

FIRST EDITION DUNGEON MODULE I15

THE ASSASSINS OF ABU-DALA



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INSPIRED BY *THIEVES OF FORTRESS BADABASKOR*

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FORWARD

There is much that goes into the designing of a role playing adventure. Professional looking format, artwork and illustrations, maps and cartography are all important elements in the success of a module; though they seldom doom it to failure if they are sub-standard, as long as the text rises above their inadequacies. But the single-most important factor (in the author's opinion) of whether an adventure is *good* or not, is its ability to inspire the Game Referee and his players into imagining the world in which they are moving, and feeling the excitement of each encounter, monster defeated, treasure found, and levels gained among the group.

Clearly this inspiration is difficult to achieve. But if the adventure, itself, is inspired by a work that has withstood the test of time, endured countless sessions of play, and remained a favorite among many, then there is a good chance that it might enjoy a degree of the same success. And hopefully we have created an adventure that many will take to their heart and find countless hours of enjoyment playing.

NOTES TO THE DM

The ASSASSINS OF ABU-DALA is designed for a group of 4 to 8 characters of various classes that range in levels from 5th to 10th. This level spread is based on the 1E rules system that excludes the material later published in *Unearthed Arcana*. If classes from that manual are included the DM

should lower *their* range to from 5 to 8. The party should include at least one cleric, ranger, magic-user and thief; larger groups should increase their ranks of clerics and fighters first before adding more thieves or a magic-user or other sub-classes. Non-humans should not be excluded, but chaotic evil personalities should. It is recommended that each character have at least 1-2 magic items, that at least 2 fighter types possess a magical weapon, and that magic users not have the spell, *teleport*.

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BACKGROUND

Deep into in the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter stands the lonely mountain. Its ragged flanks of black stone thrust high from the dunes that ebb and flow with the eternal winds that scour the arid continent from its furnace like interior to its rocky, spray drenched shores. Few know of the mountain, but those that do, fear it well.

The rumors told by the simple shepherds who herd their emaciated goats occasionally through the area say that the mountain was once the home of the *old man* of the mountain; better known as the father of assassins. Whatever the truth of these tales, if there be truth in them at all, the mountain and the fortress within it has become the focus of a recent series of disturbing events. The assassins have returned.

Caravans crossing the Empty Quarter have been destroyed, ransacked, the men slain, and the females taken captive. In the far-flung desert towns surrounding the mountain, emir, holy man and merchant alike have died under the slashing blades of these assassins and a new breed of leaders has arisen in these towns, one that secretly declares itself to be in league with the wild desert warriors of the interior. The ancient trading ties of the cities of the southern continent are breaking down or have already broken as a new wave of zealotry threatens not only the safety of the remaining cities, but also the peace of the northern continent.

QUICK START

Negotiations between the rulers of the trade cities and those whom rule over you has bought you to this place, a nightmare of blazing heat, of sand storms that bury man and beast alike in minutes, of endless vistas of sand dunes stretching from horizon to horizon without a blade of grass or drop of water. Still the torment of the journey is nearly over, for your objective looms just a few miles away now, the lonely mountain and the ancient fortress of Abu-Dala rear high above the desert plain. In the small shale filled valley before you is the cave, the one that the seers divined. The one which will take you to the heart of the mountain, and ultimately your target; the grandmaster of the assassins.

Should the DM decide to have the party begin as quickly and as closely to the mountain fortress as possible then skip over the section to follow and simply *start* them at the base of the mountain, on the northern side, about a tenth of a mile distant. From there they will see two features on this face

of the mount, one at about ground level, and the other higher up, about a quarter of the way up this side of it. The lower one is clearly a cave opening and easily accessible, this leads to the cavern levels below, while the higher one will require climbing the base of the mountain via some means, until reaching a narrow ledge where a dark depression in the wall appears; a search here will reveal a secret door, leading to the back side of level one.

CAMPAIN START

For over three centuries the harsh barren lands on the southern continents lay largely unexplored by adventurers from the north. As sailors making their living from the bounties of the sea sailed farther in search of its natural resources such journeys brought them into contact with exotic and faraway places, and strange peoples. Merchant ships that soon followed began the world-wide transport of goods conveying with them the hint of distant cultures in lands unseen by northern eyes.

In a short time most of the accessible coastal towns and villages of these societies became ports of call to dozens of northern fleets sweeping down to conduct business and the exchange of goods. Sailors and merchant-representatives began to learn the languages and customs, as much as they were allowed, taking home with them stories of strange societies and rituals that excited the minds of their fellow citizens.

Sprinkled throughout such stories was always a tale of untold riches, hidden treasure buried away in deep, dark places guarded by fierce and unusual monsters. Stories of seven headed serpents, giant scorpions, riddle posing lions with wings and more were circulated, set in desolate locales of scorching heat, among shifting dunes of beach-like sand in a land where veiled women of dark skin carried large clay water pots atop their heads, and caravans of humpbacked creatures ported merchant goods from village to village.

Also brought back by sailors and merchants was the report of desert marauders sweeping across the sea of sand, savagely attacking the caravans and confiscating the goods on their way from the deep interior of the continent to the coastal ports, and eventually the shops of merchants and tradesmen in the northern realms.

With the demand for such goods among the citizenry being a lucrative source of tax revenue, the King of the northern provinces sent his daughter, Princess Elawen, to meet with the southern Sultan to negotiate the trade agreement.

But 11 months have passed and not a word from the princess has returned to the King. With the supply of goods trickling in, and his daughter not seen or heard in all that time, the King has had to dispatch any and all mercenary adventurers to the southern locations to find his missing daughter, and return the flow of goods needed in order to refill his tax coffers.

And so it is that a company of adventures has sailed south, sent to find the missing princess, and reestablish the flow of goods from the southern lands to the northern kingdoms.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Upon arriving at the port city of Kanibus the party is met by the local official, Kahim Oman, the chief administrator of foreign affairs and his entourage. After brief introductions and inquiries as to their purpose, Kahim will inform the party that the princess Elawen disappeared suddenly, 11 months past, and has not been seen since. Knowing that the girl's disappearance would upset her father, the northern king and further strain trade between the two continents, the Sultan has sent every available man to search for her, but to no avail. Kahim believes the girl's disappearance is tied somehow to the banditry along the caravan routes that has all but extinguished the trading of goods between the southern and northern lands.

If the party did not bring mounts with them on the journey they will be provided with Arabian horses and camels to port their equipment. Oman will also assign guides to travel with the group as far as the inland town of Bombutu; from 1 to 6 0-level men with 1-6 HPS, AC7, using scimitars for 1-8 damage. The guides will fight to defend themselves, but will flee if given the opportunity in the face of a large group of attackers. Once on the road the adventure begins.

THE JOURNEY INLAND

The caravan route from deep inland to the coastal port towns and cities is a well worn track in the sand that has been mingled with blood, water and decomposed organic and animal materials that has compacted over the years. A thin surface layer of a few inches dries and cracks in the sweltering sun only to be filled in by drifting debris and excrement and refuse from the passing caravans, again and again.

Due to the intense temperatures and the condition of the caravan route itself movement along the

track will be slower than that normally achieved by the party. Where 18 to 22 miles per day was not beyond the experience of them before, they will be lucky to travel 12, now. Water, however, should not be a serious problem for the group that includes a cleric or druid. Water alone, however, will not fully restore their stamina and that of their mounts, and actual physical rest is mandatory.

Traveling across the scorching waste will be a long and tedious endeavor. The mid-day heat often reaches as high as 120F (49C) degrees causing most traffic along the track to slow and seek the shelter and shade of hastily erected tents periodically until the sun hangs low in the western sky. Most southern inhabitants can tolerate this as long as they stop every hour or so and rest. Visitors from the north or other regions not accustomed to it will find the heat unbearable, requiring them to cease moving at all from about mid-day until the sun has set. This may force them to continue moving in the warm dark night if they want to make good time on their journey. The guides will advise against it, but will abide by the party's orders.

Should the party attempt to travel during the heat of the day they will suffer a loss of 1 hit point per hour; this will go undetected until such a loss causes the character to drop to dangerously low levels, or is countered inadvertently by healing magic. Normal rest, once the victim has stopped moving, will restore the loss at a rate of 1 per each hour spent. **Note: if the character is wearing any kind of armor the chance of suffering from heatstroke is equal to 100% minus ten times the character's armor AC value (minus shield); 70% for plate, 60% for banded/splint, etc. A Check per each hour moving while armored is done by rolling a Save vs. Dragon Breath, using the character's CON hit point adjustment as a bonus. Should the character fail the save, then the DM should roll the % dice to determine if heatstroke has actually occurred. (The DM should consult the Wilderness Survival Guide to determine the results of any suffering)**

Once on the road the party is likely to encounter others that use the route. A check every 2 hours spent traveling will result in such a meeting on a roll of 1-2 on a d6. The DM should then roll % dice and consult the following descriptions.

01-15% Group of 2-20 Bedouin merchants. These traders will be helpful in the traditions of hospitality extended by the Bedouin to all desert travelers. They will aid the party in whatever way they can. If encountered at night these folks will be in a set up camp, with guards posted.

16-30% 5-100 Bedouin raiders. These bandits opportunistically scout the caravan track looking for travelers from clans outside their own. They will attack the party immediately on deeming that they are foreigners. They conform to the statistics listed for *Dervish* under the Men category found in the MM, though they are considered Neutral to Evil.

31-45% Pack of 3-18 hyenas. These unsavory creatures cruise the caravan track devouring the carcasses of the dead and dying. They will track a party with wounded members for days.

46%-60% Pack of 5-20 jackals. These nervous, slightly built animals will tail the party for days but make no attempt to attack, unless the party comes under heavy attack by another foe, when they will dart in an attempt to feast on any downed party member.

61-80% Herd of 1-50 Wild camels. The odor from these ungainly creatures can be smelt a mile away. The herd will generally attempt to avoid the party, and only attack if it attempts to interfere with them.

81-98% Desert Caravan. These trains vary from as small as 10 persons to as many as 100 depending on what/if anything is being ported and from where the train originated. If it is moving south it is likely smaller, being comprised mostly of guards and guides, while if heading north it is likely larger, with darker skinned porters bearing large quantities of goods and raw materials. North bound trains will always have 1 guard per 10 bearers and 1 guide for every 50; these being in addition, not inclusive. Guards will be L1 fighters, wearing padded armor and with scimitars and spears.

99-00% 1-5 dust diggers. These creatures are trap layers and will periodically entrench themselves as near to the track as possible in an attempt to catch any unsuspecting passersby that meander or drift off the actual route. They will be encountered anywhere from 3' to 6' off the track itself, lying in wait.

BOMBUTU AND BEYOND

Reaching the town of Bombutu will immediately give the party a false sense of security as they take in some of the local cuisine and the few amenities available. The Amir will extend a grand welcome and offer his large home as quarters to the party in which to rest for the evening, assuring them that

they need not worry about anything as their mounts are taken and fed and watered, and hand maidens arrive to tend to their own needs.

Bombutu is a small town with a population that varies from 100 to 200 depending on time of year. Most of the citizenry are local families of goat herders that dwell in tents around the perimeter of the town, while the Amir, his guards and a few merchants and peddlers occupy the constructed dwellings. A medium wall about 6' in height and a foot thick encloses the town, with wooden towers rising up with platforms a good 20' above the ground, two at each end of the rectangular lay out of the community where gates appear to allow entrance and exit. Each tower holds 3 to 5 guards while another 2 to 3 will be on the ground manning the gates.

The party may or may not be safe while within the boundaries of the town. With the Amir in league with the grandfather of assassins, any questions asked by the party about marauders attacking the caravans and information about the missing princess will certainly send warning flags through the town. And if asked directly, the Amir will smile and graciously respond that he knows nothing of a missing princess, being so far inland and all. And as to marauders, he has had no trouble of such kind, though he hears rumors from travelers along the caravan route.

If the party asks around town choose from the table below to determine general responses from those questioned.

General characters

1. I/we have heard that some princess of a northern king was visiting our lands, but that was long ago.
2. There have always been bandits raiding along the caravan routes; it's something we've grown accustomed to.
3. The Amir? He appears to be a wise leader and his men obey him without question. I/we only come to the city to buy and sell goods, and have little contact with the authorities.
4. Don't tell anyone I/we said this, but the Amir doesn't come to Bombutu often. He resides in a tent city at the base of Abu-Dala most of the time. The only time he seems to show up is when there are strangers passing through.
5. Be careful on the caravan route. Straying off of it can be a lethal mistake; strange creatures have

begun appearing along it ever since the mountain of the *old man* was reclaimed by a band of raiders.

6. I/we hear tell there's more to this "missing princess" story than the Sultan wants everyone to know. The Sultan is a good man, but ever since his daughter became a priestess of Kali, things have been different in the realm.

7. Who is the *Old Man*, you ask? No one knows. No one knows if he truly exists. Some say he is an evil spirit that haunts the black mountain of Abu-Dala itself.

8. What about the raiders? Well, they sweep in from the desert dunes and attack mercilessly any and all they find upon the caravan route. It is said they hole up in the Great Mount, but if you're going after them, you'd best find some way other than the front gate; their numbers and strength would defeat you in minutes. Stealth, is likely your only ally, and some secret entry no doubt the only way you'll gain entry to the mount.

The guards will not answer any questions, and will direct the party to the Amir himself.

During the night as the party sleeps the Amir and his men will quietly slip out of town and head for the tent city of Abu-Dala. If the party posts guards they will sense something amiss, but will not know what unless they actually go and investigate. If they do they will find the gates closed and barred from the outside, as a team of assassins leap down from the walls to attack them. If the group is caught unaware, having posted no guards, there is a good chance they will be captured automatically. An assault squad of five assassins (the leader L4 and the others L3, L2, L2, L1) have been waiting in Bombutu for the party to arrive; word from someone in Kanibus having already reached the grandfather of assassins, who then dispatched this team. If defeated the assassins will fall on their own blades rather than be captured or offer any kind of information. Their leader may attempt to flee if he can to report back to his liege.

