

THE SCARLET CITADEL

EXPLORE THE HOME OF TSOtha-LANTI IN THIS **CONAN, THE ROLEPLAYING GAME** ARTICLE, BY RONALD TOLAND

The tunnels were not silent. From the bowels of the earth in all directions came sounds that did not belong in a sane world. There were titterings, squeals of demonic mirth, long shuddering howls, and once the unmistakable squalling laughter of a hyena ended awfully in human words of shrieking blasphemy. He heard the pad of stealthy feet, and in the mouths of the tunnels caught glimpses of shadowy forms, monstrous and abnormal in outline.

It was as if he had wandered into hell - a hell of Tsotha-lanti's making.

- Robert E. Howard, *The Scarlet Citadel*

INTRODUCTION

High above the colour and sparkle of the city of Khorshemish, a sorcerer spins plots in a fortress whose stones are stained red by the innocents he sacrifices to dark powers. This is the Scarlet Citadel, whose dungeons once held the mighty Conan for a time.

Though Conan escaped the Citadel, the fortress and the foul beings that dwell beneath it remain. There are adventures aplenty waiting behind its blood-red walls. Come, o prince, and carve out your own legend!

OVERVIEW

The Scarlet Citadel stands within Korshemish, slim-towered capital of Koth. The city is known as the Queen of the South, a glittering town of minarets, sparkling fountains, and lush gardens. Over it all broods the Scarlet Citadel, symbol and source of the sorcerer Tsotha-lanti's power.

In *The Scarlet Citadel*, Tsotha-lanti already dominates King Strabonus of Koth through sorcery and fear. Rumors abound of the atrocities committed by the sorcerer behind the walls of his fortress: prisoners tortured by the madly grinning eunuch Shukeli, or twisted by Tsotha-lanti's experiments into a shadowy and evil imitation of life, or simply swallowed by a monstrous serpent that lives in the gloomy tunnels beneath the Citadel. Scholars whisper that Tsotha-lanti himself is no mere man, but a half-demon spawned from a lord of hell.

The sorcerer is not content with his control of Koth. He sends emissaries to King Amalrus of Ophir, friend of Conan, who is now King of proud Aquilonia. Tsotha-lanti uses Amalrus' greed to convince him to betray King Conan and ally with King Strabonus. Together they draw Conan into trap. Tsotha-lanti takes Conan prisoner as Strabonus and Amalrus march to conquer the now kingless Aquilonia.

The arrogant sorcerer chooses not to kill Conan immediately, but imprisons him beneath the Scarlet Citadel to be consumed by the monsters that live there.

His confidence proves his undoing. For Conan escapes his chains, and while seeking a way out of the tunnels finds and rescues Pelias, a sorcerer Tsotha-lanti had imprisoned for ten years of slow torture. With Pelias' help Conan breaks out of the dungeons and returns to his kingdom in time to drive out Strabonus and Amalrus. Pelias becomes master of the Scarlet Citadel in Koth, and Conan saves his kingdom from invasion and conquest.

HISTORY OF THE SCARLET CITADEL

While the current Citadel is relatively new, raised by Tsotha-lanti within living memory, the origins of the pits beneath it are lost in time. Scholars say the pits were there 3,000 years ago, when Khorshemish was founded by King Khossus V. Khossus built a palace on the hill and a city on the ruins of an earlier settlement. While digging the foundations for his palace he found a sealed doorway that led down to the tunnels beneath the hill.

Khossus did not explore the unlit passageways, but his vizier did. Whatever the vizier found, he did not return from his investigation of the tunnels. Khossus, afraid of what lay beneath his home, re-sealed the doorway to underground passages and abandoned his palace. Khossus' fears eventually drove him to leave the city altogether. Khorshemish's people left with him, and the city became a new ruin settling on the bones of the old.

Many years later, another king, Akkutho I, resettled and rebuilt the city. He raised a fortress on the hill overlooking the city. This fortress became the foundation of Tsotha-lanti's Scarlet Citadel.

Tsotha-lanti re-opened the old cellars and discovered the shadowy tunnels under the ruins. He is the only man - or half-man - known to have explored the Halls of Horror and lived. It is said he found a cursed well somewhere in the unlit tunnels and descended into it of his own free will. He emerged some time later, his eyes burning with a strange fire.

