

SAVAGE

Legends of the Burning Sands

version 1.0

Legend of the Burning Sands (c) Alderac Entertainment Group
Material extracted from the site 'The Abyss'
conversion by Marco Viggì

Copyright (c) 2005 Marco Viggì.
This is a no-profit work not intended to violate the rights
of anyone.
This document can be freely used as long as its content
remains unchanged and contains this text and conditions.

CHAPTER 1: SETTING

A Outlanders Guide to the Burning Sands

What follows is a basic outline of The Burning Sands history, culture and socio-political structure. The history is told in a narrative form to give you an idea of how the people of the Burning Sands view their past.

The First Age: Creation

In the beginning, there was only the Sun, the Moon and their children, the stars. They were alone, boundless within infinite space. This was the First Age of the World, and little of it can be comprehended by us. Eventually, they created the Jinn, who were the first to walk this place.

The Jinn were powerful, akin to gods themselves, and even after they created others to live within the world with them, they remained the most favoured children of Shilah and Kaleel, the Sun and Moon. Then, over a thousand years ago, the world was a verdant, lush place, with great seas and mountain ranges and forests as far as one could travel. The Jinn and their creations – the Ashalan and humanity – rejoiced in their newfound paradise.

The Second Age: The First Jinn War

The Second Age was to be granted to the Jinn, so that the gods would be able to retire back to their homes beyond the sky. The Jinn were offered great power, and tutored in its use. They were to be the gods of a new dawn. But something terrible occurred; many of the Jinn were not benevolent beings. Seizing the free will their creators had blessed them with, several of the most powerful Jinn, including their Champion, who had taken the name of the Moon, staged a coup against the gods. The Jinn Kaleel and his five brothers lashed out with their new strength, together toppling the Moon and casting him into an eternity of quiet slumber.

Other Jinn responded in kind. Striking without warning, a horde of them invaded the night sky, dousing thousands of stars and capturing the rest. Together, the Jinn imprisoned the evening heavens, quickly becoming more than a match for the few who would stop them. With the dawn, Shilah arrived to behold their crimes, and was horrified by what her beloved creations had become. In an instant, the shambling hordes of a new Kaleel descended upon her, trapping the Sun within a prison built of their awful face. Cut off from all that she had envisioned, and thinking her cherished family dead or destroyed, she quickly fell into madness, loosing her own power for the eager Jinn to collect. Within one cycle, Kaleel and his Legion had captured the world. Soon, they embarked on a campaign of terror, reducing their own

creations to subjects or slaves, or consuming them whole in a lustful rampage of destruction...

There were a few that opposed them, however.

Ashalan and human were forced to work together for the first time in history against a common foe – their own progenitors – with all creation at stake. Weapons were conceived and forged to fight the new menace, but few were effective, and countless lives were lost. At first, it seemed as if the Jinn were unstoppable, that the new Age really would be theirs to corrupt until nothing was left of the original vision of the Sun and Moon...

But twelve Ashalan refused to submit to the will of the Jinn. They conspired in secret, working with the most skilled humans to devise a way to fight back. Together, they discovered the secret of sandsmithing, and constructed swords made of crysteel, which could cut through the insubstantial bodies of the Jinn like flesh. Eventually, a human named Hakhim, aided by Lammassar, Katani, and others, stumbled upon a fabulous magic – a sigil made of light and smoke that formed a map of all known magic. Locked within its myriad revolving icons were the keys to understanding the nature of the Jinn and the gods that had created them. Hakhim's Seal became the focus of a new direction for the struggle.

The Seal also offered two new and startling revelations about the current war. First, it illustrated, in bold and amazing spectacle, how the efforts of the Jinn would eventually spread beyond our own lands, consuming everything until they were the only powers left, replacing deities of a lost age. Shilah, the sleeping Kaleel, their children in the night sky – all would perish so that the Jinn could revel in their self-depriving power. Second, the Seal offered a way to contact Shilah directly, to pierce through the wall of Jinn that murmured deceitfully in her ear each day, and opened her clenched eyes to the terrible truth of her creations' design.

The humans only sought a new ally in their fight against the Jinn, a way to end the awful cataclysm approaching. They never anticipated that their actions would urge it forward. Awakened from her lunacy, Shilah witnessed the Jinn through the veracity of the Seal, and – calling upon all the power keeping her sane – lashed out across the beautiful terrain she had brought into being. In one climactic moment, the world dissolved around the Jinn, Ashalan, and humans. Magic touched by her wrath was consumed to add to the destruction, ripped away from those who would carelessly use it for their own selfish desire. Minor beings – Jinn subsisting upon the land and within the air, and Ashalan both young and weak –

were obliterated in a flash of Shilah's grace. Those who thrived from magic and lived were forced out of Shilah's sight: the Ashalan fled into the earth, and the last thousand Jinn bound themselves into service with the humans or fled beyond the boundaries of our world.

Kaleel and his brothers, saved by the power stolen from the slumbering Moon, were severely weakened during the Day of Wrath. They attempted to escape but were hunted down by those whom they had tried to enslave, their citadel grounded and buried beneath the sands. With precious little strength left, they fell into a long sleep – like their father had before them – not to be seen again for hundreds of years. In time, the Young Races, who are eternally optimistic in their nature, assumed the Adversary and his brethren to be destroyed. One brother, Israk, refused to accept that Kaleel was dead and ventured into the Blighted Realms to find him.

The First Jinn War was over.

The Third Age: The Survivors

The survivors of Lady Sun's wrath wandered the barren lands for many days. Groups wandered outwards seeking lands that would support them, desperately looking for water and farmable land. Many died as they wandered the land of sand and sun.

One group wandered inland, confident that they would find salvation, that all the fertile land had not been destroyed. They indeed found fertile land, on the banks of a massive deep river that flowed from east to west. On the banks of this river the tribe built their first city, calling it Senpet, in honor of their leader who had brought them here.

Yet another group wandered northwest till they came across a fertile river delta, a part of the same mighty river that the fledgling Senpet Empire had found. Here they built their villages and set their farmlands. They tamed the camels and horses they found there and thanked Fate for delivering them to this place of peace.

A Time of Growth: the Golden Age

The Tribes of Senpet fared well, their cities growing in size and splendor. Huge pyramids began to dot the landscape of the Senpet cities, marking the tombs of their dead priest-kings. The Senpet also traded with the tribes to the west. The Senpet possessed incredible artists who created some of the Burning Sands' most dazzling paintings, jewelry, and pottery. They are also accredited with creating the first form of writing within the cultures of the Burning Sands. Their hieroglyphic writing was adopted by the more learned of the other cultures in order to record histories, legends, and important documents. Many tribal wise men traveled to the cities of the Senpet to learn the arts of writing.

The tribes to the west were perhaps the most prosperous of the cultures of the Burning Sands. Ruled by a person known as the Sultan, the Sultanate cities grew incredibly fast. The entire delta was taken under their control. Dozens of villages had grown up over the delta, with keeps protecting them. The capital itself grew in leaps and bounds. Nicknamed the City of One Thousand Stories, Medinat al-Salaam became the focal point of all trade for the Burning Sands. Ships from the lands of the Senpet regularly docked on its river port. Trade caravans routinely entered and left the massive gates of the merchant quarters, bringing horses, furs and copper, and taking back worked goods. The ruler of Medinat al-Salaam, the Sultan, declared his city the brightest gem in the Burning Sands and that all were welcome to trade, negotiate, and live.

It was during this period of growth, that a group of peaceful soothsayers and their families were exiled from Medinat al-Salaam. The exact reason for this exile was because the leader of the group, a person known as the Grey Woman, saw the current Sultan's son kill his father and family. She cursed him with immortality and the inability to ever use a weapon again. In revenge he had her and her family exiled. He blamed the deaths on the exiles and circulated it throughout the cities of the Sultanate and Senpet empires. Thus, no one would accept them in any city, seeing them as murderers and renegades. They left in large caravans, heading south into the deep desert.

It was also at this time that ships from a land to the distant west arrived, stating that they were the ambassadors of the Ivory Kingdoms. The diplomats presented the Sultan with works of ivory and volcanic glass that appealed to the most greedy. Trade negotiations were opened immediately.

The now immortal Sultan, pleased with the apparent success of his city and its merchants, declared it a golden age.

The Fall of the Dark God

It was but 50 years later that the immortal Sultan vanished into the miles of secret passages and rooms of the palace and city. His cousin took the throne and became ruler. Perhaps as an omen to his disappearance a star appeared in the sky, naked to the human eye even during the day when Lady Sun blazed in the heavens.

Senpet priests immediately declared it the light of Rha, their prime deity while the Sultan's priests and wise women declared the star a warning that darkness was coming.

Shortly after its appearance cults of death emerged, prophesizing doom and the coming of darkness and a new age of power.

In the sixth month of the star's life the night was brought as bright as day as the star expanded and then

vanished. A rumble was heard from the deep desert and the ground shook as if the ancient gods suddenly walked again. Hundreds died that night, some sacrificing themselves to their cults of death, others from fright and unknown causes. In the months that followed all seemed to return to normal, even though the prophets foretold of a Darkness that now walked the sands.

The Vengeful Sands

It began almost trivially. The Senpet were the first to notice it, as the desert seemed to move inwards on their cities and croplands. It was as if the desert seemed to now be alive with a life of its own, as if what ever had fallen from the heavens had imbued it with a dark, malignant force.

Then came the prophet known as the Shadowed One. A man of unknown origin he wandered in out of the desert claiming to be the voice of the Fallen God. He proclaimed that the Fallen God was the true creator of the people of the Burning Sands, not the Jinn as legend told. He proclaimed that the reason Lady Sun seared the land and held back the soothing rays of Lord Moon was because she was jealous of the Fallen God and wanted to destroy his children.

Many cities exiled him, but support for his teachings did occur. Small pockets of followers attempted to take control of cities and towns and for a time seemed to be gaining strength. Senpet and Sultanate towns became dedicated to the word of the Shadowed One.

The respective rulers of the two kingdoms declared war on the followers of the Shadowed One and over the following months the followers were routed out and butchered. Entire villages were flattened. It was during this crusade that armies of the Senpet ran across their first dark sorcerer. A small town of followers was discovered and its populace put to the sword. When it came to the destruction of their chief priest they found that he wielded incredible magics. Sword strokes bounced off him. Fire couldn't burn him. The priest screamed of the power of the Dark God. He taunted the Senpet legions and fled into the deep desert.

The rulers of the two kingdoms were noticeable shocked and disturbed by this discovery and set about discovering all they could about this Dark God.

It was at also at this time that a group calling itself the Ujik-hai became known to the Empire of the Senpet and the Sultanate. Fierce nomads, descended from the outcast soothsayers, these people rode mighty horse and raided many of the caravans of the two empires. They quickly became a force to be contended with, earning the enmity of the Senpet and the grudging respect of the Sultanate.

The Fourth Age: the Journey of the Ki-Rin

They came from across the Southern Mountains fifty years after the beginning of the Fourth Age. They

wore strange armor, spoke a tongue none could understand, flew a flag of a horned horse, and didn't seem to understand the way of the desert.

The Ujik-hai came down out of the steppes, lead by a young woman know as Martazera, and engaged these strange people. Several battles occurred till the leader of the strangers came forth to do battle. Dozens of people died by the leader's hand alone and the Ujik-hai fell back fearful of the power of the strangers. Over the course of the next weeks, several Ujik-hai journeyed to the strangers in order to make peace and teach them the ways of the desert and steppes. They learned that the strangers called themselves the clan of the Ki-Rin and hailed from a distant land called Rokugan, far to the south beyond the Great Barrier Mountains.

The Darkness Grows

Time passed almost uneventfully. A few assassinations within Medinat al-Salaam occurred, perpetrated by a group known simply as the Assassins. Lead by a person know as the Old Man of the Mountain, who in reality was the immortal ex-sultan, the assassins would become one of the dark tales of the great city.

The Senpet cities were still slowly being devoured by the desert and its people journeying to Medinat al-Salaam to start new lives away from the ever encroaching sands.

Several scouts reported that large hostile creatures had been spotted in desert, preying on caravans, small groups of travellers and tribes of nomads. Named giants because of thier immense size, these vile creatures seemed to take pleasure in pain and torture and it was rumoured that they had a dark city deep in the desert where they kept hundreds of slaves for mining silver and copper, as well as to entertainment them and feed them.

Within the cities of the Sultanate another evil reared its ugly head. Deep in the sewers and ruins of sunken cisterns and ancient passageways came a race known as Ghuls. They fed on flesh, fresh or dead, finding it wherever they could. Some crept up into the city looking for live bodies to take, especially children.

The clan of the Ki-Rin stayed with the Ujik-hai for nearly a hundred years, teaching them their ways while learning of the desert. When they decided to leave they traveled further west, taking with them the blessings and warnings of the Ujik-hai, as well as a large number of tribesmen who had joined their clan and formed a new family within it called the Moto.

The remaining Ujik-hai split into two factions. The more militant, the Moto, continued their life as raiders, striking at caravans from hidden oasis. The second, peaceful faction took the name of Ra'Shari and wandered into the deep desert, becoming nomads,

traders, storytellers and keepers of the amassed knowledge of history.

The Coming of the Dark God

The Dark God finally made his presence known to the Burning Sands by sending out a vast army of evil creatures. Giants, Ghuls, skeletons, mummies and other things terrible to behold lay siege to the cities of the Burning Sands. Hundreds died and were enslaved. Even with the combined armies of the Senpet and Sultanate and the tribes of the Moto forged into a single fighting force, the minions of the Dark God were steadily reaching out to claim all.

It was as the inner cities were starting to fall that a man called Mekhem appeared out of nowhere proclaiming that he could stop the Dark God and his forces. He walked out onto the battlefield and into the army of the Dark God. He calmly declared that he would face the Dark God on his own ground and defeat him there. The general of the army laughed and took the man to the Dark God.

The people of the cities shook their heads, knowing that the man was destined for a gruesome and horrible death at the hands of the Dark God. They took hope, though, from the man's courage and in some outer areas, the man's sacrifice bred faith in the human spirit.

As the forces of the Dark God pressed their attack a new fever ran through the human armies. Bolstered by the sacrifice of one man for the greater good, they surged forward to destroy their foe, even though the battle seemed fated to be lost.

The Journey of the Prophet Mekhem

No one is sure what the man who became known as the Prophet experienced on his journey into the heart of the Dark God's forces. One legend told tells of a journey of pain and suffering that he endured till finally he reached the Dark God's castle. Here he endured all the tortures of the Dark God till finally the Evil One let him go impressed that man had such spirit.

Another legend tells of a long journey through strange places, each with a riddle that had to be solved. As he answered each, another piece of the Dark God's power was destroyed till finally he sealed the Dark One within his own fortress deep in the desert.

What really happened has been a contention among the enlightened Priests of the Prophet for untold decades and will probably continue to be so for many more. Only two men in all the Burning Sands know the truth. The head of the Faith of the Prophet and the Prophet Mekhem himself.

The Prophet was from a distant land known as Theah. There he'd been heralded as the head of their religion, a messenger of their God, Theus. But he soon realized that his presence there was causing confusion and dissention among nobles and religious groups and so

he left, journeying to a land he'd only heard of in legends, in order to bring the Word of Theus to what he believed was a godless place. What he found were a proud people who were both civilized and fiercely independent. He brought Gods' word, but in the beginning none would listen. When the Dark God attacked he recognized it as Legion, the Dark One of his religion and took it upon himself to go forth and destroy its presence on this earth. His trip was long, stretching across the desert dunes into the heart of the Great Dune Sea. Here they came across a massive crater, surrounded by mountains and three volcanoes. Smoke drifted from the tops of these great mounts, and the future Prophet shivered as he felt the dark cold emanating from the place.

The Darkness Revealed

Within the great crater lay a massive citadel, carved of ebony stone and black volcanic glass. Creatures of darkness wandered the plains of the crater and fell flying beasts nested in its walls. He passed into the citadel and soon stood in the throne room of the Dark God.

He confronted the high priest of the Dark God and brought forth the power and truth of Theus.

It is said that the light could be seen from all around and when it was gone all that remained was a ruined castle in which lay a massive stone of ebon with Mekhem standing before it.

He stepped closer and within its depths he could see something sleeping. Something dark. Something powerful.

Nodding, Mekhem knew that he'd only managed to trap the essence of Legion in the stone and it would need to be protected by the strong of heart, soul and mind. He sent word home and outwards to the lands of the Burning Sands for people to come and assist him.

Dozens paid heed to the call of Mekhem, taking the Ritual of the Ebon Stone, becoming protectors of the Ebon Stone, the most persistent of these were the men and women who once served the Dark God, held under its sway by the power they'd unleashed when they started to worship it. They proclaimed that they and their descendants would cleanse the world of evil as repayment for their crimes.

Mekhem himself wandered the lands of the Burning Sands for many years before finally returning to the Ebonite Stronghold and, according to Ebonite legend, ascending to heaven.

Among the people of the Burning Sands, especially those of the Sultanate, Moto, and Ra'Shari, Mekhem was a holy figure who spawned an entire religion. A religion followed as fiercely now as it was then.

The Return of the Ki-Rin

Two hundreds years had passed since the day the Clan of the Ki-Rin had left the Ujik-hai.

For all that time the descendants know as the Moto have been waiting for their return. The White Guard were the first to see the darkness on the horizon, hear the sounds of screams on the wind and see the evil slowly rise from the ground. The darkness of the Shadowlands slowly made its way across the mountains to assault the Burning Sands as Fu-leng, the Dark Kami made his bid for power and control. It was the Day of Thunder, as seven heroes made their way into the dark lands of Fu-leng to destroy his power. The undead, demons and fell things of the Shadowlands attacked the White Guard of the Moto with ferocity matched only by the White Guard's own tenacity and combat skill. Days of cat and mouse games in the deserts and mountain passes eventually saw the retreat of the Shadowlands forces. Shinjo herself then reappeared with the Unicorn, the descendants of the Ki-Rin. They fought alongside the White Guard Moto in the final battle, a battle in which Shinjo lost her weapon and then vanished, saying that she would return.

