

# Al-Qadim<sup>®</sup>

CORSAIRS OF THE GREAT SEA

CAMPAIGN



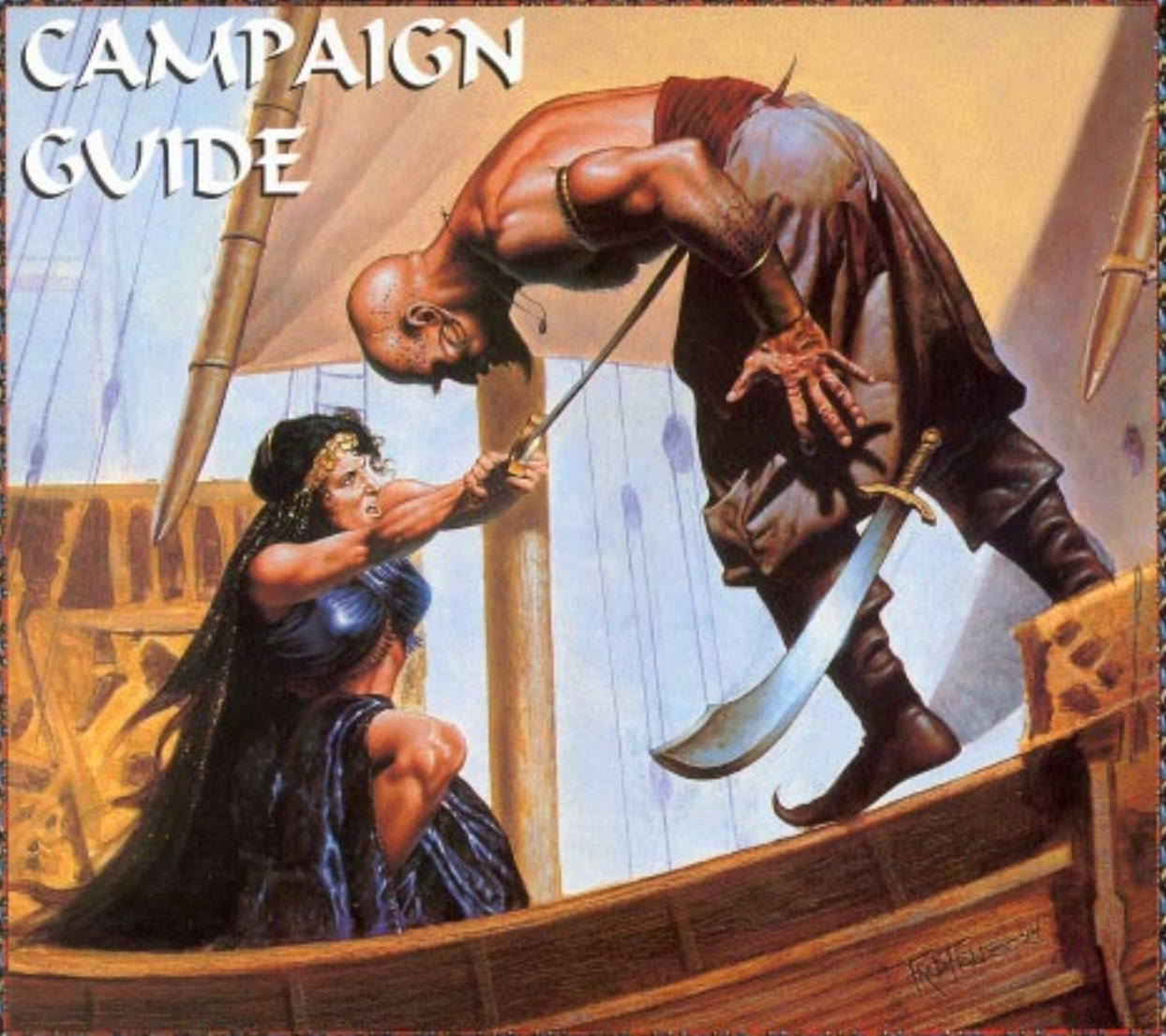
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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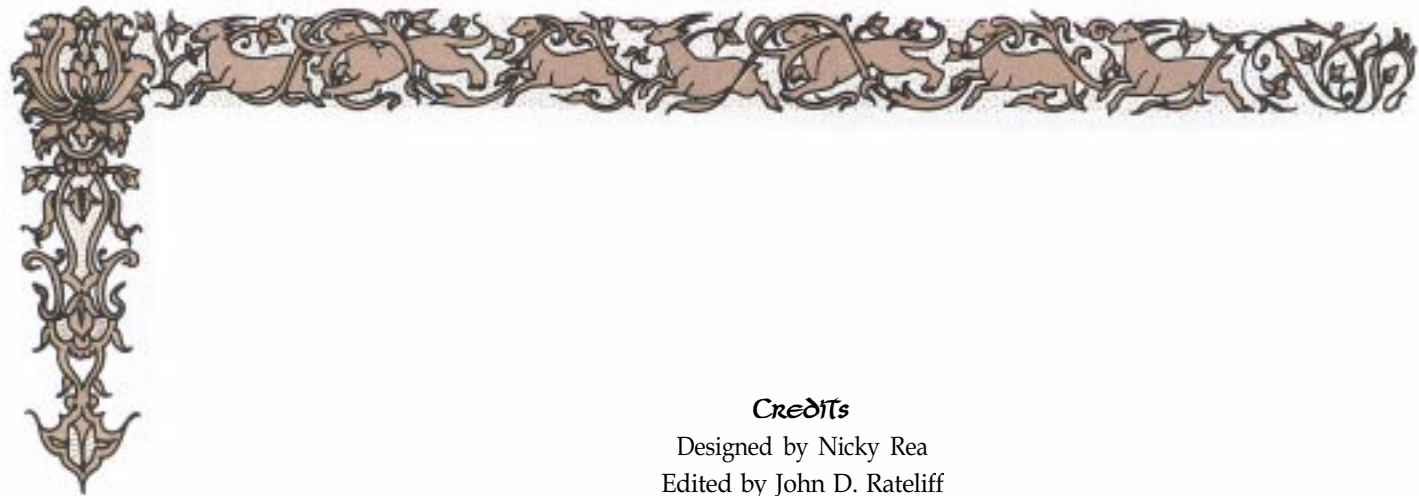
## CAMPAIGN GUIDE



# **Corsairs of the Great Sea**

## **Corsair Sourcebook**

by Nicky Rea



### *Credits*

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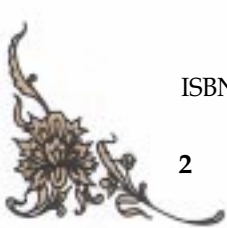
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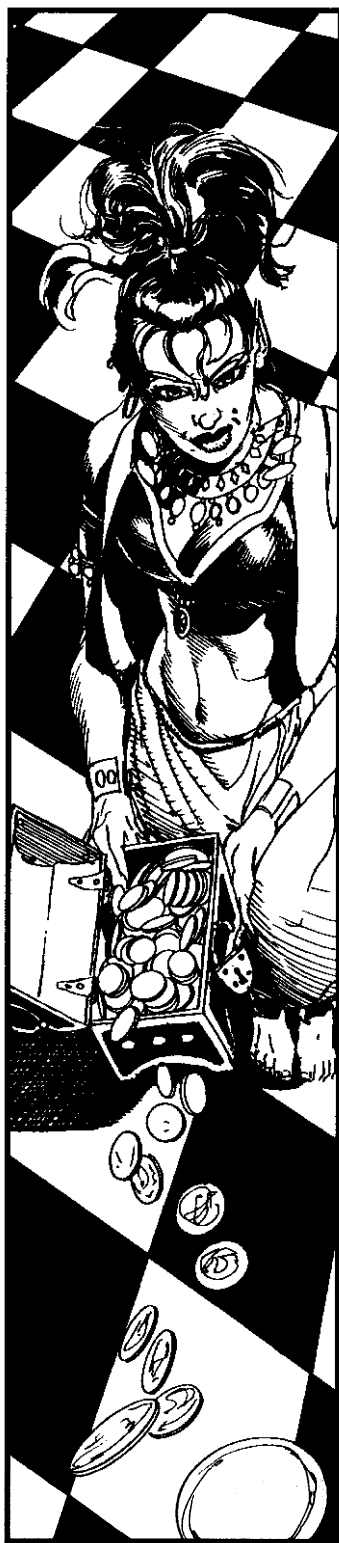
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## Introduction

A thousand thousand welcomes, noble ones! May Fate bless you and bring you to Enlightenment, and may you have joy of the tales contained herein. It has been commanded by my esteemed master that this unworthy one should offer to you a small but wondrous golden box, most pleasingly shaped, scented with the rarest of spices and perfumes and inlaid with precious woods and priceless gemstones. Within this golden box may be discovered fabulous treasures heretofore hidden.

By order of my noble and most gracious master, I have placed many great wonders within it: a large color mapsheet of the area surrounding the Corsair Domains, six cards (color, backed with black and white) of area maps and information about the marvels and adventures to be found there, an 8-page booklet of strange new monsters suitable for use in the AL-QADIM® campaign setting, this 32-page sourcebook featuring the wily denizens of the Corsair Domains as well as their greatest enemies, the powerful mamluks of Qudra, and finally a 64-page adventure book. Truly a treasure to those who desire adventure and intrigue!

But beware! For in order to use this treasure, you will need to have the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, the *Monstrous Manual*, the AL-QADIM® *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix (MC13)*, and the AL-QADIM *Arabian Adventures* rulebook. The *Land of Fate* boxed set may add both depth and enjoyment to the game but is not necessary for play. Some of the information found in that set is also represented here and expanded upon as needed.

To hear is to obey, and all has been done as my master has commanded. You, noble ones, have but to stretch forth your hands and open the wondrous golden box. The treasures within should bring you many fine hours of play and adventure. It has been said that the wise person places great store in stories, games, and amusements, for there will never come a day when such a one has nothing to do or think about. So, wise ones, enjoy that which Fate and the foresight of my master has placed in your hands.





## Chapter One:

# An Overview of The Corsair Domains

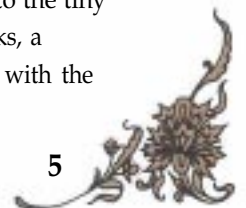
*It has been said that the corsairs who infest the Great Sea plague the Free Cities like unto a swarm of locusts. They give nothing to Zakhara or to the Grand Caliph's people. They do no labor, nor do they produce fine goods for trade, nor do they offer services. "What, then, is their reason for existing in the Land of Fate?" you ask. And I reply, "To test the resolve of the Faithful."*

— Akil min Kor

**S**trewn across the shallow turquoise seas of northwestern Zakhara are a handful of islands that make up the Corsair Domains. These range from small sandy or rocky desert islands barely four miles across to the large island (over 100 miles east to west) known as the Island of Firethorns which serves as the main base for the majority of corsairs. The larger islands are patchworks of sandy beaches, swamps, coastal cliffs, inland heights, grasslands, jungle, and myriad hidden coves, sea caves, and inlets where the corsairs hide their ships or pull them ashore for repairs. Lush jungles, white sand beaches, graceful palms, abundant fruit trees, and aquamarine lagoons with clear, sandy bottoms filled with darting, colorful fish all make the isles of the Corsair Domains a beautiful setting fit for the Grand Caliph's summer palace were they not inhabited by pirates. Such is Fate!

## The Genies' Turban

**T**he main islands lie off the coast opposite Muluk, City of Kings, and form a grouping known as the Genie's Turban. The two larger ones, the Island of Firethorns and the Island of Gardens (al-Hada'iq), form the turban, while three smaller islands cuddled in the eastern part of Chaos Bay make up the genie's "face" and are known as The Eyes (al-Oyun) and The Nose (al-Anf) of the Marid. Some witty corsairs have been known to refer to the tiny islets found among the larger "eyes" and "nose" as the Beauty Marks, a designation that never fails to confuse those who have never dealt with the





corsairs before. Corsairs who are suspicious of those whom they do not know will often test newcomers to see if they are familiar with the term before committing themselves to any dealings or giving out any information to them. Thus the little Beauty Marks have become an important password for dealing with the corsairs, and anyone unfamiliar with the password will be viewed with some suspicion.

The Island of Firethorns is so named for the abundance of that plant on the island. Also known as sea rose, this curious weed thrives equally well in grassland or swamp and gives most of the lower parts of the island its beautiful flame-red color. Retaining some of the heat from the sun, this lovely but potentially deadly plant glows softly like banked embers at night. It incidentally provides an almost impassable barrier to travel in the regions where it is thick as well, since few care to test the virulence of the plants' poisonous thorns. The island is host to only two real settlements, a small fishing village named Safe Cove located in a sandy bay on its western face and the city of Hawa proudly ensconced on its eastern face overlooking Chaos Bay.

The Island of Gardens is a misnomer. The lush vegetation and colorful flowers found near the shore all around the island give way to a sandy, barren interior. The few villages to be found on this island cluster near the shoreline or rise from ledges along the eastern face of the Comb, as the island's forested elevation is called.

## The Desert's Virtues

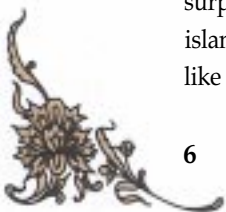
The second grouping of islands sometimes known as "the Desert's Virtues" lies to the west of the Genie's Turban and consists of three islands: two large and one small. The first island has one elevation upon it, which rises to a gradual peak from either side, somewhat like the hump of a camel. It is not too surprisingly called The Camel's Hump. The second island has two elevations which are shaped somewhat like the eyeholes in a moralist's robe. For this reason,

the island is known as The Chador. Each island holds a few small villages, most of which are clustered in quiet coves or in the areas where plant life is abundant. Most villages are ruled by former corsair captains and are considered to be autonomous holdings rather than satellites of Hawa. Rumors abound, however, that some of the more important figures from Hawa have hidden fortresses or caches of gold and other treasures on these islands as well.

The third island is a small, sandy desert island known as The Dune. It has also been called either Solitude or the Isle of Exile since those who have displeased one of the corsair captains have been marooned here from time to time. Other tiny isles dot the area around and between the Genie's Turban and the Desert's Virtues and have different names depending upon who is asked. Many of them are no more than glorified sand bars and may disappear entirely with an especially high tide or during storms.

## The Disputed Holdings

The corsairs would like to claim several islands which lie nearer to the Free Coast than their main holdings. These include the island known as The Wizard's Reach, which lies just north of Qadib, City of Wands; the two islands called al-Raqa (The Dancer) and al-Tir (The Bird), which lie just west and slightly to the north of Liham, City of Soldiers; and their most sought-after prize, The Fortress or Qal'at, an island strategically placed to prey upon all ships heading to and from Qudra, City of Power. Though one or more of the corsair captains have loosely staked claim to these islands, the corsairs as a group have been unable to work together long enough to make the concerted effort necessary to establish any sort of permanent base on any of these islands. Many individual corsairs make landfall on them for restocking supplies, and sometimes groups of ships lie in wait in hidden coves among these islands for a rumored prize to sail into their grasp—making journeys past them a sometimes chancy business.







## Chaos Bay

Chaos Bay, so called for its chaotic and often impassable formations of coral reefs and sandbars, provides the first obstruction to anyone wishing to attack the corsairs' main base. Creatively positioned and maintained by sea elves to cause the maximum possible havoc to enemy ships, these formations are also home to hundreds of different sea creatures—brightly colored fish (including eels and sea horses), crustaceans, dolphins, and the sea elves themselves, whose coral city and grand coral palace can be seen half hidden among the undersea landscape through the clear-blue water of the bay.

Periodically, the coral reefs and sand bars are shifted and repositioned, using magic which no other sea mage has as yet discovered or duplicated. Aside from the design and movement of the undersea barriers, the sea elves serve as harbor pilots to direct friendly ships

through the one clear passage left open.

Though they do not charge a fee for this service, the wise captain always offers some valuable object to the pilot as a token of thanks once his or her ship is safely through the maze.

Regular visitors to the city know better than to pollute this area in any fashion. Likewise, any mistreatment of the sea elves whether at sea or on shore is likely to provoke severe punishment from anyone who witnesses it. The sea elves are Hawa's first line of defense and, as such, are treated as valuable allies.

Their leader, Kawthar bint Husn umm Ra'id (efW/sem/12) and her son, Ra'id bin Kawthar (emF-W/a-sem/6-6) occasionally take part in the Corsair Council, where their plans for defense are always welcome. The sea elves have been granted all the rights to their waters, a mutual assistance pact, and a share of common treasure in return for their services to the city of Hawa.





## Chapter Two:

# Hawa, City of Chaos

Though they lie within the Bahr al-Kibar or Great Sea which frames Qudra and the Free Cities of the North, the Corsair Domains boast only one city of any size: Hawa, the City of Chaos. Located on the Island of Firethorns and stretching out into Chaos Bay, Hawa is also named the City of Stilts. Half the houses in Hawa are indeed built up on stilts or share long, raised docks which jut out into the outer portion of the bay. Interspersed among the houses and moorings for small boats are small garden plots planted on semi-permanent raised sandbars (more work of the friendly sea elves).

## CITY PLANNING

No central plan was used to regulate the growth of the city, and consequently the stilt houses and docks sometimes stand alone and sometimes meet together to form long boardwalks. These, in turn, may veer off sideways to link with another dwelling or end suddenly several yards from shore. Those unfamiliar with this warren of piers, stilt houses, floating docks, and tiny gardens may become hopelessly lost within minutes of setting foot on the first dock.

Even within clear sight of the shore, charting a direct course is impossible. Ships larger than a small dory have no prayer of making way through this cluttered region, making any assault on Hawa a difficult proposition at best. The corsairs themselves reach the inner lagoon by a completely different route, skirting the stilt city and gliding in via secret channels cut through Firethorn Swamp along the southern arm of the island.

Even ashore, the city is no less confusing. Buildings near the lagoon continue to be built on stilts so the changes in the sea level due to tides won't cause problems, while those set further back or elevated a bit more are usually built directly on the ground. Whether on stilts or solid ground, most of the houses are built of either clay bricks or stone. Though some are





painted or washed with color, the sun and salt air quickly leech all colors away, leaving most of the city a yellowish-white. Several buildings are built upon the ruins of earlier structures, and in places houses rise on stilts above old foundations which may hold old flooded basements. One of the most prevalent rumors in Hawa is that of ancient treasures to be found in some of these submerged ruins.

Throughout the city, houses sit at odd angles to one another, patches of gardens are interrupted and divided by small paths and roads which run through them, and tumbledown hovels stand next to sturdy inns or finely built mansions. In the Free Market (the Grand Bazaar of Hawa), held in the large open space surrounding the main town well, artisans and craftsmen do not group together in orderly rows by profession. Nor can certain streets be identified by the businesses they contain; instead they are known by some 'local landmark or person of note who lives there. For example, rather than a Street of the Rugmakers filled with all the people in the city plying that particular craft, the Street of the Fishes is so called from the fishmarket at the head of the street, and the Street of the Poet gets its name from a well-known rawun living there.

The real trouble for visitors arises, however, when they first discover that the streets can have more than one name depending upon whom you ask. Visitors may be told by a long-time resident to seek the Street of the Lamps (because 30 years ago a lampmaker used to live there) only to find that the street was renamed the Street of the Shrine four years ago in honor of the shrine to Najm erected there by one of the faithful. It is usually best to hire a local as a guide when visiting the city for the first time.

## The Docks and Shipbuilding Yards

The southwestern edge of the city seems a little more organized than the other parts. It is to this area that ships which emerge from the secret route



through the swamp are taken. They are towed into docking spaces in the lagoon by the harbormaster, Najit'aqalat, a bound marid. Each ship given a berth pays a small fee which is claimed by the marid, and its contents are assessed a 2% tax by an agent of the Corsair Council. This money is shared by the council members and is payment for the right to dock in Hawa and to sell whatever goods one has aboard with no questions asked. Since the assessor has the final say on the worth of the cargo (and therefore the amount of tax owed), it is sometimes cheaper to simply bribe the assessor to devalue the cargo in his or her report. No one on the council ever bothers to read them anyway unless too little money comes in over too long a period of time.

Alongside the docking area is the shipyard where craft are built and repaired. Some of the best ships in Zakhara are built in the shipyards of Hawa, which specialize in light, sturdy ships capable of quick maneuvers and speedy retreats. Most have significant cargo space to accommodate the booty the corsairs take and enough room to carry the large crew needed to overbear a merchant vessel's defenders in boarding actions. Recently, as the Qudran mamluks have become more tiresome in their insistence on protecting merchant ventures along the Free Coast, the corsairs have begun fitting their vessels with devices to hurl oil of liquid stars (Greek fire) at non-merchant ships. The shipyards are partially enclosed by an old, half-built sea wall that was never finished. Reports vary as to whether the council ran out of money to complete the wall or simply lost interest in it.

## The City Wall

A more sturdy wall encircles the city on its westward side, making an attack on Hawa from that direction more difficult. If an attacking force should land on the far side of the island (at the fishing village located there, for instance), then trek overland through the jungle and swamp to the city side of the





island, they would be disappointed in their goal. The interior side of Hawa has several well-fortified manors outside the city walls. Many of these are also well hidden and could provide bases from which harrying attacks against the invaders could be made. The small area of land which has been cleared for farming is not really necessary to keep the city supplied with food so long as ships can come and go from the city or the sea elves can bring in fish and kelp. The wall has only one gate, which is defended by two strong towers, and most of the 2,000 city guards could take up positions along the length of the wall to defend it from a besieging army.

As an additional defense, some of the swampy jungle land has been disguised to look like farming plots, and those moving through the area could easily find themselves stuck in a morass or sinking in quicksand after stepping on what looks like solid ground. Though in many cases they are simply the result of favorable terrain features rather than central planning, the defenses of Hawa are such that an assault on the city is a major undertaking requiring much special knowledge and planning. Even with a successful assault, it is not clear whether a victory for the invaders would gain them what they sought.

Though the majority of the people of the Corsair Domains reside in Hawa, the nature of the islands and their dependence on watercraft allow those folks who live in Hawa to have bolt holes or fortresses elsewhere to which they can retreat during difficult times. Several of the smaller islands have hidden coves where a ship can escape notice, and the elevated portions of the Island of Firethorns have plenty of hiding places. If they have no other place to go when threatened, the residents of Hawa may usually expect a welcome in Utaqa, City of Free Men, where many of them have blood relations. Invaders might overcome the city only to find that those corsairs they most wanted to capture had long ago fled the city and taken up residence elsewhere, only to return once the occupying force has withdrawn.

## The People

The people of the Corsair Domains are independent, strong-willed, and self-reliant. They demand their personal freedom and are proud and adventurous. Both men and women favor the practical working clothes of the corsairs: a lightweight shirt or blouse with billowing sleeves, pantaloons, and supple black boots. Colorful sashes and headscarves are popular, as are earrings. Almost everyone wears a dirk or jambiya, and swords of various styles (short sword, scimitar, cutlass) are common accessories as well. Most of the corsairs would fight to defend Hawa, as the city provides them with the life they wish to lead.

Hawa is a tough city, and its residents are certainly not above performing illegal activities such as smuggling and piracy. These two practices are the major sources of income for the islands and provide the Free Market of Hawa with a steady supply of fine and exotic goods. Though most of their activities are concentrated along the Free Coast, many of the corsairs also search further abroad for booty, venturing into the northern barbarian seas and returning with strange wares that fetch high prices from the right collector.

Most of the people of the Corsair Domains see themselves as both Enlightened and civilized. The city boasts three mosques (to Hakiyah, Kor, and Najm). Though they can seem heartless and cruel when crossed, many of the citizens of Hawa react with generosity and true concern for those less fortunate than themselves. Residents pay at least lip service to the Grand Caliph and the Laws of the Loregiver, claiming that the Grand Caliph is welcome to a portion of what they have—should he care to claim it in person—and stating to anyone who will listen that they take only one or two ships from any given merchant or city, which means that they are not depriving anyone of his or her whole livelihood, only a small part of it.

Some even go so far as to maintain that if the merchant vessels were truly following the path of



Enlightened people, they would freely offer one or two ships worth of goods to the corsairs as one would gladly offer generous gifts to the poor. Since they do not do so, it is then the business of the corsairs (as good and Enlightened people themselves) to make certain the merchants do not draw the evil eye upon themselves for their lack of generosity.

Some corsairs are indeed concerned enough about the Loregiver's Laws that they will not attack a ship which belongs to someone with whom they have shared the bond of salt or which is known to be the only vessel of a small-time merchant. They will likewise take only a portion of a ship's cargo and will spare the lives of the master and crew unless the ship puts up such a vigorous defense that the corsairs must make an example of it. Even then, they are more than willing to accept the ship's surrender than kill everyone aboard.

In any case, true corsairs never seek to severely damage any merchant ship they attack. There are three good reasons for this: first, taking the cargo and leaving the ship intact leaves their victims a vessel in which to return to port, meaning the corsairs are not responsible for dozens of needless deaths; second, if their own ship is damaged, they may need to transfer to the merchant ship; and third, a ship left afloat today may carry more booty through the area next week. Because of these practices, captains who wish to preserve their lives and the lives of their crews have learned not to resist corsair attacks unless they have the backing of a strong navy or the Qudran fleet. Mamluk escorts of the merchant fleets, however, are given no quarter and will be attacked on sight unless they obviously outnumber the corsairs or can be easily outrun.

## The Government and The Law

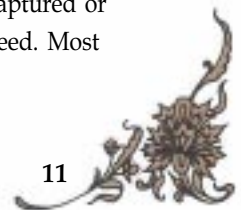
Hawa has no caliph or central ruler, being loosely governed by a council of corsairs both active and retired. Though ostensibly made up of all the

corsair captains, in practice the council only heeds the votes of the most powerful ones. Those who are still active pirates, smugglers, or semi-legitimate merchants attend the council only when they are in port and feel like it, leaving most of what governing there is to the others. For the most part, if the council members get their money from docking fees and make money on the side from protection rackets, sale of cargo, and investments in various legitimate and illegal ventures, they are content to let Hawa rule itself. . . within reason.

People who engage in rampant slaughter and savagery are not welcome in the city, though those who are subtle can get away with slitting throats in back alleyways for a considerable time. The council assumes that people in Hawa can look after themselves and stays out of petty quarrels unless they threaten to engulf the whole city in a blood feud. Likewise, vices which are rare or unheard of elsewhere in Zakhara are either tolerated or openly practiced in many parts of the city.

Public drunkenness has become a problem, as corsair crews celebrating a recent successful venture may roam the streets searching for rival crews to engage in brawls. Many are so far gone they don't care who they fight, and residents have learned to avoid these gangs when possible. Additionally, in many of the inns and taverns which cater to the corsair crews, gambling is one of the main attractions along with the dancing girls. Accusations of cheating have led to more than one knife fight. Other problems, from robbery to assault, have led many of Hawa's citizens to learn to defend themselves at an early age, and personal weapons are commonplace, even among children.

One practice which Hawa does not tolerate is institutionalized slavery, mostly because the mamluks of Qudra are their chief enemies. No slave market can be found in Hawa, and any slaves who are captured or who fall into the hands of corsairs will be freed. Most are then recruited as crew members.





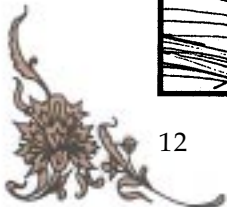
*Akura al-Hiyali*

*Hamid al-Bashshar*

*Jayani al-Jasir*

*Shing Jaw-long*

*Grima al-Auni min Kor*





## The Corsair Council

The most important members of the council are detailed below.

- Jayani al-Jasir (hfF/c/14): AC 0; MV 12; hp 82; #AT 2/1; Dmg by weapon; Str 12; Dex 17; Con 14; Int 15; Wis 14; Cha 17; AL N; THAC0 7.

Weapon Proficiencies: short sword, jambiya, cutlass, darts. Nonweapon Proficiencies: appraising (15), navigation (13), reading/writing (16), rope use (17), seamanship (18), swimming (12), tightrope walking (17), weather sense (13).

Equipment: almost any normal equipment she wants plus a *ring of youth*, *short sword of quickness*, *jambiya +2*, and *bracers of defense AC 3*.

Jayani is a legend both in and outside of the Corsair Domains. Now retired, she once was the scourge of the Free Coast, raiding up and down its length, seemingly at will. For a decade, she worked out of a base on the back of a great zaratan (an enormous sea turtle) until an attack by Qudra's mamluks spooked the creature. It dove to the bottom, taking Jayani's base—and most of her treasure—with it. She has never been able to find the zaratan again, and her hatred of the mamluks and their agents is of epic proportion.

Jayani now serves as the unofficial head of the council and owns or controls most of the taverns in Hawa and a few in the other Free Cities (and even Qudra!). Any taverns in Hawa which she does not own must pay her a small fee for permission to conduct business. Whether she owns a particular tavern or not, Jayani has spies in all of them. They subtly listen to conversations, buy drinks for and chat with newcomers (the better to extract information under the guise of taking a friendly interest in the latest news or local gossip), and in general notice anything that might be of interest to Jayani.

Aside from her spies, who contact her via *message rings*, Jayani also employs 30 corsairs as personal guards at her compound outside the city walls; these can serve

as sailors when needed. Should she need them, many of her old crew members would respond to Jayani's call, and most of the people of Hawa would fight to protect her as well, since they would be defending one of their own legends.

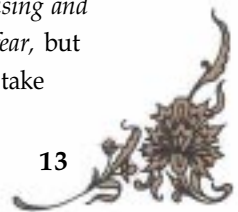
Her boldness and knowledge of the sea are surpassed only by her beauty. Allegedly in her nineties, Jayani retains her youthful looks except for a little graying at the temples. She is a striking woman with black hair and intelligent brown eyes. Her face is angular and her trim figure is well muscled. Most people assume she guards her looks through magical enhancements. She still wears the blouse, pantaloons, and tall black boots favored by most of the active corsair captains and disdains the use of a veil except in bad weather. She always carries her sword and jambiya with her and wears a set of golden bracelets which are intricately decorated. All of these are rumored to be magical.

Her current favorite is a handsome young outlander captain named Turn bin Trevor (hmF/ow/8). Originally from Waterdeep, where he was known as Turon Daysender, this restless explorer has sailed along most of the coastline of the Realms and across the Great Sea to Zakhara. Jayani's patronage has helped him to find acceptance in Hawa, and she hopes to extend her holdings to port cities outside Zakhara with his help. Jayani has been unable to persuade the other council members to accept Turn as a council member as yet.

- Akura al-Hiyali (hmW/sh/15): AC 1; MV 12; hp 47; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 9, Cha 13, AL NE; THAC0 16.

Weapon Proficiencies: staff, jambiya. Nonweapon Proficiencies: genie lore (18), haggling (9), herbalism (16), navigation (16), reading/writing (19), seamanship (17), spellcraft (16).

Equipment: Any reasonable normal equipment plus a *sash of defense AC 3*, *jambiya +1/+2 vs magic-using and enchanted creatures*, *jambiya of fear* (as *wand of fear*, but a successful attack is required for the magic to take





effect), *staff of the sea* (16 charges), two *potions of extra-healing*, and a *ring of genie summoning*.

Wizard Spells known: 1st level – *alter normal winds, avert evil eye, charm person, comprehend languages, cool strength, detect magic, fire truth, float, identify, magic missile, read magic, sea sight, wall of fog*; 2nd level – *banish dazzle, continual light, depth warning, ESP, invisibility, knock, know alignment, sand shadow, sundazzle, true bearing, wizard lock*; 3rd level – *converse with sea creatures, dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt, reveal invisible, slow, stone hull, sunscorch, tongues, water breathing, wind shadow*; 4th level – *conjure sand lion, dimension door, ghost rigging, improved invisibility, minor globe of invulnerability, shatterhull, stoneskin, sunfire, wind blade*; 5th level – *hold monster, seeming, shipshock, wind carpet*; 6th level – *command water spirits, flameproof, geas, ship of fools*; 7th level – *lifeproof, water form*; 8th level – *cleansing water*; 9th level – *maelstrom*.

Priest Spells known: 1st level – *cure light wounds, purify food & drink*; 2nd level – *find traps, slow poison*; 3rd level – *cure disease, protection from fire, remove curse*; 4th level – *cure serious wounds, detect lie, neutralize poison*.

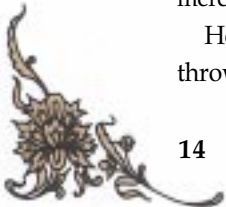
Originally from the intrigue-riddled city of Hiyal, Akura is an active corsair captain. Despite his frequent absences from the city, he wields a good deal of power and influence on the council. Of medium height and trim build, Akura has sun-streaked dark brown hair and light brown eyes. He favors black clothing with bright scarves and sashes and keeps his moustache and beard short and neatly trimmed. Never seen without his carved and polished staff, Akura also wears a pair of jambiya. He is one of the most successful pirates on the Free Coast, using his abilities as a sha'ir and Mawiyah, his water gen, both in planning his raids and in carrying them through. Bold, aggressive, and ruthless, he has been known to attack other corsairs as well as merchant vessels.

He wants to be the next pirate king and thereby throw off the constraints and enforced compromises

of the Corsair Council. He has somewhat rashly claimed that his legend will exceed that of Jayani, a position that has led to fights between them in council and battles among their supporters on the streets of the city. He is constantly evolving new schemes which will outdo anything Jayani ever attempted. Though highly intelligent, Akura is rash and doesn't seem to realize that some of his plots may jeopardize not only himself, but the city as well. Thus far, though he openly boasts of his prowess, he seems to have avoided attracting the evil eye. His detractors sneer that this is only because he sends his gen for spells to avert it every day. These same detractors speak softly, however, for Akura has been known to send Mawiyah to spy on his enemies and has used the gen's reports as an excuse to attack foes in the past.

Akura's house can be found near the docks. Though it has no wall around it, the house is usually given a wide berth, as those who have trespassed have occasionally been escorted from the premises by one of Akura's bound genies. The genies' orders have not always included instructions to treat such visitors gently. Though Akura currently has no genies bound to him, the citizens of Hawa don't know that, and stories of his "dozens" of servitors abound in the city.

He does not keep a great amount of treasure in his city home, preferring to avoid the cargo tax which would be levied on it. He has a hidden base on the far side of The Wizard's Reach where he takes most of his booty. Being a sha'ir himself, he has reached an accord with Sultan Kamal al-Hadi, ruler of Qadib. In return for his stronghold on the island, Akura has agreed to leave ships from Qadib strictly alone. Thus far he has mostly kept his word (and the exceptions haven't lived to tell of his perfidy), but he is working on a plan which will provide another base for him. Once he has attained his new base, he will resume attacks on Qadib's vessels regardless of any deals he made in the past.







- Grima al-Auni min Kor (hill giant mP/e/8). Grima is an ethoist priest of Kor who trained in Huzuz. Sent to Liham to serve the faithful there, he was captured by Jayani en route. Though quite understandably upset at the time, he has since found his services are needed much more desperately by the people of the Corsair Domains. His main work is with the children, who often need a protector in the violent society of the corsairs. He hopes to bring them to true Enlightenment so that this next generation can work to bring Hawa to accept a place among the other Enlightened cities of the Land of Fate.

Black haired and black eyed, tall and ugly (even for a hill giant), Grima nevertheless seems stately rather than monstrous, thanks to his calm, thoughtful manner and the careful attention he pays to his personal grooming. His soft, resonant voice makes everything he says seem so reasonable that he rarely has to resort to using physical persuasion (a right hook that can reportedly “smash through a ship’s hull”). He has been accorded a place on the council because Jayani saw the use in having his wisdom at their disposal; he can often point out a disastrous course of action to the other members before they try to implement it (and often does dissuade Akura from his more foolish plans).

One of Grima’s accomplishments was to persuade the council to award him with the initial funds to build a mosque to Kor in Hawa. It has become the tradition that Grima will take in any children who come to him or who make it to the Free Market and claim they want sanctuary with him. To a lesser extent, he has also been able to offer safety to people who want to avoid a fight in which they are likely to be killed. Grima listens to the stories of all those who seek shelter with him and decides on a course of action based upon what he hears (and the judicious use of a *detect lie* spell). Someone who has just cheated people in the market, then sought to hide from the just wrath of his or her customers will find little sympathy from Grima and had best be prepared to

make restitution, but those in true need are never turned away.

- Suhailah al-Hawai (dfT/mr/6). Suhailah is a sturdy, brown-haired, blue-eyed dwarf who gave up her former career as a smuggler to oversee the shipyards of Hawa. She is a minor member of the council, as she is usually too busy to bother attending meetings. She is happiest working on “her ships” and is content to hear a short version of the matters under discussion and the decisions regarding them.

Though she is a genius when it comes to inventing new designs or squeezing the most speed or strength out of a proven ship design, she is very conservative about other matters. She doesn’t tolerate workers who don’t show up on time or who are lazy and inefficient, nor does she tolerate her customers hanging around and trying to hurry her. Whenever her vote is needed by the council, they know to vote “no” for Suhailah whatever the question since she is of the opinion that “changes are for fools who can’t understand what they already have.” She is famous throughout Hawa for her acid tongue.

- Hamid al-Bashshar (hmF/mk/6). Hamid is one of the most recent members to join the council. His face is terribly scarred from the removal of the tattoos which once marked him as a mamluk of the Dutiful; only his wavy black hair and hazel eyes still hint at how handsome a man he once was. Accordingly, he always wears a veil. An escapee from the hated “killers and ravagers of his village,” Hamid made his way to the Corsair Domains where he proclaimed his own freedom and begged to join the corsairs in fighting against his former “captors.”

The fearful scars left from the removal of his tattoos and the failure of a *detect lie* spell to discern any untruth in his story helped convince the council that Hamid was what he claimed to be, and he was provisionally taken in and given a place aboard Akura’s own ship. His intelligence, willingness to





learn, and ability to follow orders, coupled with his almost insane diatribes against the mamluks convinced Akura that Hamid would be even more of an asset if given a command of his own and accorded a place on the council. That Hamid would be in Akura's debt for helping him (and thus more likely to back Akura in council) was also a factor.

Unknown to everyone on the council is Hamid's true mission. He is a willing spy for the Dutiful. He agreed to have his tattoos removed in order to attempt to infiltrate the Corsair Domains as a former mamluk bent on revenge. He was given an *amulet of proof against detection and location* and two *philtres of glibness* to aid him in his deception. Coupled with the scars (which no one believed he would inflict upon himself unless he really was deserting the mamluks) and his natural acting talent, Hamid thoroughly convinced the other council members.

There are a few problems with the plan. Now that he has worked himself into a position of trust, he doesn't want to betray himself over minor undertakings by the corsairs. He is waiting for the right moment to flee back to Qudra with the information he has gathered over a three-year period. Meanwhile, he works to help infiltrate other agents into Hawa. Thus far, these other agents have invariably been discovered and killed or have had to flee the city (due to Jayani's spies). He lives in constant fear that one of them will be taken alive and will betray him.

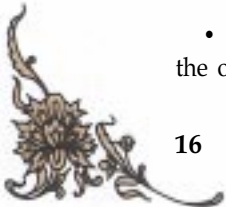
More importantly, as he has come to know the corsair people, he has come to like and admire many of them for their bravery and self-sufficiency. He now feels torn between his duty and his personal feelings. It will take a planned strike against Qudra itself or something equally dire before he will feel justified in breaking trust with the people he originally came to spy upon.

- Shing Jaw-long (hmW/aj/10). Shing Jaw-long is the only outlander currently accorded a place on the

Corsair Council. Originally from Hai Yuan, the maritime provinces of Shou Lung in distant Kara Tur, Shing grew up in a pirate family. Hiding his background, he was accorded a place on one of the emperor's spelljamming Dragonships because of his seamanship and his abilities as a wu jen. Eventually Shing found himself in a position to advise the captain on choosing crewmembers. As a result of his privileged position, he was able to sign on many of his old companions. Once they learned the trick of spelljamming, the pirates overthrew the captain and the loyal crew and fled with the ship.

After ravaging their way back to RealmSpace, Shing and his crew decided to return to Toril. Rather than risk the emperor's wrath, they chose to make Hawa their new base. From Hawa they use their Dragonship to raid along the southern coast of Faerun and along the Free Coast of Zakhara as well. Occasionally, they sail south to the Crowded Sea, but they usually stay closer to their base, since traders from Kara-Tur sometimes make their way through that area and they do not want the emperor to hear of their presence. The Dragonship has become a familiar sight in Hawa's harbor, and the crew, most of whom lived in stilt houses back in Hai Yuan, have adapted well to the city.

Shing Jaw-long is a small, handsome man with long black hair and intense, dark brown eyes. He prefers to wear silk robes rather than shirt and pantaloons. Though very intelligent, Shing is loud, arrogant, audacious, and stubborn. He will not admit that there is any feat which he cannot perform. Because of this, he can be goaded into agreeing to try some fairly outrageous stunts rather than be called a coward or a braggart. He was given a place on the council because he convinced them that with the special abilities of his ship (i.e. flying overhead), he can potentially cause massive damage to any fleet sent against the corsairs. Dropping one large container of oil of liquid stars onto a target below his ship proved his point and cost Akura one of his ships.





## Those Outside The Council

Aside from these luminaries, Hawa boasts a few other persons of import:

- Inayah bint In'am (efW/sh/13). No one knows Inayah's true importance, nor is anyone likely to guess. She is the sha'ir who summoned and bound Najit'aqalat to act as harbormaster for Hawa. The marid has been forbidden to tell or show anyone in any way whatsoever that Inayah is his master. At the end of every 101 days, he and Inayah renegotiate their contract. Though marids usually disdain association with mortals, he has discovered that he finds their sparring entertaining. By pulling ships in to the docks, he also earns a fair profit. In addition, Inayah rewards him with special treasures she thinks he may like. Because she doesn't flaunt her power or ask more of him than acting as harbormaster, and because he gets along well with her water gen, Sas, Najit'aqalat has formed a grudging respect for Inayah. If she were attacked, he would probably come to her rescue.

Inayah hides her true calling by spending most of her days in the Free Market selling herbs and spices. She disguises herself as a bent old woman and is quite successful at prescribing herbal remedies for various ailments. After mornings in the market, she retires to her shack out among the maze of piers. From there, she can change or remove her disguise and move through a series of abandoned shacks to another part of the docks and emerge as someone completely different. She also has a house near the Free Market where she keeps most of her possessions, which include several items (both magical and mundane) which help her maintain her disguises.

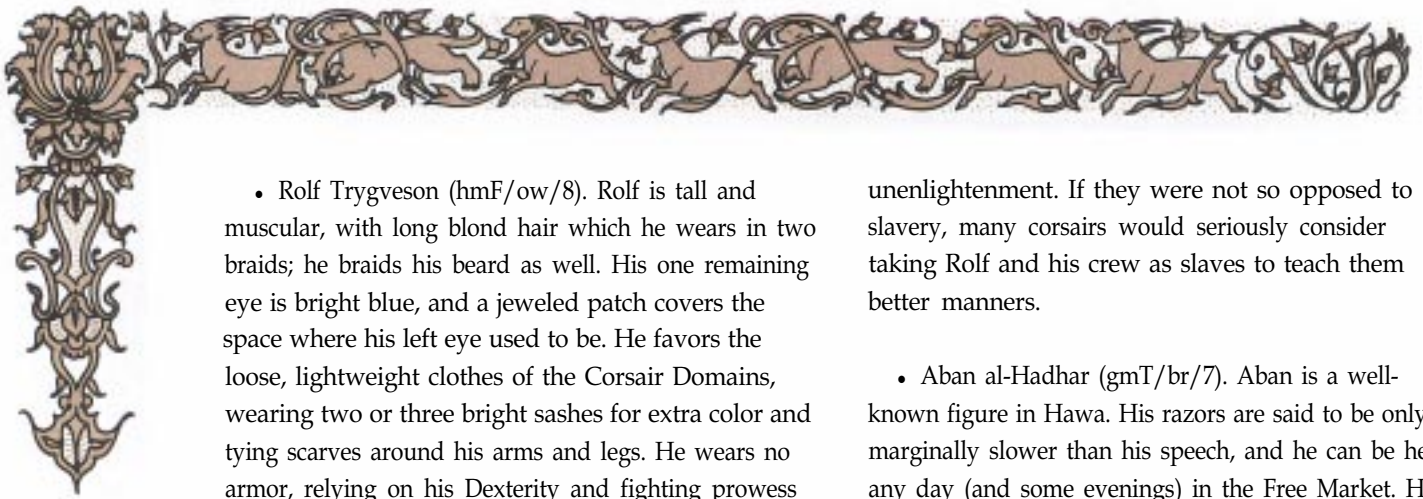
Inayah has no interest in having personal power. She believes that the Grand Caliph has allowed his slave-soldiers in Qudra to get out of hand, so she has decided to even the odds a little by living in Hawa. She has begun secretly searching for some likely child to become her apprentice, but her chief goal in life is

to be left in peace to discover new spells she can try. If convinced of a threat to Hawa, she might take action but would probably do so secretly, if possible. She is a possible source of information (or an occasional helping hand) for the PC's, though it is possible they may never know who helped them. She might also be a difficult-to-find plague to them if they seek to undermine the corsairs.

- Faridah bint Halah. Tall and trim, with deep brown eyes and sunstreaked brown hair which always smells of her rich, musky perfume, Faridah is one of the prettier captains in Hawa. Though Faridah is thought to be a human corsair, she is actually a lamia noble who has assumed human form to spread evil in the Corsair Domains. She is followed by her slavishly devoted crew (all of whom have had their Wisdom drained). Her ship, the *Dark Rover*, has achieved notoriety among the merchants of the Free Coast and the mamluks of Qudra. Unlike most of the other corsairs, Faridah actively seeks to take prisoners. Those who submit to her charms join her crew; those who resist end up being eaten. Unknown to anyone is her growing control of the fisherfolk of Safe Cove. Each time she visits, she reduces the Wisdom of a few more of the people there. Eventually, they will all become her willing servitors.

Rumors of her cruelty have led merchants to greater efforts not to be boarded by corsairs and have stirred the emir of Qudra to offer a substantial reward for her capture. Though the corsairs of Hawa have a tradition of non-interference with one another, the council is beginning to take an interest in Faridah's affairs, since her practices have made all the corsairs' lives more difficult. The council's chief concern is that she may be engaging in some form of slave trading (an abhorrent thought to any corsair); they have no idea that Faridah is a lamia noble. Aside from her favorite hideouts along the coast, Faridah has a fortified area atop the sandy northern elevation of the Island of Firethorns.





• Rolf Trygveson (hmF/ow/8). Rolf is tall and muscular, with long blond hair which he wears in two braids; he braids his beard as well. His one remaining eye is bright blue, and a jeweled patch covers the space where his left eye used to be. He favors the loose, lightweight clothes of the Corsair Domains, wearing two or three bright sashes for extra color and tying scarves around his arms and legs. He wears no armor, relying on his Dexterity and fighting prowess to see him through any battle. Rolf was originally a barbarian from the nomadic tribes near Icewind Dale. When they began to trade with people further to the south, Rolf was among those who wanted to learn the new skills required. He quickly learned that those who were most ruthless survived, and he soon turned to piracy. With his ship, the *Raven*, he embarked on a career noted for its ferocity. Having worn out his welcome at more ports along the Sword Coast than he can recall, Rolf and his crew moved into southern waters and continued their depredations. He was becoming bored, however, and when Zakharan pirates raided from across the Great Sea, he followed them back to the Corsair Domains, a feat he considers prodigious.

He and his men, though tough and seasoned veterans, have become lazy in the warm Zakharan waters. They have built a few huts and some have taken local wives. The abundance and availability of food on the islands mean they need not work hard to feed themselves, and they have taken to only raiding once or twice a year. When they do raid, they try to catch ships in deeper water, where their heavier, sturdier ship has the advantage. At other times, Rolf and his crew can be found in the inns or on the streets of Hawa, or holding court in the village of Ravenwing which they built on The Camel's Hump. Rolf's ship can be hired by adventurers if they offer enough money or if the task they are trying to accomplish interests Rolf enough. Though nominally accepted by the community, Rolf has not been asked to join the council, as his barbarian habits reveal his

unenlightenment. If they were not so opposed to slavery, many corsairs would seriously consider taking Rolf and his crew as slaves to teach them better manners.