In addition to whatever creatures lived in the Halls of Horror in the past, Tsotha-lanti has filled them with his own monsters. Worse, he experiments with strange hybrid forms of life, and leaves the results of his experiments to wander the darkened halls below.

LAYOUT OF THE SCARLET CITADEL

The Scarlet Citadel crouches on top of the central hill rising above Khorshemish. It has a commanding view of the city, and any citizen who looks up can see its blood-red walls looming over him.

The Citadel has three main sections: the outer wall - or bailey - first built by Akkutho I, the inner keep raised by Tsotha-lanti with its adjoining tower, and the pits beneath the Citadel.

Approach to the Citadel: Only a single marble-paved road winds up the western side of the hill to the Citadel. The slopes of the hill are too steep to climb anywhere else. While Tsotha-lanti's men patrol the walls day and night, the sorcerer is confident enough in his power that uninvited guests will be questioned by the guard rather than killed on sight.

Bailey: The road ends at a pair of strong iron gates set into the bailey, a 30-foot high stone wall circling the top of the hill. The wall is 12 feet thick, made of a core of sandstone rubble sandwiched between large stone blocks. Tsotha-lanti's guards pace the flattened top of the wall protected by a crenelated parapet.

The gates are formidable when closed. They are kept shut and barred, opening only on the sorcerer's command. Not even the king of Koth can enter the Citadel when he pleases. Characters wishing to enter the fortress without Tsotha-lanti's permission will have better luck bribing a guard than trying to scale the walls or assault the gates.

The wall encloses a roughly rectangular area of 200 feet by 150 feet. Each corner is protected by a round tower rising fifteen feet above the top of the wall. Near the northwestern tower is a stable with space and gear for up to six horses.

Iron Gates: 3" thick iron, Hardness 10, hp 90, Break DC 30

Corner Towers: These towers house most of Tsotha-lanti's slaves and guards. They are dark and dirty, but infinitely preferable to the pits beneath the Citadel.

Each of the corner towers has the same floor plan. There are two entrances to each tower through stout wooden doors: one from ground level inside the bailey, the other from the top of the wall itself. Each entrance opens into a short corridor. Just to the right of this corridor is an opening to a spiral staircase running the length of the tower. The corridor ends at a circular chamber which is 15 feet in diameter. Three doors lead off from this central chamber to three smaller domed rooms, each 10 feet in diameter. The only windows in the tower are in the walls of the central chamber of the uppermost floor.

The roof of each tower is flat and rimmed with a crenelated wall. It can be reached through a trapdoor at the top of the spiral staircase.

During the reign of Akkutho I, the lower floors of each tower were used as holding cells for prisoners. Since Tsotha-lanti took over the fortress, however, any captives end up in the Halls of Horror to serve as food for Satha or subjects for Tsotha-lanti's grisly experiments.

The lower, windowless floors of the towers are used as sleeping quarters by his slaves. Guards sleep, eat, and carouse in the upper chambers. Neither group has many possessions. Most of them lack even clothes. The Games Master is free to populate the rooms of the towers with shabby tables and chairs, sleeping pallets, and perhaps a few copper pieces as she sees fit.

Wooden doors: 2" thick wood, Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23

Inner Keep: Tsotha-lanti's home is more like a palace than a defensive structure. On the outside it is finished in scarlet stone, on the inside are wide halls with perfumed censers and domed chambers lined with white, gold-veined marble.

The keep lies near the center of the area enclosed by the bailey. Its eastern wall abuts a tall tower Tsotha-lanti had built for his personal use. Though the keep is only two stories tall, its upper windows can see over the outer wall to the city below.

Most of the rooms of the first floor are dedicated to Tsotha-lanti's sorcerous work, while the upper chambers are used for dining and entertaining noble company. Guards are present only when Tsotha-lanti calls for them. Shukeli, the eunuch jailer, has quarters on the first floor, and whenever Tsotha-lanti is present he is usually attended by several slaves.

The four walls of the keep surround a rectangular courtyard 40 feet wide and 100 feet long paved with marble. A single fountain rises in the center of the courtyard, the sound of its waters serving to chill the heart rather than calm the soul.

