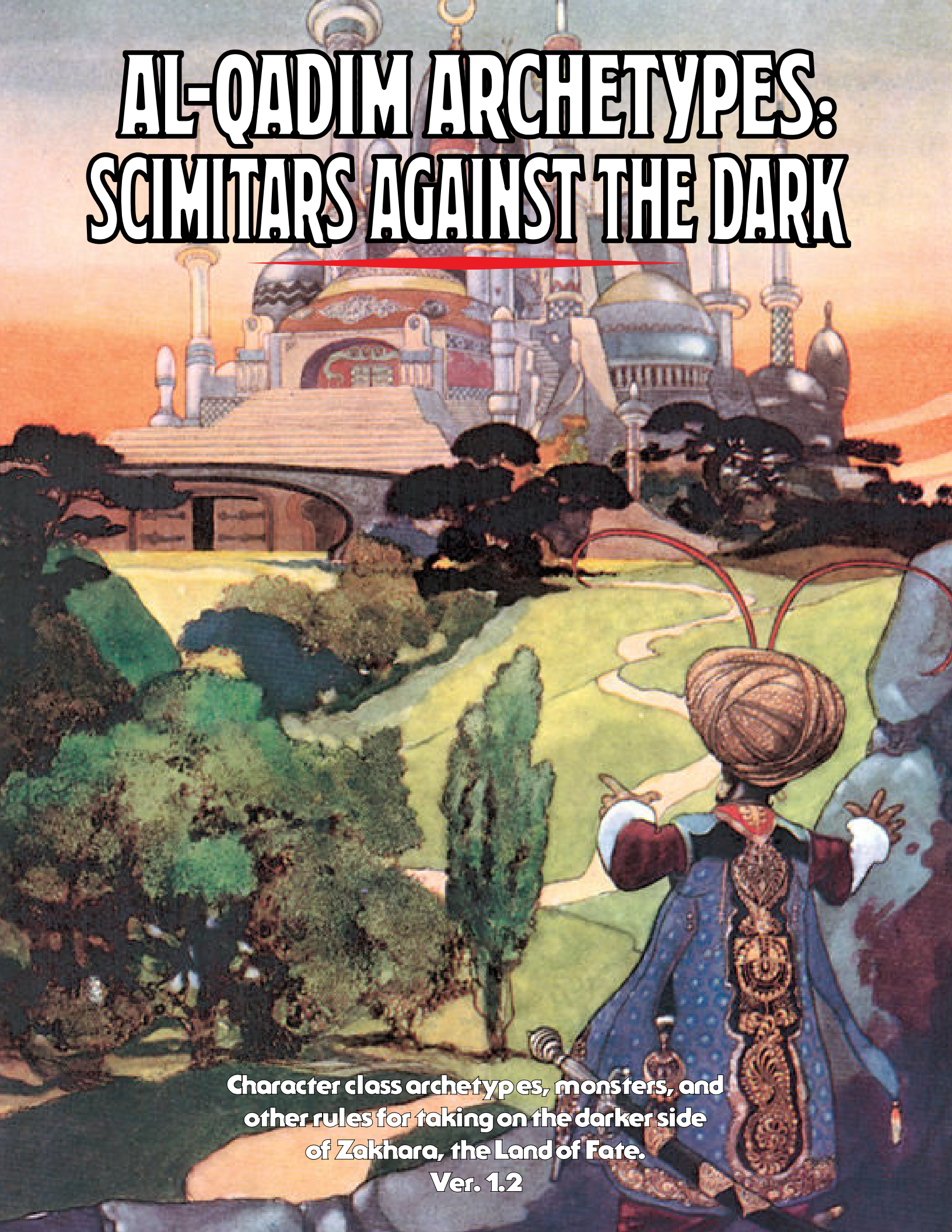


AL-QADIM ARCHETYPES: SCIMITARS AGAINST THE DARK



Character class archetypes, monsters, and
other rules for taking on the darker side
of Zakhara, the Land of Fate.

Ver. 1.2

AL-QADIM ARCHETYPES: SCIMITARS AGAINST THE DARK

Version 1.2

An Adventurer's Guide to Banishing the Shadows of Zakhara

Converts material from the article “**Campaign Journal: Scimitars against the Dark**”
from *Dragon Magazine* #198, with additional material from *Al-Qadim: Arabian Adventures*, *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, the *Al-Qadim Monstrous Compendium*, and *The Complete Arcane*.

BY JEREMY FORBING

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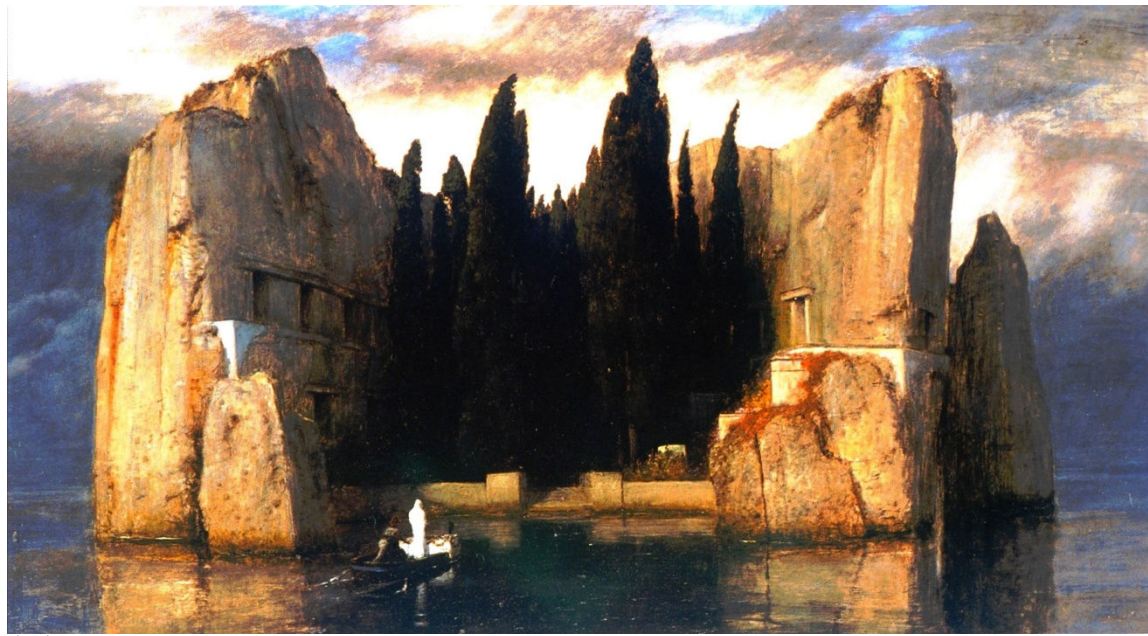
A Land of Dark Fate

"Listen and grow wise, my children, that you may avoid the darkness that has claimed my sight. Though the sun shines bright on the sands of Zakhara, the earth beneath hungers for blood, and the night hides mad genies, howling for vengeance. We have no Fate but the Fate we are given; may your Fate not be a dark one."

—Ali ben Ali, blind prophet

Not long after the debut of the *Al-Qadim* campaign setting, one of that product line's most prolific authors, Wolfgang Baur, wrote an article on a new campaign style for *Al-Qadim* games. Inspired by the fictions of Tanith Lee, H.P. Lovecraft, and Clark Ashton Smith, this article, "Scimitars Against the Dark" detailed a more sinister side to the Land of Fate. This version of the setting was described as *"A setting of tyrannical caliphs, man-eating ghouls, and mad genies"* where there were *"whispering terrors in the dark, and treks deep into the bowels of the earth... Dark cults and heartless tyrants... the struggle against encroaching shadow gives the campaign a clear focus. The villains are ruthless, lurking just out of sight, stronger or smarter than the PCs, but the glory to be had is that much greater because of it."*

The text of the article describes *Dungeon Mastering* techniques, motifs, and themes for running such campaigns, making the original invaluable reading for a game set among the eldritch shadows of Zakhara. This document does not seek to improve on or reproduce that invaluable DM advice, but converts character options, monsters, and other rules stated or suggested in that article, for the 5th Edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. It also converts material from the original *Al-Qadim* tome and other books directly referenced or related to concepts in the article as well, and provides some new rules in order to give players and DM's everything they need to create such a campaign with the existing core rulebooks. These rules also focus on the two kinds of geographic features that perhaps most define the Land of Fate: the deserts and the seas.



How to Use This Document

Though the rules herein adapt material originally intended for the *Al-Qadim* campaign setting—which describes the continent of Zakhara, far to the south of the default *Forgotten Realms* setting of Faerun—this content can also easily be used in any D&D campaign setting.

In an area of the *Forgotten Realms* such as the Sword Coast, characters with these class archetypes can obviously be visitors from Zakhara, taking their pursuit of ancient evils from their native land to less civilized northern climes. However, these archetypes can also represent homegrown heroes aligned against such dark forces. The mariner and tomb robber require no adaptation at all to be natives of traditional fantasy settings such as Faerun. The priest-defenders who follow the Defender domain can easily be converted to followers of a protective god such as Helm or Torm. A janissary can represent a member of a multi-generational, long-standing mercenary brotherhood, especially one with administrative duties over a nation or city-state. The Paladin of the Oath of Enlightenment (a conversion of the *faris* from the original *Al-Qadim*) works best as the exemplar who brings what they believe to be a more advanced way of life to the common people of the realm. And of course, the wizard meddling with dark forces that could turn him to evil or insanity is a long-standing trope of many fantasy settings, making the School of the Sungazer an easy conversion as well. Sea dragonborn should work as written in most campaigns, as should all new spells and equipment.

As for the monsters, they can strike anywhere at all...

Class Archetypes

Cleric Domain:

Defender Domain

There is a secret faction within your faith, an order that includes members of certain allied religions as well. The god or gods you worship grant unique powers to you and your fellow members of this order, for your sacred task is keeping all of Zakhara safe. You are a *priest-defender*, charged with protecting civilization from the dark primordial forces that still haunt the shadows of the Land of Fate. There are very few of you, and being organized at all is very new for clerics called to your divine mandate. It is only through alliance with a legion of mamluks, known as “abd-Haris,” or the Vigilant, that clergy with the knowledge of these secret threats have now banded together. All priest-defenders are allied with the Vigilant, and those of higher level serve a crucial function for these warriors. When absolutely necessary, they alter the memories of those who have encountered those dark forces against which priest-defenders and the Vigilant have made common cause. Most clerics of this domain are loathe to violate the minds of the innocent, but sparing common folk such knowledge is considered a mercy, and often prevents a near-certain loss of sanity. Priest-defenders are usually equipped much like mamluks of the Vigilant. They are often armed with maces, scimitars (a traditional weapon of Zakhara), or with huge scimitar-like greatswords. Their armor and clothing are commonly embroidered, painted or inlaid with sacred verses, holy writings, and religious symbols. Unlike their farisan allies, priest-defenders often care little for their own appearance, but maintain their tools devotedly.

Defender Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1 st	<i>alarm, shield</i>
3 rd	<i>cloud of daggers, magic mouth</i>
5 th	<i>conjure animals, wind wall</i>
7 th	<i>private sanctum, stoneskin</i>
9 th	<i>modify memory, wall of force</i>

ANOINTED DEFENDER

In addition to your magical abilities, you are trained in special combat techniques that help you defend



people and locations from an enemy advance. Any creature within 30 feet that you hit with an attack (including both weapon attacks and spell attacks) must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell DC or have its speed reduced by half until the end of its next turn.

