

Gapharnaûn

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

The Tears of Ampharool
QUICKSTART RULES AND INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE

This is a highly detailed fantasy map set against a parchment-like background. At the top left, the words "THE INNER SEA" are written in a serif font. At the bottom right, "OCEAN OF LAMENTATIONS" is written in a similar font. The map itself shows a large body of water on the left, labeled "The Inner Sea". To its right is a vast, arid landmass. In the upper right, there's a mountainous region called "Limberk Plateau". A large, winged bull stands prominently in the center-right. A river, "Lazurine River", flows from the top right towards the bottom center. Another river, "Khet Anjae", flows from the bottom left towards the center. Various cities and towns are marked with small icons and labels: "Capharnaum", "Aramla El-Nar", "Khasaba", "Jergath the Great", "Bassuhma", "Samsara", "Al-Bagdir", "Messara", "Zarbeth", "Beletmei", "Shankti", "Balzabaar", "Madina El-Sakhra", "Madina Al-Muhit", "Muhl", "Al-Kasir", "Inenite Oasis", "Nabiy Oasis", "Forbidden Valley of Shamair", "Forbidden Fountain", "Abandoned Palace", "Pit of Tiamat", "Flower People", "Al-Mogabit Fortress", "Isle of Agramatra", "Jebel Omphor", "Thieves Cave", "Genies Halls", "Quartorian Monastery of St Jude", "Village of the Prophets", "Master Eblak", "Ben Nassin's Workshop", "Clarks of Chironos", "Eastern Mines", "Wail of Enerrads", "Al Mamlakah Jabah", "Raminsha", "Fragrance", "Carrassine", "Sagrada", "Opna", "Aithun Munham". A scale bar in the lower right indicates "500 KM". The overall style is reminiscent of classic fantasy cartography, with intricate details and a rich color palette dominated by earthy tones.



The Tears of Ampharool

QUICKSTART RULES AND
INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE



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INTO THE DESERT OF FIRE

How did I end up this weary of my life? Was it one greedy merchant too many criticising my services, one more bordello doxy complaining about her lot, one more child caught by the city guard for stealing food? I didn't know any more, but suddenly the walls of Fragrance looked like a prison, its inhabitants closed in on themselves, their activities empty and without meaning. I know life isn't easy, and no one's perfect except the gods and dragons, but still...

Sitting in the inn that morning with my noisy companions, a wider world called to me. As the steam rose from my mint tea, I remembered the verses the warrior-poet Issef Ibn Mussah Abd-Al-Hassan wrote for his princess:

*"The sun shines brighter facing the desert
Glory and power are not enough.
To the honour of thy cosy bed
I prefer the taste of adventure and freedom."*

Adventure and freedom. I had been vegetating, falling back on a fake notoriety because of the mark on my back. I had reached the age where a man looks at what he's done and contemplates eternity. Being one of the Dragon-Marked without ever having deserved it was becoming intolerable. I needed to do great deeds, and I was going to find a way to do them. It was time to change my life.

The thought seized me. I sold everything I owned. I bought a camel and some scrolls to write on—I prided myself that I could pen a few verses—and then a new suit of armour and a shinskin. Travel gear, fighting gear, food. I was ready for adventure.

After a few days negotiating, I found myself at the gates of Fragrance, facing the dancing dunes of the Aramla El-Nar. The Desert of Fire. The windblown sand brought heat, made the horizon shimmer, summoning me to follow mirages. How beautiful the desert was! I had crossed it so many times, but had I ever really seen it before?

Unable to relax, I turned to the city. In the distance, a caravan was departing. My soul burned with impatience as the Salifah calmly harnessed their beasts, my body anticipating, by way of a sudden thirst, the difficulty of the trip. To shore up my newfound resolve, I focussed on my destination.

I became aware of what was missing from my ambitions. Where would I go? Did adventure await me in the middle of the desert, or around the next corner? How was I to find it? How was I to make it happen? Suddenly my goal seemed an illusion, my life shabby and poor. I imagined the bitter verses I would write:

*"Facing the immensity of the burning desert
A fierce courage swelled my breast.
But, turning towards the illustrious city,
I became aimless, frozen until the sun was gone."*

What fabulous verses for an adventure that was over before it ever began! How ridiculous I was! I had acted on impulse, and now found myself without home, without money. Without glory. With a sigh, I turned my dromedary towards the city of Fragrance and prepared myself to recount to my old comrades-in-arms the most laughable misadventure of my life.

As I was dismounting, a pretty young servant girl approached. "My lord, you dropped this!" she called, handing me a scroll.

"Thank you," I said, reflexively unrolling it. To my surprise, it bore writing, so was no scroll of mine. Wanting to give it back, I raised my head, but the girl was nowhere to be seen. I looked back to the scroll to decipher its contents. Yes, decipher. For it was written in an old Saabi I had only seen once or twice before, in a library of Jergath the Great. That told me it was old, despite its excellent condition.

I mouthed the passages I could make out. "Our goddess's wound." That could be the geographical fault they called the Entrails of Tiamat... A shrine there would date from ancient times, even before the creation of the blessed kingdom of Kh'saaba. The scroll indicated a place two days from the fault—a vast territory to travel through, and not devoid of danger if I encountered a djinn. But the words spoke of bravery, of that I was sure. It was an invitation to adventure—or the next best thing!

If I wanted to leave, why not be guided by this scroll? I couldn't understand it all, but the unknown is part of adventuring. And I would rather die on this quest than live in obscurity! Wasn't that the destiny of the Dragon-Marked? I climbed back into the saddle and, my heart filled with the desire to live intensely, turned towards the desert, deciding at last to join the caravan. And, when the right moment came, I would leave that, too...

THE WORLD OF CAPHARNAUM

Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked is a fantasy roleplaying game set in an imaginary Arabia-like world. It borrows from the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, as well as semitic legends and the ancient and mediaeval epics. *Capharnaum* doesn't aim to be a historical game, but a heroic one, a flamboyant refraction of historical, cultural, and mythical themes, filled with light and thrilling adventure!

The Names of the Dragon-Marked Resound Through the Ages

In *Capharnaum*, you play the **Dragon-Marked**, heroic individuals with a special destiny, born with a birthmark on their backs shaped like a dragon's claw. The **Dragon-Mark** announces to the world that you're capable of astonishing feats, for good or evil. Chosen by mystical dragons in accordance with an unknown divine will, you're offered a place in the great game of the gods. As though the world itself is calling you onto the path of heroes, you'll be cast into colourful adventures, political, military, and magical intrigues, and much more.

Long Ago, the Agalanthians Ruled

In an age as far back as written records go, the Republic of Agalanthia ruled the world, gathering to itself great science and knowledge. But its life was brief, and it was succeeded by the Empire. Jazirat, the land where your adventures take place, fell under the Imperial yoke, cycling through revolts and wars. Then the Empire collapsed, just like its capital, Therema, of which now only a vast field of ruins remains. Today the Agalanthians are a shadow of what they once were, but in the depths of the desert you can find traces of their greatness.

The Future of Jazirat is at Stake!

This *Capharnaum Quickstart* takes place on the vast peninsula of Jazirat, which is divided into three regions.

To the south lies **Kh'saaba**, a rich kingdom rooted in ancestral traditions. Jergath the Great is its capital, the divine city raised in one night by the god Hubal. From here Saabi law reigns, extending well beyond the kingdom's borders.

At Jazirat's heart lies the **Aramla El'Nar**, the Desert of Fire. It's an arid expanse criss-crossed by never-ending caravans carrying spices, cloth, jewellery and artefacts, travelling between the peaceful oases, braving bandits and marauders and the creatures of the desert.

To the north lies **Capharnaum**, the most populous region of the peninsula. It's the centre of the world, and lies by a sunlit sea at the junction of the trade routes. Once it was the land of the Shiradim, and has suffered many wars and conquests. It's said that, since the dawn of time, the threads that weave the world's fate are tied and untied here.

A Land of Many Peoples

Today Capharnaum is at peace, but only just. It's prey to the intrigues and influences of all Jazirat's neighbours: the Quarterian barons from the distant west, the Agalanthian satraps who once owned the world, the powerful Shiradi merchants and the Saabi sheiks. It's a place where all cultures meet and mix.

The **Saabi** are in the majority in Jazirat. Their ruling tribes descend from the three prophets, Hassan, Salif and Tarek, and they worship the One Thousand and One Gods. Most live to the south, in the fertile kingdom of Kh'saaba, while others are desert nomads. But some have settled in Capharnaum, for business, or to play the games of politics or taste the ripe fruits of life on offer in the cities of Sagrada, Carrassine and Fragrance. The **mujahid**, a holy warrior or poet of the sword, is the heroic symbol of this people.

The **Shiradim** are the long-oppressed cousins of the Saabi. Although physically similar, they are culturally very different. They worship Shirad, the one god with many aspects, and live mostly in Jazirat's north, in Capharnaum, the land they cleared and made fertile.

The **Quarterians** live far to the west, and worship new gods that were unknown six centuries ago: Jason, the Quartered God, and his father, Almighty Aether. Quarterian history begins with Jason, the man who made Capharnaum quake, and who won his place in the Celestial Realm by surviving the terrifying punishment of quartering, before sacrificing himself for his faithful. The Quarterians arrived in Capharnaum not long ago, on a Holy Quest to recover the martyr's remains. Many remained to make their fortune, begin new lives, and impose their new religion.

Finally, the **Agalanthians** are still here, although now only a shadow of the people that once mastered the sciences and the arts. Present everywhere because of their formidable elite troops, the Myrmidons, only a few city-states remain from their ancient empire, surviving on the commerce of men and goods.

Mektub! The Gods have decided! The Prophets have written!

So come and save kings and princesses, battle with the djinn, steal forgotten treasures and sing serenades in the moonlight. And cut a dash while you do so! The *Capharnaum* game system is fast and narrative, encouraging panache and inventiveness. The Dragon-Marked are mighty heroes which few can resist, and the game reflects their power. Players take centre-stage, taking risks and accomplishing feats to make the very gods green with envy!

CHAPTER 1

QUICKSTART RULES

Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked is a bright and heroic game, with rules that aim to be as cinematic and as fun as possible. It's a simple system which encourages player description, eloquence, and invention.

Note that this *Capharnaum Quickstart* is an abridged version of the full rules of *Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked*, specially designed to get you playing quickly and experience the game and its world. It presents an overview of the setting and the main game systems; check out the *Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked* core book and its range of supplements for much more!

WHO IS AL-RAWI?

Most roleplaying games—including *Capharnaum*—have a **game master** or **GM**, whose job it is to describe the game world and present the players with the events which constitute their adventures. In keeping with the Arabian flavour of the game, we call the game master of *Capharnaum* “Al-Rawi”, an Arabic word meaning “the Story Teller”. When you play *Capharnaum*, you're not only playing a roleplaying game, you're participating in an ancient tradition millennia old!

ACTION RESOLUTION

Most actions the players' characters attempt in the game work automatically: speaking, eating, walking, and so on. But, when the result of an action is uncertain, Al-Rawi and the players rely on chance and the roll of six-sided dice (also called D6). The success or failure of an action is most often resolved by rolling between 2 and 15 dice. This is called a **dice roll**.

The number of dice used in a dice roll depends on several factors. Mostly, you roll a number of dice equal to your score in one of your **attributes**—Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Dexterity (DEX), Intelligence (INT), or Charisma (CHA)—and sometimes add a number of dice equal to your score in one of your

skills—such as Fighting, Flattery, or Unctuous Bargaining. There are 32 skills in *Capharnaum*, representing the things your character knows how to do. Skills are described in detail in the *Capharnaum* core book, but you can usually work them out from their names. All the skills are listed on the character sheets on page 34.

Scores in attributes and skills are usually between 1 and 5, so you'll usually end up rolling between 1 and 10 dice. So, for example, you may make a roll of your DEX 5 attribute and your Riding 3 skill, in which you'll roll 8 dice. There are several types of dice roll, including attribute rolls, skill rolls, unskilled rolls, and opposed rolls (see page 11).

When you make a dice roll, you add up some of those dice, called your **result dice**, to make a total, called a **result**. The number of result dice is always equal to the **attribute** you're using in the roll. In the above example, you'd roll 8 dice and total 5 of them. Sometimes this is written using the notation:

Number of Dice Rolled / Result Dice

In the above example, the Riding skill roll could be written DEX + Riding 8/5, or just Riding 8/5.

Your result is compared to a number called a **difficulty** (see page 11), to see whether you succeed in your action or not.

Dice rolls often have the following notation:

Difficulty n Component 1 + Component 2 roll.

A roll of Strength and Athletics with a difficulty of 9 is written: difficulty 9 STR + Athletics. It means you roll a number of dice

What Do My Skill and Attribute Scores Mean?

A score of 1 in a skill or attribute indicates beginner-level competence. With a score of 2, you're at a professional level; and at 3, you're an expert. A score of 4 represents the best person at that skill or attribute in your whole village or even town; and at 5 you're becoming truly exceptional. Scores of 6 or beyond represent true mastery, the domain of heroes...

equal to your scores in your Strength attribute and Athletics skill, and add up a number of them equal to your Strength attribute. If the result is equal to or greater than 9, you've succeeded.

The Whims of the Dice

The Dragon's Breath

The dragons are the servants of the gods. They watch over the Dragon-Marked as they pursue their destinies. In game terms, each player has at least one **Dragon Die**, which should be a different colour from the other dice, which you roll whenever you make a dice roll. For example, if you have 1 Dragon Die and have to roll 8 dice in a dice roll, you roll 7 normal coloured dice, and 1 die that's specially coloured to mark it out as a Dragon Die.

Only the Dragon-Marked have Dragon Dice; normal humans and monsters don't.

If you roll a 6 on a Dragon Die, your action is said to be "carried by the dragon's breath". You keep the 6 you rolled as part of your result, and roll the Dragon Die again! And, if you roll a 6 again, you keep going! As long as the dragons breathe, the Dragon Dice are rerolled!

Don't neglect to describe the awesomeness of the dragon's breath! It's your schtick, it's what sets your character apart from normal mortals. You're inspired by the mystic power of the dragons and the heroic destiny which awaits you, you succeed at an amazing stunt or manoeuvre, leaving everyone speechless and impressed. The greater the bonus on the dragon dice, the more superhuman your effort appears. Any additional points your Dragon Dice give you make you look special, but if you get more than 10, then something uncanny, even supernatural is happening; and if you get more than 20, even the gods themselves start to take note!

Constellations

Rolling the same number on three or more dice in a dice roll is called **lighting up a constellation**. Constellations can do two things.

First, if your dice roll is a success, a constellation can activate special abilities your character has because of the **path** he follows. A path may be a special school, sect, organisation, or philosophy. Each of the 5 pregenerated characters presented on page 34 and after belongs to a path, and brief descriptions of the paths and their path abilities are given there. There are many more in the *Capharnaum* core book.

For example: Amin Ibn Malik is facing three brigands, and must fight to survive. While attempting a riposte, Amin rolls 9/5 for his attack, rolling 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 5 and 5. The three 2s light up a constellation, letting him activate the Path of the Fire Scimitars (the path he chose to follow) until the end of the fight... No doubt the brigands are going to regret attacking a Dragon-Marked!

Second, constellations are used in combat against some opponents. See the "Combat" section below (page 12) for more.

Bonus Dice and Penalty Dice

There are two types of modifier in *Capharnaum*: numerical modifiers to the **difficulty** of a roll (or, rarely, the **result**); and an increase or decrease in the number of dice rolled. These modifiers are quite different.

In *Capharnaum*, the number of dice you roll directly affects how great your success or failure will be. Changing the difficulty of a roll won't affect that; it'll be harder to succeed at the roll in the first place,

but once you succeed you'll have just the same chance of a great success as you would have had without the difficulty being modified. Sometimes this is exactly the effect you're looking for.

However, if you want to modify the degree of success or failure of a roll, you need to change the number of dice rolled. This is where **bonus dice** and **penalty dice** come in.

Heroic Virtues

Every Dragon-Marked has a "Heroic Virtues" section on his character sheet, for the three Heroic Virtues of Bravery, Faith, and Loyalty. Each virtue has a numerical score, and is surrounded on the character sheet by five stars. These five stars may be filled in one by one during play; when all five are filled in, the sixth point gained



takes the virtue score up by one, to the next level, and all the stars are set back to zero.

Heroic Virtues are used in character creation, and it's also possible to spend stars of your Heroic Virtues during play, or even to lose them. For example, if you were hoping to roll a constellation to activate one of your path abilities (page 9) and didn't, you may spend one point of an appropriate Heroic Virtue to make up every die missing from the constellation. The Heroic Virtue you spend depends on the path in question, and is indicated on the pre-generated character sheets beginning on page 34. Whenever an action requires a character to spend points of a Heroic Virtue, it's these stars that are spent, not the raw levels themselves.