• Aban al-Hadhar (gmT/br/7). Aban is a well-known figure in Hawa. His razors are said to be only marginally slower than his speech, and he can be heard any day (and some evenings) in the Free Market. His prices are reasonable, he is noted for his disdain of those who rob their customers, and he tells more stories than anyone has a right to know. Though he holds no place on the council, he somehow always knows at least rumors about their latest business, and he delights in telling that business to anyone who will listen. Aban is a good source of information (though he does expect to receive a generous tip), and can be used to point a confused party in the right direction. Though he specializes in beautifying gnomes, he is quite adept at enhancing the natural charms of other races as well. Because of his penchant for telling rumors and stories, he is quite popular with locals and visitors alike. His favorite story, known as "The Foolish Pirates, or An Exaggerated History of the Corsair Domains," appears in the Appendix (to allow the DM to use it, if desired).

## Other Notable Figures

There are scores of other pirates as well as legitimate merchants in Hawa, and hundreds of other people spread throughout the corsair isles. Many of these hail from other areas of Toril such as Faerun, Chult, and Maztica. Several monsters with illusion or shape-shifting abilities might be found in Hawa as well. Though some of the better known personalities of Hawa are presented here, many possibilities have been deliberately left open for the DM to create his or her own NPCs and use them as allies or foes for the PCs, the better to customize the city for the DM's home campaign.







## Chapter Three:

# Piracy, Smuggling, and Trade

*Do not be deceived, my friends. Many of the people of Hawa are honest, hard-working folk who do not engage in piracy of any sort. Several are honest merchants who only seek deserved recompense for the exotic goods they risk their lives to bring to Zakhara. Most of the people of Hawa simply wish to live their lives where they need not be under the harsh yoke of the Grand Caliph's soldier-slaves or subject to the whims of a single petty ruler. At least in Hawa the council takes thought for the common people and how they shall live. And why should they not choose the life they desire so long as the Laws of the Loregiver are kept and the worship of the Enlightened gods is practiced?*

*Of a certainty, many others are of a different sort, taking great pride in their depredations. It is obviously of these few you wish for me to speak. I must reach that subject in my own time and by a winding path, and along the way you may learn much of trade along the Free Coast and across the Great Sea to distant lands undreamed of by most folk of the Land of Fate, but so be it. Fate and the gods shall be the judges of all people . . . even you.*

—Grima al-Auni min Kor

## Coastal Trade

**T**hough lying over a hundred miles from the mainland of northwestern Zakhara, the Corsair Domains are in a location which is almost central to the Free Cities. Because of this, the merchant ships of Hawa are in a unique position: they can easily reach any city from Utaqa to Liham, and they are less likely to be beset by pirates than ships from the coastal cities. The shallow seas hold hundreds of tiny islands too small to be found on any maps. Food and water can be had or landfall for repairs made on many of them. Though these islands offer a marvelous opportunity for pirates, they also serve the more honest merchants well in their trade with the coastal cities, providing them with the means to range further and stay at sea longer than would otherwise be the case.





The Corsair Domains have little to offer the cities of the Free Coast except for dye of a beautiful scarlet hue made from sea roses (firethorns), perfumes rendered from some of the exotic plants found on the isles, and red or black coral jewelry. None of these can be produced in any abundance. Firethorns are dangerous to work with, the other flowers are scarce, and the sea elves object to anyone taking “their” coral—especially the rare black coral which is found nowhere else in Zakhara’s waters. Consequently, much of their trade with the coastal cities consists of exotic items the corsairs have brought from the north. Metalwares, fine weapons, silks, wood for shipbuilding, and grain are the corsairs’ chief imports. Their illegal imports (those from piracy) are, of course, more varied.

As well as doing some cautious trading with the corsairs, the Free Cities exchange particular specialty items among themselves. These are broken down city by city from north to south below.

- Utaqa, City of Free Men, is the loser in this exchange, as it really has nothing to export except mercenaries. Additionally, since the recent insurrection, traders are leery of possibly becoming embroiled in Utaqa’s political upheavals and losing their goods. Recent rumors that gold has been found in the al-Zulma River have led to some renewed contact from merchants seeking to enrich themselves, but thus far no gold has been forthcoming. Utaqa imports some foodstuffs (most notably grain and coffee), weaponry, and furnishings (such as rugs and carved chests). The one advantage Utaqa has is its longstanding secret agreement with the Corsair Domains: Utaqa lets the corsairs smuggle stolen goods into and out of the city, acting as an agent to sell those goods to the other free cities and Qudra; in return, the corsairs leave Utaqa ships alone.

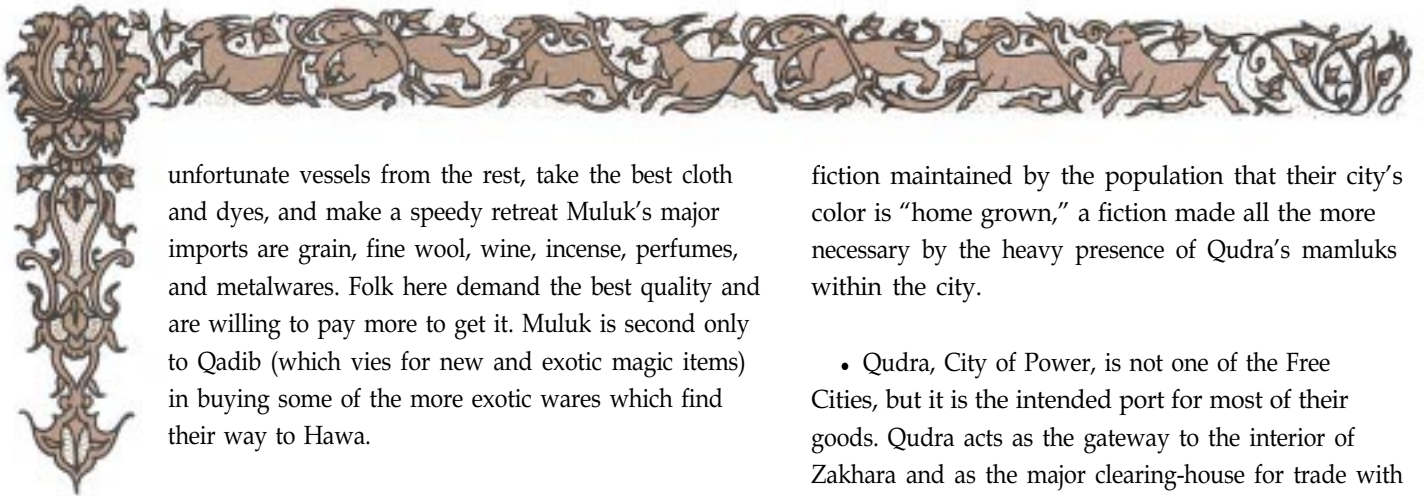
- Hafayah, City of Secrets, is blessed with agates and semi-precious stones, which are in great demand.

Its people also make black cloth for trade and have enough of a rice surplus to allow them to export their overflow to those cities which are less blessed. More valuable gemstones are said to have been found near Hafayah, but none have been offered in trade as yet. Hafayah imports salt, coffee, cardamom, pottery, and wood for shipbuilding. Recently, there has been some demand from a particular buyer in Hawa for Hafayah’s black tiles. Hafayah has a fleet of ten extremely fast, though small, ships. They try to outrun the pirates from the Corsair Domains, and have been fairly successful in doing so. Hafayans are very suspicious of Qadib’s wizards and tend to have as little to do with them as possible.

- Qadib, City of Wands, exports the knowledge and handiwork of its mages in the form of scrolls, and its golden yellow-orange dye (known as *uther*) is sold both as a basic dye and in already-treated fabric. Magical items are occasionally exported but usually one at a time and earmarked for a particular buyer. The city’s chief imports include rice, coffee, and components and semi-precious stones for use in magical workings. There is also a great demand for special aromatics, herbs, and such for use in bargaining with various kinds of genies. Qadib boasts only a five-ship navy which often joins Muluk’s “fabric fleet” when making the trip south to Qudra. Qadib’s ruler, Sultan Kamal al-Hadi, has made an agreement with one of Hawa’s most notorious pirates, Akura al-Hiyali, to protect Qadib’s ships from his attacks, but other pirates from Hawa still treat them as prey.

- Muluk, City of Kings, is blessed with an abundant indigo crop which provides its people with their chief exports: purple cloth and a beautiful indigo dye which is famous throughout Zakhara and known to the north as well. Their fabric fleet, which sails to Qudra under the escort of the city’s navy of twenty ships, is a prize which has often been raided by the corsairs, who have been known to work in teams to cut off one or two





unfortunate vessels from the rest, take the best cloth and dyes, and make a speedy retreat. Muluk's major imports are grain, fine wool, wine, incense, perfumes, and metalwares. Folk here demand the best quality and are willing to pay more to get it. Muluk is second only to Qadib (which vies for new and exotic magic items) in buying some of the more exotic wares which find their way to Hawa.

- Umara, City of Knights, known worldwide for its carpets and textiles, also produces tilework and clothing which feature the beautiful cobalt and turquoise blues for which the city is famous. Few successful corsairs lack a beautifully-worked Umara blue carpet of their own, and the ease with which they can be sold throughout Zakhara and Faerun almost guarantees that ships from Umara will be preyed upon. Other exports from Umara include both goats and goat cheese, and not a few of the goats now make their homes in the cleared area outside Hawa or in smaller pirate enclaves. Umara has disbanded its navy and sold some of its ships, which can only encourage more predation on its merchants in the future. Umara imports grain, rice, coffee, honey, gemstones, and worked metalware.

- Liham, City of Soldiers, is in the enviable position of supplying much of the coffee and salt needed by the other free cities. Lihamware pottery is also in some demand. Though the city is renowned for various shades of red clothing (from the palest pink to the brightest scarlet), the chief source of the dyes needed to produce the clothes is Hawa. The firethorns which give their name to Hawa's island produce a brilliant red dye which is easily mixed with other substances to produce a wide variety of hues. Liham's other source for dye is a type of shell which also produces a red pigment. Though they are found near Liham, not enough of the shells are available to make the abundance of red fabric of which Liham boasts. Nevertheless, there is a polite

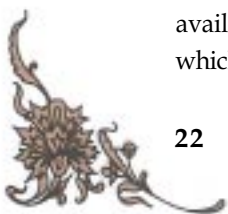
fiction maintained by the population that their city's color is "home grown," a fiction made all the more necessary by the heavy presence of Qudra's mamluks within the city.

- Qudra, City of Power, is not one of the Free Cities, but it is the intended port for most of their goods. Qudra acts as the gateway to the interior of Zakhara and as the major clearing-house for trade with the interior and the south. Additionally, for one month of the year Qudra's fleet patrols the Free Coast and acts as guards for the merchant vessels from both the Free Cities and the barbarian north. All the Free Coast cities' exports are sent through Qudra, while pearls, frankincense, metalware from the deserts, fine horses, and other southern goods, as well as exotic goods from Kara-Tur, are moved north in return. Though the incidences of pirate attacks against Qudran vessels are few, the booty reported from such raids has been so valuable that some captains are willing to take the risk.

## Smuggling and Piracy

The Free Cities are a fractious group, often engaging in raids against one another or outright warfare. Whenever this occurs, the corsairs become heroes of a sort to the various cities, as they are able to take one city's goods to an "enemy" city to trade under the guise of having "liberated" them from the foes. Though usually well paid for this to keep them from simply absconding with the goods, they occasionally take both the money and the wares while laughing at the foolishness and greed of the merchants who hired them. This is a rare enough occurrence that many corsairs are trusted to keep trade functioning during such troublesome times.

This sort of smuggling is secondary and fairly harmless compared to the sorts that many corsairs routinely engage in. Many corsairs frequently act







more as smugglers than pirates. Their goods are usually either considered borderline, are actually proscribed, or are extremely unsavory. Heady liquors, dangerous herbs and opiates, and several types of virulent poisons are popular trade goods both in Hawa and among the less scrupulous Free Coast traders. Stolen magic items, artworks, and rare treasures are also smuggled to those willing to pay handsomely for them. And despite the general hatred of slavery in the Corsair Domains, there are still some captains willing to sell the crews or passengers from ships they have sunk or captives from the northern barbarian lands to those looking for inexpensive and expendable slaves. Some even snatch children from one city and sell them in another—or in the barbarian lands—as “apprentices.”

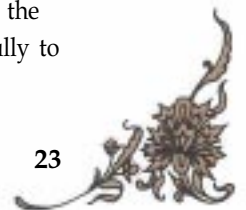
Outright piracy remains the favorite method for most corsairs, however, and all the cities know that they will lose several shiploads of goods each year to the bold men and women of the Corsair Domains. Again, the bickering among the Free Cities provides the corsairs with an unparalleled opportunity to exercise their main talents by pirating-for-hire. They often accept commissions from one city to act as privateers against another (some even accept commissions from both cities and gleefully rob each in turn!), a wonderful twist of Fate for them as they may then prey upon the “enemy” city’s vessels while having a guaranteed market in the “friendly” city which hired them. This sort of legalized larceny never lasts long, however, as the cities eventually settle their differences and turn upon the “true culprits,” the pirates of the Corsair Domains! The corsairs must then usually fight their way out of a supposedly friendly harbor which so recently welcomed them and hailed them as saviors. For this reason, many corsairs decline the privateering contracts, yet prey upon the cities involved anyway, knowing that their attacks will be blamed on the enemy city rather than attributed to the corsairs themselves.

## Cross Sea Trade

Zakhara, though distant from the lands to the north, still conducts some trade with its neighbors across the Great Sea. Trading mostly with the southern cities of the Realms, Zakhara exports fine carpets, decorated metalware (trays, coffeepots, and decorative weaponry), rare spices, frankincense, indigo, *uther*, pearls, exotic herbs, fruits and nuts, fine steel weapons, and desert horses, just to name a few of their better-known wares. Shells, coral, ivory, elephants, teakwood, and colorful glassware are secondary exports from the Land of Fate. There is a small but growing trade in Zakharan magic and magical items as well, a trade which is of particular interest to Qadib. Unhappily, because of unscrupulous dealers, slaves, drugs, and poisons are also traded to equally unsavory merchants in Faerun.

In return, Faerun sends grains, fine wool, certain gemstones, and paper to Zakhara as well as ajami magic and exotic items (such as heavy metallic armor) which have little use in Zakhara’s torrid climate but fetch high prices from collectors. As more people become aware of Zakhara’s existence, there is also a burgeoning industry in transporting visitors to the fabled Land of Fate. Regrettably, some of these arrive in Zakhara only to be sold as slaves by unscrupulous captains.

Trade goods for Zakhara’s thriving markets also come from Kara-Tur, which deals with southern and eastern Zakhara rather than the northern cities. Even the jungles of Chult provide some trade goods which occasionally make their way to the Land of Fate, although there is as yet no established trade route between the two. Even more rare is the sighting of a ship from Maztica, as the great distance makes this crossing particularly arduous. However, as the corsairs are of all Toril’s sailors the ones most willing to risk any voyage in search of booty, these markets, like the Realms before them, will eventually open more fully to Zakharan ventures.





## Bounties and Bounty Hunters

Some ten years ago, the mamluk fleet attempted a direct attack on Hawa, City of Chaos. The various obstacles such as the coral reefs and maze-work of docks coupled with the mamluks' lack of sufficient magical support (and the excellence of Jayani's spy network) crippled their attack. The mamluks were unable to penetrate the corsairs' defenses and the remnants of the fleet were forced to retreat after great losses. Aside from the loss of life, the blow to their pride was devastating. The revolt of Utaqa which occurred soon thereafter was attributed to that display of weakness. Since that time, the mamluks have been leery of any face-to-face confrontations with the corsairs. This does not mean that the various illegal activities of the corsairs provoke no response, simply that other means to bring the pirates to justice are being employed.

Acting upon the orders of the Grand Caliph to keep his borders safe and to protect his people, the emir of Qudra has placed a bounty on the pirates of the Corsair Domains. The mamluks do not want bounty hunters to act on their own initiative, preferring to regulate those who would hunt the pirates lest the hunters become little better than freebooters themselves. For this reason, it is difficult for bounty hunters to gain a general warrant (one which does not name a specific individual or ship engaged in piracy). The mamluks fear that issuing such broad warrants might result in attacks on innocent merchant ships in order to collect a bounty.

Warrants are, therefore, issued only for a single individual or for the captain and crew of a known pirate vessel. They are further limited by the existence of an official whose job it is to determine the character of applicants who want a license to hunt pirates. The official is a qadi who has the authority to commission bounty hunters and to issue warrants. Eyewitness reports of depredations which are corroborated by other witnesses or sworn to

before hakimas or under truth spells are considered adequate proof of guilt to issue a warrant with that ship's or pirate's name on it.

To keep those who are not up to the task of bounty hunting from wasting their time, the mamluks have imposed a fee for the bounty-hunting license. It costs 200 dinars to obtain a license, and the bounty hunter must prove that he or she has a seaworthy ship and a crew before the license will be issued. Character witnesses can reduce the fee to 100 dinars, and sponsorship of the hunter by one of the mamluk organizations enables the qadi to waive the fee altogether. When the hunter returns with his or her quarry or with positive proof that the pirate has been destroyed, the fee is repaid along with the reward. If the corsair's ship was captured intact, the mamluks pay an extra bounty, the amount depending upon the kind and condition of the ship.

### Typical Bounties

Minor Pirate Captain	1,500 dinars
Minor Pirate Crewman	100 dinars each
Noted Pirate Captain	3,500 dinars
Noted Pirate Crewman	350 dinars each
Notorious Pirate Captain	7,000 dinars
Notorious Pirate Crewman	500 dinars each
Spellcaster Pirate	add 1,000 dinars for every four levels
Each prisoner freed	30 dinars

### Ships

Barijah	up to 3,000 dinars
Sambuk	up to 7,000 dinars
Zaruq	up to 2,000 dinars

Others considered on an individual basis



## Chapter Four: Qudra, City of Power

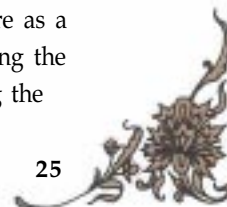
*O Mighty Qudra, Shield of Zakhara, our Shelter and Protection, Gateway to the Land of Fate, and Home of the Grand Caliph's Most Trusted and Loyal Mamluks, may your walls ever remain strong, your soldiers vigilant, and the hearts of your people pure.*


– Verse from an anonymous rawun

**Q**udra, City of Power, home to many of the mamluks of Zakhara, rises in tiers above the banks of the al-Faddi (silver) river, overlooking the best natural harbor on the Free Coast. Because of its position astride the harbor and close to the Sea of Caravans, the city serves as the gateway for northern trade to the interior of Zakhara and as the major port from which the goods of southern and central Zakhara make their way north. For the same reasons, it is of the utmost strategic importance as well.

Those who come to trade might just as easily come to loot or raid into the heartland of the Land of Fate, and Qudra stands as a forbidding bastion against both the northern barbarians and the pirates of the Corsair Domains. Ruled by the mamluks, the soldier-slaves of the Grand Caliph, the city presents a grim, strong exterior and a stern face to the rest of the world, yet its position astride the sea trade routes dictates that it function equally as a great mercantile base. The atmosphere in Qudra is therefore a strange mixture of cosmopolitan sophistication and sober military discipline.

Ruled by Emir Hatit Abd al-Wajib, himself a mamluk, and a military council composed of representatives of all the major mamluk organizations, Qudra stands in direct opposition to the chaos and lawlessness of the Corsair Domains. Though both cities are controlled by councils, Hawa's leaders seek mainly to enrich and entrench themselves, overseeing the city's welfare as a secondary function. Qudra's leaders are more concerned with protecting the city and the rest of Zakhara and with keeping the peace and enforcing the





Grand Caliph's proclamations throughout the Land of Fate. To them, profit is secondary, and useful only as it provides needed monies to maintain their defenses and accomplish their goals.

## Features of The City

The most immediately noticeable feature of Qudra is its massive grey stone walls. The outer granite wall is 40 feet high and 40 feet thick, though a 15-foot-wide tunnel runs through the center of the wall. This tunnel is used to move mamluk units around the perimeter without having to go through crowded areas in the city, to store some of the armaments and the cauldrons and oil of liquid stars (Greek fire) used by the city's defenders, and to house inconspicuous guard posts or temporary barracks. A series of portcullises and pit traps make even this tunnel defensible. Two sections of this passage contain hidden escape routes leading under the wall and away from the city, but their placement (and indeed, their very existence) is a closely guarded secret known only to the emir and the most trusted members of the council.

Three gateways pierce the walls, but all face south toward the mountains, causing some slight inconvenience for caravan traffic arriving from the interior. The only other entrance is via the waterfront, where the great walls curve around to embrace the harbor. Two 50-foot-tall towers guard the harbor entry and serve to hold great chains which can be used to seal the harbor against invading ships. Interior walls divide the city itself into defensible quarters. Taken as a whole, the defenses give Qudra the look of a great brooding bird of prey hovering protectively over its harbor.

The second most obvious feature of the city is the crimson-colored Mosque of Blood, the largest temple in the Land of Fate to Vataqatal, a warrior-god worshipped by many mamluks. Though the walls are of sandstone, they receive a regular coating of henna to honor those men and women whose blood has been spilled in battle.

One jewel relieves the heavy, oppressive grey of the city: the Open Mosque of Qudra. Graceful and beautiful, this building features some of the most lovely shades of blue tilework to be found outside of Umara. Those who worship gods other than Vataqatal flock to this exquisite edifice.

The Harbor of Qudra is a deep-water, sheltered bay which is divided into two sections. A civilian area holds moorings for the city's fishing boats and a trade dock for the merchants, while a military section houses the majority of Qudra's naval vessels. Once past the great chains which guard the harbor mouth, ships must signal their intentions to the harbor patrol, which then guides them to the correct destination. Failure to follow the directives of the harbor patrol may result in the offender's ship being first warned, then attacked by either the sea mages or the sorcerers who are always on duty in the towers.

Not surprisingly, Qudra has a large central market, a suq, and a caravanserai. Though much of the trade which passes through Qudra comes via water, a significant amount arrives by caravan. The cities of the heart of Zakhara send wares through the Sea of Caravans to Adhal, where they are unloaded from the ships and brought the rest of the way to Qudra by camel. Qudra sends goods in return by the same method. Many exotic wares may be found in Qudra's bazaar, especially those having a connection to the military arts. One of the largest sections of the Qudran bazaar is the slave market, which is overseen by a qadi and two hakima in an enlightened fashion. Slaves sold in Qudra are of high quality, talented, and in good health. None are mistreated.

Throughout the city may be found the headquarters and barracks of the various mamluk units which reside in Qudra. Barracks are located in each quarter of the city, both to minimize the effects of any attacks directed against the mamluks and as a reminder to the common people of Qudra that they are under the protection and guidance of the mamluks. Quarters which might otherwise be very poor profit from the



mamluks' patronage of local craftsmen and merchants, and the mamluks' ubiquitous presence means there are no overtly lawless parts of Qudra.

## Visitors To Qudra

Because of their position astride the north/south trade route, Qudra caters to many visitors and maintains businesses to serve them. There are several inns, cafes, and tobacco houses even outside the caravanserai which gain their clientele almost exclusively from visitors to the city. Visitors from other parts of Zakhara will find that Qudra is not significantly different from any other city they are familiar with. It has a different architecture, geared toward defense, and its people are more more organized and efficient, perhaps, but for the most part, the customs, laws, and religious observances are the same. The streets within each quarter are organized into business and residential areas, with the businesses grouped according to type. This makes it easy for a visitor to locate someone or something he or she may be seeking. Native Zakharians attract little attention in most areas of Qudra unless they are obviously improperly dressed for the place they are in (such as wearing rags in a very rich section), are caught sneaking around, or are armored and armed to the teeth.

As in the northern Free Cities, many foreigners can also be found in Qudra. These may be from the Realms, Kara-Tur, Chult, or even far-distant Maztica. All are treated courteously, so long as they behave themselves, break no laws, and cause no trouble. Certain wells are set aside for their use, and specific areas within the marketplace are reserved for foreign (no-Zakharian) wares in order to insure that they have what they need to support themselves. Within reason, there is even tolerance of foreigners' strange religious practices and customs. Those who are obviously foreigners are usually watched by one or more members of The Defenders, whether they are aware of the surveillance or not. Despite their outward

courtesy to and concern for the welfare of foreign traders, the mamluks' job is to protect Qudra and Zakhara, and foreigners aren't quite trusted.

## The People of Qudra

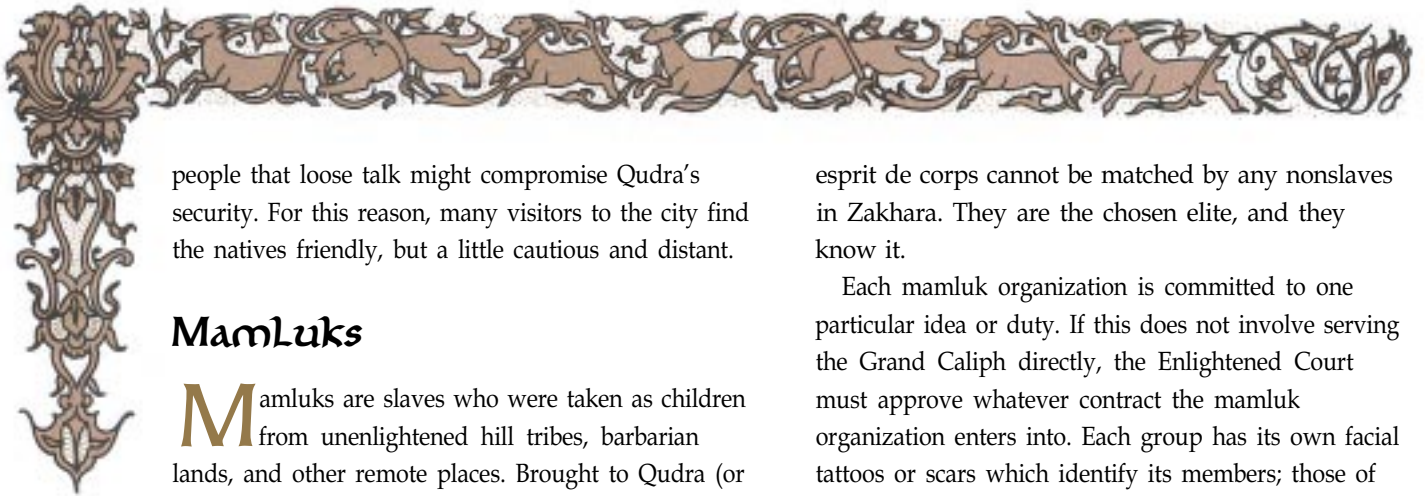
The common people of Qudra comprise one of the most hard-working, honest, and law-abiding populations in Zakhara. Most are untrained in warfare, for they live in the best protected fortress of the Land of Fate. The mamluks, though they are all slaves of the Grand Caliph, are the elite rulers of the city, and the people of Qudra support them.

The farmers and herders of the city are always assured of a market for their goods. The al-Faddi river valley provides Qudra with a great deal of fertile land which is used to grow grains, rice, vegetables, and fruit. Less fertile spots are used as grazing lands for goats and sheep. These can be used to supply Qudra's population at need (such as during a siege), and excess grains are stored within the city for such an emergency rather than being exported.

Crafters and artisans also find a ready market as uniforms, armor, pottery, and such goods wear out or are needed for the latest recruits. Those who offer services—such as barbers, dancers, porters, and innkeepers—can usually find employment from the mamluks, the local citizens, or visitors to the city. Adventurers may even find a market for their services as caravans arrive and depart or the mamluks hire outsiders for more covert jobs which their tattoos preclude them from performing.

In general, the people of Qudra are secure, a little self-satisfied, and proud of their city and its importance to Zakhara. They are affected by the mamluks' military discipline. Most Qudrans feel that they have a duty to support the military and do their utmost to provide the goods and services asked of them. Also, though the Qudrans love news and gossip as well as any other of the al-Hadhar, they are very careful of what they say to outsiders. The mamluks have impressed upon the





people that loose talk might compromise Qudra's security. For this reason, many visitors to the city find the natives friendly, but a little cautious and distant.

## MamLuks

**M**amluks are slaves who were taken as children from unenlightened hill tribes, barbarian lands, and other remote places. Brought to Qudra (or another mamluk holding), the children are brought to Enlightenment and taught the arts of warfare, discipline, and administration. In theory, the organization responsible for bringing in the new recruits claims them for its own, but this is not always the case, as some groups (such as The Defenders) rarely get the chance to leave Qudra and would therefore have little chance of gaining any new members.

Instead, though all are subject to the basic training and the rigors and hardships of military life, an attempt is made to match the child with the mamluk organization which best suits his or her talents. If, for instance, the child shows an aptitude for management and defensive planning, he or she would probably be assigned to The Defenders, while one whose talents pointed to exploration would fit best with The Dauntless. Personality conflicts within the ranks might preclude the most obvious pairing, however, or bickering among the groups might result in the new mamluk being assigned to a compromise unit. Particularly bright and talented candidates are occasionally the cause for inter-organizational maneuverings and deals as each unit vies for the new recruit. In that case, the emir will either ask the recruit for his or her preference or will hold a contest to see which organization wins the candidate.

Whichever group he or she serves, the mamluk is subject to superior officers, and ultimately to the Grand Caliph (as all mamluks are owned by him). Their rigorous training in warfare and statecraft, coupled with a pride for their unit usually produces fierce and loyal soldiers and administrators whose

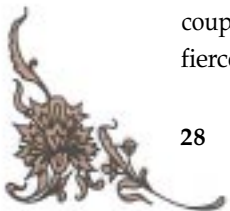
esprit de corps cannot be matched by any nonslaves in Zakhara. They are the chosen elite, and they know it.

Each mamluk organization is committed to one particular idea or duty. If this does not involve serving the Grand Caliph directly, the Enlightened Court must approve whatever contract the mamluk organization enters into. Each group has its own facial tattoos or scars which identify its members; those of higher rank have more elaborate markings. It is a crime for any nonmamluk to imitate the markings. Each mamluk takes the designation "Abd al-(name of the group)" as his or her surname (Abd means "slave of"). Thus a recruit named Hamar who joined The Dutiful (al-Wajib) would become Hamar Abd al-Wajib (Hamar, slave of the Dutiful).

## The Mamluk Council

**T**he following large mamluk organizations in Qudra have seats on the military council:

- The Dauntless, who specialize in exploration and the recovery of magics. Their commander is General Kemil Abd al-Jasir (hmF/mk/12). Kemil is a minor member of the military council, and as such he usually follows the lead of whichever group is most in favor of explorations or campaigns that promise some hope of recovering magical items.
- The Defenders, who are charged with the management and defense of Qudra. They are commanded by Akir Abd al-Himaya (hmF/mk/10). Though the actual defense of Qudra's walls is rotated among the various groups every month, The Defenders are responsible for defending the city when the other units are gone. Usually they function as a city guard and as mediators among the other societies. Akir is in a fairly weak position in council and often trades favors in return for support for his aims.
- The Dutiful is the leading mamluk society of Qudra and most powerful in Zakhara. The dwarven





emir of Qudra, Hatit Abd al-Wajib (dmF/mk/20) is their commander. Hatit, a genius at fortification, does not represent The Dutiful on the council because his position of emir requires that he be fair to all. His protegee General Ekuriyah Abd al-Wajib (hfF/mk/14) represents The Dutiful in council. She is seen as the most likely choice for the next emir, since the office is held for 20 years or life (whichever comes first) and Hatit has already served for 13 years. Ekuriyah is a capable officer and has led recruiting drives into the Furrowed Mountains.

- The Faithful is one of the most powerful groups in Qudra, and also in direct service to the Grand Caliph in Huzuz. Their commander is General Adun Abd al-Amin (hmF/mk/18). Adun sought to be elected emir 13 years ago, even going to the extreme of trying to line up votes for himself and reminding everyone of his personal triumphs against the corsairs and hill tribes. This attracted the evil eye to him, and the council passed him over in favor of Hatit. He nourishes a fierce anger for what he views as a personal slight and constantly looks for flaws in Hatit and in Ekuriyah. He has recently evolved a plan which he hopes will result in his rivals' fall from power (or destruction) and secure the emirate for himself.

- The Studious, known for their espionage activities, have bases in several other cities. Their commander in Qudra is General Okin Abd al-Talib'ilm (emF/mk/16). Okin is a venerable elf who was crippled in battle. Though healed, he had no more taste for combat, preferring to serve as a researcher and tactician. Unlike his fellow council members, Okin does not worship Vataqatal, but reveres Zann.

- The Valiant, noted for their lightning strikes against the mamluks' foes, are commanded by General Kalin Abd al-Bas (hfF/mk/14). The youngest member of the council, Kalin has much support among the younger mamluks. Her natural streak of white hair is identical to that possessed by one of The Valiant's legendary warriors. She plays on this, but her temper and lack of judgment may be her undoing.



- The Wanderers are one of the few naval units, and they have little support in Qudra. Their commander is Admiral Dus Abd al-Dawwar (gbmF/mk/5). This goblin commander is highly frustrated. Though Qudra's fleet is the largest of any Zakharan city, half the ships are unsuitable for action and have been used to repair the others. Qudra's decision to maintain a defensive rather than an offensive position in regard to the Corsair Domains and any Free Cities which might try to revolt leaves him with little to do except sulk. The only time he is happy and shows his true nature (a crafty, alert commander who knows naval tactics quite well) is the one month each year when the Qudran fleet escorts Zakharan craft past the Corsair Domains. Fearing that morale is so poor (it has been degenerating since their defeat by the Corsair Domains ten years ago) that his navy might desert en masse before long, he is ready to try almost any strategy to get his fleet back in shape and into battle.





## Appendix: The Foolish Pirates

*Before the time of the first Grand Caliph, may his name be forever remembered and blessed, the islands now known as the Corsair Domains were called the Isles of Fear. No mortal is alive today who remembers why they were so called, but my grandmother's mother told her a story she had heard when she was young, and that story was this one I now tell to you. To listen is to know, and to know is to be armed against adversity.*

—Aban al-Hadhar, barber extraordinaire

**T**hough merchants fear for their goods and the mamluks despise those who acknowledge no law, though some among the corsairs are cruel or take lives needlessly, yet are they preferable to the pirates and slavers who inhabited the islands in earlier times. In those times, many petty caliphs, sheikhs, and sultans fought among themselves for this and that reason, but mostly for power. Aiiee! What is power that these foolish men and women should desire it so? Does it place bread on the table or assure that strong children will be born? Nonetheless, those who were foolish enough to fall prey to the lure of power had many chances to fight other fools for it.

One such person was Kadar ibn Qasim, called The Scourge, who was a great pirate from the Island of Firethorns (may one such as he never come near you!). He was the pirate king and commanded over a thousand ships, all of which were pirate ships like his own. His raids along the coast were so terrible that people dared not keep any livestock or fine goods within twenty miles of the shore, nor dared they have any children lest The Scourge steal them all away.

This went on for many years, and no one could stop these pirates, until one day a handsome young man came to a city upon the shore and found the people there all packing to run away.

"Where are you going, and why are you running away?" he asked a merchant.

"Look there, across the water," said the merchant. "The fleet of The Scourge is coming. Run! Run before they capture you and take you to the







Isles of Fear!" And the merchant picked up his goods and ran.

Now the young man, whose name was clever Hasan, thought to himself: "I am as strong and as clever as anyone else. My face is no worse than it should be, and I have never seen these Isles of Fear. Perhaps I shall wait here until these raiders come ashore and ask them to take me with them." He was not entirely without sense, however, and hid a magical golden ring given to him by his father inside his shirt.

When the pirates came into the city, they were able to catch only two or three unfortunates who were too slow to run or who hadn't heard that the fleet was coming. Among these was a beautiful girl whose face was like the moon and whose voice was like the singing of the most dulcet nightbird. She had stayed to tend to her old grandmother who could not walk.

And so, it came to be that the pirates captured both the young girl and clever Hasan. They thought Hasan added that he had stayed on purpose to go with them, and he had the run of the ship on the way back to the Isles. It pleased the pirates to have Hasan serve them dinner, and one night as he did so, he heard them talking among themselves. From this he learned that they belonged to a terrible cult which worshipped an elemental water god called Istishia (may you never hear that name again, and I say it now only because I am under Hakiyah's protection!), and that they planned to sacrifice him, the young girl, and her old grandmother to this god in return for the strength to fully overcome the cities along the coast and claim them for their own. He also heard that a terrible ghul was the high priestess of this cult and that anyone not given to the god was given to her to eat!

He went to the girl, whose name was Atifa, and told her all that he had heard. Together they made plans to escape their terrible fate and to punish the pirates for their evil deeds. Taking up a sack of grain which had been stolen in the raid, Atifa and Hasan emptied it over the side. Then they bundled Atifa's grandmother into the sack and sewed it shut again. Taking a huge

melon, Hasan threw it over the side with all his might so that it made a big splash, and then he called out,

"Oh, terrible misfortune! What a calamity! Poor grandmother has fallen over the side."

Well, the pirates scrambled up to save their sacrifice from being given too soon and without the proper rituals, but the "grandmother" melon sank out of sight and no one could rescue it.

"Well then, we shall just have to make do with two sacrifices," they said to themselves, and a guard was posted on Atifa to make certain she did not stray.

They still thought Hasan was a fool and so did not watch him. Some time later, he brought the guard a little bit of dinner and a large gourd of wine, saying,

"Oh, my captor, we have but little food left, for which I apologize most humbly. But see, there is plenty of wine, and I have brought you a good portion to make up for the lack of food."

Though the pirate did not like having so little food, he much enjoyed the wine, and as a consequence was soon snoring. As soon as he was asleep, Hasan and Atifa hit him on the head with clubs and lowered him over the side. Then they took much delight in tearing open many of the sacks of grain and other foodstuffs and treasure which the pirates had stolen. Then Hasan pricked his finger, and they smeared blood around the room. Finally, Hasan slammed the door very loudly and ran to the pirates crying,

"Help! Help! Now I see why the poor grandmother jumped overboard! The girl! Just see! She has eaten her guard and almost ate me!"

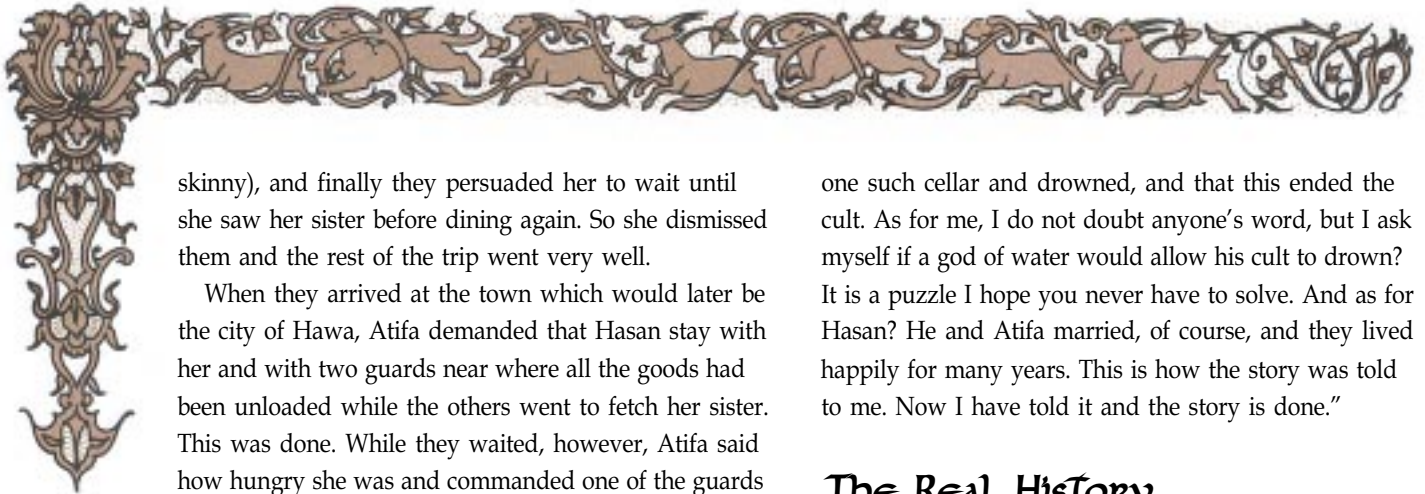
Well, the pirates had to see such a sight, and when they saw that the guard was gone and the room all torn apart, their eyes grew very round.

"Surely she is a ghul!" they said to themselves.

And Atifa laughed a most hideous laugh and said, "Thank you, foolish pirates, for taking me to see my sister, your high priestess! But now, I'd like another of you to eat. Which one shall it be?"

Oh, how they begged and pleaded and offered to give her Hasan (whom she refused, saying he was too





skinny), and finally they persuaded her to wait until she saw her sister before dining again. So she dismissed them and the rest of the trip went very well.

When they arrived at the town which would later be the city of Hawa, Atifa demanded that Hasan stay with her and with two guards near where all the goods had been unloaded while the others went to fetch her sister. This was done. While they waited, however, Atifa said how hungry she was and commanded one of the guards to either become her dinner or else fetch her some fresh fruit. He, of course, chose to go for the fruit.

Meanwhile, Hasan sat down and pretended he was drawing pictures in the sand. Instead, he drew out the magical golden ring his father had given him and commanded the genie held within it to appear before him. Atifa hit the guard on the head with a rock, rendering him unconscious, then released her grandmother from the sack. Hasan commanded the genie to bring about a great storm and destroy the terrible pirate village . . . after carrying Atifa, her grandmother, and himself to safety. And this was done.

Now, the pirates were not so clever then as they are today. Their houses were built on the shore, not on stilts, and when the great storm came through, it tore most of the houses off their foundations and washed them away and drowned the basements of others forever. Most of the pirates were killed, and those that were left did not present so great a problem from then on. Much of their treasure had been held in secure basements, and they could no longer reach it. I have heard it is still there.

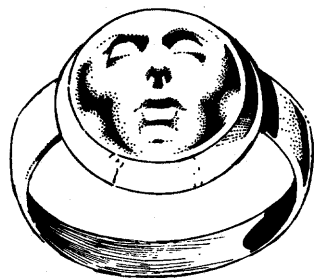
It is said, though no one knows for certain, that the ghul priestess and her fellow cultists were trapped in

one such cellar and drowned, and that this ended the cult. As for me, I do not doubt anyone's word, but I ask myself if a god of water would allow his cult to drown? It is a puzzle I hope you never have to solve. And as for Hasan? He and Atifa married, of course, and they lived happily for many years. This is how the story was told to me. Now I have told it and the story is done."

## *The Real History of The Corsair Domains*

**A**ban's story contains many elements of truth. Before the Grand Caliph brought Enlightenment to the Land of Fate, the islands were inhabited by many cruel pirates and slavers under the rule of various pirate kings and queens. People who knew of the pirates' reputation greatly feared them, for they did indeed capture many unfortunate prisoners to sacrifice to their dread elemental god or to serve as wretched slaves in the city which would become Hawa. Though pirates continued to congregate on the islands, other settlers found a home there as well, and when the forces of the Grand Caliph sent emissaries to them, they embraced the Laws of the Loregiver and the gods of Enlightenment.

Though it is doubtful that the harsh and evil pirates who worshipped Istishia could have been so easily duped as in the story, tradition has it that they were overcome and their kingdom washed away by a great hurricane soon after the arrival of the Loregiver's Laws. Most corsairs still claim that they honor that commitment whether they strictly obey all of the laws or not. Certainly, the majority of the pirates no longer take captives whether to use as sacrifices or slaves. They applaud any abolitionist moves the Grand Caliph approves, and his seeming dislike of slavery endears him to the corsair people. Nevertheless, rumors persist of a secret cult to Istishia, the cold elemental god of water, which hides within partially flooded cellars and the underground tunnels of the city of Hawa and waits to return to power.





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# **Corsairs of the Great Sea**

**Adventures in the Corsair Domains**

by Nicky Rea



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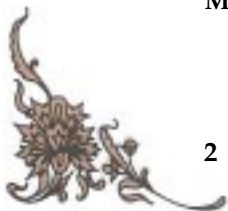
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## Introduction:

# Wherein The Tales Begin

**A**h, my most noble Friend, have you conceded yet that I am the more discerning of us two?" The elaborately coiffed and extravagantly clothed djinni known as Ja'ashan the Magnificent leaned back against a mound of brightly covered cushions and looked inquiringly at his companion. The other djinni, no less elaborately bedecked, breathed deeply of the jasmine-scented air, then turned to Ja'ashan with an amused look.

"No, indeed, my most puissant and esteemed associate. Though you are quite well versed in many things, as one in your exalted position should be, yet you lack knowledge and experience of mortals. In that area, I must claim to be your superior."

"Mortals, Ruashad? Bah. What of mortals? I do not concern myself with the creatures."

"Then, oh most gracious Ja'ashan, you do not begrudge me my superior knowledge in that area nor contest my greater experience?" Ruashad, known as the Wise, lifted his eyebrows in mock surprise.

"I did not say that. I do not agree that because you once served one of those sniveling sha'irs your learning exceeds my own. More likely, you have been led to believe whatever these puny folk say of themselves."

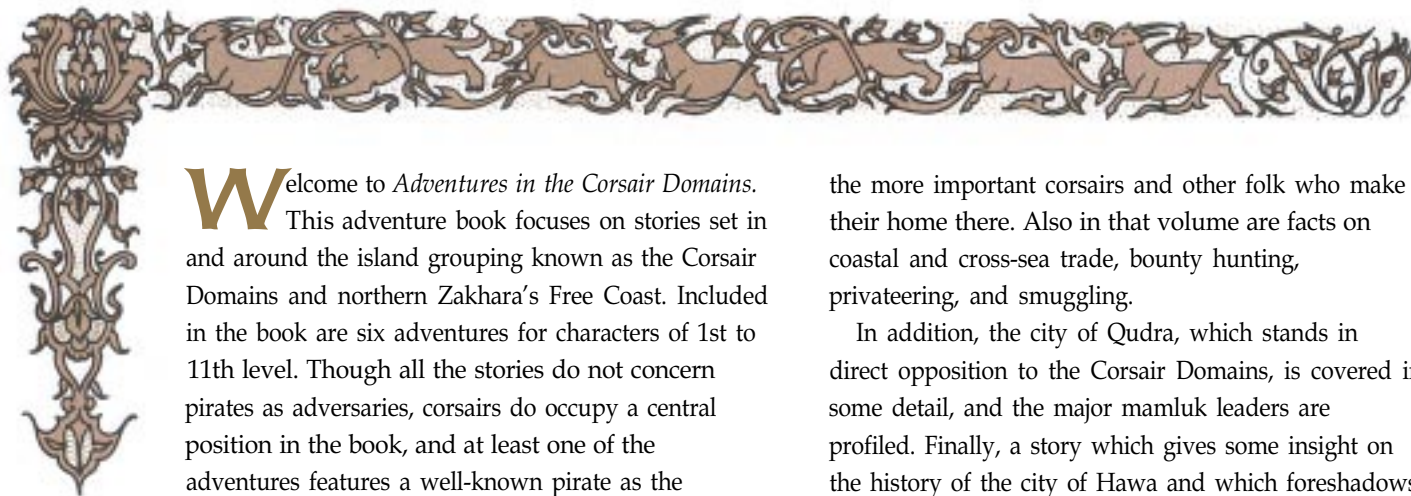
"Ah, so you would like to put me to the test?" Ruashad smiled secretly to himself. Now would be the time to show Ja'ashan's lack of knowledge. Perhaps this would even enhance Ruashad's own position among the djinn.