The entrance to the ground floor is on the southern side of the keep. It opens onto a hall 65 feet wide and 15 feet deep with an arched roof and four doorways leading out. A staircase just right of the door spirals up to the second floor. The room is sparsely furnished with a few wooden stools, though the arches over the doorways sport jeweled inlays set in geometric patterns.

Two doorways opposite the entrance connect to a corridor 10 feet wide. This corridor runs along the inner walls of the keep on the south, west, and north. The ornate walls of the

corridor are inlaid with gold and silver. A richly colored mosaic covers its floor, and sweet-burning censers hang from its arched ceiling. Arched doorways along the corridor open onto the courtyard.

A doorway left of the entrance leads to a small (15 feet by 15 feet) and tidy kitchen that is sparsely furnished. Rough stone stairs descend from this room to the cellar.

The doorway to the right of the entrance admits to a larger room measuring 30 feet by 15 feet. This room is bare save for three sets of manacles attached to the southern wall. Prisoners awaiting torture or sacrifice are kept here, within sight of freedom.

Manacles: 1/2" thick iron, Hardness 10, hp 10, Break DC 26, Open Lock DC 25

On the north side of the ground floor the main corridor opens up to three more rooms. The room in the northwest corner is 25 feet wide by 15 feet deep. This is Shukeli's quarters. It holds few comforts, as the eunuch derives most of his pleasure from inflicting pain on others. His room is fairly clean but foul-smelling, with a hard pallet on the floor and a low peg on the wall nearby to hold his keys.

25 feet down the corridor to the east from this room is a door to a second room, which measures 30 feet by 15 feet. This is Shukeli's torture chamber, where captives are ultimately flayed alive to furnish skin for the books of Tsotha-lanti's vile library. A blood-stained rack big enough to hold and stretch a Large humanoid commands the center of the room. Along the walls hang numerous torture implements: hooks, jagged blades, coils of rope, iron weights. Shukeli keeps all the blades sharp save a few he leaves deliberately dull to enhance their effect.

East of this painful room is another of identical size, connected to it by an

arched doorway. This is Tsotha-lanti's sacrificial chamber, where many a torture victim has been relieved of life. A simple black altar, shaped like a large butcher's block, stands near the eastern wall. Manacles snake outward from each end of the altar, ready to secure the next innocent sacrificed to power Tsotha-lanti's sorcery.

The second floor follows much the same floor plan as the lower storey. Here the main corridor is lined with arched windows and balconies overlooking the courtyard. The hall on the south side of this level is bare save for a few chests containing alchemical goods that do not fit into the laboratory next door (see below).

Other than the hall, the rooms on this floor are more ostentatious than below. The room in the southeast corner of the keep is a domed chamber with a ceiling carved from jet. Soft silk divans are set against the walls, with low tables nearby to support food or drink. The chamber in the northeast corner is decorated similarly, but its ceiling is covered in gold. This chamber also holds Tsotha-lanti's crystal ball (see *Conan the RPG*, page 228). The room just west of this one is also furnished for lavish entertainment of guests, with a ceiling coated in bright silver.

The room in the northwest corner holds Tsotha-lanti's library. Shelves line the walls from floor to domed ceiling, filled with dusty scrolls and books written on human skin and bound in wood. In the middle of the room, flanked by large candle-stands, is a low couch for reading. Near the bookshelf along the northern wall is a short writing desk with quill and ink.

The smaller chamber in the southwest corner serves as Tsotha-lanti's alchemical laboratory. Here he creates his Kothic Demon-Fire and researches the properties of Stygian Tomb-Dust (see *Conan the RPG*, pages 234-235). A long table stretches down the center of the room, surrounded on all sides by trunks and bags filled with various chemicals and herbs. On the table itself are several

mortars and pestles of varying sizes, two oil lamps, and an alchemical treatise from Tsotha-lanti's library.

Leading off from northern side of the main passage is a narrow corridor. Its walls are deep black, and it ends at a brass door with a grinning skull atop its lintel.

This is the door to the Halls of Horror, the pits under the Scarlet Citadel. Beyond it is a narrow staircase that used to connect the first and second floor of the Citadel. Tsotha-lanti has extended it so it now twists down into the hill to the Halls of Horror.

Brass Door: 2" thick brass, Hardness 8, hp 30, Break DC 25

Halls of Horror: At the foot of that narrow stair is an iron door forged as if it were the outer defence for some keep. It is locked, but can be opened with Shukeli's keys.

