

to do (pre game)

- Figure out DCs for Ord, Beowulf's progression on the mediation. Meditation ritual needs name.
- Need general mental image of djinn. I guess the different tribes of djinn also have rivalries between themselves, so convincing one batch won't necessarily convince another.
- The Directorate need names, powers.
- The djinn need some kind of feudal structure.

djinn

Made of fire; hidden from sight; good, evil, or neutral.

Arabic lexicons such as [Edward William Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon](#) define *ǧinn* not only as spirits, but also anything concealed through time, status, and even physical darkness.

Many cultural interpretations noted the jinn as having distinct male and females, they would often appear wearing vests and sashes, various interpretations note that they tied their hair long vertically. According to various stories, jinn could exist independently or bound to any particular object.

I guess people on the river would have a worshipful or fearful (appeasing) relationship with the jinn the way English countryside had one with fairies.

In the *One Thousand and One Nights* are depicted several types of jinn that coexist and interact with humans: *ṣayfān*, the *ghūl*, the *marīd*, the *'ifrīt*, and the angels. The *One Thousand and One Nights* seems to present *'ifrīts* as the most massive and strongest forms of jinn, and *marīds* are a type of jinn associated with seas and oceans.

Feudal Djinn

I guess there is an ancient hierarchy, which would predate the 99 coming. I guess in this sense the 99 are like the Normans coming to England and putting down the Anglo-Saxons. The Anvil of Fire would be the seat of the Djinn's high king, with the Well of Life being a kind of First among equals of the dukes. I kind of imagine the tone of this first among equals like in a stained glass of a king looking down at us perfectly symmetrically.

I guess there are also "dukes" at:

- Cities and other natural resources along the river.
- The other wells and oases in the desert, cataracts (rapids) on the river, natural mineral (e.g. salt, copper, gold, uranium?!) outcroppings, meteor crater -- this could be a great one because there can be a huge community of tents around it....places associated with fire? Devil's crater, devil's postpile, type stuff, natural rock bridge. A geyser or colorful

bacteria lake like at Yellowstone. I guess there are not waterfalls since it's desert.

- al-Watan would have djinn.
- What else? They'd of had their own religion and monuments (now lost among human structures -- I guess the djinn were not of the Caliphate's religion, so they could have monuments...like stonehenge, etc.? Or obelisks?), where their communities would be. Maybe their religion would be ancestor worship...in this case Ord Djinn could be one of their ancient ancestors.
- I imagine their history to be vaguely like English history, with War of the Roses, etc. between houses.
- I guess visually it's about tents, the deep blue and gold of ancient texts, the blue and white of the sky, satins, gold arm bands, wind blowing through the camp.
- Can I find some kind of cheat map to show the layout of the djinn's stuff?

oases

Paradise, garden.

Remaining challenges for Ord:

- Sway Djinn at the Sun's Anvil. Will they send Ord to the Well of Life, the Ninety-Nine's plane, to get some mcguffin there?
- Sway Anjurr -- not sure yet where they are?
- Ord must still be confronted as an exile, heretic. Does he have to deal with the civil war?
- Rescue Krohn's god from the Void Prison. Maybe the Void Prison is in the plane, so that's what they have to do to get the Djinn on board.
- Defeat Krohn
- What happens after? Ultimately they would find Krohn's giant stash of greencake -- a room or library full, with much of it further refined into the philosopher's stone. They would have to decide what to do with it. Maybe they have to fight the remnants of Cold Comfort for it.

questions for players

recap from last time

Ord defeats the assassin Raihim under the dome of Cold Comfort's refuge. Cold Comfort's

books reveal that The Maker's rightful heir is the slave Gafur, the crowd's favorite gladiator at al-Watan's coliseum. Learning that assassins have replaced Gafur's next opponents, the party rushes to interrupt the fight, killing the assassins and creating chaos at the coliseum.

Forgotton from last game

Last game, Ord and Beowolf were approached by a priest at the church of The Watchful, named Kabir. Kabir perceived that Ord and Beowolf had spirits with them and offered to teach them a ritual to summon and talk with them. But, we forgot to roll and see if they could do so. Would Kelly and Steve like to roll to see if they can succeed at this mediation before they left the church of The Watchful?

