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Adventures *in* Ialmieray



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FEEDING THE DEAD

an adventure for four 4th-level characters

by Ian Gopal Gould

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A party of dungeon delvers known as the *Accord of Blades* entered the Murmur Dome in Prada Hanam and barely escaped with their lives. Unfortunately, they did not escape completely unscathed—a terrible curse has befallen the leader of the expedition and is now claiming each member of the expedition one by one. What starts as a simple murder case escalates into an investigation that spans the city and leads to lifting a curse created by Khiben-Sald himself. In order to set things right, the characters must find the leader of the expedition and destroy him before the curse claims its next victim.

THE MURMUR DOME

Outside of Prada Hanam, up the coast just north of Harbor Town, is the imposing structure known as the Murmur Dome. This mysterious domed complex surrounded by four towers inexplicably appeared in 2821 AR, and to this day none know its true purpose. There are few who approach this structure, and fewer still who can hear the incomprehensible murmuring in their minds. According to the locals of Prada Hanam, none who have dared to enter this structure have lived to tell the tale, and most give the imposing dome a wide berth. Almost as mysterious as its appearance is the presence of the quiet, battle-scarred *calikang*, Viswas, who sits upon the ghat just outside of the dome. She sits meditatively as if waiting, with one of her four arms broken off of her body and resting in her lap.

THE ACCORD OF BLADES

A small-time adventuring crew, the *Accord of Blades* was recently hired to enter the Murmur Dome in an attempt to steal one of the many treasures rumored to be hidden there by Khiben-Sald. Led by the *vishkanya* Captain Bhagga, a once-loyal sailor to the empire of Vudra, the *Accord* consists of three additional members:

Shir Nirva, a beastkin monk; Zolona Kane, a human rogue; and Solzar Utish, a nagaji thief. Although all four members of the *Accord* were able to escape from the Murmur Dome, one of its traps mortally poisoned Captain Bhagga. When the adventurers returned to their hideout, Bhaaga died from the poison only to be immediately affected by the dread curse and arise as the Kuggisu Saapa.

KUGGISU SAAPA

The Murmur Dome is protected by a powerful curse set by Khiben-Sald himself to punish any thieves who attempt to enter the structure. During his time in Quantum under the hospitality of the then-ruler Nex, Khiben-Sald learned necromantic rituals which he used to ward the Murmur Dome. The curse that befell Bhaaga comes directly from one of Nex's own grimoires and transforms the offending victim into the Kuggisu Saapa, or hungry ghost! Overwhelmed by the compulsion to devour at least one living creature every day, the hungry ghost drains the life force of its victims, leaving only a shriveled husk of a corpse behind. In a misguided attempt to perform good deeds, Captain Bhagga is focusing his hunger on his former adventuring companions to ensure that none know the secrets of the Murmur Dome and become cursed as he has.

AUNTIE KOTAGHAT

Although they are a local band of mercenaries, the *Accord of Blades* is a rather small-time enterprise with neither the knowledge nor the resources to pull off such a daring theft. Then they met Auntie Kotaghat, a local crime lord with a keen interest in the Murmur Dome who is well familiar with the legends surrounding Khiben-Sald and the Murmur Dome. Auntie provided key information and resources to Captain Bhagga and scried on them using a *clear quartz crystal ball*. When the *Accord*

THE MURMUR DOME
ART BY FABIO GORLA

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emerged from the Murmur Dome, Auntie Kotahghat immediately detected that Captain Bhagga was affected by a terrible curse and witnessed his transformation into the Kuggisu Saapa before the scrying effect broke. Now, Auntie Kotahghat and her loyal thieves are watching and waiting to see how the curse unfolds.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure consists of three chapters.

CHAPTER 1

The adventurers are hired by Bhaidrun, zamindar of Prada Hanam, to solve a murder in Harbor Town. Investigating the crime scene and interviewing witnesses put the characters on the trail of an Exhaustive Path adherent, a reclusive tigerkin named Shir Niva who lives below the Seaspray Ghat.

CHAPTER 2

Following up on the clues learned in chapter 1, the characters soon learn that finding Shir is no easy feat.

The reclusive tigerkin monk lives in a temple beneath the waters of the ghat, which is guarded by a cursed water elemental.

