

HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

• REALM GUIDE #4 •

THE GREAT SOUTHERN DESERT

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Introduction

The area encompassing the Great Southern Desert may be but a fraction of the continent, but it remains a vast, largely unexplored realm. While the ruins common in the Great Northern Desert are scarce, there are still many places where men have not trodden in centuries, and many dangers awaiting the unwary traveler. This supplement expands on material found in *Hellfrost: Land of Fire*.

ORIGIN OF THE SAND GOBLINS

Sand goblins are a ubiquitous race, found in cities, towns, and nomad camps across Al-Shirkuh. While citizens are quick to place a hand on their coin pouches and shoo the filthy creatures out of their sight, few, if any have ever given much thought to the ill-kempt, bizarre-looking, universally mistrusted race's origins.

A few scholars, sages, and savants from the other civilized races (Devoted and Faithful alike) have given the matter more than passing thought, though there is no consensus of opinion among them. Unlike some topics, differences over the origins of sand goblins have never led scholars to engage in wars of words (or fists).

The most common theory claims sand goblins were once a race of men who dwelt in a now forgotten city somewhere in Al-Shirkuh. The majority who support this belief agree that the race fell from grace, suffering a terrible curse for their transgressions. Faithful claim the punishment was meted out by the gods, while Devoted hold that the race's hubris led them astray from the light of the Creator and into bestial ways. A small few propose that the race's fall was self-inflicted, the result of a magical attempt to make their form more ideally suited to desert life going badly wrong.

Another theory says the race was created by the jinn shortly after the invasion. Human slaves were merged with camels in an effort to create a slave race who could cope with the worst the desert could throw at them and carry heavy loads. Unfortunately, their plans went awry, for their creations proved too short and too lazy to be of use as manual laborers or expendable troops. Failing to think ahead, the jinn cast aside their race, leaving them to their own devices. As all creatures are wont to do, they multiplied.

Bedu legends, which predate those of the Hadaree, cast very little light on the matter. Some tribes' storytellers do speak of a short race of "desert men," yet other tribes make no such references. The ruins of Hekata are equally silent on the subject. This is perhaps not surprising, given that most remaining monuments are dedicated solely to death and the power of the might pharaohs who ruled over the land.

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RULES OF THE REALM

These rules apply in the Great Southern Desert.

* **Equipment and the Bedu:** The Bedu rarely produce metal armor, weapons, or goods, though they regularly trade for them. The price for metal items in the Great Southern Desert, when they can be found, is increased four fold. When trying to sell the spoils of their adventures to nomadic bands, the heroes' roll to find a buyer suffers a -2 penalty unless the heroes happen across an oasis, in which case the penalty is negated.

* **Trading with the Bedu:** Although the Bedu settled around the oases use coins, their true nomadic cousins rarely bother, preferring to trade goods. Heroes looking to sell war booty or buy equipment from nomadic wandered will need to accept or offer trade goods if they hope to strike any kind of deal. The GM should not demand the heroes keep a detailed list of their exact trade goods. A hero who spends 100 dinars on trade goods need only record "trade goods: 100 dinars" on his character sheet, leaving the exact nature of the goods flexible. He may then spend the trade goods as if it were coin in the Great Southern Desert. For convenience, every 5 dinars of trade goods weighs 2 pounds.

In coffee houses and caravanserais across the land, the most common story put forward by Hadaree citizens is that Bedu are friendlier with their camels than they would like others to believe. Such comments never fail to raise a smile or quiet laugh, no matter how many times they are heard. For their part, most sand goblins have never given much thought to the past—nothing is to be gained by looking backward when daily survival is a constant struggle. Few goblins even bother to look beyond their next meal.

That sand goblins are lazy now does not preclude them once being an industrious race. That they honor the major gods does not mean they once had their own pantheon and raised temples in their honor. That they are, by nature, thieves and rogues does not mean they once lacked honor. The origins of sand goblins shall perhaps never be known, and thus the mystery continues to perplex generation after generation.

Religion

While the great gods who govern desert life—Duamutef, Apsu, Ashtart, Shamash, and Upuaut—are as duly honored in the Great Southern Desert as they are elsewhere in Al-Shirkuh, Marqod has a large following here.

Although there are two sites sacred to the goddess of healing, these have no direct bearing on her popularity. Perhaps her popularity is because the desert is so arid, a

burning waste with only a single water source at its core and scant few on its periphery.

With Apsu unwilling to send rain, Shamash caring little for who dies under his gaze, and Duamutef favoring only those strong enough to survive the harsh environment, it falls to Marqod to answer the prayers of whose throats burn and whose tongues are swollen from thirst, whose stomachs are distended from hunger, whose skin is burned and blistered from the relentless sun, and whose eyes are half-blind from the constant glare.

SAND GOBLINS

As a race, sand goblins favor Tamarni above all other gods, favoring her stealth and thievery aspects. With little opportunity for employment due to their poor reputation, and a lazy streak that precludes most forms of work, thievery is their main source of income.

Apsu is favored next. Given their ability to survive quite comfortably on half the water required by other races, such worship seems oddly out of place. Many scholars argue it is a leftover from whatever culture they once possessed, a racial memory whose origin has been lost to the grubby goblins. Others believe worship of Apsu is the goblins' way of thanking the god for their very handy gift. Being able to survive longer without water means they can travel the desert without having to visit settled areas, allowing them to bypass border posts and patrol routes by walking the deep desert.

Sand goblins continue to worship Duamutef, despite most having given up their nomadic lifestyle. Such faith is a historical left-over, but ever pragmatic, sand goblins are always prepared to flee to the desert if their nefarious schemes require them to life low for a while.

Trade & Tribute

The great bulk of trade through the Great Southern Desert is limited to the extreme western flank, the border of which is delineated by the Southern Trade Road.

The sole trade route on the western side of southern Al-Shirkuh, it is a vital link between Hulwan, City of Gardens, and the core trade network. More specifically, it is a direct route to the Free Emirates, something the Sultanate lacks. With Hulwan a port city, many caravan masters departing the Emirates for the Caliphate's great markets prefer this route, it being considerably more expedient than walking the Jinn Road to Dry Water and then turning south. However, it is not without risks—there are fewer oases and caravanserais along the route, the wind roaring out of the Great Dune Sea can extend across the trade road, burying entire caravans beneath mounds of desert, and orcs are more common here than in the central Jinn Lands. Despite the many dangers, many traders consider it a safer option than braving the vast valley between the Lizard Tail Mountains and the Spires, and then crossing the waterless wastes.

