



OH, SURE. IF IT'S JUST ONE OR TWO OR FIVE OR SEVEN, ME AND HUNTER, WE'RE NOT SO BAD. THEY'RE ONLY GHUL, MANGY HOUNDS OF CAIN...



BUT TO REACH THE KEY, SEE, *THAT* MEANS ENTERING THE LOWER DREAM LANDS, CROSSING THE PEAKS OF THOK, AND THAT'S WHERE *YOU* COME IN, SWEETLING.



WHAT KEY?



TELL HER THE TALE, CARSON. THE WAY *YOU* TELL IT, I COULD LISTEN TO IT OVER AND OVER, EVERY DAY.



HOW ABOUT IT, CARSON? I LOVE A GOOD YARN.



OR YOU COULD LET US BOTH GO NOW, *RIGHT NOW*, AND I WON'T KILL YOU AND YOUR SISTER.



JUST LISTEN...

**SLAP!**



LONG, LONG TIME AGO, FAR ACROSS THE SEA, BACK BEFORE THERE WERE EVEN PEOPLE, THERE WAS A WAR BETWEEN THE GHUL AND THE DJINN.



"IN THOSE DAYS, THE GHUL KEPT TO THE DEEP DESERT, AND OVER THE MILLENNIA THEY GREW JEALOUS OF THE DJINN IN THEIR HIGH, GLITTERING CITIES.



"MOST AGREE IT WAS THE GHUL WHO STARTED THE WAR.



"SOME SAY THE GHUL LAY IN WAIT FOR THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER OF A POWERFUL DJINN LORD, HIS ONLY DAUGHTER.

"HER GUARDS WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE.



"YOU CAN PROBABLY IMAGINE HOW THAT WENT."



"THE *QUNW* ARE AN ARROGANT RACE. THEY'D NEVER EVEN *IMAGINED* THE LOWLY WALKERS OF THE WASTES WOULD RISE UP AGAINST THEM."



"SO, THE HOUNDS HAD THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE GOING FOR THEM."



"AND WHILE IT LASTED, THEY DID A [REDACTED] OF DAMAGE."



"UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE *GHUL*, IT DIDN'T LAST LONG."

"IN THE END, IT  
WAS A  
SLAUGHTER."





"STILL, THAT DAY ON THE BATTLEFIELD, THE DJINN LOST SOMETHING OF GREAT VALUE, A TROPHY FROM THEIR WARS WITH HELL."



"ONE OF THE SEVEN WARDS TO SHEOL, THE KEY OF SHACKLES."



"THE GHUL WERE BANISHED BY THE DJINN TO THE LOWER DREAM LANDS, TO THAT PERPETUAL DARKNESS ABOVE THE VALES OF PNATH..."

"...THOUGH THE DJINN DIDN'T KNOW IT, THEY TOOK THE KEY OF SHACKLES WITH THEM."



"TO THIS DAY, EVEN AFTER THE FALL OF THE DJINN, FEW GHUL EVER DARE VENTURE BACK UP TO THE WAKING WORLD."



"AND TO THIS DAY, THEY STILL HAVE THE STOLEN KEY, THOUGH IT'S NEVER BEEN MORE TO THEM THAN A PRETTY BAUBLE, A SOUVENIR OF A LOST BATTLE."