If the party is caught asleep, by surprise and off-guard they will automatically be taken captive and then hauled to Abu-Dala. Blindfolded and bound they will be taken before the grandfather of assassins and questioned. Whether they cooperate or not, they will be forwarded up the mount to the temple atop where they will be sacrificed and thrown down the shaft.

The shaft extending from the sacrificial pit atop the mount to the ceiling of the caves in level 3 is well over 200 feet. Adding another 30 to 50 to the floor

of the caves, the possibility of a character surviving is slim. However, since the characters will be thrown down, alive, the DM should roll the 20d6 to see if they do. Any adjustments to the dice are up to the DM to determine.

Should the party survive the assassins' attack they will find the town in total disarray. Tents of the families will have been hastily taken down, packed on camels and ported away along with their owners. Only the constructed buildings and walls will remain, though they will be empty.

If the party waits until dawn before continuing it will experience no further encounters in Bombutu. Come morning they may continue on.

Back on the road the journey from Bombutu to Kordo will find the party traveling more or less in a south then southwest direction. The view about them will be more bleak and desolate than they experienced before. The nearly unbearable heat will average 104F (40C) during the day with the mid-day extreme reaching 115F (46C). Thus the penalties for wearing armor and the chances of suffering catastrophic effects are the same as those mentioned previously.

The best time to travel will, again, be from dawn until nearly midday, and then again at just before sunset until the light fades away. Morning temps will begin at around 75F (24C) and pre-sunset ones will finally dip to about 90F (32C), allowing the party to continue on, though uncomfortably. Traveling at night, while cooler as the temperature reaches a mild 70F (21C) will run the risk of more encounters of greater strength.

A daily check every 2 hours spent traveling will result in an encounter on a roll of 1-2 on a d6. The DM should then roll % dice and consult the following descriptions.

01-15% Group of 2-20 Bedouin merchants. These traders will be helpful in the traditions of hospitality extended by the Bedouin to all desert travelers. They will aid the party in whatever way they can. If encountered at night these folks will be in a set up camp, with guards posted.

16-30% 5-100 Bedouin raiders. These bandits opportunistically scout the caravan track looking for travelers from clans outside their own. They will attack the party immediately on deeming that they are foreigners. They conform to the statistics listed for *Dervish* under the Men category found in the MM, though they are considered Neutral to Evil.

31-40% Group of 2-8 Pedipalp. These strange creatures are a cross between a spider and a scorpion. Commonly called *whip scorpions* this group consists of the smallest type of its species.

41%-45% A small *pod* of 1-3 Dun Puddings will appear at the side of the track. Their odd shape and size tend to deceive their victims, as they have a fast move rate and attack swiftly.

46-70% Group of 3-12 large scorpions will jump out from among the sand and rocks to attack the legs and feet of the horses or camels, and those party members afoot.

71-95% Desert Caravan. These trains vary from as small as 10 persons to as many as 100 depending on what/if anything is being ported and from where the train originated. If it is moving south it is likely smaller, being comprised mostly of guards and guides, while if heading north it is likely larger, with darker skinned porters bearing large quantities of goods and raw materials. North bound trains will always have 1 guard per 10 bearers and 1 guide for every 50; these being in addition, not inclusive. Guards will be L1 fighters, wearing padded armor and with scimitars and spears.

96-00% 1-10 Thunderherders will be encountered traveling as their route intersects that of the caravan track, albeit, underground. These creatures may surface in what looks like an attempt to attack the party but this is not truly the case, as the creatures are just following the contour of the surface and rising and diving through the earth depending upon it and the type of terrain they are in.

Should the party decide to travel at night, remove the Bedouin merchant, raider and caravan type encounters and replace them as follows:

01-15% 2-16 Mobats will appear having risen from the depths of their caves in the *great rift* west of mount Abu-Dala. These creatures will be hungry and attack anything moving along the route.

16-30% 2-8 Megalo-centipedes will surface from the protective layers of sandy surface that prevents them from roasting alive during the day.

71-95% A raiding party of Formian Centaur-ants; 10-100 workers accompanied by 1-10 warriors. These creatures will be frantically scavenging anything they can lay their mandibles into.

96-100% 1-2 Hieraco-sphinx. This mated pair is out hunting and will attack the party on sight.

THE RAIDING TRAILS

There are several trails the desert raiders use (see the large wilderness map, dashed lines) when attacking parts of the caravan route. These are always guarded by a small contingent of raiders mid-way along their course. This group consists of 6-10 horseman archers or crossbowmen that will fire upon any group they spy approaching Abu-Dala that does not display the Seal of Permission. After releasing a volley they will mount up and ride hard to warn the Amir. They are always camped off the trail, behind small dunes, and camouflaged with desert attire.

These trails connect with the caravan route at various points but generally about half-way between Kordo and Bombutu. Following any of them will eventually take the party down into the bottom of a dried up riverbed. Once across the trail rises upwards of 30' where it continues across a plateau toward the mount of Abu-Dala itself.

Any ranger in the party is likely to notice a foot trail leading north along the riverbed. Should the party follow this they will eventually reach a cliff face with a winding trail too steep for the horses to negotiate. Once atop the cliff the trail continues on to Area Map location **O**. Should they continue on horseback along the riverbed they will reach location **N** which is described later.

If the party stays on the main trail it will wind across the plateau and arrive at an oasis near the foot of Abu-Dala. The DM should consult the Local Area Map at this point.

THE OASIS & TENT CITY

Above the whispering desert sands looms the ominous bulk of the rocky spire of the assassins citadel. Nearer at hand sounds the groan from lines of picketed camels, and from within the oasis's palms comes a lilting melody of a flute accompanied by the staccato clamor of a tambourine and the shuffling of dancing feet. In the background are the cheerful conversations of the Bedouin. The sweet smell of black lotus hangs heavy in the air.

A natural spring of fresh water pools at the surface of the ground a few hundred feet southwest of the mount itself. The ancient dried riverbed just a little

ways to the east would seem to explain how the oasis is possible. But there is much more to the story, and more water nearby than is evident. that the party might uncover upon further exploration. Around the pond grown many date trees and these offer the only natural shade in the area; save the shadow cast by the great mount appears either on the western or eastern side depending on the time of day and location of the sun, and seldom dips toward the oasis itself. Thus the tents of the inhabitants provide the majority of the shade they use.

It will not be easy for a party to casually stroll about the local area. As soon as they are spotted they will be reported by residents or confronted by patrol types and taken into custody. The DM must make plans on what such will entail in either case. Moving about under the blanket of night is the most likely way they can recon the area; or using other means to disguise themselves from obvious detection is possible and another matter.

Anywhere south of the mount it is possible the party will be met by a patrol of 1 d6+6 level one warrior types, led by one that is level 3 or 4. These watchmen know that strangers do not get to roam about freely, and are not easily duped by contrived excuses offered to them. Only visitors bearing a special pass acknowledging them as slave traders will be allowed to go on their way. The party will have no such pass. Such encounters will occur on a roll of 1-2 on a d6 checked every 3 turns during the day, and on a roll of 1-3 at night.

A. The Fighters' Pit. This large arena is used for forcing certain prisoners to compete in life and death combat amongst one another for the thrill and amusement of the bandit-raiders. A good 200' from east to west and 100' from north to south, this huge pit is 20' deep with sheer walls preventing escape. Dozens of combatants easily fill the arena. Often wild animals such as lions and tigers are included to add more carnage to the events. The games are usually held when an unusual amount of prisoners has accumulated and the raiders are running out of space in the Slave Pits or at The Wheel. Four tall wooden pylons rise 30' above the ground, two at each end of the pit, with lines crisscrossing between them, allowing some combatants to be suspended from these to add more spectacle.

Those lucky enough to survive by the valor of their skill and bravery are sometimes rewarded with their freedom. For the Bedouin value strength and courage. Those lucky enough to have suffered little damage in the process can sometimes walk away.

Those less fortunate, it is said, are taken away and buried somewhere. The corpses of losers and cowards are thrown to the hyenas.

A large tent for the Amir and his personal guests stands at the western side of the pit, and when he is present there are always 12 guards around him. If games are being held it is 40% likely he will be in attendance. Data regarding him will appear later.

Events are usually held during the cool of the morning or in the evening after sunset. Those held at night require an extensive amount of lamps lit and placed about the pit. Whether such events are being held when the party arrives in the area is determined by the time, and at the DM'S discretion.

B. The Wheel of Woe. A large device made with wooden spokes that extend out from the hub stands here. The spokes are roughly 2' in diameter and up to 30' long. Chain manacles are attached to the spokes every 5' along their lengths allowing up to 6 prisoners to be attached as they spend days and weeks at the wheel, pushing the spokes that turn the hub that runs the grinding device that makes meal out of the local agricultural products. The device is cleaned and used one day per week to mash grapes to be fermented and used to make wine.

At any given time there will be 1-6 prisoners attached to each spoke, with a level one guard walking along at the end of it with a task whip making sure no one slacks off. Atop the hub stand 3 more overseers. Prisoners not slotted for the Fighters' Pit will either be working the wheel, or have been broken of spirit and brainwashed to the point of subservience and will be found working as attendants and cooks for the raiders.

C. The Bazaar. This section of tent city is an array of shelters wherein vendors collect and barter all manner of goods and valuables. Everything from jewelry to pipe weed to camel saddles or just about anything else can be found. There are tents filled with dancing girls where strong liquor is served and others filled with magicians, strongmen, and jugglers competing for your attention and a few coppers. The Amir seldom frequents this location but many of his lower level soldiers do.

The area is more busy at night when it is cooler and the sun isn't beating down. At such times there are as many as 100-200 people milling about, and an occasional patrol of soldiers. Such encounters occur on a roll of 1-2 on a d6 checked every hour. Such patrols consist of 1 d4+3 level one types accompanied by a level 2 leader.

Should the party find themselves moving among the tents there is a 1 in 10 chance per turn that someone will report their presence to someone of authority. Should they encounter a patrol they will be immediately questioned and taken before the Amir. If the latter is the case, the results will be about the same as if they had been captured at Bombutu: they will be stripped of all weapons and taken to the temple atop mount Abu-Dala where they will be sacrificed and thrown into the shaft.

In addition to the bazaar are tents of nomads and herdsman that are temporarily stopping at the oasis. They will have herds and flocks of animals under their control, and usually tethered together, that are responsible for the wild and strong odor of the area. Animal droppings are usually allowed to lay where they fall until dried from the desert sun, when they are then gathered up and used as fuel for camp fires, adding more foul aromas to the air. About 80% of these nomads are distant kin to the Amir and thus such use of the oasis is allowed.

D. Pond of the Oasis. This large pool of water is nearly 50' across from east to west, and almost 75' from north to south. Though it sets in a depression there is a sandbank that surrounds it rising up anywhere from 2' to 4' high. An array of date and palm trees rise from the ground and nearly surround it; these not being as prominent on the eastern side of the pond, where heavy foot traffic from humans and animals takes its toll. The water is remarkably clear and clean, drinkable as is, yet only 6' at its deepest points. While some fronds and shoots grow up out of the western bank they do not appear growing out of the others.

Travelers using the pond do not allow their animals to drink directly from it. Instead, they gather what they need in buckets, setting these on the ground for the animals to reach. This helps keeps the water from collecting backwash and possible parasites. The pond's own circulating system does the rest to keep it fresh.

Slave girls bearing buckets or clay pots atop their heads make appearances at the pond at least 3 times each day. These women are brown skinned and always wearing veils. They are attended by at least 4 level one guards and often double that. The women do not dally at the pond waters and retrieve it swiftly before returning to the interior of the mount from which they came.

E. Militia Tents. Hidden among the vast array of tents and makeshift shelters are two large tents that the desert raiders use during the day to store supplies, arms and retreat to for needed breaks

from their duties. There are always 2-12 level one raiders within the tent, resting, or in search of fresh clothing or weapons. Along with these will be one level 2 warrior, and a level 4 commander.

One of the tents will be filled with weapons and supplies, and on occasion a bound prisoner of special importance temporarily, as his or her fate is being decided. Currently there are none, unless the DM wishes to create one or more for some purpose.

F. The Ramp. At 35' wide this large construct rises up from the desert floor at this location and continues north until it reaches the entrance into the mount itself. Enclosed by a 9' wall of stone and mud the ramp passes through an archway where 2-5 guards block entrance to any stranger foolish enough to get close. (The Entrance into the mount is described later under the Level 1 Key) 6 towers along the walls are designed to reinforce the strength of the walls, and 2-5 men can easily stand atop each and rain down arrows upon invaders.

G. The Slave Pits. Six large pits ranging from 8' to 15' deep contain only the lowliest of slaves or prisoners. Used for labor, the men are thin and starving, and most are near mad from being confined in the squalor of the pits, allowed to bake in the desert sun with no relief offered. At night hyenas often draw near to the pits following the scent of blood and wounds coming from the men. The number of slaves varies but generally averages 21-30 at a given time. None are in any shape to offer the party any assistance.

LOCAL WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Foot trails dot the landscape to the west, north and east of the mount. These are sometimes used by the raiders or their slaves for various reasons. The one to the east actually connects to the ancient dry river bed at two locations.

The encounters listed are not designated to occur at any particular time of day or night. The DM can arrange these events as he sees fit. Should any creature listed be slain or driven away by the party it is possible a replacement will appear at the end of a week; sans any treasure.

H. Ant Lion. At this point the trail passes over the trap-nest of a large Ant Lion (48 HPS). At the bottom of its pit lies what treasure there may be. It is 30% likely for 1-4 of the following to be present: 1d4x10 GP; 5d4 PP; a shield; a metal weapon; some jewelry; a miscellaneous item. If any of the last 4 listed are present, there is an additional 10% chance that the item is magical.

I. The Secret Entrance. A small cave appears at this location that is in fact an entrance to the lower cavern levels beneath the mount. Hidden by rocks and various other debris that could be gathered and put into place, there is the standard chance of the party discovering this if an elf is present in the party or some other means is applied. Once the outer debris is cleared away the actual entrance will be clearly visible. A 6' wide opening about 4' in height leads into the cave proper, an oval shaped shelter about 20' across and 30' deep. At the back of the cave is a narrow tunnel that leads downward to dungeon level 3 (see maps to follow). Reaching this passage will be difficult, as 3-5 large Tunnel Worms currently reside in the cave (HPS: 47, 45, 43, 41, 39) Their current treasure consists of 2-8 GP and 1-6 PP each, with a 50% chance of there being 1-4 gems each. These are buried under the sandy floor at the back of the cave.