Major Locales

While *Land of Fire* describes a handful of locations in the Great Southern Desert, countless others exist. This section delves into some of the other sites in and related to the arid realm.

AL RAKIM

Al Rakim, the Cave of the Seven Sleepers, is widely regarded as a myth. Depending on who one asks, it lies high in the Spires, Desert Wall Mountains, or Lizard Tail Mountains. About the only thing storytellers and sages agree on is that the cave lies in the Great Southern Desert, assuming it exists at all, that is.

The nature of the “Seven Sleepers” is likewise hotly debated. One story claims seven greater jinn entombed themselves in the mountains to escape Suleiman’s wrath, setting magical wards to protect them during their slumber and set to awaken them at a specific time. Another says the Sleepers are seven powerful Hekatic pharaohs, laid to rest in secret away from their homeland and ready to march to war when their dark master next awoke. To some the Sleepers are ancient priests who hid when the jinn came to preserve the knowledge of the old gods.

A more fanciful tale tells how Suleiman created seven magical relics (the only person ever attributed this ability), each inhabited by a powerful spirit. Old and nearing death, he had them hidden away so they could not be misused after his passing. Those who hid the relics supposedly chose to remain as their guardians, eternally vigilant until the rightful heir of Suleiman comes to collect them, undead yet not servants of Iblis.

A variant story involving relics says the magic items were very intelligent and highly evil, created by Iblis or once owned by the withered pharaohs of Hekata. Unbreakable by mortal means, they were stolen by paladins and concealed within the mountain until the end of the world, when the gods would sunder them.

Strangely, every single tale claims the cave is guarded by an enormous, ferocious dog with many supernatural abilities. Again, there are differences of opinion, with the dog said to possess one, three, five, or seven heads, and the nature of its abilities varying by storyteller. In some versions of the story Al Rakim is actually the name of the dog, not the cave. In one story, the “dog” is actually Upuaut, who is always depicted as a cakali.

THE BLACK CARAVAN

The Black Caravan has an evil reputation. Some stories say it is a camel train that was led astray by an inept guide and doomed to a slow, painful death. Centuries later and it still travels the western desert, its desiccated undead traders, guards, and camels unable to rest until they finally reach their intended destination. Others say it is a corporeal force, a caravan of Bedu slavers who cap-

ture all those who cross their path and sell them in the markets of the great cities.

Yet another tale says the Black Caravan is headed by a demon, sent by Iblis to gather sinners and haul them to the Bottomless Pit before they can repent their transgressions. Another has the caravan carrying shipments of precious gems or metals from secret mines to the coffers of the Caliph, its name deriving from the black, unmarked garb worn by the guards to conceal their allegiance.

As popular as these stories are, they are entirely false. The Black Caravan is actually a black market operation. Furthermore, it is not a single caravan, but a collective of like-minded businessmen who operate as a loose and informal society across Al-Shirkuh.

For the right fee, the traders can arrange for the shipment of any cargo across Al-Shirkuh without paying taxes or having the cargo inspected by officials. Such a service does not come cheap, but only those who really cannot afford to be caught dealing in certain goods would use the Black Caravan.

CITY WITH NO NAME

In the southern foothills of the Lizard Tail Mountains lies a city of indeterminable age. Approaching the city must be done on foot and without guides, for camels refuse to venture near the site, and the nomads are fearful of it, for many who cross its boundaries never return.

All that remains of the city are towering pillars rising half-eaten from the timeless sands. Strange hieroglyphs which defy magical translation adorn the pillars. The nomads say that all who try to decipher the strange script are struck mad. Legends say it is impossible to count all the pillars, though no reason is given as to why.

Other stories claim that although the surface was obliterated, the city extended deep below the ground. Here, undisturbed by the passage of time and the rise and fall of nations, lies a vast network of tunnels and chambers of darkness so absolute they wither the soul.

Some sages believe the pillars mark the site of Iram, one of the greatest jinn cities. Others insist the hieroglyphs are not of jinn origin. What lies beneath the pillars, they go on to say, is indeterminably older than any of the civilized races, being of the first age of creation. Others say the site is a prison for some dire servant of Iblis, a creature imprisoned on the mortal realm during the God War and so terrible that should it ever escape it would take direct intervention by the gods to recapture.

THE JINNI’S FINGERS

Roughly halfway between the jinn-infested Well of Marids and the silent, doom-laden streets of Mirah, City of Traps, ten stone columns of unequal height rise unevenly spaced from the rocky plain, their surface etched and blasted by centuries of windblown sand.

Bedu call these the Jinni’s Fingers. Their storytellers tell that Suleiman imprisoned a powerful majin beneath the ground during the War of Copper Jars, enchanting

CLERICS OF MARQOD

The Faithful chapter in *Land of Fire* details the core aspects of the greater gods, and provides a information on the clergy's duties. This entry is an expansion for the cult of Marqod, providing facts useful to both players and GMs.

Training: Clerics are healers first and foremost. Although novitiates must undergo classroom tuition, the cult believes practical experience is the best teaching method—describing a wound is not substitute for seeing it in the flesh. Once he has mastered basic techniques, the novice is expected to help out in the temple hospital. Under the instruction of their mentor they diagnose injuries, treat minor ailments, set broken bones, and dispense medicines. At a point chosen by his mentor, the cleric will be given a patient who cannot be saved from death. Although a harsh lesson, clerics must learn that death is inevitable.

A cleric's second most sacred duty is peaceful resolution. Early training involves staged arguments with black-and-white solutions. Over time, the solutions grow more complex, favoring shades of gray and compromise, for in life there is rarely a simple solution to a dispute. These are also tests of impartiality, for clerics are expected to be neutral, setting aside personal feelings in favor of the common good. One frequently used scenario involves a vile criminal beset by an angry mob intent on delivering swift justice.

Healers are a valuable asset, and novitiates are taught that their lives are more important than those they serve—an injured soldier is the loss of one man, but an injured medic may cost hundreds of lives. Instruction is given in basic fighting techniques, how to wear armor, and how to wield a shield effectively.

