

The Hourglass Desert



DUNGEON MASTERS
GUILD

A Setting and Campaign Book
for Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank my friends in the group that fought with valiant hearts through the maiden voyage of the Hourglass Desert campaign. Their enthusiasm and feedback was invaluable to the creation of this unique setting, and I hope that their hard-fought victory will be recognised.

David played Kema, a human druid who wandered into the Hourglass Desert from the Australian outback and whose favoured form, a flying giraffe, proved exceptionally useful not just as a comic relief but also in a fight to the death.

Emily played Lydia, a duskrise glamour bard who used her spectacular dances to peacefully resolve any situation. She gave her blood to restore the youth of her cursed comrades. Over the course of the campaign, she adopted traits from an elf, a black dragonborn, and finally a githyanki knight.

Josh played Elred, an elven sorcerer whose inspiring speeches and meditation sessions gave the party the strength and courage they needed to succeed. Without his calm voice and (occasionally hilarious) dramatic speeches, the party probably would not have survived their ordeals.

Judith played Nugget, a glass genasi paladin who overcame a terrible secret from her past to unlock her true potential, landing the blow that brought an ancient dragon to its knees.

Pat played Connor, a human ranger who was separated from the rest of his British Expeditionary Force and ended up in the desert. He relied on his musket to fight back against all of the singing and screaming creatures, knocked down again and again but always getting back the strength to keep fighting. After a nasty encounter with a banshee, his youth was taken from him, but it was restored by his friend Lydia after the defeat of the dragon.

Simon played Gribble, a sand gnome wizard whose cowardly persona was only a mask for his unstoppable cosmic power. He led a contingent of sand shamans in a pitched battle against the red dragon, supporting everyone else with creative uses of spells on the warship.

Most importantly, the party's camel Ringo deserves a shoutout. The poor thing went through a lot. After a nasty encounter with a banshee, Ringo aged more than 30 years in a second, becoming a sad, old, decrepit camel where once there was youth and vigour. After making an emotional connection with Nugget during one of Elred's inspiring meditation activities, the party kept him on, using polymorph to transform him into great winged beasts. During the final fight, the githyanki knight Yaukiss used his telekinesis on Ringo to give him the power of flight, which he used to catch Nugget as she fell, saving her life. Ringo was rewarded by the ancient wizard Osark, who used Lydia's duskrise blood to restore Ringo's youth. Ringo is now a baby camel again with his whole life ahead of him.

The entire party, plus Yaukiss, Spite, and Ringo have taken the githyanki warship to the stars, exploring the planes. Maybe one day each of them will find their homes again.

LEGAL STUFF

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master's Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

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ARTWORK

Front Cover. Yaukiss and Lydia by Thea Blokhuis (<https://www.deviantart.com/wildfireillustration>). A githyanki knight takes a break to appreciate the cultural dance of the native people of the Hourglass Desert, the duskrise. A githyanki war party failed to conquer them a thousand years prior. Perhaps true beauty can only be found in small moments like these, freely given. Perhaps it is time to make amends.

Part I Section Divider. Red Canyon Hoodoo Hike by Nicolas Raymond (<https://www.deviantart.com/boldfrontiers>).

Part II Section Divider. Poul naborne Pastel Rapture by Nicolas Raymond (<https://www.deviantart.com/boldfrontiers>).

Back Cover. Bell Serpent Canyon by Nicolas Raymond (<https://www.deviantart.com/boldfrontiers>).

SOURCES

Player's Handbook. The core rules for Dungeons and Dragons, most spells, and the twelve core classes and most of their subclasses are found here.

Monster Manual The Monster Manual contains the majority of the enemies encountered in this document.

Elemental Evil Player's Companion. This official free document contains many of the spells and a few of the races in the Hourglass Desert.

Xanathar's Guide to Everything. Additional subclasses and spells are found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything.

Volo's Guide to Monsters. This book contains several of the monsters referenced in this document. If you don't own Volo's Guide to Monsters, there are suggestions provided for how to replace these monsters with others in the Monster Manual and this document.

Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes. This book contains several of the monsters referenced in this document. If you don't own Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes, there are suggestions provided for how to replace these monsters with others in the Monster Manual and this document.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book contains everything you need to run a campaign in the Hourglass Desert. It includes the following content.

- Setting Information
- Variant Rules
- Character Creation Guidelines
- Races: 2 new variants, 3 new subraces, 1 new full race
- Classes: 5 new subclasses
- Spells: 3 new spells
- Full Campaign
- 100 Random Encounters
- 16 NPC Statblocks
- 12 Monster Statblocks

DM PREPARATION

Before starting a campaign in this setting, the DM should read through all six chapters of the main campaign and skim through the random encounters. Some other tips:

Don't Forget the Complication Tables. Some of the best moments from the first time this campaign was run was when the desert environment itself completely changed the course of a battle. The complications are on page 67.

Don't Be As Surprised by an Encounter as Your Players. One way to avoid being unprepared by a complicated random encounter is to 'pre-roll' the random encounters before the session and plan them out ahead of time. This will help in keeping the game moving instead of making the players wait for you to read through something new.

Use the Tools for Managing Monster Selection. The index on page 96 is sorted alphabetically and contains the source (and page number) for each monster referenced in this book. It also highlights random encounters within which the monster is found, in case you want to try out a specific monster on your party and want a pre-written encounter with it. You can also use the guides on page 69 and 83 for swapping out monsters from Volo's Guide to Monsters and Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes for ones from the Monster Manual and this book, in case you do not own nor want to purchase those other books.

Play to Your Party's Strengths. Use ranged spell attacks against the glass genasi. Let the dune diver camp out for an ambush. Provide suitors for the duskribe. Your party chose their race and class for a reason.

Go Full Ham on the Spectacle. Have a playlist of desert ambience in the background. Use unique voices for each of the different races. Aim a harsh light at the players when the sun beats down on their backs. Perform a dance to charm your players while their characters are charmed in the game. Crank up the heater, why not. The difference between a fun campaign and a campaign that no one will ever forget is *presentation*. But only if you want to.

Trust Your Judgement. If anything in the book doesn't make sense to you, or if you think you could improve something, just go for it. You're the DM. Your word is law.

PLAYER PREPARATION

Give the players full access to Part I of the book. There's nothing there they aren't supposed to see.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: THE PLAYERS

INTRODUCTION (6)

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? (6)

VARIANT RULES (7)

- Heat Levels (8)

CHARACTER CREATION (8)

EXPECTATIONS (9)

PLAYER OPTIONS (10)

RACES (10)

- Aarakocra (EE)
- Genasi (EE)
- Human (HD)
- Sand Gnome (HD)
- Dune Orc (HD)
- Pelandrian Elf (HD)
- Glass Genasi (HD)
- Duskrise (HD)

CLASSES (12)

- Barbarians (PHB, XGE)
- Glamour Bard (XGE)
- Grave Cleric (XGE)
- Druids (PHB, XGE)
- Nomad Fighter (HD)
- Glass Monk (HD)
- Oath of Rebirth Paladin (HD)
- Dune Diver Ranger (HD)
- Storm Sorcerer (XGE)
- Genie Warlock (HD)
- Wizards (PHB, XGE)

BACKGROUNDS (16)

SPELLS (16)

PART II: THE CAMPAIGN

CHAPTER I: THE INTERLOPER (18)

CALL TO ACTION (18)

GLASSWORK (18)

THE ALIEN (19)

BRAVING THE DESERT (20)

CHAPTER II: DREAMS OF REBIRTH (22)

THE BIRTH OF A HERO (LVL+) (22)

A CHANGE IN FATE (24)

CHAPTER III: THE ETERNAL LOST (25)

THE WATCHTOWER (25)

THE CAVE (25)

THE WARSHIP (27)

THE DRAGON (28)

CHAPTER IV: FALLING SANDS (29)

PELANDRIA (LVL+) (30)

SHARDS (30)

THE ORC SIEGE (31)

CHAPTER V: ASCENT (34)

DUSKRISSE (34)

SADNESS AND MADNESS (34)

THE TOWER OF DUSK (35)

CHAPTER VI: THROUGH GLASS (37)

BACK TO GLASSWORK (LVL+) (37)

INNOCENCE LOST (38)

FIRE (40)

EPILOGUE (42)

DIFFERENT STORY DECISIONS (43)

PILGRIM CAMPAIGNS (43)

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (44)

ENCOUNTER LIST (45)

SUNRISE REALM COMPLICATIONS (68)

SUNSET REALM COMPLICATIONS (68)

MONSTERS (70)

HUMANOID (70)

MONSTROUS (84)

- Druid Wild Shape Table (85)

MONSTER INDEX (97)

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

During the campaign, the party levels up at the following three opportunities for a long rest.

- **Chapter II: Dreams of Rebirth.** The party levels up from 5th to 6th level when they take part in the dune orc celebration.
- **Chapter IV: Falling Sands.** The party levels up from 6th to 7th level when they recover in Pelandria.
- **Chapter VI: Through Glass.** The party levels up from 7th level to 8th level when they help out the mayor of Glasswork.

PART I

The Players



INTRODUCTION

Words alone are rarely sufficient to describe the nature of the Hourglass Desert. An interloper who first stumbles across this strange new world might not grasp the full extent of the forces underneath the sands. They might only see the sands draining in whirlpools, not realizing that an eternity away, an identical twin dimension takes shelter from those same sands trickling down from the skies above their heads.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

THE HOURGLASS DESERT

The desert is an isolated plane of existence in the astral sea.

Twin Seasons. During the summer, white sand rains from the sky. Flying creatures would be able to see the source of the sands if they were able to fly safely, but taking flight through the thousands of tonnes of sand sprinkling down to earth is hazardous at best and suicidal at worst. During the winter, however, the skies have settled and the sand dunes that have formed during the summer start to shift and slide in lazy circles, until finally they form sets of enormous whirlpools that drain the vast majority of the desert's sands into the basins below, where the sands are, for all a casual observer might observe, lost forever, only for the rains of sand to start up again the next summer.

Twin Realms. The Hourglass Desert is actually two separate planes of existence, called the Sunset Realm and the Sunrise Realm. While it's summer in one realm, it's winter in the other. In a sense, the two realms share exactly the same sands. Every season the sands that drain out of one realm are sucked into a wormhole and deposited in the skies of the other realm.

The two realms aren't exactly the same, however. The Sunset Realm is dominated by the pelandrian elves who have stumbled out of the Feywild and made a new home in the Hourglass Desert. The elves, and all other creatures who reside in the Sunset Realm, live exceptionally long lives for their species, and it can sometimes feel as though time has slowed to a crawl.

The Sunrise Realm, on the other hand, has become a bustling little pocket dimension for interplanar travelers. Permanent residents use the realm's curious properties and constant output of energetic sands to experiment with mechanical creations, trading their devices for curiosities and materials from other planes. While the Sunset Realm can feel languid, the Sunrise Realm bursts with activity, almost to a desperate degree. This has quieted down in recent years as no planar travelers have come to the desert and no residents have been able to leave.

Native to both realms are the duskriese, a strange, nomadic race that, over time, seems to have adopted a host of abilities from the other races who have made their home in the sands.

Twin Wormholes. It's not known how close the two realms really are to one another, on a cosmic scale, but distance matters little when a wormhole closes the gap. The realms are connected by a set of two wormholes, each of which connects the draining sands beneath one realm to the glittering skies of the other realm. From the sand's perspective, it is always falling steadily down in a never-ending loop of rain and whirlpool.

During the winter, creatures that can fly can safely reach the wormhole in the sky of their realm, entering the basins beneath the surface of the other realm. During the summer, creatures that can burrow can safely reach the wormhole beneath the earth of their realm, sending themselves tumbling into the skies of the other realm.

Attempting to access the wrong wormhole during the wrong season is a supremely dangerous affair, and countless curious adventurers have suffocated to death or worse, for the sands themselves can seem almost sentient, almost vindictive, and have the power to send a creature hurtling through their own stages of life, aging up to a hundred years in an instant.

THE GREAT HOURGLASS

In the isolated system of a desert, the presence of a god watching over the sands is hotly debated. Those who believe call this god the Great Hourglass, the one who ensures that the cycles of birth and death remain constant throughout the seasons. Clerics and paladins worship at the altar of the Great Hourglass and carry its symbol, one half of a broken hourglass, around their necks as a pendant.

Disbelievers of the Great Hourglass note that magical power can be found in many ways through the Hourglass Desert, and it is very possible that those who believe they draw their power from a god in fact are merely drawing upon the power that is already here. There is no need for a great being to grant such powers to them explicitly.

Still, the religion of the Great Hourglass provides the communities in the desert some comfort through the burial rites it affords the dead. The idea that all things come in cycles, that there is no true end, is an attractive idea indeed.

LANGUAGES

There are seven major languages spoken in the Hourglass Desert. In order from most to least common:

COMMON

Common in the Hourglass Desert, as a result of its isolation, would hardly be recognisable to speakers of Common in the material plane. It shares many of the same words and grammatical structure but has diverged significantly from its roots. It's a language shared by most people within the desert, but trade between natives and outsiders is usually conducted in Gnomish (or sometimes Elvish), having not changed as dramatically.

GNOMISH

As the primary language of trade between the Hourglass Desert and the outside planes, Gnomish has gained a reputation as a source of commerce, mathematics, science, technology, and progress. Those who have established regular trade with the Hourglass Desert ensure they have at least one gnome on board, and they pay the gnome exceedingly high wages so they don't jump ship at the first opportunity. Now that the desert seems to have been cut off from other planes, Gnomish is still used as a language of trade, but Common is more popular within the peoples of the desert.

ORC

The dune orcs are very successful in the desert and have a tribal civilisation that is arguably more successful here than what their cousins have in the material plane. Their language has changed quite a bit and bears little resemblance to the Orc language on Toril, aside from superficial similarities like the prevalence of barks and growls. Most other races don't bother learning Orc, but the sheer number of dune orcs means that the language remains high in use.

ELVISH

The pelandrian elves in the Sunset Realm have their own language which is a combination of Elvish and Sylvan. Most people simply refer to it as Elvish. The elements of Sylvan are mostly adopted phrases and idioms, and the original aspects of the language are drawn from elements of the Hourglass Desert not shared from the material plane, so communication between pelandrian elves and the high elves, wood elves, and drow from Toril is difficult but not impossible. For this reason, trade with the Sunset Realm is often conducted in a simplified form of Elvish rather than in the pelandrian dialect.

PRIMORDIAL

Although not the most popular language, Primordial is the most ancient and true of the languages of the Hourglass Desert. Glass genasi are born with an innate knowledge of Primordial, and many planeswalkers who visit share this language as well (often just for practical purposes). Its universality makes it ideal for communicating with old and powerful beings; it's most likely that it is a language they will at least recognise if they do not know it already. The aarakocra who have settled here also know how to speak Primordial and favour those who send genasi as diplomats.

DUSK

The duskribe of the Hourglass Desert have their own language, but almost all of them know three languages or more, with Common almost always being one of them. Although the duskribe interact with many other species regularly, they retain their own personal language for privacy reasons with their own kind. Few other races bother to learn Dusk due to the ease with which the duskribe pick up new languages anyway.

AARAKOCRA

There's nothing particularly special about the Aarakocra language apart from its musical, birdlike quality. Its lack of popularity only stems from the very small population of aarakocra in the desert (less than a hundred). Most aarakocra also speak Primordial for diplomacy.

VARIANT RULES

ROAD TRIP RESTING

The style of play in the Hourglass Desert has a road-trip feel to it. The characters travel for many days to get to their destination, fighting off threats and dealing with issues as they go. Generally, there is only one substantial fight every couple of days, meaning that, with the default resting rules in the Player's Handbook, players will be able to 'go nova' on every fight, lessening the challenge considerably. Instead, a campaign in the Hourglass Desert operates on different resting rules.

1. Resting overnight for eight hours counts as a short rest.
2. Spending three days of comfortable downtime in a civilised area with proper accommodation counts as a long rest.

To clarify when it is appropriate to take a long rest, the adventure will explicitly call out specific opportunities afforded to the players throughout the adventure. These opportunities may also explicitly allow for players to level up at appropriate milestones. If it doesn't say the party can level up, they can't.

Some monster statblocks include abilities that recharge on a short rest: remember that this means a full night of sleep. Abilities that are "1/day" mean the same thing.

RESOURCE TRACKING

Part of the elements that make a campaign in the Hourglass Desert unique is the focus on ensuring that the party has the resources to survive a trek through the desert. Make sure that the party keeps track of their rations, water supply, shelter, and level of heat. It's recommended to mark down on a sheet the use of resources. Keep in mind that some spells (*create or destroy water* or *goodberry*, for example) allow the players to easily overcome these limitations, although the road trip resting rules ensure that these will come at the expense of spell slots during combat. Rangers and characters with the outlander background also provide opportunities to easily forage for supplies, so take this into account when guiding your party through character creation.

Encumbrance is also tracked, but the penalties for encumbering a character are different.

- If you carry items with a weight exceeding half of your encumbrance, your heat level increases by 1 for that day.
- If you carry items exceeding your maximum encumbrance, your heat level increases by 2 for that day, your speed drops to 10 feet, and you cannot carry more items.

For every day a party does not meet one of their needs (food, water, shelter, or heat level), they must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take one level of exhaustion. Each subsequent day where their needs are not met increases the DC by 1. Many racial and class features specific to the desert give players bonuses or other alleviations to these rolls.

Players especially need to manage heat. If their heat level exceeds 3 at the end of the day, their needs are not met and they must roll for exhaustion as above. Characters who are adapted to hot climates can manage a heat level of 4 instead of 3. Each of the following conditions increases a character's heat level by 1. Characters should expect to have at least one heat level each day; it is not possible to avoid heat entirely.

- You took fire damage today.
- You spent more than three hours in direct sunlight today (this is expected on most days).
- You did not sleep well the previous night (up to the discretion of your DM).
- You wore medium or heavy armor today.
- You fought more than one battle today.
- You carried items with a weight exceeding half of your encumbrance today.
- You carried items with a weight exceeding your encumbrance today (stacks with previous).

Not every group will enjoy this mechanic. The group doesn't have to follow these rules if they don't want to, but make sure that the rules apply to every member of the group equally and that they are agreed upon at the start.

FEATS

The use of feats as an alternative to ability score improvements is a variant rule that is commonly adopted by players of Dungeons and Dragons. A campaign in the Hourglass Desert uses this variant rule, and also expands it by providing players with a free feat at character creation.

LONG REST REWARDS

The variant rules for resting in the Hourglass Desert may result in a punitive feeling for players when using the standard rules for regaining hit dice at the completion of a long rest. The regular rules dictate that you regain only half of your hit dice, whereas the variant rule in place here dictates that all of them are regained instead.

Additionally, all levels of exhaustion are cleared upon the completion of a long rest, not just one.

MONEY

Currency is not used in the Hourglass Desert, with most merchants using a barter system. The closest that anything comes to a currency is "days of rations" and "days of water".

Some spells require material components with a price attached. Normally, you would need to purchase these components. For this campaign, you can replace these items with your component pouch or your arcane focus (etc.) as though the material components didn't have a cost attached.

CHARACTER CREATION

To create a character for use in a campaign set in the Hourglass Desert, players undergo the following steps.

STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Players create a vague character concept like "desert soldier" or "nomad tracker". Players should be aware of the limitations of a campaign in this setting, particularly in the following areas.

- There is a heavy survival focus.
- Magic is limited to a few areas, specifically elemental magic (not water), desert-related natural magic, clerical magic related to death and rebirth, and some fey magic adopted from the elves.
- The world has recently been cut off from the planes but otherwise has engaged in a lot of trade with other realms.

In addition, it's recommended for a party to include at least one character who has at least one of the following options:

- Race: Glass Genasi
- Class: Ancestral Guardian Barbarian
- Class: Oath of Rebirth Paladin
- Class: Genie Patron Warlock
- Background: Hermit

STEP TWO: RACE

Players decide whether their character is an outsider to the Hourglass Desert or was born and raised here. Players can pick a race outside of these options from any sourcebook with their DM's permission, but if their wish is to be special and unique, they can play a duskriese, which allows them to gain traits and abilities from their preferred race without having to clear it with the DM first.

Players pick from the following racial options. The races here are either original to this document (HD) or found in the Elemental Evil Player's Companion (EE).

- Aarakocra (EE)
- Genasi (EE)
- Human (HD)
- Sand Gnome (HD)
- Dune Orc (HD)
- Pelandrian Elf (HD)
- Glass Genasi (HD)
- Duskriese (HD)

STEP THREE: CLASS

Players pick from the following list of classes. Players can pick other classes from any sourcebook or homebrew, but must justify why their character is so out of place in the desert and how they have adapted to their drastic change in circumstances.

The sources for the classes included here are the Player's Handbook (PHB), Xanathar's Guide to Everything (XGE), or original to this document (HD).

- Any Barbarian (PHB, XGE)
- Glamour Bard (XGE)
- Grave Cleric (XGE)
- Any Druid (PHB, XGE)
- Nomad Fighter (HD)
- Glass Monk (HD)
- Oath of Rebirth Paladin (HD)
- Dune Diver Ranger (HD)
- Scout Rogue (XGE)
- Storm Sorcerer (XGE)
- Genie Warlock (HD)
- Any Wizard (PHB, XGE)

STEP FOUR: BACKGROUND

Players whose character is an outsider can pick any background from any sourcebook or homebrew. Players whose character is a native to the Hourglass Desert can pick any background but are encouraged to choose from this list:

- Acolyte: You worship the Great Hourglass.
- Criminal (Spy): You keep an eye on enemy factions.
- Entertainer: You keep spirits high.
- Guild Artisan (Merchant): You craft and sell valuable goods.
- Hermit: You live alone in search of deep secrets.
- Outlander: You live amidst a tribe of nomads.
- Sailor (Pirate): You're a desert bandit.

This list is reproduced in the Background section of this document.

STEP FIVE: FREE FEAT

Players pick any feat from the Player's Handbook or from Xanathar's Guide to Everything for free. Homebrew feats or feats from other sourcebooks are allowed with the DM's permission.

STEP SIX: FREE TRINKET

Players pick a trinket from the Player's Handbook that has special significance to their character.

STEP SEVEN: BUILD CHARACTER

Players assign their stats and build their character to 5th level. They can give their character any non-magical equipment they wish. A character doesn't need to worry about money, but they do need to worry about encumbrance.

STEP EIGHT: ESTABLISH BONDS

Players talk with each other and create a bond or connection to each other character in the group. These bonds are important not just to establish but also to maintain; it's important to remember to check in with all other members of the party during each overnight rest, as the party will be spending a lot of uninterrupted time together.

EXPECTATIONS

The Hourglass Desert is an original setting, and the campaign in this document serves as a "highlight reel" of its wonders. However, in order for the most to be made from the adventures provided to the party, some expectations ahead of time should be established.

The Adventurers Want to Adventure. The most important thing to remember while playing this campaign is that every character in the party must want to go on adventures. They want to travel, to fight, to learn new things, to make difficult decisions, and to change the world. They also want to be part of a group, and they respect the other characters in their party because they all share a common motivation to go on adventures.

The Story is Here for the Player's Fun. The story of the campaign is written with an implicit understanding that the players will participate enthusiastically so they'll be able to experience all the cool stuff that the setting has to offer. The story assumes that the party wants to travel with the alien, and, later on, they want to move quickly so they have time to prepare defenses for their home. Even later, it's expected that the party wants to have an epic final battle in the skies. There is a lot of room for player self-expression in the story, but the general plot beats are taken as a given. If the story is not followed exactly, the DM should not despair: the book trusts your skills to improvise if you are knocked off course. There are also suggestions at the end of Chapter VI for how to adapt the story if players make decisions that throw things off course.

The Fun Comes Before the Story. While the story of the campaign is pre-set, sticking rigidly to what is written in this document when your players make it clear they're not having fun is not what a good DM does. There are plenty of resources in this book, like monsters, NPCs, spells, and interesting locations, that can be adapted into the basis for new campaigns and new stories. A DM could theoretically grab a few of the random encounters and string them together into their own campaign. Do not feel restricted by the book if that's not what your table wants. At the end of Chapter VI, there is also an alternative approach to a campaign, putting the story completely in the background and sending the players on a pilgrimage through the desert, focusing much more on the use of the extensive random encounters than on forming a coherent, dramatic story from beginning to end. If this seems more your group's speed, go for it.

PLAYER OPTIONS

RACES

AARAKOCRA (EE)

Aarakocra are bird people from the elemental plane of air. The aarakocra in the Hourglass Desert were sent here in search of an ancient alien warship that crashed here a long time ago, said to once have been the flagship of the evil Githyanki raiders before it was lost. When the way back home disappeared, the aarakocra have set up a new life in the highest ranges of the desert, ever searching for a way home and, barring that, at least for the ship they were sent to find here.

Aarakocra traits can be found in the Elemental Evil Player's Companion.

GENASI (EE)

The elemental genasi, born of a genie and a mortal, are drawn to the Hourglass Desert innately. There are rumoured to be progenitor genies living amongst the shifting sands. Fire genasi come in search of an awesomely powerful efreeti who grants powers to warlocks in the desert. Earth genasi seek a dao that has the answers to merging with the earth and becoming one with creation. Air genasi come out of sympathy for a djinni who was said to have gone insane looking for his children. Water genasi stay far away from the desert, for there is nothing for them there but death.

Genasi traits can be found in the Elemental Evil Player's Companion.

HUMAN (HD)

In the Hourglass Desert setting, humans have different mechanical effects than in the Player's Handbook to distinguish themselves more from other races. Their flavour remains mostly the same, and the reasons for any human to find themselves in the desert are as varied as their origins.

As every character receives a free feat at character creation, the variant humans from the PHB are not permitted. You can still use the standard humans if you wish.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution and one other ability score of your choice increases by 2. A third ability score of your choice increases by 1.

Age. Humans in the Hourglass Desert live as long as humans anywhere else.

Alignment. Humans are not bound to any alignment.

Size. Humans are the same size in the Hourglass Desert as elsewhere. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Persistence Hunter. You ignore the effects of exhaustion until you gain a third level of exhaustion.

Sharp Learner. You are proficient in two skills of your choice.

Languages. You can speak Common and one other language of your choice.

SAND GNOME (HD)

Sand gnomes have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Hourglass Desert and have diverged genetically from the rock gnomes that originally settled here. Their tinkering technology has proved useful to themselves and their allies in the desert. They are a subrace of the gnomes from the Player's Handbook.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Planes Tinkerer. You have proficiency with artisan's tools (tinker's tools). Using those tools, you can spend 1 hour and 5 gp worth of materials to construct a Tiny magical device (AC 5, 1 hp). If you use your action to dismantle the device, you can reclaim the materials used to create it. You can have up to three such devices active at a time. When you create a device, choose one of the following options:

Compass. The device has three needles. The red needle points North. The yellow needle points towards the threshold where the two realms of the desert are at their closest. The blue needle points towards the closest source of drinkable water.

Hourglass. The device can be set as a timer for any length of time between 1 minute and 12 hours. When the timer runs out, you can choose to have it magically return to your person, release a loud chime, do both, or do nothing.

Weather Ball. The device predicts and reports the weather for the next day; it can be consulted as an action. At the beginning of the day, the DM secretly rolls a d6. On a roll of 1, all weather ball devices report inaccurate information for the day.

Sand Snake. You can attempt to hide even when you are only lightly obscured by sand.

DUNE ORC (HD)

Orcs in the Hourglass Desert have lost their cultural connection to Gruumsh and other gods of chaos, losing traits like darkvision but gaining other adaptations to their world. They are much more organised, efficient, and forward-thinking than their material brethren, but this does not always mean that alliances are easier to make. Raids from some dune orc tribes continue to be a thorn in the side of "proper" civilisation even while other tribes attempt to foster trade.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution increases by 2 and your Strength increases by 1.

Age. Dune orcs live longer lives in the desert where their vindictive god cannot dictate the kind of brutality that so often shortens their lives. Dune orcs reach adulthood at age 15 and live up to 70 years.

Alignment. Dune orcs are liable to adopt the chaotic evil ways of old, but are just as likely to follow a more neutral or more lawful stance in the interest of furthering their tribe's welfare.

Size. Dune orcs stand about six feet tall and weigh between 190 and 250 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, you can move up to your speed toward an enemy of your choice that you can see or hear. You must end this move closer to the enemy than you started.

Dune Walkers. You are naturally adapted to hot climates, you ignore the effects of difficult terrain caused by sand, and you have advantage on saving throws made to resist exhaustion.

Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Orc.

PELANDRIAN ELF (HD)

The pelandrian elves are descendants of eladrin from the Feywild who became trapped in the Hourglass Desert and adapted to the two major seasons of the plane of existence. They are a subrace of the elves from the Player's Handbook.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Dust Step. As a bonus action, you can magically teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see. Once you use this trait, you must complete a short or long rest before you can do so again. Additionally, while within the Hourglass Desert, this ability has an additional effect depending on the season (or overridden by your emotional state).

Raining. Immediately after you use your Dust Step, each creature of your choice that you can see within 5 feet of you must succeed on a Strength saving throw or become restrained by mounds of magical sand until the end of your next turn. A creature restrained by the sand (or its ally) can end the effects early by using an action to clear the sand.

Draining. When you use your Dust Step, your speed doubles until the end of your turn.

GLASS GENASI (HD)

The glass genasi are a race born from the fever-dream creations of the pillar of sand, whose raving madness twisted human settlers into elemental beings based on a combination of the air of a djinni, the fires of its rage, and the earth of its prison of madness. The glass genasi have taken the tumultuousness nature of their creation and reflected it away.

Glass genasi are a subrace of the genasi from the Elemental Evil Player's Companion.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Reflective Skin. As a reaction when you are hit by magic missile or a spell of 3rd level or lower that requires a ranged attack roll, you can roll a d6. On a roll of 4-5, you are unaffected. On a roll of 6, you are unaffected and you can reflect the spell back at the caster as though it originated from you, making a ranged spell attack using Constitution as your spellcasting ability (if necessary).

Mirage. You can cast the *mirror image* spell once with this trait, requiring no material components, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest.

DUSKRISE (HD)

While the vast, vast majority of residents of the Hourglass Desert are migrants and interlopers from other planes, there exists a small community of natives. They're not shy, but their small numbers (only a few hundred total) make interactions with them in any meaningful capacity quite rare. They tend to gravitate towards the outskirts of other small communities, joining in for a while before moving on, engaging with the residents in a friendly manner then leaving them as if they were never there at all. Their nature is reflected in their monument of pilgrimage, the Tower of Dusk, that wanders the desert unchained just as its people do.

These people are called the duskrise.

TWINKLING IN THE DARK

Elemental in creation, they resemble humans whose alabaster skin both glitters in the sunlight and glows faintly in the darkness. They never sleep, comfortable and active in both the day and the night, and their eyes are sharp as glass. All duskrise are universally youthful and beautiful, even (or especially) to other races.

PEREGRINES

Nomads by nature, and ephemeral in their desires, the duskrise wander from settlement to settlement over the seasons in search of novel experiences. They are more often seen in the Sunrise Realm than the Sunset Realm; the pelandrian are stuffy and the inventors are exciting. Having existed for so long alone in their realm, any lifeforms other than their own are subjects of endless fascination.

EMOTIONALLY CONNECTIVE

Cavorting with other races isn't just a fleeting fancy. The duskrise have a peculiar method of maintaining their numbers. They have no children. The very concept is alien to them. Instead, every duskrise is functionally immortal.

While they can be killed through regular means, no duskrise for millennia has known the touch of old age. Once per season, a duskrise undergoes a ritual where it falls into an 8-hour stupor, waking up as a younger version of themselves. Some of their memories fade during the rejuvenation process, but these memories slowly return over the next few years. When a duskrise is rejuvenated in a form it likes, it will usually stay in that form for about a decade.

When it is time to rejuvenate, a duskrise seeks out strong emotional connections with other beings. This often takes the form of love, but it can also be intense boiling hatred, deep platonic friendship, a long-running mentorship, or other methods of connection. The duskrise will request (or steal) an object of personal meaning to this person and take it along during the rejuvenation process. While rejuvenating, the duskrise takes on some of the traits of that person, physically changing its body to match their adaptive traits. For this reason they almost always try to form a connection with someone from a race other than their own.

Of the four hundred duskrise in existence, about fifty contain the DNA of pelandrian, a little under a hundred possess the DNA of humans, less than a dozen are pure duskrise, and the rest are of other assorted races.

DUSKRISSE TRAITS

Your duskrise character has a set of traits innate to itself, plus some traits adopted from another race whose members it has mated with.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Age. You have lived for thousands of years. duskrise don't show signs of aging, so it may have been anywhere from one day to one decade since the last time you rejuvenated.

Alignment. Duskrise are universally chaotic in nature and temperament.

Size. Duskrise have about the same range of heights as humans do. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Luminous Skin. As a bonus action, you can activate the effects of your luminous skin for ten minutes. While active, your skin glitters and glares, giving you disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and imposing disadvantage on ranged attack rolls made against you. Additionally, your skin gives off bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light in a 10 foot radius beyond that. Once you have used this trait, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Nomad. You suffer no negative effects from forced marches, and you have advantage on saving throws to resist gaining levels of exhaustion.

Wandering Trance. Duskrise don't need to sleep. Instead, they wander slowly, as though they are sleepwalking, for 4 hours per day. While wandering, the duskrise moves about 5 feet per minute, either in a straight line or in a wide circle. After wandering in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep, including gaining the benefits of a long rest.

Racial Adoption. In addition to your regular traits, you have one additional trait based on the race you last connected with. Suitable races are included below.

Aarakocra. While your luminous skin is active, you have a flying speed of 30 feet.

Dragonborn. You have a dragonborn's breath weapon. Once you have used your breath weapon, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

Dune Orc. Once a turn while your luminous skin is active, you can move up to your speed toward an enemy of your choice that you can see or hear without expending movement. You must end this move closer to the enemy than you started.

Duskrise. You can use your luminous skin twice instead of once before you must finish a short or long rest to use it again.

Dwarf (Any). You have resistance to poison damage, and you have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Elf (Pelandrian). You can cast *misty step* innately. Once you have used this trait, you must complete a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Elf (Other). You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Gnome (Any). While your luminous skin is active, you have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saves against magic.

Genasi (Glass). While your luminous skin is active, as a reaction when you are hit by *magic missile* or a spell of 3rd level or lower that requires a ranged attack roll, you can roll a d6. On a roll of 4-6, you are unaffected.

Half-Orc. When you are reduced to 0 hit points and not killed outright, you can choose to drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you have used this trait, you must complete a long rest before you can use it again.

Human. One ability score of your choice (other than Charisma) is increased by 1.

Tiefling. You have resistance to fire damage, and you know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip.

Other. The DM chooses one trait for you from the chosen race, roughly on the same power level as the other options.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, Dusk, and one other language of your choice.

CLASSES

The campaign finishes at 8th level. The custom subclasses here contain features for levels higher than 8th only in the case that a player wishes to continue their character in another campaign. Focus on the early features when choosing your class.

BARBARIANS (PHB, XGE)

Barbarians of every type are found in the Hourglass Desert. Every archetype of barbarian in the Player's Handbook and Xanathar's Guide to Everything will fit in with this setting.

GLAMOUR BARD (XGE)

The glamour bard can be found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything. Glamour bards in the Hourglass Desert tend to focus on illusions and mirages.

GRAVE CLERIC (XGE)

The grave cleric can be found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything. They worship the Great Hourglass that controls the cycles of birth and death.

DRUIDS (PHB, XGE)

Druids draw their power from the natural magic emanating from the sands of the desert. Any druid circle from the Player's Handbook or Xanathar's Guide to Everything would fit into the Hourglass Desert. In addition, the following variant rules for druids can be applied:

- The DM can choose to give all druids the circle spells associated with the desert (PHB page 68).
- A table for wild shapes specific to the Hourglass Desert is included on page 84 of this book.

NOMAD FIGHTER (HD)

This fighter archetype fits characters who are self-sufficient desert wanderers, weathering storms and dealing with threats as they travel. Nomad fighters are less likely to fight to the death and much more likely to leave their opponents gasping for breath from attrition after a long and hard-fought battle while the fighter slips away, no worse for wear.

THE HARDINESS OF THE WANDERER

Starting at 3rd level, you are steady and consistent over long distances and suffer less from the strains of both travel and combat. When you wear padded armour, your AC is 16 plus your Constitution modifier. You ignore any detrimental effects of difficult terrain, you have advantage on Constitution saving throws, and you have resistance to nonmagical cold, fire, and poison damage. Finally, when you take a long rest, you do not require much sleep, replenishing your hit points, relevant fighter abilities, and relevant racial traits after half the amount of time normally required for your race.

ALWAYS PRESS ONWARDS

Starting at 7th level, when you spend hit dice to heal yourself, you regain the maximum amount possible from each die. Additionally, as an action, you can spend two hit dice to immediately gain the effects of a short rest. You do not gain hit points from the hit dice you spend to trigger this feature, but you can immediately spend additional hit dice to heal yourself.

CANNOT BE HELD BACK

Starting at 10th level, when you wear padded armour, your AC is 18 plus your Constitution modifier. Additionally, you have advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws and any checks made to escape from a grapple.

SHRUG OFF THE WORST

Starting at 15th level, while you're wearing padded armour, any critical hit against you becomes a normal hit.

SURVIVOR

Starting at 18th level, at the start of each of your turns in combat, you regain hit points equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 hit point). You don't gain this benefit if you have 0 hit points or if you have more than half of your hit points left.

GLASS MONK (HD)

Monks of this monastic tradition meditate on the properties of glass. These properties become a part of their own body. They can be tempered and solid when required, or shattered, sharp, and deadly when threatened. Some doubt the existence of glass monks at all due to their elusive nature and difficulty in fighting them head-on.

MIRAGE DEFENSE

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, when you use your patient defense feature, three mirages of you appear in your space until the start of your next turn. A creature that targets you with an attack must roll 1d4. On a roll of 2-4, the creature targets a mirage instead and the attack misses. Creatures that can see through illusions or that rely primarily on senses other than sight are immune to this effect.

SHATTERSTRIKE

Starting at 6th level, the shattering of the glass inside you becomes a weapon in itself. When you are below your maximum hit points, your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 slashing damage. When you are at half of your maximum hit points or below, this extra damage increases to 2d6.

REFRACTION

Starting at 11th level, when you take fire, force, lightning, or radiant damage, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage taken by half.