BONUS PROFICIENCY

When you choose the Defender Domain at level 1, you gain proficiency with heavy armor, as well as the scimitar and the greatsword.

SACRED ENEMY

Starting at 2nd level, your faith grants you special power when you face certain enemies. You can choose a sacred enemy from the following: aberrations, constructs, dragons, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, or oozes. Whenever you use your Turn Undead feature, instead of affecting undead

with this ability, you may choose to affect either the type of monster you chose for your sacred enemy, or to affect elementals (including genies). Otherwise, the effect is identical to when you Turn Undead

EXPERT DEFENDER

Beginning at 6th level, opportunity attacks are made against you with disadvantage. In addition, choose one of the following types of monsters: elementals, undead, or your sacred enemy. When a creature of that type attacks a target within 30 feet of you, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

DEFENDER'S WRATH

At 8th level, when you hit a creature with a weapon attack that has made an attack roll against you in the last minute, you can choose to inflict an additional 1d8 radiant damage. In addition, choose one of the following categories when you gain this ability: elementals, undead, or your sacred enemy. When you hit a creature of the chosen type with a weapon attack or a spell attack, you can choose to inflict the same extra 1d8 radiant damage, whether the creature has attacked you or not. Either way, you can only inflict this extra damage once per turn.

UNCANNY PROTECTOR

Starting at 17th level, when an attacker that you can see hits you or a creature within 5 feet of you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage.



Additional Ability

Because this ability uses less common game mechanics and can have larger effects on your party's ability to defeat encounters, it requires your DM's approval before you acquire it in-game.

Vigilant Allies

Starting at 8th level, at the beginning of a game session, or at another time the DM deems appropriate, you can spend 10 downtime days to summon three guards from the Vigilant to assist and protect you in battle. If you spend 15 downtime days, a veteran comes leading them as well. The guards stay with you until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they return to their post.

Warrior Roles: The Mamluk

Fanatically loyal professional soldiers educated from youth in the disciplines of war, leadership, and politics, mamluks are the unequalled masters of large scale battle. The unpleasant root of most mamluk legions is slavery, as the oldest such orders began as cadres of child slave soldiers, and to this day many operate in this way. However, in the current era of Al-Qadim, not all mamluk legions are based in such atrocities, and at this point leadership positions are nearly always held by the mamluks themselves, rather than an outside “owner.” Still, it is traditional for all members to start in their youth, as the mamluk system of training demands it, and all the legion are sworn to a nation, leader, or cause they serve with unwavering devotion.

Whether they begin as slaves, orphans, younger children of large families, offspring of older mamluks, or choose this path for themselves, these scholar-warriors receive an education as good as any aristocrat. In the societies they serve, they operate as the infrastructure of the government and civil service as well as the professional military. Instead of earning position by being born with the right name or connections, they advance based on their own aptitude and determination, making mamluk orders and the governments they compose true meritocracies. This emphasis on personal excellence as a path to authority pays off, and mamluks (also called *janissaries*) often end up entirely ruling the countries they once merely served.

The most important structural element of mamluk society is rank. The scholar-warriors are raised for absolute loyalty to their comrades in their legion, and they are known for strict obedience to those of higher rank. Disputes are arbitrated based on rank, and the only time a trained mamluk will disobey an order from a higher ranking member of their legion is if they are countermanded by someone of even higher rank. In order to make these ranks clear to all, mamluks receive special facial tattoos that indicate their position in the legion, as well as to which legion they belong. Though different orders use different tattoos, the systems are similar enough that anyone from a society where mamluks are prominent can recognize one's rank on sight, and likely can identify which legion they belong to as well.

In general, adventuring mamluks have been given leaves of absence from regular duties to perform some task or larger tactical objective, ranging from spying or scouting to master-minding an entire slave rebellion. While they are expected they send reports whenever possible, these leaves usually have few limitations, as they are granted to exemplary scholar-warriors known to for their adaptability and personal prowess. Such individuals are expected to have the discipline to operate in the long-term without direct oversight, in the belief that if they are worthy they will gain the field experience necessary to become great leaders, and that if they are unworthy they will at least die well, without endangering their fellows.

Creating a Mamluk

Most mamluks have the Soldier background. Most mamluks in a *Scimitars Against the Dark* campaign join the Vigilant, but you can also choose or roll using the table below to determine the mamluk society you serve. A great martial archetype for mamluk fighters (especially members of the Vigilant) is the Janissary (see next page). Another suitable archetype, the Commander, will appear in the forthcoming *Adventurer's Guide to Al-Qadim*.

d12 Legion

- 1 The Dauntless:** Specialists in exploration and recovery of lost relics, based in Qudra and Huzuz.
- 2 The Defenders:** Focused on defense of Qudra, City of Power, seat of the mamluks' power.
- 3 The Devoted/Devout:** Religious crusading mamluks of I'tiraf and Kadarastro, respectively.
- 4 The Dutiful:** Largest mamluk society stationed throughout Zakhara, very loyal to Grand Caliph.
- 5 The Exalted:** Moralistic mamluks of Pantheist League seeking to make Zakhara lawful and civilized.
- 6 The Honored:** Eunuchs and independent women serving as harem guards for the Grand Caliph.
- 7 The Parched:** Mamluks of Talab protecting the water supply and nearby oases.
- 8 The Respected:** Mamluks of Muluk, more loyal to the kings of Muluk than the Grand Caliph.
- 9 The Studios:** Qudra-based specialists in espionage and communication.
- 10 The Valiant:** Qudra-based specialists in lightning raids and ambushes, facing impossible odds.
- 11 The Wanderers:** Mamluk navy throughout Zakhara.
- 12 The Wondrous:** Parade troops and palace guards of the island of Afyal.

The 13th Legion: The Vigilant

The most ancient and powerful of the mamluk societies are the renowned twelve listed above. However, in the last century or so, a new legion of mamluks has emerged, one of the first such societies to be led entirely by their own kind, rather than as slaves of an outside authority. Called “abd-Haris,” or *the Vigilant*, they are based in the frontier regions of Zakhara, including the Free Cities, the Ruined Kingdoms, and the Crowded Sea, and dedicated to the extermination of evil creatures beyond the Enlightened lands. They have made close alliance with the holy warriors known as the farisan (including paladins of the Oath of Enlightenment) and the priest-defenders (clerics of the Defender Domain) to cover up the existence of the forces of darkness. They hide such knowledge fanatically, even calling upon their cleric allies to erase memories when necessary, in order to protect the innocent from things that would only terrify them, and to keep eldritch lore away from those who might seek to learn more. Members of this legion prefer the term “janissary” to mamluk, and are best represented by the Janissary martial archetype described on the next page.

Martial Archetype:

Janissary

You are a member of a sworn alliance that defends one or more kingdoms or city-states from dire threats. The oath you share bonds you and your comrades together as brothers and sisters, forswearing all outside ambitions and any social ranks or obligations to which you were born. Perhaps you're a watcher on a wall at the far end of the known world, the defender of a keep on the caliphate's borderlands, or a mamluk guard stationed in a lawless city, but wherever you serve, you seldom enjoy civilian comforts. You spend long hours training in armor amid the extreme conditions of your protectorate and its adjoining wilds, whether they be scorching deserts or frozen wastelands, gaining phenomenal endurance. Your fighting style relies on this indomitable vigor, and on leveraging the tactical advantages provided by close collaboration with allies.

STALWART ALLY

Beginning at 3rd level when you choose this archetype, if you successfully hit and damage an opponent with a weapon attack on your turn, you can use the Help action as a bonus action to assist an ally in striking that same opponent.

STEEL YOURSELF

At 3rd level the unforgiving training regimen you live by helps you to resist threats to your morale as well as the extreme temperatures of your home. You gain different benefits depending on your legion's favored climate. Choose one of the following:

Colder Climate: You can use your reaction to gain advantage on saving throws against cold damage, psychic damage, fear, sleep, paralysis, or being charmed until the end of your next turn, and you are considered naturally adapted to cold climates as long as you are wearing armor.

Warmer Climate: You can use your reaction to gain advantage on saving throws against fire damage, psychic damage, fear, sleep, paralysis, or being charmed until the end of your next turn, and you are considered naturally adapted to hot climates when you are not wearing heavy armor.

MARKS OF RANK

At 7th level, you have attained a powerful reputation in the alliance you serve, developing a natural mien of authority. In a mamluk legion, this includes impressive facial tattoos that intimidate foes. Even those who don't know of your standing are inclined to take you seriously. The combination of any

marks of rank you possess and the grim, relentless personal bearing you've gained as you've risen in the ranks lets even mindless beasts know you are not to be trifled with. But for those who know, your rank testifies to your unquestionable battle prowess. You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks against any creature that can see your face, and advantage on all Charisma checks against members of any organized military hierarchy (such as a mamluk society).

ALLIED ENEMY

At 10th level, you are a specialist in infantry tactics, as well as in dispatching enemies of the organization to which you are sworn. Work with your DM to determine an appropriate type of enemy for the organization to which you belong (for example, members of the mamluk order known as the Vigilant are likely to choose aberrations or undead). You can choose one allied enemy from the following: aberrations, beasts, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. Alternatively, you can select two races of humanoids (such as humans and goblins) as legion enemies. When you hit with a weapon attack against a creature that is within 5 feet of one of your allies, or that is your allied enemy, the creature takes an extra 1d10 damage.

At 18th level, you choose a second allied enemy.

UNYIELDING COMRADE

Starting at 15th level, you are stirred to greater prodigies of valor by dire threats to your comrades. When an ally fails a death save, if you have no uses of your Action Surge ability remaining, you regain the ability to use it once. If the death save is the second one that ally has failed, you also regain the use of your Second Wind ability if you have no uses remaining. In addition, as long as you have an ally within 30 feet, you cannot be charmed or frightened, and you cannot be forced to sleep by magical effects unless you choose to be.

LORD COMMANDER

At 18th level, you become a legendary role model in your organization, regardless of your actual rank. You gain resistance to psychic damage, you are proficient in Wisdom saves, and you have advantage on all weapon attack rolls against enemies within 5 feet of an ally. In addition, you gain a resistance dependent on the type of legion you chose for your steel yourself feature. If you chose colder climate, you gain resistance to cold damage; if you chose warmer climate, you gain resistance to fire damage.

Additional Abilities for Mamluk Fighters

The abilities below are intended to represent a mamluk's true power: being part of larger organization. However, because they use less common game mechanics and can have larger effects on your party's ability to defeat encounters, they require your DM's approval before you acquire them in-game.

Ranking Mamluk

At 7th level, because of your rank, whenever you are in a settlement with at least 1,000 inhabitants, you can spend 5 downtime days to recruit a knight or veteran (your choice) from your order of mamluks or an allied military force to assist you. The knight or veteran stays with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they leave you to resume duties at their regular post.

Marshal Soldiers

At 10th level, you have such a natural mantle of command that you can recruit soldiers even when away from your legion. At the beginning of a game session, or at another time the DM deems appropriate, you can spend 10 downtime days to recruit three guards to your cause. If you spend 15 downtime days, you can instead recruit three scouts. They stay with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they return to their previous lives.