Prayers: Prayers focus on one of Marqod's aspects. A cleric might begin, "Let your gentle hand quell my wrath, Peaceful One..." if he is feeling aggressive, or "Grant me thy shield..." if in a dangerous situation. Blessings are typically short and to the point, with phrases like "Peace be upon you" and "May Marqod shelter you from Iblis' gaze" being common. Even rebukes have healing connotation. For example, "Stupidity is a disease without a medicine." Clerics favor optimism, for as the old saying goes, "He who has health has hope; and he who has hope, has everything."

Adventures: Wherever there is war or sickness the cult of Marqod is never far away. Clerics may be called upon to tend to the wounded on the battlefield, protect an important person or place, combat cults honoring Iblis' pestilence aspect, safeguard vital medical supplies heading to a plague-stricken settlement, or settle a dispute between rivals.

the last seal as the creature's fingers burst through the surface in a final, desperate bid for freedom. Bedu rarely come here, for they say the low moaning sound that continually blows on the wind is actually the jinni, either demanding to be released from its bondage or fruitlessly summoning Suleiman to hear it repent its many sins.

It is true the stones do resemble enormous fingers, but there is an argument this is an optical illusion caused by weathering. Some clerics of Upuaut (and a few honoring Duamutef) argue the columns were raised as marker posts. By standing outside the perimeter and extending an imaginary line between two pillars, they point the way to now lost cities. A handful of mages, especially those specializing in astrology, claim the stones are markers for an astrological calendar.

KEBIR KHAYMA MEDINA

Population: 1,319 (75% sand goblins, 10% hyaenidae, 7% Bedu, 5 Hadaree, 3% cakali)

Ruler: His Exalted Eminence Jahan (known locally as the Flatulent)

Religion: Mixed (Duamutef, Tamarni, Qedeset)

Imports: Information, trade

Exports: Information, artifacts, trade

Nestled at the far end of a wide valley in the eastern Desert Wall Mountains, two day's camel ride from the Road of the Gods, is Kebir Khayma Medina, the impressively named "Great Tent City." The name is misleading, for the "city" is nothing more than a shanty town of patched tents and primitive lean-tos clustered around a small spring and "great" is a subjective term.

Originally a gathering place for nomadic sand goblin tribes, it has been permanently occupied for a little over a century. During that time it has attracted of manner of rogues, swindlers, down-on-their-luck adventurers, and other social degenerates.

Goblin Town, as it is more commonly known, has become a bustling settlement specializing in the purchase and sale of information, black market goods, artifacts excavated from ancient tombs, and just a little legitimate trade. Almost anything short of true relics is available for purchase, if one has the money and wits necessary to deal with the light-fingered, selfish inhabitants. Maps pinpointing ancient ruins are a specialty, though explorers have no way of determining the veracity of the seller's eager claims that it is genuine until he arrives at the supposed destination.

Lording over the "city" is Jahan, an elderly sand goblin. His flatulence is legendary, as is the unique and foul stench he produces in copious quantities. The root cause of his gas problem is sweet date wine, which he drinks in copious quantities. Although his title is one used behind his back, he does spend much of the time leaning to one side to break wind. Despite his obvious poor social graces, Jahan should not be underestimated. He is devious, cunning, and has absolutely no qualms about getting what he wants by force—all methods he used to secure power three decades ago.

Jahan demands nothing from his followers, but those who fail to give him 10% of their earnings tend to suffer “unfortunate accidents.” Although he rarely leaves his tent, he has numerous spies in his employ. While information brokers and gossipmongers are plentiful, Jahan knows more than everyone else combined.

Any religion is permitted to operate openly here, so long as Jahan receives his share of any profits. Duamutef, the traditional god of all nomads; Tamarni, in her role as goddess of thieves, and Qedeshet, in his aspect as god of knowledge, are honored above all others.

Jahan knows that the cults of Chactinax (detailed in *Realm Guide #14*) and Iblis have secret temples somewhere in the vicinity of the city, but their locations elude him. He tried to uncover the locations when he first seized power, but when his spies’ heads returned without the rest of their bodies he got the message.

Although orcs live in the mountains, the city has not suffered raids in recent memory. Shortly after gaining power, Jahan and a handful of followers rode out into the desert, claiming they were going to deal with the orcs. Few believed him when he returned and claimed success, but three decades of peace have changed their minds. What his followers do not know is that Jahan met with several chieftains, agreeing to pay each of them an annual tribute to leave the city in peace.

Unfortunately, the ruse is in danger of unravelling. The orcs are growing greedy. As well as demanding information on rich caravans passing along the nearby trade road, they have raised the tribute to almost unaffordable levels in preparation for an invasion of the Caliphate. Jahan is secretly seeking adventurers to rid the mountains of orcs, and he is offering a sizeable reward. He may even be willing to honor his agreement.

THE MEDICINE TENT

Marqod’s Well is the most well known site in the region dedicated to the goddess of healing, but it is not the only one. The Medicine Tent, which stands along the Southern Trade Road, takes the form of a traditional Bedu tent, its walls stark white, its carpets vibrant red.

Hanging carpets divide the interior into two sections. The smallest is the personal quarters of the Medicine Tent’s sole occupant. The larger is a well stocked herbalist’s workshop, easily the equivalent of one found in any of the great cities.

The Medicine Tent is home to Apothecary Asiya bint-Farruz, a priestess of Zerbanitu (see page 10). A talented herbalist and alchemist, Asiya spends her days creating herbal remedies and medical alchemical devices. These she trades with passing caravans for food and water. Serene and humble, Asiya treats injuries only with herbs and potions, refusing to stitch wounds. Fellow herbalists and alchemists are welcome to use her equipment for their own concoctions, but not her precious supplies.

Although her skills could earn her a very good living in a city, Asiya has no wish to return to her native Mar-rash, City of a Thousand Gods. A dedicated healer, she

CLERICS OF MARQOD CONT.

Character Guidelines: Although Healing is the most important skill for Marqod’s clerics, their role as mediators requires them to have a passing knowledge of Intimidation and Persuasion. Alchemy and Hedge Magic are both useful for creating medicines. Clerics who expect to journey with Extras would be wise to invest in Expert Healer, while the Disciple of Marqod Edge turns a good doctor into a great one.