This can be an Arcana, Insight, or Religion check, whichever the players prefer. Initial DC is 30 (which actually would make it impossible for both of them unless they roll a 20).

Prosper

As the players are wrapping up the fight with the assassins, they hear intense, horrified screaming coming from the next room. After it subsides in choked whimpers, a person comes through the door. He's unshaved, wears rusted chainmail and a filthy cloak, has a menacing driftwood staff. Beowolf and Kasskar immediately recognize him as Prosper.

Kelly's original full background for Prosper:

Storywise I'm thinking my character, ironically named Prosper, tells those who'll listen he's the son of a rich merchant family from a far off land whose ship left port while he was passed out drunk in a brothel. In reality, his father was a sailor whose ship went missing at sea, and his mother was a prostitute who was murdered in front of him by a drunk, wealthy merchant from a far off land. He survives as a wharf rat scavenger, pulling in debris and bodies at the docks with a hooked driftwood staff. One day, he pulls in the body of a soldier of unidentifiable origin. When he touches the badly rotted insignia affixed to the soldier's chest, a column of light breaks through the clouds basking Prosper in a divine glow. He is momentarily awashed in visions of war in bloodshed. An unearthly booming voice explains he has been given power so that he may make amends for a grave and monumental sin. The only further information he is given is that he must persevere through many trials and travails. He emerges from this experience a changed man. He sets out to help as many people as he can, and reveal to sinners their transgressions so they might repent. He is faced with two major problems. The first, is that no one else witnessed the divine event that granted him his power. Knowing no one will believe him, he is wary about revealing his powers for fear of being lynched. Second, is that Prosper is a bit touched. It hasn't occurred to him that people might accept his help more readily if he shaved, or bathed, or stopped wearing his trusty, but filthy, cloak. The rusted chainmail from the dead soldier he wears and the somewhat menacing driftwood staff he still carries with him everywhere don't help, either.

I'm assuming from the sound of things the party is still level 1? I'll put my build from Character Builder below. I'm thinking his powers could easily be refluffed as whispers of the sins of the Guilty God in some unknowable language and the visions that come along with them. The only thing I'm not really happy with is the limited skill selection of skills for the Invoker. Religion is automatic, so it might represent knowledge granted in a glimpse of divine insight. Endurance and Insight I like for a guy who has made it as long as he has mostly through stubbornness. The rest of my options, however, are either social skills my character specifically lacks, or knowledge skills that would require strange circumstances for Prosper to have acquired. Would you consider letting me to take something like Athletics, Perception, or Streetwise in place of History and Arcana to represent the skills my character used to survive as a scavenger? Also, have you considered using the Inherent Bonuses rules from DMG2/Dark Sun? The last 4e campaign I was in was low magic, and I think it would have benefited greatly if those rules had been around when my DM created the campaign. If you don't have access to either book I can describe them to you pretty easily.

The Coliesum underground

Wikipedia discusses the hypogeum, or underground of the original Coliesum:

The arena itself was 83 meters by 48 meters (272 ft by 157 ft / 280 by 163 Roman feet).[14] It comprised a wooden floor covered by sand (the Latin word for sand is *harena* or *arena*), covering an elaborate underground structure called the *hypogeum* (literally meaning "underground"). Little now remains of the original arena floor, but the *hypogeum* is still clearly visible. It consisted of a two-level subterranean network of tunnels and cages beneath the arena where gladiators and animals were held before contests began. Eighty vertical shafts provided instant access to the arena for caged animals and scenery pieces concealed underneath; larger hinged platforms, called *hegmata*, provided access for elephants and the like. It was restructured on numerous occasions; at least twelve different phases of construction can be seen.[14]

The *hypogeum* was connected by underground tunnels to a number of points outside the Colosseum. Animals and performers were brought through the tunnel from nearby stables, with the gladiators' barracks at the [Ludus Magnus](#) to the east also being connected by tunnels. Separate tunnels were provided for the Emperor and the Vestal Virgins to permit them to enter and exit the Colosseum without needing to pass through the crowds.[14]

Substantial quantities of machinery also existed in the *hypogeum*. Elevators and pulleys raised and lowered scenery and props, as well as lifting caged animals to the surface for release. There is evidence for the existence of major [hydraulic](#) mechanisms[14] and according to ancient accounts, it was possible to flood the arena rapidly, presumably via a connection to a nearby aqueduct.