J. The Buried Idol. Buried beneath 3' of sand at this location is a silver figurine. It will emanate as magical if a Detect Magic spell is cast on the area. If such type of investigation is not made, the idol will be found nonetheless because of the powerful *charm* magic that radiates out from it. Any human, dwarf or hobbit that comes within 30' of it will feel an irresistible urge to rush to the location and search frantically--there is no save against this. Elves are immune to its powers. Once uncovered the finder will feel an overcoming feeling of lust and want to own the object. Carved in the shape of a beautiful nude woman the item is a curse to any that fall under its effects. The first one to fail his or her save throw will claim the object as his (or hers) and will not be willing to share it with anyone. This madness to have and protect it will grow worse each day until the possessor becomes completely insane after 6 weeks. During this time, kissing the item anywhere will bestow a limited form of *invisibility* upon the doer. Unfortunately, the item also slows the possessor's move rate by 1/2, and drains 1 point of charisma per day unless a Save vs. Magic is made. Only a Dispel Magic combined with a Remove Curse cast by a level 8 cleric or higher will remove the effect of the idol upon its possessor. If such is done, the item is worth 5000 GP to the right people, in the bazaars of large cities in the realm.

K. The Dune Stalker (48 HPS). This creature is currently looking for the an idol (located at "J"), being summoned and sent on its quest by a high level mage in Kanibus. If it encounters the party it will react according to the manual.

L. The Lost Lamp. With its spout sticking up out of the sand this magic item will, at first, seem a

blessing to he or she that finds it and rubs the side of its pot. Doing so will allow the Dao trapped within to emerge. In order to free itself from the prison of the lamp the Dao must fulfill a *Limited Wish* of whomever possess the lamp. Once done the Dao will vanish, returning to its own plane. Unfortunately, it will twist and perverse the wish in any and all ways it can. If no wish is asked of it, the Dao will not serve the owner of the lamp in any manner.

M. The Skeleton of a giant humanoid lays partially buried in the sand at this location. A large broken scimitar is loosely held in its boney hand. There is nothing magical or unusual about this encounter unless the DM wishes to create it as such.

N. The Opinicu. The trail here actually goes over the edge of the canyon wall and down along it at an angle until it arrives at the dry riverbed below. It is a steep climb back up, slowing movement to 1/4, and the descent is tricky, but doable. At the bottom of the trail in the riverbed is an Opinicu (34 HPS). It is merely traveling along the riverbed on its way to some location for some purpose that is not connected with this area. If approached in a friendly and helpful manner, it may return the behavior. It has no treasure.

O. Giant Dustdigger (12 HD). An unusually large specimen (54 HPS) has taken up residence at this location. Since it has just recently moved into the area it has not accumulated any treasure, nor has it managed to trap anything to eat of late. Thus it is very hungry and will behave very aggressively should the party get near enough for it to act.

Notes to the DM. Should any of the Wilderness creatures or treasure listed conflict with the style to which you run your game it is incumbent that you alter, change, delete or add anything that you feel is necessary or desire.

MOUNT ABU-DALA

Fortress of the Desert Assassins

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL 1

WANDERING MONSTERS

An encounter will occur on a 1 in 12. Check each turn. These events will occur with residents going to and from one location to another, and are not considered part of the roster of any room or locale noted.

1. 1d4+2 entry guards. These are (archers/footmen /spearman) going to or coming from their duty station at 1a or 1b.
2. 1-2 low-level leader types (7-12 HPS) on a stroll.
3. 1d6+3 footman (5-8 HPS) on a regular patrol.
4. 1 Henchman of the GF of Assassins.
5. 1d6+1 harem girls performing their duties.
6. Water brigade. 3 times per day 1d6+4 slaves will be escorted to the oasis to retrieve water. They will be accompanied by 1d4+4 level one types (1-6 HPS)

Level one raiders will be wearing no armor and carrying only long daggers unless they are on a patrol, or going to or returning from duty. In such cases they will have a dagger and spear, shield and padded armor; archer types will have short bows. Low level leaders will be wearing very fine ring mail if on duty, or going to or from such. They will be carrying a long dagger and short sword.

Harem girls are daughters of local area sheiks sent to the Amir as payment for some service, or in answer to some kind of blackmail used against them. They are, thus, of minor nobility and have an *air* about them. They will be dressed in fine silks, smell of sweet perfume, painted, and be generally more pleasing to the eye than slave girls.

Should a Henchman be encountered the DM should consult the dungeon locations of these types and determine which one it is, then figure what gear and items the NPC would likely be using or carrying at the time. A purpose as to why the NPC is out and about is up to the DM, but could be tied to instructions from his Master.

The monolith of Abu-Dala is approximately 575' in diameter. It rises up from the surrounding terrain to a height of nearly 1000'. It was formed by the intrusion of igneous material from beneath the surface. Wind and rain have taken their toll on the encircling face of the cliff walls, creating deep gouges and cracks running up and down its height. As the top is somewhat flat, the local myth is that a great god cut the upper cone from the mount and used it as a club.

Being comprised of sedimentary rocks the halls and chambers dug within have had their walls filled in and coated with a layer of clay and allowed to harden. This has been whitewashed creating a startling collection of alabaster tunnels and rooms decorated with wall hangings of silk and hemp,

where bronze tripods 3' to 6' in height support lamps of burning oil, and woven rugs lie scattered about the floors along with feather stuffed pillows upon which to recline. The aromas of burning incense drift through the air mixed with the sound of feminine voices singing along with a melodious lute and tapping tambourine from some distant quarter.

ENCOUNTER AREAS

1. THE GRAND TERRACE. A 45' wide ramp **A** from the desert floor below runs at a 35 degree angle to this point where it connects to the balcony entry to the fortress. A long terrace 45' deep and 165' long juts out of the south face here at about 70' above the surrounding terrain. Chiseled and formed from the very rock of the mount it is a sturdy protrusion capable of supporting unknown tons of weight. Two worked staircases at each end of the terrace lead to a second tier **B** 15' above. This stretches the entire length of the lower one as it overpasses the actual tunnel entry **C** leading into the interior of the mount itself. During the day two groups of archers (1d6+3 per group) are always stationed along the upper tier on both sides of the tunnel. These will have short bows and a quarrel of 30 arrows each along with a long dagger. All are level one raiders (having 1-6 HPS each). At night there will be but one group of 1d8+4 on one side or the other. Two great wooden doors hang open on hinges to each side of the tunnel and can be closed and barred from inside in 1 round. Two level one footmen with spears (5-8 HPS each) stand beside each valve ready to defend the tunnel or close the doors if necessary. All wear layered clothing that is reinforced with patches of animal skin equal in protection to padded armor. The footmen will also have wooden shields.

OTHER FEATURES

D. This long declining corridor descends into level II, below. It is seldom traveled, and when used at all only low-level assassin applicants will be found within it. These are sent by the GF of assassins to determine their worthiness. Few survive the ordeal and live to return.

E. This rising corridor is just the opposite of the one just described. It merely leads to the level above.

F. Behind the statue at this location a secret door leads into a long narrow corridor that appears to come to a dead end about 150' to the north. But a second secret door **G**. will allow anyone from this side to escape to the exterior of the mount, only to find themselves on a ledge about 70' above the

surrounding desert floor. Should the door close shut it will snap locked, and only a thief's skills will possibly reopen the door.

2. THE GREAT SALON. A gigantic chamber 105' north to south and 165' east to west occupies the core of this level. 45' wide corridors enter it from the south and north, with smaller 15' wide ones joining at the eastern and western boundaries. With a dome shaped ceiling carved out of the rock itself the mere sight of the expanse is breath taking, leaving one to wonder why pillars of some kind were not necessary. Lamps hang on iron hooks that are fitted into the walls at about 6' off the floor, about 1 for every 20' of wall length. But these do not warm the room very well, and there is a coolness in the air as scores of feet of mountain rock protect the chamber from the heat outside. At midday the temperature is but a cool and mild 70F (21C) degrees. Wooden benches appear pushed up against the walls, one for each 15' of wall space, but otherwise there is no furnishings in the great chamber. And in fact it is likely to be empty when the party enters it, for its purpose is tied to the temple at area **23**. Thus, an eerie reverent silence hangs in the air as if this place is somehow, holy. Close inspection of the walls will reveal relief carvings that hint at services and ceremonies being attended by groups of people, sacrifices, and even one or two depicting some strange, multi-armed creature. This place is not meant to be loitered in, and is not normally used to post guards unless the mount is under attack. Thus at any given time as not just mentioned it will likely be empty. The DM may roll a wandering-monsters check when the party reaches this location, but if nothing is indicated then another is not required for at least one hour.

Actual temple services are held only once per month. These are at or just close to midnight and are attended by 50% of the low-level types and conducted by the C6 henchman of the GF of assassins; no actual assassins attend these. Those attending will receive aide if they are suffering from any light wounds, and be given soothing liquids and wafer like biscuits. The purpose of which is to simply keep the low levels calm, and under the assumption that the GF and his henchman are taking care of their spiritual needs. It is a hoax, however, a device used simply to keep them deceived and obedient. The only true services that are performed occur atop the mount, and are under the direction of the entity there, and the high priestess; the daughter of the sultan.

3. HALL OF THE IMMORTALS. This wide but short corridor runs north out of the Great Salon. It is lined with 3 large statues on each wall (east and

west) as another, directly to the north across a narrow hallway that passes above this one, stands in an alcove, protruding slightly into the narrow corridor. Behind this one is a Secret door that an elf could possibly locate.

The statues all depict multi-armed creatures with frightening expressions and large fangs pointing up from their lower jaw. Made of iron and filled with a hot, molten liquid the constructs stand just at 7' in height, and weigh about 700 pounds. Each has 6 to 8 arms, but only half of those are holding weapons--long curved huge scimitars. If an alarm is raised and/or the mount is under attack the constructs can be summoned and controlled by anyone wearing the *amulet of Ali*. Currently only the C6 henchman and GF of assassins possesses such a device. When animated, the creatures will attack and otherwise follow commands until they are destroyed, or returned to their original positions. Upon being animated they will have 40 HPS each, have an AC0, move 6", attack 3 to 4 times depended on number of arms, and do 1-10 damage per attack. Blunt weapons do half damage against them, and slashing/blade weapons run a risk of breaking every time they successfully strike the constructs. Piercing weapons inflict full damage, but pole arms and spears that are thrust into the construct and withdrawn, will cause holes from which molten liquid will spray out upon the attacker, inflicting 6-36 damage of intense burning that may result in scarring or other serious injury. Should a construct be damaged by puncture wounds resulting in more than half its hps, it will run out of interior liquid, turn brittle, and break into pieces. Arrows will not cause the spewing effect as other puncturing attacks, though sling bullets and crossbow bolts will.

4. ARCHERS AND SPEAR MEN BARRACKS. This large chamber is roughly 30' wide by 120' in length. It is filled with cots and bunks, chairs and small tables scattered about. At any time of day there will be 10 + 1d10 low level raiders present. These types will have 1-6 HPS, and be AC9 or 10 if caught unprepared. They will be in various states of awareness--some asleep, some nodding, some alert and playing games, etc.-- but will rally quickly once an alarm is raised. None possess magical items, and there is only a 10% chance per each that they will have 1-20 SP; these being kept in a small cloth bag on their person or somewhere among their belongings. Half those present will be archers, and half spear men. Archers unable to use their weapons will resort to daggers.

5. ARMORY. This chamber holds a horde of spears stacked along the walls (roughly 500) along with

pole axes (about 200), several dozen bows, and quivers filled with arrows.

6. SMALLER QUARTERS. This chamber is the home to several junior-leader types (3+d4) having 5-8 HPS each. If alerted and prepared they will have their standard garb allowing them an AC 8, as well as their blade weapons. Each possesses 1d10X10 SP that he keeps in a cloth sack beneath his bunk. These types are responsible for marshalling the troops against invaders, directing the defense and counter-attack techniques of squads, and maintaining order and discipline.

7. FOOTMEN BARRACKS. Similar to the previous barracks described, this one houses from 12 to 30 troops (10+2d10) at all times. If alerted and armed they will have sturdier garb giving them an AC of 6, have 4-6 HPS each, and use gruesome appearing pole axes doing 1-12 damage each.

8. DAYROOM. This irregular shaped chamber serves as a resting place for the low level troops when they are not on duty, asleep, or out on a raid. It is filled with throw rugs and cushions upon which the troops sit and smoke from group water pipes. At any given time there will be 1d6+2 archers or spear men, 1d6+2 axe men, and 1d4 junior leader types. These are identical to those already described, but will be unarmed save for a long dagger, and unarmored.

9. PRIVATE QUARTERS. This chamber is the private residence of HALIM AMIK, F6 henchman of the GF of assassins. With 33 HPS and able to deal out 1d10+3 damage with his large scimitar he is a formidable opponent against small or weak parties. When alerted and ready for combat he wears a suit of reinforced padding that affords him an AC of 4 that includes his high dexterity. He is loyal to his master, and serves as a military advisor to the Amir in charge of the Bedouin raiders. He is free to wander anywhere within the level, even the harem, though he doesn't, often. His chamber is more ornately furnished than the barracks and dayroom previously described. He has furnishings that are foreign to this land, obviously gained in raids or some kind of trade with distant merchants. Thus the DM is free to describe and stock the contents as desired. What little treasure he possesses is kept in a box under his cot; no more than d100x10 SP, 10D10 GP, 1-3 gems of no more than 100 GP base value each, and 1-2 potions. He will move to reinforce the raiders should an all out assault be launched against the fortress, but should that be failing he will quickly depart, reporting to his master the way of things. He is only present during the day on a roll of 1 in 12; 1-3 in the evening and 1-5 at night. This is to be checked 3 times per day

and if he is not indicated to be present, he will be elsewhere on his master's business. His Stats are, F6, CN, 33 HPS, S18, I12, W10, D15, C15, CH12.