Despite being pacifists, do not neglect Fighting. Not only does it allow you to deliver nonlethal injuries, it determines your Parry and is essential for defensive Edges like Block. As protectors, paladins will get much mileage from Shieldwall and Bodyguard. Regardless of his calling, a cleric needs a high Spirit—a cleric who continually runs away or faints is no use in the heat of battle.

believes the inhabitants of the desert have more need of her services than wealthy city-dwellers.

Although she lives alone, Asiya does not live in total isolation. A small Bedu clan headed by Mir Azzam dar-Haroun dar-Ummar has a permanent camp located at a tiny spring at the foot of nearby hills. The clan are actually Devoted, but they swore to protect Asiya after the alchemist saved the life of the mir’s young daughter after she was stung by a scorpion. Their hunters also gather herbs to ensure Asiya’s stores are plentiful.

One of the clan is always perched atop a nearby dune, continually watching over the tent. Should he sense trouble, he signals his camel-riding peers with a horn.

OASES OF ONE THOUSAND BITES

Few maps show the location of this verdant oasis, and few travelers visit here more than once unless desperate, despite the water being exceptionally fresh and cool. Although it does not lie on the trade road, it is clearly visible on the eastern horizon, a large swathe of green amid the yellows, browns, and oranges of the arid desert.

Plump dates, figs, olives, and apricots weigh heavily on verdant trees, the air is cool, and the shade plentiful, all a welcome sight for hot, thirsty, desert wanderers, yet even birds avoid the oasis. The oasis is plagued by swarms of biting insects that defeat even the tightest clothing. So numerous and large are the swarms that they can kill a man in seconds.

As is typical, Bedu have myths regarding the oasis. The Devoted claim a greater jinni hides here, keeping itself safe from persecution by commanding the swarms to drive out intruders. To the Faithful, the oasis is the resting place of a powerful demon, a servant of Iblis. A few stories, far older than the common ones told today,

NEW PROFESSIONAL EDGE

BARBER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Strength d8+, Healing d6+, Streetwise d6+

Cleanliness is a prized trait among the civilized peoples of Al-Shirkuh. Barbers are a mix of actual barbers, doctors, masseurs, and gossips.

The hero has +1 to Healing and Streetwise rolls. A barber who spends 30 minutes massaging a patient and makes a Healing roll can alleviate Fatigue from bumps & bruises or saddle sore more quickly. With success, the time before recovery is halved. On a raise, it is reduced to one-quarter. Critical failure inflicts another level of Fatigue. A patient can only benefit from one massage per 24 hours.

tell of a Hekatic pharaoh who was buried in the deep desert. One version says he suffered from a terrible wasting disease and was buried away from his peers to prevent the contagion spreading. Another says that he was a wicked man who could command biting insects. The Bedu know of no ruins within the oasis, but they also readily admit that no one has tried to penetrate the interior for many generations.

THE PHARAOH'S LOST MINE

Stories abound in caravanserais, coffee houses, and taverns that the great wealth of Hekata lay far from its borders. Storytellers and poets speak of great camel trains laden with mineral wealth crossing the trackless sands, though whether they carried gold, silver, or gems is open to much debate, for the historical records still surviving in Hekata are unclear. By all accounts, the mine (or mines in some versions) lay within the Desert Wall Mountains.

It is no coincidence that during the Hekatic civil war, some of the refugees who founded the Kingdom of Magor settled close to such a fabulous source of wealth. It has long been suspected the jinn exploited the existing mines, though after their downfall all records were lost.

The problem with the stories is that none give an exact location. At 400 miles long and an average of 50 miles deep (double that when the foothills are included), the jagged landscape is too vast to explore in any detail.

Time can be cruel, and while the mine shafts may still exist, secluded in some hidden valley, they may also have been concealed by avalanches. It may be that Hekata retained control of the mines, for through the black art of necromancy they would have an inexhaustible supply of tireless workers. Perhaps the Magorians and jinn never found the mines, in which case the undead may still be excavating precious minerals.

The lure of a thousand years of mineral wealth just

waiting to be collected has tempted hundreds to search for the mines. Those who survive the arduous trek report nothing of interest save for Magorian ruins.

VALLEY OF RAINS

Although the central part of the valley between the Spires and the Lizard Tail appears little different to the rest of the desert, it has a unique micro-climate. Rain falls here far more often than elsewhere in the interior, though the pattern is highly irregular. It may not rain for a year or two, and then suddenly the heavens will open and it will rain for a week solid. When the rain falls, two things happen to make travel treacherous.

First, flash floods rush down the wadis (dried river beds) and valley wall, sweeping away camels and riders as if they were twigs and destroying camps. The force of the water alone is enough to crush bones, but most damage occurs from the debris carried in the flood.

Second, while the rains cause the valley floor to erupt in a thick blanket of lush vegetation for a short while, they also create vast pools of quicksand. Sand blown onto the quagmire quickly disguises its true nature, leaving it indistinguishable from the safer parts of the valley.

There is no obvious cause for the rain. A few sages believe it has something to do with the shape of the valley and its facing. Cool, moist winds from the coast sweep down the valley before rising to give birth to heavy clouds. Such theories are beyond the comprehension of most citizens, and it does little to explain the strange pattern of the rains.

High up the valley wall, in the middle of the region frequented by rain, stands a colossal stone door flanked by two columns carved to resemble dolphins leaping from the sea, a somewhat unusual design given the site lies hundreds of miles inland. Some stories tell that a powerful relic lies behind the door, a relic that summons the rain. Another says that Suleiman bound a greater marid here, entombing the jinni in rock as punishment. The creature sleeps much, but when it awakens it remembers its plight and cries, causing the rain to fall.

Some even claim it marks the final resting place of Sinbad the Sailor, the greatest mariner to ever sail the Southern Ocean, and by all accounts an extremely wealthy individual when he died.

VALLEY OF STINGS

Southeast of Clearwater Oasis lies the mouth of the enormous arid, boulder strewn, rocky valley that dominates the landscape between the Spires and the Lizard Tail Mountains. Where the valley begins to narrow, the terrain is dotted with tall, conical mounds of red earth. Here begins the Valley of Stings.