Legendary Legionnaire

Starting at 15th, your status in your legion is such that even jaded sergeants and proud officers will flock to your banner, even crossing great distances to fight by your side. At the beginning of a game session, or at another time the DM deems appropriate, you can spend 20 downtime days to summon a total of three mamluks (who can be any combination of knights and veterans) to serve you in completing your mission. These seasoned soldiers are led to you by a competent scout, so they can reach you anywhere within reason. The scout will not stay and fight for you, but he can be trusted to deliver a message back to your legion if you wish. They knights or veterans stay with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they return to your legion and report what has occurred.

Political Intrigues

At 18th level, your importance in your legion of mamluks makes you an influential mover-and-shaker in the politics of Zakhara. By spending 20 downtime days whenever you are in a settlement with at least 1,000 inhabitants, you can cause an assassin to target and attempt to kill a humanoid of your choice. It is up to the DM to determine how long the assassination attempt takes to plan and execute, whether or not it succeeds, and how long it takes you to get word of the result.



Paladin Oath:

Oath of Enlightenment

To swear the Oath of Enlightenment binds you to live the holy and civilized beliefs that unite the honorable peoples of Zakhara. You become known as a *faris*, a faithful warrior who brings others to the true path. You know that Fate walked the lands of Al-Qadim as the shadow of a woman in ancient times, leaving her teachings with the illustrious Loregiver, who recorded the code of honorable behavior for all to follow. These are not merely manners of custom, but the commandments of divine revelation. You strive to embody these ideals as a holy warrior, sworn to serve only a righteous cause. You devote yourself in particular to the common folk, seeking to bring them enlightenment and truth. You've sworn to fight for them and inspire them, both by living honorably and by your willingness to die for your cause.

If a *faris* worships a god associated with a particular weapon, they always carry that weapon on their person, whether or not they ever fight with it. They are certain to always carry the holy symbol of their faith as well, and often have sayings from holy works or writings of their religion inscribed in beautiful Midani calligraphy in various places on their armor and arms. They maintain a meticulously clean appearance whenever possible, in keeping with the Loregiver's principles of purity.

Warrior Roles: The Faris

A *faris* (plural *farisan*, pronounced FARE-iss-ahn) is a holy warrior sworn to fight only in divine causes. Not all *farisan* are paladins of the Oath of Enlightenment, or even paladins, but all pledge their bodies and souls to their faith. No mortal is without sin, but the Loregiver wrote clearly in her scrolls that those who go to battle as champions of the enlightened ways and wage war only in the service of holiness will be redeemed. No matter what the sins of a *faris*'s past, the paradise of the afterlife will one day be welcome them, so long as they ensure that they fight only the good fight. A truly just and holy war is one that enjoys the popular support of the people, and which is righteous according the teachings of the faith. A fighter, ranger, or paladin with the Acolyte, Folk Hero, and Soldier backgrounds is a good fit to be a *faris*, though a Criminal background also suits the *faris*'s quest for redemption.

The Faris Paladin & The Faris Fighter

A paladin of any oath may be a *faris*, but a good choice for paladins following the Enlightened gods is the Oath of Enlightenment. Such paladins are always *farisan*, The Faris Fighter. An archetype for fighters who walk the path of the *faris*, the Holy Warrior, appears in the forthcoming *Adventurer's Guide to Al-Qadim*.

TENETS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Inspiration. You are a model and protector to the common folk, and must conduct yourself in a manner that inspires them, including distributing any excess wealth you obtain as alms for the poor.

Duty. When you are called upon to redress attacks against your church or its devoted adherents, you must answer with action, and when you are asked to join in wars which the church has declared holy, you must fight and die if necessary.

Revelation. The fame of your deeds is an opportunity to shine the light of the Loregiver's truth as a beacon for those following benighted ways.

Faith. You are champion of your faith and your people, in that order, and your religious beliefs require absolute devotion, even beyond mortal perceptions of ethics or morality.

Righteousness. So long as you fight only for holy causes that enjoy the support of the people, any misdeeds will be forgiven and your soul redeemed.

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Oath of Enlightenment Spells

Paladin	
Level	Spells
3 rd	<i>charm person, faerie fire</i>
5 th	<i>detect thoughts, enhance ability</i>
9 th	<i>beacon of hope, tongues</i>
13 th	<i>freedom of movement, greater restoration</i>
17 th	<i>commune, hallow</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options

Holy Light. You can use a holy symbol on your person to distract your enemies. As long as you have a symbol of your faith displayed openly on your person, you can dazzle an attacking enemy. When you are attacked by a creature within 30 feet of you that you can see, you can use your Channel Divinity as a reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll, before it hits or misses, as the light from the symbol flashes at just the right angle to distract the attacker. At that moment, the attacker is also filled with fear of the power you are granted by your faith, taking 2d6 psychic damage. An attacker that can't be blinded is immune to this feature.

Turn the Unenlightened. You can use your Channel Divinity to rebuke fiends as well as genies and other elementals with the holy sayings of the Loregiver. As an action, you present your holy



symbol and speak an appropriate scripture, and each elemental or fiend within 30 feet of you that can hear you must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, such a creature is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage.

A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it possibly can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

If any other creatures are charmed and/or frightened by the turned creature at the time it is turned, any such charming and frightening effects are suppressed while it is turned. Any suppressed effect resumes when the duration of the turning ends, provided that its duration has not expired in the meantime.

CAVALRY LEADERSHIP

Beginning at 7th level, you are an experienced battlefield leader, especially comfortable leading from atop your steed, and those who fight alongside you feel a sense of security from your very presence. You and all creatures you choose within 10 feet of you have resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed

or frightened. At 18th level, the range of this effect increases to 30 feet. In addition, when you are mounted, opportunity attacks against you and your mount are made at disadvantage.

HOLY ENLIGHTENMENT

Beginning at 15th level, your religious studies have fortified you against the occult. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and resistance against fire and necrotic damage.

BATTLEFIELD PRAYER

When you reach 20th level, you can focus your mind with prayer to gain legendary mettle and unmatched martial prowess. Using your action, you gain the following abilities for one minute:

- You increase your walking speed and the speed of any mount you ride by 20 feet.
- You and your mount ignore difficult terrain.
- You have resistance against all damage inflicted by spells or non-magical weapons.
- When you inflict damage on a creature with a melee weapon attack, that creature must make a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC. If it fails, it is knocked prone. Once per turn, when a creature is knocked prone by this effect, you may choose to move it 10 feet away from you if you wish.

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

Ranger Archetype:

Mariner

Mariners are rangers born not to the desert or forest, but the sea. You are the daring merchant-princess, the cunning freebooter, or the bold explorer. While your Zakharan ancestors were born to the desert, they soon became practiced in the ways of the sea, and today, mariners like you dominate trade (and piracy) in the waters surrounding the Land of Fate.

You live the virtues that Zakharans are known for: bravery, honesty among allies, leadership by example, and advancement by merit. Yet as a traveler between the great seaports, with no single home, you exist on the borders of society. When your luck or patience runs out in one port, you move on, seeking out new lands and adventures. Yet the waves are no peaceful haven. The sea lanes are choked with pirates (who may be your enemies or rivals, depending on your own activities), sea serpents, giant squids, and other strangeness. And lately, these threats seem to be growing darker. It has always been said by some that, in the deepest waters, primordial powers older than the gods of mortals still hold sway. Prophecies state that when such beings wake, they will bring forth a cataclysm that will devastate the Land of Fate, and that their spawn and worshippers will swarm over city and desert alike. Sailors will tell their tales, of course, but you've heard too many rumors of signs and omens repeated in different ports to dismiss these dire predictions out of hand.

You've heard that mamluks of the order called the Vigilant seem to be taking these threats seriously enough to ally with even the most lawless mariners when necessary. They most often seek only information, but at times they will hire a ship and all its crew to investigate dark doings in remote places, occasionally joining the voyage themselves. Some of these daring seafarers have never returned, but others have come back to port with incredible stories or cargo holds full of unique treasure. In the Land of Fate, it is a strange and dangerous time to be a mariner. Then again, you weren't seeking safety or boredom when you chose a life at sea. Upon "retiring, corsairs often become simple sea merchants, following common routes and carrying traditional cargos. Yet even in the hearts of these old sea dogs a fire burns—a passion that may lead them to accept one "last" great adventure. Your fighting style reflects the common traits of sailors everywhere, prizing freedom, mobility, and vengeful counterattacks.

Warrior Roles: The Corsair

Shunning the regimented lives of land-bound soldiers, corsairs are warriors of the waves, accustomed to swift moves and running battles over open water. For a corsair, the sea represents freedom, untethered to land-based organizations or leaders. A mere mortal becomes the master of their own universe when at the helm of a ship. Corsairs may be fighters, rangers, or even rogues. Barbarians who engage in coastal raiding or piracy may be corsairs as well, just as paladins who take to the sea to battle such savage pirates or greater evils such as the servants of the Zakharan kraken may be as well. The simplest way to represent this is to choose the Sailor or Pirate background, or the Pearl Diver background from the forthcoming *Adventurer's Guide to Al-Qadim*. In addition, whenever a class feature allows a corsair to choose a fighting style, they may always choose from the following additional options, even if they are not normally options for that class (though they can never choose the same fighting style twice).

• MOBILITY

When you are not using a shield or wearing any kind of heavy armor, you receive a +1 bonus to AC, and you gain a swimming speed and climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

• TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

The Corsair Ranger

The Mariner archetype is a worthy choice for corsairs of the ranger class.



CORSAIR FIGHTING STYLE

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you receive a second fighting style, chosen from either Mobility or Two-Weapon Fighting (as listed under *Warrior Roles: Corsair*, on the previous page). You can never take the same Fighting Style option more than once.

SEAFARER

You gain proficiency in navigator's tools and vehicles (water). When you make ability checks for either of these proficiencies, or Strength (Athletics) checks related to climbing or swimming, your proficiency bonus is doubled. For purposes of holding your breath and avoiding suffocation, you may treat your Constitution as if it were 19.

SAILOR'S LUCK

Once per round, when you miss with a weapon attack against a creature that has attacked you within the last minute or that is your favored enemy, you can re-roll that attack roll. You must use the result of the second roll.

SLIPPERY OPPONENT

At 7th level, when you hit an opponent with a weapon attack, that opponent's attack rolls against you are made at disadvantage until the end of your turn. In addition, whenever you fail a saving throw to avoid being frightened, you can use your reaction to roll that saving throw again.

SEASONED SAILOR

At 7th level, you learn three languages you did not already know and the *druidcraft* cantrip.

MARINER RETREAT

At 11th level, whenever an opponent makes an opportunity attack against you, they provoke an opportunity attack from you in turn.

OVERWHELMING COUNTERATTACK

Starting at 11th level, once per turn, when you attack a creature that has attacked you within the last minute, if that attack hits, you can choose one of the following options:

- Inflict an additional 1d10 damage on that creature.
- Make a weapon attack against any number of creatures within 5 feet of that creature, with a separate attack roll for each target.

ROLLING WITH THE WAVES

At 15th level, you gain a special defensive ability. Choose one of the following features.

