

FOR 4 PCS OF
1ST LEVEL



MONKEY BUSINESS

A 5E WARLOCK ADVENTURE
BY RICHARD PETT

MONKEY BUSINESS

Softly, Softly...

Ik-jar-salim was the monkey familiar to the great and powerful efreeti Abjar Hakoore-du-Balom-Asktee-Nas-Jii, known more usually and simply as Lord Ash, faithful servant of Baal and Grand Sultan Ixingaltrix. Alas, powerful masters make powerful enemies and Lord Ash's mighty spark was quenched, tricked into an *iron flask* that only—through a quirk of mad magic—could be opened by his familiar. This quirk appealed greatly to the somewhat twisted mind of Lord Ash's enemy, a distant efreeti sultan whose name history has already forgotten. The familiar was, at the same time (and to ensure a good job done) destroyed, quite messily, before its master. The unnamed sultan laughed so much at the time he ruptured something crucial within himself and died some months later. The flask was sunk, along with its master's vessel—the fearsomely reputed pleasure barge Furnace—into the Boiling River within the City of Brass and forgotten.

Yet Lord Ash remained mercilessly awake, his mad prayers to Baal unanswered, while his ship's iron cladding

was eaten away over centuries. As the vessel decayed in the terrible river, its skeleton repelled the fire and slowly, so slowly, cast off the shackles of iron and mortal metals that weighed it to the bottom of the river. When its skeleton was stripped bare, it rose like oil on a mortal river.

Three nasty brothers are good at digging up old legends and stories. When one of them learnt that beneath the Boiling River lurked a powerful imprisoned efreeti rumored to be able to grant wishes, they began to obsess about finding it. They lurked in dusty corners of libraries, listened between the lines of old fables, and talked to the spirits using a magic heirloom. Eventually they found not only the truth about the tale—that only the monkey familiar could open the *iron flask*—but learnt the familiar's true name, something that allowed them to summon its spirit. Though they are brothers, they really don't like each other. Each craves for power, so they are bound together, at least until our tale begins, by greed and a desire to discover the truth of the legend.

Yesterday evening they summoned the monkey's spirit using an old family heirloom and ritual, intending that one of them should host the spirit and somehow reach