For example: Amin faces a gang of Babouche-Dragners (page 16), and decides the Path of Malik he is following will be of great use. Unfortunately, the dice don't fall in his favour and he doesn't light up a constellation. Instead, using the Paths rules, he decides to spend two Bravery points to activate the path. His Bravery score, which was previously 4 (+5 stars), is reduced to 4 (+3 stars).

Note that you can also win back Heroic Virtue stars during play, by acting according to those virtues—by being especially brave, faithful, or loyal. You can even lose them by acting counter to those virtues. At any moment during play, Al-Rawi can decide your character gains or loses a star of one of his Heroic Virtues to reflect his behaviour.

Your **Heroism** score is a pool of points representing the average of all your Heroic Virtues. It's used for a number of purposes, but for this Quickstart it's main roll is to limit the number of **swagger dice** you may roll—see page 11 for more.

Skill Rolls

As described above, a skill roll uses a number of dice equal to the sum of an attribute and a skill score, from which you only count a number of dice equal to your attribute as your **result dice**. You must always keep the best dice in your result dice. Note, however, that this doesn't apply to your Dragon Dice: you have the choice to include them in your result dice or not, regardless of the numbers rolled.

The total of your result dice, called the **result**, is compared to a number called a **difficulty**. If the result is equal to or higher than the difficulty, your action is a **success**; if it's lower, it's a **failure**.

Magnitudes

In some cases (like combat), it's useful to know and quantify the **magnitude** of a success or a failure—how well or how badly you've succeeded or failed. Magnitude is a numerical score equal to the number of dice not kept when calculating your result, also known as your **magnitude die**. Any magnitude die roll of 1 is not counted towards your magnitude; any roll of 6 is counted twice. This gives the following calculation:

TABLE 1: FIGURING MAGNITUDE	
RESULT ON MAGNITUDE DIE	ADDITION TO MAGNITUDE
1	+0
2	+1
3	+1
4	+1
5	+1
6	+2

Your magnitude gives you an idea of how great the success (or failure!) of your dice roll is, as follows:

TABLE 2: DESCRIBING MAGNITUDE		
MAGNITUDE	SUCCESS	FAILURE
0	Barely succeeded	Almost succeeded
1	Normal Success, no panache	Normal Failure, no catastrophe
2	Good Success	Stinging Failure
3	Very Good Success	Painful Failure
4	Memorable Success	Memorable Failure
5	Exceptional Success	Catastrophic Failure
6	Critical Success	Critical Failure
7	Legendary Success	Legendary Failure

Note: You can end up with magnitudes which fall outside this table.

For example: Chasing a traitor, Amin Ibn Malik tries to cross a street on his galloping dromedary. Al-Rawi sets the difficulty at 6 (the street is pretty empty), and Amin's DEX is 4 and his Riding is 3. He rolls 7 dice, getting 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5. He keeps the 4 best (equal to his DEX), giving him a result of 17 (5+5+4+3)! The action succeeds, because 17 is (way!) higher than the difficulty of 6. The three dice which don't contribute to that total are Amin's magnitude dice: with results of 1, 2, and 3, they contribute +0, +1, and +1 to his magnitude, for a total magnitude of 2. It's a Good Success.

Critical and Legendary Successes and Failures

You'll find that those points of magnitude you generate on a roll get used in a variety of ways in these rules. Often, though, we consider there to be a qualitative difference in your success or failure when you achieve a magnitude of 6 or more, and some special rules kick in. One of the most obvious is that if you score a Critical Success or better on an attack roll in combat, the damage you do ignores your opponent's **Soak** (page 18), inflicting terrible wounds.

Dice Rolls

There are several types of dice roll:

- **Skill Rolls:** Roll as many dice as Attribute + Skill.
- **Attribute Roll:** Roll as many dice as Attribute + Heroism (page 10).
- **Unskilled Roll:** Roll as many dice as Attribute.
- **Opposed Roll:** Both you and your opponent make rolls, and the higher result wins.

Note:

- **Result:** The sum of the kept dice, called the **result dice** (which must be the best ones, except for your Dragon Dice—see page 9), to beat the difficulty.
- **Magnitude:** The number of dice not kept, called the **magnitude dice**. Dice which roll “1” don’t count; those which roll “6” count twice.

Difficulties

In an action, the result is always compared to a number called the **difficulty**. The difficulty is determined by Al-Rawi, according to the descriptions given in Table 3: Difficulties. It’s up to Al-Rawi whether or not she announces the difficulty of a roll to the players: sometimes it’s more exciting to keep it secret, but sometimes it raises the tension to let the players know. If the result of the dice roll is equal to or higher than the difficulty, the action succeeds.

Active and Passive Difficulties

Sometimes, when you attempt an action, someone may be actively opposing you or otherwise trying to stop you doing what you’re doing. For example, if you’re trying to sneak past the Palace Guard, your ability to use your Stealth skill is being pitted directly against the guard’s Notice skill.

Now, Al-Rawi may just decide on a flat difficulty for your action based on Table 3: Difficulties. However, she may also decide to make an INT + Notice roll for the guard trying to spot you. This is called an **opposed roll**. In this case, the result of the guard’s INT + Notice roll becomes the difficulty you must beat in order to successfully sneak past. Sometimes this is also called an **active difficulty** (see also the Active Defence action on page 14).

Swaggering

Characters in *Capharnaum* are swashbuckling, heroic types who like nothing better than to cut a dash and look cool while accomplishing great feats, apparently effortlessly!

Swaggering involves taking risks when you attempt an action, in order to look cool, shine more brightly, and achieve greater magnitudes of success. But—be careful!—you also risk failing much more catastrophically on a bad roll!

When you choose to swagger, you hold back one or more dice from your result dice, and instead add them to your magnitude dice. These are often called **swagger dice**. You must specify the

TABLE 3: DIFFICULTIES

DIFFICULTY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
6	Common	The default difficulty for most rolls. <i>Reciting verses you know well, kicking open a rickety door, urging a Saabi horse to gallop down an empty road, picking the pockets of a distracted chatterbox.</i>
9	Moderately Difficult	The default difficulty of a professional-level task. <i>Repairing your own armour, lifting more than your own weight, writing a long letter, evaluating a precious stone at first sight, stealing from a market stall on a quiet street.</i>
12	Difficult	An action worthy of a specialist. <i>Forging a weapon of quality, succeeding in a feat of athletics, organising a festival for an entire city quarter.</i>
15	Heroic	Now we sort the wheat out from the chaff! <i>Crossing a street by jumping from one roof to another, winning a running race against a dog, juggling with sabres, riding back to front and shooting arrows from the back of your horse, dropping 10 metres onto a shop awning.</i>
18	Insanely Heroic	These actions are recklessly heroic, and have serious consequences! <i>Sleeping with the king’s wife while the king is sleeping next to you, winning a running race against a horse, dropping 20 metres onto a shop awning.</i>
21	Fabulous	People will be talking about you in a hundred years’ time! <i>Persuading the king who’s just woken up next to you and his wife to let you carry on, winning a running race with an abzul, diving from a cliff top into a rocky river.</i>
30+	Legendary	Actions beyond the reach of ordinary mortals! <i>Pole-vaulting over a 20 metre high rampart, juggling excitable snakes while blindfolded, stopping a bolting horse on a slippery surface using only one hand.</i>

number of swagger dice **before** you make your dice roll. You can never roll more swagger dice than your Heroism score (page 10).

Note that this means that, when you swagger, you actually **lower** your chance of success! But, if you do succeed, your chance of getting a greater magnitude of success is much higher. However, if you fail on your dice roll, your magnitude of failure will be that much worse!

For example: Frank's character, Don Felij Belmonte de Valladon, is climbing down the outside of a tower, attempting a difficulty 15 action, for which he's rolling 7/5 (rolling 7 dice, keeping 5). He decides to swagger, increasing the stakes so that he can impress the women that are following his actions with interest. Frank says to Al-Rawi: "These three storeys are but small steps when compared to my escape from the dungeon of lord Al-Shamin! I'll take two swagger dice, and show those lard-arse eunuchs what a real escape is all about!"

His Heroism score is 3, meaning Francis could have taken up to 3 swagger dice, but that looked too risky even for him. His 2 swagger dice means his Climbing skill roll goes from 7/5 to 7/3! He rolls against the difficulty of 15, getting 2, 3, 3, 5, 6, 6 and 6. He keeps the highest three dice, a total of 18: his climb action is successful! The remaining 4 dice are now his magnitude dice (without the swagger, he would only have had 2), for a final magnitude of 4—a Memorable Success!

Helping and Hindering

Sometimes you may want to take an action which helps someone else do something, or which tries to stop them doing something. These are called **helping actions** and **hindering actions**.

A **helping action** is an action (see "Actions and Rounds", below). If you succeed, you give a number of bonus dice to the person you're helping equal to the magnitude of your success, up to a maximum of that person's own skill score. If you fail, however, you inflict a number of penalty dice on the person you're "helping" equal to the magnitude of your failure—and there's no limit!

Get Creative!

The Capharnaum system provides a flexible framework of rules with a lot of permutations in play. Al-Rawi, encourage your players to get creative when describing their characters' actions! As a player, always work from your description first: start by describing what your character is trying to do, and then use the rules to work out how to model that. Your characters should attempt amazing swaggers and stunts, help one another and hinder their foes, create bonuses, and improvise awesome magical effects with their spells. Throughout this Quickstart, we give you hints and tips about some of the cool things you can do with these rules.

A **hindering action** is an action. If you succeed, you inflict a number of penalty dice on the person you're hindering equal to the magnitude of your success. If you fail, nothing happens unless your magnitude is 6 or greater; in that case, you actually give one bonus die to the target for every point of magnitude above 5.

If you want to stop someone performing a helping or hindering action, you can do so with an Active Defence action (page 14).

COMBAT

Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked is a heroic game. Action scenes and combats are not unusual, and even the not-so-good fighters among the Dragon-Marked have their chance to shine, emulating Sinbad the Sailor, Ala'ad-Din, or even the great names in the epic poems or chivalric romances (Saladin, Lancelot, or El Cid) and Mediterranean legends (Achilles, Gilgamesh, Hector, Herakles). Strength, honour, cleverness and luck drive the Dragon-Marked in their quest to defeat evil genies and demons, and to steal the treasure—or a kiss when they rescue the beautiful (or handsome!) captive.

Actions and Rounds

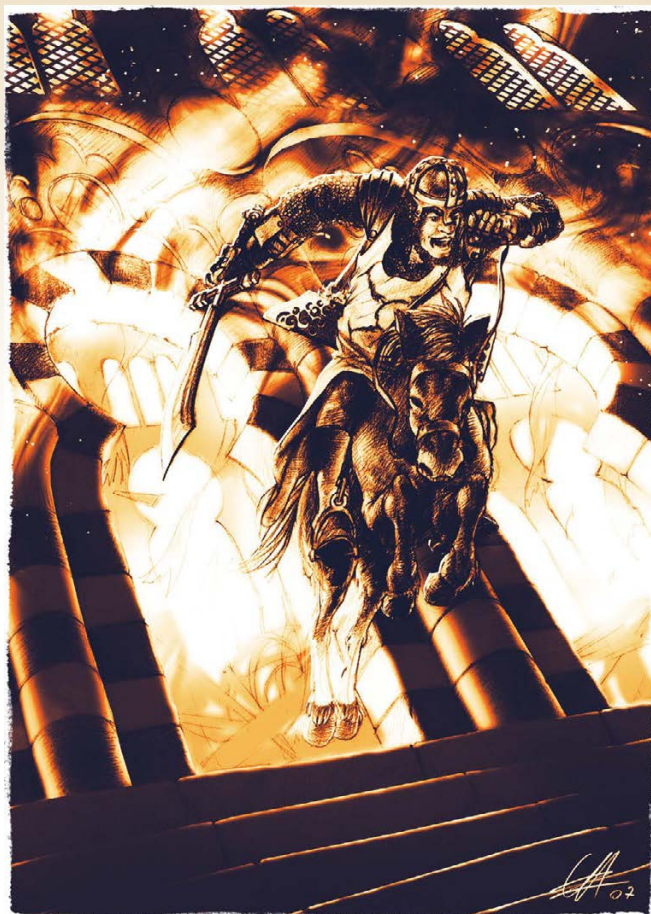
A combat is divided into **rounds** of about twelve seconds each. During one round all sorts of **actions** take place, the fighters run, attack, dodge, shout, jump, take cover, wound or are wounded. In each round, a character may do the following:

- **Take any number of the following free actions:** speak, drop an object, look at something, make a small gesture.
- **Take 2 of the following standard actions:** defend; parry; make an alert, cautious, defensive move of his DEX in metres; jump; manipulate something; and so on.
- **Take 1 attack action or cast 1 spell, plus any other standard action.**
- **Take 1 of the following double actions only:** a brutal attack, which does +6 damage if it succeeds.
- **Take a charge action, which takes up all of the current round, and an attack action in the following round, and which does +10 damage if it succeeds.**

See "Combat Actions" below (page 13) for more.

Initiative

When a round starts, each player rolls 1D6. The result indicates the order in which each character acts in a round, a higher result acting before a lower. This is known as **initiative**. Initiative is rolled at the beginning of every round.



Maximum Initiative

There's a limit to how quickly a character can act in a round, known as his **Maximum Initiative** score, or simply **Max Init**. To determine a character's Max Init, average his DEX, CON, and INT and add 1 to the result. (Generally you'll calculate Max Init when you create your character: it only changes when one of the attributes involved changes.)

$$\text{Max Init} = 1 + (\text{DEX} + \text{CON} + \text{INT})/3$$

When you roll 1D6 for initiative, if the die result is equal or higher than your Max Init, then you act at an Initiative score equal to your Max Init. If the 1D6 result is lower than your Max Init, then your Initiative is equal to the number shown on the die.

For example: Ralph's character has a Max Init of 4. At the start of the round he rolls 1D6 for Initiative and gets a 5. His Initiative for the round is 4.

Note that if you have a Max Init greater than 6, you roll 2D6 for initiative.

Acting in Initiative Order

Once you've determined everyone's initiative, Al-Rawi calls the highest Initiative score at the table. Any character with that Initiative score can then take his actions for that round. Once all actions for every character acting at that Initiative score are resolved, Al-Rawi calls the next lower Initiative score, and so on, continuing his countdown until 1. At Initiative 1, any character who hasn't yet taken his actions does so, or loses their chance for that round. Al-Rawi then announces the end of the round and the beginning of the next one (assuming the protagonists want to continue to act), and initiative is rolled again.

Note that if a character is performing an action that takes a number of actions to perform (such as a brutal attack or a charge), he rolls for the action at his Initiative score as normal, but may only take that action in that round. If he's rolling for an action which requires more than a round to complete (such as a Charge action), he acts at his Initiative score (having rolled for initiative again) on the following round.

For example: Ralph's character has an Initiative of 4 this round. He decides to Charge, letting him do more damage (see "Combat Actions", below). However, a Charge takes place as an attack action in the following round. Ralph takes no action in the current round (he can't even defend, as he's charging), and in the following round he rolls 3 for his Initiative. He acts at Initiative score 3 in that second round, completing his charge and making his attack.

Who Acts First in a Tie?

During a round, characters act in descending order of Initiative score. However, if more than one character acts at the same Initiative score, the character with the highest DEX goes first. If that also results in a tie, make an opposed roll (page 11) of DEX to see who goes first. It's often a good idea to jot down the initiative order to you can visualise it more easily.

If it's your turn to act, you can always **delay your action** to a later point in the initiative order and let other people go first if you wish. If you don't act in a given round, your action is lost: it doesn't carry over into the next round.

Combat Actions

A character may attempt all sorts of actions in a round. Talking is free, can be done at any point in the Initiative order, and doesn't require a dice roll. On the other hand, attacks, parries, and other feats take a certain amount of time and a certain number of actions. For example, although a simple sword strike only takes one action, charging an opponent by running, weapon in hand, to strike a violent blow takes 3 actions (and is called a **Charge**).

When you attack in combat, you make a roll of DEX + Fighting, which must exceed the target's **Passive Defence**, which is a fixed score (see Table 4: Duration of Combat Actions). Optionally, the target may immediately use one of his standard actions to make an **Active Defence**, which is a skill roll of DEX + Fighting (so the same as the normal attack roll). You may only make an Active Defence roll if you have unused actions remaining. If you roll a Critical Success on your Active Defence roll, you act before your opponent on the next round, regardless of initiative, and also gain +1 bonus die to whatever action you take. If you roll a Critical Failure on your Active Defence roll, you may not use your Soak against any damage caused by the attack. Note that any armour worn still applies.

The attacker must roll equal to or above the target's Passive or Active Defence to succeed. If an attack succeeds, it inflicts **damage** on the target. If it fails, it inflicts no damage. If an attack is a Critical Failure, your opponent automatically acts before you on the next round, regardless of initiative, and also gains +1 bonus die.

