

# City of Cats

BY RICHARD PETT

CITYBOOK AND ADVENTURE



# City of Cats

## credits

**LEAD DESIGNER** Richard Pett

**ADDITIONAL DESIGN** Richard Green, Shawn Merwin,  
Kelly Pawlik

**EDITING LEAD** Meagan Maricle

**COVER ARTIST** Mateusz Wilma

**INTERIOR ARTISTS** Miguel Regodón Harkness,  
Julia Metzger, David Auden Nash, William O'Brien,  
Florian Stitz, Egil Thompson

**CARTOGRAPHY** Alex Moore, Tommi Salama

**GRAPHIC DESIGN** Marc Radle

**LAYOUT** Marc Radle

**VIRTUAL TABLETOP CONVERSION** Nic Bradley  
and Linda Buth

**DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL GROWTH** Blaine McNutt

**ART DIRECTOR** Marc Radle

**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR** Amanda Hamon

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS** T. Alexander Stangroom

**PUBLISHER** Wolfgang Baur

A special thanks to the designers, editors, and contributors to earlier versions of the adventures in this book:  
Wolfgang Baur, Amanda Hamon, Greg Marks, and Steve Winter.

Midgard and Kobold Press are trademarks of Open Design. All rights reserved.

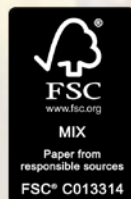
**Open Game Content:** The Open Content includes the brotherhood of fezzes magic item, the kitten to lioness spell, and the monster statistics and abilities in the Monsters and NPCs Appendix, except for the Bastet Warrior-Priestess, Basteti Catfolk, Basteti Cat Burglar, Catslide Monitor, Qadif-Ja, and Scribe of Thoth-Hermes. All other material is Product Identity, especially place names, character names, locations, story elements, background, and fiction.

No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission.

©2021 Open Design LLC. All rights reserved.

[www.koboldpress.com](http://www.koboldpress.com)

Printed on FSC® – certified sustainable forest products.



**KOBOLD  
Press**

# table of contents

<b>PER-BASTET, THE CITY OF CATS</b> .....	<b>4</b>	The Flotsam of the River of Sand .....	40
Past .....	5	At the Lion Gate.....	41
Present.....	5	Sights, Sounds, and Smells of the	
Climate.....	6	Monument District .....	42
Riverlands .....	6	Adventures in the Monument District .....	42
Passage of the Gods.....	6	<b>Palace District</b> .....	<b>43</b>
Monolith Colonnade.....	6	Gilded District .....	43
River of Sand .....	6	Haakim's Agents.....	43
Economy.....	6	The Nine Millennia Archive.....	44
Leaders and Government .....	7	Royal Entertainments .....	45
The City's Call .....	10	Food in the Palace District .....	46
Status in Per-Bastet.....	10	Paranoia Abounds .....	46
<b>District of the Cat</b> .....	<b>13</b>	Living in Per-Bastet.....	46
Caterwaul.....	13	Adventures in the Palace District.....	48
Adventures in the District of the Cat.....	17	<b>Perfume District</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Guard District</b> .....	<b>17</b>	The Still .....	49
Per-Bastet's Military .....	18	The Streets of the Still.....	53
The Street of Many Fools .....	18	Adventures in the Still.....	53
Sights, Sounds, and Smells of the		<b>The Hunt</b> .....	<b>54</b>
Streets of Per-Bastet .....	24	What Happened at the Hunt.....	54
Adventures in the Guard District.....	24	Untamed Hunting Grounds.....	55
<b>District of the Hyena</b> .....	<b>25</b>	Dubious Guides .....	55
Shanty Above and Below .....	25	Terrible Denizens .....	57
Gnoll Games.....	26	Residents in Hiding.....	58
Cruel Games and Crueler Mistresses.....	27	Sights, Sounds, and Smells of the Hunt .....	58
Fun in the Last Crucible .....	27	Adventures in the Hunt .....	59
The Undercity.....	27	<b>Wharf District</b> .....	<b>59</b>
Sights, Sounds, and Smells of the Undercity.....	27	Thriving Trade Hub.....	59
Greedy, Greedy, Greedy Gnolls .....	28	Abdrin Al-Rashir.....	59
More Than Words.....	29	Medina Al-Rashir General Features .....	61
Local Gnolls .....	30	Adventures in the Wharf District.....	65
Gnolls and Ghouls.....	31	<b>ADVENTURES IN PER-BASTET</b> .....	<b>66</b>
Adventures in the District of the Hyena.....	31	<b>CAT AND MOUSE</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>Lioness District</b> .....	<b>31</b>	Adventure Background .....	67
The Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet .....	32	Adventure Summary .....	68
Lioness Locals .....	34	Creating PCs for this Adventure .....	69
The Palace and Wharf of Shmir.....	34	<b>Part One: New Friends</b> .....	<b>69</b>
Ubdul's Cloud Pleasure Palace.....	34	Mistress Henna Mjelidi .....	69
Madame Xir's Vertical Theater .....	35	Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor .....	71
Endless Diversity—Many Streets and Many Stories .....	35	Hakaan's Home .....	71
Adventures in the Lioness District.....	37	<b>Part Two: Into the Perfume District</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>Monument District</b> .....	<b>37</b>	The Moneylender .....	75
The Dead by Our Side.....	37	The Blind Man .....	75
Incredible Monuments.....	40		

The Laundry Woman .....	75
The Despicable Yet Beloved Cat .....	77
Festering Heth's .....	78
Return to Festering Heth's .....	81
Raheed's Squat .....	82
<b>Part Three: Three Sides to Every Story .....</b>	<b>82</b>
The Square of Lions .....	84
A Final Standoff .....	84
Conclusion .....	84
<b>THREE LITTLE PIGS .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Adventure Background .....	85
Adventure Summary .....	86
Adventure Hooks .....	86
Beginning the Adventure—A Race Against Time ....	86
Pigs in Blankets.....	87
A Messenger Arrives!.....	87
<b>Part One: Nulah's Tale .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Seeking a Magic Pig in the Wharf District .....	88
Trouble at the Wharf .....	88
A Peculiar Auction .....	88
Running the Auction .....	89
Latifa and Her Poultry .....	90
Mahmud Lurks .....	90
Nulah Saved! .....	90
<b>Part Two: Armina's Peril.....</b>	<b>91</b>
A Dash to the Hunting Grounds .....	91
Riding Northward .....	91
Outside the Endless Bazaar .....	91
A Sudden Arrival! .....	92
Chasing a Pig .....	92
Armina .....	92
The Man Kissed by a Pig .....	93
Gnoll Hunters .....	93
Nefertari .....	93
Obstacles .....	93
Three Fat Men in Fezzes .....	93
Armina Saved! .....	94
<b>Part Three: Madgit's Story .....</b>	<b>95</b>
Something Ratty and Wicked This Way Cooks .....	95
The Souk of False Smiles .....	95
Aibtisamat, the Ever-Smiling Host .....	95
Madgit's Story .....	96
The Old Cellar .....	96
Waiting Outside... ..	98
Three Little Un-Pigs .....	98
Conclusion .....	99

<b>GRIMALKIN.....</b>	<b>100</b>
Adventure Background.....	100
Adventure Summary .....	102
Beginning the Adventure—The Beautiful Gnoll.....	102
<b>Part One: What's Happening</b>	
<b>at the Charnel House? .....</b>	<b>105</b>
Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor .....	105
A Woman in Mourning? .....	106
Charnel House Features.....	107
<b>Part Two: The Plot Thickens.....</b>	<b>112</b>
Where's the Body? .....	112
Sinister Followers.....	113
Abdul-Haqq's Lair .....	114
<b>Part Three: The Growling Sanctuary .....</b>	<b>117</b>
False Entrance .....	117
Growling Sanctuary Features.....	117
Conclusion .....	121
<b>APPENDIX: MONSTERS AND NPCs .....</b>	<b>122</b>
Abdul-Haqq .....	122
Anubian .....	124
As'haad Al Heth.....	124
Bastet Temple Cat.....	125
Bastet Warrior-Priestesses.....	125
Catfolk, Basteti.....	126
Catslide Monitor.....	127
City Watch Captain .....	128
Death Sentry .....	129
Edimmu .....	130
Eughon, Trollkin Call-Seer.....	130
Ghulgrah, Gnoll of Steel .....	131
Gnoll Slaver .....	132
Jan'kim, Miracle Receiver .....	133
Jesferet, the Perfume Maker .....	133
Karima Gamila.....	135
Kellicko, Caterwaul Chronicler .....	135
Krakatat, Tomb Raider.....	136
Mahmud .....	137
Necromancer.....	138
Phyrestra, Scourge of the Dead.....	138
Qadif-Ja, Ravenfolk Brute .....	139
Ratfolk.....	140
Rift Swine.....	141
Scribe of Thoth-Hermes .....	142
Second-Story Falcon .....	143
Undead Factotum.....	144
War Ostrich .....	145
Werecrocodile .....	146
<b>APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS .....</b>	<b>147</b>



## per-bastet, the city of cats

In southern Nuria Natal, where the great River Nuria narrows into a gorge hundreds of miles long, the river streams around the monolithic ankles of 800-foot-tall statues of gods. Their towering forms loom over the river just before its waters course out into the open desert again, broadening and slowing at the foot of the gleaming city called Per-Bastet.

Thriving, bewildering, and roiling with frenetic life, the City of Cats has stood for unknown thousands of years at the crossroads of the Southlands. It is a city of nine districts, nine pyramids, and nine lives. Each time

the city has fallen, it has risen again to sing its praises to Bastet, the patron goddess who walks among her chosen.

Per-Bastet is the city of cats and gnolls, of perfume and temples, of abounding gold, mithral, and diamond mines, of alchemy and prophesy, of imported spice and draconic slave markets, and of sumptuous brothels and brutal fighting pits. With its mercurial patron goddess and a populace of myriad carnivorous races and predatory species, the city thrives on the energy of its own lack of harmony.



## PAST

History does not record the city's founding date, although all agree the city has existed for thousands of years. Gnolls claim they were the original founders. Cats know better. This dispute still rages. The first god-king dynasties of what is now Nuria used Per-Bastet as their capital for 2,200 years, until power shifted downriver to the north 1,800 years ago. The god-kings worshipped many different deities in Per-Bastet, although most people kept their devotion to the cat goddess, and Bastet's cult remained.

## PER-BASTET, CITY OF CATS

**Rulers:** Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit, Mother of Destiny and Defender of the Realm; High Priestess Nafrini; Haty-a Haakim, Prince and Nomarch of Per-Bastet, Third Brother of God-King Thutmoses



**Important Personages:** Lamasara Fahir, Vizier of the Council of Sands; Warlord Raykar-Takur

**Population:** 66,150 (22,000 humans, 13,500 basteti, 12,000 gnolls, 8,250 slaves [predominantly kobolds and dragonborn], 3,550 dwarves, 1,000 jinnborn, 1,125 ghuls, 1,300 darakhul, 1,200 ghouls, 600 subeks, 450 aasimar, 300 tieflings, 125 vampires, 750 others [elementals, djinni, efreeti, nagas, sphinxes])

**Great Gods:** Bastet (patron), Anu-Akma, Aten, Ninkash, Wadjet

**Trade Goods:** Diamonds, gold, mithral, fine perfumes, rubies


Per-Bastet has been defeated and razed nine times, or so the stories say. Each time, it was reborn and rose again to glory. Over the past four centuries, it has repelled numerous Mharoti invasions, almost always with paltry support from other Nurian cities.

## PRESENT

One can best describe Per-Bastet today as chaos bridled by patriotism. Here, cats, humans, gnolls, the cat-like humans known as basteti, and the city's beloved Dead (see page 37) reside together with great energy, if never peace.

A large proportion of the city's population is carnivorous and predatory by nature. While most city dwellers are not evil, few fear conflict. Days here are largely peaceful, if frequently frenetic, but nights often become wild and dangerous.

The city's ancient criminal code contains penalties as severe as those found anywhere in Midgard, but enforcement is uneven. Minor infractions meet harsh punishment in the Palace District, and everyone knows to behave in the District of the Lioness. In the Wharf and Perfume Districts, robbery and burglary see more prosecution than assault. Citizens enforce their own justice in the District of the Cat, tribal law rules the District of the Hyena, and the Hunt enjoys no laws at all. On the whole, the city provides fertile ground for lawlessness.



## CLIMATE

The Crescent and Sarklan Deserts' summertime temperatures average 110 degrees Fahrenheit during daytime and plunge to 45 degrees at night. Winter temperatures range from 65 degrees in daytime to 32 degrees at night. In contrast, the city and its riverlands enjoy daytime and nighttime temperatures between 90 and 70 degrees in summer and 75 and 40 degrees in winter. Scholars cannot explain the origin of these climatic anomalies. Divinations suggest both divine and primal elemental magics play a part.

Per-Bastet and its lands are generally so arid that songs tell of the city's crystalline nights beneath blazing stars. Nonetheless, in spring and fall, fogs often rise in billowing banks from the river, enshrouding everything in echoing clouds for days at a time.

## RIVERLANDS

The rainy-season storms inundating the lands south of Nuria Natal never touch Per-Bastet. The level lowlands running north along the river depend on the massive river floods that those distant rains produce. The shoreline marshes teem with birds, small mammals, and crocodiles, making them a favorite place for many in the city to hunt, and the river is flush with fish.

Well-maintained canals and irrigation ditches carry the flood waters through the reedy marshlands lining the banks deep into the verdant fields. While fruit orchards flourish here, grain fields and rich grasses predominate, nourishing the extensive herds of goats and cattle that the city's largely carnivorous populace needs. It is not uncommon to witness an undead shepherd, one of the city's ever-loyal Dead, serenely tending a herd.

## PASSAGE OF THE GODS

South of Per-Bastet, the River Nuria runs through a cliff-sided gorge called the Passage of the Gods. Along the eastern side of the ravine, 20 ancient statues of Nurian deities, each over 80 feet tall, stand side-by-side in alcoves carved into the soaring wall. No one knows who crafted the monolithic figures of this breathtaking pilgrimage site. All are incredibly ancient. The southernmost ones are weathered beyond recognition, but the northern ones retain majesty that awes and humbles viewers.

All of the immense statues look down as if in judgment on river travelers, all except one. The northernmost statue depicts Bastet. Her alcove faces northwest, and her head turns north. Her visage gazes down with a slight, enigmatic smile on the city bearing her name.

The next statue after Bastet depicts her consort Anu-Akma, followed by Aten, Horus, Ninkash, and so on down to the last four gods, so ancient and weathered that their features are lost and mortals have forgotten their names.

## MONOLITH COLONNADE

A row of widely-spaced monoliths (Area 2 on the Per-Bastet map) rises from the river, arcing around the city in a half-moon-shape. A divine ritual, known only to Bastet's highest priests, awakens an ancient defensive magic woven into this triple colonnade, guarding the city's river approach. Most of the monoliths are etched or sculpted, each with its own unique and cryptic carvings. Legends say most came from cities that Per-Bastet conquered long ago, and many are rumored to have magical effects reflecting the conquered cities' arcane proficiencies.

The two tallest monoliths in the central row (Area 3 on the Per-Bastet map) bear an entablature, forming a colossal, free-standing, door-like frame. This doorway is 200 feet tall and 75 feet wide. A colossal stone statue of a sea-dwelling feline with an eel-like body winds halfway out of the water up each supporting monolith.

## RIVER OF SAND

A moving, quarter-mile-wide flood of sand winds like a river out of the heart of the Sands of Sorrow to cross the Sarklan Desert at speeds averaging five miles an hour. Desert folk call it the River of Sand, and they say it is the last trickle of the great flow that the gods poured to fill all the deserts of the world. Others spin a variant tale of a great hourglass broken and spilling time.

As it approaches Per-Bastet, the torrent of sand narrows and accelerates to 15 miles per hour. With a rumbling roar, it courses through the city's core, where numerous aging bridges arch over it. It churns beneath the great arena straddling the Districts of the Hyena and the Hunt, then it pours into a vast, funnel-shaped crater in the ground called "the Pit," and vanishes. Some objects carried into the Pit are found years, decades, or centuries later, often hundreds or thousands of miles away in seemingly random spots in the Sarklan Desert or Sands of Sorrow. Many appear far older or younger than they should.

## ECONOMY

Most of Per-Bastet's enormous wealth flows from the gold, mithral, diamond, and ruby mines carved into the tors' northern heights. The bounty extracted from the tors maintains the city's prosperity, funds its roads and walls, and finances huge quantities of livestock (most

imported and some raised in the nearby riverlands) to feed its people. Political battles for control of these mines occupy the city's wealthiest and most powerful figures.

Per-Bastet depends on trade. Bountiful as they are, the city's riverlands do not produce enough meat and other food for the populace. Moreover, the exchange of goods from the north, from Siwal, and from the southern realms drives the city's prosperity.

## LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT

The Council of Sands, led by Haty-a Haakim, handles much of Per-Bastet's day-to-day administration.

The council has four official advisors: Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit, High Priestess Nafrini, Lady Alashra al-Zania of the Pallid Court, and Warlord Raykar-Takur (see page 18).

## A SHIFT IN POWER

Three years ago, Haty-a Haakim, who gained greater mastery of his oracular powers with each passing year, foresaw echoes of an attempt on his life. Straining to see the details more clearly, his eyes were clouded with visions when Panshar el-Elai, the werehyena Vizier of the Council of Sands, appeared before him with a weapon raised. His shock at the sudden appearance of the Vizier in his visions and in his physical reality caused a backlash of magical energy. When the dust settled, Haakim was unscathed, and Panshar el-Elai was a spectral, jackal-headed undead. His memories and sense of self muddled by the backlash of magic and the transition to one of the Dead, Panshar now believes himself to be an avatar of Anu-Akma. Meskhenit, curious about Panshar's transformation and how it relates to Haakim's growing power, gave Panshar leadership of a unit of spectral undead in the Army of Night to keep a closer eye on him.

## THE COUNCIL OF SANDS

At the behest of Haty-a Haakim, the Council of Sands appointed the elfmarked Keeper of Laws, Lamasara Fahir, as the new Vizier after Panshar's betrayal. Her voracious appetite for strict adherence and enforcement of the capital's laws often brings her into clashes with Meskhenit, Nafrini, and the city's more chaotic populous. However, her renewed loyalty to Haakim, who has recently been more present in public and on the Council of Sands, reinforces the Nomarch's previously weakened political power and makes the Council a political power Meskhenit and Nafrini can't dismiss.

**Akman-Sut, Guardian of Coin.** Guardian Akman-Sut is a middle-aged, barrel-shaped, dark-skinned dwarf with a gleaming, bald head, a short, forked black beard, and

golden eyes that never close. He wears ornate robes and ostentatious jewelry, and he owns a sizable share in one of the local gold mines. More practical than crafty, his only ethic is the balance and power of money.

**Master Salwar Bashir, Keeper of the City.** Master Bashir is a plump, 52-year-old man with florid skin, a bald pat but for a single long braid sprouting from the middle of his head, and watery, colorless eyes. He has a disheveled mien and speaks around a long pipe. He is a gifted civil engineer whose appearance belies a vigorous mind and boundless energy. Enthusiastic to a fault, he places the physical workings of the city above all else. He also prioritizes the overall morale of each racial group and each individual district in the city above power or money.

**Shemayet Sabah Tafez, Voice of the City.** Shemayet Tafez is a talented basteti musician and devoted follower of Bastet. An ally of Nafrini, she was recently appointed to the council to fill the seat left vacant by Vizier Fahir's promotion. She enjoys mingling with the people of Per-Bastet and often has a better understanding of the daily lives and desires of the people than the other council members. Vizier Fahir believes Shemayet Tafez's mingling leaves her blind to the greater concerns of the city as a whole, while Master Bashir appreciates the basteti's unique insight.

**Vizier Lamasara Fahir, Keeper of the Council.** Vizier Fahir is a mature, elfmarked woman with silver-gray skin, auburn hair piled high, and deep purple eyes. She wears simple jewelry and a lustrous black sari with silver and blue trim. The struggle to maintain laws in a city whose populous views all laws as circumstantial and flexible turned her attitude dour for years. With her recent appointment as Vizier, however, her attitude has lightened, and she sees the promotion as an opportunity to affect positive change in the city and to strengthen its ties to the other cities of Nuria Natal.

## HAAKIM, HATY-A AND NOMARCH OF PER-BASTET

Gentle Haty-a Haakim is the third brother of the God-King Thutmoses and Nomarch of the City of Cats. An able minister and kindly soul, this small, middle-aged man lurks behind dark eyes that mask deep troubles. A fall into the River of Sand years ago awoke within him a curious ability to see visions, an unwanted seer's talent that troubles him. Terrified of inadvertently bringing about the end of the city, he stepped away from most of his administrative duties for a few years as he studied his growing oracular powers.

Though he has gained greater understanding of his power, he is still wracked by conflicting visions of the city's rise to eternal heavenly greatness or sudden utter



Meskhenit is the risen great-grandmother of King Thutmoses, ruler of all Nuria Natal, and she presents herself as a spectacular beauty with ivory skin and raven black hair adorned in the full regal attire of a god-queen. She often rises above the ground while walking, as if striding on sands blown away long ago. She sends a smell of exotic spices before her when she wishes others to know of her approach. Her otherworldly aura causes lights to dim and become more colorful, hot dry breezes to rise indoors or out, and a distant sound of cymbals or wind chimes to follow her. She does not breathe unless speaking and trails fine sand wherever she passes. She remains unseen for seasons or years at a time, but she sometimes

destruction. He sees riddles and fate in every blink, every change of wind direction, and, especially, in every tale he hears. Because of this, petitioners with unique backgrounds, those from outside of Per-Bastet, and those who dabble in divination magic have a high chance of obtaining an audience with him.

**Relations with Other Leaders.** Years ago, Meskhenit encouraged Haakim to take time away from the political sphere to hone his oracular powers, a decision that, ultimately, saved his life. Though he has returned to the political sphere, he still values Meskhenit's guidance and appreciates every appearance she makes on the council. In the fog of his visions, he saw Justiciar Lamasara Fahir leading the Council of Sands to decisions that would bring greater glory to Per-Bastet in the future. He encouraged the council to appoint her to the empty vizier seat and, in turn, gained her loyalty.

#### REBORN QUEEN-GODDESS MESKHENIT

In the lands controlled by Per-Bastet, the pharaonic lich Meskhenit—*independent, aloof, mysterious and ruthless*—is second only to Bastet herself in power. She leaves administration of the city to Nafrini and the Council of Sands, but she views herself as the true defender of this great desert jewel, and no dragon army, undead lord, or god is ever going to take it from her.



walks the city on errands of her own. When she is seen, she is rarely far from a silver house cat. This cat, it's said, is possessed by the ghost of a keenly intelligent dire tiger that once served the god-queen as a handmaiden.

Despite her more sinister nature, Meskhenit causes city denizens no harm. She views city powers as children who occasionally must be corrected, but only when there's a real need. She views all other denizens like unruly grandchildren: prizes to be protected, but whose wild and at-times destructive antics are, in the great scheme of things, harmless. She nurtures their loyalty and pride, knowing that this will enlarge the Dead's numbers when they die.

**Relations with Other Leaders.** Although she enjoys sparring with Lady Alashra, Meskhenit considers Nafrini the only political power worthy of serious consideration, but the recent strengthening of the Council of Sands gives her occasional pause. Meskhenit regularly interferes with Nafrini's church and political movements for entertainment and, perhaps, to test Nafrini's strength—after all, if Nafrini is weak, she may not be worthy to hold sway over Per-Bastet's people. When others saw Haakim as a fool or “empty chair” on the Council of Sands, Meskhenit saw the potential of his burgeoning mystical power. Over the years, she has nurtured his magical growth and knows having a great seer or true prophet on her side will serve her designs well.

#### HIGH PRIESTESS NAFRINI

Bastet's chosen living agent is the high priestess of the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet (see page 32), and she embodies the essence of the city. She appears publicly equally in her human and her hybrid werepanther form. In human form, she is a tall, lithesome, exquisite beauty with ebony skin, large green eyes, and long, lustrous black hair. She has never met anyone better attired than herself.

Wherever Nafrini goes, cats of all kinds follow, and troupes of cats moving together down an alley are often attributed to her presence. She rarely ventures beyond the District of the Lioness without attracting a welcome entourage of gnolls. Ever regal, Nafrini is nonetheless welcoming to all Bastet worshippers. The gnolls of Per-Bastet are wholly enthralled by Nafrini, and most believe she is Bastet in the flesh.

**Beating Heart of Per-Bastet.** Nafrini's charismatic magnetism, the affinity she evokes in feline peoples, and her bond to the gnoll community help hold the city together. As wild, vicious, and ruthless as the gnolls' hearts may be, Nafrini makes them see all denizens of Bastet through her eyes. Hence, they largely curb their instincts for mayhem and slaughter while within city



walls. When the city is attacked, Nafrini commands several corps of basteti and great cats. She also frequently dispatches her basteti and awakened cats as emissaries and spies.


#### LADY ALASHRA AL-ZANIA AND THE PALLID COURT

From her island palace on the western edge of the Hunt, the sultry and exquisite Lady Alashra al-Zania has ruled the Pallid Court of Vampires for over 1,000 years. Her court owns a famous diamond mine deep in the nameless tors, once the richest in the lands but now all but tapped out. The wealth it generated should suffice for the court's extravagant needs for several more decades, but this seems a dismally short period to Lady Alashra.

The lady immerses herself deeply in the city's high society and throws sumptuous annual dances, reveling in the vampire cliché. Anyone of stature or reputation who enters the city is likely to receive an invitation to an elegant dinner.

The Pallid Court has sworn not to feed on Per-Bastet citizens unless:

- They volunteer (in which case they shall be treated well and never bled to serious harm).
- They violate a contract with a penalty of blood or permanent servitude (the court likes to purchase such contracts from others).
- They have committed a capital crime (this often turns the vampires into investigators and informants who are well connected with magistrates).
- They are found in the Hunt. Occasionally, Lady Alashra publicly disciplines an oath-breaker, but most people believe undisciplined transgressions occur nightly.



**Relations with Other Leaders.** Meskhenit views the vampires as worthy citizens, all the more so because of their lethality. She and Lady Alashra have a long history of deals and debts as both maneuver to manipulate the other. The Queen-Goddess does not deem Lady Alashra a genuine political power, but she enjoys their sparring immensely. Nafrini does not trust the vampires, but she respects the power that their extreme wealth, connections, and reputation carry enough that she treats with them civilly. Secretly, Nafrini finds the Lady so alluring it disturbs her. Nomarch Haakim seems unconcerned with the Pallid Court's presence, but the Council of Sands wrings its hands whenever the Lady's shadow crosses their threshold.

### THE CITY'S CALL

Most who dwell in Per-Bastet for more than several months become deeply loyal to the city. This devotion does not prevent all animosity toward other denizens. On the contrary, schemes, intrigues, protests, and criminal acts abound. Basteti lie in ambush to settle feuds with gnoll clans and Perfume District alchemists brew necromantic tinctures to poison the vampires of the Pallid Court.

But, viewed more broadly, the city's call makes Per-Bastet itself feel like true home. Moreover, the mystical, communal connection makes many folk view city residents of different factions, races, and even species as something like distant blood kin. An unspoken code of conduct exists that precludes many from inflicting lasting harm on fellow citizens absent dire provocation.

Most who linger also develop a strong affinity for cats. Said to embody both luck and life, cats become respected companions and familiars of the populace and are never simple pets. To the frequent visitor, even feline features become alluring, and the city's basteti prostitutes see the most profit from frequent visitors and recent residents.

Speculation abounds over whether the city's call is a blessing, a curse, or some other magical effect. Some lose their loyalty upon receiving curse-breaking magic, but others do not. Hearing the call is a predicate to joining the Dead.

If you wish to make the city's call a more active part of your campaign, see (see page 47).

### STATUS IN PER-BASTET

Status (*Midgard Worldbook*, p. 25) is a measure of how the people of Midgard view a particular PC, and it determines who NPCs address and defer to when interacting with the PCs. Status works similarly in Per-Bastet; however, the Status a PC gains or loses in Per-Bastet affects the PC's Status only within Per-Bastet or while interacting with citizens of Per-Bastet. At the GM's discretion, some actions might cause the PC to gain or lose Status outside of Per-Bastet.

PCs with higher Status receive more respect from the city's citizens, and they sometimes receive preferential treatment from authority figures. Those with lower Status are more likely to be targeted by petty thieves and disregarded by the citizens. Those with particularly low Status might even find themselves on the wrong end of a gnoll race in the Hunt, while those with particularly high Status might regularly receive invitations to events and galas in the Palace District.

PCs gain and lose Status through their actions, as detailed in the Per-Bastet Status Adjustments table. A PC can gain or lose Status from a particular action only once. At the GM's discretion, certain actions, such as murdering all the cats in a district or rooting out an entire Mharoti spy network hidden within multiple ranks of society, might cause the PC to gain or lose Status multiple times or in larger amounts.

### STARTING STATUS

A PC that enters Per-Bastet for the first time uses standard Status with the following adjustments:

- Add 1 for a PC who is a basteti.
- Add 2 for a PC who is a member of Bastet's priesthood, such as an acolyte or cleric.
- Subtract 1 for a PC who is a dragonborn or kobold.
- Subtract 2 for a PC who is a member of the Mharoti Empire.



# PER BASTET



RIVER NURIA

PASSAGE OF THE GODS

PERFUME DISTRICT

DISTRICT OF THE HYENA (GNOLL QUARTER)

PALACE DISTRICT

WHARF DISTRICT

LIONESS DISTRICT

THE HUNT

MONUMENT DISTRICT

DISTRICT OF THE CAT

GUARD DISTRICT



## district of the cat

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into her heart, blood, and pulse—the District of the Cat.

Per-Bastet has countless festivals, holy days, celebrations, and royal events. It seems that every day at least one and sometimes many more take place. Here we deal with just one. Among the oldest events, linking back to an event of great significance to the basteti of the city, is Caterwaul, or the Days of the Cat. Scheduled by the passing of celestial bodies, this event occurs regularly, yet the duration and dates vary from year to year, depending upon complex astrological computations.

### CATERWAUL

Caterwaul is an austere, celebratory, and nervous time for the priestesses of Bastet, for it is inextricably linked with the blossoming of fleeting catslide alleys (see sidebar) that spontaneously appear across the city before—almost always—later vanishing. The first catslide was discovered at this time back when the first god-kings made this place their capitol and sowed the seeds of the city's present name. Occasionally, new alleys remain after Caterwaul, and feline scholars believe the event has some presently unknown deeper significance. Catslides are as enigmatic as the cats they presumably exist to serve and remain mysterious. To most folk, unable to even sense the alleys, this event would pass without much consequence, but it is a time of importance to felines. Occasionally during the festival, a curious keening is heard upon the wind;

sensitive humanoids and some animals pick up this odd pitch, the sound of the Caterwaul, a noise some call the Herald. Unlike most of the rare but permanent catslide alleys that occur across the city, these fleeting catslides come and go during the course of the festival for reasons unknown, rarely leaving permanent traces.

They are not understood, but they are both feared and nervously welcomed as crooked kin by cats.

### WATCHFUL EYES

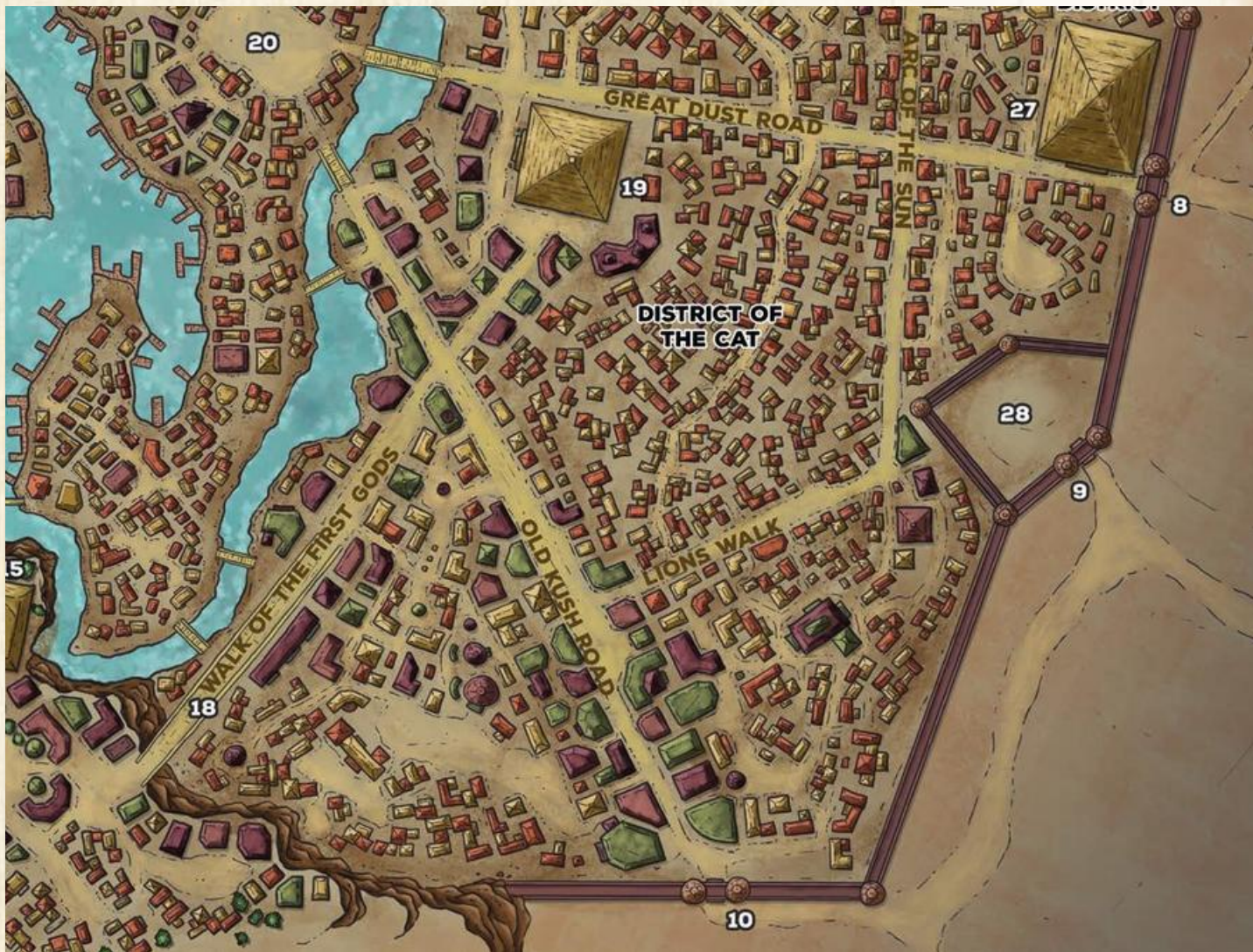
It is possible to know of but never understand catslide alleys. Only basteti can sense them, but observant non-felines can learn to detect them. The alleys, they say, are like the weather in far climes—ever changing and unpredictable, yet if one knows and studies the climate, patterns emerge. Two covert sisterhoods were formed by

### CATSLIDE ALLEYS

Seemingly peculiar to the City of Cats, catslide alleys are magical portals that lead to often distant places. Those who use the alleys find themselves transported to another cat-friendly place. Unfortunately, only cats truly know how to use the ways, although many have tried to follow them—often with devastating consequences. Many alleys are very short, mere portals that link one place to another with a single step, others link through long alleys and byways that sometimes hold demented (almost always feline) occupants.

### PER-BASTET MAP LEGEND

- |                             |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Statue of Bastet         | 13. Pyramid of Anuut-Tan, God-King of Prophecy            | 24. The Flood                                      |
| 2. Monolith Colonnade       | 14. Isle of Prophecy                                      | 25. Sunken Pyramid of Wadjet                       |
| 3. Seacat River Gate        | 15. Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet                     | 26. Pyramid of the Mother of Destiny               |
| 4. The Pit                  | 16. Plaza of the Goddess                                  | 27. Pyramid of Neferkahor, God-King of Vindication |
| 5. Hyena Gate               | 17. Pyramid of Shepkaru, Queen-Goddess of Origins         | 28. Sandship Harbor                                |
| 6. Lion Gate                | 18. Ramp to the Lioness District                          | 29. Great Sand Pyramid                             |
| 7. Panther Gate             | 19. Pyramid of Semerkhofu, Queen-Goddess of Endless Night | 30. The Pallid Court                               |
| 8. Tiger Gate               | 20. Grand Souk  | 31. Pyramid of Menkare, God-King of Judgment       |
| 9. Leopard Gate             | 21. Endless Bazaar  | 32. Temple of Anu-Akma                             |
| 10. Jaguar Gate             | 22. Flood Market  | 33. The Last Crucible                              |
| 11. Palace of Haty-a Haakim | 23. Bazaar of Lamentation                                 |  |
| 12. Council of Sands        |   |  |



the devout to keep a watchful eye upon the alleys. The alleys are in truth as much an annoyance as a boon to High Priestess Nafrini, who views them like many felines: often unpredictable, always curious, and sometimes dangerous. Bastet's priestesses see the work of the sisterhoods as necessary but secret, as occasional groups spring up seeking to use the alleys for darker purposes.

**Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage.** The first, the Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage, explore them and maintain them, tending their peculiar magic and seeking to catalogue each one—an impossible task. They record these voyages in the great Book of the Ways. A massive tome (indeed many tomes in one) written in unfathomable code, it is housed in the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet (Area 15 on the Per-Bastet map) and kept under obsessive guard. The few basteti that carry out this devout work are sometimes aided by a small group of minotaurs (referred to as the Blind Guides) whose infallible sense of mazes and the Great Labyrinth

enables them to keep cool heads when chaos unfolds—which it occasionally does. Though cats instinctively empathize with the alleys, minotaurs understand mazes, and their cool heads are sometimes better than instinct.

Without their feline friends to help find the alleys, however, minotaurs would be as unable as anyone of another race to find the catslides. Cats, it seems, are the only ones who know the secrets of the catslides, much to the annoyance of certain Great Labyrinth worshipping minotaurs who desire to know such secrets.

The basteti priestess of Bastet, Nefari-nim-Afraiti, is the present matriarch of the Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage. A woman of few words, she reports directly to High Priestess Nafrini on a monthly basis.

**The Sisterhood of the Alleys.** The second, much smaller group who watch the catslides is the Sisterhood of the Alleys. It is their task to keep the city safe from incursion and to ensure no one weaponizes the alleys for conflict, invasion, or conquest.

The more reckless and fearsome of the Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage join this fierce Sisterhood to ensure, by whatever means necessary, that the alleys are safe and as secret as they can be. During Caterwaul, their work comes to the fore because, sometimes, what lives within or emerges from the alleys is dangerous. Her Grace Ikram, a human priestess of Bastet, is the present leader of the Sisterhood of the Alleys. She coordinates the work of her small band of sisters with the aid of her confident catslide monitor (see page 127) Anriff the Compass, a minotaur Ikram saved from gnoll slavers over a decade ago. Anriff is very aggressive when it comes to defending the alleys and their secrets. She often takes it upon herself to stalk and punish those who use the alleys for their own gain, in particular gnolls, whom she loathes.

### THE FOLLY

The countless catwalks that hang above the broad avenues of the district are called “the Folly” and are where life truly thrives in the District of the Cat. Here, a particularly warm welcome is guaranteed for anyone who can spin a tall tale or sing a captivating song to the many basteti that call this place home. Strangers are amazed not only at this welcome, but often also by a glaring of cats that suddenly appear and sit, rapt, as some daring tale about a spoilt princess, a blind crocodile, or a wise efreeti is told. They seem to enjoy the stories as much as the people listening, although they sit in appreciative silence. Some suggest these cats are more than just cats, as many seem to be able to tell what the other is thinking. In truth, only the cats know.

The Folly is the beating heart of Caterwaul and to locals this festival is as important as any Bastet holy day or city-wide celebration. This is *their* festival, and they aim to enjoy it. The entire district, which already honors cats, treats each alley cat and stray as a beloved, honored guest. Each is fed, fussed, and respected. To have a cat make home and adopt a local family (as many seem to at this time) in Caterwaul is considered particularly lucky. Tales of people who are taken in by cats suddenly finding catslide alleys linking to treasure chambers and handsome princes abound. There are also, of course, stories about cats that become princesses when kissed, of cats that lead the lost to safety or fame and fortune, as well as cautionary tales where those who harm cats meet extremely unpleasant ends. Clerics of Bastet deliver endless blessings as they wander the thronging streets at this time, and locals exchange gifts of a feline nature. Cats swarm from alleys, particularly during Caterwaul, sometimes forming great carpets of the feline creatures. Often these groups go hunting, and their prey is almost



always rats. Among ratfolk, these days are not celebrations but days of terror. Sometimes the cats simply round a corner and vanish; a clowder seemingly disappearing into thin air.

### A FELINE CALLING

Peculiarly, cats from across the city, and sometimes farther, make their way to the District of the Cat during Caterwaul, and while not uncommon—all the city cats seem to find their way here eventually—it is strange. The calling is partly due to the Cat’s Graveyard (sidebar on page 16), but it also pulls on those humanoids who have feline blood. It is a calling, but to what end? Some say it is a premonition that at some future time the only safe place in the Southlands will be Per-Bastet, and only the cats know it. Others conjecture different reasons. Some say a cat afterlife exists and has a catslide alley directly to it from here. Others say High Priestess Nafrini knows a terrible secret that is told only to her, and that cats come to her for protection and succor from what is about to come.

## THE CAT'S GRAVEYARD

There is a catslide alley that every cat instinctively feels and eventually strives to reach: the alley that leads to the graveyard where all cats go to die. This alley extends to all places where cats are treated with friendliness and respect but has its crossroads here in Per-Bastet. The graveyard is a melancholy place filled with the calls of dying felines from across existence. It is a secret place and seldom visited by anyone save cats. Powerful feline spirits guard the way to the graveyard and aid cats taking their last mortal steps. Those felines who fail to reach it are said to

be trapped in the mortal domains and destined to wander eternally as lost spirits.

Once reached, cats find the welcoming souls of the guardians and expire among mounds of their fallen kin, who were left undisturbed where they took their final mortal step. The graveyard exists in a secret garden of Bubastal, the palace of Khastiri, the Queen of Cats (*Creature Codex*, p. 32). She tends the graves of fallen felines and weeps as she quietly sings songs of lamentation to her fallen beloved kin.

## SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF CATERWAUL

Use these events, encounters, and experiences liberally during Caterwaul, or use them to spice up any visit to the District of the Cat. Roll a d20 or select one as a basis for an encounter, as background during an adventure, or simply to add color to the great city.

1. A Bastet shrine of stuffed revered cats lurks at the corner of this alley. The creatures' unblinking glass eyes seem to follow you, a curious odor of lokum confections following their gaze.
2. A giant rat runs across the alleyway ahead of you, screaming. A carpet of slavering, caterwauling cats follows close behind it.
3. A man is dressed with a hood made of cat tails.
4. A white tiger watches you from a rooftop before slinking out of sight. Did you imagine it?
5. A cat dashed by too quickly for you to be sure, but you feel almost certain it said "beware."
6. A woman walks by dressed in a mourning veil, a dead cat on her shoulder. Suddenly, the cat moves its head, blinks, and watches you through empty sockets.
7. A wild woman tosses endless small fish to a vast clowder of cats that follows her through the city as she screams her song.
8. A dozen performing cats run up and over humanoid dancers as they all tumble through the streets.
9. A most revolting, disarranged cat slithers into view, all bald flesh, overly large ears, and strange stares. It clearly winks and vanishes down an alleyway.
10. A cat clammers dripping out of a nearby fountain and drops an odd-looking fish at your feet.
11. Half a dozen cats are following you covertly. Every time you glance back at them, each slips into a doorway or alleyway.
12. A cat races by, carrying a crying stirge in its mouth.
13. A man appears, screaming and running in terror. Not far behind is a great group of howling cats. "Leave me be!" he begs as he runs.
14. A cat stares up at the most peculiar looking bird you've ever seen; a ball of leathery wings, fur, and too many beaks. The cat then suddenly begins making the oddest cries, almost like a human baby.
15. A priestess of Bastet has a train of pale cats behind her that resembles a wedding dress or long gown.
16. Wind chimes strung across the street make odd yowls as they link half a dozen street shrines to Bastet.
17. You suddenly become aware that the cat looking at you from an upstairs window is just one of hundreds who watch you from nearby windows.
18. Pitiful cat meowing comes from an oddly dark, curiously crooked-looking side alley.
19. Thousands of cat motifs, images, and tokens hang across the street. An odd little band of figures with grotesque wicker cat head masks cries out that the day of doom has come.
20. Three dozen cats are curled up asleep inside a nearby establishment.

## MAGICAL SOUKS AND FAR JOURNEYS

During Caterwaul, countless guides promise exotic adventures just a short step away. These unscrupulous merchant-escorts treat the divine catslide alleys as mere stepping stones, and they know they can earn vast sums by promising that enormous distances can be safely and swiftly crossed in moments. Not only are these guides despised by the holy guardians of the alleys, but they are also often charlatans, whose promised journeys end



in different, usually more dangerous places than those stated, if they happen at all. The chief charlatan of these unworthy liars is presently Merchant-Guide Ibadm Nuss, a basteti who bathes in milk daily to keep his beautiful fur supple and glossy. Nuss not only takes advantage of his dubiously sketchy knowledge of the alleys, but he often divides his customers from their luggage and spending money with the help of a ruthless group of basteti associates.

Sometimes, however, more honest and knowledgeable basteti use the blossoming alleys to explore, and they occasionally require the help of adventurers to venture to far-flung lands for exploration and hunts for treasure, fame, and magic. The return journey from a Caterwaul-birthered catslide alley is the hardest part, as groups often find their return gone when the fleeting alley winks out of existence.

### ADVENTURES IN THE DISTRICT OF THE CAT

The presence of countless cats provides you with an excellent resource both to hide enemies in plain sight and also to allow your players to engage with the feline community. Cats of course are wonderful enigmatic creatures that are soaked in folklore and fairy tales, many of which would be at home here. Here are some examples

of possible adventures in the District of the Cat.

**Caterwauling.** Something mad has crawled from the Cats' Graveyard and staggered into the city. The PCs are in the District of the Cat when it is struck down by a feline plague. As the bodies begin to mount, the source of the plague—a catslide alley that reeks of decay—is located. A group of Sisters of the Alleys enter but do not come out and strangers are enlisted by the priestesses of Bastet to find out what has happened. They know the plague slays every cat that comes near its source, and they must trust adventurers to help.

**Catsliding into Insanity.** A madness has afflicted the catslide alleys and even the priestesses of Bastet struggle to cope. The sisters turn to legendary heroes to help stem the grizzly tide as portal after portal vomits out deranged and twisted feline things that seek to hunt and play and tear. The PCs are brought into the fray and find themselves in a race to save Sister of the Alleys Her Grace Ikram and her small brave band, who have found what lurks in the darkness.

**Stalkers.** The PCs find themselves mistaken for cohorts of Merchant-Guide Ibadm Nuss and chased through the streets by an angry former customer, who lost their daughter due to Nuss's incompetence. Unfortunately for all, the customer is an infamously violent gang boss with seemingly limitless followers, and he does not believe the PCs are telling the truth about being innocent. Find Nuss, find his daughter, and all will be well. Fail and...

## guard district

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture where its military rests—the Guard District.

While the Dead form the majority of Per-Bastet's military reserves, known with great respect as the Army of Night, and answer an endless call to serve their city, the city's living armies, the Army of Summer and the Sky-Guard of Horus-Ra, dwell in the Guard District. The scattered stables, barracks, offices, and arsenals that crowd this district serve as a constant reminder that here the defense of the city makes its home. Of course, whenever such forces idle there is inevitably trouble and deadly rivalries, but such intrigues are generally served behind the shelter of darkness, intoxication, or bravado. It would be unwise to do otherwise. This area also houses offices, jails, and courts for the City Guard and as such teems with countless jumbled buildings, many serving humble purposes.

## PER-BASTET'S MILITARY

The ridiculously feral, haughty, and astonishingly loud basteti General Kasmaron Shahpar commands the Army of Summer and its host of charioteers and armored basteti. Though rarely seen except on festival days and at times of crisis, the massed horde is a frightening sight, particularly with its jabbering and screaming packs of gnoll charioteers. The gnolls, led by Warlord Raykar-Takur, are famed throughout the Southlands for their reckless abandonment of any kind of self-preservation or fear. Raykar-Takur and his insane charioteers tear about the streets, “practicing” at any and all hours. Accidents are regular and chases often encompass the streets of the Hunt. As with any gnoll sport, bets are inevitable and those who hear the charioteers’ approach do well to hide behind closed doors—the gnolls see only one need: to win.

**Aerial Forces.** The Sky Guard’s commander is Sun Lord Fariq Gozra, a sharp-eyed ravenfolk tactician. Her forces ride griffons in the defense of the city, and they are occasionally bolstered by several of the city’s sphinxes and air elementals.

**Aquatic Forces.** The Army of Summer’s river division defends the city’s western side. It consists of numerous golden battle barges supported by water nagas, trained giant crocodiles, the city’s crocodilian humanoid citizens known as subeks, and a spinosaurus (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 116). When the Bastet priestesses raise the river monolith’s magical defenses (see page 6), the army’s river division can turn back virtually any attack.

## RIVALS IN ARMS

Gozra and Shahpar enjoy a peculiar rivalry. When they retire, they have both sworn to face each other in the Hunt. Rumors abound of a strange attraction between the two—perhaps, some say, they are trying endlessly to impress each other—but no one dares speak these rumors in hearing of the two military leaders.

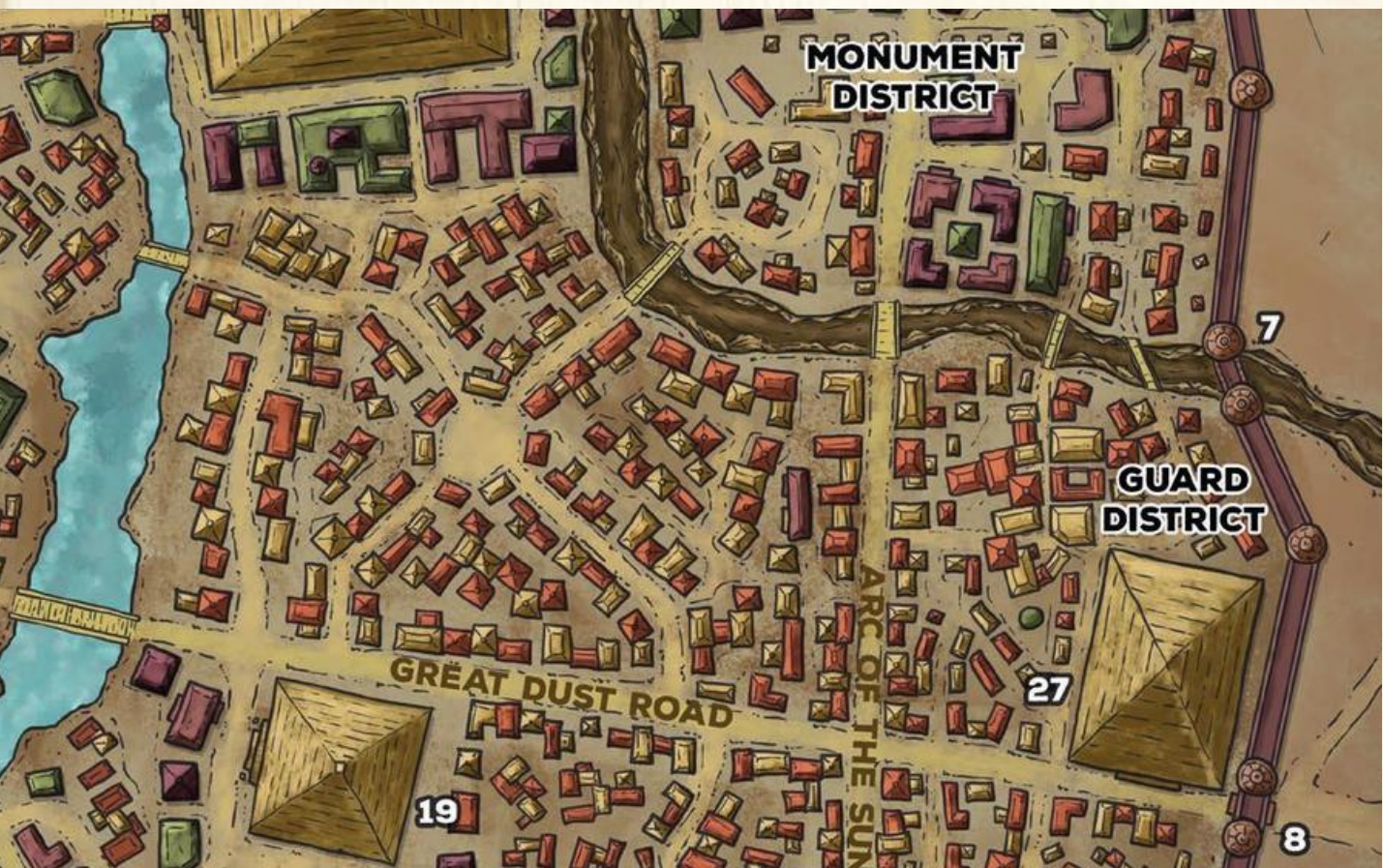
Gozra and Shahpar’s bitter rivalry also spills into their forces. Army discipline would never allow open fights between the two armies as that would be disorderly, but the odd (and at times strangely regular) *spat* occurs. Usually, these tiffs are little more than gentle bar fights, but often the overt bragging leads to some furious wager. These wagers can take many forms: a fight at the infamous Last Crucible (Area 33), a chariot race around the whole city between swarming teams of reckless soldiers, or even mass brawls disguised as some innocent ball game. The soldiers are careful to prevent these spats from involving their leaders, as both army leaders are very, very sore losers.



## THE STREET OF MANY FOOLS

It is true that the Guard District does not boast the magnificent towers of the Monument District, nor the unique flavors of the Perfume Quarter, but it is mostly safe, secure, and entertaining. As such, those who call the district home love it every bit as much as basteti love the District of the Cat and gnolls love the District of the Hyena. The Street of Many Fools, a typical street in the Guard District, might be found anywhere in this great city. It represents the common face of Per-Bastet; her gears, her bones, her muscles. Per-Bastet’s tea-houses, riads, souks, clothes, and foods are found on every street corner no matter how grand. Everyone has bills to pay and mouths to feed. The houses and businesses in the Guard District are typical of those found across the city, and the more opulent homes have courtyard gardens or roof terraces to let in and enjoy the sunlight. Doors are hefty, secure, and ornate, and everyone is very house-proud—perhaps a subliminal effect of the call of the city (see page 10). Locals very often invite strangers into their homes to eat or take tea, and the sense of community is strong, again perhaps a sign of the call manifesting in locals.

The Street of Many Fools, like so many in the city, is narrow and dark but busy throughout the day with people coming and going. At any given time, a lokum confectionery seller might set up on a corner to chance her arm, a merchant might be driving camels, sheep, goats, or something more exotic to market, or a shady escaped slave might follow anyone who looks vaguely like a stranger. Here, we have some locations travelers might find on the Street of Many Fools.



### THE RIAD OF GRARK MO CHATOOR

Famous gnoll chef Grark Mo Chatoor is the half-brother of the lightly infamous Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor (see the *Grimalkin* adventure on page 100). He sees himself as a humble cook, but he is gaining a reputation among gnolls for his magnificent dishes, including his city-wide admired songbirds in lard (his signature dish) and his unrivalled Ten Types of Blood Pudding (his desert monster version being his most sought after). Ludicrously corpulent, endlessly sweating, and frankly repulsive, Grark is nonetheless madly, irreversibly, and somewhat excruciatingly in love with his neighbor Anisah (Area SM8). Daily, he sends her vast bouquets of flowers, lokum candies, honeyed whelks, kittens, kites; anything to try to catch her attention. Of late, the foolish gnoll has taken to serenading her by singing while playing his magnificent brand new gimbrì or his new goblet drum, both purchased from the shop of his friend and neighbor Asti-ki-Fatti (see Area SM12).

Unfortunately, the gnoll has absolutely no talent for singing and many locals laugh behind his back. The short-tempered gnoll doesn't take kindly to the ridicule and has been tempted to add such people to his ever-expanding menu. Grark particularly has his eye on Arif

Rafika (Area SM4) who the object of his own desire seems very keen on. Grark is already hatching a plot where the good Arif appears on a very select menu for a few notable clients of his own. He amuses himself greatly by privately referring to the good Arif as the *cream of the watch* and imagining Arif in a soup.

Though plotting such things, Grark has yet to actually cook citizens of the city, instead preferring to work with local and imported meats and spices. He serves meals in his garden, assisted by half a dozen curiously clean and strangely polite gnolls, who are more than a little terrified of the chef and, more worryingly, his increasingly powerful doting customers from the gnoll community across the city. Of late, several enormous carriages, including the very latest vanity carriages, have transported several equally enormous gnoll matriarchs, together with—it is rumored—none other than Fatrimi-Khakchon (see page 30).

As Grark's fame increases, his riad becomes the local place to *be seen* and to mingle with the generous, if hazardous, gnoll matriarchs. Dangerous little tasks, favors, and jobs are always at hand from these fearful ladies, who are known for their generosity. And tempers. And appetites.



### THE HOME OF JABBAS

Jabbas is like many subek—incredibly sophisticated, particularly, in his case, in the graceful arts of mime. Jabbas prides himself when in character that he can go for weeks without talking and communicates purely by his actions, which might seem odd if he's met by someone unaware of his gift. He has consequently built up an admiring horde of local artists and is a frequent performer with his friend Asti-ki-Fatti (see Area SM12), and often seen at his neighbors Grark's place (Area SM1). Effete yet curiously quick to anger, Jabbas is apparently a camel merchant. Merchants are common in his family: his cousin Aibtisamat (see the *Three Little Pigs* adventure on page 85) is a carpet merchant, while his sister Adilah, who lives just down the river from Per-Bastet, trades in sheep and crocodiles and dabbles in slavery. Jabbas has a small stable at home where he keeps his most prized bull and cow camels and is often seen leading them around the local street talking to them (or not if he is performing).

Jabbas is in fact leading a double life. He is an accomplished jewel thief who has been using his sophisticated contacts and strange demeanor as cover for theft, particularly from gnoll matriarchs and richer ladies across the city, many of whom he meets at Grark's. To ease his conscience, he has been making considerable (but not *too* considerable) donations to various good causes within the district, including gifts via his neighbor Arif Rafika (Area SM4) to city watch members injured and forced to retire through service. Unfortunately, none of the money got past Rafika, who lost it all gambling at the Fortunate Dromedary (Area SM7).