Iron door: 2" thick iron, Hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 30

Past the iron door is a steel grille. It is not locked, but bolted, and the bolt can only be pulled out from the outer side. When the bolt is withdrawn, the grille can be slid into a recess in the wall.

Steel grille: 2" thick steel, Hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 25

Beyond the grille is an arched, 15 feet wide corridor cut from solid stone. The air is close down here, with no light save for any torches the guards carry with them.

30 feet down the corridor from the steel grille is a set of iron fetters used to hold prisoners for Satha to find and devour. A chain, 5 feet long and forged of links 1" thick, connects a steel ring set into the wall to a metal belt 1/2" thick and 5" in width. Huge locks hold chain to belt

and keep the belt clasped shut. Without Shukeli's keys, anyone unlucky enough to be fitted with these shackles has little hope of escape.

On the wall above the steel ring is a niche for a torch. The guards leave one burning torch here when they bring down a new prisoner. The light is not for the comfort of the prisoner, but a signal to Satha that another meal awaits the serpent.

Iron chains: 1" thick iron, Hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 26

Iron lock: 1" thick iron, Hardness 15, hp 30, Break DC 26, Open Lock DC 30

The wide corridor forms the main route through a maze of smaller tunnels and crawl-spaces dug out thousands of years ago under the hill. The main corridor extends for at least three hundred feet, though only Tsotha-lanti knows where it ends.

The smaller tunnels are 5 feet wide, branching off from the main corridor to make their own stony paths. Several of these smaller tunnels intersect at cross junctions, making it easy to get lost in the dark once off the main corridor.

The Games Master should feel free to populate these smaller tunnels with all kinds of monsters and depraved creatures. The main tunnel is the hunting ground of Satha, however, so other denizens of the Halls of Horror keep to the smaller passages.

Three monsters in particular make their home in the side tunnels.

The Gelid Abomination (see **Monsters**, below), the horrid result of one of Tsotha-lanti's experiments in creating hybrid life, stalks the tunnels closest to the entrance.

The plant Yothga (see **Monsters**, below) sprouts in a cell at the end of one of the more distant corridors. The cell measures 15 feet square, and is set off from the tunnel by a set of iron bars running from ceiling to floor. One section of the bars is made to swing open, but is held shut by a metal lock that can be opened with one of Shukeli's keys.

Finally, down a small tunnel on the opposite side of the main corridor from the Gelid Abomination is a strange well. It is a sheer pit cut through the floor of the tunnel measuring 5 feet wide and 10 feet long. Characters standing near the well can feel a dark wind blowing up from below. A Listen check (DC 15) detects faint drumbeats drifting up on that wind.

The pit leads down into hell, and what may lie at the bottom is up to the Games Master to decide. The presence of characters at the head of the well attracts the attention of 1d4 Bodiless Slimers (see *Conan, the Roleplaying Game* page 314), who float up out of the well and attack anyone they find. The Slimers will pursue fleeing characters only as far as the main corridor.

Tsotha-lanti's tower: The tower adjoining the Inner Keep can be reached two ways. A wooden door on the eastern side of the courtyard opens onto the ground floor of the tower. In addition, a marble stairway at the northeastern end of the second-floor hallway leads up to the very top of the tower. The ground-floor entrance can be barred from the inside.

Wooden door: 2" thick wood, Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23

The tower has three floors, each with a single circular room 10 feet in diameter. The first floor has no windows. Two narrow arched openings in the eastern wall of the second and third floors allow light and air to reach those rooms. A spiral staircase just to the right of the door to each floor runs between the floors.

The chamber on the first floor has but a single set of manacles dangling from the eastern wall. Tsotha-lanti keeps prisoners here before feeding them to summoned demons above or experimenting with them in the pits below.

Manacles: 1/2" thick iron, Hardness 10, hp 10, Break DC 26, Open Lock DC 25

The second-floor room is Tsotha-lanti's summoning chamber. A permanent circle is inscribed on the floor, surrounded by warding symbols to constrain whatever demon Tsotha-lanti wishes to conjure. Twelve black candles on tall steel candlesticks are arranged about the circle. Two black censers dangle from the ceiling, their scent dank and foul rather than sweet.