GLASS SKIN, GLASS BONES

Starting at 17th level, when you hit a Large or smaller creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 3 ki points to magically turn the creature into glass. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw, resisting the effects on a success. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to glass and is restrained on a failed save. At the end of its next turn, it must repeat the save. On a success, the effects end. On a failure, the creature is turned to glass and is petrified. A glass creature has an AC of 5 and 1 hit point. If it is reduced to 0 hit points, the creature is destroyed. Otherwise, the petrification lasts for 24 hours or until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

OATH OF REBIRTH PALADIN (HD)

Paladins who take the Oath of Rebirth seek to harness the collective knowledge and power of their past lives. They have come to the understanding that a soul does not occupy one life, but many, and the soul remembers what the mind does not. Only through the trials and enlightenment of a paladin can one achieve one's true destiny: unlocking all of one's past.

TENETS OF THE OATH OF REBIRTH

Humility. You are one drop of water in an ocean. Billions of people lived before you and uncountable numbers will live after you are gone. You can only be special by embracing this fact and knowing that your soul travels through not one being, but countless.

Memory. The memories in your mind are not the only memories that are afforded to you. Your ancestors live on through your memory and through you.

Destiny. There is one true path that you must walk. One true destiny. Find it and the cycle of rebirth will continue.

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following channel divinity options.

Return Refreshed. Choose an ally within 30 feet of you that has 0 hit points. The target regains hit points equal to your Charisma modifier + your paladin level.

Turn the Unholy. As an action, you present your holy symbol and speak a prayer censuring fiends and undead, using your Channel Divinity. Each fiend or undead that can see or hear you within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the dodge action.

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Paladin Level	Oath Spells
3rd	<i>comprehend languages, identify</i>
5th	<i>alter self, augury</i>
9th	<i>speak with dead, tongues</i>
13th	<i>divination, polymorph</i>
17th	<i>legend lore, reincarnate</i>

AURA OF THE TRUE SELF

Starting at 7th level, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you are immune to psychic damage and have advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

At 15th level, you can call upon the knowledge of your past lives to perform certain actions with greater precision and with a greater understanding than one life could possibly hope to achieve. Whenever you make an ability check using your Dexterity, Wisdom, or Intelligence, you can grant yourself a bonus to that check equal to your Charisma modifier plus your proficiency bonus on top of any other bonuses you would normally receive.

A THOUSAND PAST LIVES

At 20th level, you can now empower yourself with the combined collective knowledge of all of your past lives at once. As a bonus action, you gain the following benefits for 10 minutes.

- You can treat any result of an ability check as a 15.
- You know a great deal of information about any creature that you can see, including its maximum hit points, its armor class, any resistances, immunities, or vulnerabilities it might have, its speed, its ability scores, its saving throws, its skills, its senses, its languages, its special abilities, and its possible actions, reactions, and legendary actions, if applicable.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

DUNE DIVER RANGER (HD)

Rangers of this archetype are most at home in the desert sands and have almost invariably taken desert as the environment of their Natural Explorer trait. They draw on the magic of the sands to bolster their natural gifts of fighting.

DUNE DIVER MAGIC

Starting at 3rd level, you learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Dune Diver Spells table. The spells count as ranger spells for you, but don't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

Ranger Level

Dune Diver Spell

3rd	<i>earth tremor</i>
5th	<i>warding wind</i>
9th	<i>erupting earth</i>
13th	<i>stoneskin</i>
17th	<i>wall of stone</i>

SAND COVER

Also at 3rd level, you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in sandy terrain, and you can use your bonus action to Hide when you are lightly or heavily obscured by sand. You can also ignore the effects of difficult terrain caused by sand.

SANDY DEFENSE

Starting at 7th level, when you are touching sandy terrain and you are targeted by a ranged attack from an attacker you can see, you can use your reaction to magically impose disadvantage on the attack roll by protecting yourself with a sheet of erupting sand.

DUNE AMBUSER

Starting at 11th level, when you hit a Large or smaller creature with an attack on the first turn of combat and the target is standing on sandy terrain, you can choose to knock them prone.

IMPROVED SANDY DEFENSE

Starting at 15th level, you can use your Sandy Defense against melee attacks or to give yourself advantage on a saving throw against a spell or other effect that includes you in its area of effect as long as you can see the source of the attack or the effect.

SCOUT ROGUE (XGE)

The scout rogue can be found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything. They are masters of hit and run tactics.

STORM SORCERER (XGE)

The storm sorcerer can be found in Xanathar's Guide to Everything. They generally have a strong focus on wind spells.

GENIE WARLOCK (HD)

Deep within the deepest, most hidden depths of the Hourglass Desert, where ancient civilisations have lost more than we could ever imagine, great power lays hidden within artefacts erased from the annals of history. The genies of the Hourglass Desert are those of the Earth, of Fire, and of Air, and once, when the land was lush and the soil was arable, so too were the genies of Water. Instead of a wish, a genie may grant the one who releases them the powers of a warlock.

Certain features are changed depending on the type of genie from whom you received your warlock powers. Choose from the following genies: **dao** (earth), **djinni** (air), **efreeti** (fire), or **marid** (water).

EXPANDED SPELL LIST

Spell Level	All Genie Spells	Dao Spells	Djinni Spells	Efreeti Spells	Marid Spells
1st	<i>detect magic</i>	<i>earth tremor</i>	<i>feather fall</i>	<i>burning hands</i>	<i>purify food and drink</i>
2nd	<i>levitate</i>	<i>pass without trace</i>	<i>warding wind</i>	<i>continual flame</i>	<i>locate animals or plants</i>
3rd	<i>protection from energy</i>	<i>meld into stone</i>	<i>wind wall</i>	<i>flame arrows</i>	<i>wall of water</i>
4th	<i>polymorph</i>	<i>stoneskin</i>	<i>dimension door</i>	<i>wall of fire</i>	<i>watery sphere</i>
5th	<i>legend lore</i>	<i>wall of stone</i>	<i>control winds</i>	<i>immolation</i>	<i>maelstrom</i>

GENIE MAGIC

Starting when you take this pact at 1st level, you learn two cantrips from your genie patron if you don't have them already. You also gain resistance to a damage type.

Patron	Cantrips	Damage Resistance
Dao	<i>magic stone, mold earth</i>	lightning
Djinni	<i>gust, poison spray</i>	poison
Efreeti	<i>control flames, produce flame</i>	fire
Marid	<i>shape water, acid splash</i>	acid

In addition, your genie patron bolsters your spells.

Dao. While you are concentrating on a warlock spell, you are resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Djinni. When a creature fails a save to avoid being moved by one of your spells, you can move them up to twice the regular distance and precisely control the direction they are moved.

Efreeti. When you target a creature with *produce flame*, you can add your charisma modifier to the attack and damage rolls.

Marid. Immediately after casting a spell of 1st level or higher, you can fill any empty containers within 30 feet of you with water (up to 10 cubic feet of water total).

A GENIE'S WISH

Starting at 6th level, you begin to access the power of genies to grant wishes. By speaking the name of your genie patron and precisely wording the terms of your wish, you can use this magical ability to replicate the effects of any 3rd level spell or lower, cast at its original spell level, ignoring any material components or costs. Once you have used this ability, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

As you gain levels in warlock, you can grant ever more complicated and wondrous wishes, replicating spells of higher level than before. At 10th level, your wish can replicate any spell up to 5th level, and at 14th level, your wish can replicate any spell up to 7th level.

NEW PACT BOON: LAMP

This pact boon becomes available to warlocks of the genie patron as an alternative to existing pact boons.

You carry a nigh-indestructible magic item, the lamp of your genie patron who has been imprisoned within. As a bonus action, you can rub the lamp, causing a spectral representation of your patron to spring forth. The form disappears after one minute or until the genie decides to retreat back into its lamp. Once the genie has been summoned forth in this way, it cannot be summoned again until you finish a short or long rest.

The genie's spectral form can provide insight and advice, but it is otherwise incapacitated. The DM chooses how the genie helps you, either using one of the following effects or making up another effect of roughly the same level of power. Unless noted otherwise, the genie can only use the effect once before it retreats back into its lamp.

Genie's Inspiration. The genie gives its warlock or a creature of its choice that it can see a d8, which functions identically to the Bardic Inspiration class feature.

Elemental Resistance. The genie grants its warlock or a creature of its choice that it can see resistance to one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder. This resistance lasts until the genie returns to its lamp.

Future Guidance. The genie replicates the effects of the *augury* spell for its warlock, and can offer a short explanation of the results.

Magic Flourish. The genie replicates the effects of one of the following cantrips: *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*, or *thaumaturgy*. The genie can repeat this magic flourish (choosing any cantrip) at the start of each of its warlock's turns until it returns to its lamp. The genie does not need to concentrate on these cantrips, but it can have only one cantrip requiring concentration active at once.

WIZARDS (PHB, XGE)

Wizards in the Hourglass Desert are primarily illusionists and diviners, although the extensive libraries of arcane magic traded from other realms mean that most essential schools of wizardry can be learned over years of study. These can be found in the Player's Handbook. The war wizard from Xanathar's Guide to Everything is also acceptable.

BACKGROUNDS

For a character who was born outside of the Hourglass Desert, your background can come from any source and should represent who you were before you came here. When describing your character's background during table introductions, explain what mysterious circumstance led you to finding yourself in the Hourglass Desert. Not knowing the answer to that question is not only okay, it's encouraged.

For a character who is native to the Hourglass Desert, your background is up to you, but it's recommended to pick from one of the following options. These options represent common backgrounds of the people who live here.

- Acolyte: You worship the Great Hourglass.
- Criminal (Spy): You keep an eye on enemy factions.
- Entertainer: You keep spirits high.
- Guild Artisan (Merchant): You craft and sell valuable goods.
- Hermit: You live alone in search of deep secrets.
- Outlander: You live amidst a tribe of nomads.
- Sailor (Pirate): You're a desert bandit.

SPELLS

Magic is a part of life in the desert. The sands themselves contain an ancient magic within them. Most people in the desert interact regularly with magic, either casting it or trying their hardest to resist it being cast on them.

SOURCES

Many of the monsters and NPCs in this book use spells from the Elemental Evil Player's Companion. As it is a free supplement to DnD 5th Edition, it's recommended to download this supplement before beginning a campaign in this setting. The dune diver ranger and the genie warlock both include spells from the EE in their expanded spell lists.

The book Xanathar's Guide to Everything is also a good source of spells, and would make an excellent addition to the PHB and EE when choosing your character's spells.

HOURLASS SPELLS

The following spells are available to any spellcaster who has extensively studied how the sands of the Hourglass Desert affect one's perception of time.

QUICK MINUTE

2nd level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (an hourglass containing a single grain of sand inside it)

Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a creature affected by a spell or magical effect with a duration of 1 minute or less. The effect ends at the start of the creature's next turn. If the creature is unwilling, it can make a Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, this spell has no effect on it.

At Higher Levels. When this spell is cast with a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the casting time becomes 1 bonus action.

TIME TURNER

3rd level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (an hourglass filled with mud)

Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a willing creature. In the next round, the creature takes two turns on its initiative count, one immediately after the other. Other creatures on the battlefield perceive the two turns taking place simultaneously, with two copies of the target acting at once.

WHEEL OF TIME

7th level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 ft.

Components: V, S, M (an hourglass with both sides filled to the brim with sand)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You shriek a reminder of mortality at a humanoid within range. The creature instantly ages 1d20 + 30 years, and remains that age until the spell ends. If the caster concentrates on the spell for the full duration, the change is permanent.

If this would bring the target within 10 years of the natural lifespan for its race, it makes a Constitution saving throw. The target dies on a failed save. The target has advantage on the saving throw if its new age is below the natural lifespan (but still within 10 years). The target has disadvantage on the saving throw if its new age is more than 10 years older than the natural lifespan for its species.

If the target is younger than 20 years old, the spell has no effect.

PART II

The Campaign



CHAPTER I: THE INTERLOPER

The vertical city of Glasswork was once a major trading hub for planar travellers. Nestled within the gaps between the great flat bluffs in the southern Sunrise Realm, Glasswork is built up of stone, earth, and metal scaffolding. The flat tops of the bluffs were once landing zones for interplanar ships, but these have gone unused for half a decade. Areas of commerce and industry have been cut into the sides of the bluffs and given beautiful stained glass windows thanks to the artistry of the sand gnomes who have made Glasswork their official base of operation. Here, the gnomes do the thinking and the humans do the grunt work, performing as cooks, labourers, bartenders, maids, and entertainers. Other races like the genasi and dune orcs are a common sight crossing Glasswork's bridges, but they wouldn't dare live here where the ground falls away beneath their feet. There's one thing everyone can agree on here, however: they trade in rations of food and water. Only raw metal is worth more than that.

SUNRISE REALM

CALL TO ACTION

Glasswork is where our adventure begins. Each of the players are encouraged to describe their character's specific relationship to this city.

Human characters generally work here as labourers, dealing with face-to-face hospitality roles and other low-wage jobs. Bards and other entertainers can find work easily keeping the gnomes and the other humans entertained enough to stop them from throwing themselves off the edges. Strong, silent types are usually tasked with operating the pulleys and gears of the lift systems. Wizards, especially diviners, hold a more lofty place in the society of Glasswork.

Gnomes will generally be accepted here as part of the larger community. They will have connections to dozens of other gnomes, each of whom probably has a remarkably specific and vaguely insulting nickname for them, an honour that is no doubt mutual. The gnomes treat any other gnome as family and shower them with gifts, praise, and companionship, whether those gifts are welcome or not.

Pelandrian elves are relatively rare in the Sunrise Realm, but there is one elf in particular who has made a permanent arrangement in Glasswork. Pejanel the Scholar, a **pelandrian elf commoner**, runs a museum of curious artefacts at the base of the bluffs, where he is constantly accosted by Silver, a rogueish **duskriase** seeking a relationship of mutual hatred. Pejanel, like most elves, views most other beings with barely-disguised disdain and disinterest. At fifteen hundred years old (an age which he wastes no opportunity to remind people of), he has seen it all and he has seen it better.

Orcs, genasi, duskriase, and aarakocra will generally be here looking to trade for practical supplies for their tribe. A chunk of unprocessed metal ore can be traded for useful materials like hourglasses, compasses, and other industrial products, and several weeks worth of rations might grant them access to a map or a prediction of the weather in the coming months. Knowledge can be worth more than blood.

GLASSWORK

Once the characters' relationship to Glasswork and to each other is established, we start the campaign with a series of overheard rumours in hushed whispers. Gnomes speak of hiding the presence of an interloper from their children. An air genasi has been hired to manage a small fire on the flat tops of the bluffs. An aarakocra came shrieking into an inn talking of a meteor landing on the city. Sharp-eyed characters might spot a column of wafting smoke from high above.

A ship has crash landed in Glasswork, and it has brought with it an alien.

The characters all have a reason to investigate the ship. For those who are not native to the desert, the presence of this ship indicates that whoever arrived might know of a way back home. To natives, it might represent a potential threat. If one came, others may soon follow. The ship could also represent a possible improvement to industry, with alien materials being used to create wondrous new devices, or perhaps merely the chance at an exciting fight with an exotic monster to stave off boredom.

Getting up to the ship is an easy task. There are pathways along the vertical edges of the bluff (no hand rails) that lead directly to the top, or the party can trade a day's worth of water for a free pass up the pulley lifts for the afternoon. They are tended to by a very large barbarian man whose exposed skin is starting to get burned from the high sun. Once at the top of the bluff, the party wades into a large crowd of gnomes, humans, and other diverse races of Glasswork who have all come to see the alien ship.

Once the party gets close enough, they can identify the following information about the ship with an Intelligence (Investigation) check.

- DC 5: The ship, a skiff, is only big enough for one person. That person is not here. The ship is severely damaged. Its sails are ripped. Its wooden hull is cracked. Its equipment is crushed.
- DC 10: This ship will never fly again. It is too badly damaged. Some of the broken equipment looks like it was a ballista.
- DC 15: There is a small amount of blood spattered across the ship. Its pilot was wounded in a fight. That was probably why it crash landed. The pilot has left a silver knife in a compartment under the main equipment.
- DC 20: This is a ship built for war. It was attacked and damaged by the same kind of ballistas that it had mounted on its hull. The ship fought and lost a battle against similar ships.

Further information can be uncovered with an Intelligence (Arcana) check.

- DC 5: The ship has magical components.
- DC 10: The ship's sails help it manoeuvre in an atmosphere, but to get here it would have had to get through the Astral Sea, which has no atmosphere. It must have magical navigation and shields, which are now broken.
- DC 15: This is a gith ship. The gith were once enslaved by mind flayers but freed themselves in an insurrection before splitting off into two factions. The githyanki are a race of violent warlike raiders and the githzerai are more neutral and enlightened. It's hard to tell which race this ship belongs to.
- DC 20: This is a githyanki skiff, used mainly by githyanki pilots as scouts for a larger warship which arrives when the scout has completed his or her report of a potential raiding location.

As the characters investigate the ship, they hear a commotion from within the crowd. Gnomes shout about how there's an alien running around with a big sword. A few of the barbarian guards have chased him down to the lower levels but he's taken shelter inside of a daycare.

On the way down, the players see a few people who seem to have been magically moved into precarious alcoves that would otherwise be inaccessible. These people ask if maybe there were a way the party could help them get down from here. When questioned, they explain that the alien seemed to lift them up with an invisible hand when they got in its way. Whoever this alien is, it has many unnatural powers and could be extremely dangerous.

THE ALIEN

The nursery is built out of stone and half carved into the side of the bluffs. It protrudes just enough to have a stained glass skylight (with designs of unicorns and satyrs). Its door is closed and bolted from the inside. Several worried gnomes and a very large orc stand outside the nursery, unsure of what to do. The orc hefts his maul and shouts that the alien has one minute to come out or he's bashing down the door. A gnome spins an hourglass accordingly. There's no response from inside, but the party can hear the shrieks of young gnomes.

There are multiple ways into the nursery. The players can break through the skylight, unlock the door, use magic to carve through the walls, or any other solution they can come up with. When they do manage to get in, they see the alien for the first time.

INSIDE THE NURSERY

The alien has a gnome child on its back. The child is shrieking with delight as the alien spins it around. He kneels down and the child hops off. He uses magic to shape glass into the form of a unicorn and gives it to a girl, who smiles and runs around.

The alien stands up and the party gets a better look at him. He is wearing limited armor, essentially shoulder pads and a metal skirt, and his skin is a deep shade of yellow. His face is distinctly alien, with a scrunched-up nose and bulging black eyes.

He whispers a word in his alien language and palms a glass model of a ziggurat (an ancient religious structure). The little glass structure pulses with each syllable he speaks. This is the spell *tongues*.

"I don't want to fight. I just want to find my friend."

His words don't quite match up to his mouth movements; he is using magic to translate his words into a language that each individual player is most comfortable with. Humans will hear Common, elves will hear Elvish, gnomes will hear Gnomish, et cetera.

If the players agree not to fight, the alien relaxes and introduces himself as **Yaukiss** (YAW-kiss, rhymes with "caucus"). He might ask for his dagger if they found it in the skiff. If the players didn't find the dagger, you can just rule as a DM that the Yaukiss still has it with him. A character with proficiency in Arcana can make an Intelligence (Arcana) check to identify Yaukiss' species.

- DC 15: The alien is gith, an ancient race formerly enslaved by mind flayers before they broke free in a slave insurrection. Now they hunt mind flayers wherever they are found. They have special psionic telekinetic powers. There are two distinct subraces of gith, the warlike, lawful evil githyanki who raid helpless settlements in giant warships, and the githzerai, a lawful neutral ascetic race of monks who seek spiritual enlightenment.
- DC 20: This man is a githyanki, as evidenced by his silver sword, his armor, his skiff built for war, and the style of the braids in his black hair.

Yaukiss explains the following information. If a character doubts the veracity of any of Yaukiss' claims, they can make a Wisdom (Insight) check, getting no concrete information on a failed check due to his alien nature.

- He got here by following specific coordinates he had exhaustively researched, directly travelling here through the Astral Sea rather than take a portal or a gate. (Truth)
- His ship was damaged on entry into the atmosphere and burned up, which is why it crashed. (Half-truth; DC 20 Insight check reveals that he's leaving out details, which the players can also figure out due to discrepancies in the damage to his ship with how he said it got damaged)
- He came here in search of a ship that crashed here thousands of years ago, an ancient legend of his people. (Half-truth; DC 20 Insight check reveals that he's kind of making up all the legend stuff and he knows more about the ship than he's letting on)
- He was commissioned by his queen Vlaakith to find the ship and give a report on what truly happened. (Lie; DC 20 Insight check reveals he's just straight up lying)

- If it comes up, he will say he has no intention of revealing the Hourglass Desert's location to other githyanki. (Half-truth; DC 20 Insight check reveals that although his words are technically true, he is strategically leaving out the fact that he may have been followed)

In actual fact, Yaukiss came here in search of a githyanki warship that never came back from a raiding party to the Hourglass Desert, a raiding party led by his former instructor and a red dragon that was once Yaukiss' personal mount. He is here for the dragon, to seek closure and bury his old friend. Due to the way time works in the outer planes, thousands of years have passed in the Hourglass Desert and comparatively few have passed for Yaukiss in comparison.

He exhaustively researched the desert's coordinates from his instructor's old notes, then, against Queen Vlaakith's orders, stole a skiff and broke off from his raiding party to pursue his own goals. Unfortunately, his getaway was not so clean, and a few other skiffs pursued him through the Astral Plane. He managed to fight them off, but not before they severely damaged his ship.

If thoroughly questioned, Yaukiss might reveal that he went rogue and that he personally knew the githyanki in the failed raiding party that was lost in the Hourglass Desert, but he won't reveal that he is here for the red dragon just yet. It's too personal and the wound is still raw.

A HUMBLE REQUEST

Yaukiss asks the party for help finding the warship. If they find it, he might be able to reverse engineer some of its equipment in order to escape from the desert.

This is the call to action of the adventure. It's not a matter of the players choosing whether to help them, it's a matter of the players describing why their characters make the choice to help him. If the call to action is refused, there is no adventure. Yes, it is possible to run a campaign in this setting independently of Yaukiss' storyline to find the warship, but this document is structured in such a way that the story guides our odyssey.

If the party does not trust Yaukiss at all, remind them that he is the only one who can lead them to the warship, which itself would be valuable to them whether they trust Yaukiss or not. They can always betray him at the last second and take everything in the warship for themselves.

After accepting Yaukiss' quest, the party must address the worried gnomes and the bloodthirsty **dune orc** outside. A DC 5 Charisma (Persuasion) check will calm down the commoners. In the unlikely chance of failure, the orc attacks. He isn't tough.

GOODBYE TO GLASSWORK

The party has one day and one night in town to gather up any last minute supplies or information for their journey. Some suggestions of town activities include ...

- Gambling at the pub for extra food and water.
- Purchasing equipment from the gnomes like hourglasses, compasses, and weather balls. Each piece of equipment costs three days' food or water.
- Acquiring a camel from a nomadic merchant. A camel (quite a large variant using the **draft horse** statblock) costs a full week's worth of food or water and also requires an additional ration of food and water to keep it alive each day. Camels are nasty, spiteful creatures that bite, spit, fart, and scream at random intervals, but just one camel can carry essentially all of the party's supplies for free.

Another useful activity is visiting Pejanel's museum to seek more information about the alien. Being a scholar who collects artefacts from countless races, and being fifteen hundred years old, Pejanel has a massive library of information on almost every known species and monster in the multiverse that he happened to hear about from the various aliens that landed in the Hourglass Desert.

The party can find Pejanel in his museum exhaustively dusting off a slate carved with an ancient language, which appears to be coded Primordial (reads as just gibberish at the moment). He has a very precise little brush and you can't even see the dust with the naked eye. Pejanel will part with information only at the promise of recording more information about what you find in the warship and bringing this information back to him.

Pejanel knows a lot about the Gith and can inform the party about them up to the level of a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check listed above. The party can persuade Yaukiss to reveal more with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, at which he describes information up to the level of a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check listed above. Scoring above 25 on the Persuasion check may convince him to bring out his book on the gith, which gives information equivalent to the write-up on gith in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes.

While within Pejanel's museum, a character with a passive Perception of 16 or higher notices a dark figure in the shadows. This figure steps into the light and reveals his glittering skin, a duskribe. This duskribe hates Pejanel and wants Pejanel to reciprocate the hatred so that the emotions run high enough for the duskribe to adopt elven traits on his next rejuvenation. The duskribe poofs out a bag of dust all over the ancient text on his way out.

BRAVING THE DESERT

The party sets out from Glasswork with Yaukiss at first light. If the party has not yet been acquainted with the rules for managing exhaustion and heat level in the desert, now is the time to review them (from the variant rules section of this document).

The desert is in the draining season, so the sands have been steadily receding on a path to the dead center of the realm where they whirl into a deep gorge and are gone forever. As a result, the path is quite low-lying with massive bluffs towering high above their heads. The ground is often more rock than sand, and large pieces of stone lay scattered across the deadlands. The desert much more resembles the badlands of Arizona than it does the dunes of the Sahara.

As the party travels, encourage them to swap stories about their characters' backstories to keep spirits high. Yaukiss remains silent during these stories, offering commentary if asked but not wanting to reveal too much about his own past. Yaukiss reminds the party that they need to stay alert as they'll soon be passing through dune orc territory, according to the townsfolk that he spoke to the other day. They'll arrive in a dune orc settlement on the third day of travel.

FIRST DAY

For each day of travel, roll on the Random Encounter table. You will only have to do this for the first day of travel during this chapter, as the second day is predetermined and on the third day the party arrives in the orc settlement.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Do not forget to also roll on the **Sunrise Realm Complication** table!

If the random encounter includes a fight, Yaukiss refuses to draw his sword, relying only on his telekinesis to deal with threats.

When the party finds adequate shelter, they can rest for the night. The skies are free from stars and clouds. It's just black.

During the night, the party is scouted by an **arakocra** who rolls a Dexterity (Stealth) check (+4) against the passive Perception of the party member currently on watch. The party member spots the arakocra flying high above their shelter if the Stealth check fails (DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check to determine that it is an arakocra). If the Stealth check succeeds but is not more than 5 above the character's passive Perception, the character just hears mysterious flapping of wings during the night.

SECOND DAY

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Yaukiss is more comfortable with the party on the second day and might reveal more of his backstory, namely that he was once bonded with a young red dragon who was taken from him by his jealous instructor during training. The instructor then took the red dragon on a raiding party which never came home. It's very likely that they all died. Yaukiss has felt ever since that he has been left with a hole in his chest that can never be filled. His best friend in the world was ripped away from him.

Later in the day, as the party passes in the narrow divide between two large bluffs, keeping out of the sun in the cool shade, a squad of arakocra waits for them high above. The arakocra roll a Dexterity (Stealth) check (+4) against the whole party's passive Perception. Any character whose passive Perception is not high enough for the result of the Stealth check is surprised in the first round of combat. The arakocra have disadvantage on the Stealth check if their scout was spotted the night before.

AMBUSHED

Six **arakocra**, one of which is **Spite**, dive down from the top of the bluffs, shrieking a battle cry. Any character that can understand Arakocra or Primordial will hear "Capture the githyanki scum!"

During the fight, Yaukiss refuses to draw his silver sword even though at least two arakocra will be targeting him at once. He uses his telekinesis to push an arakocra against the wall and disable it (preferably Spite, if he can), using his other free hand to grapple a second arakocra. Any arakocra attacking party members instead attempt to wound them (but not kill) and simultaneously demand (in Common) to know why they are helping the githyanki scum.

CEASE FIRE

Fighting stops after the first round. The arakocra call for a cease fire. Yaukiss calls for peace.

One of the arakocra, named Spite, is a heatseeker and the leader of the squad. He tells them that his arakocra tribe was also originally sent here seven years ago to locate the githyanki warship and destroy it. Now the githyanki have clearly sent a scout to locate the warship themselves.

Yaukiss explains that he is perfectly willing to destroy the warship and isn't affiliated with the rest of the githyanki. He went rogue for this mission. A sharp player might notice a contradiction with what Yaukiss originally said (specifically, that he was sent by Queen Vlaakith) if that contradiction hasn't already been pointed out. He will admit to lying about that if pressed, but he stresses (truthfully) that he is a rogue agent.

The arakocra are satisfied with the idea that Yaukiss will destroy the warship, but warn that they will always have scouts watching their every move. Hopefully Yaukiss will lead them to the warship. If they see any indication that Yaukiss is going to double cross them, they'll attack again, this time in overwhelming numbers.

The party can recruit Spite to join the party if they convince him with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

THIRD DAY

On the third day, the party wanders into dune orc territory. Roll on the encounter table for the day as normal, but as the sun sets and the skies darken, the party crests a hill to see the awesome sights of a dune orc celebration.

The party has the opportunity to advance to 6th level if they take a long rest in the orc settlement. Details of the orc settlement begin in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II: DREAMS OF REBIRTH

Closer to civilisation than the good people of Glasswork are comfortable with, the dune orcs of the Sunrise Realm celebrate by night a monumental occasion: the birth of the Scalechosen, a hero of legend who will lead their people to mastery over life and death. The dark skies light up with pyrotechnics stolen from the gnomes. The sands swirl as their shamans chant. They beat drums. They shout songs. They dance. They drink.

The party can take part in the festivities, for the orcs are in a mood of celebration, not marauding. Ask the party how they contribute to the party, giving out inspiration liberally.

SUNRISE REALM

THE BIRTH OF A HERO (LVL+)

For the next three days, the party has the opportunity to long rest in the dune orc settlement. There are plenty of activities to occupy their time and get to know the situation better. As the only non-orcs, they are viewed with suspicion, but not hostility. Again, it is meant to be a time of celebration. **If the players take this long rest, they advance to 6th level.**

Examples of activities and events in the orc settlement are included below.

THE SONG OF THE HOURGLASS

An open-air gathering billows with magical wind. Orc children gather around a **sand shaman** who sings a song of religious reverence for the ever-turning of the Great Hourglass.

Through the song, the dune orc religion is made clear. The dune orcs worship the Great Hourglass and see their own lives as a temporary passing in a never-ending cycle of death and rebirth. A dune orc that falls in battle will be reborn as a stronger warrior than they ever were in their past life. A dune orc that dies surrounded by loved ones will be born amidst loved ones in their next life. So as it is in death, it is in life.

The last lines of the song, setting a tribalist attitude between the orcs and the 'you' of the other races of the world, is often repeated twenty or thirty times, adding in a furious staccato beating of drums, with more and more orcs rushing in from nearby to add even more voice and even more percussion, building and building until there are sometimes fifty or sixty orcs playing out the last lines over and over again in a religious fervor.

If the party joins in, they are welcomed as equals to the orcs. If they don't join in, the last lines take on an uncomfortable tone towards the interlopers that have encroached on their festivities. The orcs don't attack, but the change in attitude is palpable.

Regardless of how the party interacts with the orcs, Yaukiss gets increasingly more agitated at the last lines of the song. He quickly ducks away and hides out in an unoccupied tent.

A DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check might get Yaukiss to open up about the fact that the song has really hit home for him. His people are the ones who come in, kill who they want, and take what they want, and yet here is a civilisation that the githyanki tried to break a thousand years ago, still here amidst a festivity of thousands and thousands of their people, celebrating their resilience. It's extremely difficult to confront these ideas when Yaukiss has known nothing else.

THE HOURGLASS TURNS

The hourglass turns, we lose our way
The sand recedes, our blood drains away
The hourglass turns, our children look on
The sand cascades, we sing our song
Ten deaths, a hundred deaths, we suffer alone
Our skin turns to ash, to dust our bones
A thousand deaths, a thousand forlorn
But ten thousand orcs again are reborn

Cut my skin and break my bones
Gouge my eyes and turn me to stone
Crush my ribs, break my legs, stake me
My life isn't yours, you'll never break me

All this pain and all this death
Only for others there is nothing left
The hourglass turns, we die as men
The hourglass turns, we're born again
My father died a warrior, my son was loved
My sister died a fighter, my mother won
The hourglass turns, the winds, they blew
The hourglass turns, we give birth anew

Cut my skin and break my bones
Gouge my eyes and turn me to stone
Crush my ribs, break my legs, stake me
My life isn't yours, you'll never break me

Our life is ours, you'll never break us
Our life is ours, you'll never break us
Our life is ours, you'll never break us
Our life is ours, you'll never break us
(continues for a while)

BAPTISM BY BURIAL

The Chieftain and her husband invite special guests to witness the baptism of their newborn child, the Scalechosen. A baptism in dune orc society involves the burying of a child in sand. If they claw their way out of the ground, they will be welcomed. If they suffocate, they were never meant to live, and that baby will be born again stronger than before.

The chieftain buries her baby in sand. Sure enough, within a few seconds, the baby has clawed its way back to fresh air. She holds the baby high and praises her son for his destiny to escape his burial.

Immediately, a whole host of other mothers rush their babies to the sand. All of the babies manage to claw their way out, except for one. None of the orcs watching seem concerned about this. They just nod and say that the baby was not ready, and its soul will be quickly reborn to try again. This was its destiny. It is not a loss, just a setback. The party has the opportunity to save the baby (no check required). If the baby is saved, the orcs will nod and say that the baby was meant to be saved. This baby will inspire others to act unselfishly for the greater good of the tribe. It was destiny.

The orcs will also invite the party to baptise themselves in the sand. For an adult, the baptism will require a deeper burial than the babies. They will need to be buried in a grave five feet deep and somehow emerge.

If the party accepts, they are lowered into the grave and buried completely by shamans casting *mold earth* in synchronisation. They immediately begin to suffocate. Escaping requires a flat DC 20 Strength check. Casting spells such as *mold earth* are allowed and count as a method of escaping. The point is not proving your strength, the point is proving that you were meant to escape all along.

DRINKING GAMES

Although it is unwise to challenge an orc in a drinking game, there are plenty of opportunities for the party to do so. They might be invited by a few friendly orcs to a game of "Never in Eternity", a drinking game where you boast of your life experiences.

Play passes around the circle. If it's your turn, you must come up with some life experience you've done and shout "HAVE YOU EVER...?". If another participant has not had this life experience, they must shout "NEVER IN ETERNITY" as loud as they can and take a drink.

To avoid getting drunk too quickly, a character must make a DC 5 Constitution saving throw to avoid gaining the *poisoned* condition. The DC of the saving throw increases by 1 for each successful save. After gaining the *poisoned* condition, a character can keep playing, but a second failed saving throw and they fall unconscious.

The orcs go first, with the party taking the last turns in the circle before they go around again. There are ten orcs in the circle plus the party.

1. "HAVE YOU EVER LAID WITH A LADY WITH A BEARD?"
2. "HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TURNED TO STONE AND TURNED BACK?"
3. "HAVE YOU EVER PRICKED YOUR FINGER ON A CACTUS?"
4. "HAVE YOU EVER BEATEN AN ANKHEG IN A SPITTING CONTEST?"
5. "HAVE YOU EVER BEEN STUNG BY THE SAME SCORPION TWICE?"
6. "HAVE YOU EVER KISSED YOUR HUSBAND ONLY TO FIND HE WAS AN ILLUSION?"
7. "HAVE YOU EVER HAD A BABY STAY UNDER THE SANDS?"
8. "HAVE YOU EVER FOUGHT YOUR COUSIN AND LOST?"

9. "HAVE YOU EVER DANCED WITH THE FIRE BEETLES?"

10. "HAVE YOU EVER CUT OFF YOUR OWN LEG?"

As the game goes on, the party might be put off by the fact that absolutely none of the orcs are claiming "NEVER IN ETERNITY". The party are the only ones drinking. Perhaps the orcs are playing a practical joke? No, in fact, the orcs genuinely believe that they have had every life experience they mention. They consider their past lives to count; if an ancestor did it, it counts for them too.

The orcs look expectantly at the party. Perhaps these interlopers may have experiences that a dune orc has never had. They encourage the party to come up with interesting and unique experiences.

If the party survives through the first round of the game, hand-wave the rest of the game by saying that the rest of the night is a hazy memory.

DUEL OF THE FATES

Dune orcs love to party, but equally, they love to fight. An orc might challenge a party member to a duel just for fun. Melee only, no magic or ranged weapons, and non-lethal only. The party has already seen many of these duels popping up now and then, and it always draws a crowd. Both the winner and the loser seem to draw adoring fans ... once all the wounds have healed, of course. Whoever won was fated to win, and whoever lost was fated to lose. It is not a test of skill, but a test of destiny. The Hourglass decides the victor.

The rival combatant is a **dune orc**. The dune orc might use a special weapon. They can attack twice with this weapon on their turn.

Spiked Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12).

Longspear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. This weapon can be used with a shield (+2 AC).

Iron Fists. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the wielder attacks the same target twice in the same turn, they can use their bonus action to make a third attack.

DREAMS OF A BETTER TOMORROW

As the third night winds down, the chieftain holds a special event for any who are still up. There are only a few dozen orcs in attendance as the rest are sleeping off their steak and mead. The chieftain, now that the party has a chance to see her by the light of a bonfire, is a broad, powerful orc woman with a shield and scimitar strapped to her back, both of which have the iconography of a dragon. The scimitar curls like a dragon's wicked spiked tail, and the shield has stone teeth glued to the top and bottom like an outstretched jaw, a painting of a great roaring fire between the teeth.

The chieftain speaks of her dreams. Every night she dreams of her son, the Scalechosen, taking the fire of the red dragon that lives beneath the sands and using it to forge a new beginning for the dune orcs. The red dragon has told her that this is their destiny. A part of the dragon has been born within her son. Now that the celebrations of his birth are winding down, it is pertinent to take a moment to reflect on these good times and understand that they come at a great cost, the suffering of her people, repeated again and again throughout history in an unending cycle of birth and death. Only by understanding this cycle can we break free.

If it isn't already clear, the chieftain is a **rebirth knight**.

Yaukiss is excited about the prospect of a red dragon. He keeps pestering the chieftain with questions: where is the dragon buried? What does it look like? What is the dragon's name? She looks at him and says that she recognises him. She can't place where. Perhaps from another life. Or, perhaps, from one of her dreams. Yes, from her dreams. She will need to revisit her dreams this night to find answers to his questions.

When the party sleeps that night, they finally receive the benefits of their long rest. Yaukiss says that the celebrations have been nice, but they must keep going.

A CHANGE IN FATE

Yaukiss wakes up the party early. He has overheard orcs whispering of an attack on their tent. He helps the party put on brown cloaks to disguise themselves. As the party emerges into the aftermath of the celebration, they find that the only ones still here are dune orc warriors, armed to the teeth with scimitars and slings. They are searching tents. There are a few shamans wandering around as well, casting spells to clear away sand and other hiding places.