After braving the dangerous waters of the ghat and dealing with the temple guardians, the characters find Shir's body... and his ghost. The characters are able to interview Shir's ghost and realize they must return to Harbor Town to solve the mystery of these deaths.

CHAPTER 3

The characters follow the clues they learned from Shir to a shady tavern and find themselves face to face with the crime lord of Prada Hanam, Auntie Kotahghat. She informs them of the fate of Captain Bhaaga and identifies where he is likely to be hiding. She hints that defeating him should be their top priority, and the murders will continue until the cursed Captain is stopped. The characters track the Captain to his former haunt and confront the Kuggisu Saapa in hopes of ending the curse once and for all. They have the opportunity to provide him a burial to set his soul to rest.

CHAPTER 1: A LOST SOUL

SYNOPSIS

The adventurers are hired by Bhaidrun, zamindar of Prada Haanam, to investigate a troubling murder in Harbor Town. The victim, an elderly nagaji, was found early this morning and the zamindar is keen to solve the case quickly and bring the perpetrator to justice. Investigating the crime scene and interviewing witnesses put the characters on the trail of Shir Nirva, a reclusive tigerkin adherent of the exhaustive path who lives below the Seaspray Ghat.

TREASURE

The zamindar offers the characters some supplies for taking on the case; otherwise, there is no other treasure for the characters to find in this chapter. The permanent and consumable magic items found in chapter 1 are as follows:

- *potion of healing, lesser*
- *emerald grasshopper*

Each character gains 60xp upon the successful completion of the chapter.

The adventure begins within the estate of Bhaidrun (LN he/him nagaji monk), the zamindar of Prada Hanam. Each of the characters received a summons to the zamindar's estate this morning to help with what has only been alluded to as "a significant problem for the people of Prada Hanam."

MEETING THE ZAMINDAR

As the characters approach the estate, read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter the estate, you are struck with the simple ascetic aesthetic of the furnishings and decorations—not at all what one might expect from the lavish manor of the zamindar of Prada Hanam. You are guided by an elderly human who wears the simple robes of a monk of Irori, her long gray-black hair braided into a single long rope that she wears around her neck.

She walks you to a simple temple within the inner courtyard of the estate where a number of monks dressed in similar fashion are finishing their morning ritual of movement and rhythmic chanting. One by one they finish and leave until only a nondescript elderly nagaji monk remains. His scales have a melanistic krait's banding, and his Irorian robe hangs loosely from his wiry frame. Finishing his chant, he turns to you and opens his eyes.

His raspy voice is calm and soothing, like water upon the shore: "Welcome adventurers, to my home. Come and walk with me—we have much to discuss."

Bhaidrun turns and walks through the gardens, bidding the characters to follow him. As he speaks, describe the beauty of the zamindar's gardens that surround them: the blooming fragrant flowers, the gentle clouds of butterflies that surround them and then fly away, the songs of birdcall that echo gently and sweetly through the courtyard, the well-kept

pathways lined with stones. As Bhaidrun speaks to the characters, he occasionally stops to tend a plant or straighten a stone in the pathway. When the zamindar passes other Irorian monks as they walk through the gardens, describe how Bhaidrun gives each monk the same respect that they pay him; he does not hold a station above his fellows.

THE ZAMINDAR'S REQUEST

On their walk, Bhaidrun asks each of the characters their thoughts on what they believe will happen to their souls when they die. He actively listens to each of their answers, asking brief open-ended questions but not pressing them for details. He then shares that there is one in Prada Hanam whose own karmic fate was realized sometime last night—the devoted champions of Matravash found him dead early this morning. Bhaidrun shares the following information with the characters:

- The body was found in the early morning hours as the devotees of Matravash were making their morning patrol in Harbortown.



ZAMINDAR BHADRUN
ART BY EMANUELE DESIATI



DEATH BY THE SEAPRAY GHAT
ART BY RACHID IVAN SADIWA &
ENRIQUE "MARK" DE VERA

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- The devotees found the body slumped on the stairs of the Seapray Ghat and have since cordoned off the area as a crime scene.
- The body was an extremely elderly nagaji, dressed in loose black and a gray hooded cloak.
- The devotees of Matravash blockaded the stairs leading down to the river where the body was found, to limit the view of the body from passersby.