"Yes, my worthy adversary, and the test shall be as follows: we shall search out deeds for mortals to attempt and secretly through disguise or deceit persuade them to involve themselves. Each of us shall wager on either the mortals we choose or their adversaries. Whichever one wins the wager gains a point. At the end of the wager, we shall count points and see who has won. That one will be declared as he who knows most about mortals. Do you accept the test?"

"If I have first choice of which I choose to wager upon. . . ."

Ja'ashan nodded. "Then let us begin, and may Fate favor the wise."





**W**elcome to *Adventures in the Corsair Domains*. This adventure book focuses on stories set in and around the island grouping known as the Corsair Domains and northern Zakhara's Free Coast. Included in the book are six adventures for characters of 1st to 11th level. Though all the stories do not concern pirates as adversaries, corsairs do occupy a central position in the book, and at least one of the adventures features a well-known pirate as the characters' potential employer.

A section on new magic items for an AL-QADIM® campaign appears at the end of the book to assist the DM in running the game, and several maps are spread throughout the book. Six color maps (often backed with black and white ones) providing details for the adventures can be found on the cards inside this sourcebox. A large color mapsheet shows the placement of the islands of the Corsair Domains, the Free Coast cities, Qudra, and those islands which are disputed territory.

The *Corsair Sourcebook*, the companion book to this one, provides background information on the islands of the Corsair Domains, the city of Hawa and its defenses, Chaos Bay, the corsair people, and some of

the more important corsairs and other folk who make their home there. Also in that volume are facts on coastal and cross-sea trade, bounty hunting, privateering, and smuggling.

In addition, the city of Qudra, which stands in direct opposition to the Corsair Domains, is covered in some detail, and the major mamluk leaders are profiled. Finally, a story which gives some insight on the history of the city of Hawa and which foreshadows the adventure "Of Waters Dark and Deep" is given in an appendix to allow the DM to use it as needed.

In order to understand some of the background to most of the adventures, the DM is encouraged to read through the *Corsair Sourcebook* first. Details which will enrich the adventures, and complete statistics for some of the major NPCs in them, are to be found therein.

Some of the adventures include set speeches or suggested actions for various NPCs. These are intended as guidelines to help the DM understand the adventure and run it more easily. They are not written in stone. As always, the DM is free to change anything he or she does not like, from alignments, motivations, and monsters encountered to types of treasure and details of room descriptions.





## The Genies' First Wager: To Steal The Steel

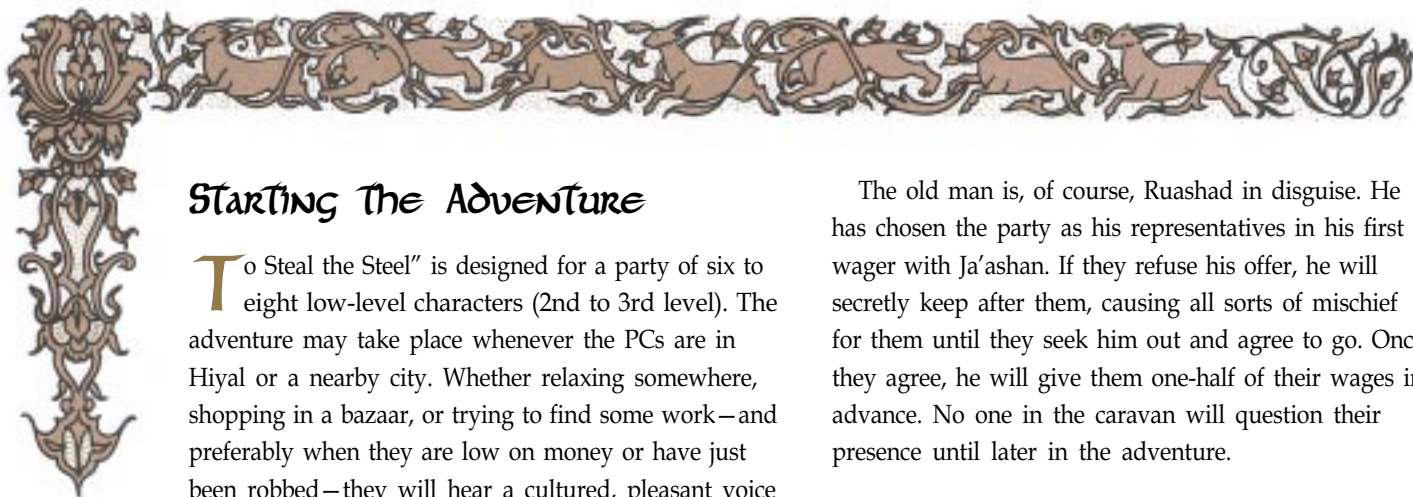
Once a year, weapons made in the great forges of Hiyal are sent to the mamluks of Qudra. Though Qudran steel is good, Hiyal's is even better, and their swords and spearheads are in great demand among the various mamluk units. So lucrative is the contract with Qudra, in fact, that Hiyal uses the proceeds from these sales to pay the city's taxes to the Grand Caliph. The most impressive and finest weapons are made by the House of Bulad. Their long swords, broad swords, cutlasses, and scimitars are of such quality that their wielders receive a nonmagical +1 attack bonus. These are particularly sought after by the mamluks, and their ownership is considered a mark of distinction.

Bahramiyah al-Musafir (hgT/mr/15) has overseen the great caravans which transport the weapons for 40 years. Though her sons and daughters have taken over much of the burden of her steel-selling business, she still personally travels with each shipment. The wares are sent from Hiyal by the Sea of Caravans in sambuks, then loaded onto camels for the overland journey to Qudra. The great caravan is almost always in need of a few more trustworthy guards. The PCs should fill that position nicely.

The caravan guards usually have little to do besides look daunting. No one has ever even attempted to attack this large caravan because of its numerous guards and the difficulty of getting away with the goods. Most people have no real use for the hundreds of swords and spearheads which comprise the cargo, and few people are willing to risk the wrath of both Hiyal *and* Qudra. These drawbacks do not concern the thief who has now turned his attention to stealing the mamluks' weapons. Akura al-Hiyali, a native of Hiyal and a notorious corsair captain, hopes to tweak the noses of the mamluks and gain valuable weapons for the Corsair Domains with one bold stroke. If he succeeds, Qudra will be highly embarrassed (as well as out the money they paid for the weapons), his legend will be established, and he will make his first move to become the next pirate king of Hawa.







## Starting The Adventure

To Steal the Steel” is designed for a party of six to eight low-level characters (2nd to 3rd level). The adventure may take place whenever the PCs are in Hiyal or a nearby city. Whether relaxing somewhere, shopping in a bazaar, or trying to find some work—and preferably when they are low on money or have just been robbed—they will hear a cultured, pleasant voice calling out, “Warriors, sorcerers, those who seek adventure: if you are of good character, your services are sought! Travel by sea and sand, receive fine wages, and be in service to those who serve the Grand Caliph! Come now and speak with me, for the available places are almost filled!”

## The Old Man

If they investigate, they find a bent old man, well dressed and groomed, who smiles and exclaims how lucky he is to have found the perfect group to help him. He gives his name as Ruan al-Hiyali. He tells them that Hiyal is sending a shipment of weapons to Qudra and needs caravan guards, confiding that the guards rarely have anything to do but are paid well and get to see Qudra, a marvel in itself for its great walls and the Mosque of Blood. Whatever seems to most interest the PCs, he will emphasize—if they want money, he’ll dwell on the good pay; if adventure, he’ll describe the possibility of action.

Unless the PCs are already in Hiyal, he will include transport to the city as part of their payment. He will do whatever it takes (within reason) to get the PCs to agree to take the job. He is offering 100 dinars per person plus one free weapon, though he will start the haggling over pay at 45 dinars. Regardless of how well the PCs haggle, he will go no higher than 150 dinars since that would be making it too obvious that he wants these particular people. If they refuse the offer, he will shrug and begin announcing the job again as he moves off.

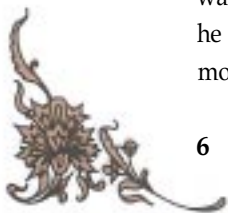
The old man is, of course, Ruashad in disguise. He has chosen the party as his representatives in his first wager with Ja’ashan. If they refuse his offer, he will secretly keep after them, causing all sorts of mischief for them until they seek him out and agree to go. Once they agree, he will give them one-half of their wages in advance. No one in the caravan will question their presence until later in the adventure.

## The Caravan

Once the PCs agree to the job, they can meet with the caravan. After being briefly introduced to Bahramiyah al-Musafir, the grumbling old female halfling who journeys from Qudra once a year to oversee the caravan, the party is assigned to the third watch. The guards for the journey are made up of both mamluks and hired guards like the PCs, with the mamluks clearly in charge. It should become obvious to the PCs that the slave-soldiers consider the nonmamluk guards to be little better than mercenaries.

The person in overall charge of the guards is Akila Abd al-Amin (hfF/mk/8), a small, wiry woman whose pride in her unit, The Faithful, is evident. Under her command is a company of mamluks (three 10-mamluk platoons, each with a 4th-level sergeant). The PCs have been assigned to coordinate their duties with the third platoon under the command of Nudar Abd al-Amin (heff/mk/4). Nudar is well liked and easygoing, and Akila considers her the commander best able to tolerate the disruption in the ranks that outsiders are sure to cause. She will allow the PCs to all work together rather than splitting them up.

Once the party has met their commander, they can settle in aboard the troop ship. The cargo is loaded into two other sambuks, each of which has a few guards on board. The party may notice several other “civilian” guards lounging around and may talk to them if they wish. Some of these have travelled with the weapon caravan before and will tell the PCs they





can pretty much relax until the end of the sea voyage. Then they'll earn their pay. Not as guards, but as extra hands to get balky camels moving!

## The Voyage

The initial part of the voyage is fairly boring. The best part about it is the food, which is both plentiful and delicious. Bahramiyah is like most halflings when it comes to food, and though she is willing to undergo the trip each year, she is not willing to eat poorly cooked or tasteless food during the journey. To that end, a professional cook is always hired to accompany the caravan and provide all the meals. This year's cook, Zaid bin Ziyad, is very large and very friendly. He chooses to spend his time between meals asking the PCs numerous questions about what kind of food they like best, what they thought of last night's dinner, when they think the ship will reach their destination, and if they like being caravan guards.

## The False Attack

After a few days' journey, when the PCs are used to the routine of standing watch, the ships near the end of their journey. About an hour into the PCs' watch, a trio of zaruqs come in sight around a promontory. They are racing toward the troop ship at top speed. Several people armed with bows are on each ship's deck. As the PCs watch, they see some of these lean down toward a big iron pot and straighten up with flaming arrows.

The lookout on duty on the PCs' ship, one of the hired guards, has fallen asleep. If the PCs do not give the alarm, one of the mamluk guards on one of the other two ships will. The trio of zaruqs will attempt to surround the troop transport and fire enough flaming arrows at the ship to sink it. They will try to avoid coming into boarding range and will break off the fight and flee if their enemies get too close.

It will take five rounds for the mamluks and other guards to respond to the attack. For the first two of those rounds, the zaruqs will be maneuvering into position. On the third round, they will be in range to fire arrows. Thus, the PCs will have to handle things for three rounds by themselves. Each zaruq carries 15 archers in addition to the crew needed to sail the ship.

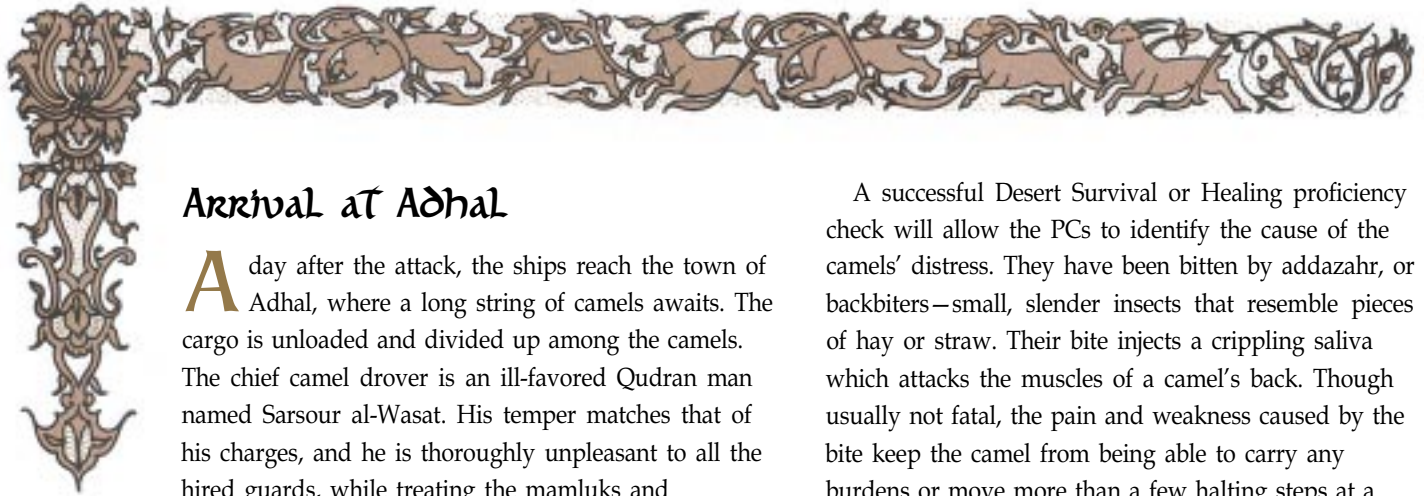
These are part of Akura's fleet of pirates. Acting on his plan, they sailed up through the Crowded Sea and the Golden Gulf disguised as merchants to be in position for this attack. They are supposed to make a raid on the weapons fleet, kill as many guards as they can without risking themselves, then flee when it looks like they will be overcome. Akura doesn't really believe this small part of his fleet can win and steal the weapons. He just wants to cut down on the number of guards; the real raid on the caravan is planned for later.

If the pirates somehow manage to actually sink the ship and kill the mamluks, the crews aboard the zaruqs will attempt to capture the sambuks with the cargo aboard. Note that the pirates prefer to set fire to the ship or take aim at mamluks in preference to shooting at the PCs and other nonmamluk guards unless the PCs make a real nuisance of themselves.

Unless the PCs and their allies manage to cause considerable damage to the zaruqs, the pirates will manage to get away, as their ships are faster than the sambuks. If, by some good fortune, the party or their allies capture any of the pirates, they can only tell their captors that Akura plans another raid. These pirates don't know any more details of the plan, but simply knowing that a raid is planned might give the mamluks and the PCs the edge they need to defeat it.

Pirate Archers (45, 15 per ship): Int Avg (8-10); AL NE; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19 (18 with bow); #AT 1 (2 with bow); Dmg 1d8 (sword), 1d6 (bow); SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.





## Arrival at Adhal

A day after the attack, the ships reach the town of Adhal, where a long string of camels awaits. The cargo is unloaded and divided up among the camels. The chief camel drover is an ill-favored Qudran man named Sarsour al-Wasat. His temper matches that of his charges, and he is thoroughly unpleasant to all the hired guards, while treating the mamluks and Bahramiyah with an obsequious respect which grates on everyone's nerves.

When misfortunes begin to develop, Sarsour's whining voice and sneaky demeanor may lead the PCs to watch him closely or blame him for the problems. The poor man is entirely innocent; he gravely insulted a rawun recently and is suffering under the effects of the evil eye. The bad luck attracted to him simply happens to coincide with Akura's plot.

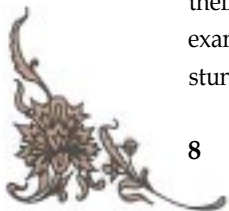
## Treachery By The Cook

It is a journey of about 60 miles from the Sea of Caravans to Qudra. The camels can travel about two miles an hour while burdened with the weapons. Since they plan to travel for eight hours each night, the caravan should reach Qudra within four days. Guards are spread out ahead of, behind, and to either side of the caravan to provide maximum protection. The first night's travel is uneventful.

On the second night, several of the camels must be prodded to their feet. After moving only a short distance, many of them stop and begin trembling. Others fall or sink to the ground, braying in pain. About a quarter of the camels seem incapacitated. No reason for their distress is evident, but they are clearly unable to carry their burdens. If someone can *speak with animals*, the camels can describe a terrible pain in their backs, almost as if they were broken. If closely examined, all show evidence of having been bitten or stung by insects.

A successful Desert Survival or Healing proficiency check will allow the PCs to identify the cause of the camels' distress. They have been bitten by addazahr, or backbiters—small, slender insects that resemble pieces of hay or straw. Their bite injects a crippling saliva which attacks the muscles of a camel's back. Though usually not fatal, the pain and weakness caused by the bite keep the camel from being able to carry any burdens or move more than a few halting steps at a time (see the 8-page booklet for more details on addazahr). The disease caused by the addazahr can be cured by a *cure disease* spell. Lacking magical healing, it will take about two weeks for the camels to return to normal. The other camels will be checked to see if they have any of these parasites on them, but no others will be found.

Unknown to anyone in the caravan, this problem has been engineered by Zaid bin Ziyad, the cook. He is actually a member of Akura's crew. Working to aid Akura's plan, he carried the addazahr with him to use when the weapons were transferred to the camels. If 3 the PCs think to investigate and ask some of the guards who were on duty about who has been near the camels, the guards can tell them that Zaid brought some grain to them earlier in the day. Checking Zaid's tent and supplies will not reveal any more insects among them, since he has used them all, but hidden among his spices is a poison he plans to use on the rest of the caravan when he cooks the evening meal. A successful Herbalism or Cooking proficiency check will reveal that this is no normal spice, while a rogue character has a percentage chance equal to double his or her Intelligence score to identify it as poison. If the party discovers this, they may inform the mamluks, who will question the cook. They will not allow the PCs to question him themselves. Under interrogation, Zaid will eventually reveal Akura's plan. If this happens the mamluks will set up an ambush for the pirates. If the PCs do not get involved or fail to find the poison, Akura's plan will proceed unhindered.





## What To Do

If the weapons are to be brought to Qudra fairly close to schedule, the stricken camels will have to be left in the care of a couple of the drovers, and the weapons will have to be distributed among the healthy camels, the mamluks, and hired guards to carry. This will mean that everyone is heavily encumbered and will slow the progress of the caravan considerably. Alternatively, the mamluks can send one or two people ahead to Qudra to fetch more camels, and the caravan can wait where it is. A rider on an otherwise unburdened camel can attain and maintain a speed of about 12 miles per hour. Traveling at that speed, the messenger can reach Qudra in less than a day. Returning with unladen pack camels will take another two to three days. If this plan is adopted, the mamluks will not allow the PCs or other hired guards to go, preferring to send one of their own number. Returning to Adhal is useless, as there are no more camels there.

Bahramiyah will call for a vote, and the PCs may make their wishes known. Whichever plan sounds better to the majority of the PCs is the one which will be adopted. Under the first plan, the caravan will be terribly vulnerable to possible attack since everyone will be heavily burdened and tired. Using the second plan requires that the caravan stay where it is for several days. Either possibility leaves the caravan more open to attack.

## The Raid

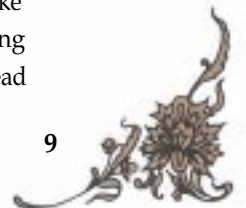
Unless the PCs exposed him, Zaid's next bit of sabotage takes place at the next meal. Zaid outdoes himself, saying that he hopes a fine meal will cheer everyone. Anyone eating the meal must make a successful saving throw vs. poison at a -2 penalty or be rendered helpless for 1d8 hours due to nausea, severe stomach cramps, and retching. Those who save suffer a -2 penalty to all attack and damage rolls for the same amount of time. Assume that three-quarters

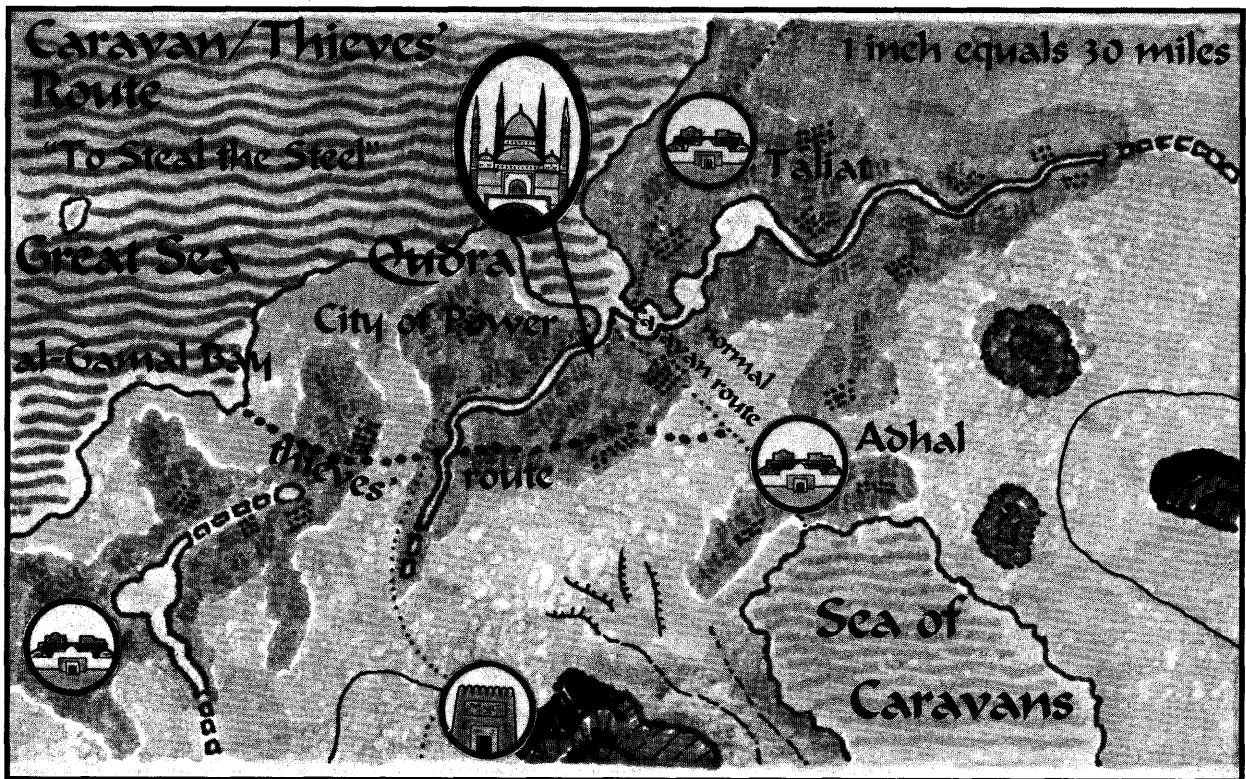
of the mamluks and NPC hired guards are incapacitated by the poison. Two hours after the meal ends, whoever is left to guard the others will see what looks like a large caravan (with almost double the number of camels the weapons caravan started out with) approaching the decimated encampment. Once the newcomers are close enough, they will attack upon a prearranged signal. They look like desert tribesmen but are actually Akura's corsairs armed with longswords and bows.

Aside from the player characters, there are nine mamluks, three drovers, and four other hired guards capable of defending the camp. Run any combats the PCs are engaged in, but simply describe noise and tumult around them rather than worrying over all the details of NPC combats. The NPCs can manage to defeat half their number in corsairs before they are killed or incapacitated. It should become obvious to the characters that they cannot hope to win against such a large number of foes. The corsairs gladly accept surrender and will swear to harm no one. They want the goods, and if they can take them quickly and with a minimum of bloodshed, so much the better.

Any who surrender will have their weapons taken and be tied to prevent them from interfering. The corsairs will load up the healthy camels (if they weren't already loaded) and distribute the other booty among the camels they brought with them. If he is able to protest, Sarsour will do so, moaning that these camels are his only means of livelihood and begging them not to take them. They will laugh and tell him to apply to Qudra to replace them.

The corsairs will then depart with their lightly burdened camels. Since there are now twice the number of camels there were originally, and they are now carrying less weight, the camels will be able to move at six miles per hour. The corsairs intend to travel for ten hours each night, meaning it will take them two nights to reach their destination. Skirting the mountains to the south of Qudra, they will head





for the aptly named al-Gamal (Camel) Bay, some eighty miles away, where Akura's fleet awaits them. Once there, they will load the weapons aboard and turn the camels loose to fend for themselves.

Corsairs (40): Int Avg; AL N to NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 (sword), 1d6 (bow); SZ M; ML 12; XP 65 each.

## The Blame Falls

**Z**aid will leave with the corsairs. When people have recovered sufficiently, the PCs and the other hired guards will find themselves under suspicion. Bahramiyah will check her records and find that neither she nor Akila Abd al-Amin hired the PCs. In fact, no one ever saw them before it was time for the ships' departure from Hiyal. The PCs will have to explain their side of the story as best they can. If they offer to try to track the thieves to prove their

innocence, what is left of one platoon (the third) will be assigned to go with them and watch them for signs of treachery.

If the PCs don't volunteer, the mamluks will attempt to catch the thieves themselves but will be too late. The corsairs will escape with the weapons, leaving behind a gloating note telling who master-minded the raid. The party will be taken to Qudra to stand trial. They will eventually be exonerated if they tell the truth and may find employment elsewhere in Qudra, but the mamluks will not pay the rest of their fee and will remain somewhat suspicious of them.

## Race To The Sea

**I**f the PCs chase the thieves, they should just be able to catch up with them. Through sneaking up and listening, the party can ascertain that these are corsairs working for a leader named Akura al-Hiyali and that they plan to meet him at the Bay of al-Gamal. Though

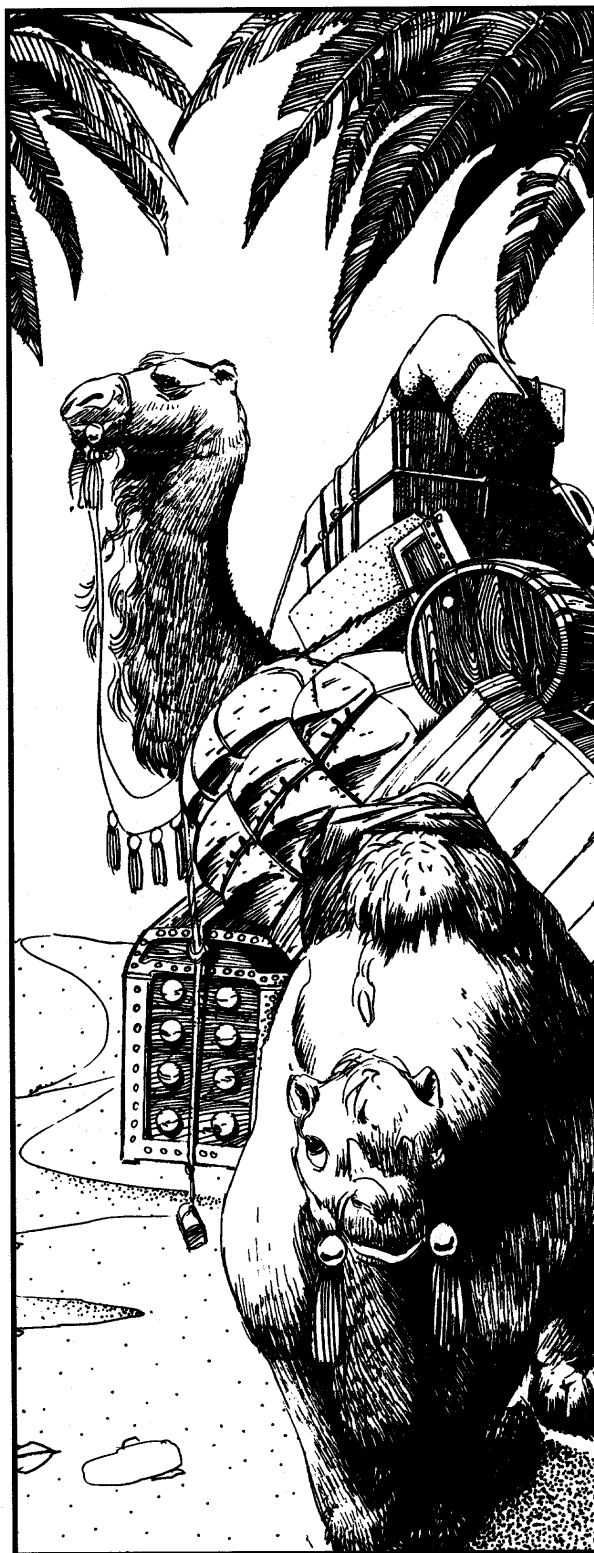




it would be suicidal to attack them openly, the PCs and the mamluk platoon could wreak havoc through sneak attacks against the men or camels. Minor wounds (half their hit points) to camels will slow them; stealing some camels will cause the corsairs to redistribute the loads, further slowing their flight, or leave some weapons behind. Of course, if they are caught, the characters will have to fight their way to freedom from the midst of the corsair camp.

The DM should use his or her best judgement regarding how much damage can be done in a quick raid or how many camels can be stolen (bear in mind that camels will usually be hobbled at night). After the first such attack, the corsairs will be on their guard, making subsequent raids more difficult. If they can manage to steal or wound half the 70 camels, the party can delay the corsairs long enough for reinforcements from Qudra to arrive. Once they see the troops coming, the corsairs will take as many camels as they can to escape, leaving most of the weapons behind.

The mamluks will stay to transport the precious weapons to Qudra. If the PCs helped delay the corsairs, they will have earned the mamluks' respect and gratitude. Each of them will be paid the remainder of the fee they were told they would receive plus a bonus of 50 dinars. Additionally, they may each choose one weapon from the shipment they helped save. The mamluks will be happy to hire them again. Furthermore, if they prevented the theft of the weapons, the PCs will mysteriously find the sum Ruashad agreed to pay them among their things. He will have won his first wager with Ja'ashan.





## The Genies' Second Wager: Of Waters Dark and Deep

**B**efore the time of the first Grand Caliph, before the Laws of the Loregiver were spread throughout the Land of Fate, the Island of Firethorns was home to a wretched collection of scum. These pirates plundered for lives as much as for riches, killing all who opposed them, or taking them as slaves. Worse still, many of the captives were destined to become sacrifices in the unholy rituals performed to appease and gain the favor of the aloof and cruel cold elemental god of water, Istishia. Some information about those times is given in Aban al-Hadhar's tale "The Foolish Pirates," but the whole story is far more sinister and dreadful than the lighthearted tale implies.

The cult of Istishia that was based in what became the city of Hawa not only practiced the sacrifice of sentient creatures but encouraged ghoulish behavior among the cult members as well. Led by a trio of ghul-kin high priestesses, the cult flourished around a sacrificial well said to be the chosen embodiment of Istishia himself. Those who brought the most victims for sacrifice or recruitment achieved high standing in the cult and were rewarded well. It quickly became the practice to kidnap young children and rear them to assume positions in the cult hierarchy as loyal priests, guards, or holy slayers. Others were trained as pirates, barbers, and mages to provide the cult with several options for spying, raiding, and self-protection. Not a few were sacrificed to the well.

With the arrival of the Laws of the Loregiver and the Enlightened priests who followed, the cult found itself challenged. As more people embraced the Enlightened gods, the cult members found themselves isolated and on the defensive. Finally, they attacked to rid themselves of the meddlesome priests and their new religion. Fate was against them, for a terrible hurricane tore apart most of the city and their strongholds there. They were forced to retreat to flooded cellars and underground tunnels after losing many members to the storm. They have waited and plotted. Now they have returned.





## Starting The Adventure

This adventure is intended for six to eight characters of 6th to 8th level. There are several powerful opponents for the PCs, so if there are fewer characters, the DM could reduce the power of their opponents or provide magical items that will give the PCs a chance to overcome their foes and survive the adventure. Because of the enmity between the corsair people and the soldier-slaves of the Grand Caliph, mamluks are unsuited to this scenario.

Grima al-Auni min Kor is worried. In the past few months several children have disappeared from Hawa. At first, only abandoned children were missing, but more recently some of the Faithful have reported that their children have disappeared or run away. He has heard Aban's tale and believes that the cult of Istishia may be starting to flourish again. Though he has alerted the Corsair Council of the children's disappearance, there is little they can do directly.

Confiding in a sympathetic listener, Grima was counseled by him to seek help from strangers—adventurers either not connected to Hawa or only marginally familiar with it. That way, he could be more certain they were unconnected to the cult. Seeing the wisdom in his advisor's words, Grima asked him to act as a messenger to find a likely adventuring group, hire them, and bring them to Hawa. The advisor was Ja'ashan. The genie has also agreed to act as Grima's messenger. Having wagered on their opponents last time, he has decided to choose the heroes himself this time.

## First Contact

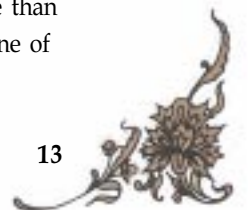
The PCs can be brought into the adventure from just about any starting point except Hawa. If Hawa is being used as their home base, assume that Grima is simply seeking adventurers who seem unlikely candidates for the cult. Wherever they are and whatever they are doing, the PCs will begin to notice that

they are being watched. The first time they confront Ja'ashan, who looks like a nicely dressed but unremarkable merchant, he will claim coincidence, saying that he did notice the party but wasn't watching them in particular. Assuming they believe him, they will find him watching them again the next day. Unless they confront him again, he will approach and admit that he has been watching them—among others.

Calling himself Qulid al-Hawai, Ja'ashan will offer them the chance to serve the Enlightened gods (and to make a tidy sum) by traveling with him to Hawa where they will meet with Grima, a priest of Kor. Qulid will assure them that the task Grima has to offer them is entirely legal. If pressed, he will tell them that the children of Hawa are in danger. He will arrange transportation for them aboard the ship which brought him and will pay them 1,000 dinars in advance. Unless the DM wishes to include a few seafaring encounters, the crossing to Hawa is uneventful until they approach the Isle of Firethorns.

The DM should use the descriptions of the coral reefs, the maze of docks and houses, and the layout of the waterfront given in the sourcebook to describe Hawa to the PCs. As they near the coral, a sea elf will come aboard to pilot the ship, and the characters will be asked to go below in order to keep the approach to Hawa secret from outsiders. Qulid will explain that the corsairs rely on their secret approach to keep the mamluks from attacking. The ship will not proceed until they comply.

Once they go below, it will take about two hours for the ship to traverse the coral reefs and the path through the swamp. Once they leave the swamp, the crew will turn the ship over to the harbormaster, the marid Najit'aqalat, who moves the ship to the middle of the lagoon and allows the passengers to come on deck. From their current position, it looks as though they sailed right through the maze of docks and stilt houses. Of course, that is probably less impressive than having a marid tow the ship! They will dock at one of the small piers.







## Welcome To Hawa

**A**nxious for the return of his messenger, Grima will have been alerted that the ship was approaching and will be waiting for the PCs when they land. They may be somewhat taken aback to find that their employer is a hill giant. After introducing the PCs to Grima, Qulid will take his leave while Grima escorts the PCs to his mosque.

If this is the first time the party has been to Hawa, they should be almost overwhelmed by the chaotic tumult surrounding them. The shipyard is a hive of activity. Fishermen, children, sailors, and merchants argue, interweave, call out bargains, and move about seemingly at random. Net menders vie for space with hawkers proclaiming their wares. The sounds and smells of various occupations from smiths to weavers fill the air. Sleekly trimmed ships, obviously pirate raiders built for speed, fill the harbor alongside merchant vessels and small fishing craft.

Moving away from the harbor leads to more noise and confusion as the party passes through the Free Market of Hawa. Part open bazaar, part covered suq, the Free Market is a maze in itself with no apparent organization by craft or merchandise. Almost any legal item can be found somewhere in the market. Exotic items are more costly, and illegal wares are sold more covertly or quietly on the fringes.

Everyone the party meets is armed with at least a jambiya, and most carry scimitars, cutlasses, staves, or darts as well. Several tough-looking men and women lounge about, leaning against buildings or sitting on carpets. When they cross through the area, the PCs will be the subject of intense scrutiny by the locals and subjected to all sorts of ploys from pickpocketing attempts to offers of "real steals" or "artistic performances." At one point, they will see a fight break out between two merchants. A few of the loungers drift over to break it up after a moment. They are apparently the town guard, though they look like pirates (surprise, they Are pirates).

Although things may seem a little chaotic, nothing in the market is too unusual during the day. At night, the covered portions create wells of deep shadow and the booths of the more open area provide scores of ambush spots. Intelligent people don't move around the market after closing except while heavily armed and in large groups. Inns, coffee houses, and taverns surround the market area and are marginally safer than the actual bazaar at night.

## The Moneychanger

**A**mong those watching the PCs' arrival is Setara bint Aasim (hfT/hs/8), Hawa's premiere money-changer. She exchanges Zakharan coins for foreign ones based upon the weight of the metal and makes change for those bringing jewels and other valuables to the city. When the PCs pass through the market, Setara will approach them crying, "Coin exchanges, change made. Honest value by weight." Moving up to the party, she will hand one of them a silver coin, saying, "You see, strangers, you have but to examine my wares. Carefully weighed and not shaved."

If the PC looks at the coin, it is a round silver coin about the size and weight of a dirham. Instead of the usual Zakharan design, however, this shows a curiously shaped crested wave on one side and a man in flowing robes with wavelike hair on the other. If the PC looks as though he or she recognizes it, she will note this and try to contact that character later. If the character acts like he or she hasn't seen a coin like this before, she will take it back and exclaim, "Oh, how foolish of me. I seek to show you my fine Zakharan coins and bring out a foreign one instead. Here, let me show you the correct one."

She will hold out her hand for the PC to return the coin and bring out a normal dirham to show him or her instead. Should the PC wish to keep the coin, she will try to dissuade the character, saying it is valueless unless exchanged. If he or she insists, she will "sell" it





for twice its weight value (two dirham). Insisting on keeping the coin will mark the PC for an assassination attempt later on since this is the recognition symbol for the cult of Istishia and she cannot allow it to fall into the wrong hands. Setara's job is to contact newcomers to Hawa and see if they recognize the symbol. Her secondary function is to notice unsupervised children in the market and target them for kidnapping.

Setara seeks to discover if the PCs accompanying Grima know anything about the cult or secretly belong to it. She is quite attractive and is not above flirting with male PCs or promising to meet them later for dinner, if it will serve her purposes. She, like the other members of the cult, is suspicious of Grima because he has been poking around. If she can get information from the PCs and get them to trust her, she will be well rewarded by the cult leaders.

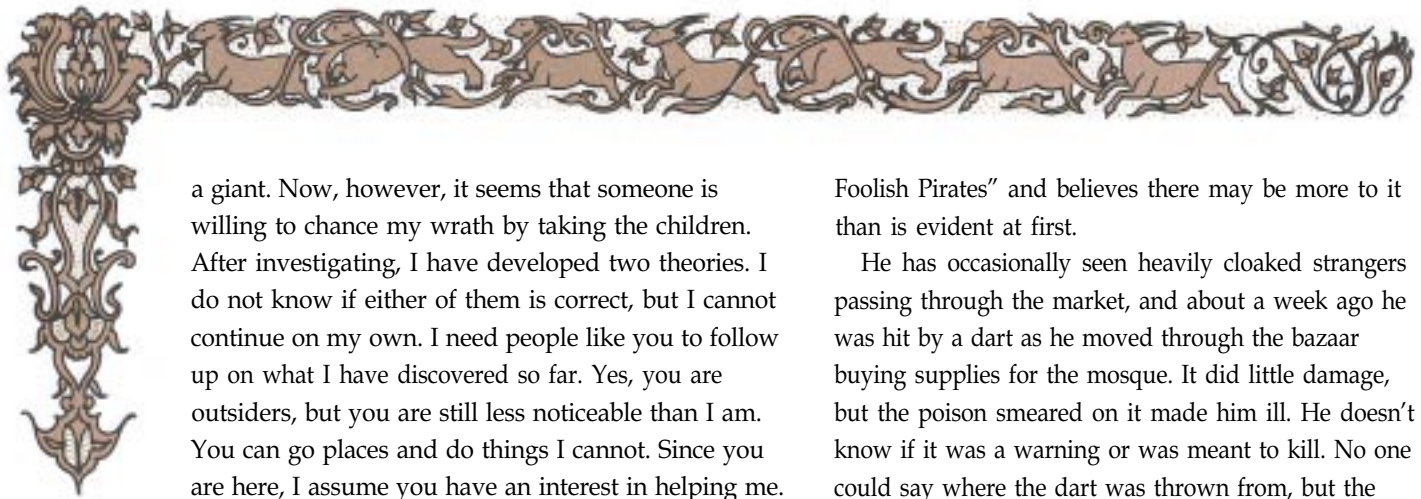
If no precise plans are made to meet her later, she will wander toward the Mosque of Kor, trail the PCs wherever they go, "accidentally" run into them later, and invite them to join her for a meal since they are strangers here. She does not anticipate that they can find the cult within three days, so she has no fears that she will have to break the bond of salt in order to kill them later, if necessary.

### *Grima's Story*

Grima will lead the party to his mosque. Once in his quarters, he will tell them the following:

"The children of Hawa have been disappearing. Eighteen are unaccounted for so far. It has been my custom since coming to Hawa to take in abandoned or abused children and house them here in the mosque. Many of them do chores or run errands for me, and up until a few weeks ago I had no real fear for them. Most of the people of Hawa know my custom and also know that one of the few things I will fight for is to protect the children. I am not boasting when I say that few people wish to be hit by





a giant. Now, however, it seems that someone is willing to chance my wrath by taking the children. After investigating, I have developed two theories. I do not know if either of them is correct, but I cannot continue on my own. I need people like you to follow up on what I have discovered so far. Yes, you are outsiders, but you are still less noticeable than I am. You can go places and do things I cannot. Since you are here, I assume you have an interest in helping me. Shall I tell you my theories, or do you wish to discuss payment first?"

If they want to talk money, Grima will offer them 5,000 dinars plus any valuables they may find. In addition, he will offer them a few magic items that he has collected (two *potions of extra-healing*, three *potions of water breathing*, and an *arrow of direction*). He can't offer them any more without speaking to the Corsair Council and trying to persuade them to offer a reward for the children's safe return.

He will explain both his theories and say that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. His first theory is that someone has instituted a slavery ring specializing in children. If that is so, the children are being captured and sold to the highest bidder. Since there are no slaves or slave market in Hawa itself, the kidnappers must be somehow smuggling their victims off the island.

The person he suspects may be behind any slavery ring in Hawa is Mahmud, a carpet-seller (hmT/mr/4). Mahmud has a booth in the market but can often be found at the House of the Green Fish, a tavern near the bazaar. The Corsair Council has been watching him for some time but has been unable to prove that he is involved in slavery. The council's chief concern is that he might be stealing freeborn children and selling them to Qudra to become mamluks.

His second theory is that the children have become the victims of a cult that is operating secretly in Hawa. Whether they are taken to be used as sacrifices or indoctrinated with the beliefs of the cult, he doesn't know. He has heard Aban al-Hadhar's story "The

Foolish Pirates" and believes there may be more to it than is evident at first.

He has occasionally seen heavily cloaked strangers passing through the market, and about a week ago he was hit by a dart as he moved through the bazaar buying supplies for the mosque. It did little damage, but the poison smeared on it made him ill. He doesn't know if it was a warning or was meant to kill. No one could say where the dart was thrown from, but the object itself was carved with baneful symbols. He can show them the dart—a wicked, barbed missile crawling with stomach-twisting carvings. It is non-magical, but very disturbing in an alien fashion.

Additionally, Tuka, the mason, has been importing large quantities of black tiles from Hafayah. He hasn't used them in building anything yet, but when Grima approached him and asked to buy some of them to use in repairing the border around one of the mosque's walls, he was told they had already been sold. This might mean nothing, but he suspects they were used to decorate a hidden mosque somewhere in or near the city.

He will suggest that they seek out Aban al-Hadhar to do their barbering and ask for his best story while there, and that they talk to or watch Mahmud and Tuka. Though they are welcome to stay at the mosque, Grima believes the party could accomplish more if they rented rooms at one of the inns near the market. He suggests the Golden Dome, which is clean and serves good food. If they try to get rooms there, the inn will have enough rooms if the PCs double up.

It is up to the PCs where they go from here. If they go to Aban, the DM can use the story found in the Appendix of the *Corsair Sourcebook*. The DM should remember that Setara will be following the characters and that she might intervene to deflect them from meeting or spying upon either Mahmud or Tuka by bumping into them and suggesting they go somewhere for a drink or a meal. Wherever the party decides to go, just skip to the correct section.





## A Visit To Mahmud

At the far end of the bazaar, near one of the covered sections, lies Mahmud's Carpets. Mahmud has erected a tent made of some of his less fine carpets and sits outside of it on a smaller rug to do business. Dozens of colorful carpets and rugs are piled atop one another and several more lie rolled up nearby. Mahmud himself takes his ease, smoking an unpleasant-smelling tobacco blend from a glass hookah set beside him and drinking cool fruit juice bought from a nearby vendor. He greets all who come near with a respectful gesture from his pudgy hands and a patently false smile which shows his blackened teeth. His black hair is greasy, and his dark eyes dart over potential customers appraisingly as he wheezes, "May you have a fine day. How may I help you?"

He is happy to talk of selling carpets and more than willing to gossip about his neighboring vendors (most of what he says is either an exaggeration or a lie). Though he invites customers to sit on pillows strewn atop his rugs outside, he doesn't invite them inside the tent. Unless the PCs send someone around to the back to cut through the carpet back there, there will be no way for them to see or get inside while Mahmud is present. If they try to get in while the market is open, a neighboring merchant will see them and raise the cry of "thief!" Two large dogs (see the Monstrous Manual) guard Mahmud's wares when he is absent. The tent holds several rolled-up carpets.

If the PCs do not approach him directly but watch his booth for a while, they will see a cloaked figure approach and quickly duck past Mahmud and into the tent. A moment later, Mahmud will arise and join the figure inside the tent. Rogues who are close enough might hear a muffled conversation about "four others" and hear the clinking of money. A few minutes later, the cloaked figure will leave and Mahmud will come back out jingling a purse and looking satisfied. If they follow the cloaked figure, the PCs lose it in the twists and turns of the docks and stilt houses.

If they stay and continue watching Mahmud, about an hour later they will see four laborers arrive (the four referred to in the whispered conversation, but the PCs may not connect this), hand a paper to Mahmud, then go inside and emerge with a rolled-up carpet. If the party intervenes and unrolls the carpet, they will find a young girl of about fifteen inside. She has been heavily drugged. The laborers only know that they were to take the rug aboard the *Sea Spray*, the ship belonging to Turn bin Trevor (hmF/ow/8), an ajami captain from distant Waterdeep (where he is known as Turon Daysender) who is Jayani's current flame.