The room on the third floor is Tsotha-lanti's sleeping chamber. It contains a single sleeping couch, a wooden trunk, and two censers. The trunk holds spare silk robes and a supply of black lotus power. Tsotha-lanti burns the lotus powder in the censers during his meditations, drawing on the dark dreams the powder induces to enhance his sorcerous powers.

The top of the tower rises 15 feet above the roof of the Inner Keep, making it the tallest tower in the Scarlet Citadel. It is flat and protected by a low wall. Khorshemish, spread out at the bottom of the hill below, seems tiny from here. A constant, chill wind blows across this pinnacle, making it feel lonely and remote.

TSOtha-LANCI

Tsotha-lanti appears to be a man with a lean build and sharp, bird-like features. In truth he is a Spawn of Dagoth Hill, a half-demon born to a Zamoran dancing-girl that slept too close to a cursed shrine.

He is wicked and cruel, reveling in the fear he inspires. Even King Strabonus of Koth is terrified of the sorcerer. Tsotha-lanti uses this terror to twist the king to his purposes, making himself the true ruler of the kingdom of Koth.

Tsotha-lanti did not make the pits under the Scarlet Citadel, but he has put them to his own foul use. He feeds prisoners to Satha (see **Monsters**, below), a massive serpent he has set loose in the tunnels. Some prisoners he saves from the snake only to use them in his twisted experiments in creating aberrations. Most of these experiments end in failure, and the hideous results are left to wander in the darkness below.

In combat Tsotha-lanti prefers to use his Kothic Demon-Fire (see *Conan the RPG*, page 234) from a distance to incinerate foes. In melee he closes quickly and uses his poison ring: as a free action, a small metal point juts out from the ring, delivering a dose of whatever poison has been smeared onto it. Tsotha-lanti's favourite poison to use for this purpose is purple lotus juice (see *Conan the RPG*, page 232).

Medium Outsider (native)

19th Level Scholar

Hit Dice:	10d6+16 (62 hp)
Initiative:	+21 (+9 Dex, +6 Reflex save, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft
Dodge Defence:	25 (+5 level, +9 Dex, +1 Dodge)
Parry Defence:	18 (+5 level, +3 Str)
DR:	1
Base Attack/Grapple:	+14/+17
Attack:	Unarmed strike +19 melee finesse (1d4+3 plus poison ring); or Kothic Demon-Fire +18 ranged (5d6 fire)
Full Attack:	Unarmed strike +19/+14/+9 melee finesse (1d4+3 plus poison ring); or Kothic Demon-Fire +18/+13/+8 ranged (5d6 fire)
Magic Attack:	+14 (+9 base, +5 Charisma)
Power Points:	18 (max 72)
Space/Reach:	5 ft/5 ft
Special Attacks:	Spells, poison ring
Special Qualities:	Knowledge is Power, Darkvision (30 feet), immunity to poison, Spawn of Dagoth Hill (+2 effective scholar level when casting <i>summon demon</i> and <i>summon elemental</i>)
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +17, Will +14
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 28, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 21
Skills:	Bluff +15, Concentration +22, Craft (alchemy) +28, Craft (herbalism) +28, Decipher Script +24, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcane) +24, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (nobility) +24, Perform (harp) +27
Feats:	Spawn of Dagoth Hill, Ritual Sacrifice, Summoner, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Tortured Sacrifice, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Improved Initiative, Permanent Sorcery*, Craft Aberration*
Possessions:	Silk robes
Corruption:	8
Spells:	Divination - <i>astrological prediction, mind-reading, visions, sorcerous news, greater sorcerous news, dream of wisdom</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, dread serpent, domination, mass hypnotic suggestion</i> ; Necromancy - <i>raise corpse, death touch, agonising doom</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance</i> ; Prestidigitation - <i>conjuring, burst barrier, telekinesis, greater telekinesis</i> ; Summoning: <i>demonic pact, greater demonic pact, summon demon, summon elemental</i>