The Khan of the Moto took up the sword and has carried it since then, passing it to his son and so forth through the ages.

The Birth of the Tyrant

The child that would grow up to rule the city of Medinaat al-Salaam with an iron fist was initially quite benign, her worst traits a touch of the dangerously curious and a healthy fear of death. These two pre-eminent facets of her personality would dominate her actions throughout her adolescence, and would - through the malignant warping of the Senpet Book of the Dead - form the foundation for her mindset into the present day.

Soon after her discovery of the Book, her father was murdered in the Residential Quarter of the city, left to bleed to death. The girl was "adopted" by the Merchant King that had employed her father, the estate she had lived in her whole life absorbed into his holdings. Her works of art were sold off at auction, and she is said to have wept a week for each lost memory. The King was a stern guardian, protective and sheltering. He refused to allow her the time she had always enjoyed alone, forcing her to study the arts of refinement and courtship instead.

He told her that she would make a fine wife one day, and that she would fetch a handsome price at market. She hated him. She despised him for every harsh word he said about her dead father, for every loose comment he made about her, and for the one time he ever mentioned her mother.

She was eighteen, and had been secretly learning the language of the Senpet from one of the servants that had raised her as a child. He had come to her room every night to tutor her, often until well after dawn. Soon, they were conversing, and soon after that, she

was reading from the Book, the only item she had managed to hide from the vile Merchant King's greed. It contained many discourses on the nature of what comes after the end of life. Where you go, what you do, who you meet, and how your final fate is determined. She feverishly read every word as if it had come from the mouth of Lady Sun Herself, though she knew that statements this true could never have come from Her. No, Lady Sun did not cherish truth. She knew that now. Lady Sun valued deception, drenched in the juice of sweet olives.

More revelations followed. She found that death was not such an honourable, or even desirable, thing. Those that died passed on into a dark land of judgement and arbitrary punishment by ten thousand gods that warred with one another endlessly, needlessly. There, you were only one small soul, a tool to be used by other, terrifying beings of immense power and angry dispositions.

As she read, she found herself immersed in the world of Enala, the dark afterlife that she had been taught to believe was where evil people go after death. But it was twisted by the foreign cosmology of the Book of the Dead, recreated as an alien hell where nothing human mattered anymore.

Yet there was something she could do about it. And on a night only days before she would have been auctioned, she struck. The Merchant was berating her in her chambers after she had "impudently" referred to one of his associates as a "revolting, boil-ridden ghul". "How dare you!" he screamed. "What role do you think you play here?" His face loomed too closely to hers, sweat gleaming from his brow and in-between the rolls of fat on his neck. "You... are property. To be sold like so much meat."

She fingered a knife her servant-friend had given her one night after the Merchant had beaten her. Hidden behind the curtain she was pressed against, she could draw it with only a single moment's regard.

"In one week," the fat Merchant continued, "you will belong to someone else. Why, I'm half inclined to *give* you to our mutual friend, the 'ghul'. Perhaps he would be motivated to teach you some manners...

"...or at least derive some small pleasure before tossing you into the river."

He raised his hand and began to twirl a lock of her hair in-between his chubby fingers. "So beautiful, and yet so grandly impudent... just like your mother..."

"What would you know of my mother, cow?" She cursed at him.

"More than you would think... slave." He smiled and blinked irreverently. "Who do you think sold her to your father?"

With a maniacal scream of anguish, she lunged forward, imbedding the knife into his sternum. She could feel his ribcage collapse beneath her as they

toppled over, and she jerked the knife free and stabbed him again. And again. And again, until there were no more hateful words left upon his lips, or more struggle from his corpulent body. Working quickly, she ripped open his tunic and began carving. It took longer than she would have expected to dig out the swollen organ, and when she lifted it before her, her impression was of a huge, rotten pomegranate.

Looking across the room at the location of her hidden tome, she laughed. With his heart and a little effort, she would be able to mold Enala into whatever he feared the most. And while his anguish within this personal hell would be immeasurable, he was only the first of many, many more...

It is said that the Senpet Book of the Dead is a wellspring for the human mind - that it contains not only historical and philosophical notes of the glory of the Senpet Empire (spanning back some 800 - 1500 years), and a plethora of magical and metaphysical knowledge, but also an indeterminate element that allows its contents to be "adopted" by the reader, allowing him or her to form new concepts and create new effects with every read. The concept of a "living book" has largely been disputed, however, by those not within the astrological or mathematical fields.

Yet a great many sahir and Senpet Thinkers still believe. Regardless, the future Tyrant managed to take something away from the experience of reading the Book, and forge it into the Ceremony of the Hidden Heart, which has allowed her to create many undead thralls from the remains of her enemies. She named them Khadi, which translates as "servants", or "slaves". Since that day, she has managed to create dozens of them, with hundreds more being slaughtered along the way.

The Shadow of the Tyrant

Ruled by a benevolent family of nobles, who lived in a grand palace carved from the earth itself, Medinaat al-Salaam had been at peace for just over 200 years. The Sultan and his family were even-handed, and kind, having realised the mistakes of the past, and how to correct them. They had bright eyes for the future.

But something changed with the arrival of the Tyrant and her corps of Khadi. The Tyrant took the title of Caliph and it was rumoured that the Prince himself courted her. But disaster struck, when the Prince murdered his own father. The Caliph had him executed as an example.

A new Sultan was appointed, recommended personally by the Caliph. He governed as best he could, but many claimed he was nothing more than a figurehead and that the Caliph was the one true voice of law in the city. The loudest of these soon followed the Prince, however, and those that remained came to

think twice before speaking against the Caliph when their words could be repeated, or remembered.

Not very long after that, the Khadi began policing the streets as enforcers of the Sultan's law. Again, those that complained mysteriously disappeared, leaving no one with the will to oppose them.

Legends, Alliances, and Plots

For three hundred years did the Caliph rule from behind the scenes, making sure that she remained in power. She sired several children who became prominent businessmen and nobles of the smaller cities that surrounded Medinaat al-Salaam.

It was early in her reign when the Ashalan were spotted once again. An ancient race from the 1st Age, it became rumored that the Ashalan had a massive city deep in the depths of the earth under the City of One Thousand Stories itself. A rumor led credence by the number of Ashalan spotted in the following years. All of them seemed to be hunting for something or someone. Those who talked with the strange creatures tended to walk away confused and not all together the same anymore.

This was also the period that the Qabal was formed as a rebellious order of sahir who opposed the Caliph and her slave-sorcerers, the khadi. These Qabal took aide from the various merchant princes, know collectively as the House of Dahab, in order to further their cause of taking down the Caliph. The Houses of Dahab, followed a rather different line of thought though. The Houses had long been the home of an ancient society known as the Qolat. Bent on the destruction of all sorcerous powers and such so that mortal man could live and decide upon his own destiny instead of having various deific powers make the choice for him, the Houses plotted against all beings of such power, and nothing delighted them more that putting one sorcerous group against another. To combat this new rebellious faction of sahir and merchants, the Caliph made a bittersweet alliance with the Senpet Empire. In return for the right to move massive parts of their population to the city, they would provide guards for the Caliph. Guards to patrol the city and deal with the unwelcome elements.

Today

And so it has been for three hundred more years. The Caliph and her heartless mages never get any older, and no one is bold enough to question why. Sultans have come and gone, yet always they seem amenable to the Caliph's wishes. Trade and alliances with those outside the city has, until recently, dwindled, leaving no new blood to challenge the old.

Raiders, pirates, and other outsiders have always plagued the city, and little has ever been done to stop them. But recently, it would seem that the Caliph has taken an interest in foreign affairs. Last year, a large army of well trained men and women entered the

burning sands from the north. Known as the Yodatai, they are perhaps the strongest military faction to enter the Burning Sands since the time of the Ki-Rin. These Yodatai have conquered small towns here and there and even sent two of their legions to camp outside the City of Stories itself, trading foreign steel and silver for water and food. The Caliph has made negotiations with these foreigners, but the extent of the agreements is unknown.

Open trade agreements with the various Ivory Kingdoms has finally begun to bring wealth back to the city, in the form of both water and material treasure such as gold, and silver.

Meanwhile, the Caliph, perhaps afraid that others would learn enough to challenge her necromantic army, has made several curious (and oddly open) orders. All of the libraries in the city have been shut down, and most burned to the ground. No practitioners of magic outside her own Khadi are legally allowed within city limits. And tithes are rising at an unprecedented rate, including not only copper denari but water, a far more valuable resource in these perilous days.

All this has done little to prevent visitors from bringing books and sahir into the city. Senpet Astrologers and Moto Traders smuggle information and items from beyond city limits every day, much of which falls into the hands of a growing number of people unhappy with the Caliph's totalitarian rule. The renegade sahir of the Qabal hide in corners and back rooms, summoning Jinn and casting spells to aid the cause, but many wonder if they are instead ushering in magical annihilation and not revolution.

The resistance to the Caliph and her inhuman soldiers is growing. The city is tiring of the yoke. Soon, it will rise up in force to stand against her oppressive control. Every day, new heroes are being born - in the stables of persecution, under the wing of abusive guidance, and in the hollow halls of autocracy. Their lives will decide the fate of the world, for a growing feeling of change is happening, and all can feel it.

The Cultures of the Burning Sands

The Senpet

Where the red flag with black scarab flies, one finds the Senpet. One of the ancient human cultures, the Senpet are a hardy people with a culture that seems similar to that of Rokugan's from the exterior.

The Senpet are broken into a caste structure that is very similar to that of Rokugan. Above all is the Pharaoh. He in turn has a royal family. Various noble families also exist, ruling the small cities, towns and villages. Next in the pecking order are the Sun Priests and Death Priests. Considered second to the nobles gives them great power over the people. Then comes of warrior caste, which is comprised of two lots. The

calvary and charioteers, who are the sons of the nobles, and the common foot soldiers, who are peasants who have joined to better their lives and that of their families. The peasants are on the bottom of the ladder and as such do all the labour needed.

This is where the similarities end though.

In the Senpet lands a peasant is actually beneath notice and can be killed just to amuse a lord or lady. Unlike Rokugan, where such acts would be deemed un-samurai like and could offend certain lord, in the Senpet lands this is not so. Entire villages have been wiped out just in order to better the training of a noble's personal army. The only saving grace of this practice is that the Senpet seem to have an abundance of commoners within their cities.

Typical commoner families can easily have eight to twelve children and parents frequently sell their youngest children to nobles for slave labour.

Slavery exists in the Senpet civilization. Slaves tend to be criminals, captured nomads as well as anyone else that is deemed unneeded in the greater scheme of things. Slaves are treated worse than the Rokugani eta, often dying of exposure, lack of food and over exertion while working.

The Moto, Ujik-hai and Ra'Shari

Across the arid wastes of the Burning Sands lie dozens of oases. Each of these can sustain life for years and years. Stories and legends abound of several massive hidden oasis fed valleys. It is in these valleys that the lands are windswept plains with rocky outcroppings and winding shallow rivers. Flora and fauna flourishes across these temperate valley floors. It was here the people known as the Ujik-hai first came and flourished.

The Ujik-hai were a simple people, content with life in their hidden oasis. When the clan of the Ki-Rin arrived they adopted many of their ways. After the Ki-Rin left, two factions rose to content with each other. The militant Moto and the benign Ra'Shari. A man known as a Khan, a powerful warrior who commanded absolute loyalty of his followers, ruled the Moto. He decided that the Moto would raid the deserts for what was needed. That the oasis would provide them with a home hidden from the others and that they would repay the "kindness" shown to them in the past with their lightning raids and attacks. The Ra'Shari are perhaps one of the most benign cultures of the Burning Sands. They found the idea abhorrent and so left their brethren and journeyed out into the deep desert. Since then the tales of Ra'Shari trade caravans and their leader, an enigmatic old woman know always as the Grey Woman, have stretched across the lands of sun and sand.

For the Moto, life became drastically similar to that of the Rokuganese clan that molded them. As time passed they split into two factions themselves, each

dedicated to a different duty. The Moto themselves raided the caravans of any who would travel the sands, even their once brothers the Ra'Shari. Operating out of hidden oases, the Moto strike fast and hard, vanishing into the sands as quickly as they appear. They take no prisoners and leave no survivors. Each Moto oasis is governed by man called a tar-Khan, a powerful warrior of the ruling family who are descended from the original Ki-Rin. The Khan listens to his tar-Khans intently, knowing that they are his ears and eyes to the people and the land.

Unlike Rokugan, there is no separate warrior caste among the Moto. Anyone who owns a weapon can join the warrior caste and fight.

The second group are known as the White Guard, and it is they who stand the borders between Rokugan and the Ivory Kingdoms, watching for travelers from either empire entering the Burning Sands. The White Guard and the Moto have sporadic contact at best and the White Guard are closer to being like their Rokugani cousins than the Moto are.

The Ra'Shari are a nomadic people, wandering the deserts with their caravans. They are said to know the location of all the oases in the Burning Sands, as well as all the ruins of the First and Second Age. It is also said that they are the chroniclers of the history of the Burning Sands, remembering and writing down everything that has, is and will transpire. Ra'Shari soothsayers are eagerly sought after by many in the cultures of the Burning Sands.

The Ra'Shari travel in large extended family caravans. Trading with small towns as they trek from location to location. Each caravan is ruled over by the eldest woman and all the Ra'Shari are ruled by the enigmatic Grey Woman, eldest of the eldest.

The Sultanate

Medinat al-Salaam, the City of One Thousand Stories, the Jewel of the Desert. This is the home of the Sultanate. Though the city is the largest of Sultanate's holdings, it is not the only one, as the river delta to the east and west of the city is under the rule of the Sultan and the Caliph as well. The largest of all the cities in the Burning Sands, easily three times the size of the Senpet capitol and twice that of Otosan-uchi, capitol of the Empire of Rokugan, Medinat al-Salaam sits astride a massive river that connects it to the other cultures of the Burning Sands.

The people of the Sultanate are ruled by a figure known as a Sultan. This is only position of power that can be held by a woman within the Sultanate culture. Though rare, Sultanas have ruled the lands on occasion. Beneath the Sultan is Caliph, but most know that the Caliph is the real power behind the throne. After her are the Khadi, the nobility, and clergy, then the merchants and landowners and finally the peasants on the bottom. Slaves also exist, but are considered

good only for manual labor, arena fighting and, in the case of young women, toys.

Of interest is the group known as the Assassins. They have been cursed, and the curse affects every male member of the family. A curse that prevents them from being able to hold a blade. As such, the inconceivable has occurred. The women have taken the role of assassin, and learned the arts of death, donning the black robes and taking up the ancient knives of vengeance, following the schemes of generations to return their tribe once more to their rightful place in the sun. This is of course inconceivable to the men of the Sultanate, as their society really doesn't have a place for women except in the place of child bearers and keepers of the homes.

Ivory Kingdoms

Far to the west lie a ridge of tall mountains, and beyond them is a lush land of jungles, savannahs, and grasslands. This is the home of the Ivory Kingdoms, a loose collection of lands each ruled by a Maharajah, the equivalent of a king or prince. The Ivory Kingdoms frequently bicker with each other over territory, resources and people. While over all they are a peaceful land, the occasional war has flowed across their lands in the past.

Within the Ivory Kingdoms exists a secret cult of death known as the Thuggee. Worshipers of the Goddess Kali, they seek to bring about her emergence through what they term holy work. This holy work is simply the strangulation of a victim. In their homelands they are persecuted and have almost been wiped out. In response to this they summoned an avatar of their Goddess, called Kali-ma, and with it at their head, left the Ivory Kingdoms and came to the Burning Sands. Many village oases have felt the power of the Kali-ma and its followers, and many of the cult are within the City of One Thousand Stories, practicing their art and waiting for the arrival of their Goddess.

The Sultanate hosts dozens of trade ships from the Ivory Kingdoms each day, as they bring in ivory, volcanic glass, exotic foods and slaves, and taking back copper and silver. The various kingdoms see the Burning Sands as a useful ally.

Yodatai

They arrived barely a decade ago, a vast army on the northern edge of the Sands. Well equipped and heavily armed, they marched across the sands, conquering town after town. Each one was given a simple choice. Live as citizens of the Yodatai Empire, or flee into the desert. Those towns that fled found their towns turning into encampments and used as staging points for the armies of the Yodatai. Those villages that acquiesced were left largely to themselves.

The Yodatai hail from a continent to the North known as Theah. They are the remnants of an ancient faction who split from the rest of their original empire in order to strike out on their own.

While their cousins have evolved in the regards of culture, learning and magic, the Yodatai stayed stagnant, keeping what worked as their status quo. Today they would be seen as barbarians at best in the civilized nations of Theah.

While envoys of the Yodatai have reached the Sultanate and Senpet, most are simply requests for surrender. The various cultures of the Sands, while recognizing the might of the Yodatai army, ignore these requests.

Of note, though is that members of the Yodatai army have been spotted in Medinat al-Salaam of late. Evidently the Caliph and Sultan have allowed the General of the Yodatai and a legion of his army into the city as "guests".

Ashalan

For a thousand years they have remained hidden from the other cultures of the Burning Sands. Only in the last few decades have the enigmatic race known as the Ashalan come back into the public eye.

The average Ashalan is a tall man or woman with pale skin though which show luminescent veins of blue. As they use their magical powers, the veins glow.

Ashalan are said to live in a city deep in the depths of the earth under Medinat al-Salaam. This fabled city, known as the City of the Seven Stars houses the last of the Ashalan, as the rest have been killed and lost to time.

Ashalan are said to be searching the lands of Burning Sand for four artifacts of great power, holdovers from the 1st Age. It is said that these artifacts will help guide them to a noble future where they no longer have to hide from the wrath of Lady

The Others

There are other factions operating within the Burning Sands, each worth being mentioned. While not actual cultures, they none the less have incredible impact on the society of the Burning Sands.

Jackals

They are perhaps the direst thing to arise in the depths of the great city since the arrival of the Caliph and her Khadi.

