that time, he is free to negotiate another arrangement. Akim's oath prevents him from killing Marwan himself, but he does everything he can to stir up the other factions against Marwan, so that his servitude will come to an end.

Currently, Akim hopes that the marrash he has summoned will cause enough mayhem in the cities he sends them against (as allies of the slayers, of course) that someone will come against the Everlasting and slay Marwan, releasing him from his given word. So far, his minions have had no success in causing **a** major epidemic.

Akim is well known for using the Everlasting against rival sha'irs as part of his price for enchantments he creates and genies he summons to protect their fortress. He realizes that Batina hates him and intends to try to finish him if she can, but he is confident in his ability to deal with her. He is much more worried that the jann may some day settle their affairs of their amir and come back to claim Sarahin from its current occupants.

The *lamp of the four winds* is a magical item that Akim researched and had a genie create for him. Its intended purpose was to summon lesser djinn. While the scrolls he consulted for details of its enchantment were accurate, the work was flawed by bad materials (the metalsmith responsible died a prolonged and agonizing death), and as a result only wind walkers hear the call of the lamp. Because it is the only magical item he has researched himself, Akim is inordinately proud of the lamp and will not consider selling it, loaning it, or even showing it to anyone he does not trust and respect. As the Grandfather is the only person on the mountain he trusts, Marwan is the only one who knows of the lamp.

Ali Abdal Akim is the sha'ir's second gen, a brutal and sadistic little sand gen. He always harasses guests when he knows he can get away with it, even to the point of drawing blood. Akim tolerates this misbehavior because most of his visitors are too cowed to object, and Akim enjoys seeing fear in his guests' eyes. However, Ali knows a few secrets that he has been keeping from Akim. He knows, for instance, that Farouk (see below) is an efreeti in disguise, but he is unwilling to tell anyone other than another gen, because Ali is afraid of what the genies might do to him when his sha'ir dies and the gen returns to the elemental planes.

Akim has two new apprentices, Mara and Safia al-Gurab Sagir (hfW/sh/2), and a senior apprentice, Nikolai Nikopolis, an outlander who has sought to learn the secrets of Zakhara through its magic.

Nikolai (hmW/sh/4) is a complete and utter pig, a

smug and smirking example of what happens when someone feels immune to any and all retribution. He knows he is Akim's best student, and since no one would willingly anger Akim, he uses this status to do whatever he pleases with the guards, holy slayers of low station, servants, and even the dwarven farisan. He is a tall and pale fellow with dishwater blonde hair and dark blue, almost violet eyes.

The women are new apprentices who obey their master in all things and keep apart from the other inhabitants of Jabal Sarahin. They are overworked, mistreated by Nikolai, and not sure that their work is appreciated. They know nothing of the machinations of the various factions, and will only fight to defend Akim (Nikolai could fall off a cliff and they would swear they didn't see a thing). Mara and Safia are sisters, with glossy black hair, skin, and eyes.

Akim has command over several genies as well. The dao in the Lion's Shrine is his guardian for his lifeproofing gem. He also commands two tasked genies: Naomi, the dancer, and Ibrihim, the deceiver.

If Akim dies, his servants are freed from any controls. The wind walkers no longer obey the fellowship, and they proceed to exact their vengeance, blowing guards off the battlements and messenger birds out of the sky. The fortress is effectively under siege; however, the wind walkers do not go into any of the buildings, and after a week, they leave, seeking out the high mountains. In addition, the ghouls are released from Akim's constraints and rise from the pit, seeking to kill as many as they can.

The release of the other genies is less catastrophic. The dancer leaves unless a skilled male mortal dancer has caught her eye. The deceiver genie abandons the area without further mischief. The dao returns to its home plane, leaving the gem in the Lion's Shrine unguarded.

Sword Dancers

The Sword Dancers are an offshoot of the Court of Rhythm mystics found in the south. They are a young faction of rather heterodox worshippers, and believers in the power of certain cleansing rituals, such as fiery purifications and fasting, as well as ecstatic dancing. They are allies of the Unclean, who at least respect their beliefs, and who depend on the Sword Dancers' numbers to add weight to the sorcerous power of the Unclean. The Sword Dancers are often whipped into frenzies of devotion by Farouk Abd al-Bazan, their charismatic leader. There are 43 Sword Dancers in Sarahin, and their numbers are growing. Farouk holds no ministerial post, though his influence with Marwan is increasing.

An efreeti with designs on the leadership of the Everlasting, Farouk has been passing himself off as a sorcerer of wind and flame. He is Akim's closest confidant and advisor, and also a close (but false) friend of Yusuf. Though hakimas and sha'irs can normally see through genie disguises, Farouk's *amulet of proof against detection and location* protects him from this and thus Akim suspects nothing of his true nature, a source of perpetual amusement for Farouk.

He has used his *polymorph self* ability to take the form of a dark and devastatingly handsome man of about 26, with dark brown hair and dancing green eyes. He can become *invisible,* assume *gaseous form, detect magic, enlarge, polymorph self,* create an *illusion* with both visual and audio components, or create a *wall of fire* once per day. Farouk can *produce flame* or cause *pyrotechnics* as often as desired. He takes no damage from normal fire.

Farouk figures that replacing the Old Man of the Mountain is a simple way to gain a powerful hold over the cities of Zakhara. He underestimates the cunning of the assassins, but he will learn.

If Farouk dies, the faction collapses and disappears within weeks. Most of them join the Loyalists, others join the Winged Bulls.

Winged Bulls

This faction consists of the most loutish of holy slayers, generally dim bulbs who are given their own leader and their own tasks to keep them from screwing up the plans of other, better organized factions. They are foaming-at-the-mouth zealous but they are utterly inept slayers, the sort of rafiqs who dream of martyrdom but lack the wits to achieve much of anything. Although they are constantly full of good intentions and grandiose plans, they are too lazy and blunt to carry them to completion.

The Winged Bulls are led by Marwan's grandnephew, a young and overweight fellow named Nusrah bin Kerim (hmT/hs/2). Nusrah has dark brown skin, thinning curly grey hair, and bad teeth. He sports a tiny beard, which his followers in the fortress imitate, making their allegiance plain. There are only twenty Bulls in Sarahin, all of them holy slayers no higher than 3rd level.

Use the Bulls for comic relief. Whenever the plotting gets grim, a thuggish Bull may wander by, asking snide, rude, or embarrassing questions ("So, why are you still alive? What's that wand do? How's it feel to know you'll die a coward's death? You look pretty scrawny for a warrior. Boy, that was a dumb thing to do."). They constantly barge in at the wrong time, say the wrong thing, attack the wrong person. Their advice is a recipe for disaster.

While the Bulls on Assassin Mountain are hopeless, they are also the least capable of their faction. Their true leader, Aida al-Irrahman al-Qudra (hfT/hs/12), is building their strength elsewhere. Aida is the minister of propaganda for the Everlasting, and she is currently spreading the word among the people of Huzuz. She is a pale-skinned woman with dark black curls and dark brown eyes, a long face, and thin limbs. Her fingers are long and narrow.

Aida is cunning, a master at the art of disguise (frequently assuming the appearance of a young man), and a stunning orator. She has many followers outside the precincts of Jabal Sarahin, and many expect the mistress of the Winged Bulls to become the next leader of the Everlasting. Grandfather Marwan does consider her his best choice for a successor, and has made sure she stays far away from the plots and treachery of Assassin Mountain for that very reason.

If Nusrah dies, there is little fallout. In fact, a PC holy slayer or a devoted worshipper of Hajama could probably take charge of the faction if he were so inclined—until Aida returns.

Part III:

The Fortress of Sarahin

The fortress of Sarahin was built by one of the lords of the jann, the Amir Heidar Qan. While out hunting one day in the Haunted Lands, he loosed a golden eagle, which settled on the rock. The amir saw the strength and beauty of the site, and at once he commanded his hosts to build a castle upon it. He called it Sarahin, which means the wolves' den, for he intended it to be his winter hunting grounds.

It was not to be, for Amir Qan vanished from the sight of men and stopped paying fealty to the Grand Caliph. At the same time, the fortress of the everlasting was overrun by the Dauntless and other mamluks of Qudra, and the holy slayers scattered among the Free Cities. While searching for a new headquarters, a young holy slayer learned of the castle. After much scheming, it was decided that the new site was found; it needed only to be taken.

The seizure of Sarahin was carefully prepared. From Hiyal, Grandfather Hasan had sent devotees to work in the village nearby. From the village, teachers were sent to the castle to convert the jann, some of whom became worshippers of Hajama and who attempted to convert their sheikh. He pretended to be won over, but afterward ambushed the missionaries, and the blood of the Everlasting washed the stone ramparts. The jann of the castle sent the Grandfather the heads of his followers and a letter saying that the fortress belonged to the sheikh.

At this, the Caliph of Shadows left Hiyal to visit the fortress of Sarahin, where he was welcomed as a guest. After the evening meal, Grandfather Hasan said he would forgive the sheikh the slaughter of his followers if the sheikh would give him, for 3,000 dinars, as much land as an ox's hide would contain. The sheikh agreed before his court. Hasan split the hide into strips, and with them surrounded the castle. The sheikh at first refused to honor his word, but the jann rose against him and forced him to keep it. Grandfather Hasan remained in the castle not for three days, but for the rest of his life.

The fortress of Sarahin is also called the Rock of Courage, the Nest of Eagles, the Abode of Fortune, and the Emerald of the Haunted Lands. The land nearby is dry but not entirely desolate; when the rains are good, enough forage grows to keep small herds of goats or cattle. The stronghold itself is on top of a sprawling ridgetop plateau, at an altitude of 10,200 feet. Although it is the highest point for miles around, the fortress cannot be seen from the ground because the outer walls were quarried from the same stone as the plateau and its towers are not tall enough to be seen over the walls. One must take the path almost all the way to the upper gate before the castle is apparent.

The Tower of Martyrs

Built of mud bricks and decorated with carved statuary and mosaic designs, this tower is only an outpost of the fortress of Sarahin. It commands a view over the desert for miles. Its base is about 40 feet in diameter, and it stands fully 200 feet tall. It is a solid column; there is no interior, only an exterior stair. The tower's base serves as a kennel for the saluqi greyhounds, and the rooftop is an aviary for pigeons (both for eating and for messages).

Three wind walkers are magically chained to the tower; they allow only members of the fellowship and worshipers of Hajama to climb the tower. If others climb it, the wind walkers wait until they are half-way up and then throw people from the tower. On successful attacks, victims on the outer staircase must make a saving throw vs. petrification to avoid being flung to the bottom. The fall inflicts 10d6 damage and requires a save versus death magic to avoid instant death *(DMG,* page 75).

In addition to its scouting and communications functions, the Tower of Martyrs is the point of departure for holy slayers traveling to the coasts. They are carried by the wind walkers, who use their *ride the wind* ability to lift travelers and push them along over any terrain. The smaller number of returning assassins travel by the same method from a number of secret locations in remote areas throughout the Free Cities and the ruins of the coast of the Golden Gulf.

Wind walkers (3): Int Very; AL N; AC 7; MV 15, Fl 30; HD 6+3; hp 33, 32, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6; SA attack in series; SD spell immunities; SZ L; ML 13; XP 2,000.

Bab il-Hawa

Bab il-Hawa, or the gate of the wind, is the lower of the two gates into the fortress. The lower gate was once an offshoot of the fortress but now serves mainly as a place for two desert giants who served the Everlasting as caravan guards and messengers before the arrival of Akim al-Kalaas and his sorcerous allies. Now they sit rocklike on either side of the gorge, holding a slab of stone between them on their gritty shoulders so that they appear to be ancient and weathered gate carvings. When visitors approach, they heave themselves to attention and challenge them, though they are not eager for combat. They are loyal to Mamoud, the captain of the guard, and share his hatred of the genies.

The giants will stop hostile parties, but if they are bribed (etiquette check to know the size of a proper bribe) or impressed with a cleric's holiness (successful debate skill), they may allow a peaceful party to pass.

If the PCs stumble across the desert without the guidance of Fadiya and Omar (see the Adventure Book), the giants will eventually try to capture the PCs or lead them back to civilized lands.

Beyond the gorge, a two foot wide path winds back and forth up to the ridge. Ponies, mules, and donkeys can make this climb while carrying a rider or goods; camels and horses must be led.

Desert giants (2): Int average; AL N; AC 1; MV 15; HD 13; hp 64, 60; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12+7; SA hurl spears; SD camouflage; ML 14; XP 5,000.

The Gate of The Bulls

Guarded by jann, this gate is flanked by colorful mosaics of winged bulls, lions bearing swords, and snakes climbing up to the sun. It is more ornamental than effective, but it does give the jann a good checkpoint for entry into the fortress itself.

These jann all have 18/01 to 18/50 strength, with an attack bonus of +1 and a +3 damage bonus.

This gate is also the current roost of the marrash, though they rarely perch for longer than it takes to gorge themselves on carrion and sleep until they digest it. If the gate is attacked, they take to the air.

Jann (6): Int very to exceptional; AL N; AC 2 (5); MV 12, Fl 30 (A); MD 6+2; hp 36, 33, 29, 22, 21, 13; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus strength bonus; SA spells; SD 20% magic resistance; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000; jann lamellar armor, scimitars.

On The Mountain

Once past the gate, the assassins' fortress sprawls over the ridge for hundreds of yards and descends into the earth in a number of secret caverns and passages. Its towers and minarets command a modest view of the riverbed and the sloping desert terrain on all sides.

Dark Wind Stables

The stables are largely kept for racing beasts. The camels are mehari, racing camels, and courier camels for messengers. The horses are racing stallions, with a few riding mares kept for hunting parties. The stables are amazingly lavish for such a lowly building, with basalt floors, cedar stalls and lintels, and whitewashed stone walls. At either end are two unusual mounts kept for special occasions.

One is a two-headed roc used for major raids, called Sar, or Vengeance. It is used when the Everlasting raid caravans between Halwa and the coast, or between Qudra and the south. The sight of the roc is often enough to frighten off many guards; the monster feasts on the camels and guards that are slain.

The other prize mount is the Grandfather assassin's steed, a pegasus called Sulbain, or Steeleye. He trained the mount from birth and broke it to his will; his harsh training and brutal punishment for disobedience has kept it from its natural alignment. The Caliph of Shadows has reserved Sulbain for his special use; no one else may ride him.

The ostler is a holy slayer from the desert tribes of the Haunted Lands, Hisan bin Hanif. He handles the horses, ponies, and the pegasus. The falconer cares for the roc, which is much too large to fit in the mews. Hisan is, quite reasonably, afraid of the great bird, though his faith doesn't allow him to admit it.

Two-headed roc, Zakharan: Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Fl 24 (C); HD 16; hp 69; THAC0 5; #AT 2 or 2; Dmg 3-18/3-18 or 4-24/4-24; SA Boulder attack, swoop, snare; SZ G; ML 13; XP 14,000.

Pegasus: Int average; AL N (CG); AC 6; MV 24, Fl 48 (C, D mounted); HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-3; SA Dive, rear kick; SZ L; ML 9; XP 975.

Training Grounds

An open sandy courtyard, this stretch of level ground is pocked with barriers, pits, wooden training machines of various kinds, and spilled blood.

The training grounds are surrounded by the Halls of the Faithful, the stables, the kennels; the mews, and the arsenal.

Arsenal

The zardkhanah or arsenal is a utilitarian building that serves as both storage and repair area for all the weapons of the assassins. Three sergeants-at-arms of the farisan rotate the guard duty here, though their vigilance is less than one might hope. The sergeants

Abd al-Jari always carry a magical blade that assists them in their sentry work—a sword enchanted with a *continual light* spell.

The zardkhanah is always locked with two locks of excellent quality (-20 percent to pick).

The arsenal contains 200 scimitars, 70 bows, 2,000 arrows, and a wide variety of light armor, helmets, and shields, as well as the robes, turban wraps, and tunics of the various ranks. All of them are well-oiled and carefully stored; the sergeants regularly inspect and maintain them.