10. PRIVATE QUARTERS. This small chamber is the abode of AMOOK-JARA, the level 6 Thief henchman of the GF. He is seldom present (only a 5% chance, 1 on d20) at any time of day or night, thus his chamber will be quiet, though not quite empty. He keeps a *giant weasel* (20 HPS) as a pet and this sleeps beneath a mountain of stuffed pillows in a corner of the room. It will attack any one that attempts to search these, for it is where the thief hides his meager wealth. The room itself is sparsely furnished with unimpressive items of decor. The thief is sometimes on the level below this one, moving about in the shadows and spying on those brave enough to take the assassins' challenge. He knows the level well and stays well clear of the traps and creatures in place. Other times he is in the tent city of the oasis, lurking about and spying for his master. His accumulated treasures consist of a gem worth 50 GP, 60 SP, a jeweled **dagger +1** and a **ring of elemental command**-air. His Stats are, T6, CN, 21 HPS, S13, I16, W14, D17, C12, CH11. He wears reinforced padding for AC3 (D bonus included), and wields a short-blade for 1d6 damage.

11. PRIVATE QUARTERS. This meek and humble apartment is the home of SHEN PAU, a L6 monk and henchman of the GF. The monk comes from a far distant land, and might seem out of place in the desolate desert barrens of the southern continent, but his devotion to his master exceeds any desire to return to his homeland. He has no wealth, no treasure, and no possessions save for the clothes on his back. He is only found here on a 1 in 20 roll at any time, for his duties keep him away from the mount most of the time. His Stats are, MK6, LN, 17 HPS, AC6, OHA 3/2, DAM 2-8, Special abilities A-D.

12. OUTER HAREM. At any time of day 2d4 young women will be found here, reclining on large stuffed cushions, eating figs or dates, laughing and talking as women do. Some will be playing instruments, a wooden lute, a tambourine, a four-stringed lyre, etc as others may be dancing, or standing around fanning those reclining with large palm fronds or massaging them. Harem girls are daughters of local area sheiks sent to the Amir as payment for some service, or in answer to some kind of blackmail used against them. They are, thus, of minor nobility and have an *air* about them. They will be dressed in fine silks, smell of sweet perfume, painted, and be generally more pleasing to the eye than slave girls. These women do not

perform tasks of labor, for they are entertainers. Though some also serve the physical needs of the Amir and high level assassins, they are not chattel in this regard. The GF expects the Amir to treat the women kindly, and fetch decent prices when they are returned to their families. All are 0-level types with 1-4 HPS, AC9 at best, but non-combatant.

13. HAREM BATH. This chamber is basically a large bathing pond. A 2' walkway runs along the north, east and west walls allowing access to a 3' deep basic where the women bathe and frolic. Fresh water is added to this daily, as the dirty water is drained through holes in the bottom that pass through pipes beneath exiting the mount to the west.

14. GUARDS' QUARTERS. 1d4+2 second-level warrior guards reside here. Triple bunks stand against the north and south walls, while a table and 4 chairs are up against the western one. Foot lockers beneath the bottom bunks store each of the guards personal possession, including a small leather bag containing 1d10x10 SP. A rack in the northeast corner holds their head gear, heavy coats and spears that lean up against it. They have 10 HPS each and fight at +1 to hit, doing 1-8 damage per successful strike. If prepared they are AC5 and if not, AC9. They answer only to the Amir, his highest lieutenants, and the GF. They will die for the Amir without hesitation.

15. THE AMIR'S QUARTERS. This large chamber is divided into two areas serving different functions. The north half of the room is devoted to providing a casual living space with throw cushions, rugs, water-pipes and so forth, while the southern half seems suited for several (up to 9 even) persons to sit and meet at a large table, with the Amir's chair at its head. Atop the table are lots of parchments, scrolls and tomes in languages of the local folk, as well as ancient tongues that look more like runes. A door in the northeast corner of the chamber leads to the Amir's private sleeping area, which is fitted with typical furnishing that would be appropriate to his standing and their purpose. A large raised bed on four posts complete with canopy stands in the northeast corner of this room. Beneath this sits a large, locked wooden chest filled with the Amir's treasures--1d4x1000 SP, 1d6x100 GP, 1d10x2 worth of gems ranging from 100 to 1000 GP in value each, 1-6 tiaras, 1-12 sets of earrings, 1-10 necklaces of silver or gold chain with finely cut polished rubies hanging from them, and 1 crown. Also included among this wealth is 1-6 potions, 2 rings and a wand. The DM should determine the values of the gems and jewelry, and the types of magic indicated. The chest has a lock that is trapped with a venomous

poison that will inject itself into the finger of anyone attempting to open it that does not use the correct key; a needle shoots out from the lid next to the lock, and on a 1 in d6 will actually pierce the hand of anyone fiddling with the lock unless other means are used to jimmy it. This poison will kill its victim within 6 hours, unless a **neutralize poison** spell is cast on the victim before time elapses.

Though in his late mature years the Amir is still an able bodied fighter. While his body has suffered the penalties of age, his skills have become honed to their maximum. But he is a wise and intelligent man, and will quickly assess any situation wherein it appears he is at risk. Initially he will rally all his forces to thwart any intrusion should the party be detected and he informed. If all his defensive measures fail, he will listen with reason, and barter for his own life, even to the point of betraying the GF of assassins. His Stats are, F7, N, 38 HPS, S16, I15, W15, D15, C12, CH13. When armed and ready for battle he uses magical **+1 ring mail** for AC5, and wields a magical **+1 scimitar** for 1-8+1 damage per successful hit.

The Amir allied with the GF of assassins when the guild began attacking caravans that supplied his little town. Seeking to ensure his own safety, and his own position of authority, he agreed to turn his own warriors into the militia of the assassins' guild. He is aware that the princess of the northern king is being held hostage in the temple atop the mount, but has no desire to meddle in the affairs of the GF and his religious advisors.

There is a 1 in 8 chance that the Amir will be present during the day should the party breech this chamber. If that is the case, he will either be resting in his inner chamber or in council with his lieutenants at the large table, or in meeting with one of the GF'S henchman concerning guild matters. In the case of the latter, data for those concerned is located in the rooms or chambers where they might normally be found, and the DM can set them in this location if desired.

16. OFFICERS' QUARTERS. Slightly smaller than the room just north of it, this chamber is the residence of the Amir's trusted lieutenants. Three 3rd level and one 4th level raiders make their home here. And similar to the previous one mentioned, a double bunk stands against the north and south walls, while a table and some chairs fill the middle of the room. Wooden footlockers sit beneath the lower bunks containing the men's possessions. If prepared for battle each officer will wear magical **+1 padded armor**, use a **+1 shield** for AC5, and wield a **+1 long blade** that deals 2-7+1 damage per successful hit. The level 3 types will have 16 HPS

each, and the level 4 leader will have 21. The foot lockers beneath the beds will contain extra clothes and foot apparel, cloaks, and either small leather bags or wooden boxes containing d10X10 SP, d6X 10 GP, 1-3 small gems worth 1d4x10 GP each. If these officers are present when the party enters the room (a 1 in 20 chance per event) they will rush to surround and subdue the obvious intruders. If they hear the alarm raised they will rush to the barracks of the troops and rally them into position of defense. If cornered they will die rather than surrender.

17. STABLES. This long and narrow chamber is identical in proportion to the barracks west of it and across the large entry corridor. The difference being that immediately upon getting within 10' of the entrance one will smell the distinct aroma and hear the neighing and snickering of horses. At any time of day at least 16 horses will be kept here, tied to a common line that runs along the eastern wall. There will be straw, fresh and soiled, upon the floor, and flies swarming about. The animals are easily spooked by unfamiliar sounds, smells and shapes, and will attempt to rear and bolt if approached suddenly by the party. If the animals make too much noise there is a 1 in 6 chance per turn that someone will come to investigate why.

18. FEED STORAGE. This chamber is filled with dozens of sacks of grain for the animals, and barrels of water along the northern wall. Rodents scurrying about will appear on a 1 in 6 at night.

19. TACK ROOM. This chamber houses all the bridles, blankets and stirrups used by the riders of the mounts in the stable. These hang on pegs attached to the walls.

20. RIDERS' BARRACKS. This large chamber is roughly 30' wide by 90' in length. It is filled with cots and bunks, chairs and small tables scattered about. At any time of day there will be 10 + 1d10 low level raiders present. These types will have 1-6 hps, and be AC9 or 10 if caught unprepared. They will be in various states of awareness--some asleep, some nodding, some alert and playing games, etc.-- but will rally quickly once an alarm is raised. None possess magical items, and there is only a 10% chance per each that they will have 1-20 SP; these being kept in a small cloth bag on their person or somewhere among their belongings. If their horses begin to act skittish or begin neighing someone will go to investigate in 1d4+2 rounds. These mounted warriors use long lances when charging to attack inflicting 1d12 damage upon a successful hit. If they must discard their weapon they will fall back upon a short blade that does 1-6 points, though it requires them to get

close to their intended target. If an alarm is raised in the fortress they will rush to make sure their horses are safe, first, then back up the archers and spear men across the way if necessary. Under direct orders from an junior-leader, lieutenant or the Amir himself, they will organize to repel any intruders threatening the mount.

21. PRIVATE QUARTERS. This room serves as the residence of MOHAMMAD KUSHA, a C6 henchman of the GF of assassins, and chief priest of the lower temple. What furnishings he has are meager, being merely a bunk, a desk and a chair. A footlocker sits on the floor beneath his cot containing his extra clothing, and some religious paraphernalia. He is only present should the party enter the room on a 1 in 12, and if he is not he is either at the lower temple (1-4 on a d6) or consulting with his master on the level above. His Stats are C6, CN, 21 HPS, AC8, S12, I14, W17, D10, C9, CH10. If in a dire situation he will attack with a weighted club doing 1d6+1 damage. He knows 5 1st, 5 2nd and 3 3rd level cleric spells. If caught or trapped here he will attempt to deceive intruders and lead them into a trap, likely leading them straight into the closest barracks. He will not betray the GF, and will fall on a blade if necessary.

22. PRIVATE QUARTERS. Two lesser priests of the lower temple, a C2 and C1, reside here. A double bunk and two footlockers are all the furnishings within the room. These two serve the high cleric MOHAMMAD directly, and the GF after that; they do not answer to the Amir or his leader types. The former has 14 HPS, and the latter only 5. Both are normally AC9 if unprepared, using simple clubs for 1-6 damage if forced to. Neither has an unusual Stat, and both are CN. Like their leader, they have no personal wealth. The level 2 cleric knows 2 1st level spells, and the other only 1. Their primary duties are to assist their leader, MOHAMMAD, and perform the minor services of their religion to the Amir's militia. They are more easily duped should a clever party present an even remotely plausible reason for its presence, even to the point of divulging what little information they have, and escorting it to a higher authority. They know only the layout of this level, nothing more. There is a 1 in 10 chance of them being in this room when it is first entered, unless they are noted as being present in the temple (see below). If they are at neither location then they are out among the Bedouin in the tent city, or on some assignment of the head cleric.

23. THE LOWER TEMPLE. Dedicated to the Demigod of war, KARTAKEYA, this facility is here in stark contrast and impending conflict with the temple atop the mount. It is allowed by the GF of

assassins to placate the Amir and his Bedouin raiders. Because he allows it, he has instructed his C6 henchman and his assistants to see to the needs of the Amir's forces. It puts the GF, however in peril with the temple priestess above, and he thus takes careful measures to prevent those atop the mount from knowing of its presence. Entry into the facility is normally via the western corridor that leads to the Grand Salon. Four sets of double-doors set equidistance apart can be closed and locked to prevent intruders from reaching the chamber. A secret door in the eastern alcove allows the clerics (who along with the GF are the only ones that know of its presence) an alternate way into the temple. A large square room containing dozens of floor mats is the main chamber where the raiders gather to pray. The clerics will use either the northern or southern alcoves from whence to emerge and conduct the necessary rituals required. It is possible all three clerics are present when the temple is first entered (check their individual locations to determine if this is the case) and if they are, 3d4 Bedouin merchants or residents from the tent city may be as well. There is no treasure within the temple, save for the standard religious paraphernalia associated with the deity and the rituals it demands.

Tactical notes to the DM

Aside from all the non-player characters mentioned there is an additional force that is always out on the caravan routes raiding. This force returns from time to time, rests, replaces lost members, and so on. If the party is easily going through the first level slaying all within the DM can have this group arrive coincidentally, and reinforce the Amir's militia. This force consists of 24 footmen, 6 archers and spear men, and 8 horse riders, all identical in abilities and HPS as their counterparts already described. They are led by two level 2 warriors, a level 4 lieutenant and a level 5 commander. The higher level types might have magical weapons or armor, and the DM should determine if this is the case.

Also, should the party be feeling little resistance from the inhabitants of this level (i.e. are too high in the level range to feel or be actually threatened by those listed) the DM should arrange for any intrusion to reach the ears of the GF, who will send his assassins down to assist the militia by picking off the spell-casters in the group.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL 2

THERE ARE NO WANDERING MONSTERS ON THIS LEVEL. *(See Note at end of Section)

The Grandfather of Assassins receives dozens of applications each year from fledgling outlaws that think they have what it takes to be a hired killer. All who apply must pay a modest fee, of course, and are then put to the test. Those that succeed are accepted and sent to lesser guilds around the realm where they will continue their training. The few, exceptional ones, remain with the GF. Those that fail are never seen again, and their bodies, if any remains linger in the level, are either consumed by the creatures of the desert where the carcasses are disposed, or buried.

The level contains several potentially lethal traps, some secret passages, and some resident creatures either in the employ of the GF, or allowed to remain out of convenience. Once the applicant enters the level there is no returning the same way. To succeed the applicant must descend into the cave level below and find the tunnel that emerges on the surface north of the mount. Thus, the cave level acts as the second part of, "the test." Only one applicant at a time is allowed to take the test, to ensure that applicants do not assist each other; the GF wants individuals that are resourceful and succeed on their own.