Evasion. You can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects, such as a red dragon's fiery

breath or a *lightning bolt* spell. When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

Outmaneuver. When you make an opportunity attack, after the attack resolves, you can move 10 feet as part of the same reaction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Retaliation. When you take damage from a creature that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature.

The Whispers at Sea

In recent years, more and more sea stories seem to speak of a growing darkness invading oceans and coastal regions. Superstitious merchant captains now make a practice of fearfully sacrificing a black goat or white calf and tossing the carcass overboard when passing through the Strait of Dawal, sometimes accompanied by chests of good coin. Primitive jungle elves on the coasts, once eager to trade for maritime goods, now chase off merchant ships with spears and poison blowgun darts. A growing number of pirates on the waters seem to be murderous cultists rather than mere thieves, and tattoos of tentacled kraken or black eight-fingered hands are seen on longshoremen in many a dock. Similar tattoos have been seen on sahuagin traveling on land, sometimes in disguise. It is said they do business near Hama with sinister mamluks of an unidentified legion, purchasing slaves of all races that are then carried off by evil jinn, but holy slayers of Hakiya have come in the night for those who have looked into the matter further. Meanwhile, advisers, nobles, and viziers in many places have been revealed as great ghuls in disguise. Mercenaries from distant lands seek passage to marshal at a long-ruined citadel in Kadar, their passage sometimes paid by mysterious figures believed to be rakshasa. A sha'ir's tower in the Sea of Chaos is said to have vanished overnight. The dirges of the rom now sing of horrors to come as well as their tragic past. Aboleths seem to be inhabiting shallower and sunnier waters than in the past, dao serving the emperor of the yak-men haunt major ports, and nothics, once rarely seen in these lands, are now a common feature of seaside tales. Even the great marids, ever known for their chaotic nature, are now described as plotting or even sinister in their deeds as often as they are called capricious. Ancient writings state that Great Old Ones sleep beneath the waves, elder things who ruled in the chaos before recorded time, and that they await a fateful night when the stars and planets align correctly, awaken these ancient horrors to devastate the kingdoms of mortals—many sages say that all these troubling rumors, taken together, point to that night coming very soon.

Rogue Archetype: **Tomb Robber**

While most burglars covet the treasure of the living, you are one who specializes in stealing the wealth of the dead. Nearly all civilized societies have strong taboos against disturbing the rest of those who have passed, and you see this as an advantage, since it winnows down the competition. Many cultures make a custom of interring their most illustrious members with finery befitting their station in life, yet the writings of the Loregiver make it clear that such worldly trappings do not accompany those who pass into the afterlife. You have determined, quite sensibly, that this is a tremendous waste.

Of course, those who lay such grand personages to rest know that not everyone respects the sanctity of burial. Special masons and engineers are often employed to design stone walls, heavy doors, bewildering architecture, and cunning traps to protect great tombs, to say nothing of magical curses or monstrous guardians. Your specialty is navigating these deterrents. Despite the unsavory nature of their work, tomb robbers tend to be well-educated and scholarly, as they require a deep understanding of the ancient past and the dangers history has left behind. Though not a formal community, they tend to know each other by reputation, and often form great rivalries. The relationship between those who pilfer from the dead for personal gain and those who do so in the service of a larger cause (such as knowledge or the desire to take dangerous magic items out of evil's reach) is particularly competitive. Many are traditional antiquity scholars attached to institutions of education, and they delight in discrediting each other's theories about the past by delving into ancient ruins or mausoleums and

obtaining contrary proof firsthand. They foster their own renown by specializing in certain cultures or historical epochs, writing memoirs of their dangerous expeditions, and carrying specialized tools and equipment. Most of all, leading tomb robbers become famous for their advanced prowess with a signature weapon. Less commonly used weapons—such as blowguns, nets, or whips—are especially favored by tomb robbers for this purpose, the better to grow their personal reputations.

SCHOLAR OF DANGER

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you can add your Intelligence modifier to Dexterity saving throws. You also gain proficiency in any one martial weapon of your choice and one of the following skills: Arcana, History, or Religion.





SIGNATURE WEAPON

At 3rd level, choose one weapon with which you are proficient. This becomes your *signature weapon*. When you take the attack action with that weapon, you can then use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action to use your weapon to force the creature you attacked to make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity or Intelligence modifier (your choice)). If they fail, choose one of the following effects:

- The target falls prone;
- The target takes damage equal to your Intelligence modifier;
- The target drops one item of your choice that it is holding;
- The next attack made against the target has advantage.

In order to use your bonus action this way, you must still be wielding your signature weapon, and the target must be within range of that weapon.

WELL-PLANNED STRIKE

At 9th level, when you add your sneak attack damage to an attack with your signature weapon, you may choose to reroll a number of the damage dice up to your Intelligence modifier. You must use the new rolls. You may use this ability twice. You regain all expended uses when you complete a short or long rest.

SIGNATURE STRIKE

At 13th level, when you add your sneak attack damage to an attack with your signature weapon, you can sacrifice 2d6 of the damage dice you would have rolled to force the creature damaged to make a Dexterity saving throw against one of the effects of your Signature Weapon ability. In addition, when you use your bonus action for your Signature Weapon ability, the target does not have to be the creature you attacked with your attack action on that turn, but can be any creature within the signature weapon's range.

ADEPT IN DARKNESS

At 17th level, when you hit a creature with an attack, if you and that creature are both heavily obscured by darkness, you can deal your sneak attack damage even if you do not have advantage on the attack roll. This ability does not function if the creature struck has blindsight or truesight, the rogue's Blindsight feature, or the warlock's Devil Sight eldritch invocation ability.

EXTRA SIGNATURE ATTACK

Beginning at 17th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn, as long as both attacks are made with your signature weapon. Once per turn, you can inflict an extra 1d8 damage with your signature weapon on a successful attack that does not include sneak attack damage.

Wizard's Arcane Tradition: **School of the Sungazer**

You study ancient, dark knowledge of the distant past, and use the power of the forces you study to empower your magic. You specialize in long-forgotten summoning, warding, and protective spells related to eldritch horrors from before recorded time. Your goal in studying these entities is to better destroy them, but there is a price. The reason other wizards eschew such forbidden lore is because it slowly drives you insane.

It is worth noting that there is no formal academic setting or larger organization in which these damning secrets are taught. There is a loose network among some of the wizards who curate this knowledge, which mostly consists of exchanging coded messages across long distances, but direct transmission of the magical techniques implicit in this "school" occurs almost exclusively from direct study of the blasphemous tomes that contain them. Only occasionally do the mysterious wizards known as sungazers even take on apprentices.

Sungazers wear dark colored robes, and they let their hair (and beard, if male) run long. As they grow progressively wilder and closer to insanity, their eyes become tinged with red or yellow.

FORBIDDEN LORE

You are both drawn to dark knowledge and repelled by it. At 3rd level, when you choose this archetype, your dark researches grant you insight and power. You gain a set of abilities called *eldritch wards*, which are fueled by special dice called *lore dice*. Both are described below. Necrotic damage and psychic damage inflicted by your expending lore dice ignores resistances and immunities to those damage types.

Lore Dice. You have three *lore dice*, which are d6s. A lore die is expended when you use it. You regain all of your expended lore dice when you finish a long or short rest. Your lore dice become more potent as you gain levels: When you reach 9th level, they become d8s instead of d6s. When you reach 13th level, they become d10s. At 17th level, they become d12s.

Eldritch Wards. You learn four eldritch wards, which are described under "Eldritch Wards" at the end of this archetype description. Three of the eldritch wards you learn are Cerulean Glyph, Dark Studies, and Supernatural Sense, but the fourth may be any one eldritch ward of your choice. Many eldritch wards enhance a spell in some way. You can only use one eldritch ward per spell.

The Price of Forbidden Lore. For a duration of one hour after you spend a lore die, you have disadvantage on all Charisma checks and Wisdom (Insight) checks against humanoids.

A Bit of Complexity

During the design of 5th Edition D&D, there was a lot of discussion about what various players wanted from the game, specifically in terms of tracking resources and other attributes of their characters. The tactical complexity of managing character abilities in some versions of the game was the source of strong disagreement among players, with some really enjoying that secondary level of gameplay. Others felt it betrayed the spirit of earlier editions, in which combat was quicker and tracking limited use features such as spells and other abilities was simpler. In most editions of this game, there is a marked difference even between classes of the same edition in this area. From the earliest editions, fighters were simpler to play than wizards, since a fighter's main action was to attack with their weapon, while wizards had to track the limited number of spells they could cast of each level. 5th Edition tries to bring the editions together by offering faster combat and simpler adjudication of edge cases while continuing the tradition of having some classes play with less complexity than others. A fighter with the Champion archetype has very little resource management, while one with the Battle Master archetype has to track superiority dice, and both are simpler than classes like the druid and sorcerer, which have to track spell slots as well as extra ability uses such as wild shape or sorcery points.

The School of the Sungazer is on the complex end of classes. In addition to tracking spell slots, the player of a wizard with this school must track lore dice, eldritch wards, and their effects. Hopefully, this complexity is mitigated by not having very many lore dice to keep track of (3 or 4 for most of an adventurer's career), since the effects of rolling too high on a lore die have more and more possible consequences as the Sungazer gains levels. This is an intentional attempt to make playing the Sungazer feel like one is keeping track of a great deal of strange and dangerous arcane lore, just as the character is in the story of the game. It also seeks to bring some direct horror into playing such a character, emulating the effects of confronting blasphemous truths in certain more Lovecraftian roleplaying games. However, a consequence is that the School of the Sungazer is a better option for advanced players who have a good deal of familiarity with this edition of D&D or roleplaying games in general. For players who envision their character as struggling with the consequences of wielding forbidden magic from unknowable entities but do not want the extra level of resource management required in playing this class, a warlock whose patron is the Great Old One or the Fiend is a perfectly good option. But for those who do choose this class, the rewards of wielding these secret powers are great. As are the risks...

BLASPHEMOUS INSIGHT

At 6th level, your dark researches let you use your knowledge of forbidden lore more reliably and powerfully, but at an even more horrifying price. You gain an additional lore die (giving you a total of four instead of three). You also learn a new eldritch ward of your choice, but may be forced to pay the penalty listed below whenever you expend a lore die.

Psychic Backlash. The price of using lore dice worsens. When you roll one or more lore dice, if at least one of the dice rolls a 6 or higher, you must roll a Wisdom saving throw against your own spell save DC or take psychic damage equal to double the result of the highest rolling lore die.

PSEUDONATURAL FAMILIAR

Starting at 6th level, if you have or summon a familiar, it becomes a pseudonatural creature, gaining the effects of the Pseudonatural Creature Template listed in this document.

