

CAT AND MOUSE



By Richard Pett with Greg Marks
An Adventure for 1st-Level Characters

KOBOLD
Press

CAT AND MOUSE

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Two little kittens, one stormy night,
Began to quarrel, and then to fight;
One had a mouse, the other had none,
And that's the way the quarrel begun.

Traditional nursery rhyme, unknown author

An adventure for four to six 1st-level characters, set in the city of Per-Bastet in the Southlands portion of the Midgard Campaign Setting.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Through the glittering heart of the city of Per-Bastet in Nuria Natal, the River of Sand flows in a cascade of dry, undulating waves—until, between the District of the Hyena and the Perfume District, it inexplicably pours into a vast crater known as the Pit and disappears. Occasionally, long-lost items, called “sand-touched” and often considered lucky, find their way to the river’s shores. Today, however, an object of much greater significance has washed ashore: the *Grimalkin Eye*. Long believed lost or stolen, this minor artifact allows the wielder to befriend, fascinate, and dominate any cat. In the city founded by Bastet, Goddess of Cats, which serves as a refuge for and celebration of all feline-kind, it is a powerful object indeed.

It is also an artifact for which Mistress Henna Mjelidi would give her catfolk front teeth. She is, in truth, a petty thief who plies the District of the Cat for easy money and tall tales. She also loves legends and is an expert in them; for her, the lost *Eye* has always offered the enticing prospect of power, an exponential increase in notoriety, and the possession of a personal piece of Per-Bastet’s mighty legacy. It should come as no surprise that, when she heard that something sounding very much like the *Eye* had turned up in the River of Sand, she wanted it very badly.

Alas, by the time she heard of the *Eye*’s appearance, it was long gone from the river. In fact, Henna’s agents reported that it had been stolen. The culprit, they’ve learned, is Raheed, an ugly, unlikeable wererat with a handful of rodent friends in Per-Bastet. Henna’s cats are running into the alleys and souks of the city looking for him, but so far, it seems that he’s vanished.

When Raheed happened upon the *Eye*, he thought

his fortunes might be changing. After all, such a fabled item is likely to bring a high price. Unhappily for him, though, things have gotten worse very quickly; he soon realized that Henna’s agents sought the artifact, and he has slithered into the Perfume District to hide from them. Secondly—and far worse—he’s started seeing things.

It started with visions; odd glimpses from high up or far down. It took Raheed some time to realize that he was actually looking through the eyes of cats. The visions come unbidden, and only a few hours ago, as he dizzily staggered through the Perfume District, he collapsed at the foot of a caged lion. Its prison choking its need for wild space, the beast roared hungrily at him. Somehow, it broke free of its bonds and bounded at him. The thief thought he was done for, but then a strange thing happened: the lion turned from him. Sick and giddy, Raheed is beginning to realize that he has something of power in his hands—perhaps something valuable.

There is a third character in this tale: Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor, gnoll slaver, carpet merchant, and camel dealer. Hakaan is vast, smiling, and possessed of the most despicably annoying chattering laugh. He also has his enemies, particularly the smug Mistress Henna Mjelidi, and he has inserted himself into her hunt for the *Eye*. With his vast network of informants, he quickly knew that she was looking for it. Naturally—and purely to annoy her—he wants it too.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Mistress Henna Mjelidi approaches the PCs with an offer. She needs extra eyes and ears to look in the city for a wererat named Raheed, who she claims has stolen an object from her. She knows he has slipped into the Perfume District, a place in which she has enemies, and she wishes to conduct the search for Raheed and the

object discreetly. She offers the PCs a sizeable reward for returning the object, but is intentionally vague about what exactly it is. Mjelidi secretly has a trio of domestic cats follow the PCs, as she is sure the cats will be able to help guide the PCs toward their goal.

The gnoll slaver Hakaan, however, soon has a counter offer for the PCs, and offers them a higher reward for the object. He seeks the item purely to amuse himself; he hates the cats and Mjelidi in particular. It amuses him to think that he would have something she would want.

Meanwhile, Raheed takes the *Grimalkin Eye* directly to his home, on an old squat atop a high rooftop at the edge of the Perfume District. He then heads to his fence and supposed friend AS'haad Al Heth—better known as Festering Heth, a gnoll apothecary who lives in the district. The crafty apothecary promptly steals the *Eye* from Raheed and throws him into his attic prison while he ponders selling or keeping the curious item.

When the PCs go into the Perfume District and start looking for Raheed, they face four potential encounters, any of which has the opportunity to turn sour very quickly. The encounters are totally open, leaving the PCs with potential fights or intrigue before locating Heth.

The PCs locate Festering Heth's lair and meet the alchemist himself. He lies to the PCs that Raheed met with him and then returned to his home, and he kindly furnishes the PCs with the address. Raheed himself is still in the attic, and if freed tries to escape and/or attack the PCs.

If the PCs go off to Raheed's squat, they encounter Raheed's ratfolk friends and rat followers, who believe him a living god. They return to find that the alchemist has hired a few toughs in the meantime, making an attack harder. Complicating things is the fact that Raheed has freed himself and now lurks above, waiting for vengeance.

When the PCs finally have the *Eye*, they find that Mistress Henna Mjelidi is waiting for them. To further complicate matters, Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatooor is also present. A three-way standoff occurs, and the PCs have the opportunity to manipulate events using their wits and skills, or engage in a three-way fight for possession of the *Eye*.

CREATING PCs FOR THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure lends itself to players who are newcomers to the Southlands, and it could serve as an excellent introduction to the campaign and its locales. If none of the PCs hail from Per-Bastet, as the GM you might bring them there as visitors to the city. Maybe

A PEACEFUL EVENING

Cat and Mouse is an adventure about relationships, and the PCs' ability to manipulate allies, friendships, and arrangements of convenience. It is entirely feasible that the PCs could conclude this adventure without personally spilling any blood. It's also—conversely—an adventure that readily allows those who enjoy slaughter without dialogue to enter the fray, wreak havoc, and take the rewards.

As the GM, if you like to run more subtle adventures, you might consider rewarding the PCs for showing wit and pluck. Consider awarding the PCs with an enhanced reputation if they use predominantly cunning approaches; such a reward could be advantage on all Charisma checks in Per-Bastet, for example. It could also be something less mechanical: a song the city's bards sing about them, an admiring greeting from an NPC, or another benefit. NPCs who admire the PCs' methods might even become friends or ally with them, providing a basis for further adventures in the city.

they are escaped slaves or rural characters come to seek their fortune, or maybe they have some other reason to arrive in Per-Bastet. If one or more of the PCs wish to be Per-Bastet natives, more information about the city and potential character backgrounds can be found on pages 37-50 of the Southlands campaign setting from Kobold Press.

PER-BASTET, EVERLASTING CITY OF THE CAT

In southern Nuria Natal, the great River Nuria narrows into a gorge overlooked by 800-foot-tall statues of gods. These towering figures loom over the river's waters just before it courses out into the open desert, broadening and slowing at the foot of the gleaming city of Per-Bastet. It is in this mysterious, fabled city where this adventure takes place.

Thriving, bewildering, and roiling with frenetic life, the Everlasting City of the Cat has stood for unknown thousands of years. It is a city of nine districts, nine pyramids, and nine lives. Each time the city has fallen, it has risen again to sing its praises to Bastet, the patron goddess who walks among her chosen.

Per-Bastet is the city of cats and gnolls, of perfume and temples, of abounding gold, mithral, and diamond mines, of alchemy and prophesy, of imported spice and

draconic slave markets, and of sumptuous brothels and brutal fighting pits. With its mercurial patron goddess and a populace of myriad carnivorous races and predatory species, the city thrives on the energy of its own lack of harmony.

The god-king of Nuria Natal has long said that his brother, Haty-a Haakim, governs this great jewel of the desert. Most who dwell here, though, know this leader and his council do not wield true power in the city. Many say the true ruler is the Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit: Bastet's pharaonic, undead sorceress who shelters thousands of loyal undead beneath the pyramids. Other say that only the iron will and dazzling charisma of Nafrini, the high priestess of the cat goddess, hold the city together. This mythic black werepanther priestess inspires the adoration of humans, gnolls, and cats beyond number, any one of who, on any given day, might be Bastet herself. For more information about Meskhenit and Nafrini, see pages 45-48 in the *Southlands* campaign setting book from Kobold Press.

BASTET, GODDESS OF CATS

The worshippers of Bastet, goddess of cats and hunters, are a motley crew: they include farmers, low-ranking soldiers, woodsmen, alchemists, perfumers, and jewelers. Perhaps the defining characteristic of Bastet in Midgard, though, is the fact that she calls a specific city in Nuria Natal home, and in turn she is its namesake: Per-Bastet, the City of Cats, where the Cat and Mouse adventure takes place. Most in Per-Bastet believe that the mortal Bastet was born in the city when it was a simple riverside village, and that, after her apotheosis, the settlement rose to greatness under her protection. Another widespread belief—and a singular point of pride among its citizens—is that Bastet regularly walks the city's streets in any form she wishes.