Feisal, Taleb, and Haroun Abd al-Jari
3rd-level male dwarven warriors (farisan)
AL LN; AC 6; MV 6; hp 27, 15, 11; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 16; XP 175; scimitar, jambiya, throwing axe.

Kennels

Two packs of saluqi greyhounds are kept here, one of which is always set free at night to guard the lands around the keep. The other one is kept for hunting when the Grandfather or one of the faction leaders desires some sport. Farouk has been availing himself of these hounds fairly frequently, and has converted the master of the kennels to side with the Sword Dancers.

The master of the hounds is a janni named Sirhan al-Din, a convert from the days when the jann built the fortress. He is completely loyal to the Sword Dancers, and is not willing to help the PCs with matters unrelated to hounds or hunting. However, if a sha'ir of at least 5th level summons a janni while in Jabal Sarahin, Sirhan will be the one compelled to answer. He has served Akim before, and will not answer his call again. Sirhan is over 6 feet tall, with dusky skin, dark chestnut hair, and black eyes. He has Strength of 18/70.

Sirhan is always accompanied by two trained hunting cheetahs, used to bring down gazelles. They are very protective of him, and growl when others approach him too closely.

Sirhan al-Din (janni): INT exceptional; AL N; AC 2 (5); MV 12, Fl 30 (A); HD 6+2; hp 25; THAC0 13 (11 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus strength bonus of +3; SA spells; SD 20% magic resistance; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000.

Cheetahs (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 15, sprint 45; HD 3; hp 13, 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-8; SA rear claws for 1-2 each; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175.

The Halls of the Faithful

These barracks for the holy slayers are segregated by sex and faction. The women are all in the northern section; the men are in the southern. The Loyalists, Preachers, Sword Dancers, and Winged Bulls all have their own sections, and Farouk and Nusrah lead their factions from their quarters here.

The hallways are decorated with abstract mosaics, mostly vague cloudlike forms of whirls and spirals, but the rooms are bare of any ornamentation that might distract the assassins from their tasks.

Tower of the Dawn

The call to prayer rings out over the desert from this tower every morning, noon, and evening. The Tower of the Dawn is a gathering site for important occasions, as it adjoins the training grounds and offers speakers a high platform. It is the site of induction ceremonies, where new holy slayers are sworn into the order as initiates or lasiqs A sacred flame is kept burning here each night, known as the Lamp of Devotion, used in the ceremony of the vow of secrecy. Lasiqs and disobedient fedayeen are often required to tend the lamp during all-night vigils.

Criminals are punished near the tower as well; offenders are branded, hanged, or thrown from the parapet to their deaths, depending on the severity of their crimes. The fellowship assembles in the training grounds below to watch.

The Falconer's Mews

The falconer is a holy slayer named Fatik al-Amin. He cares about very little other than his strong fliers and their training. His charges include the Zakharan roc in the stables, two saker falcons from the island of Dir (see the *Golden Voyages* sourcebox), four peregrine falcons, and a golden eagle. Each is well-trained and worth a fortune: the falcons vary from 900 to 1,300 gp, and the eagle is easily worth 1,500 gp.

Fatik al-Amin (hmT/hs/3) is a quiet man, devoted to the Loyalists, and not prone to rumor-mongering. Although he is a skilled animal handler, the true secret of his expertise is a *ring of avian control.* The ring allowed him to tame the roc kept in the stables, thus securing his reputation as a master falconer.

Saker falcons (2): Int Animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 1, Fl 36 (B); HD 1-1; hp 5, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1; SA Special; SZ S; ML 6; XP 65.

Peregrine falcons (Hawks) (4): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 1, Fl 33 (B); HD 1; hp 8, 6, 4, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1; SA Special; SZ S; ML 9; XP 65.

Eagle (1): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 1, Fl 30 (C); HD 1+3; hp 8; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-2; SA Special; SD Special; SZ S; ML 9; XP 175.

Feast Hall

This area is reserved for the celebration of holy days and special events. A gilded and painted archway in the western wall leads down into the Caverns of the Everlasting.

Kitchens, Granary, Well, and Herb Garden

The kitchens are blazing areas, always full of hectic activity and bustle, clanging noise, steam and heat, and heady smells. The staff is much too busy to take notice of visitors, unless they get in the way.

The water used here comes from an artesian well. Layers of limestone shale trap and carry water under the desert to this ridge, where the fedayeen and the jann have dug a well. A team of mules turns an Archimedes' screw to pull the water up into the kitchen, where it is used for cooking and washing. Dirty water is used to irrigate the herb garden, and what clean water remains flows down to the underground stream of the Garden of Delights.

The kitchen's granary contains small amounts of millet, rye, barley, and wheat, as well as sacks of dried beans, peas, and lentils.

The herb garden is a wonder of clashing smells. Small herbs grow in thick green beds, and trees bear almonds, hazelnuts, and pecans. The scents of mint, sage, rosemary, dill, parsley, oregano, thyme, and cilantro waft up from the plants.

Observatory

Grandfather Marwan is a firm believer is astrology, and the observatory, built by his command, is a recent addition to the structures of Sarahin and is filled with charts and scrolls detailing the heavens and constellations. The building is of plain white marble, gilded in a single band where the dome of the roof meets the curve of the walls.

Akim al-Kalaas comes here on clear nights to complete astrological charts. Any character using the resources of the observatory for an entire evening gains a +4 bonus to astrology proficiency checks for that evening.

Shrine of The Bold

As Hajama's confidant and brother, Adventurous Najm is respected among the holy slayers, and

occasionally priests of that faith visit here. This shrine is kept for the few devotees of Najm among the farisan and the hobgoblins, although no priests maintain it and no holy slayers worship here.

Because it is so rarely visited and because of its romantic view over the orchards, the Shrine of the Bold is a popular locale for midnight trysts and assignations. PCs who catch the eye of one of the holy slayers will be asked to meet them here.

Priests Quarters

These are bare and cheerless chambers, meant to provide a minimum of distractions and only a modicum of comfort. These rooms are also popular with the Preacher faction.

Guest Chambers

These fine rooms overlooking the herb garden are richly appointed with layers of bright rugs, shining lamps, screens, embroidered pillows, and beds covered in silk. However, the doors can be barred from the outside as well as the inside, and the beautiful tall windows are much too narrow (about 4 inches wide) to allow anyone larger than an infant in or out.

The Lion's Shrine

This beautiful green-tiled mosque and adjoining minarets are where the daily prayers to Hajama are recited and the sacred texts are stored. Only devout believers are allowed to enter. Two members of the Courageous at the entrance enforce this at all hours.

Two griffon statues stand at the top of the stairs leading up to the shrine. The northern one has a small secret compartment tucked under one stony wing. The compartment contains twelve doses of gritty phoenix powder poison, which belong to Farouk, leader of the Sword Dancers. He comes here invisibly every other night to make sure that his cache is still safe.

In the courtyard before the mosque is the lion pit, a twenty-foot-wide and twenty-foot-long pit that serves to cage a full-grown lioness. This is where the test of courage known as the Lion's Mouth is conducted.

The holy relic known as the Heart of the Lion lies on the altar. It is a bright red carnelian said to have been torn from the body of the Lion of Suja by the bare hands of the founder of the Everlasting. Fading flowers and vials of aromatic oils are often left here as offerings in his memory.

The stone itself is huge, fully a foot across and surely priceless. Flaws and inclusions give the interior a darkened look in spots, but the whole still shines. It shows strong necromantic magic if *detect magic* is used on it because Akim al-Kalaas has cast a *lifeproof* spell, using this gem as the receptacle. Usually, Akim counts on the reverence the holy slayers have for the gem to keep it safe, but the PCs are an unknown quantity. Consequently, he has warded it well, assigning his personal genie servant to watch over it night and day. This dao defends the gem from destruction by striking first at anyone who attempts to destroy the gem, and he attempts to kill anyone who lifts it from its resting place. The dao is currently lurking out of sight invisibly, but he never shows his true form while in the stronghold, to avoid implicating Akim al-Kalaas in his sentry work. To further prevent others from associating him with Akim and the Unclean, he has taken the form of a black panther. However, he has no flesh or blood in this form, only claws of steel, a body of black basalt, and eyes that sparkle like black opals.

Three smaller fragments of the stone are also on the altar; these radiate a weaker necromantic aura. Each of these fragments is capable of casting the following. spells once per day in the hands of a devout worshiper of Hajama: *bless, cloak of bravery, cure disease, dispel evil,* and *heal.* Together, these spells can cure the plague caused by the arrows of the marrash.

Dao: Int Low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 9, Fl 15 (B), Br 6; HD 8+3; hp 51; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SA Special; SD Special; SZ L; ML 16; XP 4,000.

Orchards

Left from the time of the genie construction, these enormous, twisted fruit trees no longer bear a large harvest, despite grafting and the effects of the genie magic still within them. The orchard contains rows of date palms, coconut palms, limes and orange trees. They are home to a small clan of ashiras.

The ashiras may befriend a PC who spends a great deal of time in the orchard, or who uses magic that affects their grove, such as *plant growth, speak with plants,* and *create water.* Though they can do little to aid the PCs, they can tell the story of the taking of the castle from the jann (as told on page 22) or the tale of the Grandmother and her genie lover (given on page 6 of the Adventure Book).

Ashiras (4): Int average; AL CG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 17, 14, 12, 10; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA charm; SD meld with tree; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270.

The Garden of Delights

When therefore they awoke, and found themselves in a place so charming, they deemed that it was Paradise in very truth. . . .

Marco Polo

The great black stone dome near the audience chamber and the orchards is actually a permanent illusion wrought by Ibrihim to cover the panes of *glassteel* that keep a paradisiacal garden of delights from the eyes of Sarahin's inhabitants. The gate to this garden lies underground, accessible only through a secret entrance in the Hall of Audience. The door-keepers are two mute and fanatical jann, sworn to defend the doors against everyone but Marwan, Batina, and Ibrihim. They are both exceptionally strong, with 18/93 Strength. They both wear the lamellar battle-armor of their race. One of them is usually asleep while the other stands watch invisibly.

Ibrihim, the tasked deceiver genie, is allowed onto the rock of the assassins only when new devotees are induced into the cult's rites and mysteries. Then he magically creates images of paradise to intensify the garden's effect, but the place is quite wondrous all by itself. Batina sings the *music of the spheres* to the initiates to make them more susceptible to the genie's illusions and charms.

Lemons, tangerines, oranges, pomegranates, and passion fruit hang from the trees, and glittering fountains splash and bubble. Peacocks roam freely throughout the garden, and nightingales, mockingbirds, doves, curlews, and swallows flitter from cherry trees in bloom to flowering almond trees. The streams flow with nectar, and the sky is covered with rippling banners of silk.

When initiates are brought here, huriye wait on them—they are women as beautiful as the moon, and men as bright as the sun. The huriye attend them, graceful as gazelles, cooling the fevered novices with fans, cool ices and juices, and savory dishes. The initiates may dally as they wish, and beds of soft moss are hidden in numerous odd corners and dens.

The initiates may spend days here, resting in the pavilion by night. The pavilion is of rose-colored stone with pillars of lapis lazuli and a roof of carved and painted wood. Jasmine and roses surround it, perpetually in bloom.

When the garden is abandoned, six giant cobras are allowed to roam freely here. These serpents are kept on the verge of starvation, and they attack anything that moves. A character who stands still may escape their notice, but the chamber is only opened and the snakes lured away for feeding times each day at sunset—heroes waiting for a chance to escape may have a long wait. Combat in this area cannot be heard elsewhere, though any dead snakes will be discovered at sundown.

Because the cobras are barely fed, they pursue prey eagerly. They use the undergrowth to their advantage; it slows movement for humanoid creatures to half normal but has no effect on the snakes.

Jann (2): Int very; AL CG; AC 2; MV 12, Fl 30 (A); HD 6+2; hp 38, 32; THAC0 15 (13 with strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+5 Strength bonus; SA Strength, spells; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000.

Giant cobras (6): Int Animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3; hp 22, 19, 16, 15, 13, 9; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison, charm; SZ M; ML 15; XP 270.

Hall of Audience

This chamber is perpetually lit by thousands of candles. The pillars are of red porphyry, and the balcony steps are of polished marble. The walls are covered with mosaics of turquoise, gold, and alabaster, and mirrors reflect the candlelight. Soft carpets are strewn about, depicting fruit trees, animals, and star patterns. The chamber is scented with jasmine. The areas under the balcony are hidden by screens.

The ceiling is set with windows of translucent glass, stained in various colors. When the sun shines through, the effect is similar to being underwater.

The Hall of Audience is strictly off-limits for those who do not have an invitation to speak with the Grandfather or one of his ministers. The doors are always guarded by four visible members of the Courageous: two rafiqs hiding in the shadows, and several archers up in the balcony.

Archers (5)
3rd-level male human thieves (holy slayers)
AL LE; AC 8; hp 16, 13, 11, 10, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 18; XP 120; short swords, short bows.

The Tower of Akim Al-Kalaas

This tower is well removed from the main area of the compound because most of the holy slayers feel uncomfortable around its sorcerous inhabitants. The tower was granted to the sha'ir Akim al-Kalaas, his genie servants, and his apprentices when they threw in

their lot with the Everlasting. Among the fellowship, the tower is referred to as the Tower of Al-Kalb, "the tower of the dog."

The tower is a grey stuccoed structure on the edge of the ridge. It is dilapidated on the outside, and large chunks of plaster have fallen away, revealing the mixed stone structure beneath.

Heart of The Eagle

Hidden within the cracked and dusty walls of the abandoned quarters near the tower of Akim, these shallow, worn limestone steps lead down into a cool chamber of pillars and benches. Every inch of these chambers has been carved out of the rock of the ridge, and so the chamber is small and the tunnel leading to it is cramped and low-ceilinged. To make up for this, windows look out over the river gorge, hundreds of feet below, and tapestries cover the walls. One of these tapestries depicts a treasure room; this *tapestry of folded existence* is the assassins' secret storage area for their wealth, though few know it.

The treasure includes frankincense, sandalwood, amber, lapis lazuli, gold and silver jewelry, ornamental daggers and swords, brooches for turbans, gilded coffee cups, carved ivory, collections of scrolls and banners, and ordinary coins. The total value of these goods is approximately 30,000 gp, though the scrolls and banners might bring an additional 5,000 gp if sold to collectors rather than in the bazaar. A caravan would be required to haul it all away.

The room contains scroll cases and a single huge desk. The scrolls cover accounts, theology, poetry, astrology, and mathematics. One of the scroll cases contains seven doses of phoenix powder, kept there for emergencies. The desk is dominated by a life-size statue of a Bengal tiger, carved of reddish orange jade and worth at least 8,000 gp. Several scrolls lie open on the desk, held down by the tiger's forepaws.

The Cavern of The EverLasting

This natural cavern is often used for rallies and celebrations during daylight hours, when all the chambers above are stifling. Five statues of heroic figures of the order are placed about the cavern. It is stocked with two dozen wooden tables and fifty stone benches. Most of these festivals and revels celebrate the death of an enemy at the hands of the rafiqs, though other ceremonies welcome new initiates to the fellowship or mourn the passing of leaders or martyrs. The cavern's cool environs make it a comfortable audience chamber.

The Rock of Fastings

The citadel's prison is a pillar of bare stone, 600 feet high and accessible only by a narrow rope bridge guarded by a wind'walker. The rock is blazing hot during the day, with no shelter from the sun, and freezing cold by night, when dew settles and frost forms on all exposed surfaces. Attempts to climb down from the rock are met with violence; each hit by the wind walker forces a Strength ability check at -2. Failure indicates that the PC has fallen and suffered 20d6 damage from plummeting onto the rocks below.

Rescue attempts are not advised, as the wind walker will tear out the rope bridge (on a successful attack against AC 10) as soon as it realizes what is happening. PCs on the rope bridge when it snaps must make a Dexterity ability check or fall. See the rules on death from massive damage, *DMG,* page 75.