No one is sure when the first of these strange people first arrived in Medinat al-Salaam, all they do know is that the Jackals feed on the souls of the living, sucking them out of their victims like a man would sip on a glass of water.

Jackals are the men and women who fail the Ritual of the Black Stone, the Ebonite ritual of purification and dedication. For some reason they are found wanting and the Dark God takes a part of their very soul as his

own. The creature becomes dependent on the essence of the soul, needing it to live. Most also become servants of the Dark God, carrying out its orders.

Houses of Dahab - Qolat

When the Jinn were finally beaten back at the end of the 1st Age, many decided that man should not be ruled by the deific powers that be. They decided that man should rule his own destiny and future. Man should not be dictated to by the immortal ancients and should be able to decide its own fate.

To this end, they formed a secret group known as the Qolat. The meaning of the name has been lost in the centuries since the founding of the organisation, but the intent and purpose is still there.

Qolat are staunch supporters of anything that will free man from the chains of in-equality and the might of the celestial powers, such as Jinn, sahir and even the Ashalan.

As time passed, the Qolat soon realised that money and water controlled man, thus if they controlled that, what better way to steer man away from the celestial and back to the mortal. Sadly this thinking created one of the most powerful factions of the Burning Sands. The Houses of Dahab.

Each house is run by a merchant prince, all of which can trace their lineage back to the original founders.

It is rumoured that the Houses support Moto and Ra'Shari efforts in the Burning Sands, sending them water, food and equipment.

Celestial Alliance - Jinn

When the first free Jinn decided to flee the tyranny and slavery of man after the Day of Wrath they took service as equals with hermit magicians. They whispered power into their lords' ears and when their lords died, they took on the guise of the mortal in order to remain hidden until the time is right.

As time passed they sought out and freed a number of their brethren. Soon they realised that a place to live away from the humans was needed. So a city was created to house them. Floating some distance of the ground, the Jinn city remains hidden at this point, its location known only to a select few in order to protect it from the dark Jinn and humans.

Rakshasa

Fleeing persecution and possibly extinction in their homelands of the Ivory Kingdoms, these beings have taken up residence in a small section of the city.

There are few of the Rakshasa left today, perhaps ten in all. They are solitary unless mating and tend to like to manipulate things to their advantage whenever possible.

Rakshasa are evil and highly intelligent beings, part demon, part angel and part fate all rolled into one.

In the Ivory Kingdoms they were worshipped as gods and hunted to almost extinction as demons.

Assassins

Deep in the walls of the City of One Thousand Stories lie many different secrets. The most dire and dark of all of them are the Assassins.

Descendants of the cursed Sultan of so many hundreds of years ago and lead by that very man himself, immortal due to the curse, the Assassins are some of the most skilled killers in the Burning Sands.

The one thing that marks the Assassins is the number of women who wield blades within its ranks. This is seen as almost a heresy in the rather anti-feminist culture of the Sultanate.

The Assassins use this to the very effective ends of their profession. Many men have died from the blade held by a young attractive woman who was supposed to be a toy for the night.

Ghuls

Undead. It conjures forth gruesome images from the reaches of anyone's mind. Shambling hordes of evil things moving towards you at an ungainly gait, moaning and dropping bits of themselves as they come closer.

Ghuls are the worst of the undead. Intelligent ones and not the mindless horrors left by the Jackals and other necromancers that haunt the undercity of Medinat al-Salaam.

The Ghuls are largely a mystery to all learned men. It is impossible to infiltrate them, as they are all dead so any information is gathered from tales, legends, hearsay and rumour. Most contradict themselves, citing cities, hovels, cults and similar such things as the organisation of the Ghuls.

What is known is that the Ghuls eat flesh, alive or dead. They will attack small animals and children as well as the helpless, wounded and sick or infirm.

Ebonites

When the Prophet Mekhem ascended from this plane to the next, he left behind a legacy. The Ebon Stone. Within this stone sleeps the Dark God, or at least a part of its essence.

Mekhem knew this and brought together the stragglers of the Dark Gods army as well as members of his own people from far off lands and created the Ritual of the Ebon Stone.

When a prospective Ebonite, someone who desires to protect the Burning Sands from evil and darkness, wish to become a member of the sacred brotherhood, he must undergo the Ritual. No one talks of what the ritual actually is, but it is known that it is a test of the soul to withstand the dark and evil that waits hungrily for all.

Some fail and flee into the night, either dying of exposure or joining the group known as the Jackals. Those that pass become full-fledged members of the Ebonites.

In its initial time of creation the Ebonites were a thing of good, protecting the innocent, but as time passed, they started to adopt more strong armed tactics.

Today the Ebonites are seen to be almost as bad as the things that they hunt and kill.

Qabal

When the Caliph took over and began her dynasty of power and tyranny, she unfortunately also created her worst nemesis. The Qabal.

Comprised of renegade men and women of learned quality as well as a great amount of sahirs, the Qabal seeks to destroy the Caliph's hold over the people of the Sultanate.

The Qabal are secretly funded by the Houses of Dahab, who seek to have the two groups destroy each other by playing them off against each other.

The Qabal's goals are rather simple. To have the shelves of the libraries restocked with the scrolls, and books of knowledge taken from them. To allow the people once more the ability to learn to read and write. Also to see the evil that is the Caliph removed from power and the khadi put down into their graves.

Women

Within the cultures of the Burning Sands women are a controversial thing. While in the lands of the Sultanate they are treated as little better than chattel, often used as pawns in games of power, in the cultures of the Senpet, Ashalan, Moto, and Ra'Shari they are treated as equals.

Such diversity between the Sands most prosperous center of life and the various cultures that support it and use it to support themselves is a matter of much contrition, as noble ladies and swordmistresses are often insulted, ignored and even attacked because they are women pretending to be men. The following gives a better look at each culture's view.

Senpet

Within the Senpet nation women are treated as mere child bearers and home keepers, much like those of the lands of the Sultanate. The only exception is within the nobility. The second and third daughters of noble families are always sent to the guard to learn how to defend their cities along side the second and third sons.

If the woman decides to marry after her tenure within the guard she may do so with impunity. If she decides to continue her career in the military she is also allowed to do so.

Moto & Ra'Shari

The Moto women are free to pursue anything they choose in their life. Indeed, a woman can aspire to be leader of her town, head of her town's guard, even a member of the Khan's council. Among the Khan's family it is possible for the daughters to assume

leadership of the entire Moto culture, a fact that has been realized several times in the past.

The Ra'Shari hold their elder women in reverence, as they see them as depositories of knowledge. Ra'Shari women always seem to outlive the men.

Sultanate

The Sultanate has the most restrictive laws governing women in the entire Burning Sands. Among the Sultanate a woman has no rights and is merely the keeper of the family and house. The bearer of the children and the hostess for guests. Older women are sometimes regarded as fonts of wisdom, assuming a position known as a Hakima. A Hakima is treated with reverence and respect, sought out for the knowledge that they have accumulated over the years. The daughters of nobles are perhaps the saddest of all. Among the upper classes the women are pampered and looked after like fine china dolls. Each is groomed to be the ultimate vision of beauty, poise, and purity. The perfect wife for a nobleman. Of all noblewomen only those who are the first born of a Sultan can hope of possessing any power. They alone can hope to attain the position of Sultana.

Despite all this, many women turn to a life of adventure in strict disobedience of the their parents wishes. The child is often disowned in public, but privately still accepted by the family. Such women are regarded as an anomaly in the way of life and many men often regard them as merely other males, ignoring their feminine looks. The life of such a woman can be exasperating as in public most frown upon their life style while in secret it is the stuff of stories and legends.

Ashalan

Ashalan women are treated the same a Ashalan males. Once they were revered, because the Ashalan reproduction rate was so small, with single children being born every hundred or so years at a time.

There has not been a new Ashalan child in close to a thousand years.

Ivory Kingdoms

No one is sure how the various nations that make up the Ivory Kingdoms treat their women. Women have come across with trade caravans and ships participating in the same activities as males, but only in very small numbers. It is assumed that the Ivory Kingdoms treat their women with much the same respect as that of the Moto.

Yodatai

The Yodatai are an military camp that is slowly moving forward, capturing territory as it goes. The few women of note in the Yodatai army are warriors and commanders of legions. Any other females are used for cooking, treating wounded, clothes making, etc, and of course keeping the soldiers happy at night.

Women in the Yodatai's homeland are evidently treated like the men, but this is hard to prove as no has been to the Yodatai homeland and returned.

ꠘ ꠎobles life

Senpet

Within the Senpet society a noble is the pinnacle of breeding. He or she is given an education, taught to use a weapon, deal with outsiders and the proper ways of etiquette. Senpet nobles can often be found lazing in large cool stone chambers, quietly watching slaves entertain them.

Young nobles are all required to learn the arts of war as well as the arts of the court. Trained almost from birth in these noble arts, the youngsters grow up well trained and knowing of the world around them. Senpet nobles favor the first-born sons and daughters of their families, concentrating their education on more courtly matters than warrior matters. These sons and daughters are married off to each other in order to produce more noble children.

Nobles control all of the Senpet higher court functions. Scribes, priests, researchers, generals, and officers are all nobles.

Moto & Ra'Shari

The Moto have but one noble family, that of the Khan. This family operates much like the noble families of the Greater Clans in Rokugan.

The Ra'Shari are not concerned with such things and so have no 'noble' families.

Sultanate

The Sultanate has many nobles, all within various levels of society. From the common town lord to the Sultan himself, the nobles of the Sultanate are perhaps the richest and most decadent of their caste in the Burning Sands.

The Sultan's direct family is pampered from birth, groomed to be in command. The nobles beneath him similarly raise their children the same way. When born, the parents decide what the child shall become and thus have him education to meet that purpose.

Many male children are raised to be warriors as well as perform some other function of noble society. Daughters can only be one thing, though. Gifts to cement alliances. Child bearers and home keepers. The lucky few manage to learn a few warrior skills, such as swordplay, but in the end they rarely need it.

Nobles stand above the commoners and are able to dish out punishment as they see fit to the commoners. Though not as harsh as Rokugan, nobles of the Sultanate can have people publicly flogged, hands cut off and similar humiliation bestowed upon someone they believe has slighted them.

Ashalan

It is not known if the Ashalan have a noble class of citizens among themselves. They are certainly all of

regal bearing and look. Perhaps only the nobles come to the surface and deal with the people of the Burning Sands.

Ivory Kingdoms

Like the Sultanate, the Ivory Kingdoms possess a rather obvious noble class of people. These nobles rule their peasants with a mixture of iron fist tactics and velvet gloves depending on the area and noble. Most are of the former rather than the latter.

Yodatai

The nobles of the Yodatai are all presumed to be the generals and commanders of the invading legions. It is known that the nobles can buy their commission and that they also frequently buy their legions.

A Commoners life

Senpet

The Senpet commoner can be likened to those of Rokugan. They work long hard hours in order to provide for their lords and nobles. Unlike Rokugan commoners, Senpet commoners actually own property. They own their houses, livestock, and all within.

A commoner's life revolves around basic skills. Farming, fishing, papermaking, building, painting, etc. Nobles delegate the tasks to them.

Moto & Ra'Shari

All task of life are done by the Moto and Ra'Shari on mass. All such tasks are considered vital and as such they are done and shared by all.

Sultanate

Commoners are the staple of life and backbone of the city. They perform all tasks that the nobles would never touch. They clean the streets, check the cisterns, farm, hunt, trade, and a plethora of other tasks.

Ashalan

Because it is not know if the Ashalan actually divide their people in a noble and commoner class, it is hard to tell what a commoners life would be like in the City of Seven Stars.

Ivory Kingdoms

The Ivory Kingdom commoners live lives that are very similar to the Sultanate.

Yodatai

As with the Ivory Kingdoms and Sultanate, commoners of the Yodatai Empire are the backbone of their existence. Like the Sultanate slavery exists in the Yodatai Empire.

Language

A variety of languages are spoken among those of the Burning Sands. The most commonly accepted language is s'Kirt, the spoken tongue of the Sultanate. This language serves as a trade tongue for entire land. As written languages go, all three cultures have their own, though the Senpet language is considered the

written tongue of the learned. The written form of s'Kirt is often used by many commoners as the way to document sales and do deals with merchants. The Moto language on the other hand is hardly used outside the Moto lands.

Senpet

Accredited with the creation of the first written language, the tongue of the Senpet is rather verbose. Long conversations are often had that would take less time in other languages. The Senpet tongue is often accredited as the tongue of the learned and the wise. The written form of the language uses a complex form of hieroglyphics to represent word groupings and meanings and as such is a difficult language to learn.

Moto & Ra'Shari

In their beginning days the Moto spoke a tongue that was similar to that of the Ra'Shari. Due to the influence of the Ki-Rin, the Moto tongue was infused with terminology based on Rokuganese. The Moto language of today is a bastard son of these two languages. The written form is that of Rokuganese, as the Moto did not have a written language of their own at the time of the Ki-Rin's visit. The Moto adopted the written form of Rokuganese.

The Ra'Shari tongue and written form on the other hand has stayed very close to the original, having had no need to be changed in the hundreds of years that have passed.

Sultanate

The Sultanate developed a fluid and quick speaking tongue over the centuries. Direct and to the point, the language known as "s'Kirt " in their own tongue is considered the trade tongue of the Burning Sands, and is the most recognized language in the lands.

The written form of s'Kirt is long and flowing, with entire sentences linked together like one giant stroke of the pen.

Ashalan

The Ashalan speak a ancient tongue that was thought lost after the Day of Wrath. It is believed that they are the only ones still able to speak, read and write it.

The Ashalan can also converse in almost all the languages found in the Burning Sands.

Ivory Kingdoms

The Language of the Ivory Kingdoms is broken down into several different dialects, each specific to the region and kingdom in which the language evolved.

A common polyglot is often used by the traders and sailors who ply the caravan trains and ships to the Burning Sands.

Yodatai

The Yodatai speak a strange language that is hard to understand. It seems to have a word for everything and a way to make it mean one thing then the other.

According to the Yodatai it has been unchanged for at least 500 years.

The Yodatai tongue has a written form that is supposedly very easy to master.

Economy

While all of the cultures of the Burning Sands are dependent on the trade of goods and items, water is the be all and end all of valued items. Water brings life to the barren soil. Water sustains the body in the deep desert.

Among all cultures, water is considered the pinnacle of trade items. Tokens that represent a man's accumulated water holdings are kept safe at ones side, each worth its owners weight in gold. All cultures accept water tokens as coinage. Water Tokens are made of burnished copper, stamped with the symbol of the city in which the water is held.

Barter also comprises a large section of the trade in the Burning Sands. Trade of one item for another is seen as a way to spread ones wealth amongst others.

Coins of copper, silver and gold, plus water tokens are the most common currency and are broken down as follows.

1 Gold coin = 10 Silver coins

1 Silver coin = 10 Copper coins

1 Water Token = 1-10 gold coins (depending on the time of year)

Senpet

The majority of the Senpet economy is based off their immense building capabilities. A legion of Senpet slaves can build a fortification, house or building in a matter of days or even hours, depending on its size. Senpet taskmasters often hire out their work gangs for cash and tokens.

Senpet art is also highly sought after, seen as a symbol of culture and status, especially if the item of question is from the early days of the Senpet Empire.

Moto & Ra'Shari

The Moto do not trade their own goods. Instead they raid and trade the stolen goods to one of the other cultures. Sometimes they even sell them back to the group they stole them from.

The Ra'Shari trade knowledge of the desert for whatever supplies they need.

Sultanate

They are the heart of the trade that occurs. Not just the trade of the Senpet and Moto, but of the Ra'Shari, Yodatai, Ivory Kingdoms and even the occasional Ashalan. Every trade is taxed, the coinage delivered to the treasury of the Caliph and Sultan.

Medinat al-Salaam also prospers because of the number of traders and their followers who come to the city, constantly seeking places to stay, food to eat and water to drink.

Ashalan

The Ashalan seem not to trade for anything nor need anything, at least nothing that is known.

Ivory Kingdoms

The Ivory Kingdoms most wanted substance is of course ivory from elephants as well as a couple of other animals. Exotic wines, silks, and slaves make up the rest of the material sent to the Burning Sands from the Ivory Kingdoms.

Yodatai

The Yodatai do not trade with many of the cultures, instead raiding and conquering the territories they wish or item needed.

Yodatai "merchants" will sell steel if needed items can not be found.

Travel

In the desert there are only three ways to travel. By foot, by horse or by camel. They first is a death sentence, as it is impossible to travel on foot from one city to the next, much less one oasis to the next. When on camel or horseback travel becomes much easier. The distances are less and the travel time is easily cut in half. Horses though are not ideally suited for the desert. They are used sparingly in the open sands, usually for quick raids and by messengers.

The camel is truly the best animal to use to travel the desert. Capable of going for many days without water, the camel can carry a heavy load and rider for a good distance, easily from one oasis to the next.

One other animal is occasionally seen being used as a beast of burden in the desert, the elephant, though it is usually seen more in settled areas than the open sands. Easily capable of carrying several times its own weight, the only downfall is that they are a slow steed, and unless one is prepared to take a large amount of water with them on a long trip into the open sands, they are not a wise choice for long distance travel. Most often, they can be found along the banks of the river, pulling barges or toting howdahs and boxes.

Food

The food of the Burning Sands can best be described as a combination of spicy and sweet. Coffee and tea are drunk at almost every meal. Dates (an easily grow fruit) are seen every where, as are various grains and easily grown tubers. Rice (a staple of the Rokugani diet) is almost unknown among the Sultanate and Senpet cultures, though the Moto harvest a decent crop of it, which they trade to the others on a regular basis.

A common meal within Medinat al-Salaam would consist of a bitter coffee or tea to drink, a platter of breads, dates and cheeses, a small plate of mixed peppers and tubers.

Clothing

Perhaps one of the most unusual of subjects for the Burning Sands. Some garb is quite common. In the open sands one wears light colored clothing that reflects the sun and always a headdress to protect one from the heat. At night, a heavy cloak is over put on to protect one from the cold.