I'm thinking a long narrow axis going the length of the coliseum, with lots of interesting rooms they can find on either side as the fight goes on (as described).

I have the instanbul harem map on in my adventure folder to use as an insanely complex floor plan for the underground.

The Slaver Alim, The Directorate

When the last game finished, the party was in a complicated room inside the coliseum's structure, and had just defeated the assassins who'd tried to kill Gafur.

Just as the party finishes taking down the last assassin, a man comes into the room with some gladiators and surveys the situation. He is dressed well but seems like someone who's been hardened by a difficult life. Gafur, the slave you're rescuing, brandishes a dagger in front of himself, and takes a few steps back.

The man says coldly, "I am Alim, Gafur's owner. I cannot begin to calculate how much you have cost me by interfering in the fight today. I don't know where you think you're going with Gafur, but you will turn him over to me now."

Alim's gladiators brandish their weapons, but some of Alim's gladiators were friends of Gafur, and the party can do Diplomacy checks here (DC 20) to turn each one from Alim's side to Gafur's side.

Alim's men:

- Maher
- Hicham
- Tamim

As Alim is threatening you, another group of men comes in, this time older. They are wearing long, closely fitting white robes and they have closely cropped, finely kept white beards. Some wear short cylindrical hats, and those who don't have closely cropped, finely kept white hair. Ord recognizes them as inquisitors of the Directorate -- the Caliphate order that exiled him after he testified against Krohn a few years ago. You notice that the Directorate members have exotic looking inquisitors' weapons. They look over at the weapons Alim's gladiators are carrying, and Alim's gladiators look back at the inquisitors' weapons. The two group's weapons are pretty much the same thing, and they curtly nod at each other in approval.

The inquisitors focus on Ord immediately, and one of them, Hadi, calls out to Ord by his real name, Talib Abd al-Batin, calling him a blasphemer and heinous for returning from exile.

A second inquisitor, his brow furrowed in worry, steps up. He points at Beowolf, and adds, "And also Talib Abd al-Batin, you harbor an abomination." A look of doubt crosses his face, and he looks a few times between Beowolf and Prosper. He then points at Prosper and says even more insistently, "There's the abomination!"

Hadi says that the Directorate will now sanction him. Ord can take 10 on a religion roll for that,

which will tell him that sanctioning would eliminate his rune powers.

Then turn their attention to the party and attack.

Remember making these enemies that Alim and Hadi should have Warlord-like powers.

Hadi's inquisitors:

- Ummul
- Simrah
- Khalil
- Jasham

TODO(strelow): physical description of Alim...he'd be battle hardened himself, from slaving. The first is Alim, the slaver who owns Gafur. In the last several weeks, he has made a large fortune from Gafur's wins, and he is incensed that the fight today was interrupted. He will refuse to allow Gafur to leave and will fight the party. He could have other lackeys with him, who I guess would be other gladiators.

As the party is talking with Gafur, a more serious challenge presents itself. Some members of the Caliphate's Directorate -- the inquisitors who exiled Ord -- were at the fight and recognized Ord. They consider Ord returning from exile to be a heinous crime and will now try to *sanction* him -- an attack that will remove his rune priest powers if successful.

These imam-like men are Abib, Mani, Hadi, Gani. They do not include the Directorate's head, who I can save for a final boss battle for when Ord when he comes back to al-Watan.

They asked Rana to organize their exit from town, so once the fight their way out, he can meet them at the exit and take them to a faluca (or whatever they're called) on the river. Maybe Rana could just find a leaky boat, it could be a skill to keep it afloat.

Supposing Abib heads the Inquisitors, there are potentially two Lead types against the party here. The inquisitors should have a power that works against infidels. An area attack against infidels would also hit the gladiators. One can sanction Ord and then another can use his powers against infidels against him. I guess inquisitors could have torture weapons?

Think about the scene down there, what does the battlefield look like.