Those who spend any time watching Jabbas soon notice that he always has the same four camels with him, and he is, in fact, unknown in the many camel souks across the city. If questioned, Jabbas claims to simply be waiting for the right buyer to come along, but, if pushed further, he gets dangerous and paranoid.

### THE VARIOUS WONDROUS GOODS OF IKKRILL MUSAFF

Kindly, often smiling, Ikkrill Musaff runs what is, in essence, a junk shop. So teeming and chaotic is his vast warehouse that his long-suffering wife, the devoutly Bastet-worshipping Nuha, has been lost in the place for hours at a time. Once, she spent a whole weekend trapped in a wardrobe, something she ruefully tells anyone who will listen to her. Musaff's place has bargains to be found, if visitors spend long enough here, and many speak of finding potions and magic in dusty, cobweb-gorged corners. In truth, Musaff is an obsessive. As fast as he

sells items, he buys twice as much. In his misguided enthusiasm, he often pays too much for what is basically junk, a fact well known to thieves in the district.

### THE GRACEFUL RIAD OF ARIF RAFIKA

Retired and respected former member of the city watch, Arif Rafika is a graceful, grey haired man in his early sixties. He is popular around the area and respected in the city watch. Unfortunately, when Rafika's wife died nearly two years ago, he filled his misery with games of chance, and he soon became addicted, something the vile owner of the nearby Fortunate Dromedary Yasin-bi-Bullhar (see Area SM7) was quick to exploit.

Yasin used his newly gained power over Rafika to discover secrets through the retired guard's network of city watch friends and associates to make life easier for Yasin and his friends, who now have an effective thieves' guild based in the gambling den. For his own part, Rafika is ashamed. He is too ashamed, in fact, to even respond to the gentle advances of Anisah (Area SM7), who Yasin also desires. Yasin threatened to tell the whole sordid truth to Anisah if Rafika encourages her flirtations. To make matters more complex, Grark Mo Chatoor (Area SM1) broods upon the way Anisah dotes and smiles at Rafika and angrily plots various demises for the old guard.

### THE TEA HOUSE OF MUSTAM

Mustam, a pale, bland and seemingly utterly disinterested man, is often mistaken for a member of the Dead—something his customers find hilarious. "Why would the Reborn Queen wish for Mustam? Would he make tea for the Dead in battle? Perhaps when he does, he'll come alive!" Poor Mustam is the butt of local jokes from dawn to dusk. In spite of the ridicule, this kind-hearted man would not hurt a soul, and his good-natured friendship is secretly held in great esteem.

Dirty, ram-shackled, and crowded with hookahs, saggy stools, and the dirty relics of tea, Mustam's Tea House is a local favorite—particularly for the seemingly endless groups of cats that fill the place at all hours; it's almost as if the cats *know something*. They don't. They simply enjoy Mustam's quiet company and the scent of his teas, but rumors run rampant, especially at the tea house where hordes of gossiping elders gather.

**Tea House Patrons.** At lunch time and later afternoon, the tea house is flooded with blathering older locals who have nothing better to do than debate the great issues affecting the area, district, city, and world. Sometimes local accents are thick and tricky to follow, but, once understood, the gravity of the chat can vary from a missing local cat to a rumor of invasion by foreign forces

using catslide alleys. However, it is almost always possible to get some opinion or tidbit of information here, some of it even vaguely reliable. At busy times, all skill checks to find information while at the tea house have advantage.

Locals come and go, sometimes they die, and sometimes, just sometimes, a passing member of the Dead stops and is honored by old friends and comrades. Here are some locals who might be relaxing at the tea house at any given time:

- Razzaak, a kindly older human with a blind dog. He blames all the city's troubles on gnolls.
- Khadra, a portly retired guard who once had adventures in the Crescent Desert. He spends most of his time at the tea house quietly smoking his special hookah.
- Old Jumin, an older human woman with a habit of singing or humming patriotic songs. Her eyes brim with tears at the merest mention of the Reborn Queen-Goddess, and she hopes to be honored as a member of the Dead one day.
- Ratty Moosa, a middle-aged human man who is always seen with a pet rat. He is rumored to have a ratfolk wife, but no one has ever seen her.
- Munty Kekolix (see page 56), a kobold ranger whose antics in the Hunt have made him a legend. He wanders into the tea house on occasion, finding it an excellent place to gather information and to relax and gossip.

## LOCK UP AND GUARD LODGINGS

Crushed into the darkest corner of the street is a mundane but functional lock up and watch office. A hefty wooden door with an even heftier lock gives access to the cramped office which holds a trio of surprisingly neat cells. Watch Arif Mubarill manages the lock up, under the infuriatingly pedantic eye of nearby Clerk Aspirant Nabrim-il-Musarraaf (see Area SM9). Mubarill hates the clerk, who he sees as overbearing and interfering. His hatred of the clerk is to the point where Mubarill is seriously considering killing the clerk—or at the very least arranging an accident.

Mubarill has a trio of guards who gently goad the older arif, having no idea how deep his hatred goes. Mubarill is a regular at the adjacent tea house, but, if the clerk ever sees him there, the clerk ritually belittles the guardsman, accusing him of laziness.

**Ranks of the Watch.** Guards obey the more experienced ranks of Arif, who answer to a Naqib. Naqibs answer to an area Muqad, who takes orders directly from a District Amid. If they ever retire, the watch (and army) can keep their ranks as names if they wish, and many do, as in the case of Arif Rafika (Area SM4).


**Watchful Eyes.** The watch operates across the city by use of signal whistles, which each member of the watch possesses. To lose one's whistle is to lose one's right hand, and dismissal typically follows. If a whistle is sounded, all members of the watch are supposed to respond. The speed and number of responders depends upon where in the city the whistle is sounded. In the richer districts, such as the Palace or Monument Districts, 1d8

## WORD ON THE STREETS—UNRAVELLING GOSSIP AND INFORMATION IN PER-BASTET

Numerous establishments exist across the city to disseminate gossip, including, the endlessly busy tea house belonging to Mustam (Area SM5). In the wider city, places like the Grand Souk (Area 20), Endless Bazaar (Area 21) and any of the main gates into the city hold gossip and information. However, a number of groups, associations, and guides exist specifically to gather information. Scatter suggestions, names, or rumor about these groups as often as you wish.

**Information Brokers.** The PCs might come into contact with the Sisters of Enigma, a basteti gang that specializes in gossip. They usually collect information as a premeditator to robbery, but whenever tongues wag in fear they blurt out so much useful information. Various sub-sects of Horus the Vigilant

gather information from across the city, particularly from travelers. The College of the Sanctum Eye are known to gather arcane secrets and magical information, while their brothers, the little-known Heavenly Harvesters, find it useful to know what skullduggery is taking place. They form an interesting and secretive "partnership" with several criminals across the city who they use as informants. These informants include the Crimson Vultures, a gang of spellcasting street urchins whose innocent smiles and talents with illusion and invisibility is legendary. The blackmailing Scarabs, the benevolent Feline Mothers and the Black Shades are just three more names bandied about when anyone is looking for information in the City of Cats.



guards respond in 1d6 rounds. The poorer areas, such as the Wharf District and District of the Cat, have 1d4 guards respond in 1d20 rounds, whereas places like the Hunt rarely enjoy a response as running seems more sensible than whistling. Given the great pride the city call engenders in those within Per-Bastet, locals often answer the summons of a watch whistle. On occasion, unseemly mobs have been known to take the law into their own hands, particularly if the villains are damaging property or seeking to harm the fabric of the great city itself

#### THE FORTUNATE DROMEDARY

Some might say the stuffed dromedary that hangs above the door was not lucky, rather like many who gamble here. Some also note how strange it is that law and mischief lie side by side in the street. Fortunately, the deviously unpleasant owner, the werehyena (*Creature Codex*, p. 259) Yasin-bi-Bullhar, has honey on his tongue and is on famous terms with the local arif, Mubarill, to the extent that he occasionally arranges for humiliations to be visited on Clerk Aspirant Nabrim-il-Musarraff, the arif's despised colleague.

Yasin is, of course, careful to ensure that such humiliations are highly amusing—drenching the clerk in honey and arranging for a swarm of bees to be nearby, or perhaps ensuring the clerk is found in compromising situations with dubiously attired ladies just at the very moment a powerful visitor arrives, always staying distant to ensure his innocence is without question. Yasin has something on every person living on this street, but he is usually careful to keep such information until real danger strikes, happily raking in cash from his dubious gambling establishment. Only the complications of Arif Rafika (Area SM4) and Yasin's deep desire for Anisah (Area SM8) threaten to unravel this careful mask of innocence, however, the werehyena is confident he'll find a cunning way through it.

**Clockwork Games.** The Dromedary is decked with lucky charms and symbols, and black cats wander copiously within the establishment. The games of chance are always rigged, but they are unusual in that many are clockwork: a clockwork camel racing track high around the main room, a clockwork crossbow and dragon game, and half a dozen other amusements attended by Yasin's kobold assistants.

The kobold assistants who maintain the games are young and have become very good at begging, learning secrets, and theft. However, anyone who gains their confidence can use their talents to investigate matters in the city on their behalf. A skill check to find information with their help has advantage.

**Yasin's Torment.** Deep within the bowels of the Dromedary, Yasin's own torment sits quietly, guiding cruelty and kidnapping across the city. This cruel "partner" calls itself Brackish, a salt devil (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 113). Brackish quietly arranges, via Yasin, for people to be kidnapped and sold into slavery. Business is very good, and Brackish has a number of dubious gnoll allies in various parts of the city. For his part, Yasin is terrified of the devil and does everything it says.

#### ANISAH'S RIAD AND DANCING CONSERVATORY

Dazzling and delightful, Anisah Karool is lithe, engaging, and kind. She once danced, they say, for the High Priestess herself. The rich comings and goings of several gnoll matriarchs, anxious to extoll their beauty through dance (perhaps not altogether successfully), ensures the dancer is independently wealthy. Anisah is astute, if at times a little self-centered. She finds Arif Rafika (Area SM4) sad and charming, and she senses he is a better man than his quiet demeanor suggests. Unfortunately for one so graceful, she has received some unwanted attention too, particularly from two local celebrities, Yasin-bi-Bullhar (Area SM7) and Grark Mo Chatoor (Area SM1), neither of whom appeal to her. Anisah's house is presently crammed with unwanted gifts from Chatoor and more arrive daily.

#### OFFICES OF DISTRICT TAXATION AND PROPERTY

This neat and tidy building performs an important function for the city. In these sprawling offices, Clerk Aspirant Nabrim-il-Musarraff and his team of clerks toil to ensure the day to day gears of this corner of the city work well. These offices organize street cleaning, lighting, taxation of local property owners, the legal disposal of property, and any death duties due. The establishment also serves as a repository of wills.

**The Head Clerk.** Pedantic, bullying, and tedious, Musarraff is the embodiment of civic function in the city. He takes his paperwork extremely seriously and is able to call upon the militia whenever he wishes to ensure local financial law is followed. Musarraff has an incredibly inflated view of his role and its importance. His lodgings in the attic of the offices are as orderly and bland as he is; however, the clerk has his beady eyes on local events and is building a secret dossier about Yasin-bi-Bullhar (Area SM7). The clerk suspects something lurks in his cellars. Of note locally, the clerk is presently trying to ensure the property next door (Area SM10) is sold covertly to himself. He has worked hard as a civil servant all his life, and he feels he is due a little reward.

## FASHION FOR THE MASSES

In such a cosmopolitan city, fashions change frequently. With such a haughty and wealthy upper class, the demand to wear the very latest fashion is sometimes more important than life itself. Typically, a man about town wears a wraparound robe known as a *shent*, which is fixed at the waist with a broad belt that usually displays the wearer's wealth and station in life. Women typically wear a simple sheath dress called a *kasis*.

The hot sun leads many to wear a *hal*, a simple but usually colorful wraparound scarf that can keep desert dust from the mouth and nose and the sun off heads. Others carry parasols and, if they can

afford it, a slave with a large feather fan. Sandals are the customary footwear in the city. The poor often wear only loincloths and many go barefoot.

Jewelry is commonly worn and even the most humble merchant has fingers groaning with rings. Wealthy women have longer dresses woven with sequins or more valuable objects such as gemstones. Wealthy men enjoy being seen in their silks and colors, the gaudier the better. The current taste for fashion seems to be moving towards 'more is better', where the most overt displays of wealth gain attention and respect. While the church of Bastet regards such displays as vulgar, one cannot fight fashion trends.

## VACANT RIAD

This three-bedroom riad with delightful interior courtyard was, until recently, the property of merchant Illiben Chuur. After the poor merchant passed away (and was subsequently honored as a member of the Dead), his property remained. Having no family, the city now owns the property and currently has it for sale. A painted wooden sign advertises this sale and advises those who wish to enquire about the property to contact Clerk Aspirant Nabrim-il-Musarraaf next door.

Unfortunately, Musarraaf quite likes the place himself and has it in mind for a home. Even though the official price is 2,000 gp, he does his level best to try to put off any and all purchasers. Prospective buyers will have to bypass the clerk, using some cunning roleplay, a little digging about, or even a threat of violence to secure the purchase. However, unless something happens to the contrary, a mysterious buyer (the clerk's mother) buys the place at a knock-down fee in short order.

**No Place Like Home—Property in Per-Bastet.** The riad would make a perfect base for the PCs' adventures in Per-Bastet. Having a home can transform a campaign from an endless trudge between inns, dubious lodgings, and camps into something more realistic. Having a base enables a GM to bring enemies, intrigues, and friends literally knocking on the PC's doors and can add a great device to expand your adventures. Of course, some GMs love to trudge their PCs from camp to desert ruin to cave. There is nothing wrong with either approach, but this property is included to give you some food for thought. If your PCs are interested in making Per-Bastet a more permanent home, see *Living in Per-Bastet* on page 46 for more information on residing in the city.

## HOSKAN'S HUMBLE TAILOR AND COBBLERS

This fine townhouse surrounds an intimate garden with a fountain. Unfortunately, the old tailor and cobbler Hoskan, despite once being able to fashion magical attire, is now almost blind. His scheming cousin Raak is sure the old man has a fortune hidden somewhere in the rambling old place. Unbeknownst to Raak, the money was considerable but has been secretly donated to Bastet in the hope that Hoskan is granted the honor of becoming a member of the Dead.

There are those in power who recall what a dashing and helpful young man the cobbler was in his youth, and it is said he married a foreign princess. Certainly, tales do have a habit of knocking on his door, and those who befriend the old cobbler are sure to find such old fables involving them. Hoskan also has many, many friends in the trade, and he is able to acquire the most sumptuous clothes and footwear from these associates.

## THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF ASTI-KI-FATTI

Although humble, the home of the basteti musician, Asti-Ki-Fatti, is a treasure-trove of magnificent musical instruments. The great craftsman is incredibly talented and has composed dozens of works. A beacon for artists in the district, Fatti's place always throngs with laughter and crowds of admirers, all eager to mingle, soak up their host's genius, and perhaps be honored enough to buy an instrument. Fatti does not just sell his goods, in fact he often gives them away. He breathes his soul into them, and his instruments sing like no other in the city. Locally, Fatti counts Jabbas (Area SM2) and Grark Mo Chatoor (Area SM1) as his closest friends, although he shakes his head in disbelief at the gnoll's lovelorn antics.

## SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF THE STREETS OF PER-BASTET

Use these events, encounters, and experiences to flesh out and paint the streets of Per-Bastet. They are deliberately generic so you can use them not only in the Guard District but in many places across the city. Roll a d20 or select whichever you feel fits best for where the PCs are located.

1. A man and woman argue fiercely over who is the most devout, while a huge ginger cat looks on impassively.
2. A minotaur stares in wonder at a distant tower.
3. A gnoll weapon-smith looks at your weapons and tuts in dismay.
4. A pale Dead woman drifts by, her face a rictus smile of total joy.
5. Cats crowd around a pair of fighting boys. It almost looks like the cats are enjoying the squabble.
6. A trio of devout sisters of Bastet glide by wearing feline masks.
7. A merchant astride a huge covered wagon claims the screeching from within comes from a tosculi queen (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 384) he has captured, though he refuses to let anyone look inside it.
8. You catch the distant sight of a vast sandship captained by a large subek.
9. A dwarf rides by on a zebra.
10. Two dozen carpet sellers race to market, their hefty wares on the shoulders of their countless slaves.
11. “Welcome to the greatest city in the world,” says the blind gnoll as you walk past.
12. A crocodilian man strolls by quoting poems to a songbird sitting on his head.
13. A trio of female gnolls borne in individual biers seem to be racing each other, screaming at their slave bearers as they tear around a corner.
14. A plump female basteti sells fine perfumes on a street corner.
15. A crocodile walks by, apparently unnoticed by the locals.
16. A local boy offers you cooling coconuts to drink.
17. The cat that just walked past winked at you.
18. This street seems to be filled entirely with merchants trading rubies.
19. The street here seems more like a canyon with towering cliffs of constructed stone everywhere.
20. An ancient gearforged creaks and grinds his way up the street, a mangy old cat sitting on his shoulder.



## ADVENTURES IN THE GUARD DISTRICT

Wherever there is law, there is crime. The district outlined here offers several ways to involve PCs with local events, which may or may not be of any great import but always lead to adventure. For every lover's tiff or heated exchange between rivals, there are machinations of salt devils kidnapping those it wishes to sell as slaves or for favors. These plots could reach deeply across the city, giving your PCs experiences of many facets of the wondrous Per-Bastet.



## district of the hyena

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we now venture into her raucous slums—the District of the Hyena.

In this district, gnolls reign, dividing themselves into clans led by gluttonous matriarchs. Despite being more civilized than most gnolls, the gnolls of the District of the Hyena delight in dangerous games and races, and the sounds of their bloody arena, the Last Crucible, echo up the River of Sand.

### SHANTY ABOVE AND BELOW

The District of the Hyena, regularly called the Gnoll Quarter, is a mangy, flea-gorged slum—above and below ground. Seething like a tide of filth at the skirts of the ebony Pyramid of Judgment (Area 31 on the Per-Bastet map), this seemingly endless shantytown breaks against the black cliff walls of the pyramid like a tide of ceaselessly advancing filth. Yet this filth apparently has order, a chaotic sense that local gnolls thrive upon. The confusing maze of twisting dirty streets give way to dark tunnels pierced by dubious rickety ladders, rusting ironwork, and



other more taunting descents, which lead to an echo city that lurks below ground: a lower city even more confusing than the streets above and seemingly bottomless. The upper city is the sparser populated, its streets often eerily empty, while below, the endless battle against collapse brings countless kobold slaves to toil and ensure that the bloated populace of laughing local gnolls is safely housed.

Local gnolls divide themselves upon lines of clan and loyalty, which cross seemingly invisible boundaries that the gnolls almost instinctively know. These boundaries shift like desert sands and sometimes fall into conflicts over seemingly worthless streets and territories. Yet to a gnoll nothing is worthless, and these battle lines—almost invariably across territories ruled by matriarchs—offer a chance to bully and rise and, perhaps in time, offer a way into the glorious realm of torpor, greed, and overindulgence. Power breeds followers, which offers a clever, resourceful, or mighty gnoll a way to gain notoriety and thus eventually to lord (or lady) it over others. It is their way. And here, they regard themselves as civilized among gnolls. Most conflicts can be settled in some honorable way; a duel of tooth and claw, a life-threatening game, or the loss of a finger, a hand, or some more notable appendage depending upon the status of those offended or challenged. Clan law says that it is better to go away, lick wounds, and accept the way of things rather than risk it all. In this city, gnolls have tamed their latent anger and hunger, at least a little.

Almost all the gnolls in the City of Cats are civilized gnolls (*Midgard Heroes Handbook*, p. 20), but a gnoll's definition of civilized is open to debate. To them, civilization means a full belly, someone to dominate and do their work, and the chance to indulge in a little harmless fun.

## GNOLL GAMES

Providing they are cruel, violent, and offer a chance to rise even higher in their clan or gang, gnolls enjoy playing games. Gnolls being gnolls, the risks often affect a subordinate of theirs, giving them a threat-free chance to shine and maybe impress their master or mistress in the endlessly dangerous ladder of gnoll hierarchy, which the gnolls call the Game of Snakes and Ladders. The binding ties of these games is betting, of whatever the gnoll has available, including offering up parts of their own bodies (fingers usually), or even their own servitude if they have nothing else to bet. Gnolls with few or no fingers or thumbs are called “misfortune-kissed” by other gnolls. Outsiders often mistake this name for pity or even sensitivity, but the gnolls use the term to mock those of their kind with such scars for being weak and foolish.

Gnolls are, however, untrustworthy and terrible losers, and many winners often end up regretting their skill and good fortune.

Here are a few of the more commonly encountered types of games in Per-Bastet.

**Killing.** Gnolls are bullies and like to see things suffer. They like no games more than ones where something dies, particularly if the something doesn't really have much chance to fight back. Games of true violence and danger make a great spectacle at the Last Crucible, surely the cruelest of Per-Bastet's many entertainments, but gnolls also enjoy watching risk-free suffering when the Crucible isn't holding events. Ratkill, a local game, involves a single gnoll, armed with only its hands and teeth, in a semi-confined space filled with rats or other readily available vermin.

A hundred local variants, district rules, clan specialties, and boons (cheats) tweak the basic rules, but the game typically ends after a particular time or when a condition is met. The most common variant pits two “mighty slayers” against one another to see who can conclude the slaughter first.

**Riding.** Local gnolls love to recall their history of raiding and scavenging in their games, and riding has a primal link in gnolls to their ancestry of racing and tearing as they laughed and screamed towards their prey. The riding games of gnolls are dangerous, and even those based on simple races around the district pit reckless individuals against insanely foolhardy opponents who cannot bear the shame of losing and the potential bullying that would come after. Every time the gnolls race, they race as though their lives depended on it.

Gnolls love variations that make the race more notable and often more dangerous—absurd mounts, deadly obstacles, and foes with magic or ranged attacks—which earns the winners more notoriety. Gnolls hero-worship those of their kind able to ride with abandon, facing dangers no sane gnoll would ever risk.

**Eating.** The favored game of the richer and more powerful gnolls is based upon greed. A hungry gnoll is a dangerous thing to be around and there are many in the upper echelons of local gnolls that delight in eating games. Eating in general is something of great importance to gnolls, and they take it very seriously. Gnoll eating games fulfill a very important role for gnolls: showing that with power comes wealth and with wealth comes torpor and gluttony, which emphasizes that the gnoll has the right to bully.

There are no real set rules for eating contests, but the bigger the better. Two opponents faced with each eating a whole pig is often an entry level game. The games

rise through various quantities of meats to legendary eating-duels that can last a year or more. Two great gnoll matriarchs of lore, Queen Ashfass and Matriarch Djejj, fought an eating duel over the course of a year and two summers. So great was the quantity of food consumed that the contest ended with Queen Ashfass died of an internal, explosive rupture shortly after the entire population of flightless Sarklan ubjub bird (a local gnoll delicacy) was wiped out.

### CRUEL GAMES AND CRUELER MISTRESSES

Gnolls devise ever crueler games to amuse their matriarchs and hopefully ensure the matriarchs do not get bored and invent their own diversions. In short, anything that involves random suffering is fair game, but the local gnolls are always very careful not to overstep the mark and offend the sisters of Bastet. The more notable cruelties end up being played out at the most notorious of arenas, the Last Crucible.

### FUN IN THE LAST CRUCIBLE

The Last Crucible (Area 33 on the Per-Bastet map), the city's greatest arena, glowers over the River of Sand and sits close enough to the Pit to hear, on the infrequent days the Crucible is silent, the Pit howling its hunger. The arena's true draw over the other fighting pits across the city is its removable floor, which enables battles to occur across exposed walkways, obstacle courses, and perilous leaps right above the River of Sand. To add to the entertainment, earth elementals and other earthen creatures within the river are drawn by arcane lures directly below. A standard night here might include a dozen events, such as battles between criminals and monsters and fights between renowned warriors.

On special occasions, the Crucible holds lavish entertainment that often lasts for several days. During these festivals, mock naval battles are staged above the River of Sand, mock hunts take place, and the entire spectacle usually ends in a gigantic battle to the last. Such events are rare but keenly anticipated by the many carnivores in the city, especially the gnolls. The prizes offered are always vast, and several of the city's now wealthiest individuals began their fortunes here.

### THE UNDERCITY

An army of mostly kobold slaves keep the collapsing desert at bay beneath the District of the Hyena. The underground area is vast, and several utterly misguided attempts to map the place have ended in catastrophic failure. The majority of gnolls in the district live in subterranean streets buried by sands and rediscovered,

and a teeming populace have made their home here. Deep cisterns supply drinking water, and a complex and curious sewage system draws waste deeper into the bowels of the city. A few dozen smaller neighborhoods recently popped up within the district's underbelly and now petty squabbles and vendettas run across this maze.

The various parts of the district are loyal to clans, gangs, and criminal leaders, but a respect and fear of the authority of High Priestess Nafrini extends even to here. The curious local code regarding punishments and the gnolls' own great loyalty to Anu-Akma, whose temples, shrines, and reliquaries abound here, ensure that anarchy does not break out. Ghouls lurk at the far edges of the undercity's tunnels, but they are usually fed enough cadavers to stop them sampling more living flesh. When they aren't fed enough, they almost always satisfy themselves by hunting and devouring escaped kobold slaves.

### SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF THE UNDERCITY

The Undercity is an incredible place, filled with wonder and danger. Here is a sample of some of its delights. Roll a d20 or select one of the following events, encounters, or experiences to enhance the atmosphere of the District of the Hyena's undercity.

1. A deep shaft with water echoing far beyond sight holds a score of towering, incredibly thin jackal-headed statues hundreds of feet tall.
2. The partially exposed head of a gigantic stone crocodile juts out of the sand.
3. A crooked street staggers into the distance, the columned buildings at its side bent at an odd angle as though the whole street was picked up and left hanging sideways.
4. A vast, echoing, ancient stable with room to hold a thousand horses sits at the end of an empty street.
5. A whole leaning tower fills this vast cavern, whose walls are carved with hundreds of balconies.
6. A seemingly bottomless pit sits here crossed by half a dozen chains with barrel lids attached to them, clearly to allow passage—if you dare.
7. A warehouse of staggering size is carved with countless strangely elongated faces.
8. This street has been carved with the images of thousands of cats.
9. A small shrine to Anu-Akma is decorated with funeral shrouds.
10. A gang of gnolls chase an escaped kobold slave up a street that is more like a mountain path.



11. Kobold slaves push away sand to expose a vast weathered face whose eyes are clearly doorways. Burly gnolls hold back an excited crowd at its base.
12. A susurrus wind echoes along the street, drawing with it tiny whirlwinds of sand that resemble cats eyes.
13. A dry wind reaches into your throat, and its touch scours your skin.
14. A massive chamber houses a peculiar stone object. Perhaps it was once some sort of vast water-clock or pump, but its true purpose is lost to time.
15. The street crosses a vast, deep hole. Gnoll laughter echoes up from far below.
16. Female gnolls prostrate themselves at a statue of High Priestess Nafrini.
17. A silk-shrouded bier holds an enormous, veiled gnoll. Countless slaves waft her with fans and sing songs of lamentation as petals are scattered before her journey.
18. The sounds of a huge collapse echo from somewhere nearby.
19. A mule train carrying hundreds of picks and shovels slowly passes you.
20. Momentarily, sunlight glints in, kissing the sandstone walls and exposing unseen figurines of crocodiles and jackals.

### **GREEDY, GREEDY, GREEDY GNOLLS**

Local gnolls are very lazy and prone to endless weeks of torpor, if they can get away with it. They are also almost always hungry, and they get bored and ravenous very quickly. This is not good for those nearby. The wealthiest and most influential of Per-Bastet's gnolls are prone to peculiar appetites, and many employ personal cooks. A whole subculture of culinary dueling takes place within the higher echelons of gnoll culture. There is seemingly no end to the sometimes-cruel imagination of gnolls cooks and their masters' and mistresses' whims.

### **WHY WALK WHEN YOU CAN BE CARRIED?**

No self-respecting, important gnoll allows her feet to touch the ground often. The ground sullies genteel and refined feet, and walking is for commoners who have no other option but to walk. Gnolls regard being carried aloft as a perk of power (along with being able to bully without response, eating copiously, and never being told they are wrong). The wealthiest gnolls often reach incredible sizes due to their gluttony and eventually have no choice but to be carried everywhere, unable to bear their own weight. Gnolls being gnolls, however, they have turned this into a contest and countless, sometimes bewildering, carriages and forms of transportation have been devised. A few such forms of transportation even become local legends.

#### ***The Great Desert Ship of Matriarch Eneer Shadig.***

Larger than a galley, this vast ship was drawn by a hundred camels until the desert winds could bear her on her journey by sail. A moving palace, the opulence of the interior was said to be legendary. It was also said a thousand slaves tended Matriarch Eneer Shadig. The ship was last seen heading into the Crescent Desert on the Tamasheq Trail, and her current whereabouts are unknown.

***The Flesh Train of Yussud.*** Not seen in decades, the Flesh Train was pulled by a dozen magically controlled ogres and hung with caged songbirds. The

gnoll matriarch Yussud sat within the walnut, ebony, and ivory vehicle. She was rumored to be part spider and would have her bearers pluck pretty passersby to join her caravan. She fed some, she gave a few their weight in gold, and she devoured the rest.

***Gobgrod's Folly.*** Gobgrod loved sport and arena battles. However, much of his work took place in foreign lands, and he was rarely home. To marry his hobby with his work, he built a vast traveling barge, complete with small arena, carried by four, enslaved clay golems. Unfortunately, on the first journey, an assassin, in trying to slay the merchant Gobgrod, struck a golem by mistake. The golem's instability, the result of an inexpensive and incompetent creator, caused all four golems to go berserk and pull Gobgrod and his creation apart. The event is celebrated in various works of art across the district.

***Sand Ships.*** Some gnolls see the River of Sand as a benevolent neighbor, and many sail across the river on various constructions, often as a bet, a race, or both.

***Vanity Carriages.*** Common among the weightier matriarchs of the gnolls, and readily identifiable by the number of sweating, groaning slaves bearing them, these great litters, created by Hammus-ik-Ashmid of the Wharf District, encase their mistresses in silken privacy, away from prying, mocking eyes and in extreme luxury.

Legendary feasts are spoken of in reverence by gnolls who have to work and who barely get more than a bit of flesh to chew in a week. Tastes can become very macabre in the more peculiar of these niche groups. Here are some of the more popular feast items, spoken of in slavering awe by those gnolls who have yet to be lucky enough to indulge.

1. Incinerated pork with uncooked kidneys, liver, and raw octopus
2. Sandwyrn (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 334) heart fried in onions and goat milk
3. Ten Types of Blood Pudding by chef Grark Mo Chatoor (see page 19)
4. The head of a dromedary cooked in honey and bees
5. Ten types of tongue
6. Whole camel pie
7. Whole roast ostrich cooked in buttered rice
8. Songbirds in lard
9. Giant turtle cooked in a medley of lobsters, crabs, and sand rats
10. Toad soup
11. Giraffe flanks in aspic and breadcrumbs
12. Laughing Gnoll Pudding with dates, figs, and pickled hams
13. Cauldron of cabbage and camel innards boiled in brine
14. Crocodile tongues stewed in dates
15. Bloody cooked goat, hens, and piglets
16. Mountain of Oysters Pudding
17. Seafood opera
18. Vultures in stirge gravy
19. Head of mutton cooked inside a goose
20. Manatee blubber slow cooked in palm leaves

### MORE THAN WORDS

To gnolls, mockery, laughter, and tribal chanting are more than just window dressing, they are an important part of the ritual of bullying and intimidation. Revered gnoll bards twist mocking laughter into horror to demoralize their foes, and gnoll barbarians strut and chant, clashing weapons and shields with their own kin, perhaps even wounding each other to emphasize their power and might. Gnoll wizards weave dark mocking words into their spells, and gnoll rogues and assassins whisper powerful curses to sleeping foes or helpless enemies before slaying them. These gestures form the backbone of gnoll culture, and over centuries tribal leaders have poured power into these words. Such words are never written, but complex tribal mocking has real power to gnolls.

### MINGLING WITH THE DARK SIDE: THE GHOULS OF PER-BASTET

The presence of ghouls within the city and their sponsorship by a major god of the city offer you the opportunity to give ghouls a larger role in your adventures than merely as adversaries. Here is one such ghoul.

**Gnoll Plague.** Slether is a ghoul that was outcast from the Palace District by scheming nobles who are intent upon removing the vast majority of gnolls from the city. She knows that these nobles are working closely with allies in the Perfume District to bring a plague into the District of the Hyena, a plague that only touches gnolls. She confessed all she knows to a senior cleric of Anu-Akma, who is now using spies and recruiting expendable mercenaries to stop the foul plan. But their enemies are clever and veiled and have many powerful friends. What begins as a curious meeting with the ghoul and her church could develop into an entire adventure littered with betrayal, intrigue, and murder.



Gnolls greatly enjoy potent verbal magic, such as masks that alter gnolls mouth into bellowing screaming vents of laughter that cause enemies to flee in terror, and they chant spells that when uttered can lead to madness and self-destruction of their enemies. Such magic litters the stories of gnolls and sometimes washes up from the old tales into modern streets. Those who use these arcane treasures in ignorance always meet very unpleasant ends, but those who can harness them strike fear into all gnolls.

Legends speak of arcane treasures such as: *Scars of Noag*, needles and inks that, when tattooed on gnolls and used in conjunction with the correct chanting and dances, can drive enemies insane with terror as tattooed mouths scream their own curses from hell; *Mouth of Uggol*, a legendary mouth mask made of bone and skin that causes the wearer's laughter to deafen its enemies; and the *Lyrics of Tul*, arcane words that can undo flesh and bone with their mere utterance and that move from one owner to another on death.

Though legends of powerful verbal magic abound, most gnolls stick with items, potions, and spells that mock or frighten or that make the gnoll look or sound bigger or scarier, such as the *vicious mockery* spell or the *potion of enlarge*.

## LOCAL GNOLLS

The gnolls of Per-Bastet make great roleplaying encounters, as the more civilized gnolls might act in ways unexpected or unusual for wilder gnolls, such as a wild-eyed grinning, giant female gnoll suddenly picking up and kissing a kitten in the street.

Here are a few gnolls travelers in Per-Bastet or in the District of the Hyena might encounter.

**Fatrimi-Khakchon.** Fatrimi is a gigantic female gnoll wrapped in silks and bathed in cushions. She often lurks behind the enigmatically carved faces of wooden cats on her small litter. Fatrimi is cold, calculating, and endlessly generous to her lovers and valued employees, but she has a habit of feeding those who displease her to her pet albino tigers. A would-be-matriarch on her way upwards, Fatrimi is a lot more honest than most gnolls, and she has a fanatically loyal group of servants who all love her. They love her a little out of fear but mostly because she is so very, very kind when pleased.

Fatrimi is also benevolent with the city's orphans. She herself grew up in the deeper streets of the district's undercity and sponsors, and sometimes spoils, many of the city's orphans. In addition, she has several offspring who receive similar treatment. Some of them have grown

or are growing into wonderful, grateful, benevolent gnolls themselves, while others use their mother's name in vain, trying to get their own way. Fatrimi makes a good possible enemy or ally who lurks at the back of plots and whose name can bring some out in throes of smiling joys and others in shaking fits of terror.

**Zezi Tolgrin.** Dashing, incredibly tall, and always smiling, this male gnoll moves with easy, feminine grace. The Zezi (there is only one) is outwardly fanatical about himself, but he is inwardly obsessed with the search for his lost sister, Ruuil Tolgrin. His life's quest is to find her. Although he is superficially all about his own image, standing, and ambitions, he does so with a deeper aim of locating his sister, who was taken long ago by slavers and rumored to be hidden somewhere in the city. Heroic, dandy, and annoyingly charming, the Zezi hides a deep secret and driving goal.



**Chetherric.** In gnoll terms, Chetherric is a scrawny gnoll, but she has grace below her scruffy exterior. Dancer, rogue, and adventuress, Chetherric defies her youth and low station with overconfidence. She trusts that one day she will join the Dead and serve the city forever. A fanatical clan loyalist, she serves the Clan Grothgurr with chilling bravery, especially when climbing tall buildings to sample what might lurk behind ill-defended balconies. A devout follower of Anu-Akma, Chetherric has several ghoul friends based in the undercity who operate across the City of Cats, and she intends to rise very quickly and very high.

## GNOLLS AND GHOULS

Where there are gnolls, there always seem to be ghouls. Perhaps it is the benevolent smile of Anu-Akma, Patron of Gnolls and Ghouls, perhaps it is something to do with their appetites, but wherever one appears, the other soon follows. The senior clerics of Anu-Akma see little to choose between the two, as one may serve in the long term as Dead, while the other serves the same god and is part of that god's design. Ghouls lurk in the District of the Hyena's undercity, as they do across the whole of Per-Bastet, but here their presence is more intimate. Gnolls have a curious kinship with their brothers and sisters in worship, and their worship of a god who sees laziness as a sin is more proof that there is little more enigmatic and confusing than a gnoll.

## ADVENTURES IN THE DISTRICT OF THE HYENA

Gnolls make great peculiar allies and memorable villains. In Per-Bastet, they serve both functions, allowing them to seem foul and feel fair, or vice versa. The gnolls listed in this chapter could easily lead to further adventures in the city or to darker stories within the district. The setting of the quiet shanty above ground and the dangerous and exciting undercity teems with adventures and flavors.

Are the PCs asked to explore a newly-opened area of the undercity from which distant weeping is heard? Do the PCs become embroiled in the machinations of fearful gnoll matriarchs and their gastronomic power plots? Do the PCs somehow find themselves on the bill at the Last Crucible's next special event and face a battle above the River of Sand? Do they mix with greedy gnoll merchants anxious and eager to pay for rare meat found only in the wildest, most dangerous parts of the nearby deserts?

## Lioness District


Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into her soul where Bastet's priestesses sing the goddess's praises and her temple shines above all in the city—the Lioness District.

Here tall cliffs rise upwards above the Grand Canal, taking with them parts of the Lioness District and her diverse occupants: those of great wealth and those with nothing. The cliffs house wharves and palaces, rich and poor, and above it all, soaking the city in its golden joyful rays by day and bathing the city in the reflected warmth of a thousand lanterns by night, stands the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet. Here, the goddess herself is said to walk within the bodies of those she chooses to host her, strolling the high rooftops and cliff faces as a great dark panther or watching benevolently from the eyes of a simple house cat lurking in the alleyways. And whenever there are miracles, there is always her blessing—a cat calmly watching on with sparkling, keen eyes.

Wherever you are in the City of Cats, you can see the great, golden Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet. She smiles benevolently from the highest point here in the Lioness District, spiritual center of Per-Bastet. The Prophet Road, a vast avenue of towering pillars and smiling feline statues, boils with pilgrims, regardless of the date. On holy days, this vast colonnade truly becomes one of the greatest spectacles in the Southlands. Some days it seems that everyone in the whole world is here: swarms of hermits in rags crawl in piety, nobles are wafted with vast ostrich feather fans as they are drawn in great sandships, priestesses weary at walking half the world finally end their journey. Everyone comes here, it seems. Everyone.

## DIVINE VISITATIONS

The calming touch of the Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit (see page 8) wafts across the city like the redolent scent said to accompany her. Her rare forays above ground are accompanied by gossip and the presence of a silver house cat. Whenever such cats are seen, rumors spread like wildfire that she is at hand. Such cats are not uncommon in the Lioness District, and some say she regularly sends her handmaiden to watch the city for her. The reverence with which silver cats are treated often takes visitors by surprise.



The Grand Canal gracefully curves through the district, effectively halving it. The cliffs that rise above house palaces and pleasure houses as well as slums and despair. In this district, the City of Cats shows all its colors.

### THE DOME OF THE DIVINE FACE OF BASTET

The great Dome of the Divine Face (Area 15 on the Per-Bastet map) is never still. By day, her skirts swarm with the faithful, and by night her swollen sides dance with lantern light and echo the sound of prayer and song. Cats, of course, abound, and those who gracefully stroll hereabouts are viewed as sacred—and untouchable. It's thus a very safe place for any basteti, feline creature, or cat to find themselves, and thousands do. For many, it is sanctuary.

**Miracles of the Dome.** Each year, nine miracles grace the faithful who flock to the dome. The miracles act as a beacon for the devout and confirmation that the faithful truly are rewarded. The miracles vary, but they are commonly associated with cures (such as for leprosy, blindness, madness) divine visions for the faithful (such as instructions, warnings, or knowledge) and, finally, miracles of a feline nature (such as transformation, understanding, and ascendency). Many of the miracles are truly divine intervention of a most direct form or whim, but sometimes miracles are not quite what they seem. Some are the result of magic brought about intentionally by the priestesses of Bastet to spread their

love of their living goddess, others are more mundane or just stories, and some are extremely dubious.

**False Prophets and Charlatans.** As can be expected, on the back of the crowds of pilgrims come those seeking to take advantage of the faithful. Such charlatans promise to lead the devout to a particularly holy well, shrine, or event and eventually part the pious from their worldly goods or seek to enslave them. Some claim their touch is blessed, and they can cure whatever ails the pilgrim—for a price. Of course, such false prophets and charlatans are almost always robbers and rogues, and they are never far away from divine punishment at the hands of the priestesses. Unfortunately, like any infestation, there are seemingly too many of them for the devout sisters to find and punish. As fast as one charlatan is removed, another takes their place.

### SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF THE DOME

Use these events, encounters, and experiences in and around the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet as simple backdrops to a visit to the Dome, as beginnings to larger events and encounters, or as inspiration for complete adventures. Roll a d20 or select an appropriate event, encounter, or experience.

1. A flock of vultures swoops at a mangy alley cat, clawing, tugging, and trying to capture it for food. Faithful pilgrims hurl rocks at the vultures to drive them off, but as one of the birds is struck, it clearly exclaims a word.

### BASTET, GODDESS OF CATS

The worshippers of Bastet, goddess of cats and hunters, are a motley crew: they include farmers, low-ranking soldiers, woodsmen, alchemists, perfumers, and jewelers. Perhaps the defining characteristic of Bastet in Midgard, though, is the fact that she calls a specific city in Nuria Natal home, and in turn she is its namesake: Per-Bastet, the City of Cats. Most in Per-Bastet believe that the mortal Bastet was born in the city when it was a simple riverside village, and that, after her apotheosis, the settlement rose to greatness under her protection. Another widespread belief—and a singular point of pride among its citizens—is that Bastet regularly walks the city's streets in any form she wishes.

Much of the city's ordinances and guidelines revolve around the tenets of Bastet's cult, and the key to power here lies in finding the goddess's favor. Bastet's cult in her namesake city is a vibrant, bustling

organization centered in the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet. Under the high priestess, the clergy's hierarchy is ever-changing and quite complex. Its ranks are divided into two loose categories: clergy who organize evangelical outings outside the city and clergy who serve Bastet's interests within Per-Bastet proper. Within these groups, titles—including Kitten's Purr, Friend of Cats, and Lioness's Roar—are bestowed as accolades for deeds that please the goddess. Each title carries varied privileges and authority. Such a scattered structure might seem like it promotes infighting, but the reality is quite the opposite. Bastet's clergy in Per-Bastet and beyond are unified in their love for their goddess and their common goal: to promote Per-Bastet as a refuge for those who revere their patroness.


For more information about the worship of Bastet, see page 378 of the *Midgard Worldbook*.

2. A man in rags bows before a silent alley cat.
3. A group of female gnolls riding zebras howl reverently at the Dome.
4. Someone says that a miracle has just happened nearby.
5. A woman screams that once she was blind, and now she can see!
6. A sand-scoured sandship is dragged to a halt, the camels that dragged it these last few feet through the city dropping dead as they stop. A great door within opens, and a trio of dark-skinned minotaurs exit. They fall to their knees as the last occupant, a small, golden-haired boy, emerges.
7. A blind man sells clay tokens of cat figures. A white mouse perches on his shoulder and whispers into his ear.
8. Suddenly, lines of cats race up the Dome and chase off a great red ibis that nests there.
9. A galley draws to the foot of the cliffs below the Dome. From it, hundreds of cats emerge and dash into the vast building, leaving nothing on board the vessel.
10. Two cats seem to be arguing over a rat they have caught in their paws, their voices clearly forming angry words.
11. The people nearby begin to sob with joy when someone announces that High Priestess Nafrini is walking among the crowds right now.
12. The crowd parts to allow a jet-black panther walk by. As it passes, it pauses to look at one of you before moving on toward the Dome.
13. A group of merchants violently clash over whose charcoaled chicken recipe is best and most holy.
14. A great gong echoes from somewhere within the Dome, and the sound of frantic hymn singing follows. Suddenly, a group of basteti emerge, each gripping a hooked weapon as they run past.
15. A cat plucks at an oud, the strings of the instrument singing beautifully.
16. A man nearby claims he was struck blind after seeing High Priestess Nafrini's beauty.
17. A vast, giant lion enters the area, pulling a chariot driven by a dozen gnolls. A score of cats stand within the vehicle.
18. A winged cat passes by, causing a few people to fall to their knees and pray.
19. The sun glints off the Dome into your eyes, leaving the afterimage of a cat's eye in your closed eyelids.
20. A female gnoll wears a cat mask and dances by, laughing.

## TEN PILGRIMAGES COME TO AN END

Who are those folk walking along the Prophet's Road? Why, it is simply more pilgrims! Does their arrival herald adventure or trouble? Or both? Here are some examples of pilgrimages coming to an end in the Lioness District and the pilgrims who made them.

1. A weary group of ragged basteti sing hymns in husky voices as they shake the sand from their travel-worn clothing. Each bears one large part of a wooden jigsaw that clearly shows a cat eating the sun.
2. A trio of gnolls bears a great, beaten-iron totem of Bastet above their heads. They have clearly traveled scores of miles with the heavy penance. Their hands are bloody, but their smiles broad.
3. A weary basteti pilgrim crawls the last few yards towards the Dome of the Divine Face but collapses at the base of its steps.
4. Two sisters weep as they see the great dome and spread ashes across the street at its feet.
5. A great caravan of a score of wagons comes to a halt, and a gigantic man emerges. His skin is deep red, and he wears a gold cat symbol about his neck. He stares at you and shouts 'You, come help me with my baggage! I was expecting to meet you sooner.'
6. A clan of gnolls crawl inch by inch with their faces to the sand, never looking but seemingly drawn to the Dome of the Divine Face.
7. An exhausted and injured woman collapses to the ground and suddenly assumes the form of a great, bloody lioness.
8. A clowder of mangy cats suddenly beholds the great dome and gives out a collective yowl. As they do, a huge bird takes flight nearby, and a dozen men armed with scimitars fall to their knees.
9. A couple wearily stop at the base of the Dome, and one begins to pray for a miracle to cure the other's madness.
10. A sudden dust-storm conceals the arrival of a dozen gnolls at the Dome, who are bearing large slabs of salt.



## LIONESS LOCALS

The streets here throng with colorful characters wandering the Prophet's Road, selling wares in the cooling shade of the great cliffs, and singing songs of supplication and joy to Bastet.

**Nakrim-Yis.** This older basteti spends her days on the sides of the Prophet's Road, seeking alms and whispering prayers to the Queen of Perfumes. Nakrim knows the district well, and, although now partly blinded from a squabble with local ratfolk thieves, she sees things others do not. Her keen hearing and curiosity often bring her secrets and information that others find useful. Unfortunately for her, there are others that would like her either under their benevolent control or dead, and most days she finds herself chased into the darker parts of the district.

**Ubrud-ik-Fashnir.** Ubrud is a petty local criminal who would like Nakrim gone. The shaven-headed, dark-skinned dwarf has not easily earned the gold wires that grace his beard in delicate filigree, and he doesn't like that Nakrim sometimes tips off the local priestesses about his clan's willingness to "help" pilgrims, especially wealthy ones. This "help" usually involves parting the pilgrims from their valuables and has earned his clan the nickname the Propheteers.

**Jesmit Khenit.** A former resident of the Perfume District, Jesmit Khenit is a basteti alchemist who keeps her ears open for any new or rare poisons, spices, or potions for her sponsor, the Wasp Milker Estal Shekmit (see page 50). Jesmit lives in a houseboat moored on the Grand Canal. Her confidante and lover, the subek bard Mido Chaktar, works on the docks as a laborer and has strong suspicions that one of the slaves on a galley belonging to Jabari Shmir (Area L1) is passing on information to unknown, possibly foreign, sponsors. Mido imagines himself heroically unmasking the dragonborn spy and has so far kept his suspicions to himself. Soon he intends to unmask the spy very publicly. Unfortunately, the dragonborn is smarter than he looks and already a group of escaped kobold and dragonborn slaves who lurk in the districts' dirtiest corners are planning to silence Mido, permanently.

## THE PALACE AND WHARF OF SHMIR

The perpetually (seemingly) happy and affable nature of the basteti bard, Jabari Shmir, masks a tormented and unhappy soul. The wealthy merchant dwells in opulent luxury in his cliff-side palace of Shmir, with its hanging gardens, countless slaves, and groaning larders. However, the truth is different. Shmir's overbearing wife, the arch-gossip schemer and manipulator extraordinaire,

Neferuree Shmir, uses her husband's wealth and court connections to her own ends, caring nothing for him or the consequences of her actions. Neferuree spends her days visiting anyone of rank she thinks is useful to her and has formed a cabal of similarly minded manipulators. They regard themselves as paragons of noble virtue whose task it is to learn and spread the truth—or at least the truth as they see it.

**Jabari's Distractions.** For his part, Jabari spends his long days eating and falling in love with unattainable beautiful women, and tragically seems to fall madly in love with any who acknowledge his attention. He is forbidden from attending his dear friend Ubdul's Pleasure Palace (Area L2). However, he has grown increasingly desperate in his attempts to find infallible ways to be seen at home and yet also attend his friend's dubious establishment. Jabari has variously hired wizards, illusionists, adventurers, rogues, and spies to help him, all to no avail as his eagle-eyed wife always, somehow, seems to be one step ahead of him.

**Palace and Wharf.** The palace opulence blooms in the upper balconies and hanging gardens of the vast structure, which sits above the Grand Canal, overlooking the Shmir wharf below. The palace has exquisite, cool marble sweeping across chambers dancing with enormous statues and dizzying mosaics. It holds many high balconies that stare, just respectfully lower, up at the Dome of the Divine Face. Below, through various slave wings, the palace descends to join the wharf, where floor after floor of exotic imported goods are disgorged and sold at various fabulous auctions.

**Scheming Slaves.** Unfortunately, Neferuree's gossiping is not only self-serving, it is dangerous for the city. Relklex Ashen, a dragonborn sorcerer and slave lurks among her husband's galley and labor slaves at the wharf. He wears rags but has a sharp mind and masters in distant lands. The dragonborn uses his magical talents to lurk unseen during gossip-gorged dinners and afternoon snacks held by Neferuree where the wealthy speak of all happenings. Of late, the dragonborn has noted Mido Chaktar watching him. He has taken steps to ensure that soon the nosy man will regret snooping.

## UBDUL'S CLOUD PLEASURE PALACE

A great beaten copper dome rests among the cliffs above the Grand Canal, and a seemingly endless stair promising enticements and pleasures rises upwards into its swollen belly from the wharf below. The Cloud Pleasure Palace is one of several in the district, and it models itself upon taking the cares of nobles away with a number of pleasant distractions and diverse amusements. Fun loving, jovial,

but irredeemably deviant, Ubdul is the basteti proprietor of the place, and he is known to have a nasty reputation for getting what he wants despite his smiles.

**Friends and Enemies.** Ubdul uses the talents of his associate (but barely someone he would call friend) Jabari Shmir (see Area L1) to attain rare and interesting substances, amusements, and diversions. Secretly, he laughs at the fool's inability to stand up for himself. Half a dozen basteti serve his security and procurement needs, as well as providing safety and anonymity to his guests. Ubdul wages a constant war of attrition with his one-time lover, competitor, and enemy Madame Xir (Area L3). He would gladly see the basteti hanging disemboweled from her perch over the canal, and the two wage an endless, petty war on each other.

**Pleasure Palace.** Opulence, indulgence, and imagination are the key words that are literally hammered into the swirling scarab motifs of the palace's dome, which some have argued rests in deliberate mockery of the Dome of the Divine Face. *Nonsense*, says Ubdul, whose generous offerings and heady contacts have so far secured his reputation.



The Dance of Many Veils is one of many entertainments here, provided by a diverse range of slaves of various races, including many dragonborn. Guests are usually provided with hookahs filled with substances of varying strengths to relax them into the evening, which includes feasting on some of the more exotic consumables of the Southlands. Their imaginations are then invited to lead proceedings.

### MADAME XIR'S VERTICAL THEATER

The intimate Vertical Theater, one of only two such establishments in the Lioness District, sits carved from the cliffs of the Lioness District. It is so named because many of the guests, when sat in the cramped vertigo-inspiring seats, literally seem to stare down into the Grand Canal far below. Madame Xir, the dazzling basteti matriarch of the theater, may have a streak of grey in her fiery, red hair, but her wits are sharper than ever. This serves her well as her foe and former lover Ubdul (Area L2) lurks too near for comfort. Xir is presently spreading some extremely unsavory rumors about her opponent through the loudhailer that is Neferuree Shmir (Area L1).

**Renowned Performers.** Part circus, part theater, part pleasure palace, the Vertical Theater puts on some astonishing shows. Like her neighbor, Xir uses her wily contacts to secure what she hopes are the best entertainers, and, currently, her Clown in Residence is the gifted slapstick singer the Great Taqy, a very talented human who makes the audiences weep and laugh by turn. His present incarnation of the show, one that is rapidly losing crowds because of its staleness, is part darkly comic opera, part buffoonery, and part animal acts.

Due to its open walls, acrobats have always traditionally done well in the theater, and Madame Xir secretly houses the renowned basteti acrobat Halim-ben-Akbar, who she fully intends use as a replacement for Taqy when the time is right, which she has already decided is very soon. Because she knows Taqy is tenacious, she is currently torn between pushing him off a high balcony in the theater, making it look like an accident of course, or just killing him herself to see the look on his annoying face. Xir does not like contractual complications.

### ENDLESS DIVERSITY—MANY STREETS AND MANY STORIES

The Lioness District is the soul of this vast city, and it holds endless diversity. Visitors can sample the many wares of Huk-i-Yashmir's secret Necrotic Perfumery and stroll through the amusing monkeys in the Garden of Fragrance where the apes there, they say, cherish cats like children.



In the Great Souk of the Divine Ascent, one day each week is a riot of color, smells, and sounds the like of which are not seen anywhere else in this fair, scented city. Brave travelers can ride one of the awe-inspiring hammock-swings and soar high above the city! In the Pilgrimage of the Cat, one can buy obscene carpets in the shop of Fatema or eat sweet figs beneath the Fountain of the Jaguar, while watching the old humans and basteti

play the complex local game of cenet in the many marbled plazas of those lofty cool cliffs.

At the Felidae Stair, the proprietors breed wonderful and diverse house cats of all colors and sizes. Customers can also find stranger breeds, such as those with wings, with eyes as big as their heads, with second tails, with six legs, or with any number of other unique features.

## ADVENTURES IN THE LIONESSE DISTRICT

So many people coming and going, so many stories to tell. The Lioness District is a great place for people to bring adventures. Perhaps pilgrims have lost loved ones on the road or been harassed by foul bandits. Or maybe those who walk into trouble when they arrive—robbed, beaten, or both—have their dreams of pilgrimage turn sour, leading them to dark deeds in the city. Of course, the priestesses of Bastet are not going to let such outrages occur if they can help it, and they may even turn to those with less divine missions to help in times of need when particularly great pilgrimages occur.

**The Show Must Go On.** The PCs could get caught in a curious triangle of Madame Xir and Ubdul, both of whom are prepared to pay the PCs handsomely to sabotage the other's show. The PCs are asked to infiltrate the acts, pretend to join in, then not only ruin the show but steal a valuable jewel each says actually belongs to them.

**Spies in the House.** Relklex Ashen's attempts to have cohorts kill Mido clumsily fail, but the young subek, terrified, flees into the city. The PCs are hired by his lover to find him, but soon discover a deeper layer of intrigue in the city.

## monument district

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into her statue-filled administrative core—the Monument District.

Golden-pillared edifices line the Way of Bastet from the Lion Gate to the Pyramid of the Mother of Destiny. Enormous sphinxes and statues of rampant tigers stand on pedestals before the counting houses, granaries, academies, and other public buildings that fill this district, all streaming with gloriously hued banners and flags. Here, the Dead are more prevalent than any other of Per-Bastet's peoples, silently performing civil services alongside living citizens who seem wholly at ease with their presence.

## THE DEAD BY OUR SIDE

One unique, and to many visitors unsettling, aspect of the City of Cats, and the Monument District in particular, is that the bulk of those who die in Per-Bastet remain, or return, after death. Some come back as ghosts but most return as what is politely referred to as “the Dead.” Citizens who die in the city rise, appearing much as they did in life but as white and dry as sand. Their bodies do not rot, nor do they carry the stench common in undead creatures.

How and why the city's citizens become Dead are conjectured but unknown, yet clearly the nearby enigmatic presence of the risen God-Queen Meskenit plays a role. Some scholars speculate that her vast pyramid of the Mother of Destiny plays some unknown part in this most honored and unique of the city's strange occurrences. What is known is that only those citizens completely devoted to the city become Dead.

Most of the Dead have only minimal intelligence, but all are wise and unwaveringly polite. Though they seldom remember specific details of their lives, they typically retain their skills, leading many Dead to work for the city in a similar capacity to what they did in life. Some spiritual connection links them to the pulse of the populace. When serious foreign dangers threaten the city, the Dead among the city guard often appear unbidden to face the danger.

The Dead rarely speak but seem endlessly content. Many locals believe they have truly given their soul to the city and found in its complete acceptance utter peace. Others say the city has given its soul to *them*, to sustain them forever. As a consequence, the Dead are treated with great respect by all of Per-Bastet's citizens, and they are venerated as the *proof* of the greatness of the greatest city in the world. Joining the ranks of the Dead is something almost every citizen aspires to achieve.