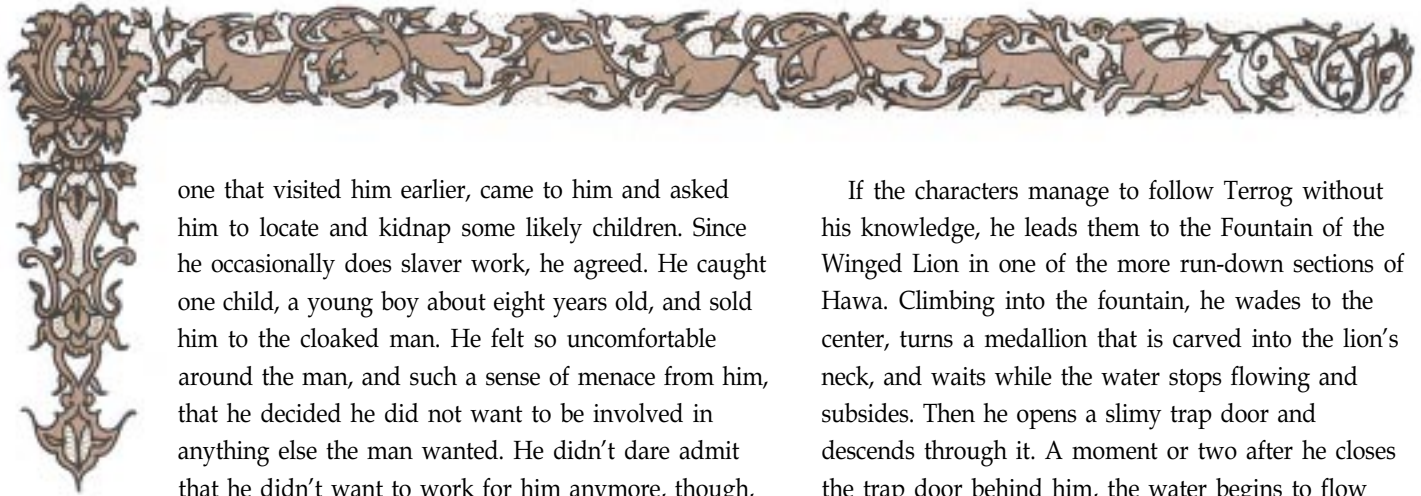
The girl is the daughter of a notoriously bad-tempered sha'ir from Qadib. She was kidnapped for ransom by one of the younger and more foolish pirates of Hawa. Jayani discovered the plot and arranged to have her stolen from her kidnapper and held until she could be placed aboard Turn's ship. He has agreed to return her to her father with an explanation and an apology. Jayani hopes this will place the sha'ir in her debt and create an opening in Qadib that she can exploit. The girl knows nothing of all these plots, and if the party rescues her they will become the focus of all Turn's and Jayani's attention until they get her back.

Questioning Mahmud or referring to slavery in his presence will result in an indignant invitation to leave his tent. If pressed, he loudly protests his innocence, claiming he has no traffic with such. If confronted with evidence, he will loudly bemoan his fate and say he was forced into cooperation to spare the lives of his wife, children, and aged mother (none of which he has). Threats (especially of exposure as a slaver to the Corsair Council, since he doesn't know it was Jayani herself who paid him to steal the girl) will make him tell the PCs all he knows about the missing children.

## Mahmud's Information

Mahmud is only responsible for one child's disappearance. A cloaked figure, much like the





one that visited him earlier, came to him and asked him to locate and kidnap some likely children. Since he occasionally does slaver work, he agreed. He caught one child, a young boy about eight years old, and sold him to the cloaked man. He felt so uncomfortable around the man, and such a sense of menace from him, that he decided he did not want to be involved in anything else the man wanted. He didn't dare admit that he didn't want to work for him anymore, though, so he agreed to continue. The man has returned twice, and Mahmud has told him each time that he has been unsuccessful. The man acted very angry and told Mahmud he'd better succeed before he returned again.

Mahmud is afraid the man will kill him if he fails a third time. He doesn't know when the man will be coming, but the frightened merchant-slaver will allow the party to hide inside the tent and wait for the mysterious man if they promise to keep the man from killing him. Should the party agree, they will be able to hear and see a hunched, cloaked man arrive, be told of Mahmud's failure, and see him strike the hapless merchant, who cries out and falls to the ground bleeding from a scratch on his face. The scent of oranges hovers around the man.

The PCs may choose to attack or try to follow the man. He is Terrog, a rare male great ghul (see MC13, the *AL-QADIM® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* Appendix) and a member of the cult of Istishia. If attacked, he will attempt to disengage and escape. Failing that, he will die rather than betray the location of the cult. He can be trailed, however, and may unwittingly lead the party right to the cult.

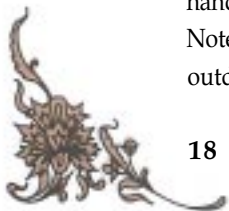
Unless the PCs do something to help Mahmud, he will die from the deadly poison (class E, save vs. poison or die; 20 points of damage even with a successful saving throw) with which Terrog coated his claws. PCs fighting Terrog are also subject to the poison on his claws. The poison lasts for one more hit from his right hand and two from his left hand before being used up. Note that thanks to his superior movement Terrog can outdistance the PCs if he knows he is being pursued.

If the characters manage to follow Terrog without his knowledge, he leads them to the Fountain of the Winged Lion in one of the more run-down sections of Hawa. Climbing into the fountain, he wades to the center, turns a medallion that is carved into the lion's neck, and waits while the water stops flowing and subsides. Then he opens a slimy trap door and descends through it. A moment or two after he closes the trap door behind him, the water begins to flow again, restarted from a knob inside.

This secret entrance to the cult's underground lair is one of the few that remain from prior times. A series of pumps and drains work the fountain and serve to shut it off or turn it on at need. The mechanism is old, however, and if the water is kept off for too long, too much pressure will build up and water will burst through and begin flooding both the fountain and the underground tunnel. The tunnel eventually leads to the cult's headquarters.

The characters will have to have some way of seeing in the dark in order to find their way through the tunnels. Light sources will attract other denizens of the underground, however. Cult members who know of this entryway always bring food to throw to the rats and torches to keep them at bay should there be too many of them to feed. Green slime finds a cozy home on the tunnel ceilings as well, and occasionally bands of pirates intent on carrying out some nefarious scheme undetected will be met with traversing the tunnels. Additionally, the cult has set up hidden spy alcoves and guard stations along the length of the tunnels leading to their area.

Terrog (male great ghul): Int 14; AL NE; AC 0; MV 18 (Br 3 or Cl 12); HD 4; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6+poison/1d6+poison (claws), 2d6 (bite); SA Poison, spell-like abilities (bestow *invisibility*, *polymorph self* and *shocking grasp* at will); SD Spell immunities (*sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *cold*); SZ M (7'); ML 9; XP 1,400.





## Talking With Tuka

**T**uka, the mason, can be located in his shop near the Free Market. The shop occupies the bottom floor of a well-built two-story stone house. The upper portion looks as though it serves as living quarters. Tuka (gbmT/mr/5) is a full-fledged member of the cult and has been using his merchant skills to purchase items they need in quantity. He is the chief supplier for the cult and has been honored with the title Elder Brother for his efforts. He would like to move even further up in the ranks and be known as one of Istishia's Acolytes.

Unfortunately for Tuka, he made an error in judgment when he decided that the way to do this was to purchase several large shipments of black tile from Hafayah. He then presented them to the cult so they could use them to decorate their plain and dreary underground quarters. Though the cult was impressed by his generous donation, Grima (checking the cargo listings of ships entering Hawa as part of an investigation of the council's tax auditors) noticed that lots of black tiles were entering Hawa, but none of them (so far as he could tell) were being used. When he asked to buy some of them, Tuka told him they had already been sold but refused to name the buyer, arousing the cleric's suspicions.

If the party pretends to have business with him, he will gladly discuss any masonry projects they may propose, noting down specifications and giving them a rough estimate of costs and time. If they mention black tiles, he will look sad and say that he did have a shipment of them from Hafayah, but they were all bought and taken away by a customer who had specially ordered them. If asked to describe the customer, he will claim ignorance of her name or whereabouts but describe her as a short, portly woman, richly dressed and wearing a ruby ring. The woman is a complete fabrication, but unless the party includes a hakima or has a *detect lie* spell or similar magic in effect, they won't know that. He will tell the PCs that

he has occasionally seen the woman near the House of the Blue Monkey at night.

If they don't believe him and press him for more information, Tuka will deny knowledge of any wrongdoing. Should the party get physical, he will scream for help. The eight corsairs who act as the town watch in this area will respond to his call within two rounds. They will identify themselves as the town watch before making any attack.

Though these guards aren't much of a threat to the party, Tuka will use their intervention to either have the PCs arrested as thieves or to escape up the stairs to his living quarters. There he will snatch up his cash box (filled with 52 dinars, four pearls worth 200 gp each, and a huge topaz worth 1,500 gp) before exiting through a secret stairway in the back. If he makes good his escape, he will warn the cult about the party's investigation.

If the party chooses to fight, the corsairs will soon realize they are outmatched. One of the corsairs will blow a whistle, alerting other guards in the area. More groups will arrive every five rounds until the party is defeated, surrenders, manages to escape, or successfully fights off four groups of guards.

Escape will result in a city-wide search for the PCs, while arrest or capture will lead to their being taken to the local qadi (the council member appointed to serve as such this month) for judgment. Regardless of their reasons or the identity of their employer, if they killed any guards, the qadi will impose a death sentence on the one(s) responsible. The rest of the party will be heavily fined and turned over either to the city guard to work off a fixed sentence or to Grima (if they admit to being in his employ). If any PC is sentenced to death, the DM should arrange an opportunity for his or her fellows to rescue that unfortunate from confinement before sentence is carried out.

Corsairs (8): Int 11; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (cutlass); SZ M; ML 14; XP 175 each.





## The Mysterious Woman

If the party believes Tuka and leaves his shop, he will temporarily abandon his work, contact the cult, and tell them what he told the characters. He will stay at the cult's lair until certain it is safe to return to his home, while the cult will take steps to rid themselves of the nosy characters.

By ones and twos, cult members will gather near the House of the Blue Monkey, a tavern on a noisy side street off the suq section of the market. Some of them will also be waiting inside the tavern. Baccira, one of the ghul-kin priestesses, will assume the form described by Tuka and enter the tavern late that night. If the party grabs her before she makes it inside, she won't put up much of a fight, since she wants them outside where her loyal cult members have plenty of space to attack them. Since they should not be able to attack a woman inside the tavern with impunity, the PCs will

probably take their business outside regardless of where they encounter her. Once the characters are outside and away from the tavern somewhat, the cult members will attack. They will use missile fire before moving in to melee range. While they fire missiles, the cult's sorceress will use spells against them. The ghul-kin priestess will turn on the character who is holding her or nearest her.

The cultists wish to remove the threat the party represents. Their goal is to capture the characters if possible. If a player character is rendered unconscious or surrenders, four other cultists will emerge from the shadows to bind the prisoner and carry him or her away while the rest continue fighting and block pursuit. Any PCs taken captive will be taken to the cult's lair and imprisoned pending conversion or sacrifice.

If Setara is with the party, she will initially pretend to be fighting the cultists. If the cultists look like they





are getting the upper hand, she will drop the pretense and help her fellow cult members capture or kill the party. If her cult brethren seem to be losing, however, she will continue to help the party, making certain she is fairly ineffectual in doing so. She reasons that so long as they trust her, she can use that trust to gather information or help the cult trap them.

Cultists (hmF/c/6) (12): Int 10; AL Any evil; AC 5; MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 15 (13 with missile weapons); #AT 1 (2 with bow); Dmg 1d8 (scimitar) or 1d6 (bow); SZ M; ML 14; XP 650 each.

Jessiyah the Sorceress, Cult Wizard (hfW/so/7): Int 17; AL CE; AC 9; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (jambiya) or spells; SA and SD spell use; SZ M (5'4"); ML 14; XP 2,000. Elemental provinces allowed: Sea and Fire; Spells memorized: *urning hands, detect magic, magic missile, wall of fog, blindness, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, sunscorch* (×2), *solid fog*.

If things turn against the cultists, Jessiyah will call a retreat and try to catch the PCs in either a *wall of fog* or *solid fog* to discourage pursuit.

Baccira (Ghul-kin, Soultaker): Int 15; AL NE; AC 0; MV 18; HD 8; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws), 2d6 (bite) or special; SA Kiss of possession, spell use as 3rd-level priest; SD Spell immunities, no damage from nonwooden weapons; SZ M (4½') or L (8'); ML 16; XP 6,000. Spells known: *command, curse* (reverse of *bless*), *hold person*; Spell-like abilities usable at will: *invisibility, polymorph self*.

Baccira is a type of ghul-kin known as a Soultaker. Her primary attack consists of a kiss which results in the victim being possessed by a portion of her essence and under her control (saving throw at -2 penalty); see the ghul-kin entry in the 8-page booklet for more on Soultakers. Baccira's preferred form is that of a tall, seductive-looking, dark-haired woman.

## Regrouping

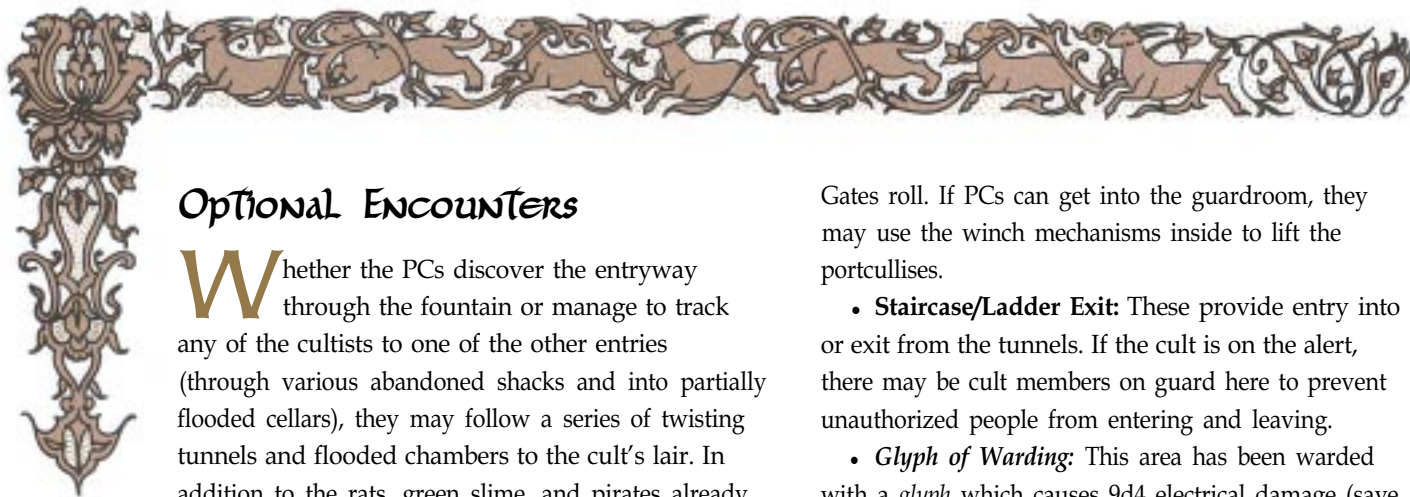
Unless the entire party was captured, they will probably need to regroup and heal. If they were attacked by the cultists, it is very late, and they also need to sleep and regain spells before proceeding. They may feel they need more information before continuing, especially if they realized they couldn't damage Baccira with most of their weapons. Note that any PC possessed by Baccira will argue with all his or her might against returning to Grima's mosque or trusting the giant (sharp-eyed PCs might note a tendency in the same characters to shy away from any priest in the party).

If the party does decide to return to Grima's mosque, they will find the giant outside scrubbing away bloodstains from the front door. Several children cower inside. Grima himself is wearing a bandage around his left hand. Grima tells the PCs he was wounded while fighting off a sneak attack by the cultists but felt it was of more immediate concern to make certain the mosque had not been defiled than to heal himself. He will offer what healing he has to any PCs who need it and will offer to pray for more healing spells.

He would like to hear any reports that the PCs have for him on what they have discovered so far. If the PCs noted any of Baccira's more unusual special abilities and describe them to the priest, Grima will be able to find an entry in an old tome which describes both Soultakers and another type of ghul-kin called a Witherer. The DM may give the players between half and three-quarters of the information found in the ghul-kin entry in the 8-page booklet as a reward for their perceptivity. Once Grima realizes that the PCs fought a Soultaker, he will cast *detect evil* on the party and discover any that are possessed. He will then pray for remove curse as one of his granted spells for the next day and use it to free the possessed PC.







## Optional Encounters

Whether the PCs discover the entryway through the fountain or manage to track any of the cultists to one of the other entries (through various abandoned shacks and into partially flooded cellars), they may follow a series of twisting tunnels and flooded chambers to the cult's lair. In addition to the rats, green slime, and pirates already mentioned, the following can also be placed wherever the DM wishes along the route to spice up the trip to the lair.

- **Room of the Sea Snakes:** This flooded chamber is literally crawling with poisonous sea snakes (use the *Monstrous Manual* entry under Snakes, Poisonous). An entire nest of them (15 snakes) inhabits the room and attacks anyone wading or swimming across. Some might be found in partially flooded tunnels nearby the room as well. The cultists avoid the room by going through a secret tunnel which bypasses the area and rejoins the route later.

- **Hall of Death:** This tunnel has a series of 12 dart traps set at a five-foot height. They are fired by two hidden cultists (3rd-level corsairs) when they see strangers enter the tunnel. If the PCs hold up a silver coin with the cult's symbol, the guards allow them to pass. The holes through which the darts are cast are only large enough for the dart, and there is no way into the room behind the wall from this area. Anyone reaching into one of the holes to try to cast a spell into the room beyond is subject to a dart attack vs. AC 10.

- **Guard Post:** Two cult guards (3rd-level corsairs, AC 7, hp 18) are stationed here alongside the passage in a small guardroom protected behind bars. There is no other way out of this guardroom. If shown the cult symbol, they allow people to pass. If attacked, they attempt to raise the alarm by blowing a horn and drop a portcullis ahead of and behind the party to trap them. The portcullises and the bars of the guardroom can be bent or lifted with a successful Bend Bars/Lift

Gates roll. If PCs can get into the guardroom, they may use the winch mechanisms inside to lift the portcullises.

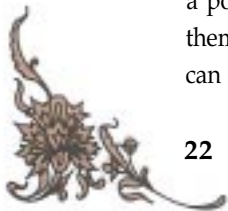
- **Staircase/Ladder Exit:** These provide entry into or exit from the tunnels. If the cult is on the alert, there may be cult members on guard here to prevent unauthorized people from entering and leaving.

- **Glyph of Warding:** This area has been warded with a *glyph* which causes 9d4 electrical damage (save for half-damage) to anyone touching or crossing it without saying the name "Istishia."

- **Guardian Elemental:** A 12-HD water elemental occupies this area and attacks those who do not display the cult symbol. The room itself consists of a narrow ledge which surrounds a deep, dark pool of water. The elemental waits until the party is halfway around the narrow, slippery edge before confronting them. It prefers to fight by knocking or dragging opponents into the water where it has the advantage. Characters who cannot swim will start to drown as described under the "holding your breath" rule in the *Player's Handbook*. A *protection from evil* or *protection from evil, 10' radius* spell keeps the elemental at bay, since it is a summoned creature. This encounter may only happen once, as the creature was summoned by Baccira using a special item.

## The Cult of Istishia

Once past the outer tunnels, the party will have an unexpected benefit to help them find their way. The rough exterior walls give way to an alcove which has been richly decorated with black and aquamarine tilework. A door set into the midst of the design is carved with flowing wavelike designs. The door is trapped with a *glyph of warding* which delivers 9d4 points of electrical damage (save for half-damage). Cult members recite the words "Praise to Istishia, the Water Lord, God-King of Undines" to bypass the *glyph*, not knowing that simply saying "praise" is sufficient to bypass the symbol.





The door leads to a branching tunnel which slopes downward. Both passages showcase more black and aquamarine tiles. Continual light globes provide the illumination unless stated differently under an individual room description.

**1. Meeting Room.** Several chairs and a long table are the only furnishings here. This area serves as an exterior meeting room for cult members and is used for less important cult business. If the cult has been warned about the party's approach, a lookout will be stationed here. As soon as he or she spots the characters, the cultist will go to the temple to report their presence.

**2. Dressing Room.** This is the entryway usually used by the cultists. Hooks and pegs line the walls, and there are shelves which hold towels and folded clothing. The clothing doesn't seem to be any sort of cult uniform, as it is all different colors. Weapons of various types lie on the shelves next to piles of clothing. Next to the far door are bundles of torches and a firepot.

**3. Nereid's Pool.** This area is dark. The PCs will have to provide their own light or use the torches from area 2. The floor in this room slopes down to a dark pool of water. Next to the pool are several unlit torches; examination shows that they have been extinguished by dousing them in the water. A careful look across the chamber reveals the presence of a dark opening just beneath the waterline on the far side of the room. The pool occupies the whole room, aside from the shelf the PCs are standing on, and is quite deep.

The cultists know to bring a torch in, extinguish it, and swim across the pool. They then duck under the water and push themselves through the flooded opening, arriving in a pool on the other side. This serves as part of a ritual cleansing honoring Istishia. Failure to douse their lights or an attempt to get across the pool without swimming is supposed to result in an

attack from the nereid and her pet baby sea wyrm who inhabit the pool.

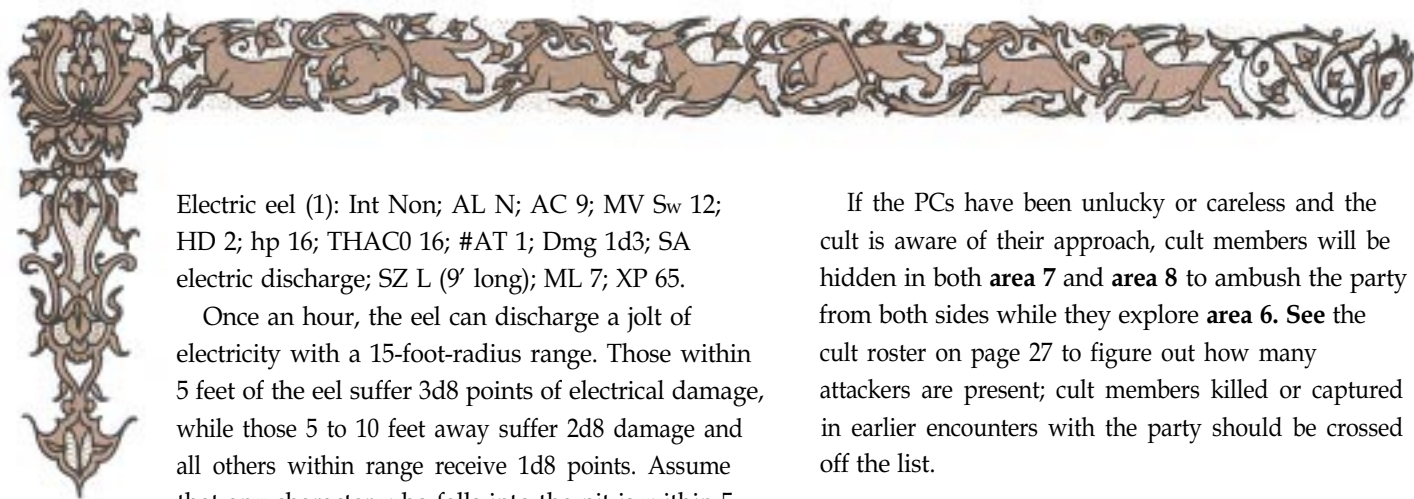
Ghaliyah, the nereid, has been enslaved by the three ghuls who lead the cult. They have stolen her shawl and threatened to destroy it unless she guards the entrance to their lair. If the PCs do not follow the prescribed procedure, she will step forth to confront them. If they attack, she will defend herself, aided by Jsss. If they do not attack, she will offer to let them through in return for their promise to retrieve her shawl and return it to her.

Ghaliyah (nereid): Int 12; AL CN; AC 10; MV 12, Sw 12; HD 4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA spit venom 20' (blinds), *control water* (attacks as 4-HD monster, 1d4 damage), drowning kiss; SD males cannot attack her, successful saving throw vs. poison negates any weapon damage she receives; SZ M (4½'); ML 11; XP 975.

Jsss (baby sea wyrm): Int 5; AL CN; AC 5; MV 9, Sw 18; HD 8; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite) or 3d8 (constriction); SZ L (12' long); ML 15; XP 1400.

**4. Reception Pool.** On the other side of the tunnel is another pool. This room is lit by continual light globes and holds shelves full of towels, robes, and sandals. Once again the black tiles have been used to decorate this room. They frame a plain door in the far wall. In the direct line from the pool to the shelves is a 30-foot-deep pit trap triggered by 50 or more pounds of weight. The cult members know to go around it. If the PCs are following closely behind a cult member, they will be able to see that the wet footprints detour around the pit trap area, if they bother to look. The pit does only ¼ normal damage because the bottom is filled with water. However, at the bottom waits an electric eel, which attacks if disturbed by someone falling in. The sides of the pit are slick, penalizing climbing attempts by 30%.





Electric eel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 9; MV Sw 12; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA electric discharge; SZ L (9' long); ML 7; XP 65.

Once an hour, the eel can discharge a jolt of electricity with a 15-foot-radius range. Those within 5 feet of the eel suffer 3d8 points of electrical damage, while those 5 to 10 feet away suffer 2d8 damage and all others within range receive 1d8 points. Assume that any character who falls into the pit is within 5 feet unless the PC flees immediately upon spotting the eel.

**5. Cult Members' Rooms.** A hall cutting across the main passageway leads on either side to a series of doorways. Behind each is a small room with a bed and shelves where cult members can stay when necessary. If Tuka got away from the characters, he will be staying in one of the rooms. No other cult members are currently in their rooms (they are attending a rite in the room of the sacred well or taking up guard positions if the PCs were detected entering the lair).

**6. Guard Room.** This open area serves as the final guardroom before the inner chambers. Like **area 7** and **area 8**, this large room was obviously formed by knocking out walls between different cellars and digging out the areas between them. There are usually four guards stationed here as a final deterrent to intruders. A secret panel in the left-hand wall opens into the chambers for the cult's holy slayers.

**7. Kitchen, Pantry, and Dining Area.** This large room is divided into three sections. The section nearest to the door holds several tables and chairs, the middle section serves as the kitchen, and the farthest holds various foodstuffs.

**8. Storage Room.** This large room serves as a storage room and armory. Necessities are brought to this room in waterproof bundles or barrels and stored here.

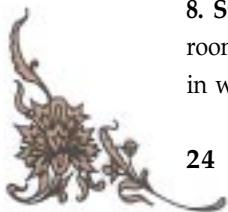
If the PCs have been unlucky or careless and the cult is aware of their approach, cult members will be hidden in both **area 7** and **area 8** to ambush the party from both sides while they explore **area 6**. See the cult roster on page 27 to figure out how many attackers are present; cult members killed or captured in earlier encounters with the party should be crossed off the list.

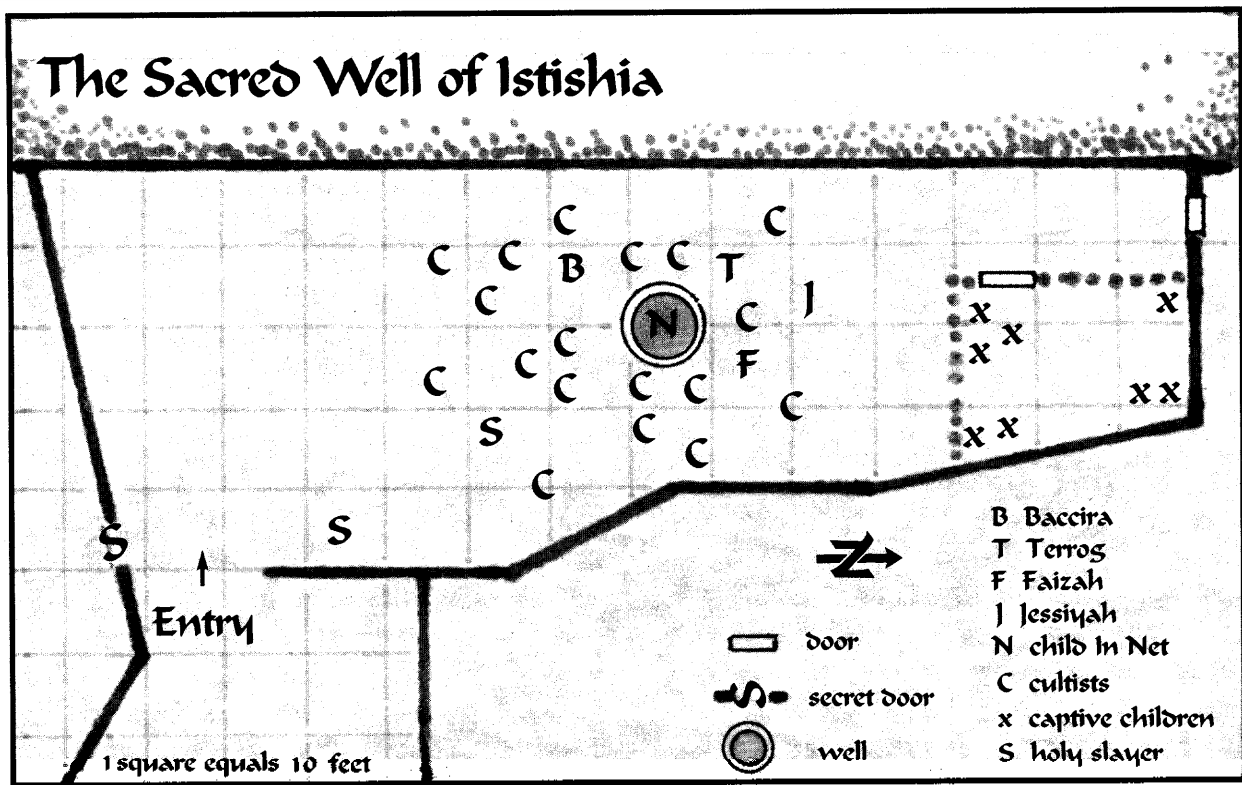
**9. Holy Slayers' Quarters.** This hidden alcove leads to the bedrooms of the three members of the cult's holy slayer organization. Calling themselves the Dark Wave, these cult members were formerly associated with other holy slayer groups. Under the influence of the ghul-kin's mind-controlling potion, the *Waters of Devotion*, they have forsworn their prior allegiances and now worship and serve Istishia.

Setara shares this room with her sisters, Shadha and Sahlah. None of them will be in the room when the PCs arrive. They are either attending the ceremony, hidden somewhere in the complex awaiting the chance to attack the PCs by surprise, or (in Setara's case) accompanying the party as a false ally.

**10. Room of the Sacred Well.** This is the heart of the complex. It is a large room which is in the process of being decorated with several shades of blue, green, and black tiles. The designs depict shapes which are reminiscent of the sea—frothy breakers, rolling swells, and choppy wavelets. The center of the room is dominated by a black-tiled well. Suspended by a single rope above the well is a large net. Inside the net, a small girl about five years old sobs as she looks out at those gathered below.

Standing around the well are several cultists in pale blue robes; a magnificent-looking, tall, gray-haired woman in darker blue; a smaller, sultry woman in aquamarine; and a handsome man dressed in sea-green. The man holds a shining dagger with a twisted blade poised to cut the rope. In the far corner rests a large cage which holds eight more children.





Some of the cultists standing around the well are fairly small, about the size of children. They are, in fact, some of the kidnapped children who have been converted to the cult through the use of a magical potion called the *Waters of Devotion*. Frequent use of these same potions converted the holy slayers and several of the other cult members as well. Unlike most potions, the *Waters of Devotion* stay within a person's system for a month or so, during which time he or she remains loyal to whoever administered the dose. Because of this, however, the potion is always subject to being dispelled. The child in the net proved immune to the potion's effects and the ghuls have decided to sacrifice her for this "blasphemy."

If Terrog, Baccira, Jessiyah, and Setara survived earlier meetings with the PCs, all four will be present; any who did not will be replaced by normal cult members.

The gray-haired woman is Faizah, one of the rare Witherer ghul-kin Grima may have warned the PCs

about. Her touch weakens and withers the recipient, draining one point from Strength, causing 1d10 points of damage, and aging the victim by a year. Prolonged contact will kill the victim as he or she withers away. Victims killed by a Witherer must have *remove curse* cast upon their bodies before they can be successfully *raised* or *resurrected*.

Faizah is the high priestess and founder of the cult. Her ghul brother and ghul-kin sister serve as the lesser priests; the sorceress and the holy slayers are accorded the rank of Istishia's Acolytes. Though Istishia is a neutral god, Faizah knows he will grant her spells yet pay no attention to what she does in his name. She has set up a cult as the basis for an eventual plan to rule the Corsair Domains.

Terrog, Baccira, and Jessiyah the sorceress have all been detailed earlier in this adventure. Most of the other cultists in the room are zero-level humans and demihumans. All but two of them are victims of the potion. All of them have jambiyas, however, even the





## Cult of Istishia Membership Roster

Faizah (Ghul-kin, Witherer): High Priestess of the cult. Faizah has granted powers equal to a 9th-level priest.

Baccira (Ghul-kin, Soutaker): Lesser Priestess of the cult. Baccira has granted powers equal to a 3rd-level priest.

Terrog (male Great Ghul): Lesser Priest of the cult. Terrog has no granted powers.

Jessiyah, Sorceress of Sea and Flame: Acolyte.

\*Setara, Holy Slayer of the Dark Wave: Acolyte.

\*Sahlah, Holy Slayer of the Dark Wave: Acolyte.

\*Shadha, Holy Slayer of the Dark Wave: Acolyte.

Tuka, 5th-level merchant-rogue: Elder Brother.

12 cult guards, 6th-level corsairs: Elder Brothers.

8 cult guards, 4th-level corsairs.

4 cult guards, 3rd-level corsairs.

2 regular cultists, zero-level humans.

\* 18 controlled cultists, zero-level humans. Any of these who are not found in the cult lair will recover from the potion at the end of the month and wonder what they've been doing.

\*9 children

9 noncontrolled children, prisoners of the cult.

\*Indicates that these people are under the influence of the *Waters of Devotion* and are not responsible for their own actions.

children. When commanded to do so, they attack with jerky, automaton-like movements; it should be obvious to the PCs that they are either drugged or charmed. The two willing members hang back until they spot an opportunity to attack without reprisal.

If the party tries to attack Terrog, he will cut the rope. The well is 30 feet deep, plenty deep enough to kill the child from falling damage. Even if a PC manages to cast *feather fall* on her in time, she could still drown. This should not be an easy fight for the party (particularly if Setara is still with the party and has won their trust), but they should be able to defeat their opponents if they work together. The three holy slayers will attack when they have the greatest advantage; use Setara's statistics for her sisters. They use glass daggers filled with paralytic poison. These cause 1d4+1 points of damage (from the shattering glass) and inject the poison into the wound created. If the party is defeated, the cult will attempt to capture them and turn them into good, loyal members.

Anyone can tell the party that plenty of treasure has been thrown down the well in sacrifice to Istishia; those who are willing to risk the cold god's wrath are welcome to retrieve it from among the bones. The treasure consists of 1,250 dinars, eight 1,000 gp gemstones, a *jambiya* +2, a *mace* +1, +2 *vs. undead*, a silver mirror framed in gold and set with pearls (150 gp), a silver coffeepot, beautifully etched and crowned with an emerald (1,600 gp), a sealed ivory scrollcase holding a scroll with four spells from the universal province, a *message ring* which holds a message that leads the PCs to another adventure, and a small box of teakwood (sealed) which holds three potion bottles (DM's choice).

Faizah (Ghul-kin, Witherer): Int 17; AL NE; AC 0; MV 18, Sw 12; HD 9; hp 68; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws), 2d6 (bite) or special; SA withering touch, spell use as 9th-level cleric; SD spell immunities, +2 or better weapons to hit; SZ M (6') or L (10'); ML 17; XP 10,000. Spells known: *cause fear*,



command, curse, protection from good; hold person ×2, silence 15' radius, slow poison; continual light, dispel magic, protection from fire; cure serious wounds, cause serious wounds; true seeing.

Cultists (20, 9 of them children): Int 10; AL any; AC 10; MV 12; HD 0; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ S or M; ML as commanded; XP 7 for the willing cultists, 0 for the controlled ones if killed (if rescued, give full xp value).

**11. Priests' Rooms.** These are fairly normal-looking bedrooms. They are all in the process of being decorated with tilework. A few bones under Terrog's bed are all that give evidence of his ghulish nature. Four potion bottles, each containing one dose of *Waters of Devotion*, can be found in Faizah's room, along with the nereid's shawl. In Baccira's room is a strange gold medallion set with a fluid-looking blue stone. It detects as magical and will summon a 12-HD water elemental and allow the user to control the elemental for one month (it has 3 charges left).

## Returning To The Surface

If the PCs manage to rescue the children (and the other cult members who were under the influence of the *Waters of Devotion*), Grima will be ecstatic. He will ask the Corsair Council to grant them honorary citizen status and allow them to move freely to and from Hawa. The council will do so and add a 1,000 gp reward per party member to their promised fee.

If the PCs were captured by the cult and subsequently controlled by them either through the *Waters of Devotion* or Baccira's special ability, they will be sent to assassinate Grima. If he cannot stop them, they will probably be sent on several other missions to kill the various members of the Corsair Council. The PCs should be given a saving throw to throw off the effects of the potion whenever asked to do something against their alignments.





## The Genies' Third Wager: Now and Zin

It is known throughout the Land of Fate that the Grand Caliph lacks an heir. Theories and tales abound as to why this should be so, and dozens of healers and holy men have visited Golden Huzuz in an attempt to cure or bless the Grand Caliph and his household. No heir has been forthcoming, as yet.

One cure which has never been tried is that of the waters of the Golden River (Nahr al-Zahabi). Said to possess vast, untold powers of curing and enhancement, water from the source of the legendary river has been greatly sought after but never discovered. Ideas as to where the river may be found are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Even the genies have no knowledge of it—or claim ignorance for reasons of their own. . . .

### Starting The Adventure

This adventure is for six to eight characters of 4th to 5th level. Rawuns are particularly suitable. It can start anywhere, but if the characters are currently in the Corsair Domains they will have less far to travel. If any of the characters are rawuns, hakimas, or priests of the Enlightened gods, they should be given an Intelligence roll to realize the significance (i.e., the information given above) of the map they receive in the first encounter.

### The Beggar Woman

An old, ragged beggar woman approaches the PCs and asks for charity. According to the tenets of Enlightened behavior, the characters should give her something—a few coins, some food, or some other valuable. Whichever character first gives something to her will be awarded with a beaming smile, gushing thanks for his or her charity, and a stained, rolled-up piece of parchment, which she thrusts into the PC's hand. She says, "Use it well, O charitable one. If you do not know its significance, ask any learned





person and he or she can tell you. I am too old to pursue it myself. Go in peace." With that, she turns and hurries away. If the PCs attempt to track her, they lose the trail abruptly just around the corner. She was, of course, Ja'ashan. In this wager, the cure need not work; the party wins just by attaining the water.

## The Old Map

The parchment the old woman gave the party is an old map. Drawn before many of the current cities were founded, the parchment is yellowed and brittle, stained in several places, and torn off along one edge.

The importance of the map is that it shows the location of the legendary Golden River (though it is no longer called that on modern maps of the area): it lies on the Island of Gardens in the Corsair Domains. If the party is able to discern the significance of the map for themselves, they may simply find or rent a ship, sail to the island, and try to locate the river using the map. If they need to consult someone else, they can contact a source that can tell them what they have. Of course, the source may wish to accompany them or share in whatever profits they make.

If they cannot decide on a source to consult, a passing half-elven rawun known as Kadin al-Zor al-Faddi (Kadin of the Silver Throat) will have seen the exchange and offer to look at the parchment. Whether the PCs need his services or agree to his help, Kadin will be intrigued by the parchment and will follow the party and attempt to steal it later (especially if he knows what it contains). Should they allow him to help, he will tell the party what they wish to know but ask to come along with them, saying his knowledge may be useful later as well.

Kadin al-Zor al-Faddi (hemB/r/5): AC 7; MV 12; hp 28; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 16; AL CN; THAC0 18  
Weapon Proficiencies: short sword, jambiya.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: appraising (14), local history (16), musical instrument (zither) (17), read/write Midani (15), singing (16).

Bardic Abilities: Climb Walls 80%, Detect Noise 25%, Pick Pockets 65%, Read Language 30%; identify magical items: 35%; influence reactions, counter poetry/song, inspire; cast/remove the evil eye on a successful Wisdom check.

Equipment: *short sword* +1, lap zither, spellbook and components, other normal equipment as needed.

## Journey To The Island

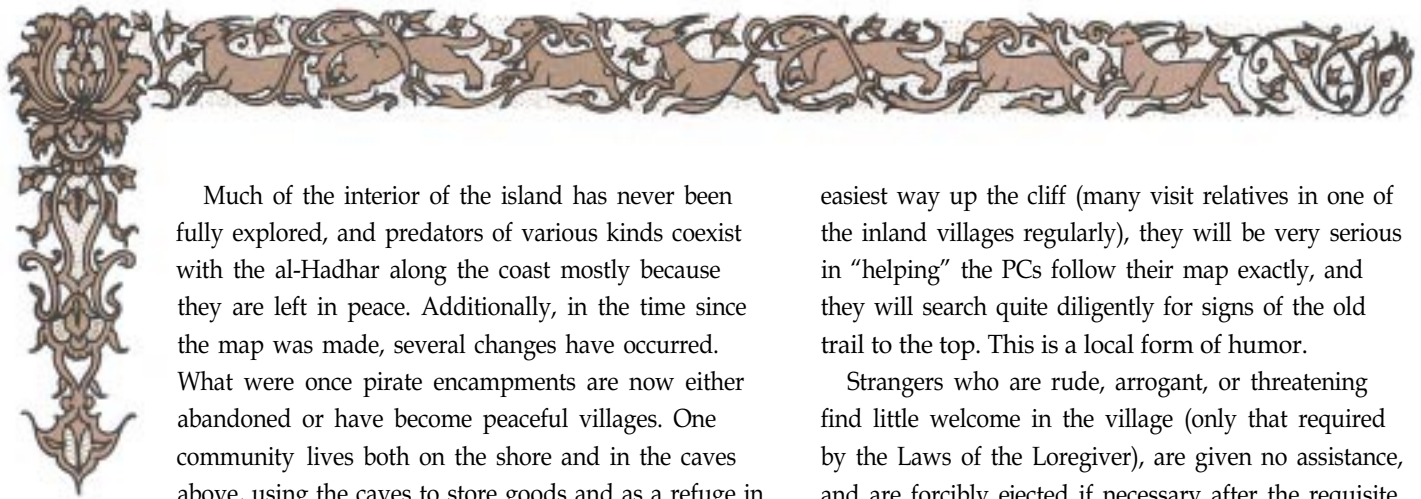
Unless the DM wishes to make the trip to the Island of Gardens a major part of the adventure, the characters should be able to reach the island easily. If they avoid the areas of Chaos Bay which hold the coral maze, they can cross through with no problems. Sea elves and pahari may make themselves known to the ship in order to exchange news or to trade, but Chaos Bay is free of any monsters. Should the party choose to sail to the northern side of the island, they may encounter a pahari colony, but again there are no threatening encounters.

## The Island of Gardens

Despite its name, the island has abundant foliage and flowers only along its coasts. The island rises from slightly above sea level along its eastern and southeastern face to a towering cliff about 2,500 feet high. To the southern end of this cliff, twin waterfalls which plunge several hundred feet are visible even from the sea up to 16 miles away. The cliff slopes more gently to the interior, with the land falling gradually until the western edge is at sea level again. The map makes no distinction as to the height of the land, however, except for a couple of vague markings meant to represent waterfalls, and the characters may be surprised to realize that the source of the river they seek is apparently atop a high cliff.







Much of the interior of the island has never been fully explored, and predators of various kinds coexist with the al-Hadhar along the coast mostly because they are left in peace. Additionally, in the time since the map was made, several changes have occurred. What were once pirate encampments are now either abandoned or have become peaceful villages. One community lives both on the shore and in the caves above, using the caves to store goods and as a refuge in times of danger or flooding. These towns may be developed by the DM, or the typical village described below may be used (with suitable changes of name) as a template for places the PCs might visit.

## The Village of al-Azra'Wadi

The village of al-Azra'Wadi (the blue valley) occupies the area once marked as "friendly village" on the PCs' map. Set between two picturesque natural coves, facing the Island of Firethorns across Chaos Bay, and surrounded with light jungle liberally sprinkled with lovely sky-blue orchids, the village is one of the most beautiful spots on the Island of Gardens. Several small houses are gathered around a central marketplace, and small plots of garden and farmland lie nearby. Peopled by a good mixture of races, the village is ruled by a retired corsair named Alima bint Khayri (hgF/c/6).

Alima's short stature and cheerful demeanor lead many people to underestimate her, but her abilities as a warrior and navigator are second only to her savvy leadership and skill in negotiations. Most people of the village gather the blue orchids to make perfumes and dyes, while others fish or farm. Some few artisans live in the village, but the city of Hawa is close enough that they do most of their major trading for crafted items there.

Strangers are cautiously welcomed and give the villagers a reason to gather to hear news from afar. If the strangers mean no harm to the village, they may find local guides to take them through the jungle and to the cliff. Though the guides know very well the

easiest way up the cliff (many visit relatives in one of the inland villages regularly), they will be very serious in "helping" the PCs follow their map exactly, and they will search quite diligently for signs of the old trail to the top. This is a local form of humor.

Strangers who are rude, arrogant, or threatening find little welcome in the village (only that required by the Laws of the Loregiver), are given no assistance, and are forcibly ejected if necessary after the requisite three days. Though the villagers are peaceful folk, many were once pirates or their descendants and have some skill at arms. About half the adult populace of 20 people are 1st-level corsairs.

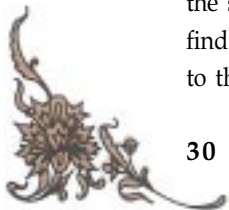
## Following The Trail

The PCs should not have too hard a time following the trail marked on the map since it pretty much follows the dividing line between the greener parts of the island and the more barren interior. A local guide will help speed the journey.

As the party travels they can see and hear small green-faced monkeys, brightly plumaged birds, and other small animals along the way. The monkeys follow the party for a while, chattering at them, swinging from vines, and throwing bits of bark or nuts at them. Loud noises or aggressive movement causes them to flee in panic.

## Winged Serpents

Soon after encountering the monkeys, the air is filled with the sweet aroma of ripening fruit and the characters find themselves moving through what was probably once a tended orchard of bananas, oranges, dates, figs, and other savory fruits. In some places it is possible to reach up and take some of the fruit as they walk along. Suddenly, the air around the party is filled with a cloud of dancing sparks as a brilliant emerald-green winged serpent, 8 feet long, flits around the trunk of a tree and attacks. Its sky-blue mate attacks from above a moment later.





The cloud of dancing sparks is the creatures' breath weapon. Those caught in the area of effect (10-foot diameter) take 2d8 (2-16) points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). The spark shower will ignite flammable materials, including hair and clothing. The creature may only use its breath weapon once a turn.

The winged serpents only seek to drive away the PCs, whom they see as competitors for the fruit the creatures live on. They can be scared away by wounding them for half their hit points. If a guide is with the PCs, he or she can tell them that the creatures will stop attacking if the party gets out of the orchard.

One baby winged serpent, whose wings have not yet fully formed, is on the outskirts of the orchard and can be captured. The guide can tell the party that when captured young, the babies can be trained as pets. Since the party is trying to locate the water for the Grand Caliph, they may think to capture the little serpent and give him to the Grand Caliph as a present. Even if the water does not work, the Grand Caliph will be most pleased by their exotic gift.

Winged Serpents (2): Int 3; AL N; AC 5; MV 12, Fl 18 (B); HD 4+4; hp 28, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Poison, spark shower; SD Immune to electricity; SZ L (8-10' long); ML 9; XP 1,400 each.

## Ascent Up The Old Path

With the map to guide them, the characters can find evidence of the old stones that used to form a great stairway up to the top of the cliff. After some searching, they can locate enough of the grass- and flower-covered stones to make out the pathway. Though now cracked and eroded, it is possible to climb the old stairs and use handholds like roots and small bushes where the stairs no longer remain.

The stairway curves around near the summit to face what is marked as a "standing stone" on the map—a

12-foot-tall weathered and cracked statue of an old man. A few bouquets of old, dried-out flowers lie at the statue's feet. In actuality, this is a living idol, once the catalyst of a flourishing cult on the island. A healing idol, it was once used to control the weather and keep away drought; it was the reason why the Island of Gardens was so abundantly blessed with greenery in the past. Because the idol has been without worshippers for so long, the interior of the island has gradually become more and more arid.

