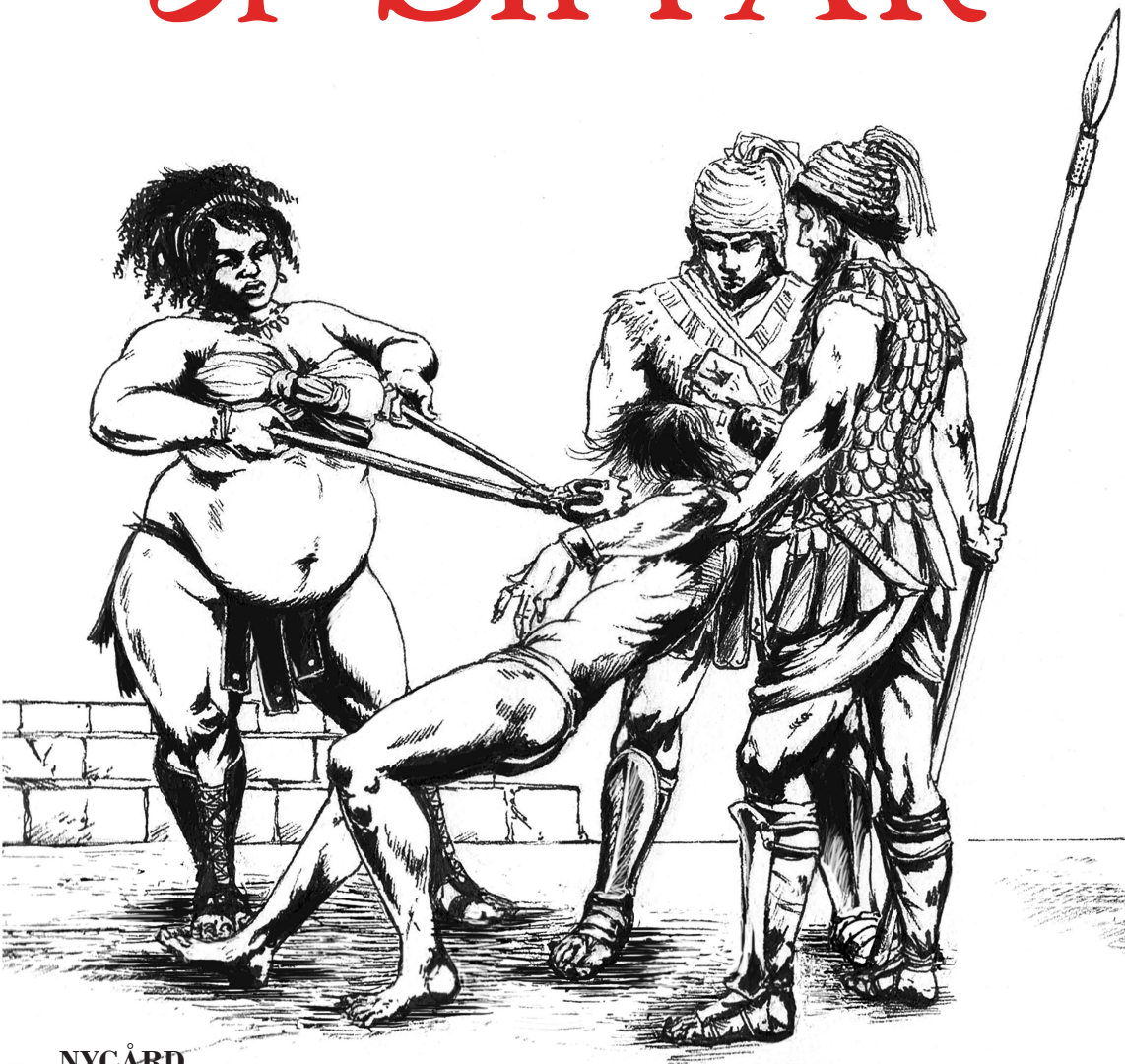


An Adventure Setup
For Use with the **BLOOD & BRONZE** Game System

SLAVE PITS of SIPPAR



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SLAVE PITS of SIPPAR

A Fantasy Adventure
In Portable Document Format
For Use with the Blood & Bronze Game System

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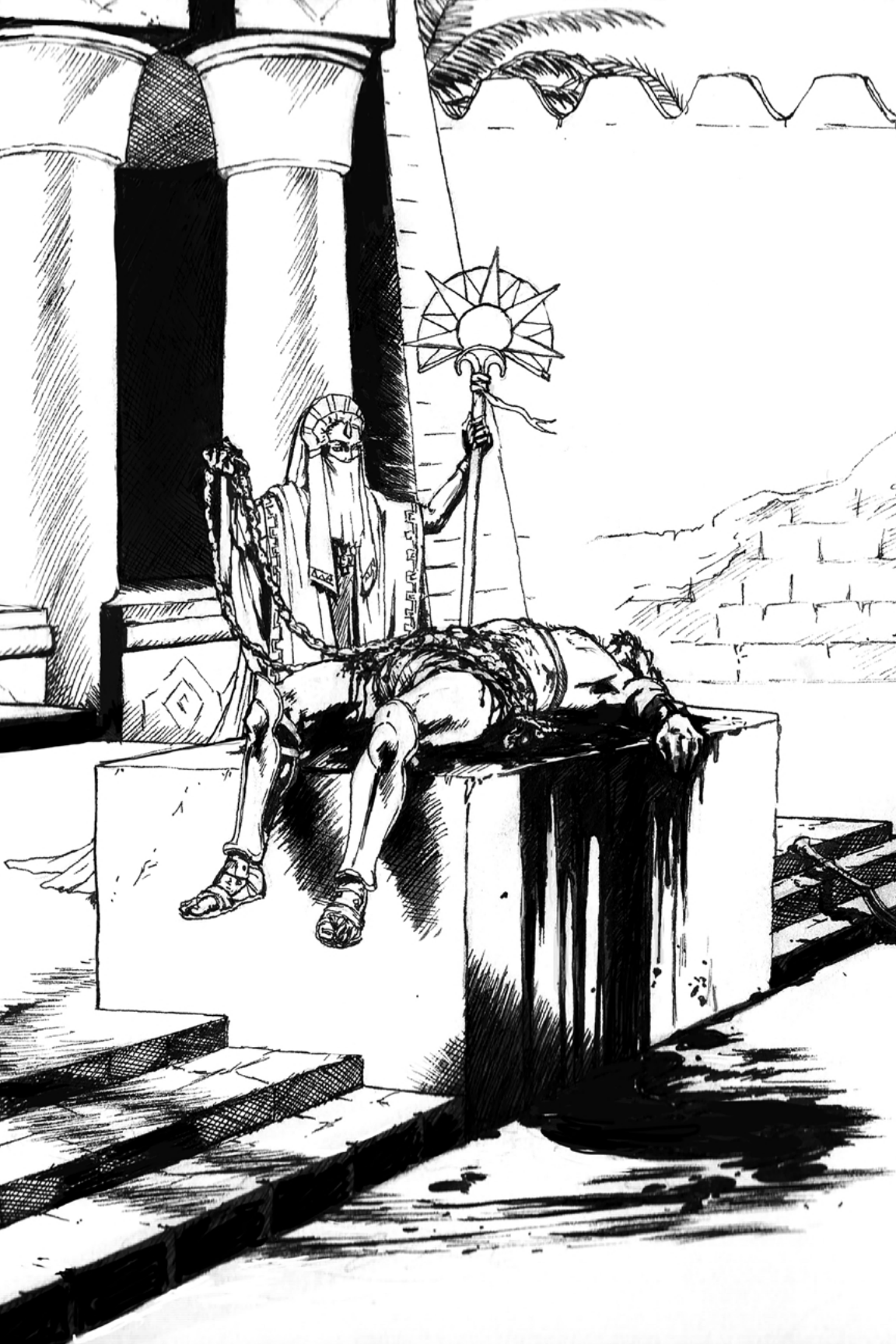
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Chapter I *~*
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Enter the Slave Pits, where the wretched are sent to perish. You have stepped away from the light of life-giving Shamash; your trespasses have forced the divine eye of the heavens to dismiss you into the shadows, for if you ever met his gaze again his flaming wrath would surely strike you down.

But one day, maybe, you can win your freedom back: by hard work, by cunning or by blood in the Sun's court.

The Basics

The adventurers are thrown into the slave pits under Sippar, accused of a crime they did or didn't commit. The adventurers' goal is to survive the slave pits and escape them. But there are secrets hidden in the shadows: both in the heart of their fellow slaves and in the dark soil they tirelessly tunnel.