## A VERY CIVIL SERVICE

The Dead dwell in vast, contented hives within or beneath the pyramids of the Mother of Destiny here and the God-King of Prophecy in the Palace District (Areas 26 and 13, respectively, on the Per-Bastet map). At dawn, the Dead silently rise and head to work as farmers, laborers, and even skilled engineers. They work in mines and tend herds. They serve as members of the guard, patrolling silently beside the living. They seem to take quiet pleasure in the glory of the city. These workers do not, as a rule, talk. They occasionally draw intricate diagrams, trace out complex equations, or make themselves understood in more poetic ways, but they rarely speak. It almost seems as though they regard words as unnecessary.

Yet the Dead are clearly happy. They attend events and celebrations important to the city; they attend services in temples, plays in theaters, and watch spectacles in the Last Crucible (see page 27); and they occasionally make appearances at private balls. Wherever they go, their presence is welcomed and considered as lucky as the presence of a cat.

## USING THE DEAD

The Dead are unique to Per-Bastet, and as such give a GM a great and memorable way to introduce adventures, lend unique angles to stories and encounters, or bring an outré edge to events in the city. The Dead are greatly honored, the embodiment of the final ambition of the majority of locals. Anyone, particularly a foreigner or

### THE DEAD ARCHITECT

Salim-duat-Neea, one of the few Dead who retained much of his former memories and intelligence and one of the few who regularly speaks, is a revered artisan, architect, and engineer of Per-Bastet. He instructs his beloved fellow Dead as they continue their endless task of fighting time and ensuring the Monument District remains magnificent for generations to come. Salim will be here tomorrow, and the day after, and the week after that, and the year after that, and he may have stood on this very spot decades ago and may stand on it again in a score of centuries from now still tending his beloved city.



visitor, will be politely told by any living local of the import of these numerous, strange, Per-Bastet locals.

Here are some suggestions to give you ways to bring the Dead into adventures and encounters in the city.

**The Pale Poet.** The countless followers of the Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit are troubled. One of the recent risen Dead is not behaving as they expected. This pale young girl spends her days toiling before the walls of a lower sanctum within the queen-goddess's pyramid. There, she scratches strange poems on the wall with chalk, rubbing her fingers to the bone as she writes line after line of peculiar rhymes. Each poem is a warning, a warning that something has come to the city and lurks beneath her swollen belly. The poems describe a creature of madness that none can see unless they are gifted with a strange vision, a way of seeing into odd corners that no one else can. Perhaps those who have it are even unaware of this gift. And within the endless poems is a name, repeated over and over and over: the name of a PC.

How this story develops is left to you, but a creature of insanity and terror lurks somewhere within the dark corners of Per-Bastet, a horror that is presently—perhaps perpetually—unseen. The PC is the only person who has the “sight” needed to perceive it. Perhaps the PC has had visions before or shown a gift for magic. Perhaps this ability is unknown to them, but it won't remain so for long. The terror that lurks in the city might even be aware of the PC's ability and seeks to end the PC before the PC exposes it.

The adventure might begin with desperate followers of the Queen-Goddess dragging the PCs bodily into her great pyramid or maybe a group of the Dead escort them into the place politely. However, as the PCs are brought into events, they soon find themselves before the pale dead girl and a wall scrawled with curious poems.

**The Silent Companion.** A very beautiful or handsome pale Dead approaches a PC. He or she does not speak but politely and respectfully follows the PC day after day. Locals look on in confused happiness that a member of the revered Dead has seemingly chosen the PC as a companion, a curious silent friend. The companion does not leave the city, but if the PC leaves, they are waiting when the PC returns.

What does the Dead companion want of the PC? Does their presence herald some coming event or is it just a quirk of the great city? Sometimes having things happening for no seemingly good reason can put PCs on their toes and be enigmatic enough to remain without any great explanation, offering an element of mystery to stories here. Is the companion mistaken in her identity of the PC and does her true former love or friend



angrily appear later? Is the PC a distant relative of the companion, whose fractured memory recognizes some familial traits? Is the companion a herald to an adventure, a silent guide to terrible events to come?

#### THE ENDLESS JOYFUL HOST

Those who pass the Pyramids of the God-King of Prophecy or Reborn Queen-Goddess at dawn behold an incredible sight. At this time, the Dead rise from what the locals believe to be their rest and head into the city that is their salvation, their god, their joy, and their sustenance. The sheer number of Dead seems beyond counting. The rank upon rank of pale faces and white attire gleam

in the gentle morning sun and burn with an orange glow, seemingly afire with joy. As the Dead rise, so do worshipers of the city, and those strongly called by it, to make offerings, such as petals, flowers, spices, incense, and even stranger tokens to their beloved Dead.

The Dead do not speak as they head to their duties, but each acknowledges a citizen it passes with a polite nod and a smile or even a whispered soundless blessing made by lips unused to birthing words. Sometimes a Dead will halt and take a blessing or offer one of its own to a cat, or trader, or even stranger, before moving quietly onwards to work for the glory of Per-Bastet.



## DEAD PCS

An obvious question comes to mind when dealing with the Dead: could a Per-Bastet PC become one? Such a decision depends on the story you and your player want to tell with the PC. When determining if you want to allow a PC to become one of the Dead, think about how the Dead PC would be played in the campaign. Keep in mind that the Dead are mostly silent and enigmatic, and they dwell primarily within two distinct areas of the city. They are eternally loyal to Per-Bastet and never leave it. Such restrictions (which you can, of course, decide to vary or remove) may make playing a Dead PC tricky. However, if you and your player decide you want to explore a story where the PC is Dead, use the statistics for the darakhul or shade player races (see *Underworld Player's Guide*) to mechanically represent the Dead PC.

An alternative solution might be for the PC to rise after death as a Dead NPC that still plays a distant, curious part in the PCs' ongoing lives. This option allows the deceased character a form of immortality, continues that link with the PCs, and instills a sense of curious reward and homage within your campaign. The Dead character is treated with great honor and often seen by the PCs, who are also regularly reminded by NPC friends and associates of the great honor of such immortality. Perhaps this even leads to further events and intrigues within the Monument District or wider city, or maybe the honor alone is enough.

## INCREDIBLE MONUMENTS

The designs of buildings, temples, towers, and astrological and astronomical edifices in the Monument District is almost frightening in its grandeur and variations. Use the following details to give more realism in stone, marble, and splendor to these places, sprinkling them in a sight-seeing tour of the district or as passing shadows as the PCs venture out on a dark, balmy night:

- A two-faced sphinx of marble forms an archway over a street. Below the arch hangs a thousand feline lanterns, a dozen of which are the size of small houses.
- A pyramid glows with sunlight at dusk, its flanks dancing in chimeric flames.
- A city block of columns each clearly points to a star in the night sky above.
- A needle of marble rises so high it seems to support the sky.
- A building some one hundred yards wide is smooth and square and has no visible entrance or join. It appears to be a single stone block.
- Four gigantic columns support an enormous, reclining, smiling cat.

- An enigmatic, grinning figure with a crocodile head, which lies a hundred feet above the ground, has human statues dancing in its mouth.

## THE FLOTSAM OF THE RIVER OF SAND

The River of Sand lurches, scours, and grinds its way through Per-Bastet, skirting the edges of the Monument and Guard districts, seething alongside the District of the Hyena, and scrubbing the edges of the Hunt toward its own consumption and eventual demise in the Pit (Area 4 on the Per-Bastet map).

Occasionally, objects, creatures, and strangely scoured flotsam are left behind by the river's remorseless flow, tossed onto the shore or left hanging on the banks of the eternal river. Such objects are called "sand-touched" by locals, and they often lead to encounters, dangers, and even adventures. The *Cat and Mouse* adventure (see page 67) takes place after one such sand-touched object washed ashore one morning.

Consequently, eager eyes watch the river every day to see what gifts it grants or what perils it releases, but they never sully it with objects of their own. Earth elementals and other creatures of the land lurk within the river's gritty currents and earthen embraces, but they rarely rise, hinder, or harm. Other, more peculiar creatures occasionally arise, sometimes alive and sometimes corpses or skeletons picked clean of any semblance of flesh and life. Local children are warned to keep away from the untrustworthy banks and scouring hold of the River of Sand, but they regularly ignore this warning. When something shiny appears or some curio that might change a life is spotted, a child's eyes are blind to dangers. They are not afraid of the legends of Lady Skin-Rasps, the Shaleshade, or the Sandstorm Serpent, confident such creatures are mere stories.

**Dangerous Occurrences.** The shores of the river are indeed dangerous, and those drawn into its current face great peril. At its shallow edges, the great river offers peril as well as temptations. Here are some example objects and encounters that might be in the River of Sand or on its banks:

1. At dawn, the prow of a ship sits just off shore, the lacerated timbers held fast in the current, and whirlpools of sand forming at its flanks. These whirlpools give glimpses of a vessel below the prow, and it seems intact! As the morning wears on, increasingly desperate efforts are made by a gathered crowd to reach the ship. The crowd might in and of itself form an encounter as the locals risk their lives to see what the hull might contain, if anything. The prow is from the curious vessel, the Winking Crocodile. Some of the older residents

- recall that it tried to sail into the Pit years ago to explore what lie beyond and was never seen again.
2. Local children find a strange bit of weathered wood that looks a little bit like a dragon from a certain angle. The wood is actually a dangerous, magical staff known as the Calamity of the Bitter Inferno, a staff that holds a black dragon known as the Gloomy Herald and which was cast away into the desert centuries ago. An obscure local cult still whispers of an artefact with a dragon's heart beating in its crooked, bent form, and, when they hear a mother's whisper that at dusk her child transformed into something horrific, they begin to ask questions. The dragon's dark soul has taken over the boy and is intent upon rebuilding its empire that was destroyed centuries ago in the sands of the Sarklan Desert. As the cultists dig deeper, they have little comprehension that they are about to become followers of a dragon that many thought, and wished, to be long dead.
  3. A tidal bore of sand comes rippling along the River of Sand from the Pit, heading toward the Panther Gate (Area 7 on the Per-Bastet map). It grows in size as it slowly, remorselessly grinds forward, wreathed in a gale of screaming, scouring fury. As locals, guards, spellcasters, and Dead gather at the Way of Bastet bridge to defend the city, the watching PCs see something rising and falling from the back of the wave. An insane elemental of incredible size screams, driving increasing numbers of its kind into a frenzy. Are the PCs brave enough to head across the sands to halt the sudden peril?
  4. A scoured and scratched figurine vaguely resembling a human child with nightmarish features lurches from the sands. The toy soon vanishes into the clutches of local children and finds its way rapidly into the waiting hands of a collector of curios known as Khemet Shrie (see page 51). He's been waiting for the object to rise for days and knows it's more than just a manikin. He knows it is a facet of a devil, which he intends to imprison and torment to gain information. Unbeknownst to the dhampir, however, this manikin can walk abroad without the need of a physical body, and it is here for a single, specific purpose...
  5. Children hang off the base of bridges on ropes made of colorful rags to try to reach some dazzling stones that are sparkling atop the sand river. As a score or more hang, leap, and reach, the surface of the river suddenly writhes with a coven of hungry sand hags (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 245).

6. A crooked island forms in the river and begins drifting. Atop it, strange silhouetted figures beckon those on the river's shores to meet them as a huge, sandy, horrific mermaid lurches from the river and sits at its shore. Her flanks drip with cascades of sand like the passing moments of an hourglass as she releases an ear-piercing shriek.

### AT THE LION GATE


A pair of towering, scarred-stone statues flanks the road at each gate of Per-Bastet. Huge hyenas stand at the Hyena Gate, lions at the Lion Gate, and so on. Just outside the Lion Gate, pairs of soaring obelisks flank the east road for 10 miles. The two gigantic lion statues of the Lion Gate rear up alongside the 30-foot high red sandstone walls, forming an arch as they link maws above the street below. The statues have been lacerated by sandstorms but remain defiant, their sneers and grinning teeth a warning that this is a city of carnivores. Stories tell of the statues at each gate animating and standing side-by-side along with the seacat statues in the river (see page 6) to defend Per-Bastet against the greatest sieges of the city's history.

As the primary gate by which merchants and travelers enter Per-Bastet, the Lion Gate might mark a first encounter for visitors to the City of Cats, and might mark their first interactions with those kissed by the city's call—the strange loyalty the city extolls over its populace (see page 10). The patriotism might take visitors by surprise at first, but those who regularly trade here cock a smile toward visitors and warn them: *"This city has a way of getting into your soul. Enter and you might never want to leave."* The great walkway below the gate, known locally as the Lion's Maw, lurks below countless murder holes, traps, and guardians—living and mechanical—which glower over an eager cavalcade of sweaty humanity, strange races, and wondrous creatures. When visitors first leave the gateway and enter the city, they see before them the magnificent Way of Bastet. With its incredible bristling armor of towers, sphinxes, edifices, and unbelievable buildings, it strikes many visitors dumb with awe.

The Lion Gate also marks the place where the peculiar language of the city sings. Here PCs may first hear the common sayings *"May the Reborn Queen bless you with eternal home," "the benevolence of Haty-a Haakim be upon you and your family,"* and *"may the high priestess grant you nine lives to enjoy, my friend."*

### FRIENDS AND SWINDLERS

The area around any gate into the city, but particularly the Lion Gate, is thronged with those eager to help and those eager to take advantage. For every benevolent



soul willing to give visitors some gentle advice, there are a dozen who lead visitors on guided tours that pass several carpet shops (all owned by relatives, of course), take merchants into the Perfume District where “civility” reigns (according to them), or even bring the visitors into the terrible Hunt just as night falls.

### SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF THE MONUMENT DISTRICT

Use these brief events, encounters, and experiences to breathe extra life into this awe-inspiring district, as a gentle spice or backdrop, or as a link into other stories, encounters and adventures. Roll a d20 or select an appropriate option for the impression you want the district to make on your PCs.

1. A group of pale figures, including basteti, humans, and minotaurs, stare upward as a stone and marble sphinx of great size slowly forms beneath the careful hands of dozens of other pale figures standing on hundreds of bamboo scaffolds.
2. A basteti Dead stops and stares at you with unblinking eyes before a thin smile crosses her dry lips. She kisses you on both cheeks, silently welcoming you to the city.
3. A group of visitors panic as they witness a trio of pale Dead minotaurs walking down the street. The strangers foolishly reach for their holy tokens and symbols, seeking protection from those who would never harm them without due cause. Locals shout angrily at the strangers.
4. A deep, uneasy chant echoes and steadily grows from somewhere deep within the bowels of the impossibly old Pyramid of the Mother of Destiny.
5. A gigantic tiger statue towers above you, its twin faces leering triumphantly down. Children play about its base, singing a rhyme about walking statues eating strangers who stare at them.
6. Suddenly, bells toll, echoing from somewhere nearby, and are answered by dozens of others across the city.
7. A newly Dead man stands beneath a towering column of marble and stares at the moon, his eyes wide with joy and his lips moving with soundless prayers to Bastet.
8. For every passing person, there seems to be a dozen merchants on the way. Within minutes of arriving in Per-Bastet, you are offered carpets, coconuts, incense, brass bells, camels, elephants, tigers, a townhouse, the company of a basteti, a ladder, a fine burial spot, a pound of tea, a pet crocodile called Ashmad, and a sailing ship.
9. A mass of Dead bear aloft a gigantic stone figure of Bastet, carrying it like ants with an impossible burden.
10. A smiling gnoll merchant offers you some juicy slices of pineapple for free.
11. A cat glowers upward at a gigantic tiger sphinx figure. On the carved figure’s head, far, far above, a white cat stares down, unconcerned.
12. A Dead woman glides past, carrying an armful of scrolls.
13. The sunlight dazzles off countless statues, sphinxes, towers, and columns, momentarily appearing as if they are all about to come crashing down.
14. Great palm trees line the way. Hundreds of children clamber up to relieve them of coconuts to sell to passing folk.
15. From the distant River of Sand comes a cry as a featureless creature of sand lurches from the river, looks around, then returns to the river with a curious growl.
16. A dust storm suddenly whips up. As the endless gathering of folk cover their eyes, you glimpse one of the great tiger statues briefly move its head.
17. A pale Dead man sweeps the road before you as you walk, his enigmatic smile unchanging.
18. An obese gnoll in a huge litter barks out orders to a group of workmen who are laboring to build a truly gigantic sphinx with a cat face. The face, she argues, is not facing the right way. The laborers toil on, trying to turn the 15-foot-tall head around while juggling themselves and it on ropes a hundred feet above you.
19. A large desert ship drawn by camels lumbers along the Way of Bastet. Oiled slave men walk backwards, bowing low and scattering rose petals before the enormous vehicle’s path.
20. Local goodwives decorate one passing Dead woman with flowers, their eyes brimming with tears as they pay homage to their beloved kin.

### ADVENTURES IN THE MONUMENT DISTRICT

The various encounters and suggestions in this chapter offer excellent introductions, outlines, and intrigues to start wider adventures in the district. The Monument District is a place of celebration in architecture and death: tragic yet proud tales may develop between former lovers or between families who lose a loved one only to see them rise. These might be simple, touching backdrops to events here, or they may add depth and detail to those encounters.

## palace district

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture where wealth and pleasure glitter and sigh on every street—the Palace District.

Kissed with gold, this proud bastion, citadel of culture, and palace of thought sits on the cliffs north of the Lioness District and high above the rest of Per-Bastet. Few come here without invitation. Here the mind and body are freed of mundane toil and allowed to soar or maybe become bored, an envy many in this city would kill to experience. Yet how could one become bored with so many diversions? Theaters, laughter, public baths, and endless rounds of social events fill the district. Here one is judged by the quality of one's friends (not to mention their rank and wealth), by what one wears, and where one is seen. The ostentatious palace of the third brother of God-King Thutmoses scours down opulently upon its neighbors. Some might say it has a tasteless crassness that is never spoken but appears in looks given by those who wander the refinement of the Council of Sands. Here, soft-spoken slaves are the very image of courtesy and refinement, yet the veneer is scarred by paranoia lurking unspoken within this lofty stronghold.

### GILDED DISTRICT

Soaring on cliffs 100 feet above the city, the gilt spires and opulent facets of the Palace District are home to but a small and very privileged rank of Per-Bastet local. Graceful stairs drift upward like gentle waterfalls or drifting clouds into the palaces that, in the rays of the setting sun, seem ethereal and otherworldly. In many ways, they are. Covering a handful of acres, this genteel bastion is the protected home of the few, the nobility of Per-Bastet who govern the lives of many.

The Council of Sands handles much of the governing of the city and is led by Nomarch Haty-a Haakim, the third brother of God-King Thutmoses. The Council's headquarters and members reside here. Nomarch Haakim's palace is the most opulent building in the district with its highly wrought white towers topped with jewel-colored domes. The Council and Haakim are detailed on page 7.

### HAAKIM'S AGENTS

Haakim, who has recently gained greater mastery over his oracular powers, has an army of independent agents listening for curious tales, occult portents, and magical omens. They are scattered across the city, each with their own network of spies and good listeners. He most

frequently enlists the aid of gearforged bard Sabrina Echo and legendary dwarven explorer and purveyor of curiosities Throno Quorrus Jig, both of whom operate out of the Nine Millennia Archive.

All of Haakim's agents scour taverns, tea houses, libraries, theaters, and slums looking for portents. In almost every case, the tale runs the same way: Haakim experiences some troubling, strange, or even peculiar dream or vision then lets it be known to his agents that he wishes this portent investigated in case it is *the one*. He seeks the great portent that will answer his riddle and either destroy or beatify the city, ending his terrible wait. The agents then scour the city seeking interpretation or rumor connected to this vision, and they know rich rewards come to those who aid their curious sponsor.

In the meantime, the Reborn Queen-Goddess seeks to pick the wheat from the chaff of these strange omens. The lich has encouraged Haakim to physically record these visions in the form of paintings, journals, and even strange sculptures. Visitors who meet the nomarch find him surrounded by a strange assortment of aides-memoire in the form of odd art. Of late, Haakim has been recording curious images of a two-headed sphinx and a burning sandstorm sky. Haakim is unaware that the sphinx, the peculiar Anuktata (see page 57) has also been dreaming about him.

Haakim's omens make a great way to introduce peculiar or off the wall adventure links, with the seer seeing riddles and enigmas at every turn and vainly seeking answers. The following example omens can be used as seeds for adventures, as gossip to bring into question Haakim's sanity, as concerned words whispered by an ardent admirer, or maybe as cruel gossip laughingly distributed by the wicked.

**Fourteen Vultures.** Word spreads among the low-lives of the city that a rich reward is being offered for anything connected with fourteen vultures, and that a small number of contacts are known to offer such rewards. These contacts are Haakim's agents, who have little to go on save their ruler had a dream where fourteen vultures were seen.

This link could lead to an adventure where a stolen jewel known as the fourteenth vulture needs to be recovered. The necklace is so named as it holds fourteen jet stones resembling vultures, and the fourteenth and largest is missing. Is the jewel part of some elaborate ritual or a crucial material component for an unknown spell? The widespread knowledge of the reward gives more devious individuals a chance to gain access to the Palace District and, potentially, the nomarch. Maybe assassins invented some obscure connection to fourteen vultures to gain



access to the Council of Sand's members, or perhaps thieves have entered the Palace District under this ruse to rob the wealthy and must be removed surreptitiously.

**The Dreaming Isle.** In his sleep, the nomarch has painted a curious shape on the wall of his bedchamber. It could be a number of things, but after consultation with the Nine Millennia Archive it is decided that Haakim has drawn a map of an obscure and rocky isle that lies in the Middle Sea (or wherever you wish it). Throng Quorrus Jig is tasked with bringing together a small crew of hardy adventurers to visit the isle and unravel the nomarch's strange vision.

### THE NINE MILLENNIA ARCHIVE

The Archive, a concept as well as an austere building, could serve not only as a fine location for the PCs to meet Haakim's lead agents, but it could also serve as a

place of research and perhaps even reward. The Archive is a repository of knowledge, holding religious records, historic journals, and libraries of rare tomes, and it is kept in the Palace District to ensure its exclusivity remains like its reputation—untarnished.

Countless clerks and minor religious recorders operate the Archive. Spells, adventure kernels, obscure texts, journals of exploration, and more, perhaps darker bits of knowledge, are all held here. PCs working with the agents of Haakim or the Matriarch, or those who perform services for the city, might be granted access to the Archive as a reward and can use their downtime to research here. Membership may even include unique magic items, spells, or other less tangible but no less powerful rewards if the PCs continue to be of use to the Archive.

**Archmage and Matriarch.** Shabdi-ik-Maor, Matriarch of the Archive, secretly worries that Haty-a Haakim

is slipping into madness. She fears his visions might be implanted suggestions thrust upon the good ruler by some enemy for nefarious purposes. As one who is soaked in the call of Per-Bastet, she believes it is her civic duty to ensure Haakim is not abused, therefore she or her agents are always nearby to take steps to protect the order of the monarchy for the glory of the City of Cats.

**Double Agents.** Two of those agents, Sabrina Echo and Thronge Quorrus Jig, operate very closely to the nomarch to aid him and to keep an eye on his sanity. Thus far, they have assuaged some of Shabdi-ik-Maor's fears by helping Haakim unravel and solve several curious omens and visions. Sabrina is a close colleague of another gearforged, Truthful Catplace, (see page 62) who assists Sabrina in the collection of knowledge. Sabrina is incredibly useful to all her allies, but her position could easily be misconstrued if she lost the faith of either patron. Indeed, Thronge Quorrus Jig finds herself in a similarly precarious position. One could almost call Sabrina and Thronge the bodyguards of the nomarch's sanity, a label both would secretly be proud to bear.

Thronge cuts a striking figure when beside Haakim's or the Matriarch's more inconspicuous agents with her shaved head, veiled face, and body covered in henna

tattoos. Long ago, she built a clockwork elephant, which accompanies her on any adventures or investigations into Haakim's visions. The noble dwarf is a grumpy companion, and she often finds herself thrust into company she believes is beneath her to aid the city she loves. Sabrina isn't as patriotic as Thronge, but she takes her position very seriously. She has a melodious voice that occasionally seems wreathed in birdsong.

## ROYAL ENTERTAINMENTS

*"Boredom is a wonderful thing that only the rich can enjoy"* is an old saying in Per-Bastet, but one that is very true. However, the Palace District is richly crammed with deviations to entertain those with deep pockets, and countless entertainers would (literally) give their right arm for a chance to perform before royalty. Stories of entertainers being given their weight in gold do wonders for their motivation. The owners of these select establishments are able to collect endless amounts of baksheesh from would-be entertainers and select only the very best. However, fame is a fickle maid, and what is fashionable one day is tedious the next, leaving demand for something new always high. It is entirely feasible that PCs could find themselves on the bill one night at any of the following establishments.

**Abdu's Theater of Domes.** Famed for his love of dark opera, tetchy Abdu has a tendency to fire first and think later, leaving him endlessly searching for new talent. He has a small band of somewhat dubious-looking ratfolk bards who tour the city looking for the next great singer.


**The Bathhouse of Aiesha.** This bathhouse sits next door to Abdu's theater. It is opulent and manned entirely by kobold slaves, who attend to visitors' whims. The bathhouse is famed for its curious, scented oils and unguents that are said to be imbued with magic. Most visitors never see Aiesha. She is a horribly scarred vampire that often visits the Pallid Court. She occasionally holds vampiric gatherings where members of the court come to her bathhouse and feast in baths of blood.

**The Garden Amphitheater.** Perched high above the sea, this amphitheater hosts lavish balls where nobles are sometimes entertained by a bloody series of events that are part fighting pit and part theater. When such a performance ends, the audience decides who lives and who dies.

**The Barge Playhouse.** Madam Quel-il's playhouse shows intimate and occasionally murderous plays to a select and small audience.

**Eateries.** The Fig, the Pig's Maw, and Mistress Elita's are just three of the many fine eateries that lurk among the mansions of the Palace District. However, dining





out is not a common occurrence among upper nobility as they prefer to hire one of several renowned chefs to cook in their homes for outrageous balls and special events. Eateries thrive here because of the reputation of their head cook, which attracts lesser nobles to dine in the establishment. Many of these buildings perch in delightful cliff-top locations and offer sumptuous fare.

### FOOD IN THE PALACE DISTRICT

It is distasteful to nobles, most of whom are human, to point to gnolls as influential for anything vaguely cultured. It is true, however, that the gastronomic attitudes of many of Per-Bastet's more influential gnoll matriarchs have worked their way up to the Palace District. While this fashion hardly ever led to songbirds in lard or Ten Types of Tongue Pudding appearing on genteel menus, the gnoll fashion (if there ever was such a phrase) for employing personal cooks of great repute has certainly taken hold

#### SAMPLE EVENING MENU

The following menu pitches two dueling cooks against one another. Use it as a backdrop to an evening's adventure or maybe as comedic relief while the PCs settle in after a long adventure.

##### To Commence

*Broiled lobster and sheep's ears cooked by the esteemed Akrad Nabil*

*Live whelk soup prepared by the incomparable Madame Khalid*

##### The Flavors of the Sea

*Nabil's octopus in honey and eel eyes*

*Madame Khalid's tusked skyfish tentacles in swan meat*

##### A Taste of the Land

*Akrad's beef farced olives with seaweed bread and camel gravy*

*Khalid's whole roast hare with cactid tart*

##### A Sweet Finish

*Lokum candy-stuffed oranges served in Nabil's secret pomegranate sauce with live tadpoles*

*Madame Khalid's apricots fried in almond sugar and vulture tongues*

##### The Decision

The winning chef is awarded the 1,000 gp purse, and a collection of tips from onlookers. The winner might share some of the award with a gourmand or a particularly supportive PC.

here. This has transformed into amusing duels between cooks that can even lead to martial duels and deaths.

At the moment, the most famous chef in Per-Bastet is Almirr-il-ab-Shamoor, a literal giant of a man who can weave gastronomic symphonies from the sea and make grown men weep with the quality of his fish head soup. His great rival, Tabor-ab-Shamoor (no relation), is an appallingly violent man prone to storming out of mansions if the ingredients are not absolutely to his liking. Few people ever get to eat anything cooked by these culinary giants, but menu-dueling is something any visitor or guest in the Palace District is likely to encounter. Visitors may find themselves having to side with one cook or another as the deciding vote in an evening's eating, and they may find that siding with one chef is actually quite a dangerous thing to do. Some of the cooks have contacts in the dubious Perfume District and aren't above poisoning particularly critical visitors.

### PARANOIA ABOUNDS

Magic can be a terrible worry, especially in the City of Cats. The catslide alleys, for example are devious and dangerously unpredictable. Such locations, which can offer ingress into this district at any time, cause many nobles sleepless nights. Imagine waking up in your bed to find a cutthroat standing above you with scimitar raised and feline teeth snapping! The light bigotry of the mostly human population of the Palace District amplifies this fear, and as such, a special posting, called Archivist of the Ways, was established. The Archivist is always a minotaur able to call upon the help of the catslides' sisterhoods (see page 14) to keep watch on the ways in the Palace District—without surrendering control to the sisterhoods, of course.

The present Archivist, promoted after the nomarch had a dream in which he saw a bull with rat's tails sitting guard over him, is Edgad the Ratbane, formerly the best rat catcher in the city and now the most trusted of royal servants. Edgad watches the various ways with the aid of his awakened cat ally, Absinthe, and, if the pair sense anything untoward, they investigate the disturbance, consult the sisterhoods, or, more usually, bring in expendable mercenaries to do the exploration for them. Edgad may be a great rat catcher, but he is also wallowing in his sudden fame, leaving him vulnerable to those who might wish to employ his unique posting for ill.

### LIVING IN PER-BASTET

With such a rich and colorful setting as the City of Cats, it can be tempting to base an entire campaign on its streets. However, engendering love for a place is not



easy. There are a lot of little ways to encourage a feeling of belonging in the PCs—perhaps a PC meets and falls in love with a local prince or escaped slave or witty merchant, or maybe everyone in a particular tea house knows the PCs' names. Maybe local children sing a song about the PCs while playing, or a local bard regales listeners with a tale of the brave PCs. Such connections bring the PCs deeper into your campaign and can work well as additional story hooks.

If the PCs perform great services for the city or aid a particularly powerful or influential individual, they might be rewarded with a residence. Alternatively, PCs looking to settle down in the city might want to purchase a residence in one of its many districts (see page 23 for an example of a vacant home the PCs can purchase). Whatever the case, PCs who spend more than a few weeks in the city might begin to feel the city's call.

### THE CALL

As described on page 10, the city's call makes Per-Bastet feel like a true home to its residents and often makes residents of different factions, races, and species view each other as extended family. For PCs who decide to more permanently reside in Per-Bastet, you might wish to use the call as simple spice for your adventures, perhaps encouraging local PCs to join in the fun of cheering for the greatest city in the world and express outrage at any attempts to harm it. However, you might want the call to have more tangible effects with specific game-mechanic benefits and restrictions. These more tangible effects are reflected in the optional Per-Bastet's Call rule.

### OPTIONAL RULE: PER-BASTET'S CALL

The Per-Bastet's Call rule gives you the opportunity to award the PCs for loyalty to the City of Cats. Per-Bastet's Call works much the same way as Inspiration—a PC either has it or they don't. A PC can't stockpile multiple "calls" for later use.

Any PC that is a resident of Per-Bastet and that has resided in the city for at least five months can feel the city's call. Once a PC can feel the city's call, the PC can earn Per-Bastet's Call any time while in the city, as long as the PC spends at least one week in the city each month. If the PC spends more than one month away from Per-Bastet, the PC must spend at least three months in the city to feel the city's call again. You can grant Per-Bastet's Call at any time while a PC is in the city, though a PC would typically earn it after expressing or performing some act of loyalty to the city or its citizens.

**The Cost of the Call.** The call does not come without cost. Once a PC can feel the city's call, the city subtly



encourages the PC to remain loyal. Each time the PC attempts an action that would harm the city or its citizens or reduce the PC's Status (see page 10) in the city, the PC must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or fail to perform the action, as some distraction, event, or circumstance interrupts the PC. The DC is equal to 10 + the amount of Status the PC would lose by performing the action. The PC is permanently cut off from the city's call after performing nine such actions, whether or not the saving throws were successful. A PC that performs a great service or act of atonement to Bastet, her temple, or the city itself can regain the city's call, at your discretion.

**Using Per-Bastet's Call.** A PC with Per-Bastet's Call can expend it to cause one of the following effects. Such effects only ever occur in the city itself, although you might wish to extend that effect to catslide alleys or other areas you feel are appropriate.

**Nine Lives in My Blood.** As a reaction when the PC takes damage, the PC can halve the damage from that source. The PC dodges behind an ancient statue on a street corner, the PC's assailants are distracted at the last second by a peculiarly pale cat, the sunlight glints off the walls of a pyramid as the assailant attacks, or a similar "lucky" effect happens, protecting the PC.

**The Call in My Soul.** As a reaction when the PC fails an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw, the PC can reroll the ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. Perhaps an unseen spirit guides the PC's limbs, the PC's dazzled aim is suddenly clarified by a cloud passing over the sun, or the attacker's spell is turned by some arcane quirk of the City of Cats.

**The Kiss of Per-Bastet.** As a bonus action, the PC invokes their deep love of the city, regaining 2d8 hit points.

**Vengeance of the City.** As a reaction when an enemy within 30 feet of the PC makes an ability check or attack roll, the PC can force the enemy to reroll the ability check or attack roll. The foe of one who loves this city is like a stain on the streets. Perhaps the foe slips at the last moment on a worn marble flagstone, is briefly blinded by the glare of the sun off the highest point of the Mother of Destiny, or a simple distraction occurs, such as the sudden call of a street vendor or a bard singing their love of the City of Cats.

**Everlasting Love.** As a bonus action, the PC regains an expended spell slot or one use of a class feature with limited uses, such as a barbarian's Rage, a cleric's Channel Divinity, or a druid's Wild Shape. This effect doesn't apply to magic items.

## ADVENTURES IN THE PALACE DISTRICT

Aloof and distant, adventures in the Palace District are likely to be all about sponsors or contacts. People don't come here without an invitation, and as such the PCs are usually only going to come here as guests.

**The Seer's Terrible Vision.** The Nine Millennia Archive offers you a good potential link into a wider adventure as the group seeks to read the signs being experienced by their somewhat confused nomarch. Such an adventure might begin with the PCs performing some minor service for the archive—the return of a book stolen by cohorts of Khemet Shrie (see page 51) perhaps. The tale could then run that the dhampir found a way to step into the dreams of Haty-al Haakim, using information he gleaned from the stolen book. Khemet studies the nomarch's dreams and believes the most recent dreams hint at a terrible portent—the slaying of Bastet, a plot hatched by Chittr'k'k, Demon Lord of Rats (*Creature Codex*, p. 76) to recreate the city as a haven for rats.

This adventure would bring the PCs into contact with the Archive, her more senior members at the side of Haakim, and followers of Chittr'k'k within the city, a group known as the Cult of the Reckoning Bite. Haakim's visions steadily become more agitated as the adventure progresses, starting as simple drawings of teeth then moving to sculptures of a vial and eventually moving to a painting Haakim creates in his sleep of a slain and bleeding Bastet. Perhaps the first step of the cult's plan involves procuring the *grimalkin eye* and *Grimalkin Idol* from the *Cat and Mouse* and *Grimalkin* adventures (see the Adventures chapter on page 66). Thwarted by the PCs, Chittr'k'k's followers turn to more insidious methods, summoning and milking a particular essence from fiendish creatures to make an elixir before releasing the creatures into the city. These seemingly unrelated incidents increase in frequency as the elixir—a poison able to slay a god—gets closer to completion.

The culmination of events happens on a holy day of great import to Bastet. On that day the High Priestess communes with the goddess, who momentarily manifests in the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet (Area 15 on the Per-Bastet map). The cult and an avatar of Chittr'k'k intend to be at that holy event, where they plan to use the elixir to slay the goddess.

## perfume district

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into her fragrant streets of incense and poison and of trade and treachery—the Perfume District.

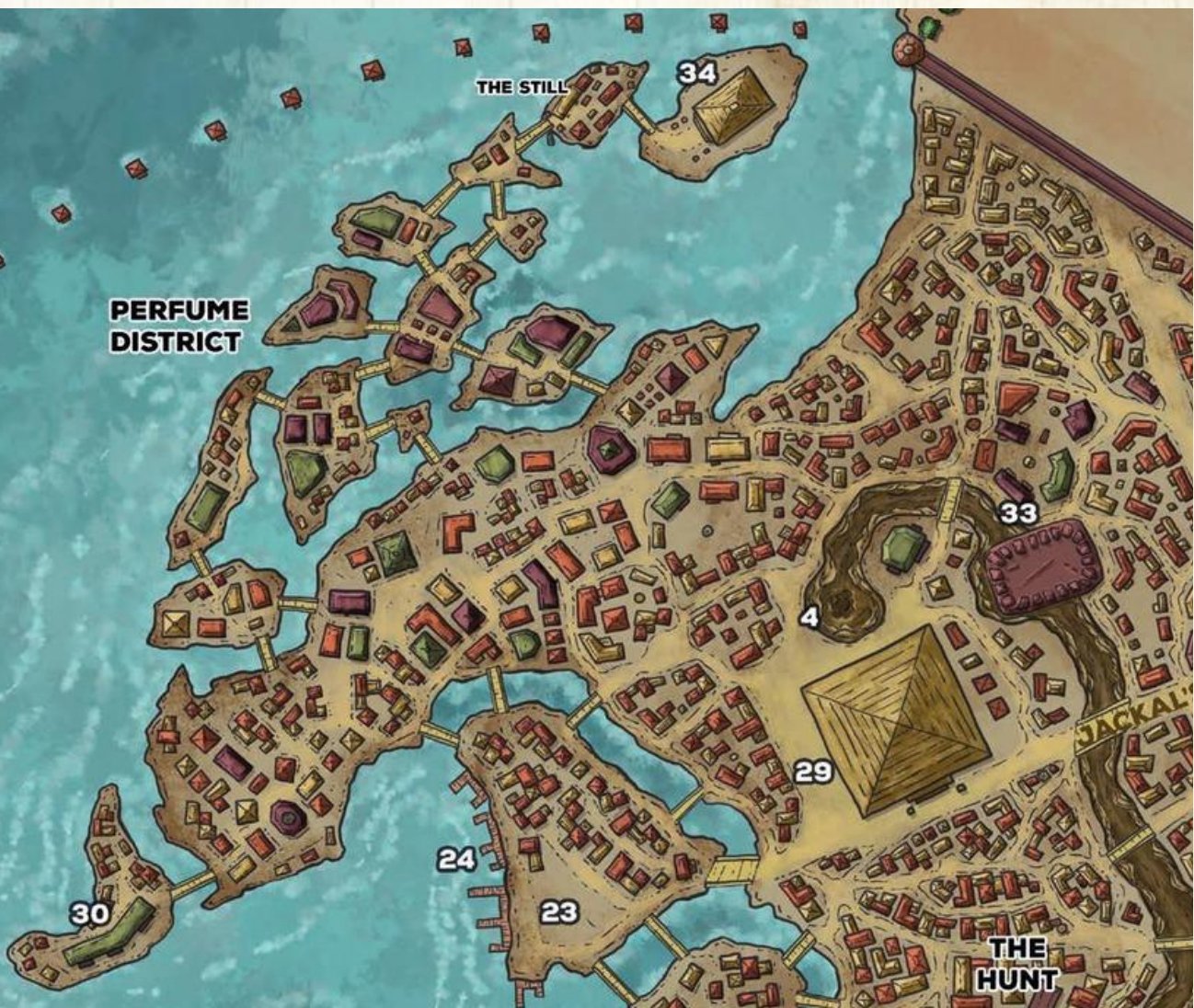
In the river at the city's northern edge, safely downstream from all else, stands the Perfume District, comprised of myriad small islands connected by bridges. As one moves downriver, the famous perfumeries and reputable potion-makers devolve into increasingly unsavory alchemical shops, distilleries, candle makers, and storage facilities. Here, anyone with connections or money can find necromantic unguents, poisons, and abominable constructs, all ostensibly designed for use on criminals, enemies of the city, or as added protection for the city.

The small, steep Pyramid of Dreams on the northernmost isle sits upon a mysterious, secret well. Most who have found a way inside have emerged plagued with night terrors, leading locals to call it the “Pyramid of Nightmares.”

### THE STILL

The infamous Perfume District lurks on the edges of the city, and its worse section lurks in a vile corner, a place whose name is spat out by sailors and whispered by goodwives across the city. The Still.

The Still squats beside the isle that hosts the terrible Pyramid of Dreams (Area 34 on the Per-Bastet map) and is close enough, many locals say, to be pervaded by its chimeric influences. The Isle of Ulth, known more commonly by its local name of the Still, is the infamous home of many of the darker and more demented poisoners, potion distillers, and creators of experimental, perverse constructs.



The Still lurches across at its neighbors like a cyst, with two crooked bridges and a swollen belly below—a hive of those who like to stay out of sight and conduct private business away from the more ‘genteel’ city. In truth, many of the activities that happen in this belly have sponsors in very high places, though these individuals are anxious to keep their names distant from what takes place in the Still. The sponsors often have a vested interest in the goings on in the belly due to a greedy and driving need to learn the boundaries of wickedness, the need to learn about their enemies, or the simple yearning for knowledge.

**Blinding Order.** The isle (and, to some extent, other portions of the district as a whole) is overseen by a cabal of strange bedfellows whose fear of being unmasked is matched only by their hunger for wealth, lust, or basic need to *know*. Whispered simply as the Blinding Order, they are a secret organization which numbers half a dozen to a dozen at any one time, depending upon how many have murdered each other or been murdered by outsiders. The Order is a gathering of convenience: each member has a vested interest in carrying out their studies via undisturbed experiments and there is always strength in numbers.

**The Order’s Hounds.** The Blinding Order sponsors a not-so-secret watch known as the Scent, which locals call the “Bloodhounds” after the watch’s ability to sniff out trouble. This force is in place to see that those who ask too many questions are fed to the horribly mutated local crocodiles that lurk below the isle, waiting to be fed. The reckless, and some say insane, Captain Hafini leads this small but effective private mercenary watch of rogues, which primarily guards the isle’s more infamous inhabitants. Why the Order elects to pay someone almost as demented as themselves to keep a wary eye out for officialdom is a mystery to locals.

#### THE CAULDRON

A curious property hangs below the main streets and, from certain angles, resembles a crooked, wooden scarab. Within, in opulent luxury, dwells the beautiful human alchemist and wizard, Estal Shekmit, arguably the most infamous perfumer in the district and the most senior member of the Blinding Order. Shekmit lurks like a queen wasp in a nest, surrounded by her own poison-bloated swarms, which she often sends out to deliver her ire and displeasure to those who have slighted her.

Estal raised herself in the murky streets of the Still. She ran away from her wicked guardians when she could barely talk and evaded their attentions. She learned her tricks from studying those who plied their trades here, flitting from place to place like the wasps she loves. She was a quick learner, but she often learned the hard way, leading to an outer defiance that masks a cruel and broken heart.

**Wasp Milker.** Estal uses her charms to lure and take, to bribe and blackmail, in pursuit of her goal. She does not desire power. She wishes for peace to study her beloved wasps, hornets, and bees, but she is ever driven by the study of some rare type of horrific tropical specimen or perverse Abyssal variety. Her long talents in harvesting their poisons has earned her the nickname “Wasp Milker.” Her house echoes with a curious low hum, the buzzing of her beloved hymenoptera, as she distills a



precious scent, sting, or extract. Visitors swear they have heard hundreds of swarms of wasps within her walls and point to the fact that even the hardy and indiscriminate gulls that flock around the River Nuria give her home a wide berth.

### THE HOUSE OF SHRIE

A grand, some might even say feverish, riad sits bent over the waters. An odd garden crammed with disturbing statues and bloated blooms lurks behind its hefty, metal outer doors.

The riad is the home and workplace of the dhampir, Khemet Shrie.

**Tormented Dreamer.** Khemet has a curious ability to magically influence others. It may come from the vampire blood that lurks somewhere in his twisted genealogy, or it might be his gift at spellcasting. Khemet is a disjointed bag of limbs that are not quite in the right places. He is a man once crippled by abuse and shame and broken by the unfortunate quirk of his birth. Now he staggers the dark streets as a would-be-king, a lord of what he surveys. He brokers no insolence—he has had enough of that—and seeks to exist in the world of dreams where the inhabitants of the city are laid bare. If he could mingle instead of cower, be loved instead of loathed, be seen as a person instead of as a product of a vampire's lust, then existence in the world of dreams is a small price. Arch poisoner and powerful wizard, Khemet Shrie is a big dreamer. Indeed, he can distill nightmares and walk into people's dreams.



### HAUNTED DREAMS AND THE SHADOW DREAMER

Lately, Estal Shekni's (see Area P1) study has been interrupted by a rival on the isle, a figure who is more driven than her—a figure with a dream—and it scares her. She cannot prove anything, but she knows in her broken heart that Khemet Shrie (see Area P2) lurks at the corners of her dreams. So great has her anxiety become that she has enlisted the confidence and aid of the (in her eyes loathsome) subek Captain Hafni (see Area P4) to put an end to this phantasm foe. Unfortunately, Hafni reads deeper meaning into her sudden companionship and has fallen in love with her. Her paranoia may be about to turn to violence but not before she turns her attentions to a known cohort of Shrie's, his underling Ashmet (see Area P6). Estal greatly desires to have a lengthy discussion

about her concerns with Ashmet. So far, the wily Ashmet has evaded Estal's grasp.

Khemet Shrie has indeed been at the edges of Estal Shekni's dreams as a shadowy figure, and, for the first time since she was an orphan on the streets of the district, Estal is scared. In truth, Khemet has nothing personal against Estal, but, like so many great people he fears, he must remove her—or perhaps simply negate her—to ensure his own safety in this stinking corner of the City of Cats. He genuinely hopes he can resolve the complication without killing her. His innate desire to remain genteel and not soil himself too much with the blood of others makes harming her problematic, but, somehow, he must ensure she is neutralized.



**Purveyor of Dreams.** Khemet distills dreams to pay for his own deeper researches. He sells enchanted trinkets filled with false dreams of glory, admiration, or love to those select customers he makes aware of his gifts. In return, he asks them for a little assistance: the occasionally enslaved devil, the odd, unspeakable tome, or the rare, extended foray into the lands of incubi.

**Loyal Followers.** Khemet has a number of remarkably loyal followers and servants, mainly through shreds of lingering magical influence. Chief among those is an ally from long ago, an aquatic ghoulish of infinite resource and wit called Ashmet (see Area P6). Recently, Khemet has been using the ghoulish contacts to bulk his own defenses, to eradicate petty enemies, and to frighten those who have brought his services into disrepute by saying too much about them to too many people.

**Uncertain Dreamer.** Now he stands at a threshold. His explorations have enabled him to walk those crooked ways of dreams into which he explores deeper and deeper, prying into the secret thoughts of many. His skin has grown pale and his eyes bloodshot. His body grows weaker, and his wakefulness threatens to take him to madness. But how far can he go, he wonders? What lies on the edges of dreams?

#### THE DISTILLERY

Part tea-house famous for its mint-tea, part inn, part market, part laboratory, the Distillery epitomizes the souk and cosmopolitan face of the Perfume District. A gigantic, affable, but short-tempered gnoll, Heretti Hekett has owned and run the Distillery since the previous owner disappeared two decades ago. The previous owner is rumored to still be wandering some insane corner of the establishment pursued by a poison-coated spider the size of a pony.

**Trade Hub.** Here the welcome is warm, if one can afford it, and everything is available for a price. In its seemingly endless, crooked corners, kobold illusionist-poisoners whisper to curious gearforged scholars and bloated staircases of tomes lurk outside curious unguent shops that show their wares from shops barely bigger than cupboards. Some say that people who go into the Distillery sometimes don't come out, and that secrets and things best forgotten dwell behind some of its older doors. The Distillery is where most clandestine meetings occur in the Still. The place is clean and welcoming, the liveried staff—mostly gearforged or clockwork—are efficient and courteous, and the unpredictably mad nature of the Distillery's endless souks and merchants make it a common stop for visitors and locals alike.

**Cat Haven.** Heretti loves her cats, and many reside in the Distillery. The gnoll welcomes strays from the whole city and woe betide anyone who harms one. She hosts curious and frequent entertainments unique to the city, and these act as a powerful draw for the locals and, seemingly, for the many cats that wander the place. In truth, several of the Distillery's cats are awakened, and they work as spies and information gatherers for the temples of Bastet. They are currently keeping a watchful eye for the agent Amira (see Area P8) as trouble seems to be coming to a boil on the isle.

#### HAFINI AND THE LEANING LIGHTHOUSE

Captain Hafini is the notorious subek captain of the Scent, a flotsam mob of thugs, killers, and hard men and women who keep order and act at the behest of the Blinding Order. He stomps about the Still, barking out orders to his terrified followers, who know there is trouble ahead if they see him with his club in hand. Hafini's house is on the verge of collapsing into the River Nuria, its groaning splintered timbers one good storm from ruin. Hafini loves the place, however, and refuses to leave, seeing his old home rather like the captain of a ship would. He fully intends to go down with her when it happens, unafraid of the crocodiles below.

**Relations in the Still.** Hafini is obsessively in love (his words) with the infamous and dangerous Estal Sheknit (see Area P1), and the duo are presently mulling over what to do about the increasingly bold Khemet Shrie.

#### THE HOUSE OF THE BRASS LANTERN

Ratfolk necromancer of the Blinding Order, Middenlips Reek, is presently the greatest construct and undead expert in the Still, possibly in the city. Reek has an extremely unsettling presence, and his house, named after the huge lantern that sways outside, is more museum and mortuary than home. Reek sees his work as beautiful, the extension of life beyond mere physicality, but he is extremely anxious to keep a low profile.

**Relations in the Still.** The driven ratfolk is particularly paranoid about the cats in the Distillery (see Area P3) and a new rogue in the attics above the Old Khadir Dock (see Area P8). He is mulling over what to do about them. Whatever happens, he plans to use the talents of his recent ally Ashmet (see Area P6) to resolve the issues. He's still unsure about the ghoulish friendliness and regards her as expendable.

## THE FATHOM

The shipwreck of the Fathom lies at the heel of the Still and is a haunt for water-dwelling ghouls. One in particular, Ashmet, uses the place as her base of operations in the district. She loves pretty things, and she has quite a collection of both goods and slaves in various locales across the district.

**Relations in the Still.** She is presently playing a dangerous game of working for two employers at once: Khemet Shrie (see Area P2) and Middenlips Reek (see Area P5). Ashmet is nothing if not a gambler, and she believes she may be able to work the growing paranoia of the ratfolk Reek to some profitable end with Shrie, either an alliance or conflict, both of which would be lucrative for her. Ashmet is particularly curious about Shrie's ability to walk in dreams and his long-held belief that he might cast his skin away and take a new one. Ashmet believes being beautiful and warm once more would be quite wonderful. She is curious about the Hermit (see Area P7) and worries the chuul's strange singing might herald some terrible event.

## THE HERMIT

The Monolith Colonnade (see page 6) is a row of wide-spaced monoliths said to contain an ancient arcane defense against attack on the city. One presently houses the Hermit, a chuul who lurks within the weathered folds of one of the monoliths. The chuul arrived recently and simply sits and utters curiously melodic chants, the lyrics of which are a language lost to time. The sounds echo west across the River Nuria and drift on the wind. Few have heard the curious melody, but those who do wonder what it portends or what the creature calls to it.

## THE OLD KHADIR DOCK

Rotting into the river, the docks are now mostly abandoned and too dangerous to enter. Rats live here, and, of late, a strange fat cat wanders the docks like it has a purpose. Named Amira, she is an awakened cat and rogue here on behalf of the priestesses of Bastet to learn what she can about the troubling ongoing wickedness in the Still. The priestesses of Bastet anxiously watch and wage covert war against this wickedness. Amira is cautious and knows she has few friends here, but the cats that lurk in the Distillery (see Area P3) keep a watchful eye out for her and for those who step too far in dark pursuits. Often, the priestesses have used strangers and adventurers to thwart the dreams of the wicked here, and they are presently considering a plan to destroy the Blinding Order entirely.

## THE STREETS OF THE STILL

The Perfume District holds the seedy underworld of Per-Bastet with its seemingly endless avenues of knowledge and dangers. Visitors can meet the curiously cheerful Judicious Man, who can answer any question but demands a hefty price of the questioner in skin and sanity. They can explore the Night Ferries that lurk below the district, with their sad and sickly lights guiding visitors to dark night markets where unsettling things are sold of flesh and bone. In the darkest areas, visitors can meet those who combine their arts to create and enjoy constructs with poisonous skin, spines, and mouths. They can also stumble upon the gibbering mouthers that are harvested by some to create oozes that are then sent to kill and engulf, leaving nothing of their victims save their memories. Lucky visitors might find the Street of Mint, which holds a score of magic unguent merchants, such as the astonishing potion and lotion souk of Sakirr-nim-Astiffi.

## ADVENTURES IN THE STILL

The atmosphere of paranoia is something that could bring the PCs into the Still in a number of ways.

**Double Agents.** The PCs could be double agents working for some outside force. They have been asked to ingratiate themselves with a member of the Blinding Order, before ultimately betraying their Order sponsor.

**Scent Recruits.** The PCs could be asked to work within the Scent to obtain secrets and layouts for a future attack.

**Rare Magical Finds.** The PCs could be seeking a rare potion recipe, to thwart an inventor creating a terrible construct, or to simply shop and buy up some new and rare unguents and oils.



## the hunt

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into the dangerous and deadly belly of this city full of predators—the Hunt.

Nobody lives in the Hunt; or, at least, so they say. The Hunt is lawless, mostly abandoned, and tragic. It is said that hundreds of years ago everyone here died. Quite how and why this happened is, like so many things in the City of Cats, subject to a seemingly endless stream of stories, theories, and dubious facts. The Hunt is far from empty now, however, and while no sane person would live here, many find it a convenient place to hide. Two thirds of a mile long and half as wide, this part of the city (and what lies below it) probably has more peril than anywhere else—even including the District of the Hyena, whose buildings and clans spill into, mingle with, and eventually overtake the Hunt as the district curves northwest toward the Pallid Court (Area 30 on the Per-Bastet map).

Deadly creatures make their lairs here, terrible creatures that lurk in twisted corners and beneath dancing hills of sand that seem alive.

### WHAT HAPPENED AT THE HUNT

Hundreds of years ago, everyone in the Hunt died. A hundred, hundred stories about the dark night in the Hunt are told by firesides, wrought into epic poems, or sung as lullabies. The only certainty is, if anyone truly knows what happened that night long ago, they refuse to say. And quite why they would keep such a secret represents the darkest part of this whole tale...

Here are a few of the wilder tales and fables about the Hunt's history:

**The Terrible Bargain.** Akril-ash-Mhkarr was an infamous necromancer who created a palace within the area now known as the Hunt, which at that time was teeming with locals whose binding tie was that they were not local. The area was known as the Visitors' District and was reserved for those who came to Per-Bastet and made it home. Each also was bound by a curious loyalty—some might say worship—of the necromancer, who was in effect emperor of the Visitors' District. Mhkarr was obsessed with the Dead, but he was horrified by their (as he outrageously put it) mindless contentment and servitude. Such a fate would not take Akril-ash-Mhkarr. As the necromancer reached the end of his already extended life, he tried to strike a bargain with the Reborn Queen. He offered her all he had—his dark knowledge, his arcane arts, and his trove of artefacts—to become Dead yet retain his mind and free will. But the Reborn Queen

is mysterious and aloof and does not strike bargains. In a single night, her wrath fell on Akril-ash-Mhkarr and those who followed him, wiping the district clean of all life, bar one—the necromancer himself. As he died, he became a member of the Dead, hosting the crooked bodies and demented souls of those who worshiped him. He was left to travel dark catslide alleys eternally, ravaged by the hatred of his followers and his nightmares into a single, terrible, bloated form—the only Dead not to find peace and fulfillment in service of the greatest city in the world.

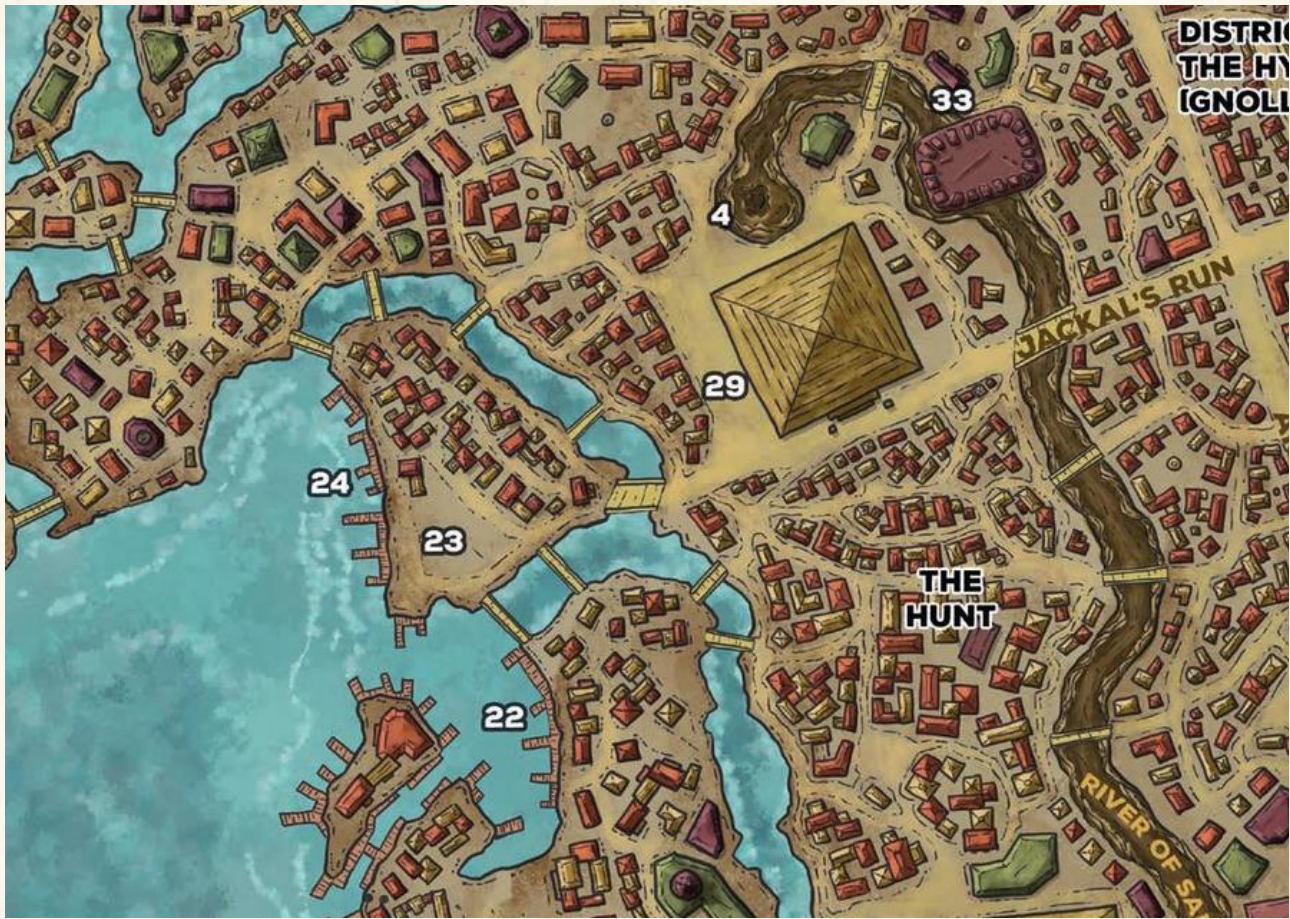
**The Cat's Kiss.** The death, they say, was brought about by a terrible plague wrought by cats. Once, long ago, the Hunt was a district used by butchers and slaughtermen who fed the city, and was known as the Meat Quarter. The quarter was a lawless place that steadily grew more and more anarchistic, refusing to pay taxes, slaying those who tried to collect them and making pacts with demented demons to keep their district safe from outside interference. However, it was not until the locals began to slaughter cats—taking them as spies and enemies—that vengeance truly struck.