The party can escape notice with a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check, slipping away into the desert.

If anyone in the party fails this check, a small patrol of 1d6 **dune orcs**, 1d6 **dune orc scouts**, and a **sand shaman** attacks the party. Defeating these dune orcs makes enough noise to alert the rest of the patrols, but the party is close enough to safety that they can escape without triggering another fight.

For a sad moment of irony, if one of the party members fought an orc in a friendly duel, use that orc in this fight, drawing attention to their special weapon.

Yaukiss explains that he didn't just overhear the orcs; the chieftain herself ordered Yaukiss to be killed based on a dream she had where he tried to turn the red dragon against them. Yaukiss already had to fight off a few orcs on his own before he woke up the party, and he has taken a nasty wound to his side. He doesn't seem to be concerned with his injury, however, and in fact he's in quite a good mood. The response from the orcs confirms that the red dragon exists.

"Maybe ... just maybe ... what they say is true. Maybe my best friend is still alive."

If the dragon truly is "beneath the sands" as the chieftain said, that means that its most likely location is the gorge, which is exactly where Yaukiss believes the warship is located.

TRAVEL

The party continues their travel through the Sunrise Realm. To get to the gorge requires ten days of constant travel. As a reminder, Yaukiss never draws his sword, relying only on his telekinetic powers or just taking the Help action as needed.

Roll on the encounter table for each day of travel. You can also pick specific encounters related to the pursuit of the dune orcs. Some recommended encounters are listed below.

- 10: The Gas Vents
- 11: The Electric Sands
- 26: The Sand Worm
- 30: The Tortured Faces
- 49: The Exhausted Barbarians
- 65: The Territory Rights

Each night, the party can take stock of their location and try to scout for the orcs in pursuit. The orcs seem to be led by an uncanny tracking capability, far beyond the abilities of any dune diver or wizard.

A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check, made with disadvantage due to darkness, allows a party member to identify the location of the dune orcs, who are keeping pace with the party, about a day's travel behind but catching up quickly despite the party's best efforts to get away.

Scoring a 15 or above on the Perception check, however, allows the party member to spot another creature: a swirling tornado of sand that is also keeping pace with the party. This is the **pillar of sand**. It's chasing the party through the Sunrise Realm.

THE ELEVENTH DAY

On the eleventh day of travel, the party arrives at a watchtower overlooking a massive canyon set into the ground. The details of The Gorge begin in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III: THE ETERNAL LOST

The Gorge stretches for hundreds of miles. It is truly grand. You'd go dizzy from vertigo looking over the edge. There is no bottom. It empties out into a grey nothingness that the natives call the Empty Space. Throughout the draining season, the sands have been draining into the Gorge from everywhere in the Hourglass

Desert, and now that you are here, the sand falls in cascades down into the Empty Space where it is whisked away into nothing. The Empty Space leads to the Sunset Realm, but it is not a passageway for mortals. If you were to fall down the Gorge and tumble with all the rest of the sand, you would end up in the sky. You would fall to your death if the waterfalls of sand didn't kill you on the way down first.

SUNRISE REALM

THE WATCHTOWER

The party comes to a watchtower jutting out from the edge of the canyon wall. Its entry-way is a hatch in the ground with stairs that lead downward and outward, and eventually the stone walls turn to glass, giving the party a full 360 degree view of the Gorge. It's like they're standing in a glass box.

A door from the glass portion of the watchtower leads straight into an unmanned lift operated with a pulley system. The lift is not technically attached to the watchtower, instead supported along the wall of the canyon with ropes, chains, and wooden scaffolding. Yaukiss reads out some maps and symbols on the wall and deduces that the lift actually leads to a cave system within the canyon.

As Yaukiss is working out how to operate the lift, a chill goes through the party. Chains on the wall start to rattle. The party can see from the bottom of the canyon a swirling miasma of white and yellow energy. It's some sort of spirit.

As the spirit gets closer and hovers next to the party on the other side of the glass wall, Yaukiss takes a step back in shock.

"That's Croyanne. I knew her. She was a mage in my instructor's war party."

Upon closer inspection, the spirit definitely was once a githyanki. Her nose is only two slits, her ears pointed, her stringy black hair braided much the same as Yaukiss'.

Croyanne opens her mouth and lets out a scream.

She is a **banshee**.

Two things happen. First, everyone in the party must make a saving throw against the banshee's wail. Some party members might be knocked fully unconscious. Yaukiss succeeds on his save regardless of the result of his roll.

Second, the glass of the watchtower shatters and the party starts to fall.

Yaukiss grabs onto the scaffolding of the lift and uses his telekinetic powers to save one other party member, preferably someone who was knocked unconscious by the banshee. Anyone still conscious can make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to control their fall and land amidst the scaffolding of the lift.

Spells like *fly*, *feather fall*, and *levitate* can also be cast as an action to save oneself or others. Party members can grab each other and hold each other aloft with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

If anyone is still falling, the banshee can swoop to catch them. She will immediately begin to drain their life. It's best to roll initiative at this point.

Once the banshee is defeated and everyone is safely in the lift, they can take a breather. It's a bit cramped; the lift is only meant to take about four people, but the whole party can fit in with a squeeze. Yaukiss needs a moment to process the fact that the warship crew is haunting the Gorge. Does this mean his dragon is also undead?

In any case, he uses his telekinetic powers to manipulate the pulleys of the lift and lower him and the party deeper into the gorge.

A quick note: any party member that falls through the Empty Space is not dead; they will reappear unharmed at the beginning of Chapter IV with the rest of the party in the Sunset Realm.

THE CAVE

As the pulley gets deeper and deeper into the Gorge, it suddenly changes course and wheels towards the canyon wall. Just when it's about to hit the wall, the rock slides open and the lift chugs along into a massive cave system. The lift dings and the door opens onto a peninsula. The party shuffles out.

Another chill goes through the party. This is a place of death. They are not welcome here.

ZOMBIES

The party quickly finds the bones of adventurers scattered across the ground. A few shuffling figures on the peninsula look up with empty, sunken eyes. **Zombies**, formerly githyanki, their bodies mummified and dry. There are 7 zombies in total.

Yaukiss opens the fight by shoving a zombie straight off the peninsula. It moans in despair as it falls down, down, down into the darkness of the cave. Its moans never stop, they just get quieter until they can't be heard anymore. The cave has no bottom; just like the Gorge, it opens out into the Empty Space.

GHOSTS

As the party continues through the cave, they pass through a tunnel with one side opened up to give a view of the massive cave system. It's so big that one might suspect the tunnels of these caves run through the entire Hourglass Desert. Eventually, however, that view disappears, covered up by cascading rivers of sand that almost form the lost wall of the tunnel by themselves. It's strangely beautiful.

A group of githyanki spirits, however, have noticed the arrival of the party. They make a Dexterity (Stealth) check against the party's passive Perception. If they succeed, they get a surprise round on the party. If they fail, a party member notices that the cascading sand wall has parted a little to let something invisible through.

The spirits are made up of a **banshee** and 3 **ghosts**. The ghosts do not have access to their possession ability. Yaukiss is willing to use his dagger against these ghosts (but not his sword) as its silvered edge can hurt the ghosts more easily than a regular dagger, bypassing their resistances. He also recommends the party find a way to silence the banshee before she can let loose a wail like the last one.

GLASS

The party emerges into a wide-open cavern. A hole in the wall gives a view out across the Empty Space: there it is, the warship, tantalisingly close now.

The warship looks extremely out of place, something almost more from speculative fiction than fantasy. Its buoyant hull, the shape of a whale's belly, sticks out from a massive clump of hardened sand and glass. Its sails, now ripped and deformed with age, are in the shape of dragon's wings. Its bow almost looks like the head of a giant angry insect. The warship bristles with defunct ballistas and its ancient magical runes of protection have dulled and become inert.

All the party needs to do is pass through this cavern, and they'll be able to just walk up to the warship on a narrow path along the wall above the Empty Space. However, Yaukiss stops dead at the sight of what is in this cavern.

A glass greenhouse.

Luscious plants grow from within the greenhouse. Sunlight shines in from a magical glowing bauble. Magical energy radiates off of the runes in the walls, runes which were not carved but rather seem to be made from the very same glass that formed the greenhouse.

Sitting within the greenhouse are two figures: a glass genasi monk, meditating, and a zombie. The zombie is mindlessly tending to the gardens.

Any glass genasi characters will recognise the genasi as Osark, a legendary **arch mage** who went missing five hundred years ago. It's shocking to see him still alive. He's meant to only be a myth.

Yaukiss charges the greenhouse. He throws open the door. He pushes past Osark and grabs the zombie. He twists the zombie around to see its face.

Yaukiss pushes the zombie against the wall. Takes a step back. For the first time, Yaukiss draws his silver sword with intent to kill. He roars.

"YOU TOOK EVERYTHING FROM ME!"

He stabs the zombie up through the stomach and into the brain, killing it instantly. Then he wails on its corpse for a good thirty seconds, hacking it to pieces until there's nothing left except for chunks of dried flesh all over the greenhouse floor.

Osark wakes up from his meditation.

"Do you know how long it took to get that zombie to stop trying to eat me? My word."

Talking to Yaukiss and Osark reveals the following new information:

- That zombie was Yaukiss' former instructor who took Yaukiss' dragon away from him, launched the attack on the Hourglass Desert, and was lost forever with his crew. This all happened about a thousand years ago, but time works differently in different planes, and especially differently here in the Hourglass Desert.
- Osark arrived about five hundred years ago and was nearly killed by the ghosts and zombies. He locked himself away in this greenhouse and warded its glass walls against undead. He took one zombie and trained it how to water his plants for him. He's been living here ever since.
- Osark thinks that only about two or three months have passed.
- Osark is more scared of the dragon than of the undead.

Yes, it turns out that there is a dragon in the caves, and it's very likely that the dragon is the one who raised the githyanki crew as undead. Osark isn't sure what killed the crew, but he suspects that the sands themselves buried them and mummified them. It does tend to happen. Within the sands are a deep magic that can take away years from your life, reducing you to a dried corpse in minutes. This is likely the fate of the warship.

Osark asks if anything has been following the party. If his greenhouse is compromised, the dragon will be able to find him in the cave systems again.

The answer is, yes, the party has been followed by the dune orcs and by the pillar of sand. It's up to the party whether they wish to divulge this information to Osark. If they do, he offers to put up some defenses against the orcs while the party investigates the warship. They just need to be careful not to make too much noise or they might attract the dragon.

Yaukiss tells the party to go on without him for now. He'll catch up later. He needs a moment to process everything. If the party still insists on not leaving him alone, he uses *dimension door* to disappear elsewhere into the cave. If they come back to get him for help with the puzzle, he will already have left, and Osark will shrug. Yaukiss has just kind of disappeared.

THE WARSHIP

As the party crosses the narrow path to the half-buried warship, get them to make Dexterity (Stealth) checks. There is no need, as the dragon won't be alerted by the party until later, but it helps to ratchet up the tension.

Now that the party is close to the warship, they can see a few more zombies and ghosts wandering around on its deck. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies three **zombies** and two **ghosts**. Again, the ghosts do not have access to their possession ability.

Once the ship has been cleared of threats, present the party with the puzzle "Aligning the Nodes". Each of these dials represents a runic symbol on the ship's deck which seems to have been misaligned when it crash-landed. Each seems to represent some aspect of githyanki culture, testing the players on how well they have been paying attention.

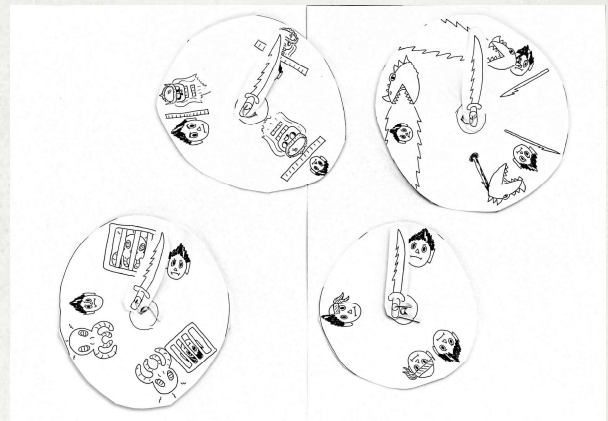
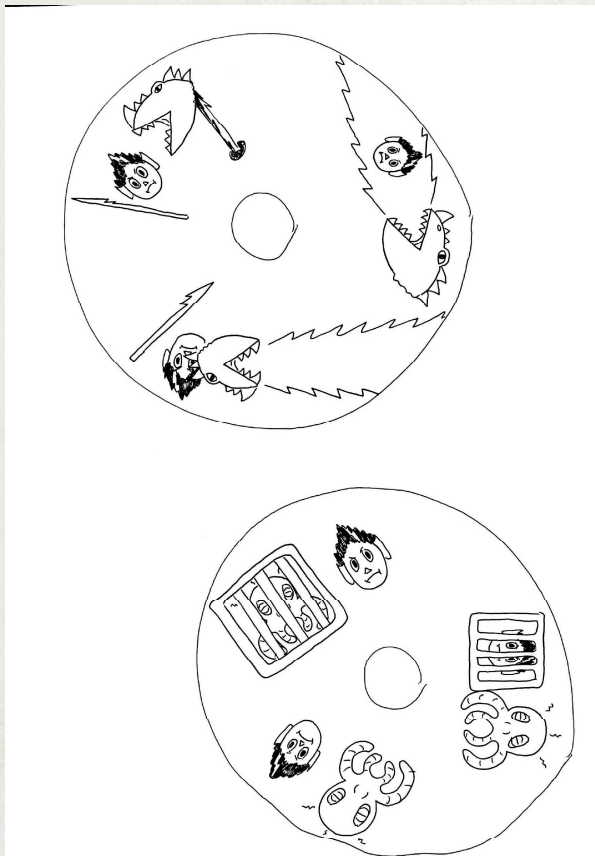
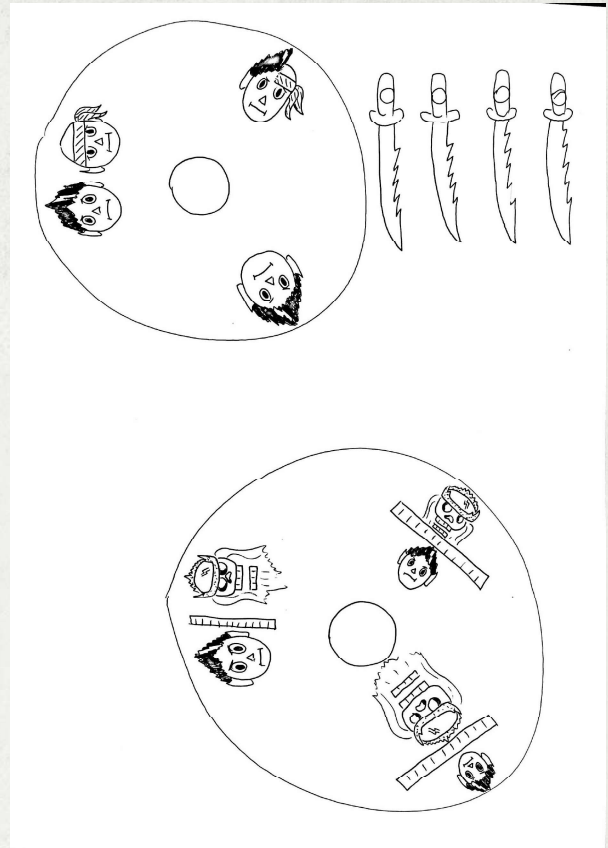
It's recommended to photocopy and cut out the puzzle pieces for the players to play around with in real life.

Once the symbols have been properly aligned, the ship powers up and starts to shake, making a huge racket and, of course, alerting the dragon.

ALIGNING THE NODES

Cut out each of the four circular nodes and the four silver sword needles. Attach the needles to the nodes in the center such that you can spin the needle to point at one of the three symbols on each node. The players must select the correct symbol on all four nodes to activate the ship. The symbols should represent the ideals of the githyanki people.

A larger resolution of the puzzle for printing purposes is included at the end of this book (page 99-100).



The solution to the puzzle is pictured above and follows this rationale:

Mindflayers. The githyanki would rather see the mindflayers enslaved.

Lich Queen: The githyanki people are in service to (below) their lich queen.

Githzerai. The githyanki would be better off without the githzerai.

Dragon. A githyanki fights alongside their red dragon.

THE DRAGON

As soon as the githyanki warship powers back up, the sands that have half-buried the ship start to shift and rumble. From within, a massive red creature emerges, shaking off thousands of tonnes of sand like a dog would shake off water.

A red scaly claw, twice the size of a man, clutches the side of the warship. It starts to shake. Everyone must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay balanced or fall prone.

Towering over the party, a dragon's head emerges. It is a gargantuan dragon, still alive after all these years, stewing in its own anger. Its dark red scales are the colour of blood. Each fang is as long as a grown man. Its eyes are like windows into its evil soul. Smoke billows from the dragon's nostrils as it speaks.

"Who dares disturb my slumber?"

This is Gethrax the Eternal Lost, an **ancient red dragon**.

Sitting on top of its head, looking rather sheepish, is Yaukiss. He gives a look to the party: "I'm sorry." The dragon's voice booms.

"The warship has been restored. Down through the Empty Space I shall go with my army of undead to scour the Sunset Realm. Now is the time for the rule of Gethrax the Eternal Lost. The Hourglass Desert shall quake in fear of its rightful master, and your scorched carcasses shall be my vanguard!"

The dragon inhales sharply, preparing to let loose a blast of fire. Yaukiss shields his eyes in anticipation. But the fire never comes. Instead, a swirling tornado of sand dislodges the warship and blows the party off the edge, sending them free-falling into the Empty Space.

The pillar of sand, weirdly enough, has saved the party from the ancient dragon.

By this point, the players will probably have realized that the Empty Space leads down into the Sunset Realm. This is true. The party will re-emerge in the Sunset Realm in the opposite season of the year, where the sands rain from the skies instead of drain into the ground. The Sunset Realm begins in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV: FALLING SANDS

Three weeks have passed since the party accidentally woke up an ancient dragon and got immediately betrayed by Yaukiss. Down here in the Sunset Realm, all of the sand that was draining through the Gorge in the Sunrise Realm is now falling down from the skies in massive cascading waterfalls, like pillars reaching up to the sky. This is the raining season. Dunes form underneath the falling sands and the ecosystem of canyons and rocks is buried until the sands drain away in the next half of the year.

SUNSET REALM

PELANDRIA (LVL+)

The party has taken up residence in the city of Pelandria, the home of the pelandrian elves of the Sunset Realm. Just like the elves, the city takes on the attitude and personality of the current season, and with the sands raining down, the city has walled itself up tight against the outside world, providing great comfort for those within and holding fast against those outside. Massive sand dunes, hundreds and hundreds of feet high, push against the walls of the city but are held back by elven magic.

Due to the long lives of the elves, the city is in a mild state of disrepair. What's the point in fixing something if it will fall into ruin barely ten years later? For an elf, ten years is the blink of an eye. The pelandrian elves instead view the slow decaying of their own city as a kind of beauty in itself, and the old stone structures crumble even while the city remains populous and prosperous.

As the pelandrian elves reach the end of the raining season, their hospitality towards other races has waned but not disappeared. Humans, gnomes, and genasi begin preparations to leave, and many shops and other places of business have closed in anticipation of the coming holidays. The city is quiet, and it's peaceful.

Get each party member to describe what they have been doing for the past three weeks as they recover from their injuries and horrific experiences. Below, their accommodation details and a typical pelandrian activity are included.

The players advance to 7th level by resting in Pelandria.

JEPANEL'S BOW

At the heart of the great city of Pelandria is a lush oasis of lakes, shrubs, and trees overlaid thick enough to form a kind of rainforest. Many of the vegetation was imported from the Feywild and has been propagated by the elves for generations to remind them, literally, of their roots. One such tree is gnarled, knotted, thick, and hollow, and within its great bulk is a small tavern and inn run by an elf named Jepanel. The tavern is called Jepanel's Bow (bow pronounced like "take a bow").

Like most pelandrian elves this time of year, Jepanel is unusually amicable, throwing arms around strangers, offering the occasional free drink to a face he likes, and going for a tickle if he thinks he can get away with it. He has put up the party in a room in the treehouse above the inn. Apparently it wasn't getting used anyway, so no charge.

Just don't ask any questions about what Jepanel does with those weird smoky plants in his room at night.

Jepanel is a retired adventurer (a **nomad**) whose brother Pejanel moved away hundreds of years ago for scholarly pursuits in Glasswork in the Sunrise Realm. He hasn't heard from his brother in quite some time and insists that the party tell him all the latest news. Although he won't say so explicitly, the party's free room and board may be contingent on their willingness to divulge information about his brother.

The tavern mostly gets other pelandrian elves, but as it's in a prime tourist location, it's not unusual to see humans, gnomes, and even exotic races patronising the bar. Most notably, there is a **red dragonborn acolyte** of the Dragon Queen who orders the Fire Mead at the end of each day. Most of the other patrons give him a wide berth. The dragonborn, Syraxim, insists that a reckoning is upon the Hourglass Desert. He has seen it in his dreams.

"I have dreamed of lava and heat. I have dreamed of molten glass raining from the skies. I have dreamed of the great beauty of destruction. Another mead, please."

Probing the dragonborn for more information doesn't yield results, as he's too drunk to talk coherently about his dreams. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that he actually doesn't know very much about his dreams at all. He'll happily tell the party he has absolutely no idea how he ended up in the Hourglass Desert and is basically just wandering around getting drunk.

MEDITATIVE RETREAT

The pelandrian elves do not sleep at night. Instead, they engage in a deep form of meditation, a trance, that lasts for roughly four hours. During the raining season, many places of worship for the elves, where they reflect upon the collective memories of their elven ancestors in the Feywild, become open to the general public as well. Although races other than elves do not possess the innate racial ability to go into a trance, the pelandrian elves still believe there is value for others to try.

The Collapsed Temple of Correlon is a popular meditative spot for the duskriese, a rare race of glittering humanoids who seek out deep personal connections with members of other races to enter into a regenerative state and extend their own lifespans, taking on aspects of the race that they have made a connection with. The duskriese are attracted to meditations in the temple of Correlon as the elven god represents a mutable, changing, chaotic state of flexible self-definition, a philosophy that appeals greatly to a nomadic race of partial shapechangers.

Meditation in the temple of Correlon is a quiet affair, moderated by an ancient elf whose ears have flowered and whose eyes have clouded over white. For each party member that joins in, read out the following passage and get the player to write the answer to each question on their character sheet, or on a separate page.

Randomly select one of the party members beforehand; they will be singled out at the end.

A MEDITATION ON CHANGE

"When you think of Correlon, do not picture a face in your mind. Do not picture a form, for Correlon is formless. Our corporeal bodies are but a pale imitation of its greatness, yet within us lies a luminous, mutable soul, and that soul is great, and it is ever changing."

The dusk rise all chatter in agreement before the old elf shushes them.

"Correlon is seen as the god of the elves, but he is not. Correlon is merely the truest form of an elf. We are all Correlon. Our souls are one. Think deep in your hearts to someone you have lost. Say their name, repeat it, quietly, and let that name wash away forever. Cast their name from your mind, for a person is not a name. A person is their soul. Their soul is within Correlon, and Correlon is within you."

With a pencil, write down on your character sheet the name of someone your character has lost long ago. Then, write down any positive traits that this lost person represents, such as resilience, confidence, strength, dignity, etc. Finally, erase this person's name. You will be left only with what they have given you. The old elf waits for a long time, then continues as though he had never stopped.

"Correlon represents change, and it can be found within the elements of existence. Fire licks at the sky with curious flames. The winds of the air tumble and shift on a whim. Water flows and laps at the beach head. Even the earth wears away, and the elves live long enough to see it. Search deep within you, and find in yourself the elements of change. What does change feel like to you? Is it a roaring fire? A cold wind? Perhaps it is the Weave itself calling for your hands and words to bring it forth."

Write down on your character sheet what change means to your character, relating it to a natural or magical phenomenon if possible. After a long wait for each meditator to reflect, the old elf walks amidst the meditators and singles out one of you.

"Tell me. Who are you? What is your name? Who are you truly?"

If the player answers with "Correlon", their character gains the ability to cast *alter self* at will. Otherwise, the old elf just smiles and pats them on the head.

"Have patience. You will learn your name in due time."

SHARDS

The day starts like any other. Birds chirp from the branches next to the treehouse where the party is staying above Jepanel's Bow. Elves wander in the streets and paths below. The party can already hear market sellers advertising a hot breakfast from their cart. And they can also hear the beating of giant wings.

An elf scout cries out from the treetops.

"DRAAAAAA-GOOOOOON!!!"

The ancient red dragon, Gethrax the Eternal Lost, bursts from black clouds and swoops down low, casting an enormous shadow across the dunes at the city's borders. The dragon lets out a gout of searing fire, but, thankfully, the magical defenses at the borders shield the city from the heat. The flames lick around an invisible dome of force.

The dragon rears up and flies high into the sky. The elves' hoots and hollers of success are cut short when the dragon breathes a hot jet of flame into one of the pillars of falling sand, and the sand turns to glass.

The city watches in horror as thousands of razor-sharp glittering shards of glass descend upon the city, passing through the magical barrier and raining down into the streets.

Mothers shriek and pull their children indoors. Elven mages cast *tiny hut* and protect themselves where they stand. Bystanders scream as they reach out and experience a hundred tiny slices pooling blood in their hands. The whole city immediately shuts down and everyone hides in their homes.

The dragon beats its wings in triumph and flies off to terrorise another town. It will be back, and it will bring even greater horrors. The dragon seems to delight in causing pain.

BROKEN GLASS

If Pelandria is to deal with the thousands upon thousands of tonnes of broken glass that has settled in the city streets, they need to solve the following three issues. Jepanel asks the party for help.

Rescuing the Wounded. There are people out in the streets who have been badly hurt by the glass and can't move for fear of hurting themselves even more. Jepanel asks if anyone in the party has the ability to heal wounds, perform medicine, or move people without hurting them.

Cleaning the Streets. Many of the elves have already asked the small glass genasi population in the city to help clear the glass off the streets. Any glass genasi or glass monk party members will be able to help clean without fear of getting hurt by the glass. Others can help too by carefully using broomsticks or magical spells to slowly clear the paths.

- **Updating the Magical Barriers.** The barriers around the city seem to protect Pelandria against effects that are magically created, but physical objects and creatures can pass through easily. The party actually can't help with this issue, as the magic, ancient and powerful, is beyond their abilities. It does mean that most of the city's best mages will be devoted to this issue and won't be able to help with other crises, however, so running food, water, and other supplies to the elven wizards will be much appreciated and help move things along quicker.

It's clear that the party is needed, as the elves aren't used to responding to crises so quickly and many of them are just standing around thinking really hard on what action to take. They wouldn't want to get it wrong, after all. Get the party to describe how they help out and award inspiration for clever solutions. There's no need to make checks to succeed in these tasks.

THE ORC SIEGE

As the city limps along in its recovery from the glass attack, rumours of orc scouts at the tops of the dunes send shivers of terror throughout the populace. Red smoke curling up from behind the dunes is also becoming a source of fear. The rumours are proven true when a dune orc is captured by an elite elven warrior.

The party is invited to witness the interrogation, but by the time they get there, the dune orc has managed to strangle himself on his own sling, which was lined with glass shards for extra gruesomeness. He apparently croaked out something along the lines of "I shall be reborn in a new era!" before he died. The elves were so shocked at the audacity that they weren't able to stop him.

An Intelligence (Investigation) check on the body reveals the following information.

- DC 5: He's dead.
- DC 10: He's from the same tribe of dune orcs that the party has met before.
- DC 15: His clothes are stained bright red, presumably from the red smoke that can be seen wafting from behind the dunes.
- DC 20: The smell of sulphur and the use of glass weapons suggests he is working for the dragon.

In any case, it is clear that an orc attack on the city is imminent. Jepanel sits down on a crumbling piece of stonewall and waves his hands impotently in the air.

"These are the plagues that drove us from the Feywild! Fire, blood, and overwhelming force! What are we to do against a plague? The city will fall to the orcs, and if it doesn't, the dragon will reduce us to cinders!"

This is an opportunity for the party to get out of the city and leave the elves behind to their fate. However, if they choose to stay, they have the opportunity to save a lot of lives. There are several ways of ensuring the city will be defended.

Scout the Orc Camp. At the moment, no one knows the extent of the orcs' numbers or capabilities. Someone needs to do some reconnaissance and perhaps even some sabotage.

Lay Traps. The elves have defenses, but their hospitality means they haven't put any traps outside the city because that wouldn't be very accommodating of them. At the present moment the orcs can just march right up through the city streets.

Evacuate the City. If the dragon comes back before the defenses are improved, it will likely be able to break through and kill everyone. One way of preventing this would be to get everyone out of the city first.

Unfortunately, it doesn't seem possible to improve the magical barrier fast enough to prepare for the dragon's next arrival. It could come back within the next day. The party can say this for certain if the connection between the orcs and the dragon has been established. In the siege on Pelandria, the orcs are just the appetizer. The dragon is the main course.

SCOUT THE ORC CAMP

A party member who can fly, turn into a flying animal, or who possesses a flying familiar can easily scout out the orc camp on the other side of the dunes without too much trouble. It's a massive mobile military camp with hundreds of tents for soldiers, several mess halls and kitchens, bonfires roaring with red smoke, and entire squads of orcs carrying nothing but percussion instruments making as much cacophony as possible. They're not subtle.

If the players wish to sabotage the orcs, they can sneak into the orc camp to carry out their sabotage. One obvious way to do so is to lace the orcs' stew with poison. The elves from Pelandria don't have poison available for sale, but Jepanel does sheepishly offer some psychedelic drugs.

Both sneaking in and sneaking out of the camp requires a Dexterity (Stealth) check from each party member involved. Each party member might have a different result; for example, one character might be noticed and attacked while another is unnoticed. Characters who are unnoticed or get away clean can escape unharmed but can also choose to come back and assist anyone being attacked.

- Below 13: The character is noticed and attacked by a patrol of 2d6 **dune orcs**.
- DC 13: The character is noticed but manages to get away.
- DC 18: The character is not noticed.

Sabotaging the orcs requires a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Only one party member needs to make this check.

- Below 13: The party is noticed and attacked by a **rebirth knight**. If the battle lasts more than 2 rounds, 1d6+1 **dune orcs** arrive as reinforcements. The sabotage is unsuccessful.
- DC 13: The party is noticed but manages to get away. The sabotage is unsuccessful.
- DC 18: The party is not noticed. The sabotage is successful.

If the party is noticed while sneaking in, the orcs go on high alert and the party has disadvantage on any following checks to sabotage the orcs or to sneak out.

If the party is noticed sabotaging or sneaking out, the orc camp becomes too dangerous to stay in for any longer, and the orcs will have advantage on initiative checks and on any saving throws to avoid traps during the attack on Pelandria.

If the sabotage is successful, every orc will have the *poisoned* condition during the attack on Pelandria, giving them disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. Given that they have been drugged with psychedelics, whenever an orc misses an attack or fails an ability check, roleplay the orcs as seeing horrific images, overwhelming colours, or extremely emotional memories that reduce them to gibbering tears. It's a bad trip.

In addition, if the party wishes to do some investigating, they can risk an Intelligence (Investigation) check to identify more information about the orcs and why they are here. They will also need to make another Dexterity (Stealth) check equivalent to sneaking in.

- DC 8: The dune orcs are from the same tribe as the tribe the party encountered in the Sunrise Realm.
- DC 13: The dune orcs are followers of the dragon. The dragon must have taken them through the Empty Space to get here.
- DC 18: The dune orcs don't really understand how the Hourglass Desert works. They think that the only way to travel between the Sunset and Sunrise Realm (and vice versa) is through the gorge at the center of both deserts.

LAY TRAPS

Let the party use their imagination for the kinds of traps that they set. The city is at the base of an enormous dune and the streets are characterised with crumbling infrastructure. Don't forget that the entire city has recently been blanketed in razor-sharp shards of glass.

Setting an effective trap requires a flat Intelligence check. A character can gain advantage on the check by bolstering their plans for the traps with class abilities or spells. The success of this check determines the orcs' Threat Level during the attack.

- Below 10: The traps are completely ineffective. Threat Level 3.
- DC 10: The orcs are wounded by the traps. Threat Level 2.
- DC 15: The orcs are severely wounded by the traps. Threat Level 1.
- DC 20: The orcs are completely incapacitated by the traps. Threat Level 0.

EVACUATE THE CITY

Evacuating the city requires a flat Charisma check. A character can make it a Deception, Persuasion, or Intimidation check to increase their bonus, or even use another skill such as Intelligence if they effectively describe how their character uses their skills to organise the evacuation efforts.

- Below 10: The evacuation effort was unsuccessful.
- DC 10: Tourists have been evacuated but no elf agrees to leave their home.
- DC 15: Tourists and dependents (children, elderly, disabled, etc) of the elf population have been evacuated.

- DC 20: Tourists and dependents of the elf population have been evacuated, and, in anticipation of the dragon, the rest of the elves will also leave once the orcs have been defeated.

THE DEFENSE OF PELANDRIA

Morning of the next day, the orc vanguard courses over the crest of the dunes and descends down towards the city like a tidal wave.

The party is sent out ahead of time to ambush one of the dune orc squads on their own to lighten the load of the attack on the city. The success of the traps laid out ahead of time determines the Threat Level of the orc attack, and subsequently the difficulty of the party's ambush.

It should be made clear to the players that the success of their ambush will be directly representational of the success of the defense of the city overall; if they defeat the orcs handily, the elves will also defend the city handily. If they royally screw things up in this fight, the elves will also royally screw things up in their defense.

Don't forget the effects of a sabotage in the orc camp if it was successful.

The party sets up an ambush at the edge of the city, where one of the orc squads has circled around to attack from the side. A few of the elite pelandrian warriors has instructed the party of some effective hiding places ahead of time, making Stealth checks unnecessary (the warrior is badly needed elsewhere and does not help in the fight, however). The terrain is a city street with crumbling walls on either side where the party lays in wait. The orcs will be surprised by the party.

If the party has a better idea of how to deal with this particular orc squad, they can forgo the ambush and pursue their own plan instead.

THREAT LEVEL 0

There are 1d6+4 **dune orcs** who already look badly wounded. Each orc only has 15 hit points instead of 25 due to their wounds.

THREAT LEVEL 1

There are 1d6+4 **dune orcs** led by a **dune orc warchief**. The dune orcs have 15 hit points and their warchief has 92 hit points.

THREAT LEVEL 2

There are 1d6+4 **dune orcs** led by a **dune orc warchief** and a **sand shaman**. The dune orcs have 15 hit points, their warchief has 92 hit points, and the sand shaman has 44 hit points.

THREAT LEVEL 3

There are 1d6+4 **dune orcs** led by a **dune orc warchief** and 2 **sand shamans**. The orcs are unharmed.

AFTERMATH

There are many possible results of the siege. The city might still be filled with fearful people, or it might be completely empty as even the soldiers pack up to leave rather than face the dragon. The city might have been completely ravaged by the orcs, or perhaps the orcs barely made it two feet into the streets before they were slaughtered.

The dragon's terrible wings can be heard beating in the distance. The orcs were just leading up to the true attack from the dragon itself.

Jepanel gives the party enough water and rations for 10 days of travel and tells them to just run. It's not possible to fight an ancient red dragon at the moment so their only hope is to put as much distance as they can between them and Pelandria before the dragon arrives.

"The dragon will scour the Sunset Realm, and when it's done, it will travel through the gorge again to scour the Sunrise Realm too. Your only hope is to get to the Sunrise Realm before it does and prepare for its arrival. Once the seasons change, it will be upon you again. That dragon isn't native to our world and it doesn't understand our ways. You can get back to the Sunrise Realm before the seasons change by finding the Tower of Dusk, the tallest structure in the realm, and flying up through the sky itself."

With that, the party has their goal: find the **Tower of Dusk** and return to the Sunrise Realm before the seasons change.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Do not forget to roll on the **Sunset Realm Complication** table when determining the random encounters for the Sunset Realm!

CHAPTER V: ASCENT

The Tower of Dusk is not easy to find. Talking to other refugees fleeing Pelandria, this tower seems more myth than reality. Just like the people who created it, the duskrise, the Tower of Dusk wanders the world aimlessly, never showing up in the same place twice and never settling down in one location for long. It is said that its spire scrapes against the highest layers of darkness of the night and carries that shadow with it during the day like a flag or a banner, trailing in the wind behind its peaks as the tower wanders the dunes. This tower is the tallest point in the Sunset Realm. With proper planning, one could easily fly straight from its spire and into the Empty Space to return to the Sunrise Realm. It's important to plan ahead.

SUNSET REALM

DUSKRISE

If there are any duskrise in the party, they have an innate sense of direction that pulls them towards the tower. In their culture, travelling to the Tower of Dusk is a pilgrimage that all duskrise are compelled to make at least once every century.

Without a duskrise, it is almost impossible to locate the tower, as it moves constantly and unpredictably. Without a duskrise in the party, it's recommended to have the group, on their first day of travel, fortuitously run into a duskrise camp.

THE DUSKRISE CAMP

You can use the following encounter as the basis for the duskrise camp.

- 83: The Glittering Nomads

One of the duskrise approaches the party with curiosity and introduces herself as **Dailah**. She has slits in her neck that non-natives of the Hourglass Desert would recognise as gills. Her eyes are huge, yellow, and glassy like fish eyes.

"Oh, these? I had a whirlwind romance with, believe it or not, a triton. He came here all the way from the Elemental Plane of Water to find a traitor to his people, and he was not at all happy with his new circumstances. Well, not happy until he met me!"

She winks and flirts with party members she finds interesting, but it's all just for fun. She mentions off hand that she's been itching to see the Tower of Dusk. It's been too long since her last pilgrimage.

If asked, Dailah will gladly accompany the party and guide them to the tower as long as they provide her protection while they travel through the desert.

"I'm sure big, strong, powerful adventurers such as yourselves will have no trouble letting a glittery little duskrise tag along, wouldn't you say?"

TRAVEL

It's a ten day journey to the Tower of Dusk, but Dailah won't ever say exactly how long they have left. She'll just say that it's over a week to get there at the beginning. At the halfway point, she'll say that the party is getting close. With two days left, she'll say "any day now."

Note too that she can cast either *fog cloud* or *gust of wind* once a day, but not both.

Roll on the encounter table for each day of travel.

