

Chapter 11

The Djinn

Character Knowledge

Knowledge (Djinn) is one of the most useful skills a character can have. The following paragraphs can be given to players when they attain each level of knowledge.

Knowledge Level 1:

Djinn are magical beings. Whereas most mortals were formed by the Creator from earth mixed with other elements, Djinn were formed from smoke and fire. In the distant past, the different tribes of Djinn had a lot of interaction with mortals. Djinn were known to take them as slaves, teachers, students, lovers, worshippers, and food. Those Djinn who still exist are very dangerous and best avoided. It is a very lucky mortal who walks away with only a curse.

Knowledge Level 2:

There are six major tribes of Djinn. Jinn are the most common, and often interact with mortals. Jann often make their homes in oases in the desert. Marid are few in number, but very powerful. They tend to live near the coast. Ifrit are more common, and tend to be violently opposed to mortals. Their allies the Shaitan live in the mountains and underground. The Ghul are the most base and depraved of the Djinn, and prey on both the living and the dead.

Djinn can take the form of animals or people, and often do so when dealing with mortals. They are all capable of creating illusions or altering reality.

Padishah Ishaq bin Asad is the only mortal known to have been able to control Djinn. Many of them still fear his name.

Ankhs (cross-loops) are associated with Djinn. They are often used as good luck tokens.

Knowledge Level 3:

During the rule of Padishah Ishaq bin Asad, the great Jinn sheikh Al Yazid had a vision of a giant scythe splitting a great Djinni in half. In order to survive, Al Yazid told the Djinn tribes that they must all choose to side with mortals, or against them. The elders of both the Jinn and the Jann chose to aid the side of mortals. However, the Shaitan and the Ghul were both corrupted by demonic powers lurking within the Ifrit. All three fight against mortal interests. The elders of

the Marid tribe, being both proud and powerful, allowed each individual to make his or her own choice.

Even those Djinn allegedly on the side of mortals often see nothing wrong with harming individuals. Further, all the tribes have renegades. It is best to treat them all with extreme caution.

Some Djinn are vulnerable to certain kinds of metal, especially iron or copper. It is not known if these can be fatal to them.

On very rare occasion, a Djinn might be bound to some object and forced to serve a master.

Knowledge Level 4:

Jinn are the most populous of the Djinn tribes that have sided with mortals. They have also been the most active in interacting with them. They enjoy intellectual debate with mortals, and sometimes take on human form for such purposes. They are the least magical, and some have become nearly human. It is said that many Jinn travel on carpets that fly, and live in places where the wind never stops. Some can change their appearance to a smoke or mist, a huge eagle, or a strong man or woman. They are vulnerable to copper.

Ifrit are among the most powerful of the tribes, and they are extremely violent towards mortals. They make their homes in abandoned or desolate places, and will attack any who disturb them without hesitation. Iblis was a great leader of the Ifrit who was corrupted by a demon. Today they are still the tribe that interacts most with Infernal powers. Ifrit can appear as a dog, a great tornado of dust, a magical camel made of sand, or a giant scorpion or serpent spitting fire. Only the most experienced of mortals has any chance of surviving an encounter with an Ifriti. They are vulnerable to iron.

Knowledge Level 5:

Jann are allies of the Jinn, though they are more conservative and have fewer interactions with mortals than the Jinn. They are more individualistic, but as a whole have aided mortals more than not. They were among the first Djinn with whom mortals came into contact, for many of them live in oases. Caravans could prosper or become lost and die at their whim. They can take the form of a white camel or a whirlwind of sand. Their greatest enemies are the Ghul. They are vulnerable to copper.

Like the Ifrit, Ghul are wholly corrupted by the Infernal powers. Though they are very intelligent, they

are entirely driven by a crazed lust to feed. They stalk the wastes between cities, preying on both living people and dead bodies. Many seek out grave sites to devour the newly fallen. However they are very superstitious, and may be tricked because of this. Ghul often appear as pilgrims in order to join caravans, but will openly attack individuals or small groups. They may also appear as whirlwinds or as vultures. Almost all ghul are female. They are vulnerable to iron.