Escape from al-Watan

The party had asked Ord's fellow rune priest Rana to scare up a boat while they went to coliseum. When the party comes out of the coliseum, the city outside the coliseum is in chaos, with the flying chimera that escaped from the cage in the arena now rampaging through the city.

The party can make short time to the river, where they find Rana and Burns waving from a fast-looking river boat with sails, called a Faluka.

Where are they headed? In the last game, the other priest at the church of The Watchful pointed the party toward allies at the well of life and the Sun's Anvil:

If Ord will share some of his quest with the church priests, a scholar priest there, Basit, can give Ord some information on the the "long-forgotten allies" of the rightful heirs that Ishild mentioned. Basit says that when the Ninety-Nine came into the world, they entered it at the Well of Life. From their, they soon discovered that a kingdom of djinn ruled the desert, which mostly means ruling the wells, and held their courts and the oases. The Ninety-Nine conquered the djinn and made them swear fealty to the Ninety-Nine's families. But with the rightful heirs missing, the djinn no longer recognize their fealty. A rightful heir could travel to the main djinn court, and claim their fealty.

The djinn are beings of fire, and their high court is in the worst part of the desert, The Sun's Anvil.

Last game I called the Sun's Anvil "God's Anvil," which was wrong.

Getting Gafur on board

Remember that Gafur is from a different, conquered country, and he is probably an adherent of his own religion. He should be suspicious of Ord. He does not know that he is the rightful heir of anything.

I guess Gafur's religion can be like ancient Egyptian religion. Would it have the death focus that Egyptian religion has? Or what components do I want to take from it's

Trip to the Sun's Anvil

Once they get out of the city, they are in the part of the country controlled by Krohn (or "Krohn's cousin".) He is martialling up all the fuedal troops to attack the city.

Ord's fellow rune priest Rana can tell Ord that in legend, the Sun's Anvil was past the third rapid on the Asad River, then follow the dry riverbed of the Isam River east.

That will be one week travel on the river, then one week traveling along the dry river bed. They'll want to buy some camels before setting out on the river bed. An issue here is how long does it take, since Ord and Beowulf can continue to practice meditation and retry to contain their spirits about once a week.

Items of interest here: the Nile-like river with farms, donkeys, cotton; then the open desert; then the sequence of wells and oases leading to the Sun's Anvil. On the river, there can be some other smaller towns like ones I saw in Egypt. The harshest stretch of the trip right before the Sun's Anvil, Ord has the most chance to contact his djinn at that point.

This should include a 40 days in the desert where Ord can finally summon his Djinn (needs name, personality). The Djinn should tempt Ord to sell out his quest, his friends. If Ord lost his powers, he can tempt Ord with the return of his powers and more.

Presumably the wells and oases are the waypoints, but they're dangerous themselves because they're interest points in the desert.

They could meet some initial djinn here...fight them or not?

This whole trip down the river is through an invisible fealty kingdom of the djinn.

Waifa

When Ord succeeds at the meditation, he notices the wind picking up, and soon he has to shield his eyes from flying sand. The wind and flying sand become a sandstorm surrounding him. When it subsides, Ord can see a beautiful woman, actually a djinn, with bluish-white translucent skin and dark curly hair. She wears a light fabric sash around her waist and golden armbands -- only. Ord recognizes her as his "animal spirit."

No one else is there, including the party.

If Ord asks her anything, she answers, and Ord can see that wisps of steam come out of her mouth and nostrils when she talks. She'll tell Ord that she is Waifa.

Waifa touches Ord on the arm, and a wisp of steam rises from that spot. She looks Ord up and down. She says that he's princely. She says that she can make Ord a king, that he'll re-enter al-Watan a conqueror, and that other kings and emperors will bow before his splendor. She says she can transport him anywhere, and that he'll see the wonders of Balaal, like the

canals of Blackwells, but also the restful plane Hereward and more heavens beside.

For her to do all of this, Ord needs only consign Beowolf, Kasskar, and Jaeris over to her, to do as she pleases with them.

What else can she say if he first says no?

Other more firey, djinn that htey can fight: has obidian-black skin, and is covered with scores of golden bands. He eyes are fire.

The djinn can turn into sand storms.