This setup is designed to provide the very first adventure for groups new to Blood & Bronze and will take you through the basics of the game: that you—the referee—describe the scene and the non-player characters (NPCs); that the players say what their characters do and say; that you adjudicate their outcomes, using the rules as help and reference; and that you describe how the NPCs react to the adventurers' actions and how the situation changes as a result.

Thralls of the Sun is a location-based setup, meaning that the geographical layout sets limits to the both the freedom of movement and possible actions of the player characters. For example, at the beginning of the adventure the adventurers are in a large underground chamber, lit by a large bonfire and housing hundreds of slaves. Two visible paths lead into the darkness of the underground canals or *qanats*, another opening leads to the living quarters of the self-appointed leader of the slaves. A ledge above—too high to climb and heavily guarded by men in gleaming armor—separates them from the only known path to freedom.

The players are free to decide what their characters do, but their choices are limited by the possibilities provided by this particular context.

While the setup is designed with a starting group in mind, it can easily be inserted into an ongoing campaign. There are many situations that may cause the adventurers to find themselves in the slave pits, including: being defeated in combat and subsequently sold as slaves; becoming indebted to a patron and forced to enter into slavery to repay the debt; seeking the visions of the Black Priestess; or being contracted by the family in 104 to free their father.

Outline

The setup can be broken down into four parts, as follows:

1. Introducing the Adventure

Introduce the adventure by telling the players that they are brought as slaves through the twelve Gates of Twilight, deep under the golden ziggurat of the Mid-day Sun. They have been sentenced by the court of Shamash, the gleaming God of Sippar, to toil until dead in the city's underground waterworks. For each gate they pass, the darkness grows thicker and as the last gate closes they stand in eternal gloom. Here, the Pit Master Mal-Hara and her men greet them by fastening leather collars around their necks, sealing them with a brimstone curse as a sign that they are now property of the priesthood of Shamash. The PCs are bereft of their weapons and sent down a long rope ladder to the Cave of Sorrows where their fellow slaves dwell.

As a referee, you should:

emphasize the darkness and despair.

emphasize the necklace and its curse (see p. 8).

instruct the players that they must escape or perish.

give them an overview of the platform and point out where their weapons are being stashed away.

2. The Slave Camp

The introduction ends with the PCs arriving in the slave camp in the Cave of Sorrows. Built from leftover materials from the construction of the vast network of underground tunnels, the camp consists of several huts, tents and shelters. In the middle of the camp a great fire burns, illuminating the cave with a flickering hellish red.

As a referee, you should:

encourage the players to explore the cave and the camp.

let your NPCs interact with the PCs.

Have them inquire into who the PCs are and what they have done to end up here.

every ten minutes, tell the players that a the shift changes and that they are forced to work: let each player roll on the slavery chart (p. 8).

Except for when led to work, the PCs cannot leave the Cave of Sorrows until they have found, crafted, stolen or traded a torch, lamp or similar, as the underground tunnels cannot be navigated freely without a light source.

3. Exploring the Tunnels

Once the PCs have acquired a light source, they are free to begin exploring the labyrinthine tunnels of the qanat.

As a referee, you should:

encourage the players to map their explorations on a piece of paper. Correct them if they are gravely mistaken, but let them draw. Sticks-and-balls will suffice well as exact dimensions of rooms are of little import for this adventure. This will give the players a better overview of the areas they have explored as well as the passages that remain unknown.

use the included maps and numbered entries to provide content for each location. All rooms are keyed: the corresponding entries contain information about

important features, encounters and secrets. Use your own imagination to expand on this information.

every ten minutes of game time, roll a die for chance encounters as per the level. Use reaction rolls for key NPCs; others will react according to situation. Guards should react to physical danger with violence and strive to capture fugitives by any means necessary, but otherwise prefer to question, harass, or hinder in that order.

THE OPEN PASSAGES

There are three open-ended passages on level 2. You must decide beforehand whether they are open or not, and if so where they lead. Use them to string together several underground adventures or seal them off. Either way, they should not lead directly to freedom.

THE CRYPT OF UBARA-TUTUM

The third and fourth levels contain the antediluvian crypt of Ubara-Tutum. While they are connected to the qanats, they form a separate adventure setup and can be run as such.

This section is only available in the full adventure **THRALLS OF THE SUN**. All references to these levels—including room numbers starting with 3 or 4—should either be ignored or used as a basis for developing your own adventure.

4. The Escape

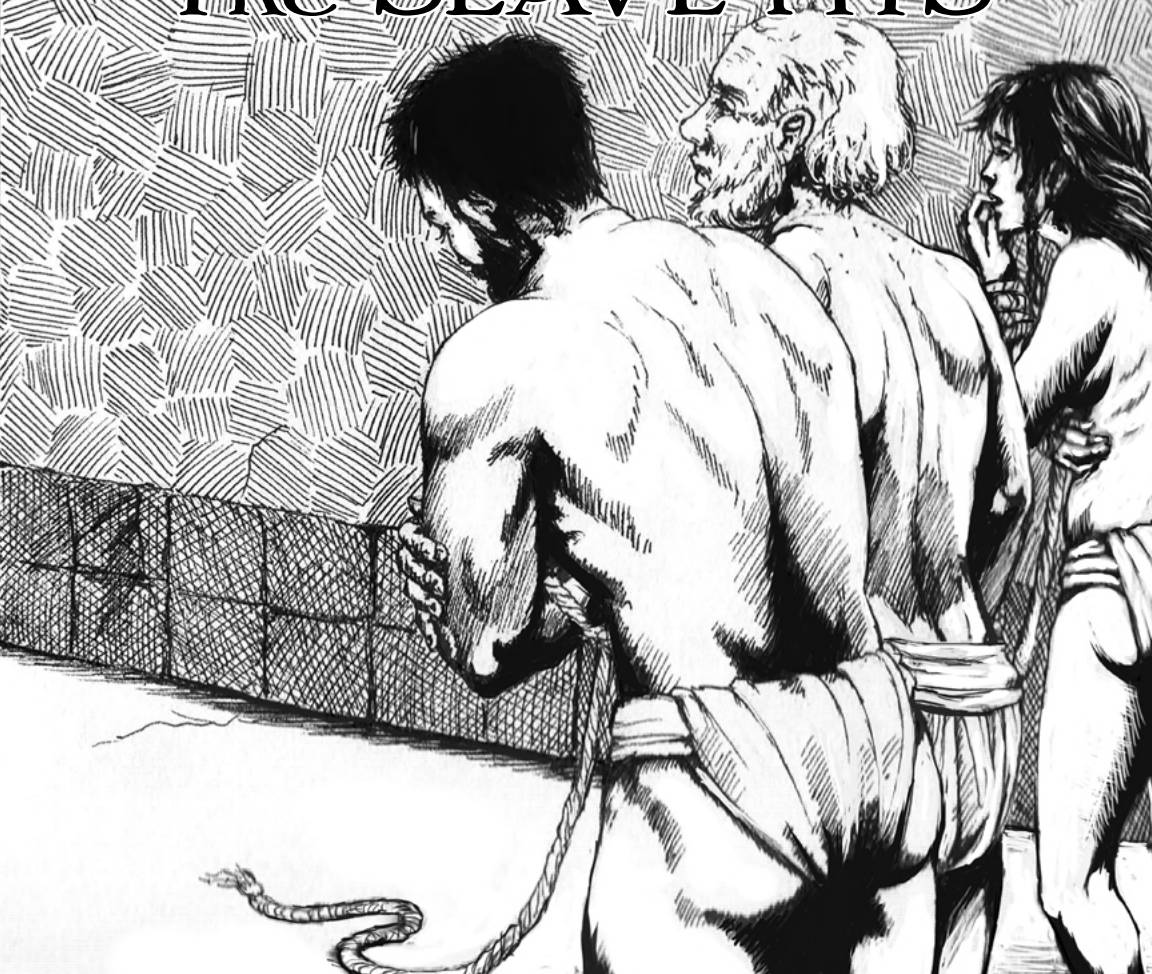
There are at least three ways for the adventurers to exit the slave pits:

1. They can find a way out
2. They can buy their way out, using wealth stolen from the tomb of Ubara-Tutum
3. They can negotiate a deal with the three sisters in 104 or with Mal-Hara in 116

The adventure ends when the adventurers exit the slave pits. However, if they haven't devised a plan to remove their collars, they will continue to trouble them.



Chapter II ~
The SLAVE PITS



THE SLAVE PITS

The slave pits are located in southern Sippar, somewhere under the looming Ziggurat of the Mid-day Sun. The purpose of the slaves' labor is simple, yet requires tremendous effort and great ingenuity: to provide the desert city and its ever-thirsting god with water.

