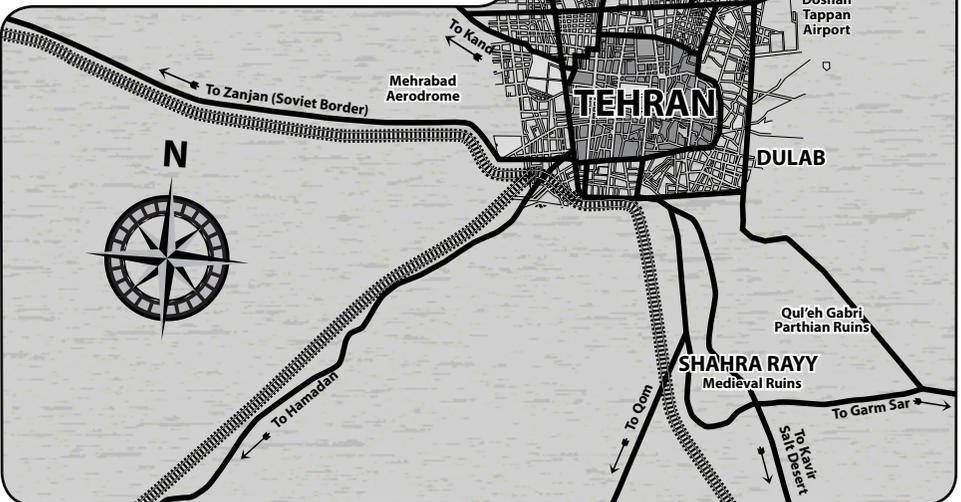
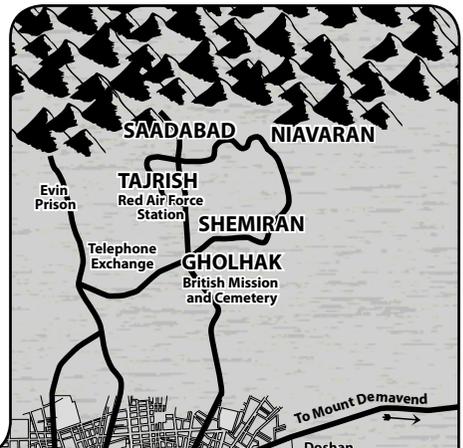


Tehran

The capital of Persia since 1789, Tehran has grown from a dusty backwater to a teeming metropolis of 800,000. In the last decade alone, Tehran has added 300,000 residents, many displaced by the earthquakes, monster attacks, and other consequences of the Serpentfall.

And some of these new residents are here to play the secret game that Britain and Russia have played here—much to the distaste of Persians of all stripes—since the 19th century. But now the game is in new innings; played with a savage intensity here because Persia is almost the only court left for it. The Serpent Curtain lies across Europe, an impenetrable barrier. Turkey is surrounded by Soviet clients and conquests—and by suspicious Soviet guards. Central Asia and China are remote, plagued by warlords and bitter cold. But Persia borders Soviet territory directly, a border that moved much closer to Tehran after the Soviets annexed Persian Azerbaijan in 1946.

Less than 200 miles from the expanded Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, Tehran has become a veritable nest of spies. It draws those who would try to smuggle agents into the Soviet empire, and information out...and it draws those who would move the Soviet border yet again, all the way out to the Persian Gulf and the doorstep of India.



Friends and Foes

In Tehran, knowing somebody is the key to getting a good apartment, getting out of jail, or even getting out of Tehran with a whole skin. The city sizzles with intrigue, and allegiances come together and come apart with frightening frequency. Worse yet, there are things no human can ally with...or that no human *should* ally with, at least.

PERSIAN NATIVES

Technically, “Persian” is only the dominant ethnic group of the country, which has officially gone by the name “Iran” (meaning “home of the Aryans”) since 1934. Among its 17 million people, Iran also counts Kurds, Arabs, Azeris (many fewer after Stalin annexed most of them), Baluchis, Turkomens, Chaldeans, and Qashqai, a Turkic southern tribe in occasional rebellion against the Shah’s government. However, it’s still “Persia” on the Foreign Office maps and in Foreign Office discussions, and to the F.O., what the wogs think doesn’t matter.

The wogs think the British are conniving, oil-stealing, imperialist rat-bastards.

The Shah

And so does His Imperial Majesty, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, the 29-year-old supreme ruler of Persia. Pressured not only by the Soviets and British, but by the rural landholding aristocracy, the ulema, and the rising middle class, the Shah charts a careful course. He wishes to follow his father Reza Shah’s example and make Persia a modern, independent country. He does not, however, wish to follow his father Reza Shah’s example and get overthrown by the British and Soviets—the two Allies invaded Persia in 1941 to secure Stalin’s southern flank against Nazi subversion, and to secure Britain’s oil supply.