TABLE 4: DURATION OF COMBAT ACTIONS

NAME	DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Talk	0 actions	
Move	1 action	DEX in metres
Draw a weapon	1 action	
Normal Attack	1 action*	DEX + Fighting
Brutal Attack	2 actions	STR + Fighting, +6 damage
Charge Attack	3 actions**	STR or DEX + Fighting, +10 damage
Throw	1 action	DEX + Fighting, ranged attack
Any bow	2 actions	DEX + Fighting, ranged attack
Aiming	1 action	+1 bonus dice
Active Defence	1 action	DEX + Fighting
Passive Defence	0 actions	DEX + Athletics + 6
Disengage	2 actions	DEX + Athletics or Stealth
Cast a spell	1 action*	INT + Sacred Word
Break a tablet	1 action	

*you may only take one of these actions per round.

**your charge attack takes place at your initiative order in the following round.

Attacking at Range

On Table 9: Thrown Weapons and Table 10: Bows, you'll see that ranged weapons can be used at four possible ranges: Short, Medium, Long, and sometimes Extreme. The precise distances of each of these ranges is shown on the tables.

TABLE 5: COMBAT STATS

NUMBER	CALCULATION
Maximum Initiative	(DEX + CON + INT) / 3 + 1
Active Defence	DEX + Fighting; a skill roll.
Passive Defence	DEX + Athletics + 6; a static value, no dice roll.

Attacks become harder at range. Any attack roll for a thrown or ranged weapon at greater than short range incurs a penalty to the result: an attack at medium range incurs a -3 result penalty; at long range, a -6 penalty; and, at extreme range, a -12 penalty. This is summarised on Table 6: Thrown and Ranged Attack Penalties.

TABLE 6: THROWN AND RANGED ATTACK PENALTIES

RANGE	PENALTY TO THE RESULT
Short	No change; attack at your full ability.
Medium	-3 result penalty.
Long	-6 result penalty.
Extreme	-12 result penalty.

Critical Success vs Critical Failure

If your attack is a Critical Success and your opponent's Active Defence is a Critical Failure, your opponent is also disarmed, knocked to the ground, and at your mercy!

If your Active Defence is a Critical Success and your opponent's attack is a Critical Failure, you turn your opponent's attack back upon him, causing him to suffer the damage he would have inflicted on you!

Damage

When a character inflicts wounds on another character or monster (for example, by making a successful attack action in combat), a number of points of **damage** are done, equal to the character's STR, plus the weapon's damage bonus, plus the magnitude of the attack. Damage is **reduced** by the target's **Soak** score (page 18), representing his physical ability to soak up damage, as well as the **Armour Value** of any armour worn by the target, or any shield carried, or even of a carapace, hard hide, or other protection it possesses. If the attack magnitude was a critical success or better, Soak is ignored. Note that armour, however, continues to protect.

The remaining damage points are subtracted from the target's **Hit Points** (page 18).

Damage = STR + weapon damage + attack magnitude - Soak - Armour

TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF CRITICAL SUCCESS AND FAILURE RESULTS IN COMBAT	
CRITICAL RESULT	EFFECT
Critical Success on Attack	The damage the attacker does ignores the defender's Soak.
Critical Failure on Attack	The defender acts before the attacker on the next round, and gains 1 bonus die.
Critical Success on Active Defence	The defender acts before the attacker on the next round, and gains 1 bonus die.
Critical Failure on Active Defence	The damage the attacker does ignores the defender's Soak.
Critical Success on Attack vs Critical Failure on Active Defence	The defender is disarmed, knocked to the ground, and at the attacker's mercy.
Critical Success on Active Defence vs Critical Failure on Attack	The defender turns the attacker's attack back on him, causing the attacker to suffer the damage he would have inflicted on the defender.

TABLE 8: MELEE WEAPONS		
WEAPON	DAMAGE	DESCRIPTION
SHORT AND NON-LETHAL WEAPONS		
Aragonian Whip	DEX +3	
Choorā	STR +4	Triangular-bladed dagger.
Jambiya	DEX +3	Curved dagger.
Khanjar	STR +3	Wavy-bladed dagger.
Kick	STR +2	
Punch	STR	
LONG WEAPONS		
Agalanthian Trident	STR +8	
Hoplite Spear	STR +10	
Quarterian Lance	STR +8	
Rumh	STR +8	Poleaxe
ONE-HANDED WEAPONS		
Agalanthian Gladius	STR +8	
Common Axe	STR +8	
Espada Valladena	STR +6	Longsword with basket guard
Falkata (Aragon), Khedama (Kh'saaba) or Yatagan (Capharnaum), Kopis (Agalanthia)	STR +6	Double-edged straight sabre
Holy Quest Sword	STR +8	Double-edged heavy longsword
Military Flail	STR +8	
Orkadian Axe	STR +10	Double-bladed war axe
Sayf	STR +4	Short scimitar
Spatha (Agalanthia), Kaskara (Jazirat)	STR +8	Longsword
Suyuf (Capharnaum) or Shimshir (Kh'saaba)	STR +8	Long scimitar
War Mace	STR +10	
Bastard Weapons	+2 to damage if used two-handed	
Two-handed weapons	+4 to damage	

TABLE 9: THROWN WEAPONS			
WEAPON	DAMAGE	MINIMUM RANGE	SHORT / MEDIUM / LONG RANGE
Javelin / Throwing Axe	STR +8	2m	<20m / 20-40m / 40 – (STR x 10) m
Knife	STR +6	2m	<20m / 20-40m / 40 – (STR x 10) m
Sling	STR +1	2m	<20m / 20-40m / 40 – (STR x 10) m

TABLE 10: BOWS			
WEAPON	DAMAGE	MINIMUM RANGE	SHORT / MEDIUM / LONG RANGE
Jazirati recurved bow	STR +7	10 – DEX	<60m / 60-120m / 120-200m / 200-250m
Longbow	STR +9	12 – DEX	<60m / 60-120m / 120-200m / 200-250m
Short bow	STR +6	8 – DEX	<60m / 60-120m / 120-150m / +150m

TABLE 11: ARMOUR		
ARMOUR TYPE	ARMOUR VALUE*	DESCRIPTION
Shield	+1	
Partial armour	+1 (+2)	A helm, pieces of mail, leather doublet, epaulettes, etc.
Light armour	+3 (+4)	A helm, plus leather armour (may be studded), or ring or plate mail.
Heavy armour**	+6 (+7)	A helm, plus solid plate armour over mail.

* AV in brackets are if a shield is also carried.

** +3 difficulty to all rolls of Assassination, Athletics, Intrusion, Riding, Stealth, and Thievery.

Death Does Not Become You...

Killing is no fun, and heroes never kill gratuitously. The reason is simple: honour, bravery, and loyalty dictate that any enemy who surrenders or loses consciousness is considered “taken out” of combat and deserving of mercy. It’s common to see a defeated enemy become the best friend of the one who defeated him: Quarterian chivalric romances and Jazirati epic poetry are filled with such stories.

In game terms, when a character falls unconscious, he doesn’t automatically die (although he might if there’s no one there to treat him—see “Health and Wounds” on page 18). For a character to be killed, the attacker must, at the moment of attack, announce that he’s striking a lethal blow and intends to kill. If the target is below 0 HP (and therefore unconscious), he’s unable to defend himself, and Al-Rawi can simply decide any subsequent blow is a *coup de grace* and the victim is slain.

Champions, Valiant Captains and Babouche-Draggers

Capharnaum distinguishes three categories of combatant: Champions, Valiant Captains, and Babouche-Draggers.

Champions

Whether Dragon-Marked or not, Champions are tough, clever, and dangerous opponents. They use the combat rules as written. Dragon-Marked are always considered to be Champions, regardless of how good they actually are at fighting.

Valiant Captains

Although tough and pugnacious, Valiant Captains are only second-rate opponents. When a Dragon-Marked obtains a Critical Success when attacking a Valiant Captain (a magnitude of 6 or greater), the Valiant Captain is automatically considered to be taken out (dead, knocked-out, etc).

Babouche-Draggers

These guys don’t even have Hit Points! They’re the hordes of guards or bandits that rush up, their *babouche* slippers flapping and dragging along the floor, only to fly out of windows when hit by the weakest punch. You face six of them at a time in tavern brawls, a half-dozen city guards cornering you in an alleyway, and they act as a **group**, rolling just once for initiative and making just one attack

Optional Rule: The Epitaph

To reinforce the heroic and dramatic nature of Capharnaum, we recommend the Epitaph Rule.

According to this rule, when a character wants to summarily dispatch a foe that is already out of action, he must come up with an exemplary, panache-filled phrase like: “You were an admirable opponent, I have killed one thousand before finding one like you...” or even “It is over for you, you blackguard! Now go present yourself miserably before your pitiful ancestors!” And so on.

Al-Rawi is the judge of the Epitaph’s validity. If she doesn’t find the phrase sufficiently dramatic, funny, sad or incisive, she can declare the victim wasn’t dispatched. The character is assumed not to have had the guts to finish the job.

For example: Amin has just beaten a Myrmidon hired killer an old enemy sent after him. Dropping to -3 HP, the hired killer loses consciousness and is about to fall, when Amin’s player announces he wants to behead him before the body hits the floor. Amin cries “Run to hell and prepare a bed for the syphilitic son-of-a-bitch who sent you!”

Al-Rawi accepts the Epitaph. Amin twirls around while pronouncing these incisive words, and at the end of the twirl his scimitar detaches the head of the Myrmidon from his body, which collapses to the sand.

roll representing the accumulated attacks of all six Babouche-Draggers (or however many are left in the group). They’re the common soldiery. When a Dragon-Marked or Champion succeeds on an attack roll against a Babouche-Dragger group, he takes out a number of them equal to the magnitude of his success. If you’re confident, you can even swagger against Babouche-Draggers, taking out still more—these flailing minions should go down like cut grain before your sword!

For example: Dalila Bint Mimun Abd-al-Tarek, a Saabi courtesan-rogue, has been taken prisoner by a band of fearsome pirates who wish to sell her in a slave market somewhere on an island south of Kh’saaba. Having managed to untie her knots and climb from the hold of the pirate ship, she now confronts the pirates on deck. Al-Rawi announces that all the pirates except for the captain and the second-in-command are Babouche-Draggers.

Dalila throws herself into the melee: “I’m currently unarmed, so I’m going to take one swagger die to get myself a weapon. I run at the first one and grab the sword he has at his belt. When I draw it, my elbow violently hits the rascal’s jaw!”

Rolling 6/3 for her attack (DEX 4 + Fighting 2, with one swagger die), she gets 2, 2, 2, 5, 5, and 5. She keeps three dice for a result of 15. The Babouche-Dragger group’s Passive Defence is 12, so Dalila’s attack is a success, despite her swagger. She succeeded with a magnitude of 3, so Al-Rawi declares that, first, the unsavoury individual Dalila stole the sword from is beaten and taken out of combat. Moreover, two

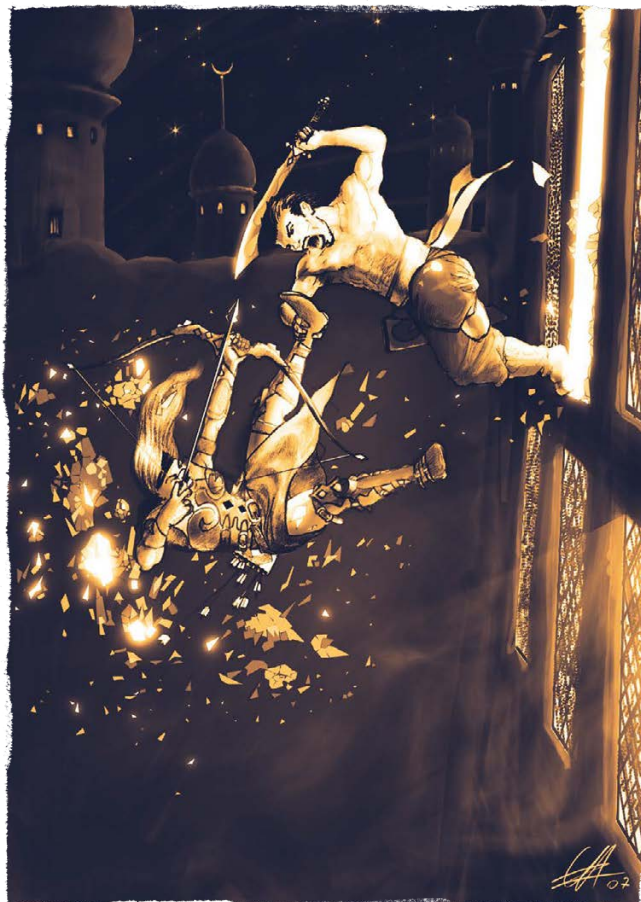
TABLE 12: OPPONENTS

Champions	Use the normal combat rules.
Valiant Captains	On a Critical Success, a Valiant Captain is dead, knocked out, taken out of the fight, etc.
Babouche-Draggers	No HP. Attack in groups of 6. One Babouche-Dragger is taken out for each point of magnitude on a successful attack. If more than half of the group taken out: Run away.

other pirates are also out of the fight: dragged back by the momentum of the pirate that was hit, they all crash down the steps to the hold and are knocked out...

When we provide stats for Babouche-Draggers (as for example on page 25), we do so as a group of 6. Instead of Hit Points, we just list their number.

Finally, Babouche-Draggers are rarely paragons of courage. If more than half the Babouche-Draggers in a group are beaten (so a minimum of four), the others flee.



Health and Wounds

Hit Points

Hit Points (HP) quantify a character's health and his ability to remain on his feet and continue to adventure. A human in good health generally has 10 – 60 Hit Points. This is a reserve that drops when the character is wounded or sick; when it drops to 0 or below, the character falls unconscious.

An unconscious character cannot act, and must be treated to regain consciousness and start to heal. A character who loses more than half his Hit Points in a single combat may suffer a **major wound**. A Dragon-Marked may always spend a point of Heroism at that instant to avoid that major wound.

Even if he has fewer than 0HP through illness or wounds, a character only dies in *Capharnaum* when he is dispatched (see the Epitaph Rule, page 17), or if Al-Rawi decides.

There are no other penalties connected to the character's health status or Hit Points. *Capharnaum* is a heroic game; a character fights hard until he drops.

Soak

Each character also has a **Soak** score. Soak represents his combativeness, his resistance to damage, and also the natural toughness of his skin, hide, carapace, and so on. Soak is equal to the sum of a character's CON and Heroism scores (page 10). Since Heroism is recalculated at the beginning of each game session, Soak is too.

When a character takes damage, the damage points are reduced by the Soak score, as well as the Armour Value of any armour he's wearing.

For example: After falling from a horse, Marina's character takes 9 points of damage. As her Soak is 6, she only loses 3 HP.

No Instant Healing?

Getting wounded is a serious business in Capharnaum. Even physicians can do little more than patch you up and then wait for nature to take its course. It's said that there are sorcerous spells of healing, using Tarmel Haja (page 18) such as Create Health, but sorcerers seem reluctant to use their powers for such apparently trivial ends...

Healing

Wounded characters may be treated by a difficulty 6 INT + Survival roll or INT + Science roll. The magnitude of the roll determines the number of HP the wounded character regains in the twenty-four hours following treatment. Thereafter, the wounded character recovers a number of HP equal to his Soak score for each day of rest, or half that if he insists on moving about.

MAGIC AND SORCERY

Magic in *Capharnaum* is both flexible and profound, with many applications and permutations. Here we're presenting the core principles of the improvisational form of magic known as the **Tarmel Haja**, particularly how it's performed by the **Al-Kimyati**, the sorcerers of the Saabi (both Assabi the Trader and Princess Karima, the pregenerated characters on pages 34 and 40, are Al-Kimyati, so this applies to them).

Tarmel Haja: The Divine Combinations

This term means "combination" in Saabi, and is used in *Capharnaum* to refer to magic in general, with the exception of Agalanthian magic or **Chiromancy** (see below). Indeed, the magics used by the Saabi, Shiradim, and Quarterians share a common foundation: the combination of elements, specific to each people, to obtain desired effects. When a sorcerer calls on the Tarmel Haja, he combines one of three magical actions—Create, Destroy, or Transform—with one or several **elements**, which may be physical things like sand, food, people, weapons, fire, or trees; or emotions such as fear, happiness, peace, or anger; or even more abstract concepts like health, beauty, speed, or dreams. In this way he affects his own environment, or himself, or even other people.

Sorcery in the Game

Sorcery uses the Sacred Word skill, representing a sorcerer's ability to call on his gods to obtain a magical effect. The sorceries of the Saabi, the Shiradim, and the Quarterians are based on three verbs, each of which is a specialisation of the Sacred Word skill:

- Sacred Word (Create)
- Sacred Word (Destroy)
- Sacred Word (Transform)

The Philosophy of the Sacred Words

The definitions of the Sacred Words Create, Destroy, and Transform are not those you'd find in a dictionary. Rather, they are philosophical terms, fundamental forces of the cosmos which the Tarmel Haja allows the sorcerer to invoke.