Much of the city's ordinances and guidelines revolve around the tenets of Bastet's cult, and the key to power here lies in finding the goddess's favor. As such, the highest-standing individuals in Per-Bastet are the Reborn Queen-Goddess Meskhenit (NE female lich wizard 18/ cleric 2 [Bastet]) and High Priestess Nafrini (CN female werepanther cleric 13 [Bastet]). The former is the risen great-grandmother of King Thutmoses, ruler of all Nuria Natal, and the latter is the leader of the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet,

PART ONE: NEW FRIENDS

Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure underway:

It is noon on a very hot day, and you are sipping mint tea in a bustling marketplace outside of Per-Bastet's Perfume District. All around you, the scent of cinnamon, incense, and sweat lingers. Nearby, a camel trader and his long train of animals shamble past, the smell of musk trailing after them. You watch with amusement as a crowd of henna-painted young women follows a handsome man beating a darbuka. Behind him rush three men bearing an enormous carpet and screaming for people to get out of the way.

At this point, the PCs are being watched. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that Mistress Henna Mjelidi is peering at them from an opposite cafe. She is smoking a long hookah pipe and, if seen, smiles enigmatically and approaches.

the seat of the goddess's power in the city, and, some say, in all the realms.

Bastet's cult in her namesake city is a vibrant, bustling organization centered in the Dome of the Divine Face of Bastet. Under the high priestess, the clergy's hierarchy is ever-changing and quite complex. Its ranks are divided into two loose categories: clergy who organize evangelical outings outside the city and clergy who serve Bastet's interests within Per-Bastet proper. Within these groups, titles—including Kitten's Purr, Friend of Cats, and Lioness's Roar—are bestowed as accolades for deeds that please the goddess. Each title carries varied privileges and authority. Such a scattered structure might seem like it promotes infighting, but the reality is quite the opposite. Bastet's clergy in Per-Bastet and beyond are unified in their love for their goddess and their common goal: to promote Per-Bastet as a refuge for those who revere their patroness.

For more information about Per-Bastet, see page 37 of the *Southlands* campaign setting book from Kobold Press. For more information about the worship of Bastet, including a new domain and subdomains, spells, and magic items, see page 257 of *Southlands*.



GOSSIP CHECKS: AN ALTERNATE SOCIAL APPROACH

Usually, asking simple questions of folks on the streets is a matter of making a Charisma check to gather information. However, not every PC in this adventure may have the ability to any degree, and not every NPC reacts the same way to a particular approach. Some need charming, some bullying and some need impressing.

In this adventure, consider allowing the PCs to use Charisma (Deception, Intimidate, Performance, or Persuasion) check to learn useful tidbits of information. These checks are simply referred to as a gossip check, and each check takes the same amount of time as gathering information would.

MISTRESS HENNA MJELIDI (CR 2)

If the PCs do not notice her, she suddenly appears at the shoulder of one PC and introduces herself. The PC she stands next to can hear her purr as she talks quietly.

Henna is a beauty with feline guile. She wears long, flowing silk robes, and carries her blade in a leather scabbard. She is covered in henna tattoos that accentuate her litheness. Apart from the long gray tail and amber eyes, this feline beauty could almost be human—and a very lovely human at that, even though her veil teases about the fact.

Mistress Henna Mjelidi

Medium humanoid (catfolk), neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +2, Deception +6, Insight +2, Investigation +3, Perception +3, Stealth +5, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Catfolk, Gnoll, Trade Tongue

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Cat's Luck (3/day). Three times per day when making a Dexterity saving throw, Henna can choose to make the roll with advantage.

Cunning Action. Henna can use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

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

Sprinter. Henna gains a 10-foot bonus to its speed when using Dash or Disengage actions.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Henna makes two attacks with her rapier or longbow.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Gear: rapier in camel hide scabbard, potion of healing, thieves' tools, studded leather armor, silk robes, violet headscarf tied with gold thread worth 3 gp, open sandals made of elephant hide tied with tiny obsidian buttons worth 25 gp, scimitar, longbow, 20 arrows in a slipper purse that also contains a carved wooden ball, small leather purse containing 25 gp and 6 small carnelians worth 50 gp each, 4 hooks, 15 ft. of climbing cord and a nose flute carved with mites eating puppies worth 15 gp.

Henna is strong-willed and resourceful, and she admires spellcasters. In fact, she covets all magic, and has a tendency to lick her lips when she sees it. Her voice is quiet, and she speaks Trade Tongue poorly, although her voice makes the ill-pronounced words sound seductive. She can speak Gnoll passably but has positively mastered the language's swear words.

Henna purrs when she is intrigued, and spends much of the adventure doing so, grinning winningly and enigmatically, even during combat. She fights dirty and aggressively, like an alley cat, using her acrobatics and climbing skills to take the fight up into the crowded rooftops of Per-Bastet.

Henna explains to the PCs that a valuable gem with magic qualities has been stolen from her. The thief, a man called Raheed, snatched it only an hour ago and dashed into the Perfume District, where she knows he has friends. Henna confides that she is afraid of the Perfume District, as many people there would not hesitate to imprison her if they found her.

Henna is vague when it comes to describing the object, having truthfully only heard a second-hand description of it. She describes it as a large tiger's eye on a chain. If questioned about its magical powers, she is evasive to the point of obstinacy.

Henna offers the PCs 500 gp to recover her property. If the PCs press for more, she easily increases the offer since she has no intention of paying. She simply wants the PCs to set out immediately, before Raheed's trail goes cold. If the PCs ask her how they should meet her in the future, she tells them that she will find them when the time is right. She also furnishes the PCs with a good description of the thief—an ugly, slight, rat-like man with rotting teeth.

In truth, although she does not tell the PCs this, Mjelidi has ten local alley cats that act as her eyes and ears. They don't fight on her behalf, but they are her spies, efficiently

reporting back to her as though they were true animal companions. The cats she dispatches after the PCs are careful to keep their distance, but keep an eye on the PCs using Stealth. Although all 10 are involved in the pursuit, at any given time only three are within 60 ft. of the PCs. A further two catfolk—part of Henna's clowder—watch from a distance. Unlike most of their kind, these catfolk share Mjelidi's Neutral alignment.

If the PCs spot the cats or the clowder, the spies duck out of sight for a round or two, but they always continue following the PCs. If the PCs harm any of the cats, Henna knows within 10 minutes and will confront the PCs as soon as they leave the Perfume District.

Henna's Catfolk (2)

Medium humanoid (catfolk), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4, Survival +1

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Catfolk, Trade Tongue

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Cat's Luck (3/day). Three times per day when making a Dexterity saving throw, the catfolk can choose to make the roll with advantage.

Sprinter. The catfolk gains a 10-foot bonus to its speed when using Dash or Disengage actions.

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Cats (10)

XP 10 each

Hit Points 2 each (*Basic Rules*)

Challenge 0

HAKAAN-AL-KHAREEN ZMIRR NILL MO CHATOOOR

Someone else is watching the PCs, or rather Henna, and his name is Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor. As the PCs talk with Henna, he stands not far away with a trio of loyal kobold slaves. When the meeting ends, he sends the kobolds to approach the PCs with a specific message.

The kobolds are not as articulate as he'd like, but they get across Hakaan's point passably. Through the kobolds, Hakaan warns the PCs that the person they are dealing

with is not all she seems; he says Henna is a dangerous liar. He begs them to come to his humble home on the Street of Ten Thousand Fools, a meek residency behind the red door depicting camels leaping the sun.

Hakaan, aware of his exposure and possible danger, does not go into too many details in the message. If the PCs somehow corner him, his approach remains friendly throughout, and he tries to move the conversation back to his house, where he feels a good deal safer. In truth, it is a more pleasant place for a civilized chat.

HAKAAN'S HOME

Hakaan's house is a graceful place wreathed in silk, wrapped in the scent of flowers and the sound of tumbling water. Songbirds sing and butterflies flutter throughout the home's grounds.

If the PCs meet Hakaan as he wishes, he is in the courtyard (area H2), lurking by the fountain behind a mound of food heaped upon a groaning platter.

H1. HAKAAN'S DOORWAY

Flaking red paint clings to a carved double door depicting camels leaping the sun.

When Hakaan is not in his residence his door is locked with an average lock, and guarded by a trap he always arms whenever he leaves his abode.

TRAP: The swinging axe trap here can be disarmed by a simple lever immediately behind the door, which lurks in a side cupboard.

Swinging Axe Trap

Mechanical trap

This trap uses a trip wire that is 3 inches off the ground that stretches across the doorway. The DC to spot the wire is 15. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) cuts the wire harmlessly. A character without proficiency in thieves' tools may attempt this check with disadvantage and cut the wire with a slashing weapon. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap triggers, an axe swings down from the ceiling, making a +7 melee attack on all targets in a 10-foot line. A target that is hit takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage.