Each night, while Dailah wanders the camp and communes with the sands to locate the Tower of Dusk, certain characters will be able to feel a competing pull: one that draws them towards a violent whirlwind of sand that always seems to be vaguely ahead of the party. These characters might include ...

- Glass Genasi
- Oath of Rebirth Paladins
- Path of the Ancestral Guardian Barbarians
- Genie Patron Warlocks
- Any character with the Hermit background

Roll 1d8+1. On the day of travel corresponding with the result, the party encounters an ancient collapsed coliseum. The characters mentioned above who might have a connection with the pillar of sand feel inextricably drawn to this place and can't help but enter.

SADNESS AND MADNESS

As soon as the party draws close to the coliseum, strong winds surround the coliseum in a massive tornado of sand, preventing escape.

The entrance is marked with two symbols. A character that can speak Primordial can identify the symbols as wind and earth. Dailah can translate if needed.

The coliseum has a small interior section before it opens out into the stands and the sandy battleground. Within the interior section is a message in Primordial which looks like it was blasted into the walls with high pressure sand.

A WARNING

Do not be swayed by beauty
Do not be swayed by smooth skin and adoring eyes
Do not be swayed by a perfect family
She is no more than human
You are no less than a god

Do not be disturbed by a human husband
Do not be disturbed by a human world
Do not be disturbed by rejection of godhood
Her children could be so much more
Her children could be no less than gods

Do not despair that they have run away
You will find them one day in the world out there
And when you return she will love you again

Characters native to the Hourglass Desert who are older than 500 years old (commonly elves, gnomes, or duskriese) might recognise this as the myth of the Pillar of Sand. Dailah recognises the story if nobody else does.

The genie within the pillar of sand was said to have jealously taken the children of a human woman and turned them into earth and air genasi. When they ran away, he promised the woman that he would find her children and return them to her. He tracked them down to the Hourglass Desert but never found her. He went mad and his madness manifested as a tornado of air and earth that scours the desert, never finding peace. It is claimed that the glass genasi were created from the mixing of these lost children with the genasi who had already settled here.

An Intelligence (History) check reveals the following extra information.

- DC 15: The woman was a wizard who had initially tried to summon the genie to help her achieve greater power. She trapped him in a tea kettle when it became clear he would not help her for the reasons she wanted. He fell in love with her only by observing her over many years from within the tea kettle.
- DC 20: The genie offered to find her children as part of the promise of a *wish* spell. She accepted, but the impossibility of the task and the inability of the genie to deliver is what has twisted its body into the form of raging winds that it now takes. It is not wise to promise to fulfill a wish that cannot be fulfilled.

Sitting in the middle of the coliseum is a very humanlike house. It has been reconstructed out of bits of wood, metal, and glass. Funny, it wasn't there when the party first looked.

THE HOUSE

The house is quite small and is basically made up of a single room. It's a representation of a house, seemingly made from memory rather than a blueprint. Appliances of a kitchen, such as a stovetop and a kettle, are mixed in with living room furniture and a few small beds for sleeping, only big enough for children. The beds are only recognisable as such due to their pillows, otherwise just being slabs of wood on the ground. Nobody is truly sleeping here.

Mounted on the wall is a shrine. Sand has been sculpted and hardened in the loose shape of a woman, although the details have been scratched away with age. An effigy of a man made of sticks has been burned and reconstructed, seemingly hundreds of times over and over again. The only thing in the house that doesn't look reconstructed is the tea kettle.

Smashing the tea kettle summons the pillar of sand.

The house explodes around the party, coming apart entirely, each individual part spinning around in the air as the remnant genie continues to storm.

"Defeat me and I shall grant you a wish."

THE ARENA

The **pillar of sand** has no intention of granting the party a wish. Now that the kettle has been smashed, destroying the pillar of sand will put it out of its misery.

Instead of fighting, a character with a connection to the genie can attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm it down.

- Below 15: The genie is inconsolable.
- DC 15: The genie's storms lessen, slightly. If the genie is defeated, it will transform into a friendly **air elemental** instead of dying.
- DC 20: The genie's storms die down entirely. The pillar of sand stops spinning until it is reduced only to a friendly **air elemental** and the fight ends.

With the genie defeated, the storms outside of the coliseum become clear and the party can continue safely again. All of the random bits of house crash down harmlessly to the ground, leaving the genie's former world in tatters.

If the **air elemental** remains, it will offer to help the party against the dragon in exchange for assisting it in getting back home to the Elemental Plane of Air where it once ruled as a djinni. It was lying when it said it could offer them a wish; it just wanted them to kill it, but now it sees that there is more life to be had and the past needs to be put to rest.

The genie disappears with a promise that it will return. It makes its promise with a sardonic tone of voice, assuring the party that it won't go mad if it can't find them this time.

TRAVEL CONTINUES

The party resumes their journey. On the eleventh day of travel total, they arrive at the Tower of Dusk.

THE TOWER OF DUSK

Scraping along the top of the world is the tallest spire of the Tower of Dusk, a trail of darkness swaying in the wind like a banner. At the base of the tower, where it is thickest and strongest and where its roots have settled firmly into the ground, a small group of duskriese have set up camp as part of their pilgrimage. They welcome the party with open arms, as the duskriese always do, but warn that the tower is meant to be seen, not climbed. There are dangers within. It is said that all those who were lost in the desert eventually find their way inside. Do not be alarmed, for it is a safe haven and not a tomb, but do not go trespassing in their home without good reason. You will join them and never emerge.

It's getting late and the duskriese invite the party to take a short rest overnight with them. The duskriese insist that the party reflect back on their journey so far. They want to hear the stories, and they want to hear the way that the party tells them, for the telling of a story is just as important as its content. They also want to hear the purpose of the party for seeking out the Tower of Dusk, and are surprised at the mention of the dragon. They just saw a dragon less than a week ago! They seem impressed that the party is willing to cross the threshold back to the Sunrise Realm just for the chance to prepare against the dragon's attack. How nice!

As a reminder, the dragon, not being a native of the Hourglass Desert, doesn't know that you can fly between realms through the sky and not just through the gorge. This means the party can get to the Sunrise Realm first and still have time to prepare the Sunrise Realm natives against the dragon's attack.

Dailah chooses to stay with her people rather than climb the tower. There are many places for a duskribe to wander, but this is not one of them. She must go. The next morning, Dailah and the rest of the duskribe pack up all of their tents and gear and head off into the desert once more.

CLIMBING THE TOWER

Unfortunately for the party, they do not have an opportunity to take a long rest before they head into the tower. The dragon is only a few days away, and even if they had more time, there is no safe community to rest in. They must ascend with the few resources they still have.

The tower doors swing wide for the party, welcoming and inviting, and a warm wind washes over their faces. Within the tower is a spiral staircase leading up and up and up, until it disappears into the darkness above.

Climbing the tower is an incredibly difficult affair. Each party member must make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to keep up the pace once per hour. If they fail, they take a level of exhaustion.

While the party climbs, get them to swap stories and other methods of keeping spirits high. They must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw to maintain their morale, taking a point of exhaustion if they fail.

In addition, the air gets colder the higher they get, and it feels almost like thousands upon thousands of eyes are upon them, watching. They must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to avoid letting the cold wind get to them, taking yet another point of exhaustion if they fail.

This continues for six hours of climbing. After the sixth hour, the air unexpectedly becomes light and bouncy, their spirits collectively rise, and the gaze of the hidden eyes can be more easily ignored.

At the very top of the tallest spire, the staircase finally reaches its end at an unassuming hatch in the ceiling. Guarding the hatch are two spirits glaring down at the trespassers to their haven. These are 2 **banshees**.

"This is a place of lost souls. What gives you the right to climb through our safe haven?"

The party can attempt a convincing reason with a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. On a failure, the banshees open their mouths to scream and combat begins. Once the banshees have been destroyed, they breathe a dying word as they fade into nothingness: they were meant to be safe here. This was supposed to be safe.

THE RED SKIES

As the party passes through the hatch, they emerge on a platform jutting out from the tallest spire of the Tower of Dusk. The Hourglass Desert stretches out for hundreds of miles in every direction, and when they see the burning remains of Pelandria, they realize how little they have actually travelled in this place.

It's night. The sky has turned red with smoke and fire. Sand pours out of cracks in the sky, swirling through the smoke and scattering across the desert floor miles below them. The black shadow that trails with the wind behind the tower cuts through this redness, and, now that the party is high enough to see it up close, it is obvious that it is a scar, not a shadow.

The spire is literally scraping through the roof of the world, where it makes a gash into the Empty Space that can be flown through.

If the party has made it this far without a plan of how to fly into the Empty Space, they really haven't thought things through enough to succeed in this quest. The dragon flies up next to them and eats them all. The end.

If they do have a plan, however, they need to leave now before the dragon notices them. It's currently burning some indeterminate little camp far below. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal that a tiny yellow figure is riding on the dragon's head. Yaukiss.

Flying through the shadow into the Empty Space requires a bit of careful maneuvering, as the falling sands are swirling dangerously at this high altitude with all of the smoke and fire below. Anyone doing the flying needs to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Using spells and class features to support each other grants advantage on this check.

- Below 5: You and anyone you are carrying are caught in the falling sands and tumble down to your deaths, buffeted by hundreds of tonnes of sand that overwhelms you completely.
- DC 5: You and anyone you are carrying are caught in the falling sands and you must jettison all of your gear in order to make it. Everyone can choose one piece of equipment to save. All else is lost. You receive a permanent scar across your face: a dozen slashes from sharp grains of sand running from your temple to your chin. Only a *wish* can remove this scar.
- DC 10: You and anyone you are carrying tumble too close to the falling sands. You receive a permanent scar across your face: a dozen slashes from sharp grains of sand running from your temple to your chin. Only a *wish* can remove this scar.
- DC 15: You manage to successfully avoid the falling sand.

The shadow envelops all who pass through the crack, and the Empty Space swallows the party. Everything goes dark.

The party returns to the Sunrise Realm beginning in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI: THROUGH GLASS

Glasswork is not the same. Years have passed. The old guard has been phased out. Platforms between the bluffs have expanded into enormous centers of commerce and trade. The elf Pejanel, now the elected mayor of the town, is beleaguered with the new developments.

Now that people he had once thought were long gone have returned as though they'd just left, he has another problem to solve. Solving problems invigorates him.

SUNRISE REALM

BACK TO GLASSWORK (LVL+)

The party was found encased in glass in a loose sand dune. Scouts from Glasswork dug them out and carted them back to the city, where Pejanel has just broken the curse on the glass. The party collapses in the mayor's office with Pejanel standing over them, his expression a mixture of curiosity and disapproval.

Pejanel's office has ancient maps of how the Hourglass Desert has changed dramatically over thousands of years mounted up chronologically on his walls. A few ancient artefacts of little practical value but of a great sentimental quality are piled up on his desk along with hundreds of administrative papers.

Pejanel's partner, Silver, a duskriese man with pointed ears and an air of pompous nobility, gives Pejanel a peck on the cheek as Pejanel quietly dismisses him from the room. Pejanel looks over the party, thinking hard, then shakes his head.

"No, no, the glass does not explain your absence. You ended up in that dune a few weeks ago, by my estimation, but it has been several decades since I have seen you. Some of you, I expect, should have died of old age by now. Very curious. Very curious indeed."

Pejanel and the party swap explanations of what they've been up to. The following information becomes clear in conversation with Pejanel.

- Pejanel became mayor of Glasswork about fifteen years ago and has held the position since then, being re-elected each season on the basis of promises of further development. This is not exactly what he wanted for the city, but it keeps him popular and in charge.
- For the past year, the orcs have been sending scouts and conducting raids nearby. There seem to be a lot more of them around than usual. Their new chieftain has united the orcs under a common cause and the power they wield has grown considerably. There are a lot more shamans and a lot more paladins who have taken the Oath of Rebirth.
- The Sunrise Realm is coming to the end of the draining season. Soon the skies will open up and the sand will rain down in great falling pillars as it does every year.

- "Dragon? What dragon? Oh, yes, that sounds dreadful, but it's important you all spend a few days to regain your strength before we deal with any of that."

Pejanel takes pity on the party for trusting a dirty githyanki and offers them free room and board as long as they help out with some development projects he's been working on. He gives them a little room looking out over the divide between the bluffs. There's enough beds for everyone and a few curtains for privacy, but not much else. It's comfortable and it's free. The party can take this opportunity to take a long rest.

If the party rests, they advance to eighth level. This is the final opportunity for the party to level up.

While they rest, Pejanel cracks the whip on projects for them to complete for him in town.

General Work. Lots of stuff to do around. Don't be strangers. Offer your help.

Scaffolding Nuisance. Many of the new platforms between the bluffs require strong scaffolds in order to stay up. There are these annoying little bugs that are blending in with the stone supports and eating away at the wood. Get rid of them.

Stone Curse. Lots of scouts outside town aren't returning.

One of the rangers came back a few days ago with his hyena companion turned to stone. He was sobbing inconsolably. Whatever is causing this needs to be defeated so the scouts can do their work without fear.

GENERAL WORK

The party takes on various physical jobs throughout the city. Succeeding at a job requires a flat DC 10 Strength or Dexterity check (player's choice). The consequences for failure is just having Pejanel express disappointment, but not surprise.

SCAFFOLDING NUISANCE

The scaffolding does not seem as secure up close as it does from a distance. Staying on the scaffolding while searching for the dirt mantises requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, otherwise the character falls 60 feet straight down to a lower platform.

The dirt mantises can be located with a spell such as *locate animals or plants* or with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Each failed check requires the character to repeat their Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Once one dirt mantis has been located, the rest reveal themselves and attack. There are 2d6 **dirt mantises** in total. The dirt mantises can navigate the scaffolding with ease, but any movement from a party member requires another Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

STONE CURSE

The ranger can be found in the bar, drinking his woes away. The hyena was a beloved companion, and now she's dead. Turned to stone. By what, he has no idea, because he got out of there as soon as he could, but he knows the monster's general location. It's in a cave pretty close to the city. He draws the party a map and refuses to come with them.

The cave is inconspicuously built into a bluff. Coming to the end of the draining season, the sand has almost completely drained away, exposing an entrance that would have otherwise been hidden.

Venturing into the cave, the party comes across statues of scared adventurers. Very strange. Who would build a statue of a man screaming in fear?

As they venture deeper into the cave, they must make a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check. On a successful check, they manage to sneak up on a **commoner**. The commoner, a teenaged gnome boy, is surrounded by adoring fans, including a very much alive hyena. The commoner is in the process of chiselling a detailed stone sculpture of one of the workers who has been staying in the cave. The gnome stands on an apple crate and chisels out an expression of terror, causing the worker to laugh at his own silly face.

All the workers have basically been drinking, eating roast beef, and watching this kid make sculptures for the entire week.

FINISHING UP THE QUESTS

If the players took damage or expended resources to complete these tasks for Pejanel, they get the benefits of a long rest again to replenish everything back to full.

Pejanel congratulates them for completing the bare minimum requirements to not get kicked out of their room.

INNOCENCE LOST

The party is woken up quite rudely by a gnome girl. She insists that the mayor wants to see them in his office. He has some unfortunate news.

Pejanel has set up a little chair in the center of his office, in which sits a **dune orc scout**. Pejanel claps his hands once with excitement and finality when the party arrives.

"Excellent. You're here. I was never very good at interrogations. You wouldn't mind getting your hands a little dirty, would you?"

The orc immediately goes for his sling, lined with razor sharp glass, and attempts to strangle himself with it. He croaks out something like "I shall be reborn in a new era!" This time, however, the party is here to stop him. Succeeding on a grapple, using healing magic, or slicing the sling in two with a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check is enough to stop the orc from killing himself.

The party can interrogate the orc. The most obvious way to do so is by making a Charisma (Intimidation) check.

- Below 10: The orc spits in your face and refuses to answer. Another strategy is required.
- DC 10: The orc roars in protest. "You'll never defeat the Scalechosen! He is destined to reign in the wake of Glasswork's destruction!"
- DC 15: "We attack in one month when the skies turn red with dragon's smoke and great beating wings churn the falling sands!"
- DC 20: "There are four hundred orc warriors ready to lay siege! The dragon will name our people as its vanguard and we will rule together over both of the realms of the Hourglass Desert!"

Pejanel stabs the orc in the neck once he's satisfied with the interrogation. He washes off his hands in a little basin and dries his long fingers with a towel while he speaks.

"Well we can't have that. We need to make some preparations. How would you like to become my inaugural Glasswork Defense Committee? You'll have free reign to do whatever you like. Flash your badges and the workers will obey your commands. Sound good?"

GLASSWORK DEFENSE COMMITTEE

Just as Pejanel offered, the party has free reign to choose how they want to defend the city. Go with what the party wants and improvise how their ideas would work.

The following resources are available to the GDC:

- Hundreds of unskilled human workers (**commoners**).
- Hundreds of sand gnome engineers (**commoners**).
- A couple of **illusionists** and **diviners**.
- A few **glass genasi**.
- A few **duskriese**.
- Roughly 10 human **nomads**.
- Roughly 20 human **guards**.
- Roughly 15 human **scouts**.
- Roughly 10 sand gnome **glass shatterers**.
- 4 ballistas (*Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d12) piercing damage. Requires a full team of operators each).
- One month of preparations.

The GDC is up against the following threats:

- Over four hundred **dune orc** soldiers, some of which are **rebirth knights** and **sand shamans**.
- The Scalechosen, a **dune orc warchief** who thinks he's the chosen one.
- The **ghosts** and **zombies** of the former crew of the githyanki warship, and likely of many others too that the dragon has killed since it awoke.
- **Yaukiss**, a githyanki knight.
- **Gethrax the Eternal Lost**, an ancient red dragon with sinister powers.

The party is likely to attempt strategies that have worked in the past, such as infiltrating and poisoning the orc camp. Use similar rules to the previous time, but this time, double the number of orcs and increase the DC of all checks by 2. An Intelligence (Investigation) check this time around reveals the following information.

- DC 10: The Scalechosen isn't here, but his mother Veeka is. She was the previous chieftain before him and it was her visions of his greatness that has led the dune orcs to where they are now.
- DC 15: Veeka is an old orc, but she is still dangerous, and she is the one leading the initial charge into Glasswork when the dragon arrives. She is a **rebirth knight**.
- DC 20: Veeka's paladin magic allows her to cure her soldiers of ailments, removing the effects of any poison-related sabotage.

If the players try to poison the orcs and later are frustrated that the orcs don't exhibit signs of poison, show Veeka explicitly healing her soldiers before sending them out into battle, if possible.

DREAMS OF A TERRIBLE FUTURE

Three weeks into preparations, while the party is still in the middle of setting up their defenses, the skies go black and the dragon attacks them unprepared.

Describe how the dragon tears through every defense they've created, burning and ripping and tearing everything to shreds. Describe the dragon crashing through all of the carefully-managed scaffolds and sending Glasswork's platforms plummeting to the ground. Describe arrows pinging uselessly off of the dragon's scales, of the dragon overpowering any magic attempting to ground it, of scores of helpless people screaming and running for their lives before the dragon douses them in fire and leaves only black shadows of ash in its wake. Yaukiss rides on the back of the dragon and takes a ballista to the chest. He falls to the ground, dead, but the dragon ignores him completely and goes after the party instead.

Have the party roll a save against the dragon's fire breath. See who survives.

The damage isn't real.

Every party member who isn't an elf or a duskribe must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) psychic damage on a failed save. This damage, in contrast, is absolutely real.

Every sleeping party member wakes up from their nightmare with the roars of the dragon still echoing through their minds. It has used the spell *dream* to demoralise them.

It was all a dream. The dragon hasn't come yet. But it's clear that all of the preparations in the world will not help them against an ancient red dragon. It will only delay the inevitable.

However, there is one last hope they probably aren't expecting.

THE ALIEN

We end the campaign with a series of overheard rumours in hushed whispers. Gnomes loudly shriek about the presence of an interloper among them. A few genasi have taken up defensive positions on the bluffs. An aarakocra comes shrieking into the mayor's office demanding that everyone gather their forces. One doesn't need to have a sharp eye to see the columns of yellow smoke and great sails mounted on a mast.

The githyanki warship has landed in Glasswork, and it has brought with it an alien.

At the top of the bluff, the party wades through a large crowd of gnomes, humans, and the other diverse races of Glasswork who have come to see the warship. After flashing their GDC badges, the crowd parts for the party and they come face to face with Yaukiss himself.

He places his silver sword on the ground and kicks it towards the party. He raises his hands in surrender.

"I was there in that dream, too. I saw myself die, and my dragon didn't care. I had always known but I never wanted to admit it. He doesn't care about me. The best thing I could possibly do for him is to take him down. And you lot are my best hope. You are the only people I can remember in my entire life who have shown me even an ounce of kindness."

He apologises for betraying the party and says that the threat of being burned alive was not a valid excuse. He hopes they can forgive him.

THE PLAN

Yaukiss didn't come all on his own.

First of all, the warship made a rough landing, but it's still in good operating condition. The party can use the warship to fight the dragon directly and prevent it from blasting through all of the paltry defenses they've set up in Glasswork, which can more effectively be used against the orcs.

Secondly, Yaukiss somehow managed to convince the aarakocra that the bigger threat was the dragon, and they have tagged along on his warship, led by their leader Spite, who gives the party a begrudging salute.

Lastly, and most importantly, Yaukiss has brought along Osark, the glass genasi wizard who had been living in the cave in the Gorge. Osark steps off the ship, warmly greets the party, and reveals his plan to kill the dragon.

"I'm sure you've observed how the sands of the Hourglass Desert can take years from your life. But little do most people know, the sands can also give them back. I have devised a ritual that will cause the dragon to de-age from its unimaginably powerful ancient form to a younger, less powerful form that we have a better chance of defeating."

The details of the plan are as follows.

- Osark needs to be on the warship and concentrating heavily on his ritual throughout the entire fight.
- In order for the effects to work, the dragon needs to be doused in sands. Luckily, with the raining season upon us, the sands will soon be falling from the skies in great quantity.
- Using the githyanki warship, the party will engage the dragon in a dogfight in the skies. Hopefully they will be able to manoeuvre the dragon into the falling sands, at which point the de-aging magic will start to take effect. It's important not to let anyone else get doused in sand, as they'll be reduced to a baby and then shrink into nothing. Probably. Not sure. It's theoretical magic at the moment.
- When the dragon has been reduced from ancient to adult, and then from adult to young, he will likely be too small and quick for any further reductions to his age. This is when we throw everything we have at him. Even at a young age, he will still be quite dangerous if he isn't killed quickly. They need people with heavy firepower, like the party.

While the party engages the dragon in the skies, the city of Glasswork can defend itself against the dune orc army. Like the defense of Pelandria, the result of the party's individual combat will be representational of the success of the larger-scale combat going on in the background. If the party kills the dragon, the town will also successfully drive off the orc invasion. If the party fails against the dragon, Glasswork will be taken by the orcs.

The githyanki warship has four ballistas, identical to the ones in Glasswork except that they shoot magical bolts that ignore any resistances to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. The warship has an AC of 18 and 300 hit points, although this shouldn't impact the fight.

The party can set the crew of the githyanki warship as they like. Yaukiss, Spite, Osark, and the party make up the base crew of the ship, and there is space for 30 more people. Generally, **commoners** will be enough for basic things like ballista crew and general staffing, and there are 15 **aarakocra** who insist that they can help against the dragon.

Several roles on the ship need to be filled by the party.

Guns. Someone needs to command the ballista crew. The ballistas fire at the end of that player's turn and they make the rolls.

Steering. Someone needs to steer the ship. During the fight, a Steering check might be called, and this can take the form of an ability check of the player's choice. For example, Wisdom (Survival) checks might include feeling the atmospheric conditions of the sky and adjusting accordingly, or Charisma (Performance) checks might be used to make the ship feel as though it is dancing through the sky. Use creativity.

Spotting. Someone needs to keep an eye on where everything is. This character makes Wisdom (Perception) checks to keep track of the dragon and other threats while simultaneously issuing orders and commands to everyone else.

Defense. The githyanki ship is equipped with runes that amplify the effects of defensive spells. A spellcaster can cast their spells into the runes and creatively determine how that spell might apply to an entire ship rather than a single target. For example, the spellcaster might cast *earthbind* on the ship to drop it down a hundred feet very quickly to avoid being grabbed by the dragon.

Deck Crew. Someone needs to command the crew from the below deck. This character can use Charisma (Persuasion) checks to inspire the commoners and other workers in the crew to make repairs to the ship on the fly, and they're also in a position to react immediately to any boarders. Multiple characters can be part of the deck crew, and they'll probably need it when ghosts and the Scalechosen board.

FIRE

The skies open up. Sand rains down in heavy swirling pillars. Dunes begin to form on the otherwise dry, cracked clay ground. A terrible boom, like a thousand lightning bolts all at the same time, reverberates across the desert.

The time is upon us. Led by the **rebirth knight** Veeka, **dune orc** soldiers sprint across the desert towards Glasswork, hoping to overwhelm its defenses with sheer numbers, not caring about the deaths of themselves or their friends due to their confidence that they will be reborn into a better tomorrow.

What does seem to shake the orcs, however, is a wave of **ghosts** that washes over them and start to fly in and through the city, picking off anyone unfortunate enough to be nearby, draining them of their youth, and throwing them off the edges of the bluff to their deaths. Chaos erupts in the city just as the dune orcs slam against the gates.

But all of that is worthless next to the dragon.

Terrible leathery wings beat, sending sand scattering in every direction underneath. A jet of fire slices across the newly formed dunes, leaving a trail of shining glass in its wake. A roar shatters windows and bursts eardrums. Through the smoke of red skies, Gethrax the Eternal Lost dives towards Glasswork and bellows.

**"I AM THE FIRE THAT
BURNS YOUR WORLD TO
ASHES!"**

Standing upon the dragon's head, armed with a wickedly curving greatsword, is the Scalechosen, the chosen **warchief** of the dune orcs. With the Scalechosen as his rider, Gethrax has advantage on Strength and Constitution ability checks and saving throws. Not that he needs it.

The githyanki warship rises to meet the dragon, and the dragon gives chase. Yaukiss stands at the bow of the ship, looking forlornly at his lost friend, almost (but not quite) filled with regret. It's time for the final showdown.

DRAGON VERSUS AIRSHIP

The airship fight won't look like a traditional fight with rolled initiative. Instead, different mechanics are in play in the final dragon fight in order to sell the experience of trying to outmaneuver a dragon in an airship. The battle is more of a conversation between the dragon and the party, with both responding to each other in creative ways.

First, the spotter makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Insight) check to identify what the dragon is doing. If they fail to anticipate the dragon's next move, any saving throws needed as a result of the dragon's move are made with disadvantage. The dragon can choose two moves on the first turn, rather than one.

- The dragon rams the warship at full speed.
- The dragon grabs the warship with its claws and tries to flip it over.
- The dragon flies close to the ship, allowing the Scalechosen to leap from its back and onto the warship's deck.
- The dragon blasts the warship with fire.
- The dragon summons forth 2 **ghosts** that swoop around the warship. The ghosts have 15 hit points each.
- The dragon tries to rip off the warship's sails.
- The dragon tries to roast the runes on the side of the ship.
- The dragon uses its Frightful Presence.

If possible, the Scalechosen also makes two attacks with his greatsword, and if the ghosts were summoned on the previous turn or earlier, each of them attacks with their withering touch.

Immediately, the party as a whole can choose a response to the dragon's move. Each response can only be used once in the fight, so they must be picked with care. For the first turn, the response can only affect one of the two moves.

- Spite and his aarakocra squad poke and stab at the dragon until the dragon gives up and tries to swat them away instead. Many of them are killed and the rest retreat.
- Yaukiss uses his powers of telekinesis to push the dragon away. The dragon is so massive that Yaukiss experiences a terrible nose bleed and collapses, dizzy. He can still fight but he won't be able to do that again.
- Defenses from Glasswork affect the fight and throw the dragon off course during a rare moment of reprieve from the orc assault.
- (if available) An air elemental swirls around the dragon's eyes, sending it tumbling in confusion for a few moments before the genie dissipates into the air once more.

If the party is unable to stop the dragon's attack, they might have to make saving throws appropriate to the context. The DC for any saving throw is 15, except for the dragon's Fire Breath and Frightful Presence, which use the DC as written. Sometimes, failing a saving throw means falling off the ship. Someone who has fallen off can be saved by an ally the spotter elects on their turn.

After weathering the dragon's attack, the spotter elects two characters (they can choose themselves) to use their role in the ship in a way they see fit, creatively adjusting to the situation as needed. A character doesn't need to use their role as written; the character in charge of steering can, for example, use their action to make a Steering check, but they might instead elect to cast a spell to catch a falling ally. The spotter can also choose an NPC such as Yaukiss or Spite to help out.

Finally, the dragon makes a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being manoeuvred into the falling sands. The dragon has disadvantage on its saving throw if it has taken more than 30 points of damage this round, if a character scored a 20 or higher on their Steering check, or if it was significantly frazzled by the ship's defenses (up to your discretion).

After this, return to the beginning and choose another move for the dragon.

After failing the saving throw the first time, Gethrax becomes de-aged down to an **adult red dragon**. After failing the saving throw the second time, Gethrax becomes de-aged down to a **young red dragon** and the fight immediately moves to the second stage.

DRAGON VERSUS ADVENTURERS

Gethrax and everyone still in the fight rolls initiative and the fight proceeds in the regular fashion of a Dungeons and Dragons combat encounter. The party must defeat the **young red dragon** the regular way. They might also still have to deal with the Scalechosen and any ghosts that remain.

Once Gethrax reaches zero hit points, however, all of the ghosts disappear and the Scalechosen falls to his knees in surrender if he's still alive. The fight is over.

DRAGON VERSUS FRIEND

As soon as the final blow is struck, Gethrax tumbles down towards the warship and lands with a bang in the middle of the deck. No longer the size of a mountain, the young dragon seems diminutive in comparison to what it once was. It is thoroughly defeated but not quite dead yet, although certainly no longer a threat, with one eye bleeding and the other twitching as it slowly and painfully tries to crawl across the deck. But it stops at the sight of its old friend Yaukiss.

Yaukiss bends down by the dying dragon and places a hand on its snout.

"I'm so sorry."

He takes his silver sword and slices the dragon's throat. Then he collapses to the ground and sobs.

EPILOGUE

In the aftermath of the dragon and orc attack, go through each NPC and what they're up to now (assuming they're still alive, which is absolutely not a given). You can choose the fate of each NPC, but general suggestions are included here. It's encouraged to include NPCs that the players met in the random encounters if they connected highly with one or more of them. After describing the fate of the NPCs, ask each player to describe their own character's epilogue in the weeks following the attack. Afterwards, each party member will be given the same final choice.

In order of appearance:

Pejanel. The old elf attempts to step down as mayor and settle in with his duskriese partner, but, as is common for their people, the duskriese wanders off one day and never returns. Pejanel then desperately pleads for his job back and is begrudgingly reinstated when the general populace is admittedly pretty impressed with his plans to rebuild Glasswork. He's got a reputation for delivering results, even if he's not exactly happy with it.

Yaukiss. Yaukiss spends a few weeks holed up in a room in Glasswork while some gnomes do work on the githyanki warship in an attempt to get its planar travel drive operational again. Yaukiss needs some time alone to process the events of the campaign, especially the painful yet necessary death of his friend that he travelled all this way in the hopes of seeing again.

Spite. Now that the dragon has been killed, Spite and his aarakocra discuss the fact that they came here to destroy the githyanki warship. Spite convinces the others that blindly following their orders may not be the best option. The warship might be their one chance at getting back home to the Elemental Plane of Air.

Veeka. Unable to accept that her visions were only implanted in her head by the dragon in an attempt to manipulate her people into supporting its quest for power, Veeka has mobilised many of the surviving dune orcs and retreated deeper into the desert where she plots her revenge.

Osark. Thought to be just myth, the old glass genasi wizard gathers around a throng of adoring genasi followers who hang off of his every word. He describes in excruciating detail the exact arcane equations that he had to follow in order to pull off his master plan, making a small note, right at the end, that the adventurers who actually killed the dragon were useful too.

Jepanel. The elf Jepanel shows up in Glasswork about two weeks after the dragon's defeat with a whole city's worth of elves in tow. They managed to escape the dragon's attack on Pelandria and hide out until it was safe to travel, bringing them here, to his wonderful brother's city. Pejanel, with a great sigh, allows them in on the condition that they help to rebuild.

Dailah. The duskriese Dailah shows up a little bit after Jepanel, now with a new beau, a dragonborn named Syraxim, complete with new red scales all down her cheeks and smoke billowing from her nostrils. She insists that they have a true love, while simultaneously winking at the party in confidence. She is a terrible flirt.

The Genie. After helping out the party against the dragon, the air elemental that was once a genie now finds itself purposeless. It only has one desire, to return home to the Elemental Plane of Air and become one with the Primordial gusts of wind that make up its birthplace. In the meantime, it just kind of floats around aimlessly, messing with people. Many a hat is blown off many a head.

The Scalechosen. Having been told he is the Chosen One for his entire life, the Scalechosen finds it difficult to adjust back to orc society. However, he has seen the true cost of power: sanity. He has taken it upon himself to change the ways of the dune orcs and get them back in touch with worship of the Great Hourglass rather than worship of the individual hero.

THE FINAL CHOICE

After a few weeks, the sand gnomes excitedly wake up the party and drag them over to the bluff where the warship is parked. Apparently they have managed to fully repair the ship and activate its planar travel drive, allowing it to leave the Hourglass Desert and sail the Astral Sea once more.

Yaukiss is elated and wants to put together a small crew to fly the ship.

"I can never go home again. I betrayed my compatriots and I defied my queen. I think I'd like to do some exploring instead. Maybe I can help some people, the way that you all helped me. I don't know. It's a big world."

Yaukiss offers each member of the party if they would like to leave the Hourglass Desert and join him on his voyages through the Astral Sea, or just drop them home if they come from another plane of existence.

Spite and the rest of the aarakocra accept.

The air elemental accepts (if available).

It's up to each member of the party individually if they accept the invitation as well.

And once the final choice has been made, the warship sets off into the great unknown, leaving the Hourglass Desert behind, forever.

THE END

DIFFERENT STORY DECISIONS

What happens if the players make choices that aren't part of the assumptions of the story? Some suggestions are included below for how to return the train to its tracks and finish the campaign even if the players make counter-productive choices.

The Players Kill Yaukiss. Yaukiss can always use *dimension door* to escape if the players attack him, but it's still possible to conclusively kill him early on in the story. Although it will be a shame that the players won't experience the conclusion to Yaukiss' character arc, the story is still possible without him. The aarakocra Spite can lead the players to the warship, and before the final battle, Spite and Osark alone can take the warship to the players.

The Players Persuade the Orcs to Switch Sides. The religious fanaticism of the orcs should make negotiations impossible, but a determined player can make anything happen. This actually does not significantly change the course of the story; the dragon does not need the orcs to destroy the world. You can skip the orc sieges on Pelandria and Glasswork, and the orcs can help against the dragon in the final fight by cancelling one of its moves using their shamanic and religious magic.

The Players Side with the Dragon. Siding with the dragon should mean instant death by immolation and being raised as a zombie, but again, a determined player can make anything possible. This would significantly change the course of the campaign; the recommendation here is let the party play out the siege of Pelandria and Glasswork from the other side. As the DM, plan out how the two cities arrange their defenses. For Pelandria, strengthen the barrier such that the players need to sneak in, blend with the locals, and assassinate the elven wizards who manage the barriers so the dragon can swoop in and burn everything to the ground. For Glasswork, the party must fight Yaukiss, the aarakocra, and the local Glasswork militia in an air battle while the dragon destroys the city below, protecting the dragon from Osark's master plan.

The Players Refuse to Work for Jepanel. Defeating the orcs is just delaying the inevitable fall of Pelandria, so there won't be any major story consequences if the players refuse to listen to Jepanel.

The Players Refuse to Work for Pejanel. Pejanel's duskriser partner, Silver, secretly asks the party to help incite civil unrest against Pejanel, who he has grown tired of (and who he thinks is a bad mayor). Silver gives the party a secret hideout in the caves in the bluffs. One of the party members is named Mayor of Glasswork after the riots settle down.

Osark Dies, Somehow. Without Osark, the master plan to defeat the ancient red dragon won't come to pass, as he alone possesses the knowledge and power to reduce its strength. If Osark ends up dead, for whatever reason, your best choice as a DM is to laugh at the party and make them fight the ancient red dragon the regular way. It's not actually a fun fight, so your best bet is to Fire Breath them, and if they're not dead after the first turn, fudge the recharge dice and Fire Breath them again. That'll teach the little bastards who's in charge around here! Aaaaaaa ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!!!

PILGRIM CAMPAIGNS

Using the resources in this book, it's possible to create a more freeform campaign that focuses less heavily on story and more on navigating and exploring the Hourglass Desert. The following two campaign options provide other ways of getting the most out of the document.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOWER OF DUSK

Each player makes a 7th-level duskriser character. The party is a group of duskrisers who are travelling together on a pilgrimage to the Tower of Dusk. Their pilgrimage starts in Glasswork and takes place at roughly the same time as the main campaign. The party will become the small camp of duskrisers encountered at the Tower of Dusk.

Shuffle a deck of 100 cards (or use an online shuffler), with each card representing one of the 100 random encounters in the next chapter. For each day of travel, draw two cards and let the party choose which encounter title sounds better. Shuffle the card not chosen back into the deck. Alternatively, you can roll 1d100 as normal and ignore repeat results.

Travel Days	Location
0	Glasswork. The party starts in Glasswork and completes the "Goodbye to Glasswork" section in Chapter I of the main campaign.
20	The Sunrise Realm. The party travels through the Sunrise Realm.
0	The Gorge. The party reaches the Watchtower in Chapter III of the main campaign. They aren't attacked and can take the lift down to a lower section of the cave that leads them straight to the Sunset Realm.
0	Pelandria. The party can take a long rest in Pelandria, advancing to 8th level. They leave before the city is hit by glass shards.
20	The Sunset Realm. The party travels through the Sunset Realm.
0	The Tower of Dusk. The party reaches the Tower of Dusk and reflects upon their journey and how it has changed them.

ENDURANCE RACE

The pilgrimage can also be adapted into a "death race" style endurance race to reach the Tower of Dusk between two rival factions of adventurers in the desert, pitting two teams of real-world players against each other. The deck is split in half and one half is provided to each group.

Players create 7th-level characters (any race, not just duskrisers) and compete with each other to reach the Tower of Dusk first. Since there are few opportunities to lose or gain days of travel, the two parties instead compare their level of loot. The DM (or DMs) decide which party was most profitable in their journey.