Although there are thorny plants here, the name comes from the huge number of fire ants that make their home on the valley floor. The mounds, which have a hole at the top, are the entrance to nests that lie deep beneath the ground, where it is cooler. The ants are extremely

sensitive to movement—even the soft tread of a camel is enough to alert the tiny but ferocious creatures that a meal is approaching. The jinn once used the valley as an execution grounds, tethering prisoners to stakes and leaving them for the ants to consume—a slow, lingering, painful death.

There are no fire ants high up the valley wall, but the escarpment is no less dangerous. Here dwell giant ants, monstrous beasts as long as a man. Many of their nest entrances resemble caves, though others are deep, wide cracks in the ground. The other danger is the loose soil and crumbling rocks. A wrong step can not only send a traveler tumbling down the slope, but the patter of stones or crash of large rocks disturbs the fire ants below.

PERSONS OF NOTE

This section details an NPC whose path may cross that of the heroes while they explore the region.

KNURLED-FOOT

Two hundred yards from the edge of Clearwater Oasis stands a lone tent, a ramshackle structure crudely patched together from discarded cloaks, blankets, and rugs. This is the home of Knurled-Foot, a sand goblin.

Knurled-Foot's nickname comes from his left foot, a malformed extremity covered in a dense cluster of warts. A filthy, light-fingered, grovelling creature, Knurled-Foot is banned from entering the oasis proper on penalty of death following a "misunderstanding" involving the sheikh's pet monkey and a bowl of overripe figs.

Knurled-Foot makes a meagre living hiring his services to adventurers as a torch bearer. Prone to exaggeration, he'll tell potential clients anything they want to hear in order to secure employment, making them swear oaths to pay him regularly before they realize he doesn't know quite as much about their destination as he said.

GODS & MONSTERS

This section details three new minor deities, eight new desert-dwelling creatures, and one new NPC archetype.

SAMNUHA

Titles: Shield of the Faithful, the Second Shadow, He Who Shields, Warder of Blows.

Aspects: Protection.

Affiliation: Karmelos, Marqod.

Symbol: A hand clenched around a sword blade.

Priesthood: Defenders (priests); Shields (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Any day the cleric saves his charge from attack. Harsh Words Day (p. 10) is a high holy day.

SOUTHERN DESERT ORCS

The Desert Wall Mountains do more than separate the citizens of the Caliphate from the great deserts of the interior—they protect the inhabitants from the barbarous orc tribes who call the wastes home. Described below are a few of the more notable tribes inhabiting this region.

* **The Black Bulls:** This tribe honors Iblis. As an action, chieftains, berserkers, warriors, and elite warriors may make an opposed Strength roll against an adjacent target, both parties adding their Size as a fixed modifier. With success, the victim is knocked prone. The orc may then make a single Fighting attack as a free action before his opponent has a chance to stand. The roll is at –2, with no penalty if the opposed Strength roll was a raise.

* **The Dust Devils:** Warriors of this tribe have learned to crawl beneath the sand and leap to attack surprised foes. When one erupts from the sand, victims must make a Notice roll opposed by the creature's Stealth. If the orc wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, +4 with a raise.

* **The Hyenas:** Named after their mocking laughs. Chieftains, priests, and elite warriors have Taunt d8, while others have Taunt d6.

* **The God Slayers:** This unusual tribe worships a renegade greater ifrit ("The Fire of Vengeance") who blames the Faithful for the loss of the jinn empire. He has taught the orcs Arcane Resistance, but only against miracles. Chieftains and elite warriors have the Favored Foe (Clerics) Edge.

* **The Reign of Arrows:** Renowned for their archery skills, the tribe has mastered the art of arcing shots over intervening terrain. They suffer half penalties for Cover for shooting at targets behind obstacles (as opposed to in cover like vegetation). This ability works at Medium and Long range only.

* **The Rubble Rats:** This tribe lives on the lower slopes of the mountains. They suffer no Difficult Ground movement penalty in hills, on loose stones, and similar terrain.

Duties: To protect the living.

Sins: (Minor) your patron is injured, killing except in the course of defending your patron; (Major) your patron is injured because you are not at his side; (Mortal) your patron dies because of violence.

Signature Power: *Armor*.

Powers: *Arcane resistance, bladebreaker, bodyguard, deflection, energy immunity, warding, weapon immunity.*

Trappings: Any except necromantic.

Special: Clerics of Samnuha have strict spellcasting restrictions. They may cast spells only on their person or those of a nominated patron. By accepting a patron, the cleric places that person's safety in her hands. A pa-

FESTIVALS TO MARQOD

ALMS DAY

Baot Yaus al-Kemi Amt Alak Shemu

Generosity is one of the cornerstones of the Faithful creed, and is commonly practiced by nobles and commoners alike. Not only is it a symbolic disdain for material trappings, which are fleeting, it also represents the sense of community, where those that have support those who have not.

Clerics spend the day giving out small sums of money to the poor, breads and water to the hungry, tending the injuries of those sick in mind, body, and soul. They may not charge for any services, nor accept donations.

Citizens usually give beggars an extra coin or two on this day in the hope of receiving a blessing. "Marqod bless you" is a common utterance from beggars when a coin rattles into their pots.

Note: Clerics of Tamarni sometimes hand out small sums of cash on this day. Despite being seen as something of a wild deity for her love of sex and drugs, acts of generosity also give her pleasure.

DEATH DAY

Tamith Yaus al-Maat Tamith Alak Paret

While the gods bestowed many gifts upon mortal creatures, they did not grant them immortality. Death is thus an inevitability.

In order to remind citizens of their mortality, clerics are forbidden from performing or assisting in any healing, magical or mundane, and from creating, distributing, selling, or using curative herbal brews or alchemical devices on this day. Those who break this rule are guilty of a mortal sin, for they are symbolically trying to make mankind immortal.

It is widely believed that all mortals are tainted by sin, for only the gods (save Iblis) are, and can ever be, totally pure of spirit. The cult regards no mortal as a good person on this day. Thus, clerics commit no sin by refusing to help those in need. However, they are still forbidden from taking life, for it is Tamuz who measures and cuts the life thread of mortals, not Marqod.

For citizens in need of the clerics' services, it is also a timely reminder that the shadow death can fall across their path at any time. Once the physical body perishes, the soul cannot repent. Thus, citizens are warned to live a good life and repent frequently or face eternal punishment.