Wind walker: Int Very; AL N; AC 7; MV 15, Fl 30; HD 6+3; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6; SD spell immunities; SZ L; ML 14; XP 2,000.

The Pit of a Thousand Voices

Although most holy slayers who violate the precepts of the sect are exiled or simply killed outright, some few are chosen for a more gruesome fate. They are brought to this pit and slowly lowered into it; as they near the bottom, a sound like the baying of a pack or a mob

rises from below. When the voices grow still, the outcasts' screams or silent bravery are noted.

The creature responsible is a gibbering mouther, an unholy abomination summoned by Akim al-Kalaas from writings better left unread. It is formed from the bodies of holy slayers and saluqi greyhounds, giving it both human and canine voices. The fellowship refers to it as Shakashik, meaning Many Clamors, or Al-Bakbuk, the Babbler.

A PC lowered into the pit can try to engage the mouther or try to flee through the tunnels. Fighting unarmed is generally futile, though pulling sharply on the rope at the moment that the PC arrives on the floor of the pit may (on a successful Strength ability check) bring the holy slayer at the top tumbling down. This unfortunate is killed by the fall; his short sword and dagger are available to the PC for combat. Otherwise, the PC must trust Fate to keep him out of the numerous dead-ends and loops that allow the slow mouther to catch its prey.

The gibbering mouther never leaves its tunnels and caves because it hates the desert sun and heat.

Ghouls who serve Akim al-Kalaas also live here, created, by the use of *animate dead* and a limited *wish* spell, Unless the gibbering mouther is disturbed, they remain hidden, feasting on the scraps of meat from the kitchen and the bones of the dead.

The largest cavern is the ghouls' treasure chamber, guarded by the living idol they worship, which is carved to resemble a great ghul. Anyone paralyzed by a ghoul in combat is immediately seized and dragged off to the living idol as a sacrifice while the remaining ghouls fight a rear-guard action. This idol has been here for generations, and dates from the time before the cities of the Haunted Lands were abandoned due to the' intervention of Fate (see *LOF* boxed set, Appendix A).

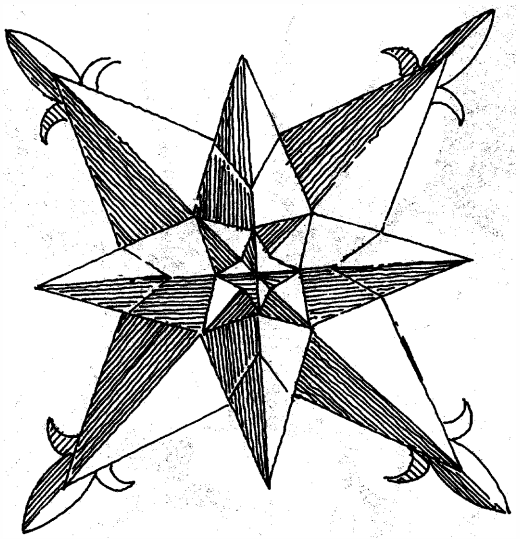
The ghouls have amassed a small fortune from their victims, amounting to 700 dinars, a silver necklace worth 100 gp, a carved ivory armband of linking dolphins worth 400 gp, and an empty copper scroll

tube. Batina doesn't know about the existence of the ghouls yet, and when she finds out, there will be quite a showdown with the Unclean.

Al-Bakbuk, the Babbler (gibbering mouther): Int semi-; AL N; AC 1; MV 2, 3; HD 8+6; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 12+; Dmg 1 plus 1/round each; SA spit, babble; SD control ground density; SZ L; ML 14; XP 3,000.

Ghouls (18): Int low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16, 15, 13 (x3), 12 (x3), 10 (x3), 9 (x2), 8 (x2), 7 (x2), 6; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD spell immunities; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175.

Living Idol: Int semi; AL NE; AC 4; MV 3; HD 16; hp 68; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 4-32; SA charm; SD spell immunities, +3 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 20; XP 16,000.



Glossary

Al-Badia: desert nomads of Zakhara
Al-Hadhar: town- and city-dwellers of Zakhara
alim: A learned man, scholar, sage, or wizard
ajami: outlander
baksheesh: a bribe, or a tip
bazan: flames
burj: tower
da'i: missionary, minister, an assassin officer
dinar: a coin, roughly 1 gp
diwan: The court or council of a ruler; a time or place of audience
fidai: one who sacrifices himself for a cause, a brave warrior, pl. fedayeen
hama: spirit
hammam: public bath
huriye: a voluptuously beautiful young man or woman
imam: a holy man and leader of the church
ins: A Midani term to identify the Enlightened races of humans, elves, dwarves, and the like.
jabal: mount, mountain
jari: courageous
khamsin: scirocco, a hot, destructive wind storm
lasiq: beginners, the lowest rank among assassins
madina: town center/market
manjus: rascal
mehari: racing camel
mulahid: the impious
nabidh: an alcoholic beverage made from fermented dates
nidir: vow
nisr: eagle
qatil: an assassin (pl. quttal)
qadi: a judge
rafiq: comrade, term used by assassins of themselves
saji: brave
sarahin: wolves' den
suq: marketplace
taqiyya: Doctrine of caution. Under compulsion, a believer may be exempted from fulfilling obligations of religion. Used to justify concealing beliefs that others object to.
wadi: a dry or seasonal riverbed
zardkhanah: arsenal

Cobra, Giant

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any tropical
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil (W)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1 -8+poison
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, charm
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	M (18' long)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	Giant 270 Elder 975

Giant cobras are dimly intelligent, hooded snakes. Their hoods are marked by two eyelike patterns on the back. Giant cobras vary from 12 to 24 feet in length and are especially long-lived; some individuals live as long as a century. These elder cobras are said to gain wisdom in their old age, giving them semi- to low intelligence (2-7).

Combat: The giant cobra attacks by raising itself into a swaying, serpentine pillar, spreading its hood, and striking with blinding speed. Although its fangs are as much as four inches long, the real danger of its bite is the massive dose of poison it injects into its victim.

Giant cobra poison results in death 2-8 rounds after a successful strike. The victim is allowed a saving throw at -2 to suffer only 10 points of damage.

Giant cobra venom can be stored in daggers made to hold the liquid in special channels, but it degrades rapidly. The virulent cobra venom decays at a rate of +1 to the saving throw per turn. After twenty minutes, the saving throw is made with no penalty; after a full hour, the saving throw is made at +4; after two hours, the save is made at +10. The poison is inert after three hours.

Giant cobras can also sway and bob in a mesmerizing way to charm creatures of animal intelligence or less, effectively paralyzing them for 2d6 rounds.

Giant cobras fear fire and will retreat from it, suffering a -6 to morale when threatened with open flames.

Habitat/Society: Usually solitary, giant cobras mate once a year in the early spring, often in a specific location where entire plagues of serpents return year after year. After a brief courtship and mating, the female cobra lays a clutch of 2-20 eggs in a shallow pit, then guards them until they hatch, at which time the young are abandoned.

The population of giant snakes can increase rapidly, and for this reason, nests of giant cobras are usually destroyed by humans as soon as they are discovered. Giant cobra eggs bring 10-500 gp on the market, as they are sometimes sought by snake charmers, assassins, or chefs. Jungle giants consider them a rare delicacy, as do some elven tribesmen.

Giant cobras live in burrows stolen from other animals; these underground lairs sometimes contain incidental treasure from their victims, but rarely anything of value. Elder cobras that have gained some measure of cunning also value glittering objects and have treasure type W.

The snakes are active in cycles; they warm themselves in the sun and then hunt, then warm themselves again. In cooler climates or during the monsoon season, they may spend more than half their time in their burrows or crevices. They never hunt or fight at night, always fleeing combat in the dark.

Giant cobras are occasionally kept by snake-handling cults and various groups of assassins. They are amenable to training, though they always remain dangerous if not carefully handled.

Ecology: Cobras are predators powerful enough to kill and eat an entire goat or a demihuman of up to halfling or gnome size. They tend to hunt in binges, eating a large meal and then curling up in their lairs for several days or even weeks. Giant cobras have few natural enemies; some varieties of giant weasel are able to hunt them successfully. Giant cobras have a liking for the rich flesh of domesticated animals and often infest wooded areas near farmland.

Elder Giant Cobra

The elder serpents are wise enough to know the value of stealth and the power of intimidation. They can speak Midani (with a lisp) and the trade language of the giants, and they are likely to try to browbeat humans and demihumans rather than simply attack them. The elder serpents can hypnotize and paralyze not only animals, but people as well. A victim is allowed a saving throw versus paralysis to avoid the effect; otherwise, the victim is hypnotized for as long as the cobra concentrates and for 2d6 rounds thereafter.

The elder cobra's venom is more concentrated than that of its younger brethren (onset of death 1-4 rounds, save at -4). Victims of its bite who save successfully suffer 10 points of damage and are also paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.

Elder serpents gain an additional Hit Die. Elder giant cobras suffer no modifier to morale when faced with open flames.

The largest of the elder serpents is called the Grand Snakemaster, and is said to be immortal. When it sheds its skin, the discarded skin is rumored to possess healing powers. Those who eat it are said to gain wisdom, but since the Grand Snakemaster has never been seen, the truth of these rumors is questionable.

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Genie, Tasked, Deceiver

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	F,U
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	0 (4)
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 18
HIT DICE:	9
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells, blinding
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Displacement
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	35%
SIZE:	M (7′ tall)
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	10,000

These tasked genies are djinn perverted to a life of deception and illusion—creatures sworn to mask the face of the world. Their true form is difficult to judge. The layers of deception in which they cover themselves are thick, but powerful sha'irs who have bound them to service claim to have seen their true shapes. According to these worthies, deceiver genies are tall and gaunt, with thin arms and legs and large heads, hands, and feet. They have long fingers, blond hair, and striking eyes, one blue, one brown. Their skin is a mottled grey.

Combat: Deceiver genies are cowards. They are shrouded in a perpetual displacement effect equivalent to that created by a displacer beast. For this reason, the first attack on a deceiver genie always misses. Creatures able to see through this illusion can attack them at their natural Armor Class of 4.

The deceiver genies can use each of the following spell-like abilities at will: *change self, delude, false vision, tongues, misdirection, undetectable lie,* and *whispering wind.*

Other abilities are available twice per day: *distance distortion, massmorph, spectral force,* and *shadow magic.*

Deceiver genies can use each of the following abilities once per day: *disbelief, projected image, solipsism, sundazzle.* Once per week, they can use a *mass suggestion* (on up to 24 levels or HD of creatures), or create a *permanent illusion, programmed illusion,* or *veil.*

Their illusions are very tightly woven and are equivalent to those cast by a 24th-level caster for purposes of *dispel magic,* duration, area of effect, and so on. However, their life of trickery and shifting images makes them susceptible to their own game; deceiver genies save against all illusion/phantasm magic at -4.

Favorite tricks of the deceiver genies include sending hapless *ins* over illusory bridges, chasing illusory oases, or even making them argue with one another over trivia, rumors, and gossip. They also enjoy sending unnerving messages to sentries, caravan guards, and other watchmen. They have the minds of immature pranksters, and no trick is too low or too difficult. Deceiver genies will gladly give up food, sleep, and treasure in pursuit of a truly cruel scheme. The only trick they dislike is taking the place of others; although they can alter their outward appearance, they are uncomfortable staying near others for more than a few minutes. They will pretend to be someone else only when a larger plot requires it.

If forced into melee, deceiver genies fight with a hysterical, terrified strength. They can slash and claw with their nails for 2-20 points. On a natural roll of 20, their steel nails tear out one of an opponent's eyes. If a roll of 20 is 4 more than the genie needs to hit its target, both eyes are torn out. In either case, an immediate system shock roll is required to avoid passing out for 1-6 turns from the pain. Partially blinded foes strike at -2; fully blinded opponents fight at -4 to all attack rolls. All rules for blind-fighting apply. In most cases, deceiver genies call up spectral minions to serve them in battle. These are often reinforced by real minions of the same type; deceiver genies think the resulting chaos is hilarious.

Habitat/Society: Deceiver genies sometimes cooperate with others of their kind to build and then hide a village in remote regions, though most deceiver genies serve the djinn or other genies. They rarely speak the truth, even under magical duress; lying is a habit for them. A deceiver genie under the influence of a *charm monster* spell or similar magic still lies constantly and shamelessly to its friends.

Deceiver genies are often dangerous to their masters when they are not constantly set to a task; when idle, they spin webs of lies around their masters, generally to provoke them into some disastrous action which the deceiver finds amusing. Deceiver genies see the entire world as a fiction, a game, or a toy created for their manipulation and amusement. While this may be entertaining for those siding with these tasked genies, it is rarely amusing for those they seek to deceive.

Deceiver genies are not very interested in wealth of the standard sort, but they are great fans of the arts, which they consider a somewhat formal but endlessly fascinating form of lying. Deceiver genies will never harm a storyteller, rawun, or tasked artist genie, though they may still confuse them.

Ecology: Deceiver genies are servants of the noble djinn and sometimes of the most powerful of jann. Anyone wishing to bind such a genie must always be on guard for its effects on and promises to one's servants, cohorts, and loved ones, as loyalty to a master does not include loyalty to a master's retainers in the code of a deceiver genie.

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Genie, Tasked, Oathbinder

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Order
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	C, H, T
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-1
MOVEMENT:	15, Fl 30 (B)
HIT DICE:	12
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-24+special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to victim's attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	45%
SIZE:	L (9′ tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	12,000

Oathbinder genies are reshaped efreet devoted to maintaining solemn oaths sworn between their masters and any consenting sentient being. If these oaths are broken, the oathbinder genie punishes the oathbreaker according to the terms of the vow.

Oathbinder genies have skin as black and glossy as obsidian. Their bodies have a perpetual nimbus of white fire. Their eyes shine with purple fire.

Oathbinder genies speak Midani and the language of the efreet.

Combat: Oathbinder genies are seen only when they are summoned by the magical ceremonial oath that they enforce. Oathbinders are summoned only when an oath that the genie oversees is broken or when the magical oath is dispelled. If an oath is broken, the genie is magically transported to the offender's location within 1-3 rounds. A *dispel magic* may be attempted to negate the oath's binding magic; it is negated if the spell is successful versus 12th level magic.

Regardless of whether the binding is successfully broken, the oathbinder genie appears in order to discover why the magic is being dispelled. The genie will attack if, in its considered opinion, the oath should still be binding. If the conditions of the oath are no longer met, then the genie's guardianship is withdrawn and the binding oath is void without consequences to anyone (for instance, if the oath applied only to members of a given tribe, and the person now seeking release from the oath has become an outcast of that tribe).

Oathbinder genies attack by projecting a stream of white fire from their hands, somewhat like a *burning hands* spell but with each hand burning independently. The genie can attack one creature with each hand, causing 4-24 hp damage. The range of the stream is 8 feet.

An oathbinder genie is completely immune to all physical and magical attacks from a creature whose oath it oversees. An oathbreaker slain by this tasked genie does not immediately assume the form of a hama *(q.v.)* and leave the Prime Material plane. The spirit form of a victim is captured and weakened for months or even years by the genie, and during that time, the victim can neither be contacted with a *speak with dead* spell nor *raised* from the dead. Victims' hama are held for one month per level of the victim. *Resurrection* and *reincarnation* are effective.

An oathbinder genie has a number of spell-like abilities that aid it in the performance of its duties, It can use each of the following abilities three times per day as a 12th-level caster: *command, evil eye, greater malison, hold person, otiluke's resilient sphere, unluck, wall of force.*

Habitat/Society: Oathbinder genies are all members of an order that governs their conduct. They are experts on all aspects of contracts, oaths, vows, and matters of obligation, and they are always glad to debate fine points or split hairs with anyone similarly inclined, regardless of the topic.

Oathbinders refuse to serve the marid, whose word can rarely be counted on.