WORSENING TAIN

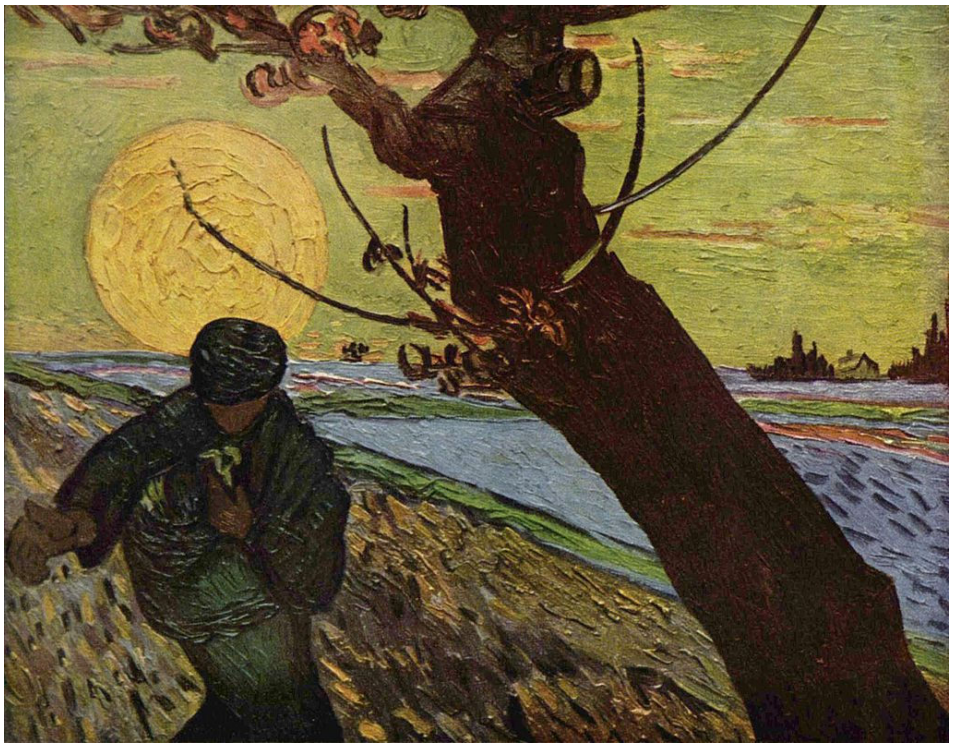
At 10th level, part of you is tainted by corruption, though you resist it. Your use of lore dice grows both more potent and more costly. You learn a new eldritch ward of your choice, but may be forced to pay the penalty listed below whenever you expend a lore die.

Spiral of Insanity. The price of using lore dice worsens. When you take psychic damage as a side effect of having expended one or more lore dice, roll 2d8 and add your Intelligence modifier. If the total equals or exceeds your Wisdom score, your Wisdom score is reduced to 0, you are incapacitated until you regain at least 1 point of Wisdom, and you gain one type of indefinite madness (per the Madness rules).

DEEPER STUDIES

At 10th level, you can choose to either gain proficiency with one type of artisan's tools or learn one additional skill from the following list: Arcana, Deception, Intimidate, Investigation, Medicine, Perception, or Religion. In addition, you add a 1st level warlock spell of your choice to your wizard's spellbook.

EDGE OF MADNESS



At 14th level, you know you may not have much longer until dark powers either destroy you or shatter your sanity, but your insight and power give you the potential to destroy such dark powers yourself. When aberrations, fiends, elementals, or undead take necrotic damage from your expended lore dice, that damage is doubled. You also gain an additional lore die (giving you a total of five instead of four), and when you roll initiative and have no lore dice remaining, you regain one lore die automatically. Finally, you learn a new eldritch ward of your choice, but expending lore dice may expose you to the penalty listed below.

Loss of Self. If your Wisdom score is reduced to 0 by an expenditure of lore dice, you risk permanent insanity if you do not regain your senses soon. For every 24 hours you have a Wisdom score lower than half of your normal Wisdom score, roll an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC. If you fail, you gain one form of indefinite madness. Unlike normal indefinite madness, this trait cannot be cured by any spell short of a *wish*. Your DM may choose to allow your madness to be cured by some other special means, but what that means might be and how you might discover it are entirely up to the DM. Finally, even when you do regain your full Wisdom, you may not regain all of it. When your Wisdom finally returns to its normal score, if you have gained at least one incurable from of indefinite madness since the last time your Wisdom was at its normal score, as described above, your Wisdom ability score is permanently reduced by 1.



ELDRITCH WARDS

The eldritch wards are listed in alphabetical order below.

Cerulean Glyph. When an aberration, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead inflicts damage on you with a spell or attack, you may expend one lore die to decrease the damage you suffer. Roll the lore die, then add your Intelligence modifier to the number rolled and reduce the damage inflicted by the total.

Creeping Spell. When you cast a spell that has a duration of 1 minute or longer, you can spend one lore die to double its duration, to a maximum of 24 hours. However, there is a side effect. For a number of minutes equal to your lore die roll, you have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks and on Constitution saves that you make to maintain your concentration on a spell when you take damage, but you also have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and Initiative rolls.

Dark Studies. When you make an Intelligence check that relates to aberrations, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead, or to any cult or extraplanar entity, you can expend one lore die to bolster the check. After you make the roll for the Intelligence check, but before learning if it was successful, you may choose to use this ability, making a second roll and taking the higher of the two rolls, and you add half the number rolled on the lore die to the final result of your check.

Harrowing Spell. When you cast a spell of 1st level or higher that targets only one creature and doesn't have a range of self, you can spend a lore die to choose a number of creatures equal to the spell's level within 30 feet of the target. One of these creatures can be the creature targeted by the original spell. The chosen creatures must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become frightened of you for a number of rounds equal to the lore die roll. If the spell cast is 3rd level or higher, on a failed save they also drop whatever they are holding and must take the Dash action and move away from you by the safest route on each of their turns while affected, as under the effects of *fear* spell.

Hungry Spell. When you hit a creature with a spell attack, you can expend one lore die to deal extra necrotic damage to that creature equal to the number rolled on the lore die. You can only inflict damage on one creature per turn with this ability. When you reach 10th level in your wizard class, you may choose to expend two lore dice instead of one on this ability. If you spend two, you roll both lore dice and add them together to determine how much necrotic damage this ability inflicts.

Insidious Spell. When you cast a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, you can expend one lore die to make the creature more likely to fail. Subtract the number rolled on your lore die from the creature's saving throw. You must choose to use this ability before the saving throw is rolled.

Instinctive Spell. When you cast a spell that has a casting time of one action, you can spend a lore

dice to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting. When you use this ability, you must roll your lore die and take necrotic damage equal to the number rolled.

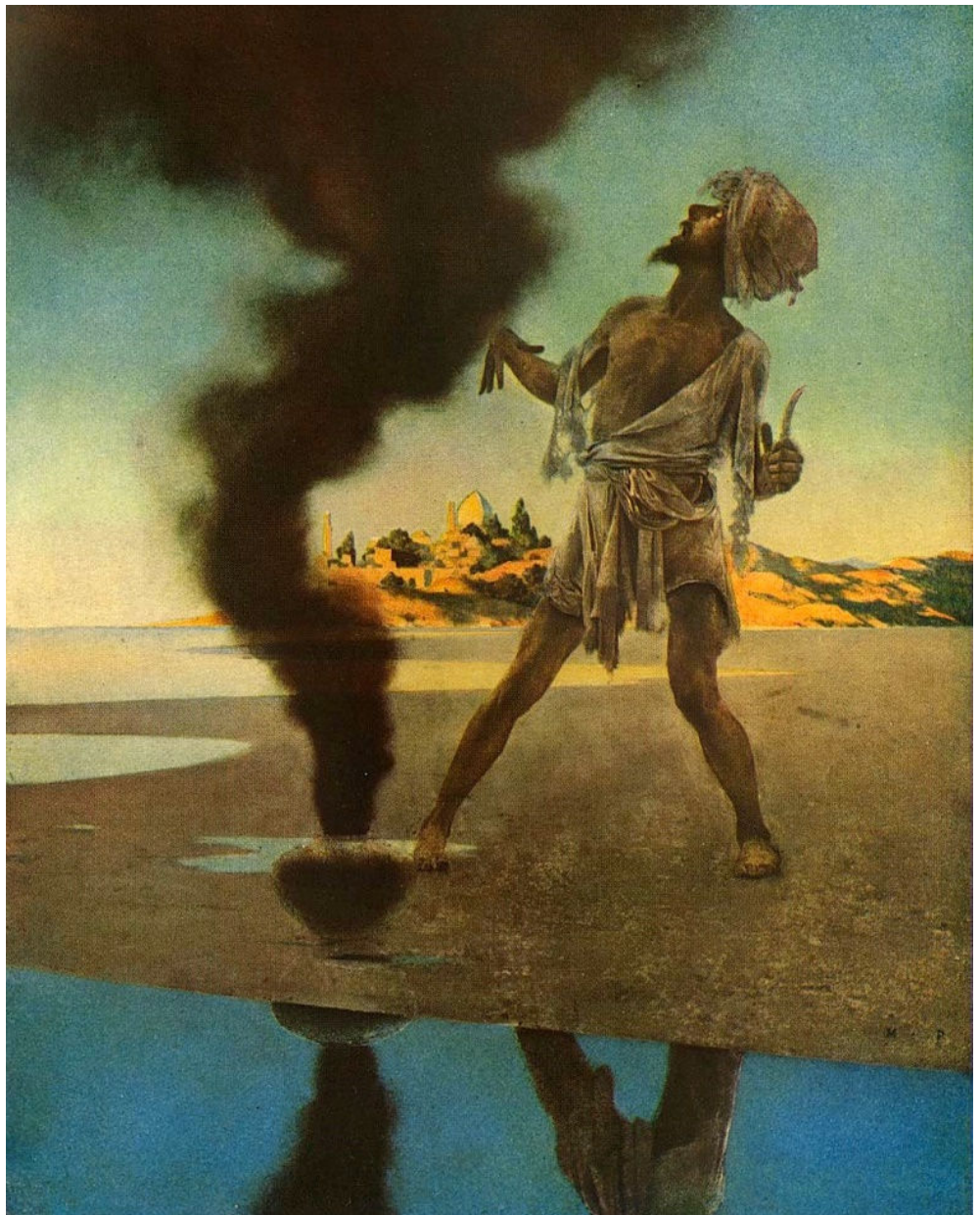
Repel Abominations. You can attempt to keep dark forces at bay. Each time you use this eldritch ward, you choose one of the following creature types to affect: aberration, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead, and then spend a lore die as an action. Each creature of the chosen type within 30 feet of you that can hear or see you must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, such a creature is repelled for a number of rounds equal to the number rolled on your lore die, though the effect ends if the creature takes damage. A repelled creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it possibly can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Slithering Ward. When you cast a spell or move on your turn, you can expend one lore die to temporarily ward yourself against harm. You roll your die and add the number rolled to your AC until the end of your turn. In addition, you increase your walking speed by 5 feet and gain a climbing speed equal to your (newly increased) walking speed until the end of your turn.

Supernatural Sense. You have a preternatural awareness for certain kinds of inhuman beings—a chill runs up your spine, the hair on the back of your neck stands up, an old wound aches, or you experience some other sensation. As an action, you can expend one lore die to open your awareness to detect these forces. For a number of rounds equal to your lore die roll, you know the location of all aberrations, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead within 60 feet of you that are not behind total cover. You know the type (aberration, elemental, fey,

fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence you sense, but not its identity (the vampire Count Strahd von Zarovich, for instance). After you use this ability, you gain another benefit. For a number of minutes equal to your lore die roll, aberrations, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead can always understand your spoken words, and you can always understand theirs, and you gain advantage on Charisma checks and Wisdom (Insight) checks against them.

