



Game Adventure

Reunion

by Jackie Cassada and Nicky Rea

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Introduction

Set in Zakhara, the Land of Fate, *Reunion* attempts to capture the flavor of that unique setting, both in the characters and in the encounters. The story is a simple one—a desert tribe has been captured by raiders in the employ of an evil and ambitious mage. They have been delivered into slavery where men, women, and children are separated. The three parts of this adventure see first the men, then the women, and finally the children escape from very different situations, making their way to a hidden oasis known only to their tribe, where they can be reunited with their families and friends. Although each chapter involves a journey from captivity to freedom, the situations themselves are very diverse.

This adventure is unusual in that the players take on very different roles in each chapter. In the first chapter, they each play one of the men of the tribe; this section is intended to challenge the players' tactical and problem-solving expertise while providing plenty of opportunity for both combat and roleplaying. In the second chapter, they each play one of the women of the tribe; this section focuses more on negotiation skills—although the potential for combat is still present, and at least one combat is inevitable. In the third and final chapter, they each play one of the children of the tribe; this section should provide the most varied and innovative range of approaches, since most of the characters must improvise. Note that while it is certainly possible to play this adventure with one game character throughout, or indeed with outlanders who are not members of the Tribe of the Flying Eagle, such an approach causes the players to miss out on the challenge of roleplaying the different points of view and facing the challenges inherent in each. Also, should any phase of the adventure end in disaster the DM can simply jump to the next chapter with its new set of player characters.

Books Needed to Run the Adventure

In addition to the books normally needed to play AD&D® (in this case, the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), in order to play this adventure the DM will need the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook. Spells detailed in this rulebook are marked with an asterisk (*) throughout this adventure. The AL-QADIM® *Land of Fate* boxed set, while useful for its detail and explanations of life in Zakhara, is not a necessity, nor is the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® appendix for al-Qadim, as we have tried to detail the pertinent statistics for all the encounters.

Roleplaying the NPCs

Part of the fun of the al-Qadim campaign setting comes from playing creatures and villains that are "larger than life." The DM is encouraged to have fun doing so, so long as it is not at the expense of forcing the players off center stage. Though most of the pertinent NPC speeches

are written out in full, the DM should break them up into natural patterns, paraphrasing and encouraging the PCs to ask questions or interact with you and among themselves. So long as the information is given to the players, and so long as the flavor of al-Qadim is maintained, the DM should feel free to improvise.