All walls, floors and ceilings in this level have been scraped smooth, layered with clay to dry and covered with a wash that has long turned to gray. The ceiling height is uniformly 9 feet throughout the level and the floors very even. It is very dark beyond area **24** and those applicants that do not have the special vision that dwarves and elves do in the dark will need a light source of some kind. The air is also heavy and thick the further one gets from the entrance. Oxygen actually starts getting a little thin by the time one reaches areas **31** through **35**. So much so in fact that breathing becomes labored, and illumination from torches or candles or lamps is reduced to half their normal reach in these locations as their flames reduce.

THE TEST

24. THE BARRED ENTRANCE. A sloping corridor leading down to this level eventually ends at a barred gate. There is no way to physically lift the gate since it has counter weights of nearly 1,000 pounds. However, on the floor on the south side of the gate are six large metal rings about 10 inches in diameter. Each one is fairly heavy, about equal to a dagger. To the north beyond the gate is an alcove with a lever on the wall about 30' distance. Set into the wall at about 6' off the floor the lever is pointing up, and should the applicant toss a ring

across the expanse and encircle the lever the weight of the ring will pull down, allowing the ring to slide off and roll away. In order to succeed in this maneuver, the applicant must take his dexterity score, multiply it by the distance from the gate to the lever, then divide by 10 to get a per cent value that he must roll. Once this is done the gate will raise and the applicant can enter the short corridor beyond. A second lever in the wall to the west merely unlocks the door to room 27. After the applicant enters this corridor **24** the gate behind him will drop, trapping him within. Should he use the lever to raise it again and attempt to exit back the way he came, he will see a half dozen men blocking the long sloping corridors, armed with bows. These men will fire upon the applicant should he continue to approach them. Twelve arrows will be fired each turn as the applicant attempts to flee this route, and if they don't kill him the men will drop their bows and draw long blades to finish the job. If the applicant fails to raise the barred gate he will be assassinated by the archers.

25. LARGE SQUARE CHAMBER. This chamber appears empty at first glance, and the air is more chilly than it was in the corridor leading up to it. In the center of the floor lies a patch of *Brown Mold*. In the center of this area rests what appears to be a shiny ring. Anyone that approaches the patch will begin to feel a biting cold reach into his body, and take 4-32 points of damage. The ring is of absolutely no value as it is a cheap imitation. If a torch or other source of flame is applied to the patch it will grow, and continue draining heat from anyone within 5' of it. It is possible to avoid this damage by ignoring the ring, and simply moving along the walls going clockwise or counter clockwise until reaching the archway into the next corridor in the northeast corner of the room.

26. THE HALL OF SPEARS. Immediately upon getting within 15' of this chamber the applicant will hear a whizzing sound ahead. When stepping into this wide long corridor the sight of what appears to be a moving wall running north to south will be startling, as it doesn't seem solid at all. After a moment of inspection it will become clear that a continuous volley of projectiles are streaming out of the northern alcove **A** and flying through the air only to disappear into an alcove in the southern end of the hall **B**. There is no way to pass around, over or under this constant flight of missiles, which literally fill the space of 30' wide by 9' high from floor to ceiling running the entire length of the chamber. A wide alcove appears in the northeast corner where a secret door, if found, will allow exit of the area. Three more such doors (See Map) can be found in narrower alcoves, two in

the western wall, and one in the eastern one just 45' north of **B**. Each 15' square is filled with 10d10 bolts each 1/10th of a segment, capable of doing 1d4+1 damage. Anyone attempting to dash through this *wall of spears* will be struck by 10d10 bolts per each square passed through. This will result in suffering a minimum of 40 points of damage, half if a dexterity check is made, and as much as 100, or again half if a check is made. Bolts that do not strike a victim will pass into the recycling tube at **B** and sent via a conveyor belt beneath the chamber to the mechanism back at **A** where they are reloaded along with new bolts to replenish those lost. A secondary corridor to the west of this one and running parallel offers no real solution to crossing the *wall of spears*. For every turn spent within it a check must be made and on a roll of 1-3 in 8 the three stone blocks that fill up the length of the corridor (See Map) will suddenly and quickly slide east or west (even/odd) crushing anyone caught between them and the wall. These blocks are 9' high, 30' long and allow only 2' of passage on either side. Anyone caught will suffer 4d10+8 points of damage, or 6-24 if they make a dexterity ability check. Those caught must make Save rolls for all their items.

A narrower corridor exits the great Hall heading east via a secret door **D** but the floors are trapped (See Map). Counter-balanced by weights the floors will begin to dip downward once the halfway point in either is reach, until the far west or east end of either is straight up (the ceiling here is 60' above), dumping anyone caught into a 60' pit lined with spikes. The floor is rigged to engage when 100 or more pounds gets to exactly 30' away from **D**. Only by shifting this same amount back will lower the floor back down to level. Some counter weight must be placed on the ends, or the applicant must remove some of his possessions to get as near as possible to the trigger weight as he can, making for a final mad dash to reach the safety of the solid floor at **D**. If this is attempted, allow the applicant to make a dexterity check to succeed. Going back from **D** to either 26 or 31 requires a reversal of the process.

27. SMALL ROOM. This is the smallest chamber on the level. Gaining access to it should be no problem once the applicant figures out that the western lever at **24** actually unlocks the door into it. Otherwise the lock will have to be picked. This may or may not be easy depending on the level of the applicant. However, if a Find/Remove Traps is not conducted first, or should such a check fail, a needle trap will shoot out injecting a poison of Paralysis. The poison is so strong that should the victim fail his Save vs. Poison check, he will be totally immobile and unable to do anything but

breath, and see for 6 hours. While that may seem a good thing the sound of the device going off will also bring the resident of the room to investigate. Inside the chamber is a very hungry *Mimic* with 31 HPS, having 7 HD. It will eat any victim laying paralyzed on the floor. Should the applicant have successfully avoided all the traps and entered the chamber he will find only a wooden chest in the northwest corner. It is, however, the *Mimic*. If the applicant is cautious and somehow discovers the nature of the chest, the creature will attempt to indicate using a pseudo-appendage that it is hungry by pointing to a large open maw. If fed it will allow the applicant to remove a shiny ring from inside it.

28. FIREBALL TRAP. At the south end of this hallway is a secret door that, when open, allows entry into area **26**. It is, however, a trapped door on this side that will release a *fireball* to shoot out of a device at the north end of this corridor, exploding when it reaches the southern end and doing 9d6 damage, or half if a save is made. If an applicant successfully Finds and Removes the triggering mechanism he can safely use the secret door from this side.

29. THE TWIN STATUES. This irregular shaped room (See Map, Level 2) is basically divided into two sections, one east and one west. While each of these 30' by 75' north to south running chambers hold nothing of interest or value, the shorter one connecting the two, does. An alcove 15' by 15' appears in the center of the connecting hallway, and within it, standing on the floor in its center is a 5' spear with its point up. What keeps the object standing is not evident, though close inspection by the applicant will reveal a thin sturdy line going from the ceiling directly over it down then around the item's metal capped point. It hangs, thus, barely touching the floor, motionless. The slightest movement of it or removing it will trigger the animation of its guardians. Two stone sculpting are carved into the walls, one to the east and one to the west of the item. These are *Caryatid columns* in the form of women, each bearing a long blade. In order for the applicant to remove the spear he must make a successful ability check on a d20 vs. his dexterity or the columns will animate and attack with vigor. The spear has no value and is not magical, but removing it and showing it to the GF will gain much favor in his eyes.

30. CHAMBER OF THE FALLEN. This room and all within it can be avoided if the applicant finds and uses the secret door south of it. If he does not and must pass through here he will see two wide alcoves, one east and one west with what appear to be finely crafted sheets/linens draped on the walls

therein. Upon stepping into the southern section of the chamber he will also be aware of four figures to the north, two in each of the bumped out areas. If he does not pass into the northern section of the chamber--beyond 30' from where he entered--the figures will make no move against him. These are all *Sheet Ghouls*, having 18 HPS each and being former applicants that failed to recognize the danger of the sheets in the southern alcoves. If he does, they will rush to attack him, never going south beyond the line indicated. In the southern alcoves are two *sheet phantoms* having 13 HPS each. They attack only those within 5' of them. Thus it is possible to pass through this room unscathed if the applicant does not act foolishly.

31. THE JINGLING MAN. This square room is bare save for the following, a narrow corridor in the west wall leading in that direction, a secret door in the south wall going in that direction, a rickety looking stool in the center of the room and hanging from a line above it, the stuffed figure of a man that is covered with hundreds of little bells. A key is clearly visible hanging from the object's nose, but getting it will require the applicant to get onto the stool and reach for it. The stool is wobbly at best, with three legs--one which is capable of breaking at any time 75 or more pounds are atop it (roll a d6 each turn spent and on a 1 the leg will snap, causing anyone upon it to tumble to the floor). The applicant must make an ability check vs. his dexterity at a -4 penalty due to the height of the dangling mannequin. Should he fail he will cause 1-100 bells to ring. For every 10 bells that jingle there is a 10% cumulative chance that the noise will warn the creature currently residing in area **34**. The applicant can continue attempting to remove the key until he has made his ability check. Should the stool break and the applicant fall, the dummy will be dragged down as well if the applicant had hold of the key. This will cause all 999 bells to jingle loudly. The key does not open any lock on this level, but does fit a barred gate located on the level below (See **42** on map level 3 & 4 to follow).

32. THE POINTED ROOM. There is nothing of great interest in this chamber except what appears to be a metal snake. It lies on the floor at the southern end of the room and does not move. This is an *Iron Cobra* and while it is quite valuable to magic-users its purpose here is unclear. Perhaps it was stolen in a raid and left here to tease new applicants. In any case it is coated with an oily but poisonous film of toxin that when handled will coat the hands used. Thereafter should the toxin not be removed within 3 hours it will dissipate, but there is a 1 in 10 chance per hour that should the victim wipe his mouth, brow, eyes or nose, the toxin will

spread onto his face and infect his eyes, nose or throat. If it is near the eyes it will slowly blind the applicant, taking 3 turns to do so and lasting 1-3 hours. If it is near the nose it will ruin the victim's sense of smell entirely, lasting for 1-3 days. If it is near the mouth, the applicant will lose his sense of taste for 1 week. There is no save against these effects.

33. CHAMBER OF THE BONE CREATURE. This oddly shaped room is full of chalky dust 1/4 inch deep from wall to wall. There is nothing of apparent interest, even in the alcoves in the western or northern walls. The one in the eastern wall contains a large skeletal form that will usher forth and attack anyone that gets within 15' of it. This is an *Ogre-skeleton*, and has 19 HPS. It does not seem to be protecting anything, but should any of the dust happen to cover the applicants feet he will notice that he cannot see them anymore. This is not, however, "dust of disappearance" but a **dust of blending** that effectively allows anyone or thing coated with it to blend into the immediate surroundings. The dust has application limits just as that of the other type. In total there is enough dust in one square to fill a packet; about 16 packets in all.

34. FALSE CRYPT OF THE FORMER GF. This large and odd-shaped chamber is as bare and unimpressive as the rest. Except for three things, a wooden bucket sitting in the small alcoves in the east and west walls containing some old liqueur, and a crown that sits resting on a short stone pillar in the northern alcove. It appears to have a thick cloth formed inside as a protection of some kind, though this is inaccurate. This "cloth" is actually an *Executioner's Hood*, having either 9, 18 or 26 HPS depending on what size HD it is--this should be commensurate to the level of the applicant. The liqueur is stale, but effective against the creature. There is nothing else of value or interest within the chamber.

35. SECRET ACCESS TO BELOW. The only actual way out of level two is to descend into the caves below and find the exit tunnel there. Following this corridor thus leads to the 2nd part of the test for all applicants; and the harder of the two. A slight breeze seems to rise up this tunnel from below.

*SECTION END NOTE

In the beginning the statement was made that there is no "wandering monsters" on this level. Well, that's not quite the truth. The fact is, that the T6 henchman, AMOOK-JARA, is occasionally on this level resetting the traps, maintaining them, and herding the creatures back to their assigned

locations. If he has not been encountered and killed or captured on level 1, it is possible that he is lurking about on this level. The odds that an applicant would see him are slim, 1 in 10 per any given hour of the day. For a party moving about they are even worse, 1 in 20. Even then, *seeing him* is about all the contact there will be--a glimpse of a shadow, or a single ankle or foot disappearing around a corner. He is too good to be caught.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVELS 3-4

With the exception of areas 45-48 the chambers on these levels are roughly formed by the natural mechanics of tectonics, natural forces such as water and burrowing creatures. The walls are jagged and cracked where lichens and other subterranean growths are located within or spread across where they survive best. The ceilings all support stalactites of various sizes depending on the height of cave floor to ceiling ratio, while stalagmite mounds (See map) rise up in some of the larger caves. Caverns with areas larger than 6 squares to a side will have ceilings ranging from 21' to 65', with smaller ones being 13' to 32'. The largest caves, 38, 41, and 43 have ceilings from 32' to 90'. The air in the western caves, 36 through 42 is fresher as a circulating route of sorts draws air from the surface outside (via the tunnel from 42 to 49C) where it passes through them and exits the tunnel leading from cave 36 to the level above. This does not mean the air is as good as that on the surface, only that it is better than that at the eastern end of these great chambers. The tunnels that enter and exit the levels as well as those connecting some of the caves, the ledge going from 42 to 45 and the secret passage from 44 to 45 are generally narrow and range from 10' to 15' in width. The floors of these as well as all the caves except 43 are rough and uneven ranging from soft and spongy to hard and packed.

These levels are generally ignored by the Grand Father of Assassins and his retinue, including the Amir and his militia of desert raiders, basically because they offer nothing of value, and have come to be the home of unsavory creatures that feed on the remains of victims tossed down the shaft from the mount top temple. If an all out war was to be waged against him and the Sultan's armies rode down upon him the Grand Father would resort to escaping into these caves as a last choice. Thus they are not patrolled or maintained by any of the forces dwelling on the levels above. And because the Grand Father has not sent anyone into them recently to survey the situation, he is not aware of the incredible build up of monsters and beasts that

have managed to work their way into them through the access tunnel **49C**.

The assassin applicant that survives the level above has but one basic thing to accomplish here, and that is to survive. He must avoid anything that might kill him, and find his way to the surface. If he accomplishes that he will earn his place in the guild of the Grand Father of Assassins.