DEVELOPMENT: There are lots of nosy kids in the area, but a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice the interest they take in Hakaan's abode. If the PCs change the children's attitude from indifferent to friendly by succeeding in a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check (a bribe of 5 cp

gives the character advantage on the check) they tell the PCs that Hakaan always does something on the back side of the door before he leaves. This action is actually the merchant arming his trap.

H2. THE COURTYARD

The scent of honeysuckle and the sound of gentle birdsong and dancing water cling to this oasis of beauty and calm in the bustling city. A long, pillared balcony overlooks the open courtyard, the centerpiece of which is a bubbling fountain and a lush, leafy tree.

Here is where Hakaan muses, plots, and meets. Eight feet above the left side of the courtyard hangs a fine white silk, which covers a small group of finely carved tables and platters surrounded by cushions. The tree in the courtyard's center is a juniper, and from its branches it is easy to climb to the balconies 10 feet above (DC 10 Strength (Athletics)).

CREATURES: If the PCs accept his meeting request, Hakaan is here, eating an enormous meal under the courtyard's canopy. Among various unidentifiable cuts, the PCs see bloodcake, sausages, the rarest-cooked steaks, pigeon pie, fried chicken, grilled pork, burnt lamb cutlets, battered fish, boiled crab, mutton, camel, bacon, hams, deep-fried locusts, and spit-roasted sheep. Hakaan does not stop eating while he talks.

Hakaan is a fat gnoll—that much is unmistakable—but as the PCs approach, the extent of his obesity becomes clear. He is swathed in a colorful thawb that covers him but threatens to burst at the seams due to his girth. Hakaan has a laugh like an angry hornet being shaken inside a tin can, and he finds practically everything amusing.

He loves meat almost as much as he loves infuriating those who have wronged him; he hates Mistress Henna Mjelidi, for example, because she rebuffed his advances and refused his offer of marriage. Now he wants to make her pay—he doesn't want to kill her; he just wants to humiliate her. In his own way, he loves her, but gnoll love is always a tricky thing to judge.

Hakaan knows that Henna is scared of the Perfume District. He also knows that she intends to send pawns (the PCs) there, get the *Eye*, and then rob them. He laughed when he deduced her plan, so loudly in fact that the PCs may even have heard his distant cackling as they left Henna. Hakaan has a counter offer—making it just to amuse himself. Whatever Henna offered the PCs to retrieve the *Eye*, Hakaan offers them 50 percent as much. Of course, he doesn't intend to pay this full amount, but he does want the PCs working for him instead of Henna.

In addition to Hakaan, his two loyal kobold slaves lurk in the juniper tree in little hammocks slung from branches. These kobolds delight in climbing, and due to their feral nature have a climb speed of 10 ft. The kobolds wear hooded black cloaks that cover their whole bodies and speak in squeaky Trade Tongue laced with profundities about dragons. The kobolds delight in throwing paint about; see area **H8** for further details.

Hidden in the fountain here is a bound water elemental that Hakaan received as a gift from a pleased customer (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) to notice). The elemental does as Hakaan commands but cannot leave the courtyard space.

Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +3

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll, Trade Tongue

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Rampage. When Hakaan reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hakaan makes two attacks with his spear.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Gear: spears (5), hide armor, *potion of healing*, *potion of invisibility*, colorful thawb, a clay model of a two-headed elephant being ridden by a dwarf and playing a piano, dog-skin money belt

Kobolds (2)

hp 5 each (*Basic Rules*)

Special: Climb speed 10 ft.

Challenge 1/8 (XP 25 each)

Small Water Elemental

Small elemental, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (7d10 + 7)

Speed 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Water Form. The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Freeze. If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage

TREASURE: If undamaged, the silk overhanging the courtyard is worth 50 gp. The twenty or so pieces of china Hakaan is using for his feast are worth 100 gp total. The kobolds' hammocks contain a few oddments: a bright copper kettle worth 25 gp, a portable brass sundial with the sun shown as a hungry wolf worth 50 gp, and a silver rattle and whistle depicting a whale swallowing a whale worth 25 gp.

H3. THE MEAT LOCKERS

Flies abound in this room, which is crammed with several chests, larders, and meat lockers. A dirty but huge stove lurks greasily by the far wall.

Hakaan never likes to go hungry, and has ample foodstuffs here to stave off deprivation. In all, there is enough food in here to feed a family of 12 for a month.

TREASURE: Among the lockers, noticed on a successful DC 15 Perception check, is a small ornate spice box carved with a figure of a man being eaten alive by bookworms swarming from a shelf of grimoires. The spices within are worth 20 gp.

H4. THE RECEIVING ROOM

In this formally arranged room there is a large bronze table, cushioned seats, and a fine deep-orange carpet. Ornaments cram the chamber and the subtle smell of spices, incense, and lavender waits within.

This is where Hakaan receives his more formal guests and business partners.

TREASURE: The carpet is particularly fine and is worth 150 gp, but weighs 8 lbs. The other objects herein are general bric-a-brac, but they are well made and may dupe some.

Those who fail a DC 15 Intelligence check believe their value 10 times the actual worth. There is an



enamel and clay tagine depicting angry swans, but the item is very flimsy and worth only 5 gp; a rib-molded amethyst decanter with glass stopper, but the amethyst is actually glass worth only 7 gp; and a beaten brass lamp with gold inlay that is actually just paint and is worth 8 gp.

H5. THE DISAPPOINTING SHIPMENT

This room is crammed with crate after large crate, some of which are open with straw spilling out.

TREASURE: Who would not want a half-life-size clay crocodile figurine in their garden oasis? On reflection, Hakaan admits that it was not one of his best purchases. Even so, the 218 figures in here might be worth about 50 gp in total if the right dupe can be found.

H6. HAKAAN'S BEDCHAMBER

Here, superficially at least, is luxury: a huge, magnificent bed in a beautifully carved wooden frame boasts countless bright silks, cushions, and kneeling poufs about it. Lurking somewhere in the room is an unpleasant smell.

Hakaan is a sloppy eater, and often hungry. He dismisses staff members on a daily basis (they annoy him so much with their questions), and it's been a few days since he's had a maid clean this chamber.

PERFUME DISTRICT

Near the river at the northern edge of Per-Bastet, safely downstream from all else, stands the Perfume District, comprised of myriad small islands connected by bridges. As one moves downriver, the famous perfumeries and reputable potion-makers of this district devolve into increasingly unsavory alchemical shops, distilleries, candle makers, and storage facilities.

Here, anyone with connections or money can find necromantic unguents, poisons, and abominable constructs. They are ostensibly designed for use on criminals, purchased slaves, and enemies of the city, or so it is always claimed by their sellers.

The lurking smell is the aroma of rotting meat, which is hidden under the bed and covered in flies. Hakaan has gotten used to the smell, but anyone who enters the chamber make a successful DC 10 Constitution save or be poisoned while in the room. If the silks hanging over the bed are removed, or if anyone crawls under the bed, the rotting meat is disturbed and requires all PCs in the room to make another successful DC 10 Constitution save. Those who fail this save are sickened for an hour (even if they were previously sickened by the smell).

TREASURE: Hakaan is very cautious about his wealth—which admittedly isn't much—and he's hidden it in a box strapped below the bed (DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) to notice, unless someone actually gets underneath the bed to look). Inside the sandalwood box are several silk purses, 10 of which contain 10 gp each, and one that contains six small but well-cut lapis lazuli worth 20 gp each.

H7. THE LADY'S QUARTERS

Although clearly a boudoir for a lady, this room appears to have been hastily abandoned.

Mistress Salma Medersa shared Hakaan's excessive appetites for as long as she could bear—in truth, she was quite a rotund lady herself—but last week it got too much and she left him. The hastiness of the departure is here for all to see.

TREASURE: In her haste, Salma left one of her earrings behind, but it's dropped in a corner and requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) to notice. The earring is made of gold and silver and depicts a crocodile with two heads. It is worth 100 gp.

H8. THE PROJECT

It looks like an accident has happened here. There are small ladders, floor coverings, and several pots of paint, but it looks more like someone has had a fight with them than done any renovation.

Before she left, Salma thought that it was high time Hakaan decorated and made a room for guests. Unfortunately Hakaan was too cheap to hire real decorators, and had the kobolds do it. They weren't very good at renovation, turns out.

DEVELOPMENT: Some of the kobolds have become a bit obsessed with throwing paint about. If any combat



occurs in the house, two kobolds dash off, grab a trio of paint pots each, and use them as improvised missile weapons.

A thrown tin of paint (requiring a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet) erupts as it shatters, covering the target in magenta-, terracotta- or magnolia-colored paint. A struck creature must make a DC 11 Dexterity save or be blinded for 1 round. Two of these two naughty kobolds also take paint with them to the final battle (see Part Three) and use it there.