Whispering Spell. When you cast a spell, you can spend one lore die to cast it without any somatic or verbal components. If you roll damage for this spell, you must replace one die rolled for damage with the number rolled on your lore die. That much of the damage inflicted becomes necrotic damage. At the same time, you take necrotic damage equal to half the number rolled on your lore die.



Races

Dragonborn Variant: Sea Dragonborn

Dragonborn remain rare in the Land of Fate. Having only come to this world during the events of what northern barbarians call the Spellplague—which affected the continent of Faerun much more dramatically—they have yet to become common alongside the civilized peoples of Zhakara. However,

a certain breed of dragonborn who share traits with sea dragons rather than chromatic or metallic ones are seafarers, and perhaps for this reason there are many more of them found in Zakhara than their more landbound cousins. The sea dragonborn are a warlike people who take to naval battle readily, using their unique abilities to strike with stealth from banks of fog or mist. Besides a tendency to be smaller and more agile, they are very much like their metallic or chromatic kin. They have a tradition of raiding ships and port settlements, but few seem to be evil, and they

focus their depredations on evil groups which their leaders declare as anathema. Recently, many such warbands have come into conflict with the slave-taking minions of the Zakharan Kraken, finding common cause with corsairs of other races as well as groups like the Vigilant. Of course, less ethical sea dragonborn of other alignments are often marine raiders as well, but are far less discriminating when choosing their targets.

Sea Dragonborn Multiclassing

If you are using the optional multiclassing rules, sea dragonborn gain a special benefit: they can substitute their Dexterity score for their Strength score when determining if they can be multiclass paladins.



SEA DRAGONBORN TRAITS

These traits replace the Ability Score Increase, Draconic Ancestry, Breath Weapon, and Damage Resistance traits of a normal Dragonborn.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your choice of either your Strength score or Dexterity score increases by 1.

Amphibious. You can breathe both air and water.

Draco-Aquatic Ancestry. Like all dragonborn, you have draconic ancestry, but it links you to dragons of the sea rather than the usual metallic or chromatic breeds. For effects that may depend on it, your draconic ancestry is of the “Sea” type, and your breath weapon is a 15 ft. cone requiring a Dexterity save. Your ancestry does not grant the normal resistance to a particular damage type, but for any effect that may be based on the damage type determined by your draconic ancestry, the damage type is considered fire.

Minor Heat Resistance. When you take fire damage, you can use your reaction to roll a d6. Add your Constitution modifier to the number rolled, and reduce the damage by that amount.

Searing Steam Breath. You can use your action to exhale a cloud of super-heated steam. When you use your breath weapon, each creature within a 15 ft. cone must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 1d6 fire damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. Being underwater doesn’t grant resistance against this damage. The damage increases to 2d6 at 6th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 16th level. In addition, your breath weapon creates an area of fog that includes not only the cone itself but any area within 5 feet of it, including the space in which you are standing when you use it. The fog remains for 1 minute, and it spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. After you use your breath weapon, you can’t use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Sea Dragon’s Legacy. You gain a swimming speed equal to your walking speed, and whenever you make a Dexterity (Stealth) check while you are heavily obscured by any form of water or vapor (including mist and fog), you are considered proficient in the Stealth skill and add double your normal proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Spells

Spellcasters are some of the greatest foes of the ancient darkness threatening Zakhara. Whether they offer healing to warrior allies, terror to their enemies, or simply bring increased destructive power, their mysterious arts often make the difference between failure and success against such powerful enemies.

Spell Lists

The new spells in this section can be cast by many classes, as shown in the following spell lists. After each spells, its school of magic is listed in parentheses.

Bard Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

dread mercy (enchantment)

frightful strike (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Cleric Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

challenger's mark (enchantment)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

frightful strike (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Druid Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

frightful strike (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Paladin Spells

1ST LEVEL

dread mercy (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Ranger Spells

1ST LEVEL

dread mercy (enchantment)

Sorcerer Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

frightful strike (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Warlock Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

challenger's mark (enchantment)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

frightful strike (enchantment)

Wizard Spells

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

reaver's touch (necromancy)

1ST LEVEL

frightful strike (enchantment)

2ND LEVEL

elemental blade (transmutation)

Spell Descriptions

All new spells referenced in this document are listed and described alphabetically in this section.

Challenger's Mark

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make a melee weapon attack against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, the target suffers the attack's normal effects, and you exchange a moment of silent, instinctive communication that expresses your personal challenge. Before the beginning of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 30 feet away from you or attacks a creature besides you, it immediately takes 1d8 psychic damage, and the spell ends. This spell's damage increases when you reach higher levels. At 5th level, the melee attack deals an extra 1d8 psychic damage to the target, and the damage the target suffers for moving more than 30 feet away from you increases to 2d8. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

Dread Mercy

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you reduce a creature within 60 feet to 0 hit points with a weapon attack

Range: 60 feet

Components: V

Duration: 10 minutes

You offer an opponent mercy in exchange for their cooperation. Choose one creature within range that you have just reduced to 0 hit points. You instead reduce that creature to 1 hit point and immediately command their surrender. (If a creature prefers to be reduced to 0 hit points for some reason, it can make a Charisma saving throw, and be reduced to 0 hit points instead of 1 on a success.) As soon as the creature is reduced to 1 hit point instead of 0 due this spell, it must immediately make a Wisdom

saving throw. On a success, the creature is frightened of you for the spell's duration, and suffers only the normal effects of being frightened. On a failure, the creature is still frightened, but rather than fleeing, the frightened creature stays where it is and does not move unless you tell it to. For the duration of the spell, the creature that failed its save will not attack you, and it fearfully obeys any instructions it can hear and understand that will not directly harm it (for example, it will not knowingly drink poison or walk off a cliff). It will not deliberately say anything to you that it believes to be a lie, though it can simply remain silent if you do not ask any direct questions. If you ask it a direct question that can be answered in one or two sentences, it will not give you an answer that it considers false, though it may leave things out, especially if you ask a question that takes more than one or two sentences to answer. It may avoid answering questions to which it would normally respond with a lie by giving short or evasive answers, as long as what it does say remains within the boundaries of what it believes to be the truth. Whenever you or one of your allies attempt to harm the creature, or if you give it instructions that would harm it, or whenever you force it to make a saving throw against another effect, it repeats its Wisdom saving throw against this spell, ending the effects of the initial failed save on a success. You always know if a creature has succeeded or failed on a saving throw against this spell. When the spell's effect ends, the creature is unaware it was ever affected by this spell, knowing you could have killed it and believing its fear of you was merely natural.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd level or higher spell slot, the duration is increased to 1 hour. If you use a 5th level or higher spell slot, the duration is increased to 8 hours.

Elemental Blade

2nd level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a plum blossom)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
When you cast this spell, a sword blade of elemental energy appears in the hand of the creature you touch (who must be a willing recipient). You choose one of the following damage types when you cast this spell: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison. It is the size and shape of a

normal shortsword, but is virtually weightless. If the wielder lets go of the blade, it disappears, but you can evoke it for them again as a bonus action. Once on its turn while it holds the blade, the wielder can use its action to create one of two effects:

- The wielder can make a melee attack with the blade, rolling the attack as if they were attacking with a regular shortsword, but on a hit the target takes 5d4 damage of the type chosen when this spell was first cast, instead of the normal damage it would take from such an attack. Since the blade is immaterial, the wielder's Strength or Dexterity modifiers do not apply to the damage, nor does any extra damage from special abilities the wielder may possess (such as sneak attack).
- The wielder can unleash lightning on a single target within 30 feet. The wielder's chosen target makes a Dexterity saving throw against your spellcasting DC. If the target fails, it takes 4d4 damage of the type chosen when this spell was first cast. If it succeeds, it takes half damage and can take reactions normally.

The blade sheds bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. A creature who takes damage from this spell suffers an additional effect depending on the type of damage inflicted, as follows:

- Acid: The creature cannot take reactions until the beginning of the wielder's next turn.
- Cold: The creature's speed is reduced by half until the end of its next turn.
- Fire: The creature must choose to either fall prone to extinguish flames on its body or take 1d4 extra fire damage. Creatures wearing metal armor are immune to this effect.
- Lightning: The creature takes an extra 1d4 lightning damage if it is wearing metal armor.
- Poison: The creature is poisoned until the end of its next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd level or higher spell slot, the damage increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 2nd.

Frightful Strike

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, M (a weapon with at least one drop of blood on it)

Duration: 1 round

You bark or whisper a terrifying threat to the creature your weapon strikes. As part of the action of casting this spell, you must make a melee attack against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, in addition to the attack's normal effect, the creature struck takes an additional amount of psychic damage equal to 1d4 plus your Charisma modifier (minimum 1) and must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it is frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

At Higher Levels.

When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage is increased by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st.

Reaver's Touch

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

The touch of your hand drains a target's life energy, allowing you to empower yourself via the ritual sacrifice of animals and other creatures, or by striking your opponents in combat. Make a melee spell attack against the target. You have advantage on the attack if your target is a beast. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 necrotic damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage inflicted (round up). The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).



Equipment

Cutlass

A curving sword with a cutting edge on only one side, the cutlass's shape keeps it short enough for battle in close quarters. At the same time, it is sharp and strong enough the cut through ropes and rigging. These qualities make it ideal for naval combat.

Type: Martial Melee Weapon

Damage: 1d8 slashing

Properties: Finesse

Cost: 25 gp

Weight: 3 lbs.

Special: All creatures can make attack rolls with this weapon underwater without being at disadvantage (for most weapons, only creatures with swim speeds can attack normally underwater).

Razor Claw

Four or five curved blades are attached to a glove, strap, or metal bar, allowing the wielder to place the blades securely atop or between their knuckles. Various versions of this weapon exist, often with nicknames like "tiger claws" or "bear claws."

Type: Simple Melee Weapon

Damage: 1d4 slashing

Properties: Finesse, light, special

Cost: 3 gp

Weight: 1lb.

Special: A wielder armed with this weapon can choose to make an unarmed strike instead of a weapon attack; if they do so, the unarmed strike inflicts slashing damage instead of bludgeoning. If a creature would drop this weapon, they can use their reaction to not drop it.

Monsters

Deep Cultist

A deep cultist is the child of a warlock who traded their child's humanity for power before it was born, mixing their own nature with that of an otherworldly being. They are naturally attracted to aquatic aberrations, such as aboleths or krakens, and they seek to assist their abominable schemes in any way they can.

Parents who make these pacts raise their tainted offspring to worship whichever Far Realm entity they made their pact with, and when such children grow up, they attempt to raise up cults of their own sharing this worship. The being that spawned them is connected to the element of water (or perhaps to the elemental evil corruption of it), and so while deep cultists can pass for human, their amphibious nature is indicated by subtly fish-like or frog-like appearances, including flattish noses that are barely more than a pair of nostrils and great bulging eyes that tend to stare without blinking. They have muscular or wiry builds, pale almost bluish or greenish skin, and black greasy hair that either grows wild or is thin and sparse.

Despite these hints to their true origins, some deep

cultists are still attractive by human standards. They've been known to recruit members for their cults by seduction as well as more mundane means of coercion, and some truly come to love their human paramours. Many are the legends of "mermaids" rescuing sailors from drowning and falling in love with them that actually tell of deep cultists. When on land commonly go about in heavy robes to hide their appearance on land.