Knowledge Level 6:

The Marid tribe is the smallest among the Djinn, but it is also the oldest and its members the strongest. They usually live near the coast, and are masters at controlling the weather. Sailors do well not to anger these spirits. Some are partial to mortals, while others react violently to them. However they are not on friendly terms with the Ifrit. Many centuries ago the Marid saved the Jinn from being destroyed by the Ifrit and the Shaitan, and the Ifrit have born a grudge since then. A Marid can take the form of a waterspout traveling across the water, or of a porpoise, horse, or old man. They are vulnerable to both copper and iron.

Shaitan are the second oldest tribe, and allied with the Ifrit and Ghul. They are master deceivers, who delight in manipulating mortals and other Djinn to their own ends. However they are also very proud, and this can be used against them. Many had human worshippers in ages past. Shaitan make their homes in the mountains and deep underground. They can take the form of a cloud of smoke, a jackal, or a black camel. They can also appear as beautiful women, though always with some part of an animal somewhere on their bodies. They often use disease as a weapon. They are vulnerable to iron.

Djinn are fascinated by ankhs. They actively attract their attention.

Knowledge Level 7:

Very little is known about the life cycle of the Djinn. It is presumed that they are born from other Djinn, but there has never been any record of children among them. However they have been known to take mortal lovers in the usual way, with the usual consequences. Such children are mortal, though they are almost always powerful magicians or otherwise magically enhanced. Djinn blood can run in a family for centuries, and sometimes lies latent until it shows itself in a child generations later. Many magical creatures in the desert are the result of Djinns' couplings with lions, scorpions, and other creatures.

It is not known if Djinn live forever, but they have been known to survive for millennia, at the very least. Killing a Djinn is even more in doubt. While some have vulnerabilities to some kinds of metal, these have not ever been said to strike a killing blow against them.

There are only cryptic references to the slaying of a Djinn, and these are always from seemingly harmless actions. These include throwing such things as a verbal curse, or throwing a small stone or plum pit near them.

Knowledge Level 8:

Djinn live in a very different state from mortals. Whereas a mortal may consider things that have not and will never be, for a Djinn to think something means to do it. If something has not happened, they do not know about it. If they consider something, it happens. Where a Djinn goes, reality is bent. Thus, for a Djinn to interact with a mortal can be extraordinarily dangerous. The best tactic to take is to cut the encounter as short as is possible. Do not negotiate. Asking a Djinn to consider a situation is asking for suicide--if you're lucky. However it may be possible for strong-willed individuals to resist a Djinn's inherent influence on reality.

Knowledge Level 9:

It is possible for an exceptional individual to bind a Djinn to an object or focus. However, this is both extremely difficult and very dangerous. First, the binder must know the Djinn's true name, and possess a piece of his or her person. Both these are very difficult to obtain. Magicians who have tried this have often ended in deadly riddle contests with Djinn, wherein the object is to guess the other's name. Only Padishah Ishaq bin Asad is known to have succeeded. The object to which the Djinn is to be bound must be made of the metal to which the Djinn is vulnerable, in its purest form. The binding itself is accomplished with a very complex magical ceremony. The potential for error is huge, and the cost of making a mistake tragic.

Once the Djinn is bound, it may either be active or dormant. An active Djinn may be forced to perform acts for the master of the object. However there is always some request which the Djinn is prevented from doing. Asking this of it will result in its freedom. In addition, destroying the focus results in the Djinn's freedom. In both cases, it will probably be very angry at its former master.

A dormant Djinn simply adds to the enchantment of the object in some substantial way. This can be much safer than having an active Djinn, but destruction of the object can still result in disaster.

Knowledge Level 10:

When a Djinn dies, its soul infuses the area of its death. If this can be somehow harvested, it can be used to create magic of great curative properties. It is said that such magic can raise the dead, greatly extend life, and bestow great powers.

Further Knowledge:

Beyond this point, the character learns miscellaneous
arcana beyond the scope of this chapter.