Via a network of tunnels and caves, the Cave of Sorrows where the slaves reside connects to the underground canals carrying water from distant hills, the large halls where water is pumped from reluctant sources deep under the earth and the bases of towering chimneys collecting dew from frosty mornings. Every sixth hour a signal reverberates through the tunnels, indicating the change of shifts: sending some to their first or second daily period of work, others to rest or for meals and recuperation.

To signify the unfree situation that the adventurers are in, you should set an alarm to ring every ten to fifteen minutes. Inform the players that when the alarm rings, they must choose to either stop whatever they are doing and instead roll a twenty-sided die on the slave-work chart below, or accept that all guards will turn hostile against them.

All slaves in the waterworks are equipped with slave collars. The collars mark the slaves as property of the temple, but are also imbued with sorcery that prevents them from stepping into the light of day. Whenever new shafts are dug, large sun-shades have to be put in place by nightly chain-gangs. Despite this, casualties among the surface crews are still common.

THE COLLAR OF BURNING VENGEANCE

Upon entering the Slave Pits, all slaves—including the PCs—get a collar etched with brimstone curses fastened around their necks. If exposed to sunshine, the sorcerous glyphs will burn with a baleful glow, causing 1 dmg per round; if broken, they will catch fire and set the bearer aflame (2d8 fire damage for 1d4+1 rounds).

SLAVE WORK EVENT

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Severe disease. You contract a severe disease. Endurance is halved until you roll 10+ on a recovery die. Subtract 2 from future rolls on this chart. |
| 2 | Disease. You contract a disease. Your endurance is halved until you roll a 7+ on a recovery die. Subtract 1 from future rolls on this chart. |
| 3 | Whipped. The slave-drivers choose you to set an example. 1d6 endurance lost; Might saves for half. Subtract 1 from future rolls on this chart. |
| 4 | Minor accident. The ceiling gives in, killing some in your team and wounding you. Lose 1d4 endurance. |
| 5 | Insufferable hardship. The labor at your station exerts a terrible toll: lose 1d4 endurance from the physical strain. |
| 6-7 | Arduous labor. Roll a twenty-sided die under or equal to your endurance. On a hit, you cope fine; on a miss you fall behind and attract unwanted attention from the guards. Subtract one from future rolls. |
| 8-9 | Toil. Lose 1 endurance. |
| 10 | Fight. On the way back from work, some slaves sees an opportunity to settle a score with you. Roll a twenty-sided die under or equal to your endurance: on a hit, you stand your ground—increase status by 1; on a miss they overwhelm you. Either way, you lose 1d6 endurance. |
| 11 | Informant. You are asked by the guards to act as their eyes and ears in the slave camp. If you accept, check Guile. On a hit, add 1 to all future rolls; on a miss your status is lowered by 1d4. If you refuse, subtract 2 from future rolls. |
| 12 | Unrest. You overhear some slaves plotting to murder a particular guard. If you warn him, add +2 to future rolls on this chart but lose one status. |

SLAVE WORK EVENT

- 13 Robbed. Another slave, desperate from hunger, tries to take your rations from you. If you fight him, check **Might**: on a hit you floor him, on a miss you suffer 1d4 damage and must starve. If you don't fight, you lose one point of status in addition.
- 14 Incineration. An accident causes one of the slaves in your team to break her collar; moments later she is incinerated by a terrible fire. If you steal her belongings before they are consumed by fire; gain an extra ration today—roll a d10 to determine its magnitude (with 1 denoting a ration befitting a status 1 character, and 10 denoting a status ten ration).
- 15 Bet. Some slaves pass time by placing bets. If you participate, roll a die: odd, you lose today's ration and must go hungry; even, you win one of theirs and get a double ration.
- 16 Rat. Tools have been stolen and the guards put the blame on you. If you rat out another slave as the thief, your status is lowered by 2; if you don't you are flogged for 1d6 damage.
- 17 Murder. You are asked to prove yourself by murdering one of the guards. If you accept, check **Guile**: on a hit you get away with it, on a miss you are spotted and bludgeoned for 3d8 damage (will not lower endurance below 0). Either way, you gain 2 status.
- 18 Supervisor. You are commanded to supervise a small group of slaves. Check **Might**: on a hit, add 2 to all future rolls on this chart; on a miss subtract 1 from them. Either way, your status is lowered by one.

SLAVE WORK EVENT

- 19 Favored. One of the slave-drivers take a liking in you, and begins to favor you. If you accept, add 3 to future rolls on this chart but lose one status. If not, subtract 1 from future rolls until you make it up to her.
- 20 Extra rations. As a reward for work well done or as an incentive to work better in the future, you and a few others are granted extra rations. You may recover completely. In addition, add one to future rolls on this chart.

Status & Rations

Each dawn, the Twilight Gates open to bring in rations supplied by the temple and awarded to the slaves collectively. If a player character has no food of her own, she must rely on her share of today's rations. The recovery dice for extended rests are then determined by each character's status, reflecting the size and quality of her cut.

Unless modified, a character's status equals her **Might** rating.

STATUS	RECOVERY DIE
<1	D4-2 (minimum 1)
1	D4-1 (minimum 1)
2	D4
3	D6
4	D8
5	D10
6	D12
7	D12+1
8	D12+2
9	D12+3
10+	D12+4

Level I

The UPPER QANAT

Overview

+ The upper qanat lies just below earth's surface: a combination of cellars, culverts and natural tunnels, created from the gradual submersion of mud-brick huts by sand from dust-storms and flood-brought sediments over millennia.

+ Houses the managerial functions of the qanat: the Pit Master's office (116), the living quarters of the guards (117) as well as the control room and siphons that prevent flooding (107).

+ The massive Gates of Twilight (118) separate the underground qanats from the sprawling city they serve.

+ A newly built brick wall (102) hides a tunnel to the basement of a commoner's house. In the house lives three women who will aid the PCs to escape if their enslaved father (109 or 112) is rescued.

+ Aside from the illuminated guard posts and well-lit living quarters, the level is dark and cool. The desert wind pours down through narrow air-holes dug at an angle to keep dirt from falling in at the cost of keeping light out.

+ The player characters briefly pass through this level during the adventure's prelude: walk through the heavy gates of twilight, see their weapons being thrown into the storage (115) before being forced at spear-point to climb the ladder down to the slave chamber on the lower floor (201).

Chance Encounters

For every ten minutes of game time spent in the upper qanat—except in rooms 119-122—the referee should roll a twelve-sided die for chance encounters. In addition, a new roll should be made if the adventurers do something noisy or that could otherwise attract attention.

1D12 ENCOUNTER

1	1d4 Guards on patrol duty.
2	1d4+1 Guards. 50% on their way to begin shift at post 221, 50% leaving their shift.
3	1d12 slaves , escorted to work by 1d4 guards .
4	Engineer , guarded by two guards .
5	Ghiri (203), sneaking off to trade with the guards.
6+	Nothing.

GUARDS: pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Clad in white flax clothes with red emblems and armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

SLAVES: pwr 2, save 5, end 6. Wearing little but loin-cloth. Unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).

ENGINEER: pwr 2 (Craft 4), save 5, end 12. Wearing a saffron robe with gold-tread fringes and an amethyst ring of office (worth 120 s), armed with a sledge (dmg 1d6; bludgeon 1d6).

Mal-Hara

Mal-Hara is the warden of the slave pits, a majestic woman of terrible strength and ogreish temperament. Her cruelty towards the slaves is of that peculiar kind found in those who are themselves subjected, for she is no more free to leave Sippar than the slaves she commands.

Mal-Hara's power is kept in check by her fear of her own masters in the temples above. The threat of reprimands for anything that could jeopardize productivity has prevented the Pit Master from destroying the more influential slaves: Zabaia (216), Talwar (225), Ghiri (203) and the priestess (227). Nonetheless, she is determined that they must die before they grow powerful enough to undermine her authority. For this reason, she recruits agents among the lesser slaves, using them to spy on the prospective usurpers or for various other deeds.

Bondsman Covenant

Any player character can enter into a covenant with Mal-Hara. There are several ways this can happen: an adventurer may seek her out and offer services and wealth in return for a favorable treatment, or enter on pain of death after being bested in combat by the Pit Master or her men.

To enter into the bondsman covenant, the adventurer must either pay 480 shekels (8 mina) to the Pit Master Mal-Hara or carry out an order to murder one of her two main enemies Zabaia (216) or Talwar (225).