Bhaidrun shares that while the devotees of Matravash value the lives of the citizens of Prada Hanam, they are no detectives. And while this may be a simple case of accidental death due to poor light or old age, Bhaidrun expresses concerns that he wants to rule out any foul play. The zamindar is well aware of the suspicion in which many of the citizens of Prada Hanam hold him and other nagaji of being "spies for Nagajor," but he would like to believe that this would not escalate into violence. As such, he requests that the characters keep their investigation discreet.

UPFRONT PAYMENT

After answering any questions that the characters might have, the zamindar formally requests that the characters conduct an investigation to determine the nature of the nagaji's death. Bhaidrun is well-familiar with how to deal with adventurers, and openly offers them one lesser healing potion, one emerald grasshopper, and 5gp each for taking on the investigation. The zamindar promises them another 10gp each when they return with clear evidence of the cause of the nagaji's death and the culprit, if there is one. He directs the characters to meet with the devotees of

Matravash who guard the crime site and gives them explicit directions to find the site.

INVESTIGATING THE CRIME SCENE

As the characters investigate the crime scene, it is quickly apparent that this death was no accident, and that necromancy was certainly used to kill the nagaji. After investigating a few potential eyewitnesses, including the silent calikang Viswas, the characters are hot on the trail of a suspect which leads them beneath the waters of the Seapray Ghat.

SIGNS OF NECROMANCY

Following the zamindar's directions, the characters easily find the alley stairway leading down to the river. As the characters approach the crime scene, read or paraphrase the following:

As you make your way through the twisting labyrinth that is Harbortown, the directions provided by Bhairun lead you unerringly to two very stern-faced devoted champions of Matravash. Their uniformed cloaks are the color of the city's ocean palette with a painted lotus embellishment on their helmets. These stony-faced keepers of the peace nod curtly as they stand aside to let you pass.

As you make your way down the winding steps, you nearly stumble over the corpse sprawled out upon the stairs. The black-hooded cloak this dead nagaji is wearing flutters in the ocean breeze; loose and barely fitting over the small frame of the body within. The mottled scales of the corpse are flaking and decrepit, so thin that many of them are translucent. The jaw of the corpse hangs loosely open, and its milky blind eyes stare blankly at the sky. The grimness of the scene stands in stark contrast to the sounds and delicious smells of street food being sold on



violent. They have begun killing the merchants. The only reason Lal knows is because their respective families never heard back from them.

- Lal doesn't know where the stolen goods go as he has not seen them being sold in the local back alleys.

No matter which thread the heroes choose to pull on first, Lal will declare that he is coming along to ensure the heroes actually try to do the job and the Zamindar is held responsible.

GULABI RAAT

Finding Bua Kotaghat (CN she/her undine human crime lord) is not difficult—she is an elderly woman and follows a routine. Lal can inform the heroes that Bua will be getting her lunch at her favourite dhabba, Gulabi Raat, a restaurant of sorts known for its heavy meals. Lal suggests the heroes go ahead; he doesn't want to be seen with Bua. He will rejoin them once they are done speaking with her.

RAHIM
ART BY RONNEL VILLAREAL



Bua is often called Auntie. Feared and respected by all in the city, she used to wield a sharp cutlass but now uses an equally sharp tongue to lash people into line. Over the years she has proven why the high seat of the underworld is hers and well earned. Even when called to defend her actions in front of the Dharmic court, she is able to use scripture to justify her actions, a trait she is likely to display in any meeting.

When the heroes arrive at Gulabi Raat, read or paraphrase the following:

Bua is in the midst of enjoying a large plate of food with five different vegetables prepared in various spices, a large naan, three types of sweets to balance the spice, and a large tankard of sweet lassi (sweetened yogurt). While other customers are present, most give her table a wide berth. No guards stand by her side but the table behind her has four armed people, two undine humans and two vanaras.

If the heroes approach Bua, she is amused and asks them to introduce themselves before stating their purpose. After the heroes have made their request, read or paraphrase the following:

Bua bites into one of the sweets, an amber colored orb that is dripping with melted sugar.

"I know who is robbing all these merchants. And how to get his attention. But first, I want to see if you have the stomach to face him." With a mischievous smile she claps her hands and calls for a plate of gulab jamuns.

"If you can eat more of these than me, I will tell you what you need to know. If I eat more than you, you will leave with empty hands but your stomachs full."