The slaughter of her kind angered Khastiri, the Queen of Cats (*Creature Codex* p. 32), who, in her misery and anger, sent a wave of retribution upon the butchers. Her wrath took the form of a screaming wall of cats, a wave of scratching terror that consumed everything in its path. As dawn rose over the Meat Quarter, a strange silence filled the air, and, when those brave enough finally wandered within its embrace to learn what had happened, they found no one—not a single person, beast, or even insect.

**The Pallid Hunger.** Countless tales exist about the terrible Pallid Court, but the worst, and one that is only ever whispered lest one of the vampires hear it, is the tale of the Gathering. The Gathering, the story goes, is a fever that affects vampires only once every dozen centuries or so. It is a madness that consumes them all and drives them to feed for a single night like an army of mouths, an insatiable maw that devours everything—bone, flesh, muscle, souls.

The Gathering last took place, the tale runs, many centuries ago and fell upon the quarter of the city then known as the Traveler District, as it held and welcomed many travelers. That district is now known as the Hunt. The Gathering, they say, feasted over a single night and left nothing. Everyone died and was utterly consumed—those who lived there, those who were passing through, those who witnessed the event—all gone.

No one, of course, utters the rumor when a member of the Pallid Court or their followers is nearby, and many try not to even think about the tale. Locals are afraid that crooked vengeance is sure to come from the vampires,



who are said to be able to see thoughts. Some scholars believe the Gathering at the Hunt last took place twelve centuries ago and is overdue.

### UNTAMED HUNTING GROUNDS

The Hunt is *the* place to hunt in the City of Cats. It is small wonder that gnolls have gathered so closely to this area of terror. It serves their mad need for dares, hunting, and bets well. It is also, like them, untamed. Of course, where there are two gnolls there are always bets, and what better bet to place than one that might rise you in an instant to glory, envy, and torpor—especially if you can cheat.

The Hunt offers gnolls and those who simply like shedding blood a place to hunt out the few creatures that somehow thrive here, pursue escaped slaves, or bag an elusive naga for one's trophy cabinet. Merely to enter the Hunt is dangerous. Whether it's a gang of gnoll children daring their friend to run up to a doorway, touch it, and return or an initiation ceremony where a gnoll must spend a night naked inside the Hunt, the opportunities for danger and glory are endless.

Races are very common, particularly chariot races. One of the many initiations for would-be charioteers who wish to join the ranks of Warlord Raykar-Takur's (see page

18) unit is known as the Frantic, a weaving course taken in pitch darkness through the Hunt. Racers are hobbled and armed only with a feather. Races between charioteers are matters of honor (although they may decide to let their minions enjoy that honor for them) and spring up daily. Treasure hunts are very common, but hunts for more obscure objects (don't come out until you have a harpsicord key) are often considered better games, despite invariably taking longer. Runs on foot, while blindfolded, fettered, tied to a pack of rabid dogs, or injured are all seen as variants on more boring options, such as chasing released slaves. Even gnolls, however, balk at entering the Hunt if they know hunters from the nearby Pallid Court (Area 30) are at large. Hunting vampires are about as terrifying as possible, and when the vampires make their occasional forays into the Hunt for whatever purpose they have, everyone else is wise to keep well clear.

### DUBIOUS GUIDES

Those who brave the dangerous confines of the district, whether that be to seek treasure of some previous unfortunate or to rob some rumored local beast or villain that lairs here, often do so with an over-confident

sense of their own worth and prowess. Magic treasure is often found after unsuccessful hunts where the hunters die. However, such treasure is just as often the spoils of some unlucky or foolish hero, the arcane oddities of a now mutilated wizard, or the eagerly kept belongings of a venturing and ultimately unlucky rogue. The varied creatures that make their lairs here—particularly nagas and sphinxes—covet such objects and seek them. These intelligent creatures have been known to lure adventurers into the area simply to steal their wealth. Many have formed uneasy alliances with “guides” from the wider city, who lure hapless adventurers into the Hunt and receive a share of the wealth from the Hunt’s denizens.

The following guides can be encountered anywhere in the city, looking for heroes to dupe into following them. They concoct stories of dying sphinxes in ancient libraries full of magic, diseased nagas whose flanks are seething with ruby blisters, or other less brazen tales, hoping to draw adventurers into the Hunt where their dangerous allies are waiting to devour and rob the adventurers.

**Munty Kekolix.** This green kobold is a self-named urban explorer. He usually sits atop his beloved war ostrich (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 307) Gog, which is bedecked with countless bags. Munty is always ready for exploration. But why, he says, expend all that energy and fruitless time heading into the wilderness when treasure and excitement lies on the next street? Munty claims to have walked catslide alleys, ventured into the Great Labyrinth, and trodden the Pallid Court in his local voyages. There is no one more expert at the city, he modestly claims, and Munty swears by his small fez that he always has a site or three worth a closer look. Munty says he enjoys meeting new folk, but, whenever encountered, he always seems to be alone apart from his war ostrich and his beloved cat Providential, an awakened cat and his companion and partner. Munty scours many locations across the city, both for leads and work. One of his favorite gossip dens is The Tea House of Mustam (see page 20). Munty views it like a bay in a river where driftwood (in the form of gossip) drifts up just waiting to be collected.

In truth, Munty is a front and currently works for a spirit naga, who rules the roost in a small corner of the Hunt near the Pyramid of the

Mother of Destiny (Area 26 on the Per-Bastet map). The naga, named Nezehguth, is obsessively searching the Hunt for magical items that will let her influence or control cats and catlike creatures. She plans to gather enough such items and loyal followers to eventually stage a massive uprising that results in the exit of all cats from Per-Bastet. Munty delights in Nezehguth’s focused tastes, which leaves him with much of the treasure from the naga’s victims. If you run the *Grimalkin* adventure (see page 100) and the characters decided to keep the *Grimalkin Idol*, Nezehguth might hear the characters are in possession of it and send Munty to lure them to the Hunt.

**Carrioncall.** Riding a large, mangy vulture, this ratfolk alchemist claims that his unique ability to fly and spy grants him greater access to curious-looking lairs and secrets than anyone else in Per-Bastet. His unique flying talents, inherent cowardice, and preference for keeping all at range has left him without a scratch, in spite of his tendency to fly in and out of ruins, treasure vaults, and temples unseen.



Carrioncall is presently in the “employ” of one of the worst and most dangerous residents of the Hunt—the frightfully aerial Paradix (see Terrible Denizens). The ratfolk lures adventurers into the district for his mistress to rob and eat (although not always in that order), but he is particularly on the lookout for arcane experts who may be able to help his benefactor in unraveling the secrets of the Great Sand Pyramid.

### TERRIBLE DENIZENS

The ruins of the Hunt are more commonly haunted by nagas, earth elementals, and a handful of sphinxes, but in such a dangerous place this can quickly change. Demons and desperate, escaped slaves often seek refuge here. Some of the humanoid who flee here have good reason to be feared—it takes quite a person to seek escape into the most dangerous place in the city.

Some of those presently vying for power are detailed here, but, like anywhere in this great city, the list is not only incomplete but open to frequent, and usually violent, change.

**Riddling Guardian.** The enigmatic Great Sand Pyramid (Area 29 on the Per-Bastet map) is fed by a steady cascade of sand from the sky above. Like a great hourglass, its flanks steadily grow and collapse, wisps of sand blowing towards the Pit (Area 4 on the Per-Bastet map). This drift of sand gathers across the streets immediately below and adjacent to the two, forming an area known as the Susurrus: named for the curiously calming noises that echo from the relentless drifting and falling sands. Paradix, a gypsosphinx (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 359) and one of the most powerful denizens presently haunting the Hunt lurks within the cavernous vault of a building just below the Susurrus.

Paradix delights in accosting lone travelers within the area (or other parts of the city as she takes flights at full moon) and asking impossible riddles. These riddles are utterly unfathomable, and it amuses the gypsosphinx to see people struggle to answer them. Those who fail to answer the riddles are set equally unpalatable tasks—such as bringing the bodies of six relatives in six days, fetching a newly Dead priestess of Bastet, or gathering an impossible number of bodies for the creature to feast upon—or else. Only one creature, the gifted Carrioncall



(see Dubious Guides), has answered a riddle correctly, and now the two have formed a convenient partnership with the ratfolk providing fresh adventurers and bodies in exchange for the odd service.

Paradix is obsessively fascinated by the Great Sand Pyramid itself, and any tale, information, or outright fabrication relating to the curious phenomenon always piques the creature’s interest enough for its minion Carrioncall to come questioning.

**Kindred Hatred.** Paradix’s greatest rival is the beautiful and peculiar Anuktata, a two-headed gynosphinx. This strangely silent creature has a small force of earth elementals formed of sand, a number of ravenfolk mummies, and the ravenfolk warrior Qadif-Ja (see page 139) that act as her (as she sees it) divine retribution. Anuktata believes she is a fragment of Horus who has been sent to the city to halt a coming night of endless darkness, which she saw in a dream. The sphinx wholeheartedly believes in her vision and mission, but around every corner she sees yet another creature who would attempt to stop her. Anuktata believes the Great Sand Pyramid actually forms part of the ritual necessary



to halt the coming night and is busy sending her agents to collect a curiously enigmatic set of objects, living things, and artefacts to ensure the ritual succeeds. It has not entered her thoughts that she could be mistaken, nor has she considered that the ritual might actually be part of a plan concocted by a devil invading her dreams and planting its own foul plan to bring about endless night. Of late, her dreams have been plagued by meetings with Haty-a Haakim, Third Brother of God-King Thutmoses (see page 7). In these dreams, the nomarch never answers her questions. Instead, he stares into the Great Sand Pyramid and is eventually swallowed in a burning sandstorm. She can only guess what this means, but she seeks living minions who can make contact with the nomarch to schedule a real meeting.

**Elemental Hive.** Earth elementals inhabit and swim through the River of Sand, but they ignore passing people they could easily reach out and crush, content to simply swim in the river. Though they don't help those who wander into the river, they don't attack the intruders either. The elementals in the Hunt, however, regularly leave the river but never leave the area of the Hunt unless driven so or forced to do so by some powerful magic.

The Hunt's elementals are, unlike their river kin, vicious, and anyone who enters the Hunt risks their life in doing so. With brooding dunes of sand at every corner and choking every sunken way and street, the opportunities for earth elementals to lurk unseen are endless. Some hunters report fleeing from packs of such creatures that form into swarms and sandstorms of elementals. A hive of elementals, known to local creatures as Sandman, lies below the streets of the Hunt and makes occasional forays into the District of the Hyena. This seemingly intelligent hive of elementals is growing, and those who have escaped it speak of a taunting howling mass of fury that seems to take delight in the chase.

## RESIDENTS IN HIDING

A creature has to be mad or desperate to hide in the Hunt. Escaped slaves whisper stories of those who made their homes in the Hunt and found vast hordes of magical treasure with which they made their fortune. The tales say these escapees now live in palaces across the city. In truth, lone slaves rarely live long, but a handful of gangs of escaped slaves have successfully holed up in the district. They use it as a base and hope that in time they will be able to live normal lives or perhaps, some dream, overthrown those in power.

The Liberty Dragons are one such group, and perhaps the safest right now. Mainly made up of kobolds, these former slaves have built a warren of traps overlooking the

Last Crucible (Area 33 on the Per-Bastet map). A small gang of dragonborn rogues who lurk nearby have formed a loose alliance with the Liberty Dragons and the two groups sometimes kill those who venture into the Hunt.

A group of (many would say insane) gnoll hunters, who refer to themselves as the Sisters of the Blood, work for other gnolls and find and devise the various hunts and games that occur herein. The sisters pride themselves in their abilities to stay hidden, to note lairs of creatures, and to work out, describe, and, in some cases, even paint routes for hunts, games, and races in the Hunt. These activities are almost always only for gnolls, but any non-gnoll who engages in such madness always gains the admiration of gnolls in the city. There is not much going on in the Hunt that the Sisters of the Blood don't know about, and those who have reason to enter (and who can afford it) would be wise to find a sister and ask her what is happening inside the Hunt right now.

## SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SMELLS OF THE HUNT

The Hunt is an echoing, and (mostly) empty place consisting of abandoned buildings: grand palaces, lurking pyramids, and abandoned, statue-infested courtyards. A dusting of sand drifts around every corner and chokes every doorway, yet, like everywhere in the City of Cats, it is not always so stifled. Odd noises echo through the streets, strange sights flicker between buildings, and curious travelers dash through the dunes that seek to swallow this area. Here are suggestions about who and what a traveler might encounter here. Roll a d20 or select one of the following as flavors that might be glimpsed locations, fleeting encounters, or the start of whole adventures.

1. A curious chittering sound echoes across the empty streets, an unsettling clicking that somehow seems to contain words. The noises echo and grow until their source, a wave of cockroaches, tears around a corner ahead.
2. A gnome dressed in spelunking gear runs past you, screaming. "*It's coming!*" his head turning in sobbing horror as he glances behind him.
3. The ruins of a palace appear to be covered in carved stone eyes.
4. A set of sandy steps winds downward toward the sound of laughter.
5. The words "beware the naga" have been drawn in the sands below the archway in the street ahead.
6. A beautiful bridge carved like a swan crosses nothing but sand.
7. A distant figure waves its arms frantically at you before rounding a corner and vanishing.

8. The dune you stand on is in fact a single finger of a vast stone hand.
9. The sand seems to whisper as you walk on it.
10. Distant laughter suddenly turns to sobbing.
11. Somewhere nearby, a pack of dogs chases something that is screaming.
12. You come upon a 20-foot-long shed snakeskin.
13. A skeleton on the street has been crushed totally flat. Upon closer inspection, you realize by the clothes it wears that the figure was flattened whilst alive.
14. Tracks lead off up a street, each footprint a dozen yards apart.
15. Howling noises come from a huge sinkhole in the street. Far below, you hear running water and a cry for help.
16. Singing drifts by, the words of a song you somehow know has not been sung for centuries.
17. Half a dozen bodies litter the street, many missing limbs. As you look at them, you see a tooth the size of your arm lying by a huge arched doorway.
18. A black cat walks past, staring at you.
19. A naked gnoll runs past. He grins and winks at you. Below the streets, something massive suddenly stirs.
20. The plaza you are in must once have been incredible, with dozens of fine residences. The ghosts of this place momentarily touch you, and you glimpse a thriving happy street. Then a vast dark cloud appears over the rooftops and your vision ends, or rather continues, as the cloud now tears towards the empty plaza where you are standing.

### ADVENTURES IN THE HUNT

Simply being in the Hunt is quite an adventure, and such events might simply be a matter of survival. Perhaps the PCs find out that a special hunt is about to take place after a trio of particularly troublesome and resourceful slaves escaped a gnoll matriarch. Maybe the PCs, in an attempt to impress the matriarch's rival, have to save the slaves, prevent their capture, or lead them to a gang of escaped slaves eking out an existence in the Hunt. Perhaps the PCs take place in a gnoll race across the Hunt to gain favor with a gnoll matriarch or Warlord Raykar-Takur (see page 18), or maybe they are tempted into the Hunt by one of the dubious NPCs detailed earlier.

## Wharf district

Looking into the many lives of the City of Cats, we venture into the hub of trade where docks creak and sailors shout—the Wharf District.

Flourishing along the banks of the city, the Wharf District grins greedily outwards, hungrily licking its lips as more vessels groaning with trade goods and slaves returns to the nest. Here the commerce of Per-Bastet both begins and ends its journey. The district thrums with the sounds of merchants calling their wares and cruel overseers barking at dragonborn and kobold slaves who are loading and unloading ships.

### THRIVING TRADE HUB

Public and private docks for hundreds of river craft line this center for trade. The Grand Souk and Endless Bazaar (Areas 20 and 21 on the Per-Bastet map, respectively) hold the majority of the city's trade goods while numerous other bazaars pulse with activity throughout the district. Caravans crossing the desert to Per-Bastet often make their first stops at the Grand Souk, which lies at the end of the Great Dust and Old Kush roads. Similarly, larger vessels laden with trade goods often stop first at the Endless Bazaar, leaving both trade centers with distinct styles, goods, and clientele.

This district holds darkness in its bosom: the Bazaar of Lamentation (Area 23 on the Per-Bastet map), Nuria Natal's largest slave market where souls are sold to the highest, greediest bidder, thrives on the sale of dragonborn and kobold slaves. Yet there is light in the least expected places: the Flood (Area 24 on the Per-Bastet map), home to copious subeks, is one of the most sophisticated and genteel parts of this great city. Smiling subek merchants, who train their beloved kin with gentle hands, might invite visitors to take mint tea on their airy terraces, peruse their collections of statues and paintings, or listen to soothing music or poetry. The Flood Market (Area 22 on the Per-Bastet map), a bazaar comprised entirely of piers and watercraft, is run by subeks from the Flood.

### ABDRIN AL-RASHIR

Benevolent, smiling artisan, actor, physician, scholar, and philosopher, the wonderful subek Abdrin Al-Rashir is one of the more notable of the Wharf District's private dock owners. Abdrin has worked his way up to become one of the most sophisticated residents of the city. His honey charm, wit, conversation, and ruthless drive has seen him soar in a little over thirty years to his present lofty station. His trade is flesh, both slaves and livestock.

Those who admire him and envy his position often repeat his most well-known quote, “*there is always money in meat.*” The kindly subek is not without his nasty edge: he smiles as slaves and (as he views it) other livestock are disgorged from his trio of vessels, and he sings as the stolen plunder of yet another raid is brought to what he regards as the home of sophistication. These raids to *liberate* neglected treasures from around the Southlands are only occasional as they can be risky, and Abdrin does not like risks.

**Pious Merchant.** In all his business ventures, the subek is careful to pay due respect and homage to Bastet, consult her oracles, and give generously in his worship. Abdrin has recently commissioned half a dozen magnificent statues to the goddess in his own humble corner of her great city, and the Dead who worked on them only recently completed them. The subek frequently takes a barge to the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet (Area 15 on the Per-Bastet map) to worship in her highest of temples, and he dreams of nothing less than one day meeting High Priestess Nafrini herself to ensure that she is aware what a benevolent, humble, and godly philanthropist he is.

**Philanthropist and Parent.** In many of his undertakings, he is surrounded by children—all twenty-two of his own blessed offspring, in fact—who accompany him, carefully groomed and tutored by a group of hand-picked scholars. Abdrin adores his



children (and any children, in truth) and hopes to grow his brood to twice, maybe thrice, what he already has—at least! A large and diverse harem helps him in this stern task. The subek is also extremely generous to orphans, waifs, and strays and is a benefactor to a number of organizations across Per-Bastet that care for such children.

**Medina Owner.** Abdrin’s medina is typical of the hundreds of other medinas dotted along the shores of the River Nuria. He owns several buildings and two connected docks northwest of the Endless Bazaar, and

## STREET FOOD

In a city where almost everyone is busy and hungry, quick and easy access to ready to eat food is vital. The number of unique dishes in the City of Cats is, of course, impossible to calculate, but here, where cultures clash and bloom, the cuisine is as rich and varied as the city’s endlessly varied occupants. Here are a few of the more commonly encountered dishes that can be bought cheaply from street vendors anywhere in Per-Bastet.

1. **Camat.** Fried camel liver cooked in breadcrumbs
2. **Fassan.** Prickly pears cooked with sheep or camel parts and stewed in honey
3. **Ipkeer.** Pidgeon meat roasted in sugar and almonds
4. **Khaf.** A very, very spicy lentil soup served in tiny clay pots on street corners
5. **Khoz.** A very stodgy olive bread

6. **Nusceesh.** Fig rolls served with boiled crab
7. **Quor.** Freshly squeezed oranges served with mint and honey
8. **Rameer.** Spicy sausages made from the innards of camels
9. **Saff-al-Meesckam.** Yoghurt served with dates and fried fish
10. **Yamo.** Fried sardines served in spicy olives and dates.

Every vendor is aware that it’s always a good idea to have the divine on ones’ side, and each vendor is careful to place an offering of their wares at the opening of an alley at the day’s end. Known as the “Sunset’s Offering to Bastet”, the offerings bring local alley cats who sample the wares. Particularly brave rats and other vermin also enjoy the wares when cats aren’t nearby.



he makes his home in a fine, lofty riad (Area W2) there. His subjects pay his overseer, the foul-tongued, lokum-devouring subek Asbat, rent and various tithes for protection, as well as the normal taxes and tithes to the city itself. Yet Abdrin is not unfair in his charges, nor is Asbat brutal in collecting them. They are both very businesslike in their dealings with their subjects.

### MEDINA AL-RASHIR GENERAL FEATURES

Like many of his neighbors, Abdrin Al-Rashir finds it useful to maintain a small, private militia to keep order and secure his premises and home. Led by Asbat, this group consists of a baker's dozen of mostly subeks who wear the livery of Al-Rashir, a bright green tunic and tall black fez. Known as Al-Rashir Watch, they are based and housed within the Warehouse (Area W3).

**Safe Street.** The broad timber walkway known as the Street of Rashir runs the length of Al-Rashir's Medina, linking his two docks. It is clean and welcoming, and it is lit at night by hefty brass lanterns, which Al-Rashir Watch light at dusk and patrol in pairs until dawn when the lanterns are extinguished. The majority of Al-Rashir's buildings surround the Square of Al-Rashir, which hosts one of the new statues of Bastet at its center.

**Bastet Statues.** Visitors to the medina are welcomed by the five new Bastet statues, which depict the feline goddess in a sphinx form, smiling enigmatically. Each stone statue is 20 feet tall and embellished with semi-precious stone, such as lapis lazuli, carnelian, or jasper.

**Growing Medina.** The buildings here are in the process of being repaired after the neglect they received in the years prior to Abdrin purchasing them, and long teetering lines of wooden scaffolding cling to some buildings. Occasionally, a member of the Dead is seen with Abdrin himself, overseeing the slave builders as they repair and enhance the area. Each building is subtly marked as belonging to Abdrin by the presence of bas-reliefs depicting Al-Rashir insignia, a smiling crocodile with an open mouth full of human babies.

**Street Vendors and Rats.** This area, strategically placed between the thriving Flood Market and Endless Bazaar, attracts a number of colorful street vendors of food and drink (see the Street Food sidebar for examples). Visitors who spend at least an hour wandering the medina notice that rats seem more populace here than in other places in the city. This increase in rats is entirely due to the subliminal presence of the Catskin (see Area W12).

### AL-RASHIR WHARF

This calm wharf hugs the river and features two broad piers where ships are moored. Three of these ships, the *Hungry Crocodile*, the *Burdened Crib* and *Bastet's Blessings*, bear the insignia of Al-Rashir, a smiling crocodile with an open mouth full of human babies. Two barges—one a great pleasure vessel and the second a smaller, more humble yet still luxurious affair—moor here almost permanently for their owners' pleasure and use. Crews (mostly subek) are ready at all times to man these vessels and drive the slaves to row. The Street of Rashir, a wide timber walkway, lies between the wharf and buildings and connects the two piers.

**Lively Trade.** The wharf is perpetually busy, but, when ships arrive, it is a swarm of sweating, shouting, and stressing as ships are emptied into the nearby warehouse (Area W3). When livestock arrives, the timber walkway is awash with waste, distress, and movement as cattle and other livestock are moved toward the slaughterhouse (Area W11).

### THE RIAD OF ABDRIN AL-RASHIR

Magnificent and opulent, much like its owner and creator, the flamboyant Abdrin Al-Rashir, the riad is more palace than home. Its twin courtyards echo the sounds of fountains and the smells of the gardens that bloom therein.

The riad hosts lavish parties, and Abdrin often consults the most famous entertainers of the city for advice. The subek is terribly ambitious, and his astonishing charm has brought him many friends—and a few enemies—in the City of Cats. His supplication to Bastet thrives everywhere within his amazing riad, and countless cats have free reign and endless food. He also keeps many magnificent large cats, including a pair of giant tigers. Abdrin employs his own Mistress of Cats to take care of his beloved felines. Abdrin is never seen without his favored, overweight housecat, Whisker.

**Roof-top Terraces.** The riad also boasts a small, private temple on an elevated roof terrace from which the whole city can be seen. Visitors in the small temple have an open view of the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet from a cat-mosaic balcony. Abdrin loves astronomy and astrology, and he makes a careful study of the stars from his adjacent astronomical temple terrace, which houses an impressive and expensive telescope.

### THE WAREHOUSE AL-RASHIR

Heady with the scent of rare things, of books and spices, and of strange woods, this vast warehouse overlooks the wharf and houses Abdrin's employees in fine wharf-side lodgings and slaves in its cellars. This place is seemingly

endless, and it plays host to occasional auctions the subek delights in holding for his wealthier friends across the city.

**Enhanced Security.** Secure to a paranoid degree, Abdrin uses the services of not only his watch, but a bronze golem (*Creature Codex*, p. 196), which is permanently housed in the building and assists in its security. Abdrin makes no secret of the golem's presence, stating bluntly that it is an aid to security.

### THE HOUSE OF NARCAAN

Cantankerous and myopic, Aliaa Narcaan never got over her husband's death and now lives in a moldy old ruin surrounded by cats and sad memories. She has a tendency to head out and accost strangers, accusing them of all kinds of heinous crimes.

### THE ARCHIVE OF CATPLACE

This cramped house is crammed with books, tomes, librams, maps, scrolls, and tablets. It is a maze of learning owned and loved by the gearforged Truthful Catplace. The four-armed gearforged sits surrounded by books, his body as old and battered as much of his vast library. A close confidante of Abdrin, the gearforged acts as the subek's researcher and guides his occasional forays into treasure hunting, which Abdrin calls his "adventures to liberate treasures from savages."

**Friendly Gearforged.** Those who meet the gearforged find his gentle voice echoes at almost a whisper as it grates gently in his wheezing, metal chest. Many of Abdrin's cats find their way into his house and the gearforged is making a catalogue of them, naming and studying each that enters his home. Customers come and go quietly. The gearforged likes to keep his presence quiet, but he is so keen to make new friends and find more secrets that he often finds himself making the wrong kind of friend. He is frequently seen in the Gentle Teahouse next door (Area W6), talking to his dear friend, the poet Moaz Hi-Sheesh.

**Dedicated Collector.** Truthful has a little deviousness in him, his gears tweaked with a subtle oil of anarchy, and he plays his own double-bluff on his employer. Abdrin trusts Truthful's views so much that if the gearforged suggests a suitable location for a little piracy, the subek almost invariably arranges it. This allows Truthful to indulge in his vocation as library owner and collector of very rare tomes, which he supplies to clients across the city, including several kindred gearforged.

**Secret Allies.** Truthful has a covert ally in Shehab Meek (Area W7), a clerk at the Bazaar of Lamentation. Meek seemingly has little or no interests, friends, or influence, but he arranges, through careful and discreet **paperwork**,



to have the occasional useful slave removed and brought into the benevolent sphere of Truthful, who then arranges housing and funds for his new accomplice. Such slaves always have a reputation for knowledge, and now the gearforged has a network of such followers across the city, including the infinitely useful Sabrina Echo (see page 45). Truthful affectionately calls the freed slaves “the Scholars,” and their influence is gently felt in libraries across the city as they unearth secrets for their employer. The gearforged has no great lust for the use of secrets; he simply needs to know things. However, he has unwittingly unearthed several dangerous secrets in his time.

#### THE GENTLE TEAHOUSE

Haphazard, neglected, and dingy, the teahouse serves as the local hotspot for gossip, and nearby residents and dockworkers come here to sit outside, take sweet mint

tea, and smoke one of a dozen enormous brass hookahs at various times during the day. The subek poet and owner, Moaz Hi-Sheesh, hosts regular poetry evenings and has published several books of his poems. Softly spoken, gentle, and kind, Moaz’s hulking, intimidating figure belies his truly benevolent nature.

**Writer’s Haven.** Writers, poets, and playwrights are Moaz’s stock-in-trade, and, on any given day, at least one of the city’s famous literary figures takes tea or reads an excerpt from their latest work here (see Artists of the City of Cats sidebar).

#### ARTISTS OF THE CITY OF CATS

The bohemian poets, artists, and writers of Per-Bastet base themselves in small communities throughout the city, and one such group resides in the Wharf District. This enclave of artists is more famous for its writers than painters and sculptors, although many come and go in the garrets that sit high above the old docks here.

Having a few famous folks in a city that are not just renowned for their power, prowess with an axe, or ability to slay dragons or devils adds verisimilitude to a setting, and Per-Bastet has hundreds of such famous figures. Here are a few the PCs might meet in the Gentle Teahouse.

**Akbar Nil.** A poet, visionary, and sculptor, Nil weaves his worship of Bastet into all his works, but his strange philosophies (he believes only cats should live in the world) leads people to have difficulty when dealing with him.

**Doha-al-Yebrin.** Singer, writer, ideologist, and puppeteer, the pale and gaunt Doha spends her days in deep thought, frowning at any interruption as she works. Most nights, Doha uses her puppets to recount famous tales of Per-Bastet and earns a good living; however, her strange and sometimes grotesque marionettes shock many audiences.

**Shub Din-Haffar.** Shub is a notorious playwright who was exiled from the Palace District after one of his plays went awry and burned down part of a palace. He now seeks, and fails to find, inspiration in anything, but particularly in the heroic tales of strangers. Alas, that his spark has gone, and his inability to create leads him to anger and depression.

### THE HOME OF MEEK

The humble abode of the human Shehab Meek masks his truth. Superficially, Meek is a clerk at the Bazaar of Lamentation, his very being screaming unimportance and mediocrity. In truth, the clerk uses his talents with a pen and his extreme cleverness to remove useful slaves from under the noses of the slave-traders and into the clutches of his dear friend Truthful Catplace (Area W5).

**Extreme Secrecy.** Meek is obsessive about his own anonymity and secretes any financial gains, which are considerable, in various vaults across the city. Outwardly dull and tedious, there is little to commend the clerk until his true demeanor—something only a handful of people know—is revealed. Then his artful brilliance in planning and deceit shines like the dome of his head in sunlight.

### THE HOUSE OF DECEITFUL VISIONS

This majestic townhouse boasts two small towers with wide balconies. Its owner, the basteti illusionist Ammar Lif, operates in the city as a performing magician who carries out magic acts as cover for his petty pilfering. His house and indeed life have fallen on hard times, and he is usually found propping up the bar in the Arak House (Area W10). There, he spies upon and secretly adores Madame Mahuud (Area W9) and jealously watches the benevolently smiling Abdrin, who he loathes. Ammar would very much like to see Abdrin pickled in his own leathery skin.

**Declining Performance.** The sad alcoholic puts on occasional, mundane shows at his house, but these have ended in spectacularly tedious failures of late. His situation has gotten so bad that he is close to being evicted. Ammar is desperate enough to engage in any scheme or scam, but he is unreliable. His alcoholism weakens his connection to his magic, and he has increasing difficulty remembering spells. Of late, he has even been seen in the Flood Market, begging for alms.

### MADAME MAHUUD'S BAKERY

The elfmarked baker, Madame Mahuud, is a whispering, flighty soul who toils hard to create baking masterpieces. Recently, she had a couple of commissions from the Palace District for her outrageous, multi-layer cakes, and she is cautiously optimistic about her future. She is suspicious of Shehab Meek (Area W7) but too tired to do anything about it. She hates the attentions of the foul-mouthed gnoll Zezi Kane (Area W10) who, for some reason, seems to be in love with her and keeps sending her inappropriate gifts.

### THE ARAK HOUSE

Rowdy, rough, and never shut, the Arak House is part gambling den and part souk for pilfered goods (usually stolen from the Endless Bazaar). The owner, Zezi Kane, turns a blind eye to practically anything, except his neighbor Madame Mahuud (Area W9), who he openly admires. At present, the gnoll's clumsy attempts at courtship have been a mild irritation. However, Zezi is prone to wild fits, and sooner or later he is likely to be bolder in his attentions.

**Den of Danger.** The Arak House holds daily, sometimes hourly, cock fights, and it is a meeting place for petty thieves and ne'er-do-wells from across the district. Zezi makes arak, a strong aniseed spirit, in a back room where he keeps a pair of very old, very dangerous stills. The gnoll is not patient enough to make the spirit properly, and the poorly maintained stills are likely to explode soon.

**Roof Antics.** Zezi's brother Zil works in the slaughterhouse next door and often smuggles a few kobolds into the bar to join in the fun. Zil lodges with his brother on the rooftop terrace, and, for fun, the pair attempt acrobatics by walking along the entire square via adjacent rooftops. They sometimes spice up the bet with blindfolds, kobolds on their shoulders, or by racing each way to see who gets back first. These antics almost always end in injury.

### AL-RASHIR SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Grim, windowless, and miserable, the large slaughterhouse is where stock comes before being prepared to move onwards to the hungry people of the City of Cats. A handful of kobold slaves do most of the killing, but the actual skilled butchery is carried out by the gnoll chef, Zil Kane, whose brother Zezi runs the Arak House next door. Zil has an odd affection for kobolds and always tries to help them. He frequently secretly takes a few into the Arak House to drink and have fun, something that could cost him his job. When feeling adventurous, he takes a group on a tour around the city.

### THE CATMOUTH

This often-unnoticed bas-relief of a cat with a wide-open mouth is like thousands of others carved in the rock of the river's bank. Most serve as mundane sewage vents, allowing the city's waste to be sent into the river. This one, however, houses something much darker.

**Rat Hero.** By night, terrified rats whisper of a hero, a savior who kills and skins cats, saving rats and their kind from being eaten. The hero, Catskin, lives here. Catskin is a shadow fey who wears a cap of cat tails and carries a curved scimitar. She is rarely seen without half a dozen



dead cats gripped in her pale hands. Each night, she lurks on the rooftops of the city, taking lone strays to ensure her work can go on unmolested. She's aided by a peculiar magic item (see Catskin's Magic sidebar), which lets her get close access to her prey.

**Demon Lord of Rats.** Catskin is a disciple of the Demon Lord of Rats, Chittr'k'k (*Creature Codex*, p. 76), and she believes her divine mission is to be the secret protectorate of the rats in Per-Bastet. She feels the rats of Per-Bastet have been persecuted by cruel felines who torment them before killing them. This cannot go on unanswered. Catskin has been very clever in her operations, which are steadily being rewarded. Chittr'k'k's power is slowly granting her rat-like features with each month of successful hunts, and she hopes to one day be blessed with the power to become a rat. She exults in her new features and continues her nightly hunts in Chittr'k'k's name. Catskin's lair, a patchwork of dead felines, wire, cruel traps, and bones, is her own (she laughingly says) cat's cradle of tunnels, traps, and confusion.

## CATSKIN'S MAGIC

The shadow fey hero to rats and ratfolk, Catskin, hunts the cats of Per-Bastet under the cover of darkness. Her talents are aided by a magical necklace. The necklace is made of nine tiger's eye gems set in the decayed teeth of an old housecat and strung on a sturdy length of catgut.

### NECKLACE OF THE CAT

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this necklace, you can use an action to touch a tiger's eye gemstone and become a CR 0 cat for 1 hour. This effect otherwise works like the *polymorph* spell.

The necklace remains around your neck, resizing to fit your new form. You can revert to your original form as a bonus action. Once a tiger's eye transforms you into a cat, that tiger's eye can't be used again until the next sunset.

## ADVENTURES IN THE WHARF DISTRICT

The endless crowds and diverse races, slaves, valuables, and swarthy merchants make for a heady mix of adventure. Here are some examples of adventure in the Wharf District.

**Catskin.** Catskin, drunk on her new power from Chittr'k'k, is getting careless. One of her victims escaped, and the tale of a cat-killing monster at large in the Wharf District attracts bounty-hunting locals eager to unmask the killer. The rats, in the meantime, have confirmation of the urban legend that accompanies their night stories about a hero. They also wish to locate their hero to whisk the person away to safety.

**Seeds of Anarchy.** A group of deranged poets begin to use the Gentle Teahouse as their meeting ground, careful to mask their sinister intentions with foppish inability. As strikes against the properties of wealthier locals, especially those who worship Bastet, increases, rewards are posted and searches begin. Can the artists that gather in the teahouse really be behind the attacks on property and person or is something more sinister at work?



# adventures in per-bastet

This chapter features three adventures that take place or start in Per-Bastet, the City of Cats. These adventures each appeared previously in print and have been slightly modified to fit the updated version of Per-Bastet. Some creature stat blocks have been updated or replaced with more appropriate stat blocks. You can run these adventures separately or as one mid-length campaign. If you run the adventures as a small campaign, the below summaries given guidance on when the characters should reach the appropriate levels throughout the adventures.

Creatures whose names appear in bold without a page or book reference can be found in the *System Reference Document 5.1*. All other creatures in these adventures, including those that appeared in the original adventures and those that appear in the *Tome of Beasts* or *Creature Codex*, can be found in the appendix on page 122.

***Cat and Mouse (1st to 2nd-level Characters)***. A thief finds a mysterious magic item on the shores of the River of Sand. Shortly after he attempts to fence it, word spreads of the item's existence. Two subtly warring forces in the city seek adventurers to help them obtain the item, which holds more power and significance than either faction could ever imagine. Meanwhile, the thief struggles with the item's strange visions and magic.

If you are running these adventures as part of a small campaign, the characters should start the adventure at 1st level, reach 2nd level before heading into Festering Heth's, and achieve 3rd level at the conclusion of the adventure.

***Three Little Pigs (3rd-level Characters)***. A merchant and his daughters are celebrating a local holiday in Per-Bastet when, woe of woes!, a mysterious figure in white robes transforms his daughters into piglets. Terrified and uncertain of what happened to them, the girls dashed into the carousing crowds. The merchant seeks adventurers who can find his daughters before sundown when the holiday's main event, a pig feast, takes place.

If you are running these adventures as part of a small campaign, the characters should start the adventure at 3rd level and reach 4th level at the conclusion of the adventure.

***Grimalkin (4th to 5th-level Characters)***. A scholar turns up dead after seeking *something* in the River of Sand. The scholar's friend, Karima Gamila, seeks answers to his death, and her rivals seek to thwart her by getting to his body first. All the while, the proprietor of the mortuary housing the body has other, more sinister plans for the corpse. Clues on the scholar's body speak of an ancient, treasure-filled temple long forgotten by most texts and hidden by the River of Sand. Can the adventurers unravel the scholar's puzzle and overcome the guardians of the ancient temple to retrieve the prizes within?

If you are running these adventures as part of a small campaign, the characters should start the adventure at 4th level, reach 5th level before heading into Abdul-Haqq's lair, and achieve 6th level at the conclusion of the adventure.



## cat and mouse

An adventure for four to six characters of 1st to 2nd level.

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Through the glittering heart of the city of Per-Bastet in Nuria Natal, the River of Sand flows in a cascade of dry, undulating waves, until, between the District of the Hyena and the Perfume District, it inexplicably pours into a vast crater known as the Pit and disappears. Occasionally, long-lost items, called “sand-touched” and often considered lucky, find their way to the river’s shores. Today, however, an object of much greater significance has washed ashore: the *grimalkin eye* (see page 147). Long believed lost or stolen, this magic item allows the wielder to befriend, fascinate, and dominate any cat. In the city founded by Bastet, Goddess of

Cats, which serves as a refuge for and celebration of all feline-kind, it is a powerful object indeed.

It is also an item for which Mistress Henna Mjelidi would give her front teeth. She is, in truth, a petty thief who plies the District of the Cat for easy money and tall tales. She also loves legends and is an expert in them. For her, the lost *eye* has always offered the enticing prospect of power, an exponential increase in notoriety, and the possession of a personal piece of Per-Bastet’s mighty legacy. It should come as no surprise that, when she heard that something sounding very much like the *eye* had turned up in the River of Sand, she wanted it very badly.

Alas, by the time she heard of the *eye*’s appearance, it was long gone from the river. In fact, Henna’s agents reported that it had been stolen. The culprit, they’ve learned, is Raheed, an ugly, unlikeable wererat with a handful of rodent friends in Per-Bastet. Henna’s cats are running into the alleys and souks of the city looking for him, but so far, it seems that he’s vanished.



When Raheed happened upon the *eye*, he thought his fortunes might be changing. After all, such a fabled item is likely to bring a high price. Unhappily for him, though, things have gotten worse very quickly. He soon realized that Henna's agents sought the artifact, and he has slithered into the Perfume District to hide from them. Secondly—and far worse—he's started seeing things.

It started with visions; odd glimpses from high up or far down. It took Raheed some time to realize that he was actually looking through the eyes of cats. The visions come unbidden, and, only a few hours ago, he dizzily staggered through the Perfume District and collapsed at the foot of a caged lion. Its prison choking its need for wild space, the beast roared hungrily at him. Somehow, it broke free of its bonds and bounded at him. The thief thought he was done for, but then a strange thing happened: the lion turned from him. Sick and giddy, Raheed is beginning to realize that he has something of power in his hands—perhaps something valuable.

There is a third character in this tale: Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor, gnoll slaver, carpet merchant, and camel dealer. Hakaan is large, smiling, and possessed of the most despicably annoying chattering laugh. He also has his enemies, particularly the smug Mistress Henna Mjelidi, and he has inserted himself into her hunt for the *eye*. With his network of informants, he quickly knew that she was looking for it. Naturally—and purely to annoy her—he wants it too.

## A PEACEFUL EVENING

*Cat and Mouse* is an adventure about relationships and the PCs' ability to manipulate allies, friendships, and arrangements of convenience. It is entirely feasible that the PCs could conclude this adventure without personally spilling any blood. It's also—conversely—an adventure that readily allows those who enjoy slaughter without dialogue to enter the fray, wreak havoc, and take the rewards.

As the GM, if you like to run more subtle adventures, you might consider rewarding the PCs for showing wit and pluck. Consider awarding the PCs with an enhanced reputation or Status (*Midgard Worldbook*, p. 25) if they use predominantly cunning approaches. The reward could also be something less mechanical: a song the city's bards sing about them, an admiring greeting from an NPC, or another benefit. NPCs who admire the PCs' methods might even become friends or ally with them, providing a basis for further adventures in the city.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Mistress Henna Mjelidi approaches the PCs with an offer. She needs extra eyes and ears to look in the city for a wererat named Raheed, who she claims has stolen an object from her. She knows he has slipped into the Perfume District, a place in which she has enemies, and she wishes to conduct the search for Raheed and the object discreetly. She offers the PCs a sizeable reward for returning the object, but she is intentionally vague about what exactly it is. Mjelidi secretly has a trio of domestic cats follow the PCs, as she is sure the cats will be able to help guide the PCs toward their goal.

The gnoll slaver Hakaan, however, soon has a counter offer for the PCs, and offers them a higher reward for the object. He seeks the item purely to amuse himself; he hates the cats and Mjelidi in particular. It amuses him to think that he would have something she would want.

Meanwhile, Raheed takes the *grimalkin eye* to his home, an old squat atop a high rooftop at the edge of the Perfume District. He then heads to his fence and supposed friend As'haad Al Heth—better known as Festering Heth—a gnoll apothecary who lives in the district. The crafty apothecary promptly steals the *eye* from Raheed and throws the wererat into his attic prison while he ponders selling or keeping the curious item.

When the PCs go into the Perfume District and start looking for Raheed, they face four potential encounters, any of which has the opportunity to turn sour very quickly. The encounters are totally open, leaving the PCs with potential fights or intrigue before locating Heth.

The PCs locate Festering Heth's lair and meet the alchemist himself. He lies to the PCs, telling them Raheed met with him then returned to his home. Heth kindly furnishes the PCs with the address. Raheed himself is still in Heth's attic, and, if freed, tries to escape or attack the PCs.

If the PCs go off to Raheed's squat, they encounter Raheed's ratfolk friends and rat followers, who believe him a living god. They return to find that the alchemist has hired a few toughs in the meantime, making an attack harder. Complicating things is the fact that Raheed has freed himself and now lurks above, waiting for vengeance.

When the PCs finally have the *grimalkin eye*, they find that Mistress Henna Mjelidi is waiting for them. To further complicate matters, Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor is also present. A three-way standoff occurs, and the PCs have the opportunity to manipulate events using their wits and skills, or engage in a three-way fight for possession of the *eye*.

## CREATING PCS FOR THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure lends itself to players who are newcomers to the Southlands, and it could serve as an excellent introduction to the setting and its locales. If none of the PCs hail from Per-Bastet, you might bring them here as visitors to the city. Maybe they are escaped slaves or rural characters come to seek their fortune, or maybe they have some other reason to arrive in Per-Bastet. If one or more of the PCs wish to be Per-Bastet natives, more information about the city can be found earlier in this book, starting on page 4.

## PART ONE: NEW FRIENDS

Read the following to get the adventure underway:

It is noon on a hot day in a bustling marketplace outside of Per-Bastet's Perfume District. The scent of cinnamon, incense, and sweat lingers in the air. Nearby, a camel trader and his long train of animals shamble past, the smell of musk trailing after them. A crowd of dancing, henna-painted young women follows a handsome man beating a darbuka. Behind him, three men bear an enormous carpet, bound for a nearby building, and shout for people to get out of the way.

As the PCs stroll, sit and sip tea, or shop in the Perfume District, they eventually notice they are being watched. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that Mistress Henna Mjelidi is peering at them from a nearby cafe. She is smoking a long hookah pipe and, if seen, smiles enigmatically and approaches.

### MISTRESS HENNA MJELIDI

If the PCs do not notice her, Mistress Henna Mjelidi, a **basteti cat burglar** (see page 127), suddenly appears at the shoulder of one PC and introduces herself. The PC she stands next to can hear her purr as she talks quietly.



Henna is a beauty with feline guile. She wears long, flowing, silk robes and carries her blade in a leather scabbard. She is covered in henna tattoos that accentuate her litheness. Apart from the long gray tail and amber eyes, this veiled feline beauty could almost be mistaken for human.

## GOSSIP CHECKS: AN ALTERNATE SOCIAL APPROACH

Usually, asking simple questions of folks on the streets is a matter of talking to them and succeeding on a Charisma (Persuasion) check. However, not every PC uses the same approach, and not every NPC reacts the same way to a particular approach. Some need charming, some need bullying, and some need impressing.

In this adventure, consider allowing the PCs to use different ability checks to learn useful tidbits of information. To encourage a varied approach to information gathering, we refer to any such checks in this adventure as "gossip" checks rather than as specific ability checks.



Henna is strong-willed and resourceful, and she admires spellcasters. In fact, she covets all magic and has a tendency to lick her lips when she sees it. Her quiet voice speaks Common poorly, although the purr in her voice makes the ill-pronounced words sound seductive. She can speak Gnoll passably, but she has positively mastered the language's swear words.

Henna purrs when she is intrigued, and she spends much of the adventure doing so, even during combat. She fights dirty and aggressively, like an alley cat, using her acrobatics and climbing skills to take the fight up into the crowded rooftops of Per-Bastet when possible.

Henna explains to the PCs that a valuable gem with magic qualities has been stolen from her. The thief, a man called Raheed, snatched it only an hour ago and dashed into the Perfume District, where she knows he has friends. Henna confides that she is afraid of the Perfume District, as many people there would not hesitate to harm her if they found her.

Henna is vague when it comes to describing the object, having truthfully only heard a second-hand description of it. She describes it as a large tiger's eye on a chain. If questioned about its magical powers, she is evasive to the point of obstinacy.

Henna offers the PCs 500 gp to recover her property. If the PCs press for more, she easily increases the offer since she has no intention of paying. She simply wants the PCs to set out immediately, before Raheed's trail goes cold. If the PCs ask her how they should meet her in the future, she tells them that she will find them when the time is right. She also furnishes the PCs with a good description of the thief—an ugly, slight, rat-like man with rotting teeth.

Although she does not tell the PCs this, Mjelidi has ten local alley cats that act as her eyes and ears. They don't fight on her behalf, but they are her spies, efficiently reporting back to her. The cats she dispatches are careful to keep their distance and stay hidden, but they keep

an eye on the PCs. Although all ten are involved in the pursuit, at any given time only three are within 60 feet of the PCs. A further two **basteti catfolk** (see page 127)—part of Henna's clowder—watch from a distance.

If the PCs spot the cats or the clowder, the spies duck out of sight for a round or two, but they always continue following the PCs. If the PCs harm any of the cats, Henna knows within 10 minutes and confronts the PCs as soon as they leave the Perfume District.

**Treasure.** If the PCs rob or defeat Henna, they can find the following on her: a set of thieves' tools, a headscarf tied with gold thread worth 3 gp, open sandals made of elephant hide tied with tiny obsidian buttons worth 25 gp, a small leather purse containing 25 gp and six small carnelians worth 50 gp each, 15 feet of climbing cord, a nose flute carved with mites eating puppies worth 15 gp, and a *potion of healing*.

## HAKAAN-AL-KHAREEN ZMIRR NILL MO CHATOOR

Someone else is watching the PCs, or rather Henna, and his name is Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor. As the PCs talk with Henna, he stands not far away with a trio of loyal kobold slaves. When the PCs' meeting with Henna ends, he sends the kobolds to approach the PCs with a specific message.

The kobolds are not as articulate as he'd like, but they get across Hakaan's point passably. Through the kobolds, Hakaan warns the PCs that the person they are dealing with is not all she seems; he says Henna is a dangerous liar. He begs them to come to his humble home on the Street of Ten Thousand Fools, a meek residency behind the red door depicting camels leaping the sun.

Hakaan, aware of his exposure and possible danger, does not go into too many details in the message. If the PCs somehow corner him, his approach remains friendly throughout, and he tries to move the conversation back to his house, where he feels a good deal safer. In truth, it is a more pleasant place for a civilized chat.

## HAKAAN'S HOME

Hakaan's house is a graceful place wreathed in silk and wrapped in the scent of flowers and the sound of tumbling water. Songbirds sing and butterflies flutter throughout the home's grounds.

If the PCs meet Hakaan as he wishes, he is in the courtyard (Area H2), lurking by the fountain behind a mound of food heaped upon a groaning platter.

## H1. HAKAAN'S DOORWAY

*Flaking red paint clings to a carved double door depicting camels leaping the sun.*

When Hakaan is not in his residence, his door is locked and guarded by a trap he always arms whenever he leaves his abode. A successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the door.

**Swinging Axe Trap.** This trap uses a trip wire just inside the door to release a swinging axe at any creatures entering the house. When the trap is triggered, the axe is released from the ceiling, hitting unsuspecting intruders. The axe makes a melee attack with a +5 bonus against each creature in the two spaces just inside the door. A target that is hit takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage.

**Prevention.** The trip wire stretches between weighted, potted plants on either side of the door just inside the house. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the trip wire. A successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools breaks the trip wire harmlessly. A PC without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. Alternatively, a lever in a cupboard beside the door on the inside of the house arms or disarms the trap.

**Development.** There are lots of nosy children in the area, but a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the interest they take in Hakaan's abode. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the children to tell the PCs that Hakaan always does something on the back side of the door before he leaves. A PC that gives the children 5 cp has advantage on this check. The action the children observed is actually the merchant arming his trap.

## H2. THE COURTYARD

*The scent of honeysuckle and the sound of gentle birdsong and dancing water cling to this oasis of beauty and calm in the bustling city. A long, pillared balcony overlooks the open courtyard, the centerpiece of which is a burbling fountain and a lush, leafy tree.*

Here is where Hakaan muses, plots, and meets guests. A fine, silk cloth hangs above the left side of the courtyard, shading a small group of finely carved tables and platters surrounded by cushions. The tree in the courtyard's center is a juniper. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check climbs up the tree to the balcony above the courtyard.

**Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatooor.** If the PCs accept his meeting request, Hakaan is here, eating an enormous meal under the courtyard's canopy. Among various unidentifiable cuts, the PCs see bloodcake, sausages, the rarest-cooked steaks, pigeon pie, fried chicken, grilled pork, burnt lamb cutlets, battered fish, boiled crab, mutton, camel, bacon, hams, deep-fried locusts, and spit-roasted sheep. Hakaan does not stop eating while he talks.

Hakaan is a fat **gnoll**—that much is unmistakable—but as the PCs approach, the extent of his obesity becomes clear. He is swathed in a colorful thawb that covers him but threatens to burst at the seams due to his girth. Hakaan has a laugh like an angry hornet being shaken inside a tin can, and he finds practically everything amusing.

He loves meat almost as much as he loves infuriating those who have wronged him. He hates Mistress Henna Mjelidi, for example, because she rebuffed his advances



and refused his offer of marriage. Now he wants to make her pay. He doesn't want to kill her; he just wants to humiliate her. In his own way, he loves her, but gnoll love is always a tricky thing to judge.

Hakaan knows that Henna is scared of the Perfume District. He also knows that she intends to send pawns (the PCs) there, get the *grimalkin eye*, then rob them. He laughed when he deduced her plan, so loudly in fact that the PCs may even have heard his distant cackling as they left Henna. Hakaan has a counter offer, which he makes just to amuse himself. Whatever Henna offered the PCs to retrieve the *grimalkin eye*, Hakaan offers them 50 percent as much. Of course, he doesn't intend to pay this full amount, but he wants the PCs working for him instead of Henna.

**Creatures.** Hakaan's two loyal **kobold** slaves lurk in the juniper tree in little hammocks slung from the branches. These kobolds delight in climbing and have a climbing speed of 10 feet. The kobolds wear hooded black cloaks that cover their whole bodies, and they speak in squeaky Common laced with profundities about dragons. The kobolds delight in throwing paint about; see Area H8 for further details.

Hidden in the fountain here is a bound **steam mephit** that Hakaan received as a gift from a pleased customer. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) notices the mephit. It does as Hakaan commands but can't leave the courtyard.

**Treasure.** If undamaged, the silk overhanging the courtyard is worth 50 gp. The twenty or so pieces of dinnerware Hakaan is using for his feast are worth 100 gp total. The kobolds' hammocks contain a few oddments: a bright copper kettle worth 25 gp, a portable brass sundial with the sun's shadow shown as a hungry wolf worth 50 gp, and a silver rattle and whistle depicting a whale swallowing a whale worth 25 gp. Hakaan carries a *potion of healing* and a *potion of invisibility*.

### H3. THE MEAT LOCKERS

Flies abound in this room, which is crammed with several chests, larders, and meat lockers. A dirty but huge stove lurks greasily by the far wall.

Hakaan never likes to go hungry and has ample foodstuffs here to stave off deprivation. In all, there is enough food in here to feed a family of twelve for a month.

**Treasure.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while inspecting the shelves notices a small ornate spice box carved with a figure of a man being eaten alive by bookworms swarming from a shelf of grimoires. The spices within are worth 20 gp.

# Hakaan's House

Second Floor



First Floor



A1

#### H4. THE RECEIVING ROOM

---

A large bronze table, cushioned seats, and a fine deep-orange carpet fill this formally arranged room. Ornaments cram the chamber, and the subtle scent of spices, incense, and lavender wafts through the air.

---

This is where Hakaan receives his more formal guests and business partners.

**Treasure.** The carpet is particularly fine and is worth 150 gp, but it weighs 8 pounds. The other objects herein are general bric-a-brac, but they are well made and may dupe some. A failed DC 15 Intelligence check believes each item's value is 10 times the actual worth. These items include: an enamel and clay tagine depicting angry swans, but the item is very flimsy and worth only 5 sp; a rib-molded amethyst decanter with glass stopper, but the amethyst is actually glass worth only 7 sp; and a beaten brass lamp with gold inlay that is actually just paint and is worth 8 sp.

#### H5. THE DISAPPOINTING SHIPMENT

---

This room is crammed with crate after large crate, some of which are open with straw spilling out.

---

**Treasure.** Who would not want a half-life-size clay crocodile figurine in their garden oasis? On reflection, Hakaan admits that it was not one of his best purchases. Even so, the 218 figures in here might be worth about 50 gp in total to the right buyer.

#### H6. HAKAAN'S BEDCHAMBER

---

Here, superficially at least, is luxury: a huge, magnificent bed in a beautifully carved wooden frame boasts countless bright silks, cushions, and kneeling poufs about it. Lurking somewhere in the room is an unpleasant smell.

---

Hakaan is a sloppy eater and often hungry. He dismisses staff members on a daily basis (they annoy him so much with their questions), and it's been a few days since he's had a maid clean this chamber.

The lurking smell is the aroma of rotting meat, which is hidden under the bed and covered in flies. Hakaan has gotten used to the smell, but anyone who enters the chamber must succeed on DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned while in the room. If the silks hanging over the bed are removed, or if anyone crawls under the bed, the rotting meat is disturbed and each

creature in the room must succeed a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour, even if the creature is already poisoned from entering the room.

**Treasure.** Hakaan is very cautious about his wealth and doesn't fully trust the vaults in the city. He hid some of his wealth in a box strapped below the bed, just in case. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) notices the straps leading under the bed. A creature that crawls under the bed automatically notices the box. Inside the sandalwood box are several silk purses, 10 of which contain 10 gp each, and one that contains six small but well-cut lapis lazuli worth 20 gp each.

#### H7. THE LADY'S QUARTERS

---

Although clearly a boudoir, this room appears to have been hastily abandoned.

---

Mistress Salma Medersa shared Hakaan's excessive appetites for as long as she could bear, but last week it got to be too much and she left him. The hastiness of the departure is here for all to see in scattered clothing, an unmade bed, and open, empty wardrobe.

**Treasure.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices an earring in a corner, dropped in Salma's haste. The earring is made of gold and silver and depicts a crocodile with two heads. It is worth 100 gp.