RANKS AND IMPROVEMENTS

As a slave, you are in no position to bargain. When gaining new ranks with the bondsman covenant, your adventurer must follow the five step procedure below:

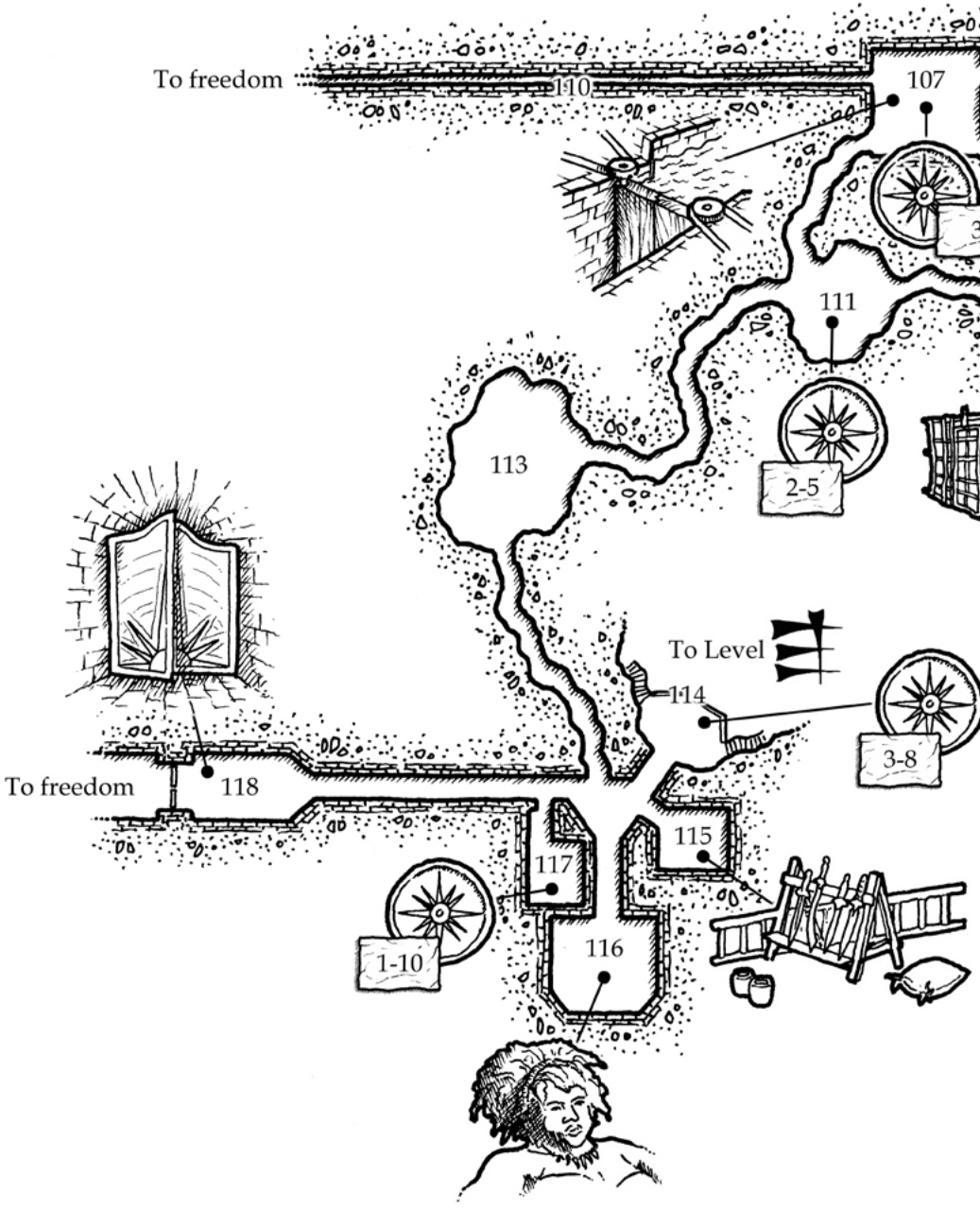
1. Lose at least three weeks of her life to slavery. Roll three times at the slave-work chart. If an equal period has already passed, lose just one week and roll once.
2. Reroll ability score for either Might, Vigor or Craft, using $2d6+1$.
3. Reroll another ability score, chosen at random from the remaining five, using $2d6$.
4. Increase Endurance by $1d4$.
5. Gain a +1 bonus to all future rolls on the slave-work chart.

TRIBUTE AND WRATH

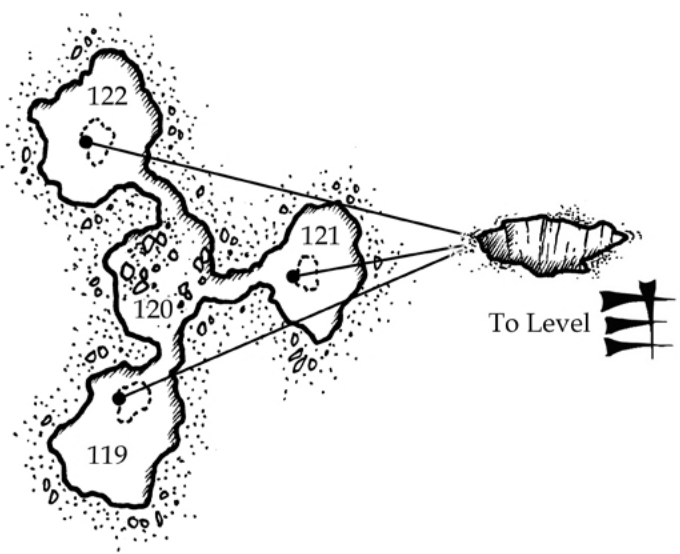
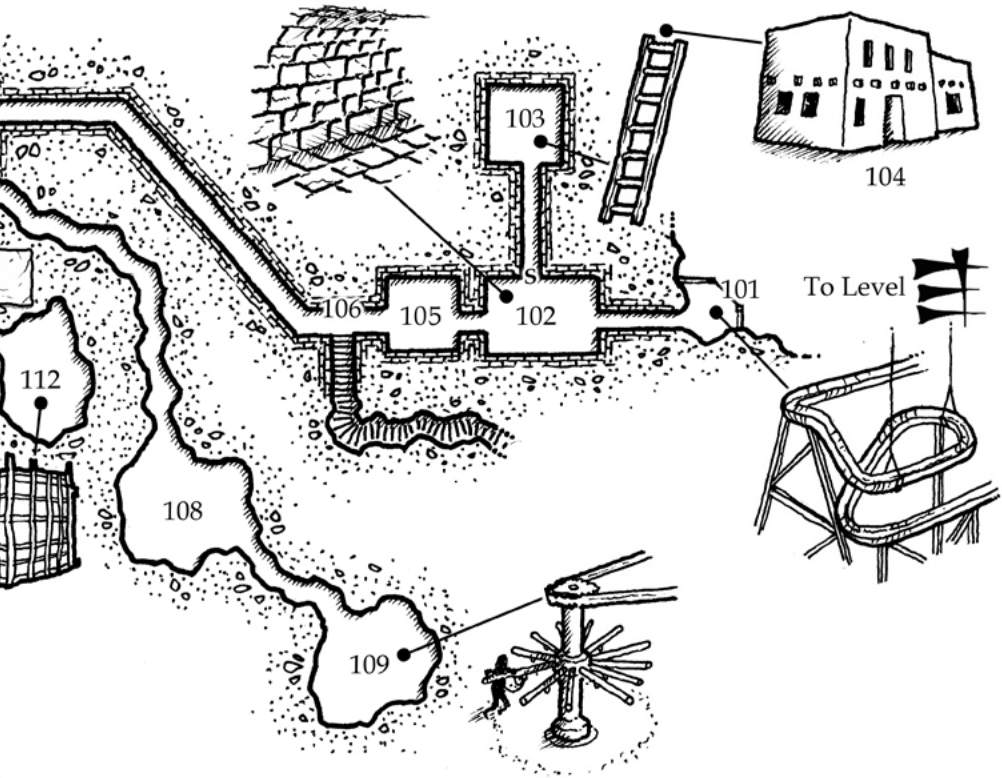
After entering this covenant, the PC is expected to pay fealty by doing one month of labor for Mal-Hara each time the adventurer gains another rank.

Failure to do so means risking her wrath. The player must roll a single six-sided die. If the result is lower than or equal to her adventurer's current rank as bondsman, the Pit Master forgives the trespass. Otherwise she will dispatch $1d6+Rank$ deputies to hunt and capture the adventurer. A hunted character must roll a percentile die each day: if she rolls 01 her persecutors catch up. For each additional day the character remains in the same place, the chance is increased by one. For example, lingering in the same spot for a week results in seven rolls, where the first is being made against 01, the second against 02 and the seventh against 07.