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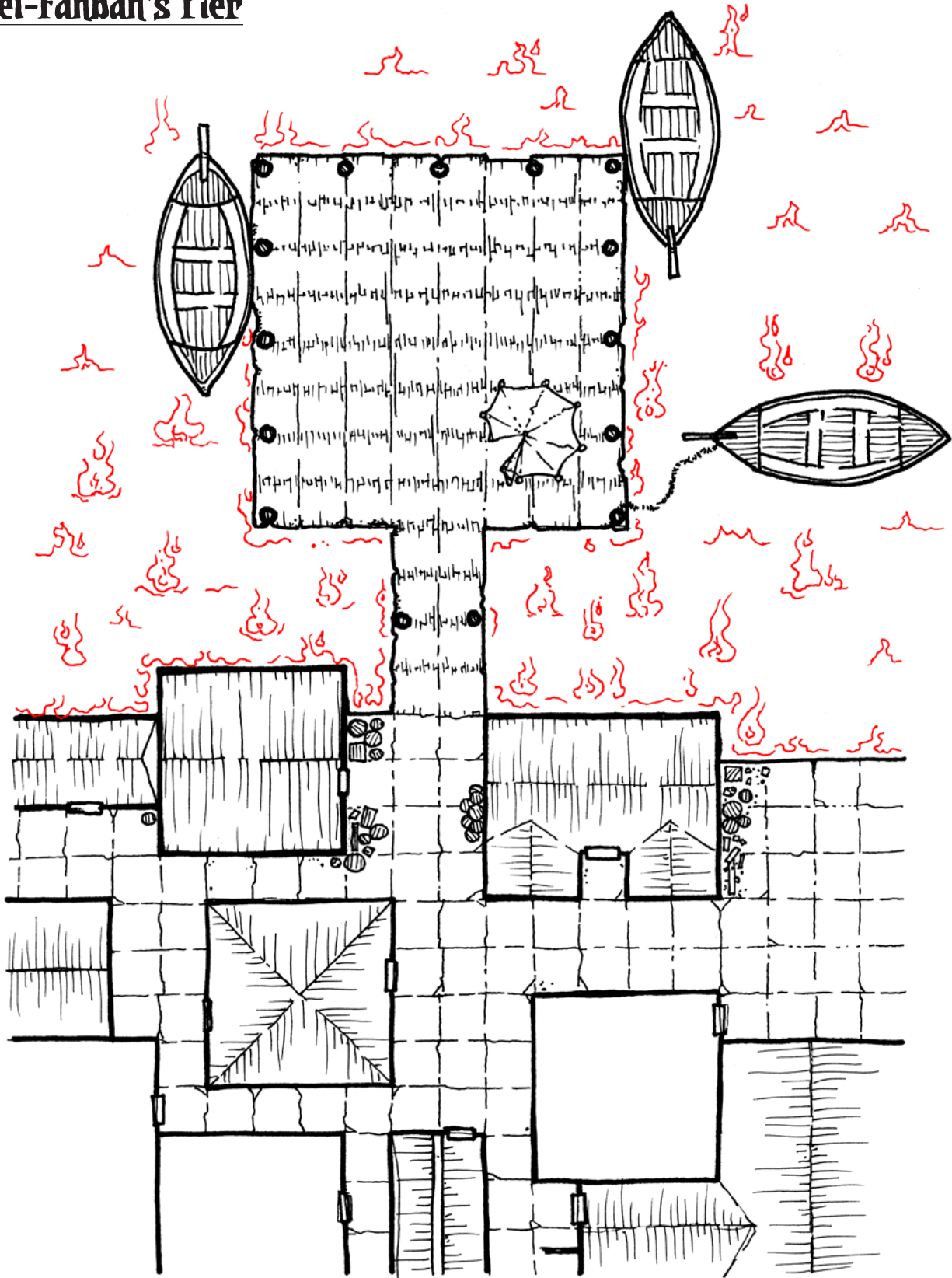
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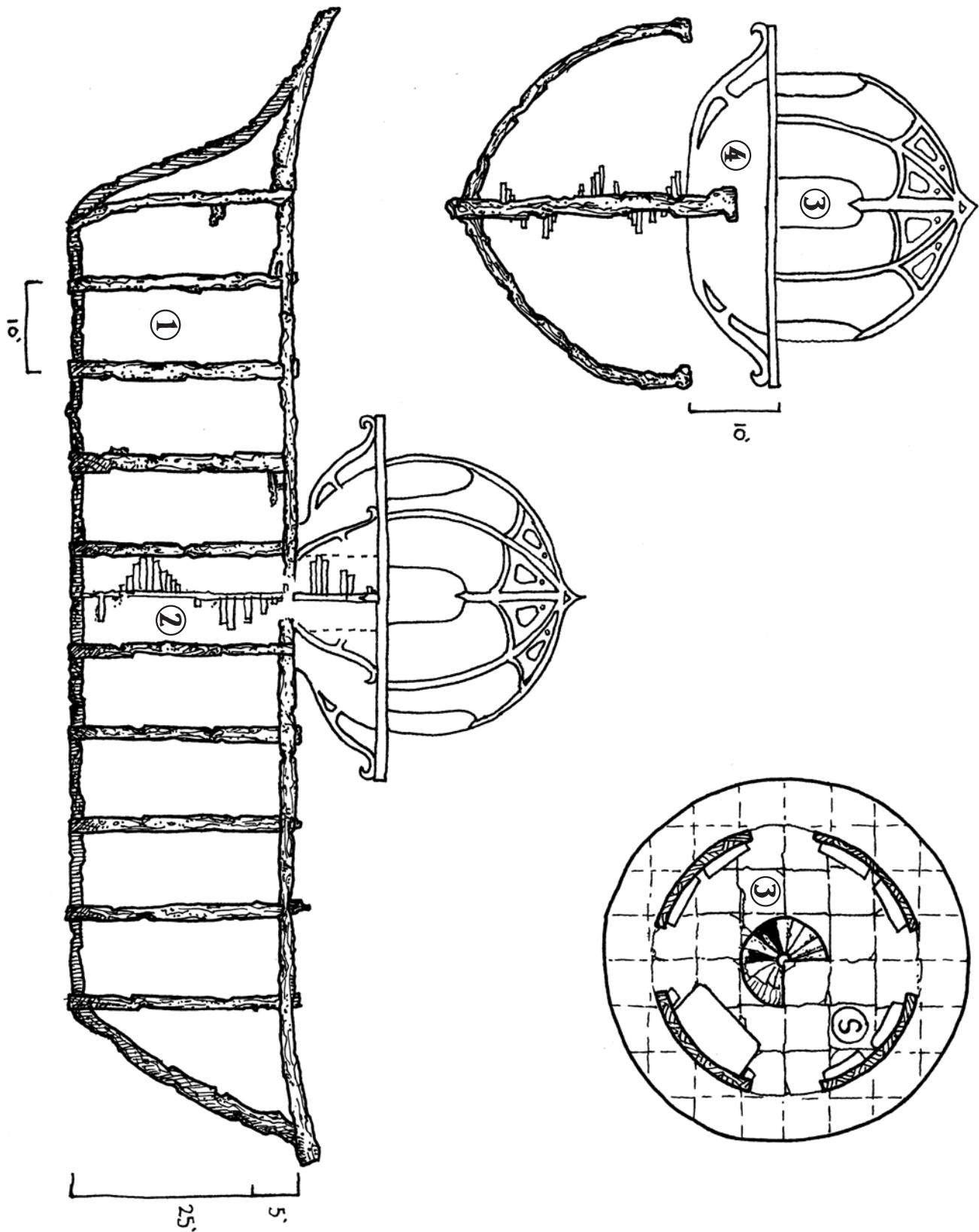
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Bab-el-Fanban's Pier



The Furnace



the *iron flask*. Each secretly intended to host the spirit and thus, eventually, command the efreeti. This deviousness spilled out when each reached for the vessel at the crucial summoning point to claim the prize of hosting the spirit. As they squabbled over the container now holding the monkey spirit, it dropped out of a window. The mundane-looking container dropped down into the possessions of one of the PCs, who barely, at least at first, noticed its presence. The landing jolted the monkey spirit from the container and into the PC. The container can be any mundane object capable of holding at least one droplet of water—an empty vial, a thimble, a mug, a spoon, etc. How exactly this object lands in the PC's possession—landing on the PC's hat, falling into the PC's backpack, etc—is at your discretion as long as it ends up in the possession of one of the PCs.