PART TWO: INTO THE PERFUME DISTRICT

The Perfume District is where the city's perfumeries and reputable potion-makers toil; however, the southern areas are too expensive. Raheed and his followers can't afford such luxury, and attempts to gather information about him here turn up nothing useful.

However, as the PCs move further north along the river, into increasingly unsavory alchemical shops, distilleries, factories, and storage facilities, they begin to hear about Raheed. It turns out that he isn't very popular among the people here, who describe him as everything from an unsavory character to a scourge upon the district. The smell here is almost unbearable at times; the air is laced with chemicals and steam, and the river is a seething mass of bright chemical colors.

The PC's investigations are divided into a series of four encounters, which can be encountered in any order. The PCs should learn about the existences of the moneylender, the blind man, and the laundry woman (see below) through DC 10 Charisma checks to gather information (this takes 1d4 hours). Or, they can make DC 10 gossip checks; see the sidebar on page 6 for more information. Each successful check informs the PCs about one of the NPCs mentioned.

THE MONEYLENDER

Raheed owes money to a local hustler—a lot of money—and it's no secret. So when Nassoor el-Rabat (LN male human commoner, *Basic Rules*) saw him a few hours ago heading north, the moneylender gave chase. A successful DC 15 Charisma check to gather information (or a DC 15 gossip check; see the sidebar on page 6) reveals the extent of Raheed's debt.

When the PCs meet Nassoor, he is in an alley that is 10 feet wide, with squat, 15-foot-tall buildings on both sides. The buildings are 30 feet wide, and on top of each of the buildings that immediately flank Nassoor are 1d8 workers who are renovating the

drooping structures.

Nassoor begins the encounter indifferent to the PCs unless they claim to be Raheed's friends, in which case he is immediately hostile. Unless the PCs quickly succeed in returning Nassoor to Indifferent, he shouts to the adjacent rooftops; the workers there are his friends and family members, who hate Raheed as much as he does.

The builders immediately snatch up stones, rocks, and other improvised weapons and hurl them at the PCs until the PCs retreat 15 feet or more from the buildings that flank Nassoor. The improvised weapons have a range of 20/60 feet, deal 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage, and the builders throw them at a +0 to hit with no bonus to damage.

If the PCs retreat, the builders continue to verbally abuse them, but they only attack if they return. If the PCs retaliate, spill any blood, or use magic in any way, the builders and Nassoor flee into the city screaming about devils. (Note: As an optional encounter, Nassoor and the builders might return later in the adventure with a few members of the city guard who are on the moneylender's payroll. In this case, use the statistics for the guard [LN male or female human] in the *Basic Rules*.)

A friendly Nassoor is a different proposition. He is anxious for the 75 gp that Raheed owes him, and if the PCs offer that amount to him, or if his attitude becomes friendly, he invites the PCs to meet the builders.

The way upward involves a series of tricky overhanging and loose ladders and requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. The fall is 15 feet. The builders stop working and talk to the PCs who come up, and during the conversation, one remembers that Raheed is close to a laundry woman called Oumayma. She gives the PCs directions and warns them to beware of ropers; as a self-declared seer, she is convinced that the PCs are going to have a hateful, possibly deadly encounter with one in the future.

THE BLIND MAN

The beggar Achraf (N male human commoner, *Basic Rules*) knows Raheed, who frequently gives him money. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information (or gossip check) reveals that Raheed has actually been giving him worthless buttons and stealing real coins as he did so.

Like before, the result of this encounter depends upon the PCs' approach. Achraf begins the encounter indifferent to the PCs unless they claim to be Raheed's friends, in which case he is immediately hostile, and gets up, waving his stick about. Unless the PCs quickly succeed in making Achraf at least indifferent, he attacks, using his stick as a club. He attacks with

disadvantage. Anyone attacking him back quickly draws the wrath of other locals for beating a beggar, and they threaten to call the city guard.

If Achraf is made friendly, he tells the PCs the same tale about the laundry woman that the builders might, but this time he adds that the foul thief has rat-like allies and real rats following him; he smells their stink on the air about him. He wishes the PCs good fortune, says he hopes a werecrocodile doesn't menace them today, and bids them adieu.

THE LAUNDRY WOMAN

If the PCs have failed in the encounters above to learn about the laundry woman, then allow them to make a DC 10 Charisma or gossip check to learn about her from a street waif, prostitute, or other informant.

Oumayma and her fellow laundry women work by the river. They form a large crowd, and anyone asking for Oumayma is quickly sent to the woman who is singing songs about dirty men and telling rude jokes.

Oumayma (N female human bandit, *Basic Rules*) has muscles like a fighter and a deep, rich voice. She's also very popular with the other workers here, who number about 50. Oumayma also knows where Raheed has been today, as one of her helpers—her cousin Mounia—saw him enter Festering Heth's earlier. Oumayma does not approve of her cousin's friendship with Raheed, who she finds unpleasant for a reason she can't quite articulate.

As Oumayma gladly tells the PCs, Heth—an apothecary who lives in one of the worst parts of the Perfume District—never washes, either himself or his clothes. The laundry women find him disgusting, hence his unkind nickname. They often tease the foul wererat for his stench or feign romantic interest in him to amuse their friends. All of the laundry women can give directions to Heth's place and an outer description of it.

Characters pretending to be enemies of Raheed can make a successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check to receive all this information immediately, along with some rather profane message the women want the PCs to pass on to the wererat. Those who fail the check, pretend to be friends with the wererat, or throw their weight about meet the same response—merciless verbal abuse.

The ladies are wicked; their tongues lash those they do not like, belittling and pointing out every little fault—real or imagined. In fact, if the laundry women verbally abuse the PCs, word about their supposed incompetence and ridiculousness moves so quickly throughout the Perfume District that they take a -1 penalty to all social skill checks for the rest of the adventure.

As the PCs leave such a scene, Oumayma shouts

out, “go to your friend Raheed—you'll find him at the stinking cesspit of Festering Heth's. You should enjoy it there! It's disgusting! Go! Go to your foul friend!” Finding Heth's should prove fairly straightforward but interesting from this point and allows GMs to develop other encounters as desired.

Drawing weapons or any threat of violence causes the women to scatter, possibly leaving the PCs without Raheed's whereabouts. Perhaps the PCs finish the adventure empty-handed, although whether their sponsors believe that they have the *Eye* as they leave the Perfume District is left to the GM. The laundry women have extensive friends and family, and if the PCs are aggressive or unwarranted in their approach, consider having a few of these relatives turn up to exact vengeance.

THE DESPICABLE YET BELOVED CAT

This encounter can occur at any time while the PCs are in the Perfume District, but is recommended as the last one before the PCs meet Festering Heth, as evidence that Raheed and the *Grimalkin Eye* are not far away.



The PCs hear a commotion just ahead in a small plaza. As they enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead, an excited group of people edges a small circular plaza, above which is a stepped entrance to a temple. Some wave mops and sticks; those who do not have anything in their hands wave their arms about excitedly. In the middle of this group prowls a small, curiously marked cat. It snarls at the crowd and bears its teeth, which are dripping with blood.

The cat has just escaped from the temple and is a Bastet temple cat, a creature sacred to the temple's priestesses. For some reason—actually the passing of the *Grimalkin Eye*, which has temporarily unhinged the cat—it has gone slightly berserk and now prowls the plaza, attacking anyone who comes near it. The cat ordinarily is a placid creature that watches the temple by night and sleeps by day. It is not caged, nor has it ever been.

The priestesses who normally staff the temple are presently across the city visiting a sister temple, leaving only two very junior priestesses (N female human acolyte, *Basic Rules*) here who are, in truth, little more than caretakers. Clad in the junior ecclesiastical attire of Bastet's faith (something noted on a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check), the priestesses are terrified that the cat is either going to escape or be killed. They are slightly less concerned that it might kill someone, but presently all options look bad, and the arrival of armed strangers might cause the juniors to cry out for help.

There are a dozen or so further locals (all male or female human commoner, *Basic Rules*) at the edges of the plaza. If the PCs threaten them (Charisma (Intimidate) DC 10) or politely calm them down (Charisma (Persuasion) DC 10), they move back from the plaza, allowing the PCs room to deal with the cat.

CREATURE: The Bastet temple cat attacks anyone who comes within 10 feet of it, but it can in certain situations (see Development) be driven back. If attacked at range, it uses its fascinating lure ability on such attackers.

Bastet Temple Cat

Small monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Sylvan, Trade Tongue

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The Bastet temple cat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the Bastet temple cat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the Bastet temple cat can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Priestly Purr. Divine casters who worship Bastet and spend a short rest preparing spells or regaining spell slots within 5 feet of a Bastet temple cat gains advantage on spellcasting ability checks (not attacks). In addition the caster may imbue one spell of 2nd level or lower to the Bastet temple cat. To do so, the caster must cast the spell on the Bastet temple cat. The spell has no effect but is stored within the Bastet temple cat. The Bastet temple cat then may cast the spell with any parameters set by the original caster, requiring no components. When the spell is cast or a new spell is imbued, any previous spell is lost.