DEEP CULTIST

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d8+42)

Speed 30ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +3, Deception +4, Religion +3, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, lightning

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Aquan

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The deep cultist is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following spells: Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *reaver's touch***, *shape water**, *vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *create/destroy water*, *dissonant whispers*, *disguise self*, *fog cloud*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear*, *tidal wave**

4th level (1 slot): *storm sphere**

(* = appears in the *Elemental Evil Player's Guide*).

(** = new spell appearing in this document).

Amphibious. The deep cultist can breathe air and water.

Fanaticism. The deep cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Venomous Skin. The deep cultist can cause their flesh to exude a corrosive poison. Any creature grappling to deep cultist or grappled by it takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and 3 (1d6) acid damage at the end of that creature's turn.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3(1d6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage and 3 (1d6) acid damage.



Great Ghul

Undead elemental cousins of the dao, djinn, efreeti, and marids, great ghuls comprise the most wicked members of an inferior order of genies. They haunt burial grounds and feed on dead human bodies. They are usually female, and all great ghuls are beguiling and seductive shapechangers. No matter what form they take, however, their feet always remain those of a donkey, though they often wear special boots or long robes to conceal this aberration. Ghuls delight in devouring the flesh of victims and sucking the marrow from the bones.

Masters of Disguise. Great ghuls have thick hair and bushy eyebrows that often droop over their eyes. Their hands end in clawed fingers, and their feet and sometimes their ears are those of a donkey. Their jaws jut out and are powerfully muscled. Their dark gray or pale white skin is always cold and clammy, and they have the hunched posture of their lesser kin, the ghouls. Great ghuls are aware of how their looks repulse other creatures and are eager to disguise their true appearance with cosmetics, clothes, and jewelry. While most great ghuls stand over 7 ft. tall, those that are sorcerers typically stand about 10 ft. tall. In their polymorphed form they are often smaller. Because great ghuls are feared by humans and despised by genies, they rarely keep their own form, even when at home in their lonely caves and ruins.

Shapeshifting has become a habit for the great ghuls, and they are excellent actors and liars. Great ghuls have many opportunities to practice these deceptions when they travel among humans. Great ghuls are fond of all forms of perfumes and scents, such as attar of orange, rosewater, cloves, and so on. They use these to cover their own unpleasant smell.

Secretive yet Social. Great ghuls serve the genies (when required), but lord it over the ghouls, who are

considered unrefined and unreliable. Great ghuls who become sorcerers are very secretive; the other genies resent and fear the ghuls' power over them. Such great ghuls are often destroyed when their

homes are discovered. In general, all great ghuls avoid contact with other races because violence often follows. But, they do sometimes help humans and others who come to

them seeking help against other genies.

Sometimes they also help humans in quests which the great ghuls find interesting, and they do this without expectation of reward.

Though solitary, they grow bored easily, and this seems to motivate them to take part in pranks and daring deeds that sometimes put them and the secret of their true identities at considerable risk. Some of their pranks are less amusing than others: great ghuls are particularly fond of joining groups of nomads and travelers and then leading them astray. Many of these travelers are led to their deaths and consumed by the carrion-eating ghuls.

Predators of the Lonely

Wastes. Great ghuls are normally solitary, though if they have kin who are great ghuls as well, they will form packs with them. Great ghuls live in seclusion in ruins or caves found in the emptiest deserts or on the highest mountains. Because of their sharp claws and incredible strength, great ghuls are able to climb sheer rock walls that would daunt most mountaineers. Only genies slain by great ghuls become ghuls themselves; all other races are simply slain and devoured.



GREAT GHUL

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d10+96)

Speed 40ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	23 (+6)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dexterity +6, Wisdom +7, Charisma +8

Skills Deception +8, Religion +6, Stealth +6

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, necrotic

Damage Immunities cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Primordial

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The great ghul's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following spells:

At will: *shocking grasp*, *detect evil and good*, *disguise self*, *true polymorph* (self only)

1/day: *animate dead*, *invisibility*, *tongues*

Magical Weapons. The great ghul's weapon attacks are magical.

Mountainwalk. Great ghuls ignore difficult terrain and take no damage from falling.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the great ghul has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Turning Defiance. The great ghul and any ghouls within 30 feet have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The great ghul makes two claw attacks or one claw attack and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) piercing damage.



Great Ghul Sorcerers

A great ghul sorcerer has a challenge rating of 11 (7,200 xp). It has the same statistics as a regular great ghul, except that it has 229 (17d10+136) hit points, a Constitution of 26, and the sorcerous spellcaster trait as described below, in addition to its normal innate spells:

Sorcerous Spellcaster. The great ghul sorcerer is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *friends*, *prestidigitation*, *shape water**, *shocking grasp*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *chromatic orb*, *feather fall*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *dust devil**, *shatter*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fear*, *vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *storm sphere**, *wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*

(* = spell appearing in the *Elemental Evil Player's Guide*).

Pseudonatural Creature

Pseudonatural creatures originate in the Far Realm or in other places beyond the planes as we know them. Eldritch abominations such as these are often the spawn or servitors of Great Old Ones, elder gods, or powerful aberrations. They can take on at least one less alien form when needed, but a glimpse of their true nature can shake a mortal's grip on reality.

Pseudonatural Template

Any corporeal creature can become a pseudonatural creature. When it becomes a pseudonatural creature, it keeps its statistics, except as noted below.

Type. The creature's type changes to Aberration.

Alignment. Chaotic evil and neutral evil creatures do not change their alignment. Other alignments are changed as follows:

Pseudonatural Creature Alignment

Base Creature's Alignment	New Alignment
Lawful Good	Unaligned
Neutral Good	Neutral
Chaotic Good	Chaotic Neutral
Lawful Evil	Neutral Evil
Lawful Neutral	Lawful Evil
Chaotic Neutral	Chaotic Evil
Neutral	Chaotic Neutral
Unaligned	Chaotic Neutral

Hit Points. If the creature has less than 3 Hit Dice, raise its number of Hit Dice to 3 and adjust its hit points accordingly.

Ability Scores. If the creature's

Intelligence is below 3, increase it to 3. In addition, if the creature's Wisdom is less than 20, increase the creature's Wisdom by 10, to a maximum of 20 or the base creature's challenge rating, whichever is higher.

Challenge. Increase the creature's challenge rating by 1 after applying this template. If the base creature's challenge rating is lower than 1/2, increase the challenge rating to 1/2; if it is 1/2, increase it to 1.

Senses. The pseudonatural creature gains blindsight with a radius of 10 feet.

Damage Resistances. The pseudonatural creature gains resistance to acid and lightning.

Languages. The pseudonatural creature gains telepathy 30 ft.

New Trait: Telepathic Insight.

If a creature within 30 ft. communicates telepathically with the pseudonatural creature, it must make a Charisma saving throw against a DC equal to the pseudonatural creature's Wisdom score. If the creature fails the save, the pseudonatural creature magically learns one fact or secret about that creature.

New Spells: The pseudonatural creature knows the *true strike* and *vicious mockery* cantrips. If it can



cast spells of 1st level or higher, it also gains the spells *bane* and *dissonant whispers*.

New Action: Pseudonatural Form. As a bonus action, the creature assumes its true form, that of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. While it is in this form, all attack rolls against the pseudonatural creature made by creatures who can see it are at disadvantage. In addition, while it is in its true form, the pseudonatural creature has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other Charisma checks. It can use another bonus action to change back.

New Reaction: True Form. When the pseudonatural creature takes damage, it can assume its pseudonatural form as a reaction.

Example: The Rat-Thing (Pseudonatural Rat)

The rat-thing appears to be a regular rat to most who see it, but it is always the familiar of some loathsome, half-mad spellcaster, and its true form is far more disturbing. Those who glimpse it in unguarded moments are horrified, for the rat-thing has a face much like that of a human, and its tiny hands are human-like as well. Its face is bearded, sharp-toothed, and bears an evil expression. Its voice sounds like hateful tittering, but it can only communicate via telepathy, which those contacted



experience as the same loathsome titter forming words in their own language. It is said evil wizards and warlocks create rat-things from the remains of sacrificed cultists. Such a creature almost never fights alone, engaging in hostile action only at the side of the corrupted spellcaster they serve.

PSEUDONATURAL RAT (RAT-THING)

Tiny aberration, chaotic neutral
Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (3d4-3)
Speed 20ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	3 (-4)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances acid, lightning
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The pseudonatural rat’s innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components:
At will: true strike, vicious mockery
Telepathic Insight. If a creature within 30 ft. communicates telepathically with the pseudonatural rat, it must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 20). If the creature fails the save, the pseudonatural rat magically learns one fact or secret about that creature.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.
Pseudonatural Form. As a bonus action, the pseudonatural rat creature assumes its true form, that of a rat with a human-like face and tiny, humanoid hands. While it is in this form, all attack rolls against the pseudonatural rat made by creatures who can see it are at disadvantage. In addition, while it is in its true form, the pseudonatural rat has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other Charisma checks. It can use another bonus action to change back.

Reactions

True Form. When the pseudonatural rat takes damage, it can assume its true form as a reaction.

Example: The Black Dog (Pseudonatural Hell Hound)

The black dog is massive dog the size of a calf with thick, shaggy, jet black fur and glowing red eyes. It has massive, sharp canines, and its mouth always seems to be grinning, as the fell creature bears some hidden secret. Its saliva stinks of sulfur. It appears only at night, but even in the moonlight its fur does not shine or gleam, but remains dark as a shadow. It leave no footprints, but can be tracked by the scorch marks it leaves on the ground every few paces, and by its tendency to stop and claw or gnaw upon large objects of wood or metal. It is always associated with fire, with the smell of smoke and flickering shadows in its presence, but does not appear with a visible aura of fire. It is as if, wherever it goes, there is always an unseen fire nearby. Thankfully, these creatures are rare, and seldom attack the living, but rather are omens of worse horrors to follow. They appear before great fires, deadly plagues, battles with high casualties, and the deaths of important personages. They also accompany the appearances of comets in the night sky. Sometimes, they are set to guard something, charged with this duty by unknown powers. In this case, they remain calm and aloof unless a creature threatens or approaches the object of their protection, which sends them into an aggressive frenzy.

In their true form, black dogs are far more frightening. Their bodies seem to explode, as they become unsteady orbs of crimson flame, surrounded by ember-like points of fiery light and bursts of red lightning. They shimmer with heat, making them hard to focus on, but anyone looking directly at the fiery orb sees visions in the flames, visions of various horrific ways they might die, combined with scenes of cataclysm and carnage consuming nearby settlements.

PSEUDONATURAL HELL HOUND (BLACK DOG)

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 45 (7d8-14)
Speed 50ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +9
Damage Resistances Acid, lightning
Damage Immunities Fire

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages telepathy 30 ft., understands Infernal but can't speak it
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The pseudonatural hell hound's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components:
At will: *true strike*, *vicious mockery*
Keen Hearing and Smell. The pseudonatural hell hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
Pack Tactics. The pseudonatural hell hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.
Telepathic Insight. If a creature within 30 ft. communicates telepathically with the pseudonatural hell hound, it must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 20). If the creature fails the save, the pseudonatural hell hound magically learns one fact or secret about that creature.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.
Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The pseudonatural hell exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Pseudonatural Form. As a bonus action, the pseudonatural hell hound creature assumes its true form, that of a flaming sphere wreathed in embers and red lightning, shimmering with it and filled with horrific visions. While it is in this form, all attack rolls against the pseudonatural hell hound made by creatures who can see it are at disadvantage. In addition, while it is in its true form, the pseudonatural hell hound has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other Charisma checks. It can use another bonus action to change back.