#### H8. THE PROJECT

---

Small ladders, floor coverings, and several pots of paint stand around the room, but it looks more like someone has had a fight with them than done any renovation.

---

Before she left, Salma thought that it was high time Hakaan decorated and made a room for guests. Unfortunately, Hakaan was too cheap to hire real decorators and had the kobolds do it. They weren't very good at renovation, it turns out.

**Development.** Some of the kobolds have become a bit obsessed with throwing paint about. If any combat occurs in the house, the kobolds dash off, grab a trio of paint pots each, and use them as improvised ranged weapons. The kobolds can use an action to throw a tin of paint up to 10 feet, shattering it on impact. On a hit, the target is covered in magenta-, terracotta- or magnolia-colored paint and must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn. Two of these naughty kobolds also take paint with them to the final battle (see Part Three) and use it there.

## PART TWO: INTO THE PERFUME DISTRICT

The Perfume District is where the city's perfumeries and reputable potion-makers toil. Raheed and his followers can't afford to live on the district's more expensive mainland, and attempts to gather information about him here turn up nothing useful.

However, as the PCs move onto the district's islands and into increasingly unsavory alchemical shops, distilleries, factories, and storage facilities, they begin to hear about Raheed. It turns out that he isn't very popular among the people here, who describe him as everything from an unsavory character to a scourge upon the district. The smell here is almost unbearable at times; the air is laced with chemicals and steam, and the river around the islands is a seething mass of bright, chemical colors.

The PC's investigations are divided into a series of four encounters, which can be encountered in any order. The PCs can learn about the existences of the moneylender, the blind man, and the laundry woman by spending 1d4 hours talking to locals and succeeding on DC 10 gossip checks (see page 69). Each successful check informs the PCs about one of the following NPCs.

### THE MONEYLENDER

Raheed owes money, a lot of it, to a local hustler, and it's no secret. When Nassoor el-Rabat, a local **thug** and moneylender, saw Raheed a few hours ago heading north, Nassoor gave chase. A successful DC 15 gossip check reveals the extent of Raheed's debt.

When the PCs meet Nassoor, he is in an alley that is 10 feet wide, with squat, 15-foot-tall buildings on both sides. The buildings are 30 feet wide, and on top of each of the buildings that immediately flank Nassoor are 1d8 workers who are renovating the drooping structures.

**Angering Nassoor.** If the PCs claim to be Raheed's friends, Nassoor is immediately hostile. Unless the PCs quickly succeed in calming Nassoor with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he shouts to the nearby rooftops. The workers, all **commoners**, are his friends and family members, who hate Raheed as much as he does.

The builders immediately snatch up stones, rocks, and other nearby objects and hurl them at the PCs until the PCs retreat from the alley. The objects have a range of 20/60 feet and deal 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage.

If the PCs retreat, the builders continue to verbally abuse them, but they only attack if the PCs return. If the PCs retaliate, spill any blood, or use magic in any way, the builders and Nassoor flee into the city screaming about devils. As an optional encounter, Nassoor and the builders

might return later in the adventure with a few **guards** from the city watch who are on the moneylender's payroll.

**Befriending Nassoor.** Nassoor is anxious for the 75 gp that Raheed owes him. If the PCs offer him that amount, or if a PC succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he invites the PCs to meet the builders.

The builders stop working and talk to the PCs who come up, and during the conversation, one remembers that Raheed is close to a laundry woman called Oumayma. The builder gives the PCs directions and warns them to beware of ropers. She is a self-declared seer, and she is convinced that the PCs are going to have a hateful, possibly deadly encounter with one in the future.

### THE BLIND MAN

The blind beggar Achraf, a male human **commoner**, knows Raheed, who frequently gives him money. A successful DC 15 gossip check reveals that Raheed has actually been giving Achraf worthless buttons and stealing real coins as he did so.

**Angering Achraf.** If the PCs claim to be Raheed's friends, he is immediately hostile and gets up, waving his stick about. Unless the PCs quickly succeed in calming Achraf with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, he attacks, using his stick as a club. Anyone attacking him back quickly draws the wrath of other locals for beating a beggar, and they threaten to call the city guard.

**Befriending Achraf.** If the PCs are friendly to Achraf, he tells them the same tale about the laundry woman that Nassoor's builders tell. If the PCs offer him food, drink, or coin, he adds that the foul thief has rat-like allies and that real rats follow him. Achraf smells their stink on the air about Raheed. Afterwards, the beggar wishes the PCs good fortune, says he hopes a werecrocodile doesn't menace them today, and bids them adieu.

### THE LAUNDRY WOMAN

If the PCs have failed in the encounters above to learn about the laundry woman, then allow them to make a DC 10 gossip check to learn about her from a street waif, prostitute, or other informant.

Oumayma and her fellow launderers work by the river. They form a large crowd, and anyone asking for Oumayma is quickly sent to the woman who is singing songs about dirty men and telling rude jokes.

Oumayma, a female human **bandit**, has muscles like a warrior and a deep, rich voice. She's also very popular with the other workers here, who number about 50.

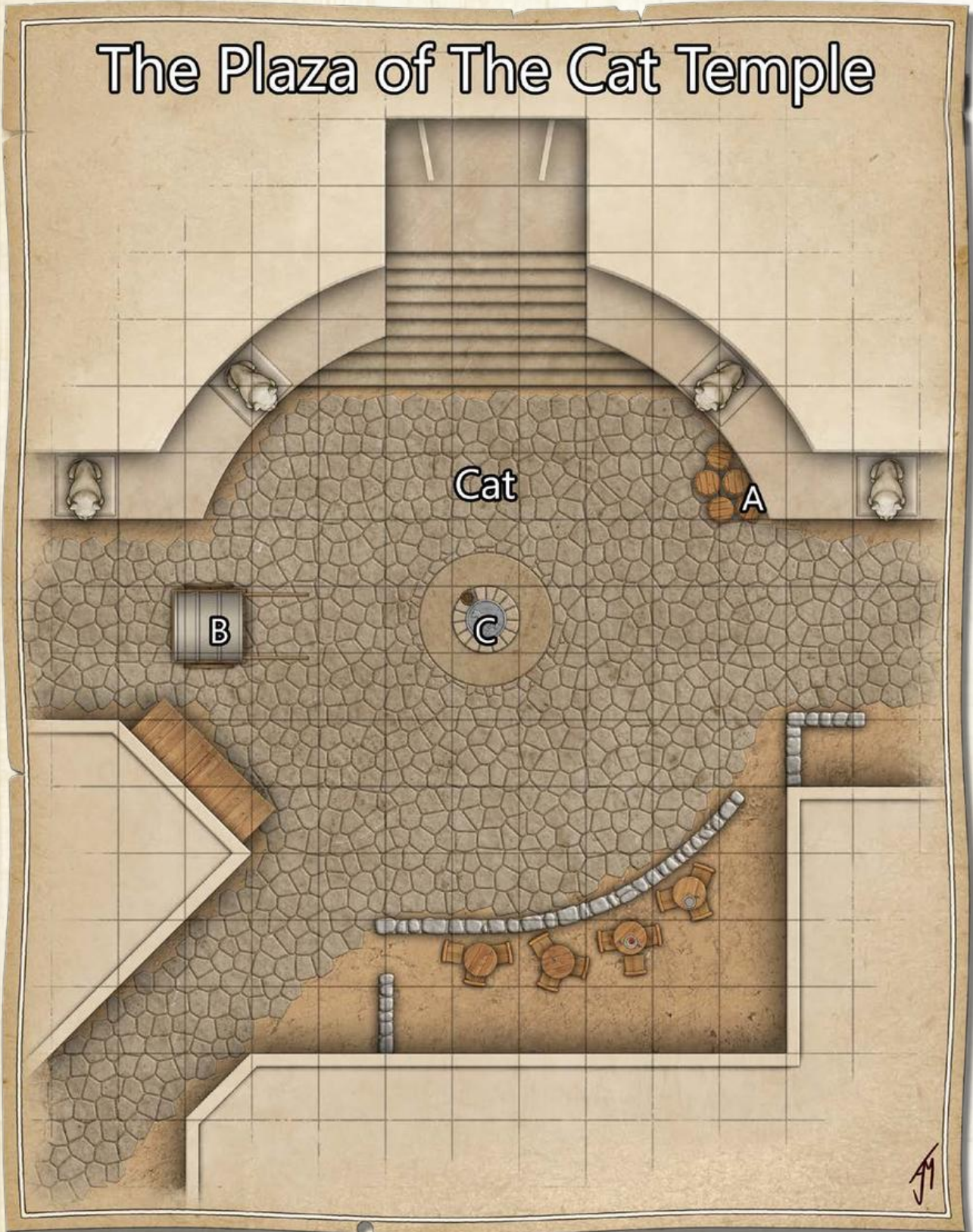
Oumayma knows where Raheed has been today, as one of her helpers, her cousin Mounia, saw him enter Festering Heth's earlier. Oumayma does not approve of her cousin's

friendship with Raheed, who she finds unpleasant for a reason she can't quite articulate.

**Befriending Oumayma.** Unless the PCs try to deceive her, Oumayma tells them where her cousin last saw Raheed. She also gladly tells them Heth, an apothecary

who lives in one of the worst parts of the Perfume District, never washes, either himself or his clothes. The launderers find him disgusting, hence his unkind nickname. All of the launderers can give directions to Heth's place and an outer description of it.

## The Plaza of The Cat Temple



**Deceiving Oumayma.** If the PCs pretend to be friends with Raheed or throw their weight about, they are met with merciless verbal abuse.

The launderers are wicked; their tongues lash those they do not like, belittling and pointing out every little fault—real or imagined. In fact, if the launderers verbally abuse the PCs, word about the PCs' supposed incompetence and ridiculousness moves so quickly throughout the Perfume District that the PCs have disadvantage on all gossip checks for the next hour.

As the PCs leave such a scene, Oumayma shouts out, “go to your friend Raheed—you’ll find him at the stinking cesspit of Festering Heth’s. You should enjoy it there! It’s disgusting! Go! Go to your foul friend!” Finding Heth’s should prove fairly straightforward but interesting from this point and allows GMs to develop other encounters as desired.

**Harming Oumayma.** Drawing weapons or any threat of violence causes the launderers to scatter, possibly leaving the PCs without Raheed’s whereabouts. Perhaps the PCs finish the adventure empty-handed, although whether their sponsors believe that they have the *grimalkin eye* as they leave the Perfume District is left to the GM. The launderers have extensive friends and family, and if the PCs are aggressive or unwarranted in their approach, consider having a few of these relatives turn up to exact vengeance.

## THE DESPICABLE YET BELOVED CAT

This encounter can occur at any time while the PCs are in the Perfume District, but it is recommended as the last one before the PCs meet Festering Heth, as evidence that Raheed and the *grimalkin eye* are not far away.

The PCs hear a commotion just ahead in a small plaza. As they enter, read or paraphrase the following:

---

Ahead, an excited group of people edges a small circular plaza, above which is a stepped entrance to a temple. Some wave mops and sticks; those who do not have anything in their hands wave their arms about excitedly. In the middle of this group, a small, curiously marked cat prowls. It snarls at the crowd and bears its teeth, which are dripping with blood.

---

The cat has just escaped from the temple and is a Bastet temple cat, a creature sacred to the temple’s priestesses. The recent passage of the *grimalkin eye* has temporarily unhinged the cat, who can feel the *eye*’s pull mucking up its mind. Scared, irritable, and uncertain of what is happening to it, the cat now prowls the plaza, attacking

anyone who comes near it as it paces the area in an attempt to clear its head. A sentient feline, the cat is ordinarily a placid creature that watches the temple by night and sleeps by day.

The priestesses of Bastet who normally staff the small temple are presently across the city visiting a sister temple, and they left only two very junior **acolytes** here who are, in truth, little more than caretakers. The acolytes are terrified that the cat is either going to escape or be killed. They are slightly less concerned that it might kill someone, but presently all options look bad. The arrival of armed strangers might cause the acolytes to cry out for help. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check notices the acolytes are wearing the junior ecclesiastical attire of Bastet’s faith.

There are a dozen or so further locals (all **commoners**) at the edges of the plaza. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check threatens (Intimidation) or calms (Persuasion) the crowd enough to convince them to give the PCs room to deal with the cat.

**Creature.** The **Bastet temple cat** (see page 125) attacks anyone who comes within 10 feet of it, but it can, in certain situations, be driven back. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a pile of barrels at Point A on the map, a covered wagon filled with clucking birds at Point B, and a covered well at Point C. Each offers a brave PC a chance to drive the cat toward a potential trap. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Charisma (Intimidation) check coaxes or scares the cat to move 5 feet in any direction the PCs want. A check that succeeds by 5 or more moves the cat 10 feet. If a PC fails the check, the cat lashes out with a single claw attack.

**Barrels.** The barrels are a new batch just made by the local cooper K’hallim-i-Nath. The barrels are empty, and their lids have not been hammered shut. They could readily fit the cat inside, but getting the cat into the barrels beyond magical means is not easy. If anyone tries to remove the barrels, K’hallim approaches, waving his hammer aggressively. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check or drawing a weapon gets him to back down. The PCs could feasibly use the barrels to cover the cat. Doing so requires backing the cat into a barrel’s space then succeeding on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

**Wagon.** The wagon contains chickens in a large cage owned by Rania V’thei. The cage is made of wood and is 5 feet wide on all sides. Rania tries to stop anyone from releasing her chickens or—far worse—sending a cat in with them. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) check or drawing a weapon gets her to back down. If not, she tries to distract anyone from



interfering with her property by throwing eggs at them. This does no damage to PCs struck, but makes for quite a spectacle in front of the crowd.

**Well.** The well cover is made of metal, and it requires a successful DC 8 Strength check to lift. If the temple acolytes see the well cover lifted and the PCs moving toward the cat, they yell madly to try to stop them. The acolytes know the well is 50 feet deep and could seriously injure the creature if it falls in. Unless forced to back down in the same way as Rania above, the acolytes try to distract the PCs by throwing themselves in front of the cat, risking an attack from the cat while trying to get the well cover back on. They also push and shove at any would-be-attacker.

**Capturing the Cat.** If the cat is captured peacefully, a great cheer goes up among the locals, who mob about the PCs, congratulating them. The PCs learn that the temple cat is not the only cat that has been behaving oddly in the city; locals have heard at least 127 similar separate tales this day alone. In truth, there have been no more than a handful of unusual cat-related events, but that's gossip for you. If the PCs follow up on any of these leads, they go down literal blind alleys, but learn that wherever Raheed went, cats behaved oddly.

That evening, a more senior priestess, accompanied by the two juniors, finds the PCs and rewards them in a suitable way; GMs should choose a reward worth up to 500 gp that is appropriate for the group.

**Killing the Cat.** If the cat is killed, the crowd falls into a worried silence and gathers about to inspect it, some crying and wailing at the terrible fate they are sure is about to befall the city. The death should have ongoing consequences for the PCs, at the GM's discretion. Perhaps the priestesses locate the PCs and berate them while sobbing, or maybe they have some little task for the PCs to carry out as recompense for their heresy. Or, maybe they try to impose a fine on the PCs.

## FESTERING HETH'S

A vast ship's mast lurches from a lower building. It rises to an overhanging, two-story timber building, from which balconies protrude, and beyond to a steeply gabled roof.

Heth's lies atop a lower building, itself 20 feet tall, from which rises the two-foot-thick ship's beam. The beam rises a further 10 feet to the lower floor of Heth's home. An iron ladder is nailed and riveted to the beam and outer wall of the building below. It then lurches outward to the main entrance, which overhangs the beam by some 10 feet.

**The Animal Merchant.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices, in the cobbled street below Heth's, a merchant sells creatures from her menagerie. If the PCs check, there are no cats here, but the merchant, Ahri Khaleeni, is happy to confirm that she sold her prize cat, a juvenile cheetah, to her neighbor, Heth, just over an hour ago. Heth had the cat immediately lifted to his home high above in a cage.

If the PCs press her, the merchant remarks that it was an odd transaction, because Heth is usually much more interested in chemicals than animals. Ahri can easily point out the building Heth lives in, as it took two of her best slaves the better part of an hour to haul the cage upward.

**The Captured Thief.** Raheed is held in the gable attic (Area FH4), but when the PCs first arrive, he is still bound and gagged. If the PCs enter the place and search, they find him before he has had chance to escape. Heth has both Raheed and the *grimalkin eye*, and he is slightly worried that Raheed's allies might come calling.

**Festering Heth. As'haad Al Heth** (see page 124) is a dirty, stinky gnoll. He wears a long, stained white thawb and walks with the help of a cane. He has one cloudy eye and an unsettling twitchiness about his furtive actions. The arrival of the PCs offers Heth a way of removing Raheed's ratfolk allies and quickly bringing in reinforcements.

When the PCs enter his home, Heth quickly meets them. If they attack or otherwise threaten him, Heth tries to run into his laboratory (Area FH2) to lock himself in and avoid combat. If asked about Raheed, he claims that Raheed was here earlier. He says Raheed demanded too much for an object and went back home when Heth was not interested. He gives the PCs clear details of how to



# Festering Heth's



get to Raheed's home. He won't tell the PCs this, but he intends to send them on a wild goose chase so he can hire help to protect himself in the meantime (see Return to Festering Heth's).

Heth hates physical pain and if the PCs begin combat with him before he has a chance to get reinforcements, he eventually offers up Raheed, while secretly trying to retain the *grimalkin eye* on his person. If the PCs forcefully demand the *grimalkin eye* after drawing weapons or attack Heth, he hands it over. If faced with no

other choice, he fights, freeing his cheetah, if possible, to see if it will truly fight for him.

**Retrieving the Eye.** Heth knows the item is cursed and covered the *eye* with a powerful alchemical salve when Raheed presented it to him, removing Raheed's curse and attunement to the object. He bought the salve from a traveling alchemist months ago and hasn't been able to recreate it yet. Heth understands the item allows control over cats, but he is afraid to attune to it himself until he can ensure it won't curse him. Of course, if the PCs acquire



the *grimalkin eye* and do not determine its properties, the PCs might soon find themselves cursed by it.

**Treasure.** If the PCs defeat or rob Heth, they find: the keys to the main door of his home and the padlock to the attic, three vials of alchemist's fire, a *cloak of protection*, and the *grimalkin eye*.

#### FH1. THE OVERHANG

The iron ladder here looks secure, but it overhangs a high drop before lurching over the outside of the balcony above.

A successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check reaches the entrance via the ladder. Another building nearby can also be used for access to Festering Heth's. With a running start, most creatures can easily leap the 10-foot gap between the buildings. Encourage the PCs to come up with creative solutions, including using a pole or grappling hooks and ropes to make a makeshift bridge, if they aren't comfortable using the ladder or leaping from the nearby rooftop.

#### FH2. HETH'S LABORATORY

A narrow, balcony surrounds the timber building, which has a single hefty-looking iron and wooden door.

Heth's door is locked, and he has the key. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the door. Heth normally greets visitors through the door's peephole. The door is old and has been battered by sandstorms and age (AC 15; 5 hp; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to poison and psychic damage). There are no windows on this floor.

The room is a cramped laboratory. The stench of chemicals is almost overpowering. Within the laboratory are a fine alchemist's laboratory, books, cages with small creatures, and a larger cage with a young cheetah inside. A ship's ladder rises to a hole in the timber ceiling.

**Creatures.** After speaking to Raheed, Heth invested in a cheetah from a nearby merchant and has been busy testing the *grimalkin eye's* preliminary effects on it. If attacked and not persuaded to back down, he frees the cheetah (use the statistics of a **panther**) and tries to direct it to attack intruders while holding the *eye*.

**Treasure.** A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the laboratory's jars and vials reveals four vials of acid, three vials of alchemist's fire, two sets of alchemist's supplies, a set of tinker's tools, and an herbalism kit. Heth uses the acid and alchemist's fire in the event of attack. The books lying on the tables are mostly alchemical and are worth about 150 gp total.

#### FH3. HETH'S BEDROOM

This is an airy chamber, with lots of gaps in the walls and a trio of kites hung up around a large hammock that stretches across the room. Iron spikes that have been nailed into the wall rise to a trapdoor that's padlocked from below.

A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the padlock. Heth has the key and has locked Raheed in the room beyond.

**Treasure.** One of the kites has a bronze, copper, and wooden head worth 35 gp. Heth has hidden a few valuable or useful items here, just in case. Each requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find. They are a pair of alchemist's fire vials tied with catgut, a sow's ear made into a purse containing three tiger's eyes worth 25 gp each, and a small carved giraffe with a mouth that holds a *feather token (tree)*.

#### FH4. THE GABLE ATTIC

The trapdoor gives access to a dirty chamber infested with bats. Tantalizing glimpses of the Great Sand Pyramid and the vast Pyramid of the Mother of Destiny peak through gaps in the timber. The sprawling city festers beyond in a hive of people, commerce, and adventure.

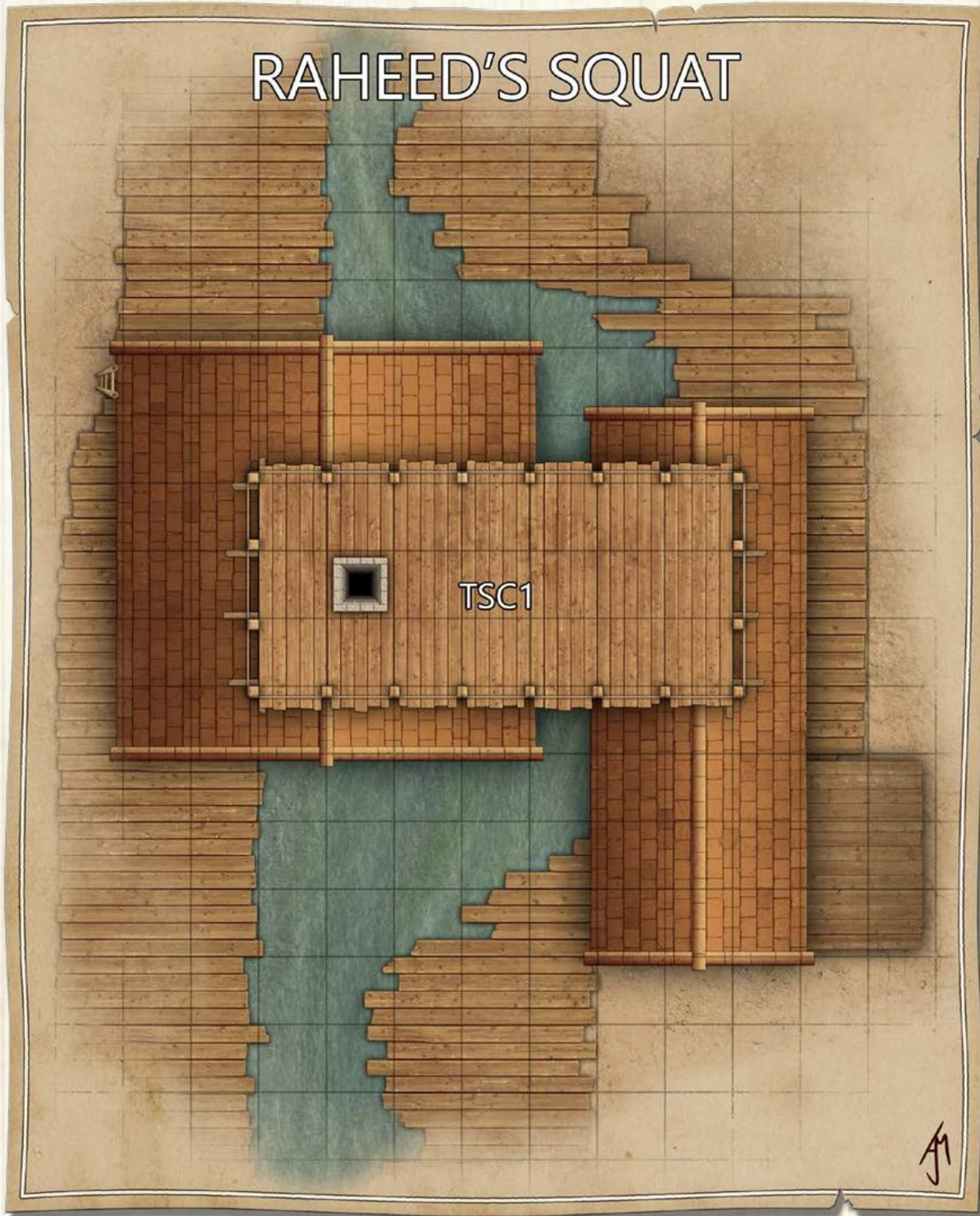
If the PCs entered Heth's immediately on their first visit, Raheed, a **wererat**, is herein, in a large sack hanging from a butcher's hook hanging from the ceiling some 10 feet above the floor (as represented by point R on




the map). If they arrived later (see Return to Festering Heth's), Raheed has escaped and lurks nearby with two rats, desiring vengeance and the *grimalkin eye*. They patiently await their chance to surprise Heth—or his allies. As soon as anyone enters, Raheed's rats rush into attack, swiftly followed by Raheed himself.

### RETURN TO FESTERING HETH'S

If the PCs fall for Heth's ruse and go to inspect Raheed's home, Heth heads straight down his ladder and into the streets nearby. Fifteen minutes later, he has hired two **bandit** brothers and awaits the PCs' return, smiling at his own cunning. These bandits are by no means loyal, and





if one is killed or if all three combatants are injured, they offer to leave, claiming they meant no trouble.

The bandits use the advantage of Heth's building to attack from the balconies. They shoot bolts at returning PCs as the PCs climb the ladder, and they use cover for as long as they can.

**Catching Heth in the Act.** If the PCs cleverly wait outside after leaving Heth's to see what happens, they catch Heth red-handed. If they manage to corner him, he easily backs down without a fight, as described on page 78.

## RAHEED'S SQUAT

The squat is lashed to the Perfume District's rooftops and lies right at its outer western isles. It is little more than a raised timber platform, comprised of two-inch-wide planks lashed together, with wooden boards to provide a stable surface and an outer wall made of dusty cloth. Between the buildings beneath, a small open section of exposed river finds use as a sewer.

### TSC1. THE TEETERING SQUATCHAMBER

This rooftop building is little more than a skeletal plank frame with a dusty cloth skin that balances on stilts between two buildings. A bamboo ladder grips its way up an outer wall to the rooftops' sloping gables, where the temporary building billows.

The squat lurks on the rooftops of one of the riverside slums and hangs between two buildings. It rests about 30 feet above the ground and river.

**River Vent.** The river here is a disgusting flotsam and wastethrottled vent. Although easy to swim, it is infested with a local breed of **constrictor snake**, and one lurks not far away. The dirty stilts climbing from the river are slimy and lie 10 feet below the boardwalk where the buildings sit. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check climbs the stilts. If a PC swims in the river or falls into it after failing to climb up the stilts, a constrictor snake attacks. The snake slithers away if injured in any way.

**Reaching the Squat.** The ladder on the exterior building is easy to climb, but the sloped roofs are dusty, requiring a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to cross without sliding down into the river below. Alternatively, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a chimney sticking out of the squat, which offers an entrance to Raheed's lair and leads directly into a gap in the cloth in the middle of the lair.

The buildings below are presently unoccupied, and the PCs' actions don't disturb any inhabitants within. Unless

PCs succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check as they climb up, the rats become aware of intruders.

When the PCs reach the rooftop, read the following:

---

The timber platform sits upon a dozen gleaned flotsam planks. Its extreme edges lie some five feet above the dusty rooftops, and a cold chimney sticks up from the cloth roof. Here at the riverside, the city curves in a graceful arc away to the south, toward the Palace District. The Wharf District sits to the south east, the Hunt to the north, and beyond those the Monument District and the District of the Cat. Past the city's gleaming walls, the desert rolls and boils, answering the song of Per-Bastet with her own susurrus hymn.

---

**Creatures.** Three **giant rats** and a duo of **ratfolk** (see page 140), who worship Raheed as a living god come to liberate them from filth and bring them endless cheese, nervously await the return of their leader. The group watches from the squat, but they concentrate upon the ladder. They expected their leader back a while ago and know he bears a mighty magic item. If caught off-guard, they lay down their weapons, scurry away over the rooftops or into the river below, and only attack if attacked.

**Treasure.** The group is very poor. They have a gourd of poor local wine, a loaf of black bread, and a few onions and chilis, as well as a small chunk of very old hard cheese with gnaw marks in it. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices a small leather bag hidden under the floorboards. It contains 23 cp, 3 sp and a ceramic depiction of Anu-Akma worth 8 gp.

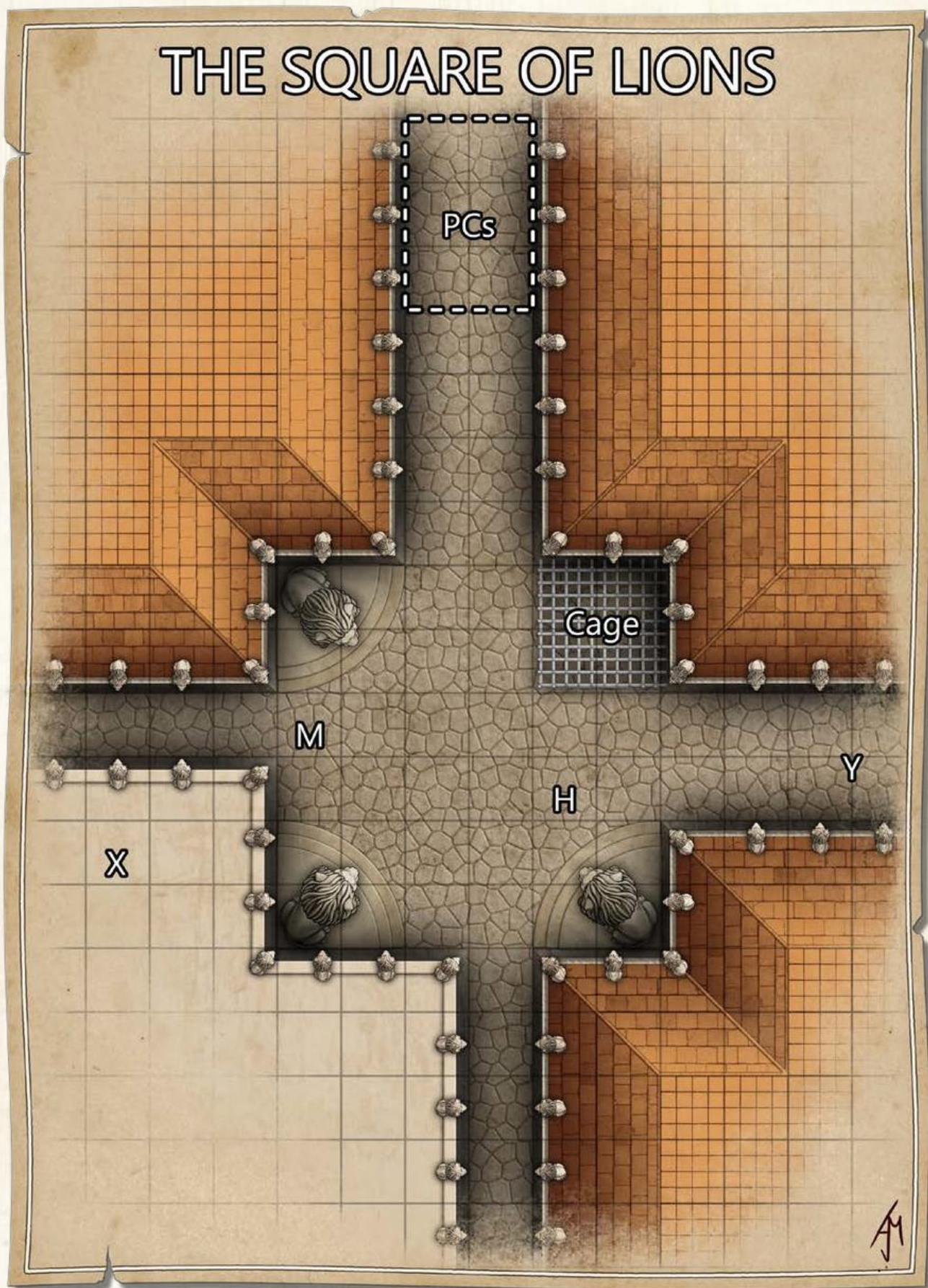
## PART THREE: THREE SIDES TO EVERY STORY

The PCs have several loose ends to tie, and they may even try to sneak away from their escort of cats to take their own reward for the *grimalkin eye*. How this develops—and it should develop into a wider story of pursuit and intrigue—is left to the GM.

If the PCs follow the offered course of action, as soon as they leave the Perfume District they come to a square where they immediately see Mistress Henna Mjelidi standing beside a great lion statue. Opposite her, across the cobbled square, squats Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor, chewing upon a great haunch of roast camel cooked in sugar and saffron.

Both step forward, their allies hidden close by, and demand the *grimalkin eye*.

# THE SQUARE OF LIONS



## THE SQUARE OF LIONS

The high rear walls of minor temples surround this 30-foot-wide square. The walls are 20 feet tall, weathered, and full of holes. The southwest temple has a flat roof, while the others are gabled at approximately 45 degrees.

The area is full of lion statues, which offer cover to anyone behind them. The statues on the rooftops are heavy, but can be pushed over with a successful DC 20 Strength check. Creatures directly below a falling statue must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. In each corner of the square, atop a dais reached by three steps, is an open-mouthed roaring lion statue. These are simply too big to move.

**Creature.** The square is noted for its caged lions, which lurk in a shaded corner indicated on the map. Local priestesses feed the lions, savage beasts that prove impossible to tame, daily. Locals pray before the lions as they pass and often toss food to them. The lions are presently hungry, however, and lash out. They attack anyone who comes within 5 feet of the cage using a single claw attack. The lions have disadvantage on these attacks. If a lion is fed, it turns its attention to the food and does not attack anyone for the remainder of this encounter.

A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the padlock on the cage. Alternatively, a successful DC 18 Strength check breaks the locks. Releasing the lions is a risky strategy, but the lions don't attack the creature holding the *grimalkin eye*. A creature holding the *eye* and not attuned to it can use an action to make a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. On a success, a lion within 10 feet of the creature holding the *eye* protects the bearer for 1d4 rounds, attacking anyone who comes near the *eye's* bearer. If not controlled, the hungry lions simply attack randomly until they have killed someone, who they then eat, only attacking again if attacked.

**Development.** The local temple masters might react poorly to any acts of vandalism, such as knocking over statues, and the local authorities might fine the PCs for releasing unsupervised lions into the city streets.

## A FINAL STANDOFF

Henna stands at point M on the map, and her two **basteti catfolk** followers are on the flat-roofed temple behind her at point X. Hakaan teases the lions from point H, his three **kobolds** lurking heroically behind him at point Y.

The PCs can play this situation however they wish, but bear in mind that both Henna and Hakaan want the *grimalkin eye* and can't afford the reward they promised. If the PCs don't immediately hand over the *eye*, both sides attack each other and the PCs. If the PCs hand the *eye* to one of the NPCs, the other sends its minions to attack the PCs and the other side. No matter the situation, the minions from both sides get into a scuffle, potentially dragging the PCs into it. This encounter could potentially prove very deadly for the PCs. Keep in mind that the two sides despise each other and their minions attack each other just as often as they attack the PCs.

**Picking Sides.** If the PCs wish to ally with one side over another, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check is enough to convince would-be allies to work with the PCs in a fight. If the PCs are really clever, they can keep to the edges of combat and simply avoid major harm to themselves. In this way, the PCs may simply play at being in a fight and watch as everyone wears each other down to a point where only the PCs can win.

**Ending the Fight.** Both Henna and Hakaan flee or surrender if more than half of their followers are slain or if they are reduced to half their hit points or fewer, pledging to no longer pursue the *grimalkin eye*.

## CONCLUSION

The ending of this adventure is very open. The PCs might side with one person and sell the *grimalkin eye*, forcing the NPC to pay properly for the item. They might sell the item themselves and betray both groups. They might try to slay everyone and keep the item. Whatever happens, think of how this event might develop. Do betraying PCs get a reputation that attracts shady NPCs to hire them? Do heroic and honest PCs have further adventures with Hakaan or Henna? If possible, try not to let adventures simply end without consequences; ongoing stories are always so much more fun.

If the PCs keep the *grimalkin eye*, they might be approached by Karima Gamila, a gnoll who is very interested in the *grimalkin eye* and its origins. Karima, her goals, and further events involving the *grimalkin eye* can be found in the *Grimalkin* adventure on page 100.



## three little pigs

An adventure for four characters of 3rd level.

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure occurs during one of Per-Bastet's lesser known market festivals, the Day of Pigs, where farmers, landowners and many famous hog-breeders bring their precious pigs to market to trade. Some farmers will be lucky; their beautiful pigs will command fabulous prizes at the many souks that spring up this day. Fortunes are made for hogs of prowess, breeding, and, occasionally, intelligence. The festival ends at dusk when a mass slaughter and hog roast takes place in the Wharf District's Grand Souk, an event known as the Night of Pigs. The residents of Per-Bastet go out of their way to dress in colorful pig masks, wear cunning pig costumes and garb, and oink their way through the day.

Alas for Omar-bac-Maheem and his trio of wondrously beautiful daughters! How can fate have dealt such a cruel hand to them this very morning—but a few minutes ago in fact?! There was the innocent and respected merchant Omar, enjoying the Day of Pigs in magnificent Per-Bastet with his beautiful offspring—indeed on their very way to meet his wealthy (and very available) friend Khangijann to suggest a betrothal for his daughter...

How much he and his daughters, especially Nulah, who it has to be said has a bit of a greedy head, were looking forward to the taste of juicy pig fat and the crunch of finest crackling. How proud he was of his daughters, parading them and extolling their virtues and beauty: Nulah with her curly, black locks and gift for mathematics, the red-headed and demure Armina whose poetry can cause crocodiles to weep, and blonde-haired Madgit with her angelic singing voice. Now terror has visited his family in the form of porcine misery!

He was enjoying the sing-song prayers of a street-priestess of Bastet, her ceremony just about to end



with an incredible display of her powers. Out of the blue, a trio of rather large, ugly men and a dubious-looking man in a white robe who was chanting words of magic dashed towards them. All the villains were intent upon harming his daughters, that much was clear. As both incantations reached their zenith, the words took on a new horrific form, like feline pigs bathed in chaos. The magic reached out to the daughters, engulfed them, and then—horror of horrors—turned them each into pigs, marked only as his daughters by their pretty hair, which remained as abundant and luxurious as ever! In the confusion, the pigs fled, as did the white-robed villain and his oddly-large, fez-wearing cohorts. An unlucky pair of passersby had also been transformed, and they now cower in an alley nearby, confused and trapped.

Alas! For soon the slaughter will begin! What if his beloved daughters remain as pigs throughout the day? Or worse, forever! What if they are eaten? Omar has only moments ago been told by the helpful priestess that she believes that to turn the girls back, the magic situation that caused the change and perverted her spell must be repeated. The white-robed man must be found and returned here to perform his magic once again and hopefully restore the girls.

How fortunate for him that at that very moment as he kneels, pounding the sandy streets with his fists, a group of adventurers arrives upon the scene. Praise Bastet!

As he sets eyes upon them, Omar begs for help! *'Save my daughters!'*

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs happen upon a weeping merchant who has had his three daughters transformed into pigs by a mysterious group of masked attackers, and he asks the PCs to help recover them. Setting out into the city, the PCs must use their wits as well as their swords and magic to bring the girls safely back to their father.

Sadly, not only does the festival conspire against the PCs, but they are harassed by the masked attackers. These attackers are Omar's own were-crocodile half-brother Mahmud and his three ogre accomplices, who are able to move about the city unnoticed thanks to their magical fezzes. The quartet are intent upon kidnapping the girls and have been stalking their prey all morning, readying their ambush. A peculiar magical accident involving a chanting street priestess of Bastet ending her transmutation spell exactly when Mahmud conjured a giant boar are behind the girls' unfortunate transformations. To make matters worse, in order to transform the girls back, Mahmud must be caught and persuaded to replicate the magic effect that changed them.

The adventure becomes a race against time as the PCs seek to outwit or overcome their foes and local hazards and rescue the daughters before the Night of Pigs begins!

In each section, the PCs receive clues of the whereabouts of one daughter. They must track down the daughter, return her to Omar, and receive the clue for the whereabouts of the next daughter. The feast happens in the evening, limiting the amount of time the PCs have to find each of the daughters. This should keep the pressure on the PCs to encourage them to keep moving. However, PCs of this level might have fewer resources and need moments of rest. Be sure to allow the PCs a chance for a short rest after rescuing the second daughter or a long rest after rescuing all three, if they are running low on resources. Alternatively, villains and kidnapers can (and sometimes do) flee when reduced to below half their hit points, not willing to risk their lives for an interesting piglet. Those who flee might remember the PCs and return at a later point in the campaign to cause trouble for the PCs, holding a grudge after the PCs took the pig from them.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

Adventures that suddenly happen can be fun, and the PCs chancing upon the stricken Omar as they are out carousing, shopping, or just sightseeing in Per-Bastet is a great way to test your players' improvisational skills as well as their quick thinking. However, you may want something a little bit less random to link your players into this adventure. Perhaps Omar and the PCs have a mutual friend in the city who happens upon the stricken merchant and dashes off to find the helpful PCs, or maybe Omar knows the PCs himself through some social event they attended. However you approach this, the format should be one of running into adventure while Omar uses his contacts across the city to urgently search for clues that lead to the whereabouts of his three daughters. Omar uses his loyal friend and former pet, a talking, awakened vulture named Nefertari, as a means of communicating with the PCs as they search the city.

### BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE —A RACE AGAINST TIME

The attackers had stalked Omar from his lodgings (which were well guarded) and prepared to put their cunning plan into action. Their intention was for the ogres to rush and take the girls while Mahmud summoned a giant boar to cover their actions and escape. How Mahmud laughed at his own cleverness in conjuring such an animal on such a day.

The villains followed the happy family group into a plaza in the Wharf District of Per-Bastet on the very edges of the Grand Souk. On his signal, the magically-disguised ogres rushed in as Mahmud cast his spell. Sadly, Mahmud's mouthful of big, pointy teeth (they often don't quite change back properly when he's in human form) made him mispronounce the incantation. That mispronunciation, together with the simultaneous climax of the priestess' transmutational spell, resulted in a wave of chaotic magic which changed the girls and two bystanders. Mahmud and his underlings left the scene moments later, chasing the fleeing girls.

Omar, a **noble** from Per-Bastet, rushes toward the PCs, pleading for help. Omar briefly explains what has happened, while leaning heavily on his walking stick. As he speaks, the priestess Raheema interjects, pointing out her magical theories and the fact that the white-robed man will need to be present to undo the magic that transformed the girls. Omar explains that he has sent servants into the city to chase his beloved daughters. He also says his precious (and very gifted) awakened **vulture** Nefertari is circling to keep eyes on where the girls might be. Shortly before the end of Omar's conversation with the PCs, Nefertari swoops down, politely introduces herself and reminds Omar that in the street nearby a group of locals has the other two victims of this terrible event cornered—for their own safety.

Just as the PCs begin to pay attention to the pigs, a messenger of the temple of Bastet arrives to call Raheema away. She promises to return here at dawn to recast her spell in exactly the same conditions and, hopefully, restore the girls to their true selves.

### PIGS IN BLANKETS

The two transformed men are down an adjacent cul-de-sac alleyway which leads to a small group of doorways into homes. A trio of brave locals shout and hold blankets across the end of the alleyway in a barrier the pigs have so far not rushed. The pigs are getting scared and want out. If the pigs are not restrained, they won't be here when the PCs return and may meet unpleasant ends when the Night of the Pigs begins. A *detect magic* spell cast near the pigs reveals transmutation magic on both pigs. Omar feels— at least partially—responsible for their wellbeing and asks the PCs to help. The men (use the statistics of a **boar**) are still reeling from the dizzying chaos of the magic and aren't fully aware of what has happened to them. They yell and shout at the unknown locals who are trapping them in this alley, not understanding why their voices sound like pig squeals.



A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices several large, empty wicker cages on a nearby stall that could each hold a single pig. The owner is happy to sell the cages for 25gp each, though a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince him to lend them to the PCs for the good of Per-Bastet.

If the PCs succeed in capturing the pigs or safely restraining them, the little crowd that gathered after witnessing the transformation applaud. Award the PCs double the experience points for the encounter if both pigs were not harmed during the capture.

### A MESSENGER ARRIVES!

Regardless of the PCs' actions, one of Omar's servants soon arrives. He has found one of the daughters! Or at least he has heard a rumor. He met a merchant



in the south of the Wharf District who claimed he'd heard someone was selling a magic pig today. The pig apparently has a head of curly, black hair!

Omar collapses into weeping misery at this news, confirming that pig must be his daughter Nulah, who is gifted in mathematics. He offers the PCs 900 gold pieces on the spot to save his daughters (300 gp for each daughter), and he begs them to race to the south of the Wharf District with all speed. He immediately sends his servant off to haggle with a nearby camel seller and, within minutes, each PC is presented with a **camel** to ride.

Omar is happy to increase his offer, but PCs haggling may be booed by the gathered crowd.

## PART ONE: NULAH'S TALE

Nulah has been seized by a repulsive farmer, a horrible lady called Jubb-il-Fatmina, and even now is being readied for auction as a magic pig. What's worse, Jubb is suggesting that magic pork might well imbue the eater with magic and is promising that those who eat the crackling might be granted wishes! Alas that Nulah cannot talk to defend herself; though her wits remain, she is very much a pig.

Woe piles on woe, for stories travel quickly in the City of Cats. A hag, who has need of special magic and a taste for pork, hears of the magic pig and begins to seek out the auction with great haste.

### SEEKING A MAGIC PIG IN THE WHARF DISTRICT

The PCs do not have long before the auction starts. A crowd is already gathering for it in the old, abandoned palace on a small cliff overlooking the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet.

Oh, how the **green hag**, Latifa, would like to have her wishes come true! She's fed up with being a hag and the abuse that comes with it. Raised among humans, she was horrified when she became an ugly hag right as she was on the cusp of womanhood. She is in Per-Bastet today with her two favorite chickens (the little cockatrices do love a day out) and lo! Salvation has come in the form of a magic pig. Even now she lurks at the auction, her form disguised by magic. She is determined that pig will be hers, and then she'll eat it, become the human she once was, and marry a prince with silky hair and perfect teeth.

The PCs know the auction is somewhere in the southern section of the district, but it is a large area to search. Furthermore, the PCs aren't the only ones who've heard the tale—the werecrocodile, Mahmud, is also nearby.

A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Perception) check while talking to locals or looking around finds the auction—even during the Day of Pigs, magic pigs are a rarity, and the auction has gained attention. If the PCs fail the check, they run into a group of shady dock thugs known as the Big Ears Gang. The gang knows all about the auction and is on the lookout for wealthy folks seeking magic pigs!

### TROUBLE AT THE WHARF

The local leader of the Big Ears Gang is Afaf, an overly-friendly lady known for her terrible swear words and short temper. Once a mercenary for hire, she's now retired and earns easier money as a **bandit captain**. She has six **bandits** with her, but other members of her gang lurk nearby, also looking to muscle money out of those looking for the auction, and appear in 1d4 rounds if she calls for them.

Afaf approaches the PCs, leading a very fat ewe, after a member of her gang told her the PCs are after a magic pig. She offers to sell them a magic sheep instead, and she's willing to let it go for everything the PCs have. In truth, Afaf is lonely and looking for love. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check from a handsome male PC could charm her into backing down and leaving them alone—but only if the PC promises to join her for the feast tonight. If the PC fails to eat with her during the Night of the Pigs, she and her gang seek out the PC for retribution.

If the check fails, or the negotiation sours, she and her group draw weapons and attack. The Big Ears Gang aren't that tough, being more petty thieves and thugs than hardened murderers, and quickly back down if half their number are overpowered or Afaf is knocked down. If forced to back down, the gang quickly reveals the location of the auction and apologizes for any inconvenience before asking to be let go.

**Treasure.** Afaf has a nice collection of rings depicting snakes worth 100 gp, and the other gang members each have 20 gp in various coins.

### A PECULIAR AUCTION

The crumbled palace is a roofless ruin of weathered sandstone in the southern section of the Wharf District. A crowd of just under one hundred people has gathered within it for the auction.

The farmer Jubb-il-Fatmina, a **commoner** in a dirty smock, greedily conducts the auction on a makeshift stage in Area 1. The transformed Nulah stands beside her on a chain held by Benji and Jabb, Jubb's two **thug** sons.

The **green hag** Latifa, magically disguised and wearing a mask, lurks at the back of the crowd, clutching a wicker

## THE CRUMBLED PALACE



basket which contains her two **cockatrice** pets. Mahmud stands nearby, a huge smock covering his white robes, with four recently-hired **thugs** beside him.

### RUNNING THE AUCTION

If the PCs arrive late, such as by taking a rest before going to the auction, the auction has already reached its climax, and Latifa has legitimately bought Nulah for 250 gp. Otherwise, the PCs arrive just as the auction starts. Nulah has a starting price of 25 gp, but the crowd erupts with bids that rapidly increase her price. When the price reaches 200 gp, the last of the bidders backs down, and Latifa remains the only person bidding, determined to win the pig at all costs. The PCs can try to outbid her, but the sale is legally binding, requiring the PCs to pay Jubb-il-Fatmina or forfeit the prize to the next highest bidder, Latifa.

Mahmud watches on but doesn't participate in the bidding. He intends to track the winner and overpower them with the help of the thugs he hired. Latifa and Mahmud's actions are detailed below.

Jubb-il-Fatmina wants as much money as she can get for Nulah and expects immediate payments when the auction

concludes. If payment isn't forthcoming, her sons try to collect while she calls for the authorities to help. A **veteran** city watch captain arrives in 1d4 rounds with six **guards** to sort out the mess. How this develops is left to you.

Instead of participating in the auction, the PCs can try to prove Nulah is not a pig but a woman. If they remember that her father described her as a mathematician, they can ask her a mathematical question, which she correctly answers by stomping her trotters. Unfortunately, this merely causes more interest—a magic *counting* pig is even more valuable! A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check eloquently tells the tale of her transformation to the crowd and shames them into letting Nulah be returned to her father. However, Jubb-il-Fatmina isn't fully convinced and still wants compensation for a pig she views as rightfully hers. She releases the pig for no less than 100 gp.

Other approaches may work at your discretion.

If the PCs obtain Nulah from Jubb-il-Fatmina, the jealous Latifa follows and attacks when they turn down an alley or in some other relatively secluded area. Mahmud follows as subtly as he can and acts as detailed below.

If Latifa wins Nulah, she brings the pig into Area 2, a dark sandy kitchen in the back of the ruin, and starts a fire using old wood in the kitchen. Unless stopped, Latifa then slaughters, cooks, and eats Nulah, wishing for her former youth and beauty as she eats. Sadly, she remains a hag no matter how much she eats. If Mahmud is still free, he intervenes by sending his thugs after Latifa. How that encounter develops is left to you.

### LATIFA AND HER POULTRY

Swathed in dirty robes and wearing a mask, the **green hag** Latifa keeps two **cockatrice** in a wicker basket she carries and releases them whenever she feels she is in danger. The cockatrice do not attack the hag, but they bite anyone else nearby. Latifa uses her claws above spells in combat.

During the auction, the PCs may see through her disguise and seek to unmask her. If they actively see through her Illusory Appearance, they can point it out to other people in the crowd. Though the average person is unable to see through her disguise, the commotion quickly derails the auction, forcing Jubb-il-Fatmina to call the authorities as detailed in Running the Auction. Latifa, having been found out, throws her cockatrice into the crowd and uses Invisible Passage to escape. She watches the PCs from a distance and attacks them in a secluded area after they retrieve Nulah, desperate and determined to have her wish granted by the magic pig.

**Treasure.** Latifa has a bag made of woven seaweed decorated with barnacles which contains 250 gp. She also carries a sack of whelks, three of which are stuffed with bloodstones worth 50 gp each, and a small box holding three pots of *marvelous pigments*.

### MAHMUD LURKS

Mahmud intends to steal the pig from the winner then escape, covering his tracks with the *entangle* spell and vanishing into the crowds. Though he lurks at the back of the auction, a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices his white robes beneath his smock. If the PCs aren't studying the crowd, they have disadvantage on this check. If the PCs ambush him, he immediately swallows his *potion of gaseous form* and escapes—there are still two daughters to find!

How and when he attacks those who have Nulah is left to you. However, he does not engage in combat personally, and he doesn't linger, trusting his thugs to handle the capture of the pig. Ever cautious, if Mahmud expects trouble, he has a *potion of gaseous form* inside



arcane sugar glass in his cheek. He can bite it at any time, and the potion takes immediate effect. If pursued, he hides in the rush of crowds celebrating the Day of Pigs. This isn't the last the PCs see of Mahmud as he heads off to find the other daughters.

### NULAH SAVED!

If the PCs return Nulah to her father, he weeps tears of joy and pulls a ring worth 250 gp from his fat fingers in addition to the promised 300 gp for her safe return. But even as his sobs of joy echo around the plaza, a vulture circles above, calling 'I have found Armina, but she is in terrible danger!'

## PART TWO: ARMINA'S PERIL

What joy! By sweet chance, the transformation has enabled Armina to escape the clutches of that sweating pig of a man, Khangji-Jann, with his unwanted offers of betrothal. Now she can seek her true love, Amir. She heads to his place of work at the back of the Endless Bazaar in the north of the Wharf District. Her heart is filled with love—surely a kiss from the love of her life will undo this terrible curse! The gnoll ruffians who made sport of her on her way did not stop her reaching her beloved and seeking his lips.

Unfortunately, as she reached Amir and tried to kiss him, he screamed in horror. Now the gnolls are back, chasing her! Is this her end? Unloved and destined to be dinner?

Luckily for her, a friendly vulture has spied her peril and is even now bringing help...

### A DASH TO THE HUNTING GROUNDS

Reunited with his daughter Nulah, Omar weeps tears of joy, but it is short-lived. The awakened vulture Nefertari swooped down and told the group that Omar's daughter, Armina, was in peril. The vulture has just seen a beautiful pig with red hair in the north of the Wharf District, not far from the perilous area of the city known as the Hunt. She believes the pig is none other than the red-headed and demure Armina whose poetry can cause crocodiles to

weep. When Nefertari saw Armina, the transformed girl was being chased by a bunch of ruffian gnolls mounted on birds and who seemed to be making sport of chasing the scared pig. Time is short; there is not a moment to lose!

At this news, Omar collapses into weeping once again and begs the PCs to make all haste. If they do not have the camels he offered them in Part One, he supplies some now, begging the PCs to ride immediately.

### RIDING NORTHWARD

Nefertari soars above the rooftops, leading the PCs to the area where Armina is being chased by gnolls. While traversing the busy, crowded streets of Per-Bastet on camel back, each PC must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If a PC fails a check, roll a d4 and consult the City Occurrences table to determine what happens to the PC as it struggles to direct its camel. If the majority of the PCs fail their checks, they are delayed in reaching the chase area, changing the encounter with Armina and the gnolls as detailed below.

### OUTSIDE THE ENDLESS BAZAAR

Once she had calmed down after the transformation and realized that maybe things weren't as bad as she thought, Armina went straight for the Endless Bazaar. Her love, Amir, works there, and she believed his kiss would

#### CITY OCCURRENCES

##### d4 Occurrences

- 1 A quartet of men dressed as pigs and beating drums appear from a side-street. The PC must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be hurled by its startled camel onto the burning brazier of a meat seller, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall and 1d6 fire damage from the brazier.
- 2 As the PC passes the stall of the famous crocodile merchant, Abus-ni-Khom, a small child screams at the merchant's largest crocodile opening its mighty jaws. The scream causes the PC's camel to lurch rapidly away from the child and toward the crocodile pit beside the merchant's stall. The PC must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw to hold onto the reins and avoid falling off the camel. If the PC falls off the camel, the PC must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the 10-foot-deep crocodile pit. The crocodiles in the pit are docile, having been feed this morning, but the slimy walls of the pit require a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb out.
- 3 A trio of jugglers dressed as piglets approach the PC who is struggling to control the camel in the crowded streets. The PC must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics), Wisdom (Insight), or Charisma (Intimidation) check to avoid losing 5 gp to the jugglers as they momentarily dance around the PC before dashing into the crowd.
- 4 A passing pig merchant has several sows on leads, pulling him along like dogs. The pigs squeal in unison when they see the stalled PC, and a few dash below the PC's mount. The PC must succeed a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to heroically leap the pigs or a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to steer a safe course past them. A heroic leap draws applause from onlookers if successful, but a failed leap results in the PC falling from the camel's back and taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage.



transform her back like it says in all the old tales. On her way, her sumptuous red hair betrayed her as an unusual pig, and she gained the unwanted attentions of a trio of **gnolls**, who are mounted on **war ostriches** (see page 145) and armed with spears. Their leader, the haughty and very loud Safiya, has a taste for pig and sport. She is a **gnoll slaver** (see page 132) and has been having fun chasing the pig just outside the Bazaar. She has been particularly enjoying its almost lyrical squeal.

Sadly, Safiya and her followers are not the only ones after the pig. A trio of fez-wearing ogres are also on the scene. They've just stolen a big net and, once they have settled the argument about who is the best at using nets, move in to catch the pig for their master, Mahmud.

### A SUDDEN ARRIVAL!

When the PCs reach the outskirts of where Armina was spotted, Nefertari swoops down, gripping a small box in her claws. The box is a gift from the vulture, something she had hidden in one of her nearby rooftop perches. The box contains 10 magical dates (each acts as a *goodberry*), and a cordial of magical strength in a small vial (a *potion of hill giant strength*). Nefertari explains that Omar and the girls are her only family, and she can't bear the thought of losing any of them. She hopes the gifts help the PCs rescue the remaining daughters.

Shortly after the awakened vulture bestows her gifts, a terrible pig squeal echoes from a nearby street. Read or paraphrase the following:

---

The street ahead looks like a great market. Stalls are everywhere and the narrow streets are thronged with merchants, shoppers, and pigs—on leads, in pens, even wandering freely in places. One pig stands out from the others, however, a pig with red hair. It dashes through the crowd of people, its flank clearly bleeding. Not far behind the pig, a group of gnolls, mounted on ostriches and gripping spears, shouts 'there goes our sport!'

---

If most of the PCs succeeded on their checks in Riding Northward, they arrive just after Armina has taken 1 piercing damage from a spear. She is being chased by Safiya and three gnolls, who begin this part of the adventure 40 feet ahead of the PCs and 30 feet behind Armina.