Ecology: Oathbinder genies have little impact on Zakharan creatures, as their needs are simple and they are never encountered other than as the servants of some powerful genie lord or sha'ir. Genies never break the word they give an oathbinder genie, although they may bend, twist, and wriggle to talk their way out.

Oathbinder genies demand more for their services (treasure, respect, goods) when the conditions of the oaths they oversee are more strict or exacting. Oaths of fealty sworn for a lifetime are more demanding to enforce than promises of nonaggression made for the coming year. All oaths of this sort cost a minimum of 1,000 dinars to establish, and may frequently be tens or hundreds of times more expensive.

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Gibbering Mouther

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/swamp, underground
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi (2-4)
TREASURE:	Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	3, Sw 6
HIT DICE:	4+3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6+
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1 (x6) +1/round
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spit, babble, bite
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Control ground density in 5' radius
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	4 HD: 650 8 HD: 3,000

The gibbering mouther is an amoeboid form of life, composed entirely of mouths and eyes. Its favorite tactic is to lie in wait with its eyes and mouths closed so that it appears to be a lump of earthy material, hoping to surprise creatures stumbling across it. Its only motive is to eat whatever is edible within reach, regardless of whether the food is animal, vegetable, or mineral. Because of the creature's excessive hunger, the mouther's lair and the surrounding area will be stripped bare.

Gibbering mouthers prefer to inhabit swampy or underground regions. The creature propels itself by oozing forward, fastening several mouths to the ground and pulling itself along. A mouther may move faster over fluid and viscous terrains, such as mud and quicksand, by a series of muscular contractions. Given time, it alters the ground with its special talent to allow this faster form of movement.

Underground varieties of the gibbering mouther are generally much paler and smaller than their surface cousins, due to the lack of large prey available to them.

Combat: The brain of a mouther is located in its mid-portion, and its gelatinous body makes it difficult to strike this spot. The mutable nature of the monster gives it a high AC.

The mouther attacks in three ways: babbling, spitting, and biting. When any edible object is sighted by a mouther, it may begin an incoherent gibbering that causes confusion (as per the spell) to all characters within a 60-foot radius unless a saving throw versus spell is made. For each round that the gibbering is heard, characters within range must roll another saving throw. Roll 1d8 for each confused character: 1 = wanders aimlessly for one round, 2-5 = stands stunned for one round, 6-7 = attacks the nearest living creature for one round, 8 = runs away in fear for two rounds.

The spittle of a gibbering mouther will burst into a bright flare if it strikes any hard surface. The resulting flash will blind characters looking at it if they fail to make a saving throw versus petrification. The blindness lasts 1-3 rounds. The mouther may attempt to bite blinded opponents with a +2 bonus to its attack rolls. Blinded victims make attack rolls with a -4 penalty.

A mouther's best attack comes from reaching out and biting with six mouths per round. Each mouth that hits on a die roll of 2 more than needed to hit attaches to the victim and drains an additional 1 hp per round while attached; the next round, six new mouths attack the victim. When 3 or more mouths are attached to a single victim, that character must make a Dexterity ability check each round thereafter against slipping. A failed roll indicates the character has fallen. The gibbering mouther will flow over the victim and bite with 12 more mouths, gaining a +4 bonus to strike its prone and held opponent. If given the opportunity, once it has pulled down one victim, a mouther will try to trap other prey.

When a victim reaches 0 hp, it is absorbed into the mouther, giving it another mouth and pair of eyes. Each time a victim is absorbed, the mouther also gains 1 hp permanently, up to the maximum for its HD. Only living flesh can be absorbed like this—dead or undead creatures are not affected.

A mouther always liquifies the ground and stone within a 5-foot radius of itself and can control the consistency of this material by changing it to doughy, tarry quicksand. It requires 5 segments to alter earth to quicksand, and a full round to mutate stone to earth.

Habitat/Society: Like other amoeboid life forms, gibbering mouthers reproduce by asexual fission. When a mouther has absorbed enough victims to gain maximum hp, it splits into two mouthers. Each mouther is a 4+3 HD monster; one has 17 hp, the other 18 hp. Because this process takes about four hours, the mouther usually retreats to some small dark den before the fission begins. When the two new mouthers recover, each seeks its own new territory.

Gibbering mouthers not only avoid each another's hunting territories, they avoid all physical contact with one another and never fight one another over territory or food. It is believed that bringing two mouthers in physical contact forces them to merge, creating a larger creature with twice the size, HD, and number of attacks, but half the already slow movement of the parent monsters. These great beasts strip the land of anything edible so quickly that they generally die of starvation as soon as prey becomes scarce.

Ecology: Gibbering mouthers are unnatural creatures, usually created by foul sorcery and kept as guards by mages or obscene cults. Although they can survive in the wild, they are more scavengers than hunters, and rarely establish reproducing populations in any but the lushest swamps.

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Greyhound, Saluqi

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi (2-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	3-12
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Overbearing
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	120

Saluqi greyhounds are the hunting hounds of the jann of the Haunted Lands, particularly of the tribe of Amir Heidar Qan. They are sleek, black animals with grey markings, thin whiplike bodies, and long narrow heads, and their pedigrees are rigorously maintained to allow owners to breed only from the finest.

Combat: These nocturnal desert hounds hunt by sight rather than by smell, and they prefer staying in packs rather than hunting alone or in scattered lines. Their blurringly fast speed allows saluqi greyhounds a -2 modifier to their initiative rolls. The hounds have infravision to 120 yard range, and they can faultlessly track quarry by its heat trail if it has passed over ground within the past 3 turns.

Saluqi hounds are also known for their ability to bring down opponents by attacking en masse. This overbearing attack is resolved by a single attack roll against AC 10, allowing only modifiers for Dexterity and magical pluses of armor or protective devices. There must be a minimum of four hounds for the overbearing attack, and each hound over four gives the pack an additional +1 to hit. If successful, the hounds knock their opponent to the ground, and unless a saving throw versus petrification is successful, the opponent is stunned as well and cannot take any action that round. To rise, a victim must spend a full round doing nothing but regaining his footing in the midst of the pack. All attempts at spellcasting are ruined by the pack, regardless of whether the overbearing attack succeeds.

After the initial overbearing attack, such a victim is attacked by individual members of the pack with +4 to the hounds' attack rolls and no Dexterity adjustment to the victim's AC. Some packs have also been trained to hold down their foes; this requires that two dogs score hits on their downed opponent. If the dogs succeed, a victim must spend a full round getting up, but must also make a successful Strength check with a -1 penalty for each dog that hit. Failure indicates the victim was dragged back down.

Habitat/Society: Saluqi greyhounds are a carefully bred strain of hounds, and they are almost always found in the care of a huntsman who has trained them from birth. They respond to a number of standardized calls: attack, guard, return, pursue and return, fetch, stay, and hold are among the most common.

Saluqi do not flourish if they spend too much time in the sun; nomads keep them in tents during the hottest part of the day. Wild packs usually live near some cave or overhanging shelter where they can retreat from the burning sun.

Ecology: Saluqi greyhounds hunt small game and are good at flushing antelope or other grazing animals from cover. There are few of them in the Haunted Lands, and so their impact as predators is small. Wild packs of saluqi do exist, but are extremely rare, as the jann hunt these mutts and neuter them, then give them as gifts to other desert tribesmen.

Jungle Hounds

It is said that a related breed of hound has been created by the jungle pygmies or jungle giants of the lost jungle empires of Nog and Kadar. These hounds use similar tactics, but are much better at tracking by smell than by sight—so much so that they can follow a trail up to a week old. They are smaller than the saluqi hounds, with orange and yellow patches of fur dappling their dark coats instead of grey.

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Marrashi

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/desert
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Carrion
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	B
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-3
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 27
HIT DICE:	7
THAC0:	13 (12 with missile weapons)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2/1-2/1-6 or by arrow type (see below)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Missile weapons, disease
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to missile attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5′ tall)
MORALE:	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	2,000

The marrashi (plural *marrash),* or winged archer, is an evil spirit of pestilence that sometimes agrees to serve a sha'ir or an evil genie in exchange for treasure and the opportunity to spread contagion. It has the dark wings of a vulture, the arms and body of a human, claws like a parrot, and the head of a jackal. Its voice cracks and screeches. A marrashi is always armed with a bow and arrows.

Combat: On the ground, a marrashi is a weak fighter, attacking with each clawlike hand for 1-2 points of damage and its beak for 1-6 points of damage.

Marrash use their bows while airborne by holding the bow with their talons and pulling back the string with their hands. This gives them additional power in each shot. It also gives them an odd, tumbling style of flight when shooting. Marrash can fire two shots per round and never suffer range penalties.

Marrash arrows may be barbed or diseased. Barbed arrows cause 1d8+2 points of damage each. Diseased arrows cause 1d6+2 hp damage and require a saving throw versus petrification. A failed saving throw means that the victim has contracted a fatal disease. A victim dies in 1-20 days unless treated by a *cure disease* spell cast by a cleric of 7th level or higher, or a character with the healing proficiency makes a successful check at a penalty of -5. Any person exposed to the infected character must make a saving throw versus petrification each day or also become infected.

Marrash increase their numbers on the Prime Material plane by firing *taklif* arrows. These infect the victim with a disease that appears to be identical to the one spread by the diseased arrows described earlier, although the course of the disease is always much swifter-the victim of a taklif arrow dies in a day if untreated. *Bless, cure disease,* and *dispel evil* in combination are required within six hours to heal the afflicted victim. After six hours, the course of the disease is irreversible, short of a *heal* or *limited wish* spell (these also cure the disease completely in its earlier stages). A marrashi never has more than one taklif arrow at a time, and these are almost always used on human or demihuman targets; marrash bred on other souls rarely survive, though their host still dies.

The soul of the victim is devoured by the growing marrashi, and when the soul is entirely eaten, the victim dies and the new marrashi begins to slowly transform the corpse. Victims of a taklif arrow cannot be brought back with a *raise dead* or *resurrection,* though a properly-worded *wish* is effective. If buried, the body becomes a new marrashi in 1-6 days. The marrashi, having fed on the soul of the transformed body, sometimes retains some of the memories and personality of the deceased. Its alignment, if not already lawful evil, shifts to that alignment in stages over the next 1-3 weeks.

If cremated, the body containing an embryonic marrashi dies. As a result, the bodies of plague victims are normally burned in Zakhara. This is sometimes impossible among desert tribes, and thus the marrash are greatly feared by the Al-Badia.

Habitat/Society: Marrash are usually confined to the outer planes but can be summoned to Zakhara by wizards knowledgeable in the art of commanding their service. Once summoned, they always seek to increase their numbers without the knowledge of the mage who conjured them, so that the newborns may, in time, avenge their parents' servitude. These newly created marrash are always the result of taklif arrows, and they must fend for themselves from the moment they shed their hosts' skin. They grow quickly and nourish themselves to maturity in desolate places, stealing carrion from vultures and ambushing lone travelers to create even more of their own kind.

Ecology: Marrash are servitor creatures on the Prime Material plane and have few effects on any ecology there, except when their plagues decimate city populations. They are perpetually at war with the asuras, however, and these conflicts sometimes spill over into the Prime Material plane.

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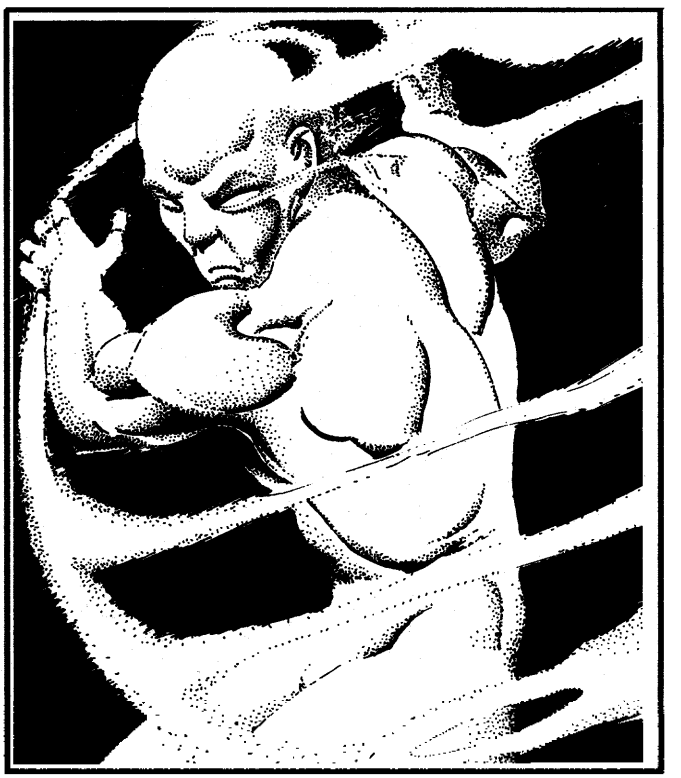
Sandman

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subtropical or tropical/desert
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	Minerals
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	A, Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Sleep
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Elite (13)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	975



The sandman's name describes it exactly—a manlike biped made entirely of sand, held together by magical cohesion. They are creatures of the plane of elemental Earth, but on the Prime Material plane, they serve as the slave-takers of the dao. Their ability to capture foes unharmed makes them especially successful in this role.

Combat: Sandmen prefer to fight from ambush or at night, when they can flee encounters that go against them. Any character or monster coming within 20 feet of a sandman must save versus spell or fall asleep, regardless of experience level. Elves are 90% resistant to this effect. Those who manage to stay awake must attempt to save again each time they touch the sandman or are touched by it (a hit on the sandman with a weapon does not constitute a touch).

Once a sandman has put a victim to sleep, it will take no further hostile action against him, leaving him to doze while the sandmen and the dao take the victim to the slave markets of the Great Dismal Delve. Sandmen not in the service of the dao simply eject sleepers from their lands.

Victims remain asleep for 3 full turns regardless of noise, motion, or magic applied to them. Thereafter, there is a cumulative 10% chance per turn of a sleeper waking of his own accord, and a 95% chance per round of him waking if violently disturbed. Creatures attacked while asleep are automatically hit for maximum damage for a single round of attacks, but thereafter, they may respond normally.

Sandmen have the natural ability of *protection from normal missiles.* Missiles striking a sandman simply pass through its form and fall to the ground.

When a sandman is slain, it immediately crumbles into dust. This powder can be used to make *potions of dreaming* or *sand of truth.* If used as the material component in a sleep spell, the spell affects double the normal number of levels or hit dice. The dust of a sandman is enough for only one potion or two spells.

Habitat/Society: Sandmen automatically attack humans and need never check morale. Sandmen hate humans because human and demihuman mages often slay them simply to use their remains in working magic. This is why sandmen always seek out human or demihuman slaves for their dao masters—as revenge.

Ecology: Sandmen are often slaves of the dao. They are allowed to win their freedom by bringing replacement slaves to the mazeworks of the dao nobles to take their places. The dao have learned to bind sandmen through the use of magical amulets; this ensures that sandmen sent to the Prime Material plane to fetch more slaves do not simply run away. Sandmen hate their masters fiercely, but they loathe humans even more, for they consider them weak. They despise any creature that they can ensorcel into sleep, and they fear any creature immune to their powers.

Sandmen seem to require neither food nor drink, and they are excellent at surviving even the harshest deserts or mines. They derive their food from stone, sand, and dust, and can starve only if they are kept airborne for a lengthy period.

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Wind Walker

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical mountain, desert, plains
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Diurnal
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	C, R
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-3
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	Fl 30 (A)
HIT DICE:	6+3
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	One per creature within 10 feet
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-18
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Attack in series
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spell immunities
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	L
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	2,000

The maswat-rih, or wind walkers, are creatures from the plane of elemental Air, where they are the servants of the djinn. On the Prime Material plane, they prefer to live high in the mountains or in great caverns far below the surface.