This idol has continued to exist because it is considered good luck by some of the villagers (especially the children) who live atop the cliff to give it thanks for rain and bring it gifts of flowers. Consequently, although it does not get enough attention to generate control of the weather, it does radiate *protection from evil* in a 100'-foot radius.

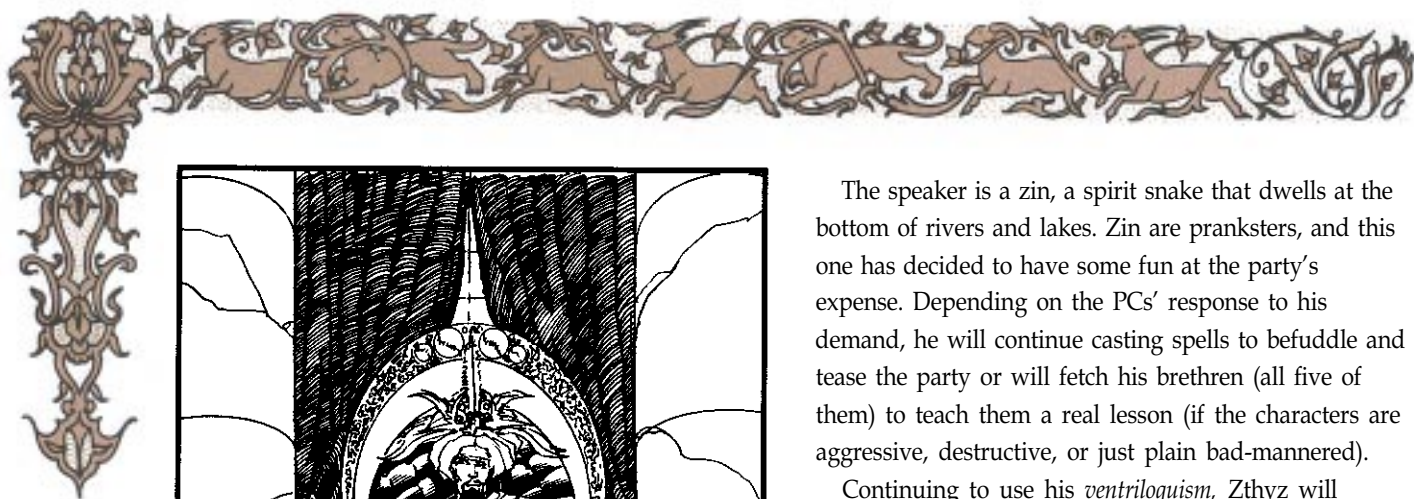
Living Idol (Healing): Int 4; AL NG; AC 4; MV 3; HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 4d8; SA Charm; SD Immune to most spells, +3 or better weapon to hit; SZ L (12' tall); ML 20; XP 12,000.

## The River of God

Traveling either south or east of the idol will bring the party to the river they seek. To the south, the river divides and falls several hundred feet in breathtaking twin waterfalls, while to the east the river flows gently through the light jungle, meandering its way south.

The characters may forget that they need to get water from the source of the river and attempt to take some from whatever place they first run across it. If they do remember, they may travel north to the apparent source of the river (where it rises out of the ground). As soon as they have taken some water, regardless of their location, they will hear a voice from behind them which shouts, "Who dares to steal the waters of my river? Return it immediately or suffer the consequences!" The speaker is not visible.





The speaker is a zin, a spirit snake that dwells at the bottom of rivers and lakes. Zin are pranksters, and this one has decided to have some fun at the party's expense. Depending on the PCs' response to his demand, he will continue casting spells to befuddle and tease the party or will fetch his brethren (all five of them) to teach them a real lesson (if the characters are aggressive, destructive, or just plain bad-mannered).

Continuing to use his *ventriloquism*, Zthyz will demand that the party pay, and generously, for whatever they take—or he, a guardian servant of the noble marids, will be forced to transport them all to the Elemental Plane of Water where they will face the wrath of the Great Padisha! He will use his spells as creatively as possible to maintain the ruse, seeking to prolong his amusement.

Should the party explain their mission to him and its importance to the Grand Caliph, he might even help them. If the characters proved to be truly amusing (from the zin's point of view), and good sports when and if they find out the truth of the situation, Zthyz will explain that the true source of the river is an underground spring which can be found only by slipping through a narrow crevice. He will offer to swim to the spring and fill a small waterskin or stoppered flask and bring it back.

Whether he does so or fills it with some strange concoction of his own is up to the DM. In any case, it will not be anything overtly harmful or poisonous (but might taste terrible). If it fits the DM's campaign, the miraculous waters could be exactly what is needed to help the Grand Caliph, once other impediments to his fathering an heir are removed. If they bring back anything they believe are the waters, Ja'ashan will be satisfied that they have fulfilled their obligations and count it as a win.

Zthyz al-Zin (Zin): Int 16; AL CN; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 12; HD 5+1; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Poison; SD Special; SZ M (6' long); ML 10; XP 2,000.

Zthyz has the following spells: *charm person*, *spook*, *ventriloquism*; *improved phantasmal force*.





## The Genies' Fourth Wager: Unraveling The Pattern

General Adun Abd al-Amin, commander of the Faithful, one of the most powerful mamluk organizations in Qudra, glanced down at the spy who trembled before him. The man had been caught making notes about Qudra's defenses and, under questioning, had confessed to working for the notorious pirate known as Jayani the Beautiful. He seemed to know little else of value. Becoming bored, Adun considered simply having the man's head cut off, and was on the verge of pronouncing exactly that sentence when one of the ancient qadi who usually served the city approached him. Though he did not know this particular qadi, the man radiated an aura of wisdom.

"General, may I offer a suggestion concerning this prisoner?" the old qadi inquired. Though annoyed at the man's presumption, Adun nodded.

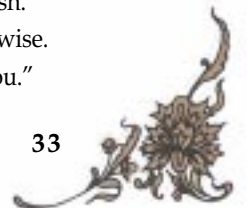
"Why do we not make use of this spy? There must be some service he can perform which will aid Qudra and make some restitution for what he has done in the past."

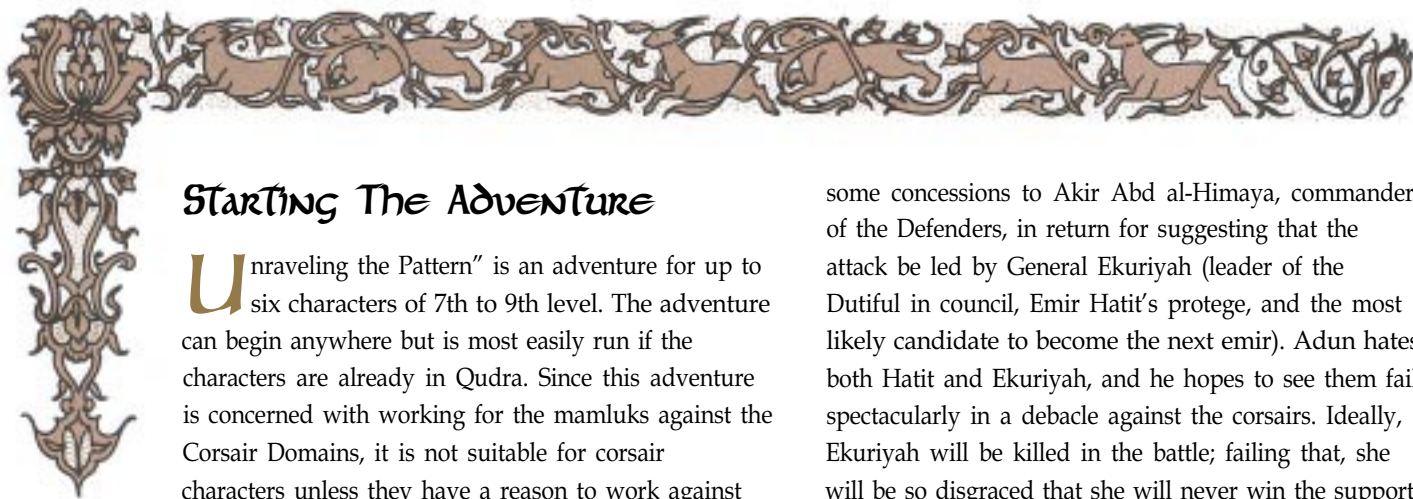
An idea suddenly came to him, and forgetting that no one else was supposed to know of the spy's capture yet, Adun turned to the spy and demanded, "Tell me how the Qudran fleet can penetrate the defenses of Hawa. Tell me your secrets and I shall allow you to live and go free."

The spy groveled and cried out, "But most worthy mamluk, I am only a small, insignificant lookout for the corsairs. I do not know their secrets. Have mercy!"

Feeling his hopes collapse around him, Adun sat back and glowered at the spy, then motioned for him to be taken away. The ancient qadi quietly cleared his throat and said, "That is unfortunate, general, but I have heard that merchants and adventurers often find their way through to Hawa. The way is secret, but it cannot be impossible. Perhaps we could hire some adventurers to go to Hawa posing as traders. They could map the route for you, if you wish."

Adun smiled and nodded. Secure in his qadi disguise, Ruashad did likewise. "I go now, general, to locate some likely adventurers and bring them to you."





## Starting The Adventure

Unraveling the Pattern" is an adventure for up to six characters of 7th to 9th level. The adventure can begin anywhere but is most easily run if the characters are already in Qudra. Since this adventure is concerned with working for the mamluks against the Corsair Domains, it is not suitable for corsair characters unless they have a reason to work against the pirates—or unless they take the job in order to spy on Qudra under the guise of working for the mamluks. Mamluk characters would have good reason to become involved and can easily be given a *turban of disguise* or other such magical item to hide their tattoos. The adventure begins whenever Ruashad contacts the party and asks that they attend a meeting at the grand council hall with General Adun Abd al-Amin, commander of the Faithful.

## The Plot

This adventure is fairly complex. Although the characters are hired by Adun Abd al-Amin to chart the path through Chaos Bay and into the city of Hawa, that is not their primary objective in the scenario. Adun plans to sell out his fellow mamluks in order to gain power for himself, and the discovery that he is doing so is the characters' actual goal. The plot is as follows:

Adun has caught a spy in the employ of Jayani al-Jasir, one of the most notorious pirates of the Corsair Domains. He plans to send the characters to map the route to Hawa and have them return with the map and present it to the Mamluk Council. Since the mamluks were bested by the corsairs ten years ago because they didn't know the route through Hawa's defenses, they will now plan another attack against Hawa using the information provided by the PCs.

Adun knows that Admiral Dus Abd al-Dawwar is desperate to reactivate his navy (in disgrace since the failure against Hawa a decade ago). He will also offer

some concessions to Akir Abd al-Himaya, commander of the Defenders, in return for suggesting that the attack be led by General Ekuriyah (leader of the Dutiful in council, Emir Hatit's protege, and the most likely candidate to become the next emir). Adun hates both Hatit and Ekuriyah, and he hopes to see them fail spectacularly in a debacle against the corsairs. Ideally, Ekuriyah will be killed in the battle; failing that, she will be so disgraced that she will never win the support she needs to become the next emir.

Naturally, Adun expects to be able to give Fate a hand in the downfall of his fellow mamluks. Once the characters return with the map, he plans to release Jayani's spy with a message telling her of the mamluks' plans. Knowing that the mamluks plan an attack, Jayani will be able to change the route and rouse the corsair populace to defend the city. If there are any mamluk survivors of the resulting defeat, Adun will simply claim that the characters are to blame for their false information.

## The General

When the characters first meet the general, they should get the impression that something is not quite right with him; this is due to his being under the effects of the evil eye. The general is a man who is impressed by his own importance, and trophies of his personal triumphs (from curved swords used by the tribesmen of the Furrowed Mountains to a sash and jeweled jambiya from a corsair) hang upon the walls or are displayed on shelves in his office. As he talks with the PCs, he moves around the area caressing his trophies and interrupts the discussion to tell snippets of stories which glorify his bravery, cleverness, military knowledge, or skill at arms.

The proposal he makes to the party covers the following information: about ten years ago, the mamluks attempted to subdue the city of Hawa in order to put a stop to the corsairs' raiding. They were turned back by a maze of coral reefs and a labyrinth of





docks and stilt houses that blocked access to the town's harbor. Lacking knowledge of a way through and adequate magical support, they were beaten back and forced to withdraw. In the time since then, Qudra has not attempted to mount another attack. The pirates of Hawa have grown both complacent in their city's protections and more bold in their attacks on merchant ships.

He tells them he has recently captured a spy from Hawa, and he believes it is time to make another attempt to overcome the pirates, but this time he wants information before the strike is planned. Though he would usually ask the Studios, those mamluks who excel at espionage, to perform the task he wants the PCs to do, he cannot because he suspects a traitor in their ranks. Instead, he would like the PCs to pose as semi-legitimate traders and travel to Hawa.

The mamluks will provide them with a ship and trading goods, if needed. Their mission is to map the path through the coral reefs and the stilt houses and find the way through to the harbor. Once in Hawa, they are to sell their goods, mingle with the other people there, and pick up any rumors they can about certain well-known pirate captains and their whereabouts. They are to note any defensive features (walls, guards, weapon emplacements, etc.) that might cause any problems for the navy or for soldiers entering the city. Finally, they will have to make an in-depth report to the Mamluk Council when they return. Until then, they must keep their mission a secret—for their own protection. Adun does tell the PCs that if they get into serious trouble while in Hawa, they can contact Hamid al-Bashshar, ostensibly one of the members of the Corsair Council but in actuality a mamluk agent. Adun should not be telling the PCs this, as it is a secret of the Mamluk Council, but he reasons that if they need help, they may need someone on the inside. Furthermore, Hamid is not a member of Adun's own group (the Faithful), belonging instead to Hatit and Ekuriyah's organization (the Dutiful). There

is even the chance that Hamid might disrupt Adun's plans, so he doesn't care if he exposes the young mamluk as a spy.

If the party agrees to accept the mission, he will offer them 10,000 dinars plus one magical item each (to be recovered from the pirates of Hawa). He does not negotiate. Attempts to do so merely anger him. He will hint that they would be best advised to accept his offer since he cannot allow them to leave the council building until they do. They know too much, he says; if they decline the job, he will have to have them detained until another group successfully completes the mission and secrecy is no longer so important. If they still refuse, he calls for his guards. Enough guards are on hand to subdue the PCs after a rousing battle. If they are subdued and imprisoned, Adun waits for a day, then makes the proposal to them again. If they still won't accept, the DM may wish to run an escape scenario which leads them to overhear some of Adun's plans.

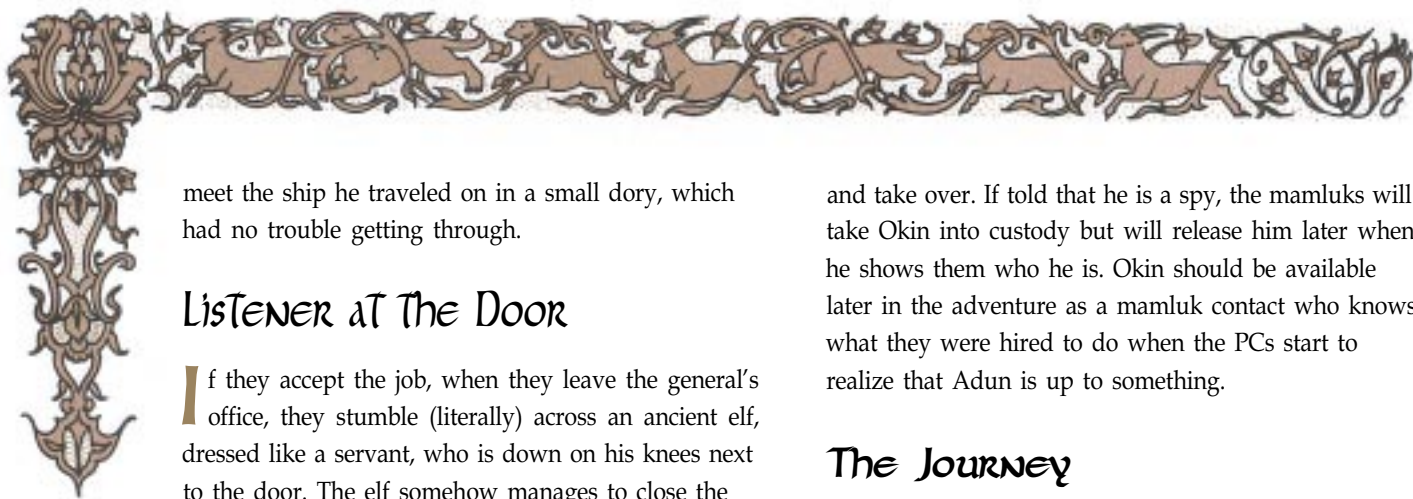
## The Spy

The party may wish to question the spy who was caught. Adun will allow them to do so, having the man brought from prison to talk to the PCs. His name is Tokaq, and he doesn't volunteer his information. He waits to find out what the PCs ask. If they fail to ask the right questions, they don't get much information. He knows the following:

Jayani is the head of the Corsair Council (he can accurately describe her). She sent him to Qudra to spy on their defenses. He has not reported back to her yet.

There is a secret route into the city, but the ones who know it are the sea elves who pilot the ships through the coral maze. All incoming and outgoing ships must stop at the maze and be guided through by a sea elf. The elf always expects a nice reward for his or her efforts. He doesn't know how larger ships get through the docks and stilt houses once they are through the coral maze, since he was rowed out to





meet the ship he traveled on in a small dory, which had no trouble getting through.

## Listener at The Door

If they accept the job, when they leave the general's office, they stumble (literally) across an ancient elf, dressed like a servant, who is down on his knees next to the door. The elf somehow manages to close the door before Adun gets up to investigate. Once everyone is sorted out, the elf gives the party a beatific smile and asks them to help him locate his dinar, which he dropped through a nearby hole in the floor.

The PCs will probably be suspicious of the elf, who gives his name as Ganib, if asked. Questioning him will only bring the answer that he was looking for his dinar (this is the truth, but only because he deliberately dropped a dinar to use as an excuse when he noticed the party entering Adun's office). He will resist being taken into Adun's office, if the party tries to do so.

The elf is General Okin Abd al-Talib'ilim, the commander of the Studios, the espionage branch of the mamluks. His tattoos do not show up as he is wearing an *earring of disguise* (same effect as a *hat of disguise*). He overheard most of the conversation Adun had with the PCs, and he would like to know why Adun is suddenly concerned with the Corsair Domains. Though finding the route into the city of Hawa sounds like a good idea to Okin, it isn't like Adun to do something without trying to grab glory for thinking of it or accomplishing it, and Okin is worried about what this might mean (though he will not tell the PCs any of this). He has been somewhat suspicious of Adun's intentions since Hatit was elected emir thirteen years ago, but lacking evidence of any wrongdoing on Adun's part he has bided his time in true elven fashion.

If the PCs become too insistent about taking him in to Adun or try to rough him up, the DM should feel free to have several mamluks happen upon the group

and take over. If told that he is a spy, the mamluks will take Okin into custody but will release him later when he shows them who he is. Okin should be available later in the adventure as a mamluk contact who knows what they were hired to do when the PCs start to realize that Adun is up to something.

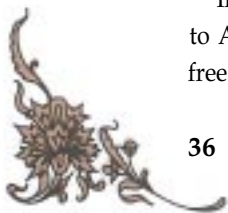
## The Journey

Should they need it, Adun can outfit the party with the *Pahari*, a trim zaruq. The ship will be filled with various trade goods from the interior and the Free Coast in an attempt to make the cargo look like that which might be taken in raids by pirates. If the PCs have their own ship, the cargo can be taken there instead.

Once underway, the characters should have no trouble sailing from Qudra to Hawa. If the DM wishes to spice up the journey to Hawa, he or she can use the random encounters found under the Salt Water Surface column of the Aquatic Encounters table given in MC13, the AL-QADIM MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix. If the table indicates a pirate encounter, the DM may wish to introduce the PCs to some of the people they might meet in Hawa. Identifying themselves as "merchants" headed for Hawa could enable the party to follow the others back and would provide them with a perfect opportunity to begin mapping the route to the city.

## Chaos Bay

However the characters reach it, once they make their way to Chaos Bay the PCs will have to decide how they are going to map the route to the city. As they approach the coral maze, a sea elf will hail the ship, expecting to be taken on board as pilot to see them through the coral. The sea elf on duty this day is Ra'id bin Kawthar (emF-W/a-sem/6-6), son of the sea elves' leader, who has occasionally taken part in the Corsair Council along with his mother. Ra'id is





friendly but not stupid. If the PCs don't seem to realize they are supposed to stop, he will tell them so, warning them that they cannot get through without a pilot who knows the route.

Unless they talked to the spy and learned that they need a sea elf pilot, the characters' best bet is probably to just admit they've never been to Hawa before but to imply that they'd like to begin trading with the city on a regular basis. Any other story will make Ra'id suspicious. In any case, since he doesn't know them, Ra'id will insist that the characters and whatever crew they have with them go below while he summons a crew of sea elves to sail them into the harbor.

Since they need to map the route through, it's up to the PCs to come up with some kind of ruse or other ploy to enable them to map the way. The DM should be fairly generous and give the PCs' plan a good chance of working if they don't refuse outright to go below. Once the sea elves start sailing through the coral maze, they will be far too busy to notice much else—including clever or well-hidden PCs. Any PC with a Navigation nonweapon proficiency may produce an accurate map if successful in a proficiency check. If no PC has Navigation, the map is inaccurate in several places but still usable as a general guide.

If the party fails to get the map at this time due to bad luck or misreading the situation, they should have a chance later to persuade a tipsy sea elf they meet in a tavern to draw the route for them. Alternatively, they might be able to make the map on the way back out, since the elves will be far less watchful of those leaving than of those arriving.

One sight that the sea elves will allow the party to see is their underwater coral castle, which lies about halfway through the maze. They will stop the ship long enough to allow the characters and crew members to come up on deck to marvel at their beautiful home.

If the characters try attacking the sea elves for some reason (possibly in the mistaken idea of taking one for ransom in return for a map of the route through the

maze), Ra'id will lead his kinsmen in defending themselves while one of their number jumps overboard and summons help. A total of 78 sea elves live in the coral maze and, if necessary, they will sink the ship to gain the advantage. Ra'id's mother, Kawthar bint Husn umm Ra'id, a 12th-level sea mage, will also join the attack. If the PCs are foolish enough to make trouble, they should cease when they realize they are outnumbered and in a precarious position. Though the elves will accept their surrender, the party will then be escorted to the Corsair Council and questioned at length.

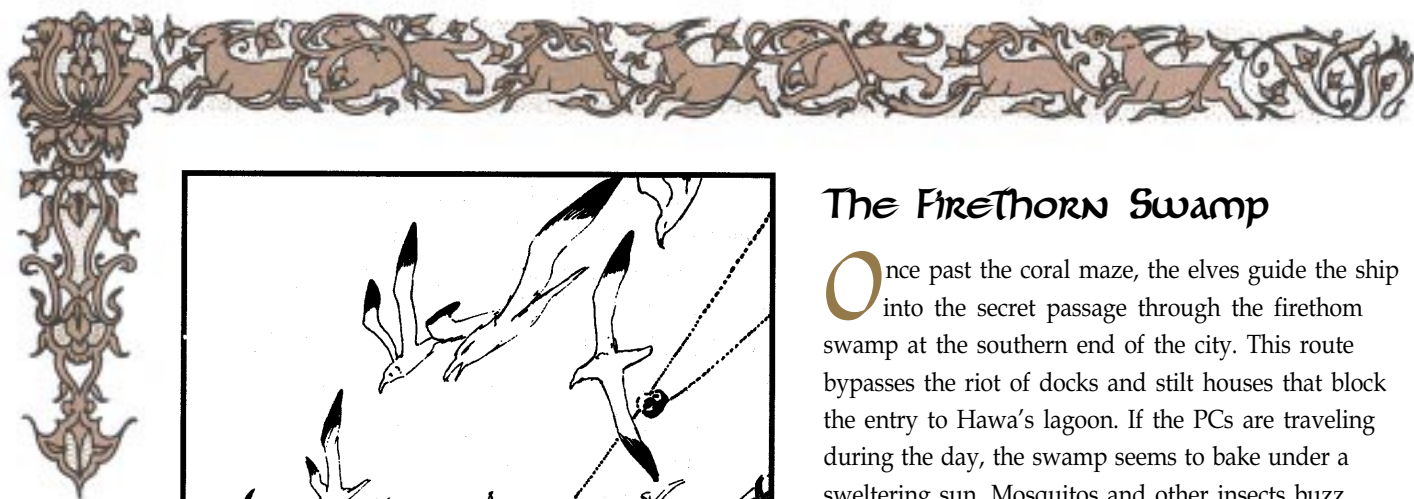
Ra'id bin Kawthar (emF-W/a-sem/6-6): AC 6 (9 on land); MV 9, Sw 15; hp 38; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 15; AL CG; THAC0 15 (12 with *spear*). Spells memorized: *cool strength* (already cast on himself), *magic missile*, *sea sight*, *shield*; *depth warning* (cast when he came aboard), *improved phantasmal force*, *mirror image*; *hold person*, *suggestion*; *shatterhull*. Ra'id fights with a *spear* +2 or a nonmagical short sword.

Kawthar bint Husn umm Ra'id (efW/sem/12): AC 1; MV 9, Sw 15; hp 41; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 17; AL CG; THAC0 17. Spells memorized: *charm person*, *cool strength* (will cast on herself before arrival), *magic missile*, *ventriloquism*; *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *web*; *converse with sea creatures*, *dispel magic*, *slow*, *spectral force*; *improved invisibility*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *shatterhull*, *strengthen water creature*; *chaos*, *cone of cold*, *hold monster*, *water blast*; *disintegrate*. Kawthar wears *bracers of defense* AC 2 and carries a *jambiya* +2.

Aquatic Elves (76): Int 14-18; AL CG; AC 6 (9); MV 9, Sw 15; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA +1 with spear and trident; SD 90% resistance to *sleep*, *charm*; SZ M (6'+); ML 13; XP 420 each. The aquatic elves may also be armed with nets.







## The Firethorn Swamp

Once past the coral maze, the elves guide the ship into the secret passage through the firethorn swamp at the southern end of the city. This route bypasses the riot of docks and stilt houses that block the entry to Hawa's lagoon. If the PCs are traveling during the day, the swamp seems to bake under a sweltering sun. Mosquitos and other insects buzz loudly, and the occasional plop of a leaping fish is the only other sound. If they are moving through at night, the plants glow like embers, eerily lighting the way.

Though the elves are cautious about traversing the swamp, it is impossible to get through it without encountering the dangers presented by the firethorns. First, the scent of the plants permeates the area. Though the elves have been through many times and become somewhat inured to it, the characters will have to make saving throws vs. the poison scent or be affected as if by a confusion spell for 2 to 8 rounds. They will need to make this check four times during the journey through the swamp. If they leave the ship or cause delays along the way, another saving throw will be required for each additional half-hour they are in the swamp.

Furthermore, the firethorns grow close along the edges of the route through and hang down over the ship in places where they have taken root on overhanging branches. The elves know to avoid their touch, but the characters don't. If the PCs are hidden somewhere on deck mapping the route, they probably won't even notice the plants until touched by one. See the entry on the firethorn in the 8-page booklet for details on the effects of the plants' toxic thorns.

If touched by a firethorn, a character must make a Constitution check at a -3 penalty to avoid making some noise at being pricked or burned. Depending on where the PC is hiding, he or she might be discovered as a result. Depending on which route through the swamp the elves choose, the trip takes from two to three hours





Firethorns (sea roses) (20): Int Non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 0; HD 6; hp 30(average); THAC0 15; #AT 1d10; Dmg 1d2 + special; SA poison, fire; SD confusion, immune to fire; SZ M (4' radius); ML 8-10; XP 1400 each.

## The Harbormaster

Once out of the swamp, the elves sail toward the center of the harbor where Najit'aqalat, the marid harbormaster, waits to tow the ship into dock. Once Najit'aqalat assumes control of the ship, he calls to those below to come up on deck. At this time, the PCs are expected to offer the sea elves a generous payment for their help. The elves slip over the side and swim home while the marid pulls the ship to shore.

To those who did not witness the travel through the firethorn swamp, it seems as though the ship somehow passed between the stilt houses and piers. It was this belief that led those mamluks whose ships managed to make it through the coral maze to attempt to find a passage through the docks during the attack ten years ago—a mistake that allowed the corsairs to defeat them while they were still on the outskirts of the city.

Najit'aqalat tells the PCs that their goods will be inspected and a tax levied upon them when they reach their assigned space in the port. They also owe him 30 dinars for the privilege of docking in Hawa. If they don't have enough coin, he accepts goods worth that amount in lieu of money, as does the tax assessor. In return, no one will question what goods they are bringing in to sell.

The following ships will currently be in port:

- The *Wave*, a sleek zaruq always kept ready in case Jayani needs a quick escape from Hawa;
- The *Sea Spray*, an outlander vessel owned by Turn bin Trevor, Jayani's current favorite;
- The *Calipha*, Akura's flagship, one of the fastest and most impressive-looking ships in the harbor;
- *Freedom's Prize*, Hamid al-Bashshar's ship; and

- The *Dragon*, Shing Jaw-long's stolen spelljamming Dragonship. Other ships may be in port as well.

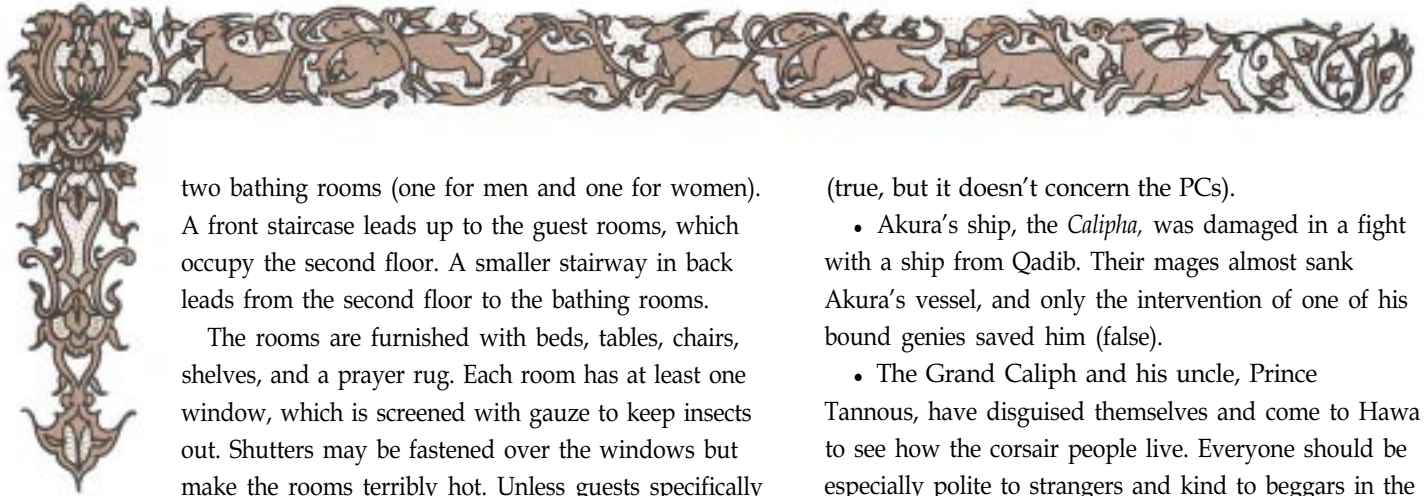
Once they dock, the PCs meet with the tax assessor, who will take 2% of the value of their cargo (the cargo is worth about 8,000 dinars; hence the fee will be 160 dinars). If they refuse to pay, he will simply make note of this and leave. Eventually, the Corsair Council will send enough people to confiscate all their goods (including personal weapons and magical items) until they pay the assessment plus a 10% annoyance fee. This will, of course, attract a good deal of attention; worse yet, the search may even turn up any maps they've made.

The tax assessor can also rent them a spot in the market where they can trade or sell their goods and can recommend a few inns where they might want to stay. Any of the inns he recommends are pretty much the same. All are owned by Jayani, and all play host to one or two of her spies who are more than anxious to meet strangers and find out what they are doing in Hawa. The Inn of the Whispering Palms is the most lavish and has the best food, but the Inn of the Golden Dome, the Inn of the Billowing Sails, and the Inn of the Purple Turban are all clean and well appointed, with good food. Whichever inn the PCs choose, if it is night when they arrive, the tax assessor will suggest they hire a few burly sailors as guards to escort them to their inn, as travel through Hawa's market district at night is dangerous—especially for those unfamiliar with the city. All the suggested inns are near the market.

## At The Inn

Rooms in Hawa are fairly inexpensive—two dirham a night for a single room, three for a double. The inns are much like those found anywhere throughout Zakhara. A wall encloses a small garden which leads to the front door. There is a central hall where the innkeeper greets the guests. To the right of this hall is the dining area, while to the left are the





two bathing rooms (one for men and one for women). A front staircase leads up to the guest rooms, which occupy the second floor. A smaller stairway in back leads from the second floor to the bathing rooms.

The rooms are furnished with beds, tables, chairs, shelves, and a prayer rug. Each room has at least one window, which is screened with gauze to keep insects out. Shutters may be fastened over the windows but make the rooms terribly hot. Unless guests specifically ask to have keys to their rooms, the innkeeper keeps all keys. Doors lock from the inside. Behind the dining area is the kitchen and storage area; the back door of the inn leads out to a stable yard. Stables are rarely full in Hawa, as few citizens have horses or camels and travelers usually arrive by ship.

More expensive inns have elaborate tilework and fancy rugs. They can often provide dancers or entertainers and serve private dinners for their customers in a separate back dining room. Their meals include delicacies, and some offer laundry services or have private baths attached to the rooms. Their prices usually start with dinars rather than dirham.

In general, those staying at inns in Hawa have nothing to fear from the innkeeper, his or her family, or the servants. These folk take the bond of salt very seriously. Naturally, this means they expect their guests to comport themselves suitably in return. Picking fights, destroying property, or insulting other guests are all considered to be breaches of the host-guest relationship. Those who engage in such activities, as well as those who refuse to eat any salt in their meals in order to avoid forming a bond of salt with the innkeeper, will be asked to leave.

## Rumors

Once they are settled in an inn, the PCs can hear the following rumors if they eat in the dining room or visit any nearby taverns:

- Jayani has called a special meeting of the Corsair Council to discuss some news she's had from Qudra

(true, but it doesn't concern the PCs).

- Akura's ship, the *Calipha*, was damaged in a fight with a ship from Qadib. Their mages almost sank Akura's vessel, and only the intervention of one of his bound genies saved him (false).

- The Grand Caliph and his uncle, Prince Tannous, have disguised themselves and come to Hawa to see how the corsair people live. Everyone should be especially polite to strangers and kind to beggars in the next few weeks, just in case (false, unless the DM wants it to be true).

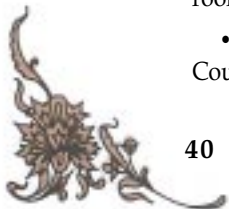
- Suhailah said that the old unfinished sea wall is collapsing and should be tom down, but the Corsair Council refused because a prophet once predicted Hawa would never fall to attack so long as the sea wall stood (true and false—Suhailah did say that, the council doesn't want to waste time and money on something that will eventually collapse by itself, and there never was such a prediction).

- Ara bint Cala, one of the sea-elf pilots, has been arrested and is being held in the council building. She wants more money and prestige for the sea elves and threatened to reveal the way through Hawa's defenses to outsiders unless the corsairs opened more spots on the council to sea elves (true).

- The council wants the city guard to practice repelling invaders along the wall which circles the rear of the city (true, but it is unlikely they could get the 2,000 city guards to all agree on a time to do so unless a real attack were in progress).

## A Friendly Stranger

The PCs will be noted by one of Jayani's spies as soon as they enter the inn. He or she may watch and listen or might approach their table and offer to buy the party drinks in exchange for news from afar. The DM should customize the spy to fit his or her campaign, keeping in mind that Jayani's people are smart, observant, and clever about avoiding outright lies. They are mostly some variation of the neutral





alignment, so the party should not be able to pinpoint the spy as a spy just because of alignment.

The spy can draw some conclusions about the party just from what questions they ask. Except when it would not be in Jayani's best interest for the spy to answer truthfully, most answers given by the spy should be at least partially true. PCs should have a hard time trying to get the spy to accompany them anywhere out of the public eye. Spies are, by their nature, both intelligent and suspicious of other people's motives.

If the PCs discuss any of the real reasons why they are in Hawa or allude to looking for certain things or finding a way through the coral and the swamp, they may be overheard. If they are foolish enough to talk in the dining area of the inn or the common room of a tavern, Jayani's spies will certainly overhear them. Talking in their rooms at the inn is not safe either, as spies will try to listen outside the door. Unless they take precautions, one of Jayani's spies will hear enough to catch her interest. Thereafter, wherever they go, they will be discreetly followed and note taken of what they do and say.

## The Faction Fight

On their first evening in Hawa, either at their inn or in a tavern, the characters will become embroiled in a faction fight. At first, the PCs may only notice that there are several rough-looking people gathering together in two different places in the room. A successful Intelligence check or roll on Etiquette, Heraldry, or a similar proficiency will allow the characters to realize that one group is wearing bright red sashes, while the other group sports green sashes.

About the time they realize this, a man with a red sash and a woman with a green sash each saunter out toward the center of the room, where they meet, insult each other and the other's employer (the names Akura and Jayani are mentioned quite loudly), and begin a knife-throwing contest. After a couple of throws, the

man points at the floor and says the woman stepped over the line and is cheating. As she glances down, he quietly draws a dagger, only to be surprised by her punch to his stomach. A major brawl ensues as both sides go for each other—and anyone else in the place. Fists and daggers seem to be the accepted weapons; drawing swords or using magic will cause both sides to turn on those who broke the unwritten rule.

The PCs may elect to join one side or the other. The side they join will consider them friends in any future encounters, while the side they fought against will consider them enemies and fair game for harassment or attempts at thievery.

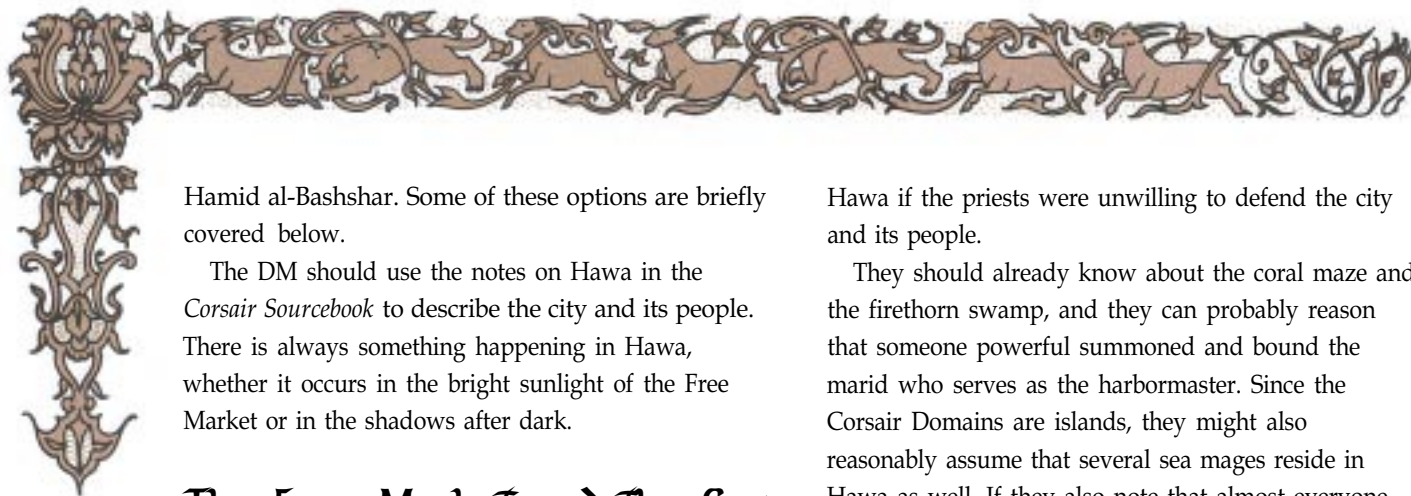
Anyone can tell the PCs that the pirates in red sashes are members of Akura's crew, while the ones in green work for Jayani. The two factions fight all the time because Akura and Jayani hate each other. Even if the brawl takes place at the PCs' inn, the innkeeper will acknowledge that the characters were trying to defend themselves rather than starting a fight. So long as someone pays for the damages, no one will be charged with anything—even if a few people were killed. The city guard who eventually arrive don't care. They are on the verge of taking sides themselves, and lots of people get killed in Hawa every day.

Corsairs (32): Int 10; AL N to CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (fist) or 1d4 (dagger); SZ M (5-6' tall); ML 13; XP 270 each.

## Decisions

From here on, it is up to the PCs where they want to go and what they want to do. They could sell their goods in the market and learn some things about Hawa just from interacting with the merchants and other people there. They could snoop around and note defensive fortifications and troop strengths. They might want to try to rescue Ara bint Cala, reasoning that she knows the route better than any map they could make, or they might want to contact





Hamid al-Bashshar. Some of these options are briefly covered below.

The DM should use the notes on Hawa in the *Corsair Sourcebook* to describe the city and its people. There is always something happening in Hawa, whether it occurs in the bright sunlight of the Free Market or in the shadows after dark.

## The Free Market and The Suq

**S**pread roughly over the center of the city and trailing off into a nearby neighborhood, the market is the lifeblood of Hawa, and almost anyone and anything can be found there at one time or another. The market holds merchants, pirates, customers, jugglers, acrobats, dancing girls, wine sellers, monkey-trainers, pickpockets, artisans, and children (note that these categories are not mutually exclusive!). All of them clamor for attention and bargain with one another. Fights erupt, merchandise gets stolen, children beg for coppers or offer to carry things or guide strangers, dogs chase monkeys, wares fall to the ground or get broken, barbers tell stories, rawuns sing, and hundreds of sights, sounds, and smells vie for each person's attention. If the PCs want to sell their goods, they can get no more than the average price for them because Hawa always has exotic goods in the market.

If Jayani's spy has heard anything of interest from the PCs, a different spy will be set to watch them and to bargain with them for some of their goods.

## Scouting The Territory

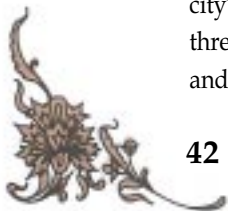
**I**f the PCs try to discover Hawa's defensive works and strengths, it should not be hard for them to note the wall around the rear of the city or to make a guess as to how many able-bodied folk are able to come to the city's defense in case of attack. They may notice the three mosques in the city (to Kor, Najm, and Hakiyah) and draw the conclusion that they would not be in

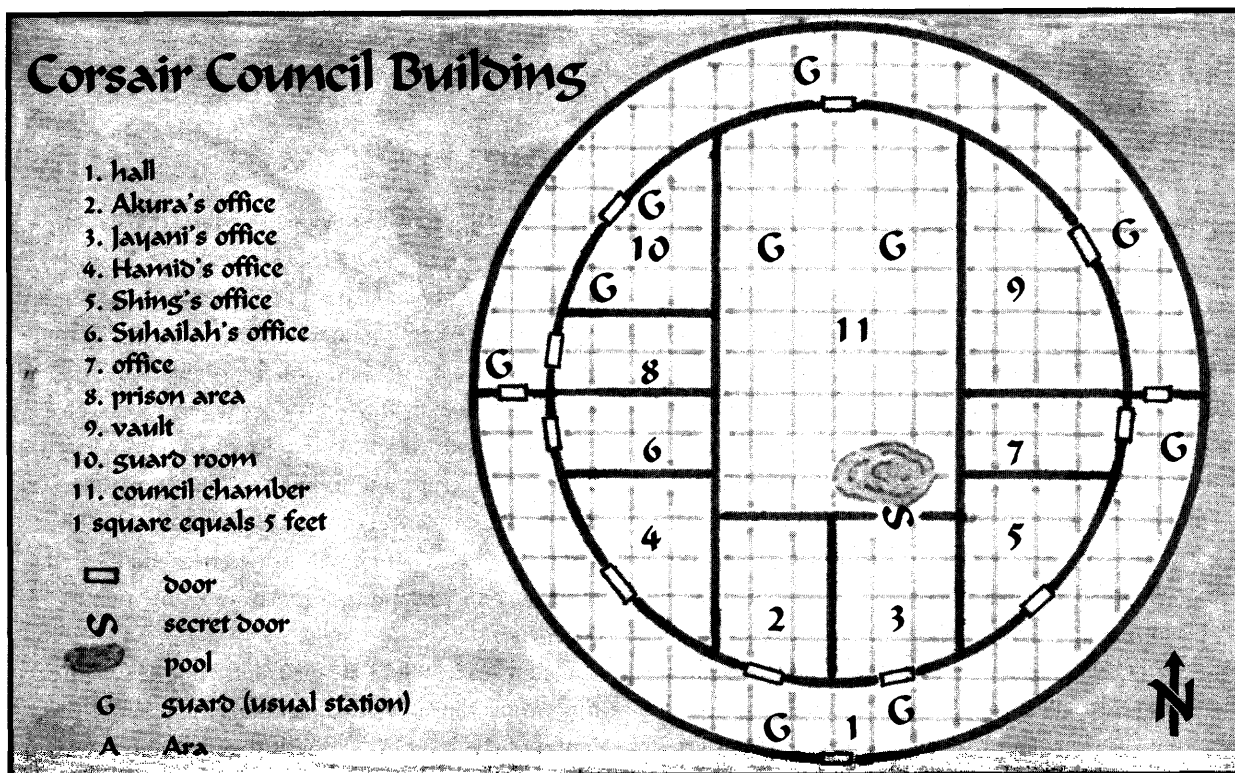
Hawa if the priests were unwilling to defend the city and its people.

They should already know about the coral maze and the firethorn swamp, and they can probably reason that someone powerful summoned and bound the marid who serves as the harbormaster. Since the Corsair Domains are islands, they might also reasonably assume that several sea mages reside in Hawa as well. If they also note that almost everyone, even children, carries weapons and seems capable of using them, they will have learned enough to satisfy the Mamluk Council. Of course, if they stroll around taking notes, Jayani's spies will notice what they are doing.

Real detective work (such as going outside the city wall) will allow them to discover that there are fortified holdings outside the city proper, and any thorough search through the farmlands will lead to the discovery of the quicksand pits disguised as normal farmland. Coming up against more firethorn swamps beyond the farmland should discourage any further exploration in that direction, but should they choose to brave the dangers they will find that the swamp goes on for miles, eventually leading to light jungle. There are elevations to the north and south which hold several caves, and continuing westward across the island eventually leads them to the fishing village of Safe Cove, where it is possible they could have a run-in with Faridah bint Halah, a lamia noble disguised as a corsair captain. It should be fairly clear to the PCs that an army would not be able to make it through the rough terrain to attack from the rear.

If Jayani's spies can tell her enough that she realizes the PCs are spying on Hawa's defenses, she will arrange to have them seized and brought to her estate for questioning. In this case, the DM may either play this through and allow the characters to try to escape or may have someone whom the characters have befriended learn of the plan and warn them just in time to escape on their ship before Jayani has them picked up.