If the majority of the PCs failed their checks in Riding Northward, they are late, and two more gnolls on war ostriches have joined the others. The group of gnolls is 60 feet ahead of the PCs and 30 feet behind Armina.

As the PCs glimpse the scene, a man dashes out of an alley beside them, rubbing his lips in horror. Behind the

man a group of locals shout 'Amir was kissed by a pig and liked it!' Amir and his part in this adventure are detailed in *The Man Kissed by a Pig*.

### CHASING A PIG

This race to defeat the gnolls and catch Armina is purposefully described in an abstract way to allow the adventure to unfold cinematically. Combat should play out as normal with the exception that all of the participants are moving a specific distance (listed in each entry below) in the same direction each round. The PCs must chase Armina through the busy city streets while also dealing with the unruly gnolls hunting her. To make matters worse, there are complications along the route, including haphazardly-placed stalls, festival performers, and a trio of disguised ogres. As the PCs pursue the gnolls, remember to describe the bazaar around them: locals scream and shout as the PCs race past, stalls rattle with shaken goods from the thunder of the running mounts, and children cheer when the PCs do something particularly impressive or eye-catching, such as scoring a critical hit or casting a colorful spell.

The PCs can give chase on foot, but, if they do so, they risk losing the gnolls and Armina. The camels the PCs were gifted by Omar are fast enough to keep up with the gnolls on their ostriches, who are letting Armina have a sporting lead. The gnolls block the PCs' way forward, preventing the PCs from gaining ground and catching Armina. The PCs must deal with the gnolls before rescuing the frightened pig.

Each round, a PC's camel moves up to 50 feet toward Armina and the gnolls, and each PC can take one action at any time during the camel's movement. The camels aren't accustomed to being raced through busy city streets and won't move faster than their normal movement each round unless directed to do so. A PC can encourage its mount to Dash by succeeding on a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If the PC uses its action to encourage the camel, it has advantage on this check. The gnolls block the PCs' way forward, ending the camel's movement that turn once it is within 5 feet of a gnoll. If the PC's camel uses the Dash action, the PC has disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check, and it has to succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to cast a spell that round, losing the action but not the spell slot on a failure.

### ARMINA

A red-headed pig (use the statistics of a **boar**, except her Intelligence is 12 and her Charisma is 15), Armina flees her pursuers. Each round, she moves her walking speed

(40 feet) and uses the Dash action in an attempt to escape the gnolls. She ducks and weaves through the narrow streets, terrified of the gnolls and the PCs, who she doesn't know. In her terror, she eventually runs full-circle, if not stopped, and hides in an alley not far from where she kissed Amir. Armina cannot talk, but she does keep trying to recite love poems through her porcine mouth to bring herself comfort while hiding. If the PCs find her in hiding or catch her as she flees, she struggles to escape them, but, in her fatigue, she is unable to fight for long. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Armina that the PCs are there on behalf of her father. The PCs have advantage on the check if they mention Omar by name or if Amir or Nefertari are with them.

### THE MAN KISSED BY A PIG

Amir lurks near the alleyway where he was kissed by Armina, being mercilessly taunted by his co-workers. He does not want to talk about what happened, as he can honestly say he's never been kissed by a pig before. He finds the whole episode revolting. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces him that the pig is Armina transformed. The PCs have advantage on this check if they point out Armina's red hair. If the PCs convince Amir that the pig is Armina, Amir works with them in whatever way they ask to calm Armina or stop her from fleeing. Armina races to Amir if she can see or hear him.

### GNOLL HUNTERS

The all-female, slaver gang of **gnolls** ride **war ostriches** and use spears to attack the PCs and harry Armina. Each gnoll has six spears hanging from her saddle. The beautiful **gnoll slaver**, Safiya, carries eight spears and a whip. Her war ostrich wears studded leather barding which increases its Armor Class to 13. Safiya is an auburn-furred gnoll wearing a black, silk dishdasha.

The gnolls are having sport and aren't interested in catching Armina any time soon. They whoop, cheer, and laugh while pursuing the scared pig.

Each round, they move up to 50 feet, making sure to get no closer than 30 feet to Armina. If the PCs attack the gnolls or Safiya, the gnolls attack the PCs with their spears while Safiya continues pursuing Armina.

If the PCs catch up to Safiya after dealing with her gnolls, she uses her *potion of animal friendship* to convince the closest PC's camel to give up the chase. If the camel fails its saving throw, it skids to a halt, and the PC must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being thrown from the camel's back. The PC must either succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to convince the camel to rejoin the chase or a DC

15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to borrow a camel from a passerby. Alternatively, the PC can pay 25 gp to a nearby merchant for one of its camels. The PC must then encourage its camel to Dash on the following round to catch up with Safiya.

**Treasure.** Each war ostrich is worth 150 gp—if the PCs capture them. The saddles and tack are of a good quality and worth 25 gp for each set. The barding on Safiya's mount is worth 90 gp. Safiya's saddle bags hold a bronze model of a bird eating a monkey worth 75 gp, a well-made pottery panel depicting a beautiful gnoll dancing for a genie worth 50 gp, a purse containing 35 gp, a *potion of animal friendship* (if she didn't use it in the chase) and a *potion of healing*.

### NEFERTARI

The awakened **vulture** soars in and out of the chase, aiding the PCs when she can while also keeping an eye on Armina. Every other round, she distracts one of the gnolls by flapping just above its face, swooping in front of its mount, or clawing at the mount's tail feathers. A distracted gnoll has disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check. Nefertari never gets close enough to engage in melee; however, the gnolls get sick of her interference after she distracts them three times and throw spears at her if they aren't engaged in combat with the PCs.

### OBSTACLES

Aside from catching a fleeing pig and dispatching the gnolls who are chasing her, the PCs must contend with busy city streets and Mahmud's ogre accomplices. The PCs encounter at least four obstacles during their chase with their fifth obstacle being Mahmud's ogres (though you can add more obstacles between the PCs and the ogres if you feel they handled the gnoll problem too quickly). To determine the obstacles the PCs face, select an obstacle or roll a d8 and consult the Endless Bazaar Obstacles table (see next page). Each obstacle requires the creatures encountering it to make an ability check or saving throw. For ease of play, these obstacles treat the rider and mount as one, and any mention of "creature" refers to the rider. You can roll the appropriate check or saving throw for each gnoll, or, for the sake of brevity, you can assume each gnoll succeeds on each obstacle's challenge.

### THREE FAT MEN IN FEZZES

Three **ogres**, faithful accomplices of Mahmud, are squabbling over a net they have stolen to capture Armina. When Armina passes the ogres, one throws the large net at her (+6 to hit), hoping to capture her for Mahmud. If they succeed, the ogres, who all appear like the exact

## ENDLESS BAZAAR OBSTACLES

### d8 Occurrences

- 1 **Street Sign.** A sign hangs above the street, advertising for a local pottery shop. Each creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or take 1d6 bludgeoning damage as it hits the sign.
- 2 **Flagged Banner.** A string holding flags that spell out the phrase “Day of Pigs” stretches across the path. Each creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be unseated. An unseated creature has disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check as it rights itself in its seat. A creature can choose to have disadvantage on this saving throw. If it does so, it can use its reaction to cut down the banner, earning angry shouts from the crowd but allowing those behind it to pass through the area without having to make the saving throw.
- 3 **Narrow Stalls.** A section of street holds temporary stalls clustered together, creating a narrow path for those on mounts. Each creature must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Wisdom (Perception) check or take 1d6 slashing damage as its mount crashes through a stall.
- 4 **Leap of Faith.** Large, plaster casts of cats and pigs are spread out in front of two stalls. Each creature must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to pull its mount into a leap over the plaster casts or take 1d6 slashing damage as its mount clumsily stomps through them. Alternatively, a creature can carefully go around the plaster casts but loses 20 feet of movement that turn.
- 5 **Bothersome Monkeys.** Small monkeys hang from colorful decorations adorning the streets. Each creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check or a monkey jumps down onto its shoulders. The monkey hangs onto the back and shoulders of the creature, scratching and pawing at the creature. While a creature has a monkey on it, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. The creature can use its action to shake off the monkey, which leaps away into the crowd.
- 6 **Street Offal.** A section of street is slippery with discarded, rotting fruit and vegetables from an earlier day’s market. The area is difficult terrain for the mounts that move through it. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check pulls the mount into a leap over the offal, or a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a safe path through the offal, bypassing its effect.
- 7 **Party Swings.** A group of laughing revelers swings back and forth across the street on some colorful swings. As each creature passes through the area, roll a die. On an odd number, the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone in its saddle as it is hit by a swinging reveler, risking falling off its mount. On an even number, the creature passes through the area unscathed.
- 8 **Parfumerie.** A cloud of strong fragrances and incenses hovers on the street outside a large parfumerie stall. Each creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

same large, portly, human man thanks to the magic fezzes they wear, scoop up Armina and run through the streets back toward their master. If they fail, they join the chase on foot, hustling after the fleeing pig.

The gnolls are after sport, not trouble, and ride by the ogres whooping unless the ogres have Armina. If the ogres have captured the pig, the gnolls lash out at the disguised ogres who stole what they believe is their rightful prey.

**Treasure.** The ogres carry three fezzes that are a *brotherhood of fezzes* (see page 147), a large net, three gourds of arak, a selection of local snacks, and a total of 50 sp in pig cheek purses.

### ARMINA SAVED!

If the PCs return his second daughter, Omar howls in happiness, immediately handing the PCs one of his most precious rings—a *ring of protection*.

As Omar consults with his servants and Nerfertari, the PCs have a moment of respite. The PCs can take a short rest while Omar’s agents search for the final daughter, Madgit. As the Day of Pigs continues, the sun slips below the skyline of Per-Bastet and the Night of Pigs begins. Braziers begin to burn and the smell of charcoal permeates the air. “Where is my little one?” sobs Omar, just as a very dubious-looking hooded figure taps him on the shoulder...

## PART THREE: MADGIT'S STORY

In the streets near the Bazaar at a small but infamous crocodile souk called the Souk of False Smiles, a notorious chef with the unlikely noble name of Qadi Hafeez-i-Burhan has stated that he will pay handsomely for a blonde-haired pig known to be at large. Rumor has it he hosts strange dining events to curry favor with certain well-connected individuals with particular—some would say revolting—tastes.

Known as the “Feaster” by locals, Hafeez has instructed that those with any information on the pig bring that information to his smiling partner, the terribly-tempered subek Aibtisamat. The Feaster believes the pig to be a magically-transformed princess, something that would command a very high price on certain menus...

### SOMETHING RATTY AND WICKED THIS WAY COOKS

Omar is overjoyed at being reunited with his daughters Nulah and Armina. However, the last, and youngest daughter—blonde-haired Madgit with her angelic singing voice—eludes Omar's servants. Even now, charcoal fires are glowing and pigs are being slaughtered for the Night of Pigs, the conclusion to today's festivities. ‘*Where is my little one?*’ sobs Omar, just as a very dubious-looking hooded figure taps him on the shoulder...

The dubious-looking figure is Aalim Tufferniti, a former **bandit captain** and now slave-trade fixer who has a trio of his **thug** friends standing beside him. He heard that both Omar and the Feaster were looking for a blonde-haired pig, and he believes he can get more money out of Omar. He knows Omar is a wealthy merchant and eyes the smaller man's rings greedily. Play out this scene to show Tufferniti's cruelty and Omar's desperation—first one ring is demanded, then another, until Tufferniti has them all. After he has all of Omar's rings, he starts to talk about property. He doesn't know the extent of Omar's holdings, but he suspects the merchant has a nice house. Unless the PCs intervene, time wears on, the rogue does not stop until Omar is literally on his knees, a legal expert is brought in, and a vast fortune is signed over—by which time it might already be too late for Madgit.

Tufferniti is a hard nut and not easily bullied. His thugs are very loyal and support him, but they do not share his knowledge. If Tufferniti is reduced to 10 hit points or less, he is magically coerced, the PCs convince him with a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, or the PCs perform some other action you deem is appropriate for convincing a petty thief to hand over

valuable information, he spills the beans about the chef and the equally dubious Aibtisamat, as described in the Adventure Background. If the PCs step in, Omar begs them to stop, afraid to lose the one lead he has to Madgit's whereabouts, while Nefertari cheers and squawks them on from a nearby lamppost.

Once Tufferniti shares the information, Omar begs the PCs to find his daughter and bring her back to him. In the meantime, he sends all his most watchful allies and friends into the city to seek the white-robed villain who caused this terrible transformation.

### THE SOUK OF FALSE SMILES

Located just west of the Bazaar of Lamentation, this infamous crocodile market sells everything crocodilian, from trained crocodiles to wind chimes made in the likeness of crocodiles, to enormous crocodile costumes to smoked crocodile meat. The odd thing about the subek that thrive in this area is how courteous and civilized they are—manners are everything. The gnolls around Per-Bastet see hunting crocodiles as a local rite of passage and are treated with hostility in the Souk of False Smiles. A gnoll PC has disadvantage on checks when interacting with the subek of the souk.

As the PCs travel to the Souk of False Smiles, the streets on Per-Bastet are filled with people dressed as pigs, jovial oinking, and the plentiful butchering and cooking of pigs. When the PCs reach the souk, read the following:

---


Here is one of the oddities of the City of Cats—a souk given over to everything crocodilian. Carvings of crocodiles, cages full of the smiling beasts, chained crocodiles that seem to be trained, crocodile skin bags, crocodile meat, and even a huge false wicker crocodile fill the streets. Crocodilian people walk between the stalls or haggle from behind them.

---

Aibtisamat has a huge carpet shop at the northern edge of the souk. PCs who succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Investigation) check soon learn where it is and can seek out his warehouse shop. If the majority of the PCs fail the check, they meet a quartet of **thugs** intent upon separating them from their gold.

### AIBTISAMAT, THE EVER-SMILING HOST

Aibtisamat, a subek cursed by a hag he happened to be tasting one day, is permanently stuck mid-transformation from a subek into a full crocodile. He failed to finish eating the hag fast enough to stop her magic and can't make her change him back now that she's been eaten. But he never lets a little thing like being a massive,



hunched-over, crocodilian man get in the way of civilized chat—at least with those who can cope with his appearance. He has adopted a few peculiarities since his curse—he occasionally snaps his mouth open and closed with a small growl whilst in deep thought and he tends to fly into a rage and eat people who upset him, especially by insulting his wares.

A sign above the open door to his warehouse depicts a smiling crocodile and the words Aibtisamat's Humble Carpet Shop. When the PCs enter, read the following:

The carpet shop, in truth more carpet warehouse, is overrun with chickens. They perch in cupboards, roost in shelves, and lay eggs on rolled up rugs. Carpets are laid everywhere, but the room is dominated by an enormous, hunch-backed crocodile squatting on two almost-human legs. A vast fez perches on his head, and one of his claw-hands holds a smoking hookah. He smiles, revealing a live chicken perched in his mouth. He grins and swallows before offering a greeting...

Aibtisamat, like other subeks, is nothing if not civilized. He immediately calls for his cringing, terrified servant to bring mint tea, sherbet, and lokum, offers the PCs seats on any of the countless cushions near him, and tries to sell them a nice carpet. Their host claims to know nothing of the Feaster, indeed he laughs heartily when he hears the name. He's lying; he knows that his friend has tracked the piglet with blonde hair to a nearby cellar and is at this moment heading there. He also knows how to find its entrance. The ratfolk has told Aibtisamat to begin offering seats for tonight's feast at 100 gp a head.

If the PCs attack Aibtisamat to get the information he holds, use the statistics for a **giant crocodile** (except Aibtisamat is neutral, has an Intelligence of 14, and knows Common). He surrenders when reduced to 20 hit points or fewer—though a loyal friend to the Feaster, he won't die for the ratfolk. If the PCs try to bluff their host into believing they wish to attend the feast, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) check—Aibtisamat knows the Feaster's usual customers and doesn't easily give up knowledge of tonight's special feast to strangers. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) or Charisma (Persuasion) check plays off his vanity or flatters him enough to trick him into revealing where his friend is hunting right now—a nearby cellar—and how to find it. In addition, the PCs can try to magically coerce him to give them Madgit's whereabouts, at your discretion. The PCs have advantage on the above checks

if they buy a carpet or bribe him. He loves money more than his friendships and may reveal everything—for the “right price” of 400 gp.

### MADGIT'S STORY

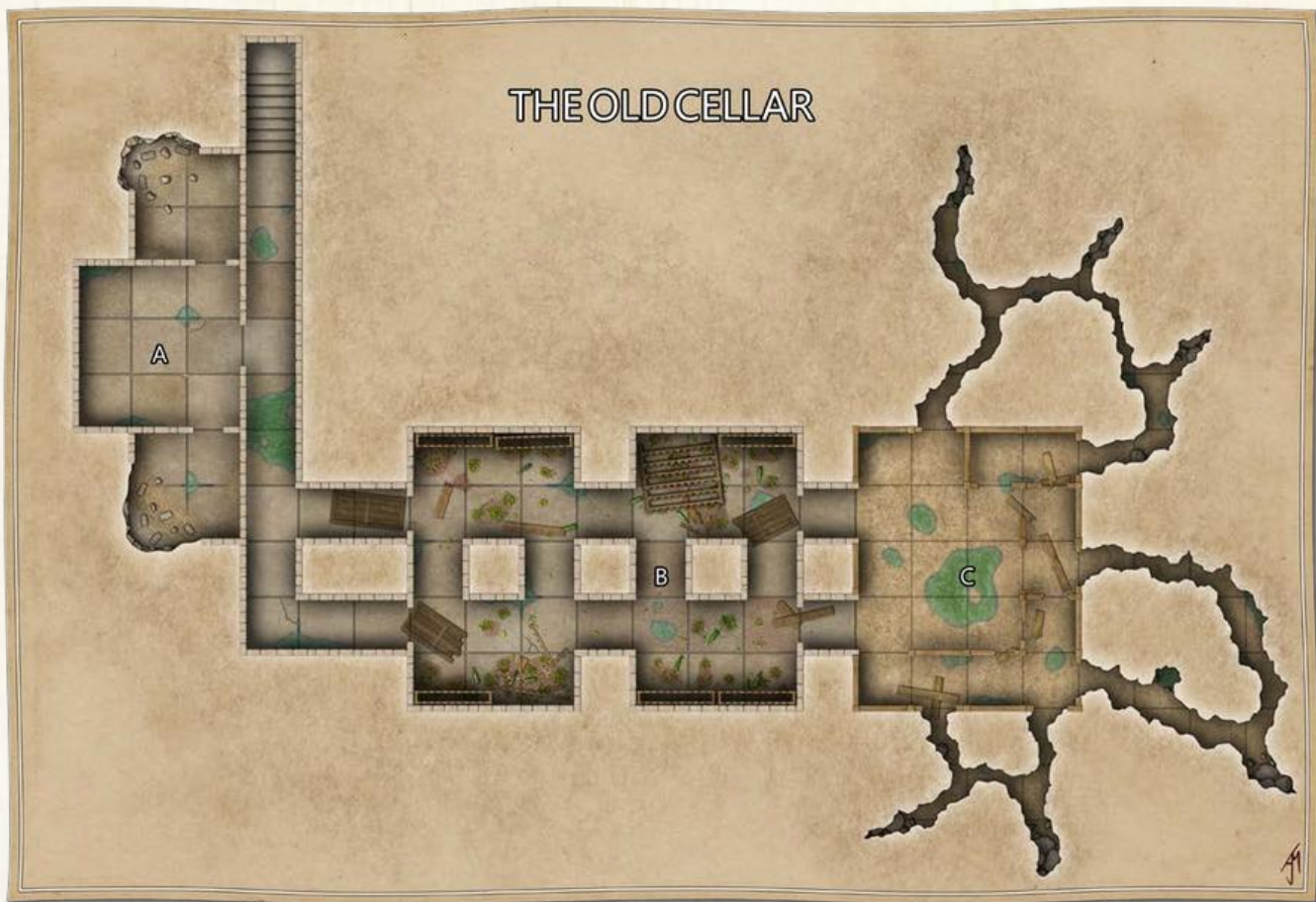
Scared by the transformation, the littlest piglet fled and has spent the last hour or so being chased through the streets by rats who serve the Feaster. At last she found a little hole to hide in, but it turned out to be the home of a terrible ooze! Now she trembles as she slinks from deadly corner to deadly corner in the cellar of horrors! The little piglet squeals in terror—this place is full of rats, horrible slime, and, worst of all, spiders! Alas, for her screams are like a trail leading to the feast, and the Feaster is not far behind her.

Mahmud trailed Madgit and the rats to the old cellar. He now hides outside the entrance, worrying. The pack of rats has not long since gone in, and he debates whether it would be better to wait until they come out—perhaps injured. When the PCs arrive, he decides waiting is the best idea. He intends to let the foolish PCs go into the cellar and get the piglet out, then attack when they emerge.

### THE OLD CELLAR

Madgit hides in an old cellar that was once used to store foodstuffs and alcohol, though its once-hidden tunnels suggest it might have also been used for illicit dealings. All the cellar's doors have long since been used for firewood. Big, local but otherwise harmless spiders share the space with rats, cats, and the odd unlucky child. The damp cellar is slick with molds and slimes. Each minute a creature explores the cellar or each time a creature takes the Dash action in the cellar, it has a chance of disturbing a patch of mold or slipping on a spot of slime. Roll a d6. On a 1 or 2, nothing happens. On a 3 or 4, the creature disturbs a patch of mold and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. On a 5 or 6, the creature slips on a spot of slime and must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or twist its ankle. A creature with a twisted ankle has its speed reduced by 10 feet for 1 minute. A creature that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check can avoid the hazard.

Madgit squeals every minute in terror as she finds some horrid spider, fat rat, or glistening slime. She scurries around Area C, trying desperately to find a safe place to hide. Luckily for her, the cellar's walls echo her screams in a confusing way, throwing off her ratfolk pursuers. The PCs must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check each time she squeals to determine where she is hiding.



### A. MOTHER SLITHER'S BOUDOIR

Locals avoid the old cellar as many know that Mother Slither haunts the dank passageways. She's a peculiar, intelligent ooze (use the statistics of an **ochre jelly** except Mother Slither has an Intelligence of 5) with a rudimentary motherly nature, and she nurtures a trio of her "children," small oozes that split off from her over the years (use the statistics of an **ochre jelly** except each is Medium and has 15 hp). She and her "children" don't leave the cellar, preferring to pick off the odd stray rat, crocodile, or cat that wanders into the cellar.

Mother Slither and her children lurk here. She has gathered her children and prepares to follow the ratfolk into Area B for a feast. Mother Slither is very protective of her children and attacks any creature that harms one of them.

If the PCs are delayed by an encounter with thugs in the Souk of False Smiles or by a combat encounter with Aibtisamat, Mother Slither is in Area B watching her children devour ratfolk as she circles around to the largest of the ratfolk, the Feaster.


**Treasure.** Each item hidden in Area A requires a bit of digging and a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)

check to find. The hidden treasures are: a scarab beetle brooch made of bone and gold with a painted miniature of an extremely homely lady worth 100 gp, a child's wooden horse with real teeth and gold braid worth 125 gp, a Dabu Zavodan rug wrapped in oilskins depicting the Pool of the Sky in radiant colors worth 300 gp, and a beautifully-crafted ney that functions as *pipes of haunting*.

### B. THE FEASTER'S HUNT

The Feaster is a **ratfolk rogue** (see page 140) and is accompanied in the cellar by his cohort and bride, the lovely **ratfolk rogue** Darjenta. Darjenta brought along her six younger brothers, all **ratfolk** (see page 140), to help look for the blonde pig. Darjenta carries a large sack for holding Madgit once they find her. The Feaster wants to kill and cook the magic piglet in front of his guests later this evening. Cunningly, the Feaster lets his brothers-in-law lead the way to ensure they find any hidden dangers for him.

Some blonde hairs are snagged onto an old, rusty nail in the wall about a foot above the floor, tugged off as Madgit ran south. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) notices the hairs.



If the PCs are delayed in reaching the cellar, Mother Slither and her children have ambushed the ratfolk. The Feaster is on the southern end of Area B, throwing daggers at the ooze attacking Darjenta. Mother Slither slowly makes her way around the chaos, intent on devouring the plump Feaster. Each round, two ratfolk and one ooze dies, leaving Darjenta and the Feaster alone

## RAHEEMA'S SPELL

Though Mahmud was a bit clumsy when he cast *conjure animals* to summon a giant boar at the beginning of this tale, his spell alone wouldn't have transformed the girls without the transmutational magic of Raheema's nearby *kitten to lioness* spell. This spell is common among followers of Bastet and sees frequent use in her temples. It is available to clerics, druids, sorcerers, and wizards.

*2nd-level transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You target up to nine cats within range and temporarily transform the clowder into a lion. If only one cat is within range, it instead transforms into a lion cub (use the statistics for a panther). For each cat targeted beyond the first, the lion gains 2 temporary hit points (maximum of 16).

While you are casting this spell, the cats become a golden vapor, which coalesces into the lion in an unoccupied space that you can see within range.

The lion is friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the lion, which has its own turns. It obeys any verbal commands that you issue to it (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to it, it defends itself from hostile creatures, but otherwise takes no actions.

When this spell is dismissed, its duration expires, or the lion is killed, the lion immediately dissipates into a cloud of golden vapor, and the transformed cats reappear in the space the lion once occupied. The golden vapor always retransforms into the same number of component cats, regardless of whether the lion was killed or injured, and the cats immediately flee the area after the spell ends.

The GM has the creature statistics.

against Mother Slither. If the PCs don't interfere, assume the two ratfolk dispatch Mother Slither with little effort and continue searching for Madgit.

**Treasure.** Darjenta still proudly wears her white wedding dress and a wedding *ring of animal influence*. She also carries a fan depicting wild camels with crocodile heads eating figs from bowls held by humanoid rats worth 50 gp. The Feaster has a trio of bottles hung from a belt of sheep sinew: a *potion of growth*, a *potion of poison*, and a *potion of resistance (acid)*. The Feaster likes to see his bride enlarge to maul larger humanoids and gives her his *potion of growth* if he suspects trouble. He also has a leather knife roll containing 20 specialist cooking knives with vulture bone handles worth 300 gp.

## C. MADGIT'S HIDEOUT

Madgit (use the statistics of a **boar** except her Intelligence is 12 and her Charisma is 17) scurries in the corners and narrow passageways in this area, alternating between being paralyzed with fear in a corner she thinks is safe and squealing in terror as some barely-seen horror crawls across the floor or wall near her. She is scared of everything and trusts no-one, especially in this darkness. Unless restrained, she flees, but, in her fatigue, she is unable to fight for long. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Madgit that the PCs are there on behalf of her father. The PCs have advantage on the check if they mention Omar by name.

## WAITING OUTSIDE...

**Mahmud** (see page 137) lurks in the streets outside, waiting for someone to exit with Madgit in tow. When he sees the PCs leave, he immediately attacks, trying to capture Madgit. If he manages to secure the pig, he tries to escape and later issues demands to Omar via an intermediary. If the PCs mention Omar, Mahmud mocks them, saying the PCs know nothing of the merchant's true colors.

If Mahmud is overpowered, the PCs can return with him and Madgit to Omar. See *Three Little Un-Pigs* for more details.

## THREE LITTLE UN-PIGS

Some time ago, Mahmud tried to speak to Omar and claim kinship, but the merchant dismissed him as a witless peasant. Mahmud, desperate to connect with the only living family he has left, plotted to kidnap Omar's daughters to get the merchant to speak with him and acknowledge their familial ties. Once captured, he admits defeat to himself and internally despairs that he has missed his only chance to connect with Omar. Bound and

hopeless, he remains silent and withholds this information from the PCs unless magically compelled to speak.

When the PCs arrive back to Omar, a **city watch captain** (see page 128) named Haffish and a pair of **guards** are present at Omar's request to see that Mahmud complies. If the PCs rescued Armina in the previous adventure, Amir sits nearby with Armina in his arms. Raheema, the priestess of Bastet who was present when the girls were transformed, is also with Omar, having returned early after completing her other duties. Omar weeps if the PCs have Madgit and grips the piglet tight in his loving arms. If Mahmud escaped the PCs without Madgit, Haffish and his guards have Mahmud bound between them by the time the PCs return, having apprehended him shortly after he escaped the PCs.

Raheema has her spell ready and needs only for Mahmud to start chanting to begin. Mahmud has little choice but to comply. If he is out of spell slots for the day, the guards allow him a long rest with rotating shifts watching the bound druid.

As the casters begin, a curious magical aura appears between them. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check notices the aura. Such odd magic may be worthy of further study, but for now the spells whip up a magical gale. The girls stand in the middle of the gale with the two bystanders who were also transformed, tears in Amir's and Omar's eyes. The spells reach their climax and the gale erupts, engulfing the transformed people in a shower of arcane lightning. Raheema is thrown back and knocked out. As the storm slows, the pig figures resolve themselves into those of the humans they were before. As smiles break out, the arcane storm takes on a darker aspect: pig faces and trotters form in the mass, then, with a terrible squeal of fury, a dreadful sweaty *something* pops into existence.

The *something* is a **rift swine** (see page 141), which is called into being and attacks. Omar and Amir rush to shield the ladies. This leaves the PCs and the nearby watch on hand to face the riftswine. Nefertari does her best to help as well—every other round she distracts

the riftswine by flapping just above its eyes, giving it disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check. At this moment, powerless in the grip of family devotion, Mahmud also joins in the fight to defeat the riftswine.

The riftswine is more than a match for the average group of 3rd level PCs, but the aid of Nefertari, the guards, and Mahmud should balance the scale in their favor. If you feel that your PCs can handle this fight on their own, then only Mahmud comes to their aid, desperate to protect the only family he has. In that case, the guards and city watch captain stand back to keep bystanders out of the riftswine's reach and can jump in to aid the PCs should they start to falter.

## CONCLUSION

With the rift swine destroyed and Raheema tended and brought round, the two brothers Omar and Mahmud face each other—Mahmud still angry and hurt from Omar's earlier rejection, and Omar finally realizing the truth in Mahmud's original claim as he looks at Mahmud and sees his father's features in the other man. They slowly embrace, and Omar welcomes Mahmud to the family. Tears are shed, particularly for Armina, whose left leg now ends in a boar hoof. But, as Amir kneels before her and proposes, she feels it is a small price to pay for winning her true love. Naturally and joyfully she accepts!

Omar gives the PCs their promised 900 gp for rescuing all three daughters and insists that they come to the wedding, which takes place a few days later. Mahmud and the PCs are guests of honor, and even the scowls of the corpulent Khangi-Jann (who still hopes, right until the last moment, that Armina will change her mind and marry him instead) do not dampen the smiles of joy—all thanks to the great PCs!

The PCs have made a rich and powerful friend in Omar, a major merchant in Per-Bastet. If your campaign uses the Status rule (*Midgard Worldbook*, p. 25), the PCs' Status increases by 1 while within the Southlands and by 2 while within Per-Bastet.



# grimalkin

An adventure for four to five characters of 4th to 5th level.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A while ago, a peculiar object slithered out of the River of Sand and caused a minor stir in the Perfume District of Per-Bastet before vanishing, as stories tend to do in the spiced city. (These events are detailed in the *Cat and Mouse* adventure on page 67) The object—which picked up the name *grimalkin eye* somewhere along the way—granted its owner power over cats. What was missed at the time by everyone involved in the caper was that if there was an eye, might there not also be a body?

“Princess” Karima Gamila doesn’t miss things like that. She might be a gnoll, but she’s an exceptional gnoll; she’s smart, graceful, attractive (particularly to other gnolls, who fall at her feet to get her attention), and

cunning. Karima’s mother believed she wasn’t a mortal gnoll at all but some sort of bestial child of Kwansi. This so frightened Karima’s mother that she abandoned her daughter, rather than share a home with a living god, and fled into the desert. Karima was forced at an early age to become independent and resourceful—and she quickly became a devoted worshiper of the very god her mother believed was her father.

When Karima heard about the *grimalkin eye*, her interest was roused. She sought out news and rumors about it and spoke to everyone who had any knowledge of it, paying special attention to its origins. Things like that don’t just appear from nowhere...

The truth (which eluded Karima) is intriguing. The *eye* appeared in the River of Sand after it was stolen by a lowly thief, Hakkam-nis-Afirr, from the city of Per-Bastet. This thief was a tomb robber of minor talent who had a habit of diving in the River of Sand for treasure—a very dangerous hobby. Hakkam discovered, below the river’s surface, the entrance to a long-forgotten basteti tomb.

It had been known (in the years before its existence was forgotten) as the Growling Sanctuary; the name came from the peculiar noises that reverberated through the tomb, caused by the River of Sand scraping past. The Sanctuary was “populated” by the undead remains of basteti who were faithful to a wicked aspect of Bastet. These undead guarded sacred treasures of the cat goddess, including the *Grimalkin Idol*, within which the *grimalkin eye* was originally fixed.

Hakkam, being resourceful, entered and explored the Sanctuary without alerting the guardians, but he was discovered when he stole the idol. During his flight through the tomb, Hakkam lost his grip on the idol and, when it struck the stone floor, the eye popped out and bounced toward the exit. As Hakkam stared down at the two objects—the heavy stone idol behind him and the small, light, and obviously valuable gem lying in his path toward the exit, with the tomb guardians closing in, Hakkam made the reasonable choice and scooped up the gem on his way out the door.

Alas, it was Hakkam’s last swim, for he suffocated in the River of Sand. The eye slipped from his dead grasp and drifted away in the current of sand until eventually it washed ashore, where it was found by Raheed wa Moi Matiba at the beginning of the *Cat and Mouse* adventure.

Which brings our tale back to Karima. Intrigued by tales of the *eye* but unable to locate it, she turned to a learned friend, the scholar Zubayr. The scholar roamed the libraries and antiquaries of Per-Bastet, and though he was human, his knowledge of the basteti and their history was unrivaled. This was unfortunate in the end, because the scholar’s research for Karima uncovered an ancient, two-part rhyme that revealed (to a clever reader) both the existence and location of the Growling Sanctuary. The scholar was nothing if not clever, and the knowledge awoke something new in him—greed. Armed with the location of the entrance to the Sanctuary but no practical experience in such matters, he lashed himself to a post at the side of the River of Sand and descended to the entrance. Once inside, he had time only to gather up a few items of little value before he was confronted by the tomb guardians. Like Hakkam, the scholar fled for his life, and equally like Hakkam, he lost his life in the River of Sand. Passersby spied his corpse only hours later, pulled it from the sand, and sent it dutifully to the nearest charnel house, as all faithful citizens should do.

The scholar’s dive into the River of Sand and the subsequent retrieval of his body occurred within the past 24 hours. And so, we come to the present.

Though the items the Scholar took are worth little, their theft still angered the Sanctuary’s guardians. Among

these stolen trifles was a *calling cat*, an item that acts like a beacon to the guardians. The undead sent out one of their sacred mummies, Sister Withering, veiled and swathed in thick robes, to contact ghost followers of Bastet in the city and enlist their help in ensuring that all trace of the Sanctuary remains hidden. The mummy and her ghost escorts are even now in the city, homing in on the *calling cat*.


Beauty and resourcefulness are a blessing and a curse; Karima has many enemies (jilted lovers and those who foolishly hoped to be lovers), particularly amongst an arm of the Thieves’ Guild known as the Dogs of Per-Bastet. Chief among them is a cunning gnoll werecrocodile known as Abdul-Haqq, who *really*, really hates Karima. He spies on her continually and jealously devours any of her lovers that fall into his grasp.

When Karima met with the scholar, Abdul-Haqq had the man watched. This morning, Abdul-Haqq’s slimy henchman Sweet Hasna, herself insanely jealous of Abdul-Haqq’s focus on Karima, followed the scholar and saw his body pulled from the River of Sand. Sadly for her, the body was taken to the charnel house before she could search it. In a stroke of insight, Hasna swallowed a *potion of invisibility*, slipped inside the mortuary, and searched the scholar’s body without being noticed. In his pockets, she found two things. First was the curiously alluring *calling cat*, which Hasna foolishly hung around her own neck. Second was half of the rhyme that led the scholar to the Sanctuary. Believing the rhyme was complete, Hasna departed to report her triumph to Abdul-Haqq.

Hasna’s triumph turned to Abdul-Haqq’s anger when he deduced that she’d brought him only half a clue to the location of a forgotten tomb that’s no doubt stuffed with treasure. He ordered her back to the charnel house to finish the job instantly—bodies that don’t rise as one of the Dead are often burned within 24 hours in Per-Bastet to prevent the spread of sickness. He also sent his pet imp Sharbit to follow Hasna invisibly and make sure she did the job properly.

When Hasna reached the charnel house for the second time that day, she had no more *potion of invisibility* with which to slip inside. She sat, and thought, and struck upon an idea. Drawing out her forgery tools, she began writing...

In the meantime, Karima heard about the scholar’s death, and she, too, went to the charnel house, which as fate would have it, is run by another of her enemies, Sultan Shuk’ri Nill Mo Chatooor (who is “Sultan” only because he calls himself that, and none dare contradict him). There are those who say Sultan manages a charnel house because it provides him with a supply of fresh bodies to eat, but such things are said quietly. In truth



and in secret, Sultan does lead a small cult that indeed eats human flesh. When the fresh, succulent body of the scholar arrived, Sultan sent followers to buy potatoes and herbs, and looked forward to a feast later today.

And thus, the stage is set.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

To kick things off, Karima turns to the PCs for aid. She wants to know how her friend the scholar died, and she wants to secure his body for a proper, respectful cremation rather than leave it to be eaten by Sultan, who she knows (or strongly suspects) to dine on the dead. How the PCs came to Karima's attention is up to you, but it's always best to play off of their past deeds.

When the PCs arrive at the charnel house, the cult is getting ready to dine on the scholar's corpse. Disgusted PCs might attack immediately, or they could try a friendlier approach. The gnolls in the charnel house are keen to preserve their ghoulish secret; several powerful families in Per-Bastet would be very cross if they found out their relatives had been eaten by Sultan (not to mention that the penalty in Per-Bastet for cannibalism is quite harsh).

The fragment of the rhyme that PCs find here is a tantalizing clue, but it tells them only half the story of the Sanctuary's location. Without the second fragment, the Sanctuary will remain lost.

In the meantime, Sweet Hasna is outside the charnel house working on her own plan. Before long, she enters the place in the guise of a grieving relative, complete with papers, pallbearers, and a coffin, demanding the remains of her beloved, fallen kin. There are ample clues on her to lead the PCs back to Abdul-Haqq's crocodileinfested lair at the edge of the Perfume District. There the PCs must

choose between an ugly fight against the werecrocodile or what might be an even uglier alliance with him.

Then there is Sister Withering and her ghost followers. Slowly but surely, they are closing in on the *calling cat* with only two thoughts in mind—to make a grisly example of thieves and to safeguard the secret of their tomb.

Eventually, PCs should retrieve both fragments of the rhyme. With the complete rhyme, they can enter the River of Sand and penetrate the Sanctuary. Once there, PCs must overcome the encroaching, driven sand and battle the tomb's horrific guardians to claim its greatest treasures.

### BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE—THE BEAUTIFUL GNOLL

“Princess” Karima Gamila (see page 135) knows a lot of beautiful, interesting people, and she's always keen to know more—including the PCs. The adventure assumes Karima is aware of the PCs by reputation and knows something of their deeds.

If your PCs are unusually secretive about their exploits, that alone is a reason why Karima would find them fascinating. It's not as if she won't hear about them anyway. Her network of informants is impressive. If possible, find a way to introduce Karima to the PCs as a seemingly minor NPC one or two sessions before *Grimalkin* begins. She can simply be a colorful local character who enjoys meeting adventurers, rather like the stylish hostess of an 18th century salon. This isn't a one-way relationship; although she holds no official office, Karima has tremendous influence in Per-Bastet through her vast network of paramours, friends, social contacts, confidantes, hopeful hangers-on, and paid informants. She can be an invaluable friend, for both the introductions she can make and the strings she

### CAT AND MOUSE, GRIMALKIN, AND TIMING

*Grimalkin* is intended as a direct sequel to the *Cat and Mouse* adventure. You and your players might enjoy *Grimalkin* even more if you run that adventure first. If they have the *grimalkin eye* from that adventure, Karima has even more reason to approach them now. The climactic chapter of this adventure covers what happens if the eye is reinserted into the *Grimalkin Idol*, and it's a fitting conclusion to the two adventures. Don't worry if you haven't played *Cat and Mouse*, though; it's an advantage, not a requirement, to run this adventure.

The *Grimalkin* Adventure Background states the background events “occurred within the past

24 hours.” Keep in mind, these events are those following the scholar's death. The time between the end of the *Cat and Mouse* adventure and the beginning of the *Grimalkin* adventure can be weeks or months. If you plan to run both adventures, be sure to give the PCs ample opportunity to gain experience between them.

Allowing the PCs to gain experience between *Cat and Mouse* and *Grimalkin* also gives you the opportunity to introduce some of the NPCs from *Grimalkin* early—maybe the scholar holds a bit of arcane lore for a wizard PC or maybe Karima is their informant for another short adventure in Per-Bastet.

can pull. When the events detailed above create a need for Karima to bring in outside help, those interesting and oh-so-capable adventurers she recently met spring immediately to her mind.

If PCs are meeting Karima for the first time in this adventure, read the following description.

---

Here is a curiosity, and a pleasant one. There's something alluringly feral about this female gnoll. She's tall and slim and has none of the hunched posture typical of gnolls, and she carries herself with grace and elegance. A long, purple cloak covers her slender limbs, and a yellow headscarf frames a face that is clearly canine and yet exotically beautiful. She has long, dark eyebrows, bright, flashing eyes, and smooth, lustrous fur. Her voice is nothing like the barking of gnolls; it's musical, deep and sonorous and yet undeniably feminine.

---

Karima has a poetic way with words and a wide, white smile (she obsessively brushes her teeth with birch twigs dipped in wine). To gnolls, Karima is a walking goddess. To other races, her grace and perfection may not be sexually exciting, but she is sensual and stunningly graceful. She walks like a ballerina, speaks with eloquence, and intermingles her beautiful singing voice into her conversations.

Beneath this exterior, the gnoll is steely but not hard. She is truly one who wishes to live a life of good company and excitement. She wishes for fame and fortune in Per-Bastet and the Southlands. She is not wicked, but she is selfish and driven, elemental and wild.

Karima's immediate dilemma is that the scholar's body is held by Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor, who has a famously intense hatred for her. She's wary of trying to sneak into the charnel house alone as she's heard rumors about the gnoll's eating habits and necromantic talents and doesn't want to be on the menu. So her mind turns to the PCs, and she arranges to bump into them straight away.

Of course, Karima has many gnoll friends she could call on—several of whom would happily die for her if she so much as smiled at them—but their infatuation makes them foolish and gets in the way of their effectiveness (see Part 2). She's also reluctant to enlist gnolls for this task because Sultan will easily connect them to her, and that will only complicate the situation.

Karima's approach varies depending upon the PCs' immediate reaction and their general approach to problems (are they careful planners or kick-in-the-door types?). Two likely scenarios are described below,

along with how Karima deals with both. She is an irresistible flatterer who points out that, in a city full of untrustworthy scoundrels, the PCs impress her as both reliable and capable; so much so, in fact, that she believes they're destined for greatness, and she would like to count them among her associates and friends. She praises the PCs' past deeds in glowing terms. None of this is smarmy, cheesy, or manipulative. Coming from Karima, this type of flattery should make the PCs feel proud. At the same time, she stresses that this is a straightforward business arrangement involving nothing illegal. Karima needs a task performed that she finds distasteful, and the PCs are perfect candidates to carry it out. As in all things, Karima is deliberate and charming.





***If your PCs are motivated chiefly by lust for treasure.***

Karima tells them that she has just learned that a dear friend, tutor, and de-facto father was found dead along the River of Sand. His body now rests in a charnel house run by a gnoll who despises her and would mistreat the corpse if he knew of its connection to her. She wants to recover the body for proper rites, but if she enters the charnel house, its master, a vile gnoll called Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatooor, will obstruct her wishes and possibly even attack her. If the PCs retrieve the body and bring it to her before tomorrow, she'll pay them 500 gp, no questions asked.

***If your PCs are motivated by a desire to be heroes.***

Karima is more forthcoming. She tells them that she and a close friend were researching information about a hidden shrine in Per-Bastet. The shrine is said to house a wicked and thankfully forgotten aspect of Bastet's faith and is guarded by undead. But her friend ("the scholar") was found dead along the bank of the River of Sand this morning. She suspects foul play and seeks justice. His body lies in a charnel house run by an evil gnoll who despises her and who is rumored to be a cannibal. She wants her friend's body retrieved from the charnel house before the gnoll defiles it. If she goes herself, the vile gnoll called Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatooor is certain to frustrate her plans out of spite. He might even try to kill her, as payback for her attempts to expose his atrocities in the past. She will pay the PCs 500 gp, along with her gratitude and friendship, if they retrieve the body from the mortuary and bring it safely to her before tomorrow morning. The scholar was human, so it should be easy enough for human PCs to present themselves as relatives come to claim the deceased.

***Karima's Goals.*** Ultimately, Karima's aim is simple: she wants to talk to the scholar via *Speak with Dead*

without getting into a messy entanglement with Sultan. She doesn't bring up her desire to communicate with the corpse unless absolutely necessary to win the PCs' cooperation. As far as they're concerned, she wants only to prevent Sultan from defiling the corpse and to give her friend a proper, respectful cremation. She tries to be as truthful as possible with the PCs; although she enjoys machinations, Karima is, for the most part, inherently honest. She may not tell them everything there is to know about the situation, but what she says is true. Her interest in the PCs is also sincere. She's always interested in adding strong, reliable problem solvers to her circle of acquaintances. She's no stranger to complications and treachery, either, and after her meeting with the PCs, she gathers another group of cohorts as detailed in Part 2.

Assuming the PCs accept the job, Karima follows them discreetly to see what happens. Being a consummate stalker, she trails the PCs from a distance, always wary of tricks intended to throw off or detect a tail. If she suspects the PCs have noticed her, she scrambles up and follows them on the rooftops or uses *Disguise Self* to "disappear."

If attacked, Karima first tries to charm her way out of trouble, then runs if that fails or if the odds are against her. She isn't a coward, but she also knows she isn't a warrior. She's seen too many people die or suffer terrible wounds in fights because they were too proud to run away. She's eminently practical, and she always has one eye on the most accessible escape route.

***Karima's Instructions.*** The Charnel House is just a few streets away from the Great Sand Pyramid (Area 29 on the Per-Bastet map). She asks the PCs to bring the scholar's body and possessions to her at the southeastern tip of the pyramid near the Jackal's Run bridge at dawn tomorrow. Finally, she sincerely warns the PCs to be wary of Sultan.

## TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE? TOO SUSPICIOUS TO TRUST?

The PCs may dislike gnolls, or they might smell a rat when talking to Karima. Some adventurers instinctively distrust anyone who's charming. If PCs make disparaging remarks about gnolls, Karima rebukes them proudly and reminds them that Per-Bastet is a city of civilized gnolls. "*We are not all sadists, slavers, and yapping psychopaths.*" If she believes the PCs have a sensitive side, she adds how surprised she is that people with the PCs' reputation would judge someone solely on the basis of her ancestry and the misdeeds of others.

If your PCs simply won't take the job, Karima departs. She recruits three besotted males and continues her own exploration. Quickly sneaking into the Charnel House, she and two of her followers are overpowered by Sultan and prepared for dessert. The PCs may see one of her frantic, infatuated males beside himself with terror and grief near the Charnel House and learn from him what has happened, or is about to happen...

## PART ONE: WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CHARNEL HOUSE?

Per-Bastet has several charnel houses where unclaimed bodies that didn't become one of the Dead are stored before being cremated. The one run by Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor is in the District of the Hyena. It has lapsed into an illicit, horrifying practice because Sultan is a cannibal who leads a small group of gnolls with similar, gruesome tastes. Sultan and his followers consider themselves gourmets of a sort: they eat only fresh corpses, cooked in the mortuary's crematory oven. Their feasts are held in the cellar, where no respectable citizen goes without the most pressing need. There are rumors in the city about Sultan's practice but no evidence. Most people discount the talk as nothing but spiteful attacks against a figure who performs an unpleasant job with more gusto than decorum and who isn't an especially likable person to begin with. Only a few city residents outside Sultan's circle have learned the truth, and some of them have disappeared down the gullets of Sultan's cult.

Karima has seen enough evidence to believe the rumors are true. Sultan already hates her, and if he knew how deeply she suspects him of cannibalism, her life would be in serious danger.

When the scholar's body arrived, Sultan sent word to his gourmet friends that fresh meat is on the menu. By the time PCs arrive at the charnel house, preparations for a feast are already under way. If the PCs observe carefully, they may see vegetables being sneaked inside and also make the acquaintance of the poorly named Sweet Hasna. How they react is up to them. They could leave the encounter with all the clues, the body of the scholar, and a small bribe to keep quiet without having drawn a weapon, or the whole episode could collapse into slaughter, especially if the PCs put two and two together when the side dishes appear and are repulsed by what they see.

### SULTAN SHUK'RI NILL MO CHATOOR

The favorite, beloved cousin of the infamous gnoll slaver, merchant, and camel dealer Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor (see the *Cat and Mouse* adventure), Sultan is a troubled soul. He looks very dour, suicidal almost, but his face occasionally erupts into maniacal joy and laughter before quickly retreating into dark thoughts again. He's accustomed to deflecting questions from visitors to the charnel house, but his cultists aren't. Sultan takes the lead in any interaction with the PCs. He's very good at name-dropping, and if anyone starts to look

## INVESTIGATING KARIMA AND THE CHARNEL HOUSE

If the PCs take some time to ask around about Karima or the Charnel House, each PC chooses one or the other

topic and makes a Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. The result determines what they learn.

10	She's a wild one, that Karima Gamila. Some say she's a princess. She certainly has the poise and fancy words of nobility.	The Charnel House is run by the self-named Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor. It's said he's a formidable spellcaster and that he never forgives an insult.
15	I've seen gnolls fall over their own feet trying to impress her and win her affection. Some say she's a living goddess, an aspect of Kwansi. Her own mother believed it! I don't know whether she is or isn't, but she sure doesn't try to stop the gossip.	There's something odd about Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor and his nasty friends. You hear stories about things happening to bodies in his morgue. Of course, nothing's ever been proven.
20	Karima may be wild, but she's got a good heart. I've heard how she gives money to the poor and helps other folk out of trouble. Everyone in the city knows her, or wishes they did.	Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor isn't just some garden-variety hedge wizard. He's a necromancer. Now you tell me, could there be a more perfect position for a necromancer than being in charge of a morgue?

suspicious, he mentions the name of his “dearest, closest friend,” Master Salwar Bashir, Keeper of the City. In truth, the two have met only once, but Sultan describes Bashir as a virtual brother. He declares loudly that if any harm comes to a servant of the Council of Sands, those who perpetrated the vile act had best flee the city or prepare to suffer horrible consequences. This is all bluff. Attention from the Keeper of the City is the last thing Sultan wants.

The one thing Sultan is not willing to do is let the scholar’s body be taken away. He and his followers are hungry and, despite their veneer of civilization, they’re still gnolls. As with most canines, taking food away from them is almost guaranteed to start a fight. The PCs can subtly explore the mortuary and the bodies therein, and even take things of value, but the “meat” stays here.

Sultan is totally unaware that the scholar’s corpse has any significance beyond his own perverted hunger or that it holds clues to the location of a lost shrine. His interest in it is purely culinary. He’s also unaware that Hasna has already been in the mortuary and hastily searched the corpse.

When the PCs first arrive and express their interest in taking away the scholar’s remains, Sultan extolls his sadness over their loss while trying to keep everyone crammed into the tiny reception area (Area CH 2). If the PCs pretend to be relatives, he asks for proof that they are indeed related. He’s not about to give up a free dinner. If proof is not forthcoming, he suggests helpfully that it is usual for relatives or friends to go to the Dome of the

Divine Face of Bastet (Area 15 on the Per-Bastet map) and petition the priests there, who use a *zone of truth* spell to establish whether a family relationship exists. Other than that, any of the Council of Sands advisers can provide the necessary paperwork, though the fees can amount to 100 gp or more. Throughout these exchanges, Sultan uses his familiarity with the costly formal methods of identification used in Per-Bastet to stall the PCs and encourage them to leave the mortuary so he and his friends can eat. Unfortunately for the gnoll, the arrival of Sweet Hasna scuppers this plan.

**Treasure.** Sultan carries a *spell scroll of blur*, a *potion of greater healing*, and a rusty key ring that opens the doors in his charnel house.

### A WOMAN IN MOURNING?

Sweet Hasna has been told not to come back to the Dogs without the other half of the rhyming key, and she decided she must take possession of the corpse for a fuller examination. To accomplish this, she forged papers that “prove” she is the scholar’s niece and, therefore, entitled to claim his remains. She’s brought along four pallbearers: three **commoners** hired for this job who have no idea what’s going on and a **werecrocodile** (see page 146) devotee of Abdul-Haqq, who carries a coffin to bear away the scholar’s body. Sweet Hasna uses the statistics of a **spy**, and her loyal pet, a parrot (use the statistics of a **raven**) named Whispering Hesk, perches on her shoulder. PCs who examine her papers and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notice that something seems phony about them.

Hasna has already broken into the mortuary once, and she’s keeping an eye on it, looking for a chance to get in again and complete her job. She’ll intervene decisively in developing events if the opportunity arises. Her arrival should be used to throw an unexpected spanner in the works. It’s probably best if she arrives just as the PCs are about to roll initiative for an attack on Sultan. She rings the bell courteously, and if no one answers, she waltzes in, along with her pallbearers.

This scene could develop any number of ways. It could become an awkward interaction with plenty of roleplaying, a three-way fight, or a combination of the two. The PCs might browbeat Sultan into letting Hasna (“the grieving niece”) depart with the corpse, then ambush her to grab it for Karima. The joy of this scene is letting the PCs puzzle out who to side with and what to do. The choice is entirely up to them, but there are consequences for whatever they decide, as covered in Part 2.

If Hasna is threatened and it’s obvious she’s overwhelmed and outmatched, she flees using a *potion*



of gaseous form, but she stays near enough to the charnel house to watch what happens. If captured, Hasna is keen to point out her story up to this point and that she may be useful to the PCs. Afraid for her own safety, she goes to extraordinary lengths of betrayal and duplicity to remain alive, even if this means helping the PCs assault her boss's home. Bear in mind that Hasna is cowardly and duplicitous as well as nasty and selfish.

If Hasna gets the body, she and her pallbearers bring it straight to the well-defended home of Abdul-Haqq. Suggestions for what happens there are in Part 2. Anyone, but outsiders in particular, attacking mourners bearing someone's mortal remains is guaranteed to lead to outrage from local residents and guards.

Finally, Abdul-Haqq's pet and spy, the **imp** Sharbit, lurks invisibly in the chimney opening as soon as Hasna enters the scene. It takes no action in any combat and always tries to remain safe. Once it has seen enough, it flies back to its master and reports what happened. This is expanded on in Part 2.

**Treasure.** Hasna carries several odds and ends: forged papers stating the scholar is her uncle ("signed" by Akman-Sut, Guardian of Coin), a goatskin purse containing 43 sp and 52 gp, a bottle of *oil of slipperiness*, a *potion of resistance* (fire), a *potion of gaseous form*, and the *calling cat* (see page 147) on an ancient leather cord around her neck.

## CHARNEL HOUSE FEATURES

The charnel house is a bell-shaped, sandstone building. The thick, windowless walls help to keep the interior cool. The building itself is 15 feet tall, and a brick chimney rises another 10 feet above that, giving the whole structure the shape of a handbell. The single entrance has an iron door that Sultan locks at night.

The interior of the building is not what visitors expect. There is no "ground floor." The main entrance opens onto a 5-foot-square landing atop stairs that wind downward 15 feet into a "basement" level that's larger than the building's footprint at street level. That's where corpses are kept and where they're cremated if no one comes to claim them. Most of the interior is one massive, open space extending from 15 feet below street level to 15 feet above.

Half of the valuables on unclaimed bodies goes to the city and the other half goes to Sultan to pay his expenses and his salary. Sultan is scrupulously honest about these transactions. He doesn't want to give the authorities any reason to shine a light on his operation.

The mortuary is in a busy corner of the district where loud noises are fairly common. To draw any kind of attention would require a major disturbance, such as



a *fireball* spell going off outside or an escaping gnoll running down the street shouting "Help! Murder!" at the top of his lungs.

When Hasna first broke in, she climbed down the chimney to search the room below, where she rifled the scholar's body before leaving through the main entrance. Although she was invisible at the time, she left dozens of small, sooty footprints and handprints in her wake. Someone who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or Wisdom (Survival) check notices them around the scholar's body. Following that up with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check leads to the deduction that someone has already searched the body, haphazardly. The gnolls missed these clues entirely, as they have other things on their minds.

## RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The gnolls who make up Sultan's cannibal cult can be encountered anywhere in the building. Try to focus this encounter on exploring the site and interacting with the various NPCs.

When the PCs arrive, Sultan, a gnoll **necromancer** (see page 138), is here with two **gnolls**, who are armed with poorly concealed meat-cleavers (treat as battleaxes). They've already lit the fire (Area 3), and they have a surprising amount of spices on them for visitors to a mortuary. Another two **gnolls** are out at market but should arrive at a suitably amusing point, each carrying a box of sweet potatoes, eggplants, okra, onions, figs, dates, and lots of pomegranates. Be careful, however, not to overwhelm the PCs with too many additional foes.

# THE CHARNEL HOUSE



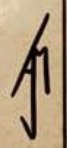
Level One

Basement



S: Scholar

R: Rotting Corpse



The mood to aim for in this encounter is an evergrowing air of odd and suspicious behavior. Sultan is anxious to prove that everything is normal while many small details are anything but normal. The entire charnel house smells more like a spice market (or a restaurant!) than a mortuary. The aroma is inescapable. He explains that the spices are meant to cover the unpleasant smells that accumulate in a building where corpses are stored and cremated. The boxes of vegetables are snacks. He and his companions eat a few of them to prove his point, if necessary, but anyone who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check sees that the carnivorous gnolls are nearly gagging on the raw vegetables. However, Sultan and his group have no illusions about what will happen to them if their crime is discovered, and they have no intention of being unmasked. If they believe the PCs have realized what they're up to and intend to inform the authorities, the cultists are more than ready to kill to preserve their secret. The PCs may quickly find themselves on the menu if they are overpowered. Though Sultan fights to the end to protect his name and establishment, his fellow cultists aren't willing to die for him, and they retreat if reduced to half their hit point maximum or lower.