GULABI CHALLENGE

These sweets are delicious but the quantity will certainly test one's fortitude. All the heroes may participate. Each round, everyone eats one sweet. The Fortitude DC for the first round is 5. It increases by 5 every round. If a player fails the check by five, they feel sick and have a -3 penalty the next round. If a hero fails by ten or more, they are nauseous and end up vomiting. They are disqualified from the game. Last person standing wins.

For the purposes of the challenge, Bua Kotaghat has a +8 bonus to her Fortitude saving throws. If characters try to influence her in other ways, she has a +13 bonus to Reflex saving throws, +12 bonus to Will saving throws, and a +1 status bonus to all saves versus mental. Subtle attempts to cheat do not bother Bua, but she disqualifies the heroes and has them kicked out of Gulabi Raat if any of them attack her.

As they play, Bua tells the heroes a story.

Nearly two decades ago, she had a young apprentice named Gabbar. She had found the young vanara

struggling to support his family through fishing. She had taken him in and trained him. He had taken to the blade better than he took to the fishing pole. Even then she was looking for a possible heir and had hoped he would be the one. But he was driven by bloodlust for all the rich nobles he saw around him. She couldn't curb that hunger in him and so, worried that he would make their position indefensible in the Dharmic courts, she banished him. She has not seen him since but has heard that he has nurtured a following of his own.

She suspects he is the one attacking the merchants. It would be like him to kill the merchants instead of simply robbing them. From what she remembers, he wields a sharp sword but isn't skilled with magic.

If Bua wins, she does not offer more insight than this. However, if she loses, she adds:

- If they wish to seek him out, they should squeeze him where it hurts. They must find the goods he steals and stop them from being sold. This will push him to attack more often.
- None of his stolen goods have been sold under his name in Prada Hanam. Gabbar would dare not cross her like that. So he is clearly moving goods in another way. The heroes should talk to her lieutenant who works for Shahzada Majumdar. If anyone has noticed an increased supply of illegal wares being smuggled around, it is him. His name is Rahim. He is an undine with only one eye.
- Bua also points out that Gabbar hates the wealthy so if they present themselves as nobles, he is more likely to attack them.

XP Award. For successfully learning about Gabbar from Bua Kotaghat, award each character 30xp.

SEASPRAY GHAT

Rahim (CN he/him undine human bandit) is a one-eyed port worker who serves both Shahzada Majumdar and Bua. The heroes can find him in an alley by Seaspray Ghat. He is currently overwhelmed by five blink dog puppies who have escaped their cage and are playing with each other. Rahim needs to catch them all before any of the guards arrives. If the heroes ask for his help and mention that Auntie sent them, he asks them to help him catch the puppies first.

Lal rejoins the party to talk to Rahim, and though he claims that he can't aid in this illegal activity, he is moved by the sight of the puppies. He asks to purchase one and have it sent to his estate.

DON'T BLINK

Catching the puppies requires Athletics or Acrobatics checks. Succeeding at a DC 14 check means the heroes catch one. The heroes catch two on a critical success,

and a critical failure means that one of the puppies the heroes already caught blinks away before Rahim can collar them. The collars prevent the puppies from blinking. They are all blinking in a 30-foot radius around Rahim. Players can also use Nature or Performance checks to lure the puppies to them, but DC is 17 as they are young and easily distracted.

Once the heroes have helped Rahim, he hears them out. He explains that he knows most of the crime lords and what they send down to the Ghat. He hasn't seen anything marked for Gabbar, but he has seen some unmarked goods that have been managed differently.

Rahim explains that the unmarked goods are delivered at random. The request that accompanies them is scribbled on a note that just asks that the money be given to any beggars present in the area. Rahim usually ensures smugglers pay a fair price and then passes the gold around. He has not reported this to Auntie or tried to catch the delivery person as their request seems harmless.

Rahim can point out the latest batch of unmarked goods to them. He lets the heroes decide what they wish to do with them. If they mention wanting to bait Gabbar, Rahim suggests they take the goods along with them and pretend to be merchants.

XP Award. For successfully catching the blink dog puppies and obtaining information from Rahim, award each character 30xp.

BLINK DOG PUPPY
ART BY ENRIQUE "MARK" DE VERA



Once all the races are over, Yami heads to bed early, claiming to be tired from the race. Before she departs, she shakes hands with Jasveer and whichever character came closest to or succeeded in beating her. She is escorted up by her guru, Sava-Ji, who smiles politely, if solemnly, to the heroes. He only speaks very old Vudrani, so even those who speak that language struggle with his old-fashioned language.