	Medium Humanoid (Koth) 17th Level Scholar
Hit Dice:	10d6+18 (53 hp)
Initiative:	+8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflex save)
Speed:	30 ft
Dodge Defence:	19 (+6 level, +3 Dex)
Parry Defence:	17 (+6 level, +1 Str)
DR:	-
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+12/+13
Attack:	Unarmed strike +15 finesse (1d4+1)
Full Attack:	Unarmed strike +15/+10/+5 finesse (1d4+1)
Magic Attack:	+14 (+8 base, +6 Charisma)
Power Points:	11 (max 44)
Space/Reach:	5 ft/5 ft
Special Attacks:	Spells
Special Qualities:	Knowledge is Power
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +15
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 23
Skills:	Appraise +8, Bluff +18, Concentration +22, Craft (alchemy) +24, Craft (herbalism) +22, Decipher Script +22, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcane) +24, Knowledge (history) +20, Perform (song) +21, Sense Motive +13
Feats:	Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Summoner, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Augment Summoning, Noble Blood*, Menacing Aura
Possessions:	Linen tunic
Corruption:	6
Spells:	Curses - <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> ; Divination - <i>astrological prediction, psychometry, mind-reading, visions, sorcerous news, dream of wisdom, greater sorcerous news</i> ; Hypnotism - <i>entrance, hypnotic suggestion, domination</i> ; Necromancy - <i>raise corpse, death touch</i> ; Oriental Magic - <i>calm of the adept, darting serpent, warrior trance, shape-shifter</i> ; Summoning - <i>demon pact, summon demon, greater demonic pact, summon elemental</i>

PELIAS

Pelias is a tall, thin man with a noble countenance. His eyes are dark and intelligent, though his gaze is unsettling. Even when he is unarmed, it is obvious that Pelias is a dangerous man.

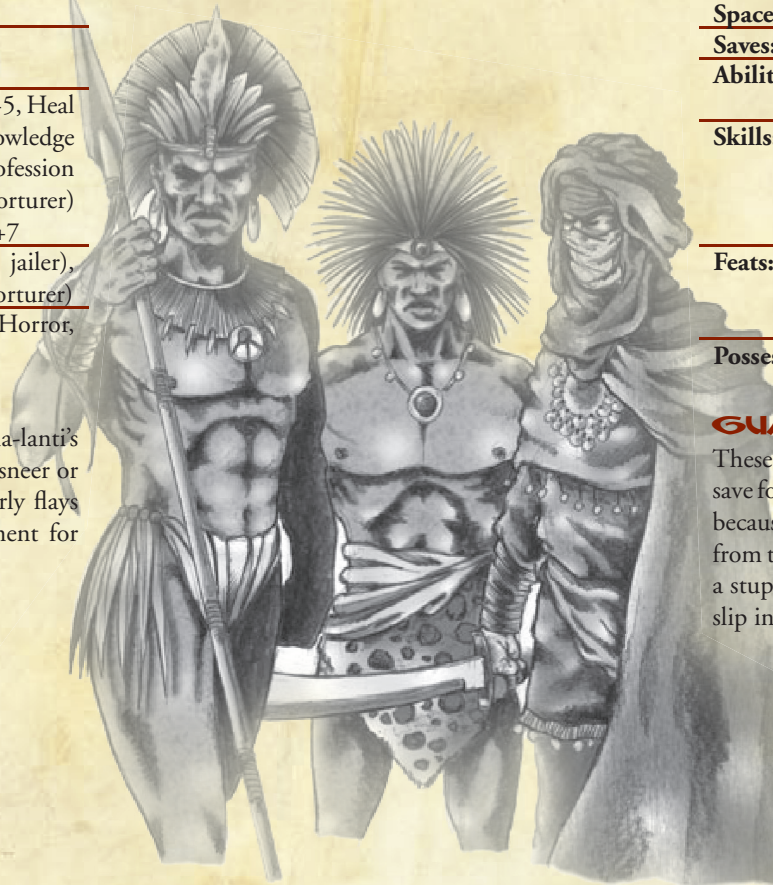
Ten years before the events of *The Scarlet Citadel* Pelias was Tsotha-lanti's chief sorcerous rival, but Pelias had a weakness for fine food and drink. After one typical night of debauchery, Tsotha-lanti captured Pelias in his sleep and imprisoned him in the pits beneath the Scarlet Citadel. Rather than kill him outright, Tsotha-lanti locked Pelias in a cell with the plant Yotha (see **Monsters**, below). This hellish plant slowly drained Pelias' mind and soul for ten years before Conan freed him. When he escaped from the Halls of Horror, Pelias' mind recovered and quickly focused on revenge against Tsotha-lanti.