Senpet

Among the Senpet, city garb can vary from person to person. Most males wear a short kilt of some type, and sometimes a tunic with it in the evenings. Women wear a long dress that covers the torso and legs, but leaves the arms bare.

Among the nobles, certain women have adopted the style of leaving their midriff bare, criss-crossing the material over their breasts as protection and for modesty.

Senpet nobles often sport elaborate semi-permanent tattoos and make-up designs on their faces.

Moto & Ra'Shari

Moto garb differs from most Burning Sands cultures in two ways. The first is that it is not flowing, allowing them to ride with ease. The second is that it has a distinct Rokugani look to it because of the time that the Ki-Rin spent with the culture. Moto clothing is not really designed for prolonged desert wear and as such, most Moto will adopt the standard desert garb when travelling the open sands.

Ra'Shari wear clothes suited for desert travel. Hooded cloaks, warm boots and well worn leathers.

Sultanate

In Medinat al-Salaam, men's clothing is often long and flowing, with colors varying from blacks and whites to reds and golds. The women of the city tend to wear long dresses, which cover much of their bodies, as it is considered against the teachings of the Prophet to show such flesh. Noble women often wear dresses of gossamer material that cover them quite completely, but still almost show what is underneath, flaunting the rule. Fallen women, those that work by pleasuring men, dress in provocative low cut halter-tops, with loose pants of silk or similar material. The practice of women wearing veils is commonplace across the entire Sultanate.

Ashalan

The Ashalan wear cloaks and robes that cover almost 90% of their body, leaving the face free if anything.

Ivory Kingdoms

The people of the Ivory Kingdoms wear clothing similar to that of the Sultanate, with turbans and loose clothing.

Yodatai

The Yodatai tend to wear tunics and leggings, mixed with long flowing cloaks or robes. Women tend to wear similar fashions but cut for the female body.

Dwellings

Senpet

Many of the Senpet dwellings that stand today are several hundred, if not thousands of years old. Their great pyramids are tributes to the building capabilities of the Senpet architects. The average Senpet house is a three or four room affair made of clay with a thatched or tiled roof.

Moto & Ra'Shari

Among the Moto houses tend to be made of stone, most with a distinct Rokugani feel to them. The Khans castle is actually a massive long house of stone and thatched roof, surrounded by a massive stone wall. Moto are not in the business of making their abodes beautiful or architecturally pleasing, they are there to make them functional and usable.

Ra'Shari have few permanent abodes, tending to travel in their caravans for long periods of time. Most Ra'Shari homes of a permanent nature resemble those of their Moto cousins.

Sultanate

The great city seems to a mixing pot of various cultures' buildings. Senpet houses stand next to Moto taverns that neighbor Raksashan warehouses. The actual building style of the Sultanate tends to be a square-ish looking edifice with multiple rooms and floors. An open-air courtyard is usually present in the middle of most houses.

Ashalan

The City of the Seven Stars is the only dwelling of Ashalan style know to exist in entirety today. Its towering peaks touch the cavern's roof, each tipped with a spear of burning white light.

The walls are tall and no-one has seen within them in a thousand years.

Ivory Kingdoms

The Ivory Kingdoms homes are a mixture of poorly built mud/clay dwellings with thatched roofs of the common class and the high walled, minaret topped towers of the nobles' homes and castles.

Yodatai

It is not know what the Yodatai homes look like. They have merely taken over the towns and cities they have captured and not built anything new.

Castles

Senpet

The fortresses of the Senpet are massive pyramidal structures, walled with huge towers that house hundreds of warriors. Filled with secret passageways and hidden rooms, many armies' fear having to invade such a structure.

Moto & Ra'Shari

The Moto fortifications are simple affairs. Large stone castles with sturdy walls and a single large gate to allow troops and horsemen through.

Ra'Shari have no castles of note.

Sultanate

Medinat al-Salaam is a fortress unto itself. Massive walls surround the city with towers placed at strategic points. It is said that the day the walls of Medinat al-Salaam fall the desert will swallow all there is. The Sultanate has several smaller fortresses some distance from Medinat al-Salaam, acting as forward posts. These walled fortresses are large stone towers with several walls around them.

Ashalan

The City of Seven Stars is the only Ashalan castle still standing. It is said to be unassailable, a rumor proven since no one has even entered its walls.

Ivory Kingdoms

The castles of the various Ivory Kingdoms resemble the castles of the Sultanate. Massive many walled structures with minaret topped towers.

Yodatai

The castles of the Yodatai are merely captured Sultanate and Senpet fortifications.

Cities

Within the Burning Sands there are now few cities. Medinat al-Salaam is the mightiest of the those left. Within the open sands only ruins can now be found, half-buried in sand and long forgotten memories. One sees most of the remaining cities of the Senpet on the riverbanks, and of course those small outlying communities of the Sultanate are also upon the river. The cities of the Ivory Kingdoms dot their lands near the coastal areas and river ways, leaving much of the land untamed.

Etiquette

Like the distant land of Rokugan, the people of the Burning Sands value etiquette highly. Men are cordial to other men and extremely polite to all women, regardless of their station. The only time a man is not cordial is if the person has slighted them in some form or another and vendetta has been enacted.

Vendetta

If a man causes a slight to another man then Vendetta can be called. Vendetta was once merely a name given to the act of killing one who insulted you or something you owned. Over the years the tenants of the custom has blossomed into a whole code of conduct.

Vendetta

It is perhaps the most bizarre yet gentlemanly code of conduct ever created by any culture. Within the Burning Sands it is perfectly legal for a man to enact the Code of Vendetta upon another man who has insulted him in some way. This can vary from killing

members of his family, to stealing, to looking at his wife the wrong way. Vendetta can only be called upon by a man of noble birth against another of noble caste. Calling it upon one of lower caste is considered to be an act of a coward and barbarian. The peasants of the Burning Sands are said to have their own version of the Code of Vendetta but it in no way compares with the noble one.

When Vendetta is called for, the slighted man must approach a neutral party and tell him his case. The neutral party then calls upon the offender and discusses it with him. He then has the two meet with him for coffee and dates at his house. He tries to settle the matter with words, for to call upon Vendetta will surely result in the death of one of the two men. Once it has been decided that Vendetta must be enacted the neutral party acts as judge for the coming events. The slighted party has the right to call upon assassins, warriors, traders and other people to either financially and/or physically kill his offender. The offender has the right to defend himself in the same manner. Some Vendetta last mere hours, while some have lasted decades, the respective houses feuding against each other in a never ending war over long forgotten insults.

It should be noted that Vendetta used to be unique among the Sultanate. In today's times, the Code of Vendetta is used by any who live within the Jewel of the Desert, be they of the Sultanate, Senpet or even outsiders such as the Ra'Shari, Moto or Ivory Kingdom.

The Vendetta is not actively practised in any other of the cultures of the Burning Sands and it is considered bad form to take ones Vendetta outside Medinat al-Salaam and to other cities and kingdoms. As such, the offending party in a case of Vendetta can flee the city for another land and be safe till he decides to return.

This is often done in order for an offender to prepare for the coming hostilities by the slighted party.

Politics

Within the society of the Burning Sands, politics do play a great part of life. From the negotiations between the Caliph and the Senpet to the Motos' dealings with the Ra'shari about trade routes, the cultures of the Burning Sands constantly deal with their counterparts in an attempt to better their own lives. The Senpet seek to find a new home for their people, knowing that the desert will soon devour their cities forever. The Moto raid all that come within their sight. As for the Caliphs political agenda, no one can tell, but it will serve her purposes in the end.

Religion

The priest is the backbone of the Burning Sands theologic circles. They man the temples and tend to

the faithful. They call upon the gods for aide and even receive it now and again.

Each kingdom has its own pantheon of gods, goddesses, demi-gods and the like that they follow. Only two faiths are actually observed across all lands of the Burning Sands that of Lady Fate and that of the Prophet, though many of the cultures of the Sands have their own culture specific deities, it is the major two that we look at here. The culture specific deities will be covered in later books.

Lady Fate

The faith of Fate is a fickle thing, like tossing a coin everytime you want to do something and praying that its heads. Sometimes you are lucky, sometimes you are not, but still, many follow Her, as well as pay lip service to Her, depositing a coin in the hat of one of Her priests as they embark upon a journey.

The faith of Lady Fate has existed for as long as the Jewel of Desert has stood, even longer if the Ra'shari are to be believed, for they are Her strongest supporters.

The Prophet

The faith of the Prophet is one of the youngest and strongest religions next to that of Lady Fate. The Prophet was a man who walked out into the desert and brought the armies of the Fallen God to a halt. His dedication and courage set an example for others.

The Faith of the Prophet is a severe one, proclaiming abstinence, monogamy, sex for procreation only, as well as a host of other rules and tenanents. Many who follow the faith actually break most of the tenanents, making penance later in the month, though most observe the holidays without fail.

Death Cults

An interesting development within the Senpet religious circles has been the emergence of the death cults. These groups pray to the Senpet death god, Anubis, hoping that through his blessings they will not only live a long and eventful life, that their place in the afterlife will also be set.

Some death cults are into human sacrifices, feeling that one soul can save many.

The Ivory Kingdoms has many of these death cults, the most prolific and dangerous being the Rhumal Assassins of Kali, Goddess of Death.

Senpet

The Senpet worship a variety of gods, the most prominent which is their ruler, the Pharaoh. Though not actually a god, the Pharaoh is still treated as one. The chief deity of the Senpet pantheon is Rha Annu, Lord of Light, and the God of the Sun. The Pharaoh is considered to be the son of Rha.

The Faith of the Prophet has a rather small following within the Senpet lands, as the Pharaohs saw it as counter to their power. Still it is allowable for one to

worship the Prophet, as long as one also acknowledges the Pharaoh as the Son of Heaven.

Senpet gather on regular occasions in large temples dedicated to their gods.

Moto & Ra'Shari

The Ujik-hai had many gods. Indeed, their religion bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Rokugan. The Moto hold Lady Sun and Lord Moon in great reverence, knowing that through appeasing Lady Sun the days will grow cooler and through the worship of Lord Moon the nights will grow a bit warmer. The Moto adopted some of the Rokugan beliefs in spirits, as they had their own to deal with. Jinn, as the spirits are known, are easily summoned within the Burning Sands, and the Moto pay them every respect they deserve.

Most Moto families worship in private shrines inside their own homes, there is no public place of worship.

The Ra'Shari on the other hand worship Lady Sun and Lord Moon and none else.

Sultanate

Religion is a rather difficult subject when talking about the Jewel of the Desert. There are several cultures within the massive city, all worshipping their variety of gods, goddesses and deities. The Senpet, the Moto, the Ra'shari, the Ashalan, and the Sultanate all have differing pantheons, not to mention the Assassins guild and the merchant slaves of the Ivory Kingdom. Suffice it to say, that Temple Row is the grandest feature in the entire city as each religion attempts to draw new worshippers.

The Sultanate themselves follow one of two religions. That of the Prophet and that of Fate. The Faith of the Prophet is centered around the teachings of the Prophet, which call for the destruction of darkness through light. The followers of the Prophet are purists, drinking no alcohol, copulating only to have children, and following a strict code of conduct. The Priests of Fate on the other hand seem only concerned that their followers understand that Fate is a fickle mistress. Followers of the Fate religion tend to make sacrifices of something of value before embarking on journeys or ventures. Surprisingly, many people of other religions pay lip service to Lady Fate almost unconsciously.

Incredible temples dedicated to the Faith of the Prophet dot Medinat al-Salaam, only rivaled by the majestic temples of the Senpet. Temples and shrines to Lady Fate are small affairs, hidden away in places that you find only when Fate seems to draw you there.

Ashalan

The Ashalan worship the Lord Moon, Kaleel, as well as the Four Unnamed Goddesses. The Ashalan respect Lady Sun, but do not worship her, seeing her as a deity of chaos and fire.

Ivory Kingdoms

The people of the Ivory Kingdoms worship many gods, goddesses, demons and such. One such creature was a thing known as the Rakshasa, tiger headed demons of smoke and mist. They delighted in playing with man and his plans, destroying hope and free will. These Rakshasa were nearly wiped out some decades ago and many fled to the Burning Sands to hid and begin their work again.

Of particular note is the Goddess Kali and her death cult, the Thuggee. Stranglers without peer, the Thuggee cult grew in size and power till it nearly split the kingdoms in half and ushered in a bloody civil war. The cults were finally put down and many of their kind destroyed. Finally the cult, almost extinct, summoned its goddesses' avatar, the Kali-ma and journeyed into the Burning Sands to begin their holy work anew.

Yodatai

The Yodatai worship a variety of gods and goddesses. The primary of these is Theus, the lord of all gods. Following him were gods and goddesses of war, death, love, spring, summer, etc, etc.

MagiC

Those who Use Magic

The Sahir

The sahir are the harnessers of the Jinn, the powerful spirits of the desert. Through them they cast their spells and summon forth the energies of the elements. A sahir holds a strange place in the Burning Sands. Within the lands of the Sultanate they find themselves outlaws, hiding from the Tyrant and her Khadi. Many are part of a secret society known as the Qabal. In the lands of the Senpet the sahir enjoy a status on par with the priests. Within Moto lands the sahir are the priests, and are treated as such.

Sahir bind Jinn to their will, commanding them to cast spells for them. Most Jinn are anything but favorable to this idea. Jinn are notoriously free willed and many turn on their masters when freedom is obtained. The most common type of sahir merely summon the Jinn only for the moment needed to cast the spell and then set them free in return for the service.

The Shugenja

Though few in number, Rokuganese style shugenja exist within the Burning Sands. They are not seen in any culture but that of the Moto.

Shugenja are users of the elements, differing from their Burning Sands counterparts, the sahir, in that they do not actually summon Jinn and use them to create spells.

Shugenja seemingly channel the elemental energies through themselves to create spells. While considered a better form of magic, as it does not require Jinn, others see the limited use of the shugenja as a downfall. Shugenja can only cast a number of spells

per day equal to the Ring of that element (Re, if the Sand Ring is 3, only 3 of the Sand/Earth spells may be cast each day).

The Sorcerer

The Ashalan sorcerer is a true enigma to all practitioners of magic within the Burning Sands. neither a user of Jinn or elements the Sorcerer instead seems to be able to harness the very substance of creation and bend it to his will. Ashalan sorcerers are given wide berths when discovered.

The Ra'shari

All Ra'shari inherently can cast curses upon a target. The only limitation being that they must learn these curses from other Ra'shari. These curses can be very powerful and must be used with extreme care. Many are the tales of reckless Ra'shari youths who cursed an individual in mere anger or for sport, only to find that the curse had doubled back upon them instead.

The Qabal Elementalist

A few of the Qabal have discovered some of the older magic of the Burning Sands. Magic that predates the Day of Wrath. Known simply as elemental magic, it allows the sahir to cast spells from the elements without needing Jinn. Seen as revolutionary and dangerous by most, the Elementalist is more a story than truth it seems.

The Rehtu

Rehtu is the Senpet word that is used to represent the dark magics of necromancy, death, disease, and so forth. Some unscrupulous people learn these spells, harnessing the power of the death to gain power over others. Dark sorcerers, necromancers, plague priests, are but a few of the names carried by these dark men and women.

The Priests

Priests channel the power of their deity into themselves and others through a series of powers known simply as Acts of Faith.

The priestly classes are those who have dedicated their lives to the following of specific religious tenants. They can be found many places within the lands of the Burning Sands.

Priest of the Faith

The Faith is that of the teachings of the Prophet. The priests of the Faith wander the lands of the Three Kingdoms looking for people to help and teach the way of the prophet. Of course not everyone wants to hear what they have to say.

Priest of the Culture

All cultures of the Burning Sands have their own pantheon of gods and goddesses to worship. These men and women serve those pantheons, carrying the word of their chosen deity to the ears of the unfaithful. Senpet Priests are covered in their Culture Schools section.

Priest of Fate

Mistress of Destiny, Fate, The Weaver of the Skeins of Life. She has many names but they all mean the same thing. A priest of Fate is a perpetual wanderer, walking his way into and out of sandstorms without harm and telling prophetic stories of life. Many seek out these priests and give them alms, so that hopefully Fate will treat them with kindness.

Of Jinn, the Spirits of Nature

The word Jinn is used as a generic term for all the spirits and forces of nature. Each Jinn can be classified as belonging to either Flame, Sea, Wind, Sand or Ka.

The Jinn are a race of free spirited, strong willed elementals. They exist within nature, apart of it, flowing with it and manipulating it. Jinn are able to use their affinity with their element to manipulate it and cast spells.

The smaller spells are usually possessed by the Jinn while the greater and more powerful spells are hoarded by the Elder Jinn.

Smaller Jinn are usually associated with a single element, while the larger Jinns are able to command multiple elements.

Of course the stronger the Jinn, the harder it is to summon, bind and control.

All of the Jinn kind dislike being commanded by the sahir, though they are more tolerant of those who merely ask a single service than those that bind them into service. Contrary to popular belief, the Jinn do talk with others of their kind, trading stories and rumors. This means that those sahir who become sorcerers often find it difficult to summon new Jinn to bind.

Why Summon Jinn: Benefits Gained

One might ask why someone would summon such creatures.

The answer is quite simple. Power. When one summons a Jinn and puts it under his control, he gains the power of the Jinn. Usually this is for but a short time, and usually it consists of getting the Jinn to cast spells or perform tasks of service.

Jinn are great repositories of knowledge of the arcane and, of course, of history. Many sahir historians will confer with summoned Jinn on subjects of history, legend, myth, magic and so forth.

The overall benefit of binding a Jinn is that you gain its services indefinitely, or until it is unsummoned or destroyed. When a sahir has a Jinn bound to him he gains the ability to cast spells associated with the elements that the Jinn is part of, thus binding a Jinn with an aspect related to the element of Sand would allow the sahir to cast Sand spells.

Of Avatars and Prophets

The Avatars

The Avatars are the earthly incarnations of the Shilah upon earth. They are there to help stop the coming darkness and end that has been prophesied.