## Rescuing Ara

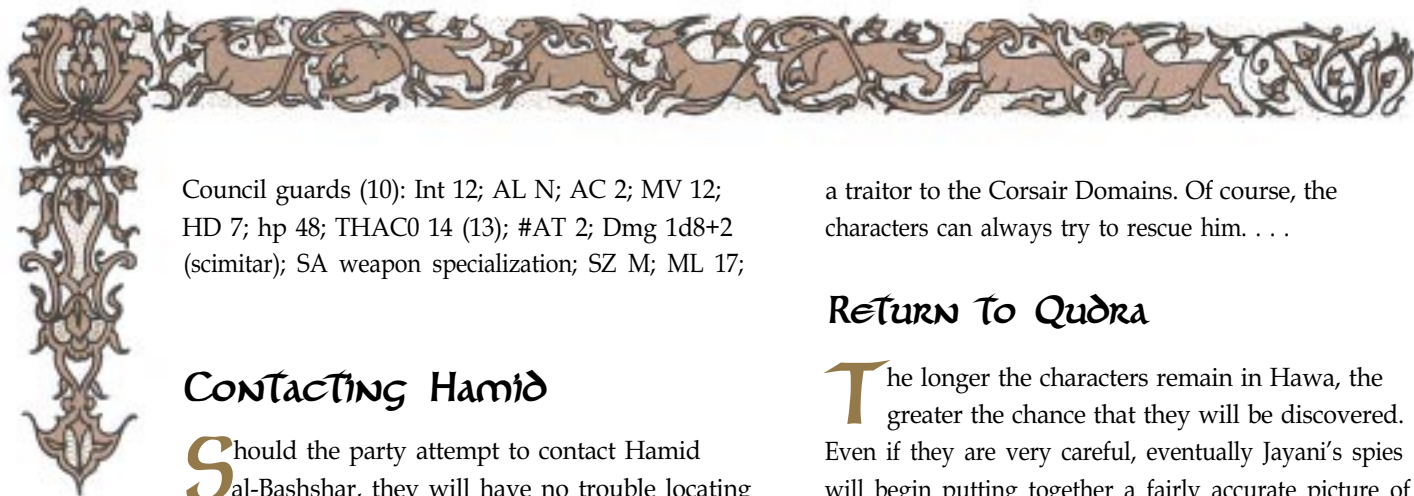
**R**escuing the sea-elf prisoner isn't as difficult as the PCs might think, since the council building is only open when the council is in session. There are ten guards spread around and throughout the building when it is closed. Aside from the main council chamber and a personal workspace for each of the council members, there is a small guard room, a vault that holds the day's proceeds from tax assessments, and a small prison area. Ara is not in the prison area, since being away from water for extended periods would kill her. She is in a great magical basin which constantly replenishes itself with seawater. It has been installed in the main council chamber, where it usually serves to make Kawthar and Ra'id comfortable during council sessions. Three guards stand watch over her.

All ten guards are fanatically loyal to the Corsair Council. They are also highly trained specialists in

the scimitar. If any of them engage in combat with the PCs but manage to escape, they will sound the alarm. This will bring not only the remaining council guards but a dozen standard city guards (4th-level corsairs with average hit points, AC 7, average stats, armed with cutlasses), who will arrive five rounds after the alarm is sounded.

Ara will be willing to accompany the PCs to Qudra, but she will explain that as soon as they realize she's gone the sea elves will simply change the coral around to create a different route through. That will make her knowledge of the route (and the PCs' map) useless. She is confident, however, that she could find the way through even if the maze has been changed. Ara will make it clear that she does not intend to work for free: she expects to be well paid for anything she tells the mamluks. She has dreams of founding her own sea-elf colony and could be persuaded to cooperate by promising her an island near Qudra for her new colony.





Council guards (10): Int 12; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 7; hp 48; THAC0 14 (13); #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+2 (scimitar); SA weapon specialization; SZ M; ML 17;

## Contacting Hamid

Should the party attempt to contact Hamid al-Bashshar, they will have no trouble locating him. He is a well-known figure in Hawa and just about anyone can tell the characters where he lives. He has a small house near the docks and shipyards. If the characters identify themselves as mamluk agents, Hamid will try to help them without betraying the corsair people and without compromising his own cover.

If they don't actually need his help but are just contacting him because it is easier than doing any of the work themselves, he will be extremely angry that they have possibly thrown away years of undercover work for a trivial reason and may refuse to assist them. In any case, he will want to know who told the characters about him. He answers directly to the emir of Qudra, and his job as a spy is supposed to be a closely guarded secret known only to the members of the Mamluk Council. If the PCs explain that General Adun Abd al-Amin hired them and told them about Hamid, he will remark that it doesn't seem right that Adun took that authority on himself but that he isn't surprised because the general is an idiot who hates the emir and doesn't mind interfering in other people's plans.

He can tell them the layout of the council building, and he might help them escape Hawa if their lives are in imminent danger, but he will not do their job for them. If Jayani's spies have discovered what the PCs are up to or suspect them of spying against Hawa, Hamid's career as a spy will be over. Depending on how discreet the party is and how much warning he receives, Hamid will either escape and attempt to return to Qudra or be taken and held for execution as

a traitor to the Corsair Domains. Of course, the characters can always try to rescue him. . . .

## Return To Qudra

The longer the characters remain in Hawa, the greater the chance that they will be discovered. Even if they are very careful, eventually Jayani's spies will begin putting together a fairly accurate picture of what they are up to. The DM can simulate the growing danger by having the party begin to notice more and more people who seem overly interested in them and who seem to follow them wherever they go. If they don't take the hint and leave, they should begin to notice that heavily armed men are tracking their movements and apparently awaiting some kind of orders.

If they leave before Jayani orders their arrest, they can escape Hawa. Najit'aqalat tows them out to the center of the lagoon, then tells them to go below while he summons a sea-elf crew to take them back through the swamp and the coral maze. The effects of crossing the swamp are the same as for their first trip through. Once clear of the coral, the sea elves return control of the ship and dive overboard. If the characters have been particularly foolish or failed to be discreet, the DM may want to send a pirate vessel after them in an attempt to sink them. If they have to make a run for it just ahead of Jayani's people, they will have to steer themselves through the swamp and coral and hope their maps are accurate.

## The Mamluk Council

When the party returns, they can meet with Adun, who will suggest that they imply that they were working for Admiral Dus Abd al-Dawwar, the goblin commander of Qudra's fleet. He will explain that he and the emir have personality conflicts and that were he to suggest an attack on Hawa it might be rejected out of hand. If the party is agreeable, Adun





will introduce them to the admiral, who will accompany the party to a meeting of the Mamluk Council. If they refuse, Adun will ask that they not identify him as their sponsor unless absolutely necessary. He will pay them the agreed-upon fee and promise them first choice of magical items once the war with Hawa is satisfactorily concluded.

The characters can make their report to the full council and should present any maps or other evidence they have. If Ara is with them, she can add a few details about both the coral maze and the firethorn swamp. She knows, for example, that there is more than one way through the swamp. Once the PCs' report has been given, the mamluks debate the pros and cons of an attack against Hawa. The Admiral will be strongly in favor, as will the leaders of the Dauntless, the Valiant, and Adun.

The emir is cautiously optimistic but prefers a defensive strategy. Ekuriyah will follow the emir's lead. Okin, the leader of the Studious, is absent, supposedly on a secret mission, and his second-in-command is willing to be persuaded but wants to discuss things a little longer and cover all the possible plans. The commander of the Defenders, Akir Abd al-Himaya, is apparently noncommittal but eventually suggests that the attack proceed. He also suggests that it be led by general Ekuriyah, a proven commander and the most likely candidate to become the next emir. He argues that she needs a victory of this sort to gain the prestige and support she will need to be elected emir.

After a vote, the plan to send the fleet to attack Hawa is approved. The admiral is charged with readying the fleet to carry Qudra's soldiers within twelve hours. All mamluks in the city are to be recalled from whatever duties they are currently assigned to and make ready to leave as soon as the fleet is supplied and ready to sail. They hope to strike before Hawa has time to prepare any new defenses in response to what the characters have done.

The party is asked to remain and help some of the mamluks of the Studious make copies of the maps and

go over the other defenses they noticed. The council will offer the party an extra 500 dinars per person to help with the extra mapping. The PCs will be provided with places to sleep and with whatever they need. It may occur to them that the mamluks don't want the party to leave the council building until the fleet has already sailed so there will be no news leaks.

## The Betrayal

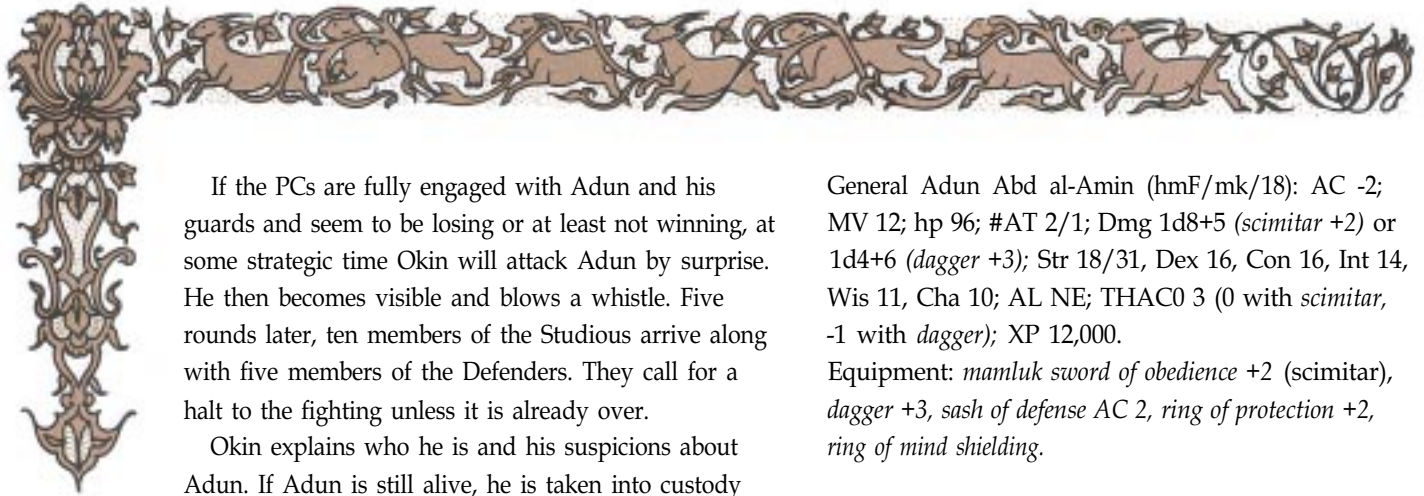
Once the fleet has sailed, the party is free to leave the council building. Their path takes them past General Adun Abd al-Amin's office. Whether they intend to stop by to say goodbye or just pass by, they will notice that they can hear the general speaking. Inside are the general and the spy from Hawa. The general tells the spy that his agents have persuaded the mamluks to attack Hawa and that they have maps of the coral maze and the firethorn swamp. He tells the spy his letter to Jayani contains an accurate count of the ships sent (23) and the number of mamluks on board each, their armaments, and their general battle plan. He then gives the spy a ring which has a *teleport* spell in it.

The party will probably wish to intervene. If they try, they get the door open just in time to see the spy vanish. Adun calls for his personal guards and draws his weapon, realizing he has been overheard. The guards arrive one round after they have been summoned, emerging from the room next door. They concentrate their attacks on any obvious spellcasters first, attempting to keep them from using spells. The guards are loyal mamluks of the Faithful who obey Adun without question.

Adun is still under the effects of the evil eye, and as such his attacks and saving throws suffer a -2 penalty (Fate will not aid him, and he is unlucky in his maneuverings). If the characters are having too difficult a time with him, the DM should feel free to have him slip or miss an easy attack or otherwise be the recipient of a piece of bad luck.







If the PCs are fully engaged with Adun and his guards and seem to be losing or at least not winning, at some strategic time Okin will attack Adun by surprise. He then becomes visible and blows a whistle. Five rounds later, ten members of the Studious arrive along with five members of the Defenders. They call for a halt to the fighting unless it is already over.

Okin explains who he is and his suspicions about Adun. If Adun is still alive, he is taken into custody pending an investigation of his actions. Okin tells the PCs that he was invisible and hidden behind a wall hanging in Adun's office. He asks that they join him in testifying against Adun.

Meanwhile, the fleet has sailed and is heading into a trap. Okin requests that the PCs take the ship they used before and try to catch up to the fleet. If necessary, a wind mage or sea mage can be provided to help them overtake the mamluk armada, or scrolls can be provided if the party contains a mage capable of casting such spells of enhancement. As compensation, he offers them Adun's magical items, provided the general is found guilty. Should the party agree, they can easily catch the fleet, which is somewhat slowed by the number of passengers being transported. Okin will send along an official recall order from the emir, who has been kept informed of events by Okin. Ekuriyah will obey the emir's order and turn the fleet back to Qudra.



General Adun Abd al-Amin (hmF/mk/18): AC -2; MV 12; hp 96; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+5 (*scimitar* +2) or 1d4+6 (*dagger* +3); Str 18/31, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 10; AL NE; THAC0 3 (0 with *scimitar*, -1 with *dagger*); XP 12,000.

Equipment: *mamluk sword of obedience* +2 (*scimitar*), *dagger* +3, *sash of defense* AC 2, *ring of protection* +2, *ring of mind shielding*.

Mamluk guards (hmF/mk/8) (4): Int 10; AL N or G; AC 6; MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8 (*sword*) or 1d6 (*spear*); SZ M; ML 17; XP 975 each.

## Aftermath

The DM should decide if Adun stands trial for his treason. If so, the characters are prime witnesses against him. Okin also testifies, and Adun himself is questioned under truth spells. He is found guilty and relieved of command. His ultimate fate is in the hands of the Grand Caliph, whose slave he is, and plans are made to transport him to Huzuz for judgment. The characters might be hired to escort him to Huzuz in such a case.

Alternatively, Adun might have a core of dedicated and loyal followers who manage to rescue him from imprisonment before his trial. The PCs might be hired to track him down, or Adun might disappear, only to emerge later as a continuing villain and a constant obstacle to anything the PCs try to accomplish.

Whatever happens, the party members will be awarded Adun's magical items in lieu of the promised items from the Corsair Domains. If the DM would like to award any special items to the party, this is a good time to do so as part of their reward. The mamluks will consider the characters to be good and trustworthy allies. The party will find that a lot of work comes their way due to the glowing recommendations given them by the mamluks, and Ruashad is pleased that he has won another wager.





## The Genies' Fifth Wager: Terrapin Isle

**H**elp me!" the trapped corsair pleaded desperately. Locked in the rapidly flooding room, he scabbled frantically at the steel door as the waters rose. On the other side of the magically locked door, Jayani, his captain and the woman he wished to someday marry, threw her weight against it as hard as she could through the waters which had risen past her waist already. It was no use. The heavily reinforced steel door refused to move or break.

"I'm sorry, Nuri" she called, "I cannot force it open. Pray to the gods and put yourself in the hands of Fate. If they are willing, I shall return. I give you my pledge I shall not rest until you are restored to life. Goodbye, my love."

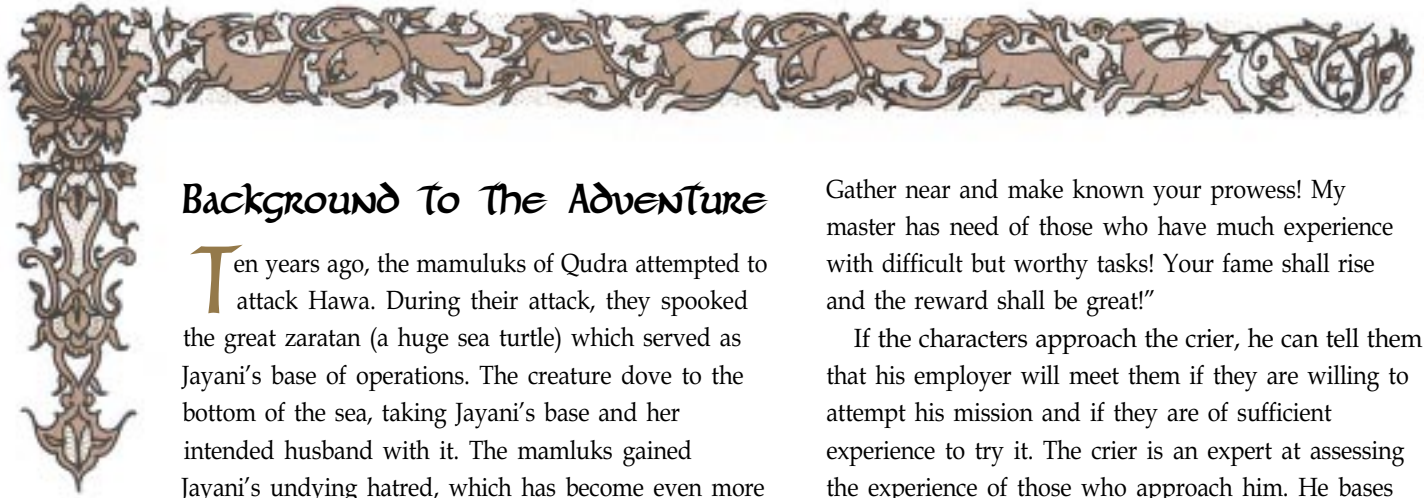
Nuri's despairing cry was lost to the waters which swirled upward to cover Jayani's head. Salt tears mixing with the salt water, she pushed herself up and out through the opening. Lungs straining, she kicked her way to the surface.

The great zaratan which had served as her base of operations for eleven years was almost invisible now, lost in the waters as it dove further and further down into the sea. Frightened into the descent by the noise and ferocity of the mamluks' attack, the great turtle carried with it most of Jayani's worldly goods, the greater part of her legendary treasure hoard, and the young corsair whom she treasured above all else.

Strong hands caught hold of her and lifted her into a small boat. Most of her crew had escaped; now some of them had stayed behind to rescue her. Quickly they rowed for a hidden cove where they could escape the notice of the mamluk navy. Nuri might have escaped as well had he abandoned the turtle when it first began its dive. He had stayed behind, looking for her, and been trapped in the treasure room when the door pulled loose from the latch which held it open and slammed closed. Now she horribly regretted asking Azizah to place the *wizard lock* spell on it. Azizah had left with the first group, sealing Nuri's fate.

In her grief, she cursed the mamluks for their attack. "I shall never forgive them," she whispered to her dying corsair, "and I promise you I will be back."





## Background To The Adventure

Ten years ago, the mamuluks of Qudra attempted to attack Hawa. During their attack, they spooked the great zaratan (a huge sea turtle) which served as Jayani's base of operations. The creature dove to the bottom of the sea, taking Jayani's base and her intended husband with it. The mamuluks gained Jayani's undying hatred, which has become even more pronounced over the decade she has searched for the zaratan in vain. Now a fisherman who lives on the Isle of the Camel's Hump has reported a strange floating island which he spotted to the north of the Isle of Firehorns when he traveled there to trade. The rumors of this island have not yet reached Jayani. They have reached Akura, who believes the island is Jayani's old zaratan returning to waters it once inhabited. He has plans to take the fabled base for himself. If he succeeds, he will have established his legend more fully than Jayani's and will move to make himself the pirate king. Accordingly, he has hired the fisherman to guide a group to the site to explore this strange "island." Ruashad, reveling in his disguise as a humble fisherman, has lavished thanks on Akura for his generous payment (five whole dinars!), and agreed.

Now all Akura needs are some expendable explorers. . . .

## Starting The Adventure

The adventure is intended for six to eight characters of 9th to 11th level. It may be started anywhere but is more easily run if the characters are in Hawa or in a coastal city or town nearby. Akura has arranged for criers to move through the marketplace and among the inns, taverns, coffee houses, and baths to find willing adventurers. They have been placed in several cities and towns to cry out this message:

"Those of brave heart and adventurous soul, hearken to my words! My most generous master has bade me to announce his need for your services!

Gather near and make known your prowess! My master has need of those who have much experience with difficult but worthy tasks! Your fame shall rise and the reward shall be great!"

If the characters approach the crier, he can tell them that his employer will meet them if they are willing to attempt his mission and if they are of sufficient experience to try it. The crier is an expert at assessing the experience of those who approach him. He bases his opinions on the perceived station of the characters. If they are poorly dressed or in disguise as someone of lower station, he will thank them for their interest but say he doesn't believe they are the right people for the mission. If the characters convince the messenger that they are somewhere between 9th and 11th level or so, he will arrange a meeting place in a fine coffee house for the next evening. Coincidentally, Akura will be in town already.

## The Meeting

Akura al-Hiyali is described in the *Corsair Sourcebook*. When the characters gather for the meeting, Akura approaches them, introduces himself, and asks to join them and pay for a meal for them all. To Akura, this signifies that there is a bond of salt between them. He expects the characters to interpret this to mean that neither side is out to harm the other. Since he realizes that people of the level he wants to hire probably have several means of detecting whether he lies, he is absolutely straightforward with the PCs. He gives them his real name and explains that he is from Hawa and a member of the Corsair Council. Telling them that he is unable to risk leaving Hawa for an extended period just now, he asks them to follow the directions given them by an old fisherman and find a floating island for him.

He is perfectly honest and tells the PCs that it used to be a pirate base but sank about ten years ago. He does not tell them it is a zaratan unless they ask. He explains that he would like to claim it for himself to





use as a base, for to do so would probably allow him to assume the leadership of Hawa. Akura argues quite convincingly that Hawa would be better off if it had one strong leader who could make alliances with other cities rather than the chaotic system now in force which lets dozens of pirates run unchecked up and down the Free Coast. He truly believes this, so nothing he says can be detected as a lie by the characters.

He asks the party to go to the floating island, see what sort of shape it is in, clear out any riffraff or dangerous things that might have moved in, and then turn over the island to him. He will negotiate the fee for this in an attempt to get off as cheaply as possible but can be persuaded to loan the characters a ship and crew (why not? that way he can have his loyal crew keep an eye on them and be on hand if the hired help become uncooperative), pay them up to 5,000 dinars in advance, and agree to split whatever magical and mundane treasure they recover. He agrees to take only 30%, leaving 70% for them.

He intends to keep his bargain with them so long as they clear out the base and turn it over as promised. He will mention Jayani's legendary treasure room as an enticement to get them to agree. Akura will also state almost casually that he has hired the fisherman already and that it is probably impossible for them to locate the floating island without his directions. If the party agrees to help him, he introduces them to the old fisherman, who gives his name as Sayyid bin Ja'far.

Whether he loans them a ship or they have one of their own, Akura comes to see them off and wish them luck. When he does so, he secretly attaches a magical tracker called a *compass rose* to their ship so he'll be able to locate them and follow at a distance. Though he would like to trust them, gaining the base is just too important to him to let them go unsupervised. He hired them in the first place just so he wouldn't have to risk his loyal crew members in exploring the base, while the rumored magical traps

that might still be active made him reluctant to explore the base himself.

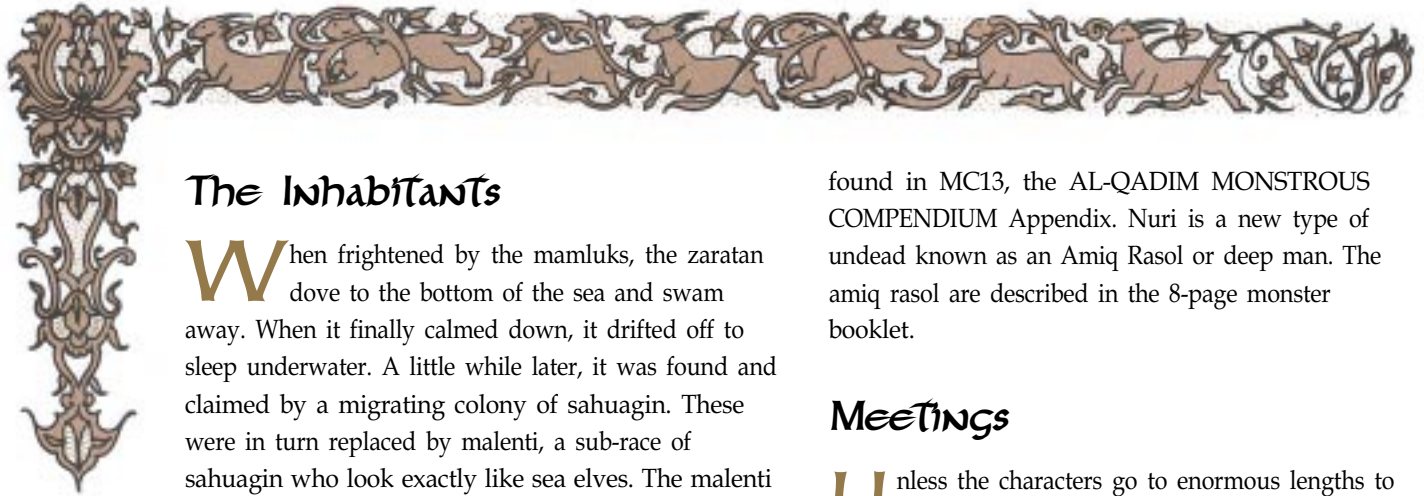
## The Floating Island

After several days of uneventful travel following Sayyid's directions, an island comes in sight. It is roughly circular, rising to a hill at the center. A few domed buildings and what look like old ruins are visible on it. Sayyid swears that this is the island, saying it has never been here before this. As a shark's fin cuts the water near the ship, Sayyid pales and asks, "What am I to do while you explore? It's too dangerous for an old man like me." Although Ruashad is basking in his own clever acting, he has no intention of actually endangering himself just to play a role. Any good suggestion which doesn't involve him in any danger is acceptable to him. He is happy to stay on or near the ship, so long as he is out of reach of the nearby shark.

As they move closer to it, the PCs can see that most of the island's rocky surface and the buildings on it look like they are covered with algae and things which resemble barnacles. Remains of palm trees are now whitened and slimy, while sea grasses which had taken root here are now yellowing and drying out. It must have either been underwater for a considerable period or have sunk, risen, and sunk again many times. If the PCs realize the island is a zaratan, they probably won't find this too surprising. The only mooring place they will be able to find for their ship is along one of the legs, where they can tie up on what looks like a stump protruding from a section of reef (actually a knobby place on the zaratan's flipper).

The zaratan, though it recently awoke and surfaced, has since fed on a huge school of fish and not a few of the creatures that have made its back their home while it was underwater, and has once again drifted off to sleep. Even sinking an anchor into its leg will not immediately awaken it.





## The Inhabitants

When frightened by the mamluks, the zaratan dove to the bottom of the sea and swam away. When it finally calmed down, it drifted off to sleep underwater. A little while later, it was found and claimed by a migrating colony of sahuagin. These were in turn replaced by malenti, a sub-race of sahuagin who look exactly like sea elves. The malenti have been using some of the buildings while planning to migrate to a new base closer to human habitations. They were astonished when the turtle awoke and carried their lair to the top of the waves and even more amazed when a human appeared and proclaimed himself caliph of the island.

The strange human, who claimed he was responsible for raising the island from the bottom of the sea, fought and killed the malenti prince. He said he would destroy the island unless all the malenti obeyed him. Though their best warriors attacked, their weapons had no effect on him, so the malenti have resigned themselves to having Nuri al-Zaratani as their caliph—for now. They do not like being out of the water and can only remain so for about four hours at a time. They want to sink their lair again until they can find a suitable new one to occupy.

At any given time, most of the malenti stay in the water with their shark companions. Only those few whom the new caliph requires to attend him willingly stay above the waves during daylight hours. Their new caliph has demanded that some of the malenti be sacrificed to him, and though he demanded they open a certain door in the central building for him, the malenti have so far been unable to do so. When the party arrives, Nuri sees his chance to have them recover his bones and release him from his undead state. The malenti, for their part, see the characters as their chance to rid themselves of the troublesome human.

Malenti are fully detailed in the *Monstrous Manual* under the entry for aquatic elves. The Zaratan can be

found in MC13, the AL-QADIM MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix. Nuri is a new type of undead known as an Amiq Rasol or deep man. The amiq rasol are described in the 8-page monster booklet.

## Meetings

Unless the characters go to enormous lengths to hide their approach to the zaratan and also find some way to muffle any underwater sound, the malenti will be alerted to their presence immediately. Two of them, Qallit and Tekir, will swim to a nearby spot, emerge, and greet the strangers in Elvish, asking why they have come to their home. These two are practiced spies and were quickly chosen to make the first approach to the strangers when the malenti realized the ship was headed for their lair.

The malenti attempt to befriend the characters, claiming that this is their home and that a terrible, invulnerable human has recently appeared and made himself their caliph. They say they only want to be left in peace and ask the party to rid them of the tyrant.

Should the party tell them they have been sent to clean out the island, Qallit and Tekir aren't sure what to do. They ask the party to wait while they consult with their people. If the party agrees, the two malenti dive in and swim to the huge crowd of malenti waiting to hear their report.

Qallit and Tekir (malenti lieutenants) (2): Int 13; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 24; HD 3+3; hp 23, 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 3-5; Dmg by weapon or 1d2/1d2 (claws), 1d4 (bite), 1d4/1d4 (leg rake); SA leg rake; SD keen hearing, long-range underwater sight; SZ M (6'); ML 12; XP 270 each.

## Nuri

Meanwhile, Nuri will have noticed that people have come to his domain. He will hurry out to





greet them (arriving just after Qallit and Tekir depart), hoping that they have come on purpose to rescue him. His first question will be to ask if they are from Jayani. If they say they are, he will ask how she is, what she is doing, why she didn't come herself, and if her green eyes are still as beautiful as he remembers. Though he desperately hopes they really are from Jayani, he feels he must test them; Jayani has brown eyes. If he hears an answer that convinces him they have come from Jayani, he will ask them to follow him to the treasure room, expecting that they will open it and resurrect him.

If they don't answer correctly, he will realize they are here for some other purpose and will try to discover what that is and somehow bargain with, persuade, or trick them into opening the treasure room door, retrieving his bones, and having the proper ritual performed over them.

The party's response to him may depend on several factors. First, if any member of the party has some sort of *true seeing* capability or magic, they will be able to see Nuri for what he really is—a rotting corpse. Second, they may believe he is an evil tyrant who is oppressing what they think are aquatic elves.

In any case, Nuri will welcome the party and tell them not to be fooled by whatever the evil elves say, that he is the only friend they have here. He will suggest they come inside the main building, where they can all talk.

## Caught Between a rock and a Hard Place

If the party starts to go with Nuri, the malenti will be convinced that the party intends to join their foe. Rather than wait for the newcomers to establish themselves, the malenti will attack, hoping to overbear the air-breathers, force them into the water where the malenti have the advantage, and kill them.

They attack in waves of ten. Each group of ten is overseen by a lieutenant. In overall command is a

baron, and there are three priestesses with the tribe as well. Four waves will attack, and five malenti from each wave concentrate their attacks on a single character and attempt to grab, overbear, or otherwise force their victim into the water, where other waves of malenti and their shark allies wait.

Half the malenti attack using spear and dagger, the rest with trident, net, and dagger. Those waiting in the water have heavy crossbows and daggers, and if their fellow malenti prove to be unable to force the characters into the water they begin firing their crossbows at those characters not surrounded by malenti. If they see any of the PCs using magic, that character will become the target of concerted attacks from any unoccupied malenti.

Should the malenti succeed in forcing characters into the water, one of the groups waiting there will try to swim above them and trap them in nets. Any characters forced into the water will also come under attack by the sharks there. Although they are fairly low-level creatures, the sheer numbers of the malenti should give the characters some problems. In addition, since the malenti look exactly like normal male and female sea elves, PCs may be reluctant to use deadly force against them.

While his fellows fight the party, Qallit will punch holes in the characters' ship and attempt to sink it. If there are crew members aboard, they may try to plug the holes or fight off the attacker. Qallit, however, never surfaces; he just keeps on punching holes through the bottom of the boat with a heavy *spear* +3 (the malenti do not know it is magical, just that it seems to work better than any other tool when used to hole ships). If anyone thinks about it, the old fisherman seems to have disappeared (when things got out of hand, he decided to watch from the roof of a nearby building).

Nuri will help the characters fight the malenti. If he believes they are from Jayani, he wants to help protect them so they can resurrect him; if he doesn't think they are there primarily to help him, he hopes





that by assisting them, he will have earned their help in return.

Malenti (70): Int 13; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 24; HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 3-5; Dmg by weapon or 1d2/1d2 (claws), 1d4 (bite), 1d4/1d4 (leg rake); SA leg rake; SD keen hearing and underwater sight; SZ M (6'); ML 12; XP 175 each.

Malenti lieutenants (7): as above except HD 3+3; hp 24; THAC0 17; XP 270 each.

Malenti baron (1): as above except HD 6+6; hp 50; THAC0 13; XP 975.

Malenti priestesses (3): as above except HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; XP 650 each. Their normal spells are *cause light wounds*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from good*; *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*.

Sharks (6): Int Non-; AL N; AC 6; MV Sw 24; HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SZ L (12'); ML 10; XP 420 each.

Giant Sharks (2): Int Non-; AL N; AC 5; MV Sw 18; HD 11; hp 68; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SA swallows whole; SZ G (30'); ML 11; XP 3,000 each.

Giant sharks can swallow prey whole if their attack roll is 4 or more above the minimum needed to hit. Swallowed creatures suffer 20 points of damage per round. They may attack the shark from within but suffer a cumulative -1 penalty per round and can only escape by killing the shark.

## The Other Side of The Coin

If, on the other hand, the characters don't trust Nuri and refuse to go with him, he will first attempt to use his *charm* ability to persuade some of the characters to help him. Failing that, he will attack the closest PC, attempting to bite the character and drain a level. If

he is successful, he will attempt to drain other characters, attacking a different one randomly each round until wounded for at least half his hit points. Then he will attempt to flee into the main building. Nuri can outdistance the PCs, thanks to his superior speed, and hopes he can use his knowledge of the building to spring traps on the PCs and continue to drain them of levels a few at a time until he can force them into making a bargain with him.

If the malenti see Nuri attack the characters, they will stay out of the fight, hoping the characters can overcome Nuri and destroy him. One or two of them will follow wherever the party goes and report back to the others if the party succeeds in killing Nuri. Once Nuri is dead, the malenti will attack by surprise to rid themselves of the characters.

Nuri al-Zaratani (amiq rasol): Int 14; AL N; AC 4; MV 18, Sw 9; HD 9; hp 70; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claws), 1d6 (bite); SA energy drain, *charm*; SD spell immunities, +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ M (6'); ML 14; XP 7,000.

## The Zaratan's Role

The great zaratan, a placid animal, remains asleep during most disturbances on its back. If damaging area-of-effect spells are tossed around, they will damage the turtle as well. If it takes more than 25 points of damage, the zaratan will awaken, casually chomp into the PCs' ship (since it is annoyingly moored to its flipper), then shake itself all over. The result feels like an earthquake. If any more damage is forthcoming, the zaratan dives for the bottom (an occurrence which delights the malenti but is probably bad news for the characters). It then pulls in its head and legs and proceeds to sleep for the next four years, possibly leaving the PCs adrift without a boat some fifty miles from the nearest land.

If the characters still wish to continue their exploration of the base after it sinks, they will need





some sort of *water breathing* spells or devices. Akura will be enraged that they caused the zaratan to submerge yet again, and they will still have to deal with the malenti, who much prefer their underwater environment. Nuri, for his part, goes dormant until such time as the “island” returns to the surface.

## The Base

**Area 1.** This oblong building used to provide barracks for Jayani’s crewmembers; now the malenti use it for much the same purpose. Materials left over from its days as a pirate base have, for the most part, rotted into uselessness. Strong structural materials have been used to make sleeping areas inside.

**Area 2.** Another oblong building originally used as crew quarters; it too has become a sleeping area. Part of one wall has collapsed, but the malenti have rebuilt it using coral and timbers from old ships.

**Area 3.** Once a lookout tower for the base, this tall, round structure did not fare well from its long immersion. The interior once held bedding, a few weapons, and a small living area for those on guard. The top of the tower was the site of a large mirror used as a signaling device, now broken off and useless. The stairs leading to the top as well as the flat roof itself are all covered with algae and extremely slippery. The stones of the building have developed cracks from the stress placed on them; any strenuous combat, damaging area-of-effect spells which catch part of the building, or abuse will have a good chance (75%) of causing the tower to topple over. The malenti store a few weapons here.

**Area 4.** The wall which encircles the inner core of buildings is tumbling down in places. The malenti have not rebuilt it, since they find it a useless annoyance. When it was underwater, they simply swam over it; now they have to walk around to the

gates—gates that stick about half the time and must be forced open.

**Area 5, Downstairs.** The main building is a circular two-story tower. The bottom floor contains an open area which used to serve as Jayani’s grand hall, with a treasure room on the left and a guard room on the right. A corridor on the right just before the guard room leads to **area 6**. A wide corridor at the far end of the hall leads to **area 7**.

The grand hall has been turned into a communal area by the malenti. Various kelp piles (now withering since the zaratan’s return to the surface) provided seating for most of them, while Jayani’s great chair, carved of fine marble, was used as a throne by the prince. It now serves as Nuri’s favorite brooding place.

The guard room is a simple room with an algae-covered table and three chairs. Along the back wall is a rusting cell. The rusty key is still in the lock of the open cell door.

The treasure room has a huge steel door. It is firmly shut and still bound by a *wizard lock*. The area directly in front of the door is trapped with a 10-foot-deep pit lined with iron spikes. If the door is touched without first turning the door handle to the left, the pit swings open, dropping anyone in the area into it. Because it has been underwater so long, the mechanism is rusty; thus the malenti who attempted to open the door did not set it off. Nuri has forgotten about the trap.

If anyone manages to actually open the door, however, there will be a horrible grinding and screeching, and the pit will drop open. Those in the outer part of the area have one chance to declare actions before falling. If they try to jump out of the way and succeed in a Dexterity check, they may do so. Anyone standing in the center of the area must state that they are jumping into the treasure room or they will fall in. Roll 1d8 for characters who do fall to see how many spikes the character hits. Each spike does only 1 point of damage since the pit is full of water, but all are rusty and will cause extra damage equal to type







D poison (30 points, or 2d6 if a saving throw vs. poison is successful).

The treasure room is basically a steel box with a steel door. Had the door fit more tightly into its frame, the water would not have rushed in and Nuri would not have drowned (of course, he would eventually have suffocated or starved). Attached to a heavy steel ring beside the door is the decomposing, broken-off heavy strap that once held the *wizard-locked* door open. The door was only closed when strangers visited or Jayani thought there might be an attack planned against her base. Since the door was technically under a *wizard lock* spell, simply closing it reactivated the spell. After all, her wizard, Azizah, was always around to reopen it.

Inside are Nuri's rather horrible remains and the following treasures, which are held in several trunks: 30,000 dinars, 150,000 dirhams, a case with 12 matched black pearls worth 1,000 gp each, a set of 6 tarnished silver goblets set with jet (500 gp for the set), 26 semi-precious gems (50 gp each), an elaborate coral necklace strung on a golden chain (2,250 gp), a trunk filled with rich silks (ruined), a jeweled jambiya set with emeralds, rubies, and sapphires (3,000 gp), several dozen sea charts showing routes to fabled lands (these have badly decomposed and the ink has run, but one or two might be salvageable if the DM would like the characters to have them) worth possibly 500 gp to the right buyer, a full set of heavily decorated plate mail with a sodden, rotted plume on the helmet (now rusted solid, but worth at least 100 gp as a curiosity), a warped wooden box holding 6 vials of rare perfume (one has broken, but the rest are worth 45 gp each), a set of 24 golden serving dishes (650 gp for the set), a carved jade statuette of a ship (300 gp), a *cutlass of the golden golf*, *armor of swimming*, a *staff of devotion*, an *aba of protection* +3 (somewhat faded due to its long immersion), two *potions of extra healing*, a *turban of disguise* (kept in a waterproof pouch), a *ring of shocking grasp*, and a scroll with two spells (DM's

choice) in a waterproof ivory scroll case (worth 30 gp). Other lesser treasures (fine rugs, brass lamps, etc.) are also in the room but have suffered too much damage to be worth anything.

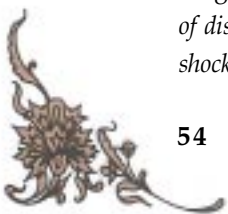
**Area 5, Upstairs.** A marble grand staircase, now covered in algae and draped with seaweed, leads to the upper floor from the grand hall. The upper area is divided into elaborate bath chambers and three large bedrooms. Originally occupied by Jayani, Nuri, and Azizah, they have been ransacked and most recently provided private quarters for the prince, his chosen female, and the baron. All the fine furnishings which once graced the rooms are gone. Searching the area yields 1,200 gp worth of coral and pearls.

**Area 6.** This large building served as a kitchen and dining area for Jayani's pirates. Now the female malenti use it as their living quarters and nursery. Forty noncombatant females and several dozen malenti children occupy the area. Given a chance, they will flee through whichever door the party doesn't enter.

**Area 7.** This area once served as a sort of indoor bazaar for those who visited Jayani's base to trade; a few guest rooms can be found here as well. When the island was underwater, the guest rooms served to house the malenti lieutenants. Coral and shells hidden among the beds of dying sea grass here are worth a total of 125 gp.

**Area 8.** Laughingly referred to as Azizah's tower, this squat, one-story round building held her laboratory and library. Everything inside is a mess, and nothing is salvageable.

**Area 9.** This building was used for storage; anything of use or value here disappeared or fell into ruin long ago.





## Akura

Using his magical *compass rose*, Akura is following the characters. When he gets close enough that he can just make out their ship and the zaratan, he sends his water gen, Mawiyah, out to spy on the party. Akura's actions depend on what Mawiyah reports. If the gen tells him that the characters are having too difficult a time and seem to be losing to the inhabitants, Akura will either leave them to their fate (if it won't profit him to help) or will come to the rescue (if he thinks his efforts combined with theirs will overcome their foes). In the latter case, he will severely reduce the party's share of the spoils.

If Mawiyah reports that the party seems to be holding their own or winning, Akura will wait to see how events unfold. He sends his gen out periodically to check on them, as he has no intention of being cheated out of his fair share of the treasure. His plan is to arrive once the major foes have been dealt with and before the party locates and claims the treasure. If, at any time, the party seems to be going against their agreement with him or if they fail to renegotiate with him if he has to rescue them, he will make plans to attack them by surprise and at his leisure. Akura's crewmembers are elite sailors. Most are second-level corsairs with AC 6 and 16 hit points. He has a 4th-level second mate with 38 hit points and an 8th-level first mate with 65 hit points, both of whom are AC 4. Both have *longswords* +2.

Akura wants this base. He will attack anyone or anything which threatens to deny it to him. More than any other scheme he has ever hatched, this one signifies either total victory or total defeat for him.

## Jayani

In his maneuverings, Akura forgot one important detail: Jayani has spies almost everywhere. One of them was in the coffeehouse where the characters met Akura and talked about their intended mission. The

spy managed to quickly get a message to Jayani via the fastest available ship. Jayani, knowing she was already several days behind, made a deal with Shing Jaw-long, offering him several concessions in return for his help in reaching the zaratan and preventing Akura from taking over her old base. Jayani, Shing Jaw-long, his crew (use the statistics for Akura's crew), Azizah (Jayani's sea mage; use the statistics for Kawthar bint Husn umm Ra'id on page 37), and a hand-picked contingent of fifteen of Jayani's most trusted guards are speeding toward the zaratan and Akura in the *Dragon*, Shing Jaw-long's spelljamming ship. They should arrive soon after Akura does. Jayani herself is detailed on page 13 of the *Corsair Sourcebook*.

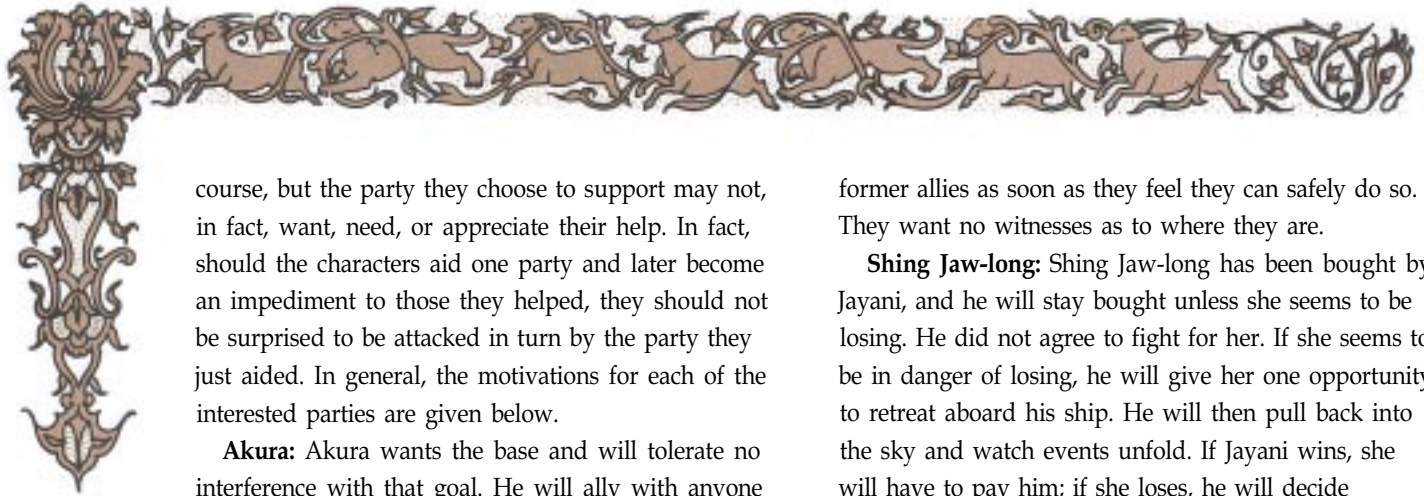
For the most part, Jayani is interested in stopping Akura from claiming her old base and disturbing the bones of her old love. Though she is currently interested in Turn bin Trevor, she has never forgotten Nuri and still loves him. She has every intention of retrieving his bones now that the chance has finally come and taking them to Hawa, where she will try to find some way to have him resurrected. She is less interested in doing any harm to the characters unless they side against her and actively help Akura or block her from getting to Nuri's resting place.

Jayani's corsairs (15): Int 14; AL N to NG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M (5-6'); ML 13; XP 650 each. The guards are armed with short bows and longswords.

## Confrontations

Whenever the DM deems it to be most dramatically appropriate, all the various interested parties may be brought together to the base. Each of them has different reasons for what they do, and the DM will have to judge whether any party will cooperate with any other based on each one's goals. Alliances can shift quickly when so much treasure is at stake. The PCs are free to choose for themselves, of





course, but the party they choose to support may not, in fact, want, need, or appreciate their help. In fact, should the characters aid one party and later become an impediment to those they helped, they should not be surprised to be attacked in turn by the party they just aided. In general, the motivations for each of the interested parties are given below.

**Akura:** Akura wants the base and will tolerate no interference with that goal. He will ally with anyone who will help him but has no qualms about attacking erstwhile allies should they prove difficult. If his life is sincerely threatened, he will have Mawiyah fetch a *teleport* spell to return him to Hawa.

**Jayani:** Jayani will do her utmost to make certain that Akura does not gain her old base. She is most concerned with getting to Nuri's remains but would naturally prefer to regain her lost treasure as well—after all, she stole it fair and square. She will ally with whichever side seems most likely to help her achieve her goals. She will negotiate with allies and attempt to buy them off with promises if they present problems after the fact. If she allies with the party, she will explain the situation to them and promise them half the treasure. Should they refuse to listen, she will either fight or ask Shing Jaw-long to show them the power of his ship, hoping this will frighten them into submission. If her life is really threatened, she will try to retreat to the ship.

**Nuri:** Nuri wants to either be resurrected or released from his undead existence. He will only ally with Jayani or the party (if they aren't fighting Jayani). He will do whatever he can to protect Jayani from harm.

**The Malenti:** The malenti want to rid themselves of Nuri. They also want their lair sunk again. Since they are planning to move soon, they will retreat if half their fighting force is depleted.

There are 40 noncombatant females and several dozen young as well, and the malenti will fight to the death to protect them. They will ally with anyone but Nuri, though they will subsequently attack their

former allies as soon as they feel they can safely do so. They want no witnesses as to where they are.