An even stranger event occurred at that very moment. Baal must have smiled upon his servant as the last vestige of weight holding the Furnace to the nadir of the river fell away. What was left of Lord Ash's vessel rose from the riverbed and boiled into the City of Brass, cloaked in a cloud of steam. Chance or divine whim? Perhaps even the Lord of Fire himself could not say. From their window the brothers saw a glimpse of the vessel rising as the steamy mists devoured it. They realized something mighty must be happening—the efreeti, they thought, was reaching out to be released.

The monkey spirit—now lurking in the PC—also realized what had occurred and began to try to control the PC's body into going out to its master and releasing him. Alas, controlling any body is tricky—at least at first—so it settled with planting images in the PC's dreams of vast holds of gold and jewels.

As morning prayers are called across the city, the PC awakens, his or her head filled with dreams of loot waiting to be found. The brothers, who have now badly fallen out and gone their own ways, know who the PC is and where the PC lives.

Today is going to be an interesting day...

Running This Adventure

Monkey Business brings one PC to the fore, but this is about every PC, not just the possessed PC. Pick a player you think will enjoy hosting the monkey spirit, then think about how much you want the spirit to be part of proceedings. You might wish it simply to be an unseen and silent guide leading the PCs into events by subtle thoughts, remaining in the background. You might want it to be front and center, actively speaking in the head of the possessed PC. The "Playing the Monkey" sidebar has some suggestions for how to handle the monkey being a more active participant in the events to come. Be careful to use the monkey's antics as a way to lead the PCs and help everyone have fun. Don't use the adventure to isolate that player or take too much control

from the player. Whatever happens, the PC and the spirit are stuck together—for now—and they both understand this isn't an ideal situation for either one of them.

Throughout this adventure you'll see references to a City of Brass Local. These are standard local burly men and women who are encountered during the adventure—they may be fishermen, local strongmen, or others. In each case, use the statistics for a **thug** except the locals are of neutral alignment and most do not carry heavy crossbows.

Good Dreams, Bad Days—Beginning the Adventure

This adventure is all about three brothers—Babull the eldest and the brains, Kassir the charmer, and Yamin the brawn. They love old tales, particularly tales about treasure. Each dreams of wealth and power and thinks little of his kin; each has a story of childhood bullying or parental favoritism or betrayal never forgotten or forgiven.

As events unfolded, the brothers' deduced that the risen ship held the iron flask. They saw the PCs head off into the streets below, had a minor squabble, and went off in pursuit. Now separate, Babull, who started tracking the PCs, was followed by Kassir and Yamin. When the balding eldest brother eventually tracked the PCs to their lodgings, the other two were not far away—but not together. If you want to give the PCs some time with the monkey spirit, Babull could have difficulty tracking down the PCs and shows up in a day or two rather than the next morning.

Each brother, who has a different story to tell, is anxious to convince the possessed PC to go with him to the Furnace. Each hopes, once they are on the Furnace, to convince the PC to open the *iron flask* where he can then, triumphantly, step in and claim all the glory (and wishes) for freeing the efreeti. How the PCs handle this is entirely open, but any remaining (rebuffed) brothers find a boat and appear towards the end of the adventure as detailed unless already slain (see the end of this section for more details). A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check recognizes that the men are closely related.

Before any of the brothers visit, take the possessed PC aside and read the following:

You awaken suddenly in your bed, your mind racing with curious, vivid dreams. And dreams they are indeed! A feeling—no, a certainty—that out on the Boiling River a vessel has just risen to the surface whose hold groans with treasure! You rise and stare out of your window. Outside, a curious, steamy mist envelops the river. You can feel the draw of the vessel within the mist, and you know exactly where it is. Suddenly you hear a desperate knocking on your door.

PLAYING THE MONKEY

Ik-jar-salim is the monkey familiar of a great and powerful efreeti, but he is still a monkey. The monkey spirit cannot take total control of the PC, but he can play from time to time. If you like, have the effects occasionally manifest themselves using the suggestions below, rolling randomly or choosing what works best at the time. You might want them to occur just once or have them endure longer if you are all having fun. Using spells like *protection from evil and good* works to pause the effects, as the spirit is inherently evil and undead. However, the spirit is bound to the PC through accident and powerful magic, not of its own volition. Once the *protection from evil and good*, or similar, spell ends, the monkey's spirit is drawn—reluctantly—back to the forefront of the PC's mind and the odd dance goes on. Use the spirit to draw the PC along in this short adventure with visions of treasure rooms, repositories of magic, or images of whatever decadent life might tempt the PC. The spirit is not above changing its tactic to asking for help in finding its master if promises of wealth do not sway the PC.