The Sacred Word **Create** represents the positive, creative force of the universe, that power broadly called "good". It creates wholesomeness and health, warmth and light, life, stability, law, and integrity. It can be used to oppose and counter manifestations of the Sacred Word Destroy, even those which haven't been created by sorcery. Thus, Create Health can be used to heal wounds, whether those wounds have been caused by weapons, injury, or magics such as Destroy Flesh.

The Sacred Word **Destroy** represents the negative, destructive force of the universe, that power broadly called "evil". It destroys wholesomeness and health, life and light, leaving instead sickness and wounds, darkness and chaos in its wake. Thus, if you want to "create" wounds, or fear, what you're actually doing, in philosophical, Tarmel Haja terms, is using the Sacred Word Destroy to destroy flesh, calm, peace, and so on.

That's why, when you learn certain elements, you automatically learn their opposite. If you know the element "light", for example, you automatically know "darkness". You can even write down "light / darkness" on your character sheet. In terms of the Tarmel Haja, you use Create + Light to cause light, and Destroy + Light to cause darkness.

The Sacred Word **Transform** represents the force of transformation in the world. It works to change one element into another, unrelated, and completely different element. Note that the element must already exist, and that, instead of being destroyed (which is the province of the Sacred Word Destroy), it must actually be transformed into another element. Thus, Sacred Word Transform may transform sand into water, or a person into a camel. The sand or person must already exist, even if they have been created by Sacred Word Create. Note that Sacred Word Transform always requires two elements, even if those elements may sometimes be improvised (page 20).

The Effects of Magic

To cast a spell in *Capharnaum*, first declare the Sacred Word and elements that you're using, then describe the effect you're trying to achieve. Then make a roll of INT + Sacred Word: the difficulty is 15, unless your target is a living thing, in which case the difficulty is equal to a roll of its INT + Willpower (called a **resistance roll**). If you succeed, you get to "spend" the magnitude of your roll on Table 13: Magical Effect Parameters to determine your spell's exact effect in terms of the game rules.

For example: Nazir is trying to set fire to the robes worn by Hakim, his rival, to show off to his peers. He succeeds with a magnitude of 2. He chooses to allocate the magnitude as follows:

- *Target: 1 (0 magnitude). It's just Hakim that Nazir is aiming at.*
- *Duration: 1 round (1 magnitude). Nazir wants to make Hakim look ridiculous, so he wants the fire to burn for at least one round.*
- *Range: 5m (1 magnitude). Hakim isn't right next to Nazir.*
- *Damage: 5 HP (0 magnitude). This is a small amount of damage, pretty much a side effect of the greater goal of making Hakim look ridiculous. If Nazir had just wanted to harm Hakim, he could have reduced the duration to 1 action (0 magnitude) and put 1 magnitude into damage, doing 10HP.*

The robe catches fire, doing 5 HP damage to Hakim, who departs, his tail between his legs.

Describing a Spell Effect

When you describe a spell effect, you combine one of the three Sacred Words (you'll usually only know one to begin with) with one or more **elements** (you'll usually know several to begin with). If you don't know a specific element, you may **improvise** it, but each element improvised increases the difficulty of the spell-casting by +6.

Some elements may be **broadly-defined** or **narrowly-defined**. This is often a subjective decision, and may depend on the actual spell being cast—if in doubt, discuss it with Al-Rawi. Broadly-defined elements are more widely applicable, but increase the casting

TABLE 13: MAGICAL EFFECT PARAMETERS

MAGNITUDE	DURATION	RANGE	TARGETS	AREA / VOLUME*	HP	ATT	VIRTUE	SKILL	DMG / AV**
0	1 action	1m	1	1	5	+0	+0	+0	+/-1
1	1 rd	5m	2	2	10	+/-1	+0	+/-1	+/-2
2	1 min	10m	5	5	20	+/-1	+/-1	+/-2	+/-3
3	15 min	50m	10	10	30	+/-2	+/-1	+/-3	+/-4
4	1 hr	100m	20	20	40	+/-2	+/-1	+/-4	+/-5

* The area unit is the m², the volume unit is the litre, except for rare or precious materials, in which case the unit of measurement is the ounce.
 ** Applies to increases or decreases in weapon damage or Armour Value.
 Al-Rawi may modify the difficulty of the Sacred Word roll for any effects which are not represented in the above table.

difficulty by +3. Narrowly-defined elements are more restricted in their approach and applicability, but reduce the casting difficulty by -3. Elements which are neither broad nor narrow are referred to as **normally-defined**. This means that spells using narrowly-defined elements are much easier to cast.

For example, if Assabi the Trader (page 34) tries to cast a spell to transform sand into water (very useful in the desert!), he faces a difficulty of only 9 rather than 15 because both elements are narrowly-defined.

Targeting a Spell

Some elements, such as emotions, by definition must affect a person, so it isn't necessary to include a target as an element in a spell creating, transforming or destroying emotions. If you Create Joy, Create Dreams, etc, then a target is automatically affected.

However, physical objects don't automatically have targets. Create Fire, etc, simply creates a fire, right in front of you. In order to set a person on fire, or to fill their lungs with water, you must

include a target element in your spell which explicitly references that person. If you don't, you're improvising an element, which increases the difficulty by +6.

For example, if Assabi wants to transform the water in the tears of his enemy into sand (ouch!), then he needs a target element, such as Person. He doesn't have one, so he must improvise, which automatically increases the difficulty by +6: the target makes a resistance roll (page 19), and adds +6 to the result. If Assabi succeeds, he allocates his magnitude on Table 13: Magical Effect Parameters, to determine exactly what the spell does.

On average, Assabi will have a magnitude of 2. He could choose to inflict 10 points of damage (costing 1 magnitude) to 1 target (costing 0 magnitude) within 5 metres (1 magnitude); or he could inflict 5 damage (0 magnitude) on 2 targets (1 magnitude) within 5 metres (1 magnitude). Alternatively, if his target is within 1 metre (0 magnitude), he could choose to inflict a -1 penalty on the target's skill rolls (1 magnitude) for 1 combat round (1 magnitude).

The more powerful your spell is (the higher the magnitude) the more you can do!

Supplementary Elements

Sometimes your character may know a magical element which isn't strictly necessary for the spell, but which could clearly play a supporting role. Each of these **supplementary elements** reduces the casting difficulty by -3.

The Ancient Arts

The tribes of the Saabi have preferred ways of using their magic. Some prefer to sing their spells; some declaim epic poetry, or tragic verse; others still pluck upon the heartstrings with gladness. These ways are based on the Ancient Arts of the Agalanthians, imported into Jazirat millennia ago. A Saabi Al-Kimyati (sorcerer) doesn't have to use his tribe's preferred art when casting a spell (declaiming epic verse in the middle of combat may be inappropriate, to say the least), but if he does, he gains a **bonus die** (page 9) on his Sacred Word skill roll to cast the spell.

In the pregenerated characters on page 34, Assabi the Trader uses Astronomy and Astrology by preference, calling upon the mother goddess Al-Uzza. Princess Karima's preferred method of spellcasting is to sing her spells, praising the god Hubal.

Using "All or Nothing" Magic

If you try to cast a spell such as Destroy Life on a character, then you need to achieve a HP damage magnitude at least equal to the target's total Hit Points to have an effect. Otherwise, the spell simply has no effect. This is why spells like Destroy Flesh are better:

Magical Elements

The following elements may change from being broadly, normally, or narrowly defined based on the context of the spell. Generally, however, they fall into the categories below.

BROADLY-DEFINED ELEMENTS	NORMALLY-DEFINED ELEMENTS	NARROWLY-DEFINED ELEMENTS
Animal	Feline	Cat
The Elements (air, etc)	Fire	Flame
Plant	Tree	Palm Tree
Food	Meat	Beef
Sense	Sight	
Weapon	Bladed Weapon	Scimitar
Body	Organ	Heart
Person	Man / Woman / Child	You / Me / Amir
Treasure	Jewel	Ruby
Attribute	Strength	Lifting ability
Health / Unhealthiness	Recovery / Injury	Healing / Wound
Cloth	Clothing	Boots

Detecting Magic

Any character is capable of detecting magic, whether a sorcerer or not. It's a roll of INT + Willpower against a difficulty set by Al-Rawi, based on the proximity and power of the magic in question (figure a base difficulty of 15 for a non-sorcerer, maybe 9 for a sorcerer). The magnitude of the result determines how much the character perceives about the magic detected.

they create wounds, reducing HP based on the HP damage magnitude of the spell.

But what about spells like Transform Person to Sand? If your intention is to do damage, Al-Rawi may decide such spells have an incremental effect, withering away body parts by transforming them to sand. In other words, the spells do HP damage based on their magnitude. Such damage is probably only healable by spells such as Transform Sand to Flesh. On the other hand, if you're trying to incapacitate someone for a short period, then you should spend your magnitude on range, targets and duration, as that sand will reform into people once the spell ends! Spells like this are obviously much more effective against Babouche-Draggers, and thoroughly spectacular!

Other Types of Sorcerers

The Agalanthians, Shiradim, and Quarterians have variations on the above magic of the Tarmel Haja, and indeed there's still more to say about how the Al-Kimyati of the Saabi work their spells. All this and more is described in the *Capharnaum* core book.

Predefined Spells

Characters will often find themselves casting the same spells, even when using the improvised magic of the Tarmel Haja. Indeed, it's possible to create lists of predefined spells, which Al-Rawi and the players may sometimes find useful.

The Costs of Magic

*It may appear that characters may make unlimited use of magic. In these Quickstart Rules, that's pretty much the case. However, there are darker sides and perils faced by those who gives themselves up too much to its practise, and sorcerers tend to be reluctant to cast spells too frivolously. The *Capharnaum* core book provides much more detail on this.*



So what can Assabi do with his spells?

Assabi the Trader, the pregenerated character on page 34, has learned some minor magics of transformation which he uses in case of need during his caravan expeditions. He commonly transforms sand into water, bread, and even semolina rice meal.

He doesn't really think of his magic as offensive, but more than once he's transformed the water in a foe's eyes into sand. Ouch!

And how about Princess Karima?

Princess Karima (page 40) knows magic which is all about communicating, especially emotions such as calm and friendship. She often uses Create Amity to defuse conflicts or violent situations. She can also use Create Communication on a single target to enable them to understand, say, another tongue; or on two or more targets to permit those who don't share a common language to communicate.

A common approach is to have a broadly-defined target (Person, Place, etc), and a narrowly-defined object (Flame, Love, Fear, etc). The +3 and -3 difficulty modifiers both end up balancing out, producing a spell with an overall difficulty modifier of +0.

For example: Princess Karima often casts a spell she calls Hand of Friendship. It uses the Sacred Word Create and the narrowly-defined element Amity. She can cast it at range, but she prefers to touch the target, who may resist. She casts it at a -3 difficulty modifier, and uses the magnitude to determine the number of targets and the length of time the friendship lasts.

Predefined spells like this may be found in ancient writings, and may have unusual effects. Players may also want to create their own. Many examples of predefined spells are provided in the *Capharnaum* core book.

Agalanthians and Chiromancy

Chiromancy is also called Fate Magic, since it alters the fates of people, animals and things by calling on the gods to intervene. It's the second main type of magic used in Capharnaum, alongside the Tarmel Haja. Chiromancy uses clay tablets, specially created and imbued with magic by sorcerers known as Chiromancers. These tablets must be broken for the magical effect they contain to be activated or released. Chiromancers alone have the knowledge needed to impregnate the clay with this request to the gods, but anyone may break a tablet.

Chiromancy has led to a very lucrative trade in enchanted tablets, pejoratively dubbed "Money Magic" by non-Agalanthians. These foreigners believe magic is free and instantaneous, and the fact that Chiromancy is prepared in advance and can be sold is considered a perversion. But, for the Agalanthians, Chiromancy is beneficial, since it is within anyone's reach. There's no need to study for years to learn magic: simply buy the tablet you need, and break it at the right time.

In the city states of Agalanthia, gifting Chiromancy tablets is common. Tablets against disease are often given as birth gifts, so a mother can heal her child from the most current illnesses. Many a traveller orders tablets to guarantee his trip, to make the winds favourable, calm the waters. What other magic can do the same?

Full rules for Chiromancy are provided in the Capharnaum core book.

ADVANCEMENT

Characters in *Capharnaum* are not static. As you adventure, you will see your character grow and change, and forge a place for himself in the world. First of all, your Heroic Virtues will fluctuate during play, depending on your character's behaviour and the use you make of them. But also, when you complete a scenario, Al-Rawi will award your character **adventure points**, which you may spend to improve your skills and attributes, advance on your chosen paths, and develop new abilities.

You may earn anywhere from 10-30 adventure points from a single scenario, depending on its length and complexity. You can then spend those points to increase, say, one of your skills by +1, at a cost in AP equal to the new skill score x 10. So to increase a skill from 1 to 2 costs 20AP.

There are lots of other things you can do with adventure points; full rules for advancement are given in the *Capharnaum* core book.

CHAPTER 2

THE TEARS OF AMPHAROOL

The Tears of Ampharool is an introductory scenario for *Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked*, designed to be played with the simplified version of the rules provided in this book. It offers a group of up to five characters a “call to adventure”, introducing them to the *Capharnaum* setting and rules. We’ve provided 5 pregenerated character on page 34 so you can get playing right away.

For maximum game fun, if you’re a player of *Capharnaum*, we recommend you stop reading here (although you can take a look at the pregenerated characters on page 34). The events of the scenario described below should only be read by Al-Rawi, who will reveal them to you during play.

In a sense, there are two adventures here, depending upon whether the players initially accept the call to adventure or not. Each of these two adventures should be playable in one session of a few hours; we also provide guidance for linking the two parts together into a single, larger adventure of a couple of sessions of play.

If you enjoy this adventure, be sure to check out the whole range of products for *Capharnaum – The Tales of the Dragon-Marked*!

OVERVIEW

The player characters are travelling by trade caravan from a village in the north of the Saabi Kingdom of Kh’saaba, across the Aram-la El-Nar, the Desert of Fire, to the city of Carrassine in distant *Capharnaum* (see the map on the inside front cover of this book for more). During their journey, the caravan is beset by a great sandstorm, from which they are attacked by mysterious, perhaps ghostly assailants. After the storm, they see the mirage of a fabulous palace above the sands, and the promise of adventure. Depending upon whether they answer this call to adventure, the player characters participate in magical events linked to an ancient betrayal, with profound consequences...

ONCE UPON A TIME

The story of the fabulous palace of the mirage goes back two thousand years, to a period when the whole of Jazirat was under Agalanthian rule. It belonged to a Saabi king, Khawani Ibn Safi, whose dynasty had long been served by a friendly djinn named Ampharool. Ampharool loved the company of men, and Khawani neglected his harem to spend his nights debating with his magical companion.

Ampharool proved unwise, and told the king secrets about the djinn and the nature of magic. This forbidden knowledge preyed upon Khawani’s mind, who saw an opportunity to rid his lands of the Agalanthian invader. He became obsessed with the powers of sorcery, learning all he could from the djinn. Eventually, he used the secrets to bind Ampharool into an oil lamp, which he locked in a secret room, then exploited his new abilities to create the first flying carpets, intending to equip all his troops with them to expel the Agalanthian occupier and conquer Jazirat.

Khawani never completed his plans. Horrified by his father’s warrior ambitions and the consequences they might have, his daughter and heir, Princess Shahira, poisoned him. The patricide was the end of the Khawani dynasty. Bereft of the wise counsel and magical protection of Ampharool, the kingdom was plunged into chaos, cursed by internecine struggles, the death of the whole family, and the destruction of Khawani’s palace at the hands of the vengeful Agalanthian army.

But Ampharool remained, imprisoned in the lamp locked in the palace ruins, swallowed by desert sand. The lamp’s magic prevented Ampharool from leaving without outside help, unable to end even his own life.

For almost two thousand years, Ampharool has been trying to escape. He has discovered a stellar conjunction which has allowed him to manipulate time, calling strangers into the distant past, to the moment when King Khawani was about to imprison him. For the three days this conjunction lasts every year, courageous souls can journey to this event. For those who refuse the journey, a magical mirage of the abandoned palace awaits, as it was during Am-

pharool's long imprisonment before it fell to ruin. The djinn hopes that the brave will prevent him from being imprisoned; or that the meek will be forced to search for his lamp and set him free.

The Dragon-Marked receive the call to adventure. Will they heed it?

PROLOGUE: THE CARAVAN OF ASSABI IBN YUSSEF

The characters are at the gates of a village in northern Kh'saaba, one of the departure points for caravans crossing the Desert of Fire. Caravans are the village's mainstay, being the last stop before the sand begins. One is ready to leave for the north, towards Capharnaum and Carrassine.