USUAL ENEMIES: The Shah’s enemies list shuffles itself every season, but constants include the old Qajar aristocracy that his father overthrew in 1921, the most radical of the ulema, and the Serpent cults that (as a good Muslim) he despises.

USUAL ALLIES: The Shah’s power base is the Persian army and air force, which constantly agitates for action against the Soviet “invader” regardless of the balance of forces. He can usually count on the Shahr bani and Gendarmerie, although his court’s corruption offends the latter.

HOW HE WILL CROSS YOU: If the Shah bears the heroes no personal malice, he will send the military or Gendarmerie to arrest them, prevent their plane from leaving, or whatever else seems needful. If the heroes have irritated him, he will turn the Shahr bani loose on them and forget they ever existed.

WHY HE WILL CROSS YOU: The Shah will cross the heroes for some enemy who needs to be placated in the short term, or because he has decided (or some enemy of the heroes has convinced him) that they pose a threat to him. Only major political pressure can convince him to back off in the latter case.

Shahr bani

The Shahr bani are the Shah’s internal secret police, back under the command of the feared and hated Rokneddin Mokhtari. (Mokhtari, intriguingly enough, is also a concert-quality violinist.) The Shah removed Mokhtari from command in 1942 as a sop to the Allies and as a way to gain popularity with the citizenry of Tehran. After the Soviets annexed Azerbaijan, the Shah brought Mokhtari back to root out Communist subversion across the country.

— Monsters of the Persian Night —

Persia escaped the Serpentfall relatively unscathed, as far as supernatural infestations go. Of the creatures in the main **Day After Ragnarok** setting book, adventurers in Persia have encountered only giant snakes, fly-by-nights, and other demons (**DAR**, p. 87). The Soviets, of course, have deployed man-apes in their occupied zone and on missions into the Persian wilds.

Most of the dangers in Persia come from rebel tribes in the hinterlands (use the Bandit statistics, **DAR** p. 79) such as the Qashqai, from the political turmoil and tension discussed earlier in this book, and from resurgent Serpent cults. The primary local cult is the Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka, who worship the three-headed evil dragon from the *Zend-Avesta*, who according to Zoroastrian lore is imprisoned in Mt. Demavend just 60 miles northeast of Tehran. They identify Jörmungandr with Gandarw, the great sea serpent who could devour twelve provinces in one bite; Azi-Dahaka is Gandarw's avatar and successor as inevitable ruler of the world. The Fadayun-e-Azi-Dahaka primarily recruit from ambitious intellectuals, generals, and figures of power. The mass cult of Zahhak grows amongst the poor of Tehran, opposed strenuously by the ulema.

Persia does, however, have a few specific local monsters, detailed in the following pages.

Thief

Tehran, like most poor, crowded cities, is full of thieves, from burglars to pickpockets to smash-and-grab types. Most spy rings in the city employ at least one thief (either local or brought in from the home country) for specialized operations—ideally a master thief, if they can afford it.

ATTRIBUTES: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

SKILLS: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Guts d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

CHARISMA: 0 **PACE:** 6 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 5

HINDRANCES: Greedy, Wanted

EDGES: Thief

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **MASTER THIEF:** Every ring of thieves has a master thief to lead it. Master thieves are Wild Cards, with Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Lockpicking d12, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Streetwise d10, Throwing d8, and a smattering of additional Edges (Dodge, Acrobat, Natural Leader) as needed.
- **PICK POCKET:** With a successful opposed test of Stealth against the target's Notice, a thief can lift a wallet, cut a purse, or plant contraband without detection.

Ganj

Awakened by the Serpentfall, the ganj crawled out of the earth's fissures and caves and back into Persia's nightmares. The dreaded "jewel serpent" resembles an enormous cobra, with its scales studded with faceted encrustations: sapphires, emeralds, rubies...and always one great diamond in the beast's forehead. The ganj can sniff out large concentrations (or even a few carats) of crystallized carbon—jewels and gems, in other words. Tehrani banks and jewelry stores have to hire monster-killing parties every so often, to clear out the qanats or sub-cellar underneath them as the ganj draw closer. Fortunately, ganj are solitary creatures: where one ganj is "hunting," others stay away. The exception, of course, is mating season, when any female ganj that has discovered and "nested" a sizable hoard attracts predatory males by the dozen.

ATTRIBUTES: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

SKILLS: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

PACE: 9 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 8 (14 on head)