Each time the monkey spirit wants to affect the PC's actions or steer the PC in a particular direction, the PC must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or suffer one of the following effects. The PC can choose to fail this saving throw. After at least two effects occur, the possessed PC's companions who succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check recognize that the antics happen more often when the possessed PC is moving away from the Boiling River and seem to be steering the PC in the direction of the river.

1. The spirit suddenly feels restless and takes the PC on a simian clamber up the nearest building. The PC must make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failure, the PC fails to climb the building and falls 10 feet. On a success, the PC climbs up the side of the building. After the check is made, the monkey spirit falls silent again, potentially leaving the PC in a precarious situation.
2. The spirit drags the PC to a market stall and begins to devour a selection of soft fruits, much to the annoyance of the owner. The owner demands 2 gp recompense or he will call the city guard. The PCs can pay the fee or avoid it with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. If they fail, the owner's brother, a City of Brass Local, turns up and uses his size and strength to intimidate the PCs into paying the fee.
3. The spirit takes the PC to a huge burly man who is having his hair cut at a stall nearby. The PC squats behind the man and begins grooming the hairy, shirtless hulk. The man in question is not impressed. PCs can extract their friend from this situation with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check or by using magic such as *charm person*. If they fail, the man, a City of Brass Local, rises and attacks the possessed PC.
4. The spirit makes the PC rush across a street to where a child sits in her mother's arms, eating a slice of juicy watermelon. The PC snatches the melon and begins eating it. The woman—clearly a lady of high birth—begins shouting for the city watch. The PCs can extricate their friend with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check; however, the child still cries pitifully. The PCs can stop the crying by finding some more watermelon with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check (a fruit vendor nearby sells slices of watermelon for 2 cp) or by amusing the child with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check. If the PCs do not act, a City of Brass Local, a kind-hearted lady blacksmith, rushes to the mother's aid and the situation quickly develops into a fight.

Three Brothers, Three Tall Tales

Each brother is anxious to join the PC and get moving. They each approach the PCs in their own ways and with their own stories, detailed below. If the PCs openly side with a particular brother before they have spoken to another, the other brother(s) attempts to approach the PCs covertly. When the brother with the PCs isn't looking, the other brother(s) might signal them from a side-street or speak from the other side of a curtained stall to draw their attention. If the covert tactics don't work, the other brother(s) reluctantly talks to the PCs in front of his kin in a last-ditch effort to influence the PCs.

Babull the Eldest and the Brains

A wicked-looking man with a bald head and wild eyebrows that seem to move without a breeze stands dressed in loose-fitting robes.

Babull is not a great communicator, but he is clever. His shifty looks and disturbingly deep voice cliché him as the outcast. He secretly worships Ixingaltrix, the same Grand Sultan Lord Ash served. Ixingaltrix has taken an interest in retrieving its trapped servant and has bestowed some blessings on Babull to aid the human in releasing Lord Ash. Babull carries a lucky pig's nose, which he often rubs when worried or nervous, and a leather purse full of mummified pig tails. He also carries two *spell scrolls of conjure animals* that he keeps in case of emergencies or if he needs to make a quick escape. His approach to the PCs is one of veiled promise.

Babull's Story. Babull informs the PC that he knows the PC is possessed by a curiously wicked creature—a creature he knows how to remove. This dreadful curse, which was placed accidentally upon the PC by Babull's wicked brothers, is snared within the PC and will slowly rot the PC from within. He knows of the cure, however, and that it rests upon a vessel currently risen from the depths of the Boiling River. The cure is in a flask in a room full of gold and jewels. If opened under his guidance and protection from the dreadful spirits about, the curse will be drawn into the flask and the PC cured. All he asks is to accompany the PCs to the vessel and see his brothers' wrongs righted.

Babull uses the statistics of a **priest**, except his challenge rating is 3 (700 XP), his Divine Eminence trait deals extra fire damage instead of radiant damage, and he gains the following additional action option:

Heat of the Molten Tower (Recharge 5-6). Each creature within 15 feet of Babull must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 18 (4d8) fire damage and is incapacitated for 1 round. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't incapacitated.

KASSIR THE CHARMER

A dandy fellow with long curly hair falling in neat, oiled ringlets onto his impossibly clean white robe smiles warmly.

Kassir is a rogue at heart. He knows his good looks and charms win people, and he relies overtly upon them, assuming everyone believes everything he says. He carries a small, silver mirror and pulls it out to check his reflection when he is stressed or nervous. When his word is challenged, he often worries he might have a blemish or his hair might be out of place as those are obviously the only reasons why someone wouldn't have faith in him and his words. His approach is one of lies and temptation.