WANDERING MONSTERS

A check should be made every 3 turns with a 1 on a d8 indicating some type of encounter has occurred. If such is indicated, use the table below.

| <u>D8</u> | <u>Type of encounter</u> |
|-----------|--|
| 1-2. | 1-4 large scorpions (HPS 13, 11, 9, 7) |
| 3. | 1-2 rock reptiles (HPS 27 each) |
| 4-5. | 1-8 large spiders (HPS 2-5 each) |
| 6. | 1 Blindheim (HPS 20) |
| 7. | 1 Flail Snail, 4HD (HPS 18) |
| 8. | 1-2 Hook Horrors (HPS 22, 19) |

None of these creatures will possess treasure and the DM should diminish their numbers and HPS or forgo their presence if continuous appearances seriously threatens the flow of the session, or the fun of those involved.

36. MEDIUM CAVERN. It is the first subterranean chamber to be entered from the level above, and like most if not all of the other caves, it is a dark and dismal place. A large stalagmite rises up from the floor in the western half of the chamber and nearly reaches the stalactite hanging down above it. The space of a few inches apart symbolizes the slow eternity to be spent before the two will grow into one. At roughly 45' across at its base, the conical tip reaches only 40' feet above the floor. Among the stalactites hanging from the ceiling south of the great mound is a large sticky nest that is home to a pod of **large spiders**. 2-20 of the creatures will be present as the applicant first enters the chamber. They will scurry forth to investigate any intruders as possible food, then attack if they feel they have the advantage. The DM should adjust the number and their HPS to be in balance with the strength of the applicant. They have no treasure but, oddly, on the ground below the nest lay 7 to 12 pellets that appear to be of some type metal. These are actually +1 sling bullets, and the rotted leather sling that used them hangs dangling from the spider nest above; it is non magical, and virtually useless at this point.

37. SMALL CAVERN. While a roughly 75' by 105' chamber does not sound like a *small* space it is, by

comparison to the others, quite so. With a ceiling at about 28' above the floor average it provides enough room for even a large party to occupy with plenty to spare. For the lone applicant entering the chamber it becomes exponentially larger. Luckily for the single assassin, or anyone else, there is little within the chamber of a threatening nature. The only thing present upon anyone entering the cavern will be a lone creature, a **Xaren** (HPS 1). It has suffered a severe injury and was left behind by the group it was with. It is currently dazed and confused as to what to do next. If an applicant or group should have discovered the magic bullets in chamber **36** and feed them to the creature, it will recover on a basis of 1 hp per bullet fed. If more than 4 are fed to it the creature will bond with the applicant or person tending it, and behave as a follower while the person remains in the cave level. There is a 5% cumulative chance per hour that the group of Xaren that abandoned it will return. If that is the case, it will leave with them, but it will not allow them to attack or harm the applicant or person it bonded with. If it is not fed any bullets it will remain where it is found, in pain and suffering.

38. VERY LARGE CAVERN. The largeness of this chamber will at first be lost by the presence of a colony of **giant slugs** slithering about. 5 to 8 of the creatures will be sliming about when the applicant or anyone else enters the chamber. These creatures vary in size and maturity, from 2 to 7 HD (having 9, 13, 18, 22, 27 or 31 HPS according to size). They will run from 10' to 24' in length. The DM should set the number within according to the strength of the applicant or group and the challenge he wishes to present. The creatures are very slow, always attacking last in a round.

39. MEDIUM CAVERN. This chamber might be considered an extension of the one above simply because the connecting tunnel is so wide. But it is even worse than the previous one, having over a dozen (d12+6) smaller versions of the creatures already mentioned. These **large slugs**, however, have but 1 HD each (1-8 HPS each) and do not attack. But the big Mother **Giant Slug**, from which the little ones have just emerged, will if she or her brood are molested. Having 54 HPS, she is much too powerful an opponent for a single applicant. Should a group approach her she will spit her acid in an attempt to turn them away.

40. SMALL CAVERN. This, as the one previously mentioned, could be considered part of the larger cavern below it **41**. But it is not home to the same types of creatures, as 1-4 **large scorpions** currently reside here. They will rush to attack anything that does not seem to appear larger than them, and flee from creatures that obviously are.

The DM should adjust the number present and their hps according to the strength of the applicant or group involved. They have no treasure.

41. VERY LARGE CAVERN. There are several features within this chamber of interest to the applicant or party. The first being a hole in the roof above (see map, dashed lines) representing the bottom of the shaft extending to the top of the mount. Through this fall sacrifices of the temple priests where decomposed bodies lay on the ground directly beneath. The stench in this chamber is equal in effect to that of troglodytes for those that approach within 30' of the mountain of bones and rotted flesh piled up. The second being that the cavern actually extends south (becoming chamber **43**) after dropping down 30'. A ledge actually looks down onto a vast body of water, black as a moonless night. Third is a trail going down along the western wall into the lower cavern. This ledge-like path clings to the western wall as it winds its way south; eventually meeting area **42** then continuing on. Finding these features will not be difficult, but the distant sound of continuous squeaking will tend to unnerve the applicant or anyone else while within this cavern. Overhead and clinging to the canopy of this chamber is a large colony of bats (100-1000). Guano is constantly falling, and the floor is slick and slippery with the stuff. For every turn spent in this chamber there is a 1 in 6 chance of anyone having a large dollop of the stuff slam down upon him. The bats will not attack anyone but should a strong light as a torch or better be in use the creatures will swoop down in frantic kamikaze style to investigate. At night they will exit the chamber via the great shaft, and return before the next day.

42. TRAIL TURNOUT & BARRED GATE. This area is actually part of the larger chamber **43** where the trail ledge winds along the western wall. Here the trail widens and a man-made gate of iron bars appears inset in the wall. This seems puzzling since, from this side, all that appears beyond the gate is stone wall. In actuality a secret door in the wall beyond the gate accesses a tunnel that allows the applicant or anyone to leave this area and return to the surface, north of the mount. Should the applicant have the key from the *Jingling Man* in area **31** from the level above it will fit this gate and swing away, allowing the assassin to inspect the wall beyond. Finding the secret door will require a check with a 1-2 in 6 being successful; or on a 1-4 in the case of an elf. Should the applicant fail this check the DM may allow further attempts but at only 1 per day. (Note: should a party reach this area from the tunnel coming the other way, they will likely not have the key to the gate. The DM

should allow each character an individual attempt to bend the bars, thus allowing egress.)

43. GIGANTIC CAVERN & LAKE. Fed by an underground river **49A** that runs deep beneath the dry ancient river bed to the east, this large body of water is bottomless as far as an applicant or any exploring group is concerned. A ledge runs along the western wall of the chamber, that eventually rises high above the lake and enters another set of caves (**45-48**). A great wall of rock contains a 2nd ledge **44** at roughly 30' above the lake surface that is connected via a secret passage to those other caves (see map). Anyone wondering why the huge pile of corpses in **41** beneath the shaft hole are not taken and eaten by the creatures previously listed will soon see why, for every 6 turns a bloated bladder-like form will surface in the lake, with a dozen tentacles well over 60' in length each. It will reach out, scooping the carrion into its coils then submerge, going to either area **A** or **B** to feed upon the remains. The creature is called SHALGOTH and is a minor deity, of sorts, once worshipped by the beings that inhabited the remaining caves long ago. It should not be used as an encounter against a lone applicant, though a strong party could possibly pose a challenge to it. (Details on the creature appear in the Appendix following the adventure.)

44. THE LEDGE ABOVE THE LAKE. This wide ledge cut into the rock protrusion here can easily be seen upon reaching the top of the horseshoe section along the ledge-trail leading from **42** to **45** (see map). The power of the light source will of course determine if the ledge can be seen in its fullness. While that is not likely without the aid of some magic (item or spell) a secret passage, if found, will deliver anyone from area **45** to this ledge. What purpose this ledge may have served is not evident from inspection. The fact that it was a sacrificial place where the former residents in the caves paid tribute to the creature in the lake is of no importance to an assassin-applicant. The DM can, of course, create any back story he wishes if he is inclined to expand this area and incorporate it more into the overall adventure. The sole thing of interest will be the mummified body of a very short being, sitting against the back of the ledge. This tiny figure will resemble something of a cross between a dwarf and human, not quite either, but a little of both. Its clothing will be rotted and fall apart upon inspection, revealing a dull ring on its finger, and a necklace. The ring is not magical, but the symbol of a high priestess of this unknown race. It is considered an artifact by sage standards and will likely fetch 2500 GP in large markets. If kept, the owner will be allowed certain privileges if/when encountered by members of this race. The

DM can expand upon this as desired. The necklace is actually a **Necklace of Strangulation** and was the cause of the figure's demise.

45-48. THE ABANDONED COLONY. Four caves, three small and one large served as an outpost for an unknown race of beings millennia ago. Walls with roofs are carved out of the stone that served as houses for them. They were obviously a short race of beings, for their *buildings* are not higher than 6' with doorways averaging just over 4', and the caves themselves have ceilings no more than 12'. Who they were and why they were here is not important to the assassin-applicant. What is of importance is the fact that a small band of **ghouls** (2-5), perhaps degenerate survivors of previous sacrifices from the temple above, linger about here, away from the reach of the Shalgot. The DM should determine how many and their hps based on the applicant or party involved. These creatures will be initially encountered in either area **46** or **48** depending on a random determination (even/odd). They have no treasure, will have less than average hps, and are starving, since the Shalgot takes all the food dropping down the shaft. They are not aware of the secret passage leading to the ledge at **44**, nor the one beyond the gate in the wall at **42**. Any other information regarding this abandoned outpost and the beings mentioned can be designed by the DM and expanded or not.

49. ACCESS TUNNELS. Three tunnels aside from the one entering from the level above access the caves. **49A**, as already mentioned, brings water into the lake from an underground source deep below the dry ancient river bed east of the great mount. **49B** is a spillway that allows the lake to remain at a near constant level. This tunnel goes south and splits into various side venues, with one eventually rising up to feed the oasis. **49C** is the tunnel leading down into this level from the surface just north of the mount, where it begins in a small cave.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL 5

WANDERING MONSTERS

Depending on the time of day from as few as 1 to as many as a group of 3 to 9 assassins could be encountered. This is directly related to specific activity the Grand Father has his members doing at the time. For the purpose of this adventure, it is to be assumed that the raiding parties sent out by the Amir are supplemented by aerial troops and advisors provided by the Grand Father.

As such raids are conducted when it is most likely the caravan routes will be in use, there will be less

assassins on this level during the morning and late afternoon hours, and more during mid-day and at night. The figures suggested in the table below will indicate both possibilities, and as always are subject to alteration by the DM.

1. 1-4/2-7 level 1 assassins
2. 1-3/2-8 level 1 assassins & 1 level 2
3. 1-3/2-5 level 2 assassins & 1 level 3
4. 1-3/1-4 level 3 assassins & 1 level 4
5. 1-2/1-4 level 4 assassins
6. 1-2/1-3 level 5 assassins
7. 0-1/1-2 level 6 assassins
8. 0-1/1-2 level 6 assassins & 1 level 7

During the early morning or late afternoon hours they will be going to or returning from a raid. If it is mid-day or night, they will be going to and from their own quarters and the day room. If they are returning from or going on a raid they will be wearing armor, armed, and alert. If it is mid-day or night they will be sans their armor and carrying only a short blade. If they are encountered and killed they must be deducted from the appropriate listing found in the KEY. If they are returning from a raid they will be carrying treasure types J-N each and Q, to be tallied by the Grand Father.

The walls, ceiling and floor of this level have been smoothed, leveled and filled with wet clay to harden into very even and precise angles. The walls are all washed with a white coat, and the ceilings vary from 8' in the smaller chambers, to 18' in the large stable chamber **55**. A slight breeze stirs throughout this level, growing stronger as one nears or enters the main chamber and corridor at its heart. This results from the large wide hall leading from the terrace on the north side of the mount, through the great stable area and on south into the narrower corridor that rises up to the south face of the mount. This circulating system would be more pleasant if not for the stables in the heart of the level, where the smells of beasts flow from one side of the corridors to the other. As it is the aroma is pungent to those not accustomed to it, bordering on the verge of causing one to gag.

50. THE ENTRANCE. A long descending corridor to level 1 below reaches up to this level, the home of the Grand Father of Assassins and his followers. The corridor ends in a **cross** with doors at each end (see map). The doors are not locked, but any noisy poking about will attract the nearest assassins on a 1-3 in d6.

51. BARRACKS OF THE LESSER ASSASSINS. At 30' wide by 90' long this chamber is filled with the furnishings expected to house 16 people. All newly accepted applicants begin their guild life here, in

the dormitory. Currently there are 16 level 1 types residing here, each with his own private area that includes a bed, prayer mat and basket to store his possessions. There will be burning incense in holders aplenty, filling the chamber with a sweet aroma of sandal wood. Each apprentice will have 1-6 HPS, wear padded protection for AC8, and carry a short bladed shamshir that does 2-5 points of damage. Each will have a few coins (J, K, L types) stuffed away in his own reed basket. During the late night hours all will be present here, but during the day only 1-4 might be, with the remainder being out on a raid or in the day room **53**. If an all-out assault is launched upon the mount the apprentices will follow the instructions of the Grand Father, and likely set up a crossfire-ambush into the corridor outside their door to bide time for him and his lieutenants to escape. If caught by surprise they will rally as best they can, trying all the while to raise the alarm and alert the Grand Father.

52. THE ARMORY. This rectangular room holds all the spare weapons of the assassins. Long and short bladed shamshir stand in wooden barrels with their handles ready for grabbing. Spears and short bows lean against the walls while quivers of arrows hang on pegs attached to them. About two dozen of each blade weapon are present, along with an equal amount of spears, and half that in bows. There is nothing special about these and none are magical.

53. THE DAYROOM. This large square room is used by the assassins during the day to rest and recover from their duties. It is usually occupied at mid-day and in the evening by at least 1-8 level 1 assassins (1-6 HPS each), 1-4 level 2 types(7 HPS each), 1-3 level 3 assassins (10 HPS each), 1-3 level 4 (14 HPS each), and 1-3 level 5 (17 HPS each) assassins. The higher level types do not hang out here. If/when encountered the men will be in normal clothing for AC9 or 10, will have short bladed shamshir swords that will do 2-5 points of damage, and will rush quickly to engage obvious intruders and raise the alarm. The chamber is filled with throw rugs and pillows, some water pipes and burning incense.