The prize for winning is the friends they've made along the way. Also they get to start their own city in the desert and rule over it with an iron fist. That too.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d100 / Encounter

- 1: The Open Caskets
- 2: The Clay Bowl
- 3: The Arable Cave
- 4: The Silent Shack
- 5: The Buried Cat
- 6: The Glass Skull
- 7: The Glass Crock
- 8: The Rusty Pickaxe
- 9: The Clay Warrior
- 10: The Gas Vents
- 11: The Electric Sands
- 12: The Glass Ceiling
- 13: The Elemental Scroll
- 14: The Clockwork Well
- 15: The Sandal Retriever
- 16: The Dead Snake
- 17: The Dark Assassin
- 18: The Secretive Caravan
- 19: The Swallowing Sands
- 20: The Shimmering Isle
- 21: The Eager Vultures
- 22: The Affable Slavers
- 23: The Elemental Slurry
- 24: The Welcome Reprieve
- 25: The Desperate Traveller
- 26: The Sand Worm
- 27: The Shifting Dunes
- 28: The Bleached Bones
- 29: The Druid's Garden
- 30: The Tortured Faces
- 31: The Floating Skiff
- 32: The Death Race
- 33: The Stinging Storm
- 34: The Weapon Merchant
- 35: The Precarious Rock
- 36: The Earth Miners
- 37: The Mesa Fortress
- 38: The Monster Town

d100 / Encounter

- 39: The Ankheg Hive
- 40: The Bustling Crevice
- 41: The Married Nomads
- 42: The Big Bird
- 43: The Swarming Death
- 44: The Black Sands
- 45: The Cactus Field
- 46: The Abandoned Post
- 47: The Camel Priest
- 48: The Wind Speaker
- 49: The Exhausted Barbarians
- 50: The Stone Pillar
- 51: The Collapsing Dune
- 52: The Junk Site
- 53: The Murky Reflections
- 54: The Red Bones
- 55: The Cursed Hound
- 56: The Fearful Scavenger
- 57: The Pepper Merchant
- 58: The Slave Auction
- 59: The Perfect Well
- 60: The Telepathic Scorpion
- 61: The Sand Nymph
- 62: The Water Barrels
- 63: The Swooping Giraffe
- 64: The Spraying Spider
- 65: The Territory Rights
- 66: The Bashful Xorn
- 67: The Brown Cows
- 68: The Flying Needles
- 69: The Death Eaters
- 70: The Slithering Valley
- 71: The Mating Season
- 72: The Doom Tracks
- 73: The Shameless Bandits
- 74: The Hopeless Illusionist
- 75: The Future's Secrets
- 76: The Shrieking Hives

d100 / Encounter

77: The Cursed Statues

78: The Old Friend

79: The Axe Stampede

80: The Trading Post

81: The Item Finder

82: The Laughing Pack

83: The Glittering Nomads

84: The Translucent Fist

85: The Dao's Anguish

86: The Still Field

87: The Long Lost

88: The Twitching Whiskers

89: The Flying Earth

90: The Frozen Dust

91: The Anxious Calm

92: The Dusty City

93: The Hot Sun

94: The Strange Clump

95: The Sexy Dance

96: The Long Drop

97: The Elven Traders

98: The Flying Giraffe

99: The Great Hourglass

100: Roll twice and combine the encounters.

d8 Sunrise Realm Complications

1-3 Shifting Sands

4-6 Pillar of Sand Sighting

7 Earthquake

8 Consumed

d8 Sunset Realm Complications

1-3 Sandfall

4-6 Dragon Sighting

7 Blocked Skies

8 Consumed

ENCOUNTER LIST

1: THE OPEN CASKETS

The entrance to a cave has collapsed. The only thing keeping it open is a brace of earthen and glass supports. Most of the glass has shattered over the ground, necessitating careful steps. From within the cave, those who have darkvision can see glimpses of artefacts and bones. There might be something valuable within. A character can make a Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check at the entrance.

- DC 5: Something else has gone through here.
- DC 10: Whatever came through here did so in the past few hours. The damage is quite recent.
- DC 15: Whatever it was, it left enormous talon tracks, like an ostrich or a cassowary. There were either two four-legged creatures or four two-legged creatures.

Succeeding on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals these tracks to belong to two **sepukets**.

Further into the dark cave, the party finds the entrance to an underground tomb, a door and archway made of the carved bones of sacred animals. A civilisation of humans once buried their dead here, but the entrance has been blasted open by magic (necromancy). Scattered around the entrance are the smashed remains of clay bowls and urns, each empty.

The tomb itself has long hallways with tall shelves on either side carrying sarcophagi. The sarcophagi on the second and third level of the shelves are too high up to see into, but the floor is littered with the smashed-up rubble of the sarcophagus lids. On the lowest level of the shelf, the sarcophagi are empty. An Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the following information.

- DC 10: They were forced open.
- DC 15: There used to be a body in here, but it was dissolved or destroyed.
- DC 20: The damage was done less than an hour ago. There are talon marks on the inside of the lip of the sarcophagus.

The party hears smashing from up ahead. As they head towards the noise, they find two **sepukets** trying to force open more of the sarcophagi. They have been systematically ripping open the lids and eating the skeletons inside. One of the sepukets has an innate spellcasting trait; it uses its telekinesis to hover the sarcophagus lid in the air.

When describing the creatures, play up their horrific appearance and describe in detail how they dissolve the bones of the dead with the necrotic energy that wafts from the very fibre of their being. If the party has the presence of mind not to attack on sight, the sepukets will telepathically explain that they are only here for a meal and don't wish to create any new corpses if possible. Despite their fearsome appearance, they are quite reasonable.

If a fight breaks out, one of the sepukets uses its necrotic powers against the party while the other one charges with its talons to take out the most dangerous threat, incurring attacks of opportunity if it needs to get past frontline fighters to take out blasters in the back. Anyone concentrating on a spell is a primary target. The spellcasting sepuket starts by casting *dance macabre*, animating 1d4 **skeletons** and a **mummy** from their sarcophagi on the higher levels. Alternatively, it might use its telekinesis to chuck a heavy sarcophagus lid at a party member (DC 12 Dexterity save, 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure). Its main source of damage, *circle of death*, is saved for the second or third round once it becomes suitably frustrated with the party's insistence on fighting.

Whatever the outcome of the encounter, once the party has moved past the sepukets, they find a decomposing body in a golden sarcophagus clutching a *bag of holding*. The body is inanimate and there are no traps. The *bag of holding* has eight clay jars hidden inside, each containing a decomposed organ, including a liver, a right hand, a heart, an eye, an ear, a stomach, a bladder, and an appendix.

The exit to the tomb is nearby and the party emerges into glorious sunlight.

2: THE CLAY BOWL

Sitting upon a pillar in an otherwise open plain is a clay bowl. Within that clay bowl is an iridescent black liquid, swimming with all the colours of the rainbow. This is a *bowl of endless oil*, a magic item. Emptying the bowl, such as by dousing a Medium or Small creature in oil, takes an action. A creature doused in oil can be lit on fire, dealing it 9 (2d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns, burning for 2d4 rounds before the oil is burned off. The clay bowl refills fully at dawn each day.

Taking the clay bowl draws the ire of Frizz, a **fire genasi dune diver**, who sneaks into the party's camp during the night to steal back her prized possession.

3: THE ARABLE CAVE

A crack in the arid soil reveals an underground river and oasis with lush greenery along the banks of the river. The crack is at just the perfect angle such that the sun beams onto the trees throughout the entire day. It's about a 200-foot drop down to the river, however. A sharp eye will notice a skeleton at the bottom with broken legs. The skeleton's backpack contains two days of fresh water, a scimitar, a shortbow, and fifteen arrows.

Unfortunately, the river has turned black and green with sickness and the lush greenery, upon closer inspection, is sick and on the verge of dying out. Within the water wanders two **mummies** and a **dybbuk** that takes the form of a handsome pharaoh. Their presence is sickening this underground oasis. The dybbuk promises to tell the party a dark secret if they move on from this place and never return.

If the party disagrees, the dybbuk and the mummies attack. The dybbuk laughs as its handsome features drip into goop and its demonic form is revealed underneath. Once defeated, the sickness in the oasis drains away. The water becomes clean enough to drink and the trees produce sweet pears and apples.

If the party agrees, they are told that the Hourglass Desert is Hell. They are here to be punished for eternity. Everyone wakes up in their campsite several hours later. The sun is setting and nobody can remember what they did today.

4: THE SILENT SHACK

The party comes across a group of **sand gnome commoners** rushing to and from a partially-built shack set up in the middle of nowhere. Each gnome is carrying heavy clay bricks used to construct the shack, gathered from a clay deposit at the base of the bluffs nearby. The gnomes say nothing. When confronted by the party, they put a single finger to their lips: "Sssshhhh."

Inside of the shack, in the process of being trapped inside by the gnomes, is a **giant scorpion** with hundreds of babies on its back. The scorpion and its babies are in a docile state thanks to two **sand gnome sand shamans** alternating the casting of *enthrall* to keep it occupied. They are slowly running out of resources and their friends probably won't be able to trap the scorpion in time.

If the party makes too much noise, the giant scorpion awakens from its docile state. The two sand shamans are immediately swarmed by hundreds of babies, taking them out of the fight, while the giant scorpion and the rest of her babies (3d8 **scorpions**) skitter out of the shack and attack the party.

5: THE BURIED CAT

The party stumbles over uneven ground, kicking up a haze of sand that settles over a strange artifact lying in the sand, a clay sarcophagus barely big enough to hold a small mammal. Brushing away the dust reveals the faint imprint of ancient dyes and paints in the rough approximation of a cat.

Opening the little sarcophagus reveals a cat wrapped tight in yellow bandages. The cat leaps into the arms of whoever rescued it and lets out a noise that sounds something between a purr and a mournful wail. This is a **mummy cat** that can be used as the familiar of any party member who can cast the *find familiar* spell.

On the inside of the sarcophagus is the following inscription in Common.

DALENE

she was only a cat, and she was mine
but alone in a desert as wide as her heart
she was a friend who can never be forgotten

i hope you too will know her as a friend

6: THE GLASS SKULL

The party's camel shrieks and rears back, nearly spilling precious containers of water. The camel can be calmed with a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check; otherwise, it spills 1d4 days of water which are lost forever in the sands.

Once calmed, inspection of the camel reveals that its foot is bleeding. It has stepped on a shard of glass. As the party combs through the sands, they find more shards of glass scattered around the area.

The shards become more visible in the sunlight further ahead, and they are in much larger pieces, until they finally come across a massive heap of broken glass scattered in the cracks within a garden of loose stones. Sitting at the very edge of the heap is a perfectly preserved glass skull. A Wisdom (Medicine) check can reveal information about the skull.

- DC 8: It is an anatomically correct humanoid skull.
- DC 13: It is the skull of a genasi, as evidenced by the shape of the eyes and ear holes.
- DC 18: It's not a glass representation; minute imperfections indicate that this is literally the skull of a glass genasi, and the glass shards you've been walking through had once been a part of its body.

Three **dune orcs** with **warhammers** can be encountered later in the day, sitting down, deep in concentration, trying to tie shards of glass to sticks to make spears. They ask the party for help in building their weapons. In truth, these orcs killed the genasi and are morbidly using pieces of its body as tools.

7: THE GLASS CROCK

While the party attempts to get a good night's rest, a **sand gnome master thief** attempts to sneak into the party's camp. The gnome has no intention of killing anyone. Instead, he has brought a pair of dental pliers and will attempt to pull a tooth from a sleeping party member, rolling a Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check (+9) against that party member's passive Perception.

The gnome is attempting to collect one hundred and one fresh teeth in order to conduct a ritual in order to revive his dead daughter as a mummy. She died as a result of a tooth infection. The gnome has already collected 93 teeth and keeps them in a little glass bowl with a lid. His collection includes teeth from humans, gnomes, elves, orcs, genasi, aarakocra, cats, camels, vultures, hyenas, giant spiders, and even one from a tincalli. He's been quite busy.

8: THE RUSTY PICKAXE

A **human commoner** has been chained to a rusty pickaxe. The pickaxe is jammed into a rock and will not come loose. The man is seated in the shade under a boulder, where he periodically snatches up one of the skittering beetles nearby and eats it. He invites the party to come close and listen to a dilemma he has been thinking about lately. He explains that he was left behind when the slave keepers decided it was too much trouble to free him from his chains. The speed of production was more important than a single slave stuck to a rock.

"Before I came here to work on the mines to pay off my gambling debts, I lived back in Glasswork. I was working as a labourer for one of the production centres, stringing and wrapping lengths of hempen rope. I had just had my second boy and I hadn't been sleeping well for the past three weeks, and unfortunately this meant I was often late for my job. My boss told me that it was reflecting poorly on me and he might be considering a replacement if I keep up my level of attendance. One day, I overslept, but only by a little. I knew I could make it to work on time if I rushed as quickly as I could. So I raced through the streets and up the platforms that lead up the side of the bluffs. I was racing so fast I almost missed seeing him, a man hanging from the edge of a platform. He called out to me for help. And I thought to myself, I am running late for work, and others may come along. And besides, what obligation do I have to help this man? I don't know him, and it would greatly inconvenience me. I don't want to help him. So I didn't. I got to work on time and when I was walking home later that evening I saw that the man had fallen and died. Am I morally culpable for his death? At the time, I thought to myself, there are arguments to be made on both sides. But I now see that all of my arguments were useless, because the true answer to this question is simply this: Would I want others to do the same for me? I am asking you now to do what I could not. Break these chains, give me a few days of water, and point me to a settlement nearby. That's all."

9: THE CLAY WARRIOR

A group of dune orcs chuck rocks at what appears to be a statue of an armoured soldier holding a warhammer (a **clay golem**). The soldier stands guard at the entrance to a cave, an entrance held up by very flimsy supports, and with each hit from a sharp rock, the statue flinches. Bits of clay flake off with the hardest hits. The orcs holler at it...

"Get outta the way you melty old codger!"

... but it does not respond. The orcs, if questioned, complain that the soldier is guarding an underground river of fresh water that might act as a shortcut deeper into the desert. It could shave off a day of their journey. The only problem is this stupid statue that won't move.

If the party attacks the clay golem, the orcs help out by chucking rocks at it on initiative count 10, forcing it to succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (4d4) nonmagical bludgeoning damage. If the golem goes berserk and doesn't have a target, it will destroy the supports holding up the entrance the cave, making it impossible to enter.

If the party attacks the orcs, they will fight back and the golem will do nothing unless provoked. There are five **dune orcs** in total. They already threw all their javelins at the golem so they only have their scimitars. If things look bad for the orcs, they will rush the golem and try to anger it in the spiteful hope that it will blindly attack the party.

If the clay golem is destroyed and the entrance supports remain standing, the party gains access to the underground river. It burbles and babbles in the echoey darkness. Navigating the river is difficult, requiring a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow along the slippery rocks along the banks in the cave. On a failed check, the party ends up back at the entrance to the cave they started at (perhaps through magic) with the day coming to a close and an understanding that the river probably won't take them where they need to go. On a successful check, the party emerges out of another entrance to the cave, having shaved one day off their journey.

10: THE GAS VENTS

The party spots a large host of dune orcs on a dune or hill a few miles away. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that there are roughly twenty orcs (otherwise their numbers are unclear but probably over a dozen). The orcs scream into the sky, clang their weapons together, and begin a charge. Unless the whole party can move faster than 90 feet each round, the orcs will catch up to them in less than an hour. The party shouldn't have a good indication of the orc's speed, but will notice them catching up slowly.

Whether or not the party rushes to meet the orcs in combat or attempts to outrun them, the party eventually finds themselves in a large crater filled with sand. As their feet shift the sand around, a gas vent becomes uncovered under their feet and expels air through the sand in the crater. The sands start to behave as a fluid.

The sands above the gas vent have a 60 foot radius and are roughly four feet deep. Gnomes risk suffocation. Everyone else sinks chest-deep. It is considered difficult terrain. At initiative count 20, the gas vents stop or start flowing gas. When the flow stops, the sands become hard again, restraining anyone still trapped inside and making escape impossible without magic. When the flow restarts, the sand becomes fluid again.

The dune orcs don't care about the sand. They charge in recklessly, attempting a pincer movement on the party, closing in from two or more points of attack. There are 20 (3d6 + 10) **dune orcs** in the raiding party (2d4 are **scouts**). It's recommended to split the orcs into 4 or 5 different groups in initiative order for smoother combat. Alternatively, you can treat the orcs as just another component of the trap, requiring ability checks, repositioning, and magic to deal with, rather than explicitly as a combat encounter. For example, several of the dune orcs might throw a net on one of the party members, hoping to restrain them and hold them down under the sands. The target must make a contested Strength (Athletics) check to avoid being dunked. Throw similar challenges at the party until you have decided that their trial is complete.

11: THE ELECTRIC SANDS

A dune orc raiding party crests a hill and spots the party. A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that there are roughly a dozen **dune orcs** (otherwise their numbers are unclear but definitely fewer than twenty). Their true numbers are 12 (3d6 + 2), 2d4 of which are **scouts**. They are led by a **dune orc warchief** riding on a **giant hyena**. He has a lumpy bag attached to his saddle. He raises his sword high in the air and yells a war cry, spurring the other orcs to charge. Unless the whole party can move faster than 90 feet each round, the orcs will catch up to them in less than an hour. The party shouldn't have a good indication of the orc's speed, but will notice them catching up slowly.

When the warchief gets close to the party (don't worry about tracking distances, but if it comes up, he is 300 feet away), he starts throwing round blue explosive devices from his bag. When they hit the ground, a crack of electricity surges through the air and all of the sand in a 60-foot radius rushes towards the point of impact. This slows down the party enough for the orcs to close in. The warchief controls the terrain of the fight by creating large mounds of sand cover and knocking the party's feet out from under them using his explosives. Every time he throws one, he cackles with surprise and glee.

Make the following changes to the warchief's statblock.

Multiaction. The warchief makes two attacks with his greatsword. He can trade one of these attacks to throw an electric grenade.

Electric Grenade. The warchief throws a grenade at a point it can see within 60 feet of its position. Objects and creatures within 10 feet of the point of impact must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) lightning damage. If there is loose sand within 30 feet of the point of impact, the sand rushes towards that point; creatures standing on the sand are knocked prone, and the sand gathers into a five foot by five foot clump around that point. A creature that failed its save against the damage and is standing at the point of impact becomes restrained by this sand (escape DC 13).

Later in the day, the party runs into a sand gnome merchant (a **commoner**) advertising the very same electric grenades. The warchief had cleaned him out of stock, unfortunately. But perhaps he can be ... persuaded ... to build two more (expending all of his available materials) in exchange for a week's worth of rations.

12: THE GLASS CEILING

The sands here are thin, and the party hears a strange clacking noise when their boots hit hard ground underneath the sand.

Clearing away the sand reveals that they are standing on the glass ceiling of a cave. Following the glass ceiling around the immediate area reveals the structure of the cave, winding around in various pathways, curling in on itself in a twisted labyrinth. In the heart of the labyrinthine cave is a pedestal revealing a book of ancient secrets. It's impossible to make out the words from above.

The glass is magically protected against nonmagical weapons, granting it immunity. It also has immunity to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, reflecting damaging spells into the sky with a flash of green, indigo, red, blue, or purple light, respectively. Necrotic, psychic, and radiant damage types have no effect. Other damage types deal damage as normal, although the glass automatically succeeds on saving throws. The glass is quite thick and has an AC of 18 and 100 hit points.

Players with magic such as *misty step* can pass through the glass ceiling as they only need to see the space they wish to teleport to. They will fall down 10 feet after teleporting as the ceiling is 40 feet above the floor.

The ancient book can be acquired without magic by following the cave's tunnels to locate the entrance, an elevator shaft without an elevator that goes 40 feet deep, and then guiding a party member through the cave by explaining where to go from above. The cave is filled with **swarms of insects** that move around periodically and can be avoided with sufficient warning.

The book of ancient secrets is guarded by 1d4 **dust mephits**, which immediately summon 1d4 more **dust mephits** to attack the party members outside of the cave as well.

The book is a spellbook previously belonging to "Hagdar the Architect" containing the following spells.

Cantrips: *infestation*, *message*, *mold earth*

1st level: *absorb elements*, *faerie fire*, *shield*

2nd level: *magic mouth**, *magic weapon**, *misty step**

3rd level: *dispel magic**, *protection from energy**, *sending**

4th level: *conjure minor elementals*, *fabricate*, *giant insect*

Tucked into an envelope in the book are six small spell scrolls, containing one use of each of the second and third level spells in the book (marked with an asterisk*). An inscription on the inside front cover of the book reads, simply:

To whom it may concern,
Put this magic to better use than I did.
-- Hagdar

13: THE ELEMENTAL SCROLL

A flock of 2d8 **dust mephits** screeches at the party from a few hundred feet away. They flutter around a stone pillar jutting out from the ground in the middle of nowhere.

Destroying the dust mephits and examining the pillar reveals it to have inscriptions in Primordial of elemental magic formulas. Using a piece of parchment to copy down these formulas produces parchment with the same effects as spell scrolls of *gust*, *produce flame*, and *mold earth*.

14: THE CLOCKWORK WELL

A well has been dug into an inconspicuous patch of land nearby the party. A series of clockwork pulleys suggests that a bucket system is used to draw water from the well, but its bucket has descended all the way to the bottom. Dropping something down the well reveals that the well is about 80 feet deep and contains liquid. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check based on hearing reveals that there is a low grinding sound coming from within.

The bucket can be pulled up. It is filled with blood.

15: THE SANDAL RETRIEVER

Directly in the party's path is a slumbering clockwork arachnoid automaton, a **retriever**, cobbled together from scrap pieces of metal and stone. Its eyes have been smashed with a hammer and are broken, sparking with electricity. As the party watches, a **cainuraptor** nervously approaches the retriever. Immediately when it reaches 30 feet away, the retriever pounces on the cainuraptor and rips it into pieces. The retriever then settles back down and rests. This retriever is blind, but has tremorsense up to 30 feet. It can use its eye rays if it senses a creature through this method, blasting out jagged, unnatural beams of energy from its broken face.

Next to the retriever is a pair of sandals with a beautiful quartz set into their straps.

SANDALS OF UNDISTURBED EARTH

*Wondrous Item, Rare (requires attunement)

These magic sandals grant their wearer silent steps that do not disturb the terrain. The wearer can't be tracked through their footprints or through tremorsense and the wearer has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to stay quiet while moving.

16: THE DEAD SNAKE

The party comes across the skeleton of a small dead snake. Upon closer inspection, however, the snake seems infinitely long. If the party follows the trail of snake spine bones, they are led off track by several miles until they finally round a bend behind a large boulder and see a **human commoner** meticulously placing snake bones down onto the steadily-lengthening skeleton. He has fourteen dead snake skeletons hanging from his arm. Seems he's just been mashing them together.

"You guys wouldn't happen to have any more dead snakes for me, would you? No? Damn."

If he's asked why he's doing this, he shrugs. There's no master plan here. He just likes arranging snake skeletons in a big line. Who could blame him?

17: THE DARK ASSASSIN

A small pyramid has been constructed just off the party's path. Inside, it is lit by torches, each holding the spell *continual flame*, and along the walls are hieroglyphs of a legendary assassin striking through her enemies with a wicked black knife and leaving no trace of the attack. Deeper into the tomb, the party sees a sarcophagus with the face of the assassin drawn on its lid.

If the sarcophagus is opened, a remarkably well-preserved body of a human woman rests within. A wicked black knife has been stabbed through her chest. The body itself is grasping the hilt of the knife as though in self-sacrifice. The knife appears to be made of glass.

If the knife is removed from the body, the first thing the party would notice is that the knife has not left any mark in her body. Secondly, the body quickly disintegrates into black ash, and all of the torches sputter out, plunging the tomb into darkness. A split second later, even those with darkvision find their vision gone, as magical darkness envelops the room.

Whoever took the knife is the target of a vengeful **mummy** that can see through her magical darkness. The mummy's only goal is to take back her knife. She will attempt to kill any who holds the knife unless it is willingly given up, at which point the magical darkness recedes, the torches sputter back to life, and she lays back down in her sarcophagus, plunging the knife again through her chest and resting once more. The lid slams shut.

If the mummy is defeated and the knife is stolen, the party gains a *shadowglass knife*. This is a +1 magic dagger that does not leave a physical mark on its victims. It deals an additional 9 (2d8) necrotic damage to creatures if the wielder has advantage on the attack roll.

18: THE SECRETIVE CARAVAN

A caravan of three covered wagons, twelve camels (two carrying water barrels), and four humans crosses paths with the party. Two of them are **nomads** and one, wearing blue robes with gold trim, is an **illusionist**. Their leader, a **dune diver** named Artemis, invites the party to trade for supplies. She keeps her hand on the hilt of her scimitar.

"We're looking for scraps of metal, chains, pickaxes, and any magical scrolls. If one of you can cast a spell that can dampen sound, we have an illusionist who will pay a good price to copy it down. We can offer arrows, a few days of rations, and information about the surrounding area. Our rations are in our first wagon."

If asked what's in the other two wagons, she refuses to answer. She just wants to trade and keep moving, not get into small talk. Her two nomad friends each guard one of the wagons, suspiciously eyeing the party. Within the two other wagons are slaves, weakened by days of malnourishment, their voices meek and scratchy. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can identify the sounds as human.

If confronted, Artemis and her friends will attack the party. The nomads might grab a slave and use him or her as a human shield. The illusionist will attempt to confuse the party while keeping his distance. Artemis will leap behind a crop of rocks and launch arrows from cover, cursing the party for their curiosity.

If the party just keeps their head down and trades with the caravan, Artemis will supply them with knowledge about the dangers of the surrounding area, granting the party immunity from being surprised for the next 24 hours and giving each character advantage on initiative checks during that period.

19: THE SWALLOWING SANDS

The party realizes too late that they are walking through quicksand. The quicksand covers a 120-foot radius around the party. The rules for quicksand are as follows.

- Quicksand is difficult terrain.
- On initiative count 20, each creature in the quicksand sinks 1 foot deeper. If they sink up to their head level, they begin to suffocate. If a player hasn't specified their character's height, their character is of average height for their race.
- Moving through quicksand requires success on a Strength save (speed reduced to 0 on a failure until the end of their turn). The DC is 10 + twice the number of feet the creatures has sunk so far.

20: THE SHIMMERING ISLE

Something glints and shimmers along the horizon. It's off the party's path and would require a detour to investigate. Characters can make a Wisdom (Perception) check.

- DC 5: It's water.
- DC 10: It's a lake. There are trees.
- DC 15: Animals are drinking from the lake.
- DC 25: It's a mirage.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can also identify the shimmering as a mirage.

If the party goes towards the mirage, each character's heat level increases by 1 and they find nothing.

21: THE EAGER VULTURES

High above the party's heads, 2d6 **vultures** and a **giant vulture** circle ominously. Each party member must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become convinced, inconsolably, that they're all going to die. They have disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws for 24 hours.

The vultures follow the party for the next three days. If a party member is reduced to 0 hit points during that time, the vultures immediately swoop down and attack, attempting to kill the unconscious character and eat their flesh.

After three days, the vultures leave, and the party breathes a sigh of relief.

22: THE AFFABLE SLAVERS

The party crosses paths with a line-up of slaves chained to their own pickaxes. The slaves are taking a break to have some lumpy old rations.

There are three slavers, human males, a **sand shaman** and two **scouts**. They extend a friendly offer to the party to join them and have a nice hot meal of delicious soup. This soup is not offered to any of the slaves.

The slavers explain that every slave in the line-up has accrued a massive gambling debt or was convicted for a serious crime. They don't consider these people slaves, more like indentured labourers, or prisoners with jobs. The sand shaman in particular can't resist a smirk.

"They deserve everything that's come their way, you know. That's my philosophy. Some people deserve prosperity, some people deserve enslavement, and I believe that you can tell the difference in the moral standing of a person by their lot in life. You get what you deserve."

The two glass shatterers nod in agreement. They are the ones in control, after all, which means that they have done good in life and are being rewarded. That is the natural order of things. Isn't it?

23: THE ELEMENTAL SLURRY

A wind picks up. The earth rumbles. A wave of heat washes over the party.

They are attacked by an **air elemental**, an **earth elemental**, and a **fire elemental**, each with half hit points.

24: THE WELCOME REPRIEVE

Something glints and shimmers along the horizon. It's off the party's path and would require a detour to investigate. Characters can make a Wisdom (Perception) check.

- DC 5: It's water.
- DC 10: It's a lake. There are trees.
- DC 15: Animals are drinking from the lake.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check can confirm that the shimmering is not a mirage.

If the party goes towards the shimmering, they find an oasis. The oasis is a small fresh water lake surrounded by thick greenery. Several palm trees grow coconuts, bananas, and pears.

Many animals rest here in harmony, refusing to fight each other even if they would otherwise be natural predators. 2d4 **cainuraptors** bathe in the lake, cooling down their sails. A herd of 2d6 **drudons** keeps mercifully quiet. 2d6 **hyenas** and a **giant hyena** lounge in the shade. A few **cats** climb up and down the trees, chasing each other playfully. A **camel** yawns and sleeps with 2d12 **lizards** clinging to its back. A **giant vulture** drinks from the lake, bristling with frustration at the lack of carcasses to eat. A **dire giraffe** flies around above the other animals, picking pears off of the tallest trees. None of these animals are hostile to each other or to the party unless seriously provoked by the party.

None of the animals are willing to leave the oasis, but the party is free to leave whenever they want. Nothing magically compels them to stay here.

If the party kills any of the animals, the lake immediately dries up and swallows all of the greenery, leaving them once more in a dry, dusty desert. The rest of the animals give them a look of disdain and run off.

25: THE DESPERATE TRAVELLER

The party comes across a dying **nomad** with 3 levels of exhaustion and 32 hit points. The nomad, a desperate man with nothing on him except his clothes and his staff, pleads with the party to give him a few days of food and water and direct him to the nearest settlement.

This nomad might be a human or a dune orc, whichever feels more appropriate to the party's experiences thus far. If the nomad is a dune orc, he might instead ask the party to give him an honourable death in battle rather than food and water.

26: THE SAND WORM

As the party walks through a canyon pass, their eardrums burst from a sound like thunder that does not stop cracking.

Up ahead, a group of 2d8 **dune orcs** led by a **dune orc warchief** chase down a herd of 4d6 **drudons**, hollering about the thrill of the hunt and the divine righteousness of killing to feed oneself. The drudons bellow in distress and gallop towards the party as they are hunted down, tackled, and slaughtered one by one.

The grounds begin to shake under everyone's feet. An Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check can reveal information about the tremors.

- DC 10: This is not a regular earthquake. Something else is causing the tremors.
- DC 15: These tremors are caused by some sort of massive underground creature.
- DC 20: These tremors are caused by a purple worm that is attracted to the bellowing of the drudons.

The party has an opportunity to convince the orc warchief to call off the hunt on a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, but even if the hunt is called off, it is still too late to prevent the sand worm from coming. The dune orcs may choose to help the party prepare in the twelve seconds before it arrives.

The sand worm uses the **purple worm** statblock and does not have a stinger. It burrows up out of the ground and swallows one of the surviving drudons whole.

As the fight against the sand worm progresses, it smashes through the canyon walls, popping out at various intervals and consuming drudons, dune orcs, and party members indiscriminately.

Ways of dealing with the sand worm might include ...

- ... using any surviving drudons as a distraction.
- ... hiding from the sand worm and remaining still so as not to trigger its tremorsense.
- ... feeding it something poisonous.
- ... creating a noisy illusion to lure it away.
- ... somehow dealing enough damage to it to kill it.

The dune orcs will help deal with the sand worm, but they might need some convincing to go along with a plan that doesn't involve hacking it to death. The warchief sees the slaying of a sand worm as a mark of valour and perhaps a sign that he is to lead his tribe to world domination.

27: THE SHIFTING DUNES

The party crosses over a particularly difficult dune, requiring a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to reach the top. Once getting to the bottom, their camel, exhausted, sits down and refuses to move until the party takes a break for ten minutes. Looking through the camel's equipment reveals that an entire barrel of water has gone mysteriously missing. Weird. It's nowhere to be found, either. It must have been lost a long time ago. No use going after it now.

While the party takes a break, some of the sand from the dune trickles down onto their back, as if disturbed by some sort of creature. When they look, there is nothing there. No check reveals any creature following them. No magic. Nothing.

As the party moves on, they make significant headway through the desert. One party member gets a funny feeling and looks back, to find that the dune is not as far away as they had suspected. Mild investigation shows that, no, they have definitely been travelling a fair distance, definitely as far as they had assumed. So what's that dune still doing there?

Further still, and when the party looks back at the dune, it is even closer than it was before.

Further still, and the dune is bearing down on them. But if they stop to look around the dune, they find that it is not moving. It is perfectly still.

The dune in fact hosts the spirit of an **earth elemental**. The camel dropped its barrel of water while climbing the dune earlier, and the dune picked it up. Now it wants to return it to the party.

It will chase the party until the party stops moving and deliberately allows the sand dune to catch up to them. This may take several days if the party is stubborn, as the sand dune does not move during the night-time. Once the barrel has been returned, the sand dune begins to roll back the way it came.

28: THE BLEACHED BONES

Heat shimmers as it rises from the hot sands. The sky is a rich shade of red. The skeleton of an enormous beast of legend lies half buried in sand, stretching for half a mile before the party. Rays of light arc through the ribcage and create a mottled pattern on the clay. The beast's legs are trapped in the sands, a hundred years of seasons having buried the beast half underground. Only the top half of its skull is in view. It bears a thick bony plate, presumably used ineffectively to headbutt the thing that killed it.

Underneath the ribcage, the party can hear two people chatting and clinking wine glasses. Closer inspection reveals a gnome and an earth genasi, both of whom appear to be **commoner** merchants, dressed in simple brown robes and sharing a glass of fine red wine between them. As soon as they see the party, they immediately hop back behind two separate market stalls and start to loudly bicker about who offers the best prices.

The earth genasi trades in rations (2 rations, or more if she doesn't like the party) and sells the following goods. She is actually a **dune diver** who hunts animals for their unique properties.

- a red dress made from cainuraptor sails
- a warhorn made from the esophagus of a drudon
- an axe made from an axe beak
- a sand-sled made from a triceratops skull
- a necklace made from dead snake spines
- a stone skull that looks a little too realistic
- quill pens made from tyrannosaurus rex feathers
- a rock that is actually a tamed **dirt mantis**
- a jar of camel spit for some reason

The sand gnome trades in magic items. He is actually a **mage** who *dimension doors* away if threatened or intimidated, taking all of his goods with him. He has various *alarms* and *glyphs of warding* set up to ensure that nothing gets stolen; laying hands on an item before buying it will set off the spell *Agnazzar's scorcher* on the thief. The only method of payment he accepts is other magic items.

- *potion of climbing* (common)
- *spell scroll of alarm* (common)
- *spell scroll of Agnazzar's scorcher* (common)
- *potion of greater healing* (uncommon)
- *eversmoking bottle* (uncommon)
- *sending stones* (uncommon)
- *dragon slayer longsword* (rare)

If asked about the skeleton of the great beast, the two merchants look at each other and shrug. The gnome says it was good shade. A DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check on the earth genasi reveals that her grandfather fought and slew this beast (a baby terrasque) one hundred years ago and she has been trying to live up to his legacy ever since. Perhaps there is an even more terrible beast somewhere in the desert that she can help slay to ensure that her family's legacy lives on.

29: THE DRUID'S GARDEN

The party comes across a beautiful range of green grass, flowering cactuses, and a babbling brook that flows in a perfect circle. Tending to the gardens is a human **druid** woman who conjures chairs out of vines for the party to sit and summons a canopy of leaves to block out the sun. She introduces herself as Grall, a land druid of the forest who wandered into the Hourglass Desert one day while travelling through the Anauroch Desert on Toril. A DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check gets her to sheepishly admit that she had been captured by slavers and forced to march away from her home, and she may have cast a few rituals to escape them that backfired and sent her here. In any case, she's decided she likes it here and doesn't want to leave.

"You know, it's not a bad life living here. All the other outsiders I've talked to have expressed a desire to leave. I think they're idiots. We have everything we need. Rest here a while, won't you? I don't get many opportunities to share what I've grown."

She feeds the party several cactus apples from her garden. Roll on the table below to determine what happens to the each character.

d6	Psychedelic Effect
1	You see what you believe is the way you will die.
2	You see your greatest fear.
3	You see over a dozen clones of the love of your life, each clamouring over you like ants over a carcass.
4	You see the desert as a lush space of endless greenery fed by endless rain.
5	You see higher than the sky to the Empty Space beyond, and to the Astral Sea beyond that.
6	You see an ancient red dragon waiting beneath the sands.

Once the effects wear off, the party is roused by a friendly **ankylosaurus**. The druid and her garden have totally disappeared, leaving the party lying on dry, baked clay. The ankylosaurus gallops off as soon as it sees that everyone is awake, disappearing as well before the party has managed to clear their heads.

30: THE TORTURED FACES

The party crests over the lip of a crater, perhaps caused by a meteorite from the Astral Plane long ago. It's quite a large crater and takes a bit of balance to reach the bottom, but it's shadier down there, with strange rock formations popping up and providing protection from the sun.

A druid, a ranger, or a character with the *outlander* background can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival or Perception) check to notice something strange about the layout of the sands within the crater. It seems almost like they are made up of hundreds upon hundreds of screaming faces.

As soon as this revelation becomes apparent, the faces start to twitch, and a horrifying wail escapes from all around them. Everyone in the party must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they take 7 (2d6) psychic damage and become *frightened*.

From above the lip of the crater, a **harpy** flutters down to the party while two **dune orcs** that she has enthralled slide down behind her. The harpy has 77 hit points (14d8 + 14). She intends to put the party to sleep and eat their flesh. Her two dune orcs fanatically rush at the biggest threat to the harpy to protect her.

31: THE FLOATING SKIFF

A sand skiff floating five feet above the ground flies up and hovers next to the party. Its pilot, an **air genasi sand shaman** wearing massive goggles, introduces herself as Ruggerfoot and asks the party if they like her vehicle. It's powered by an **air elemental** bonded to the underside of the skiff.

She offers the party spell scrolls (she has one of each of her first level spells) if they can give her information what they've encountered in the surrounding area plus a few days of rations and water, totally negotiable.