Despite not sinning this day by refusing treatment, many clerics find the task difficult. For many it is a day of mourning, to be spent wailing and lamenting the short span of mortal existence.

tron can be changed, but only after an hour's meditation and prayer. A cleric of a greater god who also honors Samnuha does not get the +1 bonus to spellcasting for having identical spell unless she casts them on herself or her patron.

Marqod's ability to heal the gods made her a prime target for Iblis' assassins during the God War. The first attempt was thwarted by Samnuha, a lesser warrior god, who threw his body between the assassin's blade and Marqod. Samnuha accompanied Marqod wherever she went from then on, selflessly placing himself in harms way to protect the healer. When the war ended, she elevated to true minor god status.

Officially, there is little distinction between priest and paladin beyond militancy. In general, though, paladins act as bodyguards to warrior nobles, military commanders, and adventurers—citizens whose life is constantly in danger by dint of their lifestyle. Priests typically favor merchants, less militant nobles, scholars, and city officials who believe their lives are in danger. Clerics receive no stipend from the cult, and must hire their services to support themselves.

There is no set rate for their services. Clerics must negotiate their daily or weekly rate with their patron. Factors such as the cleric's abilities and reputation, the nature of the charge's potential enemies, where he intends to travel, and so on, must all be considered. By the cult's laws, a cleric whose patron is injured by enemy action while the contract is operating forfeits half his income from the commission (this applies only once). If the patron is killed by hostile action, the entire fee must be returned to his family.

During rituals to honor Samnuha clerics ritually cut their flesh and smear the blood on their shields or armor. This is believed to attract blows meant for their charge. A shield that intercepts a blow meant for a patron is considered blessed by Samnuha. In order that the cleric does not become complacent, he is expected to give away the shield afterward to a worthy person.

Character Guidelines: While clerics must resort to violence to protect their charges, they believe that a strong defense is the best offense. A good Fighting die is required as this governs Parry. Shieldwall is an essential Edge, and Block should be taken early—a wounded or dead cleric is no use to his charge. Notice is an important skill, as it allows the cleric to detect danger and take evasive action. Danger Sense is also a useful Edge.

TASHMETUM

Titles: The Mediator, the Great Listener, the Balance, the Unbiased One.

Aspects: Mediation.

Affiliation: Marqod, Shamash.

Symbol: Two right hands clenched in a gesture of peace and friendship.

Priesthood: Mediators (priests); Conciliators (paladins).

Herald: None.

The Great Southern Desert

Holy Days: Any day the cleric successfully settles a dispute. Harsh Words Day (p. 10) is a high holy day.

Duties: To find peaceful solutions to disputes, to prevent unnecessary bloodshed.

Sins: (Minor) failure to find an amicable solution to a dispute, making threats during a dispute, losing your temper; (Major) taking sides during a dispute, using violence to settle a dispute; (Mortal) deliberately starting an argument, taking a bribe to settle a dispute in favor of one party.

Signature Power: *Boost/lower trait* (Smarts, Spirit, Intimidation, Persuasion, and Streetwise only).

Powers: *Charismatic aura, detect truth* (no conceal), *silence, speak language, voice on the wind*.

Trappings: None with game mechanics.

Marqod worked tirelessly to find a peaceful solution to the God War, but while she struggled to find common ground between the leaders of the two factions, the gods' disputes with each other went unresolved. Iblis' agents were quick to exploit these petty arguments, threatening to turn them into full-scale conflicts that would sunder the alliance. Incapable of being everywhere at once, Marqod appointed one of her servants, a quiet spoken deity of incorruptible character who spoke little but whose words carried great wisdom, to act in her role.

Within the temples of Marqod are one or more rooms set aside for the resolution of disputes. These are considered sacred to Tashmetum, and act as the nearest thing the cult has to its own temples. Shrines are rare elsewhere, though many courthouses display her symbol along that of Tammuz, a visual indication they are impartial arbitrators of the law.

Clerics of both factions are expected to act as impartial mediators. Generally, paladins are charged with settling disputes that threaten or have already led to violence. Considered more capable of surviving the dangers of the wilds, they also act as itinerant arbitrators, travelling the desert and offering their services as an unbiased middleman. Priests usually stay close to major settlements. Here they work to settle small scale disputes, such as those between employer or employee, or buyer and seller. Clerics are not required to peacefully settle disputes involving or prevent bloodshed against races considered uncivilized, such as orcs.

Clerics of Tashmetum have no legal authority to enforce settlements, but those who pay for their services usually accept their judgment as binding—the only other recourse for a solution is through the courts, which can be costly to both parties.

It should be noted that clerics are not interested in assigning right or wrong, or following the laws of the land—they care only for the successful end of a dispute to the benefit of both parties. Pragmatic, they know full well that neither side in a dispute is likely to come away having achieved all its aims, and that compromise is key.

Services are quite affairs, the clerics meditating on previous disputes they have resolved, mentally imagining how the solution they found might be applied to other scenarios. On Harsh Words Day, they are expected to sac-

rifice a weapon to their god as a sign of their continuing belief to find peaceful solutions to problems.

Character Guidelines: As mediators, clerics need a good range of social Skills. Persuasion is the most important, with Streetwise, which is useful in uncovering the often hidden truth behind arguments, close behind. Intimidation can be useful in keeping weapons sheathed and getting participants to settle down, but it should not be used to end a dispute. In terms of attributes, Smarts and Spirits need to be high, as these help the cleric overcome attempts to bribe, threaten, seduce, or otherwise sway his judgment. Strong-Will gives the cleric more protection from those who would seek to rile him.

ZERBANITU

Titles: Apothecary of the Gods, the Divine Herbalist.

Aspects: Medicine.

Affiliation: Ashtart, Marqod.

Symbol: A mortar and pestle.

Priesthood: Apothecaries (priests); Dispensers (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Alms Day (p. 8), Death Day (p. 8), and Medicine Day (p. 11) are high holy days.

Duties: To brew herbal remedies and create alchemical healing devices.

Sins: (Minor) refusing to heal a good person in need, destroying alchemical curative devices or herbal remedies (using them doesn't count); (Major) not having a curative potion or herbal remedy on your person for more than a day; (Mortal) creating or using poison.

Signature Power: *Healing*.