54. RUTERKIN & WAGHALTER QUARTERS. This room is the abode of the 2nd and 3rd level guild assassins. Seven of each level dwell within this chamber, though only 1-4 of each grade will be in here at a given time; the rest either being out on patrol or elsewhere on the level. If caught off guard they will be either AC10 or 9, but AC8 if they have been alerted and had time to don their armor. Each will have a short shamshir on him but can draw a long blade (capable of doing 2-7 points of

damage) from the racks by the doors if need be. They have HPS and treasure commensurate with those listed in chamber **53/51**. The room is furnished in a similar fashion as that of the Apprentices of room **51**. If a major alert has been sounded they will rush to rally with their comrades if the enemy is small in numbers. If the assault is from a large force they will attempt to gather up whatever the Grand Father has ordered them to and vacate the level via their winged mounts.

55. THE STABLE. This large chamber is divided into two sections by the wide corridor heading north to the terrace, while a narrower hallway leads south, rising gradually to a balcony on the face of the mount there. The two sections are further divided into individual stables for the winged mounts that have been caught and trained by the assassins. A total of 15 Hippogriffs and a Hieracosphinx are quartered here serving as mounts for the Grand Father and his higher level lieutenants (the 5th through 8th level assassins). Each has a separate stall that holds the creature and all its riding gear. The Hieracosphinx is in the stall nearest the Grand Father's quarters. These creatures are not trained to fight, but carry their riders, thus the DM should only use them in combat situations at the extremis. Intruders not accustomed to the smell of such creatures will be effected by a most powerful stench whenever stepping into the actual chamber. A constitution check will fend off the gagging reflex caused by the stink, but those that fail will be suffering mildly to the point of making all attacks at -1 for 1-6 turns after leaving the area. These creatures will not obey the commands of anyone but their riders unless some powerful magic compels them to. A wide terrace (**55B**) clings to the northern face of the mount at the end of the wide corridor. From here the assassins launch their mounts into the skies per their master's instructions.

56. SECRET CACHE OF THE ASSASSINS. This secret chamber is known only to the Grand Father and his upper lieutenants (the 7th & 8th level ones). It contains a modest amount of loot and goods confiscated during the countless raids they have completed. Intricately woven tapestries, silver and brass candlesticks and cutlery, ivory and jade boxes filled with expensive incense and spices. It also includes about a dozen clay jars and pots filled with dried meats, figs, dates, spirit waters and so on. There are woven baskets of various shapes containing silk from foreign lands, and other fine materials. Two finely crafted wooden chests from the northern continent are filled with copper pieces totaling 15,000 and silver pieces totaling 10,000 between them. A beautifully made silver trident (**military fork +3**) leans in the

northeast corner of the room while another (**trident of warning**) of the same general shape leans in the northwest corner. The Grand Father's personal treasure is in his quarters.

57. MURDERER & THUG QUARTERS. This large room is home to 4 level 5 and 5 level 4 assassins. Not all will be present upon anyone initially entering the chamber, only 1-2 of each grade, if done during the time of day when most are out and about performing other duties. They will have HPS commensurate with those listed in the dayroom **53** and if caught by surprise, will only have an AC of 9, along with a short bladed shamshir. If an alert has been sounded they can don their armor for an AC7 and retrieve their long blade and move quickly to answer the alarm. They have basically the same individual treasure as that previously mentioned in **51** only double the amounts.

58. THE GRAND FATHER'S QUARTERS. This grand room is the home of the Grand Father of Assassins. Abdul Kanezer is a tall, lean man with sandy-grey hair and crystal blue eyes. Having reached middle-age, being 45 years old, his strength is not what it used to be. But his mind is razor sharp and quick, and he did not get to his position by some luck of the draw. He has spent many a year planning and maneuvering himself to the rank he has finally attained. Everything he had worked for he achieved, and his secret pact with the sultan was his crowning accomplishment allowing him to run his guild unfettered by the Royal armies that guarded the caravan routes, as long as a token share made its way back to the sultan's coffers. And everything had been working fine for years, until the sultan's daughter became a priestess of that forsaken cult atop the mount! It has been a thorn in the Grand Father's side since *She* took command of it. And now, with the princess of the northern king being held in the temple above, it has become difficult for the guild to continue with its business as usual, with countless parties of searchers and rescuers snooping about. The guild master would actually be relieved if a stalwart party ascended the top of the mount and did away with the cult in the process of rescuing the girl. If only...

There is only a slight chance the Grand Father will be surprised when a party enters his chamber--10% at best. For his eyes and ears extend through the mount in ways unexplainable. If a party has managed to slip from level to level avoiding a general assault and summoning the entire militia and guild to mount a defense, it is possible he will have to negotiate quickly his freedom. He will, of course, abandon his commitment to the Amir if need be, and have his assassins *stand down* to

allow the party to continue its quest. Especially if the Grand Father feels the group can accomplish this, and rid him of that annoying cult and its priestess in the process. And in this regard he will be very informative, divulging to the party that the princess was lured to the temple by the sweet talking promises of the sultan's own daughter, the high priestess of the blood thirsty order. But that was over a year ago, and he does not know what goes on atop the mount, only providing captives for the temple's sacrifices in order to use the cult's association and presence to further his own plans to control the flow of goods along the caravan routes.

The great chamber is otherwise filled with the finest of booty taken during the raids upon the caravans. The entire collection of mundane and sundry items would likely fetch a total of 10,000 in GP on the open market of the Sultan's city. The DM can design lists of such things from samples given in the DMG, Appendix I, tables Miscellaneous Utensils and Personal Items, Clothing and footwear and Jewelry and Items typically bejeweled.

The eastern part of the chamber contains his sleeping pillows and mats, with a frame-like device that supports a sheer fabric that acts as a net to keep away pesky insects that might have wandered in from the stable area. There are clay jars of fresh oasis water, baskets full of food, and incense burning in silver holders. In the center of the long room is a very provincial looking table and three chairs, likely confiscated on a raid. Atop the table are numerous parchments, scrolls rolled out revealing ancient writings, and strange glyphs and symbols, as well as maps of the area. These have no bearing on the adventure unless the DM desires to create something concerning them. The western end of the chamber is basically a display area of his most treasured goods.

Two stuffed mannequins stand supported by wooden devices in the western side of the chamber. Each appears to be clothed in fine materials and wearing a cloak; a round turban sits on the head of one of them. Each wears a jeweled belt that supports scabbards containing a short and long bladed shamshir. One mannequin appears to have dozens of tiny bells attached to it beneath the cloak, very similar appearing to the figure found on level **2** below. This is a ruse to make observers suspect the items it bears are of value, in contrast to the truth that they are not, and some are even cursed. The other mannequin appears not to have such things attached, and holds items the Grand Father actually uses on certain occasions. The DM should decide where each mannequin stands,

allowing the party to choose the order in which they are searched.

Mannequin #1. **Cloak of Poison, Girdle of Femininity/Masculinity, Gauntlets of Fumbling, +1 long-bladed shamshir--berserk.**

Mannequin #2. **Cloak of Protection +1, Robe of Blending, Gauntlets of Swimming and Climbing, +2 long-bladed shamshir Dragon Slayer.** (The turban is actually a magical device that functions identically as the second-level magic user spell, *Clairaudience*. It can do this up to 3 times per day. A conch-like silver horn is attached to the front of the headgear and is never consumed when the item is used.)

Besides these items the Grand Father usually has on him a **+1 ring of protection, bracers AC4, +1 cloak, +1 shamshir short-blade, ring of elemental command (air).**

59. THE KILLERS' QUARTERS. This room is the abode of 3 level 6 assassins. They have 33 hps each and treasure similar to that listed in **51** except triple the maximum possible. Along with that each possesses a set of **+1 leather** armor, and a **potion of healing**. Both of which are kept in the room unless the assassins are out on a patrol, or mustered to defend the citadel. If any of the 3 are encountered as "wandering" or in area **53** and killed before the party reaches this room those must be deducted from here. These Killers are among the Grand Father's highest members, and are privy to the knowledge that the princess of the northern king is being held atop the mount in the temple of the priestess. They also know that the priestess is the daughter of the Sultan. Should the assassins' efforts to repel an all out assault fail these might use their knowledge to avoid capture; but not as long as the Grand Father is alive and in command. If ordered to stand and die defending the citadel they will. If ordered to mount up and flee, they will. They obey their master implicitly.

60. QUARTERS OF THE LIEUTENANTS. A pair of level 7 Cut-throats and a level 8 Executioner reside in this chamber. The former have 38 HPS each and their superior, 44 HPS. If not surprised they will be wearing **+2 leather**, and wielding a **+1 long-bladed shamshir**. Each has 2 **potions of extra healing** among their belongings, including treasure types J, K, L, M, N being 10 times the maximum of each. This trio is knowledgeable of the treasure chamber, and the facts surrounding the missing princess from the north, and the Sultan's daughter. But they keep their tongues in check, as they are loyal to the Grand Father to the end and will fall on a blade for him. If both the cut-throats have been

encountered as "wandering" and killed they will, of course, not be present when a party enters this chamber. Otherwise they will react according to the behavior of the party, responding to invaders as one would expect. If their master orders them to load up goodies upon the mounts and flee with him they will do so. If he orders them to stand and fight that he may flee, they will.

The narrow corridor rising from area **55** and going south eventually ends at a balcony dug out of the southern face of the mount itself. Dozens of feet above the level below, and hundreds above the ground itself. The view is spectacular, allowing those privileged enough to see it a sprawling vista of the desert lands south of the Abu-Dala. It is here, however, that normal ascent of the mount stops. (Continued in next section)

KEY TO TEMPLE LEVEL 6

A man-made terrace juts out from the south face of the great mount (see cutaway side and front views of Abu-Dala) about 100' beneath the top. Though a good 45' wide along the face it is a narrow balcony being only 15' out from the rock. Constructed of wood pylons and planks it is maintained by a crew of Bedouin followers, artisans and carpenters of the Amir that reside in the tent city below. This is the only non-magical means beside climbing the mount itself of reaching the temple above. A pair of thick, wound ropes support a gondola that is lowered from a crane atop the mount to allow special visitors and guests to attend ceremonies held in the temple. These dignitaries come from various locations around the continent, and for various reasons. The DM can construct any other plot devices desired to accommodate including such expansion of the module. Such is not needed at present, for there is only one such person atop the mount at the moment, and that is the princess Elawen.

Shalezar, high priestess of the temple and daughter of the sultan, is in charge of religious services. Sworn and loyal to the deity KHALI, the young woman (about 27 years of age) is corrupt, greedy, and full of cruelty that starkly contrasts her absolute beauty and charm (with a charisma score of 20). She is carnally wicked and perverse and takes great enjoyment in sadistic treatment of her lovers.

The story of her rise to power is a long narrative that need not appear here. In summation, she was seduced long ago by the former Grand Father of Assassins who brought her to this mount on occasion. Here she discovered an ancient and

forgotten temple atop the great monolith of Abu-Dala and, quite by chance, summoned a demon representative of the deity that favored the priests here. Using its great powers, she dedicated herself to restoring the worship of the deity and rebuilding the temple. For a time she used the Grand Father's network of assassins to assist her. But when he began to turn against her, she seduced one of his lieutenants into taking over and had the master slain by the demon and cast into the well (**C**), where his remains have since trans-morphed into the haunting presence some call the *Old Man of the Mountain*. Since that time she has rebuilt the old order to its former infamy, while the new Grand Father served her needs when required.

Shalezar conducts services to honor KHALI every full moon. These consist of lengthy and grueling orgies with her attendants and the snake-men that reside in a secret level below. Human sacrifices are conducted every new moon, with victims being anyone that the Amir or Grand Father can provide. This arrangement has kept all three empowered and the populace in fear for the past 4 years.

Recently Shalezar came into contact with a princess from the northern realms. Upon meeting Elawen, the high priestess was enchanted by the young woman, and set about luring her into her confidence, hoping to turn the northerner into a follower of KHALI. She brought the princess here over a year ago, and has succeeded in keeping the young woman content and happy with an array of...activities and drink; the latter heavy with a narcotic harvested from a plant indigenous to the area.

The temple grounds are enclosed by a tall wall of stone filled with mortar and cracks with dried clay. Washed with a coating of white this, and the buildings within, appear almost like bones atop the mount at a distance.

61. THE TEMPLE COURT. A double story gate house stands just north of the crane device at the edge of the mount. This structure is guarded by two squat bloated figures that stand atop it **A**. Summoned by the greater demon of the shrine, these two **Dretch** serve as sentinels, sounding the alarm should uninvited guests breach the mount top, and holding them at bay until help arrives; having 27 HPS each and barely able to hold their own against a quasit, they should not pose a serious challenge to a large party. Inside the gate house are rooms designed to accommodate the dozen master archers that reside within. Each one attacks as a 3rd level fighter, AC8, doing 1-8 damage per arrow that hits, and has 9 HPS each. These troops are considered part of the Amir's

militia, and are rotated every 3 months. They do not participate in the temple ceremonies though they do man the crane and gondola when guests are scheduled. Eight platforms **B** surround the compound that allow the archers residing in the gatehouse to fire volleys from in the event of an assault. A large well **C** about 10' across serves as the sacrificial pit where victims are tossed down the well to the secret level (**7**) below. If they survive that, the snake-folk may eat them or toss them down the great shaft that leads to the caverns below. A large marble statue stands **D** just south of the temple itself. At 15' tall, this sculpting appears to be a hideous woman with fangs and multiple arms. It is the likeness of KHALI herself, and non-worshippers that get within 10' of it will feel an overwhelming nausea at the sight of it. A secret door in the base of it opens to reveal a hollow space and a shaft to below (this drops down to secret level **8**).