Plot Synopsis

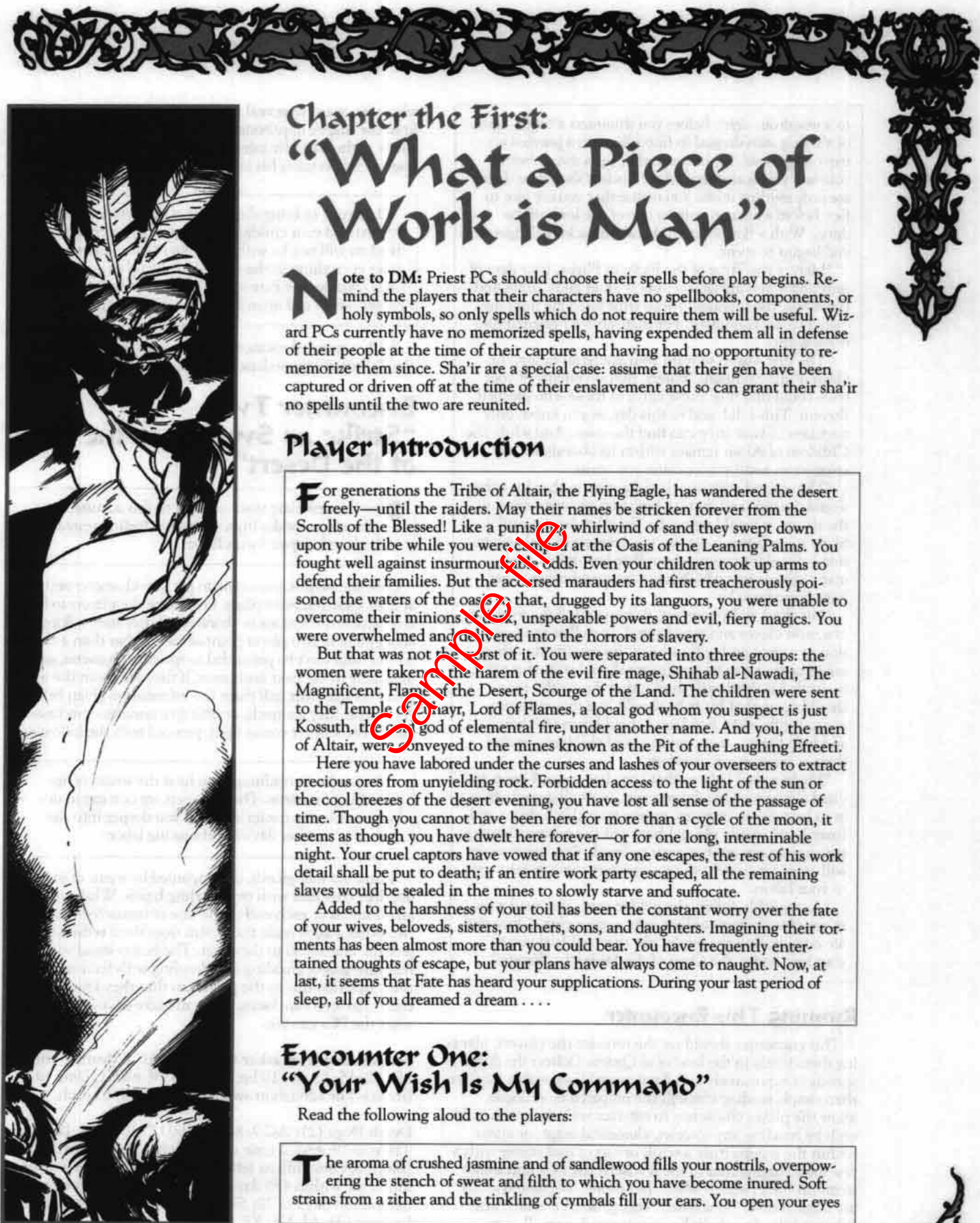
All the player characters in this adventure are members of the Tribe of the Flying Eagle. Captured by raiders in the hire of an evil elemental mage, they have been divided up so that the men are used as slaves in the mage's mines, the women have been sent to his harem, and the children have been given to the temple of a fiery god, whose priests the flame wizard is trying to impress. Fate intervenes in the form of a noble djinni, who is at long last fulfilling the final wish of a long-dead tribal chieftain.

In Chapter the First, the men have the opportunity to overpower their guards, recover some of their equipment and their horses, and escape from the mines. Their journey to the Oasis of the Midnight Waters, their tribe's ancestral

homeland, takes them deep into the Zakharan desert. They are plagued by a ghost mount, battle a sandstorm, meet some desert centaurs, and fight against werheynas. They are being pursued, however, and finally, within sight of the last leg of their journey, they must fight a final, desperate battle to win their freedom. If they are successful, they can reach the hidden oasis and safety, where they hope to be reunited with their families and loved ones.

In Chapter the Second, the women must slip out of the mage's harem and brave the dangers of his formal gardens where "terrible things" guard it by night. In the city, these women of the desert must beg, borrow, or bargain for the items they will need to make the arduous trek across the blazing sands to their home. Encounters with the merchants and colorful characters of the bazaar, with the mamluks who are charged with guarding the city, and with a qadi (judge) who must hear their case and rule for or against their freedom all provide splendid opportunities for roleplaying and innovative problem solving. Finally, they too must make their way across the desert to the oasis where their families await them.