Kassir's Story. Kassir tells the PC that he knows the PC is acting as an unwilling host for a foul spirit. The spirit was drawn into the city as a guide by a group of robber wizards of which his brothers are members. He interrupted their foul ceremony, but, alas, the spirit fell into the PC. He discovered the spirit can only be destroyed by destroying its master, now lurking aboard a ship risen from the nadir of the Boiling River by the same ceremony. Time is short, but hope is at hand. The demon is weak now, having just been summoned, but will grow stronger each day it lives. Kassir needs the PC's help to slay it. He knows the vessel is groaning with treasure and will gladly split the spoils after the demon is vanquished. Kassir mentions nothing of a flask. He intends to toss the flask to the possessed PC once with them on the Furnace and casually ask that the PC open it to see what is inside it.

Kassir uses the statistics of a **bandit captain**, except his challenge rating is 3 (700 XP) and he gains the following additional trait:

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Kassir deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Kassir that isn't incapacitated and Kassir doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

YAMIN THE BRAWN

A hulking, shirtless brute with an oiled, well-muscled torso and closely-cropped hair stands with his arms crossed and his brow furrowed.

Yamin is no fool. He is a man of action and uses that energy to get followers. He is a leader and commander who enjoys double bluff. He carries a lucky bull's hoof on his belt, and he wears a headband made of calf tails set with a glass eye. He has a habit of touching the bull's hoof when he is stressed or nervous. He also carries a vial of alchemist's fire—payment from an alchemist friend who owed Yamin protection money. His approach is one of urgency and activity.

Yamin's Story. Yamin matter-of-factly explains the PC

is playing host to a foul presence summoned by his wicked brothers. The spirit was summoned to guide them to a vessel of treasure that currently lies within the river. Their magic failed and the passing PC accidentally, but fortuitously, now plays host to it. This vessel will remain floating for only of a matter of hours, and he suspects the spirit will fail with it. The PC needs to seize the moment and the gift fortune has placed in the PC's hands. He offers his services as a sword arm and warrior of great talent and renown in the city to aid them. He only has one warning: aboard the vessel is a cursed *iron flask* that, under no circumstances, is the possessed PC to open or terrible events will occur.

Yamin uses the statistics of a **knight**, except he has the following trait in place of the Brave trait:

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Yamin can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Trusting the Brothers or Moving On

The PCs are certain to realize something is afoot, but who, if any, to trust?

- **If the PCs choose no brothers**, the kin soon seek each other out and, getting their own vessel, they make their way to the Furnace. They intend to waylay or ambush the PCs, capture the one with the spirit and force that PC to open the flask—physically taking the character's hands, if necessary.
- **If the PCs choose 1 brother**, he instantly leads the PCs to the docks where he knows a man who hires out boats capable of sailing the Boiling River. See the next part of the adventure for details. The other two brothers, considerably put out by this event, join together shortly after, get their own boat, and sail out to the Furnace. They intend to ambush the PCs as stated above.
- **If the PCs try to recruit 2 or 3 brothers**, it quickly becomes clear that such an alliance is impossible. The brothers begin to argue over each-other's stories and eventually ask the PCs to choose who they believe. The losers slope off and decide to join forces.
- **If the PCs ignore the situation entirely**, the PC possessed by the monkey spirit will continue to be plagued by the creature's incessant desire to release its master. Does the spirit increasingly control the PC? Do the dreams get more tempting? How this develops is left to you, but the wreck of the Furnace will soon be plundered by those in the city brave enough to explore the mist-shrouded vessel if the PCs don't investigate it first. How long will it be before the *iron flask* falls into the possession of the brothers who are bound to come looking for the one person who can open it?
- **If the possessed PC seeks the monkey spirit's advice**

on the matter, the monkey spirit does not recognize the brothers as it didn't have prolonged contact with them and remains silent if asked about them. However, it does recognize the ship that is mentioned and tries to subtly push the PC, through dreams and its antics, to investigate the vessel.

Trouble at the Fiery Pier of Bab-el-Fanban

Regardless of partners, or lack thereof, the PCs are likely to need a vessel to ply the oily, super-heated waters of the Boiling River to reach the Furnace amongst the steamy mists that envelop it presently. Any number of places along the riverbanks offer such vessels, but, if the PCs have a friendly brother along, he suggests the offices of Bab-el-Fanban, a personal friend. The PCs may have their own vessel already and head straight for the Furnace. Regardless of how the PCs get onto the Boiling River, the other brothers follow them. Judge how easy this is for the brothers depending on what the PCs do. Run the ambush detailed below, varying the details to suit the location. You might want to introduce the monkey spirit's curious behavior on the way to the shore.

Bab-el-Fanban's Pier can be anywhere on the shore of the river, but it is a rickety, arcane-sheathed timber structure as shown on the map. Like his shoddy boats, the magic protecting the timber is fading, there is a palpable smell of scorching in the air, and little wisps of smoke rise from the rune-gorged wood. Fanban is portly and perpetually smiling. He always has his pet monkey Singsong on his shoulder and a pie in his hand. As soon as Fanban sets eyes upon the PCs, his chins make way for a wide smile of dazzlingly white teeth. When Singsong sets eyes on the possessed PC, it screeches and rushes onto a nearby roof until the PC leaves. Any time the PC moves near the building where it is standing, Singsong releases another screech followed by a tight-throated, fearful growl.