The deputies will try to catch the adventurer and bring her before the Pit Master; if caught, her player must choose between a year of punitive work or paying 1000 shekels per rank for her release.



Level 



Locations

101 Spiraling aqueduct (top). The lead pipes of the spiraling aqueduct (222) leads up here, to a small landing.

102 Brick culvert. The walls and floor of this wide culvert consist of lovelessly made mud bricks of various age, coated in sun-red glaze to keep from withering in the dampness. Scrutiny of the walls reveals a section that is newer than the rest. Breaking down the mud bricks opens a **secret passage** to a basement (103).

103 On the other side of the brick wall, a narrow corridor leads to a basement. Onions, dry dates and salted goat-meat hang from hooks in the ceiling; two pouches with grain and lentils lie on a flat stone covered in salt to keep mold and vermin away and a nigh-empty clay basin holds two days' worth of water. A ladder leads up into to commoners' house (104).

104 Commoners' house. Three sisters live here. Their father is held as a slave, chained to the treadwheel (109). They will not alert authorities unless threatened, and will offer to smuggle the PCs to freedom if their father is rescued and brought to them.

SISTERS: pwr 2, save 7, end 8. Wearing simple dresses and moon-servant rings (worth 60 s), allowing them to walk unmolested to and from the moon-temple in the foreigners' quarter.

105 Empty. Some broken pottery and food scraps are the only things revealing that this brick-wall room is not entirely abandoned.

106 Stone stairs. Polished black by the passing of innumerable feet, the stairs lead down to the warm light of a guard post (221).

107 Dam control room. From here, water flow in the aqueducts and canals can be regulated by lowering or raising a series of dam gates. Designed to prevent the water clock in the Great Temple above from malfunctioning in times of extreme drought or flooding, the dams are also used to drain canals or aqueducts to facilitate larger repairs. Three guards are stationed here at all times, sometimes (50%) accompanied by an engineer.

GUARDS (3): pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Clad in yellow flax clothes with white emblems and armed with spears (dmg 1d8) and tall daggers (dmg 1d6).

ENGINEER: pwr 2 (Craft 4), save 5, end 12. Wearing a saffron robe with gold-tread fringes and an amethyst ring of office (worth 120 s), armed with a sledge (dmg 1d6; bludgeon 1d6).

108 Cistern room. A damp cave with a large cistern in middle, where surplus water from the mills (109 & 219) is kept before being released into the system by the dam gates in the control room (107).

109 Tread mill (top). Shackled slaves turn large wooden wheels, hauling up water from a lower level. If not recuperating (50%), **Barawan**—father of the three women in 104—is among them.

SLAVES (12): pwr 2, save 5, end 6. Wearing little but loin-cloth, many of them have their limbs wrapped in dirty bandages to soothe their blistered hands and bleeding feet. Unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).

BARAWAN: pwr 3, save 8, end 10. Wearing a short tunic of fine quality, torn by lashes. Unarmed but competent (dmg 1d4).

110 Aqueduct. Water filled passage constructed from bricks, about a pace wide. If swam, the passage leads to open air on top of a narrow aqueduct near the west gate of the city.

111 Guards (1d4+1). pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Clad in sweat-stained clothes with red emblems and armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

112 Holding cells. In wooden cages, the slaves working on this level are held for recuperation between shifts to not reveal secrets of the organization to the main body of slaves. Unless working the treadmill (50%), **Barawan**—father of the women living in 104—is among them.

SLAVES: pwr 2, save 5, end 6. Wearing little but loin-cloth, many of them have their limbs wrapped in dirty bandages to soothe their blistered hands and bleeding feet. Unarmed (dmg 1d4; no crit).

BARAWAN: pwr 3, save 8, end 10. Wearing a short tunic of fine quality, torn by lashes. Unarmed but competent (dmg 1d4).

113 Empty. A slow dripping of water echoes between the polished stone walls, but the room is remarkably tidy as if newly swept.

114 Overseer's platform. Overlooking large slave chamber (201) at an unclimbable distance. Guards are stationed here at all times; equipped with bronze horns they trumpet the change of shifts and the passage of time, or call the other guards to arms in the events of unrest among their subjects.

GUARDS (1d6+2): pwr 2, save 6, end 18, wearing copper armor (armor 3) and equipped with spears (dmg 1d8; thrown).

Note that this location is also included on the map of level 2 (see 202).

115 Storage room. The adventurers' weapons are here, together with the guards' rations and two tall ladders used when sending slaves down into 201, intentionally weak as to break if they are swarmed by slaves trying to climb up and overwhelm their keepers.

116 Pit Master's office. In front of the gates, a wide landing houses the dwelling of the Pit Master. As the hulking warden of the pits, she is responsible for fastening the collars and counting the slaves. It is also her order that lowers and hoists the stepladder connecting the landing and the slave pits below.

MAL-HARA THE PIT MASTER: pwr 3 (+Sense -Craft), save 10, end 51. Clothed in leather and armed with a mace of office (1d6+3) and large pliers.

117 Guardpost.

SENTRIES (1d10): pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Clad in white flax clothes with red emblems and armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

118 Twilight gates. Separating the dark pits from the glorious Court of Zenith are the Twilight Gates. Fully opened only for the heralds of Shamash, the gates are pushed ajar each dusk to let new slaves in.

The Twilight Gates cannot be unlocked without aid from the outside.

119 Old canal. Water trickles in through several holes in the wall, inadequately sealed by dissolving rags and rotted pieces of wood. A **hole in the floor** leads to room 206.

120 Empty. Damp walls gleaming with moisture. A rotten rope and some splintered logs on the stony and debris-covered floor hint at the original structure.

121 Old canal. If searched, a blackened torch stub thrown among the large stones on the floor shows that someone passed here after the canal was abandoned, perhaps engineers assessing the possibility of reopening it. A **hole in the floor** leads down to room 207.

122 Cave chamber, full of debris. If the debris is cleared, it reveals a **hidden passage** to room 216.

Level II

The LOWER QANAT

Overview

+ Contains the underground canals that supply southern Sippar with water, and its well-offs with air-conditioning through wind towers.

+ A mix of tunnels and caves: some natural, some excavated and some the result of the ceaseless piling of sand upon sand. New tunnels are constantly dug, while old ones are repaired or abandoned.

+ Contrasts between the pitch-black darkness of tunnels currently unused, the sooty dung-fires lighting up the sites of heavy work, the torch-like shafts from the surface where glimmering dust dances endlessly under the searing light of day and the clear flames of the olive-oil lamps and lard candles of the patrolling guards.

+ Houses the underground village of the slaves working there (201). When the PCs interact with other slaves, use the chart opposite to quickly generate information. Share their knowledge generously.

+ Four hideous stone faces, one in each cardinal direction (229, 220, 205, 237), erected in a time when sand had not covered this place.

+ A Black Priestess (227), presiding over a small shrine and the hole where corpses are thrown.

+ Three open-ended corridors. Decide beforehand whether to use them to expand the adventure by adding more rooms, or seal them off as impassable or filled with water to prevent the adventurers from entering them.

Chance Encounters

For every ten minutes of game time spent in the lower qanat, you should roll a twenty-sided die for chance encounters.

1D20 ENCOUNTERS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Slaves carrying a dead comrade to the Sepulcher Well (228). |
| 2 | 2d4 patrolling guards. |
| 3 | 1d6 Guards. 50% on their way to begin shift at nearest post (212, 221 or 232), 50% leaving their shift. |
| 4 | Slaves , seeking to assassinate the PCs and steal their things. |
| 5 | Sabad or Ubad (215), with 1d6+1 loyal slaves. |
| 6 | 1d4+1 thieves , on their way to or from their hideout (209). |
| 7 | Slave crew on their way to work. |
| 8 | Engineer , followed by two guards. |
| 9 | Aqueduct children (222), spying for Talwar. |
| 10 | Talwars' brutes (224) and 1d4 slaves loyal to them. |
| 11+ | Nothing. |

GUARDS: pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

ENGINEER: pwr 2 (Craft 4), save 5, end 12. A copper ring of office (worth 60 s), armed with a sledge (dmg 1d6; bludgeon 1d6).