Chapter the Third should be as freewheeling and fun as the DM can make it while still managing to keep some control over the game. The PCs here are all children, and their solutions to problems should be shaped by their sense of wonder; they need to be clever and imaginative rather than aggressive. Though there may be some combat, the overall emphasis is on breath-taking escapades and the wonders of Zakhara. From their confinement in the temple, the children escape to the precarious safety of a caravan leaving the town where they have been held. Fleeing bandits and the destruction of the caravan, they enter the "palace" (cave) of the aforementioned noble djinni, who challenges them to a series of games. If they win, they are gifted with a flying carpet to take them home and, after a hair-raising aerial encounter, can fly to the Oasis of the Midnight Waters, where all are finally brought together, at last.



Chapter the First:

“What a Piece of Work is Man”

Note to DM: Priest PCs should choose their spells before play begins. Remind the players that their characters have no spellbooks, components, or holy symbols, so only spells which do not require them will be useful. Wizard PCs currently have no memorized spells, having expended them all in defense of their people at the time of their capture and having had no opportunity to re-memorize them since. Sha'ir are a special case: assume that their gen have been captured or driven off at the time of their enslavement and so can grant their sha'ir no spells until the two are reunited.

Player Introduction

For generations the Tribe of Altair, the Flying Eagle, has wandered the desert freely—until the raiders. May their names be stricken forever from the Scrolls of the Blessed! Like a punishing whirlwind of sand they swept down upon your tribe while you were resting at the Oasis of the Leaning Palms. You fought well against insurmountable odds. Even your children took up arms to defend their families. But the accursed marauders had first treacherously poisoned the waters of the oasis; that, drugged by its languors, you were unable to overcome their minions with your unspeakable powers and evil, fiery magics. You were overwhelmed and delivered into the horrors of slavery.

But that was not the worst of it. You were separated into three groups: the women were taken to the harem of the evil fire mage, Shihab al-Nawadi, The Magnificent, Flame of the Desert, Scourge of the Land. The children were sent to the Temple of Anayr, Lord of Flames, a local god whom you suspect is just Kossuth, the god of elemental fire, under another name. And you, the men of Altair, were conveyed to the mines known as the Pit of the Laughing Efreeti.


Here you have labored under the curses and lashes of your overseers to extract precious ores from unyielding rock. Forbidden access to the light of the sun or the cool breezes of the desert evening, you have lost all sense of the passage of time. Though you cannot have been here for more than a cycle of the moon, it seems as though you have dwelt here forever—or for one long, interminable night. Your cruel captors have vowed that if any one escapes, the rest of his work detail shall be put to death; if an entire work party escaped, all the remaining slaves would be sealed in the mines to slowly starve and suffocate.

Added to the harshness of your toil has been the constant worry over the fate of your wives, beloveds, sisters, mothers, sons, and daughters. Imagining their torments has been almost more than you could bear. You have frequently entertained thoughts of escape, but your plans have always come to naught. Now, at last, it seems that Fate has heard your supplications. During your last period of sleep, all of you dreamed a dream

Encounter One: “Your Wish Is My Command”

Read the following aloud to the players:

The aroma of crushed jasmine and of sandlewood fills your nostrils, overpowering the stench of sweat and filth to which you have become inured. Soft strains from a zither and the tinkling of cymbals fill your ears. You open your eyes



to a wondrous sight. Before you shimmers a bright figure of a young man dressed in fine silks with a jeweled turban on his head. He hovers rather than stands before you, and you notice that where his feet should be there are only swirling mists. You realize that you are face to face before what can only be one of the lords of the djinn. With a flourish of his hands, he acknowledges you and begins to speak:

"Men of the Tribe of the Eagle in Flight, your days of suffering and bondage are almost at an end! Times and times ago, the founder of your tribe freed me from my own dire imprisonment. For that service I granted him three wishes.

"The first was to so ward your ancestral home, the Oasis of the Midnight Waters, that no enemy of your tribe could find it or cause harm to those who dwelled therein. This I did, and to this day, as you know, only members of your tribe can find the oasis. And while the Children of Altair remain within its boundaries, no enemy can assail you or cause you harm.

"The second wish was to make certain that his tribe would flourish and that, so long as there were sands in the desert, it would never die. So it has been—and is likely to continue to be, for you have produced generations of children upon whom Fate has smiled, and many misfortunes which have destroyed other tribes have passed you by.