The known Avatars are Amru, a sahir of the Qabal, The Twins Janan, twin Ebonites who are not corrupted by the Ebon Stone and Kara, a Moto Ashalan.

The Prophets

Mekhem, the 2nd Prophet. He was ousted from his native lands and journey here. He sealed the evil of Legion and his servants within an Ebon Stone. He then sacrificed his spirit into the Stone to act as guardian.

He has sat in spiritual form within the stone for hundreds of years watching each initiate as they are tested with the stone. He tries to reach each one in order help them but too many are taken by the evil within the stone. He has saved a few, giving them purpose and a holy mission. Destroy the corrupted souls.

Enchanted Items

The Burning Sands are full of strange artifacts.

Crysteel

Crysteel is a magical near transparent metal-like material forged from the sand itself by the Ashalan. Weapons of Crysteel are unbreakable and the only weapon capable of wounding a Jinn. Crysteel weapons come in many shapes and sizes, though the most common is that of a sword.

Some know Crysteel weapons are:

Bedayah

A Crysteel weapon was created to destroy undead.

Nehayah

A Crysteel weapon has one purpose. Destruction of Jinn.

First Era Artifacts

Many weapons, artifacts and strange devices were built during the Golden First Age. Lanterns which glow forever, animals made of metal that fly and walk like the real thing, swords that fight on their own and carpets that fly.

Some known artifacts are:

The Fallen Star

An ancient piece of a star that fell from heaven. It is said it now heralds the death of the world.

The Steed of the Goddess

A magnificent horse made of brass that can fly. It is owned by the champion of the Moto Raiders.

Current Items

Many items have been created since the Day of Wrath. Most are imitations of the items found from that era, but some are impressive and deadly.

Some know items are:

Shard of the Ancients

A piece of the actual Ebon Stone, it will destroy undead with but a touch.

The Tear of Heaven

A Senpet artifact that can instantly bring a man back from the edge of death through the sacrifice of another.

Qaliraq's Mystical Lute

It is said that the music of this lute can seduce even the coldest heart.

Map of the Burning Sands



CHAPTER II: RACES

Humans

All the peoples of the Burning Sands are humans. Humans benefits of the standard free edge as usual, and apart from racial peculiarities like color of skin and hair, facial features and such are all similar when talking about game mechanics. Choose your ethnic group from the following list: Senpet, Moto, Ra'shari, Sultanate, Yodatai or Ivory Kingdoms. Sign it as your race. It is common for a Moto to have the Moto horse edge, particularly if they are warriors. It is common for a Yodatai to have the Outsider hindrance, even if a Yodatai that have passed a long time in another culture could not have that hindrance.

Ashalan

The enigmatic creatures from the First Age does not breed a child in a thousand years. Even if the Ashalan race is balanced to a beginning character, it would be strange to see an Ashalan starting character because he must have centuries of experience. It would be more suited to an experienced character, unless a proper explanation of how is that in a thousand years the character hasn't learned much is given. Or you can be the only Ashalan child born in recent times.

Ashalan's sorcerers manipulates the very founding force of the world, so they are being of impressive power. Ashalans doesn't practice any other form of magic. So Ashalan's characters cannot get any Arcane Background, because their Arcane Background is not meant to be used from playing characters.

Unaging (background edge): Ashalans doesn't age naturally.

Night vision (background edge): Ashalans see comfortably in all but the blackest darkness. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting, allowing them to see in all but the pitch black conditions (same as the Low Light Vision monstrous ability).

Infertile (major hindrance): all Ashalan are almost totally infertile. Their race is dying.

Outsider (minor hindrance): Ashalans are uncomfortable in the manner of humans.

Sun Allergy (minor hindrance): Ashalans lives mainly underground, so their skins are not resilient as human skin to Lady Sun. If exposed to the light of sun, the Ashalan has to roll Vigor or suffer a Fatigue level that cannot be recovered unless proper repair are found. The roll must be made every hour if the light is not direct or if the light is direct but the Ashalan is fully covered in dark thick clothes (as the clothes Ashalans wear normally), every 10 minutes if the light is strong or the light is direct and very strong (as in the Burning Sands at midday) but the Ashalan is heavy covered, every minute if the Ashalan is not fully

covered under the direct wrath of Lady Sun. If he gets incapacitated from sunlight, he starts to get Wound levels instead and can possibly die of sunburn.

Agile: Ashalans are regal, swift and sinuous, so they starts with d6 Agility.

Jackal

They are damned souls in the hands of the Dark God and condemned of unending lives in his service. Jackals has no obviously distinguishing features, apart from their probably twisted features due to their very harsh lives and the jackal heads tattooed on their arms. An aura of fear and delusion surrounds them every time, the aura of the Dark God's essence in their souls. Jackals is not a standard race, but an 'acquired' race that can be applied to a standard PC even after creation. Simply add the listed edges and hindrances at a normal PC.

Marked (major hindrance): every Jackal bring a tattooed jackal head on their arms. This identifies them as outcast and criminal in all the Burning Sands, so if they will be discovered by authorities they will be treated according to local laws. Even normal people tend to view them as a sect of assassins and criminals.

Obsession (major hindrance): in their madness, Jackals think that it's their duty to save the world from a grim destiny finding and eliminating all Avatars. This is a major hindrance even if it doesn't comes up very often, but because of the foolishness and deviation of the purpose.

Soulless (major hindrance): since 95% of their souls are replaced with the essence of the Dark God, jackals need to feed upon the souls of the livings. They must feed of a soul every month, or get a wound every full moon since they don't feed, and this wounds starts to heal only if they feed of a new soul. In addition they count as undead for all purposes of affecting them, like spells or special powers.

Fear: (weird edge): the essence of the Dark God causes Fear in everyone sees a Jackal.

Soul Drain (weird edge): Jackals can drain the lives of those around them with a touch. Instead of a normal attack, a Jackal may make a touch attack. Every raise on its Fighting roll automatically inflicts one wound to its target. If the target dies of Soul Drain, the soul can be devoured by the Jackal, or it can be stored in a container for 'later use'...

Call of the Jackal (social edge): the jackals are very united with each other, and a Jackal in need of assistance can find 1d6 other Jackals to help him in a given duty in a day. Also he can issue the Call of the Jackal, a conventional signal that say that a brother is

in need of help. The call is masked as an howl of a jackal, but is instinctively heard for miles. In the City of One Thousand Stories this means that one jackal arrive in 1d6 turns, and in 1d6 minutes 1d6 more jackals would come to aid the jackal in need of help. In other areas the condition can change widely.

Khadi

The damned sorcerers of the Tyrant undergoes a ritual in which their heart is removed and then put in a ivory chest in the hands of the Tyrant.

Khadi is not a standard race, but an 'acquired' race that can be applied to a standard PC even after creation. Simply add the listed edges and hindrances at a normal PC.

Ceremony of the hidden heart (weird edge): the Khadi have been subjected to a horrific ritual that literally removes their heart and places it in an ornate ivory box. Once done, the Khadi can never die unless immolated or utterly destroyed in one go. If anything remains, he regrows and heals, getting up within half an hour of their 'death'.

Arcane Background: sahir (background edge): if the person that undergoes the ritual doesn't have an arcane background, he becomes a sahir. If he were a sahir before, his powers grows: choose a power edge of your choice instead of this edge.

Caliphs' ear (social edge): Khadis are the personal confidants of the Caliph, and his guards and police. They are just under the Caliph in the caste system, and have the duty to administer justice in the City of One Thousand Stories. They are the chief commander of the town guards, and can arrest anyone with little worries. They are expected to be treated as nobles of the highest rank from anyone.

Enemy (major hindrance): the Qabal and the Ashalans is constantly seeking and trying to eliminate you and the Caliph.

Ceremony of the hidden heart (major hindrance): the Khadi have been subjected to a horrific ritual that literally removes their heart and places it in an ornate ivory box. This ritual enslaves them to whoever owns the ivory box that contains their heart. The Khadi cannot raise a hand against the holder of the box and must obey the orders of the wielder as well. In addition, destroying the box would result in the destruction of the Khadi. The Caliph has a secret chamber where she holds all the Khadi boxes.

Hated (minor hindrance): no one likes the Khadi, and they do little to become more popular. Khadi has a -2 to Charisma to all who are less evil, suspecting and brutal then they are (so to say everyone).

Ugly (minor hindrance): the removal of their heart and the consequent lifestyle of a typical Khadi make their aspect quite gruesome, so Khadi has a -2 to Charisma (cumulative with other hindrances).

Ratling

Ratlings are everywhere, even in the Burning Sands. They have many tribes in the southern mountains. Some little groups of Ratlings has arrived even in the City of One Thousand Stories.

Coward (minor): Ratlings are not fond of combat. They will try to avoid it unless sure to be victorious, and also not be too harmed.

Self sufficient: Ratlings are naturally adept in finding shelter. They get Survival at d4/d6.

Agile: Ratlings are very swift, so they start the game with d6 Agility.

CHAPTER III: EDGES AND HINDRANCES

Arcane Backgrounds

Standard arcane backgrounds are replaced by the following edges:

Arcane background (sahir) (background edge):

Arcane skill: Summon (Smarts); Starting Power Points: 10; Starting Powers: 0 (see description).

Sahirs are common in all the burning Sands. Senpet Astrologers, Ra'shari Bonereaders or Jakla Spiritualists of the Ivory Kingdoms, Ebonites sorcerers, the Qabal all are sahir. Nothing prohibits a citizen of the Jewel of the Desert to be a sahir, but they would be outlawed and hunted by the Khadi. And the Khadi are all sahir. Yodatai does not have sahir. Sahirs summon jinns to bend their powers at their will. A summoned jinn is bound to obey to the sahir until he does not free him, but mostly the sahir will ask for a single service, in the form of a spell, to not risk annoying too much the elder jinns so they would pay him a visit... This is represented by the power points: when you run out of them you are bothering too much the jinns and is better don't call another for some time. Jinns are voluptuous being, and sometimes they anger even if you don't bother them much. When you roll your Summon, if the die comes up 1 (regardless of your Wild Die) the jinn is angered and 'strikes' at you, so that you are Shaken (a backlash). The Master can, obviously, decide for a more sophisticated punishment instead of a simple Shaken result. Even if you run out of power points, you can continue casting spells, but your chance of angering the jinn increase: simply you backlash on any result equal to the PP cost of the spell, not only with a 1. You can contact every jinn to cast any spell, but it will cost you double the normal amount of PP. In addition, you can call 'minor' jinn to make small magical tricks, like moving little objects, provoking a little blow of wind or create a little spark or flame for an instant (anything that doesn't have a particular spell that covers it). This will cost you 1 PP. Instead of summoning a jinn to have him cast a spell, you can theoretically have him perform a service for the sahir, but this is left to the GM. A sahir can buy the new power edge as usual. This implies that you have a special link to a particular jinn, and casting the spell he is able to cast is less demanding.

Arcane background (elementalist) (background edge):

Arcane skill: Spellcasting (Smarts); Starting Power Points: 10; Starting Powers: 1.

Ki-Rin Shugenja and Qabal elementalists does not rely on jinn to cast spells, but manipulate the elements of nature directly. This is less flexible than calling jinn, but more efficient and reliable. In

addition to cast spells that they have memorized, they can cast simple tricks like make little flames or moving little objects (anything that isn't covered by a specific spell). For 1 PP they can 'activate' the elements in a given area (not more than a meter cube) and use the tricks in the area for about a minute.

Arcane background (priest) (background edge):

Arcane skill: Faith (Spirit); Starting Power Points: 10; Starting Powers: 2.

Priests are those who call upon the power of gods to invoke limited miracles. They typically have spells that conforms to the attitudes of their deity: a priest of faith would have spells that help others (healing, prosperity, etc.) while a priest of fate spells that favors good destiny. Senpet Priests are priests of the many deities of their pantheon. Senpet Seers are priests of fate. Ebonites are priests of Prophet. Motos have few priests, mainly priests of fate. In the Sultanate priests are many and of many types, in the City of Thousand Stories there are temples of any god of the Burning Sands, so are his priests. Yodatai have priests of prophet (any other cult is considered heresy). Ra'shari have priests of fate and priests that follow the cult of Lady Sun. In the Ivory Kingdoms the cults are many. In addition to cast spells normally, a priest can call little tricks pertaining the attitudes of a deity (like healing little diseases or purify water and food) not covered by a specific spell, at 1 PP per use. Priests who violate their beliefs are temporarily or permanently forsaken by their chosen deity. Minor sins give the character a -2 to his Faith rolls for one week. Major sins rob him of all arcane powers for one week. Mortal sins cause the character to be forsaken indefinitely. In the latter case, a penitent hero must be sincerely apologetic for his misdeeds, and then complete some great quest or task of atonement to regain his lost powers.

Arcane background (death priest) (background edge):

Arcane skill: Faith (Spirit); Starting Power Points: 10; Starting Powers: 3.

Rethu priests of death calls upon the power of death, diseases and evil spirits. Priests of death can evoke the aura of their forsaken gods to be surrounded by a field of sadness and despair, an aura that kills butterflies as they pass by etc. Priests who does not constantly follow the precepts of the god of death can be punished by him. It will start by imposing a -2 to the Faith roll for one week, major sins like committing true act of goodness can be punished by imposing a wound that cannot be healed unless the priest does not 'redeem' himself.

Modified edges

Noble (background edge): Requirements: Novice.

A noble character has a +2 Charisma bonus in his culture and possibly with members of other cultures who are friend with his and with other nobles, but would be considered to have -2 to Charisma when dealing with people of hostile cultures or people who are hostile to the caste system. His Rich benefits derive from his possessions, so them has to be managed from time to time, even if the noble have someone to administer this possessions.

All Senpet's noble are trained as warriors and are considered to be the officials of the Senpet army who ride into battle in the war charriots. If this edge is acquired by a Senpet he would start the game with a leather armor, a pot helmet, small shield, a kopesh, a spear, a javelin, a short bow, 20 arrows in a quiver, a charriot with two horses or a war horse and two slave warriors to aid him in battle (and in all other matter), plus 200 Dinarii.

Rich (background edge): Requirements: Novice.

A Rich character will start the game with 500 Dinarii, plus would have access to another 500 Dinarii a year from his various possessions or economic activity.

New Edges

Jinn in the pocket (power edge): Requirements: Novice, Arcane background (sahir).

The sahir can call a jinn in the usual manner, but he can put the jinn in a small recipient (a jar, a bottle and so) and use it later. The recipient can be given to another person to be used when the jinn is freed. The roll for the spell has to be made when the jinn is freed, at the value used at the time of the calling. Every jinn contained in a recipient reduce the total power available for the character by one, plus one every day that passes before the jinn gets freed. Consider however that jinns are not stupid: even if stealing a contained jinn from a sahir and not freeing it will reduce to 0 the PP of a sahir (and if the sahir tries to call another jinn he will be upset, even if the sahir can try to justify himself), when the jinn will be freed it will be well aware of what's happening. Also, jinns talk each other so that the facts will soon be clear to all the jinn community.

Ra'shari curses (weird edge): Requirements: Novice, Ra'shari race.

Every Ra'shari can manipulate Fate to a degree, giving someone an advantage or disadvantage. Most often the Ra'shari use this power to punish those who have slighted them in some major way. Ra'shari Curses are not to be taken lightly, and are never bestowed unless the target is truly deserving of the curse. Curses cast in revenge or in jest often find themselves being turned back upon the curser twice fold. The Curse someone the Ra'shari needs a good

reason. The death of a family member counts, but not because the target is better looking and charming with the women than the Ra'shari. All curses have to have the ability to be lifted. So a condition must be put upon them. Some examples are: when the sky burns red with fire, when the castle rises above the clouds, or even when the forest walks. These are all good conditions. Remember, a condition must be feasibly accomplishable. The curse must be fair, so it has to be proportioned with the thing committed. The nature of the curse can vary: from headache or stomach cramp (-1 to rolls), to premature aging or mutism. To cast a curse, the Ra'shari must spend a benny and roll Spirit.

New scroll powers (power edge): Requirements: Novice, Arcane background (elementalist).

You can choose two powers that you can cast but you does not have fully memorized yet. You have to read them from a scroll in order to cast them, so you have to have one hand free and the possibility to access the book, and you have a -2 on the casting roll.

Memorize scroll (power edge): Requirements: Novice, Arcane background (elementalist).

Choose two powers that you have written in your scrolls and that you can cast at -2. You now can cast them without penalty and without the need of the scrolls.

Moto horse (background edge): Requirements: Novice, Moto race, Spirit d6.

Every Moto who becomes a warrior gets a Moto horse. The horse choose the warrior, not the opposite. This horse has a special link with his rider, and the Moto consider his horse like a member of his family. It is expected the the horse and the Moto treat one another with the maximum respect and loyalty. A Moto horse is a war horse, and the Moto can communicate with his horse, 'sensing' what it wants and think (in a superficial manner, no telepathy or empathy involved). Also, with a Spirit roll, the Moto can say a simple phrase at his horse and the horse will understand it perfectly. The Moto can spend his bennies for his horse. Consider for purpose of prerequisites and similar uses that he has the Beast Bond and Beast Master with his horse (and the Loyal disadvantage). Should the horse die (or be stolen or similar) it will be replaced by a similar beast only if the departure of the animal is justified (the horse die of age or in a noble effort), the Master will judge.

Multicultural (social edge): Requirements: Novice, Knowledge (languages) d6, Knowledge (Area) d6.

You are trained in getting good in cultures you don't know. With a Knowledge (languages) roll you can understand the general meaning of languages you don't know, and you can make yourself be understood in a general manner in your basic needing. With a successful Knowledge (Area) roll you can guess the major location of cities, geographical regions, major

cities characteristics and personalities and so on of areas you don't know, and also pass for a standard person of any culture you don't know, without attracting unwanted attention, by casual inspection. If someone inspects you more deeply, he has to roll Notice higher than your Knowledge (area), and also of your Knowledge (languages) to discern your foreign accent.

Khadi seeker (professional edge): Requirements: Novice, Agility d8, Fighting d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d6, Ashalan race.