A departing caravan is a large beast slowly awakening. Some people travel on the backs of dromedaries, but most walk. Each person knows where they should be in its long train before departure, and only starts moving when their turn comes. Travellers are situated at the centre, commodities and resources at the front and

back. There are sheep and oxen to be used for food during the trip, and dromedaries carrying food and equipment.

The Player Characters

We've provided 5 pregenerated characters starting on page 34 to get you playing right away. All are Dragon-Marked, just at the start of their journeys to herodom. They are:

- **Assabi Ibn Yussef Abd-Al-Salif**, the leader of the caravan, a magic-wielding master trader with a golden tongue.
- **Eloim Bar Sibias**, a Shiradi physician sworn to protect those in his charge from all harm—whether from sickness, injury, or foe...
- **Carmen de la Mancha**, an Aragonian campeador and whip-wielding duellist, an adventurer far from home.
- **Karima Bint Aziz Abd-Al-Salif**, a Saabi princess of thieves, travelling with her bodyguard.
- **Wafik Ibn Khalil-Abd-Al-Salif**, bodyguard to Princess Karima, who rides a dragon-like *abzul*.



Some Caravan Members

There are close to 70 people travelling in the caravan with the heroes. The main ones are:

- Thabaki, the Saabi caravan cook.
- Jalal, leader of the Saabi mercenaries, a Valiant Captain in charge of 6 Babouche-Draggers (page 16).
- Hind Safi, the caravan guide, who makes sure the caravan takes the right path through the often trackless desert.
- Cyra, a rich cloth merchant and old friend of Assabi, travelling with her retinue.
- Abarrane, an old Shiradi traveller and wise woman.

Travelling in the Desert

Traveling across the desert by day is hard. The sun burns, it's hot, you're always thirsty and bored, or else you need to be constantly vigilant.

At noon, some tents are pitched for a few hours, to await the sun moving from its zenith. It's a time for drinking and eating, treating sick beasts and maybe reorganising the caravan. Then it's back on the trail. At nightfall, the caravan stops and sets camp. It takes more than one hour to pitch the tents, organise the watch, make the meal, and so on. A good caravan is judged by its efficiency when setting up and striking camp.

The three first days go by quietly. The convoy is too close to the border of the desert for anything to happen.

The Sandstorm

The fourth day dawns with a different feel, a certain tension in the air. Have the characters make difficulty 9 INT + Survival rolls to detect that a storm is coming.

By mid-afternoon a whole wall of sand, perhaps a kilometre high, rushes in from the horizon in a suffocating dust storm.

If the characters detected the coming of the storm, they may be prepared. Al-Rawi, let any reasonable idea work. Perhaps they'll reinforce the camp, covering their faces against the driving sand, or even use Assabi's magic to Transform Sand to Water and create a localised rainstorm, clearing some of the air. If they don't prepare for the storm, they suffer 1 penalty die on all dice rolls as they cough and splutter, blinded and disoriented.

Voices of War

At some point, have the characters make difficulty 9 INT + Notice rolls. On a success, they hear strange voices shouting war cries in the storm. They have moments to prepare, before the caravan is attacked!

The attackers aren't common bandits. They're strangely dressed warriors, as if this were a war. Characters making difficulty 12 INT

The Ghostly Warriors (1 group of 6 Babouche-Draggers)

Number: 6

Max Init: 3

Passive Defence: 11

Soak: 4

Attacks/Active Defences: *Sayf*/short scimitar 5/2 +7 damage.

+ Fighting rolls may realise they're armed and armoured like the Agalanthians of old (a bit like ancient Greeks); characters making difficulty 9 INT + Willpower rolls will detect uncanny magics at work! (See "Detecting Magic" on page 21.)

The ancient warriors attack for at least 2 rounds—more if Al-Rawi wishes—before mysteriously vanishing into the storm. By preference, they attack defenceless members of the caravan, and will easily kill them if not opposed. The members of the caravan cry out for the Dragon-Marked to rise to the occasion and defend them. Do the PCs jump in to fight the warriors and protect the victims? If so, award each character a star of Bravery (page 10)!

Run this first combat using the rules on page 12. The ancient ghostly warriors are treated as Babouche-Draggers, and there are 2 groups of them, each of 6 warriors. That means, Al-Rawi, that they roll for two attacks each round (not twelve!) against the heroes. Also, because they're Babouche-Draggers, they don't have Hit Points; one Babouche-Dragger is taken out for every point of magnitude on a successful attack (see page 16 for more).

The Call to Adventure!

As the sandstorm clears, the shimmering image of a splendid and uncanny palace appears on the horizon—a mirage! The characters may make a difficulty 6 INT + Knowledge or INT + History & Peoples roll to realise that a mirage is a magical place—a call to adventure!

Do the characters answer this call to adventure, and head towards the shimmering palace? Or do they try to pass it by? Al-Rawi, remind the players that their characters bear the Dragon-Mark on their backs, that they feel they're pulled towards a momentous destiny...

If they accept, go to "The Lost City of Ampharool" below. If they try to avoid the call to adventure and press on to their destination, go to "The Palace of Bones" on page 30.

THE LOST CITY OF AMPHAROOL: ACCEPTING THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

Al-Rawi, award each one of the Dragon-Marked who accepted the call to adventure a star of Bravery (page 10). This is what it means to be a hero!

A Mysterious City in Turmoil

As the heroes head towards the mirage, they find themselves walking through the streets of a city of strange buildings named Ampharool, teeming with people—a city that wasn't there a moment ago! The people around them are agitated and panicking—their king, Khawani, is trying to imprison a djinn named Ampharool, which has been a friend and ally of his dynasty for generations, to harness its power and cast off the yoke of the Agalanthians occupying the city. A difficulty 6 History & Peoples roll reveals that the fallen and decadent Agalanthians haven't been able to occupy cities in Jazirat for centuries. Astute characters may recognise the styles of the armour and weapons of the Agalanthian guards here and there in the city as the same as the ghostly warriors who attacked the caravan during the sandstorm. There's even talk of an Agalanthian army massing outside the city walls in response to the king's treachery...

The fabulous palace the heroes saw in the mirage stands before them in the heart of the city. It's glowing with magical energies which flash and flicker—the signs of a sorcerous duel within.

The palace looks like it could house about a hundred people. Its construction is reminiscent of the Saabi style, but is different in a few details: the dome is less spread out, the windows are narrower, the spikes on top of the fences and grills are spear-shaped and not rounded, and so on. The city of Ampharool is built in a similar style. On a difficulty 12 INT + History & Peoples roll, a character can figure out it is an extremely ancient style—perhaps the mirage has taken them back to the distant past!

Tea

The tea ceremony is a way of showing hospitality, and a pretext for talking with a passing visitor. It's not very polite to refuse tea, or not to drink the three teas. The same leaves are used to brew three servings: the first tea is as bitter as life, the second as strong as love, and the third as sweet as death.

The Stars Are Wrong...

If the heroes are still in Ampharool at night, at any moment they may make a difficulty 6 INT + Survival roll to notice that the stars in the sky are not in the right position for the place where the caravan stopped (Assabi may make an INT + Notice roll—he's a bit of a specialist when observing the stars). With a magnitude 2 success or higher, they may notice a constellation shine that has not been visible for many centuries.

The Dragon-Mark

At some point, the heroes will feel pulled to intervene. Such foolishness by the king! The city is on the brink of disaster.

Al-Rawi, if the characters are not deliberately hiding their Dragon-Mark, the city folk will directly ask them for their aid. They may even be invited to the delicate pavilion, billowing with drapes, of the Princess Shahira, daughter of the king, who offers them tea, and begs for their help in stopping Khawani from imprisoning Ampharool, the ancestral protector of the city.

If the heroes agree, Princess Shahira will gift them with a crystal vial containing 3 doses of the *Draught of the Magi*, each of which gives the drinker one additional Dragon Die (page 9) for one roll only. All three may be drunk at the same time for +3 Dragon Dice. Use them wisely!

Getting into the Palace

If the PCs refuse the city people's request for help, go to "If the PCs Fail..." on page 30.

The Royal Palace is guarded at all its doors by guards loyal to King Khawani. To get into the palace and confront the king, the heroes will have to get past them.

Again, Al-Rawi, let any reasonably well thought-out plan work. It's a difficulty 12 DEX + Stealth roll to sneak past the guards, but **everyone** has to roll, and any failure immediately alerts 2 guards (see below). Perhaps Eloim Bar Sibias (page 36) has some more subtle ideas?

The guards are also superstitious and very nervous: after all, there's a major magical confrontation going on just behind them! Maybe they can be distracted with some clever deception using the Acting skill (difficulty 9), or browbeaten and even driven away with some heavy-handed Intimidation (difficulty 12)? Or perhaps Princess Karima can work her magic and befriend the guards (difficulty 9)?

Failing everything, of course, the heroes can simply run screaming at the guards, weapons drawn. They'll face 2 guards, who will resist most earnestly!

The Palace Guard (Valiant Captains)

Hit Points: 40

Max Init: 5

Passive Defence: 14 (15) Soak: 7

Attacks/Active Defences: Falkata straight sabre 8/4 +9 damage; Shield 9/4

Inside the Palace

Once past the guards, the heroes are inside the palace. It's actually deserted—everyone with any sense fled as soon as the duel began! The flashing lights and terrible thundering of the magical duel is coming from the Great Tower, directly ahead.

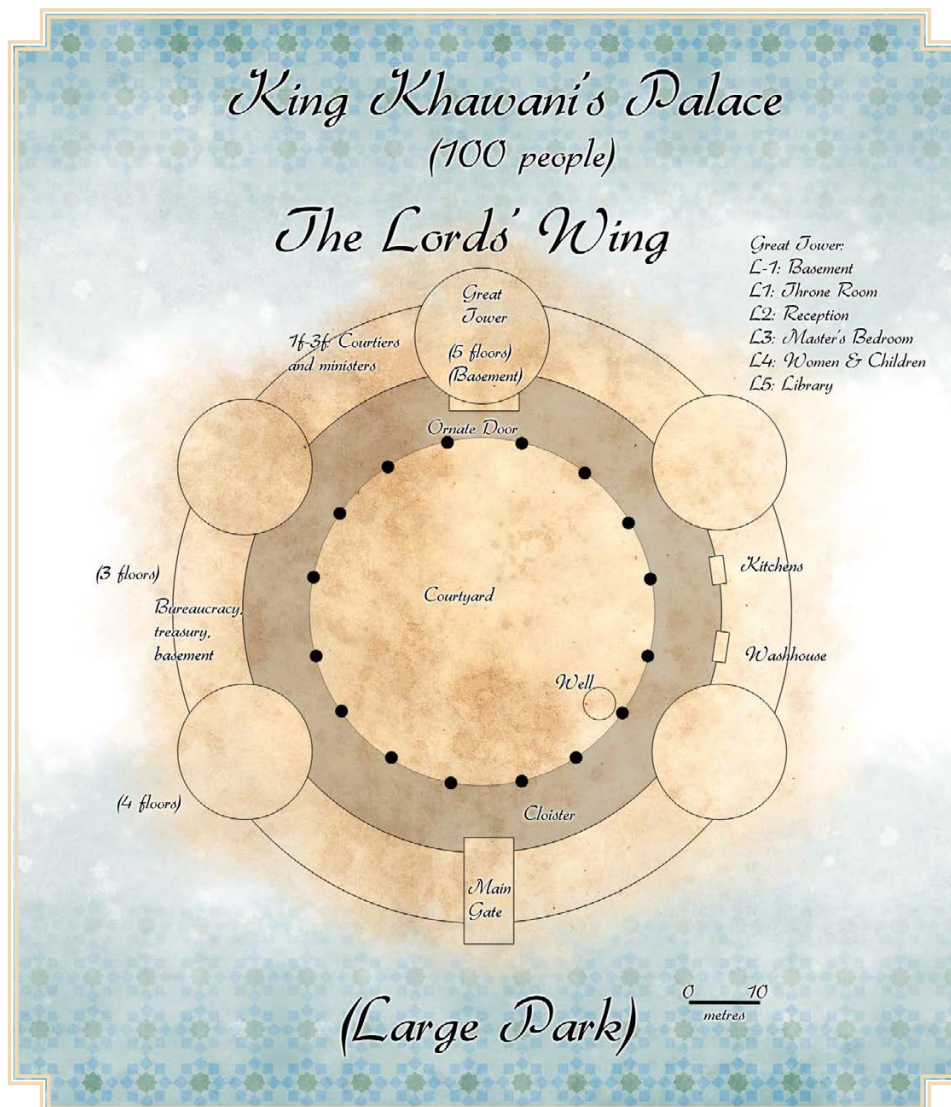
The palace has a ground floor, two upper floors, and five towers. Two towers stand at either side of the main gate, and another two are set symmetrically at the back of the building. These four towers have four floors. Finally, the fifth tower is located opposite the main gate and has five floors.

The palace entrance gate, probably where the PCs enter, leads to a large circular inner courtyard. To the right there is a well, a wash-house, and a door. The door leads to the servants' wing. The ground floor of the right wing makes up the kitchens. In front, a large ornate door leads to the great tower sharing the wing of the lord of the place. The upper floors of the building house the rooms for the courtiers and ministers; those of the tower house the audience room, the reception room, the master's bedroom, the floor of the women and children and, finally the library. As mentioned above, the Great Tower is riven by magical tremors.

The left wing of the palace houses the bureaucracy, the treasurer, and so on. It's the only one to have a basement, with a huge, brass-bound stone door, locked and protected by a hidden but ingenious mechanism.

It's a difficulty 15 INT + Intrusion roll to detect the mechanism, and then a difficulty 12 DEX + Intrusion roll to deactivate it. Picking the lock of the door is difficulty 9 DEX + Intrusion, but is +6 difficulty harder if the character doesn't have a proper set of lock-picks. In any case, picking the lock without disarming the mechanism causes the surround of the lock to spring open, rotate, close on the lockpicker's hands, then rotate 360°, tearing the hands off at the wrists!

This automatically costs the victim ½ his total Hit Points, and constitutes a major wound (page 18). The victim has one chance to avoid the trap, requiring a difficulty 9 DEX + Athletics roll. On a failure, the lockpicker loses a hand; on a critical failure, he loses both hands. A Dragon-Marked character may spend a point of Heroism to avoid the major wound; in this case, the character doesn't lose a hand, but rather has their hands badly mangled, suffering a number of penalty dice equal to the magnitude of their failure until healed. They still lose ½ their maximum Hit Points.



Opening the door leads to the king's treasury. There's enough wealth here to literally buy a kingdom. Al-Rawi, let the characters steal as much as they want, encumbering themselves almost to immobility if they want to. Neither the city folk, guards, nor Princess Shahira will take kindly to the theft, and in any case none of the treasure can be taken out of the mirage.

The Battle Between the King and His Djinn

The battle the Dragon-Marked have come to stop is raging in the Throne Room of the Great Tower. There, ten metres from the heroes, King Khawani has used his sorcery to immobilise the djinn, Ampharool, and is reducing his Willpower to 0 to force him into the Lamp of Holding he carries in his hand. Khawani has also cast a "Protect Me" Command spell on the djinn, meaning Ampharool can't attack him, and also will attack anyone trying to harm the king—such as the Dragon-Marked!

The battle is almost over when the heroes arrive, Ampharool almost defeated. Can the characters free the djinn and save the day?

How the PCs Can Win

Al-Rawi, make no mistake—this is a tough encounter, and the Dragon-Marked may die! However, winning isn't impossible—Khawani is distracted and acts last in the first round, and any reasonably well thought-out plan has a chance of success. Here are some ideas for how the PCs might be victorious.

Killing Khawani

This is the most obvious and unsubtle plan, but it's a good one! If the Dragon-Marked kill the king, his magic will fail, releasing Ampharool from his immobilisation. Note that this won't work if Ampharool is already imprisoned in the Lamp of Holding, however.

Dispel the Magic Affecting Ampharool

This is a more sophisticated solution, but more complex. First of all, the characters need to know precisely what magic is affecting the djinn. This is an INT + Willpower roll (see "Detecting Magic" on page 21), with a difficulty of 12 for non-sorcerers, and a difficulty of 6 for sorcerers, with the following results based on the magnitude of success:

- **Normal Success (1 magnitude):** Ampharool is clearly under the influence of a powerful spell!
- **Good or Very Good Success (2-3 magnitude):** The spell is a spell of destruction, ie uses Sacred Word (Destroy).