AIR SKIFF

Large object, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 50

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

Bonded Air Elemental. The skiff is bonded to an air elemental. The air elemental is incapacitated while it is bonded. If the air elemental is set free as an action by the skiff's pilot or through *dispel magic*, the skiff loses its fly speed.

32: THE DEATH RACE

The party comes across a group of mean-looking **berserkers** with brightly dyed hair and spikes glued to their armor, each atop a different unusual creature of the desert. Far in the distance across a flat plane, there are two stone markers. The berserkers are about to start a race, and the stone markers are the finish line.

One of the bandits, a sand gnome named Claw Helmet, rides up to the party on his **fire beetle** mount. He tells them that the prize for reaching the finish line first is leadership over their tribe. The traditional rites of the race dictate that only up to six candidates can race. There are currently five at the moment, because Hot Head Heavysset died of heat stroke on the way here and his giant lizard ate his corpse. Anyway, if someone from the party wants to join the race, they'll need a mount (no flying speed allowed). It starts in an hour. Once the buzzer sounds, anything goes.

The racers are as follows:

1. Claw Helmet, a **sand gnome berserker** riding a **giant fire beetle** (CR 0).
2. Buck Lucker, a **human berserker** riding an **axe beak** (CR 1/4).
3. Gnash, a **human berserker** riding a **giant hyena** (CR 1).
4. Shutterknife, a **glass genasi berserker** riding a **camel** (CR 1/8).
5. Overcompensator, a **sand gnome berserker** riding a **triceratops** (CR 5).

A party member who wants to join the race can ride a mount that the party already has access to, or they can make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to explore the surrounding area, finding the **giant lizard** (CR 1/4) that ate Hot Head Heavysset basking on some rocks after its meal. The giant lizard can be tamed and ridden with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Its name is Cool Boy, according to the nametag on its collar.

The race begins when a **vulture** (a "buzzer") screeches above the racer's heads. They're off.

Ignore differences in speed between the mounts. Instead, describe how each racer attempts to sabotage the other racers. Roll a d6 to determine which racer they target, targeting the player character on a 6.

Claw Helmet is immediately shown to cheat by flying his giant fire beetle into the faces of other mounts and flashing its lights in an attempt to get them to spook. Each mount needs to make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw to avoid being spooked and run off course.

Buck Lucker tries to get up close to the other candidates and yank them off of their mounts directly with a grapple check.

Gnash picks two different racers and casts *eldritch blast* at both of them (+1 to hit, 5 (1d10) force damage). He learned the cantrip from a random spell scroll he once found.

Shutterknife plays extremely defensively. His camel takes the dodge action and he uses his reflective skin against Gnash's *eldritch blast*.

Overcompensator just tries to barrel through the competition with his triceratops, which he is barely controlling at all.

This repeats for three rounds. After the third round, every racer still in the fight makes a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check and subtracts their mount's challenge rating rounded down. The racer who scores the highest on this check makes it through the finish line first.

If the player character wins, they gain control over the berserker tribe. Turns out it's only like a dozen people: any surviving **berserkers** from the race (minus their mounts, who have all run off in horror) and eight **commoners** who are a bit sick of the whole "death race" thing.

33: THE STINGING STORM

A sandstorm rises in the distance and rushes towards the party at ludicrous speed. They have ten minutes to find shelter with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check or they'll become lost in the storm, taking 5 (2d4) slashing damage from the heavy winds and losing a day of travel.

If they find shelter, they end up in a dank, dark cave that they must share with a herd of 3d6 **hadrosauruses** that view the party with suspicion.

34: THE WEAPON MERCHANT

A merchant **glass genasi** sunbathes naked on a rock next to a wooden rack of glass weapons. When the party gets close, he leaps up and covers himself in black robes. He nervously arranges his weapons for sale. Two days of rations for each weapon, he stutters.

He has a longsword, a greataxe, a pike, a war pick, and two scimitars for sale.

WEAPON OF TEMPERED GLASS

Weapon, Uncommon

This is a +1 magic weapon. When you score a critical hit or critical failure with this weapon, it shatters, dealing 6d6 magical slashing damage to the target (this replaces the damage of the attack if on a critical hit). The weapon is destroyed after dealing this damage.

35: THE PRECARIOUS ROCK

The party comes across an enormous rock balanced precariously on a tall, thin pillar. *Detect magic* reveals that there is a magic item on top of the rock. A character that can fly can grab a small chest which contains a spell scroll of *levitate*. Without the ability to fly, a character can attempt to climb up on the large rock with a DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failed check, they lose their balance and the rock topples down onto them, dealing 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

36: THE EARTH MINERS

The surrounding area has been blasted out and stripped clean, the beginnings of a mine. Slavers (1d6+1 **bandits** and a **bandit captain**) laugh as they rattle the chains of the 1d4 **earth genasi commoners** and 2d6 **human commoners** they've linked together in a large line of enslaved miners. They have heard rumours of iron deposits in this area and are doing a preliminary dredging of the ground to search for any traces of iron. They haven't found anything yet. Keep digging.

37: THE MESA FORTRESS

A red mesa looms before the party. On the very top of the mesa is a fortress of stone and iron, locked up tight from any who would dare raise a hand against it. There are a few manned pulley lifts that lead up the side of the mesa, where some **commoner** merchants chat with the **guards** as they are pulled up. This would be a good place to take a long rest.

The party must leave their weapons with the guards in a safe location at the base of the mesa. If they do so, the party enters the Mesa Fortress, a town locked up tight against the elements. There are no natural growths here. The streets are paved with cobblestone. The walls are lined with metal braces. Black smoke belches out of iron forges. The citizens' faces are stained grey.

A GOOD REST AT THE IRON INN

The Iron Inn provides a place for weary travellers to rest up. The vision of a crazed gnome inventor, it is completely staffed by clanking, whirring, smoking automatons that each bear the big-nosed bespectacled face of their long dead creator. The automatons are managed by a small crew of two **sand gnome commoners** who have learned the *mending* cantrip and are constantly fixing up breaks and blockages. There is a room available above the inn for the price of a day's worth of rations per person per night, or for free if the party can provide some iron to trade. Nights in the room above the Iron Inn are uncomfortable and loud with all the whirring and clanking going on below.

BRAWL AT THE BELCHING SMOKER

The Belching Smoker is the town's most popular tavern, where automatic machines create standardised jugs of ale. With the Reject Competition coming up so soon, the mayor has sponsored a Free Drinks Night to foster a sense of camaraderie in the community. Unfortunately, a brawl between 2d6 **commoners** breaks out roughly once an hour. After the wounded are carted off by doctors, the drinking resumes as if it never stopped. At least until the next brawl.

ADJUDICATOR AND THE REJECT COMPETITION

The party has arrived in town two days before the famous Reject Competition, in which inventors show off their mad creations and are judged by the Adjudicator. The prize is tea with the mayor and the opportunity to implement their invention in the running of the Mesa Fortress..

The Adjudicator is a massive smoking mechanical box in the center of town equipped with dozens of sensors in every direction. It seems to be monitoring the town, and every so often outputs a piece of paper with inscrutable writings that the mayor, a **sand gnome mage** named Polsternwick, interprets and uses to define new laws for the town. The Adjudicator judges the Reject Competition through the same method, again interpreted by Mayor Polsternwick.

The party can create their own invention. Whatever they create, no matter how stupid, wins the competition. Encourage hilarious ideas and joke entries. They are always going to win. The mayor has decided this ahead of time.

Some other inventions in the competition include:

- A glass bauble that emits light when a crank is turned.
- A throne for removing personal waste hooked up to a system of pipes for easy disposal.
- A wired communication device that can transmit information across vast distances with the proper infrastructure.
- Doorknobs.

The mayor congratulates the party and invites them into his personal study.

VALIDATION FOR THE MAYOR

Mayor Polsternwick's personal study is painted completely white. A purifier cleans the air here, and the party realizes just how much the smoke has been affecting their lungs in their stay in the Mesa Fortress until now. Mayor Polsternwick sits down behind his bleached-white desk of ivory and tells the party to take a seat on the floor in front of him. He doesn't have any other furniture. It's probably best to just lean against the wall if you don't want to sit.

He spends a few minutes sorting through a stack of papers in his desk and then just laughs. The Adjudicator just outputs nonsense. It is he, Mayor Polsternwick, who makes the true decisions for the city! He chose the party's invention because he wanted to speak to them. As adventurers who are largely outsiders to the city, he wants validation. Tell him that his city is great and doesn't need improvement.

If the party validates the mayor's choices, he showers them with enough rations and water to last every party member another 7 days and sends them on their way with a great big smile.

If the party refuses to validate the mayor's choices, he tells them it's fine and sends them off. However, while they're walking the streets at night, 1d6+1 **sand gnome thugs** ambush the party, sent by the mayor. He was so mad that they refused to validate him that he's sent ruffians to give them a message: you don't mess with Polsternwick!

Polsternwick can later be found in his study, for some reason having expected the party not to seek out revenge. He begs for his life and promises them whatever they want. It's theirs. Just don't hurt him. The party can choose what they want to do from there.

38: THE MONSTER TOWN

A great monster towers above the party. Luckily, it is dead. Its gaping thousand-toothed maw makes up the entrance to Monster Town, a small village in the desert made up entirely of retired monster hunters.

Keith, an aging **human champion**, recognises the spirit of adventure within the party and gives them a friendly tour of the town. Keith wields a glaive constructed from the stinger of a purple worm (dealing an additional 1d6 poison damage on a hit). Monster Town is made up of adventurers from every race, mostly **champions, dune divers, scouts, swashbucklers, and veterans**. The town has the following features.

- Huts with roofs repurposed from the armor of ankylosauruses.
- Ovens heated by fire beetle abdomens and kept regulated by the sails of cainuraptors.
- A wind chime made of the larynx of a harpy.
- A bagpipe made from the lungs of a drudon.
- Giant spider string as ropes and supports.
- Cute little fences made of stegosaurus plates.
- Buckler shields made from the skulls of hadrosauruses.
- Argentimir wings as canopies against the sun.
- Scavenger beast spines dug into the ground as defensive spikes against intruders.

The town doesn't have any wells. It keeps many gallons of water in barrels despite not having a clear source of water nearby, nor any spellcasters to conjure it forth.

Keith tells the party they are welcome to stay for a few days in Monster Town, gaining the benefits of a long rest, but the price is the slaying of a monster to add to the town. He's relatively sure there is a **medusa** in the caves nearby, as a few merchants haven't come out of the pass and he keeps finding stone statues of frightened adventurers. Slay the medusa and bring back proof, and the party can rest in Monster Town.

THE MEDUSA'S CAVE

The party enters the cave, which has a small babbling river running through it, probably the source of where Monster Town gets its water. There are a few statues of frightened adventurers, just as Keith mentioned. Some of them have been knocked over, their heads smashed or their limbs removed. These are extremely old statues that have been weathered with hundreds of years of age.

The party must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check to sneak up on the medusa in her lair. If they don't alert her, they find her in a larger section of the cavern, lit by blue-flamed torches and feeding petrified mice to the snakes in her hair. Her name is Candalar the **medusa**.

If Candalar hears the party approaching, she will cast *silent image* of herself as though the party had successfully snuck up on her. She then ambushes the party from behind. She will try to take one party member hostage and demand a parley, keeping her eyes closed so she doesn't turn anyone to stone.

Taking Candalar's severed head to Keith will earn the party the right to stay in Monster Town and receive a long rest. They just have to remember to cover the eyes somehow.

If the party doesn't kill Candalar, however, she explains that she had an agreement to give the town water from her underground river on the condition that they leave her alone. It seems Keith intends to renege on this deal by exploiting the ignorance of a random party of adventurers. The party can accompany the medusa back into Monster Town that night. She goes after Keith while the party fights off two **veterans**, a **dune diver**, and a **swashbuckler**.

After the fight, Candalar emerges with Keith's petrified body and stomps on its neck, breaking off the head. She lets the party take a long rest in Monster Town. She has decided that she will be the new mayor of Candalar Village. If it's a village just for one, that's perfectly alright for her.

39: THE ANKHEG HIVE

The ground gives way beneath the party and they find themselves trapped in a large tunnel built beneath the earth. As they attempt to gain their bearings, the tunnel collapses again and they fall down into an even deeper tunnel. Sand starts to fall down on their heads and the party scrambles to safety. They've fallen deep within some sort of hive created by massive insectoid monsters.

Scratching comes from ahead in the tunnel. An **ankheg** skitters up in the enclosed space and tries to spray the party with acid.

The party can choose to attempt to get out of the hive. Following the tunnels back up to the surface requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, with another **ankheg** approaching with each failed save. On a successful check, the party bursts free onto the surface, and two more ankhegs scramble at the tunnel behind them, collapsing the entrance on themselves. Thank god that's over.

Alternatively, the party can attempt to destroy the ankheg queen and disband the hive by navigating in the opposite direction. The mechanics for navigating the hive are the same. Once they find the queen's chamber, the **ankheg queen** summons her children to defend her with her Braying Screech.

The death of the ankheg queen sends the other ankhegs into a confused frenzy, but quickly they all stop and bow to the party. They burrow away. If ankhegs are included in any future encounters, the ankhegs help the party instead of attacking them.

40: THE BUSTLING CREVICE

Ahead of the party, the earth has split into a deep crevice that descends down into the earth. The top of the crevice is covered with a thick sheet of glass, allowing the party to walk over it with ease.

Below their feet, a bustling city of **glass genasi** is hard at work building materials and homes out of glass. It's almost blinding with the way that the high noon sun catches the corners of each glass material and refracts it into a shining rainbow of colours.

Unfortunately, the town is sealed up tight. There's no obvious way in, and the genasi wouldn't exactly be friendly if the party somehow tunnelled their way or shattered the glass ceiling. There are close to a hundred genasi in the city all working together on this new project and they're all armed with hammers and molten glass.

The party can rest in the town if they have a glass genasi in their party; the other townsfolk use magic to create an opening in the glass and offer for the party to stay in a glass room in their inn. The party can stay for a few days and regain their strength.

41: THE MARRIED NOMADS

The party finds a nice cave to rest in overnight, but there are already two people in the cave: two **human nomads** named Ameera and Sayid. As long as the party doesn't make too much trouble, there doesn't seem to be a problem with sharing the cave for the night.

Ameera and Sayid are a happily married couple. Ameera is a big fan of flowers and her husband Sayid has gathered up various flowers from cacti throughout the day, which he is now braiding into her hair while they make conversation with the party. Ameera asks mainly about the party members' past lives before they started wandering the desert, while Sayid asks about all of the interesting encounters they've had so far.

If Ameera and Sayid are asked about their own adventures in the desert as nomads, roll on the random encounter table for them and describe how they dealt with the situation. They are both capable fighters, but they try to stay out of trouble if they can avoid it. They're on their ninth year of trying for a baby and they don't want to take too many risks.

They head off early in the morning, leaving behind a single flower for the party as a parting gift.

42: THE BIG BIRD

The party passes nearby a small mountain that juts out unmotivated from the flat desert ground. It's dizzying to look up at it. As the party watches, they see a bird, some sort of hawk probably, glide in lazy circles, looking for prey. The bird spots them and starts to swoop lower, getting larger and larger, and soon the party is completely engulfed in its shadow. This is an **argentimir**.

If the party has any beasts travelling with them, such as a camel, the argentimir goes after the camel and tries to cart it off into the mountains. Otherwise, it swoops down low but doesn't attack the party. It's just warding them off to protect its nest.

The party can chase the argentimir up the mountain, with each party member making a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to make the climb. Anyone with a failed save finds it too difficult to climb and must be left behind. The party is also accosted by 1d4+1 **pteranodons** which can either be fought off on the side of the cliff or calmed down with a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

The argentimir's nest contains two unhatched eggs and 5 freshly-hatched chicks that snap their beaks blindly up at the air. If the argentimir has caught itself a beast, it tears it to pieces and drops bloody chunks into its nest, where its children dig in, learning the basics of scavenging for dead things. The **vulture** statblock with the blinded condition is appropriate for the chicks.

43: THE SWARMING DEATH

A plague of insects descends upon the party. They must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to find cover immediately. If they succeed, they duck into a large hole in the ground where the swarm passes by overhead. If they fail, each character must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The party can repeat the check to find cover, taking more damage with each failure to find it. The swarm dissipates after 5 rounds.

After the party emerges from their hole in the ground, they see the skeletons of three dimetrodons already starting to bleach in the sun.

44: THE BLACK SANDS

The sands in this region are black and cold, offering some relief for any party member that takes off their shoes. Every party member can reduce their heat level by one.

Once the party has cleared the black sands and cross over the dunes nearby, they look back to see that the black sands form a giant arcane mark upon the ground. This mark is mysterious and ineffable. Some mysteries can never be answered.

45: THE CACTUS FIELD

A large field of flowering cacti gives the party the opportunity to forage for free rations and water with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. Each party member who succeeds receives a free day of rations and a free day of water.

A very old and crotchety **human commoner** rushes out into the field after a few minutes.

"You meddling kids, get the hell out of my fields! Don't you know not to take what isn't yours?!"

He sends three of his **deinonychus** pets after them if they don't go away.

46: THE ABANDONED POST

A merchant outpost used to lay claim to this area, but now it's in disarray. The massive, stinking corpse of a purple worm has landed straight on the main shopping street and the whole outpost has been abandoned and infested with skittering insectoid monsters.

Inside of the purple worm corpse is the remains of a shop that still has stocked the following items:

- 3 quivers of 20 arrows
- 2 cases of 20 bolts
- 3 sealed barrels of water
- 3 sealed blocks of rations
- a case of spell scrolls

However, the shop is crawling with 3 **young kruthiks** and an **adult kruthic**. The rotten smell of the dead purple worm also gives any humanoids the *poisoned* condition while within 30 feet of it.

Defeating the kruthiks gives the party enough time to grab what they need before the rest of the monsters are alerted to their position. The spell scrolls include one of each of the following spells: *create or destroy water*, *expeditious retreat*, *protection from energy*, and *wind wall*. It also contains four scrolls of *purify food and drink*.

47: THE CAMEL PRIEST

The party finds themselves in the middle of a docile herd of hundreds of **camels**. They all graze mindlessly from bales of hay bound together with magic. The party is hit with a rather unpleasant smell. The camels burp, shriek, fart, spit, and gnash their teeth while they eat. Unpleasant creatures.

Standing amidst the camels, stroking two of their noses, is a **human priest**. As the priest spots the party approaching, so do all of the camels, and soon the party has hundreds of eyes on them.

"There is nothing in the world so beautiful as a camel, wouldn't you agree? Here, take one. Take this one. He can bear your burdens and listen to your ails. It is my gift. A gift from the Camel Priest. His name is Ringo."

The camel priest continues to insist that Ringo is a special camel but refuses to explain why. Ringo is in fact a regular camel with nothing extraordinary about him at all, but you can freak the party out by making them make frequent Wisdom (Insight) checks to over-interpret Ringo's basic camel behaviours. What do they think it means when he spits on the shoe of a guest? What does it mean when he drools all over his own legs? Why is he rearing his head so high and bearing his teeth? Why did he stop randomly in the path? So mysterious.

48: THE WIND SPEAKER

A **sand shaman** has just finished putting together a sand sculpture of an axe beak as the party approaches. When they try to speak to him, he shushes them, licks his thumb, and holds his thumb up against the wind. He mutters something about an "easterly current" then casts the spell *warding wind* around his sand sculpture to protect it from the elements.

If questioned, he just says that he hates having to constantly remake his little bird. She deserved so much better. He refuses to elaborate.

In truth, his druid partner died while she had taken the wild shape of an axe beak. The sands swallowed her whole.

49: THE EXHAUSTED BARBARIANS

A small hunting party of 2d6 **human berserkers** and 1d6 **scouts** have three levels of exhaustion and 33 hit points each. They're badly burned, and not just from the sun. They ask the party to give them enough food and water for everyone to survive another day. They are being chased by 2d6 **dune orc torchwoods**. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the berserkers insulted the Great Hourglass in front of the orcs and now they're being hunted down for religious reasons.

The dune orcs come by the party later that day and demand to know what happened to the heretics who claimed the Great Hourglass was actually just regular old magic that people have attributed to a god that doesn't exist. Clearly these heretics need to die for their heresy. Heretics!

50: THE STONE PILLAR

The party passes between two large stone pillars. At the top of each pillar is perched a stone carving of a gargoyle. The eyes of the statues seem to follow the party wherever they move.

They're just statues. It's a trick of the light.

51: THE COLLAPSING DUNE

As the party travels down the side of a sand dune, a massive rumbling can be felt underneath their feet. The sand starts to shift and give way underneath them. The whole sand dune collapses.

Every party member needs to make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, they are buried under the sand and begin to suffocate. On a successful save, they are half buried instead.

A character that is half buried can use their action to free themselves, or an ally can use their action to free them. A character that is fully buried (or an ally trying to free them) must make a flat DC 18 Strength check. Spells like *mold earth* or other earth-moving spells will free anyone buried immediately.

52: THE JUNK SITE

The party arrives at a city made up entirely of junk. The walls are rotted floorboards of an ancient sand skiff. The door has been torn off a broken elevator. There are 2d6 **scouts** standing on palisades reinforced by broken clockwork mechanisms. They wield rusted khopeshes (scimitars) from a civilisation long forgotten.

One of the guards, a nasty-looking **dune orc** woman whose tattoos of the Great Hourglass have been scratched off with a knife, calls down to the party.

"Oil! You got any pieces of junk you wanna drop off? Uglier the better."

If the party gives up some old and useless items they still have lying around, the guard lets them in and the party is greeted by a **human sand shaman** whose tribal tattoos have been re-linked with images of mechanical cogs and wheels. Her name is Viriga.

"Welcome to the Junk Site. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."

She offers the party to rest for the night, although their accommodations are limited. Instead of an inn, they just have some tents strung up from the tattered stitched-together flags of a hundred lost empires. The bed frames used to be a closet before they were hacked into a rough bed shape. The mattresses are old sleeping bags stuffed with chicken feathers. There are bugs. It isn't pretty. Sleep is difficult.

Anyone who can't sleep might wander out during the night to find the rest of the inhabitants of the Junk Site gathered around a trash fire. It smells terrible, but they are singing, drinking, laughing, and cavorting, and Viriga purifies their food and drink for them to avoid disease. There is a real sense of togetherness even in a bad situation.

BANDITS RAID THE CITY

The party wakes up the next morning to the sound of a warhorn. The orc guard from before is blowing her lungs out into a rusty metal tube that amplifies her voice. There are bandits circling the city.

The bandit leader, a **human bandit captain** named Little Liza, stands six feet tall and six feet wide. She bellows out her demands.

"Ain't nobody live in squalor lest they got something to hide. We know you're holding out on some sweet-ass loot in there, so what's the hold up? Little Liza needs her sparkly trinkets, you hear? You got five minutes to throw something shiny my way or we're burning this trash heap to the ground!"

Viriga asks the party to march out the front and fight Little Liza while she and the guards hold off the bandits encircling the camp. Little Liza has 2d6 **bandits** backing her up near the entrance.

Alternatively, the party can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to quickly search the Junk Site and find a pink rhomboid mixed in with some garbage. This is an *Ioun Stone of Constitution*, a magical stone that orbits your head and grants you +2 to your Constitution score. The Ioun stone will satisfy Little Liza, or the party might keep it for themselves instead, having to fight both factions. Little Liza wants it because it's pretty and Viriga wants it because it belonged to her grandmother.

To avoid a fight with Little Liza, the party can always just toss her something shiny from their own inventory instead, although honestly this will probably just encourage her.

53: THE MURKY REFLECTIONS

The party spots a pool of water in the distance. A DC 20 Wisdom (Survival or Perception) check reveals the water to be a mirage.

If the party approaches the mirage, however, it doesn't disappear, and in fact seems more real than ever. It's a rock pool with crystal clear spring water. Drinking from the pool satisfies their thirst, but at the end of the day, their need for water will not be met and they will need to make a saving throw to avoid taking a level of exhaustion. A flat DC 20 Intelligence check reveals the water to be an illusion: it's actually a murky mud bath.

54: THE RED BONES

The party spots the bones of a dimetrodon baking in the hot sun. The bones, however, are very strange. They are bright red.

Investigating the bones reveals them to be covered in hundreds of thousands of red ants. The closest person is attacked by a **swarm of insects**.

55: THE CURSED HOUND

The party passes through a spooky graveyard dug into a dry section of clay. Clouds make the sky go white. A mist rolls through and the area darkens even though it is still day. The howl of a hound sends terror through the party's hearts.

A **hexenhound** has chosen the party to die. It dashes in and out of the grave markings, using its curse to incapacitate a character with fear and using its stings to poison those who resist. The hexenhound is a hit-and-run hunter and when it feels as though it is wounded, it will retreat into the mist. If the party can't catch up to it, requiring a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival or Perception) check, it will return in the night to ambush the party's resting spot and finish what it started.

56: THE FEARFUL SCAVENGER

The party hears shrieking and barking coming from around a bend in the rock walls. In a flash, a **drudon** charges towards the party, pursued by 2d6 **cainuraptors**. The drudon hides behind the party in the hopes that they will protect it from the raptors.

57: THE PEPPER MERCHANT

The party passes through what appears to be a pepper farm. The wind carries with it a painful stinging to the eyes.

A crazed **sand gnome commoner** approaches the party with a wheelbarrow of peppers and spices. He wants a day's worth of both food and water in exchange for some of his wares.

He's willing to trade away a cherry bomb and a jar of pepper jam. The jar of pepper jam makes food spicy, but has a great taste. The cherry bomb is extremely dangerous.

CHERRY BOMB

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This item can be thrown at a point within 30 feet of the thrower, where it explodes in a 15-foot radius. Each creature within the radius must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 10 (3d6) fire damage and is blinded. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't blinded.

When the holder of this item takes fire damage, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the bomb explodes, centred on its holder.

58: THE SLAVE AUCTION

A **human spy** in black-and-white harlequin sequins rides up to the party on the back of a **dimetrodon** and introduces himself as Werril. He tells the party there's an auction going on for rare property. Would they be interested in attending the proceedings? He looks over his shoulder as if he were being watched, but then shrugs it off.

The party can make a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice a **dune diver** who has been tracking Werril. The ranger quickly ducks away and Werril mentions that his boss probably sent the ranger to keep tabs on him.

He leads the party to a group of other high class adventurers gathered around a serious auctioneer and a caravan. Among the bidders are a **mage**, a **veteran**, and a **priest**. They each look over the party, and seeing their shabby outfits, give them a sneer.

Werril steps up on the podium to meet his auctioneer boss, a haughty **human arch mage** whose white make-up gives her the appearance of a corpse. She smacks Werril upside the head and admonishes him for delaying proceedings. Werril gives the party a wink, but not a fun-loving wink. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check allows the players to understand the intention behind the wink: something bad is about to happen, and Werril wants the party on his side.

He opens up the caravan and produces three slaves chained together by the wrists.

"There has never in my life been a finer group of buyers, and never in my life a finer selection of slaves. We have here one of the elusive duskrise people, the strongest orc I have ever met, and a monk who worships the power of glass. If only their talents were put to good use. Let me just find my keys."

He drops the keys on the ground and fumbles for them while his boss huffs in disapproval. Then a curious expression passes across her face and she demands to know why Werril would need the keys. Her questions are cut short by the mage bidder shouting out that he will donate part of his land for the duskrise. A few of the other buyers start one-upping him with their own bids, mostly promises of even more land and power.

Werril unlocks the chains. The slaves are freed. He shouts to the party:

"Take out the bidders!"

The slaves and Werril pounce on the arch mage. The three bidders turn around in shock. The dune diver ranger pops out from a pile of sand nearby. If the party is ready to fight, the mage, priest, and veteran are surprised in the first round.

When the party has dealt with the bidders, Werril and the slaves have successfully bound and gagged the arch mage and burned her book to smithereens. Werril thanks the party for going along with his half-baked plan. He tells them he's a spy working for an agency back in Glasswork and he'll be fine to escort the slaves to the nearest civilisation. The party can do whatever they like with the arch mage.

59: THE PERFECT WELL

The party comes across a walled-off outpost. It looks like it has recently been manned, but no one comes to greet them. The door is unlocked and swings open in the breeze.

In the middle of the outpost is a stone well. The well is filled with crystal clear water. *Detect magic* reveals nothing special about the water at all. The well is functional and the water is fine.

However, littered around the outpost are the corpses of five nomads. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check on the corpses reveals that they died of dehydration.

The bodies each have clay jars of animal-headed humanoids kept safe within their robes. The clay jars contain the remains of a vengeful desert king of a long forgotten land.

JAR OF THE LOST LORD

Wondrous item, Very Rare

While carrying this clay jar, the owner can cast the following spells using the jars as their arcane focus (save DC 17).

At will: *chill touch*, *thaumaturgy*

1/day each: *contagion*, *divination*, *insect plague*

3/day each: *bestow curse*, *hold person*

Curse. While carrying this clay jar, the owner does not recognise their own thirst. They will refuse any drink offered to them. If forced to drink, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or spit it out. The curse lasts for 1 week after the owner stops carrying the clay jar; they can feel the curse lessening but still can't bring themselves to drink.

Destroying the jars summons a **mummy lord** that is rejuvenated centered on the jar containing its heart. The mummy lord does not possess its spellcasting ability and it doesn't have its rotting fist attack, using the following attack instead (also replacing Rotting Fist in its **Attack** legendary action).

Caress of Death. *Melee Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

60: THE TELEPATHIC SCORPION

The party is crossing a sand dune when they hear a voice in their heads. It has an outback accent.

"Oi, don't step on me! Watch yer bloody feet!"

Underneath the party is a tiny red **scorpion** that clacks its claws and waves its stinger at them.

"G'day mates! You seen a little stingin' Sheila round here with like a hundred little young'uns on her back? I'm worried a lizzo got her."

A DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check locates the other scorpion carrying her babies on her back. Another DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check confirms that there are no lizards around.

"Well that's a relief. See you later! Oi, Sheila, don't waddle around so tasty like! I got a nasty feelin' about those buzzards flyin' around above us. Don't gimme any lip! There's a cave down the dune, follow me, c'mon then ..."

If the party interrogates the scorpion, they find that he used to be a human warlock who was cursed by his patron, a fickle efreeti. Turns out he actually prefers being a scorpion. The women are nicer, apparently.

61: THE SAND NYMPH

As the party crosses through the shady pass between two bluffs, they notice a small waterfall running down the side of the bluff and collecting in a rock pool. The fine mist is refreshing and the party feels drawn to the pool. A flat DC 11 Intelligence check sees through the illusion: what they think is water is actually dry sand.

Drying on the rocks are the heavy cloaks and padded armour of a nomad, as well as the casual clothes that would normally be worn underneath. Sandals have been kicked off and a white scarf billows in the breeze from a rock pillar. Bathing underneath the waterfall is a human woman who gasps in shock as she sees the party. She hides behind a rock and, with a melodic, pleasant voice, politely tells the party that they can enjoy the waterfall if they like as long as they don't look at her. A flat DC 11 Intelligence check will again see through the illusion: she is a **harpy**.

If the party enters the pool, she calls out from behind her rock:

"Do you mind if I sing?"

Her song is the song of a harpy. She transforms into her true form and dispels the illusion, also summoning 2d4 **dust mephits** that emerge out of the 'waterfall'. She attempts to knock everyone unconscious that she can, using her dust mephits to blind anyone still standing. With the party incapacitated, she steals a magic item and flies away.

If the party overcomes her ambush, she pleads for her life, saying she was just having a bit of fun and was only going to steal something small. She promises not to do it again if they let her go. A DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals this to be a lie.

62: THE WATER BARRELS

The party finds three barrels of water sitting out by an abandoned camp. There's no magic and no trick, just three barrels of water. The party can choose to take the water or to leave it in case someone comes back for it.

The barrels belong to a group of 2d4 **aarakocra** who attempt to track the party later that night to get their water back. They'll ambush the party while they're sleeping.

Aarakocra had to leave the water behind because their pack animal, a **quetzalcoatlus**, went missing earlier. The party can track the quetzalcoatlus for the aarakocra with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check; the aarakocra will let them keep a barrel of water in thanks.

63: THE SWOOPING GIRAFFE

As the party passes through an area with more grass and vegetation than normal, with tall trees whose yellow leaves stretch for the sun, a **dire giraffe** swoops from the sky, making threatening passes at the party.

The dire giraffe is a clumsy flier. It has to furiously flap its wings almost like a hummingbird just to stay aloft, completely incapable of gliding. Its stumpy little neck bobs up and down with every wing flap. Its fifteen-foot-long tongue flaps underneath it as it tries to swoop. Saliva smears over at least one person's face.

It's protecting its young, 1d4+1 **dire giraffe babies**, who are perched up on the top of a tree, also flapping their wings furiously to avoid falling down.

64: THE SPRAYING SPIDER

The sand gives way under the party's feet. An 80-foot radius pit forms beneath them. The sands flow down hill in a cascade, making for an extremely slippery surface. At the bottom of the pit, in the dead center, a **giant wolf spider** pops out its head. It's wearing a yellow palm leaf as a hat. It has three quarters cover from all attacks and can use its reaction to duck into the sand, hiding under its leaf, gaining full cover from area of effect spells. Fire damage destroys the leaf.

The sand pit is difficult terrain. At the end of each of the player's turns, they must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or fall prone and slide 20 feet closer to the center. On its turn, the wolf spider uses its action to spray a jet of sand at one character it can see. The target gains disadvantage on the next Strength saving throw it makes on its next turn. If a character is within 5 feet of the wolf spider, the wolf spider can also make one bite attack at the end of its turn.

65: THE TERRITORY RIGHTS

The party pauses at the top of a rock overlooking an area of lower elevation filled with cacti and swarms of insects. An ugly place. For some reason, two different factions are arguing over their territory rights to the cactus pit. 1d4+1 **dune orc torchwoods** slam their staffs against the ground in frustration while the 2d6 **dune orcs** behind them give each other a look of trepidation. On the other side of the conflict are a squad of 4d8 **sand gnome bandits** that shake their fists upwards in defiance of the height difference. It looks like they're about to come to blows.

The gnomes want the territory because it has some rare ores that are useful for creating clockwork trinkets. The dune orcs want the territory because one of their ancestors used to own it seven hundred and fifty years ago and technically the land rights never lapsed. The party can intervene on either side (fighting 1d4 **torchwoods** and 1d6 **dune orcs** or 2d8 **sand gnome bandits**) or choose not to get involved.

66: THE BASHFUL XORN

The party is approached by a terrifying monster in the middle of the night that roars and rattles its claws to wake them up. Once they're awake, it calms down and sits, becoming almost indistinguishable from a stone save for when it adjusts its position for comfort. It speaks to the party in limited Primordial. If they can't understand Primordial, it just leaves.

"Gems? Have got gems? Gems please?"

If the party gives the xorn something shiny, it warbles like a pigeon, eats it, then leaves. If the party goes after it, they look over a large field of boulders where it has disappeared.

67: THE BROWN COWS

The party comes across a lush field of grass. 5d8 **brown cows** graze happily, letting out an occasional "MOOOO!" of satisfaction. As dusk settles, the cows amble over to a barn for shelter. The farmhouse next to the barn glows with candlelight from within.

The farmers are a family of 5 **human commoners**, a mother, father, two boys, and a girl, who all step out together and stare perplexed at the stars. The father spots the party and hails them over.

"Y'all seein' this, ain't ya? I reckon there ain't one stinkin' cloud in the sky, but I ain't seein' no stars. How about that?"

The mother pulls on her husband's shirt and points out at the desert all around them. He goes pale.

"This ain't Phandalin."

The farmer, his family, his house, his cows, and his land have all mysteriously been transported to the Hourglass Desert.

He offers the party a place to stay for the night as long as they tell him what in Helm's name is going on. They lay on a dinner of steak and eggs and offer an empty room. Used to belong to their son Teddy before he left home. Still haven't cleaned it out.

The room clearly belongs to someone too young to have moved out. There are stuffed animals kicked under the bed, which is very small. A blanket has cow and sheep patterns sewn into its fabric. Teddy didn't leave home. He died.

The next day, the farmers thank the party for explaining what's happened. They think they'll stay here for now and make sure the cows are okay. Magical nonsense was never something they've had to deal with before and they need some time to process.

68: THE FLYING NEEDLES

As the party crosses a field, they notice that all of the cacti in the area are completely bare. There isn't a single needle to be found.

Up ahead, they see the bodies of an entire pack of cainuraptors and some drudons. Every one of them is dead, punctured by hundreds of needles.

At the very edge of the field, a single cactus stands with all of its needles still intact.

The party can easily take a wide berth, but if they're stupid enough to get within 10 feet of it, it ejects all of its needles. Everyone within 30 feet of the cactus must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) piercing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

69: THE DEATH EATERS

The party is woken up in the middle of the night by a pair of disgusting monsters. They have the general shape of a horse, but their body is constructed from the bones of a hodge-podge of seemingly random desert animals. Their skulls are too long and have too many teeth. Their pin-prick red eyes flash and the party hears the twin voices of the **sepuket** in their head. The voice is an eerie monotone.

"Follow us and the rewards will be great."

If the party elects to follow the sepukets (literally, not metaphorically), they lead them to a small farmyard with a few **cows**, **camels**, and **axe beaks** chewing on the local flora. The sepukets each point to the same stone well, using a hideous talon claw of what was probably once a deinonychus. They refuse to say anything more.

The well has a rope and pulley system with a bucket. It's filled with water. It doesn't smell too good. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can identify a body floating in the water. If asked about the body, the sepukets just nod and insist the party gets it out.

The party can get the body out using any creative method they wish. A simple method would be to attach a hook to the rope and pulley system and pull the body up.

Once the body has been removed from the well, the sepukets descend on it and devour it, reducing it to bones immediately. They smile from ear to ear, splitting their jaw wide open in a hideous grin.

"Delicious. Thanks."

One of the sepukets pops a shiny red ruby out of its eye socket and kicks it towards the party. The ruby is their reward.

70: THE SLITHERING VALLEY

The party walks along a cliff overlooking a valley. Far below, the sounds of slithering can be heard louder and louder. Looking down, the party can see a massive pit of 6d10 **poisonous snakes** writhing around and slithering all over each other. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the reflection of something shiny and valuable underneath the snakes. Diamonds.

The pit is 30 feet wide and 30 feet deep. There are 1d4 **giant poisonous snakes** mixed in with the smaller ones.