"His third wish, however, demonstrated the workings of a most clever and astute mind, as well as the position of a great and selfless heart. Foreseeing that there might come a day when disaster should strike his tribe, he made his third wish thusly: that if ever the time should come that his tribe should lose that precious of gifts, their freedom, I should come to their aid and help them—men, women, and children—make their arduous way to freedom.

"My friends, I believe that time has come. I have devised a scheme whereby you may, in small groupings so as to better your chances, escape from this hideous and (may I say) smelly place. I have put the means whereby you may free yourselves near to hand. Your opportunity will come when next the taskmasters come to take you to your labors.

"Act quickly, follow the golden trail, and avail yourselves of such items as Fate puts in your path. Once you are outside, find the landmarks that will lead you to your true home, the Oasis of the Midnight Waters."

Running This Encounter

This encounter should set the tone for the players, planting them firmly in the land of al-Qadim. Deliver the djinni's speech as expressively and flamboyantly as possible. Rather than simply reading through the prepared monologue, allow the player characters to interact with their visitor. He ends by handing any sorcerer, elemental mage, or ajami within the group either a scroll or ring of spell storing with a few spells, urging him to use it wisely; the PCs find these items on their persons when they awake. Suggested spells are *magic missile*, *sand quiet*, *enlarge desert creature*, and *lightning bolt*. Any sha'ir he presents with a small cage

which he opens to reveal that character's gen, now freed from the mage's imprisonment (if the gen was slain in the battle at the oasis, he introduces the character to a new one). He then takes his leave:

"I go now to bring the means of deliverance to your women and your children. Though your journey to freedom will not be without danger (alas, I cannot order everything in the universe to bend to your desires!), know that Fate smiles upon your endeavor. Forget not to call upon Her in your darkest hour."

With a grand obeisance, he disappears in a swirling cloud. Proceed immediately to Encounter Two.

Encounter Two: "Strike as Swiftly as the Lynx of the Desert"

For the first time since coming to this accursed place, you awake from your sleep feeling rested, refreshed, and inspired with hope.

Give the players some time to get into character and make at least some tentative plans. Encourage the players to hold any tactical discussions in character. If they start talking about plans from a player point of view rather than a character one, and can't be persuaded to speak in character, go immediately to the next encounter. If they ask about the usual guard complement, tell them the information given below. As soon as they are ready, or after five minutes or so have passed (whichever comes first), proceed with the following:

As you lie in readiness, you hear the sound of approaching footsteps. The overseers are coming to unlock your leg manacles and lead you deeper into the mines for another day's backbreaking labor.

There are four guards, accompanied by a pair of savage, dog-like creatures with two snarling heads. While one guard stands at each end of the line of manacled characters, two other guards undo the chains from their tethers and jerk the characters to their feet. The beasts stand with the rearmost guard, growling and drooling with feral anticipation. Describe this to the players so that they know what their characters are facing and can make decisions based on what the PCs can see.

Guards, 2nd-level askar (four F2): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; 15, 13, 12, 10 hp; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (scourge) or 1d6 (short sword); AL NE; XP 65 each.

Death Dogs (2): AC 7; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 14, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 2 (one with each head); Dmg 1d10/1d10 (bite); SA bite inflicts lethal rotting disease (save vs. poison or die within 4d6 days); knocks opponent prone on a natural roll of 19 or 20; SZ M (6 feet long) ML steady (12); Int semi (3); AL NE; XP 120 each.

Note for the DM: This fight is meant to be a serious challenge: the player characters have no weapons and only a few spells, so some kind of plan is essential if they're to overcome the guards. If they wait until the guards have finished unlocking their manacles and then attack them, they will have one round of surprise and, if the DM is feeling unusually generous, might automatically gain initiative in the next round. Encourage them to improvise if they are so inclined. Unless they improvise weapons (from chains, mining tools, etc.), consult the punching and wrestling tables for bare-handed attacks or allow the characters to roll normal attacks, inflicting a single hit point of damage per successful hit.