King Khawani

STR: 2

Max Init: 5

CON: 3

HP: 30

DEX: 4

Soak: 6

INT: 4

Passive Defence: 10

CHA: 3

Legend: 3

- ◇ **Skills:** Command 5, Elegance 6, Endurance 3, Fighting 4, Flatter 4, Intimidation 5, Prayer 1, Sacred Word 6, Save Face 3, Science 3, Training 2, Unctuous Bargaining 4, Willpower 2
- ◇ **Attacks/Active Defences:** *Jambiya* curved dagger 8/4 +7 damage
- ◇ **Armour:** Light Armour (AV: 3)
- ◇ **Magic:** *Sacred Words:* Create, Transform, Destroy; *Elements:* Ampharool, Armour, Dust, Fear, Flesh, Intelligence, Movement, Obedience, Person, Size, Strength, Willpower.
- ◇ **Special Items:** *Lamp of Holding:* Specially enchanted to hold any being with a Willpower of 0 which wills itself to enter it, or is commanded to enter it, regardless of size. Willpower may have been reduced to 0 temporarily by magic or other means. If the lid is replaced, the being is trapped, until the lid is opened again.
- ◇ **Notes:** Khawani has several spells he commonly casts, as follows. The casting difficulty modifiers are in brackets; note that he may cast them on Ampharool with a -3 difficulty bonus.
 - **Cause Fear (+0 diff):** Using Destroy, Calm.
 - **Cause Wounds (+3 diff):** Khawani jabs his dagger from a distance, using Destroy, Flesh, Person.
 - **Command (+3 diff):** Using Create, Obedience, Person (or Ampharool at -3 diff).
 - **Drain Strength (+3 diff):** Using Destroy, Strength, Person.
 - **Drain Will (+3 diff):** Using Destroy, Willpower, Person.
 - **Immobilise (+3 diff):** Using Destroy, Movement, Person. Targets may not make Movement actions.
 - **Shrink (+3 diff):** Using Destroy, Size, Person.
 - **Turn to Dust (+0 diff):** Using Transform, Person, Dust.

Ampharool (Weakened)

STR: 2 Max Init: 5
 CON: 3 HP: 30
 DEX: 4 Soak: 9
 INT: 4 Passive Defence: 10
 CHA: 3 Legend: 6

- ◇ **Skills:** Athletics 6, Endurance 6, Fighting 6, History & Peoples 3, Sacred Word 6, Storytelling 4, Survival 5, Willpower 6 (3).
- ◇ **Attacks/Active Defences:** Bastard *Suyuf* long scimitar 12/6 +16 (+19 2-handed) damage
- ◇ **Armour:** None
- ◇ **Special Abilities:** Ampharool has the following special abilities. For this Quickstart, treat them as magical spells using INT + Sacred Word.
 - 1 Dragon Die
 - Elemental Fury
 - Gaseous Form
 - Hallucination
 - Healing
 - Immolation
 - Lightning
 - Shapechange
 - Teleportation
- ◇ **Notes:** Ampharool has been immobilised by Khawani and currently rages in impotent fury, lamenting the terrible betrayal. He shudders and shakes in place, making incoherent shrieks and growls. He can still make attacks of Elemental Fury, Hallucination, Immolation and Lightning, but is under the effects of a “Protect Me” command by Khawani, and can’t attack him directly. Khawani is draining Ampharool’s Willpower; when it reaches 0, he will order the djinn into the Lamp of Holding.

- **Memorable or Exceptional Success (4-5 magnitude):** The spell has destroyed Ampharool’s ability to move.
 - **Critical Success or above (6+ magnitude):** Ampharool is not only unable to move—he’s also under the influence of a powerful command to protect Khawani. If he’s freed, he’ll probably attack the Dragon-Marked!
- Once the characters understand what spell is affecting Ampharool, they can use Create to restore Ampharool’s Destroyed Movement. The attempt faces a difficulty equal to the result of the spell

which Destroyed the Movement in the first place—in this case, it’s a difficulty of “merely” 18, which may just be within reach of the heroes, if they’re smart. Note however that this dispel would face a +6 improvisational penalty if the caster didn’t also know the Movement element, or something similar.

Persuading Khawani to Stop

We’re probably in the realms of complete fantasy now (ha-ha!), but it’s possible that the enterprising Dragon-Marked may persuade the maniacal Khawani to stop his attack and free Ampharool. Any attempt like this will face some serious opposition, but, Al-Rawi, do your best to give any suitably convoluted plan, involving several rolls, probably opposed, at least a chance of success!

What Happens if the Heroes are Outclassed?

Remember: it isn’t necessary for the PCs to win this battle. They may do, but equally they may find themselves outclassed and facing death or defeat. In that case, it’s perfectly all right for them to flee. If they’re in combat, they’ll need to disengage (page 14), but otherwise they can let Khawani complete his nefarious plan. The adventure needn’t end here—see “If the PCs Fail...” below.

If the PCs Succeed...

The djinn Ampharool thanks them, mentioning that the Dragon-Marked are destined for great things, and invites them to the coronation ceremony as Princess Shahira, the king’s daughter, assumes the throne. The mirage dissolves, and the heroes find themselves reunited with their caravan amidst tranquil and beautiful ruins, in the early hours of the morning some hours from Carrassine. Each of the Dragon-Marked has a tear-shaped gem in their hand—see page 32—the only evidence it was not a dream. Any other items from the palace have vanished. The other caravan members remember only having made a good and fast trip, and Hind is already boasting of his reputation as an excellent guide.

Using Legend Points

Legend points are to monsters are what Heroism is to the Dragon-Marked. They have several uses, but for this Quickstart they’re used mostly as follows:

- They indicate the maximum number of swagger dice a creature may take on a single roll.
- A creature adds its Legend points to its attribute score when making an attribute roll (page 11).

If the PCs Fail...

If the PCs fail, King Khawani imprisons Ampharool in the Lamp of Holding, and tries to use its powers to cast out the Agalanthians from his city. As the mirage dissolves around the heroes, they see Khawani's army riding into battle on flying carpets...

At this point, Al-Rawi, if you like, you can end the adventure—go to “The Haunted Oasis” on page 33. If you want to carry on playing, then the PCs find themselves alone in the Palace of Bones—see below.



THE PALACE OF BONES: REFUSING THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

As night falls, the caravan finds itself entering an abandoned yet beautiful palace that isn't on any maps. In the twilight, the palace glows with a ghostly light! It has gardens, and a surrounding wall—the PCs are already inside, and can't get out!

The gardens are filled with flowers and fruit trees, and in the centre stands a magnificent fountain covered in mosaics. At the end of the park stands a large circular palace with pink marble walls. The palace is in the purest Saabi style (see above), with towers, domes and arabesque decorations. A tall enclosing wall prevents the characters from leaving the park, together with a powerful spell: a difficulty 9 DEX + Athletics roll is required to climb the wall, but you only find yourself dropping down into the other side of the park... How can the heroes get out?

Magical Analysis

The first thing the heroes might want to do is to try and understand their predicament. Analysing the magic at work here is an INT + Willpower roll, difficulty 15 or difficulty 9 for sorcerers:

- On a Normal Success (magnitude 1), the character senses that the heroes have been imprisoned by magic, but that there is also an aura of great sadness around the palace and park.
- On a Good or Very Good Success (magnitude 2-3), the character senses that something is imprisoned here, and wishes to be freed.
- On a Memorable or Exceptional Success (magnitude 4-5), the character detects that the heroes and the park and palace are under the influence of a powerful Create Imprisonment spell.
- On a Critical Success or greater (magnitude 6+), the character may immediately learn the Imprisonment magical element, for free!

In the Palace

At some point, the PCs may want to explore the palace. It is immense, and devoid of inhabitants; see page 27 for a description. However, there are skeletons throughout, of many origins and from many eras, judging by their attire. These are people Ampharool transported during previous conjunctions, and who failed to set him free. Otherwise, the palace furnishings are intact, if faded, and the characters can find weapons, dishes, clothes, even remnants of food, dried and ancient. Everything is in place as if the inhabitants had dropped everything and left, many years ago.

Whose Palace is This?

Initially the heroes may not know whose palace they're in. As it stands, it's a difficulty 15 History & Peoples roll to associate the palace with King Khawani and his story. This difficulty is reduced by -3 for each of the following: seeing a ghostly vision; finding the flying carpet; seeing a ghostly vision of Khawani's magical duel with Ampharool in the Throne Room (page 28).

Succeeding in this roll means the characters realise they're in the palace of Khawani, who imprisoned a djinn and attempted to cast out the Agalanthians with an army on flying carpets, before being murdered by his own daughter, precipitating the fall of his dynasty and the loss forever of his once-great city.

Ghostly Visions

Sometimes, at the turn of a corridor, ghosts appear miming scenes of their lives during the reign of Khawani. It's not possible to interact with them, only to watch. They tell a story of conflict, invasion, slaughter, and abandonment.

The Flying Carpet

At the far end of the library (see the map on page 27) is a pile of carpets. Most are plain, clashing with the wealth of the palace. If the heroes try to touch them, they will turn to dust, except for one: the bottommost carpet is the first flying carpet Ampharool ever made for Khawani, and it is marvellously preserved. It's a difficulty 18 DEX + Survival roll to fly it: however, if the heroes try to fly out of the palace enclosure, they will always end up flying straight back in again, no matter which direction they take!

Derja the Scorpion Man

There is one inhabitant of the Palace of Bones: Derja the Scorpion Man. This savage creature has only recently stumbled into the palace, trapped by the same stellar conjunction that has imprisoned the heroes. It has created a nest of sorts in the Throne Room of the Great Tower—the site of the ancient and epic battle between Khawani and Ampharool (see page 28, and remember the Dragon-Marked may catch a ghostly vision of this event as they enter here!), and is now searching for a way out.

Derja is aware that a djinn is imprisoned behind a hidden door behind the throne, but can't open it. He'll seize upon the heroes as a possible way to get the door open, free the djinn, and get out! Will the Dragon-Marked go along with this? Derja is more than willing to resort to violence to persuade them...

The Chamber of the Lamp

If Derja doesn't show the heroes the location of the secret door, they'll have to find it themselves. It's a difficulty 18 INT + Notice roll; the door is a hidden panel in the wall, behind the wall-hanging at the back of the throne. The wall-hanging is old, dry, faded, but bears the legend *Thou who charmed my heart with thy gaze, who gave life to the flesh of my flesh, thy name shall be the key to my power*, written in an ancient form of Saabi which is a difficulty 12 INT + History & Peoples roll to decipher.

The heroes may also notice the door with a difficulty 15 INT + Willpower roll, to perceive the strong aura of magic behind the hidden door (see "Magical Analysis" on page 30).

Opening the door requires a difficulty 15 DEX + Intrusion roll, or perhaps an improvised spell to turn stone to sand... Failing

The Scorpion Man

STR: 5

Max Init: 6

CON: 7

HP: 70

DEX: 6

Soak: 9

INT: 3

Passive Defence: 16

CHA: 2

Legend: 2

◇ **Skills:** Athletics 4, Endurance 5, Fighting (Pincers) 4, Fighting (Scimitar or spear) 3, Fighting (Sting) 2, Impressiveness 3, Survival 6.

◇ **Attacks/Active Defences:** Pincers 10/6 +15 damage; Spear* 8/6 +13 damage (+6); Sting 8/6 +6 damage +poison*; *Suyuflong* scimitar 9/6 +16 damage
*When attacking with a spear, scorpion men always use a Brutal Attack.

**The poison takes effect in a number of rounds equal to the victim's Soak -6 (or instantaneously, if that results in a negative number). The poison does SD6 damage, minus the victim's Soak. The victim also suffers a -3 penalty to all dice roll results for the next day.

◇ **Armour:** Chitinous carapace on most of the body (Armour Value: 2)

◇ **Notes:** Scorpion men are very dexterous and may use two weapons even without the usual prerequisites. Moreover, they may attack a separate opponent with each of their pairs of pincers, and a third with their weapons, all in the same attack action. However, if they choose to make a Sting attack, they may not make any other attacks in that round.

Scarab Beetle Swarm

STR: n/a Max Init: 6
 CON: 5* HP: 50*
 DEX: 10 Soak: 5*
 INT: 1 Passive Defence: 20
 CHA: 1 Legend: 0

- ◇ Skills: None
- ◇ Attacks/Active Defences: Bite 10/10 +10 damage
- ◇ Armour: Special*
- ◇ Notes: * A swarm of scarab beetles is a special creature. The swarm comprises 5000 individual beetles covering an ground area of 5m², and has 5 points of CON. Attacks targeting the swarm don't do any damage unless they are an area attack such as fire, poison, and so on. Any target in the path of a scarab beetle swarm suffers a Bite attack.

all else, a good hour or two with clubs and hammers may break a way through.

Opening the door safely requires a password—the name of King Khawani's favourite wife, Dawira, the mother of his patricidal daughter, Shahira. It's a difficulty 15 INT + History & Peoples roll to know this name, reduced by -3 for every 3 hours spent "researching" in the palace, either in the library (where an unfinished book on the history of the family recounts the hanging of the patricidal daughter and of her mother, Khawani's favourite), or in the administrative wing (perhaps using the registry of Khawani's marriages and concubines), or in the bedrooms of the women's floor, where there is a portrait of each wife, with names of each of them. See the map on page 27 for all these locations. Otherwise, if the heroes don't say Dawira's name out loud when opening the door, a pit trap is triggered; each character must make a difficulty 15 DEX + Athletics roll to throw himself clear, or drop 5 metres onto a bed of spikes, doing 2D6 +10 damage.

Compelling Ampharool...

The heroes may want to compel Ampharool to render them a service before freeing him. For example, he could enchant a magic carpet for them. If they do so, Ampharool will be glad to be released, but not exactly grateful—he considers he's earned his freedom—and will probably just depart without further ado. He won't shed any Djinn's Tears for them.

Anyone entering the room beyond will trigger a floor pressure plate, which will release a Scarab Beetle Swarm. If they're searching diligently, the pressure plate can be found on a difficulty 18 INT + Intrusion roll, and bypassed by leaping over it on a difficulty 12 DEX + Athletics roll.

Freeing Ampharool

In the chamber beyond, a tarnished lamp sits on a stone table. It emanates a powerful magical aura. Anyone touching it can sense the djinn within; if they don't let go immediately, Ampharool will be in their thoughts, telling them his story and beseeching them to set him free by opening the lid of the lamp. If they do so, the djinn will emerge, weeping, pale and almost translucent. He sheds as many tears as there are Dragon-Marked in the Chamber of the Lamp (see below), while the palace loses its tangibility.

If the Heroes Succeed...

If the Dragon-Marked free the djinn before daybreak, the mirage vanishes, and the heroes find themselves in the Haunted Oasis, each with a tear-shaped gem in their hand (see the box below), and possibly also with Ampharool's flying carpet, the only evidence their adventure was not a dream. Any other items from the palace have vanished, and indeed only the Dragon-Marked remember there having been a palace at all. The other caravan members recall only having made a good and fast trip, and Assabi isn't short in boasting of his reputation as an excellent guide. See "The Haunted Oasis", below.

If the PCs Fail...

If the Dragon-Marked have not freed Ampharool by dawn, the mirage dissolves, and the heroes find themselves in the Haunted Oasis. See below.

Djinn's Tears...

Djinn's Tears are a magical item, and quite precious. They're a valuable gemstone in their own right, but they have a single magical property which, if used correctly, can be extremely useful. If the gem is hurled to the ground or otherwise struck hard, it will shatter, and undo one single dice roll affecting the character. This can be any dice roll—even a missed Active Defence which has resulted in a character's death. It sets the clock back to immediately before the roll was made, allowing either the roll to be made again, or the character to choose to act differently.

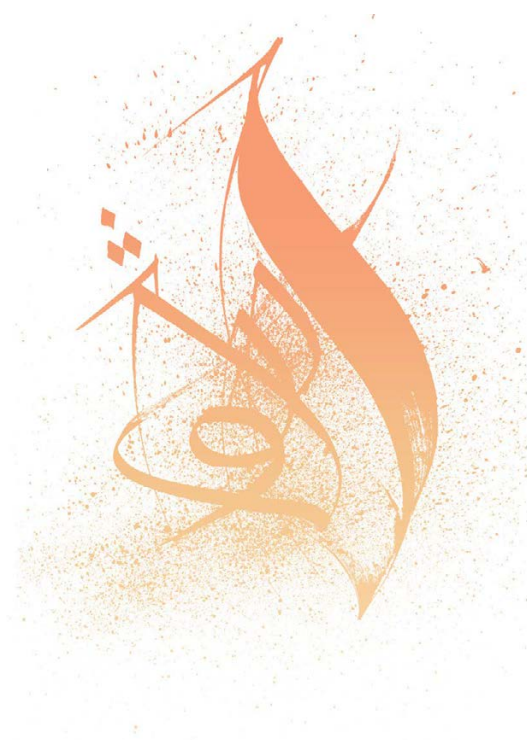


EPILOGUE: THE HAUNTED OASIS

If the heroes freed Ampharool, or prevented his imprisonment and the destruction of the ancient city, the Haunted Oasis is a place of peace, dotted with slumbering ruins of an ancient city and palace which enjoyed its heyday before passing gently into history. The Dragon-Marked each gain 1 point of Faith, and find their caravan camped around the oasis, which is only a few hours from their destination, Carrassine.