71: THE MATING SEASON

The party's sleep is interrupted by the bellowing of a large mammal. The bellowing is so loud it shakes the ground underneath them. As they stumble bleary-eyed out of the cave they've found to rest in, they come across a herd of 3d6 **drudons** rumbling around a large baobab tree. Seems that it's mating season. Drudons don't mate quietly. The party will have to slaughter them, drive them off and risk interrupting their mating season, or give up their short rest entirely.

72: THE DOOM TRACKS

The party comes across massive claw tracks in the sand, each nearly as wide as they are. A DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) or DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the tracks to be that of a **scavenger beast**, one of the largest and nastiest monsters in the entire Hourglass Desert. It's the size of a house, it bristles with razor spines, and it has an uncanny ability to sense where animals have been killed nearby.

The party can avoid it by sacrificing two days of travel. Anything less and the beast might still be able to sense them, especially if they get into a fight.

If the party elects to risk travelling through its territory, have the scavenger beast make a Wisdom (Survival) check to track the party. The DC of the check starts at 15 and increases if the party takes the following precautions. Each precaution increases the DC by 5.

- The party hides their scent through magic or by making a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to travel against the wind.
- The party hides their tracks through magic or by making a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to cover their tracks behind them.
- The party leaves bait for the scavenger beast using magic or by making a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check to plant a carcass to ward the scavenger beast off course.

This must be repeated three times (once for each day of travel) while also continuing to roll on the random encounter table as normal. If the random encounter includes a dead creature (whether or not the party is the cause of its death), the scavenger beast has advantage on its Survival check.

If the scavenger beast catches up with the party, make it very clear that it is too powerful for them to fight. The scavenger beast leaps at the party, claws flashing, closing the distance as fast as it can. The party will be subject to its **Razor Spines** and **Reactive** traits and will need to distract it with a corpse of Medium size or smaller to get it to leave them alone. If the scavenger beast finds them on the first or second day, it will continue to track them until all three days are finished.

73: THE SHAMELESS BANDITS

As the party passes beside an elevated outcropping, they can hear the hopping of little feet up on the ledge. Immediately, 2d6 tiny chicken-sized flightless birds with bright yellow feathers leap down from above, snapping and screeching with hundreds of little teeth in their little snouts. These are **velociraptors**. Two of them leap on a party member (or, if they have one, a pack animal) and snap off the straps on a bag. They grab the bag in their jaws and make a run for it. They don't seem to care what's inside.

74: THE HOPELESS ILLUSIONIST

A flaming genie appears before the party.

"T'is I, Hekate the Efrete! Leave your waterskins as tribute and I shall consider letting you pass without harm!"

A flat DC 10 Intelligence check reveals the efreeti to be an illusion. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check locates the caster hiding behind a rock. His pointy hat is sticking out. He raises his hands in surrender once he has been found out; he is a young human illusionist.

"Aw man, you saw me? But I've been working so hard lately! Damn, I needed that water to get back to town. My teacher sent me on a spirit quest and only gave me enough water to get here. Told me if I achieved mastery over my illusions, I'd find a way to get home. He's a great teacher! I've learned so much! I think ... I mean I feel like I'm learning a lot. Can I have some water to get home? I need like three days' worth."

If the party gives him water to get home, the illusion immediately vanishes. Crouched behind another rock nearby, a grizzled old **human illusionist** whoops in success and does a little dance, kicking his feet up high while he twirls.

"Ha ha ha ha ha ha!!! You have just been bested by Grizzald the Magnificent, for none of you had foreseen the possibility of two illusions, no sir! Aha! Truly you have fallen victim to the most classic bamboozle in an illusionist's library of bamboozles! You have been coaxed into a snafu! Ha ha!!!"

Grizzald disappears in a puff of smoke and is never seen again.

The illusion of the young wizard requires a flat DC 20 Intelligence check to see through, and Grizzald is hidden from all but a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

75: THE FUTURE'S SECRETS

An old woman crawls out of her tent as the party passes by. She is missing a leg, an eye, and six of her fingers. What fingers she has left are wrapped around the hilt of a staff more gnarled than she is. She beckons the party to join her in her tent.

The tent is bigger on the inside than the outside. It's lit with incense candles that form a smoky haze throughout the tent. The bones, dried livers, intestines, and pickled claws of countless unidentified animals hang from hooks or lay strewn across a fold-out wooden table in the center. She sleeps on a bed of feathers, "plucked from living velociraptors," she clarifies. The fortune-teller, a **human diviner**, offers to read the party's fortunes in exchange for "a bit of their luck".

If a party member agrees, the fortune teller consults her animal entrails to read their future.

Choose one of the following fortunes for the party member. The fortune teller is quite old and actually doesn't really know what she's doing, so it doesn't matter if the fortunes come true or not. Ideally, the players will read heavily into them and inadvertently cause them to come about anyway. Giving up "a bit of their luck" also has zero mechanical effect.

d8 Fortune

- 1 "Everlasting love will find you in an unexpected place. All your loves before were but passing fancies. All your loves beyond will leave you yearning for what by then will be lost."
- 2 "An enemy will re-emerge. No blood shall be spilt, but generations to come shall shake in fear."
- 3 "Never before have I seen darkness burn so bright."
- 4 "Trust not the one that swings the whistling sword."
- 5 "The tapestry of your life is frayed at the edges. This is no natural fortune. Eliminate the meddling in your life, and your weave shall be repaired."
- 6 "Fame and riches be upon you, but contentedness comes only at the release of one's earthly desires."
- 7 "I see fire. Only fire. Also some sand."

No fortune. Her face goes dark. She scoops up all of her animal entrails and refuses to do any more fortunes. When questioned, she screams at the party to leave.

76: THE SHRIEKING HIVES

The ground rumbles underneath the party's feet. They've stumbled onto some sort of hive. From hidden tunnels all around them spring kruthiks, shrieking scythe-clawed dragon-insects that communicate with an overpowering stench and the nauseating clicking of their needle teeth.

The party must fight off 1d6+1 **young kruthiks**, 1d4 **adult kruthiks**, and 1d4-2 **kruthik hive lords**. At the start of each day for the next three days, in addition to the regular random encounters, another group of kruthiks tracks down and attacks the party (purely out of spite) unless the party succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or flat DC 12 Intelligence check to hide their tracks from the kruthiks each day.

77: THE CURSED STATUES

The party passes the ruins of an ancient monument. Twisted statues of unearthly monsters sit on collapsed pillars. Any aarakocra in the party feel a chill run through their spine. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the monster statues to be **gargoyles**.

The statues move on their own accord, cracking as they reform into hunched-over **gargoyles**, stone wings stretching as the unyielding sun causes shimmering waves of heat to rise from their backs. There are 2d4 gargoyles. They attack the party, favouring any aarakocra or anyone with ties to the elemental plane of air.

78: THE OLD FRIEND

A lone wanderer approaches the party. It's an old friend of one of the party members. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) reveals something strange about this person, particularly the way that they can't seem to recall any shared experiences, or the fact that their voice sounds very different, or the way that their head spins in circles around their neck ...

Their 'old friend' is a **dybbuk** in disguise, which laughs as it torments them. When defeated, it returns to its jellyfish form and sinks into the ground, gone for now.

79: THE AXE STAMPEDE

As the party passes through a valley, they hear a rumbling from the hills ahead. Roughly two hundred and fifty **axe beaks** are in the midst of a stampede heading straight for the party.

The party can attempt to find a safe place to hide with a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check, ending up in a cave (with an **allosaurus**), in a hidden hole in the ground (with a giant **wolf spider**) or on top of a large rock (with 2d4 **vultures**). Everyone must individually make this check; it's every person for themselves.

Anyone caught in the stampede takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage and ends up in a fight with an angry **axe beak**. Anyone caught with other animals can calm them down with a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, otherwise they attack too.

80: THE TRADING POST

The party breathes a sigh of relief as they take shelter in the cool shade of the tarps of a trading post set up at a crossroads in the desert. There are dozens of other people who have gathered at the trading post, including humans, sand gnomes, pelandrian elves, a few genasi here and there, and even a couple of dune orcs. The party can pick up the following supplies from the following vendors.

Caldwell Caldwell is a **human commoner** who sighs as the party approaches. He's working on a novel and has to put all of his papers and inks away while he deals with them. He sells rations and water for the price of interesting stories to tell that he'll use for his novel. After 10 days of food and 10 days of water, his stocks run out.

Grampleduck Peasberry Grampleduck is a **sand gnome commoner**. Due to old age, she is missing all but her two front teeth, giving her the appearance of a rabbit. She offers quivers of arrows, bolts, spell materials, and other replenishable supplies, even including some metalworked daggers, javelins, and throwing axes. She takes days of rations and water as payment.

Umpsteck Umpsteck is an **earth genasi scout** overladen with a backpack that looks like it's the same size and weight as he is. For the price of some days of food and water, he offers survival equipment such as hammers, pitons, hempen rope, crowbars, pouches, backpacks, bedrolls, and other such equipment found in most explorer's and dungeoneer's packs.

81: THE ITEM FINDER

A **retriever** hides in a rocky outcrop and attempts to ambush the party by making a Dexterity (Stealth) check against their passive Perception. The retriever is a big mechanical spider, a creepy clockwork machine, that has a magical sense for where to locate specific items it's been programmed to find.

This particular retriever is not interested in a fight with the party. It will make Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks against a character's AC to steal a valuable item off of them, at which point it will immediately attempt to escape.

The party can track the retriever by making successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) checks. It will lead them to its master.

The exact nature of the item and who sent the retriever is up to the DM to determine and should be related to the party's experiences in the Hourglass Desert. For example, if they have stolen an item from a market vendor, the vendor could be the retriever's master. If the party has separated from Yaukiss but still has an item of his such as the silver dagger, Yaukiss may have sent the retriever (he uses *dimension door* to escape as soon as he has his hands on his dagger). If the party left a dune orc to die in the desert, the orc may have come across the retriever and ordered it to steal as much food and water from them as possible. Any idea that is specific to the party's actions is a good idea for this encounter.

82: THE LAUGHING PACK

A pack of hyenas tracks the party at a distance, laughing maniacally. If the party doesn't cover their tracks with magic or with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, the hyenas will keep close, never quite attacking but never letting their prey get out of sight.

When night comes, the hyena pack collectively make a Dexterity (Stealth) check against the party's passive Perception in preparation for an ambush. They swarm the party's campsite with sheer numbers.

The hyena pack includes 4d6 **hyenas** and 1d4-1 **giant hyenas**. They are completely starving, each hyena emaciated and tired. They will stop attacking if they are provided with a few days' worth of rations to satiate their hunger.

83: THE GLITTERING NOMADS

White tarps stretched up high on tall sticks characterise the camp. Underneath each tarp, you can see the duskriese people, about two dozen of them in total in the camp, relaxing on hammocks and setting up wares to sell to other refugees from Pelandria. When the duskriese notice the party, they immediately start fawning over them, examining them for strange pieces of clothing, weird items, scars, anything that would make for a good story. They obsess over more exotic races like aarakocra and genasi while completely ignoring any boring humans.

The party isn't allowed to stay long, as the duskriese are heading in another direction and do not need to sleep, but the party still has the opportunity to interact with the duskriese in a few ways before they say goodbye.

CURIOUS WARES

A duskriese stretches behind his table of wares. Feathers have sprouted from where his eyes wrinkle when he smiles, and his hands are curled with wicked talons. He leans against his table and asks the party if they have any stories from outside of the desert. He'll trade one of his items for a story, but just one. There are many people and many stories, and it would be unbecoming to linger. It's not the way of the duskriese. He offers one of the following items in exchange.

Wind Feather. This magical aarakocra feather allows the wearer to cast *feather fall* at will.

"This feather here, it was taken from an aarakocra. No, not the ones that live here now. We used to have quite a relationship with the Elemental Plane of Air before the time of transgressions. But this was thousands of years ago. Place this feather in your hair, yes, behind your ear, just like that, and you will find that you will not suffer from a fall, for the elements of air are still here, watching over their favoured people and all who bear their mark."

Headdress of the Raptor's Sails. This magical headdress grants resistance to fire damage to its wearer. This resistance does not function if the wearer has not spent movement on its turn.

"The raptors of the desert were not born with their sails. No, they must earn them through wander. Only through wander does one learn how to lessen the choking heat of our world."

Quiver of Dragonglass Arrows. These arrows overcome any resistance to nonmagical damage and deal an additional die of damage on a critical hit. The quiver holds 20 arrows.

"I created these myself just yesterday from shards of glass I found lying on the ground. This glass was forged from the magical sands of the desert mixed with the impossible fire of a dragon."

ENTRANCING PERFORMANCE

Many of the duskriese sit to watch one of their own perform a traditional dance of their people. The dancer is Lydia, a duskriese with shiny black scales running down either side of her face and along the backs of her hands and forearms. She is dressed only to the bare minimum to show off the precision and beauty of her dance. Her hips and waist are bare and her shirt flows off of her shoulders, the sleeves trailing along behind her in a wide arc, too long for regular day-to-day wear. Her skirt parts along the side as she raises her leg high and spins in place, her bare feet barely leaving a mark in the sand.

Each party member watching the performance must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become enthralled by Lydia. For the next seven days, the first thing they say to each new person they meet is to gush about this amazing duskriese dancer they once saw.

84: THE TRANSLUCENT FIST

A **glass genasi glass shatterer** waits for the party at the crossroads between two paths on the desert floor. He rises as they approach and pulls back his sleeves to reveal jagged glass embedded just below the surface of his skin. He stares one party member straight in the eyes and, with malice in his voice, challenges them to single combat.

"I've searched for years. I've finally found you. You shall pay for what you have done."

The DM can decide why the glass shatterer has a vendetta against this one particular party member.

85: THE DAO'S ANGUISH

The party comes across a shrine to an ancient genie. Within the shrine are hallways upon hallways decorated with a vast array of stone sculptures, each different in shape but all sharing a solid, secure frame carved of smooth limestone.

At the end of the hall is a sculpture of a dao, an earth genie, whose stone hammer has broken off the rest of the statue and lies abandoned on the floor. The stone hammer is a magic weapon that can be wielded by anyone with a 19 or higher in Strength and deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

While the party is inside of the shrine, snarling can be heard from outside. 3d6 **deinonychuses**, man-sized bipedal raptors with blue-and-green feathers and wicked claws, sniff around looking to prey on the party. These are tough enemies on their own and this is a very large pack of them.

As the deinonychuses sniff around the shrine, one of them bumps into a statue which immediately animates as a **gargoyle** and attacks the raptor, distracting 1d6+1 of them and potentially providing an opportunity for the party to escape without a fight. Alternatively, the raptors can be calmed with a DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check and an offering of a day's worth of rations for each raptor in the pack.

86: THE STILL FIELD

The party passes through a barren field of rocks, pillars, pebbles, stones, and ruined architecture, perhaps once the site of a terrible battle.

A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the rocks reveals that many of them are actually **dirt mantises**. Investigating a dirt mantis irritates it and its little beetle wings start fluttering in agitation. A DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can calm down the first dirt mantis to avoid bothering the rest. If it can't be calmed down, 3d6 **dirt mantises** swarm the party.

87: THE LONG LOST

The party is plagued by terrible dreams of sands rearing up from the desert and swallowing them whole, of terrible claustrophobia, of the anguish of years ripped from their life until they are left only a rotting corpse and a memory. When they wake up, they must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or take 3d6 psychic damage.

The nightmare is cut short by a terrifying wail in the night, the scream of a woman in emotional and physical anguish, as though she were being ripped apart by a wolf with her childhood bully's face. Everyone must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened indefinitely.

The party can stay in camp, protected by overhanging rocks and relative concealment, or they can go out to investigate what's making the noise.

If they stay in camp, the wails just get closer and closer, until eventually everyone must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw again. Anyone who fails the second throw becomes frightened, or if they were already frightened, becomes stunned. They can repeat the save at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success. While the party watches, a woman crawls into camp, her limbs splayed like a spider, her skin yellow and blistered with pus. She isn't human, barely humanoid. A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check identifies her as githyanki. She is a **banshee** and as she enters the party's camp, two githyanki **ghosts** (without their possession ability) and 1d6 githyanki **zombies** crawl into the camp in the same unnatural manner.

If the party chooses to investigate, they see the banshee walking slowly towards the camp from the outside. It's initially not clear that she knows where the camp is, at least until she points directly at the party. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the two ghosts floating above their heads and the zombies crawling low to the ground nearby. Upon spotting the other ghosts, they must make the second DC 13 Wisdom saving throw as noted above.

When the undead are defeated, the banshee screams one last time and the sands rise from the desert floor to consume her once again.

If Yaukiss is with the party, he mutters quietly to himself.

"Gretzen. She was always a bit dramatic."

88: THE TWITCHING WHISKERS

Along a narrow pass on the side of a relatively tall cliff, 2d8 wild **cats** gnaw at the corpse of a dimetrodon. They hiss at the party when they approach. They refuse to leave their meal unless the party attacks them directly. A DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is required to approach them without a cat swiping at a character with a claw attack. After a minute or so, all of the cats' whiskers start twitching and they race off without warning, descending down the cliff carefully but quickly.

The party can soon feel what the cat's felt: a rhythmic thumping quake in the earth.

From around a bend in the cliff face, the thumping gets louder and louder and louder until, finally, the jaws of a huge monster and the enormous talons of a predator make themselves seen. Bright orange and yellow feathers, soft like down, line the monster's head and flare out into a beautiful crown of soft whites. The monster's entire body, easily eight solid tonnes of muscle, is covered with a thick layer of white feathers. You almost don't see the little arms curled up against its chest. This is the biggest of the raptors, a **tyrannosaurus rex**.

It roars.

The pass on the side of the cliff is quite narrow, meaning the party can probably avoid the raptor's tail, although its jaws are definitely the most dangerous part. They can also avoid the fight by taking after the cats and climbing down the side of the cliff; the raptor won't follow. It knows it'll just tumble down and bang its head. Speaking of which, the party needs to succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid falling down and banging their heads. They'll take 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

89: THE FLYING EARTH

A boulder flies through the air and lands nearby with a thump. Sand sprays for thirty feet in every direction. It leaves a small crater. The party takes a moment to process this. Then they hear the whistling. More boulders.

They've ventured too close to the territory of an **earth elemental** who is chucking boulders at the party to ward them off. It's standing on a sand dune about three hundred feet away, looking really pouty and petulant. The party must make a DC 5 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being hit by a boulder (it's low because the elemental is trying to ward them off, not kill them), but on the off chance they fail, they take 10d6 bludgeoning damage.

The party can take a detour, adding one day to their journey, kill the earth elemental, giving them free passage, or, if they can speak Primordial, attempt a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince it to let them pass through harmlessly.

90: THE FROZEN DUST

As the party overlooks a valley, they spot 2d6 **sand gnome commoners** in a low, dirty stretch of the valley, next to a small river. The gnomes are asleep and the river has stopped flowing. Hovering above the gnomes, emitting a high-pitched whine, are 1d6+1 **dust mephits** who sprinkle dust over the gnome's eyes. The mephits attempt to steal the gnomes' supplies and drag the gnomes into the river.

If the gnomes are rescued, they thank the party and give them a few days of rations. They have to move on and they're headed in the opposite direction. They bid farewell.

91: THE ANXIOUS CALM

The wind is particularly heavy today and the party must make DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks to resist being knocked prone and gain a heat level from being dragged around by hot sand and wind.

However, after a few hours of windstorm, out of nowhere, the wind suddenly stops.

Nothing.

Quiet.

The party becomes acutely aware of the ringing in their ears. They can hear their own organs churning inside them. It's so quiet even their thoughts fade away.

Give the party some time to speculate and prepare for the worst. Then, as quickly as it stopped, the winds pick back up. They're not as strong as before and the party can continue without worry.

92: THE SCORPION KING

As the party eats lunch between two massive dunes, a little bit of sand rolls down the dune and collects at the party's feet. A **scorpion** pops out of the sand and tries to sting a party member.

If the scorpion is removed without killing it, the party is free to go on their way. If they kill the scorpion, the sand erupts all around them and the party is assaulted on either side by two **swarms of insects** (scorpions, represented by the centipede variant) led by an enormous half-scorpion half-man, a **tlincalli**, who roars about avenging the senseless slaughter of his people.

93: THE HOT SUN

The sun beats down on the party's heads. Everyone in the party gains a level of heat for the day. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check finds a network of rocky outcrops that provide the party some semblance of shade. If they can't find shade, a **fire elemental** descends on the party from the skies, made bold and aggressive by the sun.

Within the outcrops, a **stegosaurus** sleeps on its belly, taking a nap while it hides from the sun. The party needs to make a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check with advantage to sneak past it, or make a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to treat the stegosaurus with respect. It will mercilessly attack anyone that wakes it up.

94: THE STRANGE CLUMP

The party comes across a strange clump of sand at the base of a sand dune.

If they bother it, a **sand gnome dune diver** bursts out of the clump of sand and starts yelling at the party for disturbing his hiding spot. He's been hunting a brontosaurus for a few days and now they've ruined everything!

The party can track the **brontosaurus** with a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. It's sipping water by a small stream running from a bluff. If they kill the brontosaurus and give its carcass to the gnome, he tells them that they're even. Just don't tell anyone else that they had to do the hunt for him.

95: THE SEXY DANCE

Two **duskrise** dancers wander up to the party early in the day and, excited by a group of adventurers with stories to tell, hound them for information on their travels so far. The duskrise are male and female and are bonded together, with tattoos of each other's faces on their bare shoulders. They offer to show the party their dance.

The dance is a very intimate duet with a lot of rather uncomfortable physical contact, with the duskrise stealing kisses and caresses between each major step of their routine.

The party must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the two duskrise as per the spell *mass suggestion* with a duration of 10 days. When they finish their dance, the duskrise give the party the following suggestion:

"You will invite the next person you come across to a dance."

With that, the two duskrise giggle and wander off further into the desert.

96: THE LONG DROP

The way forward is blocked by a huge crevice in the desert floor. It's thirty feet across to the other side. Looking down induces vertigo; there is no bottom. Falling is certain death.

The party must devise a way to get to the other side. If they can't, it takes an additional day of travel to get around.

97: THE ELVEN TRADERS

The party comes across a trading post which has been spontaneously grown out of the earth from cacti and baobab trees. The canopy is made up of spider's silk. There are about 2d8 elves in the camp: two **pelandrian elf druids**, two **elite pelandrian** warriors (**draining** if Sunrise Realm, **raining** if Sunset Realm), and the rest are **pelandrian elf commoners**. They have a cage of 1d4+1 **giant spiders** that they are milking for silk. The elves offer to trade with the party. They have two vendors.

Ellystremanthemum. Ellystremanthemum is a **pelandrian elf commoner** dressed in the finest of silks dyed with spectacular bright colours. For days of food and water, she offers dye of any colour and any article of silk clothing the party desires, tailored specifically to their anatomy. She takes the spider's silk and weaves it in front of the party, taking a few hours to complete her commissions.

Melrends. Melrends is an **elite pelandrian** decked out with impressive magic weapons. In exchange for a character supplying him with all of their current weapons, he will craft a weapon specifically for them, a weapon which will fulfill all of their needs. In a few hours, he and the two druids grow and enchant an elven weapon from the earth itself. It originally takes the form of a longbow, but its shape can change at its wielder's whim.

WEAPON OF CORRELON

Weapon, Rare, requires attunement

This is a +1 magic weapon. When the wielder uses a bonus action to speak the name of Correlon, the god of elves, the weapon transforms into any simple or martial weapon of the wielder's choosing.

98: THE FLYING GIRAFFE

As the party travels along the ridge of a large canyon, a **dire giraffe** flies up to the party and tries hopelessly to steal some food from them. The dire giraffe is a strange looking creature with a short, stumpy neck, furiously flapping wings that are too small for its body, and a fifteen-foot-long tongue that slurps and flaps noisily as the giraffe flutters around. The poor thing looks badly starved.

The giraffe will stick around with the party if convinced with a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check and a ration of food each day.

99: THE GREAT HOURGLASS

The winds go quiet. No animals can be heard. All of the sands recede around the party. They stand only on cracked clay, flat for miles in every direction. The sun reaches its apex in the sky, reducing their shadows to nothing. There is only dry land. There is only the Hourglass Desert.

Before them, a great structure materialises into thin air. An hourglass. Two hundred feet tall. It hums with the energy of the Astral Plane.

The last of its sands squeeze through the middle and collect on the bottom, then it flips, suddenly and violently, and the cycle begins again. Every few seconds, the hourglass refills and flips. Again and again and again and again and again ...

Any dune orcs, grave clerics, and oath of rebirth paladins in the party know in their hearts that this is the Great Hourglass, their god.

But, just as it appeared, it vanishes. The sands roll back in and cover the party's feet. The winds start to flow once more. The sun crosses its apex and their shadows return. The Great Hourglass of the Hourglass Desert is gone, and it will never be seen again.

SUNRISE REALM COMPLICATIONS

1-3: SHIFTING SANDS

OUT OF COMBAT

The sands shift underneath the player's feet, sometimes so quickly and suddenly that it sends them flailing head over heels. Any ability checks that require the players to move on foot (such as Acrobatics, Athletics or Stealth checks) are made with disadvantage.

IN COMBAT

A wave of sand flows through the combat arena. Each round, on initiative count 20, each creature touching the ground must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

If combat occurs indoors, this effect can be ignored.

4-6: PILLAR OF SAND SIGHTING

OUT OF COMBAT

The party spots a whirling tornado in the distance. The sheer amount of sand it kicks up means that any Perception checks that rely on sight are made with disadvantage.

IN COMBAT

A tornado of sand rolls by less than a mile away, sending high speed winds and stinging sand through the combat arena. Ranged weapon attack rolls are made with disadvantage and the entire area is lightly obscured.

If combat occurs indoors, this effect can be ignored.

7: EARTHQUAKE

OUT OF COMBAT

Intense rumbling in the ground makes tracking creatures difficult. Any Wisdom (Survival) checks are made with disadvantage as the familiar terrain is rocked by quakes and the sounds of footsteps are drowned out completely.

IN COMBAT

On initiative count 20 in the first round, the combat arena is affected by an earthquake. Use the spell *earthquake* to determine the effects, with the following stipulations.

- The effects are non-magical.
- The save DC for the effects is 10.
- Any fissures are 1d4x10 feet deep instead of 1d10x10.

8: CONSUMED

OUT OF COMBAT

A party member is selected at random. The sands open up under their feet and threaten to bury and consume them; they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being consumed.

If they are consumed, they are buried by sand. They are incapacitated while buried. They can be freed with a flat DC 15 Strength check or by using magic such as *mold earth*. When they are first consumed, and for every round they remain buried, they age 1d20 years. If this would bring the target within 10 years of the natural lifespan of their race, they make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. The target dies on a failed save. The target has advantage on the saving throw if its new age is below the natural lifespan (but still within 10 years). The target has disadvantage on the saving throw if its new age is more than 10 years older than the natural lifespan for its race.

IN COMBAT

The effect above triggers on initiative count 20 each round until combat ends, randomly selecting targets participating in the fight. Once the fight has been resolved, the sands also mysteriously calm down. Anyone still buried is no longer subject to the aging effect.

SUNSET REALM COMPLICATIONS

1-3: SANDFALL

OUT OF COMBAT

The party travels close to one of the columns of falling sand. The area is difficult terrain as the sand builds up around their feet.

IN COMBAT

One of the columns of falling sand is blown through the combat arena by heavy winds. The falling sand stretches up to the sky and has a 60 foot diameter. The column blocks line of sight but doesn't block movement; a creature must spend 3 feet of movement to move 1 foot through the column.

Each round on initiative count 20, the column moves 10 feet in a randomly determined direction. If the column passes over a creature, the creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, moving out of the column on a successful save. A creature within the column of sand is blinded and takes 5d6 bludgeoning damage at the start of its turn.

The column can also be moved by combatants. A creature can push the column a certain distance by casting the following spells on the column or including it in the area of effect.

Spell	Distance Pushed
<i>gust</i>	5 feet
<i>dust devil</i>	5 feet
<i>gust of wind</i>	30 feet
<i>warding wind</i>	10 feet
<i>control winds</i> (gusts)	30 feet
<i>investiture of wind</i>	10 feet
<i>whirlwind</i>	100 feet

In addition, the column cannot pass through an area affected by *wind wall*. The spell *wind wall* can't be cast directly in the column's area.

4-6: DRAGON SIGHTING

OUT OF COMBAT

The party sees evidence of the ancient red dragon Gethrax, the Eternal Lost. Roll for or choose one of the following effects.

d6 Dragon Effect

- 1 A massive dragon-shaped shadow passes over the party. The dragon has flown in front of the sun and is big enough to have momentarily blocked it out.
- 2 Glass rains down from the sky; the party must find shelter with a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check or take 2d4 slashing damage from glass shards.
- 3 The dragon's roar creates a minor quake under the party's feet, sending any creatures nearby into high alert (+5 passive Perception).
- 4 The air turns hot and dry from sheer proximity to the dragon, increasing each party member's heat level by 1.
- 5 2d8 githyanki **zombies** join whatever encounter the party faces that day.
- 6 The party suffers nightmares from the night before. They must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw when they wake up in the morning or take 1d6 psychic damage.

IN COMBAT

Each round, on initiative count 20, roll for or choose one of the following effects.

d6 Dragon Effect

- 1 The dragon passes in front of the sun, plunging the combat arena into darkness until the next round.
Glass rains down from the sky. Each combatant that starts their turn this round under open skies takes 2d4 slashing damage, and for the rest of combat, the ground is difficult terrain. A creature knocked prone takes 2d4 slashing damage.
- 2 The dragon roars nearby. Each creature must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or become deafened until the start of their next turn.
- 3 The air turns hot and dry from sheer proximity to the dragon. Any creature that takes fire damage takes an additional 2 fire damage.
- 4 A **ghost** materialises in an empty space in the combat arena. The ghost does not have its possession action.
- 5 The dragon flies overhead and breathes a jet of flame into the air, demonstrating its raw power. Each creature must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the dragon for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- 6

7: BLOCKED SKIES

OUT OF COMBAT

The sun is blocked by a column of falling sand, plunging the desert into dim light for a few hours.

IN COMBAT

The combat arena is in dim light.

8: CONSUMED

OUT OF COMBAT

A party member is selected at random. The sands open up under their feet and threaten to bury and consume them; they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being consumed.

If they are consumed, they are buried by sand. They are incapacitated while buried. They can be freed with a flat DC 15 Strength check or by using magic such as *mold earth*. When they are first consumed, and for every round they remain buried, they age 1d20 years. If this would bring the target within 10 years of the natural lifespan of their race, they make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. The target dies on a failed save. The target has advantage on the saving throw if its new age is below the natural lifespan (but still within 10 years). The target has disadvantage on the saving throw if its new age is more than 10 years older than the natural lifespan for its race.

IN COMBAT

The effect above triggers on initiative count 20 each round until combat ends, randomly selecting targets participating in the fight. Once the fight has been resolved, the sands also mysteriously calm down. Anyone still buried is no longer subject to the aging effect.

MONSTERS

HUMANOID

COMMON HUMANOIDS

Humanoids marked with (MM) can be found in the Monster Manual. Humanoids marked with (VGM) can be found in Volo's Guide to Monsters.

- **Aarakocra** (MM)
- **Arch Druid** (VGM)
- **Arch Mage** (MM)
- **Bandit** (MM)
- **Bandit Captain** (MM)
- **Berserker** (MM)
- **Champion** (VGM)
- **Commoner** (MM)
- **Diviner** (VGM)
- **Druid** (MM)
- **Guard** (MM)
- **Illusionist** (VGM)
- **Mage** (MM)
- **Master Thief** (VGM)
- **Priest** (MM)
- **Scout** (MM)
- **Spy** (MM)
- **Swashbuckler** (VGM)
- **Thug** (MM)
- **Veteran** (MM)

MONSTER MANUAL ONLY

If you only possess the Monster Manual and don't want to purchase Volo's Guide to Monsters, you can replace humanoids from VGM with alternatives.

Humanoid	Suggested Alternative
Apprentice Wizard (VGM)	Commoner (MM) with two cantrips
Arch Druid (VGM)	Druid (MM) with double hit points
Champion (VGM)	Veteran (MM)
Diviner (VGM)	Mage (MM) with two divination spells
Illusionist (VGM)	Mage (MM) with two illusion spells
Master Thief (VGM)	Spy (MM)
Swashbuckler (VGM)	Bandit Captain (MM)
Warlord (VGM)	Veteran (MM)

QUICK TRAITS

A humanoid that is listed as "any race" can be quickly given a racial identity by applying one of the following traits.

Race	Racial Trait
Aarakocra	Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft.
Air Genasi	Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)
Dune Orc	Aggressive. As a bonus action, the dune orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.
Duskribe	Luminous Skin (1/Day). As a bonus action, the duskribe can activate its luminous skin for ten minutes. While active, the duskribe has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, imposes disadvantage on ranged attack rolls made against it, and emits bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light in a 10 foot radius beyond that.
Earth Genasi	Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.
Fire Genasi	Damage Resistances fire
Glass Genasi	Reflective Skin (Reaction). When the genasi is hit by <i>magic missile</i> or a spell of 3rd level or lower that requires a ranged attack roll, it rolls a d6. On a roll of 4-5, it is unaffected. On a roll of 6, it is unaffected and it can reflect the spell back at the caster as though it originated from the genasi (Constitution, +4 to hit with spell attacks).
Human	No change necessary.
Pelandrian Elf	Dust Step (1/Day). As a bonus action, the pelandrian can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.
Red Dragonborn	Fire Breath (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from the dragonborn must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.
Sand Gnome	Gnomish Resistance. The sand gnome has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

With time to prepare, it is recommended to give the creature all of its racial traits instead. This list is meant only for on-the-fly adjustments for quick encounters.

DUNE DIVER

Dune divers are employed as scavengers, raiders, and scouts. Dune divers found trawling the bars of Glasswork in their downtime are lone contractors, and advertise themselves as the person you hire when you don't want to risk letting your mission fall on too many prying ears. One person can keep a secret, and one dune diver can get the job done.

Generally, dune divers don't stick around for long once they are discovered. They prefer to let the natural land act as their cover and keep hidden for as long as possible. Dune divers aren't assassins. They finish the job and they get out. Sometimes that means staying perfectly still for three straight days in a sand dune. Sometimes that means summoning a windstorm to shield themselves against a barrage of arrows. Whatever works.

DUNE DIVER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Any two languages

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sand Cover. The dune diver has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in sandy terrain, and it can use its bonus action to do so. It also ignores the effects of difficult terrain caused by sand.

Spellcasting. The dune diver is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following ranger spells.

1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements*, *detect magic*, *detect poison and disease*, *earth tremor*, *hunter's mark*

2nd level (2 slots): *locate animals or plants*, *locate object*, *warding wind*

Actions

Multiattack. The dune diver makes two attacks with its longbow or three attacks with its scimitar.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Sandy Defense. When the dune diver is touching sandy terrain and is targeted by a ranged attack from an attacker it can see, it can magically impose disadvantage on the attack roll by protecting itself with a sheet of erupting sand.

DUNE ORCS

The dune orcs of the Hourglass Desert are not all soldiers, but most of the healthy adults in their tribes are trained to fight. They throw themselves at threats using overwhelming numbers, not worrying about cover and ignoring their fears. They know on a deep, spiritual level that death in combat is temporary. They will be reborn.

A standard dune orc has a sling, but if they think they can sprint across the dunes and get to their target in a turn or two, they'll just draw their swords and charge, covering a surprising amount of distance in a very short time, being natural sprinters. A typical dune orc in combat is a spinning dervish of death, scimitars flashing and fangs bared.

Much of the dune orc's religion relies on celebration and parties, which can sometimes last for several days and nights straight. Some dune orcs have a ceremonial role as a torch bearer, keeping the flame of celebration alive until the rest of the orcs have wound down from exhaustion. These are called the bearers of the Torchwood, and when combat breaks out, they use their sacred staffs to spew fireballs at their foes.

DUNE ORC

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)
Hit Points 25 (3d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +2, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the dune orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Multiattack. The dune orc makes two attacks with its scimitars.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Sling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

DUNE ORC TORCHWOOD

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)
Hit Points 17 (2d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +2, Perception +4, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the dune orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Torchwood Staff. As a bonus action, the dune orc can activate or deactivate its torchwood staff. While activated, the staff gives off bright light for 30 feet and dim light for 30 feet beyond that.

Actions

Torchwood. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it is set on fire.

Dune orc scouts are picked from birth for their keen eyes and trained in the use of longbows. With the recent emergence of a terrible red dragon, the glass that remains after the dragon's fires hit the sands is forged into specialised arrows for the scouts, arrows which can pierce the veil that the Weave uses to protect its favoured creatures.

Most powerful of all of the dune orcs is their warchief, a particularly massive, powerful, and charismatic orc who leads their soldiers into battle from the front lines. They are often seen riding animals like giant hyenas or vultures, which share the aggressive trait of the orcs just by virtue of the warchief's leadership. When the warchief attacks, its soldiers are inspired to attack. When the warchief dies, its soldiers fight on in its memory.

Dune orcs also commonly include rebirth knights and sand shamans in their ranks due to their worship of the Great Hourglass.

DUNE ORC SCOUT

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 17 (2d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +2, Perception +5, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the dune orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Dragonglass Arrows. The dune orc carries 12 dragonglass arrows in its quiver. A dragonglass arrow ignores resistances to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and if the dune orc scores a critical hit with one, it rolls an additional die of damage.

Keen Eyes. The dune orc has advantage on Perception checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The dune orc attacks twice with its longbow.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

DUNE ORC WARCHIEF

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saves Str +7, Con +7

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5, Nature +4, Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Aura of Aggression. As a bonus action, the dune orc and any allied creature within 30 feet of it that can see and hear the dune orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Aura of Endurance. The dune orc and allied creatures within 30 feet of it that can see and hear it have advantage on Strength and Constitution ability checks and saving throws.

Inspirational Fury. When the dune orc hits a creature with its greatsword, one allied creature that can see and hear the dune orc can use its reaction to make one weapon attack.