**A Woman in Mourning.** Sweet Hasna is outside with her cohorts, and she has her own plan to intervene, which she should do at a most awkward moment for the PCs. This time, she simply knocks on the outer door and enters, sobbing with grief through a veil of mourning. For more details, see *A Woman in Mourning* on page 106.

**Observant Employer.** Karima is not far away, either. For now, she takes a back seat and observes. She might intervene if things go very wrong, but attacking a mourning Sweet Hasna on the street is out of the question. If Hasna appears with the body, Karima simply follows, though she recognizes Sweet Hasna and is confident she knows where Hasna is taking the scholar's body. Karima reliably appears at the location where she instructed the PCs to meet her the next morning, as described in Part 2.

## 1. IRON DOORWAY

A large iron door stands in the lime-washed adobe walls of a bell-shaped, windowless building that rises to a dark chimney high above. A sign hangs over the door stating, "Bashtoor Street Charnel House—Hours of Opening Dawn-Dusk." A bell hangs beside the door.

By night, Sultan locks the door (a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools picks the lock). By


day it is unlocked, but the door creaks abominably when opened, drawing Sultan for a meeting in the draped anteroom beyond. The outer walls are smooth, and a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check is required to climb them.

**Chimney.** The chimney is 5 feet wide and its top is 25 feet above street level. If PCs arrive at night, the chimney is cold. It can be climbed as easily as a ladder, inside or out. If PCs arrive after mid-morning, the gnolls have already lit the furnace, and smoke bellows up the chimney. A creature climbing down inside the smoke-filled chimney must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion from the smoke. In either case, the biggest difficulty is at the bottom of the chimney, which opens out 30 feet directly above the charcoal pit. The inside walls of the charnel house are impossible to climb without pounding in spikes and attaching ropes to them. If a rope is lowered down the chimney, a person could easily slide down to the cold charcoal pit or swing away from a heated pit. Otherwise, the PCs can try to propel themselves from the bottom of the chimney to the landing at the top of the stairs or to one of the chandeliers with a successful Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (DC 10 for the stairs or DC 15 for a chandelier). Failing the Dexterity check means falling 30 feet to the mortuary floor.

## 2. UPPER MORTUARY

The door opens into a tiny, draped anteroom barely 5 feet wide. The drapes are heavy and somber, and they mask the mortuary beyond. This is where Sultan meets mourners, with everyone crowded into the tiny space. If the PCs move beyond the drapes, read the following. The text assumes the crematory furnace is burning when PCs arrive. Adjust the text or paraphrase if the PCs enter this area before the fire is lit.

The mortuary smells overpoweringly of spiced meat. The room is lime-washed, spartan, and immense. Most surprisingly, there is no floor at ground level. Instead, the "ground floor" is a small platform inside the main door, leading to a stairway that circles the wall as it winds down to the crematory floor. A blazing charcoal pit stands in the middle of that chamber. Heat and smoke from the pit rise up through the room to where the tapering, soot-stained walls channel everything into the open chimney in the center of the domed ceiling. A trio of wax-encrusted, iron chandeliers hang from long chains so that the chandeliers themselves are level with the top of the stairs.



The chandeliers are very robust. The PCs can swing and jump on them without any danger that the chandelier will collapse. A PC on the landing can leap to a chandelier with a successful DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check and, from there, swing the chandelier and drop to any spot in the circular, main portion of the lower mortuary.

### 3. LOWER MORTUARY AND OVEN

The whitewashed lower room has a clean floor and three neat piles of timber. A wide fire pit, filled with burning coals and charcoal, dominates the chamber. The low wall surrounding the pit has four openings with iron rails leading from them. Each rail has a human-sized mesh cradle on scorched iron wheels. Arched doorways lead to a second room, while a closed door with a stained-glass panel stands in another section of wall.

Corpses are put into the metal cradles for cremation or for cooking. Any creature that enters the charcoal pit or ends its turn in the pit must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The pit is difficult terrain, and even though the surrounding wall is only 3 feet high, scrambling across the soot-covered bricks requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Treasure.** Two of the piles of wood are just timber, but the third is sandalwood. This fine wood is worth 600 gp and weighs 100 pounds.

### 4. A TRULY ROTTING CORPSE

The room beyond the pillars is tiled and clean. It splits through arches into five cubicles, each with a stone slab. Bodies lie on two of these slabs. Incense burns in numerous censurs here.

The bodies are marked S and R on the map. Both are covered with damp cloths.

**Rotting Corpse.** The body marked “R” is the rotting corpse of a murder victim unrelated to this adventure. However, the body is at a point in its putrefaction that, if the cloth is pulled, the sight and smell of it overpowers those nearby. Each creature within 5 feet of the body when the cloth is pulled must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 5 minutes.

**Scholar’s Body.** The niche marked “S” holds the body of the scholar. If Sultan is nearby when the corpse is uncovered, he involuntarily licks his lips. This is noted by any PC who can see Sultan’s face and has a passive Perception score of 14 or higher. The scholar’s body is clothed in heavy white robes, a shirt, and trousers fixed

by a thick leather belt. He wears a red headscarf, and a leather satchel still hangs around his shoulder. Sultan hasn’t yet catalogued the body’s belongings, and the gnoll cannibals know better than to interfere with Sultan’s business matters.

PCs who examine the body can make Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) checks. The PCs uncover varying levels of information, depending on the result of the check:

- **DC 5:** The scholar suffocated—presumably in the River of Sand, since his mouth is filled with sand.
- **DC 10:** Something was removed from around the scholar’s neck, as indicated by abrasions and soot. (He had the *calling cat* slung around his neck before Sweet Hasna tore it off.)
- **DC 15:** His satchel contains three wooden pegs, a hammer, 4 iron spikes, a flint, and tinder. The PCs can’t fully interpret the significance of these items yet, but it may become clear to them later. The wooden pegs are spares matching those the scholar used when he paced out the location of the Sanctuary on the riverbank (see Part 3). The PCs also note the presence of sooty hand prints on the satchel, inside and out. The prints are those of a human, and they’re much smaller than the scholar’s hands. Someone else has poked through the bag, after getting soot on their hands. PCs who climbed down through the chimney have identical soot on their hands. Anyone who takes a good look at Sultan and his companions note that these handprints are too small to have been made by any of them. They were left by Sweet Hasna when she stole the first half of the rhyming clue.
- **DC 20 (or automatic success if the PCs remove the scholar’s outer clothing):** The scholar wears a silk money-belt—a common enough item in Per-Bastet, but Hasna missed it in her quick search. The belt contains 30 pp, a smaller silk purse made from a pig’s face containing three small but very fine jet stones worth 200 gp each, a *spell scroll of phantasmal killer* sealed with a stylized symbol of Bastet devouring a host of screaming worshippers (the scroll and case were stolen from the Sanctuary), and a battered piece of parchment—the second part of the rhyming clue.

More details on the use of *speak with dead* are given in Part 2. If the PCs have access to this spell and cast it here, consult that section for details about answers the body may give.

## 5. SULTAN'S LAIR

This large, semi-circular room is roughly split into three areas. The first is a bedchamber, the second is a cramped library with a reading desk, and the last is a curious museum to necromancy, containing skeletons and mummies in a dozen sarcophagi shrouded in sand.

Sultan keeps his door shut and locked. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools picks the lock, or the 12-inch stained glass window in the door can be smashed, allowing a creature to reach in and unlock the door from the outside. A Small creature can easily climb through the smashed window opening. Breaking the window alerts the room's guardian.

**Creature.** Sultan keeps an **anubian** (see page 124) here. When not active, the anubian lurks in the sand in Sultan's "museum." The creature acts as a guardian for the necromancer when he is in this home and answers Sultan's call.

**Treasure.** One mummy has an iron and gold-trimmed Nurian hook (*Midgard Heroes Handbook*, p. 51) worth 100 gp hanging on twisted strands of human sinew around its neck. Another grips a silver owl figurine worth 250 gp bound in decayed juniper bark. Sultan's spellbook lies in the library area, and it contains all his listed spells. Most of his books are about the preservation and mummification of corpses. The library contains a lavishly illustrated treatise on embalming worth 300 gp, a fine cloth and gold trimmed map of the Southlands worth 250 gp, and a selection of Ishadia poetry bound in alligator hide with a gold and obsidian buckle worth 300 gp.

## THE SANCTUARY KEY

The location of hidden or secret places was often set down in rhyming hieroglyphic keys in Ancient Nurian for those of faith to follow and translate accordingly. While researching the *grimalkin eye* for Karima Gamila, the scholar stumbled upon the rhyme for locating the Growling Sanctuary. He translated it on two scraps of parchment he had on hand, then he left to prepare for his journey to the Growling Sanctuary. Greed drove him to act alone and with haste, a decision that ultimately cost him his life.

### First Half

*Great knowledge must secrets necessitate hiding for  
the learned*

*The ignorant may not witness such gifts and be burned  
But those who have need should always be able to find  
the Secrets*

*If they have the gift of wisdom*

*A wise man will take a length of rope eighteen karams  
in length, and a stout iron stake a karam long*

*For the mistress river sand is fickle and her hungers  
always wake*

*The Wise would walk one hundred and twenty karams  
from the shadow of the bridge of the Way of Bastet*

*With his back to the sun along the bank of the Sand  
River*

*To cast his line and seek the fish of understanding  
below...*

### Second Half

*...He would then be wise to show his obedience to  
Bastet and crawl backward from her sight*

*A wise man would crawl away, averting his eyes from  
her holiness and hunger and might*

*Nineteen karams back he should crawl*

*Then in offering to the goddess, cast a karam of rope  
into the river with a prayer*

*That done, he should offer one karam to the goddess  
of the river in a stout knot about his stake, the  
stoutest his strength can bear*

*For the goddess is fickle and hungry and aware*

*Make the stake cast a shadow across half its length  
from the noon's shadow upon the river's western  
shore before securing it with all his might*

*Casting the rope into the river with a prayer, he should  
take courage and descend in thought*

*That secrets below are his to be caught.*

A scholar or any PC with proficiency in History knows that a karam is an ancient measure of length equal to 3 feet. The consequences of following only half of the rhyme are detailed under False Entrance in Part 3.



## PART TWO: THE PLOT THICKENS

At this point, the PCs may or may not have the scholar's body and the rhyming text that offers a clue to the location of the Sanctuary, but they should know by now that there's more to this situation than meets the eye. They may have had to take drastic action to complete this mission or may even have totally failed—possibly deliberately. Whatever happened in the mortuary, Princess Karima is outside watching them, Sharbit (Abdul's pet and spy) is probably carrying the news back to his master, and a third party is about to enter the fray.

The second part of this adventure requires some flexibility and juggling, as the PCs are suddenly the focus of three very different and dangerous groups: the Dogs, Karima, and (if they have the *calling cat*) a group of undead from the Sanctuary who are looking to punish intruders and prevent any further attacks.

The PCs, of course, can trust anyone they please—or go it alone and make enemies of everyone.

This type of situation can be challenging for a GM. It requires you to plan for contingencies, exercise judgment, and think fast on your feet. Be prepared to pause or even stop a session if you want to think through things. Juggling all of these groups may be easier, however, if you keep the following in mind:

- The Dogs of Per-Bastet have the first part of the rhyming text, and they want the second part. The Dogs' leader, a cunning gnoll called Abdul-Haqq, is accustomed to getting what he wants, and he punishes failure harshly. He expects Hasna to come crawling back with the second part of the rhyme, then he'll feed her to his crocodiles. He knows all about the Princess through his spies, and he's likely to assume that whoever the PCs are, they're just the latest in a long line of her infatuated devotees. Abdul-Haqq is cruel and impulsive, but he's also shrewd and clever. He never acts foolishly.
- Karima is desperate to find out what happened to the scholar and find the Sanctuary, but she uses her wits more than her sword. She's more likely to try to drip-feed the PCs morsels of information than to fight, or to flee and follow them if betrayed. She knows all about Sweet Hasna and where Abdul-Haqq lives. She also knows he takes security very seriously. She's seen his crocodile harem up close and doesn't want to see it again.
- The third group (see Sinister Followers) are the undead protectors of the Sanctuary that are tracking down the *calling cat*. They are bent on destroying anyone that played any role in stealing it or who

placed their hands on it. By day, they must move very carefully, but by night they have greater freedom to move around and pursue their goal.

The most likely way for the plot to proceed is with the PCs meeting the Princess, with or without the body, so that's the first event covered in this part of the adventure.

### WHERE'S THE BODY?

Karima follows the PCs after their exploits, watching where they go for the night. At dawn, she's exactly where she said she would be: at the southeastern tip of the Great Sand Pyramid, near the Jackal's Run Bridge. If the PCs don't turn up, she assumes they've betrayed her and swears she'll get even. She heads to Abdul-Haqq's, picking up some of her **gnoll** followers on the way, and watches for the rest of the day. If she sees the PCs enter, she waits outside with her gnolls. When the PCs emerge, Karima's group tails them until they're well out of sight of Abdul-Haqq's place, then attacks. Her gnolls are infatuated with her and seek to out-do each other during the fight to impress her: they try dangerous skill checks they've no chance of accomplishing, they laugh and cheer and sing as they fight, they tear their shirts open and howl in a thoroughly gnollish way. Karima ignores the displays and lets her followers do most of the fighting. She always has one eye on an escape route, and she uses it if she's in real danger. Once she gets to safety and heals herself, she can either contact more of her limitless worshipers and set up another ambush on the PCs (at their lodgings, near the Sanctuary, or anywhere else where she can corner them; remember that Karima has informants all over the city), break into their lodgings to determine what they know (or steal items to use against them, or smear poison on their personal effects), or try to locate the Sanctuary entrance on her own.

**Delivering the Body.** If the PCs keep their appointment and bring the scholar's body as promised, Karima pays them as promised. She then casts a *Speak with Dead* spell, during which she learns about the rhyming text and gleans the very briefest of information about the Sanctuary. Getting exact information from the scholar about distances, precise lengths of rope, and positions along the River of Sand is unlikely. The spell fails to produce all the necessary information for following the rhyme, making the other half required for finding the Growling Sanctuary. After Karima has all the information she can get from the spell, she carries the scholar's body to the temple of Anu-Akma in the District of the Hyena, knowing such a place will bring her friend a more peaceful rest than Sultan's Charnel House.

**End of Employment?** At this point, the PCs have performed the job she hired them for, and their employment is done—unless they say something or otherwise indicate that they’re suspicious about what’s going on. They don’t need to be very specific. If Karima believes the PCs suspect there’s more to this story than she’s let on, her enthusiasm and her interest in adventure gets the better of her, and she invites them to aid her through the rest of the escapade.

If Karima has only one part of the rhyme, she suggests to the PCs that Abdul-Haqq may have the other part (if the PCs don’t already know or suspect that). If she must, she feeds them more information about the Sanctuary—particularly its wealth or evil-tainted objects—and suggests an attack on Abdul-Haqq’s headquarters to recover the missing portion of the rhyme. She is cagey about what she knows, but she is happy to haggle over the price for the PCs’ continued help. If the PCs have none of the rhyme, again the Princess suggests an attack on Abdul-Haqq, suspecting that Sweet Hasna must have brought it to him in two stages. In any event, Karima is keen to get started immediately, before any more time is lost.

**Other Routes.** There are, of course, many other ways this portion of the adventure can develop. You know your players better than we do. Listen to their ideas, roleplay, negotiate, consider the situation and the motivations of the NPCs, and always err on the side of what will be most dramatic and most enjoyable. Don’t rush to bring all the threads together too soon, and always ensure that Karima doesn’t get drawn into a trap. She’s too clever for that.

## SINISTER FOLLOWERS

Before we come to Abdul-Haqq, we need to consider a group that’s about to join the action: followers of the Devourer, an ugly aspect of Bastet, that are determined to keep their existence a secret. After the scholar escaped from the Sanctuary, Sister Withering lumbered into the city and contacted a group of ghosts who are followers of this same, debased aspect of Bastet. She commanded them to help her in punishing the defilers of the Sanctuary, and they’re now homing in on the location of the *calling cat*, using her *cat’s cradle* to find it.

Bear in mind that these undead can’t just walk down city streets in daylight. The ghosts know secret ways through the city—alleys, sewers, abandoned buildings, and rooftops—that allow them to reach most places without attracting attention, but those routes might not be as quick as taking the street. On the other hand, in the middle of the day, some of the ghosts’ secret routes might be quicker than a crowded street. Sister Withering is careful to lurk in the shadows by day, slowly working her

way toward the *calling cat* and identifying its bearer.

**Undead Leader.** Sister Withering is a vengeful, undead basteti that uses the statistics of a **mummy**, except she also has the basteti’s Agile Climber and Stalker’s Reflex traits (see page 127). She seeks out whoever wears the *calling cat* and slays that person or creature and its allies with no regard for collateral damage. However, she is single-minded, not mindless. Sister Withering and her followers act sensibly while focusing on nothing but enacting a horrible death on whoever has the item.

**Fighting the Undead.** When Sister Withering has located her prey, she orders two **ghosts** to attack then follows them into the fight, using them as shields during the battle. Sister Withering focuses her attacks against whoever has the *calling cat*. Once that person is dead, she’s happy to slaughter any of the target’s nearby friends or allies, but she leaves if a prolonged fight is likely to end in her destruction.

The undead can attack the PCs whenever you wish. We suggest that they stage a weak attack as soon as possible after the PCs get their hands on the *calling cat* (to reinforce whatever suspicions the PCs have formed), and a stronger one later as opportunity allows.

If the *calling cat* falls into the possession of PCs who identify its purpose, they might figure out a clever way to use it against the undead (by luring them into an ambush, for example). If they come up with an inventive way to defeat the undead without facing the creatures directly in battle, consider awarding full XP for those foes. A win is a win, after all.

You might find yourself in the joyful position of the PCs having outwitted their enemies and planting the *calling cat* on their foes. In this case, you can play out the combat (letting players control NPCs for a change) or just adjudicate the outcome based on your assessment of the combatants’ strengths and what you see as the most dramatically interesting outcome.

**Losing the Pendant.** If the *calling cat* is reclaimed by the undead and the living defilers who touched it are killed, Sister Withering returns to the Sanctuary under cover of night. The PCs might be able to find the entrance by following her and save themselves the trouble of having to work out the rhyme. If she returns to the Sanctuary, Sister Withering is with the other two mummies in Area 8 in Part 3.

**Treasure.** Sister Withering wears a *stone of good luck* on a leather thong around her neck, fine silk robes worth 120 gp, enameled gold earrings with floral motifs worth 600 gp, and a gold scent-bottle incised with foliate motifs and lined with glass, worth 400 gp. She carries the *cat’s cradle* tied to the *calling cats* from the Growling

Sanctuary. Unlike the *calling cats*, the *cat's cradle* requires attunement. Its function is described in page 147 as part of the *calling cat* magic item.

### ABDUL-HAQQ'S LAIR

Abdul-Haqq's lair lies northwest of the Great Sand Pyramid, where the District of the Hyena, Perfume District, and the Hunt blend together. He tries to restrict how much is known about him in the city (he tends to eat anyone who learns too much about him). A PC who makes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to gather information about Abdul-Haqq learns that he has a reputation as a gourmet, seems fascinated by crocodiles, and lives in a crumbling home with an elaborately tiled, onion dome roof. And he doesn't like visitors.

His home is a squat, fat-looking building 50 feet in diameter and three stories tall. The lower floor sank years ago. Only a few portions of its once-beautiful mosaic floor remain, and the rest is flooded. This suits Abdul-Haqq, who filled this lower area with crocodiles. His followers placed wooden planks across the watery gaps between the few intact, dry areas of flooring so they can cross the area in relative safety. Abdul-Haqq keeps a chained harem of larger crocodiles on the second floor. With a flick of his wrist on a lever, he can extend the chains, allowing his always-hungry crocodile "wives" to devour any visitor who displeases or bores him.

All walls of the structure are smooth, lime-washed adobe inside and out, requiring a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to climb.

### INTERACTING WITH ABDUL-HAQQ

Informed by his spies of the PCs' imminent arrival, Abdul-Haqq sends his followers to greet the PCs at the door and escort them to the middle of the crocodile-infested ground floor (Area 2). Abdul-Haqq talks down to them from the floor above through a large hole in Area 2's ceiling.

**Negotiating with Abdul-Haqq.** The leader of the Dogs of Per-Bastet is not automatically the PCs' enemy, as he slyly points out to them. He has one part of the rhyme and they have the other (at least, that's the most likely scenario). Neither of them can do anything with their halves alone. Only by pooling what they know can they locate the lost shrine and loot its treasures. Abdul-Haqq is willing to enter into such a partnership, provided the PCs don't bring in Karima. The "Princess" clearly has gotten deeply under his skin in more ways than one, and it's impossible for Abdul-Haqq to partner with anyone who's loyal to his arch-nemesis. He tolerates hearing exactly one



favorable comment about Karima, and he makes it clear that he doesn't want to hear any more. If the PCs persist in saying positive things about her or exclaiming their willingness to work with her, Abdul-Haqq releases his crocodiles and orders his followers to attack.

Aside from that one sore spot, however, Abdul-Haqq is very charming. If an alliance is suggested, he accepts.

**Sweet Hasna.** If Sweet Hasna is alive, he only allows the rhyme out of his house if she accompanies it along with two of his werecrocodile "brothers." If the PCs killed her earlier, that's not a deal breaker—he never liked her much to begin with—he simply sends the two werecrocodiles to go with the PCs. In both cases, of course, Abdul-Haqq

intends to betray the PCs. He commands Sharbit to invisibly follow them, and the imp reports back any descent into the river. When PCs emerge from the Sanctuary later, Abdul-Haqq and his remaining followers are certain to be outside waiting for them, if they weren't dealt with earlier.

## 1. GREAT GONG DOOR

---

A great weathered door is wreathed in beads and glass shapes with an inset iron-grilled viewing hatch. A mosaic above the door depicts people being eaten by crocodiles. A great gong and a padded hammer hang nearby.

---

Anyone who rings the gong is viewed through the hatch by a werecrocodile, who politely says that Master Abdul-Haqq is busy. Visitors are allowed entry only if they convince the lycanthrope that they have the second part of the rhyme, in which case they open the door and rearrange planks to allow access across Area 2.

**Trap.** The door is trapped by a *glyph of warding* that summons a **fire elemental** when anyone opens it from the outside without the key, which Abdul-Haqq carries. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the glyph, and a successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the door destroys the trap.

## 2. CROCODILE TEARS

---

A ruined chamber sits beyond the door, its floor broken and swamped with murky water. Fragments of mosaics depicting humans being eaten by crocodiles litter small sections of the floor. Long planks lean against the wall near the door. A large hole opens in the ceiling above.

---

The water is deceptively deep (8 to 12 feet) and very still. The 12-foot-long planks are laid across the water to allow safe, dry travel from the door to the central "island" or to the ladder.

**Crossing the Planks.** Shifting a plank takes an action and provokes an opportunity attack in combat, should that situation arise. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check safely crosses a single plank and avoids falling into the water and riling the crocodiles. Two planks laid side-by-side can be crossed safely automatically. The narrow ledge circling the wall is mossy and slimy. A successful DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check traverses the ledge without falling into the water.

**Rope Ladder.** A rope ladder hangs down from the floor above, if visitors are expected. It otherwise stays coiled on the upper floor (Area 3). Though anchored on the

floor above it isn't anchored in this area. A successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check climbs the ladder without getting hopeless tangled in it. A tangled creature is restrained until it or another creature takes an action to free it.

**Creatures.** The murky water is home to six **crocodiles**. They attack only if someone falls into the water or if they're attacked first.

## 3. CROCODILE HAREM

---

The second floor is a wide, dirty chamber. Its only features, aside from matching holes in the floor and ceiling, are three enormous crocodiles on chains.

---

Abdul-Haqq loves his harem, but he keeps them on 5-foot-long leashes, which restricts them to the semicircular areas marked on the map. He also loves that the merest twist of his hand on the controls extends those chains to 15 feet, allowing the crocodiles to reach any point on their floor. These crocodiles attack anyone and anything that gets within their reach, except for Abdul-Haqq and his werecrocodile minions.

**Rope Ladder.** A rope ladder hangs here, anchored in Area 4 above. As with the rope ladder leading from Area 2 to Area 3, this ladder also requires a successful Strength (Athletics) check to climb.

## 4. ONION DOME OF WIND CHIMES

---

Silk cushions smother one section of this curious room, while hundreds of wind chimes hang from the domed ceiling. A slight breeze wafts through mesh-covered openings in the dome, setting up a cacophonous, but oddly pleasing, chiming.

---

**Abdul-Haqq** (see page 122) spends his time here or in his harem below and receives most of his visitors here. A metal lever near a coiled-up rope ladder allows Abdul-Haqq to control the chains in the chamber below. He likes to hurl his spears at those below, and his **imp** flits in and out of combat to poison foes. His other followers are expected to fight heroically, though he considers them all expendable.

Abdul-Haqq is a bully, and if faced with real danger, he backs down. If he's reduced to 15 hit points or fewer, he tries to pull back from combat and suggests to foes that anyone who kills him will pay a dreadful price when the Dogs find them. If cornered, he fights to the death, reluctantly but fiercely.

# THE DOGS OF PER-BASTET

Level 3



Level 2

Level 1



Lv: Lever

Lu: Ladder Up

Ld: Ladder Down

**Creatures.** Abdul-Haqq is protected by two **crocodiles**. If Sweet Hasna is still alive and fighting for Abdul-Haqq, she is here instead of the two crocodiles.

**Treasure.** Abdul-Haqq wields a greatsword and carries a *potion of heroism* and a *potion of greater healing*. The wind chimes weigh a total of 47 pounds. Most of the chimes are nice but routine. The plain chimes all together are worth 150 gp. One particularly fine set is made of gold-bound chimes with inlaid obsidian and carved hieroglyphs worth 300 gp. Several small trays and stands sit among the cushions and hold a cobalt blue enameled pitcher depicting cocks fighting basilisks worth 250 gp, a very fine silver-mounted ostrich egg worth 400 gp, and four warm crocodile eggs. A large carpet depicting Bastet surrounded by attendants worth 200 gp sits beneath the cushions and trays.

## PART THREE: THE GROWLING SANCTUARY

Once the PCs have access to both parts of the rhyme, they can figure out the exact location of the entrance to the Growling Sanctuary: 303 feet northwest and downstream of the Way of Bastet Bridge across the River of Sand. The top of the eye entrance detailed below is 46 feet below the location given for the fixing peg. The figures don't need to be totally exact, but bear in mind the difficulty of swimming in the River of Sand, and the complete lack of visibility in the sand. To save time, however, PCs armed with the measurements should find Area 1 after a few hours of searching.

A close examination of the ground near the starting point allows a PC to pick out the hole left by the scholar's peg. The peg itself was subsequently stolen by children.

### FALSE ENTRANCE

If the PCs have only half of the rhyme and they measure 360 feet along the River of Sand from below the bridge, they find the false entrance 50 feet below the river surface. If the PCs reach this point, read or paraphrase the following:

---

A circular opening rests in the riverbank. The River of Sand is kept at bay by the angle between the opening and the flowing river.

---

The opening leads to a short corridor, which enters a circular space covered with stylized images of cats.

**Falling Block Trap.** A trigger stone lies just within the door, marked X on the map. Stepping on it, interacting

with it, or moving it triggers the trap, which makes a stone block crash down in the entrance. Each creature in the marked spaces must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Those that fail the saving throw are sealed inside the chamber by the stone block. Those that succeed leap out of the chamber. A successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check and 10 minutes of work lifts and props up the block high enough for PCs to squeeze out of the chamber. Alternatively, 1 hour of work with hammers and chisels cuts a big enough hole in the soft stone for the PCs to escape. Those within the chamber after the block seals it find that the flowing river scraping along the outer walls makes a curiously unsettling noise resembling a deep, satisfied purr.


**Prevention.** A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the curiously smooth and oddly colored rock. *Detect magic*, or other effect that can sense the presence of magic reveals an aura of conjuration around the stone. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the rock destroys the trap.

### GROWLING SANCTUARY FEATURES

The Sanctuary sits at a two-way tributary of the River of Sand on the southeastern banks of the Hunt. Its buildings are partially sunken into the land separating the tributaries, and its entrance is below the surface of the River of Sand.

**Traversing the River.** The River of Sand carries objects and creatures along at 30 feet per round. Those caught in its flow must succeed on a DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check each round to remain on the surface. A creature that fails the check dips under the surface and risks suffocation. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check allows a creature to move 5 feet against or perpendicular to the flow of the river. A creature with a burrowing speed doesn't need to make a check to stay on the surface and can move in any direction at its burrowing speed without making a check.

An air-breathing creature can't breathe under the river and begins drowning if it's submerged by surprise or stays under longer than it can hold its breath. Spells such as *water breathing* don't help, but you might allow wizards to research a sand-breathing variant of that spell in a few days. The side tributaries are calmer than the main channel, moving at just 15 feet per round. A creature in a side tributary doesn't need to make a check to remain on the surface, and a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check allows a "swimmer" to move up to 10 feet in any direction.



A creature that latches onto a submerged wall or bank can pull itself along the river with a successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Sound.** Inside the Sanctuary, the sound of the growling river can be heard everywhere. Wisdom (Perception) checks related to sound have disadvantage because of the noise, but Dexterity (Stealth) checks have advantage.

**Blasphemous Images.** The interior walls of the Sanctuary seethe with carvings depicting a debased aspect of Bastet. Most of the scenes depict felines feasting on or hunting humanoids with a feral and mangy Bastet at the head of each feast or hunt. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check confirms that this worship and iconography of Bastet is considered blasphemous to true worshippers of the cat goddess.

**Magical Fortification.** The whole dungeon is enchanted to give undead within it advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead. Oddly, this magic also deters the River of Sand's earth elementals from approaching the location, leaving it largely untouched by the river's inhabitants.

### 1. THE EYE

---

An overhang shelters an opening from the flow of the sand river. The opening holds a carved recess resembling a feline eye. A corridor slithers upward from this opening.

---

The overhanging entrance is a tight squeeze, forcing the PCs to enter one at a time.

### 2. STEEP STAIRS

---

The corridor ahead rises sharply up a set of very steep steps. The air in this corridor is thick with dust.

---

The steps angle upward at an incredibly steep 60 degrees and are difficult terrain. If a creature takes damage while on the stairs, it must succeed on a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw or fall to the bottom, taking falling damage and landing prone.

**Creatures.** Having suffered two incursions into their domain, the elders of the Sanctuary positioned a pair of **anubians** at the crest of the steps, which is also marked by a pair of cat-headed statues. Enough sand covers the stairs for the anubians to use their Sand Step traits. A creature restrained by an anubian's sandstorm doesn't need to make Dexterity saving throws to avoid falling down the stairs. The anubians are expecting the return of Sister Withering, and if any of the PCs are dressed as or appear to be the mummy, they don't attack but bow in deference instead.

### 3. OUTER SANCTUM

---

The steep steps end before an archway formed of carved sandstone panthers facing each other with open mouths. The corridors beyond are crammed with mummies.

---

Mummies cram every outer wall of this area, creating an eerie watch of figures that slump or stand erect, guarding the former location of the *Grimalkin Idol* at the center of the chamber. The object rested atop a plinth on a 5-footwide, 2-foot-high dais at the center of the chamber.

**Creatures.** Six wrapped **zombies**, mummies that returned after death as lesser undead rather than true mummies, inhabit this room. They stand in pairs at the points marked M on the map. The zombies attack only after all intruders have entered the room, the zombies near the entrance cutting off the intruders' escape.

**Treasure.** A few of the mummies retain personal effects dear to them in life. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check locates each in this confusing mass of bodies. Alternatively, a PC that spends 10 minutes searching finds the items with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. The items are an iron *ring of mind shielding* with a jackal-headed crocodile figure on it, a silver and lapis-lazuli ceremonial barb-toothed mouth piece worth 200 gp, a decaying wood and cloth head-dress set with iron figurines depicting parts of humanoid bodies each with a simple yet fine amethyst feline eye worth 600 gp, and a crocodile mask with a silvered dagger hidden in cloth inside the face. Five *calling cats* on leather thongs or hemp twine hang from various mummies in the room.

### 4. THE INVITATION

---

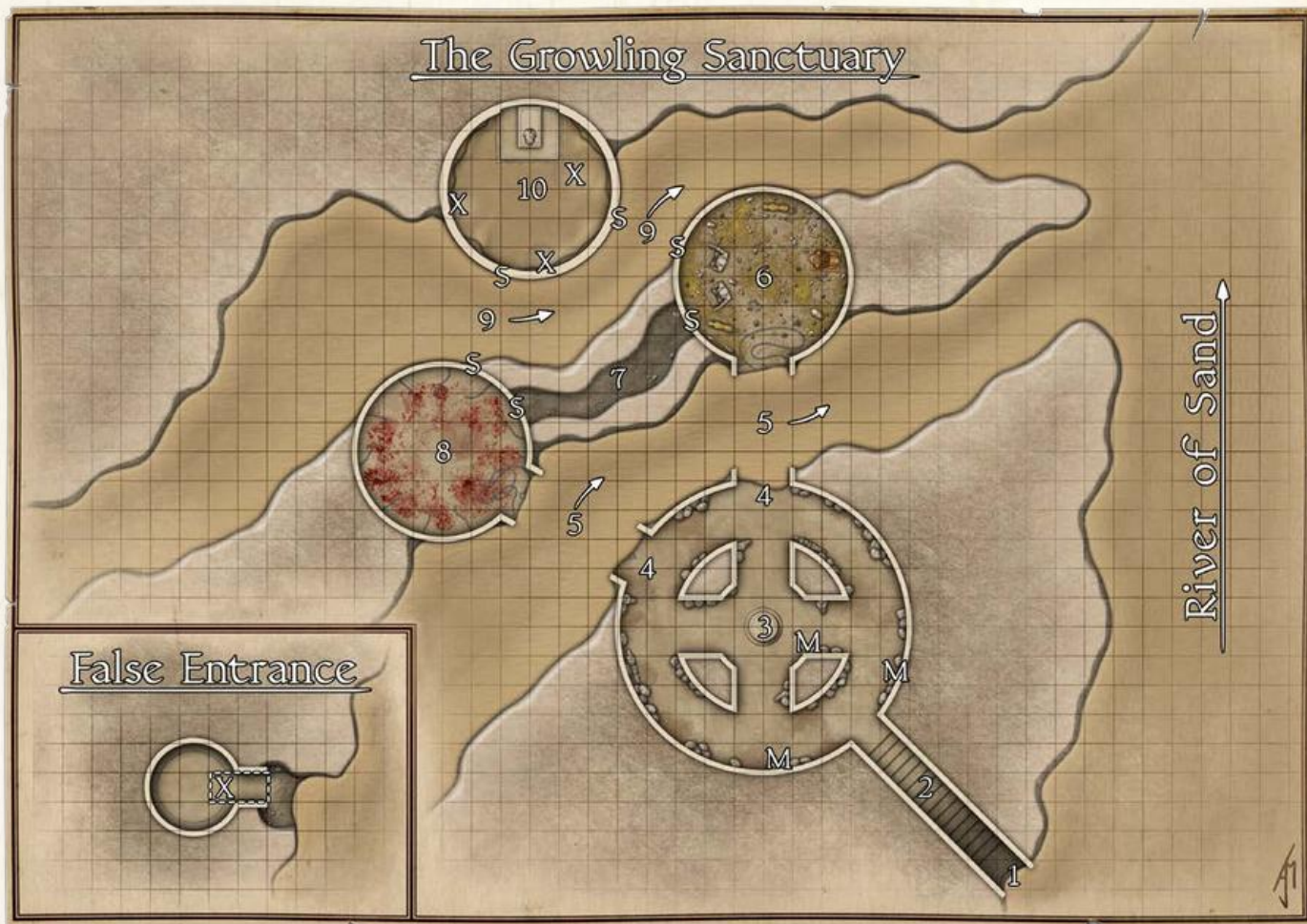
A low, semicircular opening glowers from knee height here. The opening is part hole, part doorway. A churning mass of sand oozes past. Its swift movement has pushed a large pile of sand into the chamber.

---

The elders use this access as a link between the various small aspects of the Sanctuary, crossing the river by means of the fixed chains in Areas 6 and 8.

**Guide Chain.** An iron hook is hammered into the stone at the base of each doorway. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a chain partially buried by sand and connected to the iron hook, allowing safer access between buildings.

**Sand Tributary.** The sand beyond the doorways is part of the river. Its current affects swimmers as described in the Growling Sanctuary Features section.



## 5. GROWLING RIVER

The tributary splits the lesser and inner sanctum. Elders of the shrine can move by use of their iron fetters in Areas 6 and 8. The arrows on the map indicate the direction the tributaries flow.

**Using the Guide Chain.** A creature that crosses the tributary while holding the chain automatically succeeds on checks to remain above the surface and can move itself along the chain at half its walking speed.

## 6. INNER SANCTUM

*Every inch of the room is covered in cats. Many are mummified, many others are skeletal, and some are horribly stylized statues, the creations of a disturbed mind. The figures spread deeply into the room, all facing away from the entrance. An iron chain is lashed to a ring near the entrance.*

The cat statues do not impede movement, but crashing through them destroys many of the objects and stirs up a roiling cloud of mold.

**Dusty Mold.** A creature moving more than half its speed in this room risks disturbing mold. A flying creature doesn't disturb the mold unless it flies within 4 feet of the ground. When the mold is disturbed, the creature that disturbed it and each creature within 5 feet must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned, the creature sneezes uncontrollably and is unable to take bonus actions or reactions. More mold can be kicked up after a creature moves through a space, regardless of whether the mold was or wasn't disturbed.

**Creatures.** Two **Bastet temple cats** (see page 125) hide among the countless cats in the room. These creatures are cunning and use the mummified cats and cat figurines to better hide. While in this room, the temple cats have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, and, as a bonus action, a temple cat can hide behind a nearby mummified cat or cat statue, which grants it three-quarters cover until the start of its next turn.



The elders in Area 8 are alert for intruders. If they hear any combat in this area, one crawls along the Throat (Area 7) and attacks the intruders from behind. If reduced to half its hit points or fewer, the mummy quickly retreats back down the linking corridor, leaving the guardian in Area 7 in place.

**Guide Chain.** The ring here holds the chain to Area 4. It is used by the Sanctuary's inhabitants to move safely between buildings.

**Treasure.** Among the cats is a large, pottery lion decorated with ochre glaze and with gold teeth. The whole thing is worth 250 gp. Inside the lion's stomach is a mummified mouse, and inside the mouse is a pale blue *ioun stone* (strength). The most direct way to obtain it is to break the lion, but a *mage hand* spell can also retrieve the mouse.

In addition, the room contains: a fine brass torch stand with incised illustrations showing mice being swallowed by the moon worth 400 gp; three pottery tiles—part of the carvings that fill the walls of the Sanctuary—inlaid with gold and platinum figures showing cats devouring crocodiles worth 120 gp each; and two *calling cats*, which hang on vine and hemp ties around the necks of stuffed cheetahs.

**Secret Door.** A secret door links this chamber to the Dark Feast (Area 8) via the Throat (Area 7). The opening lies behind a figure of a cat-headed man facing away from the room. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or a deliberate search of this section of wall finds the small, semicircular opening. The door pivots centrally into the cramped corridor beyond. If the mummy from Area 8 joined the fight here, it leaves the door behind it ajar, making the door easily visible.

The secret door to Area 9 also shows a cat-headed human facing away. This one is set into the floor and is a semi-circular trapdoor that opens upward. Below it is a crawlspace that leads into the River of Sand tributary. An iron hook similar to the one in Area 4 sits in the wall of the crawlspace, a guide chain attached to it.

## 7. THE THROAT

---

This corridor is arched and very low, giving the space a claustrophobic feel.

---

The Throat connects the two outer sanctums and allows the elders to move between them.

**Creature.** The linking corridor is protected by a disgusting guardian forged long ago by perverted magic. It is a **ghast**, but its limbs have been dislocated, broken,

and reformed so that it now walks on four limbs instead of two. The ghast, called "the Hobbled One" by the elders, moves with impunity along the narrow corridor, which it has never left. The pitiful creature recites nursery rhymes and murmurs its terror about what lies beyond its corridor. Its ankles and shoulders still bear the fetters used to break its body into its current shape, and the ghast whimpers painfully when it moves quickly. It's more pitiful than ferocious, but it assumes any stranger who enters its lair has come to kill it, and it fights for its life. If it is calmed with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check and released from this corridor, it falls prone and whimpers in terror before crawling away in search of a route out of the shrine.

## 8. DARK FEAST

---

Rusting manacles and fetters hang from the walls, floor, and ceiling of this grisly chamber. An iron chain lashed to a ring lies near the entrance. The whole space is splashed with dried blood and reeks of ancient decay.

---

The Devourers desecrated this location in a ceremony scores of years ago by devouring 101 people over thirteen nights. The cult's original elders made their afterlife lair here and dispatched their beloved third, Sister Withering, to pursue vengeance on the surface after the recent intrusions into their sanctuary. The chain here is identical to the one in Area 6, and the elders use it to move safely between buildings.

**Overpowering Scent.** When a creature that isn't a construct or undead enters this room for the first time, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned while in this chamber. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Creatures.** The two elders attack immediately when intruders enter their chamber. Like Sister Withering, they use the statistics of a **mummy**, except they each have the *basteti's Agile Climber* and *Stalker's Reflex* traits.

**Treasure.** Gnawed and broken bones, stretched sinews, and smashed jaws cover the floor of this chamber. Valuables hide among the detritus: a lacquer wristband shaped like a rampaging elephant and set with polished crocodile teeth, worth 75 gp, and a bronze ankle clasp carved with hieroglyphs showing the sun being pulled to the ground with ropes by a false king, worth 75 gp.

**Secret Doors.** The secret doors to Areas 9 and 7 are identical to the ones in Area 6, except these secret doors don't have cat-headed statues near them.

## 9. LAST RIVER

The River of Sand's tributary holds an additional danger here: an **edimmu** (see page 130). The creature haunts the Hunt nearby and occasionally flies along the tributary of Area 9. If the PCs linger in Area 9 for more than 1 minute, the edimmu arrives, drawn by their life force. Able to find easier meals elsewhere, it flees when reduced to half its hit points or fewer.

If your PCs made quick work of the previous encounters, consider having the edimmu attack them as soon as they enter Area 9, providing them an extra challenge before the final encounter in Area 10.

## 10. SANCTUM OF SECRETS

Beyond the secret entrance lies an area filled with stale air and littered with cat figures. Sand caresses every surface and is heaped along the walls, which themselves hold hundreds of scrolls, tablets, and ceremonial tiles. The largest of these objects—a bloated idol the size of a watermelon—squats on a sarcophagus that fills a large part of the chamber. The idol has a striking feature: where its single, central eye should be on its forehead is instead a large, ugly, bloody hole. An iron chain fastened to a ring lies near the entrance.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the two secret doors into this chamber. Alternatively, a creature following a guide chain from Area 6 or 8 automatically finds the associated door. The doors sit at a 45 degree angle to the floor, and creatures that move through them (a simple matter of pushing forward) rise into the chamber from below. The iron chain beyond allows safe travel back across the river.

**Creature.** The chamber's guardian, a bound undead called a **sand silhouette** (see page 141), rises from the sand and attacks any intruders.

**Development.** Areas marked X are sandy pits filled with a curiously airy sand. These shallow pits are quicksand. A creature that moves into the marked space must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained as it sinks 2 feet into the sand. A creature can take an action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature on a success. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the sand in the marked areas is slightly paler than the others and recognizes it as quicksand.

**Treasure.** The *Grimalkin Idol* (see page 148) is only one object of note herein. The shelves on the walls hold: a *spell scroll of animate dead*, a *spell scroll of conjure elemental*, a *spell scroll of ray of enfeeblement*, and a spellbook in the form of a series of bone-bound tablets and scrolls containing the spells *banishment*, *hold person*, *protection from good and evil*, and *vampiric touch*. The other tomes, scrolls, and writings are profane but worth 2,500 gp to the right collector. The room also contains: a *frost brand greatsword*; a bronze begging bowl worked with depictions of revelers that allows the user to cast the *create food and water* spell once per day; a Bastet scribe's table decorated with mother of pearl, bone, and ebony with a three-partitioned drawer lined with human tongues worth 800 gp; a fantastically illustrated folding backgammon table complete with warring forces of silver camels and ebony crocodiles and platinum dice all worth 1,100 gp; a wax-sealed jar containing opaque water that is hundreds of years old, in the base of which is a fine diamond worth 800 gp; and a massive pottery tiger stuffed with ancient vine leaves and gold thread worth 250 gp.

## CONCLUSION

Locating and looting the temple might only be the start of the PCs' adventures near the river. If they made an agreement with Abdul-Haqq (or even if they didn't, but they left him alive), he and his werecrocodile cronies may be waiting to ambush the PCs when they emerge from the river. Alternatively, Abdul-Haqq might bide his time and strike the PCs at a place of his choosing.

If the PCs brag about their haul, they soon come to the attention of more legitimate worshipers of Bastet; namely, followers of the High Priestess Nafrini. A triad of basteti **priests** of Bastet with dozens of **acolytes** under their command take an interest in the PCs' affairs. If PCs sold the profane tomes and scrolls or any of the figurines or depictions of disfigured felines or felines devouring humanoids collected from the Sanctuary, the priests demand the PCs retrieve the items so they can be destroyed. If the PCs hand over the objects voluntarily, their reputations rise in the city, and they receive the value of the items in credit to use at the many temples in the city. Advisers to the High Priestess seek out the PCs with offers of employment, mostly in the line of removing wickedness in Per-Bastet.

The fate of the *Grimalkin Idol* is a different matter. Do the PCs use it, donate it to the church, or sell it? If they try to sell it, how many interested collectors might there be who are keen to possess it without parting with cash?

# appendix: monsters and npcs

This section contains the monsters necessary to run the adventures featured in this book. It also contains a variety of NPCs that call Per-Bastet home, some of whom are featured in the districts earlier in this book. The Dramatis

Personae lists the leaders of Per-Bastet, noteworthy NPCs from each District, and the major NPCs from the Adventures chapter.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Major NPC	Debut	Description
Abdrin Al-Rashir	59	Werecrocodile owner and operator of a private dock in the Wharf District
Abdul-Haqq+	114	Gnoll leader of the Dogs of Per-Bastet, a thieves' guild in the city
Anuktata	57	Two-headed gynosphinx receiving cryptic visions of Haty-a Haakim
As'haad Al Heth*	78	Gnoll apothecary who recently came into possession of a powerful magic item
Edgad the Ratbane	46	Archivist of the Ways, minotaur protector of the Palace District
Estal Sheknit	50	Human alchemist and wizard obsessed with wasps
Fatrimi-Khakchon	30	Semi-benevolent gnoll matriarch in the District of the Hyena
General Kasmaron Shahpar	18	Basteti general of the Army of Summer
Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatooor*	71	Gnoll merchant trying to prevent Mistress Henna's acquisition of a certain gem
Haty-a Haakim	7	Prince, Nomarch of Per-Bastet, and third brother of God-King Thutmoses
Her Grace Ikram	15	Human leader of the Sisterhood of the Alleys
High Priestess Nafrini	9	High Priestess of Bastet and heart of the people of Per-Bastet

## ABDUL-HAQQ

Abdul-Haqq is the gnoll leader of the Dogs of Per-Bastet, a small thieves' guild in the city of the same name. He tends to eat anyone who learns too much about him. Most in Per-Bastet know him to be a gourmet who is fascinated by crocodiles and who lives in a crumbling townhouse with an elaborately tiled, onion dome roof. For more information on Abdul-Haqq and his goals, see the *Grimalkin* adventure on page 100.

## Abdul-Haqq

*Medium humanoid (gnoll, shapechanger), chaotic neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 12, or 13 (natural armor) in crocodile or hybrid form

**HIT POINTS** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**SPEED** 30 ft. (20 ft., swim 30 ft. in crocodile or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +5, Int +2

**SKILLS** Animal Handling +4, Deception +1, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +1, Stealth +5

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** Common, Gnoll, Thieves' Cant, Undercommon

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, Abdul-Haqq can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Karima Gamila+	102	Well-connected and clever gnoll
Khemet Shrie	51	Dhampir with the uncanny ability to walk in others' dreams
Madame Xir	35	Dazzling basteti matriarch of the Vertical Theater
Mahmud^	90	Half-brother to Omar-bac-Maheem
Merchant-Guide Ibadm Nuss	17	Basteti charlatan and guide for "grand expeditions" into the catslides
Mistress Henna Mjelidi*	69	Basteti thief searching for a valuable gem
Nefari-nim-Afrait	14	Basteti matriarch of the Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage
Neferuree Shmir	34	Noblewoman and well-connected gossip in the Lioness District
Omar-bac-Maheem^	85	Merchant and noble of Per-Bastet who lost his daughters at a most inopportune time
Paradix	57	Gypsosphinx researching the Great Sand Pyramid
Raheed Wa Moi Matiba*	80	Wererat thief who happened upon a strange magic item
Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit	8	Ruler of Per-Bastet and leader of the Dead
Sabrina Echo	43	Gearforged bard and agent of Haty-a Haakim
Salim-duat-Neea	38	Dead architect and engineer overseeing the construction and maintenance of the city's monuments
Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor+	105	Gnoll proprietor of a charnel house in the District of the Hyena
Sun Lord Fariq Gozra	18	Ravenfolk leader of the Sky Guard
Thronge Quorrus Jig	43	Dwarven explorer and agent of Haty-a Haakim
Ubdul	34	Basteti proprietor of the Cloud Pleasure Palace
Warlord Raykar-Takur	18	Gnoll commander of the gnoll charioteers within the Army of Summer

\* - indicates an NPC found in the *Cat and Mouse* adventure

^ - indicates an NPC found in the *Three Little Pigs* adventure

+ - indicates an NPC found in the *Grimalkin* adventure

**Hold Breath (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** The werecrocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

**Magic Weapons.** Abdul-Haqq's weapon attacks are magical.

**Rampage.** When Abdul-Haqq reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a bite attack.

**Shapechanger.** Abdul-Haqq can use his action to polymorph into a crocodile-humanoid hybrid or into a crocodile, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC and size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Abdul-Haqq deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Abdul-Haqq that isn't incapacitated and Abdul-Haqq doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** In humanoid form, Abdul-Haqq makes three greatsword or spear attacks. In hybrid form, he makes three attacks:

one with his bite, one with his tail swipe, and one with his greatsword.

**Bite (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Abdul-Haqq can't bite another target. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werecrocodile lycanthropy.

**Tail Swipe (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target not grappled by the werecrocodile. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Greatsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Spear (Humanoid Form Only).** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

## ANUBIAN

Found on page 24 of the *Tome of Beasts*, anubians are elemental guardians of ancient, forgotten tombs in the deserts of the Southlands. In *Grimalkin* (see page 100), anubians guard the entrance of the Growling Sanctuary.

### Anubian

Medium elemental, chaotic evil

ARMOR CLASS 13

HIT POINTS 44 (8d8 + 8)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

SKILLS Stealth +5 (+7 in sand terrain)

DAMAGE RESISTANCES bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 11

LANGUAGES Primordial

CHALLENGE 2 (450 XP)

**Sand Step.** Instead of moving, the anubian's humanoid form collapses into loose sand and immediately reforms at another unoccupied space within 10 feet. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. After using this trait in sand terrain, the anubian can Hide as part of this movement even if under direct observation. Anubians can sand step under doors or through similar obstacles, provided there's a gap large enough for sand to sift through.

**Vulnerability to Water.** For every 5 feet the anubian moves while touching water or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 2 (1d4) cold damage. An anubian completely immersed in water takes 10 (4d4) cold damage at the start of its turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The anubian makes two claw attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Haboob (1/Day).** The anubian creates a sandstorm in a cylinder 30-feet high, that reaches to within 5 feet of it. The storm moves with the anubian. The area is heavily obscured, and each creature other than an anubian that enters the sandstorm or ends its turn there must make a successful DC 13 Strength saving throw or be restrained by it. Also, each creature other than an anubian that ends its turn inside the sandstorm takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage. The anubian can maintain the haboob for up to 10 minutes as if concentrating on a spell.



While maintaining the haboob, the anubian's speed is reduced to 5 feet and it can't sand step. Creatures restrained by the sandstorm move with the anubian. A creature can free itself or an adjacent creature from the sandstorm by using its action and making a DC 13 Strength check. A successful check ends the restraint on the target creature.

## AS'HAAD AL HETH

A clever and conniving gnoll, As'haad Al Heth has an interest in alchemy and exotic magic items. For more information on Heth and his goals, see the *Cat and Mouse* adventure on page 67.

### As'haad Al Heth

Medium humanoid (gnoll), neutral

ARMOR CLASS 14 (studded leather)

HIT POINTS 53 (7d8 + 21)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

SAVING THROWS Con +5, Cha +4

SKILLS Arcana +1, Survival +2

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

LANGUAGES Common, Draconic, Gnoll

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

**Rampage.** When Heth reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a bite attack.

**Spellcasting.** Heth is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Heth has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, light, prestidigitation, true strike*

1st level (3 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, jump, shield*

#### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

### BASTET TEMPLE CAT

Found on page 32 of the *Tome of Beasts*, Bastet temple cats are the magical guardians of Bastet's sacred sites. In *Cat and Mouse* (see page 67), the influence of a magic item causes a temple's cat to temporarily become unhinged and excessively aggressive. In *Grimalkin* (see page 100), Bastet temple cats guard the mummified remains of cats within the Growling Sanctuary.

#### Bastet Temple Cat

*Small monstrosity, chaotic neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 14

**HIT POINTS** 40 (9d6 + 9)

**SPEED** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

**SKILLS** Perception +5, Stealth +6

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common, Nurian, Sylvan

**CHALLENGE** 1 (200 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The temple cat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Priestly Purr.** When a cleric or paladin who worships Bastet spends an hour preparing spells while a Bastet temple cat is within 5 feet, that spellcaster can choose two 1st-level spells and one 2nd-level spell that they are able to cast and imbue them into the temple cat. The temple cat can cast these spells 1/day each without a verbal component. These spells are cast as if they were included in the temple cat's Innate Spellcasting trait.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The temple cat's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell

attacks). The temple cat can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *guidance*

3/day each: *charm person, cure wounds*

1/day: *enhance ability* (only Cat's Grace)

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The temple cat makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.  
*Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Fascinating Lure.** The temple cat purrs loudly, targeting a humanoid it can see within 30 feet that can hear the temple cat. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. While charmed by the temple cat, the target must move toward the cat at normal speed and try to pet it or pick it up. A charmed target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the temple cat's Fascinating Lure for the next 24 hours. The temple cat has advantage on attack rolls against any creature petting or holding it.

### BASTET WARRIOR-PRIESTESSES

*The warrior-priestesses of Bastet are one of the most welcoming sights in the city. Unless a visitor is going to break the law. Or is thinking about breaking the law.*

**Guard, Diplomat, Priestess.** These female city officials act as the public face of the city's watch. They are tasked with patrolling the city in a very visual manner, helping the citizens of the city feel safe and protected. They can also provide newcomers with directions, religious advice, divine blessings, and tips on how to deal with citizens and show proper respect within the city.

**Representatives of the City.** The warrior-priestesses represent the city of Per-Bastet in their interactions with the public. As such, they present themselves as both charming and aloof, as both merciful and exacting, as both of this world and beyond it. Their goal is to be both loved and feared simultaneously. They are as demonstrative in their mercy as they are in their wrath.

**Dressed for the Job.** In their roles, they tend to dress flamboyantly, drawing attention to themselves and showing off the wealth and beauty of the city. They wear silver-colored chain shirts with gold embellishments, and they display holy icons of Bastet on their equipment. They carry scimitar-like swords and curved daggers like cat claws. They don't wear helmets, but instead wear feline-inspired headgear.

**Patrols and Strike Teams.** At least a dozen warrior-priestesses are always on duty within the city.

Some position themselves at the entrances to the city, welcoming new and returning visitors. Their gracious welcomes are a cover for scanning newcomers for contraband, taboo possessions, and potential ill intentions. When patrolling dangerous areas, or when planning to confront known threats, the warrior-priestesses lead a team that included 2d4 guards. In these cases, the warrior-priestess allows the guards to confront the threat, while she stays back and uses her magic to support them.

**Never Off Duty.** When not patrolling the streets on duty, the warrior-priestesses live in dormitories in the Lioness District, taking food and getting rest far from any other residents. They live for their job and spend their free time praying and training. They are treated well by the city in return for their service, never wanting for the best food, care, and equipment.

### Bastet Warrior-Priestess

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

ARMOR CLASS 15 (chain shirt)

HIT POINTS 58 (9d8 + 18)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

SKILLS Perception +5, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

SENSES passive Perception 15

LANGUAGES Common

CHALLENGE 3 (700 XP)

**Bastet's Luck.** As a bonus action, the warrior-priestess bestows luck on a creature she can see within 30 feet of it. The target has advantage on its next ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.

**Spellcasting.** The warrior-priestess is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bless, command, sanctuary, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions, hold person, spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *spirit guardians*

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The warrior-priestess makes two melee or ranged attacks.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



### CATFOLK, BASTETI

*Moving with the languid grace of a cat, this feline humanoid slinks through the streets in search of new adventures.*

The cherished children of the cat goddess Bastet, these mischievous humanoids are found throughout Nuria. They live in Per-Bastet, the City of Cats, in great numbers.

**Feline Charms.** Lithe and slender, basteti have a cat's eyes, long tail, and soft fur coat. Their fur varies in coloration and is often accented with spots, stripes, and other markings.

**Free Spirits.** Basteti like nothing better than having new experiences and meeting interesting strangers so they can share tales of their escapades with their family and friends. Their natural curiosity might get them into trouble, but they often seem to be able to quickly extricate themselves from their misfortunes and land on their feet.

## Basteti

Medium humanoid (catfolk), neutral good

**ARMOR CLASS** 13 (leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common, Nurian, Southern Trade Tongue

**CHALLENGE** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Agile Climber.** When the basteti moves at least 10 feet along the ground, it can use the rest of its movement to scale a wall or other vertical surface as if had a climbing speed. It must end its movement standing on a horizontal surface.

**Bastet's Blessing.** The basteti can communicate simple ideas to cats and other feline beasts, but it can't understand them in return. In addition, it has advantage on Charisma checks when dealing with such creatures.