2D8	NAME	SEEKS	RUMOR
2	Baran	Sunshine	I hear Zabaia isn't here because of debts or crimes. Maybe he was set up?
3	Chania	Company	There are dead that refuse to stay dead, living in the sepulcher well.
4	Dikah	Divine omens	These tunnels are much older than the water works. Once they were city streets... and what we think are caves were originally temples to their glorious rulers!
5	Hasun	Love	Yufara is the only slave to ever escape. After him new guards were enlisted and new posts set up, but they never found his tunnel...
6	Kelay	Lotus	Sabad and Ubad, the right-hand men of Zabaia, are doing their own excavations each night. I bet you they are digging an escape tunnel.
7	Malor	Food	To appease Shamash, each summer a handful of slaves are summoned to die in the Court of the Zenith. What glory to rise from slave to such elation!
8	Nura	Freedom	Make friends with Ghiri. She can trade you anything.
9	Raziel	Respect	Zabaia has a powerful patron on the outside; I have seen him handing messages to the guards.
10	Idnatum	Status	The hideous stone faces—glaring at us from east, north and south—keep age-old secrets that are best left to wither away.
11	Asharta	Rest	Zabaia is a just leader; it is thanks to him that the fire burns constant and bright.
12	Gelem	Solace	The qanats run four levels deeper than this. If you displease the Overseer, you will be sent to a lower level.
13	Zidrial	Revenge	The old witch by the sepulcher well hides diamonds in the tunnels. I saw it myself but alas her sorcery has stolen the location from my memory.
14	Shul-Kubi	To labor well	The collars have no power; they are just a means of scaring the superstitious into subjugation.
15	Kal-adad	Wine	The Akkadian Empire is marching as we speak; they will raze the palaces of Sippar and set free all who oppose her tyranny.
16	Dital	Songs and poetry	Look at us, the simplest of slaves! Our canals only supply waters for the lowest of citizens; the nobles and priests drink from wells manned by chained princes and viziers for faraway realms.



Locations

201 The palatial Cave of Sorrows.

A large bonfire burns in the center of the room; fed by dung, stolen construction material and broken equipment and constantly tended by a watch put there by Zabaia, it is the only constant source of light and the heart of the underground life. Hundreds of slaves live here, sleeping in huts made of debris or living beast-like in holes or burrows under rocks or heaps, or sleeping wherever they find place to lie down. The slaves are of all ages and genders, and they hail from every part of the lands of Hard Soil.

SLAVES: pwr 1 (+Sense -Lore), save 6, end 5. Clad in tatters and armed with tools, rocks or cudgels (dmg 1d6, no crit).

Two passages lead into the dark qanats. If the PCs wish to enter without the escort of the armed guards whose lamps lead the slaves to work each day, they must first steal, trade or craft a torch or similar.

202 The Overseers' platform (114). GUARDS (1d6+2):

pwr 2, save 6, end 18, wearing copper armor (armor 3) and equipped with spears (dmg 1d8; thrown).

203 The trader's hut.

In a shack made of driftwood and hides of curious colors lives Ghiri, the most well-connected slave in the camp. She can provide almost anything given time and proper compensation.

GHIRI, THE TRADER: pwr 2, save 10, end 10. Wearing leopard-skin loin-cloth, a gray cape and poorly fitting point-toed boots, fighting with a hidden dagger (dmg 1d6) or by using her necklaces to strangle opponents (dmg 1d4, no crit; 1d10 exhaustion, ongoing until target makes a successful Might check).

Ghiri has **one of the five stone teeth** from the slumbering face (room 205).

204 Wind tower.

A constant chilly breeze rises with a faint hissing noise, flowing towards a narrow chimney and the temperate chambers of a noble's house. During daytime a dull light falls down the shaft, hinting of the open air high above. Charred bones of a dead slave lie here, together with a lump of molten silver worth 2d12 shekels.

205 Slumbering face.

A tilted basalt face covers the entire southern wall, with its right ear towards the ground as if listening for distant foot-falls. Its eyelids are shut and the slack jaw gapes dumbly, showing five fist-sized holes where now-missing teeth once sat. A withered inscription along the ridge of the nose reads "**truth in stone.**"

If the teeth are recovered and inserted so that their acrostic reads UBARATUTUM (see below), the right eye will blink open to reveal a circular tunnel leading steeply down to room 313. If the teeth are instead inserted so that the last letters form a similar acrostic, the marble door in room 314 also opens.

TO OPEN PASSAGE DOWN

URMUDA (Guard Hound)
 BELET (Goddess of the Netherworld)
 A-ESHTU (The Early Flood)
 RIBBAT (Supreme)
 ARRATU (Evil Spell)
 TUN-BARAB (Splitting Axe)
 UR-NATA (Strong)
 TABIHHUR (Swordsman)
 UMU (Storm)
 MAR SARRIM (King born of Kings)

TO OPEN BASALT GATE

ARRATU (Evil Spell)
 TUN-BARAB (Splitting Axe)
 UR-NATA (Strong)
 TABIHHUR (Swordsman)
 URMUDA (Guard Hound)
 BELET (Goddess of the Netherworld)
 A-ESHTU (The Early Flood)
 RIBBAT (Supreme)
 UMU (Storm)
 MAR SARRIM (King born of Kings)



Guard Hound
Goddess of the
Netherworld

URMUDA
BELET



The Early Flood
Supreme

A-ESHTU
RIBBAT



Evil Spell
Splitting Axe

ARRATU
TUN-BARAB



Strong
Swordsman

UR-NATA
TABIHUR



Storm
King
born of Kings

UMU
MAR SARRIM

206 Collapsed ceiling. 10 feet above ground, a **small opening** reveals the crumbling remains of abandoned canals from an earlier epoch. The walls are covered in brown algae, watered by the defunct canals' constant dripping. The opening leads to 119.

207 Log trap. A small chamber with the mosaic floor covered in sand and debris, fallen from a ceiling crisscrossed by broken piping and rotting logs. A hole in the ceiling leads to 121.

TRAP: A tripwire running across the room releases one of the logs that swings down from the ceiling for 1d8 dmg (Vigor halves).

208 Storage. Stolen goods—a half-sack of grain, twenty fathoms of white silk, an assortment of drinking jugs and urns covered in animal motifs, three pairs of bull-horns, a bronze-tipped barbecue fork, a brass hammer, two small cedarwood boxes, a length of string, three papyrus sandals (all left)—and a **rope ladder** with hooks, long enough to climb one of the wind towers.

209 Thieves' hideout. A group of thieves, led by Tiyala, lives here. They employ rope ladders to enter and exit the qanats through one of the wind towers.

THIEVES (D4+1): pwr 2 (Vigor 3), save 9, end 9. Wearing a motley display of stolen garments and armed with thin axes (dmg 1d6).

210 Tiyala, the master thief. Tiyala has taken an interest in the slumbering face (room 205) as she guesses that it holds opulent secrets. She will pay handsomely to anyone retrieving the stone teeth. She knows that Ghiri has one, but hasn't attempted to steal it for fear of jeopardizing their hideout.

TIYALA: pwr 3, save 12, end 15. Wearing a smooth leather harness, black-dyed bronze greaves and a close-fitting helmet (armor 7), fighting with two copper adzes of good quality (dmg 1d6+1; expert dual wielder: roll damage twice and choose highest set).

211 Long tunnel. The smooth sandstone walls curve inwards, creating a cylindrical tunnel. A cracked hammer-head lies on the floor, next to a spot of blackened blood.

212 Guard post. Four guards are stationed here at all times, throwing dice and roasting nuts on a low brazier that fills the room with a soft golden light.

GUARDS (D6+1): pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Wearing white flax clothes with red emblems, belts loosened and their leather helmets (armor 1) put aside. Armed with spears (dmg 1d8)

213 Rickety log aqueduct. A deep hole, spanned by a rickety aqueduct of hollow logs. The aqueduct is drooping under the weight of the water running through it, and several metal patches bandage the ageing construction. As long as water is running through it, the aqueduct will not support the weight of a human. Falling to the bottom (312) results in 2d10 damage, Vigor saves for half.

214 Dead end. The narrow tunnel ends in a small chamber, where the air is thick with dust and hard to breathe. This place was supposed to be the site of a new wind tower servicing a great palace, but a change in fortune cancelled such plans. Tools and construction material lie in dust-covered piles, waiting to be put to use.

215 Lieutenants' dwelling. Zabaia's two lieutenants live here, in a medium-sized chamber with plastered walls and a dull floor, dotted with the white spirals of snailshells and disjointed segments of oblong fossils like minute galaxies of a night-time sky frozen in stone. Due to their master's influence over the wardens, none of them have to work in the qanats. For this reason, they are fiercely loyal to their chief.