Powers: *Bless* (no panic), *boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Vigor, Healing, and Knowledge (Alchemy) only), *feast, greater healing, succor*.

Trappings: None with game mechanics.

Special: Clerics may *only* cast their spells by means of making alchemical devices. They may take the Alchemy Edge at Novice. Clerics must have the Hedge Magic Edge before reaching Seasoned. Failure to do so is a mortal sin. Clerics who learn *greater healing* must also add all of Marqod's sins to their deity's sin list.

A daughter of Marqod, Zerbanitu grew frustrated with her mother, who was ignoring her in favor of experimenting with the newly discovered medicinal properties of plants. Seeing the girl sulking, Iblis assumed a pleasant form and approached her. Zerbanitu blamed her mother, but Iblis slyly twisted the blame toward the herbs and medicines, insinuating that if they were destroyed Marqod would have more time for her daughter.

Pleased at having been given a solution to her "problem," Zerbanitu trampled Ashtart's herbs, threw her mother's seeds, leaves, and roots out of the window (where they floated down to the mortal realm), and ruined all the medicines her mother had prepared.

Angered, but never one to raise a hand against another being, Marqod marched her daughter to Ashtart's palace and explained what the girl has done. Ashtart, who while

FESTIVAL TO MARQOD

HARSH WORDS DAY

Boat Yaus al-Sesbt Ansbi Alak Paret

Although the God War was a bloody conflict in which many deities and divine minions were slain, there were sporadic ceasefires brought about by Marqod. Harsh Words Day is representative of one of those lulls in the conflict.

Worshippers must strive to end any conflict they come across through words, not actions. Clerics who fail to end the conflict before one side is defeated or flees are guilty of a major sin. Given the violent nature of adventurers, many itinerant clerics refuse to take part in adventuring activities during this holy day.

Fearing that drawing weapons on this day tips the balance in favor of Iblis, who craves the chaos of conflict, citizens attempt to refrain from performing violent acts. Those permitted to carry weapons bind them in their scabbards with silk, preventing them from being drawn in haste. Physical and verbal intimidation is, however, permitted, for during the parleys the forces of light and darkness warred with words.

she protected children believed that hard work was good for the soul, ordered Zerbanitu to plant and tend more herbs, while her mother set her the task of picking and drying the components once they were ready, and then creating new medicines to replace the ones she had destroyed. Thus did Zerbanitu become the minor goddess of medicine. Although she originally resented her tasks, she has come to love her occupation.

Any apothecary shop owned and operated by a cleric of Zerbanitu is considered to be part of the nearest temple of Marqod, regardless of distance. Regardless of how many of these satellite temples they have affiliated with them, all true temples of Marqod (and many of Ashtart's) have an area set aside where clerics of Zerbanitu ply their trade. Common herbalists usually have a small shrine to the goddess. Typically, this is nothing more than the herbalist's mortar and pestle inscribed with prayers.

Although a religious order, the cult does not prohibit clerics from operating a business. Priests are commonly found in towns and cities, where they act as apothecaries, though some work out of Marqod's temples or are in the permanent employ of wealthy citizens. Some paladins serve as bodyguards for healers, but most are itinerant herbalists, wandering the desert in search of rare herbs and dispensing medicine to nomads.

Zerbanitu has no specific holy days, since every day involves creating alchemical or herbal medicines, and is thus considered an act of worship. However, clerics are expected to sacrifice at least a bunch of medicinal

herbs once per month. Such sacrifices take the form of burning. The smoke from these ascends to the heavens, imbuing the goddess' herb garden with new life and increased potency.

Character Guidelines: Clerics are specialist herbalists and alchemists. Thus, while Healing remains useful, Knowledge (Alchemy) and Survival are far more important. Spirit and Vigor are important attributes for ensuring the cleric remains able to carry out his duties.

AL BASTI

Al bastis were once clerics who committed mortal sins. Rather than confess their crimes and unburden their souls, they fell victim to their secret guilt, their bodies and spirits becoming warped and twisted mockeries. Their hair is a mass of hissing serpents, their venom the toxin that taints the al basti's corrupt soul; their skin is the color of bloodless meat; their eyes, windows of the soul, are utterly black; their hands are tipped with bronze fingernails, and their mouths filled with iron teeth.

Al bastis are not immortal, but they are immune to the ravages of time, keeping their vile bodies alive through willpower and sentient flesh. Now unable to repent they greatly fear death, for they know their souls will be consigned to the Bottomless Pit.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Treasure: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4 (bite is AP 1).
- * **Fearful:** Al bastis roll a d4 Spirit to resist Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Limited Immunity:** Al bastis are immune to spells cast by clerics of Ashtart, Marqod, Shamash, Tamarni, and Tammuz—deities linked to life, honor, balance, and justice.
- * **Poison (-1):** Anyone bitten by the al basti's serpentine hair must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of Venomous Poison.
- * **Refuses to Die:** Al bastis have two bennies (Wild Card variants have four). These are usable only for Soaking.
- * **Serpentine Hair:** An al basti's serpents may make a Fighting attack as a free action against one adjacent character each round. Damage 2d4 plus poison (see above).
- * **Sire:** A cleric who dies from an al basti's serpent venom while suffering any level of sin rises as an al basti in 1d4 rounds.

ANT, GIANT

Giant ants live in subterranean colonies. At the heart of the warren lies the queen, a vast, bloated monstrosity whose sole purpose is to lay eggs. While ants usually

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dine on small animals, they have been known to snatch children (and sand goblins).



QUEEN

Monstrously huge and constantly pregnant, the queen cannot move unless assisted by her drones.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 19 (4)

Treasure: Meager, in lair

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +4:** Thick carapace.
- * **Bite:** Str+d12.
- * **Hive Mentality:** Any ant within 50" is automatically aware of the queen's wishes, coming to her aid if she is attacked.
- * **Huge:** Attackers are +4 to attack a queen because of her huge size.
- * **Natural Leader:** As undisputed ruler of the nest, the queen has the Natural Leader Edge.
- * **Pheromones:** A queen releases pheromones within a 5" radius. This gives her the equivalent of the Command, Fervor, and Hold the Line Edges.
- * **Size +8:** A queen measures over 30' long.