Their approach is detectable at 100 to 300 yards as a whistling, howling, or roaring, depending on the number coming. Normally only faintly visible, in fog or sandstorms they look like a mass of coiling, writhing serpents, constantly churning out tendrils of winds and losing fragments of themselves as trailing bits of vapor or dust. Whenever they touch they ground, they spin off tiny whirlwinds, pushing dust and grit into the air.

Combat: Wind walkers are telepathic and can detect thoughts within 100 yards. If they work in series to boost their range, they may detect thoughts within 300 yards.

Wind walkers attack by wind force. Each wind walker causes 3-18 points of damage per round to all creatures within 10 feet. They can disperse any cloud or gaseous attack in a single round (though they suffer its full effects for that round), and they inflict double damage (6-36) on creatures in gaseous form. The noise of their movement can cover most sounds of combat; if they wish, a battle with them sounds only like rushing winds as all shrieks and cries are carried away by the force of their wind.

Wind walkers are partially ethereal and thus can be fought by other ethereal creatures such as genies, invisible stalkers, or aerial servants. A weapon of +1 or better enchantment is required to hit them.

These creatures are immune to most spell attacks, but are affected by certain spells such as *control weather* (unless the walker makes a save versus spell, it dies), *slow* (damages the monster as a *fireball),* and *ice storm* (drives the creatures away for 1-4 melee rounds). *Haste* causes half the damage of a *fireball* to wind walkers, but it also doubles the amount of damage caused by them. Magical barriers like *protection from evil, wall of force,* or *prismatic wall* will stop them (though *blade barrier* is ineffective). Wind walkers will otherwise pursue their victims for a minimum of 2-5 rounds. They are subject to attack by telepathy.

With effort, wind walkers can also moderate their winds to a less violent level and thus have the spell-like ability to cast *ride the wind* four times daily as a 12th-level caster.

Habitat/Society: Wind walkers are kept as cloud sculptors by the djinn. Other creatures have retained them to herd rainclouds to their lands, or to keep the life-giving rains from others. Desert tribesmen are careful not to insult the wind walkers or to disparage them as mere servants of the djinn. The genie-races are powerful, and even their servants must be feared.

Wind walkers are sometimes forced into servitude by storm giants, cloud giants, djinn, and other creatures of the windy mountains.

Wind walkers keep to themselves; the only elementals they willingly associate with are air elementals. Some sages believe that wind walkers are simply young air elementals, while others are sure that they are a separate species. They are thought to be related to the sakina, though the two races detest each other.

Ecology: Wind walkers eat only airborne water vapor and minute particles of dust. Strangely, they seem to enjoy strong fragrances, and can be lured into traps or binding circles with aromatic oils or essences. Unless kept as servants by djinn or sha'irs, they get their food from the clouds.

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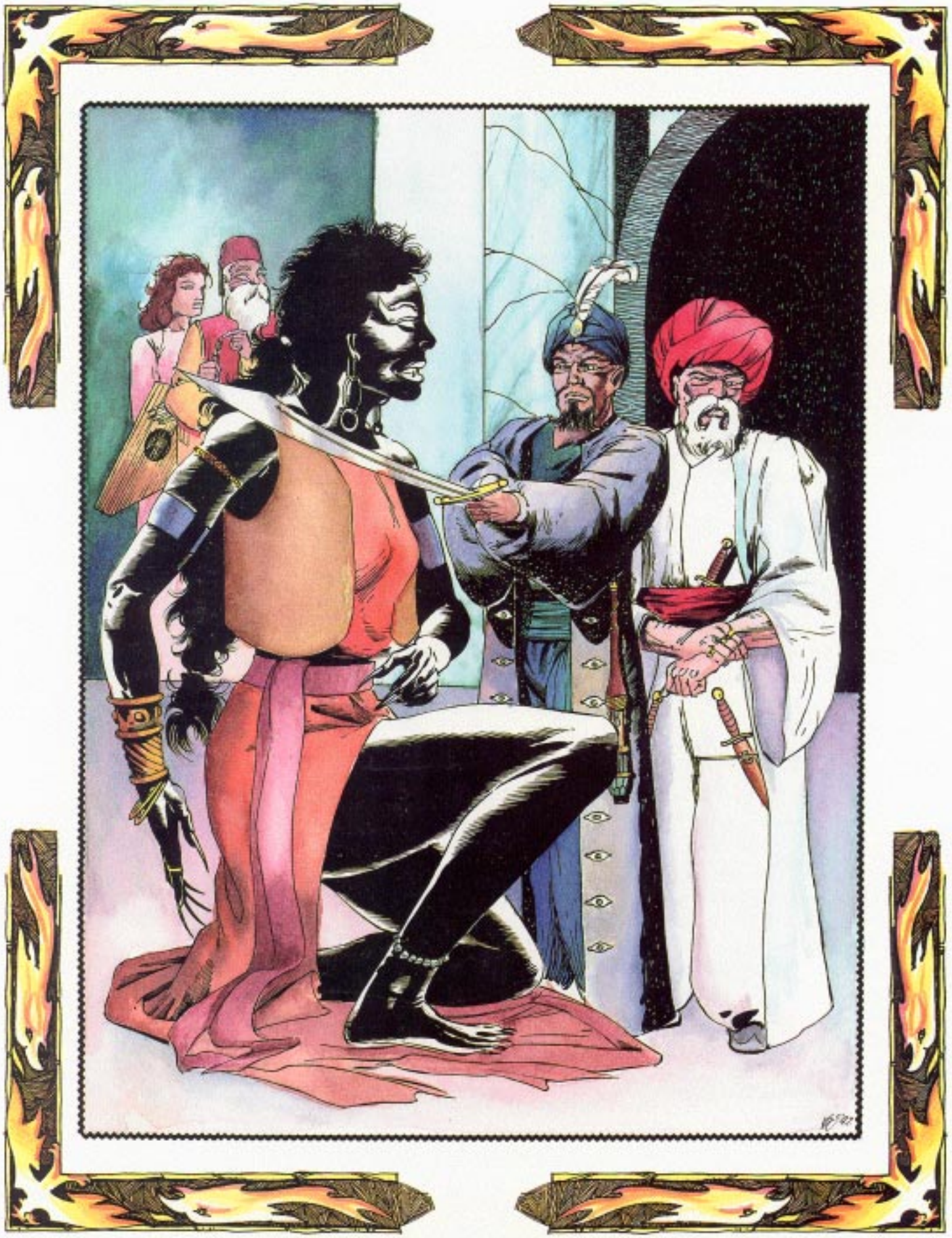

The Loyalists

The core of the Everlasting are the Loyalists, the faction that obeys Grandfather Marwan's every command without thinking or hesitation. If he told a Loyalist to leap off a cliff, she would.

Marwan al-Jabal al-Hiyali, the Caliph of Shadows
15th-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC -3; MV 12; hp 67; THAC0 13; #AT 5/2; Dmg 1-8+3; SZ M; ML 18; XP 12,000.
PP 55; OL 85; F/RT 70; MS 95; HS 95; DN 70; CW 95; RL 70; Backstab x5.
S 12 D 18 C 17 I 12 W 13 CH 17
Non-weapon proficiencies: astrology, blind-fighting, debate, disguise, poetry, religion
Magical items: *studded leather armor +3, mamluk scimitar of obedience +1, jellaba of eyes, ring of protection +3, ring of shooting stars, scroll of protection from genies, wand of size alteration*

Marwan is middle-aged but in great physical condition, and as sharp as ever in his plots and counterplots. He is specialized in the scimitar.

Halfana al-Yamini
Oathbinder genie: Int Average; AL LN; AC -1; MV 15, Fl 30 (B); HD 12; hp 52; THAC0 1; #AT 1; Dmg 4-24; SA spells; SD immune to victim's attacks; MR 45%; SZ L (9′ tall); ML 16; XP 12,000.

Halfana can use each of the following abilities three times per day as a 12th-level caster: *command, evil eye, greater malison, hold person, otiluke's resilient sphere, unluck,* and *wall of force.* She is devoted to contracts and traditions, and she has a patronizing liking for Marwan, though she detests the rest of the fellowship.

Yusuf bin Ayyub
9th-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+4 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 18; XP 2,000; leather armor, scimitar, 3 throwing daggers.
PP 15; OL 40; F/RT 25; MS 85; HS 90; DN 45; CW 80; RL 35; Backstab x4.
S 13 D 15 C 14 I 9 W 11 CH 14
Magical items: *scimitar +2, ring of protection +2, ring of invisibility*

Yusuf is devoted to duty and patient enough to wait for years before attempting to seize power. He is often tyrannical and harsh because he is unsure of himself. He is specialized with the scimitar.

Sayida ibn Afa
6th-level half-elven female bard (rawun)
AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 2 (fights with two weapons); Dmg 1-4+2/1 -6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 975; leather armor, shield, short sword.
PP 60; DN 30; CW 70; RL 30.
S 6 D 14 C 15 I 14 W 15 CH 17
Magical items: *dagger of quickness +2, qanun of quiet*
Spells: *hypnotism, sleep, taunt; scare, shatter*

Sayida is a serious half-elf with a dark sense of humor and a sharp eye for other people's character and ability. For years, she has been privy to the conversations between Yusuf and Marwan.

Essafah al-Nisr al-Qadibi
9th-level human male wizard (sand/flame sorcerer)
AL LE; AC 10 (4 with *spirit armor,* first 9 attacks absorbed by *stoneskin);* MV 12 (24 while hasted); hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (2 while hasted); Dmg 1d4; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000; jambiya.
S 11 D 9 C 12 I 14 W 11 CH 10
Magical items: *fez of disguise*
Spells: *fire burst, hold portal, jump, sand slumber; dust curtain, mirror image, sundazzle, fireball, haste, spirit armor; stoneskin, sunfire; teleport*

Essafah is a vain and somewhat cowardly sorcerer who specializes in the magics of fire and sand. He often leads dangerous missions against magically warded targets, and his success in the field has won him high honors from the bulk of the Loyalists.

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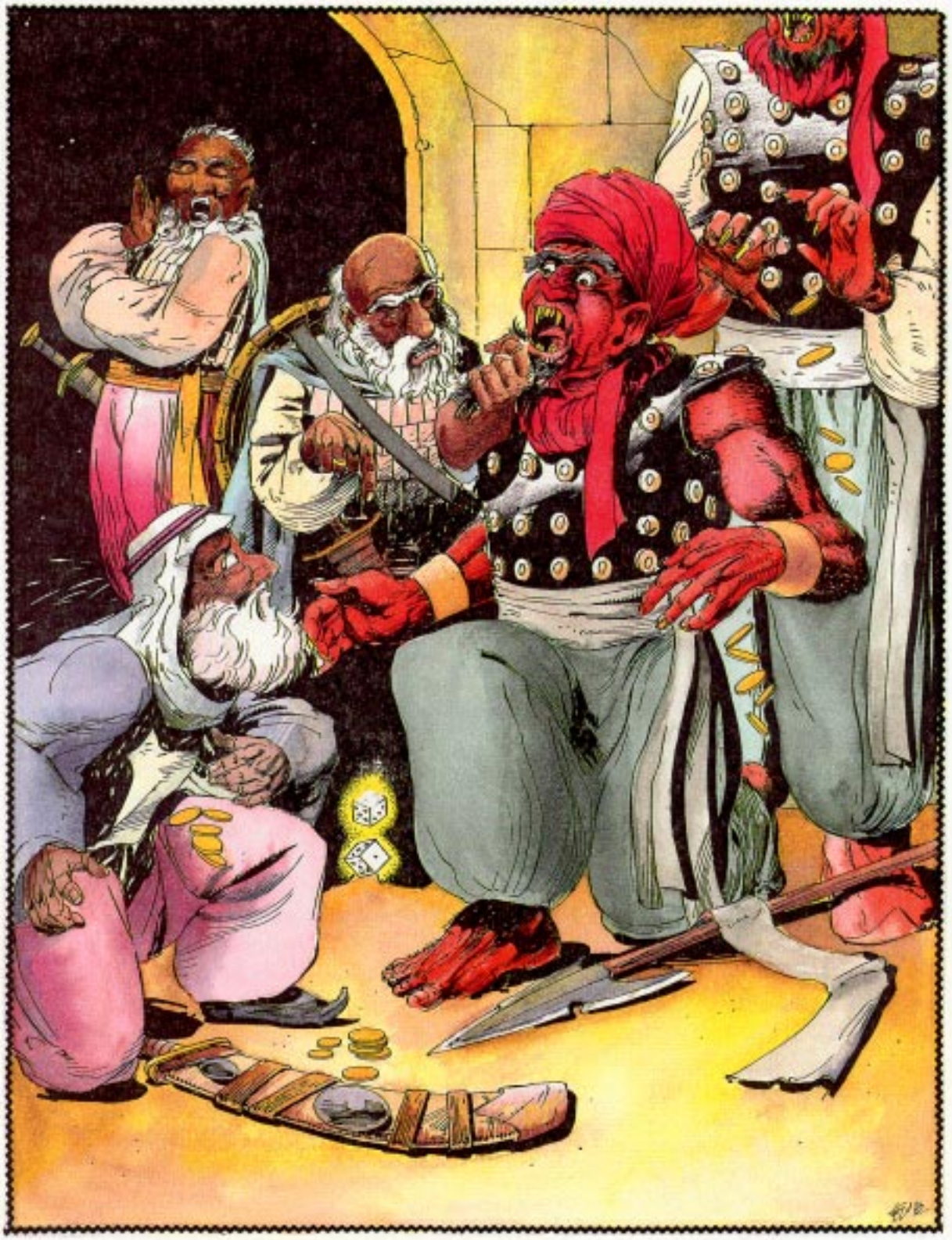

The Preachers

The Preachers are the most devout of the factions, those who joined the Everlasting for noble or idealistic reasons. They are not the firebrands that the Loyalists or the Sword Dancers are, but they do insist on a high degree of outward piety. They despise the Unclean as one step above the Unenlightened, but they realize that they cannot move against them openly.

The farisan of the Preacher faction are warriors who lacked the quickness and the treacherous instincts to make good holy slayers, but they are just as fanatical in defense of Hajama as their roguish counterparts. All of the Preachers adore Batina al-Shaat and attend her bombastic sermons.

Batina al-Shaat
11th-level dwarven female priest (moralist)
AL NE; AC 3; MV 6; hp 52; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+2; SZ M; ML 16; XP 5,000; lamellar armor, short sword
S 11 D 11 C 13 I 9 W 18 CH 14
Magical items: *powder of the hero's heart, short sword +2, shield of the holy*
Spells: *Bless, command, cause fear, detect magic, cure light wounds (X2), sacred guardian; aid, draw upon holy might, enthrall, hold person (X2), music of the spheres; dispel magic, emotion control, prayer; cloak of fear, cure serious wounds, reflecting pool; flame strike, rainbow; heal*

Batina is hard to please; she is justifiably proud of having led her followers through the desert to the fortress, but she is inclined to be very harsh toward those she distrusts or suspects of less than perfect devotion to Hajama. She is not above extracting confessions by force, and her chambers are sometimes the scene of gruesome torture. Batina has never had designs on the rulership of the Everlasting; she views her position as nearly as powerful and a great deal safer than actually wielding control.

Mamoud ibn Asra Abd al-Jari
7th-level dwarven male fighter (faris)
AL LE; AC 4; MV 6; hp 63; THAC0 14 (13 with strength bonus; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+3 (battle axe) or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000; battle axe, scimitar, heavy crossbow.
S 17 D 13 C 16 I 10 W 12 CH 13
Magical items: *lamellar armor of the desert evening, shield +1*

Batina's closest ally is the dwarven warrior Mamoud, her chief enforcer among both the guards and the warrior dwarves. He enforces discipline in the ranks and makes promotions; he also selects which troops will be employed on caravan raids, forcible recruitment drives (press gangs), and honor guard or bodyguarding duties. Mamoud is firm but fair in his judgments, and he lives for the glory of his command. He is specialized in the use of the battle axe.