Fanban tells the PCs of his woes—he has an enormous family to support and his wife has *expensive* tastes—he does not wish to charge the PCs highly, but he must charge them something. He has three rowboats. Each flimsy vessel has a hull sheathed in arcane wards to keep it afloat atop the fiery river and two pairs of oars similarly treated. Each rowboat can just barely hold the PCs and the brothers (if any), but it is a squeeze. Fanban wants 15 gp for the rental of a rowboat and a 50 gp deposit the PCs get back if they return his beloved vessel in one piece. He'll forego the deposit if the PCs can convince him of their nautical skills. A successful DC 12 Intelligence

(Arcana or History) or Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check convinces Fanban that the PCs are proficient enough to return the vessel whole without needing to leave a deposit. If the PCs do not return the vessel whole or at all, Fanban is outraged and demands 75 gp compensation.

THE AMBUSH

Three ambush options are listed below. In the likely event of more than one brother being nearby, choose the ambush that works best for you or the one that will be the most fun for you. In each case, the brothers are hiding at the edges of the map. They do not want an open fight just now, intending to kidnap the possessed PC and hold the PC until they can retrieve the flask. They flee if discovered, otherwise they keep watching and act as detailed in each entry below.

BABULL

If the PCs have Babull as an enemy, he uses one of his *spell scrolls of conjure animals* to summon a pair of crocodiles to attack all except the possessed PC. Babull, meanwhile, seeks to overpower the possessed PC and head for the Furnace, stealing a boat if necessary.



KASSIR

If the PCs have Kassir as a foe, he rushes to a nearby eatery where his enormous friend Abnim Saff is weeping uncontrollably, having very recently been jilted by his beloved, the amazingly ample Cammill-Sek. Kassir quickly tells the sobbing man that he has not only found out who Cammill has run away with, but that the person is just a short distance away at Bab-el-Fanban's pier. Abnim thanks Kassir and marches to the pier to *have it out* with whoever stole his beloved from him.

Scorned Strongman. Weeping uncontrollably, Abnim, a City of Brass Local, marches up to the PC Kassir mentioned and demands to know what he/she has done with his beloved Cammill. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check calms down Abnim and convinces him that someone lied to him. If the PCs fail to calm Abnim, he attacks.

YAMIN

Lacking his brothers' wits, charms, and magic, Yamin uses his creativity. Not far from the PCs, a servant tends his master's elephant. Yamin distracts the man, ties a vial of alchemists' fire to the creature's tail, uncorks the vial, and slaps the elephant's behind while shouting, driving it toward the PCs.

Frightened Elephant. This encounter should be run as a hazard rather than a combat encounter since the elephant is the property of a nearby merchant who would be very upset if his prized elephant was killed. This merchant might even be nearby yelling out for someone to help catch or calm his elephant. When the elephant reaches the dock area, it dashes about in random directions for 6 rounds until the fire is well and truly quenched. It does not enter the Boiling River, and, if it reaches a pier edge, it stops moving for that round. Its next round, it moves away from the river in a random direction. The elephant moves up to 20 feet in a straight line each round, changing direction at the start of its next turn. Each creature in the elephant's path must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) calms the elephant enough to make it stop moving for 1 round. If the elephant is not moving, a creature can make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failure, the creature takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage as it is smacked by the elephant's flailing tail. On a success, the creature removes the burning flask, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage from the flask. The elephant stops charging 2 rounds after the flask is removed. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check after the flask has been removed calms the elephant immediately and the owner's servant comes to collect it.

GETTING INTO HOT WATER

There are several opportunities in this adventure for the PCs to fall into the Boiling River. A creature immersed in the super-heated water of the river must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw each round or take 7 (2d6) fire damage. The DC increases by 1 for each minute the creature stays in the water. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage or creatures naturally adapted to living in the Boiling River automatically succeed on this saving throw.

The Boiling River

Steamy mists swallow the PCs' rowboat and the shore vanishes within moments. The PC possessed by the monkey spirit feels a mental tug and knows exactly where the Furnace is located in the mist. Scalding waves lap at the rowing boat's hull, steam wafts up from the sides, and occasionally a smell of scorching is traced to a growing blackened ring on the hull of the small boat. Use these to remind the PCs of their perilous and unique location, perhaps they catch glimpses of the great buildings of the city in small breaks in the mist or maybe great vessels tear out of the steamy mists and almost crush them. If you like, you could have the PCs attacked on their journey by creatures that live within the river, such as **fire snakes** or **magmin**.

Behind them, the other brothers steal a boat (or rent one from Fanban) and follow. Soon, however, the PCs approach the wreck of the Furnace. Unfortunately, they are not the only ones who have reached it.