Innate Spellcasting. The Bastet temple cat's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *guidance*

3/day each: *cure wound, charm person*

1/day: *enhance ability*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Bastet temple cat makes two attacks with claws or one claw and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Claw. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Fascinating Lure. The Bastet temple cat purrs loudly while targeting a single humanoid within 30 feet that can see and hear the Bastet temple cat. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the effect ends. The Bastet temple cat must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue purring but it can stop purring at any time and the effect ends if the Bastet temple cat is incapacitated. While charmed by the Bastet temple cat, the target is incapacitated and if the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the Bastet temple cat the target can take the Dash action on its turn to move toward the Bastet temple cat by the most direct route. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain and whenever it takes damage from any source, the target can repeat the saving throw. Once within 5 feet of the Bastet temple cat, the target is compelled to pick up or pet the Bastet temple cat. A creature can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to the Bastet temple cat's purr for the next 24 hours.

DEVELOPMENT: At first glance, the Bastet temple cat is quite the challenge for the PCs. However, PCs who look at the

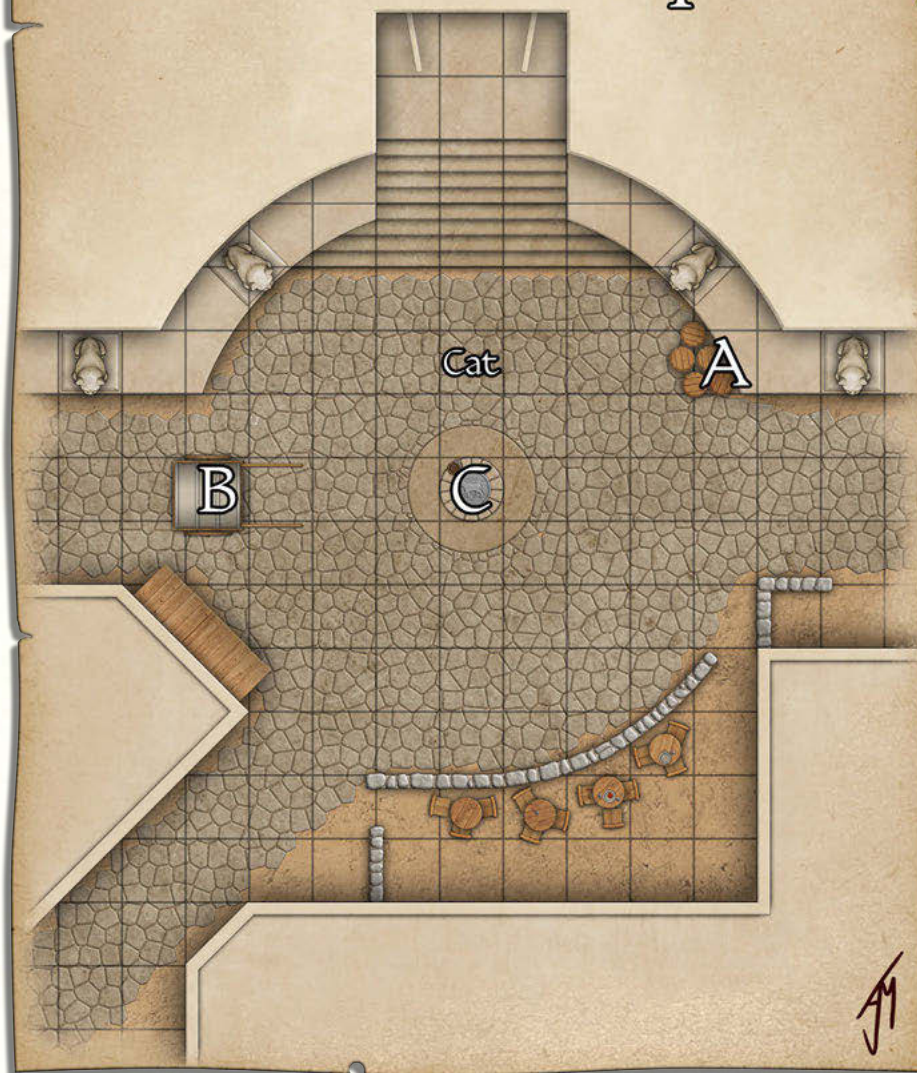
plaza closely (DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)) notice that there is a pile of barrels at Point A on the map, a covered wagon filled with clucking birds at Point B, and a covered well at Point C. Each offers a brave PC a chance to drive the cat toward a potential trap.

Blustering at the cat (DC 15 Charisma (Intimidate)) or coaxing it (DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling)) gets it to move in any direction the PCs push it by 5 feet. A check that succeeds by 5 or more moves it 10 feet. If a character fails the checks, the cat lashes out with a single claw attack. If a character fails the check by 5 or more, or fails 3 times in a row, the cat uses *charm person* on her to draw her forward, or just attacks with claws and bites.

The barrels are a new batch just made by the local cooper K'hallim-i-Nath (LN male human commoner, *Basic Rules*). The barrels are empty, and their lids have not been hammered shut. They could readily fit the cat inside, but getting it into the barrels beyond magical means is not easy. If anyone tries to remove the barrels, K'hallim approaches, waving his hammer aggressively. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidate) check (or simply drawing a weapon) readily gets him to back down, otherwise he might chance an attack using his hammer as a club. The PCs could feasibly use the barrels to cover the cat. Doing so requires backing the cat into a barrel's space and then succeeding on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

The wagon contains chickens in a large cage owned by Rania V'thei (N female human commoner, *Basic Rules*). The cage is made of wood and is 5 feet wide on all sides. Rania tries to stop anyone from releasing her chickens or—far worse—sending a cat in with them. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate) check, or drawing any weapon, gets her to back down. If not, she tries to distract anyone from interfering with her property by throwing eggs at

The Plaza of The Cat Temple



them. This does no damage to PCs struck, but makes for quite a spectacle in front of the crowd.

The well cover is made of metal, and requires a successful DC 8 Strength check to lift. If the temple priestesses see the well cover lifted and the PCs moving toward the cat, they yell madly to try to stop them. The priestesses know that the well is 50 feet deep and could seriously injure the creature if it falls in. Unless forced to back down in the same way as Rania above, the priestesses try to distract the PCs by throwing themselves in front of the cat, risking an attack while trying to get the well cover back on. They also push and shove at any would-be-attacker.

If the cat is captured peacefully, a great cheer goes up among the locals, who mob about the PCs while they

congratulate them. The PCs learn that the temple cat is not the only big cat that has been behaving oddly in the city; locals have heard at least 127 similar separate tales this day alone—in truth, there have been no more than a handful of unusual cat-related events, but that's gossip for you. If the PCs follow up on any of these leads they go down literal blind alleys, but learn that wherever Raheed went, cats behaved oddly.

That evening, a more senior priestess, accompanied by the two juniors, finds the PCs and rewards them in a suitable way; GMs should choose a reward worth up to 500 gp that is appropriate for the group.

If the cat is killed, the crowd falls into a worried silence and gathers about to inspect it, some crying and wailing at the terrible fate they are sure is about to befall the city. The death should have ongoing consequences for the PCs, at the GM's discretion; perhaps the priestesses locate the PCs and berate them while sobbing, or maybe they have some little task for them to carry out as recompense for their heresy. Or, maybe they try to impose a fine on the PCs.

FESTERING HETH'S

A vast ship's mast lurches from a lower building. It rises to an overhanging, two-story timber building, from which balconies protrude, and beyond to a steeply gabled roof.

Heth's lies atop a lower building, itself 20 feet tall, from which rises the two-foot-thick ship's beam. The beam rises a further 10 feet to the lower floor of Heth's home. An iron ladder is nailed and riveted to the beam and outer wall of the building below, and then lurches outward to the main entrance, which overhangs the beam by some 10 feet.

Sharp-eyed PCs (Wisdom (Perception) DC 15) notice that, in the cobbled street below Heth's, a merchant sells creatures from her menagerie. If the PCs check, there are no cats here, but the merchant, Ahri Khaleeni (CN female human commoner, *Basic Rules*), is happy to confirm that she sold her prize cat—a juvenile cheetah—to her neighbor Heth only an hour ago. Heth had the cat immediately lifted to his home high above in a cage.

If the PCs press her, the merchant remarks that it was an odd transaction, because Heth is usually much more interested in chemicals than animals. Ahri can easily point out the building Heth lives in, as it took two of her best slaves almost an hour to haul the cage upward. If the PCs locate these slaves, they may learn something of the interior of Heth's laboratory (at the GM's discretion).