**Shing Jaw-long:** Shing Jaw-long has been bought by Jayani, and he will stay bought unless she seems to be losing. He did not agree to fight for her. If she seems to be in danger of losing, he will give her one opportunity to retreat aboard his ship. He will then pull back into the sky and watch events unfold. If Jayani wins, she will have to pay him; if she loses, he will decide whether it's more in his interest to attack the survivors and take the rumored treasure and the base or to retreat and fly back to Hawa.

## Rewards

The characters' reward will depend largely on whom they support and who wins. Assisting the malenti against the others will gain them no reward at all except death at malenti hands. At some point it should become clear to the characters that these are not ordinary aquatic elves. They are evil beings, and for all practical purposes they are sahuagin in their outlook, practices, and goals. They will not allow anyone to escape who knows where their secret lair is if they can help it.

If the characters support Akura and he wins, he will keep his bargain with them. In order to win, Akura will have to either kill Jayani or drive her away, however, and the characters may have to deal with an attack from her later to avenge herself and Nuri. Akura might come after them eventually as well if they make it known too far and wide that they, not he, regained Jayani's famous base.

If they helped Jayani, she will give them whatever Akura promised them. Of course, if Akura survived, he'll be out for their blood.

Nuri is willing to give them all the treasure in return for restoring or releasing him (so long as they haven't hurt Jayani). If Jayani has been hurt, he will try to drain each one of them to kill them in revenge.







## The Genies' Sixth Wager: The Vizier's Turban

The little snake-like being named Saghira h sighed to herself. No doubt it was quite an honor to be the chosen headgear of the self-proclaimed sultana of Simbaya, a most noteworthy wizard and puissant ruler (as the sultana always reminded her), but it was terribly boring. Saghira h wanted to stay with her chosen partner and provide the sultana (a beautiful, but vain, woman called Hayfa al-Simbaya) with all the wonderful advantages that only her kind could give. The sultana preferred to leave her vizier's turban in her bedroom because she thought her long black hair looked more alluring without a covering. Although Saghira h had attempted to make herself as transparent as possible and had tried to match the sultana's hair coloring exactly, Hayfa was not satisfied with the result.

Feeling like a traitor, Saghira h considered her options. The sultana never talked to her, never asked her advice, and frequently left her alone for long periods of time. She never even bathed the little symbiote, leaving Saghira h to fend for herself as best she might. It was an unhappy situation, and unlikely to improve. Well, she knew her rights. If her partner proved unsuitable, she had every right to leave! Feeling more confident now that she had made up her mind, Saghira h slipped off the bed and glided to the door. Waiting patiently until the servant opened the heavy door, she slipped out into the sultana's garden, then over the wall. A cloth market enticed her down the street, and upon arriving in the exciting bazaar, the little vizier's turban curled up in a cloth merchant's rag pile and went to sleep.

### Starting The Adventure

This adventure is for six to eight characters of 1st to 2nd level. It features a new creature known as a vizier's turban (see the 8-page booklet for details). This is intended to be a light-hearted scenario provided to serve as a break from more serious fare. The story takes place in





the town of Simbaya, a small place on the Free Coast between Umara and Muluk, where the characters are hired to investigate a theft in the sultana's palace. The adventure begins whenever the PCs are in the town, either traveling through or staying over there to break a journey. Whether they are in the marketplace, having a meal or a drink in a tavern or coffee house nearby, or just walking down the street, they will become involved in the events thanks to Ja'ashan. Though this adventure is particularly suited to a non-sha'ir wizard character, a ranger or PC with the Tracking proficiency would be helpful. If the PCs do not include such a character, the DM should provide an NPC of the same level as the party to help with tracking.

## Thief! Thief!

As the characters are minding their own business, several soldiers burst out of the sultana's palace nearby and begin running down the street. They are shouting something the characters cannot quite hear yet. As they near the characters, a portly merchant who is ornately dressed in costly silks points to the PCs and yells out, "Noble soldiers, those are the ones you seek. I saw them emerge stealthily from the palace but minutes ago!" As he does so, the PCs can now make out the soldiers' cries of "Thief! Thief!" The soldiers head for the party.

If the PCs do not resist, they are led inside the palace where the sultana waits to question them. If they need a tracker, one can be swept up along with the PCs when they are arrested. They may try to run instead, but several groups of guards are combing the streets, and the portly merchant just seems to be everywhere they hide, setting their pursuers on their trail time and again. Fighting is probably the worst option, although the guards will strike to subdue so they may be questioned later.

The portly merchant is Ja'ashan, who decided to involve the party when he heard the soldiers yelling.

Sultana's guards (10): Int 8; AL N or G; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword or spear); SZ M (5-6'); ML 10; XP 35 each.

## The Sultana of Simbaya

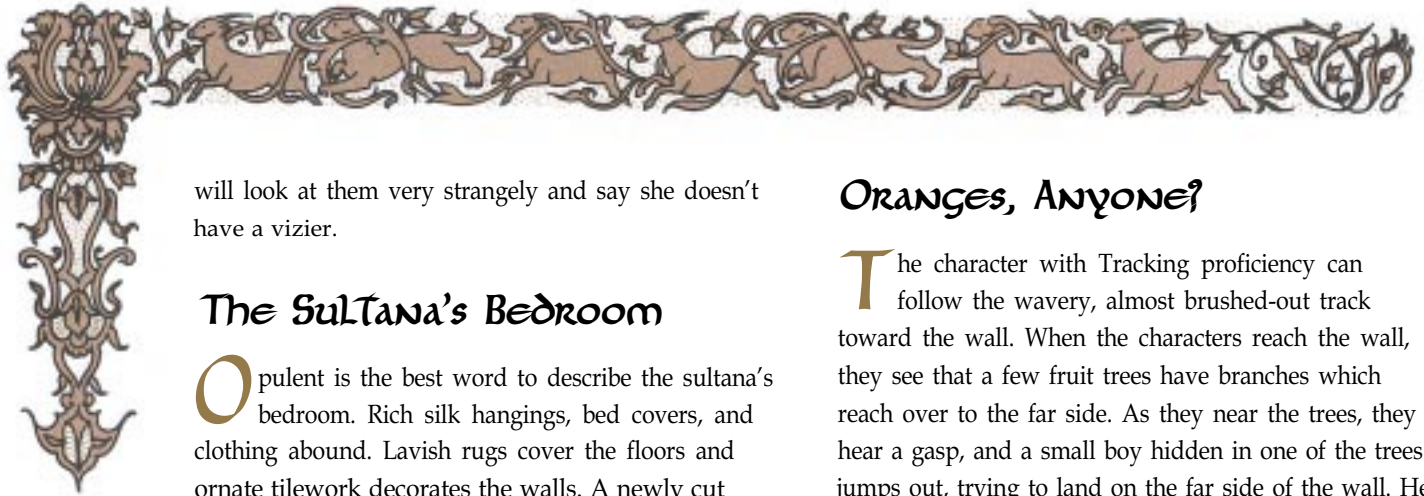
Whenever the PCs are finally caught, they are searched, their weapons are taken, and they are brought before the lovely sultana, who lolls on her throne and regards them haughtily. She demands the return of her vizier's turban. The characters will not know what she is referring to and they may wonder why she is making such a fuss over a piece of stolen headgear.

They may profess their innocence and ignorance of anything to do with the theft, and after a few minutes the sultana will look over at a gaunt man who nods his head. She will look annoyed. About this time, Ja'ashan, in his guise as the portly merchant, will arrive and proclaim that he has made a dreadful mistake and that these worthy citizens are innocent of the theft. He will add, however, that since they seem to be adventurous-looking folk the sultana might be well served by hiring them to find her thief!

Once she hears that, the sultana will offer the PCs a chance to work for her by discovering the identity of the thief and finding out where her vizier's turban has been taken. By the time she thinks about the portly merchant and what he may have actually seen, he will have slipped out.

Unless the PCs think to ask her what a vizier's turban is, she won't think to tell them. After all, she knows what one is; why shouldn't they? If asked to describe the turban, she tells them that she thinks it was gold the last time she saw it, and that the eye-jewels were green. She will explain that it was sitting on her bed and that a thief or thieves must have come through her garden and entered by the door that a servant left open to air out her room. She will allow the party to see her bedroom in order to investigate. If they ask who or where the vizier is, she





will look at them very strangely and say she doesn't have a vizier.

## The Sultana's Bedroom

**O**plulent is the best word to describe the sultana's bedroom. Rich silk hangings, bed covers, and clothing abound. Lavish rugs cover the floors and ornate tilework decorates the walls. A newly cut bouquet of beautiful flowers stands on a table in a glass vase. The door to a well-tended and fragrant garden stands open. A blade of grass and a few drops of water on the floor are visible to anyone who looks at the area. If the PCs have a ranger or other tracker with them, on a successful Tracking roll that character can tell that there are only three sets of tracks in the bedroom: the sultana's, one other set of human-sized footprints, and a sort of wavery, almost swept-out track.

The footprints belong to the gardener, who brought in a vase full of newly cut flowers and left them on the table beside the sultana's bed. The gardener himself can be heard not too far away pruning a bush.

## What The Gardener Saw

**I**f questioned, the gardener admits to being in the sultana's room and says he goes in there every day to replace the flowers. He hasn't heard any of the commotion about the theft since he had to go to the other side of the garden to fetch his pruning tools. He denies taking a hat or any other item of clothing from her room and is highly insulted if the characters accuse him of doing just that. If they can get him calmed down, he tells them that he has seen and heard no one else in the garden except some of the sultana's soldiers who seemed to be on some sort of exercise, but he did notice a pretty little golden snake slithering down one of the paths toward the far wall. Maybe it was a sorcerer or a genie in disguise!

## Oranges, Anyone?

**T**he character with Tracking proficiency can follow the wavery, almost brushed-out track toward the wall. When the characters reach the wall, they see that a few fruit trees have branches which reach over to the far side. As they near the trees, they hear a gasp, and a small boy hidden in one of the trees jumps out, trying to land on the far side of the wall. He has something in both hands.

The child was boosted up onto the wall by several of his friends and then climbed into the tree via the conveniently placed branches to steal some fruit. He has been throwing oranges down to his friends and has two more in his hands as he jumps for it. Unfortunately, he catches his tunic on a branch and is left hanging in mid-air.

When the PCs come up to get him, both he and his friends yell and pelt the party with their stolen fruit while he tries to wriggle loose. The oranges do little damage (except to stain the character's clothes if they burst on impact). If the characters don't hurt the child but help him down (the trees are easy to climb), the young trespassers will stay and talk to the party—especially if the PCs replace the fruit the children threw at them. One of the little girls says she saw a “goldy-greenish snake” slither over the wall about an hour ago. It went off down the street toward the cloth market.

Children (6): Int 11; AL N or G; AC 8; MV 12; hp 2; THAC0 20 (19 with missiles); #AT 1; Dmg 1 (fists, kicks, bite); SZ S (under 4'); ML 12; XP 7.

## The Cloth Market

**T**he tracker may, on a successful proficiency check, follow the strange tracks to the market, or the characters may simply go there on their own. They have probably figured out by now to ask if anyone has seen a golden snake go past. Most people





haven't seen a snake, and the tracks at the market itself have been obliterated by the number of people passing through. One young man says he did see the snake a little while ago and that he will lead the group to the last place he saw it. He is actually a thief whose job is to lure unsuspecting people down an alleyway near the market where his fellow thieves can attack them by surprise, render them unconscious, and steal their goods. They are waiting for him now, and he believes these silly people looking for snakes would make perfect victims.

The thieves are hidden behind cloths stretched across doorways and will attempt to step out behind the PCs to attack in order to gain their backstab bonus. If any of the PCs states ahead of time that he or she is watching the group's rear, the thieves will be unable to surprise the party this way. The thieves attack to subdue rather than kill unless the party counterattacks with deadly force. They have a total of 24 dinars among them.

Thieves (8): Int 13; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d4 (sap); SA backstab; SZ M (5-6'); ML 12; XP 120 each.

## On The Right Trail

After the encounter with the thieves, the party will meet a slightly hysterical young woman who jumps as they come near her and exclaims, "Oh! I am sorry, but my nerves have gotten the better of me today. Just a few minutes ago, I thought I saw a snake in one of the cloth merchants' rag bags!"

If the PCs ask her to point out which cloth merchant's wares frightened her, she will point to the booth of Sulim the clothmaker. If approached, Sulim will greet the characters and ask their business.

Accusing Sulim of theft is a bad way to handle the situation, causing him to call for the local qadi and

accuse the characters of slander. While they are in court, the vizier's turban will slither away, never to be seen again. If instead they tell him why they are interested or ask to buy some of his rags, he will be pleased to show them his rag bag.

Under a piece of bright purple cloth about halfway-down in the bag is the vizier's turban, now a brilliant purple color with bright amethyst-colored eyes. If there is a non-sha'ir mage with the party, the turban will try to bond with him or her, explaining that the sultana was not a very good partner, so she ran away. If the PC seems interested, Saghirah will tell the character all about herself and explain what is expected of each partner.

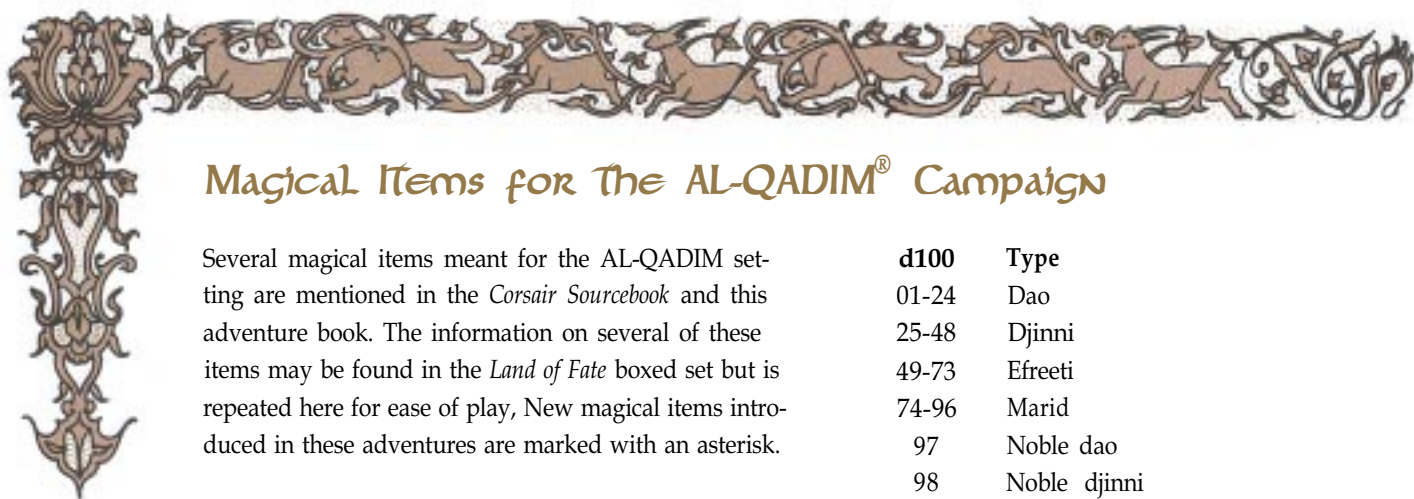
## Return To The Sultana

If the player characters fail in their mission and return to confess the fact to the sultana, she will be extremely annoyed and banish them from her city, ordering them to leave Simbaya within the hour. If they succeed in finding the missing vizier's turban but decide to keep it without consulting the sultana, she will decide that they were the thieves she originally thought them and put a price on their heads. While this will be only a minor annoyance so long as they stay clear of Simbaya, it may give them a reputation that may return to embarrass them from time to time in the future.

On the other hand, if the PCs succeed in their mission they would be well advised to return to the palace and explain things to the sultana. Since she never intended to sacrifice any more hit points to the turban and never liked wearing it anyway, she will make the PCs a gift of Saghirah in lieu of paying them for their services. What's more, she will thank them for their help and apologize for having arrested them. So long as they do not try to take undue advantage of their newfound favor, she will remain well disposed to them, a fact which may make the rest of their stay in Simbaya more pleasant.







## Magical Items for The AL-QADIM® Campaign

Several magical items meant for the AL-QADIM setting are mentioned in the *Corsair Sourcebook* and this adventure book. The information on several of these items may be found in the *Land of Fate* boxed set but is repeated here for ease of play. New magical items introduced in these adventures are marked with an asterisk.

**\*Waters of Devotion:** This potion places the imbiber under the control of the person who gave it to him or her (a saving throw against spells is allowed to resist the effect). The person so affected is loyal and biddable but may still use his or her own mental capacities to their fullest. Thus, a spellcaster who was given the potion could still study and cast spells and even make intelligent decisions about which spells to cast in a given situation, so long as those spells were used in the service of, or at the behest of, the giver of the potion.

Those affected have no recollection of being anything other than loyal to the giver and whatever cause he or she espouses. The *Waters of Devotion* stay in the victim's system for one month and remain in effect all during that time. However, the potion is subject to being dispelled at any time.

**Ring of Genie Summoning:** An expansion of the *ring of djinni summoning*, this ring summons a particular genie from its elemental plane. The genie appears on the round after the ring is rubbed. The genie so summoned serves the master of the ring faithfully until it is slain, at which point the ring becomes nonmagical. The type of genie summoned is determined from the table below.

Noble genies are freed after using their wish-granting abilities to perform three tasks.

A sha'ir of 10th level or higher may free a common genie from its binding to the ring. The sha'ir gains experience points equal to those of the genie freed. In addition, the genie consults with its puissant elders to grant the sha'ir a *wish*, free and clear of all entanglements. The ring becomes nonmagical in these circumstances.

d100	Type
01-24	Dao
25-48	Djinni
49-73	Efreeti
74-96	Marid
97	Noble dao
98	Noble djinni
99	Noble efreeti
00	Noble marid

**Message Ring:** The *message ring* is used to record and convey messages. It is often used to transmit direct orders from a superior to an underling. Such rings are used in profitable businesses, bureaucracies, religious orders, and military units.

The user of the ring looks into its inset gem, speaks a command word, and then immediately speaks his or her message (maximum length: 60 seconds). When the command word is spoken again by someone holding the ring, the speaker's face appears on the gem, and the message repeats. The gem speaks three times in this fashion. Then it is emptied, at which point a new message may be entered by anyone bearing the ring. The new message may be triggered by the same command word or a new one, at the bearer's option.

The command word is usually only known to the two correspondents, not to the ring's carrier. Thus, if the messenger is intercepted the message may not reach its destination, but the captors will rarely be able to discover what it was (and may not even suspect its existence). Spells such as *contact other plane* may reveal the command word.

The DM may choose to use an intercepted *message ring* to send PCs off on new adventures, as usually the message within is important enough to keep secret (otherwise a common scroll with an ordinary message would do the task). Alternately, the *message ring* could be found empty, and the PCs could utilize it themselves.





**\*Ring of Youth:** This magical ring works similarly to a *phylactery of long years* but is usable by any character class. Whoever wears the ring ages at only one-third the normal rate. The ring cannot restore lost years or youth, but it slows the aging process from the moment it is donned. If the ring is removed, the wearer begins aging again at the normal rate but suffers no ill consequences or rapid aging.

**Staff of the Sea:** This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *cool strength, depth warming, converse with sea creatures, water blast, waterbane.*

The following powers expend two charges (sea mages expend only one charge): *conjure water elemental, ice storm, command water spirits.*

Only a sea mage can use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *maelstrom.*

In addition, holding the staff grants its wielder the same ability as a *water breathing* spell for as long as he or she holds the staff. The *water breathing* effect expends no charges, but it disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

**\*Compass Rose:** This small tracking device has two parts: a small piece shaped like a rose that can be attached to any solid nonliving surface and a clear medallion with the four cardinal directions marked on it. The rose sends out a signal for up to 100 miles which can be traced using the medallion like a compass. When traveling toward the signal, a tiny arrow becomes visible, pointing in the correct direction. The rose portion of the device can be detached by holding it and uttering a command word. Attempts to dispel the rose will render the device inoperative for 24 hours but will not allow its removal.

**\*Medallion of Elemental Summoning:** This golden medallion allows its user to summon and control a 12-HD elemental for up to a month at a distance of up to half a mile. The service which the elemental is to

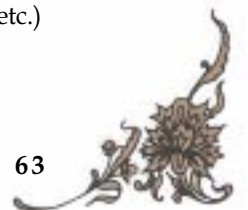
perform must be clearly explained to it. Though it cannot speak the common tongue, the elemental will understand the broad sense of what its summoner wishes it to do.

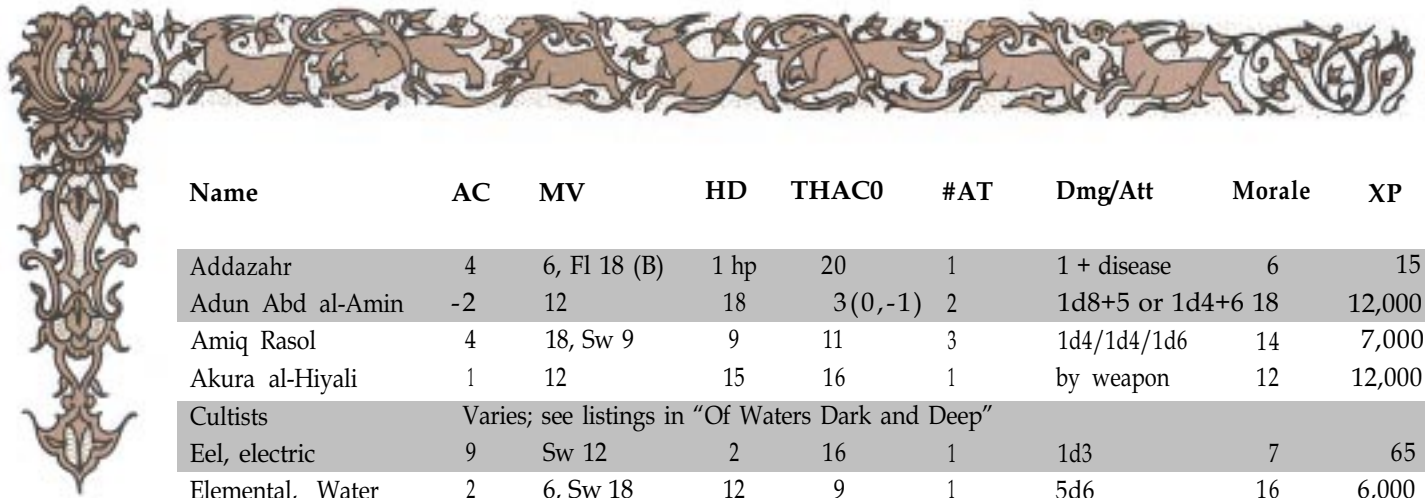
These medallions never have more than five charges. The color of stone inset in the medallion is related to the type of elemental it summons: blue for water, brown for earth, red for fire, and clear for air. The medallion is usable by any character class.

**Armor of Swimming:** This suit of lamellar armor allows the user to move through the water as if unencumbered. It does not convey *water-breathing* abilities, nor the Swimming proficiency, but allows the individual to float and swim if otherwise capable.

**Cutlass of the Golden Gulf:** This magical cutlass is a favorite weapon of corsairs and other sea travelers. In addition to providing a combat bonus, the sword allows the wielder to survive underwater as if under the effects of a *water-breathing* spell as long as the cutlass is in his or her hand.

**Mamluk swords of Obedience +1 and +2:** In addition to their magical bonuses, these weapons also have powers over all human, demihuman, and humanoid creatures—including elves, dwarves, giants, gnomes, goblins, halflings, hobgoblins, lycanthropes in human form, etc., but not creatures who are obviously nonhuman such as kobolds or lizard men (who have tails). An individual struck by one of these swords must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be *charmed*. A charmed victim immediately surrenders to his or her opponent if that individual is of higher level or greater Hit Dice; thereafter he or she will behave exactly as if the recipient of a *charm person* or *charm monster* spell. The *mamluk sword of obedience* may be of any sword type (longsword, cutlass, scimitar, etc.) and does not have to be wielded by a mamluk to have its magical effect.





Name	AC	MV	HD	THAC0	#AT	Dmg/Att	Morale	XP
Addazahr	4	6, Fl 18 (B)	1 hp	20	1	1 + disease	6	15
Adun Abd al-Amin	-2	12	18	3(0,-1)	2	1d8+5 or 1d4+6	18	12,000
Amiq Rasol	4	18, Sw 9	9	11	3	1d4/1d4/1d6	14	7,000
Akura al-Hiyali	1	12	15	16	1	by weapon	12	12,000
Cultists	Varies; see listings in "Of Waters Dark and Deep"							
Eel, electric	9	Sw 12	2	16	1	1d3	7	65
Elemental, Water	2	6, Sw 18	12	9	1	5d6	16	6,000
Elves, Aquatic	6 (9)	9, Sw 15	1+1	19	1 or 2	by weapon	13	420
Firethorn (sea rose)	8	0	6	15	1d10	1d2 + special	8-10	1,400
Ghul, Great	0	18, Br 3, Cl 12	4	15	3	1d6/1d6/2d6	9	1,400
Ghul-kin,								
Soulmaker	0	18, Sw 12	8	13	3 or 1	1d6/1d6/2d6	16	6,000
Witherer	0	18, Sw 12	9	11	3 or 1	1d6/1d6/2d6	17	10,000
Hayfa al-Simbaya	10	12	5	19	1	by weapon	10	420
Holy Slayers	7	12	8	17	1	1d4+1	20	1,400
Jayani al-Jasir	0	12	14	7	1	by weapon	16	6,000
Jessiyah	9	12	7	18	1	by weapon	14	1,400
Kadin al-Zor al-Faddi	7	12	5	18	1	1d6+1	13	420
Lamia Noble	3	9	10+1	11	1	by weapon	14	4,000
Living Idol. Healing	4	3	12	3	1	4d8	20	12,000
Malenti (sahuagin)	5	12, Sw 24	2+2	19	1	by weapon	12	175
Mamluks	Varies; see listings in "Unraveling the Pattern"							
Nereid	10	12, Sw 12	4	17	0	0	11	975
Pirates (corsairs)	Varies: see listings in the various adventures							
Rats	7	15, Sw 3	¼	20	1	1	4	7
Sea Wym	5	9, Sw 18	8	13	1	2d6 or 3d8	15	1,400
Shark	6	Sw 24	7	13	1	3d4	10	420
Shark, Giant	5	Sw 18	11	9	1	4d4	11	3,000
Slime, Green	9	0	2	0	0	special	10	65
Snake, Sea	6	15, Sw 15	2+1	19	1	1 + poison	8	175
Vizier's Turban	special	3	special	Nil	0	0	13	2,000
Winged Serpent	5	12, Fl 18 (B)	4+4	15	1	1d4	9	1,400
Zaratan	-6/0	1, Sw 2	65	5	1	10d10	19	60,000
Zin	5	12, Sw 12	5+1	15	1	1d6	10	2,000



<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical, subtropical, and temperate/Desert, hills, and plains
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Uncommon
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Swarm
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Animal (1)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	6-60
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	4
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	6, Fl 18 (B)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	1 hp
<b>THACO:</b>	20
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1 + disease
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Disease
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Nil
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	T (2" long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Unsteady (6)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	15

**A**ddazahr, or backbiters, are small, slender, winged insects about two inches in length. They dwell in Zakhara's deserts, plains, and hills. Their pale amber color and extreme elongation make them resemble nothing so much as a piece of hay or straw. Their wings are so fragile it is almost impossible to see them when the insects are in flight.

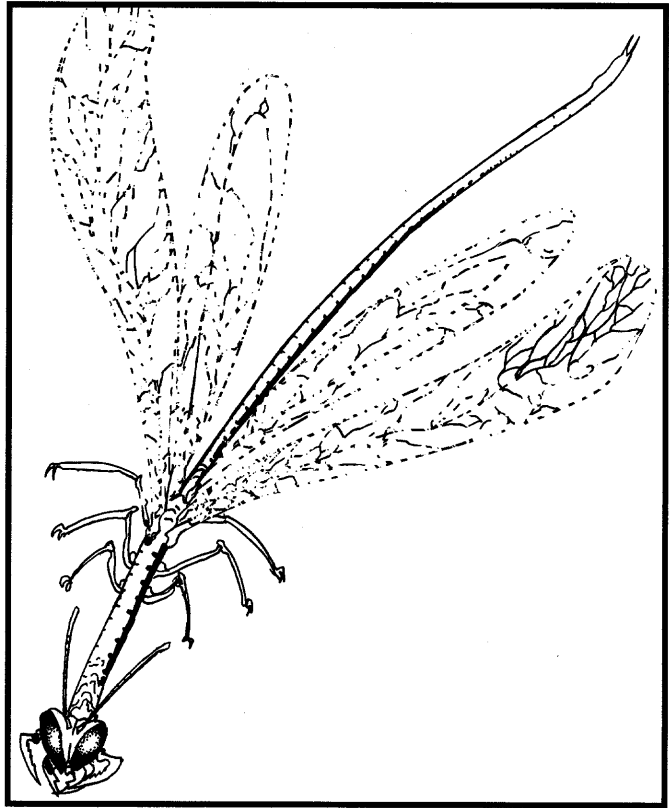
**Combat:** Addazahr do not engage in combat per se. They are non-aggressive, seeking only to gain sustenance in the form of blood from warm-blooded creatures.

Their bite causes only one point of damage, but it injects a small amount of their saliva into the bloodstream of their victims. This saliva works as a crippling agent, causing soreness and swelling of the joints in humans and animals other than beasts of burden (a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation will negate this effect).

Those animals which are primarily used as mounts or to bear burdens, such as camels and horses, are affected more seriously, though usually not fatally. In such cases, the saliva attacks the muscles of the animal's back, causing weakness and severe pain. The animal so affected cannot carry burdens or be induced to move far.

The disease in either humans or animals can be cured by a *cure disease* spell. Otherwise, those affected return to normal in approximately two weeks. A few of the desert tribes claim to know of a non-magical remedy which is effective within three days, but reports of this are unsubstantiated. Caravans attract the addazahr, and their depredations can cause loss of time while camels recover, loss of money due to late arrivals at market, or even loss of life in cases where the caravan becomes stranded far from a water source. Because of their physical forms and the effect their bite produces, this bane of merchants is sometimes jokingly referred to as "the straw that broke the camel's back."

Almost any sort of attack will kill addazahr. They are susceptible to both normal and magical cold or fire, and any hit upon them will destroy them. Water and other liquids do them no particular harm, unless they are completely immersed in the liquid and restrained from flying or crawling out of it, in which case they will drown like any other air-breathing creature.



**Habitat/Society:** Addazahr move about almost constantly, seeking out food. They are most commonly encountered in the seasonal grasslands and deserts of Zakhara. Though they are omnivores, they need to feed on the blood of warm-blooded creatures in order to reproduce. Those which have fed on blood enter a female cycle and produce eggs within 72 hours. The eggs (which are too small to be easily seen by the unaided human or demihuman eye) are laid in whatever terrain the insects are currently passing through. They hatch in a month. If there are no plants or animals nearby upon which the young can feed when they hatch, they die. Even if they take in blood as their chief sustenance, the young insects cannot reproduce until they are three months old. These are the chief regulating factors of their existence, keeping the fast-breeding insects within reasonable bounds. They can live to be up to a year old.

Addazahr have no permanent lair and hoard no treasure.

**Ecology:** Addazahr are parasites. Their role in the ecology of Zakhara is that of a scavenger and occasional accidental pollinator. They will feed on carrion, though they cannot use any blood gained thereby to reproduce, and they often break down small seed casings for food. Their wings, though fragile, act as collectors of pollen, and they may transport pollen from one plant to another.

If their eggs can be located, they can be gathered and carried without harm to them. When they hatch, they can be kept in glass or pottery jars so long as they have air and food.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sea coast
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Highly (13-14)
TREASURE:	C
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil or neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	18, Sw 9
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4/1d4 (claws), 1d6 (bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Energy drain, charm
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better weapon to hit, spell immunities.
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5'-6')
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	7,000

**A**miq Rasol, also called Deep Men or Dark Men, are undead corsairs who were lost at sea, murdered, or marooned. Corsairs who refused to acknowledge or turned away from the Enlightened gods may also become amiq rasol. They haunt the coasts or islands nearest the site of their deaths and prey upon those mortals unlucky enough to stumble across them. Though usually solitary (e.g., a single marooned corsair), several may be found near the spot where some disaster befell their ship.

The amiq rasol look like normal corsairs except that their eyes have an eerie greenish glow in the dark and their nails and teeth are slightly elongated. Their skin is paler than it ought to be, and their clothing shows some signs of wear. Anyone seeing an amiq rasol with a hakima's special ability, through a *gem of seeing*, or while using a *true seeing* spell will see the creature's true appearance—a rotting corpse.

**Combat:** Amiq rasol attack with claws and teeth, causing 1d4 points of damage with each claw and biting for 1d6. The bite of the amiq rasol also causes the victim to lose one level of experience. As with other undead that use this attack form, the effect reduces the Hit Dice, class bonuses, and spell abilities of the victim. If the victim is drained of all levels, he or she dies but does not become an amiq rasol in turn. A victim may be *raised* or *resurrected* normally.

In addition to their other powers, amiq rasol are able to cast a powerful *charm* spell (save vs. spell at -2) which they use to entice mortals to them. They can use this ability three times a day. A very few of these creatures are simply neutral rather than neutral evil; one of these exceptions will use its *charm* spells to convince mortals to travel to the place of the creature's death, find its remains, and have the proper death rites performed upon them by an Enlightened priest of 9th level or higher. If this rite is performed, the amiq rasol is freed from its undead existence and released to go on to its afterlife.

Amiq rasol can be turned as vampires, except in the actual place of their death, where they cannot be turned at all. They are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based spells. They can be hit only by +2 or better weapons. Holy water does 2d4 points of damage per



vial, but only against amiq rasol who are evil. A *raise dead* spell will slay an amiq rasol permanently, and a resurrection spell will restore the being to life. If slain with other magics or by weapons, it reconstitutes and forms another body within 24 hours.

**Habitat/Society:** Amiq rasol are found only near the site of their deaths. They are not tied to the exact spot, particularly if they died at sea, but are always found on islands or on the sea coast near the actual site. They feed off the energy they drain from mortals, and amiq rasol that do not feed for several years will fade away until they become wraiths. Though they prefer the dark, since they have natural *infravision*, amiq rasol are just as capable of moving about and attacking by day. They are quite intelligent and may seek to pass themselves off as living beings in order to join a party of adventurers and assure themselves of continued feeding. Whenever the amiq rasol travels more than 100 miles from its place of death, however, it fades away and returns to the spot of its demise. They are partly creatures of the Negative Material Plane and must therefore maintain some contact with it through their habitat. They have no true society. Even those found together seem almost entirely self-absorbed and unconcerned about their fellow undead spirits.

**Ecology:** Amiq rasol have no proper niche and serve no useful purpose in nature. They provide no useful by-products. They do retain some of the equipment and treasure they had when living, and collect such from their victims. One tale tells of an amiq rasol who led a party to a cache of buried treasure in return for their collecting its bones and performing the proper final rites.

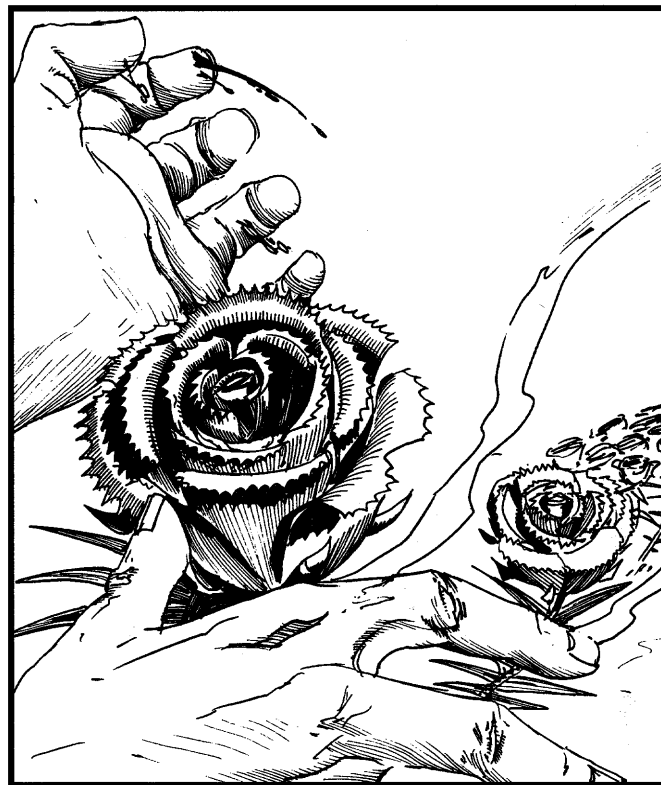
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Grasslands, saltwater swamps
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Clusters
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Nutrients
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Non- (0)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	20-200
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	8
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	0
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	6
<b>THACO:</b>	15
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1d10
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1d2 + special
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Poison, fire
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	<i>Confusion</i> , immune to fire
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (4' radius)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Average (8-10)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	1400

The firethorn, or sea rose, is a rare plant which only grows along tropical or subtropical sea coasts. The only place it is known to grow in abundance is on some of the islands of Zakhara. Firethorns can be found scattered in seasonal grasslands but more commonly spread in clusters to form dense, matted carpets in saltwater swamplands. Resembling nothing so much as squat, broad rose bushes, firethorns produce about twenty brilliant scarlet blooms per plant. Each bloom has its attendant thorns (from 1 to 10 of them). There are no thorns on the main branches of the bush, nor are there any on the flower stems except near the bloom. Sea roses have a distinctive, heady perfume which is noticeable several hundred feet away.

**Combat:** Though not intelligent, sea roses have three possible modes of self-defense. Anyone plucking one of the blooms or brushing against one is subject to attack by one to ten thorns that spring out at the offending creature, doing 1d2 points damage each. Two saving throws must then be made. A saving throw vs. paralyzation determines whether the thorns will inflict 1d3 points of fire damage per thorn (magic which protects against fire negates this damage). The second saving throw is made to resist the sea rose's extremely virulent poison: failure means immediate death, while success reduces the injury to 20 points of damage. Only one save vs. poison and one save vs. paralyzation are needed even if multiple thorns hit.

The scent the plants exude is also a powerful defense. Anyone approaching within ten feet must make a saving throw vs. poison or be affected by it. Those affected act as if under a confusion spell for 2 to 8 minutes. This may cause them to come into contact with the plant by accident, thus setting in motion its thorn attacks. When traveling through an area which has several plants, only one save per half-hour spent in the terrain is needed. Subsequent saves in the same area are at a cumulative +1 bonus as those affected build up a short-term resistance. Sea roses trap and hold heat from the sun and are immune to both mundane and magical fire.

**Habitat/Society:** It is unknown whether the sea rose is a naturally occurring plant or the result of some botanically inclined wizard's experimentation. The one place in Zakhara where they exist in



great numbers is on the Island of Firethorns, a part of the Corsair Domains. Sometimes confused with the legendary roses of forgetfulness because of their confusion properties, firethorns are actually more like weeds than garden flowers. They resist being transplanted and cultivated, though they self-pollinate and spread over large areas when conditions are right.

Perhaps their most intriguing quality is the glow they emit at night. Storing heat from the sun, the blossoms of the plant glow like banked embers in the dark. The heat given off from a single firethorn bush is about equal to that of a small lantern. Several bushes together emit about as much heat as a bonfire. They only radiate heat at night, with the excess warmth being stored in their thorns until evening, leading some people to speculate that this heat exchange is somehow necessary to their growth and propagation. Firethorns respond normally to druidical spells which relate to plants.

**Ecology:** Aside from their role in anchoring soil in salt swamplands, firethorns can be harvested (carefully) for several products. Chief among these is the beautiful scarlet dye which can be made from the blossoms. This is easily mixed with other ingredients to produce an array of colors from pale pink to deepest crimson; it is the city of Hawa's chief export. The blossoms also produce an attar which can be used in making a heady perfume or, when correctly rendered, as an ingredient for a potion of dreaming. The thorns from an entire bush provide 1 to 6 doses of type E poison, but the toxin breaks down into a harmless substance after about a week.

	Soultaker	Witherer
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Any land	Any land
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Pack	Pack
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Night	Night
<b>DIET:</b>	Scavenger	Scavenger
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Exceptionally (15-16)	Genius (17-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	C	C
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral evil	Neutral evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-3	1-3
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	0	0
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	18, Sw 12	18, Sw 12
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	8	9
<b>THAC0:</b>	13	11
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	3 or 1	3 or 1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1d6/1d6/2d6 or special	1d6/1d6/2d6 or special
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Possession	Withering
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Immune to non- wooden weapons	+2 or better weapon to hit
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (8'-10' tall)	M (10' tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15-16)	Fanatic (17)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	6,000	10,000

The ghul-kin are related to the great ghuls, and like them are undead jann. Unlike their cousins, ghul-kin are differentiated into two distinct types, Soultakers and Witherers. While they prefer to feed on dead human bodies, ghul-kin find no pleasure in haunting burial grounds. They are far more social creatures than their cousins and often interact with mortals and even live among them undetected for long periods of time. Their greatest desires are to rule over a cowed mortal population, to corrupt mortals and use them as their servants, to have a steady supply of victims whose bodies they can devour, and to achieve enough personal power and learn enough secrets to successfully control other genies.

Like their cousins the great ghuls, ghul-kin are shapechangers. They will usually assume attractive, seductive shapes, though they occasionally take on forms designed to look virtuous or wise. They may even assume the appearance of a real person they have seen at least once, though there is always something not quite right about such impersonations (eyes the wrong color, incorrectly shaped ears, etc.). If they have heard the person speak, they can perform a mimicry of the voice, achieving a close approximation.

In their true forms, both male and female ghul-kin are 8 to 10 feet tall, with long, gangly arms and legs. They have thick, tangled hair, bone-white pock-marked skin, clawed hands, and powerful jaws filled with sharp yellow teeth. Their eyes shine with a feral light, and their ears are sharply pointed. Ghul-kin exude an unpleasant odor and are rubbery and cold to the touch. They usually take great pains to disguise both their repulsive appearance and odor in order to move about in society undetected.

**Combat:** Ghul-kin attack with their claws and powerful jaws. They can forgo these attacks in order to make a special attack if they wish. The special attack and its results are different for each type of ghul-kin (see below). They can use each of the following spell-like abilities at will: *invisibility* and *polymorph self*. Being undead, they are immune



to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based magic and are unaffected by paralyzation or poison. Soultakers can be turned as spectres, while Witherers are turned as vampires. Both suffer 2d6 points of damage from holy water. They are able to function in daylight, though they suffer a -1 to their attack rolls and saving throws when in bright sunlight. Jann slain by ghul-kin become ghul-kin themselves.

Ghul-kin are immune to the binding and capturing powers of sha'irs. All ghul-kin have the ability to become sorcerers, sha'irs, or priests, and all can use any magic items usable by wizards or priests. Ghul-kin take perverse delight in collecting magic items capable of doing them harm, carefully hiding them where others cannot find them. They are always searching for genie-control devices.

**Habitat/Society:** Ghul-kin live wherever they find it convenient to do so. They often live in cities and even engage in trade without their neighbors being aware of their true natures. They prefer to live in small family units and often form a pack with lone great ghuls. In such cases, the ghul-kin usually occupy the positions of leadership. They disdain common ghouls, finding them far too unrefined.

Ghul-kin enjoy fine clothing, elegant furnishings, and jewelry. They appreciate art and often have their dwelling places elaborately tiled or painted. Though they usually defer to the dominant style of clothing worn wherever they reside, the materials will always be the finest available and the clothing expertly tailored. Though they have no desire for normal food, they are fond of wine and seem to enjoy highly spiced meats and stews. They love all scents and perfumes, from bath soaps to sachets, and their tastes tend toward the exotic—frangipani or frankincense—for its superiority in covering their own unpleasant smell.

**Ecology:** Ghul-kin serve genies when forced to but try to avoid contact with their more powerful cousins unless they believe they have

the upper hand. The chief motivations of ghul-kin are personal power and entertainment. Being undead, they have no limit on the time they can spend perfecting a plan or setting up an elaborate base of operations. Most of them are accomplished actors and delight in playing a role they have developed for years. Sooner or later, however, the ghul becomes bored and has to reveal itself to friends and neighbors. Such revelations are often followed by a great slaughter as the ghul-kin seeks to kill anyone who has learned its secret. They revel in establishing cults and secret societies where they can control mortals and lead them astray while only marginally concealing their true natures.

Some few ghul-kin help mortals who seek them out and flatter them or offer them genie-controlling devices. Some have been known to repay a kindness a mortal paid to them while they were disguised. All ghul-kin react more positively to those mortals who are both polite and respectful.

**Soultakers:** Soultakers are slightly smaller than witherers, rarely reaching 10 feet in height. There is an equal chance that a soultaker will be male or female. Though they look down upon great ghuls as being lesser cousins, soultakers are themselves subservient to their witherer kin. Because they must often subjugate their own desires and plans to those of their greater brethren, soultakers are often frustrated. For this reason, they are the more vicious of the two types of ghul-kin. They gain great satisfaction from possessing a victim and forcing that victim to obey their every whim. They feel some of the anger, terror, and despair their victims experience and enjoy knowing that it is their will which causes such misery for the poor possessed slave. Soultakers may become wizards or priests of up to 7th level (providing the god they serve accepts them). They are immune to nonwooden weapons.

Soultakers have a special attack form which they can use in lieu of making their normal attack. In order to use it, however, the soultaker must make an attack roll at a -3 penalty. If successful, the soultaker has kissed its victim on the lips. Victims who fail a saving throw vs. spell (at a -2 penalty) are possessed by a portion of the soultaker's essence and fall under the ghul's control. Though the victims' minds are still present in their own bodies, they are helpless prisoners, unable to speak or make their plight known to others. Instead, the soultaker speaks and acts for its victims, always working to the detriment of its victims' companions, though often in cunning and subtle ways.

Once the possession has occurred, the soultaker can control its victim at any range so long as they are both on the same plane of existence. If the victim is a spellcaster, the soultaker can use whatever spells the victim had memorized at the time possession took place but cannot force its victim to relearn or pray for new spells. Soultakers may possess and control one victim for every two points of Intelligence (rounded down).

The possession may be detected by various means. First, any attempt to *detect alignment* on the victim will result in a reading of neutral evil. In addition, strangers react to the victim with distrust and suspicion, just as though he or she were under the effects of an evil eye. The victim may say or do evil things, and his or her behavior may undergo a radical change. He or she may even attack his or her own party without apparent cause. A sha'ir of 3rd level or above may detect that there is genie work connected with the victim; a hakima of 9th level or above may tell that the victim is possessed; a priest able to cast *detect evil* may learn that the victim is under the

control of some evil force.

Several spells may be used to combat the effects of the possession. A *protection from evil* or *protection from evil, 10' radius* spell will keep the soultaker from exercising its control while the spell is in effect. An *anti-magic shell* will negate the possession if the victim is in the area of effect when the spell is cast, and *remove curse* will break the possession. *Dispel evil* cast on the victim will break the possession and cause 3-24 (3d8) points of damage on the soultaker. The soultaker will not willingly go near a priest or mosque, nor will anyone possessed by one. It will force the victim to fight to prevent the possession from being broken and may attempt to summon its possessed victim to its lair rather than allowing him or her to be freed of its influence.

**Witherers:** Both male and female witherers are usually taller than soultakers (averaging 10 feet in height) and more dominant. They have greater intelligence and cunning and are usually the instigators of long-term grandiose plans. Such plans are invariably designed to gain more power for the witherer and to corrupt mortals into serving the ghul-kin. They delight in showy rituals and sacrifices of both sentient creatures and treasures. Witherers use soultakers as lieutenants in many of their plans and often find great ghuls to use as pawns. Humans and demihumans are allowed to serve them as semi-slaves, becoming either shock troops or food sources as the need arises.