SABAD AND UBAD: pwr 3, save 8, end 16. Wearing rawhide garments (armor 3) and fighting with stone warclubs (dmg 1d8).

216 Zabaia's Dwelling. In a separate chamber, furnished with a couch, some stools and a low table and lit by a brazier, lives the slave-leader Zabaia. A **panel in the ceiling** can be removed, to gain access to 122.

Zabaia possesses a rawhide pouch of rubies (worth 231 s) and an **ancient clay tablet** mapping the crypt of Ubara-Tutum. The tablet is almost worn unintelligible by time, but depicts what appears to be a four-spoked wheel. Some strange symbols and a grinning face mark the intersection of each spoke with the wheel.

Also in his possession is a wooden box containing a **mysterious cylinder seal**, stolen from the dead grasp of Ubara-Tutum. Within a week, he will trade it for his freedom with the emissary of the Akkadian God-King. If deemed appropriate, you could let the PCs witness how the rope ladder is lowered, and Zabaia and his lieutenants are allowed to ascend under the supervision of heavily armed mercenaries.

FIGHTERS (5): pwr 2, save 7, end 12. Wearing loincloths and fighting with obsidian daggers (dmg 1d4).

ZABAIA, LEADER OF THE SLAVES: pwr 4, save 14, end 18. Covering his sinewy and tattooed body with a dark-red robe, fighting with a curved dagger (dmg 1d6) or employing sorcerous tricks (see below).

Confusion: check Lore or become unable to act, overcome by bewildering sights and sounds. The effect lasts for 1d4 rounds.

Dead fumes: the sorcerer breathes forth a vile smoke, filling one zone per round for 5 rounds (either by spreading to nearby zones or following a moving caster) before dissipating. All characters within the zones must check Might: on a miss they suffer 1d4 damage from choking and suffer a reroll to all actions relying on sight, on a hit they only suffer 1d4 damage.

217 Passage to the qanat. The floor is polished smooth by the passing of innumerable feet on their way to and from work in the qanats. The beige sand-stone walls are covered in graffiti: simple figures by those fearing oblivion more than notice, elaborate glyphs by scholars fallen out of luck or grace, erotic imagery to lift the spirits of those withering away as well as the occasional symbol of rebellion or spite.

218 Main shaft. A wide shaft leading up to a roofed surface station. Through an intricate system of ropes and pulleys, the mud and broken rock from the constant maintenance and expansion of the qanat is hoisted up and removed by a heavily guarded surface crew, while logs and other construction materials are lowered down. 2d20 slaves work here, hauling the heavy baskets up and down.

SURFACE SENTRIES (12): pwr 3, save 6, end 18. Wearing bone-white leather harnesses and gilded leather helmets (armor 5). Armed with spears (dmg 1d8) and bows (dmg 1d6; 6 arrows)

219 Tread wheel. A huge spiral made of wood and metal drills ceaselessly down, carrying up water with each slow revolution. 12 slaves orbit around it, shackled to the spokes of a great wheel that they turn with tremendous labor to drive the mechanism. Thick tubes of clay and bronze rise at an angle to a chamber above (109), where yet another group continues the work with similar devices.

220 Broken head and excavation. At any time, 2d8 bondsmen are toiling here digging through the rock-hard loam. The work seems senseless, as neither the location nor the angle dug at is suitable for finding water; but none of the slaves dare oppose their orders for fear of reprisals from their 2d4 overseers.

OVERSEERS (2d4): pwr 2, save 8, end 9. Wearing leather armor (armor 2), wielding clubs (dmg 1d6) and ox-hide lashes (dmg 1d4; reach 1).

221 Guard post. A small group of soldiers are stationed here at all times, guarding the stairs that lead up to the higher level and fighting off their boredom by harassing the slave-children that scurry by to service the nearby lead-pipe aqueducts (222).

SENTRIES (D4+1): pwr 2, save 6, end 18. Wearing yellow flax clothes with dark emblems, leather helmets (armor 1) and small shields (def 2). Armed with spears (dmg 1d8).

222 Spiraling aqueduct. A thin aqueduct of lead pipes, supported here and there by rickety pieces of wood and ropes spiral down from a higher floor. The leaking construction is constantly serviced by spindly child-slaves, climbing along the pipes like pale and malnourished monkeys.

The aqueduct children heed only Talwar (225), who protects them from other slaves and punishes them if unruly.

223 Wind tower. A constant breeze is felt here, soaring up a narrow shaft into the darkness of a temple. The back flow carries whiffs of cardamom and myrrh together with sonorous prayers and muffled foot-falls of the thick-robed priests that sing them.

224 Brutes' chamber. Three brutes loyal to Talwar live here, sleeping on straw mattresses on the damp floor or sitting on segments of a broken ornamental pillar that graced the room in a more glorious time. The walls of the chamber are scribbled with graffiti from earlier residents, and the brutes will go to great lengths to seem cultivated enough to be the authors.

BRUTES (3): pwr 3, save 5, end 9. Wearing leather waist-cloth and rawhide bracelets, armed with clubs (dmg 1d6).

225 Talwar's chamber. Here lives Talwar, a hulking man feared for his strength and temper. Through force and manipulation, Talwar controls the child-servants of the aqueduct. For this reason, the guards leave Talwar alone and never force him to labor as long as the child-servants tend the aqueducts properly.

Talwar has taken two ornate stone teeth from the Black Priestess with the intent of handing them over to the guards to improve his position. However, he soon found that his command over the slave-children made all other leverage redundant and traded one with Ghiri (203) in exchange for some luxury articles instead. The other **stone tooth** is hidden in his chamber, in case his luck would turn.

Originally a simpleton, Talwar has grown ambitious with the power he holds over the aqueduct-children. Now, he is measuring his strength against Zabaia, hoping one day to out-manoeuvre him and seize his place as the leader of the slaves.

Keen sighted and hard to notice, the children have spied Zabaia's men sneaking west into the qanats outside of their shift more than once and Talwar is highly interested in learning what his rival is plotting.

TALWAR: pwr 4, save 6, end 25. Clad in hides, fighting with his bare hands (skilled unarmed fighter: dmg 1d8).

226 Junction. The narrow tunnel opens up into a junction with shallow ditches leading off in all directions. To the west, the ditch is dammed to concentrate the flow east and north but the weak stream is still on the verge of drying up. Faded mosaics of foreign design adorn both walls and ceiling of the junction, adding to its air of dwindling grandeur.

227 The Shrine of Waning. A large boulder and a coarsely hewn stone vaguely resembling a human together form a crude shrine dedicated to the retreating moon. A Black Priestess lives in the cave, calming the miserable souls of those thrown in the sepulcher well and selling advice for those dreary from labor.

The Black Priestess knows how to operate the northern face so that its secret passage opens. She also has three of the stone teeth needed to open the secret passage by the southern face, hidden in room 230. Originally she had all five, but two of them were stolen by the brutes in chambers 224 and 225. She is willing to pay handsomely to have the missing teeth returned, offering either a vision from her dark lord or knowledge on how to operate the northern statue.

THE BLACK PRIESTESS: pwr 1 (Lore 4), save 16, end 18. Wearing a dark cloak, her hood adorned with human teeth. Armed with a meteorite dagger (dmg 1d6, may reroll damage on the penalty of a 1-in-6 risk of the weapon breaking).

The priestess is continuously haunted by ghostly visions of things future and past. Her limited knowledge of the future causes a negative reroll on all attacks targeting her, even those done by surprise. This also gives her a 70% chance of knowing the answer (fully or partially) to any direct question the adventurers may have regarding the qanats and the things found therein.

228 The Sepulcher Well. A reeking pit where the deceased are thrown. Since it isn't uncommon that people are mistaken for dead and end up in the pit prematurely, anyone listening closely can hear whimpers and faint cries for help mixing with the gnawing and crawling of millipedes and rats. If climbed, see 404 for details on the bottom of the well.

ORACLE POTION

The black priestess concocts a strange potion which she can sell to the PCs for 200 shekels each, or give them for performing some task of similar value to her. She currently has 1d6 potions.

The drinker glimpses a future, prophesizing the outcome of her actions. The player rolls a six-sided die to determine a sequence of outcomes foreseen (Rogues roll twice and choose):

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Success, Failure |
| 2 | Failure, Success |
| 3 | Success, Success |
| 4+ | Success, Success, Failure |

The prophecy is vague and the character must decide on its meaning herself. At any time after drinking the potion, a player may declare that this was the event her character foresaw. After this point, the outcome of the characters' actions should follow the basic pattern of successes and/or failures. If the subsequent die rolls conform to the sequence dictated, the vision was true and the player may add a success to all naturally successful rolls as long as the pattern is not broken. When this happens, the effect wears off and the character must forfeit her next round due to confusion.