Raheed is held in the gable attic (area FH4), but when the PCs first arrive, he is still bound and gagged. If the PCs enter the place and search, they find him before he has had chance to escape (see Return to Festering Heth's at the end of this description). Heth has both Raheed and the *Eye*, and is slightly worried that Raheed's allies might come calling.

Clever Heth is a dirty, stinky creature; he wears a long, stained white thawb and walks with the help of a cane. He has one cloudy eye and an unsettling twitchiness about his furtive actions. The arrival of the PCs offers Heth a way of removing Raheed's ratfolk allies and quickly bringing in reinforcements.

When the PCs enter his home, he quickly meets them. If they attack or otherwise threaten him, Heth tries to run into his laboratory (area FH2) to lock himself in and avoid combat. Throughout the encounter, he claims that Raheed has been here; he says Raheed demanded too much for his object and went back to his garret. He gives the PCs clear details of how to get there. (He won't tell the PCs this, but he intends to send them on a wild goose chase so he can hire help to protect himself in the meantime [see Return to Festering Heth's].)

Heth hates physical pain, however, and if the PCs begin combat with him before he has chance to get reinforcements, he eventually offers up Raheed (while secretly trying to retain the *Eye* on his person). If the PCs forcefully demand the *Eye* (DC 10 Charisma (Intimidate)), he hands it over. If faced with no other choice, he fights, freeing his cheetah if possible to see if it will truly fight for him.

Of course, if the PCs acquire the *Eye* and do not determine its properties, whichever PC possesses it becomes subject to the artifact's powers, and all cats within 50 feet act as if under a *confusion* spell (see the end of the adventure). The PCs can determine the *Eye*'s properties as normal (using identify or focusing on it during a short rest), or through a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History or Religion) check.

AS'haad Al Heth

Medium humanoid (gnoll), neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 53 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +1, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Draconic, Gnoll, Trade Tongue

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Rampage. When Heth reduces a creature to 0 hit points

with a melee attack on his turn, he can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a bite attack.

Spellcasting. Heth is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Heth has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, light, prestidigitation, true strike*

1st level (3 slots): *burning hands, disguise self, jump, shield*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage

Light crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Gear: alchemist fire (3), mace, light crossbow, 20 bolts, leather armor, *cloak of resistance* +1, *Grimalkin Eye*, the keys to the main door and the padlock to the attic

FH1. THE OVERHANG

The iron ladder here looks secure, but it overhangs a drop of around thirty feet before lurching over the outside of the balcony above.

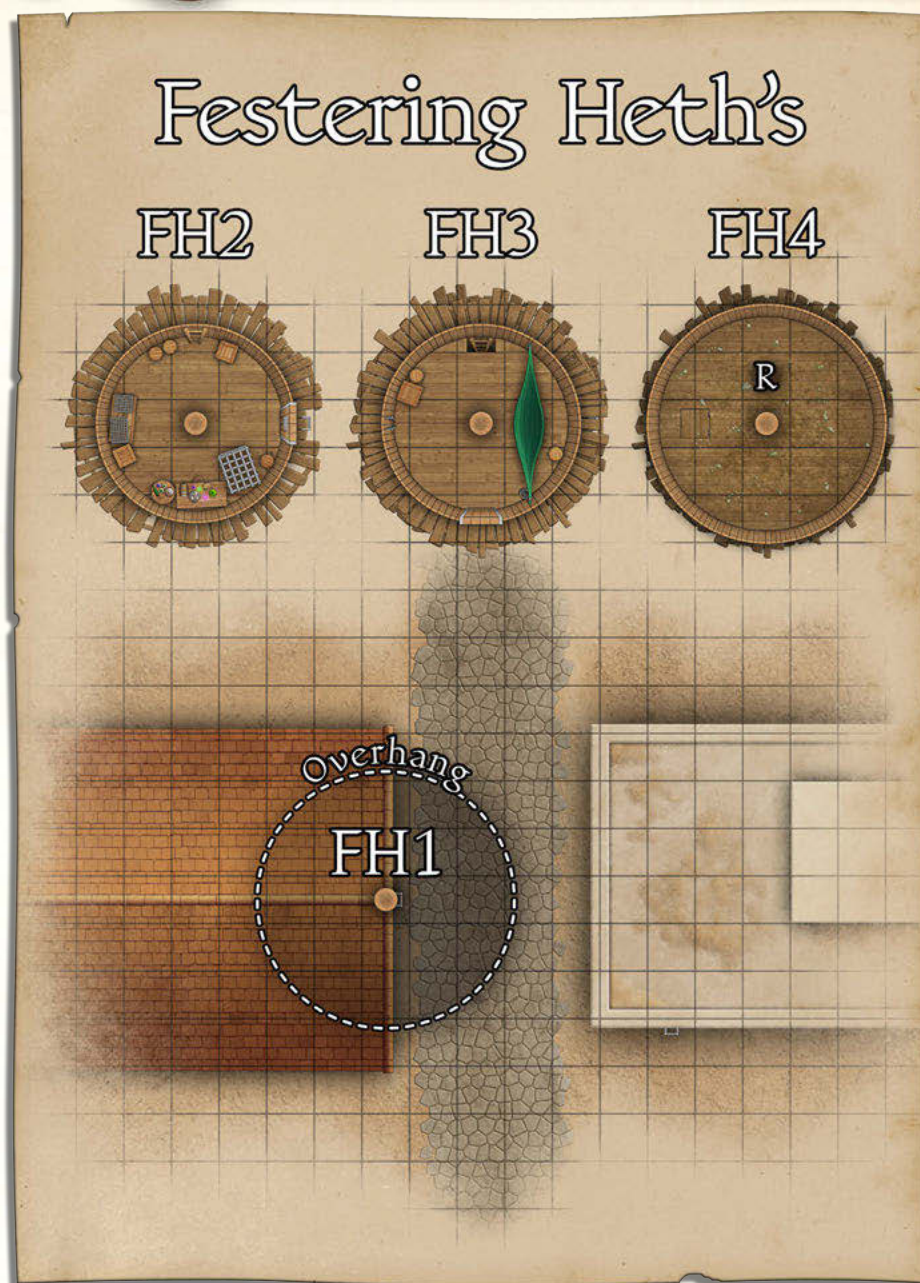
A successful DC 5 Strength (Athletics) check is required to reach the entrance by the ladder. Another building rises nearby, and lies at one point within 20 feet horizontally and 2 feet vertically below the lower balcony. This is depicted on the map and can, of course, be jumped (DC 20 Strength (Athletics)); GMs should encourage PCs to come up with creative solutions, including using a pole or grappling hooks and ropes to make a makeshift bridge). Access to this rooftop is a simple matter of surveying the street to spy an outer ladder that rises to the rooftop.

Festering Heth's

FH2

FH3

FH4



FH2. HETH'S LABORATORY

A narrow, exposed balcony surrounds the timber building, which has a single hefty-looking iron and wooden door.

Heth's door is locked with a poor lock (Dexterity (Thieves Tools) DC 10; he has the key), and has a peephole through which he normally greets visitors. The door is old and has been battered by sandstorms and age (AC 15, 5 hp, break DC Strength (Athletics) 10). There are no windows on this floor.

Beyond is a cramped laboratory. The stench of chemicals is almost overpowering. Within the

FEE FIE FOE FUM!

The ship's beam makes an interesting option for corner cutting—if the PCs aren't too worried about breakages. The ship's beam is 2 feet thick and weathered (hardness 5, hp 120, break DC 28). However, it is up to the GM to judge how Heth and his neighbors might react to this event. Certainly it could make an unusual and memorable entrance to the PCs' adventures in Per-Bastet. What it might do to their reputation, however, is another matter altogether.

laboratory are a fine alchemist's laboratory, books, cages with small creatures, and a larger cage with a panther inside. A ship's ladder rises to hole in the timber ceiling.

CREATURES: After speaking to Raheed, Heth invested in a panther from a nearby merchant and has been busy using the *Eye* to try to control it. If attacked and not persuaded to back down, he frees the panther and tries to control it to attack intruders.

Panther

Hit Points 13 (*Basic Rules*)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

TREASURE: The laboratory is a masterwork alchemist's laboratory. Among the jars and vials, a close look (DC 10 Intelligence Investigation)) reveals four vials of acid, three vials of alchemist's fire, a tanglefoot bag, and a thunderstone. Heth uses all these in the event of attack. The books are mostly alchemical, and are worth about 150 gp total.

FH3. HETH'S BEDROOM

This is an airy chamber, with lots of gaps in the walls and a trio of kites hung up around a large hammock that stretches across the whole room. Iron spikes that have been nailed into the wall rise to a trapdoor that's padlocked from below.

The padlock is poor (Dexterity (Thieves Tools) DC 10). Heth has the key and has locked Raheed behind it.