Djinn High Court

When the party reaches the end of the Sun's Anvil, they see an unusual natural stone formation, in the rough shape of a four-sided pyramid, with the sides scorched black. A large city or colony of colorful satin tents surrounds the base of the formation.

When they approach, there seems to be little structure to the city, except for a single wide avenue to the base of the pyramid. As they walk the avenue, djinn start to come out of the tents on either side and watch or follow them at a distance. As they reach the end of the avenue, a few djinn come near to walk with them, and they guide the party to the ornate tent at the end of the avenue.

Inside, the djinn high king and his court stand to receive them.

They acknowledge Gafur with a bow and some ceremony., but they the king says the Djinn are not the vassals of the Ninety-Nine's descendants. Those swore fealty to the Ninety-Nine only under coercion, and now that the 99 cannot enforce there former rights, they have lost them.

However, the will agree help fight Krohn if the party will defeat the King's own vassal at the well of life, who has aligned with Krohn to overcome the Djinn king. they're working some mischief for Krohn.

At the Sun's Anvil, the djinn will acknowledge they gave their fealty to the Ninety-Nine, but says they did it under duress, and now that the Ninety-Nine are down and out, they shun their oath.

Fighting them with force is probably the way to make it work. Diplomacy could be used to get some of the djinn on board, but some faction would resist -- this would be the faction protecting

the Well of Life and the portal to the Ninety-Nine's plane -- they are in cahoots with Krohn and would fight to keep the party from getting to the plane. They would want Ord to go to the plane that the 99 were from.

If there's a lake of fire, I imagine there's also a maelstrom of fire there.

These djinn would know of the annur, and have a kind of mild contempt for them as lacking free will and the Ninety-Nine's lackeys. Possibly they could tell Ord where to find them.

Jinn have the power to travel large distances at extreme speeds and are thought to live in remote areas, mountains, seas, trees, and the air, in their own communities. Like humans, jinn will also be judged on the [Day of Judgment](#) and will be sent to [Paradise](#) or [Hell](#) according to their deeds.[\[11\]](#)

The social organization of the jinn community resembles that of humans; e.g., they have kings, courts of law, weddings, and mourning rituals.[\[12\]](#) A few traditions (hadith), divide jinn into three classes: those who have wings and fly in the air, those who resemble snakes and dogs, and those who travel about ceaselessly.[\[13\]](#)

Efreet: "While ordinary weapons and forces have no power over them, they are susceptible to magic, which humans can use to kill them or to capture and enslave them....As with the jinn, an ifrit may be either a believer or an unbeliever, good or evil, but he is most often depicted as a wicked and ruthless being." So, maybe the djinn the characters have to fight at the well of life are efreet.

Marid: "According to folklore, they also have the ability to grant wishes to mortals, but that usually requires battle, imprisonment, rituals, or just a great deal of flattery."

Well of life, plane of the 99

It seems clear the Well of Life should be a yosemite-style waterfall, inside a Tomb-Raider-style cavern dungeon.

I think the Well of Life Indiana Jones thing should be a classic hard dungeon crawl.

Well of life could actually maybe have an Indiana Jones style structure built there -- unexpected like Shear Pass...with some kind of Arcane lock -- Kasskar would have to have both lockpick and arcana, or characters can work on it together. Main question is what kind of plane is the plane of the 99. Maybe it's a plane without order, contrasting with how the 99 differentiated on coming into the plane.

The plane could be Chaos, or it could just be hell? Maybe it should reflect the mind of the BIG directly, so that they would know they had to come to Balaal to deal with it.

As a reflection of the mind of BIG, it is a plane of creativity, but also of confusion, fear, anger,

sleeplessness. What are they going to see when they go there? It can't be boring again.

post game summary

The Sun's Anvil

Escaping through the coliseum underground, the party is attacked by Garfur's owner Alim and the Directorate, the inquisitors who originally exiled Ord. They travel to the Sun's Anvil in the deep desert. There, Djinn tell them that Krohn and the djinn high court have imprisoned Krohn's father, the Ninety-Nine's Malik, and that they'll join the fight against Krohn if the party releases him.

treasure given out

to do (post game)

- player questions to answer
- requests to send players after the game