Trouble Fishing

Ub-ni-Cham knew it was going to be a good day the second he got out of bed this morning. He and his two sons set out hunting the strange fish that swim the Boiling River to sell for eating or, if they were lucky, to sell to those who collect and study unusual specimens in the river. Today, however, they got even luckier. They found a vessel, the Furnace. After boarding her, they were driven back by her occupants, the giggling magma mephitis that make the hull home (see Area 2). They are deciding what to do, but, in the meantime, Ub has hoisted a flag (actually a pair of his wife's voluminous bloomers he found aboard) on the hull to claim her. His own sailing vessel presently lies 30 feet from the Furnace, tied to the ancient ship by magically-treated mooring rope. They will do much to protect their rightful prize.

As the PCs approach the Furnace, read:

The steamy mists part and the hulking view of a ruinous, obviously once-submerged vessel, roars into view, its scorched hull steaming. The ship is a charred shadow of its former glory

as it rests on the steaming surface of the river. A crooked, spiral stair topped by a spherical brass room rises from the middle of the ship. The brass sphere is graced by arches which lead to a balcony that encircles the sphere. A curious fishing vessel, one of the kinds that dredges the flaming waters of the river for local delicacies, sits lashed to the side of the charred vessel with its crew watching any who approach. A makeshift flag hangs from the scorched vessel.

Ub-ni-Cham and his two sons, all City of Brass Locals, are armed with spears and nets. They each have a loaded heavy crossbow resting in the ship within reach. Their boat is a small fishing vessel roughly 30 feet long and 10 feet wide that is drawn by a single, flame-resistant sail. A creature that wants to board the fishing vessel must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Ub does not want to give up the newly risen boat—his terrifying wife would be quite cruel to him if he lost this once-in-a-lifetime prize—but he and his sons are not natural fighters. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check reveals Ub is correct in claiming salvager's rights to the vessel. This open encounter could go a number of ways.

Attack the Fishermen. If the PCs attack the fishermen, the fishermen defend their claim as best as they can, but they do not fight to the death for it. When two of them are reduced to half of their hp or lower, they all surrender or retreat. Since Ub has salvager's rights to the vessel, he might later go to the authorities for assistance in confiscating any treasure the PCs obtain from it.

Ally with the Fishermen. If the PCs offer to help Ub and his sons clear the vessel of enemies, Ub might be willing to split the treasure on board. A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check convinces Ub to accept their offer of aid and give the PCs half of whatever treasure is on board.

Abandon the Quest. If the PCs decide the vessel has been claimed and back away from it, the magma mephits, who are watching from aboard the scorched vessel, grow bored and attack the fishermen as the PCs leave. If the PCs return and assist the fishermen in fending off the mephits, Ub offers the PCs half of the salvage as a reward for saving him and his family.

The Floating Wreck of the Furnace

Its skeleton built to repel fire, the Furnace has been freed of its heavy shackles and now floats, scorched but free, atop the Boiling River. The ship itself has value for its magically-protected timbers, though how much and how difficult that is to arrange are left to you.

UNWELCOME VISITORS—BROTHERS IN ARMS

At the most dramatic moment, any opposing brothers arrive in their (most likely stolen) rowboat. They are determined to claim their prize, one way or another—initially at least intending to capture the possessed PC and force the PC to open the flask. You can run this section as you wish, but it is suggested that the attack occurs after the PCs are aboard the Furnace. The brothers scoured the area the day before when they saw the vessel rise from the river, so they have no trouble finding it in the mist. They clamber aboard, attack the PCs, and side-line the possessed PC. The brother allied to the PCs, if there is one, tries to keep to the edges of combat, but, if things turn against the PCs, he joins his brothers against the PCs. Each fights according to his abilities.

1. THE SCORCHED, DEAD SHELL

The skeleton of a ship sits atop the steaming waters, her charred and pitted hull looking like a battered, wooden cage. She sits low in the water, the "bars" of her cage disappearing into the Boiling River. The scorched timbers that hold a central spiral of stairs breach the water and disappear into a sphere of brass above where the main deck once sat.

The ship's outer hull was treated deeply enough with fire protection magic to keep it mostly intact—if totally scorched. The remaining parts of the ship (which was huge and ungainly) have long since been lost, turning the ship into a giant, oblong cage. The vessel sits low in the river, its hull still partially-filled with river water. The remnants of the ship's railing form a sort of walkway around the ship. The walkway is treated as difficult terrain, and a creature that uses its action to Dash while on this walkway must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall off the walkway into the super-heated river water below. A creature in the river must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb up the timbers and onto the walkway. A creature on the walkway can jump from the walkway onto the balcony around the brass sphere with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

2. THE TORTUOUS STAIR

A partially-burnt spiral stair rises thirty feet around a huge beam and into the curious brass, arched sphere.

Four **magma mephits** make their home on the stairs. They prefer to fight at range and harass creatures that climb the stairs. If two of their number are defeated, the remaining mephits run away, their fun ruined. The mephits have been unable to reach Area 3 because of its magical protections.

Unstable Stairs. Many steps are missing from the spiral stairs. Each character must make a successful DC 8 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to ascend or descend the stairs safely. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character falls 20 feet into the super-heated river water below.