The Ashalan gets +2 to all Tracking and Stealth roll involving the Khadi, Ghuls and Jackals (because he can sense the corruption that they all are). In addition, the Ashalan can make a special attack with his Heartknife. It is a called attack to the heart of a Khadi. If successful the knife penetrates the heart cavity of the Khadi and the Khadi falls to the ground. The following round the Khadi raises and starts to seek his heart, so the Ashalan can follow him to the location of the ivory box. In the ritual of initiation each Heartseeker is given his Heartknife (which have the statistics of a normal knife).

Khadi killer (combat edge): Requirements: Veteran, Khadi seeker, Stealth d8, Tracking d8, Throwing d8.

The Ashalan has perfected the art of killing a Khadi. He can use his technique throwing the Heartknife.

Assassin of Kali (professional edge): Requirements: Novice, Strength d8, Fighting d6, Stealth d6

The Rhumal assassins are the followers of a death god of the Ivory Kingdoms, Kali. They are totally devoted to their duty, that is finding persons to sacrifice at their god in a ritual strangling, for one day have she resurrected (consider them to have the major hindrance vow: find victim to resurrect Kali). To kill their victims they use the Rhumal, a strangling scarf, that they carry with them all the time, hiding it as a decorative clothing. When grappling to strangle his victim with his Rhumal, the assassin gets +2 to his Fighting roll to grapple, +2 to contrast further tests to keep his victim on hold and +2 to his Strength tests to inflict damage. Assassins have a strong sense of affiliation, so they aid each other. Consider the Rhumal assassin to have the Connections social edge within the organization.

new hindrances

Dark secret (minor / major hindrance): this is a modified version of the wanted hindrance. You hero has a secret that no one knows. If that secret would become public, your hero would have serious problems (minor) or risk his life or liberty (major). It can be a crime committed in his past, but can also be a membership of a secret society or a particular sexual or religious tendency in a racist society.

CHAPTER IV: GEAR

Money

All character starts with 40 Dinarii and 20 Water Token. 1 Water Token = 1-10 Dinarii, depending on the season and the region. 1 Dinarii (gold, D) = 10 Dirham (copper, d) = 100 Bits (tin, b).

Armors

In the Burning Sands is quite uncommon wearing armor heavier than leather, because of the hot climate of many areas. Chain armor is worn sometimes by the Moto, plate is quite only seen by Yodatai.

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost (d)	Notes
Leather	+1	15	50	Covers torso, arms, legs
Chain hauberk (long coat)	+2	25	300	Covers torso, arms, legs
Plate corselet	+3	25	400	Covers torso
Plate arms (vambace)	+3	10	200	Covers arms
Plate leggings (greaves)	+3	15	300	Covers legs
Pot Helm	+3	4	75	50% chance of protecting against head shot
Steel Helmet (enclosed)	+3	8	150	Covers head
Plate barding	+3	30	1250	For horses, Covers entire body
Small Shield (Buckler)	-	8	25	+1 Parry
Medium Shield	-	12	50	+1 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit
Large Shield (Kite, Pavise)	-	20	200	+2 Parry, +2 Armor to ranged shots that hit

Shields protect only against attacks from the front and left (assuming a right-handed character).

Weight of armor is when worn, if carried would weight a bit more.

Hand to Hand Weapons

These are the weapons that can be found through the Burning Sands

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost (d)	Min. Str	Notes
Dagger	Str+1	1	25	-	Also the Ashalani's Heartknife
Great sword	Str+4	12	400	d8	Parry -1, 2 hands, used in the Sultanate
Bastard sword	Str+4	12	400	d10	Parry -1, 2 h. if not mounted, Moto weapon
Katana, crysteel	Str+4	6	1000	d6	Only seen between Motos and Ashalani
Scimitar	Str+3	8	300	d6	Also the Senpet Kopesh and Yodatai sword
Short sword	Str+2	4	200	-	
Battle Axe	Str+3	10	300	d8	
Warhammer	Str+2	8	250	d8	AP 1 vs rigid armor (plate mail)
Lance, horse	Str+4	10	500	d8	AP 1, Reach 2, used mounted, Moto weapon
Spear	Str+3	25	40	d8	Reach 2, 2 hands, Sultanate, Moto, Yodatai
Staff	Str+1	8	10	-	Parry +1, Reach 1, requires 2 hands
Javelin	Str+2	5	250	d6	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands, used by Senpets

Ranged Weapons

These are the ranged weapons that can be found through the Burning Sands

Type	Range	Damage	Cost (d)	Weight	Min. Str	Notes
Short bow	10	2d6	200	3	d6	Can be used mounted or from a chariot

Type	Range	Damage	Cost (d)	Weight	Min. Str	Notes
Composite Bow	12	2d6	250	3	d6	Used by Moto
Crossbow	15	2d6	500	10	d6	AP 2, 1 action to reload, Sultanate weapon, also used by Senpet and Moto
Long Bow	12	2d6	200	3	d6	Used in the Senpet and Sultanate
Dagger	3	Str+1	25	1	-	
Javelin	3	Str+2	250	5	d6	Used by Senpets

AMMUNITION

Type	Weight	Cost (d)	Notes
Arrow	1/5	1/2	
Killer Arrow	1/5	1	+1 damage, can be used only wit a Composite Bow
Quarrel	1/5	2	AP 2

Outdoors, arrows and quarrels are recovered on a d6 roll of 4-6 (50% chance). Underground or indoors, the chance is reduced to a roll of 5-6 on 1d6 to reflect the increased chance of breakage.

Equipment

Some common equipment

Item	Cost (d)	Weight
Backpack	50	2
Bedroll (winterized)	25	4
Blanket	10	4
Candle (light in 2" radius)	1	1
Canteen (waterskin)	5	1
Chest (reinforced)	30	20
Crowbar	10	2
Flask (ceramic)	5	1
Flint and steel	3	1
Grappling hook	100	2
Hammer	10	1
Lantern (light in 4" radius)	25	3
Lockpicks	200	1
Handcuffs (manacles)	15	2
Oil (for lantern; 1 pint)	2	1
Quiver (holds 20 bolts)	25	2
Rope (10")	10	15
Shovel	5	5
Soap	1	1/5
Torch (1 hour, 4" radius)	5	1

Item	Cost (d)	Weight
Whistle	2	-
Whetstone	5	1
Cotton clothing (normal)	20	-
Silk clothing (elegant)	200	-
Winter gear (cloak)	200	3
Winter boots	100	1
Cheap meal	5	1
Good meal	15+	-
Meal Ready to Eat	10	1
Trail rations (keeps 1 week)	2	1
Camel (one or two humps)	300	-
Horse	300	-
War Horse	750	-
Elephant	1000	-
War Elephant	2000	-
Hawk or falcon	300	-
Trained dog	150	-
Trained monkey	300	-
Saddle	10	10
Elaborate saddle	50	10

CHAPTER V: ARCHETYPES

Senpet Noble Warrior

Race: Human – Senpet

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Shooting d6, Riding d6, Guts d4, Notice d4, Survival d4, Tracking d4, Throwing d4, Knowledge (war) d4

Edges: Senpet noble, Quick

Hindrances: Vow (finding a new home), Mean, Overconfident

Pace: 6, Parry: 7 (8), Toughness: 6 (7), Charisma: -2 (0), Load Limit 30, Total weight 73 (in battle 40)

Gear: leather armor, pot helmet, small shield, kopesh, spear, javelin, short bow, 20 arrows, quiver, chariot with two horses, two slaves, 200 Dinarii

Senpet Astrologer

Race: Human – Senpet

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Summon d10, Shooting d6, Riding d4, Guts d4, Notice d4, Survival d4, Fighting d4, Stealth d4, Knowledge (Astrology) d8

Edges: Arcane background (sahir), New power

Hindrances: Curious, Stubborn, Cautious

Pace: 6, Parry: 4, Toughness: 5, Charisma: 0, Load limit 20, Total weight 14

Powers: Elemental manipulation (air)

Gear: Staff, Dagger, Backpack, Blanket, Canteen, 300 Dirham, 20 Water Tokens

Senpet Seer

Race: Human – Senpet

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d10, Shooting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Survival d4, Fighting d6, Stealth d4, Knowledge (Astrology) d4, Persuasion d6

Edges: Arcane background (priest of Rha)

Hindrances: Bad eyes, Loyal, Stubborn

Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5, Charisma: 0, Load limit 30, Total weight 14

Powers: Light, Environmental protection

Gear: Staff, Dagger, Backpack, Blanket, Canteen, 300 Dirham, 20 Water Tokens

Moto Horse Rider

Race: Human – Moto

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Riding d8, Guts d4, Notice d4, Survival d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d6

Edges: Moto horse, Steady hands

Hindrances: Loyal, Greedy, Clueless

Pace: 6, Parry: 6, Toughness: 5 (6), Charisma: 0, Load limit 40, Total weight 49 (40 with a weapon only)

Gear: Leather armor, Spear, Short bow, 10 arrow, Short sword (Str+2), 105 Dirham, 20 Water Tokens

Moto White Guard

Race: Human – Moto

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Riding d8, Guts d4, Notice d4, Survival d6, Stealth d6

Edges: Moto horse, Brawny

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean, Bloodthirsty

Pace: 6, Parry: 6, Toughness: 7 (8), Charisma: -2, Load limit 64, Total weight 15

Gear: Leather armor, Bastard sword (Str+4), Moto horse, 50 Dirham

Moto Shugenja

Race: Human – Moto

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Spellcasting d10, Fighting d6, Riding d6, Guts d4, Notice d4, Survival d4, Stealth d4, Knowledge (History) d8

Edges: Arcane background (elementalist), New scroll powers

Hindrances: Lame, Habit (talks continuously about his old culture), Poverty

Pace: 5 (run d4), Parry: 5, Toughness: 5, Charisma: -1, Load limit 20, Total weight 8

Powers: Bolt, Shape change (in scroll), Beast friend (in scroll)

Gear: Staff, 242 Dirham

Moto Askaree

Race: Human – Moto

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Knowledge (languages) d6, Fighting d6, Riding d6, Persuasion d4, Notice d4, Survival d4, Streetwise d4, Stealth d6, Knowledge (Area) d8

Edges: Multicultural, Attractive

Hindrances: Pacifist, Cautious, Curious

Pace: 5 (run d4), Parry: 5, Toughness: 5 (6), Charisma: +2, Load limit 30, Total weight 17

Gear: Leather armor, 2 Daggers (Str+1), Silk / beautiful clothing, 100 Dirham, 20 Water tokens

Sultanate Dervish

City warriors are trained in the various noble family schools of the city how to literally dance with their

blades. Also known as Dervishes, Sultanate warriors are a force to be reckoned with.

Sultanate Merchant

Race: Human – Sultanate

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (area) d4

Edges: Connections, Rich

Hindrances: Greedy, Bad luck, Doubting thomas

Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5, Charisma: 0, Load limit 30, Total weight 1

Gear: Dagger, Camel, 450 Dinarii of goods to trade

Ashalan Blood Sworn

Holy Warriors, the Blood Sworn are the ultimate fighters of the Ashalan. They train for decades in the temples of the Four Goddesses and Lord Moon in order to be able to defend the world from the coming Awakening.

Ashalan Heartseeker

Race: Ashalan

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6, Intimidation d6, Throwing d6

Edges: Unaging, Night vision, Khadi killer, Quick

Hindrances: Infertile, Outsider, Sun allergy, Heroic, Enemy (Khadi), Stubborn

Pace: 6, Parry: 6 (7), Toughness: 5 (6), Charisma: -2, Load limit 30, Total weight 28

Gear: Heartknife, Leather armor, Medium shield, 30 Dinarii, 20 Water tokens

Ashalan Sandsmith

They are the master smith capable of forging the Crysteel weapons.

Yodatai Centurion

They are the backbone of the Yodatai army, armed and proficient with the sword and the shield

Yodatai Inquisitor

The inquisitor can get the truth out of everyone.

Yodatai Alchemist

The Alchemist learns the magical properties of metals, potions, liquids, herbs and gems and the capacity of concocting potions, special metals ecc. May be accompanied by slaves.

Yodatai Inventor

Inventors are what it says: constructor of things.

Yodatai Strategist

A strategist is the tactician in battle.

Ra'shari Storyteller

These enigmatic men and women are fully capable of inciting large crowds to a state of action through simple words alone. They hold a power they use with care. They are the historians of the Burning Sands. All Ra'shari travel normally by camel.

Ra'shari Dancer

Acrobats, thieves, seductresses, they have called many names. The members of a Ra'shari dance troupe are often viewed with awe as well as fear. They come and go as they please, often giving incredible shows to their audiences, and often leaving the same audience minus a few trinkets.

Ivory Kingdoms Rakshasa Hunter

Among the Ivory Kingdoms, there is one creature that can strike terror into the hearts of all men. The Rakshasa. Cruel demons of smoke, they delight in playing with their prey. Rakshasa Hunters are solitary men and women who have taken it upon themselves to hunt these fearsome being down and kill them. They are some of the bravest and deadliest warriors in the Ivory Kingdoms. They belong to a particular cult that gives them special abilities to assist them in this duty.

Jackal Soul Hunter

The Soul Hunter is the most feared thing to walk the streets of the Jewel of the Desert. This vicious creatures hunt the souls of the Avatars, destroying any who come in the way, drinking their souls or worse, trapping them in bottles for future torment.

Jackal Thief

A rare few of the Jackals actually attempt to live above the sewers, hiding from the public eye and stealing what they need. Most of these wretches starve to death, unwilling to succumb to the dire action of eat another's soul. Some survive, hardened and twisted, they are the nightmares that the people talk of when they speak in hushed whispers of the Jackals.

Assassin

Assassins are un-relenting hunters of their prey, skilled at tracking their prey for days across the city. There are various orders of Assassins, like the Order of the Black Star, the Order of the 7th Gate, the Order of the 7 Oaths, the Order of the Blood Red Tiger.

Ebonite Templar

They are the defenders of the Temple of the Prophet. They are quite the only one that use heavy armor.

Ebonite Crusader

They are the warrior that goes out to defend the peoples. They are quite the only one that use heavy armor.

Ebonites priest of prophet

The Ebonite Priests of the Prophet differ from the regular priest of the prophet in one way. They can heal by simple laying on hands.

Rhumal assassin

Guided by a monstrous being that they believe is the reincarnation of their ancient goddess of death, members of the cult of Rhumal have renewed their campaign of terror. They hide among caravans, slowly growing like a cancer, until in a flurry of bloodshed all are sacrificed in the name of their angry ruler. But their exploits within the Ivory Kingdoms are legendary, and they are hunted for their faith. They have come across the desert in the guise of merchants and diplomats, hoping to find new prey to sate their goddess's vicious appetite. They all are part of a cult that grant them particular powers.

Qabal sahir

Race: Human – Sultanate

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Summon d10, Shooting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Fighting d4, Stealth d6, Knowledge (Area) d6

Edges: Arcane background (sahir), New power

Hindrances: Enemy (khadi), wanted, vow (destroy the khadi)

Pace: 6, Parry: 4, Toughness: 5, Charisma: 0, Load limit 20, Total weight 14

Powers: Entangle

Gear: Staff, Dagger, Backpack, Blanket, Canteen, 300 Dirham, 20 Water Tokens

Qolat merchant

Race: Human – Sultanate

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (area) d4

Edges: Connections, Rich

Hindrances: vow (control the world), dark secret (Qolat member), Doubting thomas

Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5, Charisma: 0, Load limit 30, Total weight 1

Gear: Dagger, Camel, 450 Dinarii of goods to trade

Khadi

The Khadi are the sorcerer warriors of the Caliph. They are evil people who have traded their very hearts for power. Using an ancient Senpet ceremony the Caliph removes the khadi's heart, placing it in a mystical ivory box. The khadi is now immortal, unkillable and almost unstoppable.

The Caliph uses these warriors to patrol the city, destroy the Qabal and serve her purpose. They have no other purpose.

Member of the Celestial Alliance

There is a gentle time between the ages when the future of humankind is unset and darkness roams the world with impunity. This is that time. There are those who gather as guardians during these times of uncertainty; they surrender their lives to the void between the moments. The Celestial Alliance are those courageous few. Born of a pact made in the First War of the Stars, the Celestial Alliance has been the first and last line of defense against the legions of Kaleel since before the Day of Wrath.

CHAPTER IV: MONSTERS AND ENEMIES

Rakshasa (UC)

Fleeing persecution and possibly extinction in their homelands of the Ivory Kingdoms, these beings have taken up residence in a small section of the city. There are few of the Rakshasa left today, perhaps ten in all. They are solitary unless mating and tend to like to manipulate things to their advantage whenever possible. Rakshasa are evil and highly intelligent beings, part demon, part angel and part fate all rolled into one. In the Ivory Kingdoms they were worshipped as gods and hunted to almost extinction as demons.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 6, Parry: 7, Toughness: 7 (8)

Gear: Leather armor (+1)

Fear: Fearless.

Bloodthirsty: Rakshasans can be cruel to their foes, much like the great cats from which they evolved. They rarely take prisoners, and feel little compunction about punishing their foes once captured. This causes a -4 Charisma penalty among more “civilized” types.

Claws: Rakshasans have retractable claws that do Str+2 damage, and grant +2 to Climb all but completely sheer surfaces.

Low Light Vision: The Rakshasa’s eyes amplify light like a cat, allowing him to see in the dark. He ignores attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

Giants

The giants are massive solitary creatures that ply the deep desert. They kill and eat anything that they can catch. Rumour says that once the giants walked the land as brothers to man, but now they are agents of evil.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+5, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; Parry: 5 (6 with Spear); Toughness: 12

Hindrances: All Thumbs. Edges: Sweep.

Gear: Weapons: Giants use either massive spears (Str+3, Parry +1, Reach 2, requires 2 hands) or stone-headed clubs (Str+3). Rocks: They typically carry bags full of throwing rocks, the only missile weapon they can manage (3/6/12, Str+2).