Mark of Honourable Combat. As a bonus action, the dune orc points at a creature it can see within 60 feet of its position. Until the end of the dune orc's next turn, it can take the Shove action against any creature between it and its marked target without spending an action. If the shove is successful, the shoved creature cannot take opportunity attacks against the dune orc until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The dune orc makes two attacks with its greatsword.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

DUSKRISE RACIAL ADOPTION TABLE

d100	Race	Racial Trait
1-29	Human	CON 14 (+2) / Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 8)
30-45	Elf (Pelandrian)	Dust Step (1/Day). As a bonus action, the duskrise magically teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.
46-49	Elf (Other)	Fey Ancestry. The duskrise has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.
50-61	Duskrise	Luminous Skin (2/Day).
62-71	Gnome (Any)	Luminous Resistance. While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
72-73	Genasi (Air)	Luminous Hover. While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it has a flying speed of 15 ft. (hover).
74-75	Genasi (Earth)	Luminous Burrow. While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it has a burrowing speed of 15 ft.
76-77	Genasi (Fire)	Damage Resistances fire / Luminous Flame. While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it can cast <i>produce flame</i> innately at will (Charisma; +5 to hit).
78-85	Genasi (Glass)	Luminous Reflection (Reaction). When the duskrise is hit by a <i>magic missile</i> spell or a ranged spell attack of 3rd level or lower, it rolls a d6. On a roll of 4-6, it is unaffected.
86-96	Dune Orc	Luminous Aggression (1/Turn). While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it can use its bonus action to move up to its speed towards a hostile creature it can see.
97-99	Aarakocra	Luminous Flight. While the duskrise's luminous skin is active, it has a flying speed of 30 ft.
100	Red Dragonborn	Damage Resistances fire / Fire Breath (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from the duskrise must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

DUSKRISE

The duskrise people are a peaceful people who seek only to learn more about other races and adopt the practices and traits they find most interesting. They're not afraid to defend themselves, but they do not seek out conflict.

DUSKRISE RACIAL ADOPTION

Roll 1d100 on the Duskrise Racial Adoption table to the left to determine which racial trait the duskrise acquired during its most recent rejuvenation. These traits do not affect its challenge rating.

DUSKRISE
Medium humanoid (duskrise), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (padded armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Persuasion +5, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dusk
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Luminous Skin (1/Day). As a bonus action, the duskrise can activate its luminous skin for ten minutes. While active, the duskrise has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, imposes disadvantage on ranged attack rolls made against it, and emits bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light in a 10 foot radius beyond that.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage when wielded with two hands.

GLASS GENASI

The glass genasi take the raging of fire and the stoicism of earth and find balance in between. The world may send its worst at them, but the worst reflects off of them like light off of a mirror. They can take the worst and turn it into the best.

GLASS GENASI

Medium humanoid (genasi), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Primordial

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The genasi's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 12). It can cast the following spells innately.

1/day: *mirror image*

Actions

Multiattack. The genasi makes two attacks with its light hammers.

Light Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Reflective Skin. When genasi is hit by magic missile or a spell of 3rd level or lower that requires a ranged attack roll, it rolls a d6. On a roll of 4-5, it is unaffected. On a roll of 6, it is unaffected and it can reflect the spell back at the caster as though it originated from the genasi (Constitution, +4 to hit with spell attacks).

GLASS SHATTERER

A community of ascetic monks study the strange properties of glass that forms in the Hourglass Desert. Experiencing these dazzling arrays of colours, lights, and images send them into a relaxed, meditative state where their bodies and minds become clear, but when their order is threatened, that relaxed state shatters and their fists become bloody with shards of glass.

GLASS SHATTERER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 36 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The glass shatterer's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12). It can cast the following spells innately.

3/day: *mirror image*

Shatterstrike. When the glass shatterer is at 35 hit points or fewer, its unarmed strikes deal an additional 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the glass shatterer is at 18 hit points or fewer, its unarmed strikes deal an additional 7 (2d6) slashing damage.

Unarmored Defense. While the glass shatterer isn't wearing armor, its armor class includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The glass shatterer makes three unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions

Refraction. When the glass shatterer takes fire, force, lightning, or radiant damage, it can reduce the damage taken by half.

NOMAD

It takes a hearty soul to make a life of travelling through the desert. Using special techniques passed down by word of mouth from traveller to traveller, nomads in the desert can turn ordinary padding into protection as good as a suit of armor. And when they are hurt, they are not hurt for long.

NOMAD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (padded armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Medicine +4, Perception +4, Survival +4

Saves Str +5, Dex +5, Con +4

Damage Resistances cold, fire, and poison from nonmagical sources

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Action Surge (1/Day). The nomad takes one additional action on its turn.

Padded Armor Expert. While the nomad wears padded armor, its AC is 16 plus its Constitution modifier. Any critical hit on the nomad while it wears padded armor becomes a normal hit.

Actions

Multiattack. The nomad makes two attacks.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

PELANDRIAN ELVES

Most elves of Pelandria are more concerned with long-term scholarly works than on defending their homeland. They have wizards for that. A few, however, have trained for hundreds of years to master the elite art of elven combat. During the draining season, the elves are desperate and quick on their feet. During the raining season, they just want everyone to slow down a bit.

ELITE DRAINING
PELANDRIAN

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical sources
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Dust Step (1/Day). As a bonus action, the pelandrian can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Fey Ancestry. The pelandrian has advantage on saves against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The pelandrian's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *guidance*
3/day each: *longstrider*
1/day each: *haste*, *time turner*

Actions

Multiattack. The pelandrian makes two weapon attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage or 13 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

ELITE RAINING
PELANDRIAN

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical sources
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Dust Step (1/Day). As a bonus action, the pelandrian can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Fey Ancestry. The pelandrian has advantage on saves against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The pelandrian's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bonfire*, *calm emotions*, *control flames*
3/day each: *animal friendship*, *charm person*, *earthbind*, *dispel magic*
1/day each: *alarm*, *commune with nature*

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) slashing damage or 5 (1d10) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 18 (4d8) psychic damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) psychic damage.

Sand Charmer (Recharges After a Long Rest). The pelandrian takes control of the sand in a 10 foot radius around itself for 1 minute or until the pelandrian uses a bonus action to end the effects. While this ability is active, the pelandrian's movement speed is 0 ft. and it automatically succeeds on saving throws to resist being moved. Additionally, creatures that start their turn within 10 ft. of the pelandrian must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage and become restrained by molded sand until this ability ends. On subsequent turns, a target can remake the save as an action, ending the restrained condition on a success.

REBIRTH KNIGHT

Armed with the knowledge and power of countless ancestors, rebirth knights have taken an oath to unlock the true potential of their lineage and demonstrate to the world their full potential. Commonly found within the ranks of dune orc armies, these knights pop up all throughout the Hourglass Desert when people give in to blind worship of the Great Hourglass and the promise of everlasting rejuvenation through resurrection.

REBIRTH KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saves Str +7, Dex +3, Con +6, Int +4, Wis +4, Cha +6

Skills History +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +9

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages any one language

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Ancestral Knowledge. The knight adds its Charisma modifier to its ability checks.

Aura of the True Self. The knight and allied creatures within 30 feet of its position have immunity to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed or frightened.

Return Refreshed (1/Day). The knight chooses an ally within 30 feet of its position that has 0 hit points. The target regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Sacred Weapons. The knight's weapon attacks are magical. When the knight hits with its scimitar, the weapon deals an additional 9 (2d8) radiant damage (included in the attack).

Spellcasting. The knight is a 9th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). It has the following paladin spells prepared.

1st level (4 slots): *bless, comprehend languages, divine favor, identify, wrathful smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, augury, lesser restoration, protection from poison*

3rd level (2 slots): *revivify, speak with dead, tongues*

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

SAND SHAMAN

A sand shaman does not fit into the typical delineations of class and background. A sand shaman could be a cleric, a druid, a sorcerer, a wizard, etc. The only thing one needs to call oneself a sand shaman is to have a few signature sand-focused spells. Typically, however, sand shamans worship the Great Hourglass above all else. Sand shamans are often found in the armies of the dune orcs as their primary spellcasters.

SAND SHAMAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (hide armor)
Hit Points 54 (12d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Arcana +3, Nature +3, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages any two languages
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The sand shaman is a 6th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). It has the following druid spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *gust, infestation, minor illusion, mold earth*
1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements, create or destroy water, earth tremor, expeditious retreat, longstrider, purify food and drink*
2nd level (3 slots): *Agnazzar's scorcher, dust devil, earthbind, gust of wind, mirror image, pass without trace, skywrite*
3rd level (3 slots): *erupting earth, meld into stone, protection from energy, wall of sand, wind wall*

Actions

Sickle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Non-Player Characters

Throughout the campaign, many NPCs use a standard statblock (for example, **commoner**) as noted when they are first introduced. Some NPCs, however, have traits or abilities that make them significantly different from other members of their race. These NPCs are included here in order of introduction.

Yaukiss

Having become disillusioned as to the legitimacy of the rule of his Lich Queen, the knight Yaukiss deserted his crew and set off alone in a rickety old skiff in search of his long-lost red dragon mount, the only friend he could remember in his entire sad life. He fully expects his dragon to be dead, and he knows that he will never be able to return home, but he knows that this is the one thing he is going to do for himself, or so help him he will not have lived a life.

Yaukiss

Medium humanoid (gith), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Deception +5, Glassblower's Tools +6, History +6, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Gith

Challenge Rating 8 (3,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Yaukiss' innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: *mage hand* (the hand is invisible), *mending*
3/day each: *misty step*, *telekinesis*, *tongues*
1/day each: *creation* (glass only; 1 hour), *dimension door*, *fly*

Actions

Multiattack. Yaukiss makes two attacks with his silver greatsword.

Silver Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage. This is a magic weapon attack.

Silver Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. This is a magic weapon attack.

PERSONALITY

"If you want to go far, set out with friends. But if you want to go fast, set out alone."

IDEAL

"A githyanki knight is a mindset as much as it is one's abilities. As a knight, I strike only when it is pertinent to strike, and I carry myself with dignity in the face of persecution. No mind flayer could enslave a knight."

BOND

"I was once bonded to a young red dragon, the most powerful and vicious of his brood, a force of nature that could not be stopped, and I was his rider and friend. I am incomplete without him."

FLAW

"My selfishness and self-pity alienate me from those who should be my allies."

SPITE

Having spent his whole life convinced of the irredeemably evil ways of the githyanki and other creatures that would oppose the pure nature of goodness in the multiverse, Spite is affronted by Yaukiss' refusal to fight and seemingly neutral reasons for coming to the desert. He finds it difficult to believe that a githyanki could ever act outside of the will of its Lich Queen, but over time, he starts to get worn down. Perhaps fanatically throwing oneself against one's enemies is exactly what makes the githyanki so evil in the first place.

SPITE

Medium humanoid (aarakocra), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +5, Survival +5
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Aarakocra, Common, Primordial
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fire Aura. As a bonus action on his turn, Spite can radiate an aura of fire. Each creature within 10 feet of his position takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Heatseeker. Spite has advantage on ability checks to locate and track creatures that aren't undead or constructs.

Actions

Multiattack. Spite makes two attacks with his talons.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage.

PERSONALITY

"I think of myself as a bonfire. Treat me with respect and you will receive warmth and good cheer in times of stress. Treat me without respect, and I will burn down everything you love."

IDEAL

"My people are guardians of all that is good in the multiverse. I seek out and destroy evil wherever I find it before it can do damage."

BOND

"My tribe was sent to the Hourglass Desert to locate the githyanki warship and destroy it. I take my duty with absolute seriousness."

FLAW

"I don't really care about people who get in the way of destroying evil. My fire burns everyone, not just those who deserve it. Also, I'm terribly claustrophobic."

DAILAH

It is the way of the duskribe to be transient. A duskribe that stays in one place is a duskribe that is dead. And yet, Dailah has refused to form another bond as strong as her bond with that trident so long ago. She flits meaninglessly from interest to interest, justifying her lack of wandering emotionally with the act of wandering physically instead. But Dailah lingers ... or at least she lingers until she sees in Yaukiss and his dragon the dangers of obsessing over past relationships for far too long. Perhaps it is time for a change.

DAILAH

Medium humanoid (duskribe), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (padded armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Damage Resistances cold
Skills Persuasion +5, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dusk, Primordial
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Luminous Skin (1/Day). As a bonus action, Dailah can activate her luminous skin for ten minutes. While active, she has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, imposes disadvantage on ranged attack rolls made against her, and emits bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light in a 10 foot radius beyond that.

Triton Magic. Dailah's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She can cast the following spells innately, requiring no material components.

At will: *shape water*
1/day: *fog cloud, gust of wind*

Actions

Triton Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

PERSONALITY

"I'm incredibly flirtatious, but it's all just a bit of fun. Serious relationships are for losers."

IDEAL

"Like all duskribe, I resent staying put in one place for long. The nature of our people is to wander. Isn't it?"

BOND

"My one exception to my rule against long-term relationships was a triton prince whose heart (and knife) I stole long ago."

FLAW

"I come off a bit strong and often make people uncomfortable."

MONSTROUS

COMMON MONSTERS

Monsters marked with (MM) can be found in the Monster Manual. Monsters marked with (VGM) can be found in Volo's Guide to Monsters. Monsters marked with (MTF) can be found in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes.

- **Air Elemental** (MM)
- **Allosaurus** (MM)
- **Ankheg** (MM)
- **Ankylosaurus** (MM)
- **Axe Beak** (MM)
- **Banshee** (MM)
- **Brontosaurus** (VGM)
- **Camel** (MM)
- **Cat** (MM)
- **Cow** (VGM)
- **Deinonychus** (VGM)
- **Dimetrodon** (VGM)
- **Dust Mephit** (MM)
- **Dybbuk** (MTF)
- **Earth Elemental** (MM)
- **Fire Elemental** (MM)
- **Gargoyle** (MM)
- **Ghost** (MM)
- **Giant Fire Beetle** (MM)
- **Giant Hyena** (MM)
- **Giant Lizard** (MM)
- **Giant Poisonous Snake** (MM)
- **Giant Scorpion** (MM)
- **Giant Spider** (MM)
- **Giant Vulture** (MM)
- **Giant Wolf Spider** (MM)
- **Hadrosaurus** (VGM)
- **Harpy** (MM)
- **Hyena** (MM)
- **Kruthik, Adult** (MTF)
- **Kruthik Hive Lord** (MTF)
- **Kruthik, Young** (MTF)
- **Medusa** (MM)
- **Mummy** (MM)
- **Mummy Lord** (MM)
- **Poisonous Snake** (MM)
- **Pteranodon** (MM)
- **Purple Worm** (MM)
- **Quetzalcoatlus** (VGM)
- **Retriever** (MTF)
- **Scorpion** (MM)
- **Skeleton** (MM)
- **Stegosaurus** (VGM)
- **Swarm of Insects** (MM)
- **Tlincalli** (VGM)
- **Triceratops** (MM)
- **Tyrannosaurus Rex** (MM)
- **Velociraptor** (VGM)
- **Vulture** (MM)
- **Xorn** (MM)
- **Zombie** (MM)

MONSTER MANUAL ONLY

If you only possess the Monster Manual and don't want to purchase the other two official monster resources, you can replace monsters from VGM and MTF with alternatives from the MM and this document.

Monster	Suggested Alternative
Brontosaurus (VGM)	Triceratops (MM)
Cow (VGM)	Camel (MM)
Deinonychus (VGM)	Giant Hyena (MM)
Dimetrodon (VGM)	Giant Lizard (MM)
Dybbuk (MTF)	Ghost (MM)
Hadrosaurus (VGM)	Drudon (HD)
Kruthik, Adult (MTF)	Ankheg (MM)
Kruthik Hive Lord (MTF)	Ankheg (MM)
Kruthik, Young (MTF)	Ankheg (MM)
Quetzalcoatlus (VGM)	Giant Vulture (MM)
Retriever (MTF)	Giant Spider (MM)
Stegosaurus (VGM)	Ankylosaurus (MM)
Stone Cursed (MTF)	Zombie (MM)
Tlincalli (VGM)	Giant Scorpion (MM)
Velociraptor (VGM)	Cainuraptor (HD)

DRUID WILD SHAPE OPTIONS

Druids can use this list for their wildshapes.

Beast	CR	Speed Type
Cat (MM)	0	
Dire Giraffe Baby (HD)	0	Fly
Giant Fire Beetle (MM)	0	
Hyena (MM)	0	
Scorpion (MM)	0	
Vulture (MM)	0	Fly
Camel (MM)	1/8	
Poisonous Snake (MM)	1/8	Swim
Axe Beak (MM)	1/4	
Cainuraptor (HD)	1/4	
Cow (VGM)	1/4	
Dimetrodon (VGM)	1/4	
Dirt Mantis (HD)	1/4	
Giant Lizard (MM)	1/4	
Giant Poisonous Snake (MM)	1/4	Swim
Hadrosaurus (VGM)	1/4	
Pteranodon (VGM)	1/4	Fly
Velociraptor (VGM)	1/4	
Drudon (HD)	1/2	
Giant Wolf Spider (MM)	1/2	
Deinonychus (VGM)	1	
Giant Hyena (MM)	1	
Giant Spider (MM)	1	
Dire Giraffe (HD)	2	Fly
Giant Vulture (MM)	2	Fly
Allosaurus (MM)	2	
Quetzalcoatlus (VGM)	2	Fly
Ankylosaurus (MM)	3	
Giant Scorpion (MM)	3	
Stegosaurus (VGM)	4	
Brontosaurus (VGM)	5	
Triceratops (MM)	5	
Argentimir (HD)	6	Fly

ANKHEG QUEEN

Ankhegs build great hives underneath the earth, where their queen, a fat, disgusting, slimy, acid-filled monster, gives birth to their young and designs the look of their hives. The queen systematically kills any other female ankhegs born and keeps at least four ankheg husbands, also spawned from her eggs, protecting her at all times.

Other ankhegs within the ankheg queen's lair drag their victims closer to their queen so that she can feast on them instead. She is completely immobile. Without her children, she would quickly starve to death, and her hive would become her tomb.

ANKHEG QUEEN

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 162 (12d20 + 36)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	3 (-4)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages --

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Braying Screech (1/Day). As a bonus action, the ankheg queen calls to her children to protect her. 1d4+1 ankhegs burrow up from the ground into empty spaces within 60 feet of her.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit* 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the ankheg queen can bite only the grappled creature and has advantage on attack rolls to do so.

Acid Spew (Recharge 5-6). The ankheg queen spews acid from every orifice, targeting every non-ankheg within 30 feet of her. Each target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

The ankheg queen can take 1 legendary action, 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. The ankheg queen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Locate. The ankheg queen slams the ground, sending vibrations that alert her to the exact locations of every creature within 120 feet of her.

Direct. The ankheg queen instructs an ankheg within 60 feet of her to attack a target within its reach, using its reaction to do so.

ARGENTIMIR

Terrors of the skies, argentimirs superficially resemble giant vultures. An argentimir can live for hundreds of years, and it is said that they cannot die, although these claims are exaggerated greatly. They have a wingspan that can cast shadows over entire dunes. They hunt by overwhelming their prey with their sheer size, wrapping their wings around them like a cocoon while they bite and claw and scratch and peck. The amount of food they must eat to maintain their size is astounding, and though they prefer to scrounge scraps of meat from dead animals, sometimes it's necessary to create those dead animals themselves.

ARGENTIMIR

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d12 + 16)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages --

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The argentimir has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Overwhelming Force (1/Turn). When the argentimir starts its turn within 5 feet of a creature that is Large or smaller, it can force that creature to make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. The creature falls prone on a failed save.

Actions

Multiattack. The argentimir makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its bite. It can also use its wings if available.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Wings (Recharge 5-6). The argentimir flaps its wings with incredible force. Each Large or smaller creature in a 15-foot cube originating from the argentimir must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and falls prone. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

CAINURAPTOR

Cainuraptors are nasty knee-high creatures that hunt in packs, spreading out across the wastes to as persistence hunters that last longer and exhaust their foes over several days. Their bites channel heat from their sails to their fangs. Dune divers have learned to identify cainuraptors at a distance by the bright red colour of the massive sails on their back.

CAINURAPTOR

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saves Con +3
Damage Resistances cold, fire
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages --
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Pack Tactics. The cainuraptor has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the cainuraptor's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) fire damage.

DIRE GIRAFFE

Ordinary giraffes grew longer and longer necks to reach up into the great baobab trees. Dire giraffes grew wings instead. Their tongues have grown long enough to wrap around branches of trees while the giraffe does its best to hover in place, flapping wildly with wings that are still just a little bit too small for its size. Their stubby little necks bob awkwardly while they fly.

Their young are even weirder, as the tongue and wings grow faster than the rest of their body and give them a misshapen, ungodly appearance.

DIRE GIRAFFE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dire giraffe attacks twice with its hooves.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one Medium or smaller target. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 14), and also pretty grossed out.

DIRE GIRAFFE BABY

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 15 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages --

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Actions

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 15 ft., one Medium or smaller target. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 11), and also extremely grossed out.

DIRT MANTIS

Dirt mantises are a constant annoyance for pelandrian elves. They constantly get into things they're not supposed to and they are known to occasionally pretend to be a rock for days before finally striking at an inopportune moment. Pests.

DIRT MANTIS

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 35 ft., fly 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the dirt mantis remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a rock.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

DRUDON

Drudons are herbivorous creatures about five feet tall that live in matriarchal herds. The males live for about twenty years and spend most of their time on the outskirts of the herd, using the bright orange markings over their bronchial tubes to attract mates and ward off other males. The females live for about forty years and conform to a rigid social structure based on the development of their children.

DRUDON

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	4 (-3)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages --
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Herd Mentality. When the drudon hears the bellow of another drudon within 30 feet of its position, it gains 10 (3d6) temporary hit points.

Strong Lungs. The drudon can hold its breath for two hours, and its bellows can be heard up to ten miles away across flat land.

Actions

Multiattack. The drudon attacks twice with its hooves.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Bellow (Recharge 4-6). The drudon lets out a thunderous bellow. All creatures within 15 ft. of the drudon must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) thunder damage on a failed save, or half damage on a success.

HEXENHOUND

Hexenhounds generally keep to themselves, relying on their keen senses to track prey rather than their eyes, which have been burned away by their masters and replaced with a shifting mass of tentacles and tendrils that constantly explore out in front of their faces. They are an enormous headache for farmers, as their stings are deadly and they are notoriously difficult to capture, constantly darting in and out of battle in a flash and barely giving their victim time to react.

The origins of hexenhounds is hotly debated. As the only fiendish creatures in the Hourglass Desert, it's suspected that a genie brought them over after a deal gone wrong with a devil. Others think that there is a secret portal to the Abyss that the hexenhounds climbed their way out of. Still others think that a mad wizard created them and they are as native to the desert as the duskrise.

HEXENHOUND

Large fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (17d10 + 34)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +7
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 180 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 17
Languages understands Primordial but can't speak
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Forsaken Tendrils. The hexenhound's tendrils count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunities.

Hexen Curse (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The hexenhound can innately cast *Bestow Curse* as a third level spell, requiring no material components. After casting this spell, it can make two claw attacks.

Hit and Run. When the hexenhound hits an enemy with a claw attack, it can use its bonus action to Dash or Disengage.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The hexenhound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The hexenhound makes four attacks: two with its claws, one with its tendrils, and one with its sting.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Tendrils. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The affected creature may repeat its save against poison at the end of each of its turns.

MUMMY CAT

A person of note buried in the traditional rites that form a mummy after death may also elect to have their servants and pets buried with them. Servants may also become mummies, and a pet cat may become a mummy cat, with all the curiosity and fearlessness of a living cat, but with all its lives already used up.

MUMMY CAT

Tiny undead, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 20 (8d4)

Speed 25 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Flesh Hunger. The mummy cat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect or track living creatures that aren't undead or constructs.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage, and if the target is a creature, it can't regain hit points until the end of its next turn.

Dreadful Glare. The mummy cat targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy cat, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy cat's next turn. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the dreadful glare of all mummy cats for the next 24 hours.

SCAVENGER BEAST

Desert dwelling societies take great care to properly dispose of the dead, lest a scavenger beast catch wind and descend upon their camps. Docile unless attacked, they suffer no anxieties about other dwellers of the sands due to their sharp, venomous spines lining their entire body and their four terrible arms whose muscles are supernaturally reactive to danger. Most feared of all is their bite, which has been known to reduce grown men to skeletons in an instant.

This monster is too powerful for an 8th level party to fight. In order to avoid combat with the scavenger beast, the party must distract it with available corpses to devour while they get away as fast as humanly possible.

SCAVENGER BEAST

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 283 (27d12 + 108)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	19 (+4)	8 (-1)

Skills. Perception +10, Survival +10
Damage Resistances poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons
Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages --
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Devourer of Bones. The scavenger beast can innately sense the direction of corpses and undead up to one mile away. It can use a bonus action to eat a corpse up to 5 ft. away, regaining 31 (7d6) hit points.

Lacerate. The scavenger beast can use its bonus action to make a bite attack against a creature it is grappling.

Razor Spines. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 ft. of the scavenger beast, touches it, or hits it with a melee attack takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Reactive. The scavenger beast can take up to three reactions each round.

Actions

Multiattack. The scavenger beast makes four claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) slashing damage. If two claw attacks hit the same creature in a turn, that creature is grappled by the scavenger beast.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by this attack, it dies.

SEPUKET

Sepukets, known colloquially as death-eaters, often compete with scavenger beasts for food, travelling without rest for many days and nights to reach the next food source before any other creature can find it. They are nomadic in nature and widely feared by local residents, although their horrifying appearance – a quadripedal skeleton with raptor's legs, feathers, sharp teeth that extend back to its ears, and beady little red eyes – masks a surprising intelligence. Their appearance is cobbled together from the bones of creatures they have eaten. If they feel inclined, they can communicate using telepathy. They usually do not feel inclined. They prefer to eat corpses than to create them and are content with letting nature take its course.

Some sepukets have the following innate spellcasting trait. These sepukets have a CR of 4 (1,100 XP).

Innate Spellcasting. The sepuket's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12). It can cast the following spells innately, requiring no components.

At will: *chill touch*, *detect poison and disease*
3/day: *animate dead*, *telekinesis*
1/day: *bestow curse*, *blight*, *circle of death*

SEPUKET

Large undead, neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 52 (8d10 + 8)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages telepathy 60 ft., understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Devourer of Bones. The sepuket can innately sense the direction of corpses and undead up to one mile away. It can use a bonus action to dissolve a corpse up to 5 feet away from it, regaining 7 (2d6) hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The sepuket makes two attacks with its talons.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

CAMPAIGN BOSS MONSTERS

The campaign includes a few recurring powerful foes whose encounters serve as the closest thing the campaign has to 'boss fights'. These represent existential threats, forces of nature that can only be stopped in specific circumstances using secret knowledge.

PILLAR OF SAND

The white sand dances as it rains from the sky, and the pelandrian claim that the beautiful swirls and twists and loops are evidence that there is intelligence, intention, and meaning within the sand. A quirky little elven myth, some would say. If only it were that.

Unbound When the pillar of sand is defeated, the remnant personality that has created it remains, and another pillar of sand may form the next season, just as angry and just as lost.

Elemental Soul of Air. The pillar of sand is the last remnants of the soul of a djinni. On the material plane, the djinni fell in love with a married woman, a wizard who entrapped him within a tea kettle after a mishap in summoning his services. The djinni quickly became jealous of her husband and family. Blinded by lovesickness, he reshaped her young children into air genasi. When she discovered his magic had seeped into her family, she tried to conduct a ritual to banish him, but again, she suffered a mishap and her children were banished instead. The djinni offered her one last wish: he would scour the planes for them and return them to her. Reluctantly, she accepted.

Hopelessly Lost. The djinni went insane searching for the children, for every time they seemed within his reach, they would waft away like dust in the wind. He eventually believed himself to have cornered them in the Hourglass Desert, but by the time he arrived, they were gone. For one thousand years he searched until his body and personality wasted away.

Ever Seeking, Ever Storming. The pillar of sand is the only remnant of the djinni, an insane whirlwind of desperation that pushes and pulls its victims in the search for the long-dead children of the woman who never requited his love.

GETHRAX THE ETERNAL LOST

Locked away in the basin of the Sunrise Realm, Gethrax has plotted for a millennium his claim for power over the Hourglass Desert. He has amassed a small army of **zombies**, **ghosts**, and **banshees** from the bodies of the githyanki raiders he once flew alongside.

Gethrax uses the statistics of an **ancient red dragon**. In addition, he has the following trait.

Innate Spellcasting. Gethrax's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components.

At will: *animate dead*
1/day: *create undead*, *dream*

PILLAR OF SAND

Huge elemental, neutral

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical sources

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Primordial but can't speak
Challenge 12 (8,400)

Sand Wielder. When the pillar of sand is within 30 feet of a source of sand, it can use its bonus action to destroy a 5 foot square area of sand. If it does so, the reach of its swirling sands increases to 60 feet and the range of its whirlwind increases to 120 feet until the end of its turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The pillar of sand makes two attacks with its Swirling Sands. If both attacks hit a Large or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 19), and the pillar of sand uses its Engulf on it.

Swirling Sands. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) slashing damage, and the target is pulled into a space within 5 feet of the pillar of sand.

Engulf. The pillar of sand engulfs a Large or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the pillar of sand's turns or take 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the pillar of sand moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The pillar of sand can have up to 4 Medium or smaller creatures engulfed at the same time, or 1 Large creature.

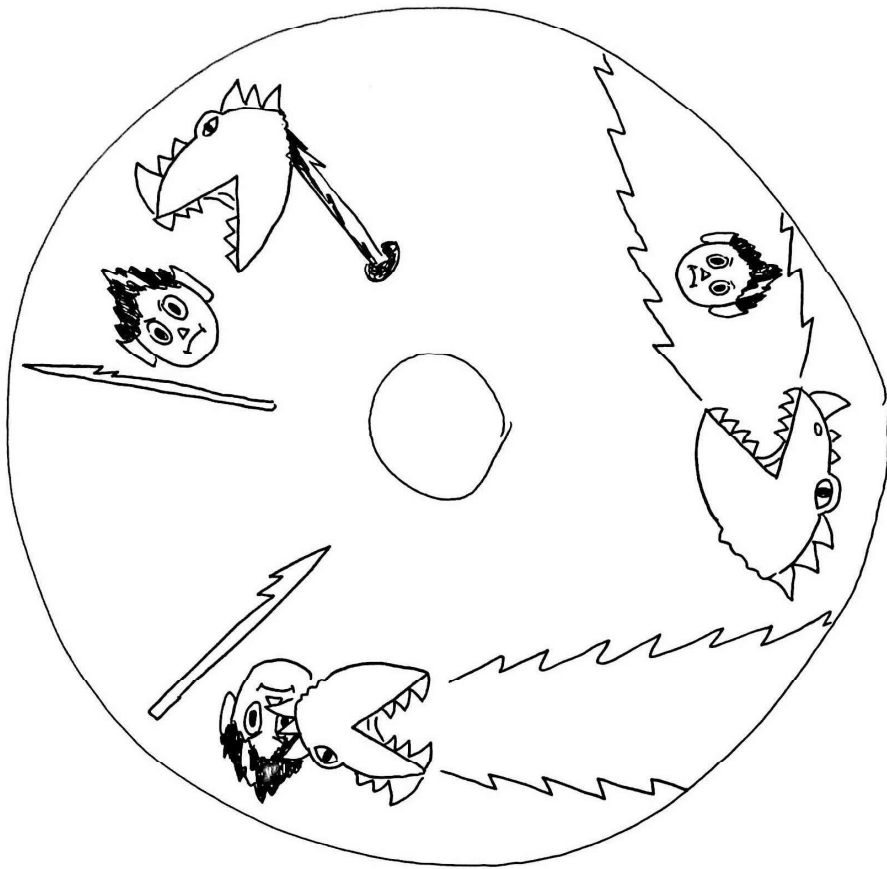
Whirlwind (Recharge 5-6). Creatures within 60 feet of the pillar of sand must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature falls prone and takes 44 (8d10) slashing damage. On a successful save, a target takes half damage and isn't knocked prone. Instead of knocking a creature prone, the pillar of sand can instead choose to push or pull the creature up to 60 feet closer or further away.

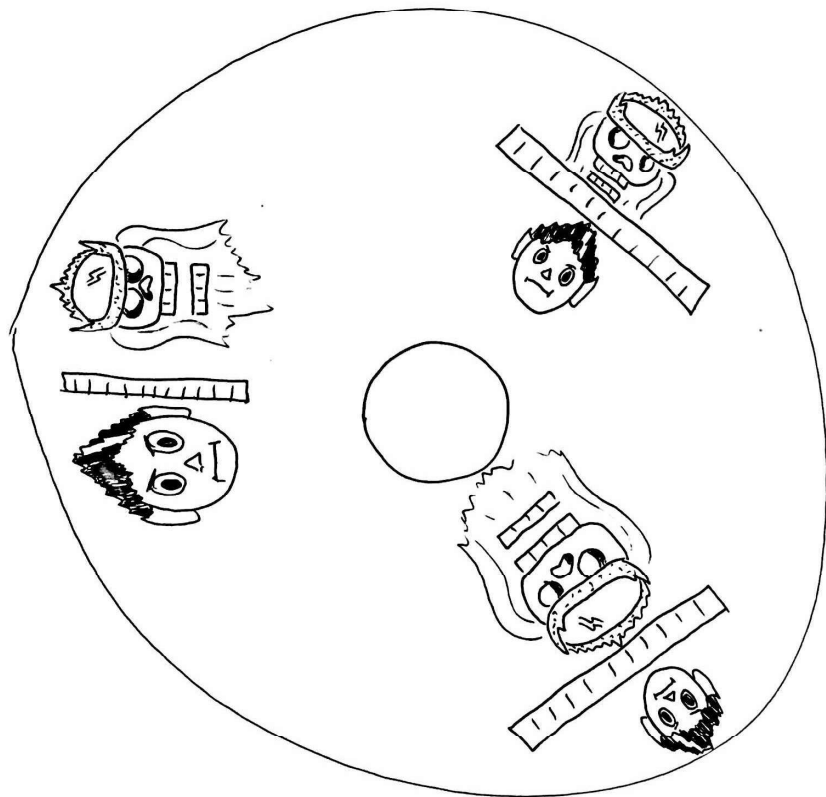
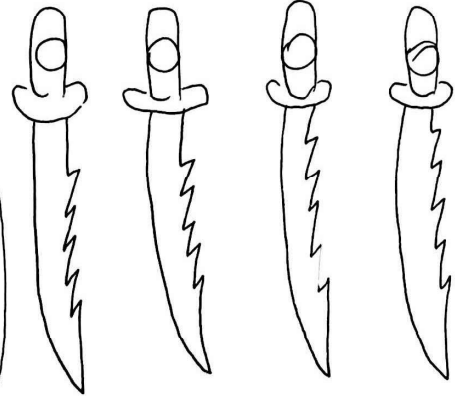
MONSTER INDEX

Monster	Source	Encounter
Aarakocra	MM12	62
Air Elemental	MM124	23, 31
Allosaurus	MM79	79
Ankheg	MM21	39
Ankheg Queen	HD85	39
Ankylosaurus	MM79	29
Arch Mage	MM342	58
Argentimir	HD86	42
Axe Beak	MM317	32, 69, 79
Bandit	MM343	36, 52, 65
Bandit Captain	MM344	36, 52
Banshee	MM23	87
Berserker	MM344	32, 49
Brontosaurus	VGM139	94
Cainuraptor	HD87	15, 24, 56
Camel	MM320	18, 24, 32, 47, 69
Cat	MM320	88
Champion	VGM212	38
Commoner	MM344	4, 8, 11, 16, 28, 32, 36, 37, 45, 57, 67, 80, 90, 97
Cow	VGM207	67, 69
Dailah	HD82	
Deinonychus	VGM139	45, 85
Dimetrodon	VGM139	58
Dire Giraffe	HD88	24, 63, 98
Dire Giraffe Baby	HD88	63
Dirt Mantis	HD89	28, 86
Diviner	VGM213	75
Drudon	HD90	24, 26, 56, 71
Druid	MM346	29, 97
Dune Diver	HD70	2, 18, 28, 38, 58, 94
Dune Orc	HD71	6, 9, 10, 11, 25, 26, 30, 49, 52, 65
Dune Orc Torchwood	HD71	49, 65
Dune Orc Scout	HD72	10, 11
Dune Orc Warchief	HD72	11, 26

Monster	Source	Encounter
Duskriese	HD73	58, 83, 95
Dust Mephit	MM215	12, 13, 61, 90
Dybbuk	MTF132	3, 78
Earth Elemental	MM124	23, 27, 89
Fire Elemental	MM125	23, 93
Gargoyle	MM140	50, 77, 85
Gethrax	HD95, MM 97	
Ghost	MM147	87
Giant Fire Beetle	MM325	32
Giant Hyena	MM326	11, 24, 32, 82
Giant Lizard	MM326	32
Giant Poisonous Snake	MM327	70
Giant Scorpion	MM327	4
Giant Spider	MM328	97
Giant Vulture	MM329	21, 24
Giant Wolf Spider	MM330	64, 79
Glass Genasi	HD74	32, 34, 40, 84
Glass Shatterer	HD75	84
Guard	MM347	37, 52
Hadrosaurus	VGM140	33
Harpy	MM181	30, 61
Hexenhound	HD91	55
Hyena	MM331	82
Illusionist	VGM214	18, 74
Kruthik, Adult	MTF212	76
Kruthik, Hive Lord	MTF212	76
Kruthik, Young	MTF211	76
Mage	MM347	28, 37
Master Thief	VGM216	7
Medusa	MM214	38
Mummy	MM228	1, 3, 17
Mummy Cat	HD92	5
Mummy Lord	MM229	59
Nomad	HD76	18, 25, 41, 62
Pelandrian, Elite Draining	HD77	97
Pelandrian, Elite Raining	HD77	97
Pillar of Sand	HD95	
Poisonous Snake	MM334	70
Priest	MM348	47, 58

Monster	Source	Encounter
Pteranodon	MM80	42
Purple Worm	MM255	26
Quetzalcoatlus	VGM140	62
Rebirth Knight	HD78	
Retriever	MTF222	15, 81
Sand Shaman	HD79	4, 22, 31, 48, 52
Scavenger Beast	HD93	72
Scorpion	MM337	4, 60, 92
Scout	MM349	22, 38, 49, 80
Sepuket	HD94	1, 69
Skeleton	MM272	1
Spite	HD81	
Spy	MM349	58
Stegosaurus	VGM140	93
Swarm of Insects	MM338	12, 54, 92
Swashbuckler	VGM217	38
Thug	MM350	37
Tlincalli	VGM193	92
Triceratops	MM80	32
Tyrannosaurus Rex	MM80	88
Velociraptor	VGM140	73
Veteran	MM350	38, 58
Vulture	MM339	21, 24, 32, 79
Xorn	MM304	66
Yaukiss	HD80	
Zombie	MM316	87







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