3. THE SPHERICAL CAPTAIN'S CHAMBER

The spiral stairs end inside a large hemisphere of brass. The hemisphere is ringed by a broad, open brass balcony. Four archways sit in the walls of the hemisphere, exposing the chamber to the air and the surrounding balcony. The chamber is crammed with scattered curios as though just left, the most disturbing of which are a dozen caged songbirds and peacocks long since dead. The marble floor depicts blue peacocks in a series of interlocking tiles.

This chamber is soaked in fire protection magic. This magic has kept the waters of the river at bay even when the ship was sunk, creating an invisible bubble repelling fire, heat, and creatures of fire. Curiously, the magical protections also kept the super-heated water of the Boiling River from entering the room except for a few damp rugs near the archways onto the balcony. The room and its contents—which hosted the efreeti's bed, muses, and study—are therefore undamaged save by the passage of time. A flat marble floor flows through the arches to the balcony, which is 5 feet wide and made of similarly-protected material. Lord Ash's secret treasure room (Area 4) lurks below this floor. As the creator of the magical protections, the efreeti was able to dismiss them at any time, which allowed him, and any fiery guests, to pass through the archways into his private chamber.

A dozen long-dead songbirds and caged peacocks surround an ornate bed carved with lewd figures in marble. Shelves flank the bed, crammed with curios. The valuable objects are listed under treasure below, while the *iron flask*, detailed in the sidebar, sits in pride of place on the bed.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices one of the peacock floor tiles is slightly off-center from the others and can be removed. Removing the tile reveals a small, brass ladder descending into the lower hemisphere.

TREASURE

Treasures and curios line the shelves in the spherical chamber: a brass, gold, and bone statue of a distorted, wickedly human-looking dodo worth 75 gp; a pot flask containing a *potion of hill giant strength*; a ship in a bottle (the Furnace in her pomp), a pleasure galley of countless complex levels lashed to her hull around a great brass sphere, worth 100 gp; a brass sextant set with tiny gold and jet eyes worth 150 gp; a *sheeshah of recovery* (Warlock#6: City of Brass, p. 12); a leather and walnut case holding a superb flute carved with zodiac signs and large, ugly flies worth 150 gp; and a desiccated and preserved flounder, which holds a *figurine of wondrous power* (silver raven) in its mouth.

4. HIDDEN TREASURE ROOM

This hemispherical chamber is crammed with more curios. A large chest, overflowing with coins, sits against a brass pillar in the center of the room.

THE IRON FLASK

This single-use magic item imprisons Lord Ash, who has been awake all this time and gone slightly mad. The heavy object resembles an unpleasantly bloated gourd. It is wreathed in images telling the story of the foul efreeti and the appalling things he did when free. A brass stopper seals the object, which can only be opened by the efreeti's familiar, the monkey Ik-jar-salim. Unfortunately the warding on the arcane prison did not stipulate what form the monkey would take. Its spirit suffices to open the thing, although the spirit is powerless to do so without the use of its host, who must voluntarily open the flask, be coerced using magic, or be forced by brute strength.

mostly valueless. The large, brass chest sits in the center of the room, its back against the central cylinder that holds the spiral staircase into the upper hemisphere. A myriad of silver, copper, electrum, and gold coins spill out of the chest totaling 500 gp.

Conclusion—Lord Ash is Free!

If the efreeti is released, a scalding mass of black smoke rises, quickly forming into the terrible, dark mass that is Lord Ash. At this stage any surviving brothers fall to their knees in supplication and claim it was they who truly released the lord. Each commands him to grant them three wishes.

The efreeti is not interested in who released him, but efreeti etiquette demands he rewards someone. The PCs may try to muscle in on the reward. If they do so, one PC must make a Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check opposed by one of brothers' Charisma (Deception) check. Lord Ash rewards the winner with a special whistle that is carved from the finger bone of one of his enemies. The whistle can be sounded three times, and each occasion calls the efreeti to aid the holder. When summoned, Lord Ash helps his summoner as much as he can but does not put himself at risk of destruction nor remain more than one day. He fights until reduced to 50 hp and uses any of his powers to aid as best he can.

After Lord Ash bestows the gift on the winner, he then thanks his savior, dismisses the magic protecting his brass sphere, and flies off to seek revenge on his enemies. The spirit of his monkey familiar tears itself from the possessed PC to join its master. The duo could become a recurring NPC in future adventures.

At this point, the jealous and inconsolable brothers are likely to turn upon the winner of Lord Ash's whistle. Babull, depending on his role in the adventure, might instead make his exit at this point—whether or not he keeps with his ruse of successfully “curing” the possessed PC as part of his exit is up to you. If he did not win the whistle, he is disappointed, but his ultimate goal, the release of one of his deity's greatest servants, was accomplished. He is convinced that he will be rewarded by Ixingaltrix at a later date for his involvement in Lord Ash's release.

Conclusion—Back to the Deep!

If the flask is thrown back into the Boiling River, it sinks and effectively ends the hopes of Lord Ash to rise. The monkey spirit tears itself from the PC in a last, futile attempt to save its master and vanishes.

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