If the heroes failed in their adventure, the Haunted Oasis is a bleak and desolate place, scoured by tortured spirits of the dead. The ruins are like bones, bleaching beneath the desert sun, and there are scorpions everywhere. The plants are a tangle of thorns, and the water foul; nothing here to assuage a caravan's thirst. Worse still, the caravan is still in the middle of the Aramla El-Nar, with many days still to go before it reaches Capharnaum. But that's an adventure for another day...!

Al-Rawi, if the PCs completed *The Tears of Ampharool* by playing only one part of the adventure, then award each of them 10 adventure points (page 22). If they played both parts, award them 20 points.



CAPHARNAÛN

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

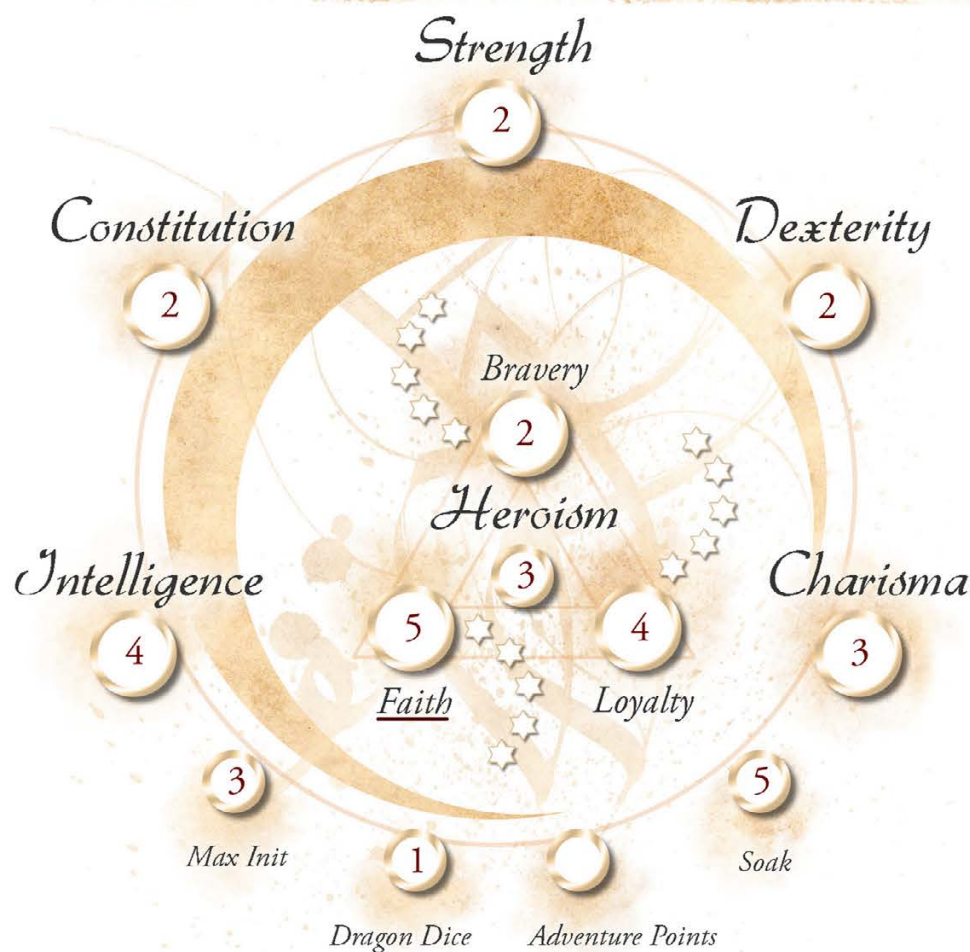
Name **Assabi the Trader**

Rath **The Saffron Dunes**

Blood **Saabi - The Clan of Yussef, Tribe of the Salifah / Ibn Yussef Abd-Al-Salif**

Status **Al-Kimyat and Master Trader**

Occupation **Caravan Chief**



Passive Defence

10

First Weapon Damage

Shimshir Long Scimitar 3/2 +10

Second Weapon Damage

Jazirati Recurved Bow 3/2 +10

Third Weapon Damage

Armour

Light (AV3)

Hit Points

20

The Adventurer

Athletics 2
Riding 2
Storytelling* 1
Survival 2

The Poet

Acting
Music
Oratory* 1
Poetry

The Rogue

Assassination 1
Intrusion
Stealth 1
Thievery

The Sorcerer

Prayer 2
Sacred Word 2
Sacrifice 2
Willpower* 2

The Labourer

Agriculture:
Craft
Endurance* 3
Solidarity

The Prince

Elegance 3
Flattery* 5
Save Face 4
Unctuous Bargaining 5

The Sage

History & Peoples 2
Instruction 2
Notice 3
Science 2

The Warrior

Command 1
Fighting 1
Intimidate* 1
Training 1

Path Abilities

The Saffron Dunes

The Path of Yussef Abd-Al-Salif

Level 1

When Assabi lights up a constellation on an Unctuous Bargaining roll to sell anything (food, jewels, palaces...), he increases the price he gets by 50%, or lowers the price by 50% when buying something. The buyer or seller opposing him must succeed on a difficulty 21 INT + Unctuous Bargaining roll to resist.

Level 1

Magic

Sacred Word



Create



Transform



Destroy

Element	Type	Element	Type
Bread		Semolina	
Sand		Water	

Assabi often creates food and water in the desert. In the past he's even tried to turn the tears of foes to sand.... Ouch!

Personal Legend

Of distant Abd-Al-Tarek origins, Assabi's parents were killed by raiders. He was raised by his uncle, an important member of the Saffron Dunes, and was a courtier in Jergath the Great, where he was the spy for a rich merchant. His Dragon Mark shines with a dim bluish aura.

Background

Taken in by his uncle after the death of his parents, Assabi has flourished as the second-in-command of his uncle's caravan ever since he was fifteen. Since that time he has taken care of the family business and has travelled widely. Now in his forties, Assabi is not cut out for combat, although he does know how to defend himself. However, he does know how to use his good looks and his quick wit to get into his travelling companions' good graces and gain a loyalty not completely dependent on the salary he promises them upon arrival. He has also convinced a young Shiradi physician to accompany the caravan.

He always travels with his lute, which he plays in the evenings beside the fire, or when he needs to enter a trance to cast a spell.

Character Portrait



Equipment

Assabi owns a house in Jergath the Great and lands just outside Carrasine. He has a harem of 5 devoted lovers, and owns 11 camels and 4 slaves.

Style

The al-kimyati of the Saffron Dunes dress richly and with many jewels, and Assabi is no exception. He wears the gold signet ring of his path, which bears the representation of a dune, and by which everyone can identify him as a member and decide whether or not to do business with him.

Wealth Level



Money

1500 ounces of cumin

CAPHARNAÛM

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

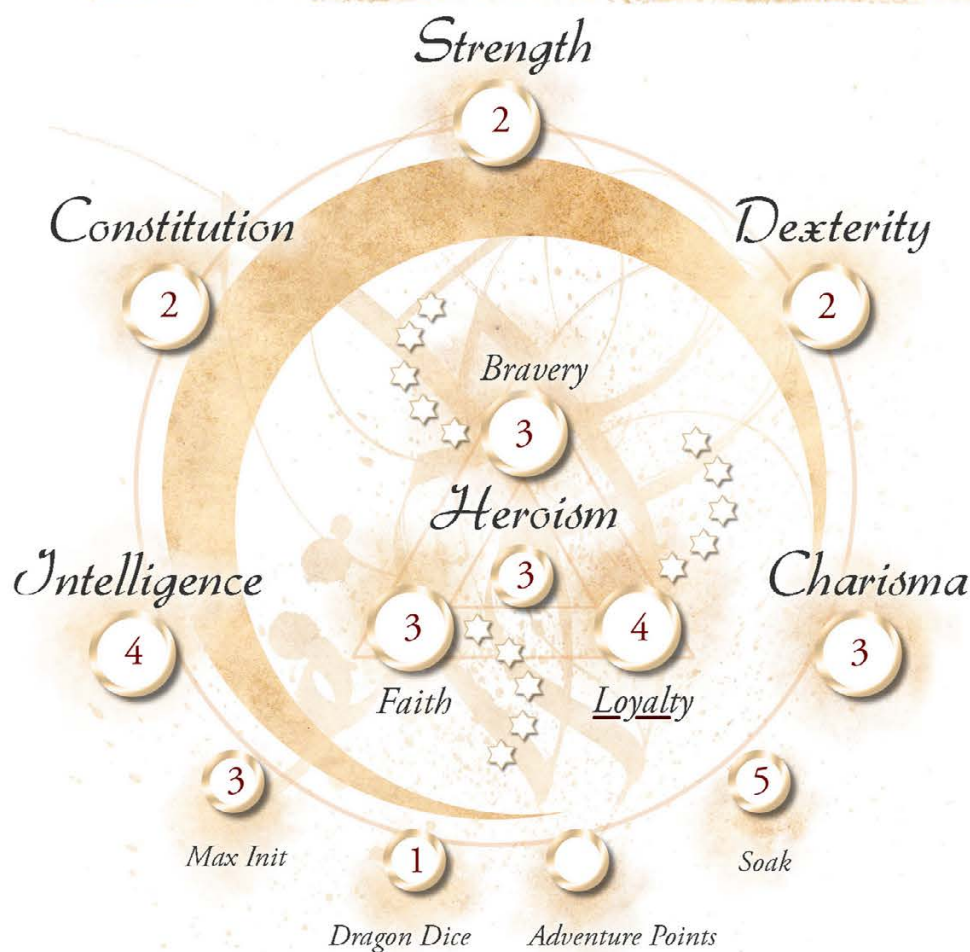
Name **Eloim the Physician**

Rath **The Sacred Heart of Shirad**

Blood **Shiradim - The Tribe of Salone / Eloim Bar Sibias**

Status **Physician**

Occupation **Physician**



Passive Defence

13

First Weapon

Damage

Khanjar Undulating Dagger 3/2 +5

Second Weapon

Damage

Third Weapon

Damage

Armour

Hit Points

20

The Adventurer

Athletics 3
Riding 4
Storytelling* 3
Survival 4

The Poet

Acting 1
Music
Oratory* 1
Poetry

The Rogue

Assassination 2
Intrusion 1
Stealth 3
Thievery 1

The Sorcerer

Prayer 1
Sacred Word
Sacrifice 1
Willpower* 2

The Labourer

Agriculture:
Craft
Endurance* 2
Solidarity

The Prince

Elegance 1
Flattery* 1
Save Face 2
Unctuous Bargaining 2

The Sage

History & Peoples 2
Instruction 3
Notice 2
Science 5

The Warrior

Command 2
Fighting 1
Intimidate* 1
Training 1

Path Abilities

The Sacred Heart of Shirad

Salonim Path

Level 1

Whenever Eloim lights up a constellation on a Science roll to operate on a wounded person, diagnose a disease, or heal anyone, he adds his Loyalty score to the result or magnitude (your choice).

Level 1

Magic

Sacred Word



Create



Transform



Destroy

Element

Type

Element

Type

Personal Legend

Of distant Shiratim origins, Eloim spent part of his childhood serving as an appointed servant of a sage of the Sacred Heart of Shirad. He once took place in a famous horse race while employed at the temple, and his fast talking once saved a village from being massacred.

A strange figure, a desert dweller dressed in black, whose veil-hidden face looks like it is made of silver, follows Eloim. Eloim feels somehow that the figure is linked to him.

Eloim is one of the Salonim, reputed physicians who take the Oath of Salone, a sacred bond to heal the children of Shirad and protect them from all ills.

Background

A son of a famous Shiradi physician, Eloim Bar Sibias decided to make a name for himself. After practising with his father to prove himself, he joined a caravan to practice far from his father's influence and meet physicians from all over the world to increase his knowledge. Now about thirty years old, he's tall and thin, with bright, intelligent eyes and a confident manner which immediately reassures his patients.

Secretly, however, Eloim has come to realise there is another side to his calling. From time to time, when necessary, he has also killed those who would threaten those in his charge. He is finding he has a gift for this, and considers it to be necessary work. He knows how to make the deaths look natural, and is able to use his Science skill in place of either Fighting or Assassination as long as his targets are unaware of his attack.

Character Portrait



Equipment

Eloim owns three sets of city clothing, a khanjar (a dagger with an undulating blade), 10 books and scrolls on a variety of subjects (you can choose during play), a calligraphy kit, an astronomical orientation kit, and a medical kit. He has rooms in the university of Carrassine where he practices his craft - both aspects...

Style

Like all the physicians of the Sacred Heart of Shirad, Eloim has a tattoo on his chest, just over his heart, depicting the sun of knowledge. It's symbolic rather than religious - it doesn't mean he worships the sun, and certainly doesn't represent the god Shirad, as Shiradi dogma forbids any representation of the god.

Wealth Level



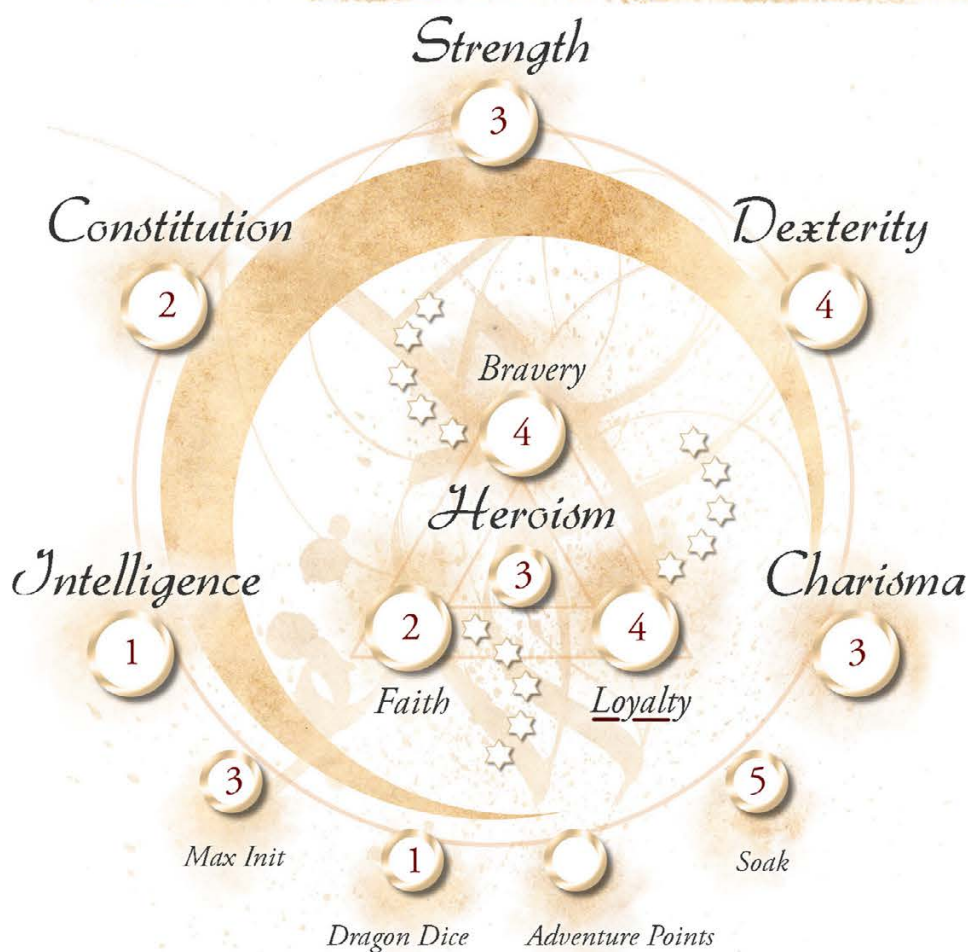
Money

100 ounces of cumin

CAPHARNAÛN

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

Name Carmen de la Mancha Path Duellists of San Llorente de Valadon
 Blood Aragon
 Status Adventurer (Campeador) Occupation Traveller



Passive Defence

14

First Weapon Damage

Aragonian Whip 7/4 +7

Second Weapon Damage

Espada Valladana 7/4 +9

Third Weapon Damage

Armour

Light Leather (AV3)

Hit Points

20

The Adventurer

Athletics 4
 Riding 5
 Storytelling* 4
 Survival 3

The Poet

Acting 1
 Music 1
 Oratory* 2
 Poetry 1

The Rogue

Assassination
 Intrusion 1
 Stealth 2
 Thievery

The Sorcerer

Prayer 1
 Sacred Word
 Sacrifice
 Willpower* 1

The Labourer

Agriculture: 2
 Craft
 Endurance* 1
 Solidarity 1

The Prince

Elegance 3
 Flattery* 2
 Save Face 1
 Unctuous Bargaining 2

The Sage

History & Peoples 1
 Instruction 1
 Notice 2
 Science 1

The Warrior

Command 2
 Fighting 3
 Intimidate* 2
 Training 2

Path Abilities

The Duellists of San Llorente de Valadon

Aragonian Academy

Level 1

If Carmen lights up a constellation when attacking with her Aragonian whip, she may make a free attack with her Espada Valladana (or any other weapon she's using), whether it's already drawn or not (ie drawing the weapon is part of the free action). The free attack is resolved in the same action as the whip attack. If she's not in range to make the second attack, the movement to close to range is included in the same action too. If the target isn't even in range of the whip attack (about 5m), then this ability can't be activated.