62. THE SHRINE OF KHALI. If a ceremony is scheduled Shalezar will be here along with her attendants performing it. The DM must determine if the party has managed to reach here at the appropriate times. Otherwise she will likely be in her private quarters (25% chance) in the bath (20% chance) or in the orgy room (55% likely). Whether or not she and her assistants are present the shrine guardian will be.

A set of steps 25' across lead up onto a terrace where the altar **E** of KHALI stands. Six stone pillars support crossbeams atop them. At the top of these stairs stands an imposing figure of a woman like creature with six arms. A type **V Demon**, she is called MORDRETH. With only 52 HPS she might seem too weak for a large party, but her other abilities, and the assistance of the temple clerics, are likely enough to defeat any poorly coordinated group.

Should an all-out assault be launched by the party Shalezar will rally her assistants to support the archers and demons. If she gets the opportunity she will take as many captives as she can and question them before tossing them down the well. If things turn against her she will take Elawen and leap from the mount to her and the girl's death. She will do anything to escape capture, even facing the world beyond life.

CLERIC SPELL ROSTER

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Shalezar | 7-6-5-4-2-1 |
| C8 | 5-5-4-2 |
| C5 | 3-3-1 |
| C3 | 2-1 |
| C1 | 1 |

Only Shalezar will be *holding* spells that might be non-combatant. She does this for the purpose of supplying water and food to the order, and her guest. The lesser clerics will all have memorized the most basic types (light, silence, etc.)

There are 8 assistant priests under Shalezar, and if caught by surprise they will all be AC10 and unarmed. If they have the opportunity they will take up a shield and a mace and do physical battle if it will protect the high priestess. In such cases they will be AC9, doing 1-6 points of damage. Like the head priestess, they are all evil, wicked things, taking pleasure in pain and suffering. They have the following HPS, C8 (40), C5 (22) C3 x3 (13-16 each) and C1 x 3 (5-8 each).

Four single story buildings stand within the temple court, two square and two rectangular. Each is made of solid walls similar to the one the encloses the temple compound. Each has a flat roof made of some lighter material. The larger ones have a door in each end, while the smaller ones have only one door. Each is described as follows.

63. QUARTERS OF SHALEZAR. Comprised of 3 rooms the door on the north side opens into a sitting parlor, with a small room to the west where the high priestess keeps her spare clothing and accessories. The southern chamber is her private sleeping room. It is furnished about as one would expect a high priestess of a demonic cult. It is possible that Shalezar and Elawen will be in this chamber when the party first arrives atop the mount. If this is so and an alarm has been raised the priestess will don her magic items and go to repel any invaders that get past her guards. The princess, Elawen, will remain behind, scared and confused.

Shalezar is a level 11 cleric, with 51 HPS, capable of casting spells as indicated earlier. If the DM does not have the time nor wish to choose these for her, he can use the following:

- LVL1: *Commandx2, Create Water, Cure Light Wounds, Light, Purify Food & Drink, Sanctuary.*
- LVL2: *Detect Charm, Hold Personx2, Know Alignment, Resist Fire, Silence 15' Radius.*
- LVL3: *Animate Dead, Continual Light, Create Food & Water, Dispel Magic, Speak with Dead.*
- LVL4: *Cure Serious Wounds, Detect Lie, Neutralize Poison, Tongues.*
- LVL5: *Flame Strike, True Seeing.*
- LVL6: *Animate Object.*

She will cast protective spells before confronting the invaders if possible and will certainly cast "Animate Object" to bring the statue of Khali to life

and join the battle, as well as "True Seeing" in order to prevent any hidden or invisible enemies from sneaking up on her. The animated statue will have an AC0, strike 6 times per attack doing 4-16 per attack when directed. It should be treated as a golem of stone regarding attacks against it. If, as mentioned earlier, any battle is turning against her, she will run back to her quarters and take the princess, then leap over the wall using her magic slippers and jump off the mount to her death. The magic items she has at her disposal are, **+2 mace of disruption, bracers AC3, ring of spell turning, slippers of striding & leaping.**

Princess Elawen is simply a 0-level non-player character with 5 HPS. But she is heavily drugged at the moment, and has been for over a year. So her reactions are slow and confused. Once the drug is out of her system, she will be able to tell little of what has happened to her all this time; such is the effect of the narcotic she was on. She won't even be sure if she is happy to be rescued, and will wonder why the party is looking for her, not knowing how long she has been here. Drugged, she is in no shape to offer any resistance to suggestions or physical handling by the party. When clear of the drug, her noble stature will return, and she will want to return to her father as soon as possible once all is explained.

64. QUARTERS OF THE LESSER CLERICS. This building houses Shalezar's assistants and all their belongings. None of the priestesses possesses any magic, or treasure, since their sole purpose is to serve their mistress, and ultimately, Khali. Though they can assist the temple guards with spell support if needed, they are not, by nature, combatant, and will surrender in the face of a large and menacing party. The DM should choose what spells they carry by some method of desire. If there are no ceremonies in progress when the party arrives atop the mount, it is likely the women will be in either the orgy chamber, or the bath. The DM may determine which, taking the location of Shalezar into account when doing so.

65. THE ORGY ROOM. This large chamber is filled with burning incense, fine silk linens laying atop stuffed pillows, platters of local fruits and meats and bowls of fermented wine as well as large water pipes. If an orgy is in progress when the party arrives at the temple they will find Shalezar and her assistants entangled with a half dozen shapes of what appear to be abominations of human and snake crossbreeding. These creatures will have some feature that is human, a head, arms, upper torso, etc. and serpentine features as well. They are a desert race of YUAN-TI, and dwell during the day on the secret level below this (7), coming forth

at night to participate in Shalezar's ceremonies to honor Khali. Half are male, half are female. These creatures are all *half-breeds*, having 7-8 hit dice and an AC0. More detailed information for them can be found in the MM2. If the party stumbles upon this scene the creatures will attempt to flee, diving into the well and to their secret location. They do not feel obligated to protecting Shalezar or her followers. The clerics, on the other hand, will flee to where they can best take a stand and challenge the intruders; likely at the steps of the shrine.

66. THE BATH HOUSE. This building is basically just a large pond surrounded by walls and roof where the clerics take their leisurely bath every evening. If they are encountered here they will react similar to that mentioned.

Note: if Shalezar is in this chamber or the previous one when the party arrives it is not likely she will be able to use her magic items. In that event she will not respond to questioning, and when the opportunity presents itself, she will try to grab Elawen when the party decides to descend the mount, and leap to her death.

It is obvious that so many variables make it nearly impossible to chart every action Shalezar and her assistants might make. It is up to the DM to run this part of the adventure in a way that makes the most use of the information given, in the most sensible way possible. So be creative. Run with it. Have fun.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL 7

This small level lies directly beneath the temple compound above. The well above (C) is used to dump human sacrifices into where they normally continue through the shaft and into the caverns below. But every so often they get backed up on this level as the bodies don't pass properly through the hole in the floor (see dashed lines in area 67). It is then up to the snake-folk to shove the bodies in, or dispose of them by other means; this sometimes ends in a feast for the serpentine creatures. The large central chamber 67 is where the half-breed snake-folk hang out during the hot daytime hours. There are usually 3-6 of them at the north end of the chamber, laying about on the stone floor between the two statues. These have either 7 or 8 hit dice each, with the former having either 28, 35, 45 or 52 HPS, and the latter having either 36, 44, 52 or 60 HPS. Those with snake-like heads can bite, while those with human-like arms and hands can wield weapons as well. Complete

information regarding these is found in the MM2 under YUAN-TI, and the DM should read up on these creatures and become familiar with all their abilities. The ones found here are a desert version, a distant kin to the jungle types described in the manual.

A round shallow pit in the north end of the chamber is filled with broken and empty egg sacks. As these creatures eat their young (much like Khali herself) only the strong survive. Currently there are no young ones about. To the east and west of this pit stands an iron statue about 6' in height. It is an odd sight, wearing scale armor, shield and wielding a wide bladed shamshir, the statues look like a deformed combination of dwarf and human. This resemblance to the abandoned colony in the caverns below (level 4) might be hard to connect and the DM is encouraged to emphasize the similarities between the statues and the mummified creature they may have discovered below. Did this level once serve as a temple or shrine to that unknown race? That is for the DM to decide, and determine whether to use or not.

Two large almost oval chambers, 68 and 69 lay to the east and west of the central room a short distance. Each is the abode of the largest YUAN-TI in this group, having 9 hit dice each and either 40, 49, 58, or 67 HPS. These creatures are so much snake and so little human as to be confused at first glance with other creatures the party may have encountered before (NAGA?). They never go up to the temple compound, for they are old and not interested in the affairs of humans any more.

None of the YUAN-TI are aware that a secret level exists above them, only that an ascending corridor to the north leads to an upside down U-shaped one with some doors in it. They will not, of course, divulge this to intruders even should a means to communicate be established.

There is no treasure on this level at all.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL 8

Accessible only from secret level 7 below, or through the secret shaft in the ceiling going into the base of the statue in the temple compound above, this level has remained undiscovered for at least 4 years.

When the former Grand Father of Assassins was himself assassinated and thrown into the pit he became, like many, stuck on level 7 as his body bounced out of the shaft when it fell improperly to

pass easily through. Back then the YUAN-TI had not discovered the level, and the injured and broken man crawled about for weeks trying to find a way to escape. Instead, he found yet another secret level and dragged himself into it where eventually he died, cursing the names of Shalezar and Abdul Kanezer. His hatred before he died had grown so vile, so evil, that before his last breath he called upon the forces of darkness to grant him revenge.

And so his remains have laid here (70) all this time, until his dying request was finally granted, and his form arose to seek vengeance against those that murdered him. The *Old Man of the Mountain* may not be a threat to the party, for he has returned in the shape of a **REVENANT**, seeking only to inflict its idea of justice upon those responsible. Thus, the DM should handle this area and encounter with calm and resolve, and reward players that do not bring the creature down upon themselves. Should they question it, it will respond, haltingly, revealing to them its true identity and the reason it has returned. Should the party have slain the current Grand Father and should Shalezar have met a similar demise, if the party informs the revenant of such events, it will thank them and disintegrate, turning into dust and ash. All that will remain will be a shiny silver magic ring. The DM should determine what type.

Four false doors appear at the end of a hallway. The DM should decide if these are traps, or have any other characteristics that might affect the party. They can, of course, be ignored, or treated simply as fake doors.

This, then, brings to an end the adventure of ***The Assassins of Abu-Dala.***

AFTERWORD

Some projects seem to have a mind of their own, and though they begin with an intention of some kind, that purpose often undergoes changes in the process of creation. This adventure is no stranger to that concept.

What began as a simple idea, to take an old out of print product and put a different twist on it, was to take on a deeper meaning once the designing process kicked in. And with more than one mind contributing ideas to the form and substance of it, the adventure became more complex.

If this collaboration has resulted in your liking the module, then we succeeded. If it has not, perhaps it suffered from too much or not enough give and take in its construction. In either case, all involved

in its creation sincerely hope that you find something positive to take away from it after reading it, and truly hope that it finds its way onto your gaming table with you guiding a party of players through its challenges.

APPENDICES, NEW MONSTERS

SHALGOTH

Semi god

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVE: 1"/36"

HIT POINTS: 250

NO. OF ATTACKS: 8, and bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 x 8, and 10-60

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Paralyzing sting

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Blunt weapons do 1 damage

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 55%

SIZE: L (40' diameter; 80' tentacles)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral (Evil)

WORSHIPPER'S ALIGN: Special

SYMBOL: Special

PLANE: PM

CLERIC/DRUID: Special

FIGHTER: Attacks as 24 HD creature

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: Special

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Special

MONK/BARD: Special

S: 30 (+12, +18) I:18 W:18 D:15 C:25 CH: -3

The details of this creature, its origin, its abilities and its purpose are left to the DM to create and design if so desired. All the data listed above can be altered, deleted and otherwise changed as per the will of the DM as long as doing so does not overtly affect the creature's behavior while running the module.

TERMS ABBREVIATED

AC= Armor Class; HD= Hit Dice; HPS= Hit Points; M=Move Rate; ATK= # of Attacks; MR= Magic Resistance; GF= Grand Father of Assassins

PREROLLED PARTY

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| CLS | Cleric | Cleric | Fighter | Paladin | F/MU | MU | Thief |
| LVL | 9 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 6/6 | 6 | 9 |
| HPS | 49 | 44 | 66 | 60 | 24 | 27 | 49 |
| RACE | H | H | D | H | E | H | 1/2 |
| SEX | F | M | M | F | M | M | M |
| HGT | 5'2" | 5'9" | 4'3" | 5'10" | 5'6" | 6' | 5'9" |
| WGT | 110 | 170 | 170 | 155 | 120 | 160 | 150 |
| AL | LG | NG | LG | LG | CG | LN | NG |
| STR | 12 | 16 | 18/95 | 17 | 17 | 10 | 14 |
| I | 08 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 16 | 18 | 13 |
| W | 17 | 17 | 15 | 13 | 09 | 15 | 11 |
| D | 17 | 16 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| C | 15 | 16 | 19 | 16 | 13 | 16 | 16 |
| CH | 08 | 09 | 11 | 17 | 10 | 09 | 12 |

MAGIC ITEMS

1. +1 shield, +1 mace, potion diminution
2. +1 scale mail
3. +1 shield, +1 axe, potion heroism
4. +1 long sword, +1 chain mail, ring of feather falling
5. +1 ring of protection, boots of elf-kind
6. Bracers AC6, potion of healing
7. +1 short sword, +1 cloak of protection

SPELL BOOKS

#5. Affect normal fires; burning hands; detect magic; feather fall; magic missile; push; read magic; spider climb. Continual light; darkness 15' radius; detect evil; mirror image; stinking cloud; web. Clairaudience; fireball; flame arrow; hold person; slow.

#6. Comprehend languages; dancing lights; detect magic; friends; hold portal; identify; jump; read magic; shocking grasp; sleep. Audible glamer; esp; knock; scare; strength; wizard lock. Blink; dispel magic; feign death; gust of wind; infravision; lightning bolt; protection from normal missiles.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Characters of these levels should have no trouble obtaining standard exploring and traveling equipment. The DM should allow players to load their characters with as much *normal* gear as desired, pursuant to the encumbrance limits indicated by the guidelines.