TREASURE: One of the kites has a bronze, copper, and wooden head worth 35 gp. Heth has hidden a few valuable or useful items here, just in case. Each requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check to spot. They are a pair of alchemist's fire vials tied with

catgut, a sow's ear made into a purse containing 3 tiger eyes worth 25 gp each, and a small carved giraffe with a mouth that holds a *feather token (tree)*.

FH4. THE GABLE ATTIC

The trapdoor gives access to a dirty chamber infested with bats. Through gaps in the timber, you catch tantalizing glimpses of the Great Sand Pyramid, the vast Pyramid of the Mother of Destiny glowering at her far shoulder. The sprawling city festers beyond in a hive of people, commerce, and adventure.

If the PCs' entered Heth's immediately on their first visit, Raheed is herein, in a large sack hanging from a butcher's hook hanging from the ceiling some 10 feet above the floor (as represented by point R on the map). If they arrived later, Raheed has escaped, and lurks with two of his kin, desiring vengeance and the *Eye*, awaiting his chance to surprise his jailer—or his allies. As soon as anyone enters, his rats rush into attack, swiftly followed by Raheed himself.

Raheed Wa Moi Matiba

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Wererat (*Monster Manual*)

Giant Rats (2)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP each)

Hit Points 7 each (*Basic Rules*)

RETURN TO FESTERING HETH'S

If the PCs fall for Heth's ruse, he heads straight down his ladder and into the streets nearby. Fifteen minutes later, he has hired a duo of gnoll brothers and awaits the PCs' return, smiling at his own cunning. These gnolls are by no means loyal, and if one is killed or all three injured they offer to leave, claiming they meant no trouble.

The gnolls use the advantage of Heth's building to attack from the balconies, throwing spears at returning PCs as they climb the ladder (they each have five spears), and then using cover for as long as they can.

If the PCs cleverly wait outside in order to see what happens, they catch Heth red-handed. If they manage to corner him, he easily backs down without a fight, as listed above.

Gnolls (2)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP each)

Hit Points 22 each (*Basic Rules*)

RAHEED'S SQUAT

The squat is lashed to the Perfume District's rooftops and lies right at its outer western isles. It is little more than a raised timber platform, comprised of two-inch-wide planks lashed together, with wooden boards to provide a stable surface and an outer wall made of dusty cloth. Between, a small open section of exposed river finds use as a sewer.

TSC1. THE TEETERING SQUATCHAMBER

This rooftop building is little more than a skeletal plank frame with a dusty cloth skin that balances on stilts between two buildings. A bamboo ladder grips its way up an outer wall to the rooftops' sloping gables, where the temporary building billows.

The squat lurks on the rooftops of one of the riverside slums and hangs between two buildings. It rests about 30 feet above the ground and river.

The river here is a disgusting flotsam and waste-throttled vent. Although easy to swim in, it is infested with a local breed of python, and one lurks not far away. The dirty stilts climbing from the river are slimy and lie 10 feet below the boardwalk the buildings sit on, and require a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to navigate. If a character falls into the river, a python (constrictor snake, *Basic Rules*) attacks. The snake slithers away if injured in any way.

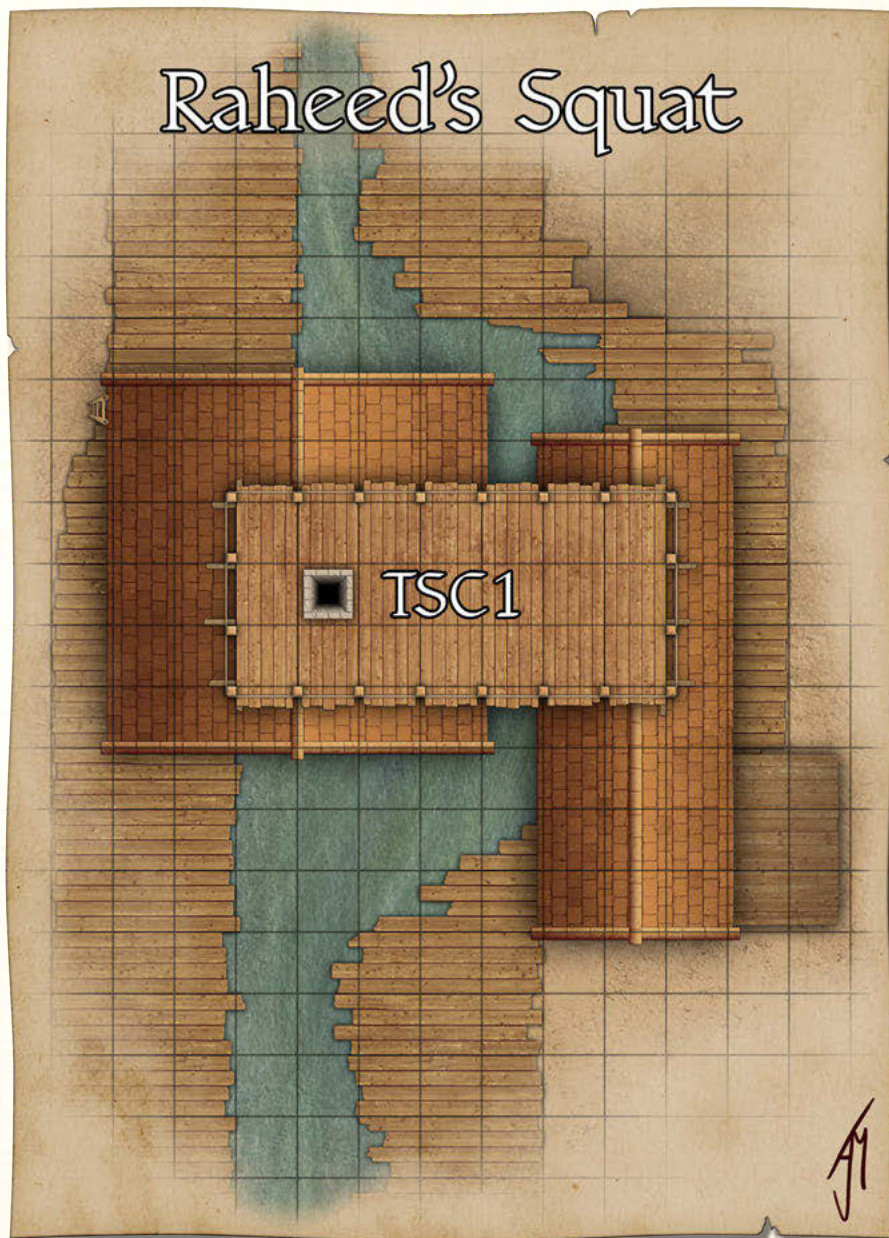
The ladder leading upward requires no check, but the sloped roofs are dusty, and require a successful DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to move along. Any PC who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a chimney sticking out of the squat; this offers an alternative entrance to Raheed's lair and leads directly into a gap in the cloth in the middle of the lair.

The building below is presently unoccupied, and a successful DC

10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to use this entrance. Unless PCs use Stealth as they climb up, the rats become aware of intruders, but are otherwise caught by surprise.

When the PCs reach the rooftop, read or paraphrase the following:

The timber platform—for that is all this really is—sits upon a dozen gleaned flotsam planks. Its extreme edges lie some five feet above the dusty rooftops, and a cold chimney sticks from the cloth roof. Here at the riverside, the city curves in a graceful arc away to the south, toward the Palace District. You can make out the Wharf District to the west, the Hunt to the north, and beyond those the Monument District and the District



of the Cat. Past the city's gleaming walls, the desert rolls and boils, answering the song of Per-Bastet with her own susurrus hymn.

CREATURES: Nervously awaiting the return of their leader are several dire rats and a duo of ratfolk, who worship Raheed as a living god come to liberate them from filth and bring them endless cheese. The group regularly watches from the squat, but concentrates upon the ladder. They expected their leader back a while ago and know he bears a mighty artifact. If attacked in their own lair and caught flat-footed as a group, they lay down their weapons, scurry away over the rooftops or into the river below, and only attack if attacked.

Ratfolk (2)

Small humanoid (ratfolk), neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Arcana +4, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Trade Tongue

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimbleness. The ratfolk can move through the space of any creature size Medium or larger.

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

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Light crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Giant Rats (4)

Challenge 1/8 (25 each XP)

Hit Points 7 each (*Basic Rules*)

Constrictor Snake

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Hit Points 13 (*Basic Rules*)

TREASURE: The group is very poor. They have a gourd of poor local wine, a loaf of blackbread, and a few onions and chilis, as well as a small chunk of very old hard cheese with gnaw marks in it. Hidden under the floorboards (noticed on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, or a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) if the PCs actively search below the boards) is a small leather bag containing 23 cp, 3 sp and a ceramic depiction of Anu-Akma worth 8 gp.