Level 1

Magic

Sacred Word



Create



Transform



Destroy

Element

Type

Element

Type

Personal Legend

Of distant Occidentian and Orkadian origins, Carmen belongs to a Dragon-Marked bloodline; six centuries ago, an ancestor defeated a Duke of Hell in single combat. After leaving home, Carmen crossed the desert with strangers who became friends. She escaped from a terrible prison, and took service with a Sagradan lord. Since then she has travelled a great deal, and has had numerous occupations.

Carmen is used to arid country, rocky mountains and great journeys on horseback. As pious as she is brave and proud, she's from a line of horse tamers and riders, appreciating galloping to war as much as the noisy family gatherings of Aragon, where wine flows into the night, and wives and sisters abandon themselves to the dance of the Gitanilla.

Background

Born of the Aragonian nobility of the sword, Carmen has a provocateur's soul, far from the stereotype of the women of her land. This caused her problems in her homeland, leading her to depart for Jazirat. Well, that's where the first ship she could get on was bound for, at least...

Selling her skills according to her mood and purse, Carmen is starting to like Jazirat, its exoticism and culture of a thousand influences. She flirts with the idea of writing an epic novel where she's the hero, adventuring in hostile deserts, encountering sabretooths, winning duels with famous Saabi swordsmen. She travels through Jazirat, noting and drawing anything that might be useful for when she writes.

In her early thirties, Carmen is prim and perfumed, even after a fortnight in the desert. The tear tattooed under her left eye adds to her mystique. She joined the caravan to replenish her purse and return to Carrassine, where certain Agalanthians will pay dearly for her company.

Character Portrait



Equipment

Carmen wears city attire and rides on horseback.

Style

The Duellists of San Llorente de Valladon often wear theatre masks of a crying face. Otherwise they bear a tattoo or drawing of a tear beneath their left eye - the side of the heart, symbol of sincerity.

Wealth Level



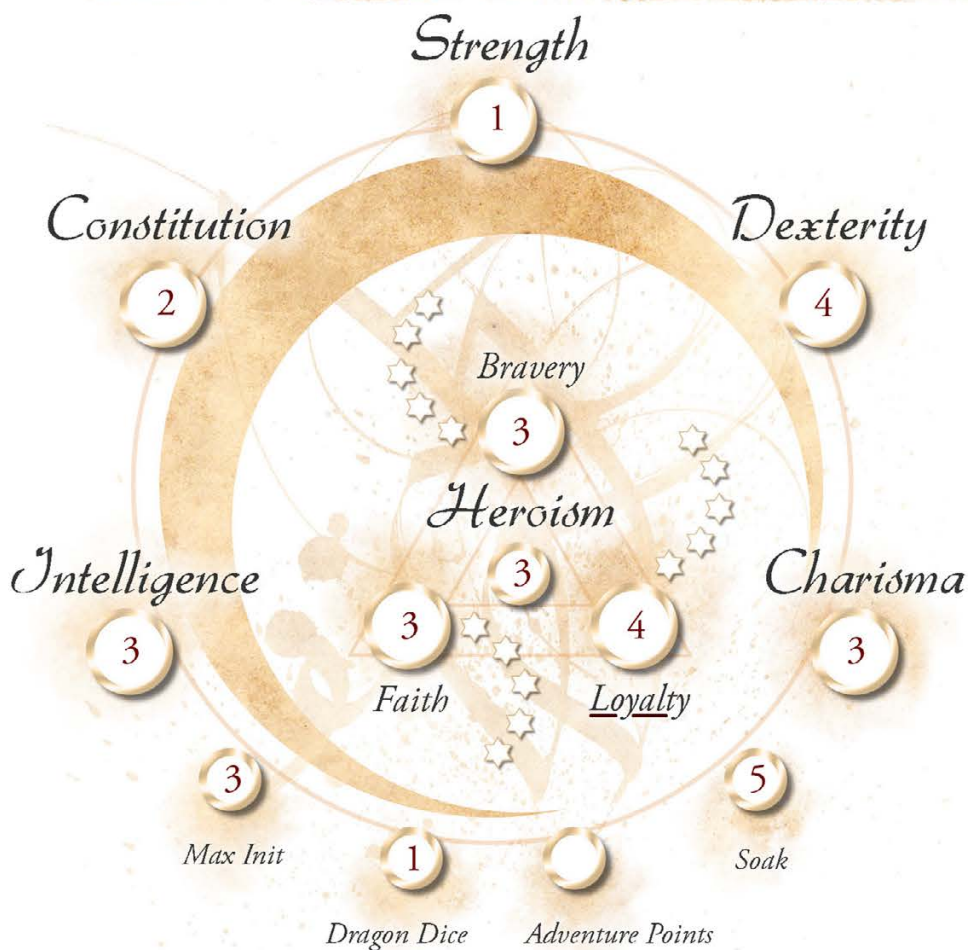
Money

100 ounces of cumin

CAPHARNATION

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

Name Princess Karima Path The Children of the Souk
 Blood Saabi - The Clan of Aziz, Tribe of the Salifah / Bint Aziz Abd-Al-Salif
 Status Al-Kimyat and Princess Occupation Princess



Passive Defence

10

First Weapon Damage

Dagger of Might 7/4 +8

Second Weapon Damage

Third Weapon Damage

Armour

Light Leather (AV3)

Hit Points

20

The Adventurer

Athletics 2
 Riding 2
 Storytelling* 1
 Survival 2

The Poet

Acting 2
 Music 3
 Oratory* 2
 Poetry 2

The Rogue

Assassination 1
 Intrusion 1
 Stealth 1
 Thievery 2

The Sorcerer

Prayer 2
 Sacred Word 2
 Sacrifice 1
 Willpower* 2

The Labourer

Agriculture:
 Craft
 Endurance* 2
 Solidarity

The Prince

Elegance 4
 Flattery* 4
 Save Face 3
 Unctuous Bargaining 5

The Sage

History & Peoples 2
 Instruction 1
 Notice 2
 Science 1

The Warrior

Command
 Fighting 2
 Intimidate*
 Training

Path Abilities

The Children of the Souk

The Path of Aziz Abd-Al-Salif

Level 1

Whenever Karima plans a robbery, ambush, or other risky and secret (but not necessarily illegal) operation in urban territory (including freeing a hostage, relieving a Prince of Thieves from his goods, etc), she may make a difficulty 9 INT + Thievery roll. If she lights up a constellation, over the next half-day she finds a number of henchmen equal to the magnitude of the roll. These are reliable, only asking for a bit of the loot from the operation (Al-Rawi's choice).

Level 1

Magic

Sacred Word

2

Create

Transform

Destroy

Element	Type	Element	Type
Alacrity		Communication	
Amity		Peace	

Karima often uses magic to calm people down. She can Create Communication to allow one person to understand or two or more people to communicate without a shared language. She can use Create Alacrity to make people zealous, enthusiastic, or just quicker on their feet.

Personal Legend

Of distant Abd-Al-Tarek origins, Karima lived among Bedouins for many months. She used to take part in athletics competitions in Carrassine, and also assisted a historian there in composing an encyclopaedic treatise. Whenever she uses magic, she hears the muses whispering advice.

If it wasn't bound by a certain code of honour, her Clan of Aziz would bring out the worst in people. It's divided into two parts: the first took part in the founding of Carrassine and specialises in the hiring out of mercenaries; the second is its shady counterpart, Princes of Thieves behind most of the illegal activities in Jazirat, including organised crime, kidnapping, and the slave trade to the Agalanthians.

Background

Karima is the daughter of a prince of the Salifah Ruling a fertile oasis too close to Jergath the Great to grant any real power, her father leads a rich but peaceful existence which once suited Karima perfectly, dreaming as she did of a contemplative life studying magic. She has a singing voice as clear as crystal, capable of calming people even without magic.

Unfortunately, court intrigue has reached her oasis, and Karima finds herself betrothed to a stranger - not unusual in Kh'saaba, although not the rule. Her clan was doubtless looking for some insignificant princess to marry off for political reasons...

Karima is to travel to Carrassine with the caravan of Assabi the Trader, escorted by the bodyguard sent by her future husband, the rich merchant Habibi Ibn Aziz Abd-Al-Salif. Her bodyguard rides an abzul, a great dragon-like reptilian, and is one of the fierce dark-skinned warrior to the Ibn Khalil. Her future husband is paying her a compliment by sending such an elite guard, who normally guard only Hassanid royalty...

Character Portrait



Equipment

Princess Karima is travelling with three sets of city clothing. She also possesses a magical Dagger of Might, forged by the expert artepharitim, which gives her a bonus die on appropriate dice rolls (already included above). The dagger is also highly resistant, and takes twice as long as normal to become blunt.

Style

The Children of the Souk have no particular identifying style, but prefer dark clothes and a veil hiding the hair and cheeks but not the face.

Karima is a young lady just under twenty years old, petite and beautiful. She rides a dromedary and is accompanied by servants in charge of arrangements for her journey.

Wealth Level



Money

1500 ounces of cumin

CAPHARNAÛN

The Tales of the Dragon-Marked

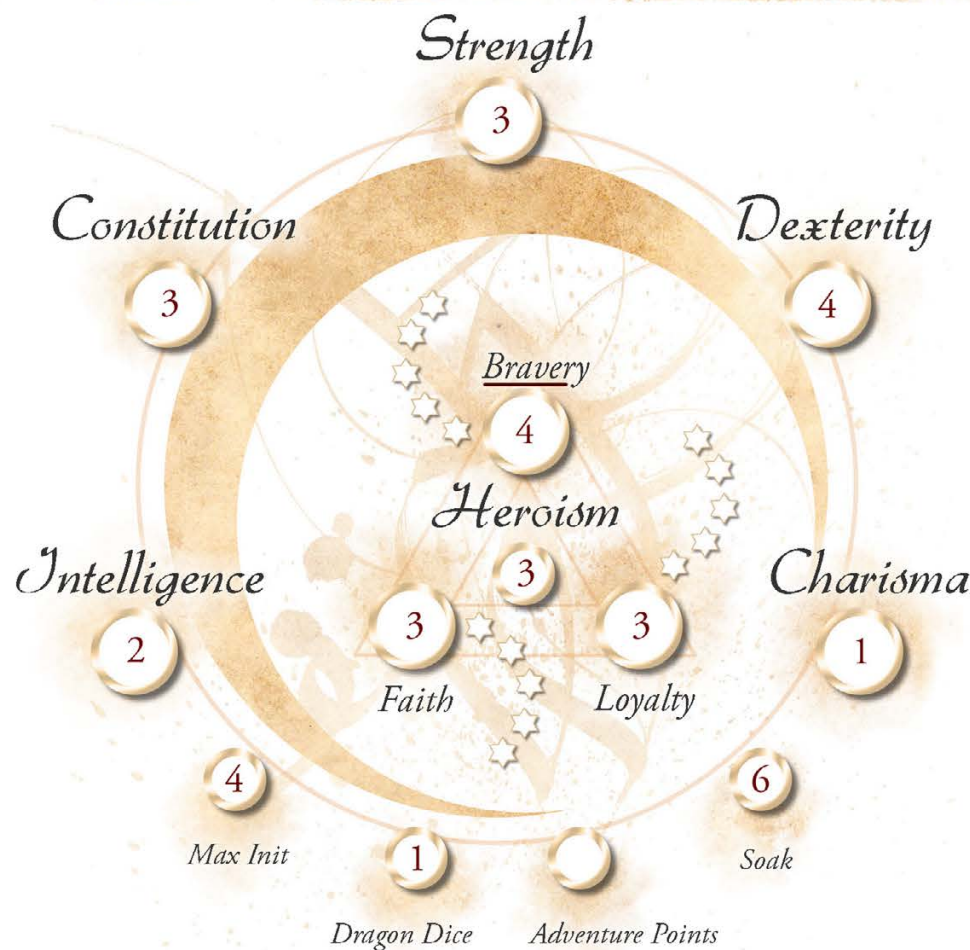
Name Wafik the Protector

Dath The Walad Badiya

Blood Saabi - The Clan of Khalil, Tribe of the Salifah / Ibn Khalil Abd-Al-Salif

Status Mujahid and Explorer

Occupation Bodyguard



Passive Defence

13

First Weapon Damage

Rumh Spear 8/4 +11

Second Weapon Damage

Shimshir Long Scimitar 8/4+11

Third Weapon Damage

Jazirati Recurved Bow 8/4 +12

Armour

Light Leather (AV3)

Hit Points

30

The Adventurer

Athletics 3
Riding 4
Storytelling* 3
Survival 4

The Poet

Acting 1
Music 2
Oratory* 1
Poetry 1

The Rogue

Assassination
Intrusion
Stealth
Thievery

The Sorcerer

Prayer 2
Sacred Word
Sacrifice
Willpower* 3

The Labourer

Agriculture: 1
Craft
Endurance* 3
Solidarity

The Prince

Elegance 1
Flattery* 1
Save Face 2
Unctuous Bargaining 3

The Sage

History & Peoples 1
Instruction 1
Notice 2
Science 1

The Warrior

Command 3
Fighting 4
Intimidate* 3
Training 3

Path Abilities

The Walad Badiya, the Children of the Desert

The Path of Khalil, Servant of Salif

Level 1

In combat, Wafik and his abzul (see below) are one being - the Walad Badiya. Whenever he lights up a constellation when attacking or defending, he may:

- Add his abzul's STR to his damage when attacking
- Subtract his abzul's DEX from any damage taken when performing an Active Defence

Level 1

Magic

Sacred Word



Create



Transform



Destroy

Element

Type

Element

Type

Personal Legend

As a child, Wafik served a *kabini* priest in the city of Jergath the Great. On a dangerous journey in a famous troupe of wandering artists, he underwent a mystical experience. Now he feels a force flowing through him - whether from gods, demons, or djinn, he doesn't know - filling him with power.

The Clan of Khalil, of the Salifah Tribe

Unusual for the Saabi, the Ibn Khalil are mostly of Alfariqani origin, and many have black or deep-tanned skin. They are famous for their fighters, who ride abzulim, small dragons as large as two oxen, who sell their services for exorbitant prices. Found at the coast and in Al-Fariqn, it's not rare to find one elsewhere: they're famous Saabi explorers, travelling far to East and West. They know otherworldly mysteries, and often seem aloof.

Background

Wafik is one of the dark-skinned, half-Alfariqani Saabi, a tall young man in his early twenties, with a foreign hairstyle and his body covered with ritual scars. He rides one of the *abzulim*, large lizards which many say are degenerate dragons. Few know that riders and their abzulim share an empathic bond from birth, able to communicate images and sensations. They form the Walad Badiya - the Children of the Desert.

Visiting Al-Fariqn after coming of age, Wafik befriended a merchant-smuggler, Habibi Ibn Aziz Abd-Al-Salif, and became his bodyguard. He travelled to Jergath to escort Habibi's betrothed, Princess Karima. Karima is unaware Habibi once met her at her father's oasis, where he was captivated by her singing. Ever since he has intrigued to obtain her hand. Habibi is genuinely smitten, while Karima considers the match a political arrangement.

Character Portrait



Equipment

As well as his weapons and armour, Wafik wears desert gear, and has a set of city clothing, comfortable shoes or sandals, a tent, twenty metres of rope, three large leather sacks, five torches, a portable incense burner, and a dromedary to carry it all.

Style

Wafik lives, sleeps, and eats on the back of his abzul. He has symbolic tattoos on his face, shoulders and arms, which he believes reinforces his link with his saurian half.

Wafik's Abzul

STR: 8 Max Init: 7

CON: 7 HP: 70

DEX: 4 Soak: 10

INT: 1 Passive Defence: 13

CHA: 1 Legend: n/a

Skills: Athletics 3, Endurance 4, Fighting (bite) 4.

Attacks / Active Defences: Bite 8/4 +18 damage, Body Bash auto +13 damage*

Armour: Thick Skin (AV: 2)

*All opponents within 2m of the abzul must make a difficulty 9 STR + Athletics roll per round to avoid Body Bash damage.

Wealth Level



Money

15 ounces of cumin

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