WARRIOR

Warrior ants protect the community from attack, and hunt down prey, which the drones then carry back to the nest. Their bite injects a toxin that causes victims to be wracked with pain, leaving them at the ant's mercy.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Treasure: Meager, in lair

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Thick carapace.
- * **Bite:** Str+d10.
- * **Burrowing (4"):** When they erupt from the ground, victims must make a Notice roll opposed by the creature's Stealth. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, +4 with a raise.
- * **Poison (+1):** Anyone Shaken or wounded by a giant ant must make a Vigor roll at +1 or suffer excruciating pain. Victims are Shaken for 1d6 rounds. Recovery rolls may be made only after this time.
- * **Size +1:** Warriors measure 7' long.

DRONE

Drones are the workers of ant communities. They are smaller (around 5") and less powerful than warriors, but far more numerous.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d8, Stealth d6

FESTIVAL TO MARQOD

MEDICINE DAY

Ansbi Yaus al-Hamala Baot Alak Paret

Although Ashtart is goddess of plants, it was Marqod who discovered how to use them to create medicine. Worshippers spend the day mixing herbal remedies, gathering and drying herbs, or assisting herbalists at the temple. All creations worked this day must be donated to the next temple of Marqod the herbalist visits or she will suffer bad luck (GM's discretion on how this works). These are then sold to provide the temple with funds for other projects.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Treasure: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Thick carapace.
- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Burrowing (4"):** When they erupt from the ground, victims must make a Notice roll opposed by the creature's Stealth. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, +4 with a raise.

BARBER

While Al-Shirkuh boasts plentiful doctors and surgeons, barbers are consulted for minor injuries. While having his wounds tended or aches massaged out, the patient can also catch up on the latest gossip.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8, Knowledge (Folklore) d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Varies

Edges: Barber

Gear: Cutthroat razor (Str+d4), healer's bag

Treasure: Worthwhile

ORC



PRIEST, ALTERNATE

To create priests of gods other than Iblis, swap the stock priest's powers with the appropriate entry below.

Note that orcs who worship benevolent gods display no friendship toward the civilized races. This applies equally to clerics of the same faith.

- * **Chactinax:** *Armor* (scorpion chitin), *bolt* (scorpions), *fear* (victim sees himself crawling with scorpions), *quickness*, *slumber*, *silence*, *wall walker*.
- * **Duamutef:** *Aim*, *bolt* (arrows), *boost/lower trait* (Vigor, Persuasion, Riding, Shooting, Survival, and

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Tracking only), *deflection* (whirling sand), *entangle* (sandy arms), *bamper movement* (soft sand), *obscure* (sandstorm), *summon elemental* (dust only).

- * **Geb-Agni:** *Armor* (stone skin), *bolt* (stones), *burrow*, *deflection* (swirling rocks), *smite*, *summon elemental* (earth, fire, lava only).
- * **Karmelos:** *Armor* (magical armor), *barrier* (whirling blades; 2d4 damage), *boost/lower trait* (Spirit, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Knowledge (Battle), Riding, Shooting, and Throwing), *smite*, *warrior's gift*.



SWARM, FIRE ANT

Fire ants are an inch long and bright red in color. Unlike other species of ant, they lack powerful mandibles. This does not mean they are any less aggressive or dangerous, though. Fire ants are not named for their color, but for their primary weapon—a jet of caustic fluid that combusts seconds after contact with air.

Individually, a fire ant delivers a painful burn to larger creatures, enough to deter all but the hardest or stupidest predators from trying to eat the ant. Massed in swarms, they can cause creatures as tall as giants to burst in flame or die writhing in agony as their flesh melts.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Treasure: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Caustic Incendiary Spray:** Swarms spray their victims with caustic, incendiary fluid, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Victims have a chance of catching fire. Damage is applied to the least armored location.
- * **Mindless:** Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like puppet.
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

TAKAM

Takams are considered blessed goats. Both Devoted and Faithful claim the wrathful jinn once banished Suleiman to the desert to die. No plant or animal would give him sustenance, for all were afraid of the jinn's vengeance. Close to death, Suleiman was saved by a lone goat, who allowed him to suckle its rich milk.

In return for its charity and bravery in defying the jinn, Suleiman blessed the goat, laying his hands upon either side of its head. According to Faithful scriptures, Marqod sent the goat to save Suleiman, thus reawakening belief in the gods. Takams are the male descendants of that original goat. The name is actually Beduan and means "my billy goat," supposedly the honorific Suleiman gave his savior. They are distinguished by vaguely

palm shaped marks around their eyes, though such patterns are not conclusive proof a goat is a takam.

Takams are intelligent creatures, though incapable of speech. Gifted with the ability to cast spells, they use their magic to protect goat herders and mundane goats. Having a takam in one's herd guarantees healthy kids, rich milk, thick wool, and succulent flesh, but only so long as the goats are well treated.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Treasure: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait roll to resist opposed spells; +2 Armor versus damage-causing spells.
- * **Mountain Born:** Takams ignore Difficult Ground penalties for hills.
- * **Powers:** *Armor*, *beast friend*, *fear*, *feast*, *leaping*, *speed*, *stun*, *wilderness step*. Their spells work only on goat herders and goats.
- * **Size -1:** Takams are the same size as normal goats.



TROLL, SAND

Sand trolls are commonly found in the sandy deserts, though some haunt the ash deserts. Their favorite tactic is to burrow just below the surface, then leap out to attack passing prey. Unlike other species of troll, sand trolls are primarily nocturnal, relying on their infravision to spot heat against the coolness of the night.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Treasure: Meager, in lair

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Thick hide.
- * **Burrowing (4"):** When they erupt from the ground, victims must make a Notice roll opposed by the creature's Stealth. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, +4 with a raise.
- * **Claws:** Str+d6.
- * **Improved Sand Walker:** Sand trolls treat sand and ash as normal terrain.
- * **Infravision:** Trolls halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking heat-producing targets (round down).
- * **Regeneration (Fast):** Trolls make a natural Healing roll every round, even after death. They cannot heal wounds caused by fire or heat. This does not include coldfire. Decapitation (a Finishing Move) also prevents regeneration.
- * **Resistance (Heat):** Immune to background heat. Half damage from fire and heat attacks.
- * **Size +1:** Sand trolls are bulkier than humans.
- * **Susceptibility (Cold):** Takes +4 damage from cold, coldfire, or ice.