EXAMPLE: a rogue drinks the potion, and her player rolls two dice: 2, 5. Preferring not to start with a failure, she chooses 5 which indicates a sequence of two successes followed by one failure. As she attempts to sneak past the guards post in 221 she invokes the vision. To comply with the prophecy, she must now succeed with her roll. With one success rolled, the dice come out to her favor. This also means that her interpretation was correct, and so she adds another success for a total of two. Had she failed, the vision would have fooled her and she would have been helpless against the guards' reactions.

229 Spherical face. In the northern wall of this chamber sits an enormous stone face, crushing its round cheeks and spherical features against the physical limits of the room. The nose is broken and its mouth is shut, and even the two shield-sized obsidian eyes that glare into the room seem lazy. An inscription reads "**seeing the signs.**"

Looking closely into the right eye will reveal a myriad of white specks, as if the stone was full of bubbles or riddled with pale impurities. If the surface is polished with water, oil or similar, the glimmer comes into focus as a starry sky. The eye can be rotated so that the sky is seen from different angles.

Looking closely into the left eye will reveal a faint glimmer, as if a flake of gold was buried in the crystalline darkness by sage craftsmen. If polished, the glimmer comes into focus as a moon-shard. Rotating the eye makes the miniature moon wax or wane.

If the two eyes are rotated in such a fashion that their visions reflect the current sky and moon-phase, the stone face will open its mouth enough to allow passage to 301 via a broad but low set of stairs.

If the two eyes are instead rotated so that they match the sky on the great kings passing—the 9th day in the 9th month—the great basalt door in chamber 302 will also open. This date is not general knowledge, but a seer or sage with suitable background can recognize it at the referee's discretion.

230 Forking tunnel. The ceiling, blackened with oil-lamp soot, hangs so low that a full grown person cannot walk upright. A few planks serve as a half-hearted boardwalk across the mud that makes up most of the floor next to the broad ditch that forks with the tunnel.

In a muddy hole under one of the planks **three stone teeth lie hidden**, placed there by the Black Priestess to keep them safe from theft.

231 Small shrine. The floor slants softly up to the north and west, strewn with rocks the size of skulls. A small impromptu shrine by the wall with a few offerings commemorate the site of a recent accident.

232 The pool. A great pool of cold water, pouring up from an underground spring. The icy water is always guarded by 1d4 guards, stationed there to prevent it from being defiled by the slaves. A weak ray of dust and light drizzles down from a hole in the ceiling, too high to reach for everything but dreams.

GUARDS (1d4): pwr 2, save 6, end 8. Clad in bronze armor (armor 4) and fending themselves with tall spears (dmg 1d10; first strike; wt 4).

233 Empty. Ancient pictograms in bas-relief cover the sandstone walls, depicting strange birds and crowned women locked in eternal dance.

234 Wind tower. Hot air pours down from a hole in the ceiling 15 feet above ground, where a narrow shaft leads up into the humid darkness of a bath house's basement.

235 Collapsed tunnel. The tunnel seems to have collapsed on more than one occasion, as the rocks on one side sit much looser and are less covered in dust. A few stones are spattered with **blackened blood**, but there are no corpses to be seen. The sandy floor reveals partial footprints of several persons and some more blood spatters, incoherent and far apart as if swept away in haste.

A keen-sensed character can feel a slight breeze coming through the fallen rocks from the other side.

The loose stones can be removed with some labor, to reveal the continuing passage.

236 **Pit trap.** A narrow corridor. The floor is perfectly smooth, as if no-one has ever walked this corridor before. The sand is actually brushed smooth to hide a large tarp covering a pit trap. The trap is rather shallow, but the sharpened sticks lining the bottom make it dangerous none the less (d6 dmg, Vigor saves for half).

237 **Western face.** A large square face sits in the western wall, extending its tongue between bared teeth in an endless grimace whose meaning is lost in time. A line of glyphs across the jaw reads “**uttering the last word.**”

Speaking any sentence into the mouth of the stone face will make the last word echo back. Only complete sentences will work. Saying a sentence ending with “death” (or similar at the referee’s discretion) will make the tongue begin to recoil, but the motion will grind to a halt as if the machinery is broken. Saying a sentence ending with “uttering” (making uttering the last word) will open the vermillion gates in room 317.

In the floor next to the stone face, a newly excavated tunnel leads down to 316. It appears that the excavators left in a hurry, because some equipment lies tossed on the ground. A rope ladder lies next to the hole, deliberately cut apart in several places.

Escape & Further Adventures

Unless the adventurers perish in the dark, they will eventually find a way to escape: by fleeing into one of the tunnels leading to freedom, by striking a deal with Zabaia or Mal-Hara, by fighting their way out or with the aid of the triplet sisters loyal to the moon temple.

Once the adventurers leave the slave pits, there are several ways to use the events in this set-up as foundation for further adventures. When designing follow-up adventures, you should be limited only by your own imagination. None the less, some possible starting points are provided below for your consideration.

Removing the collars of vengeance. Unless the players have already come up with a plan to remove their characters’ collars, one of their first concerns upon escape will probably be to remove them. Consider how this can be achieved: with the aid of a sage, by retrieving some anti-magical artifact, by threatening the priests that cast the spell...

Fleeing pursuers. If someone witnessed the adventurers’ escape—or if they left many corpses to tell of their path—they are likely to be pursued. Consider if they made any enemies during their time as slaves. Consider also if Mal-Hara, or someone else may wish them dead, and how it could be prevented.

Exactng revenge. Whether justly or wrongfully, someone caused the enslavement of the adventurers. Perhaps the players want to visit death or punishment on whoever was responsible. Consider why the PCs were sentenced to slavery. Who issued the order, and on what grounds?

Tracking down Zabaia. Unless slain by the PCs, the self-proclaimed leader of the slaves was released. Slandorous tongues whisper that his work was done, that he was never a slave to begin with. Consider what his actual agenda was, what powers the cylinder seal hold and to whom he did deliver it in return for his release.

Rules Summary

BLOOD & BRONZE is a fantasy game of high adventure and role-playing. While some may choose to use miniatures and terrain as visual aids, the adventures take place in your imagination and are bound only by them.

One of you will be the referee, describing the world and its inhabitants and adjudicating the rules. The referee also rolls dice for monsters and foes. Everyone else will play as adventurers: speaking their words, describing their actions, rolling dice and employing wits to overcome the threats and challenges the characters face.

Normally, a character is free to do anything as long as she possesses a relevant skill. However, if her actions directly affect another character or involve something that a normal person would find hard or impossible to perform, a skill test is required. To make a skill test, roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the relevant ability rating. You need to roll at least one 5 or 6.

When your character reacts to hazards or acts on instincts, roll a twenty-sided die. If the result is lower than or equal to the relevant ability score she evades the misfortune, otherwise it befalls her. This is called an ability check or saving throw.

A character's starting endurance determines how many items she can carry. Carrying more, the character suffers one point of fatigue per three additional items, rounded up. For each point of fatigue, all ability scores are temporarily lowered by one. When an ability score reaches one in this fashion, the character is weary. Any damage dealt to a weary character will cause her to pass out.

Endurance also determines how much damage a character can withstand. Each time a character suffers damage, her current endurance is lowered equally. The exact amount depends on the source of damage. As an adventurer's endurance reaches zero, she becomes incapacitated. At minus three, she is mortally injured.

To increase her chances of survival, a character can use shields or armor. Shields offer defense, which slightly reduces all incoming damage. Armor—on the other hand—can completely negate the effect of a would-be fatal attack, but the player must roll a twenty-sided die. If the result is higher than her character's armor rating, it breaks and become useless.

A character recovers endurance by resting, one point at a time. Another character may speed up the process by treating wounds. During short rests, a character may recover up to half of the damage she has suffered. Full recovery is only possible during extended rests, where the characters eat, drink and sleep.

In combat or during other dramatic and chaotic events, the game is played in rounds. During a round, every character gets one chance to act. To determine who goes first, roll one six-sided die for the adventurers and one for their foes. The side that rolls high gets the initiative.

To keep track of the positions of each character, BLOOD & BRONZE makes use of zones. A zone is an area of similar terrain, light or conditions. Zones scale with the scope of the actions: from entire provinces during travel to alleys and hiding spots when sneaking past palace guards.

If the adventures are successful, your character will gain treasures and wealth. Using the riches so earned, you may equip your character better for her future adventures or pay tribute to deities or powerful patrons in return for new skills and feats.

Find out more

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