Special Abilities: Just Plain Dumb: Giants take a -2 penalty to most Common Knowledge rolls, as well as a -2 penalty to resist Taunts and Smarts based Tricks.

Large: Opponents get a +2 to their attack rolls against hill giants. Size +4

Salamanders

Massive snake like creatures that roam the deserts in packs, they are ancient descendants of the Naga.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Pace: 10; Parry: 6; Toughness: 11

Special Abilities: Armor +2: Tough scales. Bite/Claw: Str+2 Body Heat: Fire salamanders emit a tremendous amount of heat. Anyone coming within 3” must begin making Vigor rolls each round or become Fatigued.

Fleet Footed: They have Pace 10 and roll a d10 for running. Immunity: They are immune to all fire and heat based attacks and effects. Size +2

Weakness (Cold): Cold-based attacks do damage against the salamanders base Toughness of 7.

Gryphons

With the head of an eagle and the hindquarters of a lion the Gryphon are hunters of excellent skill. They come from the deep deserts near the mountains and are reputed to have much treasure.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

Pace: 8 ; Parry: 6; Toughness: 9

Special Abilities: Armor +1: Thick hide. Claws/Beak: Str+2 Favored Prey: Griffons love to feast on horseflesh. Wild griffons will attack horses on sight. Those using a griffon as a mount must make an opposed Spirit check against the griffon to prevent it from attacking a horse. Flight: Griffons fly at Pace 24, with an 8 Acceleration. Size +2

Roc (UC)

Legends speak of the Roc, a massive bird that can carry off elephants in its claws. A bird that makes its nest out of pure gold and gems. The Roc is now legend and exists in small numbers. Once in a while, each year, a Roc is sighted preying upon livestock. Rumours that the great birds have riders is merely tall tales...maybe.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Notice d12

Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 15

Special Abilities: Claws/Beak: Str+2 Fearless: When defending their nest, they are immune to Fear and

Intimidation, and need never make morale checks.
Flying: Giant Rocs fly at Pace 24, with a 6 acceleration. Large: Opponents get a +2 to attack rolls. Size +7: While giant rocs are longer and have a wider wingspan than dragons, they're not as massive. Slow: Giant rocs move at a normal Pace 6 on the ground, but can't run. Snatch: If the roc gets a raise on its Fighting roll when swooping against a target Size +3 or smaller, it snatches up the victim and flies off with it. Swoop: If the roc can fly at least 10" in a straight line before attacking, it does Str+4 damage with its claws.

Giant Spiders

Giant spiders live in nests of 1d6+2 arachnids, but they frequently go hunting when prey is scarce. Their lairs are littered with the bones (and treasures!) of their victims.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; Parry: 6; Toughness: 5

Bite: Str+1.

Poison (-4): The bite of the spider causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.

Webbing: The spiders can cast webs from their thorax that are the size of Small Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must cut or break their way free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at -4.

Scorpion men

These barely intelligent human scorpion crossbreed live in huge caves below the sands of the desert. The exit from these caves to hunt prey, normally in groups of 5-10. Standard Scorpion men have very limited intelligence, but their queens seem to be capable of limited human intelligence.

Scorpion man

Attributes: Agility d8 Smarts d10(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d12, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Shooting d10
Pace: 8; Parry: 6 (7); Toughness: 5 (6)

Gear: Medium shield (+1 parry, +2 armor at shoots) and Scimitar (Str+3) or Long bow (range 12, 2d6)

Armor: +1 thick scales and leather armor.

Sting: Str+1.

Poison (-4): The sting of the scorpion causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.

Scorpion queen (WC)

Attributes: Agility d8 Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d12, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Shooting d10
Pace: 8; Parry: 7; Toughness: 6 (8)

Gear: Spear (Str+3, reach 2)

Armor: +2 thick scales and chain armor.

Sting: Str+1.

Poison (-4): The sting of the scorpion causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.

CHAPTER VII: PERSONALITIES

Qabal

Adil

Qabal Earthshaker

"He knows little of sorcery, but what he does know serves us well." -Tabari

Amru

Qabal Avatar & Sahir

"We must keep her safe, brothers, for the Caliph hungers for what slumbers inside her soul."

Barda the Hawk

Qabal Sky Shepherd, Sahir

"Carpets are for the cowardly. How can you call it flying when there is fabric beneath your feet?"

Dawuud

Qabal Librarian, Sahir

"They took our knowledge with a shining light, so we shall take it back with a shuddering darkness." -Adil

Hekau

Sahir, Duelist, Qabal Champion

"He is playing a dangerous game. If his Pharaoh should discover his treachery, it will mean the end of his plots and schemes, no matter how noble or just they are."

Kurrat al-Ayn

Ice Sorceress, Sahir

"The merchants think she is cursed. If she were not a master of ice magic, she would be exiled with certainty."

Nizam

Sahir, Qabal Third Apprentice

"He has promise, but what is a man's promise worth?" -Kurrat al-Ayn

Tabari

Qabal Shadowmaster, Sahir

"Do not mistake allegiance for friendship. The only reason he stands with us is to stand beside his half-brother, Dawuud." -Zinaida

Zenaida

Qabal Bane of Jinn, Sahir

"His voice is like death to the Jinn he meets and challenges."

Labib al Hatim

Sahir

"More have learned our secret. How much death will the Star demand?"

Badr al Din

Qabal Renegade, Spellcrafter, Sahir *

He waited a long moment before calling the others, relishing the sight of the Khadi's face as it contorted into a pallid mask of fear. "No more," he murmured into the terrified sahir's face. "No more."

Beda al Sin

Qabal Enlightened One, Hunter

Not all sahir are prepared for the experience of summoning the desert spirits of smokeless fire. Some become unhinged or worse, and many even take on the most ferocious aspects of their servants.

Qamus

Qabal tavern-master, Sahir

"We offer the finest in wine, women, and ... discretion."

Raghib

Qabal Reaver, Sahir

He scours the prisons buried deep beneath the city, seeking to destroy the hapless ghuls of those left behind.

Dahab & Qolat

Al'a the Siege Master

Dahab Tactician

"All of his life he had been a lap-dog for the demented conspirators at Laramun, but no longer! The Erba's Alliance had given him the chance to strike back, and his first target would be their precious Merchant Quarter."

Eda Ishan

Dahab Merchant King, Qolat

"'Adopted' by the Tongue as a young child, she has never forgiven him for the deaths of her family."

Hila

Dahab Gorilla, Guardian-Pet of the Silver Tongue

"The majesty of nature was not meant to be imprisoned. The longer it remains docile, the more ferocious it will be when release." -from The Forty-Seven Sayings of Mekhem

Kasib al Atif

Dahab Champion, Qolat Master

"His many journeys beyond Laramun in the eastern mountains have never been questioned."

Nedif Yamen

Dahab

"He has the ear of so many that it is said that one word from him can seal or break any negotiation."

Rahmid

Dahab Mercenary, Sahir

"Willing to work for anyone who can pay his price, Rahmid knows who controls the flow of money and water in the City."

The Silver Tongue

Houses of Dahab Master Manipulator, Merchant King, Sahir

"What's your pleasure, my lady?" the fiendish merchant king invited. His words were unsettling, but the poisoned corpse between them was worse. -"Jamilah's Tale," Part Two

Tareekh Farenkha

Dahab Emissary of the Ten, Historian
"Be still, Pretty, or you'll blur the ink." – Tareekh to a subject

Wagi al Musakin

Houses of Dahab Deformed Enforcer
"What do you want, freak?" the trader scowled. "The Tongue wants his dinari, thief, or shall I collect it in flesh?"

Ivory Kingdoms

Giya

Ivory Kingdoms Deranged Killer, Ruhmal Leader
"Giya led us here from our homeland. He tells us that Kali-Ma demanded it, but some of us wonder."
-Kacha

Kali-Ma

Ivory Kingdoms Champion, Ruhmal Goddess
"She is death incarnate, a walking vessel of corruption and destruction."

Kumpal

Ivory Kingdoms Caravan Escort
"He patrols the Ivory Market from a unique vantage point, and the stalls tremble as he passes."

Kyurhi the Wanderer

Ivory Kingdoms Jakla Spiritualist, Sahir
"The past footsteps of his fellows and their prey coursed through his arms, and his heart kept time with each in turn as he scanned the horizon. *_I must get to them_,* his frenzied mind pressed, *_before it is too late_.*

Omal

Ivory Kingdoms, Ruhmal Cultist, Vassal to Kali-Ma
"When they found him in the jungle, he had just killed a gorilla. Nothing much has changed."

Punjat

Ivory Kingdoms Ruhmal Initiate
"Punjat has yet to rise beyond the rank of Shumsee within the Kali-Ma cult, and therefore must distract the cult's victims or hold them down when the killing starts. Even after so many victims, it never gets any easier."

Raniyah

Ivory Kingdoms Hunter of Rakshasa
"*She has destroyed all but five of them, four of which reside here in the heart of the Jewel.*"

Sarna

Ivory kingdoms progeny of the destroyer, Sahir
"Yuna was there when Sarna was born, and only he saw for a fleeting moment the horrible visage of the being that sired her."

Yuna

Ivory Kingdoms Deific Vessel
"For every village to which he travels, another scar is drawn across his face and arms. The wounds do not heal until he embraces the locals' god."

Ashalan

Mendi-Duad

Ashalan Priest, Sahir.
"He stumbled across the wounded Senpet Sahir in a deserted part of the city, clutching a broken ivory case. He did not ask what had befallen the youth, or what was so precious about his burden, only carried him across the dunes, back to his people. -Keseth's Tale, Part Three

Althira

Ashalan Priestess, Sahir
"*Lady Sun is not angry, she is insane. We must wake Lord Moon to restore the balance that was shattered so long ago.*"

Anbari Khalil

Ashalan Champion, Council Leader
Only three remain from the Council of Twelve, and even the Ishanti Crystal cannot foretell the fate of her dying people.

Eyla the Protector

Ashalan Blood-Sworn
The Blood-Sworn. Ashalan holy warriors, have their blood spilled upon the same Ishanti crystal as every servant of the Council before them.

Hojyn

Ashalan Explorer
He chases the sun itself, hoping to find the doomed city of Laramun in its wake.

Katani

Ashalan Daughter of Midnight, Sahir
You have a choice: Leave with my water, or leave with your life.

Lamassar

Ashalan Heart-Seeker
He has collected three hearts in their ivory boxes, and there are three Khadi who cannot raise their hands against him.

Mirali

Ashalan Guard
The sewers are yours, with all the filth and putrescence you have given it. But the lake below is ours, and I will bleed any man who thinks otherwise.

Samarhad

Ashalan Sun-Rider
He bought his horse from the Moto... two hundred years ago.

Tarya

Ashalan Half-Breed
Her mother was the Council Leader of the Ashalan, and her father was a stranger from an unknown land. She's the only child born to the Ashalan in seven hundred years, and she may be the last.

Bakira

Ashalan Birth-Mother of Onaja, Renegade
She cradled the precious bundle to her chest, hoping that her cowl would keep the deep blue lines pulsing

within her cheeks from showing. -"They Collect Their Due," Part One

Dawn

Ashalan Harbinger of Disaster, Sahir

She stepped through the settling dust at the first light of day after the Awakening, carrying a message of ruin for the future.

Laqsha

Ashalan Desert Guide, Hunter of the Qanon

Her loyalties are not with her people, but out in the sands. She knows much about the wastes' lost ruins and oases, and though not very friendly, she asks only for water in return for her services.

Maymun

Ashalan Sandsmith, Sahir

"There is power in the sand left over from Lady Sun's wrath. I swear, my lady, I will find it."

Sylmun

Ashalan Birth-Father of Onaja, Renegade

"Please, I can pay! My wife and I must leave the city at once! We cannot be here when the... when the sun sets!" -"They Collect Their Due," Part Two

Jackal

Monkey Man

Jackal.

I can give you the secrets you seek, but you must trade first.

Afshan Jarr

Jackal

"Trust me," the dirty little man said. "Thirty copper pieces is a fair price."

Kalesha Sesh

Jackal

She has a thousand faces for a thousand friends.

Asadhel Jumah

Jackal Thief

The only soul he cannot steal is the one he desires most.

Chandra

Jackal, Assassin

"When you cannot seduce your enemy, seduce the one he loves." from The Forty-Seven Sayings of Mekhem

Enala

Jackal Champion

He can control the dead like a sorcerer of legend, feeding off them to power his own dark desires.

Jangir

Jackal, Moto, Shugenja, Sahir

"We know of your prophecy, and now we know how to prevent it." -Monkey Man

Ramontet

Jackal, Senpet Strategist

"Thank you for the advice, Hekau. Soon, we shall have both hands."

-Enala

Seff Seven-Fingers

Jackal

Seff is very much like his old friend, Janann. They both love adventure, wine, and women. Many scandalous affairs began as a result of their competitive nature - until Seff took a liking to the Caliph. Now the Caliph has four trophies of their time together.

Sibirah

Jackal

"No one pays attention to the Khesir. They are pitiless, wretched, lost souls. We have given them a home and a purpose."

-Wardah the Urchin Mistress

Wardah the Urchin-Mistress

Gypsy Jackal

"Every lost soul has a story to tell. I simply wait for them to come to me and collect them."

Yaminah

Jackal

She would just as soon capture a man's heart as his soul. She is the worst kind of villain - beautiful, exotic, and completely aware of her charms.

Asadhel Jumah

Jackal Idealist Romantic, Thief

The only soul he cannot steal is the one he desires most.

The Ma'ghul

Jackal Ally, Ambassador from Jigoku

A spirit from beyond the southern mountains, it feeds on the strengths of others, gaining power and skill.

ᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀ

Chandra

Assassin Bearer of the Black Star

"When all you have is a hammer, everything starts looking like a nail."

-The Forty-Seven Sayings of Mekhem

Faida

Assassin Keeper of the Seventh Gate

Her first kill was her brother, a traitor to the Old man. She killed him in his bed, but she woke him up to savor his fear.

Fatima

Assassin First-Born.

The Old Man trusted only his eldest daughter, to do the deed. "Strike at the heart of the serpent," he commanded, "and his fangs cannot strike you." She nodded and vanished away. -Fatima's Tale, Part One

Haroun

Assassin Master of the Blood Red Tiger.

Not many of the Old Man's sons show the talent for The Calling, but they all bear the mark of the curse.

Only Haroun seems untouched by the magic cast against his family so long ago.

Marishka

Assassin Midwife.

"Hush, little one. They'll never miss you."

Old Man of the Mountain

Assassin Champion.

An eternal curse deserves eternal revenge.

Sabina

Assassin Lady of the Seven Oaths.

Her first love betrayed her to the Senpet. Although her body has healed from the wounds, her soul never will.

Shala

Assassin Second-Born.

She looks at Fatima with a jealous eye, watching how her father favors her elder sister. She would pay any price to have that favor, even the price of blood.

Takiyah

Assassin Watcher of Omens. Sahir.

Her name means pious, but her dark eyes could ruin a man's faith forever.

Jamilah

Assassin Silken Ghost

"Spare me, spare me!" "Not even your weight in copper could buy my mercy."

-Jamilah's Tale, Part One.

Alhena

Assassin Apprentice

With Chandra's guidance and Fatima's support, Alhena should have been destined for greatness within the family, but her interests lay in less savory arenas.

Amber

Rogue Assassin Confidant

"I have known her since before we were given our Kris. There is no one I trust more." –Adira

Haja the Twice-Born

Cursed Assassin Master

No one knows where he is or when he will strike, but his blade is felt often and never where one expects it.

Ebonite

Kabdar Fassal

Ebonite Defender of the Faithful. Templar.

They say they worship the Sun, but their palms are stained black as the darkest night, the gift of the Stone they guard.

Manala Shessim

Ebonite Guardian of the Seven Keys

Even his most trusted advisors cannot understand why the Sultan retains an Ebonite to guard the Nine Rooms of Golden Wonder.

Ashalla

Ebonite Sorceress, Sahir

In every man, there is a monster. Draw it out, and it may be expunged.

Balance

Ebonite Judge

All things must be judged, be it for good or evil.

Enigma

Ebonite

To destroy the enemy, we must understand him. To do that, we must become him.

Jubal the Knife

Ebonite

His ferocity will make an excellent addition to our growing forces. His temper will ensure that he is never judged by the Stone.

Judgement

Ebonite Crusader, Champion

The Ebonite Champion is said to have been in every battle the Ebonites have taken part in over the last 200 years.

Kalib al Asim

Ebonite Wolf-Master

There is always the chance that we can lose control, that the primal natures within us can consume our humanity. Kalib is one who flirts with the beast within.

Pashal

Ebonite Squire

"What is this? It is the Awakening. It is the future."

-Judgement

Templar Master of Stars

Ebonite, Sahir

Nepherus once trained her in the cycles of Ra, but now she has found a new purpose...

The Twins Janan

Ebonite

"Beg us both for mercy and see which one gives it."

Yodajin Templar

Ebonite

He shares his people's fury, but not their prejudice.

Rabah al Gazi

Ebonite Nervous Runaway, Proselyte

The boy will not speak of his life before joining the Order of the Ebonites, and the Council has chosen not to allow him the Test of the Stone until he does. "His fears are his impurity," they say, "and we would only lose him, this early."

Truth

Ebonite Idiot-Savant, Principal, Sahir

The victim of a miscast sell, this blind man is without temperament devoid of emotion - the perfect candidate for the Principal of Truth.

Vengeance

Ebonite Caretaker of the Shard or the Ancients, Principal

"Vengeance is the purity of purpose with remorse."

-from The Forty-Seven Sayings of Mekhem

Rhadī

Ghiyath

Khadi Sculptor of Hearts, Sahir

It is not always easy to find someone willing to join our ranks, but once Ghiyath has properly tutored them, they are glad to do anything he wishes.

Indira

Khadi Mistress of Pain, Sahir

"The senpet who escaped us will be mine, my Caliph. I will hunt him, and I will find him, and I will break his heart in two."

Caliph, The

Sahir, Khadi

She sees the same fire in Hensatti's eyes that she once saw in the Sultan's. She captured that fire once; she can do it again.