When thwarted, witherers retreat to plan their revenge, sometimes taking decades to perfect their tactics before returning to the place where they failed. They are not adept at coping with premature disclosure, however, and they will often make poor decisions in response to the unexpected, thereby revealing their machinations or causing their own downfall.

Male witherers are rare and usually less ruthless than their female counterparts. They may sometimes be found masquerading as hermits or reclusive sha'irs and may be induced to help mortals if offered a substantial enough reward or if the matter interests them. Opportunities to act out some great dramatic role are also effective in persuading male witherers to aid non-ghuls. Claiming some sort of kinship is also an effective ploy if there is the slightest evidence to back up such a claim.

Witherer ghul-kin may become mages or priests of up to 9th level (provided the god they serve accepts them). They can only be hit by +2 or better weapons. Instead of their three regular attacks, they may use a special attack: a touch which weakens and withers the target creature while strengthening the witherer. This withering touch causes 1d10 points of damage (which are temporarily added to the witherer's hit point total). Damage against the witherer is subtracted from these added hit points first (if not used, the hit points remain for one hour). Furthermore, the touch drains one point of Strength and ages the victim by a year. If the victim's Strength falls to zero, he or she dies. The victim also dies if the aging is enough to push the character past his or her normal lifespan. Those slain by a witherer must have *remove curse* cast on their bodies before they can be *raised* or *resurrected*.

The aging is only reversible through use of potions or other magic which restores youth or reverses aging, but the Strength loss is not permanent. If not drained completely, the victim recovers any Strength points lost at the rate of one point per turn. Lost hit points must be recovered normally or through magical healing.



<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Tropical and subtropical seas
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Uncommon
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Low (5-7)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	R (x 2)
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-3
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	5
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Sw 18
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	Baby (7-8) Adolescent (9-10) Adult (11-12) Ancient (13-14)
<b>THACO:</b>	7-8 HD: 13 9-10 HD: 11 11-12 HD: 9 13-14 HD: 7
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	2d6 (bite) or 3d8 (constriction)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Breath weapon, swallow whole* *(adults and ancients only)
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Nil
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (up to 12' long) for 7-10 HD, H (12'-25' long) for 11-14 HD
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15-16)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	7-8 HD: 1400 9-10 HD: 2000 11-12 HD: 3000 13-14 HD: 4000

Sea wyrms are elongated legless and wingless sea dragons found in tropical and subtropical seas. Probably one of the sources for the tales of legendary sea serpents, these lazy creatures rarely attack anyone or anything not intruding on their territory. They are usually serene and majestic, often venturing quite close to land if left undisturbed. Occasionally, a family of sea wyrms will be seen traveling together by sailors who venture into deeper seas.

**Combat:** Sea wyrms grow larger, but not particularly stronger, as they age; thus, the bite and constriction of a baby sea wyrm are just as damaging as that of its elders. Though they are normally nonaggressive, sea wyrms will attack ships or creatures who invade what they consider to be their territory. All sea wyrms can bite for 2d6 (2-12) points of damage and constrict for 3d8 (3-24) points. If attacking a ship, every 10 points of constriction damage acts as 1 hull point versus the vessel. If the ship is smaller than the sea wyrm, the wyrm can completely encircle the entire vessel, roll it over, and drag it beneath the waves. Because of this, they are greatly feared by fishermen and others who usually have smaller boats.

Adult and ancient sea wyrms have other attacks as well. If they make a bite attack and score 5 more than they need to hit, they have swallowed their prey whole. The victim takes normal damage (2d6) from the bite and an additional 2d6 points of damage per round thereafter from stomach acids. The usual methods may be employed to escape from the creature's stomach. At any time an adult or ancient sea wyrm may choose to forgo its normal attack and use its



breath weapon instead. This is a cone of sleep gas 5 feet wide at the base, 30 feet wide at the far end, and reaching 30 feet. Those caught in the cone must save vs. breath weapon or fall asleep for 3d8 (3-24) rounds. The wyrm can use this attack only once per day.

**Habitat/Society:** Sea wyrms lair in underwater caves or in remote caves on islands. They can breathe equally well in air or water and move about on land by slithering like a snake. They eat just about anything but are particularly fond of fish and fruit. They have been known to slither around a fruit tree and constrict it in an attempt to get at fruit which is beyond their normal reach.

Sea wyrms live in small family groups until the babies are old enough to forage for themselves. When three are found together, they are always a mated pair and their baby. Two sea wyrms found together are always a mated pair, as they mate for life. The female produces one egg at a time, which is jealously guarded by both until the young sea wyrm hatches.

If captured as babies, sea wyrms make loyal and affectionate pets for sea peoples such as merfolk, tritons, or nereids, willing to fight to the death to defend their companions.

**Ecology:** Sea wyrms claim undersea or island caves for their lairs and defend the territory around it up to about two miles. They range up to thirty miles from home to feed. Though they produce no useful by-products, there is a growing market in sea wyrm eggs among traders who wish to raise a mobile guard to defend their ships while at sea. Some merchants deal in sea wyrm skins, which bring 1,000 to 3,000 gp.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Any land
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Special (see below)
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Genius (17-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Any
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	Special (see below)
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	3
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	Special (see below)
<b>THACO:</b>	Nil
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	0
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	0
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Nil
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	See below
<b>SIZE:</b>	S (2'-4' long)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Elite (13-14)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	2000

The vizier's turban is a symbiotic creature which attaches itself to a wizard and provides its partner with greatly enhanced spell-casting potential and magic resistance. In return, the wizard agrees to a permanent loss of hit points, which are used by the creature to sustain itself. The potential power to be gained by bonding with a vizier's turban far outweighs the sacrifice to the wizard. They can bond with any elemental mage, sorcerer, or ajami wizard, but not with sha'irs.

Vizier's turbans look like a turban (of any color) secured by two bright jewels (its eyes). Their skin resembles fine cloth. They can change color to suit their partners' attire and can reshape themselves somewhat to look more like a scarf or veil for female wizards who prefer such attire to turbans. A vizier's turban enjoys watching what goes on around it from its vantage point atop its partner's head and communicates telepathically with its host.

The wizard decides how many hit points (up to a maximum of 10 hp) to permanently give up to his or her vizier's turban. One hit point may be given to the symbiote whenever the wizard gains a new level, so it is possible to find an 11th-level wizard whose vizier's turban has 10 hit points, or a 9th-level wizard who has one with only 2 hp. The number of hit points the symbiote has is a function both of how many its wizard sacrifices to it and at what point in the wizard's career the vizier's turban met and bonded with the wizard.

**Combat:** Vizier's turbans make no attacks and cause no damage. For all practical purposes, the vizier's turban and its host function as a single being. The symbiote is content to let its partner control the thinking, movement, and body functions. It will give advice only if specifically asked.

The potential power which a vizier's turban can bring to its wizard is a function of how many hit points it has. It saves as a wizard of the same level as it has hit points, so a vizier's turban with 4 hit points would save as a 4th-level wizard. It also provides its host with 5% magic resistance for every 2 hit points it has, up to a maximum of 25%. Vizier's turbans cannot have more than 10 hit points; extra hit points sacrificed to it are lost as if the wizard were wounded and can be healed normally.



For every hit point it receives, the creature enhances its chosen wizard's spellcasting abilities, as detailed on the following chart:

- 1 hp = 1 extra first-level spell per day
- 2 hp = 5% magic resistance
- 3 hp = 1 extra second-level spell per day
- 4 hp = 10% magic resistance (total)
- 5 hp = 1 extra third-level spell per day
- 6 hp = 15% magic resistance (total)
- 7 hp = 1 extra fourth-level spell per day
- 8 hp = 20% magic resistance (total)
- 9 hp = 1 extra fifth-level spell per day
- 10 hp = 25% magic resistance (total)

The maximum benefit a wizard can derive from a vizier's turban is thus one 1st-, one 2nd-, one 3rd-, one 4th-, and one 5th-level spell per day plus a magic resistance of 25%. Vizier's turbans do not know any spells themselves, nor can they give their partners access to spells the wizard does not already know or is not usually allowed to cast. All restrictions as to elemental provinces, spell schools, and other limiting factors remain in force. The vizier's turban in no way allows its partner access to clerical spells, nor does it enhance such spells should its partner be a wizard/priest. These symbiotes provide no benefits to sha'irs at all and cannot bond with them.

Damage to its host from weapons, whether normal or magical, has no effect on a vizier's turban. Even if struck directly by a weapon, the damage passes right through the creature and affects its host instead. Secondary effects which emulate spell effects (such as an electrical attack which occurs when the sword strikes) are handled similarly to magical attacks against the symbiote or its host.

Spells and magical items which produce spell-like effects may affect a vizier's turban. Single target spells (such as *charm person*) and

nondamaging area-of-effect spells (such as *chaos*) have no effect on a vizier's turban, even if the creature is the primary target of such a spell. If its partner fails the magic resistance roll provided by the vizier's turban and also fails his or her saving throw vs. a damaging area-of-effect spell, then the symbiote must also make a saving throw vs. spell. If it fails its save, the creature is affected by the spell as a separate entity, which almost guarantees its demise. If it makes the save, it is affected as if it were a natural part of its partner, with its hit points being the last to be lost.

For example, a host mage with 24 hp has given 2 hp to his vizier's turban, leaving him with 22 hp. The mage is hit by a *fireball* for 23 points damage and fails both his magic resistance check and saving throw, meaning he takes full damage. The symbiote now saves and, if successful, takes only 1 point of damage (the amount by which the spell damage exceeded the mage's hit point total). Since it would still be alive, it could find another host. Had the fireball done 24 or more points, the symbiote would be dead. If it had caused 22 or fewer points, the vizier's turban would have been unharmed. Had the mage made his saving throw or his magic resistance check, the vizier's turban would have been completely unaffected, even if its host had been killed by cumulative damage.

If the vizier's turban has more than 1 hp left at any time that its host wizard is badly injured (i.e., reduced to half or less of his or her hit points total), it can return all but 1 of its hit points to its host. These regained hit points function just as if a healing spell had been used on the wizard and had restored that many hit points to him or her. Once the wizard is restored to full hit points, he or she must return these hit points to the symbiote. One hit point is always lost permanently in this exchange, reducing the wizard's total by 1, so this exchange is not made frivolously. Furthermore, returning the hit points to his or her symbiote wounds the wizard for that many points of damage—damage that can only be healed magically. The 1 hit point lost in this exchange cannot be restored by any means short of a wish.

**Habitat/Society:** There are several theories as to the origin of vizier's turbans. One theory suggests that the turbans are actually lesser genies of some sort, either condemned to serve wizards for some transgression against other genies or specifically shaped to perform the duties they do (much like tasked genies). Another theory contends that vizier's turbans were originally just that—magical headgear which somehow developed both intelligence and a sense of self while retaining their magical properties. The theory which has gained the most acceptance is that the creatures were originally some sort of familiar.

Whatever their origin, vizier's turbans do not appear to reproduce in any discernible manner, and no mated pairs have ever been found. When two vizier's turbans meet (usually while traveling with their bonded wizards), they will greet one another politely but refrain from long conversation, as though they had no interest in one another. They seem to have no differentiation of sex, adopting a male or female outlook to match that of their host. It has been theorized that the creature may reproduce by fission, forming a duplicate which is then left to fend for itself. Until it bonds with a wizard, the vizier's turban is considered to have only a single hit point.

Though it recognizes that it is a separate being from its host, a vizier's turban takes its personality and reactions to situations directly from its partner. It will never disagree with a decision made by its host unless asked to give its own opinion. It has no opinions

about what spells the wizard should study or which ones he or she should cast in a given situation, since it does not itself have any spellcasting talent. It does not understand and cannot read the spells which its wizard learns but instead derives a sense of satisfaction from feeling its wizard's emotional response to both learning and casting spells.

The vizier's turban seems to have no fixed ethical sense, changing alignment to match that of its host and adopting his or her point of view. When not with a host, the creature alignment detects as being true neutral. If a vizier's turban changes hosts, it will change its alignment to fit that of its new host, if different.

A vizier's turban exists on the hit points given to it and on the companionship of its chosen wizard. It eagerly engages in philosophical discussions with its host if the wizard initiates the conversation. It has no need to eat or drink but does enjoy being bathed, and it likes to rearrange itself into different styles of turbans when given the chance.

Keenly curious, a vizier's turban is always happy to travel with its host to see new places and things. It is very observant, though it reacts to stimuli with a never-ending sense of wonder rather than logically. If it sees a lion charging its wizard, for instance, it does not warn the wizard but rather goggles at the wondrous creature rapidly approaching.

A vizier's turban is least happy when separated from its partner, and mourns if it is taken off and left behind when its wizard goes out. A vizier's turban that is ignored by its wizard becomes depressed, and if not allowed to participate more fully in its wizard's life will eventually leave and seek a new partner. If a vizier's turban leaves its wizard, it takes half the hit points it has received away with it. The wizard regains the other hit points but permanently loses those retained by the turban.

Although they can be found almost anywhere, it takes a keen eye and a desire to bond with one to locate a vizier's turban. Even then, its rarity makes it unlikely that a wizard who is not spending every waking hour searching for one will find one. They are virtual masters of disguise since they look like strips of material when unwound and like scarves, turbans, or veils when posing.

This odd creature does not detect as magical but can be found via spells or devices which detect life or alignment. Its sense of humor is such that it is amused by the antics wizards go through to locate it. Indeed, its attempts at disguise and camouflage may be a test to see if a particular wizard is clever enough to find it and therefore worthy to become its partner. When its eyes are closed, it is indistinguishable from any other item of clothing. Favorite hiding places for vizier's turbans are at cloth markets, inside wardrobes, atop the cloth coverings which shade suqs, in rag bags, and among caravan trade goods. Since it can change color at will, it can be quite difficult to spot one should it wish to remain hidden.

**Ecology:** Vizier's turbans have no real effect on their environment other than upon the wizards they bond with. They occupy a unique niche. No one has ever seen a vizier's turban die of natural causes, so it is impossible to estimate how long they live. They might even be immortal.

Card 1

# Zakhara's Place in the World

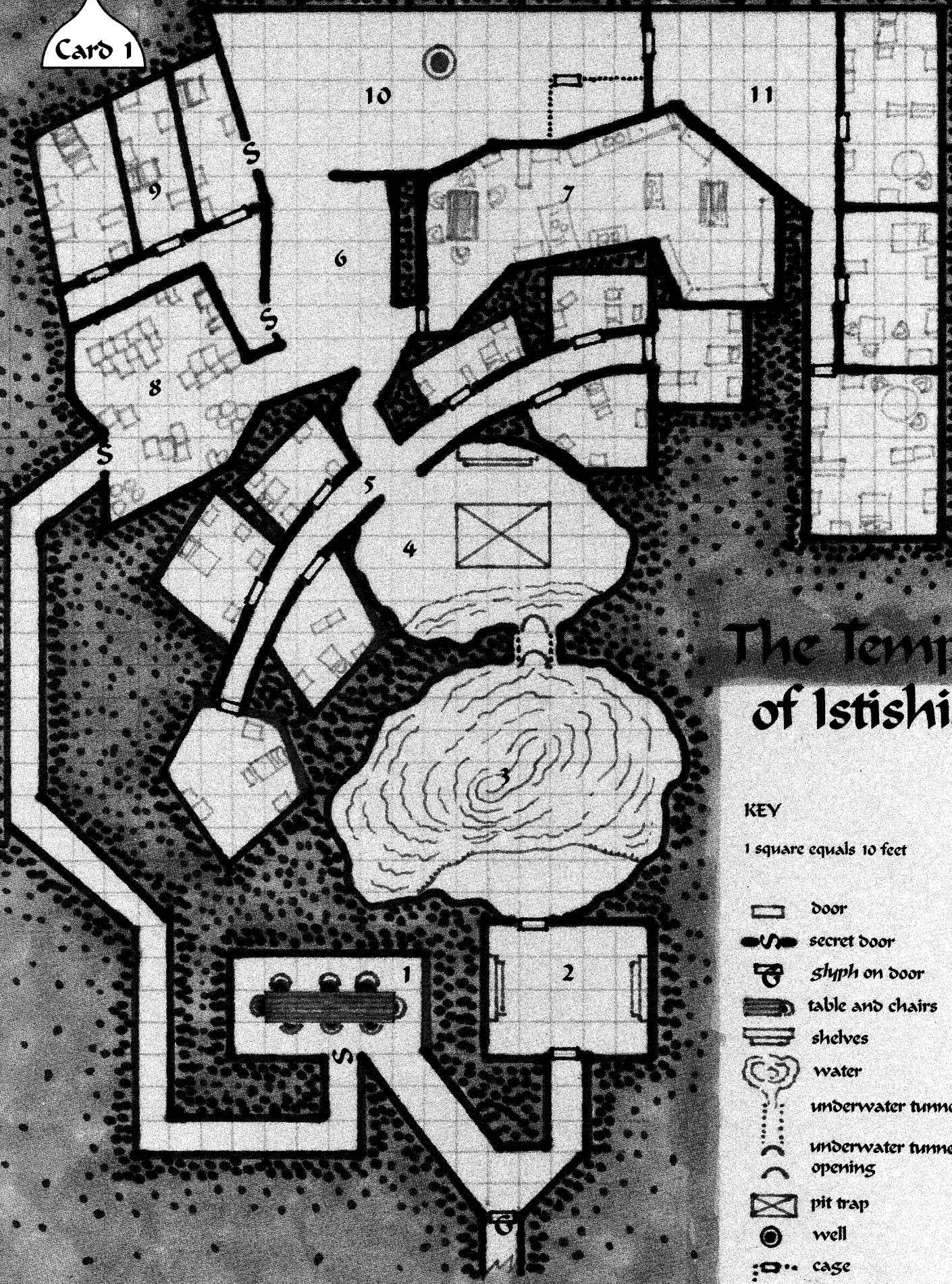
(According to Aban al-Hadhar, barber extraordinaire)

Arctic Circle



Scale: 1 inch equals 1300 miles












Card 1



# The Temple of Istishia

## KEY

1 square equals 10 feet

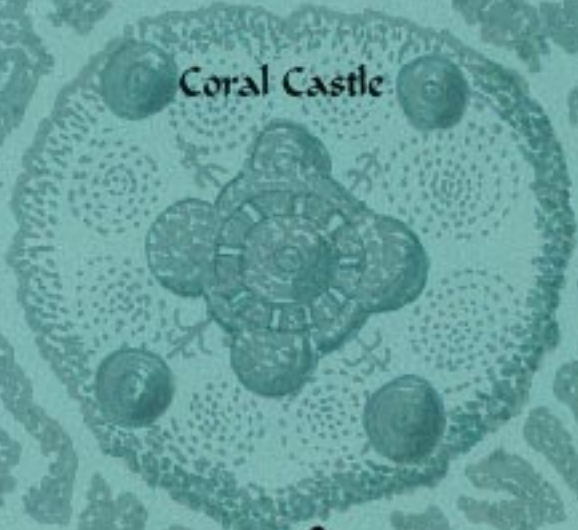
-  door
-  secret door
-  glyph on door
-  table and chairs
-  shelves
-  water
-  underwater tunnel
-  underwater tunnel opening
-  pit trap
-  well
-  cage



# The Coral Maze

Entrance to Swamp ↑

coral ↙



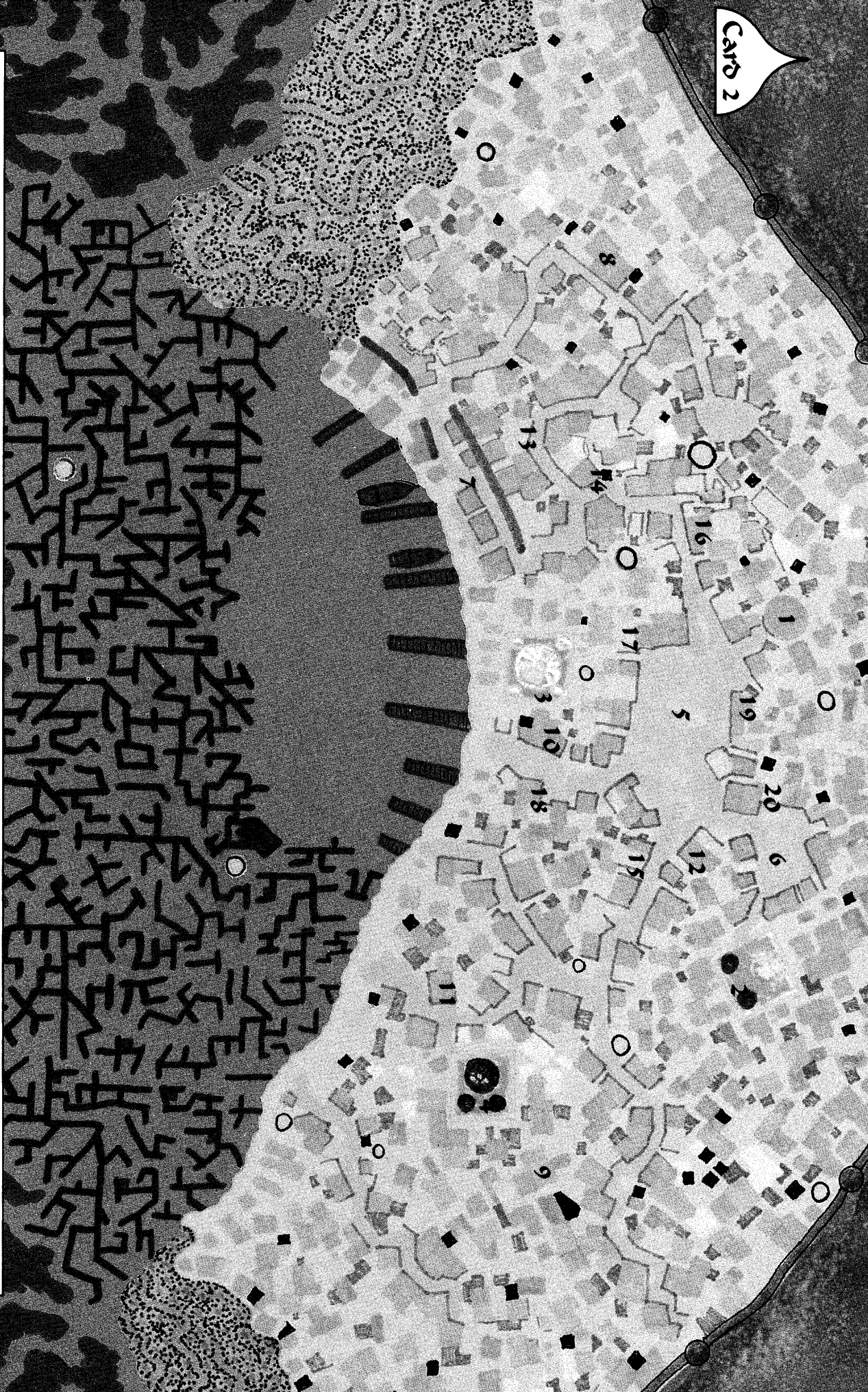
Coral Castle

safe route

1 inch equals 50 feet

Start →





# Hawa: Places of Interest

1. Corsair Council building
2. Mosque of Kor
3. Mosque of Hakiyah
4. Mosque of Najm
5. Free Market
6. Suq
7. Shipyards
8. Fountain of the Winged Lion
9. Fountain of the Pearl
10. Akura's house
11. Hamid's house
12. Inayah's house
13. Suhailah's house
14. Tuka's shop
15. House of the Green Fish (Tavern)
16. Inn of the Whispering Palms
17. Inn of the Golden Dome
18. Inn of the Billowing Sails
19. Inn of the Purple Turban
20. House of the Blue Monkey (Tavern)

Card 3

Hawa  
Bay

Coral  
reef

# The Firethorn Swamp

1 inch equals 50 feet

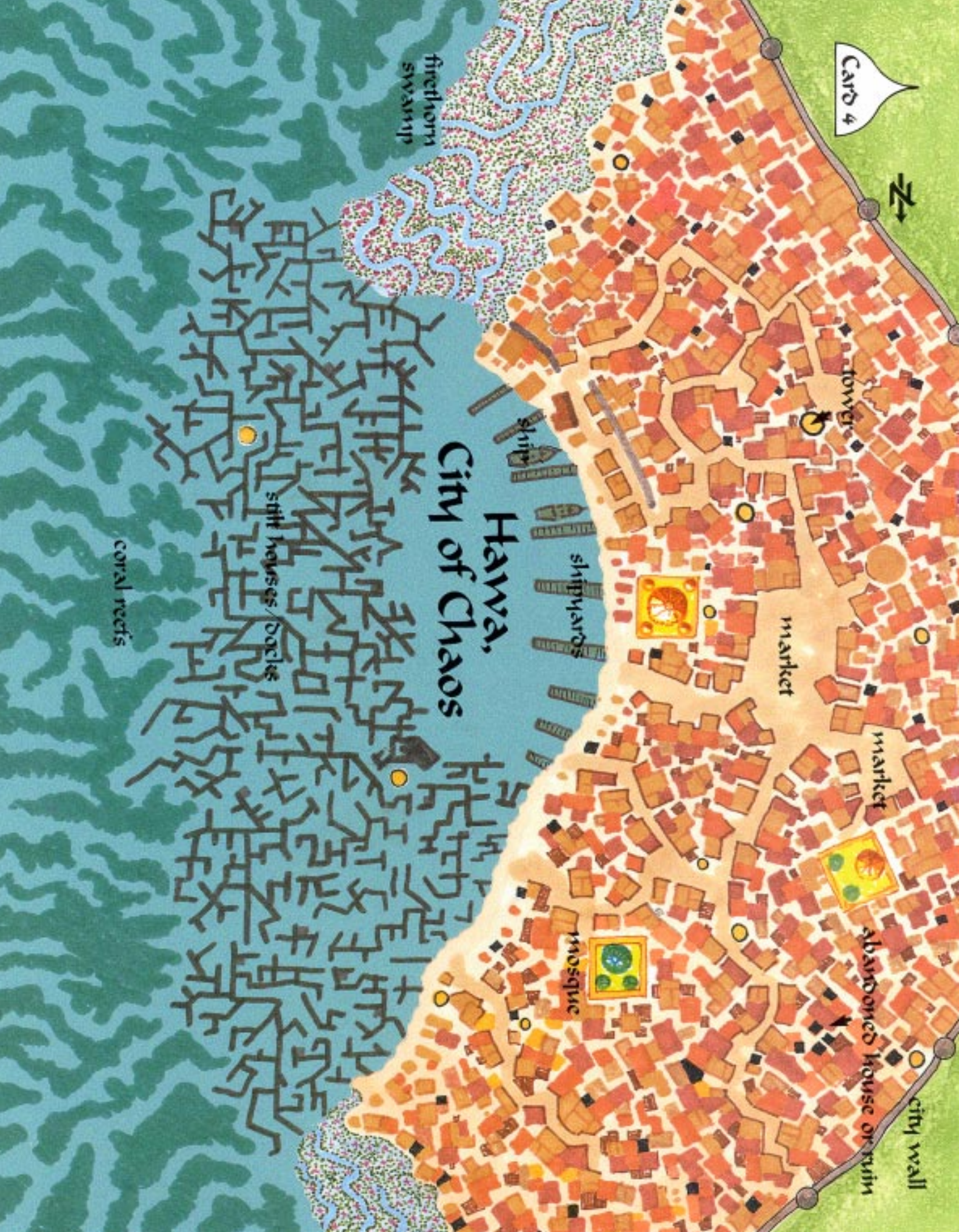




Card 3

# Encounter Areas for "Now & Zim"





Card 4



firehorn swamp

tower

# Hawa, City of Chaos

ship

shipyard

market

market

coral reefs

silt houses / Doles

mosque

abandoned house or ruin

city wall



# The River of Gold



1 inch equals approx. 16 miles



Pirates

Reefs

Caves



Pirates

Pirates

Muluk  
Approx. 180 miles

Standing stone

The Flowered Isle

Pirates

The Green Isles

Safe

River of Palms

Lake of Palms

Safe

Friendly Village

Safe

Pirates

Pirates

The Isle of Fear

Pirates



# Quick References for The DM:

## Chart Two

### The Zakharan Calendar

Al-Toril, the planet of which Zakhara is a part, has 365 days to its year. Each year is divided into twelve months of 30 days each (which roughly matches the orbit of the planet's single moon). The Zakharan calendar also includes five High Holy Days, special days which belong to no month.

### Months of The Year

Taraq	January
Masta	February
Magarib	March
Gammam	April
Mihla	May
Qawafil	June
Safa	July
Dar	August
Riyah	September
Nau	October
Rahat	November
Saris	December

### High Holy Days

Ahad, Atnen, Salas, Arba, and Yasad: these are the five High Holy Days. They follow the month of Qawafil and precede Safa each year. From dawn until dusk, the High Holy Days are a time of faith, meditation, and fasting. It has been said that even the most despicable thief thinks twice before committing any crimes during the High Holy Days. Nights are a different matter. After the sun sets, there is great celebration, feasting, and dancing. The greatest festivals take place in Huzuz.

Yasad is called Ascension Day. The first Grand Caliph is said to have ascended the throne on this date, and each Grand Caliph who succeeded him also assumed rulership on Ascension Day. When the rulership remains unchanged, Yasad is distinguished by the Grand Caliph's public appearance and worship in the Golden Mosque. Many pilgrims flock to the mosque on this day to hear him speak.

### Local Celebrations

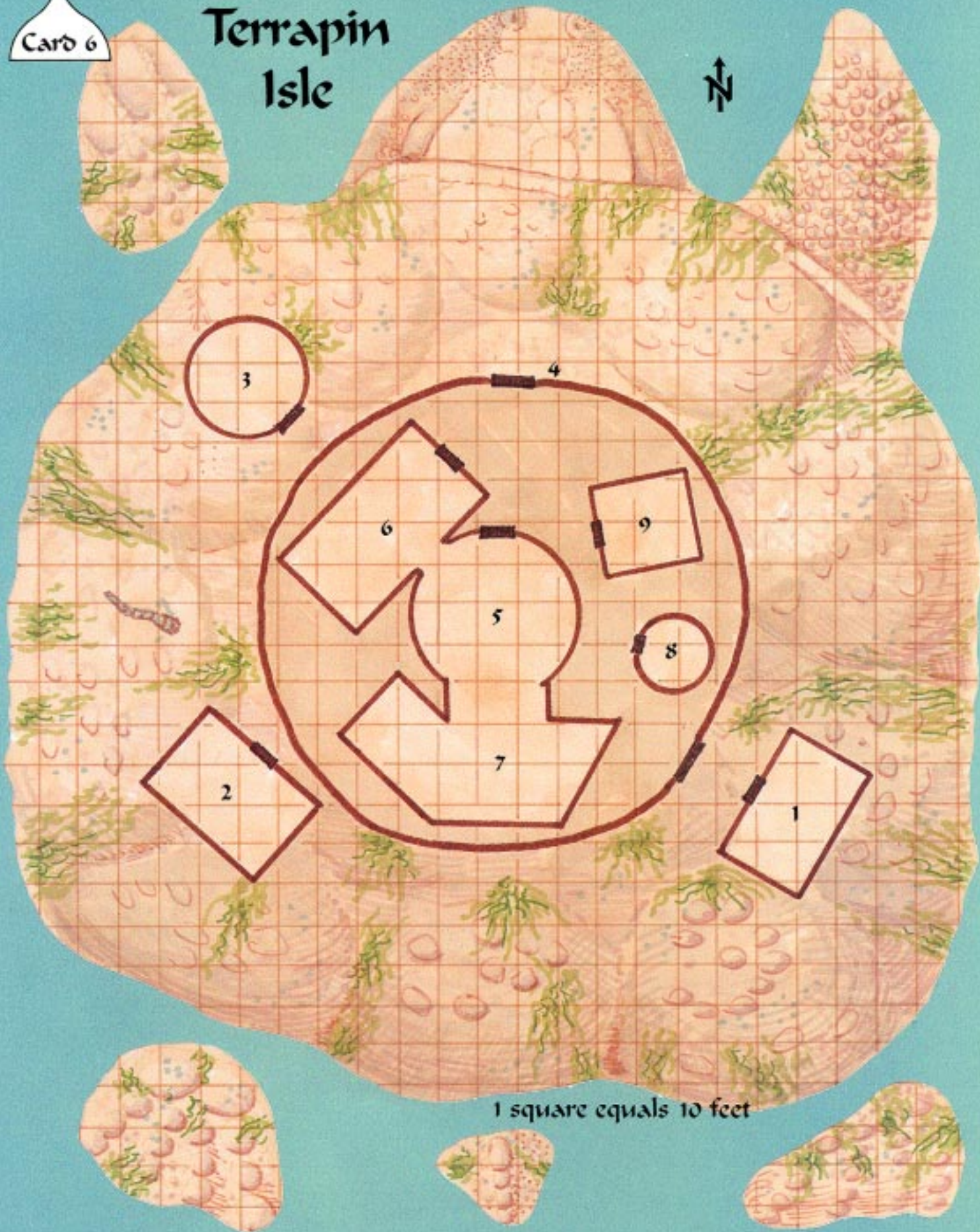
Many cities in Zakhara have their own celebrations commemorating local battles, miracles, or great leaders of the past. For example, Gana, the City of Riches, holds a spectacular three-day festival each year to mark the end of the pearl season. Most cities observe the local ruler's birthday with feasts and entertainments; such celebrations usually start in the morning and last well into the evening. Citizens of Huzuz celebrate the Grand Caliph's birthday with parades and processions throughout the day. The current Grand Caliph, Khalil al-Assad al-Zahir (hmF/f/20), was born on 27 Dar.

Qudra celebrates the Grand Caliph's birthday with a solemn procession of the various mamluk units, who march in ordered ranks to the Mosque of Blood where each mamluk reaffirms his or her loyalty and obedience to the Grand Caliph.

The people of Hawa celebrate whenever they feel like it. In recent years, the Corsair Council has staged a mock sea battle each year commemorating Hawa's victory over the mamluks of Qudra ten years ago. This was intended to encourage the citizens so that if there is a next time, they may be more easily rallied to the city's defense.

Card 6

# Terrapin Isle



1 square equals 10 feet



# Quick References for The DM:

## Quick Starts and Random Encounters

### Town and City Encounters:

- The party has just arrived in a strange town. As they ride in or enter the gates of the city, a crowd of children descends on them, begging for coins or offering their services as guides. They are literally surrounded and closely pressed by a mob of clamoring, pushing children. One small urchin is particularly persistent, following the characters and telling them he or she is the finest and most honest guide in the city.

At some point after the characters manage to rid themselves of most of the children (either through throwing a few small coins down a side street or some other ploy), one of them notices that an item of significance to that character has been stolen. Whether magical or mundane, the item should be something the character really wants back. It must also have been small enough to have been grabbed in the middle of the crowd. The child may prove invaluable as a guide to the houses of the other children or might know about the halfling thief who disguises himself as a child. . . .

- A frantic woman runs toward the PCs and begs them to help her. She is being chased by a burly man waving a scimitar and shouting "My sword! O foolish woman, where is my sword?" over and over. She doesn't tell the party that the man is her husband, or that the reason he is carrying on so is because she foolishly traded in his old, battered-looking sword for this bright, shiny new one. Alas, the old one was quite magical. If the characters don't attack the man (who is careful not to strike his wife despite his fury) and can get him to calm down, they might even be employed to locate the weapon trader, who seems to have left town. . . .

### Traveling and Non-City Encounters:

- The characters are traveling through unfamiliar territory when a startling but ultimately harmless spell effect occurs almost on top of them. Before they can quite get their bearings, another spell materializes. Though not intended as a harmful encounter, this can be used as such by making the spells ones that inflict damage.

The characters have wandered onto ground zero of a contest between two wizards to see who is the more creative mage. They are delighted to have the party as unsuspecting guinea pigs. The mages might be twins, husband and wife, or old rivals. Each revels in having invisibility and nondetection spells and devices. It makes the game so much more fun when nobody can figure out where they are. . . .

- Meeting other travelers by chance, the characters are taken by surprise when one of the strangers looks at one of the characters in a puzzled, almost unbelieving way, then steps forward and warmly embraces the character, smiling broadly. Either the character greatly resembles a good friend of the stranger, or perhaps the stranger was saved from certain death just a few miles farther down the road by the character's mark (genie double). The party could be led into an intrigue if the stranger is an agent for someone and believes the character is too. . . .

- Coming upon an abandoned palanquin, the characters decide to investigate the strange markings nearby. The occupant and the bearers may have been attacked by beasts, might have stopped to refresh themselves at a nearby river, or could have been magically shrunk and taken away in a bottle. . . .



The Chador

The Dune

Ravenwing

The Camel's Hump

# Corsair

Lake of Palms

Safe Cove village

Chaos Bay

WARRIORS

D



# THE GREAT SEA

CAMPAIGN

Corsairs of the Great Sea



1 inch equals 30 miles

## Great Sea

(Bahar al-Kibar)

The Dancer  
(Al-Raqsa)

The Bird  
(Al-Tir)

The Fortress

1





Dahab Islands

Lahib Islands

Mina

Al-Garnal Bay

**Ondra**  
City of Power

Al-Faddi River

Tahlat

Ashal

Al-Faddi River

Al-Sart River

City of Soldiers

Sea of Caravans

Sue

Caravans

(Al-Qalat)



Pit of the Ghuls

Genies' Anvil

Mountains of the Lizard's Tongue

Lake of the Ghuls

Oasis of the Desert Mosque

CARAVANS  
(Bahar al-Dahil)

Amman Oasis

Genies' Caravan



Island of Gardens  
(Al-Hada'iq)

The Teeth

The Wizard's Reach

River of Palms

ms  
of

Al-Azra Wasi



Al-Harir River & Falls

The Fingers

# Hawa

City of Chaos

aos

ay

The Eyes  
(Al-Oyun)

The Nose  
(Al-Amf)

# Qasib

City of Wands



Al-Hamir River

# Domains



**Muhuk**  
City of Kings

**Umara**  
City of Knights

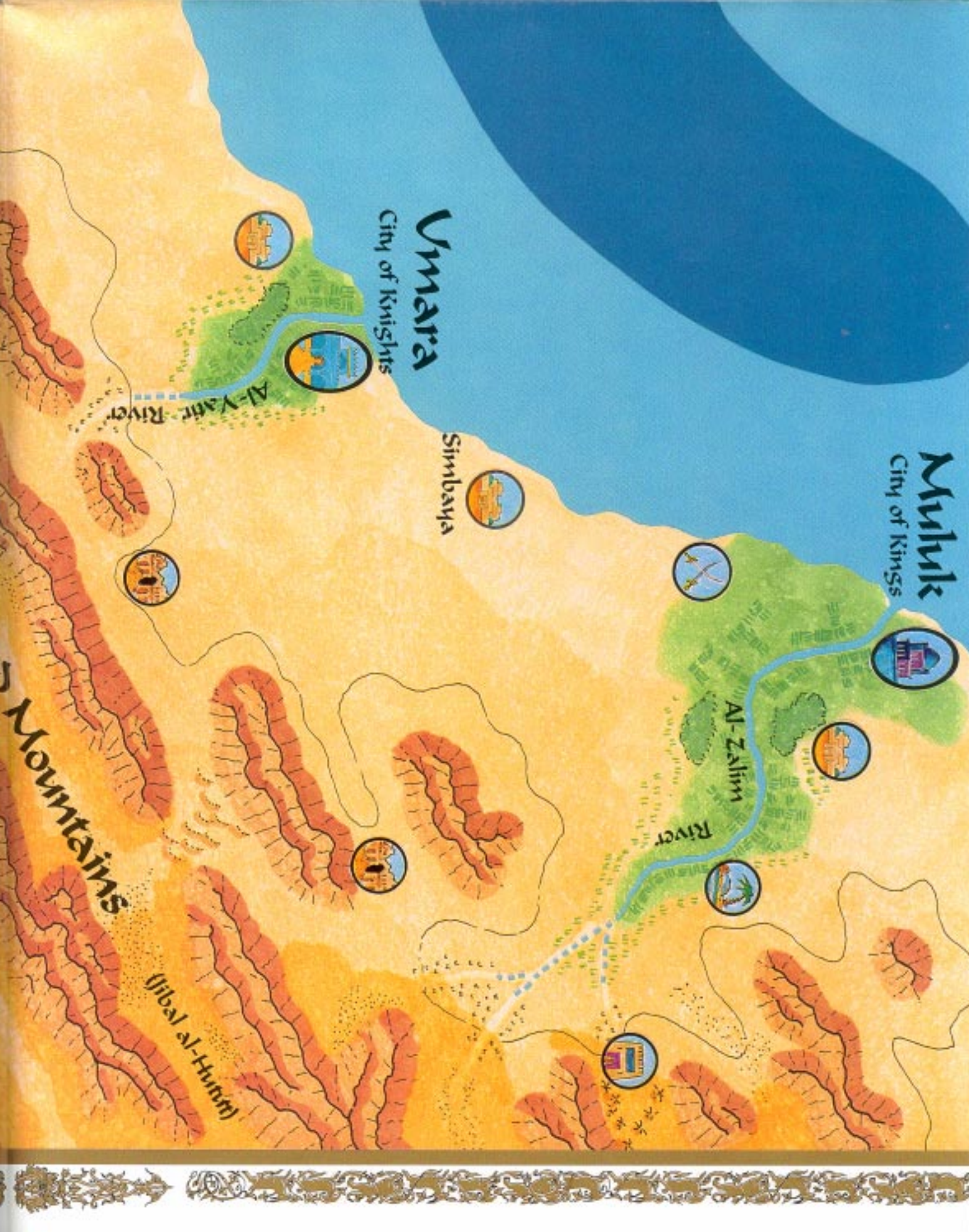
Simbaya

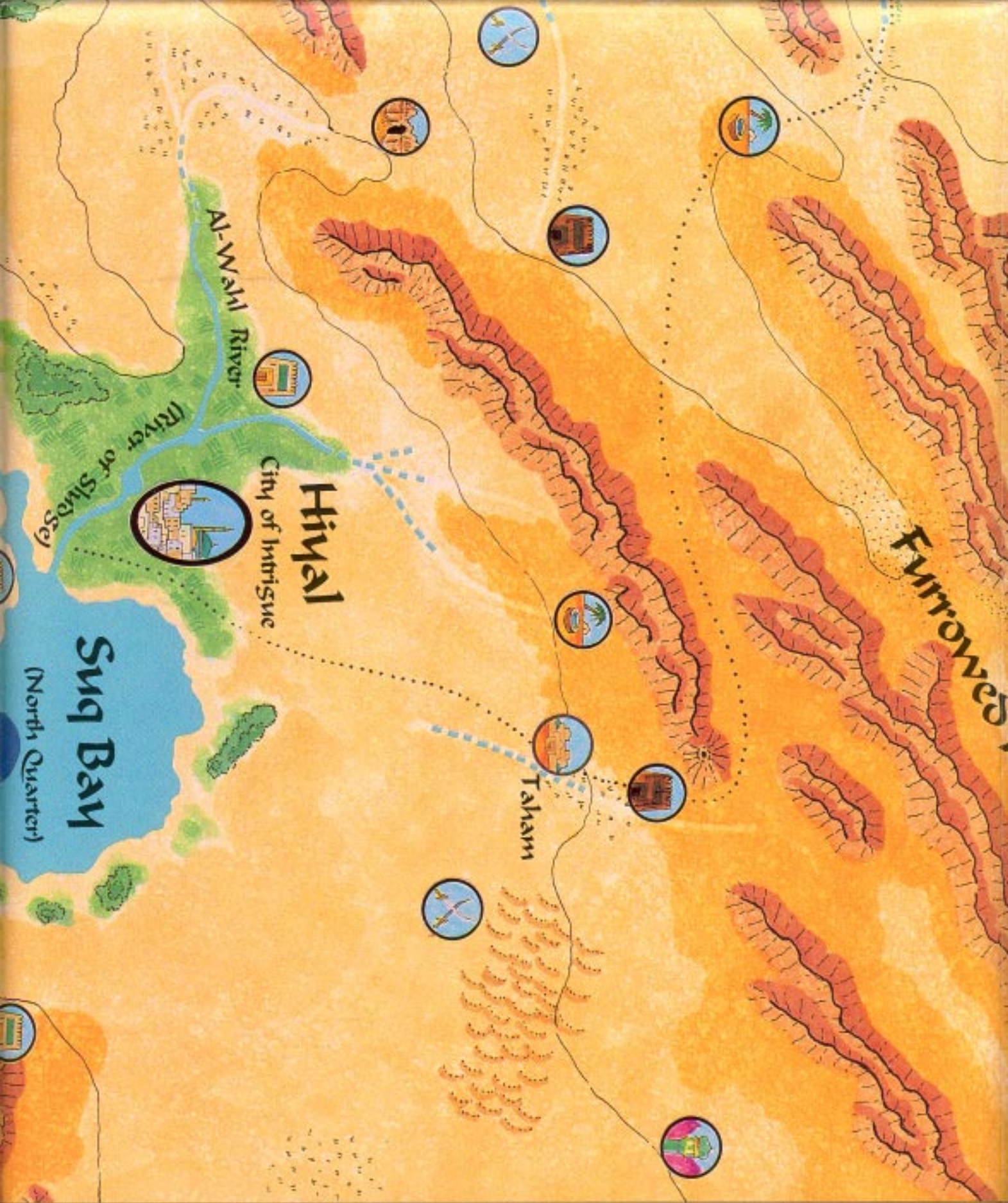
**Mountains**

(Jibal al-Hutth)

**Al-Zalim**  
River

**Al-Yafir**  
River





Sud Bay  
(North Quarter)

River of Sivas

Al-Wahl River

City of Imtriguc

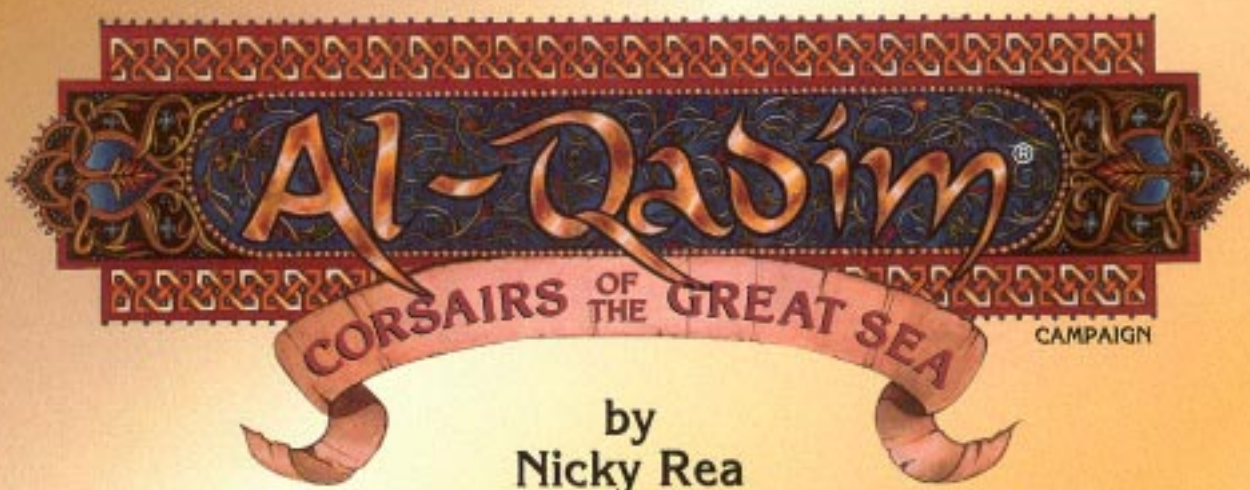
Hiyal

Taham

Furrowed



9449xxxx0701



# Al-Qadim<sup>®</sup>

CORSAIRS OF THE GREAT SEA

CAMPAIGN

by  
Nicky Rea

Set Sail with the Pirates of Chaos!



A thousand welcomes, noble friend! I see your eye is as keen as the eagle and your mind as sharp as my jambiya, for you hold in your hand a great treasure. This box contains everything needed to launch an epic adventure featuring corsairs and mamluks:

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