The dwarven warrior society of the Courageous is firmly under Mamoud's (and thus Batina's) control. These dwarves are expected to train diligently and obey without question. The warriors of the Courageous have high self-esteem, excellent training, and an unbreakable loyalty to Mamoud. Many of them crossed the desert with Batina, but their loyalty to Mamoud has been forged in battle against the desert tribes.

The hobgoblins that comprise the troops of the Eagles are just grunts. They are devout worshippers of Hajama and fierce fighters, but they are strictly used for police duties and as watchmen at the gates and ramparts. Much of the time they are bored, and there are occasional discipline problems of brawling, dueling, and blood feuds among the Eagles.

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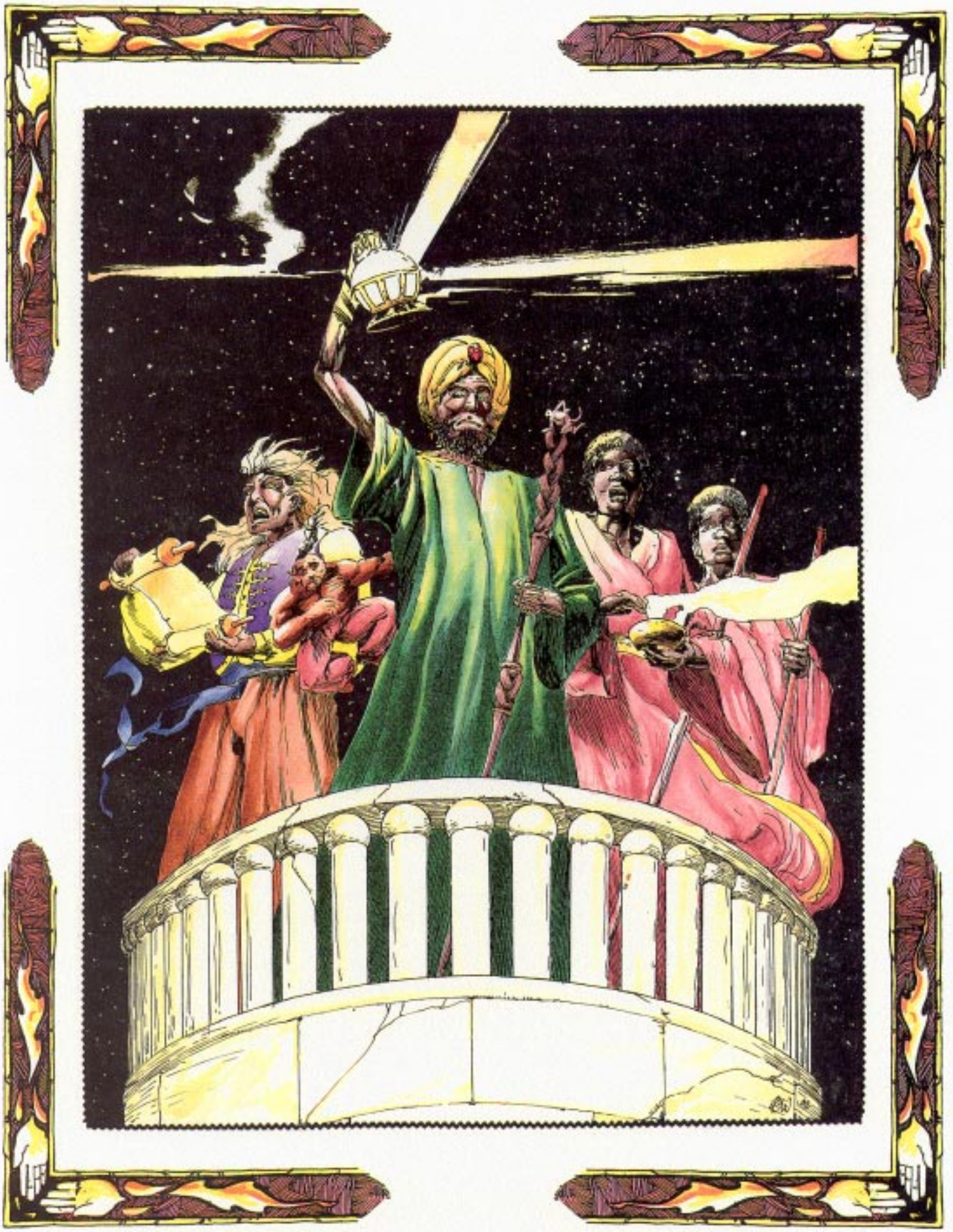

The Unclean

The Unclean is the faction of the mages of the Everlasting, a group which has fallen under the command of Akim al-Kalaas.

Akim al-Kalaas, the Sage, the Undaunted, Opener of Wisdom, He Whom the Stars Obey.
14th-level human male wizard (sha'ir)
AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SZ M; ML 14; XP 9,000.
S 14 D 14 C 15 I 16 W 9 CH 13
Magical items: *lamp of the four winds, carpet of fighting, soundstaff* (5 charges), *wand of illumination* (40 charges), *bracers of defense AC 6, ring of chameleon power*
Spells:

9th *time stop 40%* (takes 1d6+9 turns)
8th *river of sand 50%* (1d6+8 turns)
7th *forcecage 60%, monster summoning V 20%* (1d6+7 rounds)
6th *control weather, globe of invulnerability, summon wind dragons 70%, chain lightning 30%* (1d6+6 rounds)
5th *dream, fire track, teleport 80%, control winds 40%* (1d6+5 rounds)
4th *fear, improved invisibility 90%* (1d6+4 rounds)
3rd *dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt, slow 90%, cure serious wounds 60%* (1d6+3 rounds)
2nd *alter self, strength 90%* (1d6+2 rounds)
1st *magic missile 90%, cure light wounds 80%* (1d6+ 1 rounds)

Akim is zealous follower of Hajama who prefers to express his fanatical devotion to the ideal of bravery by foolishly tempting the patience of genies. He has also flirted with secret knowledge best left undiscovered; the gibbering mouther in the Pit is the result of one such summoning. He cultivates his reputation as a madman.

Ali Abdal Akim
Sand gen: Int low; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6; SZ S; ML 18; XP 4,000.

Ali is Akim's gen servant, a sadistic little daolani who enjoys tormenting those who visit his master.

Nikolai Nikopolis
4th-level human male wizard (sha'ir)
AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SZ M; ML 14; XP 420.
S 11 D 16 C 11 I 15 W 13 CH 10
Magical items: *potion of levitation*, *scroll of wind wall*
Spells:

3rd *lightning bolt 50%* (1d6+3 turns)
2nd *alter self, strength 60%* (1d6+2 rounds)
1st *sand slumber, magic missile 70%* (1d6+ 1 rounds)

Nikolai knows he is Akim's best student and that no one would willingly risk angering Akim; he uses this status to do whatever he pleases with the guards, holy slayers of low station, servants, and even the dwarven farisan.

Mara and Safia al-Gurab Sagir
2nd-level human female wizards (sha'irs)
AL N; AC 9; MV 12; hp 7, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SZ M; ML 9; XP 120.
S 7 D 15 C 11 I 14 W 14 CH 12
Spells:

2nd *alter self, strength 50%* (1d6+2 turns)
1st *sand slumber, magic missile 60%* (1d6+ 1 rounds)

Mara and Safia are Akim's new apprentices, though the wagging tongues of some holy slayers hint at some darker purpose that Akim has in store for them. Mara is the more confident and industrious of the two; Safia is a nervous hen, prone to worrying and whining. Both are opportunists.

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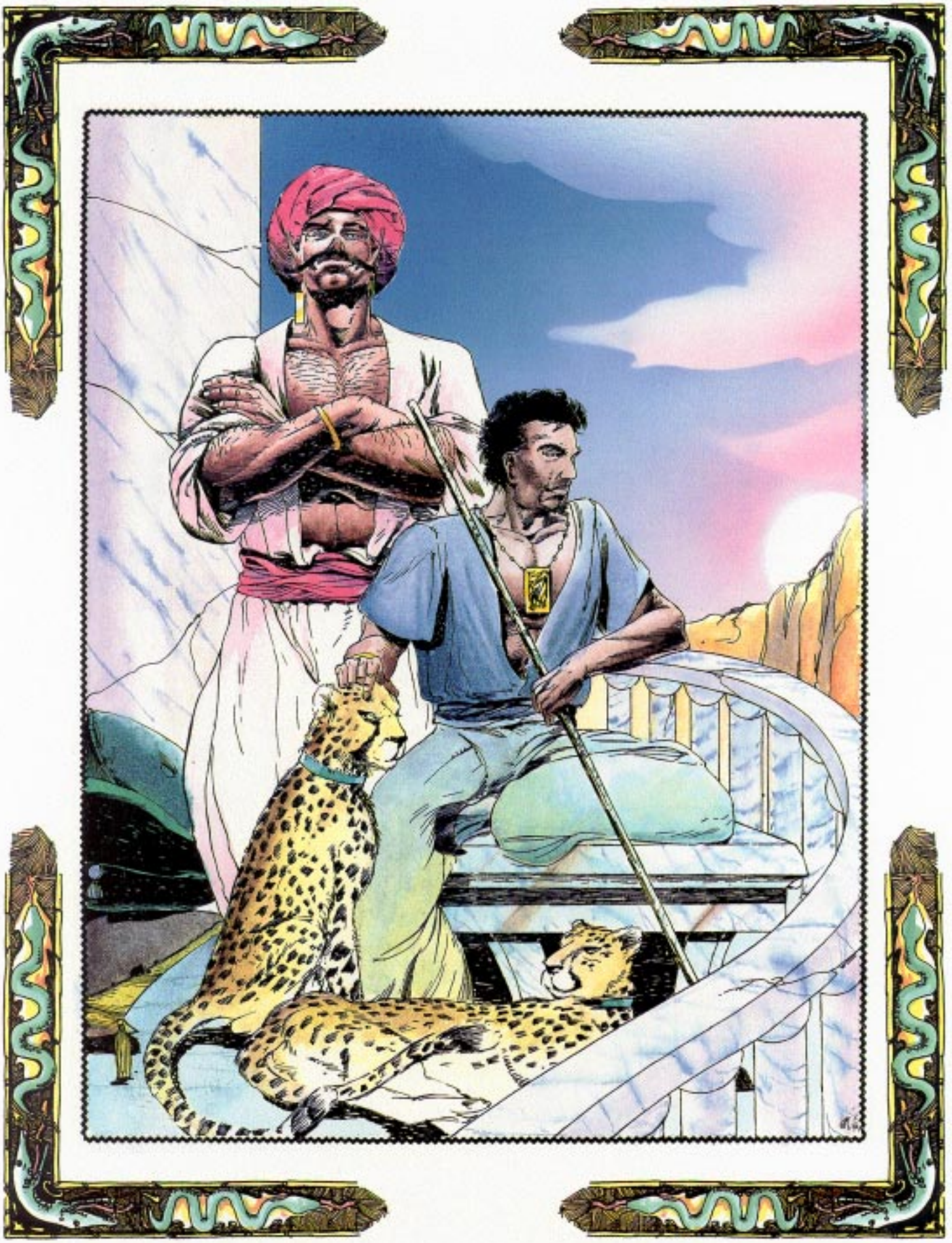

The Sword Dancers

The Sword Dancers are a very new faction, formed and controlled by one man, Farouk Abd al-Bazan. They are generally younger, more fiery, and more reckless than their brethren, especially after a night of mystic preaching and dance-induced trances. Batina and the Preachers consider them almost heretical, and watch them closely for some damning slip that will reveal a breach of faith and allow the moralist faction to consign them to a horrid death.

Farouk Abd al-Bazan
Efreeti: Int Very; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9, Fl 24; HD 10; hp 57; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8; SA spells; SD immune to fire; SZ M (L); ML 15; XP 4,000.
Magical items: *amulet of proof against detection and location, staff of the sands* (12 charges).

Farouk has used his *polymorph self* ability to take the form of a dark and devastatingly handsome man. Even in this form, he can become *invisible,* assume *gaseous form, detect magic, enlarge, polymorph self,* create an illusion with both visual and audio components, or create a *wall of fire* once per day. Farouk can also *produce flame* or cause *pyrotechnics* as often as desired. He takes no damage from normal fire.

Farouk is fond of hunting and other blood sports, and he regards his attempts to seize power among the Everlasting as a game. He tends toward sarcastic conversation and thinly-veiled threats. He sees others only in terms of how he can use them, and all his friendly advances are false.

Sirhan al-Din (janni): INT exceptional; AL N; AC 2 (5); MV 12, Fl 30 (A); HD 6+2; hp 25; THAC0 13 (11 with strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus strength bonus of +3; SA spells; SD 20% magic resistance; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000; jann lamellar armor, scimitar.

The master of the hounds is a janni named Sirhan al-Din, a convert from the days when the jann built the fortress. He is completely loyal to the Sword Dancers, and is not willing to help the PCs with matters unrelated to hounds or hunting.

Sirhan is always accompanied by two trained hunting cheetahs, which he uses to bring down gazelles. They are very protective of him, and growl when others approach him too closely.

Cheetahs (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 15, sprint 45, HD 3; hp 13, 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-8; SA rear claws for 1-2 each; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175.

Typical Sword Dancer
3rd-level human priest (mystic)
AL LN or LE; AC 10; MV 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 16; XP 175; short swords.
Spells: *Cure light wounds, cause fear, spiritual hammer*

The Sword Dancers are rather heterodox worshippers, believers in the power of certain cleansing rituals, such as fiery purifications and fasting, as well as ecstatic dancing. They are often whipped into frenzies of devotion by their charismatic leader.

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The Winged Bulls

The Winged Bulls are the weakest faction on Assassin Mountain. Their true leader, Aida, is always working at the various strongholds and city safe houses of the Everlastings' network. The Shadow Caliph favors her as his true successor, which is why he is grooming her far from the feuds and deadly infighting of Assassin Mountain.

Aida al-Irrahman al-Qudra
12th-level human female thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 1; MV 12; hp 46; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+2; SZ M; ML 18; XP 10,000; scimitar.
PP 45; OL 40; F/RT 25; MS 90; HS 90; DN 60; CW 85; RL 40; Backstab x4.
S 15 D 17 C 9 I 18 W 16 CH 18
Magical items: *bracers of defense AC 6, chime of opening, dagger of life stealing* (three charges left), *+2 jellaba of protection, ring of human influence* (13 charges)

Aida is a sharp, wily, and somewhat unapproachable person, too obsessed with furthering the cause of the Everlasting to spend time making friends. She views romantic liaisons in the same calculating way; she seduces and discards powerful or useful men with regularity. Aida is a great orator, and her followers listen to her speeches with rapt attention. When not in disguise, she enjoys wearing golden rings on all her fingers; jewelry is one of her secret vices.

Nusrah bin Kerim
2nd-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 with short sword; Dmg 1d6+2 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65; leather armor, short sword, jambiya.
PP 5; OL 20; F/RT 20; MS 40; HS 40; DN 20; CW 60; RL 0; Backstab x2.
S 15 D 13 C 13 I 9 W 8 CH 9

The leader of the Winged Bulls is a young and overweight fellow named Nusrah bin Kerim. Nusrah keeps a minimal presence before the Grandfather on behalf of Aida, but he has no illusions that he has any real power.

Bismalla bin Ala'i
5th-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18 (17 with scimitar); #AT 1 (3/2 with scimitar); Dmg 1d8+3 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 18; XP 270; studded leather armor, shield, scimitar.
PP 5; OL 10; F/RT 5; MS 50; HS 60; DN 15; CW 40; RL 0; Backstab x3.
S 16 D 15 C 12 I 12 W 6 CH 13

Bismalla is the PCs' guide to Assassin Mountain, a genial fellow who is always polite and deferential, and quite canny about the rules of the Everlasting. He speaks slowly and carefully, as he has to think very hard about what to say. He knows a thousand dull aphorisms and proverbs common among the Everlasting, almost all of them completely useless.