PART THREE: THREE SIDES TO EVERY STORY

The PCs have several loose ends to tie, and may even try to sneak away from their escort of cats to take their own reward for the *Grimalkin Eye*. How this develops—and it should develop into a wider story of pursuit and intrigue—is left to the GM.

If the PCs follow the offered course of action, as soon as they leave the Perfume District they come to a square where they immediately see Mistress Henna Mjelidi standing beside a great lion statue. Opposite her, across the cobbled square, squats Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatoor, chewing upon a great haunch of roast camel cooked in sugar and saffron.

Both step forward—their allies hidden close by—and demand the *Eye*.

THE SQUARE OF LIONS

The high rear walls of minor temples surround this 30-foot-wide square. The walls are 20 feet tall, weathered, and full of holes (DC 10 Strength (Athletics)). The southwest temple has a flat roof, while the others are gabled at approximately 45 degrees.

The area is full of lion statues, which offer cover. Those on the rooftops are heavy, but can be pushed over with a successful DC 20 Strength check. Creatures below a falling statue must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or take 4d10 points of damage; making a second successful DC 15 Dexterity save halves the damage. In each corner of the square, atop a dais reached by three steps, is an open-mouthed roaring lion statue. These are too big to move.

CREATURE: The square is noted for its caged lions, which lurks in a shaded corner indicated on the map. Local priestesses feed the lions, savage beasts that prove impossible to tame, daily. Locals pray before the lions as they pass, and often toss food to them.

The lions are presently hungry, however, and lash out; they can attack anyone who comes within 5 feet using a single claw attack (although it has a 50% miss chance when it makes these attacks). If a lion is fed—say by the piece of meat Hakaan munches on—it turns its attention to the food and does not attack anyone for the remainder of this encounter.

The padlock is average (D 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools)) but rusty (AC 17, 10 hp, break DC 18 Strength). Releasing the lions is a risky strategy, but if the PCs can overpower them with the *Eye*, they could drive the others away very quickly (see A Final Standoff). If not controlled, the hungry lions simply attack randomly until they have killed someone, who they then eat, only attacking again if attacked.

Lions

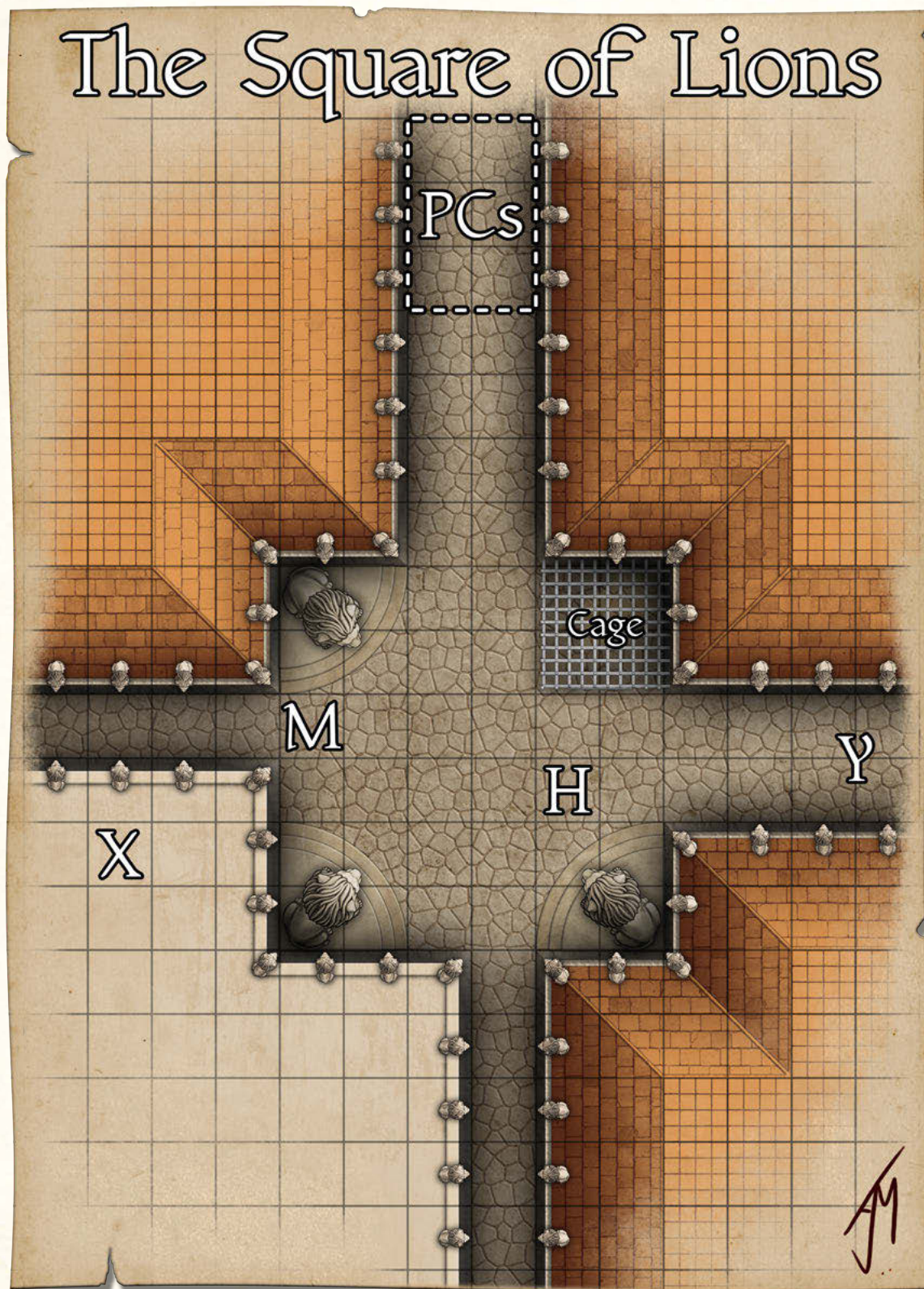
Challenge 1 (200 each XP)

Hit Points 26 each (*Basic Rules*)

DEVELOPMENT: GMs might wish to consider how the local temple masters might react to any acts of vandalism, and what might happen to a free lion in the city streets.

A FINAL STANDOFF

Henna stands at point M on the map, and her followers are on the flat-roofed temple behind her at point X. Hakaan teases the lion from point H, his kobolds lurking heroically behind him at point Y.



The PCs can play this situation however they wish, but bear in mind that both Henna and Hakaan want the *Eye* and can't afford the reward they promised.

The PCs can use their skills to ally with one side or another. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception, Intimidate, or Persuasion) check is enough to convince would-be allies to work with the PCs in a fight, and if the PCs are really clever they can keep to the edges of combat and simply dodge. Both Henna and Hakaan flee or surrender if more than half of their followers are slain or if they have 6 or fewer hp remaining, pledging not to go after the *Eye*. In this way, the PCs may simply play at being in a fight, and watch as everyone wears each other down to a point where only the PCs can win.

Mistress Henna Mjelidi

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hit Points 33 (see page 7)

Henna's Catfolk

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

N catfolk

Hit Points 11 (see page 8)

Hakaan-al-Khareen Zmirr Nill Mo Chatooor

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Advanced gnoll

Hit Points 33 (see page 9)

Kobolds (4)

Challenge 1/8 (XP 25 each)

Hit Points 5 each (*Basic Rules*)

Special: Climb speed 10 ft.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The ending of this adventure is very open; the PCs might side with one person and sell the *Eye*, forcing the NPC to pay properly for the item. They may sell the item themselves and betray both groups, or they may try to slay everyone and keep the item. Whatever happens, think of how this event might develop—do betraying PCs get a reputation that attracts shady NPCs to hire them? Do heroic and honest PCs have further adventures with Hakaan or Henna? If possible, try not to let adventures simply end without consequences; ongoing stories are always so much more fun.

THE GRIMALKIN EYE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 15th; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A black slit, making it appear like a real eye, bisects this fist-sized, spherical tiger-eye gem. Hanging from a weathered chain, the gem is said to be the magically preserved eye of a lioness that served Bastet while the goddess was mortal.

The *Grimalkin Eye* affects feline beasts—domestic cats, leopards, lynxes, lions, tigers, cheetahs, servals, and any local variants thereof, including giant versions of these animals. It does not affect any feline creature without the beast type, including creatures such as weretigers and rakshasas, which aren't true cats.

Once per day, the *Eye* can dominate cats as though using a dominate beast spell. Three times per day total, the wearer can use one of the following spells on cats: *animal friendship*, *animal messenger*, and *speak with animals*. If the wielder does not take 1 hour each day to attune with the *Eye*, though, the artifact causes all cats within 50 feet to act as if under a *confusion* spell, and the wielder randomly sees

through the eyes of a cat within range. The wielder also cannot use any of the abilities mentioned above.

DESTRUCTION

If bathed in the blood of a high priestess of Bastet, the *Grimalkin Eye* turns to dust.



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