San'a

Khadi Mistress of Mercy, Sahir

"She is too young to understand the consequences of her actions," Giyath protested. "So much the better," the Caliph snarled.

Tasir

Khadi Silencer, Sahir

"You cannot ignore me. You cannot defeat me. You can only pray for mercy that I will not give."

Senpet

Abresax

Unique. Senpet Fist of the Pharoah

He does not see Hensetti as a woman. She is the Pharoah, the child of the Ten thousand, and Light of the Senpet. He may not agree with her, but he would die at her command.

Asori

Senpet Courtesan

Abresax thinks little of his new "acquisition," but Asori looks at the glare in the woman's eyes and knows better.

Bekhten

Senpet Shield of the Empire

"Each drop of his blood exists to serve his Pharoah. It will be a pity to see such loyalty spilled on dry desert sand." -Takiyah

Hensatti

Senpet Pharoah. Champion.

Her Empire is crumbling, so she has found another to rule.

Keseth

Senpet Seer. Sahir. Khadi

His skill with sorcery captured Ghiyath's attention. It was a matter of child's play to capture the youth, but keeping him was not as simple as the Master thought it would be. -Keseth's Tale, Part One

Nekhebet

Senpet Explorer

Her extensive journey's have brought her many fabulous artifacts, including that strange ivory bow...

Nepherus

Senpet Astrologer. Sahir

He fears the return of Selqet signals the beginning of dark times, and he watches the stars for an omen of the future.

Qer Apet

Senpet Brother of the Black Shield

"Those who voluntarily put themselves under the heel of a tyrant get exactly what they deserve." -The Forty-Seven Sayings of Mekhem

Ramontet

Senpet Strategist.

"Hensatti knows nothing of warfare and tactics, but Ramontet does. Remove Ramontet, and you remove the Pharoah's left hand." -Hekau

Atep

Senpet Sergeant

"Get up" he shouted. "I haven't given you permission to die!"

Qer Apet

Senpet

He is almost unstoppable berserker on the field of battle. He is the Senpets weapon of destruction. Destroy him and destroy the Senpet's path of victory.

Jaqhabet

Senpet Falconer, Foreign Insurgent

The tacticians at the Senpet capital were confused by the bold Yodatai scouting mission, given their recent experience overwhelming them in the western mountains. But when Jaqhabet's latest reports arrived with his war-bird, Ani, they realized the terrible truth.

Kepsat

Senpet brother of the black shield

"I know now what happened to me when I was taken on that fateful day so many years ago. I know what the Qanon did when they took me to the City of Orphans, and I know what I must do for them in return. Farewell, my dear friend."

-Hekau

Kosus of Byrnia

Senpet Obsessed Slave Master, Tracker

"It is said that he once recovered an escaped slave after the fool ran into a sandstorm," Atep said. "I heard the slave was on a carpet at the time," returned Kepsat.

Nepherus

Senpet Ambassador to Medinaat al Salaam, Sahir

After the Tyrant's fall, Nepherus kept the accursed Book of the Dead close to him. Never again was it opened, nor the terrible secrets within misused.

Ra'Sharī

Shalimar

Dancer.

"We know so little of her people, only what she has told us. And if we believe everything she says, we

would believe they are gods." -In'am, Regent of the River Valley

The Grey Woman

Grandmother, Sahir

"I tell fortunes for those who are ready to hear them. It is not always wise to know your own destiny. Are you ready?"

Amahla

Ra'Shari Bone-Reader of the Fourth Chronicle

"The bones are fickle. Perhaps another throw?"

Baqiri

Ra'Shari Thief of the Eighteenth Chronicle, Sahir

"Melinda did not foresee this!"

Fazil

Acrobat, Steward of the Coming Age

"I have remained to watch, and listen, and perhaps help those who have been left behind."

Ferran

Dancer of the first chronicle of the flame

"You may read the ashes, Melinda. I shall read the flames."

Melinda

Dancer of the first chronicle of the flame

"If one reads both the flames and the ashes, a more complete story can be told."

Raya

Resurrected Caretaker, Seer of the Second Chronicle

"Death has taught me many things, chief among them that we must all strive for greatness-though not always our own."

Samand the Quick

Dancer of the Tenth Chronicle

"No, Mistress Caliph. He was not attacked. The wounds simply appeared. It was most... impressive."

-Indira

Shagala the Damned

Accuser of the First Chronicle * Sahir

She gained all of her mother's power and none of her father's control.

The Living Memory

Ra-Shari Champion * Keeper of the Great Chronicle

He remembers a time where all was right in the world. He remembers a time when all is nothing. He remembers it all as if he were there.

Moto

Argoun

Moto Clan Youth.

The maps he sells tell the caravans how to avoid the desert's dangers, but not its predators.

Gaheris

Moto Clan Khan

"From the East comes the tiger-men. From the West, those who worship Death. I hunt tigers for my dinner, and I'll help the Senpet on the way to their god."

Jangir

Moto Clan Shujenga, Sahir

"I know nothing of jinn or demons. My way is the way of my ancestors, taught to me by father. The dance of the elements is my way."

Kara

Moto Clan Huntress.

The Senpet were returning from their victory over the scorpion when the Moto descended upon them. But a sudden sandstorm swept up around them, and the will of the Lady washed them away into the sand. -Kara's Tale, Part One

Khaidu

Moto Clan Trader

The Khan's brother knows that Gaheris must do something soon, or the whispers will turn into knives.

Khitai

Moto Clan Dunerunner

"She is the best archer in our tribe, her skill rivaled only by the lovely Senpet who guards the winter caravan." -Yesugai

Kiyoshi

Moto Clan Tar-khan.

"In his blood lies the fury of the berserker, a gift from his ancestors." -Gaheris

Shu-kai

Moto Scout

His father lost his hand to one of those heartless mages. Now, he has to fend for his family any way he can.

Yesugai

Moto Clan Guide

"His eyes light up like stars whenever she arrives with the winter caravan and he looks like a weepy little girl. It's disgraceful."

-Khitai

Moto Marik

Moto Raid Master

The dust clouds parted to reveal two figures. One of them was Marik. The other... -Kara's Tale, Part Five

Malakai

Moto Askaree, Royal Informant

In his position as a Caliphate guard, he has heard many cruel words and seen many violent deaths. He is always willing to part with them for just a few dinari.

Sha-gir

Moto Clan Master Horseman, Spy

Under cover of darkness, Sha-gir rode from post to post collecting every detail about the troops around Medinaat al Salaam. Kiyoshi would be pleased at the results.

Yodatai

Adrianna

Yodatai Strategist

"The city's most significant weakness is the river. To approach from any other angle would be foolish."

Aurelian

Yodatai Champion, Incarnation of Octavius

"I walk with the gods over the broken bodies of those you fear."

Avitus

Yodatai Diseased Alchemist, Spy

He walks bent and crippled, yet his eyes are more perceptive and keen than ever.

Balak the Hanif

Yodatai Prisoner

Imprisoned, branded, beaten, and forgotten, Rawif has little love for the Jewel of the Desert, the Senpet who imprisoned him there, or any within its walls. He will follow the Eleventh Tribe on their quest, regardless of the wishes of his brother, Soraph.

Galerius

Yodatai Inquisitor, Sahir

His birth name was Phresex, but that was the first of many changes the Yodatai made.

Galon Trillius

Yodatai Amateur Inventor, Scout

He helped to build the hand-bow himself, though he is far more accurate with it than it is reliable.

Katarine of the Sheel

Yodatai Centurion Lieutenant

"Are you confident that this is the best tactic, my lord? Meeting the raiders with an army?"

Octavius

Yodatai Spectral Martyr

He was the first to set foot on this continent, and he led the Yodatai into victory against countless empires. Sometimes, when the conquest is worthy, he can be seen fighting alongside his descendants as well.

Phyrrus

Yodatai Centurion, Siege-Master

"The first step toward conquest is a foothold. These riders called Moto have provided us with an unexpected opportunity that we cannot neglect.

Valeria

Yodatai Daughter of Aurelian, Patrician

Her father left a long trail of shattered lives-and broken bodies-behind them, a hundred victims of her fertile beauty.

Vespa

Yodatai Bride of Phyrrus, Patrician

"How is it possible for such a beautiful land to be so utterly barbaric?"

Celestial Alliance

Ishrak ibn Kaleel

Celestial Alliance, Shadow-Jinn

He spent many centuries probing the far reaches of the Black Earth and the realms beyond the Stone for any sign that the Adversary had survived. He found little until the day he stopped looking.

Lurza

Celestial Alliance, Agent of the Quest, Champion

Its name means "secret," and it has a thousand to share, all of them dark and deadly.

Mohandis the Enchanter

Celestial Alliance, Sahir

"Each new creation is one less warrior upon the field of the coming war."

Sedjem

Celestial Alliance, Walking God

The legends say that one word from him can sway an army, but he has not spoken in an age.

Sehai the Healer

Celestial Alliance * Sahir

Within all this destruction the sight of one whose very hands can heal with but a touch is a miracle that the Sun has given us.

Unaligned

Abd al-Zhayn

Wanderer

I have traveled the world, and I have seen more than you could ever imagine. I have seen men with the heads of tigers, corpses wearing porcelain masks and women whose arms were great rainbow colored wings. The one thing I don't know is where I'll be tomorrow.

Adnan

Tomb Raider

"And how many marvels have you seen in your days, my boy?" "At least a thousand, my lady." He smiled, and the Caliph laughed.

al-Hazaad

Sahir

al-Hazaad, the Twice-Exalted, has returned from Rokugan with foreign magic, but he has not returned alone.

Bonepicker

Undead Ghul

"What do you do with the bodies of your dead?" asked the Scorpion of his captor. "We bury them under the city and leave them to dream of the stories they will never see."

Dairya, The Eye of Night

Ronin.

They came across the mountains on a carpet of flame and wind. The stranger at al-Hazaad's side speaks little, and his language is strange, but he has a deadly purpose in his one good eye.

Eyeslicer

Undead Ghul

Even the Assassins know better than to use the sewers.

Janan Barakah

Sand Pirate Captain.

Your horses are fast, my friend, but nothing is faster than the wind.

Dena
Thief
She doesn't know what it is, but the cats certainly seem interested in it.

Gullet
Undead Ghul
"Mine? Miiiiine..."

Julianna Barakah
Sand Pirate Wind-Bound, Sahir
Sister of the "Sultan of the Sands," her mystical skills have aided Janan's escapades - and escapes - for years.

Matsu Gohei
Lion Clan Butcher, Samurai, Tactician
Commanded by his Clan to take the Scorpions from the Emerald Empire, Gohei has to trade his skills for a single drink of water. Alone and without allies, his only goal now is to find a way home.

R'adjir, the Thunderfoot
Giant
"Me like horses. Tasty..."

Rahjid
Rakshasa Ambassador
The silent figure stands in the Sultan's court, never speaking a word. But as they argue, he watches... and plans.

Shosuro Hametsu
Scorpion Clan Poison Master
Upon his arrival he immediately started gathering new plants and herbs, knowing that here were new poison to know.

Bayushi Tangen
Scorpion Clan Martyr
"These foreigners reek of disaster and sin."

Felah Hassan
Sahir
It is not certain if he was mad before he bit Tashima, but his words have grown wild and mysterious all at once.

The Ferryman
Unaligned
"Welcome aboard. Which district, please?"

Haythum Za'nul
Unaligned
He hunts Janan for copper and glory. His collection of priceless treasures will be complete with the head of Janan and the hand of Julianna.
-The Tale of the Last Pirate, Part One

Hitomi Tashima
Dragon Tattooed Man
"The inkings of his body come alive with a power beyond belief."

Matishiya
Sahir
"I am a free sahir, but I am not Qabal. Summoning jinn is dangerous business, far more so than anyone yet realizes..."

Rohshem
Unaligned Rakshasa
"We have remained hidden from man for centuries. Some of us hide in plain sight; others, beyond the veil of darkness."
-Rahjid

Adira
Unaligned Adopted Daughter of the Mountain
"She carries the weight of the Old Man's burden in her heart and fights with a prodigal skill all her own."

Dharr
Unaligned Fated Orphan
Dharr wouldn't understand why the cats loved him so, not for many moonless nights. Yet they were in his earliest memories and with him ever since. They are a rare source of happiness in an insane world.

Effendi
Unaligned Vindictive Son of the Sultan
"Apart from his family, he will be one to take the throne if all moves right and Fate smiles."

Emiral
Unaligned Researcher, Sahir, Khadi
"Though his heart sits in box, he walks free."

Gash
Unaligned Ghul
When they are still fresh, they often try to make their way home.

Marayid
Unaligned Undead Khadi Traitor,
"Like Abdul-Malik before me, I have the weight of dreams, but I have not the strength to follow."

Nefir
Unaligned Swordsman
Nefir stumbles through an endless dreamscape, no longer sure what is real and what is imaginary. Armies of silver and white follow, and a laughing man tempts him ever further into madness.

Puja the Believer
Unaligned
His smile faded quickly when he saw the Ruhmal gathered around him. -
"Puja's Tale," Part Two

Qashima
Unaligned Nagah Abomination, Outcast Warlord
"Within this blasted land lies the secret to eternal redemption."

Ratib al' Ideem
Unaligned Independent Supplier, Street Merchant
"Desire is a dangerous quality, and more so when fulfilled, but I am prepared if you are. Shall we begin?"

Ropp'Cht'Cht
Unaligned Ratling Traveler
"So many baubles, so little time."

Shosuro Tage
Unaligned Scorpion Clan Infiltrator

Rescued from death at the Senpet's hands, Tage wonders why everyone in the foreign camp is so interested in her - especially the small elder shugenja with the strange mark on his neck.

Soraph

Unaligned Escaped Slave, Hanif Idol

The Senpet thought they were finally rid of the accursed slave-icon when they arranged his escape,

but it seemed his influence only grew thereafter.

—"The Tale of Soraph the Free Man," Part Two

The Wounded Man

Unaligned Former Prisoner

His former masters believe that he has achieved a state of physical purity through torture. Now he has escaped into the streets.

CHAPTER VIII: RULE NOTES

This are some notes on the rules and some optional rules I use.

Refer also at my compendium of optional rules, edges, hindrances, powers and such, some things are not included here. It's at http://web.tiscali.it/tavola_rotolante/risorse/edgehind.pdf.

Heat

In the Burning Sands the warming and kisses of Lady Sun can be as dangerous the sting of a scorpion. When the temperature reach 90 °F (32,5 °C) and the character doesn't have at least four quarter of water to drink or if the temperature reach 105 °F (40 °C), the character must make a Vigor roll every 4 hours, -2 if there are half the water available, -4 if less than the half, and subtract -1 for every 5 °F (2,5 °C) above the limit, add +1 if the hero stops all physical activity and +1 if the character can find substantial shade. Pay also attention to the clothing: a proper desert outfit that covers the whole body and keeps the temperature of the skin add +1 to the roll, while heavy clothing not suited for desert would subtract -1. Leather armor does not impair much (and it can be added to a proper desert clothing), but chain mail subtract -1, -2 if completely covering the body. Plate armor subtracts -2 or -3 if complete (particularly with a full helm).

INDEX

Chapter I: Setting.....	3	Sultanate Dervish.....	30
A Outlanders Guide to the Burning Sands.....	3	Sultanate Merchant.....	31
The Cultures of the Burning Sands.....	9	Ashalan Blood Sworn.....	31
The Others.....	11	Ashalan Heartseeker.....	31
Women.....	12	Ashalan Sandsmith.....	31
A Nobles life.....	13	Yodatai Centurion.....	31
A Commoners life.....	14	Yodatai inquisitor.....	31
Language.....	14	Yodatai alchemist.....	31
Economy.....	15	Yodatai inventor.....	31
Travel.....	15	Yodatai strategist.....	31
Food.....	15	Ra'shari storyteller.....	31
Clothing.....	16	Ra'shari dancer.....	31
Dwellings.....	16	Ivory Kingdoms Rakshasa Hunter.....	31
Castles.....	16	Jackal soul hunter.....	31
Cities.....	17	Jackal thief.....	31
Etiquette.....	17	Assassin.....	31
Vendetta.....	17	Ebonite Templar.....	32
Politics.....	17	Ebonite Crusader.....	32
Religion.....	17	Ebonites priest of prophet.....	32
Magic.....	19	Rhumal assassin.....	32
Of Jinn, the Spirits of Nature.....	20	Qabal sahir.....	32
Of Avatars and Prophets.....	20	Qolat merchant.....	32
Enchanted Items.....	20	Khadi.....	32
Map of the Burning Sands.....	22	Member of the Celestial Alliance.....	32
Chapter II: Races.....	23	Chapter IV: Monsters and Enemies.....	33
Humans.....	23	Rakshasa (WC).....	33
Ashalan.....	23	Giants.....	33
Jackal.....	23	Salamanders.....	33
Khadi.....	24	Gryphons.....	33
Ratling.....	24	Roc (WC).....	33
Chapter III: Edges and Hindrances.....	25	Giant Spiders.....	34
Arcane Backgrounds.....	25	Scorpion men.....	34
Modified edges.....	26	Chapter VII: Personalities.....	35
New Edges.....	26	Qabal.....	35
New hindrances.....	27	Dahab & Qolat.....	35
Chapter IV: Gear.....	28	Ivory Kingdoms.....	36
Money.....	28	Ashalan.....	36
Armors.....	28	Jackal.....	37
Hand to Hand Weapons.....	28	Assassins.....	37
Ranged Weapons.....	28	Ebonite.....	38
Equipment.....	29	Khadi.....	38
Chapter V: Archetypes.....	30	Senpet.....	39
Senpet Noble Warrior.....	30	Ra'Shari.....	39
Senpet Astrologer.....	30	Moto.....	40
Senpet Seer.....	30	Yodatai.....	40
Moto Horse Rider.....	30	Celestial Alliance.....	41
Moto White Guard.....	30	Unaligned.....	41
Moto Shugenja.....	30	Chapter VIII: Rule Notes.....	44
Moto Askaree.....	30	Heat.....	44