Bismalla is a middle-aged, pot-bellied holy slayer who has been put out to pasture, for despite having the strength of an ox, Bismalla also has the brains of an ox. He is balding and greying, but still tall and strong in a chunky kind of way.

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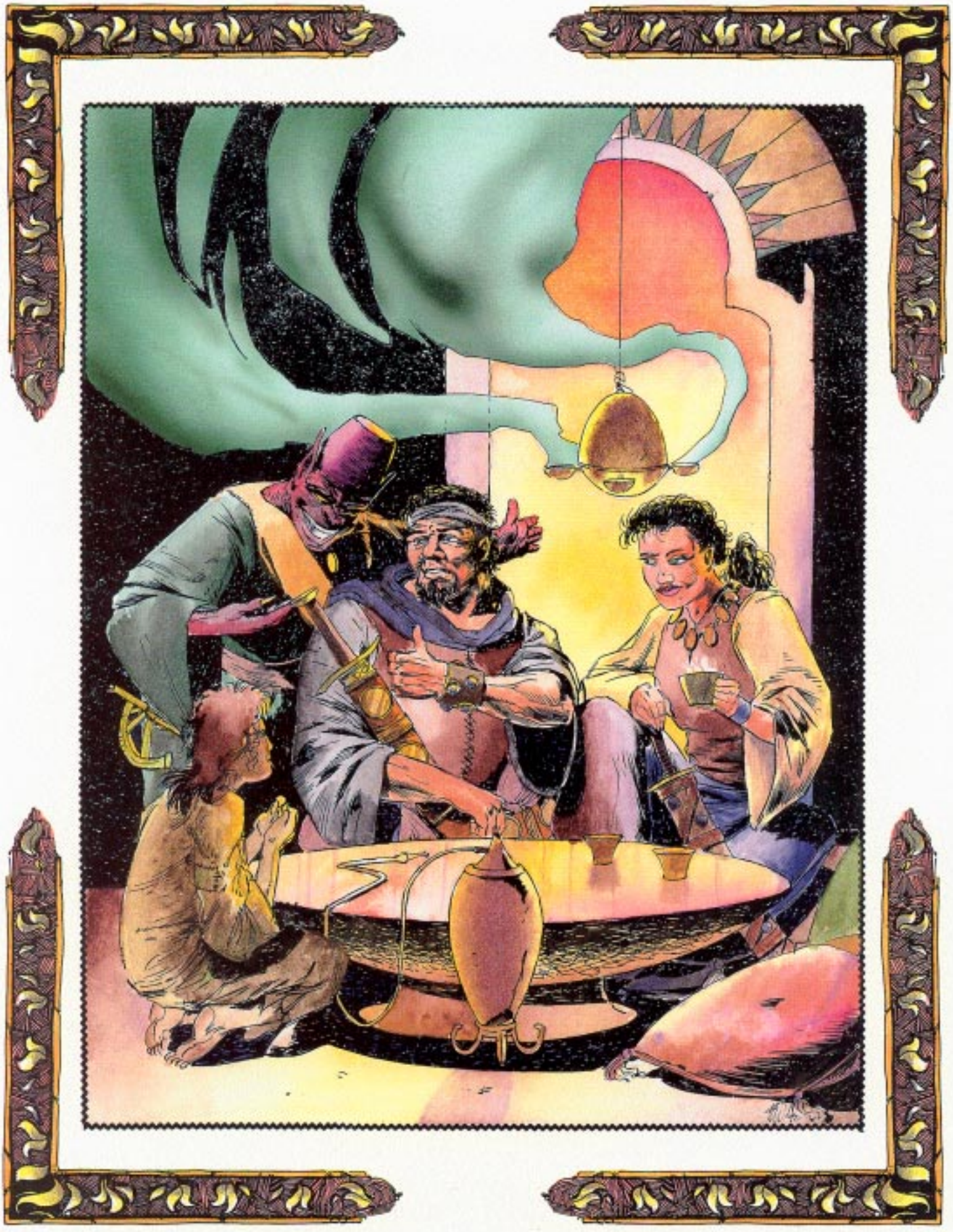

Noteworthy NPCs

The Al-Farids

Fadiya and Omar al-Farid are sister and brother, a pair of assassins currently serving the Grey Fire, though they were once members of the Everlasting. Their parents died at the hands of thieves, and the two young children learned to fend for themselves on the streets of Hiyal. The Everlasting took them in and raised them, forging them into weapons against the impious.

Bani Matruj al-Haddar, the Silent Sheikh
4th-level goblin male thief (barber)
AL N; AC 10; MV 6; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1;
Dmg 1d2; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; razor.
PP 50; OL 10; F/RT 20; MS 15; HS 10; DN 15;
CW 85; RL 10; Backstab x2.
S 10 D 14 C 13 I 12 W 8 CH 8

Bani is a ceaseless and talented gossip, tale-teller, and information broker who is physically unable to keep quiet unless gagged. He calls himself the Silent Sheikh and refers to himself as a man of few words, generally in the middle of a constant stream of gossip, monologues, and tall tales. He expounds on his talents in astrology, phlebotomy, grooming, etiquette, and games of chance while also praising his own shy, quiet nature to anyone who will listen. If he considers a customer a good listener, he may stop halfway through a shave or a haircut, in order to keep the customer around a little longer and do a quick astrological chart for him.

Bani is a goblin barber. He is 4 feet tall, with a flat face, broad nose, pointed ears, wide mouth, and small, sharp fangs. His forehead slopes back, and his skin is a dull brick red, with yellow eyes. He wears a fez, and a razor and an astronomical instrument hang from his belt.

Fadiya al-Farid
5th-level human female thief (holy slayer)
AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2;
Dmg 1-8+3 (scimitar) or by weapon type; SZ M;
ML 14; XP 420; leather armor, scimitar, javelin.
PP 15; OL 20; F/RT 15; MS 75; HS 70; DN 30;
CW 70; RL 5; Backstab x3.
S 16 D 18 C 14 I 13 W 12 CH 15

Fadiya is not a person to cross, for she is willing to hold a grudge for years. However, she puts on a smile for anyone who might help her, and she goes to some trouble to assist others who might not be immediately useful. Though she has the fire of belief, it doesn't burn nearly as brightly as her anger at having been cast out of the Everlasting. Fadiya is the older sibling, and she bullies Omar into helping her with all her schemes.

Omar al-Farid
3rd-level human male thief (holy slayer)
AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 3/2;
Dmg 1-8+2 (scimitar) or by weapon type; SZ M;
ML 13; XP 175; leather armor, scimitar, katar, javelin.
PP 50; OL 10; F/RT 20; MS 15; HS 10; DN 15;
CW 85; RL 10; Backstab x2.
S 14 D 15 C 9 I 8 W 8 CH 13

Omar is a follower, a chubby and genial-looking fellow with a round, moonlike face. His dark hair and dark eyes match his preferred dark blue or black robes. His skin is slightly darker than his sister's. He tends to defer to Fadiya, although his practical skill at theft has allowed them both to survive on a day-to-day level. He has a much more relaxed attitude toward the Everlasting, but agrees to Fadiya's plans out of fear and a sense of family duty. He wears dusty brown leather armor over a faded grey tunic.

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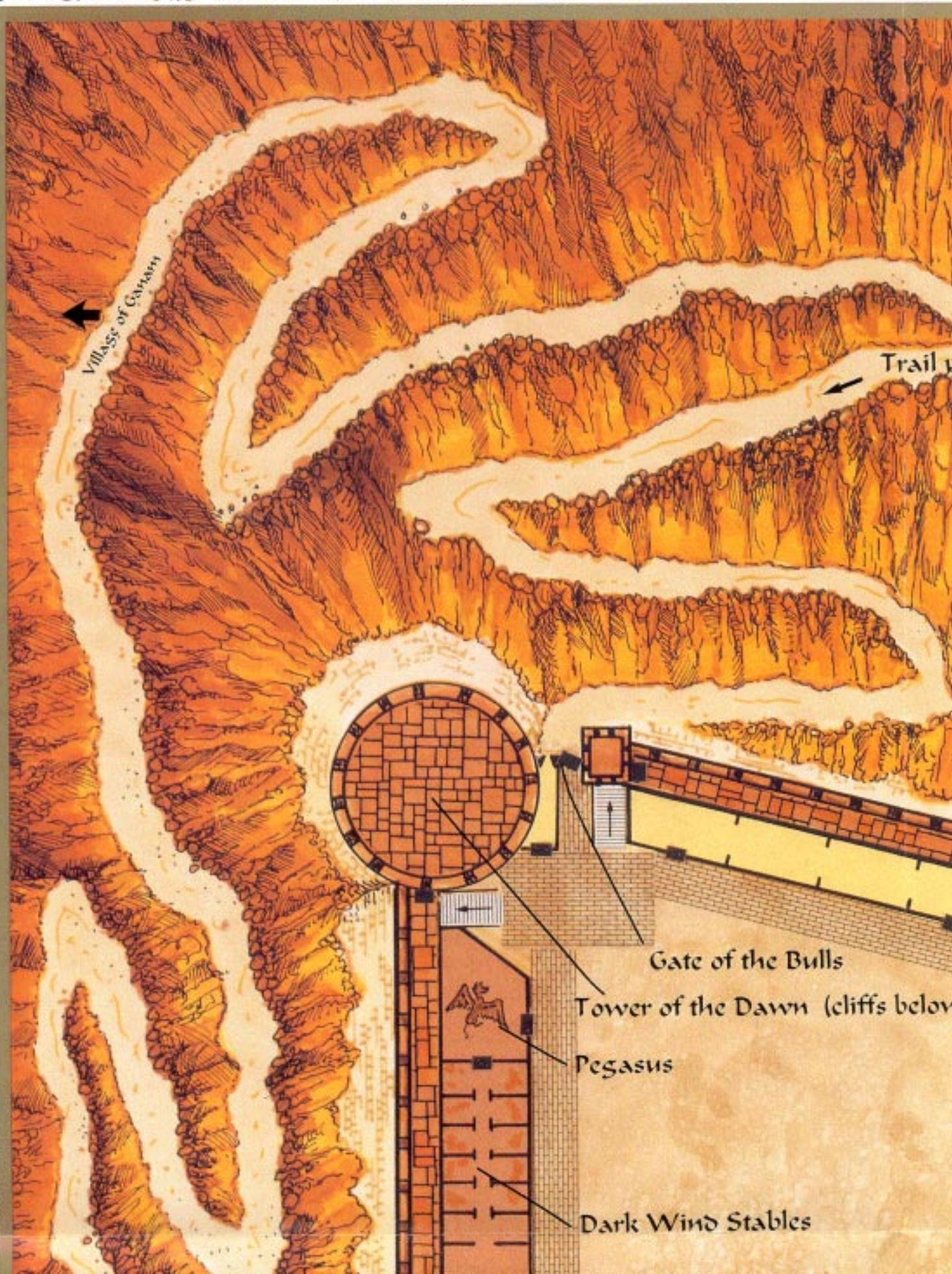
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Trail
Gate of the Bulls
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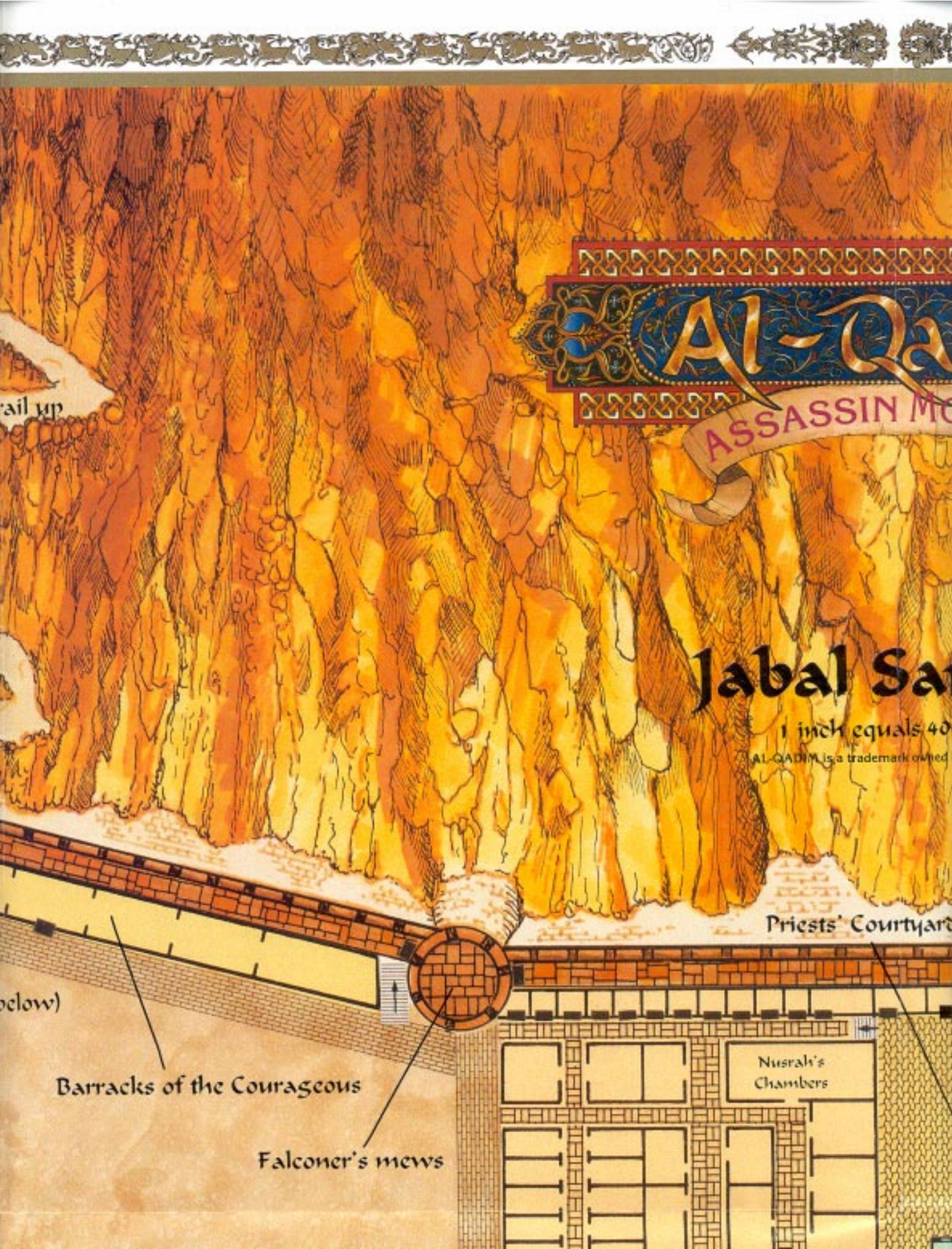
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AL-QADIM is a trademark owned
Priests' Courtyard
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Barracks of the Courageous
Falconer's mews
Nusrah's
Chambers