Reactions

True Form. When the pseudonatural hell hound takes damage, it can assume its true form as a reaction.

Rom

The rom are a race of subterranean, undead giants that withdrew from the surface world in the distant past. They are sullen, malicious, and angry creatures, attacking any who disturb their final dwelling places or cairns. Rom are all male, with tall, muscular physiques—similar to humans in proportion—and dark, ashen-grey skin. They have sunken, glassy eyes, long, curling fingernails, and are either bald or have thinning, bone-white hair. They stand about 17 ft.' tall, retaining the supernatural strength they possessed in life. They speak with sad, resonant voices. All are talented singers, poets, and musicians.

Cursed by Tragedy. Rom are thought to be all that remains of an ancient race of giant herdsmen. They lived in the hills and on the plains where their giant cows could graze, some practicing a limited form of agriculture. They were a quiet, peace-loving people whose end came when their wives produced only male children; there were no further generations. Shaking their fists at the sad destiny Fate had passed upon them, they built enormous stone cairns for themselves, fashioned out of monolithic



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granite slabs. Entire clans of rom descended into their self-made tombs, burying themselves alive. However, so great was their collective self-pity and anger at Fate, that their existence persisted beyond death.

Inspiring Hosts. The giants are known to receive brave visitors during the night, who politely knock on the entrance to the tombs and humbly request hospitality for the evening. The rom are a musical and poetic race. Brave bards who have visited with them for only a short while are said to have been inspired to compose a masterful, if tragic, song or epic poem.

Death to Trespassers. Those who brashly intrude on the giants during the night, or who break into a cairn during the day, will be immediately attacked by the rom present in the tomb (usually 8 or fewer). They will throw any corpses outside as a warning to others against further unwarranted intrusions.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The granite cairns of the rom can still be found today, towering over the plains or nestled among the hills. They are shunned by all forms of animal and insect life. Nearby vegetation appears stunted and lacks its usual color. All is quiet near these tombs during the day, but at night, one can hear a loud lamentation rising from within the cold, stone cairns, a plaintive cry against Fate.

- At night, within a mile of a rom cairn, their haunting dirges can be heard. Any creature in this area at night that can hear must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw unless their Intelligence is 2 or lower. On a failure, the character feels a heartbreaking sadness, a despair that makes their efforts seem meaningless. Until they leave the area, they have disadvantage on death saving throws and Dexterity checks for initiative, and they gain the following flaw: "If all this beauty ends in tragedy, what's the point of living at all?" A creature can repeat its saving throw every time it finishes a long rest, ending the effect on itself on a success. A creature that makes a successful saving throw against this effect is immune to it for 24 hours. The dirge has no effect on constructs and undead.
- Any beast or humanoid with an Intelligence of 2 or lower that comes within a mile of a rom cairn becomes frightened, and will not willingly move closer to the cairn.
- No plant life grows naturally within 500 ft. of a rom cairn.

ROM

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 172 (15d12+75)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Animal Handling +6, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8, Perception +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Pack Tactics. The rom has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rom's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Sleepless. Magic cannot cause the rom to sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The rom makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12

to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 17 (2d8+8) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces his Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/240 ft. one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10+8) damage.

Frightful Presence.

Each creature of the rom's choice that is within 120 feet of the rom and aware of it must succeed

on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Dolorous Dirge. (*Recharge 6*). As a bonus action, the rom sings a song of loss in its haunting voice, a mourning ballad that pierces the hearts of even hardened veterans. This dirge has no effect on constructs and undead. Any other creature within 30 feet who can hear the rom must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 16) or have its speed reduced by half for as long as the rom keeps singing. The rom must use a bonus action to continue this effect each round. A creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



Zakharan Kraken

Zakharan Kraken are an albino race of air- and water-breathing squid-like creatures that dwell in the dark depths of the ocean. Either they or their ancestors came to Zakhara from a distant blackness beyond the stars in the most ancient of ancient times, and the Zakharan Kraken believe themselves to be the eldest species of creature yet living.

Elder Things. Before the dawn of recorded time, Zakharan Kraken were smaller and lived in shallow coastal waters, where human worshippers served them and brought them sacrifices. Some upheaval in nature—or possibly a battle with forces of good—made the surviving monsters retreat to the depths. Although their number dwindled to a mere handful, the survivors grew huge and powerful. Zakharan Kraken now seek to kill good creatures and to devour all life smaller than they.

Sailors' Doom. Zakharan Kraken often attack ships to drag them down. Larger than the largest squid, a Zakharan Kraken can drag vessels up to 60 ft. long under the waves. Larger ships are dragged to a halt in five rounds. If a Zakharan Kraken can grasp the ship with six or more tentacles for three consecutive rounds during an attack, the vessel suffers damage as if it had been rammed. It then takes on water, and within 2d4 rounds the ship will have lost enough buoyancy so that the Zakharan Kraken can easily drag it under.

Lone Hunters. Zakharan Kraken are aggressive hunters, able to battle even large sperm whales and win. They are solitary creatures except during mating season, which coincides with the monsoons. At this time the Zakharan Kraken gather in the deepest trenches of the ocean, where they leave their eggs to hatch. Zakharan Kraken prey on whales, giant squid and octopi, and occasionally young zaratan. They especially hate the aboleth, whom they consider unnatural upstarts. They even disdain the more common krakens found in the warmer seas of the north, who they see as imitative parodies created by the young gods of distant Faerun. They have no natural enemies, though some legends say that rocs will eat young Zakharan Kraken basking near the surface of the ocean, and the marid hunt them for sport.



LAIRS OF THE ZAKHARAN KRAKEN

Zakharan Kraken maintain air-filled grottos, underwater cavern complexes where they keep and breed human slaves to serve and feed them. The Zakharan Kraken stock these undersea dungeons by using wind and weather to bring vessels to the area.

Ambitious Zakharan Kraken make pacts with sahuagin or ixitxachitl, agreeing not to destroy them in exchange for their servitude and tribute. These Kraken use their servants to strike against shipping and coastal cities.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Zakharan Kraken takes a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects.

- Once per minute, a Zakharan kraken can cause its lair to fill with water or with air, as it chooses. When this happens, creatures within 30 feet of the Zakharan kraken must roll a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw.

Creatures that fail this save are knocked prone and, if they are Huge or smaller, they are pushed up to 20 feet away from the Zakharan kraken. On a success, a creature is only pushed 5 feet away and is not knocked prone. If the lair is filling with water (instead of air), creatures who fail the save also take 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage (half that damage on a successful save). Once a Zakharan Kraken makes this decision, its lair remains filled with air or water until it chooses to use this ability again or until it dies (at which point nature takes its natural course).

- Creatures within 60 feet of the Zakharan Kraken have vulnerability to lightning and psychic damage until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- The Zakharan Kraken chants its own blasphemous scriptures in a pre-primordial language, blasting the minds of those around it. All creatures within 120 feet of the Zakharan Kraken that are able to hear must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

In the area around a Zakharan Kraken's lair, the insanity of the Far Realm bleeds into reality, warping both the landscape and the minds and bodies of those who dwell there. Even if the Zakharan Kraken dies, these effects take a year and a day to fade completely.

- Humanoid children born within 10 miles of the Zakharan Kraken's lair gain the Amphibious trait (able to breathe both air and water) and have oddly narrow heads, with small, flat noses and bulging, frog-like eyes (a look known as "the kraken's taint").
- 1 in 100 humanoid children born within 10 miles of the Zakharan Kraken's lair is born a water genasi (per the *Elemental Evil Player's Guide*) and also has "the kraken's taint" as described above).
- 1 in 1,000 humanoid children born within 10 miles of the Zakharan Kraken's lair is born a sahuagin, regardless of its parent's race.
- The Zakharan Kraken can alter the weather at will in a 10 mile radius centered on its lair. This effect is otherwise identical to the *control weather* spell.

- Deep cultists (a new monster appearing in this document) and their followers are attracted to this area, where they dwell in hastily constructed shrines, seeking to worship and serve the Zakharan kraken and recruit others to do the same.
- Humanoids and beasts that take a long rest within 10 miles of the Zakharan Kraken's lair have brutal nightmares. When they finish a long rest, they must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or recover 1 less hit die than normal.

ZAKHARAN KRAKEN

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 482 (28d20 + 196)

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30(+10)	11(+0)	25 (+7)	22 (+6)	23 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +17, Dex +7, Con +14. Int +13. Wis +13

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed

Senses blindsight 10 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, Primordial, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The Zakharan Kraken's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *druidcraft*, *create/destroy water*, *faerie fire*, *shape water**, *vicious mockery*

1/day each: *bane*, *conjure animals*, *control water*, *control weather*, *dissonant whispers*, *water breathing*, *control winds**, *maelstrom**

("*" = spell appearing in the *Elemental Evil Player's Guide*).

Amphibious. The Zakharan Kraken can breathe air and water.

Disturbingly Alien. The Zakharan kraken's appearance is so terrifying and otherworldly that all attack rolls against it made by creatures who can see it are at disadvantage. In addition, the Zakharan Kraken has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other

Charisma checks against creatures that are not sea creatures or aberrations.

Freedom of Movement. The Zakharan Kraken ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce its speed or cause it to be restrained. It can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or being grappled.

Siege Monster. The Zakharan Kraken deals double damage to objects and structures.

Telepathic Insight. If a creature within 30 ft. communicates telepathically with the Zakharan Kraken, it must make a Charisma saving throw (DC 23). If the creature fails the save, the Zakharan Kraken magically learns one fact or secret about that creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The Zakharan Kraken makes three tentacle attacks, each of which it can replace with one use of Fling.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature grappled by the Zakharan Kraken, that creature is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the Zakharan Kraken, and it takes 42 (12d6) acid damage at the start of each of the Zakharan Kraken's turns. If the Zakharan Kraken takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the Zakharan Kraken must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the Zakharan Kraken. If the Zakharan Kraken dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +17 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The

Zakharan Kraken has ten tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Fling. One Large or smaller object held or creature grappled by the Zakharan Kraken is thrown up to 60 feet in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes a solid surface, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

Lightning Storm. The Zakharan Kraken magically creates three bolts of lightning, each of which can strike a target the Zakharan Kraken can see within 120 feet of it. A target must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

The Zakharan Kraken can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Zakharan Kraken regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tentacle Attack or Fling.

The Zakharan Kraken makes one tentacle attack or uses its Fling.

Lightning Storm (Costs 2 Actions). The Zakharan Kraken uses Lightning Storm.

Ink Cloud (Costs 3 Actions). While underwater, the Zakharan Kraken expels an ink cloud in a 60-foot radius. The cloud spreads around corners, and that area is heavily obscured to creatures other than the Zakharan Kraken. Each creature other than the Zakharan Kraken that ends its turn there must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A strong current disperses the cloud, which otherwise disappears at the end of the Zakharan Kraken's next turn.