If they attempt non-standard actions, such as trying to shove one guard into another, have them make first an attack roll and then, if successful, an opposed Strength roll (assume the guards to have Strengths in the 13 to 14 range). Success goes to the character who rolls highest without actually exceeding his Strength score. Use the same mechanic if they try other unorthodox maneuvers, simply deciding which ability score best applies—for example, grabbing a weapon from a guard's belt requires first a successful attack roll (to get a good snatch at the weapon's hilt) and then an opposed Dexterity check (to see if the guard realized what was happening and got there first).

Characters bitten by the death dogs need not despair—healing awaits them at their destination, if only they can reach it in time. In the meantime, they can console themselves with the thought that “we have no fate but the fate we are given”—at the very least, they'll die free men!

If a character should call upon Fate, roll a d10. On a 1 or 2, his opponent slips on something wet and loses that round's attack; on a 3 or 4, his opponent takes double damage from the next hit; on a 5 or 6, his opponent automatically misses the character the next round; on a 7 or 8, his opponent loses heart and tries to run for help; on a 9 or 10, nothing happens. This benefit only occurs once.

Assuming the player characters defeat their jailers, they would be wise to search the bodies. Each guard has on his person a curved short sword, a scourge, and a jambiya. Each wears leather armor (which should fit a normal sized human or half-elf). Two of the guards carry rings of iron keys. One unlocks the heroes' chains and shackles; the other has a single large iron key that will open the door to the outside of the mining complex. In addition, the guards have between them a total of 25 copper bits (copper pieces) and a pair of dice. The death dogs have spiked collars, one on each neck (and therefore four in all), for which ingenious characters may find some use.

Encounter Three: “Trail of Gold, Man of Copper”

All around you the sounds of battle have died. A few quick calls ascertain that the other groups have also won their battles and are making their way to freedom along the “golden trail.” But what golden trail?



The “golden trail” referred to by the djinni is a thin vein of gold running through the walls of the mining complex (an illusion created by the genie that will last for six hours before fading from view). Any character who states he is looking for “something golden” may make an Intelligence roll to spot this golden vein (and a Wisdom check to realize that it was not there the day before). Characters may also get started in the right direction by stating that they are attempting to follow the sounds of their tribesmen or to track their footsteps. Ask the characters to make Tracking or Detect Noise rolls as appropriate. Light sources may be obtained from the occasional lamp on shallow shelves along the walls, but they are very smoky and light only a 10 foot radius.

As they travel through the labyrinthine tunnels, other sounds will become more faint and die away; the djinn has arranged for the groups to spread apart and take differing routes in order to insure that not all of them are recaptured if Fate turns against them. Unless the player characters “follow the gold” they will become hopelessly lost. Calling upon Fate might cause a character to stumble in such a way that, rising, he catches a glint off the tunnel wall and so discovers the golden path.

Assuming that the escapees follow it, describe a series of twisting and turning tunnels, all marked by a thin line of gold. Let the players converse quietly, but remind them that noises louder than a low whisper carry great distances through the rocky tunnels. A few noises of guards searching for them may make this short interlude more exciting. Let the players bind wounds, distribute armor and weapons, establish a marching order, and move through the passages for some time before they come across the following (see Map Two: Man of Copper).

Ahead of you, the passageway widens into an area large enough to accommodate many men standing side by side, or even a few wagons and their draft animals. At the far end of the chamber are two doorways. One leads into a small room in which you can see a number of items scattered haphazardly about. The other broad doorway holds a pair of iron doors—and through the grates set high in each you can glimpse the starlit sky! But even as you look, a man-like creature made entirely of copper and bronze steps to block your entrance into this chamber, between you and freedom. This metal man carries a long sword in each hand.

Copper Automaton: AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; hp 39; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1 (bronze long swords +1) or 2d8+1/2d8+1 (bronze long swords +1 plus heat); THAC0 15; SA starting with the third round of combat, the copper automaton's fists glow from internal heat, causing its weapons to do additional damage (2d8 rather than 1d8 per strike); SD immune to all fire-based spells, illusions, and mind-affecting spells; SZ M; ML 20 (fearless); Int low (7); AL N; XP 650.