MOUNTAIN
CAMPAIGN
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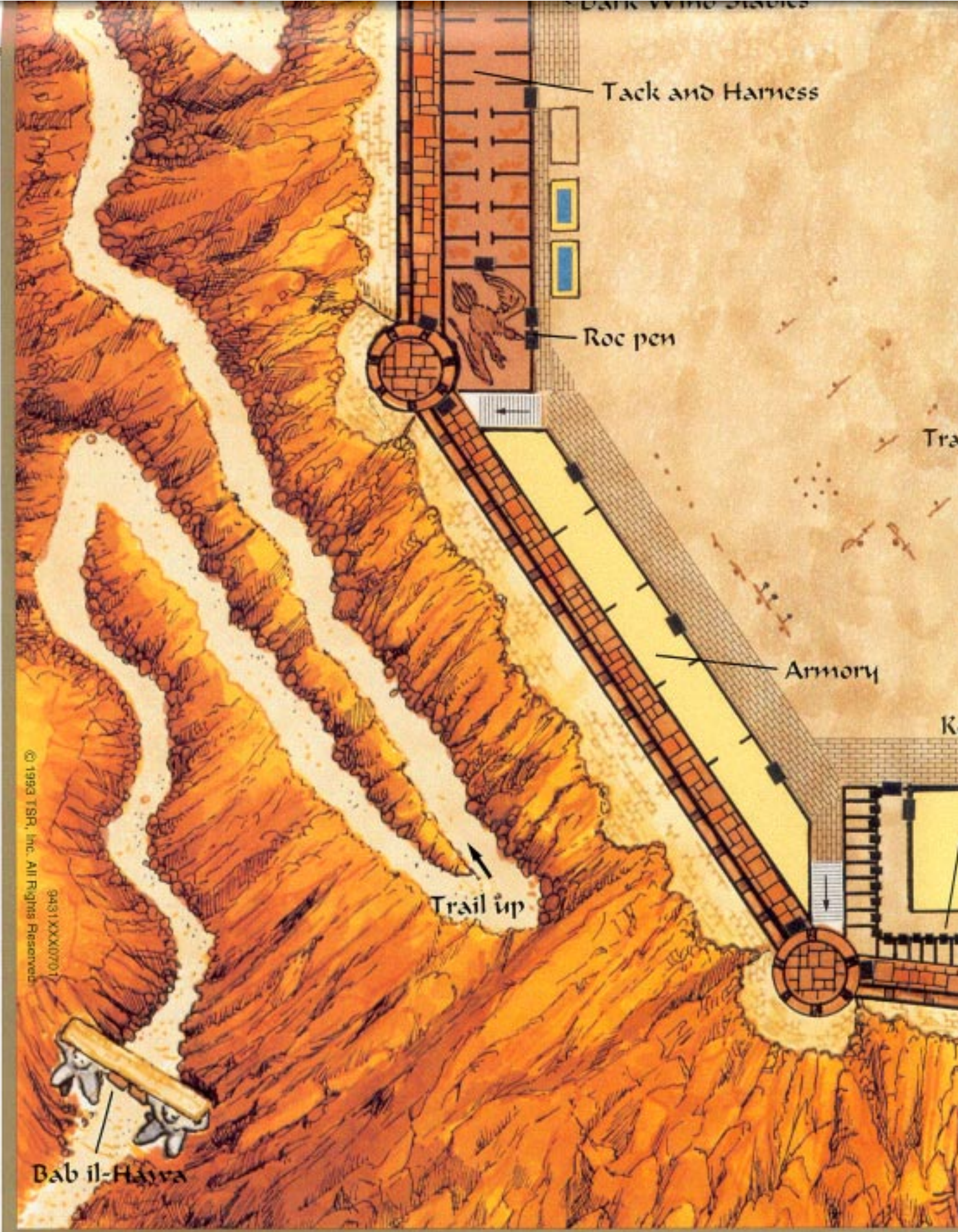
owned by TSR, Inc.
Observatory
Orchards
Mamoud's
Chamber
Terrace

The Garden of Delights
Pavilion
Rock of Fasting
Griffon Statues
Lion's Shrine
Lion's Pit
Batina's Chambers
Yusuf's Chambers
Lobby
Diwan Audience
Balcony
Waiting Room
Chamber
Hall
Marwan's Chambers
Balcony
Sayida's Chambers
Servants
Storage
Trail



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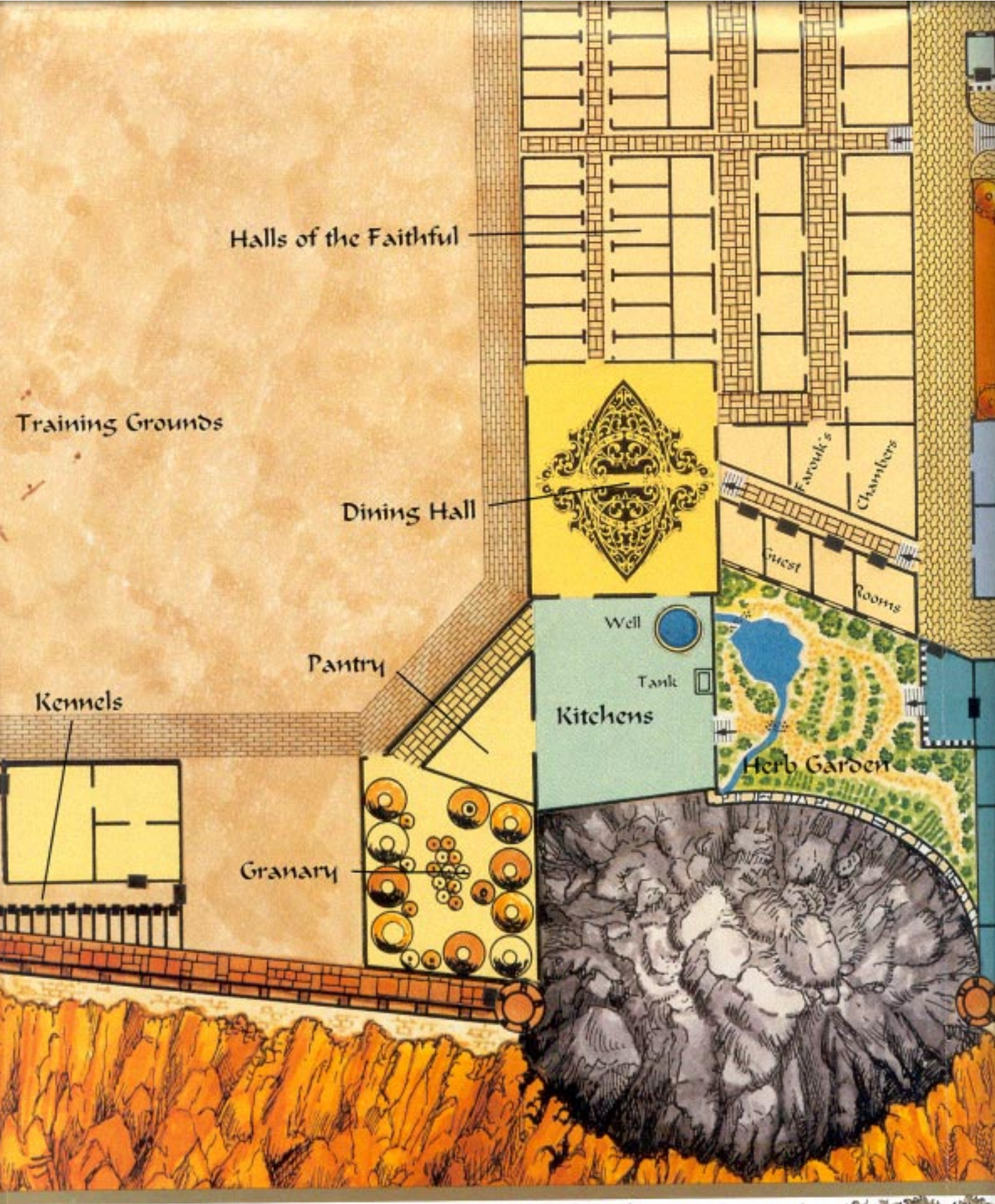
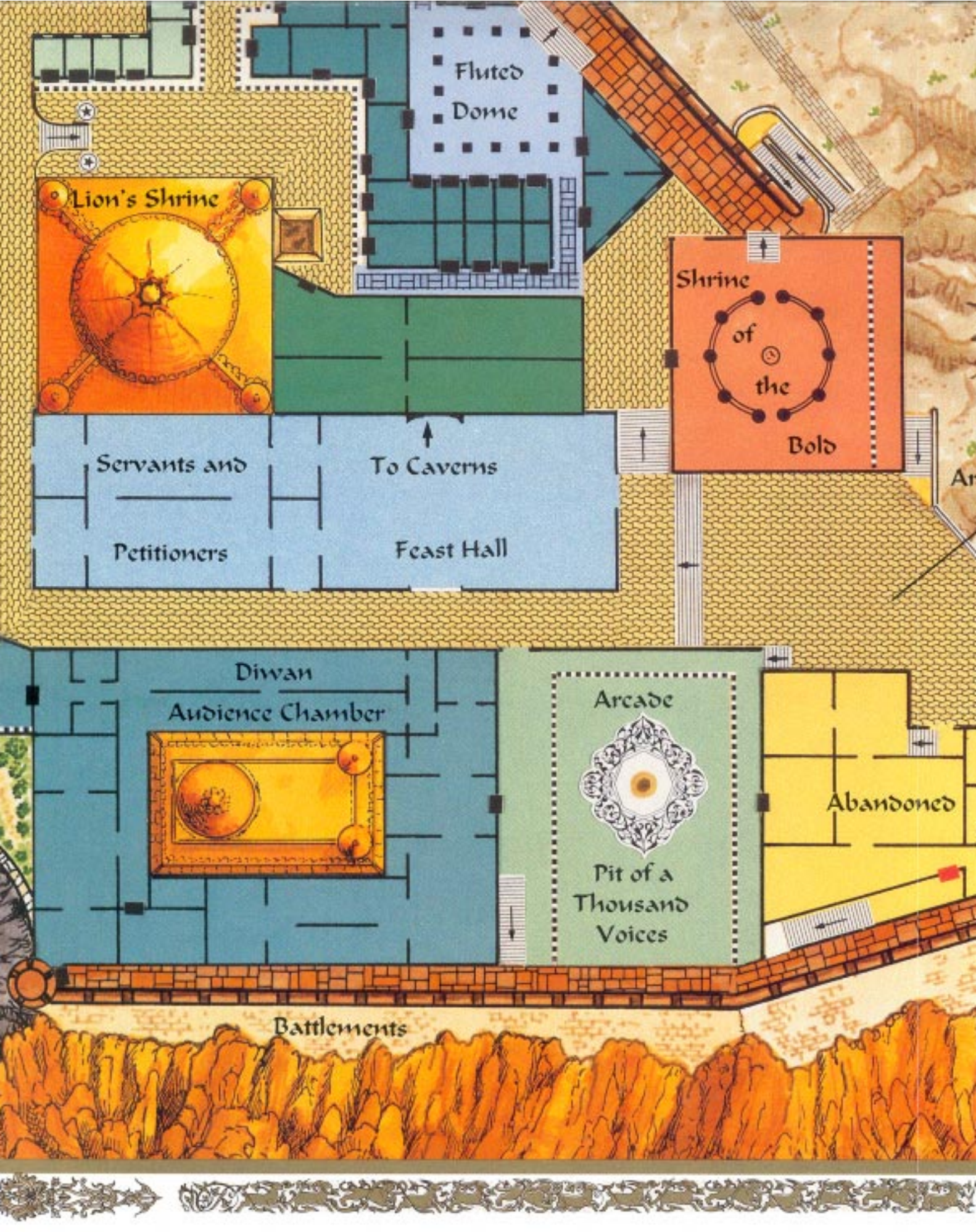

Halls of the Faithful
Training Grounds
Dining Hall
Farouk's Chambers
Guest Rooms
Well
Tank
Kitchens
Pantry
Kennels
Herb Garden
Granary


Fluted
Dome
Lion's Shrine
Shrine
of
the
Bold
Servants and
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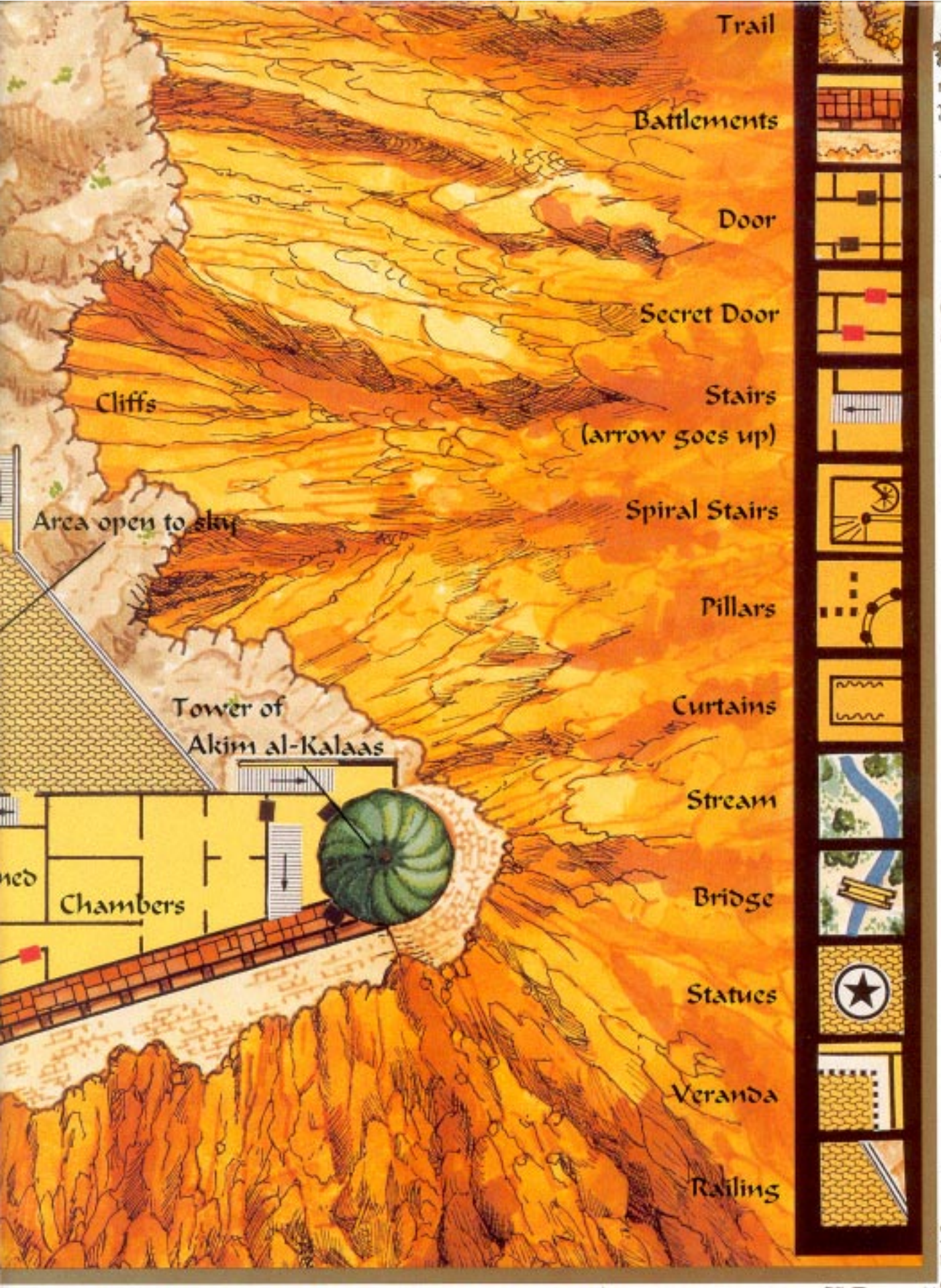
To Caverns
Feast Hall
Diwan
Audience Chamber
Arcade
Abandoned
Pit of a
Thousand
Voices
Battlements


Trail
Battlements
Door
Secret Door
Stairs
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Spiral Stairs
Pillars
Curtains
Stream
Bridge
Statues
Veranda
Railing
Cliffs
Area open to sky
Tower of
Akim al-Kalaas
Chambers

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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® 2nd Edition

Al-Qadim™

Assassin Mountain

CAMPAIGN

by
Wolfgang Baur

The Caliph of Shadows awaits!

The Assassins of Zakhara strike in silence and from darkness, certain of their faith and the rightness of their cause. The slayers carry out the orders of their Grandfather assassin, never questioning his wisdom or direction.

Assassin Mountain is the DM's guide to the secrets and objectives of the assassins.

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Assassin Mountain includes:

- two booklets filled with source material on the holy slayers of Zakhara and adventures with the Everlasting;
- six cardsheets;
- MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ pages detailing new genies and other monsters; and
- a poster map of Jabal Sarahin, the fortress of the Everlasting.

Recommended for use with the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook.

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