XP Award. If at least one character beats Yash's performance in the race, award each character 60xp.

DRINKS AND CELEBRATION

After the race everyone is invited to the dining room where a bar has been set up with free drinks and the music becomes louder. This is a chance for the characters to learn some gossip or speak to anyone at the party, including Yami's parents.

Nisha and Mukesh Kiājan, despite being noble, are of fairly low status. They rarely interact with people of their caste and are a little uncomfortable with all this attention on their daughter. Even though they try and put on a brave face because Yami has said this is what she wants, they are very confused by her sudden desire to get married and have this ceremony. They've failed to convince her to explain her reasoning, so they're hoping Jasveer can find out what's going on during the competition, as they remember Jasveer being a reliable childhood friend—they have no idea Jasveer was a spy for Bua.

Early on, Jasveer is found to be in the company of minor nobles who are cheering them on as they drink. It's pretty clear Jasveer is being made "the donkey," meaning they are being fooled into drinking more than they can handle so the nobles can humiliate them. Jasveer was here to try and make friends, but the nobles took advantage of their naivety. The characters can interrupt the drinking game, or try to turn the tables on the minor nobles. This could be by out-drinking them (DC 12 Fortitude saving throws, increasing by 2 per drink, minor nobles have +4 to their saves, passing out on a failure) or humiliating them in some other way.

If no one stops Jasveer's drinking, -2 VP. Jasveer passes out.

If Jasveer stops drinking but is allowed to talk, -1 VP instead. Jasveer says something loud and foolish before throwing up.

If the other minor nobles get more drunk or humiliated, +1 VP instead. Any faux pas Jasveer commits is overlooked.

GOSSIP FOR THE NIGHT

Some gossip the characters might hear over drinks:

- Guru Sava-Ji has been Yami's mentor since her birth and the family trusts him unconditionally.
- Yami was expected to go to the Monastery of Unfolding Wind to train as a monk; her sudden interest in marriage surprised everyone.
- Many nobles here are higher rank than Yami's family; no one's sure why she's so in demand.
- There are rumors swirling that the Soulguard are in town hunting a demon, although no one has seen a Soulguard member.

THE NIGHT ENDS

Eventually the night ends, and the party has to find a place to sleep for the night. The other suitors either have their own homes in the city or have been granted rooms in the manse to stay for the competition, but there are no rooms left for Jasveer and the heroes. Thankfully The Red Note, the inn where they left any mounts they had, does have a room for them. There aren't any beds in the room, but there are enough mats provided for the whole party.

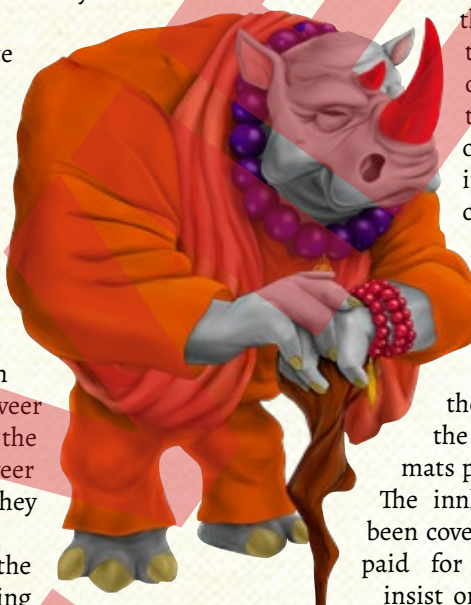
The innkeeper says the room has been covered, implying Bua Kotaghat paid for them. If the characters insist on paying, it's 5 sp for all of them in the room. Jasveer is either unconscious or too drunk to make

an argument one way or the other at this point, siding with whatever the characters decide.

If the characters wore Bua's clothes, there is a letter of gratitude waiting for them, as well as a box containing firework sparklers with a note that says to light them if they need assistance.

Late at night, any characters who are awake (because they're taking watch or just don't sleep like an automaton) notice a hooded figure sneaking into the room through the window. It is Yami in tiefling form. She approaches Jasveer's slumbering body holding a potion of some kind. If no characters are awake, make a secret DC 23 Perception check for them. Characters who succeed wake up and notice the infiltrator.