The automaton is a guardian placed here by the evil wizard to guard the treasure and prevent unauthorized passage through this exit (similar guardians wait by the mine's other exits, but the characters will not have time to reach them before encountering a guard patrol of roughly three times their number). The creature will automatically attack one of the fighters, effectively forcing him into combat. Other PCs making successful Dexterity checks may squeeze past the combatants into the larger area, thus gaining access to the small room beyond which contains items necessary for their survival.

The small room contains treasure looted from the tribe which the mage has not yet distributed to his men, planning to use them as bribes to attract henchmen. The specific items found should be for the most part appropriate to the player characters' kits and classes. The following items represent a typical selection: a two-handed sword, a scimitar, a jambiya, a *jambiya of quickness* +2, four throwing daggers (two are *daggers* +1), a scythe, a *spear* +1, a throwing axe, a short bow, twelve arrows (four are *arrows* +1), a staff (actually a *weapon of concealed wizardry* +1, which does not detect as magical), ten sling bullets (but no sling), a razor, a holy symbol, a spellbook, a healer's pack (containing herbs, salves, bandages, compresses, etc.), and some material components (enough for player character spellcasters to cast any spells known to them twice but no more). Note that should the party defeat the automaton, its two magical bronze long swords can be claimed as treasure. If the party is getting too badly mauled through bad dice rolls, they can make a run for it, as all of them are faster than the automaton (although it will hurt them badly as they struggle to unlock and open the heavy iron doors, unless some hero valiantly stays behind to do battle with it).

Encounter Four: On the Winds of the Night

Read the following to the players as their characters leave the mining complex:

Behind you looms the rocky mountain which has lately been your prison. Ahead of you are starry skies and the open desert. Outside the mountain, you see a cluster of large tents: probably barracks for the wizard's guards and raiders. You can hear the sounds of revelry and harsh laughter coming from that area. So far, Fate has been with you; no general alarm has been given. And—wonder of wonders!—someone has readied horses, your own beloved horses, for your hasty departure. Sturdy mounts, enough for all of you and one extra, stand waiting for you to leap astride them and flee into the safety of the desert.

The djinni has indeed liberated the horses of the Tribe of Altair from the pen in which they have been kept, but an extra beast has insinuated itself into the ranks of the waiting animals. The characters' own horses are fine examples of horseflesh: swift, obedient, and sturdy. The extra "horse" appears to be all of this—and more. It stands several inches taller than the other horses, its coat is a glossy black. It will seem uncommonly eager to be ridden, attempting to get between a horse and its prospective rider. It may, in fact, succeed in tempting one of the characters to mount it rather than his own horse . . . to his dismay.

Ghost Mount: AC 5; MV 30; HD 3; hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d6 (hoof/hoof/bite); SA rider must make a Wisdom check at -2 at beginning of ride or be carried away at full speed for at least 75 miles (9 hours) before being abandoned in some desolate spot (thrown for 1d6 damage plus item saving throws vs. crushing blow upon landing; leaping from the horse at anytime prior to this causes 3d6 damage plus the item saving throws), if the Wisdom check succeeds the mount obeys the rider but he must make a saving throw vs. death magic at the journey's midpoint or be drained of life energy and transformed into a wraith; SD immune to poison, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold-and-death-magics; SW holy water (2d4 hp damage per vial), destroyed by *raise dead* or *resurrection* (save vs. spell to resist); ML champion (15); Int low (6); AL NE; XP 420.

This encounter tests the tribal values of the characters, particularly the desert riders, who have Riding proficiencies and are good or superior horsemen. Suspicious characters may make a save vs. spells to disbelieve the mount's appearance; success means that character sees the creature for what it is: a malnourished, battered, and scarred wraithlike horse with wild and shining eyes. If a character actually spurns the horses of his tribe for this sleek stranger, then he must pay the penalty, and the other characters will probably end up chasing after and then tracking him, drawing them far out of their way. If no one falls for the ghost mount's ploy, the creature follows them until it is either killed or somehow driven away. A *protection from evil* spell will