**Stalker's Reflex (1/Day).** When it makes a Dexterity check, the basteti can choose to have advantage on the roll.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The basteti makes two attacks: one with its scimitar and one with its claws.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) slashing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## Basteti Cat Burglar

Medium humanoid (catfolk), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS** Athletics +5, Acrobatics +8, Perception +2, Stealth +6

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Nurian, Southern Trade Tongue

**CHALLENGE** 1 (200 XP)

**Agile Climber.** When the basteti moves at least 10 feet along the ground, it can use the rest of its movement to scale a wall or other vertical surface as if had a climbing speed. It must end its movement standing on a horizontal surface.

**Bastet's Blessing.** The basteti can communicate simple ideas to cats and other feline beasts, but it can't understand them in return. In addition, it has advantage on Charisma checks when dealing with such creatures.

**Burglar.** The basteti has proficiency with thieves' tools and can pick a nonmagical lock as a bonus action.

**Cunning Action.** On each of its turns, the basteti can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Stalker's Reflex (3/Day).** When it makes a Dexterity check, the basteti can choose to have advantage on the roll.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The basteti makes two melee or two ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

## CATSLIDE MONITOR

*The minotaurs who patrol the labyrinth known as the catslide alleys attack with the ferocity of a bull, but prowl with the subtlety of a cat.*

**Guardians of a Different Maze.** The phenomenon known as "the call" (see page 10) manifests itself differently in each resident of Per-Bastet. For minotaurs, if they remain long enough, the call leads them to the District of the Cat, where the tangle of alleys and portals known as the catslides await. Once they arrive, some ancient and primeval longing pulls at their souls, making it terribly difficult for them to leave. Those who remain often join the Blessed Sisters of the Simple Voyage or the Sisterhood of the Alleys.

**In Service to the City.** The most well-known catslide monitor is Anriff the Compass, a minotaur lieutenant of Her Grace Ikram, the leader of the Sisterhood of the Alleys. Anriff was one of the first minotaurs to find a home within the catslides, and she has risen in the ranks to become a much-respected leader in the area.

**Monitoring the Portals.** The monitors who serve under Anriff have two important jobs: keep unauthorized people (i.e. anyone who isn't a cat) from using the portals within the catslides, and, more importantly, to keep anything dangerous that emerges from the portals from endangering the citizens of the city.

**Enemies Can't Hide...or Run.** The monitors are most famous for their tridents, which they use with extreme precision in melee and at range. Enemies struck by the tridents (each monitor carries at least five) find

themselves tethered to the monitor by a long, leather leash, preventing them from fleeing—but keeping them at the perfect distance for a nasty charging gore attack by the monitor.

### Catslide Monitor

*Large monstrosity, chaotic neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather, shield)

**HIT POINTS** 93 (11d10 + 33)

**SPEED** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

**SKILLS** Perception +4, Stealth +4

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Agile Charger.** If the monitor provokes an opportunity attack when it uses its Charge trait, the attacker has disadvantage on the opportunity attack roll.

**Charge.** If the monitor moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a melee attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) damage of the weapon's type. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

**Labyrinthine Recall.** The monitor can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The monitor makes three attacks: two with its gore and one with its trident.

**Gore. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Trident. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. On a hit, the target is grappled (escape DC 15). While grappled, the target can't be moved more than 15 feet away from the monitor.

### CITY WATCH CAPTAIN

Found on page 419 of the *Tome of Beasts*, city watch captains are the leaders of local squads of city watch. The city watch captains of Per-Bastet work alongside the bastet warrior-priestesses (see page 126) to ensure the safety of the city's citizens. In *Three Little Pigs* (see page 85), city watch captain Haffish watches over the transformation ritual to ensure the priestess conducting the ritual isn't harmed and that the captured antagonist completes his part of the ritual.

### City Watch Captain

*Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 17 (scale mail)

**HIT POINTS** 91 (14d8 + 28)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

**SKILLS** Perception +2

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** one language (usually Common)

**CHALLENGE** 4 (450 XP)



**Tactical Insight.** The city watch captain has advantage on initiative rolls. City watch soldiers under the captain's command take their turns on the same initiative count as the captain.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The city watch captain makes two rapier attacks and one dagger attack. The captain can use a disarming attack in place of one rapier attack.

**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Disarming Attack.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* the target must make a successful DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it's holding of the city watch captain's choice. The item lands up to 10 feet from the target, in a spot selected by the captain.

**Orders to Attack (1/Day).** Each creature of the city watch captain's choice that is within 30 feet of it and can hear it makes one melee or ranged weapon attack as a reaction.

## DEATH SENTRY

*The heavily armored figure approaches with its hand raised. A raspy voice of undeath wheezes from beneath the helm's closed visor, "Halt! The construction unearthed some hazardous gases. It isn't safe for the living at the moment."*

**Guardians of the Dead.** The Dead in Per-Bastet operate openly as civil servants, which puts living and undead citizens in regular contact with each other. Death sentries are a special segment of the Dead drawn to protect their kin-in-death from intrusion of the living, while at the same time making sure none of the Dead bring harm—inadvertently or otherwise—to the living citizens of Per-Bastet.

**Lifetimes of Service.** Most of the death sentries were city guards in life, and they bring the same dedication and skill to their post-retirement (and post-life) careers. Unlike most Dead, death sentries retain many of their memories, especially those related to their time as guards, which gives them the benefit of having learned many hard lessons about a guard's life.

**Badges of Honor.** The death sentries are clad much like a typical city guard: chainmail, shield, mace, javelins, and a badge showing their dedication to Bastet and the city. They take pride in keeping their equipment clean and well maintained, and they embrace their new roles with flourishes that draw attention to their undeath: maces decorated like skulls, shields depicting their achievements in life, and similar embellishments.

**The Monument District and Beyond.** Death sentries spend most of their time in the Monument District, but they patrol in any area where large numbers of the Dead gather to perform a service, such as demolishing or repairing an old building or constructing a new building or monument. These areas offer the greatest chances for the living or Dead to inadvertently harm one another, and the death sentries stay nearby to prevent such harm. When accidents happen, death sentries are the first on-hand to rescue living citizens trapped in fallen rubble or keep living citizens at bay when the Dead are handling or moving particularly dangerous or heavy objects. They also investigate trouble involving the Dead, working in tandem with the other city guards and Bastet warrior-priestesses.

**Undead Nature.** The sentry doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.



## Death Sentry

Medium undead, neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (chainmail, shield)

**HIT POINTS** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**SPEED** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

**SAVING THROWS** Con +4, Wis +3

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** necrotic

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 2 (450 XP)

**Life Sense.** The death sentry can pinpoint the location of creatures that aren't constructs or undead within 60 feet of it.

**Turn Defiance.** The death sentry and any undead within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the sentry to 0 hp, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the death sentry drops to 1 hp instead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The death sentry makes two attacks.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

## EDIMMU

Found on page 165 of the *Tome of Beasts*, the edimmu is a sandy, hateful undead created when a criminal dies of thirst in the desert. In *Grimalkin* (see page 100), an edimmu guards part of the sand river that surrounds the Growling Sanctuary.

## Edimmu

Medium undead, chaotic evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 15

**HIT POINTS** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**SPEED** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** necrotic, poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**SENSES** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common but can't speak

**CHALLENGE** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The edimmu can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Rejuvenation.** If destroyed, an edimmu rises again in 2d4 days. Permanently destroying one requires properly burying its mortal remains in consecrated or hallowed ground. Edimmus rarely venture more than a mile from the place of their death.

### ACTIONS

**Water Siphon.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken and it is stunned for 1 minute and gains one level of exhaustion. A stunned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the stun on itself on a success. The hit point reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest and drinks abundant water or until it is affected by greater restoration or comparable magic. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

## EUGHON, TROLLKIN CALL-SEER

*The trollkin dressed in ragged leathers kneels before passersby and pleads with them. His one good eye is wide with emotion. "Leave the city now, while you can. Nothing awaits you here but death."*

**Victim of the City's Call.** Eughon came to Per-Bastet as a guard for a caravan, fresh-faced and awed by the splendor and majesty of what he saw. Like so many before him, Eughon found ample work in the city, decided to stay for a while, and eventually felt the city's magical "call" (see page 10). Before long, he became embroiled in various political games and schemes and wanted nothing more than to leave the city. He suffered and struggled in this fight, as his desire to leave the city and escape his situation warred against the city's call until his mind fractured.

**The Gift and the Curse.** While the fight against the city's call twisted his mind, the magic of the call twisted inside of Eughon, giving him the power of second sight. Now, he can see auras around people. These auras are physical manifestations of the city's call enveloping people new to the city. He watches in horror as the pull of Per-Bastet warps their spirits, dragging them into its claws. Eughon attempts to warn the people most noticeably affected by

the call, hoping they can avoid the same fate that befell him. If they ignore him, he grows violent.

**The Transfer of the Sight.** When Eughon sees a susceptible aura, he loses his hold on reality, and he attacks the individual. He doesn't mean to hurt them, but he often does. When he grabs onto a person he's trying to help, his visions may course through them. The painful visions of a victim's own suffering damages their psyche, but if the victim survives the attack, they may glimpse something in the visions that can help them in the future.

**Broken and Alone, but Protected.** Eughon is now a vagrant, wearing tattered leather armor and sporting unruly grey hair and long, blackened claws. His shoeless feet are dirty and bear sores and callouses. One eye is swollen shut, and he is missing a tooth or three. The city guards claim Eughon is god-touched and therefore off-limits, securing his relative safety in the city. Even the most aggressive gnolls give Eughon a wide berth, finding him unnerving. Some citizens find his visions useful to them. Other less scrupulous individuals find Eughon an easy scapegoat if they need someone killed or removed.

### Eughon, Trollkin Call-Seer

Medium humanoid (trollkin), chaotic neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 13 (leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 111 (14d8 + 56)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+4)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

**SKILLS** Athletics +7

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Trollkin

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Reckless.** At the start of his turn, Eughon can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

**Regeneration.** Eughon regains 5 hp at the start of his turn. If Eughon takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Eughon dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hp and doesn't regenerate.

**Thick Hide.** Eughon's skin is thick and tough, granting him a +1 bonus to Armor Class. This bonus is already factored into his AC.

**Innate Spellcasting (3/Day).** Eughon can innately cast augury, requiring no material components. His innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Eughon makes two claw attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 15), and Eughon uses Haunting Visions on it. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Eughon can't use his claws on another target.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Haunting Visions.** A target grappled by Eughon must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the target takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage and is stunned until the end of its next turn. On a success, the target takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. A stunned target receives visions about the outcome of an action it might take or event that might happen near it within the next 30 minutes. These visions work like the augury spell, except the target doesn't get to choose the action or event it sees.

### GHULGRAH, GNOLL OF STEEL

*The heavily armored gnoll lumbers forward, the gears in his elaborate prosthetics whirring with each step. He carries a dead gnoll in each hand and glances about warily with a blue, glowing artificial eye.*

**The Depth of Misfortune.** The gnolls of the District of the Hyena carry a reputation for being willing to bet on virtually anything, including their own limbs, if the stakes are favorable. Of all the misfortune-kissed gnolls to wager a body part in a game of skill or chance, few have been kissed more than Ghulgrah. After an epic losing streak that first cost him his wealth, then his arms, then his leg, then his freedom, Ghulgrah was finally discarded by his matriarch.

**An Experiment in Hatred.** Ghulgrah was left to die on the streets, but a human mage and tinkerer named Reneford happened upon him. Reneford was rumored to experiment on living creatures. Seeing Ghulgrah, Reneford felt a mix of pity for the gnoll and curiosity for what could be done for him. Reneford nursed Ghulgrah back to health, instilling in the unfortunate gnoll a hatred of his own kind. Then the mage used his magical and mechanical prowess to fashion for Ghulgrah new arms and a leg, crafted of magic and steel. The magical lightning that powers the gnoll's new body provides Ghulgrah with extraordinary strength and enhanced senses.

**A Tool of Revenge.** Reneford first turned Ghulgrah loose on the gnoll communities, for they were the ones who originally reported Reneford's questionable experiments to the authorities. Once Ghulgrah proves his utility as an agent of destruction among the gnolls, Reneford has a long list of powerful enemies whom he and Ghulgrah plan to visit.

**The Pain of the Lost.** Somewhere within the metal gears, steel plates, and magic lightning is a scared and confused gnoll who is not completely convinced that the destruction he carries out for his new friend is in his own best interest. A bit of compassion and friendship from the right source could redeem Ghulgrah...or drive his destructive rage in an even more dangerous direction.

### Ghulgrah, Gnoll of Steel

Medium humanoid (gnoll), neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 18 (plate)

**HIT POINTS** 210 (28d8 + 84)

**SPEED** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

**SAVING THROWS** Str +10, Dex +7, Con +8, Wis +7

**SKILLS** Athletics +10, Intimidation +5, Perception +7

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** cold, lightning, slashing

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

**LANGUAGES** Common, Gnoll

**CHALLENGE** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Expert Grappler.** If Ghulgrah is grappling a creature, he can use a bonus action to make a bite attack against the creature. If it hits, the attack deals an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

**Grip of Steel.** If Ghulgrah or a creature he is grappling is pushed, shoved, or otherwise forcibly moved less than 30 feet, Ghulgrah and the grappled creature move together, and Ghulgrah continues grappling the creature.

**Magic Resistance.** Ghulgrah has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Partially Constructed.** Ghulgrah has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, paralyzed, and poisoned.

**Rampage.** When Ghulgrah reduces a creature to 0 hp with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a claw or bite attack.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Ghulgrah makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his steel claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) lightning damage.

**Steel Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. Ghulgrah has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ghulgrah can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Move.** Ghulgrah moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Steel Claw.** Ghulgrah makes one steel claw attack.

**Lighting Lasso (Costs 2 Actions).** Ghulgrah releases a bolt of lightning at a target within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) lightning damage and be pulled up to 30 feet toward Ghulgrah.

### GNOLL SLAVER

Found on page 189 of the *Creature Codex*, gnoll slavers are common in Nuria Natal. Safiya, the gnoll slaver in *Three Little Pigs* (see page 85), is a haughty gnoll with a taste for pig and sport. Her love of tormenting her prey might work against her though, as the PCs join in the chase.

### Gnoll Slaver

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (chain shirt)

**HIT POINTS** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS** Athletics +6, Intimidation +5, Perception +2, Stealth +6

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Gnoll

**CHALLENGE** 3 (700 XP)

**Rampage.** When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hp with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gnoll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its whip or three with its longbow.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Menace Captives (Recharge 5-6).** The gnoll selects up to three creatures it has taken captive within 30 feet. Each creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage for 1 minute on any attack rolls or skill checks to take actions other than those the gnoll has ordered it to take.

## JAN'KIM, MIRACLE RECEIVER

*The rebel leader peered cautiously out his safe house window, seeing only a plain-looking woman in the lamplight below. Her orange hair was streaked with black, and her pale blue eyes glanced up at him sadly.*

**The Wish Comes True.** Jan'kim was a young woman who lived miles away from Per-Bastet, but she had a dream. She wanted more than anything to escape the life her parents had planned for her. More importantly, she wanted to be a cat. When travelers told her that wishes could be made true in the City of Cats, she knew she had to travel there. She snuck away in the night, made her way to the city, and stood before the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet, as so many had before her. And her dream came true.

**A Tiger by the Tail.** Onlookers gasped in astonishment and praised the gods when the black-haired woman transformed into a tiger right before their eyes. The tiger was led away by a priestess of Bastet, and the crowd believed that this great cat would become a prized pet in the royal court. They were only partly correct, and the truth was much darker—as it often is in Per-Bastet.

**A Royal Assassin.** Jan'kim was turned into a weretiger, but she has no control over her transformation, which is controlled not by lunar cycles, but by the will of Nafrini. When an enemy of the city is deemed too dangerous to let live, the priestesses permit Jan'kim to leave the temple, where she is a well-treated prisoner. They ask her to perform some simple task in some part of the city. Jan'kim leaves, but never remembers returning. She's then bathed and cared for by the priestesses and put to bed.

**Longing to be Free.** Jan'kim is aware that something inside of her has changed—that she's been touched by the power of Bastet. However, she has no idea of her affliction, or how the temple is using her abilities for their own purposes. She's growing more restless, and she's working up the nerve to ask some friendly adventures to help her escape the next time she's sent on errands by her keepers.

### Jan'kim, Miracle Receiver

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral

ARMOR CLASS 13

HIT POINTS 135 (18d8 + 54)

SPEED 30 ft. (40 ft. in tiger form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

SKILLS Perception +4, Stealth +6

DAMAGE RESISTANCES bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

LANGUAGES Common (can't speak in tiger form)

CHALLENGE 6 (2,300 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** Jan'kim has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Magic Resistance.** Jan'kim has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only).** If Jan'kim moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Jan'kim can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

**Rampage.** When Jan'kim reduces a creature to 0 hp with a melee attack on her turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a bite or scimitar attack.

**Shapechanger.** Jan'kim can use her action to polymorph into a tiger-humanoid hybrid or into a tiger, or back into her true humanoid form. Her statistics, other than size, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** In humanoid form, Jan'kim makes three scimitar attacks or two longbow attacks. In hybrid form, she makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws or scimitar.

**Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy.

**Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

**Scimitar (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Longbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

## JESFERET, THE PERFUME MAKER

*As the woman hands over a delicate vial filled with a sweet-smelling liquid, a strange smile plays across her lips. "Just one drop of this behind each of your ears tonight, and you'll be the talk of the city tomorrow morning."*

**Esteemed Master of Scents.** Jesferet was born and raised in Per-Bastet, and from the earliest age she showed a preternatural skill in the art and craft of perfumery. She left home while still a young girl to learn at the side of one of the most renowned perfume-makers in the city. After only a few years as an apprentice, she became a master of scents. She soon fell in love with a merchant who supplied



her with ingredients, and the couple decided to raise a family. Jesferet was an honored artisan, had a loving wife and children, and had a thriving business.

**Perfume Wars.** Jesferet tried to remain neutral in the intrigues between the various power groups in the Perfume District and the greater city. However, her home and business were destroyed—and her entire family killed—as collateral damage in a skirmish between the forces of the Blinding Order (see page 50) and a rival group it eventually deposed. Her livelihood and love destroyed, she sought redress from the Blinding Order through Captain Hafini, but she was met with only platitudes and half-hearted apologies.

**Sweet-smelling Revenge.** Jesferet briefly attempted to rebuild her life, but the hollowness of it all was overwhelming. But one desire kept her going: revenge. The expert with chemicals put into plan a motion to oversee the destruction of the Blinding Order, one drop of poison at a time. Jesferet now uses her knowledge to create poisons that she delivers into anyone she finds working directly for the organization. She has so far escaped notice, although her plans become more reckless with each passing day.

**Bubble, Bubble.** Jesferet's dark hair shows the first signs of silver-gray, and her skin is stained by chemicals. She's disheveled and ragged-looking, her mind totally absorbed by revenge, with little time for self-care. Her brown eyes have a haunted, blood-shot look. She is never far from her boiling beakers and flasks, and her home is trapped with countless alchemical concoctions, as she waits for the day the Blinding Order comes to end her war against them.

### Jesferet, the Perfume Maker

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**ARMOR CLASS** 11

**HIT POINTS** 45 (10d8)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16(+3)	15 (+2)

**SKILLS** Arcana +5, History +5, Investigation +5, Nature +5, Perception+5, Sleight of Hand +3

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** poison

**SENSES** passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 2 (450 XP)

**Alchemical Concoction (1/Day).** As a bonus action, Jesferet can imbibe an alchemical concoction. Jesferet gains one of the following benefits for 1 minute:

Her Armor Class increases by 4.

She gains 10 temporary hp.

She becomes invisible.

#### ACTIONS

**Poisoned Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Poison Vial.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Acid Spray (Recharge 5–6).** Jesferet sprays acid in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

#### JESFERET'S LAIR

Jesferet resides and works in an old building in the Perfume District. Here, she conducts experiments in her laboratory, creating ever more deadly concoctions. While in her lair, Jesferet has a challenge rating of 4 (1,100 XP).

#### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Jesferet takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Toxic gases bubble up into a cloud centered on a point Jesferet can see within 60 feet of her. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A blinded creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- Opaque mist fills a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Jesferet can see within 60 feet of her. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. A wind of at least 20 miles per hour disperses the mist. It otherwise lasts for 1 minute, until Jesferet uses this lair action again, or until Jesferet dies.
- Unstable chemicals combine in a burst of fire centered on a point Jesferet can see within 60 feet of her. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## KARIMA GAMILA

“Princess” Karima Gamila is a beautiful gnoll with many hangers-on and enemies within Per-Bastet. Well-connected, she can be a valuable informant or dangerous enemy. For more information on Karima and her goals, see the *Grimalkin* adventure on page 100.

### Karima Gamila

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +6, Wis +5, Cha +7

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +6, Perception +5, Persuasion +10, Stealth +6

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common, Gnoll, Thieves’ Cant

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of her turns, Karima can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Rampage.** When Karima reduces a creature to 0 hp with a melee attack on her turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a bite attack.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Karima does an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Karima that isn’t incapacitated and Karima doesn’t have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Spellcasting.** Karima is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Karima has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, message, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, disguise self, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions, hold person, suggestion*

3rd level (2 slots): *clairvoyance, speak with dead*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Karima makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her shortsword. Alternatively, she makes three attacks with her shortbow.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Blessing of the Trickster.** Karima touches an ally and gives it advantage on Stealth checks for 1 hour. Alternatively, Karima can give herself advantage on such checks. The Blessing of the Trickster can be active on only one creature at a time.

**Invoke Duplicity (1/Rest).** Karima creates an illusionary duplicate of herself within 30 feet that lasts for 1 minute or until she loses concentration (as if concentrating on a spell). As a bonus action, she can move the illusion up to 30 feet as long as it stays within 120 feet of her. For the duration, she can cast spells through the illusion, though she shares no senses with the illusion. When Karima and the illusion are within 5 feet of a creature, Karima has advantage on attack rolls against the creature.

## KELLICKO, CATERWAUL CHRONICLER

*As the gnome rises from his cross-legged position on the floor, he appears to be shedding kittens. They fall from his lap, his beard, and his hair in a feline explosion.*

**A Mysterious Past.** One foggy night in the District of the Cat, a bedraggled gnome dressed in tattered rags and bleeding from many wounds fell asleep at the edge of the catslide alleys. As he fell unconscious, a clowder of cats, intrigued by the strange interloper, watched over him until he regained his senses. Upon waking, this gnome, named Kellicko, told the cats the story of what happened to him and his adventuring party to leave him in such a state. The cats, enthralled and understanding his every word, brought him offerings of food. Day after day, night after night, Kellicko continued to tell stories, and the cats continued to care for him.

**Defender of the Weak.** Shortly after Kellicko fully recovered, some drunken caravan guards wandered into the district and harmed an innocent cat. Kellicko appeared from the shadows, insisting the group move along quickly. When the group refused, kicking another cat in the process, Kellicko pounced into action. Mere moments later, all of the drunken guards were unconscious. They awoke the next morning sore but alive, reeking of cat spray. He secured the loyalty of the district’s cats in that moment, and they know they can find safety with him if they ever need it.

**The Eye of a Feline Hurricane.** Kellicko records the stories that cats bring back to him from their nightly prowls, and he entertains whatever felines are in the neighborhood with stories and acrobatics of his own. Given his network of cat-spies, he is a fountain of potential information, but he trades information only with those he feels are worthy and those who uphold the highest moral standards.



**A Neutral Party.** Kellicko knows much of what is happening, politically and socially, in the city. However, he does not involve himself in anything other than caring for the cats who, in return, care for him. Anyone coming into his domain with intention of causing harm to his friends must deal with Kellicko first. The few citizens who've seen Kellicko's power gossip that he is an avatar of Bastet, sent to protect her smallest children.

### Kellicko, Caterwaul Chronicler

*Small humanoid (gnome), lawful good*

**ARMOR CLASS** 17

**HIT POINTS** 104 (16d6 + 48)

**SPEED** 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	17(+3)	15 (+2)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +8, Con +7, Wis +7

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +8, Animal Handling +7, Perception +7, Stealth +8

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** poison, psychic, radiant

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed frightened, poisoned

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Evasion.** If Kellicko is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Kellicko instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

**Gnome Cunning.** Kellicko has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Speak with Felines.** Kellicko can communicate with cats and other feline beasts as if they shared a language.

**Unarmored Defense.** While Kellicko is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Wisdom modifier. This bonus is included in his AC.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Kellicko makes three radiant slam attacks. If Kellicko hits a target with two radiant slam attacks, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

**Radiant Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

#### REACTIONS

**Defender of the Weak.** When an ally Kellicko can see within 30 feet of him is hit with an attack, Kellicko can move up to half his speed toward the attacker and make one radiant slam attack. If the ally is a cat or feline beast, Kellicko has advantage on this attack roll.

### KRAKATAT, TOMB RAIDER

*The ratfolk scoundrel whistles and gives a lopsided grin as a team of giant rats skitters out of the nearby shadows and chitters angrily.*

**A Rat Amid Cats.** Krakatat was born and raised in Per-Bastet, the daughter of menial servants answering to wealthy merchants. She quickly grew tired of the life that awaited her, and she took to wandering the streets looking for opportunities to gain the wealth she would need to escape. She soon found a talent for burglary, which served her well. She avoided the cats that she despised so much, unless she was stealing from them.

**The Treasures Among the Monuments.** After falling in with some other thieves, she was introduced to the lucrative domain with incredible treasures: the Monument District. Not only were the latest (and often gullible) merchants and wares found there, the place was a breeding ground for giant rats, who she soon came to befriend. With her rat allies, she no longer needed others to help her, and she no longer had to worry about sharing the spoils with them. Now, she picks the pockets of new arrivals—making sure to never take too much from any one individual—and scavenges the gifts and offerings that have been left by the friends and families of the honored Dead.

**A Disquieting Find.** Among the items she pilfered, she found something odd and powerful: a series of purple gems that radiates magic, placed carefully throughout the Monument District. A magic-savvy fence who Krakatat knows realized the gems could possibly corrupt the placid Dead, turning them into monstrous killers. Krakatat is conflicted about what to do with this information. While she is no friend of the city itself, she also doesn't want the Dead to turn into a mob capable of destroying her home from the inside.

### Krakatat, Tomb Raider

*Small humanoid (ratfolk), chaotic neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 72 (16d6 + 16)

**SPEED** 25 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11(+0)	12 (+1)

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +5, Animal Handling +2, Deception +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Call Rats.** As a bonus action, Krakatat magically calls up to two giant rats to her side. The rats arrive and act immediately after her in the initiative count, and they obey her spoken commands. The rats remain until Krakatat dies or until she dismisses them as a bonus action. Krakatat can have no more than two giant rats under her control at one time.

**Evasion.** If Krakatat is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds and only half damage if she fails.

**Nimbleness.** Krakatat can move through the space of a Medium or larger creature.

**Pack Tactics.** Krakatat has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Krakatat deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Krakatat that isn't incapacitated and Krakatat doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Krakatat makes three melee attacks: two with her shortsword and one with her dagger.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Tripping Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## MAHMUD

Mahmud is a lean, sour-looking man with a mouth crammed full of teeth; seemingly too many for his mouth. He carries a *potion of gaseous form* in a sugar glass bottle, which he can bite into for a quick escape. He wears a long, dirty white shift and carries a weathered club bleached white by the sun. For more information on Mahmud and his goals, see the *Three Little Pigs* adventure on page 85.

### Mahmud

*Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 13 (shield) in humanoid form, 13 (natural armor) in crocodile form, 15 (natural armor, shield) in hybrid form

**HIT POINTS** 63 (14d8)

**SPEED** 30 ft. (20 ft., swim 30 ft. in crocodile or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

**SKILLS** Arcana +2, Insight +4, Perception +4, Survival +4

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**SENSES** passive Perception 14

**LANGUAGES** Common, Druidic, Nurian, Southern Trade Tongue (can't speak in crocodile form)

**CHALLENGE** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Hold Breath (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** Mahmud can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

**Shapechanger.** Mahmud can use his action to polymorph into a crocodile-human hybrid or into a crocodile, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC and size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

**Spellcasting.** Mahmud is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Mahmud has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, produce flame, shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, fog cloud*

2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere, hold person, spike growth*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, water breathing*

4th level (1 slot): *confusion*

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** Mahmud makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

**Bite (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Mahmud can't bite another target. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werecrocodile lycanthropy.

**Club (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

**Tail Swipe (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target not grappled by Mahmud. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Sling (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

## NECROMANCER

Found on page 404 of the *Creature Codex*, necromancers are humanoid that specialize in conjuring and controlling undead. In *Grimalkin*, Sultan Shuk'ri Nill Mo Chatoor is a necromancer and the gnoll proprietor of a charnel house in Per-Bastet. He and his loyal followers secretly use the charnel house for more sinister purposes, putting him on the wrong side of those seeking justice for their lost friends and family. For more information on Sultan and his goals, see the *Grimalkin* adventure on page 100.

### Necromancer

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil alignment

**ARMOR CLASS** 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

**HIT POINTS** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

**SAVING THROWS** Int +6, Wis +5

**SKILLS** Arcana +7, History +7

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** frightened

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common plus any three languages

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Grim Harvest.** Once per turn when a living creature fails a saving throw against or is harmed by one of the necromancer's Necromancy spells of 1st level or higher, the necromancer regains hp equal to three times the spell's level.

**Undead Thralls.** When the necromancer casts *animate dead*, it can target one additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another zombie or skeleton, as appropriate. Undead created by the necromancer have an additional 9 hp and a +3 to their weapon damage rolls.

**Spellcasting.** The necromancer is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its primary spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, *mage armor*, *ray of sickness*\*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*\*, *ray of enfeeblement*\*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *vampiric touch*\*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*\*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*

\*Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher that requires a saving throw or attack roll

## ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

## PHYRESTRA, SCOURGE OF THE DEAD

*The heavily armored woman holds a faintly glowing longsword while sizing up those around her. She smiles and whispers, "None of you are dead, are you?"*

**Enemy of the Dead.** Long before she came to Per-Bastet, Phyrestra was a warrior in a land plagued by the undead. She led teams of elite warriors, all specially trained in fighting foes who have failed to pass peacefully into the land of the dead. When her battles were finally won and her land at peace again, she traveled to Per-Bastet to take in some of the city's splendor.

**A Battle Renewed.** When the divinely inspired adventurer Phyrestra came to the City of Cats, she was expecting to see a place full of life. She was pleased until she encountered the Dead. The thought of dead creatures, no matter how polite and helpful, wandering the city was abhorrent to her—especially after her years of warring against the monsters of her homeland. Conflicted thoughts tore through her. Should she attack the Dead on sight, accept the situation, or flee the city?

**Visions from Aten.** As she meditated on her quandary, she was gifted with both visions and powers from Aten. These visions showed her putting the Dead to rest, but the process would be slow and hazardous, involving as much subterfuge and stealth as martial battle. Aten's power protects her from the city's call, leaving her free of the loyalty that fills most of the city's residents and ensuring she won't join the ranks of the Dead when she dies.

**The Merchant of Radiance.** To carry out her secret plans, Phyrestra used her connections in her homeland to establish herself as a merchant in Per-Bastet, dealing in weapons and armor. She uses this cover to make connections in the city, learning about the secrets and plans of the political powers. She looks for evidence of how the Dead might be used as weapons in the future.

**Slayer of the Dead.** Away from prying eyes, she spends her time snooping around the city, finding the perfect time to strike. Then she dons her armor, prays for divine guidance, and strikes out against the Dead, doing as much damage as possible without being caught. Soon, she hopes to recruit new soldiers to her cause.

## Phyrestra, Scourge of the Dead

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

**ARMOR CLASS** 20 (plate, shield)

**HIT POINTS** 165 (22d8 + 66)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14(+2)	16 (+3)

**SAVING THROWS** Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +8

**SKILLS** Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8, Religion +5, Stealth +7

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** necrotic

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 13 (10,000 XP)

**Blessed Weapons.** Phyrestra's weapon attacks are magical. When she hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 3d8 radiant damage (included in the attack).

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Phyrestra fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Phyrestra's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). Phyrestra can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:  
3/day each: *bless*, *cure wounds*, *protection from evil and good*  
1/day each: *flame strike*, *invisibility*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Phyrestra makes three melee attacks or uses her Radiant Beam twice.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 13 (3d8) radiant damage.

**Radiant Beam.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) radiant damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

### REACTIONS

**Parry.** Phyrestra adds 5 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Phyrestra must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Phyrestra can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. She regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Move.** Phyrestra moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Radiant Beam (Costs 2 Actions).** Phyrestra uses her Radiant Beam.

**Radiant Aura (Costs 3 Actions).** Phyrestra emits an aura of radiant energy. Each creature within 5 feet of Phyrestra must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

## QADIF-JA, RAVENFOLK BRUTE

*The purple bill of the ravenfolk warrior clicks quietly to himself, his black eyes staring at the ground where he crouches. His long spear glints with a wicked, purple light as he stands.*

**Northerner in a Strange Land.** Unlike other ravenfolk in the Southlands, known as heru, Qadif-Ja is from the frozen Northlands. His story is one of loss and craving. While a younger ravenfolk in the north, he was a skilled warrior and was considered a favored son of Odin. However, one day his power was gone, and his runespear felt like nothing but a polished piece of wood. Qadif-Ja took this as a sign that Odin wanted him to roam the world, performing tasks to please Odin enough to earn his power back. Nowhere did the ravenfolk find redemption, however. That is, until he arrived in Per-Bastet.

**An Encounter with a Sphinx.** While traveling within the Hunt, looking for the deed that would redeem him in Odin's eye, Qadif-Ja met Anuktata (see page 57). The sphinx looked upon the beleaguered ravenfolk, spoke a magical phrase, and Qadif-Ja felt the power flow through him again. Not only did it flow through him, but it was much stronger than anything he'd ever felt. Anuktata claimed that if he followed her directions, he would never be out of touch with Odin again. For that reason, Qadif-Ja obediently performs the tasks the sphinx places before him, regardless of what they are or how brutally he must perform them.

**Servant of Anuktata.** The two-headed sphinx Anuktata sits in the Hunt and formulates her inscrutable plans. As her lieutenant, Qadif-Ja carries out the sphinx's orders in the rest of the city. Those directives rarely make logical sense to mortal beings, as Anuktata's visions seem born of chaos. Nonetheless, Qadif-Ja performs his duties without question and without mercy. Those who know Qadif-Ja's story and background watch him warily, for they never know what acts he might perform on behalf of his mistress.

### Qadif-Ja, Ravenfolk Brute

Medium humanoid (ravenfolk), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 16 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 117 (18d8 + 36)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +7, Con +5

**SKILLS** Deception +2, Intimidation +2, Perception +5, Stealth +7

**SENSES** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**LANGUAGES** Common, Feather Speech

**CHALLENGE** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Assassinate.** During his first turn, Qadif-Ja has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit he scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

**Empowered Weapons.** Empowered by Anuktata, Qadif-Ja's weapon attacks are magical. When he hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d4 force damage (included in the attack).

**Mimicry.** Qadif-Ja can mimic the voices of others with uncanny accuracy. A creature can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Qadif-Ja makes one peck attack and two runespear attacks.

**Peck.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) force damage.

**Runespear.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) force damage.

**Resounding Caw (Recharge 5–6).** Qadif-Ja emits a booming caw in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 36 (8d8) thunder damage and is deafened for 1 minute. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't deafened. A deafened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### RATFOLK

Found on page 320 of the *Tome of Beasts*, ratfolk are denizens of cities across Midgard. In *Three Little Pigs* (see page 85), a gang of ratfolk led by two ratfolk rogues hunts one of the merchant's lost daughters for an exotic feast. In *Cat and Mouse* (see page 67), some ratfolk gather around Raheed, believing he will liberate them from their suffering, and inhabit a rooftop shack in the Perfume District with him.

### Ratfolk

Small humanoid (ratfolk), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 14 (studded leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 7 (2d6)

**SPEED** 25 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**SKILLS** Perception +2

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Nimbleness.** The ratfolk can move through the space of any creature size Medium or larger.

**Pack Tactics.** The ratfolk has advantage on its attack roll against a creature if at least one of the ratfolk's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Light crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

### Ratfolk Rogue

Small humanoid (ratfolk), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 18 (4d6 + 4)

**SPEED** 25 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +5, Perception +2, Stealth +7

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Thieves' Cant

**CHALLENGE** 1 (200 XP)

**Cunning Action.** A ratfolk rogue can use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

**Nimbleness.** A ratfolk rogue can move through the space of any creature size Medium or larger.

**Pack Tactics.** A ratfolk rogue has advantage on its attack roll against a creature if at least one of the ratfolk's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** A ratfolk rogue deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of one of its allies that isn't incapacitated and the rogue doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Rat Dagger Flurry.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., three targets. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

## RIFT SWINE

Found on page 326 of the *Tome of Beasts*, rift swines are boars that have been exposed to the alien energies produced when tears happen in the Material Plane. In *Three Little Pigs* (see page 85), the chaotic magic of combined spells accidentally summons a rift swine.

### Rift Swine

*Large aberration, chaotic neutral*

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**SPEED** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** force, poison

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** —

**CHALLENGE** 5 (1,800 XP)

**360-Degree Vision.** The rift swine's extra eyes give it advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Chaos Mutations.** 50% of rift swine have additional mutant features. Choose or roll on the Chaos Mutations table.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The rift swine makes one tusks attack and two tentacle attacks.

**Tusks.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the rift swine can't use this tentacle against another target.

## CHAOS MUTATIONS

### d6 Description

- 1 **Acid boils.** A creature that hits the rift swine with a melee attack must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) acid damage.
- 2 **Tentacular Tongue.** Instead of using its tusks, the rift swine can attack with its tongue: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled and restrained as with a tentacle attack (escape DC 14).
- 3 **Covered in Slime.** Increase the rift swine's AC by 1.
- 4 **Acid Saliva.** The rift swine's tusk or tongue attack does an additional 3 (1d6) acid damage.
- 5 **Poison spit.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d12) poison damage.
- 6 Roll twice.

## SAND SILHOUETTE

Found on page 332 of the *Tome of Beasts*, sand silhouettes are undead created when unfortunate victims are buried under sandstorms or dune collapses. In *Grimalkin* (see page 100), a sand silhouette guards a powerful item in the Growling Sanctuary.

### Sand Silhouette

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (natural armor)

**HIT POINTS** 105 (14d8 + 42)

**SPEED** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+2)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** necrotic, poison

**CONDITION IMMUNITIES** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** all languages it knew in life

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Camouflage.** While in desert environments, the sand silhouette can use the Hide action even while under direct observation.

**Sand Form.** The sand silhouette can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Sand Glide.** The sand silhouette can burrow through nonmagical, loose sand without disturbing the material it is moving through. It is invisible while burrowing this way.

**Vulnerability to Water.** For every 5 feet the sand silhouette moves while touching water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 2 (1d4) cold damage. If the sand silhouette is completely immersed in water, it takes 10 (4d4) cold damage.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The sand silhouette makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and the sand silhouette engulfs it.

**Engulf.** The sand silhouette engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded and restrained, but no longer grappled. It must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the sand silhouette's turns or take 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the sand silhouette moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The sand silhouette can only engulf one creature at a time.

**Haunted Haboob (Recharge 4–6).** The sand silhouette turns into a 60-foot radius roiling cloud of dust and sand filled with frightening shapes. A creature that starts its turn inside the cloud must choose whether to close its eyes and be blinded until the start of its next turn, or keep its eyes open and make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature repeats the Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## SCRIBE OF THOTH-HERMES

*The quiet, scholarly demeanor of the scribe walking toward the criminal in chains belies the scribe's true power. If the criminal is found guilty, the wrath of the heavens and earth flow through the scribe.*

**Judge, Jury, Executioner.** Scribes of Thoth-Hermes are the officials of Nuria Natal tasked with recording, distributing, and interpreting the laws. In Per-Bastet, they act alongside and on behalf of the Council of Sands. They are also given the power to deal with those who've been detained for breaking those laws. Justice is swift and sure. The scribes have not only the power to judge guilt and impose sentences, they also have the mandate to carry out those sentences if they desire.

**The Tools of Office.** Scribes of Thoth-Hermes wear ceremonial robes and insignias denoting their station. The scribes carry quills or wear jewelry depicting quills, reminders of their dedication to Thoth-Hermes and the laws of Nuria Natal. They carry many books and scrolls, allowing them access to the law wherever they travel—although some scribes retain porters to carry their

records. All scribes carry a rod of their office. Imbued with the power of the scribe's connection to Thoth-Hermes, the rod can cause criminals intense mental stress and blind the guilty. For less violent punishment, the scribe can magically instruct the criminal to perform some service to the city.

**Public Trials and Entertainment.** When a scribe of Thoth-Hermes is seen in public, the citizens give the scribe a wide berth. Reactions range from fear to awe: those with crimes to hide quake in fear, while the honest citizens know that if a scribe of Thoth-Hermes is walking to a public site, a trial—and most likely a severe punishment or execution—is in the offing. Punishment is often done publicly, acting as both a deterrent and a bit of entertainment.



**Contemplation and Action.** Scribes of Thoth-Hermes spend much of their time cloistered in offices and libraries, either interpreting the last proclamation from the city leaders or debating with each other what those proclamations mean. Each scribe is assigned a personal bodyguard, a veteran soldier tasked to protect the scribe at all costs. Per-Bastet's scribes rarely go out in public for trials without their bodyguard, a Bastet warrior-priestess (see page 126), and at least six guards.

### Scribe of Thoth-Hermes

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 12 (15 with mage armor)

**HIT POINTS** 58 (13d8)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

**SAVING THROWS** Wis +5, Cha +5

**SKILLS** History +9, Insight +8, Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The scribe of Thoth-Hermes is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *mage armor*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *hypnotic pattern*, *tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *locate creature*

5th level (1 slot): *geas*

#### ACTIONS

**Rod of Thoth-Hermes.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be blinded until the end of the scribe's next turn.

#### REACTIONS

**Shield of Thoth-Hermes.** When a scribe of Thoth-Hermes is hit by a melee attack, it can interpose a reflective shield between itself and the attacker. The scribe takes half of the damage from the attack, and the attacker takes psychic damage equal to that amount.

## SECOND-STORY FALCON

*As the thief climbs out the window, a baboon grins down at it from above the sill. Distracted by the baboon, the thief fails to notice the long, hooked pole before it's too late. Startled, the thief falls from the window, as guards wielding hooked poles jump down from nearby rooftops.*

**Guards of the Tower-tops.** The city guards patrol the streets and alleys of Per-Bastet, vigilant in their duties—but painfully unaware of the crimes taking place among the rooftops of the city. The city employs a special type of guard to resolve this issue. These guards, known as second story falcons, keep the peace above and foil the nêr-do-wells who ply their nefarious trades above the heads of the average citizen.

**Expert Climbers and Aerial Combatants.** The second story falcons are guards who specialize in handling threats on rooftops or in the higher reaches of the city. Trained extensively to perform their niche occupation, they are experts at climbing and fighting at dangerous heights. They are masters with a variant of the Nurian hook, called the hook-pole, which assists them in keeping their balance and climbing in difficult places. More importantly, however, the hook-pole can be used to both injure and



unbalance foes, leading many cat-burglars to suffer terrible falls when caught in the act.

**Baboon Friends.** Second story falcons do not carry out their duties alone. They train with and lead a small cadre of baboons who assist them in the more dangerous work. The baboons follow the commands of the falcons and perform tasks ranging from gently getting overenthusiastic cats off dangerous perches to attacking a lawbreaker in the act of theft or worse.

**Peerless Investigators.** The falcons are also trained in the investigative arts, as they often must follow the clues that they find in the dizzying heights down to the streets and businesses of the city. While the falcons are most comfortable aloft, they are respected and admired while moving among their peers on the ground.

### Second Story Falcon

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral

**ARMOR CLASS** 14 (leather armor)

**HIT POINTS** 55 (10d8 + 10)

**SPEED** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +5

**SKILLS** Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Investigation +4, Stealth +5

**SENSES** passive Perception 11

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 3 (700 XP)

**Fast Climber.** If the second story falcon climbs at least 10 feet on its turn, it can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The second story falcon makes two attacks.

**Hook-Pole.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the falcon chooses if the target is knocked prone or pushed up to 5 feet in a direction chosen by the falcon.

**Poisoned Dart.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) poison damage.

#### REACTIONS

**Cat Reflexes.** When the second story falcon takes damage from falling, it can make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The falling damage is reduced by an amount equal to that result. If this reduces the damage to 0, the falcon doesn't land prone. The falcon can't use this reaction if it is incapacitated.

## UNDEAD FACTOTUM

*The pleasant-looking gentleman sporting the fine clothes and exquisite demeanor wanted to talk about a business proposition outside of the heat of the sun. But my, what sharp teeth he has!*

**Functional Servants of the Pallid Court.** The Pallid Court holds sway from an island palace that juts into the River Nuria west of the Hunt. At its center is Lady Alashra al-Zania (see page 9), vampire and master schemer. While the blazing sun keeps her and her court from gaining a true foothold of power in Per-Bastet, she has created a new tool that may allow her more influence: her undead factotums.



**Weaker but Stronger Vampires.** The undead factotums are created through a careful process of feeding and training perfected by Lady Alashra herself. Those victims (or volunteers) of the process emerge as undead creatures with some of the powers of unlife, but they do not succumb to exposure to the sun's cleansing rays.

**Emissaries and Assassins.** Lady Alashra sends her factotums into Per-Bastet to do her bidding. Some act in the open as official representatives of the Pallid Court, standing in her stead during meetings of the Council of Sands, while others attempt to infiltrate organizations of power within the city. They receive their instructions through a series of messengers difficult to trace back to the Pallid Court, then subtly manipulate situations to benefit their mistress.

**Unsubtle Means Are Sometimes Required.** When the slow and patient portions of Lady Alashra's plans are not working well, she calls upon her factotums to assassinate important targets. They can channel their necromantic power through their specially designed daggers, which temporarily incapacitates a victim, making them easy prey. Occasionally, an important or influential individual disappears without a trace, turning up at a lavish dinner party at the Pallid Court the next day. Whether they are a guest or an entrée at the party depends on how useful they might be to Lady Alashra.

**Undead Nature.** The undead factotum doesn't require air.

### Undead Factotum

Medium undead, neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 15 (studded leather)

**HIT POINTS** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**SPEED** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

**SAVING THROWS** Dex +6, Con +5

**SKILLS** Deception +6, History +4, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

**DAMAGE RESISTANCES** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**SENSES** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common

**CHALLENGE** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Assassinate.** During its first turn, the undead factotum has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the factotum scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

**Regeneration.** The undead factotum regains 10 hp at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hp. If the factotum takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the factotum's next turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The undead factotum makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or creature that is surprised, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The target's hp maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the undead factotum regains hp equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hp maximum to 0.

**Swooning Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

### WAR OSTRICH

Found on page 307 of the *Tome of Beasts*, war ostriches are prized as mounts in the Southlands. Though ornery and a bit harder to control, their faster speed and better desert adaptations make them valued over horses. In *Three Little Pigs* (see page 85), they are the trained steeds of a band of gnolls lead by a gnoll slaver.

### War Ostrich

Large beast, unaligned

**ARMOR CLASS** 11

**HIT POINTS** 42 (5d10 + 15)

**SPEED** 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**SENSES** passive Perception 10

**LANGUAGES** —

**CHALLENGE** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Standing Leap.** The ostrich can jump horizontally up to 20 feet and vertically up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

**Battle Leaper.** If a riderless ostrich jumps at least 10 feet and lands within 5 feet of a creature, it has advantage on attacks against that creature this turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ostrich makes two kicking claw attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## WERECROCODILE

Werecrocodiles inhabit many cities and villages on the banks of the River Nuria and can also be found in numbers in Lake Gossai in the Fallen Kingdom of Aksaba where they serve a sinister cult known as the Seven Wicked Blades (see *Southlands Worldbook*).

**Big Grins.** Werecrocodiles in humanoid form are well-muscled and have a disconcerting smile that is just a bit too wide. They like to wield khopeshes (Nurian sickle-swords) and other brutal slashing weapons in battle.

**Mistaken for Merchants.** Werecrocodiles are often confused for subek (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 371), which can sometimes lead to nasty surprises for those seeking knowledge or goods. The indifference that subek feel toward werecrocodiles doesn't help the situation, leaving customers always on edge, never knowing if they're dealing with a subek merchant or a duplicitous werecrocodile.

### Werecrocodile

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral evil

**ARMOR CLASS** 11 in humanoid form, 12 (natural armor) in crocodile or hybrid form

**HIT POINTS** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**SPEED** 30 ft. (20 ft., swim 30 ft. in crocodile or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

**SKILLS** Deception +4, Intimidation +4, Perception +2

**DAMAGE IMMUNITIES** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

**SENSES** passive Perception 12

**LANGUAGES** Common, Nurian, Southern Trade Tongue (can't speak in crocodile form)

**CHALLENGE** 3 (700 XP)

**Hold Breath (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** The werecrocodile can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

**Shapechanger.** The werecrocodile can use its action to polymorph into a crocodile-humanoid hybrid or into a crocodile, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its AC and size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.



### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** The werecrocodile makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

**Bite (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the werecrocodile can't bite another target. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werecrocodile lycanthropy.

**Tail Swipe (Crocodile or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target not grappled by the werecrocodile. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Khopesh (Humanoid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

# appendix: magic items

This section contains the magic items found in the Adventures chapter.

## BROTHERHOOD OF FEZZES

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This trio of fezzes only works if all three hats are worn within 60 feet of each other by creatures of the same size. If one of the hats is removed or moves further than 60 feet from the others or if creatures of different sizes are wearing the hats, the hats' magic temporarily ceases.

While three creatures of the same size wear these fezzes within 60 feet of each other, each creature can use its action to cast the *alter self* spell from it at will. However, all three wearers of the fezzes are affected as if the same spell was simultaneously cast on each of them, making each wearer appear identical to the other. For example, if one Medium-sized wearer uses an action to change its appearance to that of a specific elf, each other wearer's appearance changes to look like the exact same elf.

## CALLING CAT

*Wondrous item, rare*

This pendant is a simple clay cat figurine with one searching eye in its bloated feline face. It hangs on a dried, ancient leather thong.

This pendant is part of a matched set, which consists of up to 13 clay cat figurines and their associated *cat's cradle*, a larger figurine of horrific, mangled, and blended feline features with up to 13 cavities for housing the pendants. Whoever holds the *cradle* knows the direction and distance to all of its linked *calling cats*. This property works like the *locate object* spell, except there is no limit to the distance as long as a *calling cat* and its *cat's cradle* are on the same plane of existence. Though individual *calling cats* don't require attunement, the *cat's cradle* does.



## GRIMALKIN EYE

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

A black slit, making it appear as a real eye, bisects this fist-sized, spherical, tiger's eye gem. Hanging from a weathered chain, the gem is said to be the magically preserved eye of a lioness that served Bastet while the goddess was mortal.

This necklace has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. The necklace has the following properties, which can affect only feline beasts, such as domestic cats, leopards, lynxes, lions, or their giant versions, but not feline creatures that aren't beasts, such as weretigers, rakshasas, or griffons.

- **Dominate Feline.** Wearing this necklace, you can use an action to cast *dominate beast* (save DC 15) from the necklace on a feline beast. The necklace can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

- **Feline Friendship.** While wearing this necklace, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the following spells on a feline beast: *animal friendship*, *animal messenger*, or *speak with animals*.

**Curse.** This necklace is cursed, and becoming attuned to it extends the curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the necklace, keeping it within reach at all times. While cursed by this necklace, if you don't spend at least 1 hour each day communing with the necklace, then the next time you use it, cats with an Intelligence score of 3 or lower within 50 feet of you act as if under a *confusion* spell for 1 minute. For the duration, at the start of each of your turns, you see through the eyes of a randomly selected cat within range instead of your own eyes, and you have no control over where you look. In addition, you can't use any properties of this necklace for the duration.

#### GRIMALKIN IDOL

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

This bloated idol is carved in the shape of a smug cat whose flesh is distended with weight. The head has a stylized space for a single eye, but the socket is empty and bloody.

This idol has 10 charges, and it regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. The idol has the following properties, which can affect only feline creatures and creatures with feline ancestry, such as domestic cats, leopards, lions, feline lycanthropes, rakshasas, tigers, catfolk, griffons, and any other feline creature, at the GM's discretion.

- **Feline Control.** While holding this idol, you can use an action and choose one feline creature you can see within 300 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be under your control. This property works like the *dominate monster* spell, except the duration is 24 hours, and the target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each hour in addition to each time it takes damage. If the saving throw succeeds, the spell ends, as normal. You can have only one feline creature controlled in this way at one time. If you

attempt to control another, the effect on the previous target ends. Once used, this property of the idol can't be used again until the next dawn.

- **Feline Manipulation.** While holding this idol, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of the idol's charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using spell save DC 17: *conjure animals* (two tigers or lions only, 3 charges), *enhance ability* (cat's grace only, 2 charges), *enlarge/reduce* (2 charges), *magic weapon* (6th-level version, 6 charges).
- **Feline Rapport (Fused with Grimalkin Eye Only).** While holding this idol, you can use an action to cast one of the following spells from it: *animal friendship*, *animal messenger*, or *speak with animals*.

**Reuniting with the Grimalkin Eye.** If the *grimalkin eye* is placed in the empty socket of this idol, the items fuse, and the idol gains the Feline Rapport property (see above). While fused, the *grimalkin eye's* curse is nullified and doesn't extend to you, and you can't use the *grimalkin eye*. If a creature is attuned to the idol, the fused items can't be separated.

**Destroying the Idol.** If the idol is bathed in the freely given blood of a high priestess of Bastet for 1 hour, the *grimalkin idol* and its *grimalkin eye* turn to dust.



# COMMAND 700 NEW SPELLS FOR FIFTH EDITION



No matter how you slice it, magic is at the heart of fantasy—and nothing says magic like a massive tome of spells. This tome collects, updates, tweaks, and expands spells from years of the Deep Magic for Fifth Edition series—more than 700 new and revised spells. And it adds a lot more:

- 19 divine domains from Beer to Mountain and Speed to Winter;
- 13 new wizard specialties, such as the elementalists and the timekeeper;
- 6 new sorcerous origins, including the Aristocrat and the Farseer;
- 3 otherworldly patrons for warlocks, including the Sibyl;
- expanded treatments of familiars and other wizardly servants;
- and much more!

This tome is not just for wizards, warlocks, and sorcerers. Deep Magic also expands the horizons of what's possible for bards, clerics, druids, and even rangers and paladins. It offers something new for every spellcasting class.

**Deep Magic contains nothing but magic from start to finish!**

**KOBOLD  
Press**

©2020 Open Design. Kobold Press logo is a trademark of Open Design.



# arise, heroes of the southlands!

In this companion volume to the Southlands Worldbook for 5E, players will find dozens of rules options to build characters who hail from this sprawling continent or embark upon adventures set there.

It features racial traits for catfolk, gnolls, jinnborn, minotaurs, lizardfolk, trollkin, and more; new magic options, including hieroglyphs and lotus blossoms; new class options, including the Circle of the Desert druid, the Aeromancer wizard, the Caravan Raider rogue, and the paladin's Oath of the Ancestors; and new weapons and items that originate from this storied region.

***This book is the definitive source for players who want to bring their Southlands characters to life!***



**KOBOLD  
Press**

©2020 Open Design. Kobold Press logo is a trademark of Open Design LLC.  
5E bullet is used by kind permission of Sasquatch Game Studio.

# A MURDER OF MONSTERS FOR 5TH EDITION!



*Tome of Beasts 2* brings you:

- Angelic enforcers and avalanche screamers
- Imperial dragons and swordbreaker skeletons
- Kami and clockwork tigers
- Void drakes and zombie dragons
- Death vultures and demon lords

- Swamp nagas and magma octopuses
- Chameleon hydras and shriekbats
- Walled horrors and wraith bears!

Keep your players surprised, entertained, and terrified with all-new opponents they've never seen before—and won't ever see coming!

[www.KoboldPress.com](http://www.KoboldPress.com)

**KOBOLD**  
Press

Kobold Press logo is a trademark of Open Design.



## OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the

owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity.

The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

## 15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

**Open Game License v 1.0a** Copyright 2000–2005, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. d20

**System Reference Document** Copyright 2000–2005, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, and Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

**Midgard Worldbook.** © 2018 Open Design LLC. Authors: Wolfgang Baur, Dan Dillon, Richard Green, Jeff Grubb, Chris Harris, Brian Suskind, and Jon Sawatsky.

**Creature Codex.** © 2018 Open Design LLC; Authors Wolfgang Baur, Dan Dillon, Richard Green, James Haeck, Chris Harris, Jeremy Hochhalter, James Introcaso, Chris Lockey, Shawn Merwin, and Jon Sawatsky.

**Tome of Beasts.** ©2016, Open Design; Authors Chris Harris, Dan Dillon, Rodrigo Garcia Carmona, and Wolfgang Baur.

**Cat and Mouse** ©2015 Open Design; Authors: Richard Pett with Greg Marks

**Three Little Pigs - Part One: Nulah's Tale** ©2019 Open Design LLC; Author: Richard Pett

**Three Little Pigs - Part Two: Armina's Peril** ©2019 Open Design LLC; Author: Richard Pett

**Three Little Pigs - Part Three: Madgit's Story** ©2019 Open Design LLC; Author: Richard Pett

**Grimalkin** ©2016 Open Design; Authors: Richard Pett with Greg Marks

**City of Cats.** © 2021 Kobold Press; Authors: Richard Pett, Richard Green, Shawn Merwin, and Kelly Pawlik.

# Who do you trust in the city of cats?

Welcome to the City of Cats, where some very ambitious people have their paws and claws out, where thieves prowl, and where the goddess Bastet herself walks the streets!

This city gazetteer and adventure collection is a perfect introduction to the Southlands campaign setting. It also fits neatly into any desert setting where cats are sacred and rats are cautious and sly.

*City of Cats* is FULLY COMPATIBLE with the 5th Edition of the world's first roleplaying game and includes:

- Three wild adventures for levels 1 to 5, loaded with memorable NPCs
- Dozens of fully detailed and illustrated villains, NPCs, and new monsters
- A poster map of the city's dusty streets, rich temples, deadly docks, and the River of Sand!
- An official 5th Edition character sheet for heroes in the city
- A complete gazetteer of its districts filled with adventure ideas and distinctive characters

Sniff what's in the air and prepare for adventure—in the City of Cats!



**KOBOLD**  
Press

PO Box 2811 | Kirkland WA 98083  
[www.koboldpress.com](http://www.koboldpress.com)



MSRP \$39.99  
ISBN 978-1-950789-06-1  
Printed in China