If the infiltrator realizes a character is awake, they immediately flee, dropping the potion and causing it to shatter on the floor. The character closest to the



GURU SAVA-JI
ART BY ANGEL ERYKAH MELECIA



infiltrator can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to catch the falling potion on a success.

If no one is awake, or the characters play dead by succeeding on a DC 16 Deception check, the infiltrator pours the potion into Jasveer's mouth and then flees out the window. A character that catches them off guard can wrestle the potion out of the infiltrator's hand with a successful DC 19 Athletics check.

The stalker is a silver cobra snake-headed humanoid who runs incredibly quickly with no interest in fighting and using techniques like *abundant step* to teleport away. Jasveer does not participate in any chase, being either too drunk, too sleepy, or too sick from the potion the hooded figure made them drink.

PURSUING THE STALKER

If characters try to catch Jasveer's attacker, allow them to suggest DC 15 checks to attempt to reach their target. Each character in pursuit makes one check. Possible options include rolling a Perception check to find the stalker while they're hiding in shadows, an Acrobatics check to run across a clothesline as a shortcut to get closer, an Athletics check to leap a gap or scale an obstacle, and so forth.

The party must have at least three successes among them to succeed in pursuing the infiltrator to their destination. A critical success counts as two successes. The destination is Yami's family manse where the

noble suitors have been given rooms. The infiltrator sneaks in by jumping the fence. The heroes aren't able to move closer without guards getting involved, who won't let them in this late.

If the group fails to accumulate three successes, they lose sight of the stalker early on and are not sure where they were heading or where they came from.

XP Award. If characters track the stalker to Yami's manse, award each character 60xp.

HELPING JASVEER

Examining the potion remains is difficult if it was smashed. The characters can attempt a DC 19 Medicine check on either Jasveer, if they consumed the potion, or the bottle, if they grabbed it beforehand. Examining the potion remains is difficult if it was smashed and requires a DC 22 Medicine check. A success reveals that while snake venom is an ingredient, the potion is essentially a hangover cure and harmless. A failure shows that it contains snake venom.

If the characters fear Jasveer is in danger of dying, the innkeeper can recommend a healer who sees patients this late at night. The healer charges 2 gp for making them work late and is able to tell the players that the snake venom potion is actually just a hangover cure made from king cobra venom, although this one is very concentrated so the venom was mixed from a lot of king cobras or a very big one.

THE PARTY PERFORMS A DANCE
AT THE SANGEET
ART BY RUSTY SANDOVAL



picked a partner yet, many suitors are using this as a chance to perform to impress her. Some are preparing songs and poetry, but the most popular performance is a choreographed dance routine.

The characters can suggest any kind of performance, from group juggling to a magic show if they wish. Just let it be known that Yash is preparing a dance, and feels smugly that it's better than anything anyone else has prepared.

The performance is a group check against a DC 19.

If half or more succeed, +1 VP. The characters put on a great show.

For every 5 that the highest check exceeds over 19, extra +1 VP. So if the highest result was 24-29, the party gets +2 VP total. If the highest result was a critical success of 29 or higher, the party gets +3 VP total.

Characters can use skills besides Performance. For example, using Crafting to create fireworks and make an impressive display, or Acrobatics to add backflips to the show.

XP Award. If the characters gained at least 1 VP, award each character 60xp.

After the performances, everyone eagerly awaits Yami's choice. After an awkward pause, she quickly

says she needs time to meditate with her guru before making a decision. After a little while, a servant lets the characters know that Yami has invited Jasveer and them to her room to speak.

Yami's room is on the top floor. It is large enough for a section to greet people, a balcony, and a small shrine where the guru is chanting with some incense. Any character with imprecise scent or better, or who succeeds on a DC 16 Perception check, notes that the incense smells familiar but may not know exactly where. A critical success reveals this incense is from their Sald dream, but they can't smell any sulfur.

Yami is eager to find out more about the characters, and more importantly how they ended up travelling with her old friend Jasveer. Jasveer and her are a little nervous around each other, so the characters need to get them to open up.

She also asks the characters' outside perspective on Yash, as everyone else in the city is either biased for political reasons or a sycophant.

She also loves to hear about the adventures the heroes have been on and the places they've travelled.

Gain +1 VP if they hype up Jasveer and/or discredit Yash.