Pelias takes his powers for granted, and freely employs sorcery to achieve whatever he wants at the moment. He will not hesitate to spy on friends and enemies, use an air elemental to travel great distances, or raise zombie servants if needed. He readily forms alliances against perceived threats, but feels no further obligation to his allies once the threat is gone.

	Medium Human (Koth) 3rd Level Expert
Hit Dice:	3d6+3 (13 hp)
Initiative:	+2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex save)
Speed:	30 ft
Dodge Defence:	13 (+2 level, +1 Dex)
Parry Defence:	12 (+2 level)
DR:	-
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+6/+9
Attack:	Unarmed strike +3 finesse (1d4)
Space/Reach:	5 ft/5 ft
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills:	Bluff +5, Concentration +5, Heal +3, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +1, Profession (jailer) +10, Profession (torturer) +10, Spot +1, Use Rope +7
Feats:	Skill Focus (Profession: jailer), Skill Focus (Profession: torturer)
Possessions:	Keys to the Halls of Horror, loincloth, sandals, belt

SHUKELI

Shukeli is a grossly fat eunuch that serves as Tsotha-lanti's jailer. His mouth is usually twisted into either a sneer or a fiendish grin. He delights in torture and eagerly flays victims alive to provide human skin as parchment for Tsotha-lanti's growing library.



	Medium Human (Southern Islander) 2nd Level Barbarian
Hit Dice:	2d10+6 (17 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)
Speed:	30 ft
Dodge Defence:	13 (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 racial)
Parry Defence:	13 (+3 Str)
DR:	-
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+6/+9
Attack:	Bardiche +5 melee (2d10+4)
Space/Reach:	5 ft/5 ft
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Skills:	Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Perform (dance) +5, Profession (sailor) +3, Profession (guard) +4, Spot +6, Survival +4
Feats:	Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Power Attack
Possessions:	Bardiche

GUARDS

These tall and imposing warriors go completely naked save for their bardiches. They are loyal to Tsotha-lanti only because of their fear of him. When the sorcerer is absent from the Scarlet Citadel, the guards drink themselves into a stupor, offering a perfect opportunity for characters to slip into - or out of - the Citadel unnoticed.

	Medium Aberration
Hit Dice:	10d8 (45 hp)
Initiative:	+8 (+5 Dex, +3 Reflex save)
Speed:	30 ft
Dodge Defence	21 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +8 natural)
DR:	-
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+7/+12
Attack:	Tentacle +13 (1d6+5)
Full Attack:	6 tentacles +13 (1d6+5), Bite +11 (1d8+2)
Space/Reach:	5 ft/5 ft
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, constrict (1d6+5, AP 8), horrible laughter
Special Qualities:	Immunity to physical weapons, darkvision (60 ft.)
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 12
Skills:	Bluff +8, Disguise +4
Feats:	Multiattack, Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (tentacle), Weapon Focus (bite)

THE GELID ABOMINATION

Born from one of Tsotha-lanti's foul experiments, the Gelid Abomination hunts through the tunnels beneath the Scarlet Citadel. Though it can make human sounds, there is nothing human in its appearance. Stumpy tentacles surround an amorphous, jelly-like mass for a body. A sickly amphibian head grows out from the mass without a neck.

The Gelid Abomination imitates a woman's weeping to draw in its prey. When close enough to be seen, it begins tittering in a wicked voice, causing all Terror saves it provokes to be made at a -2 penalty. The Gelid Abomination then closes and attacks with its tentacles, using its constrict attack to squeeze the life from more sane creatures.

Note that the Gelid Abomination can only be harmed by fire or silver.



	Colossal Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	40d10+200 (420 hp)
Initiative:	+28 (+4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +22 Reflex)
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft., swim 20 ft.
Dodge Defence	27 (-8 size, +4 Improved Initiative, +25 natural)
DR:	4
Base Attack/Grapple:	+40/+69
Attack:	Bite +35 melee (3d8+16+poison), or slam +35 melee (3d6+24)
Full Attack:	Slam +35 melee (3d6+24), bite +30 melee (3d8+16+poison)
Space/Reach:	30 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks:	Constrict 3d8+24 (AP 17), improved grab, poison, charging slam
Special Qualities:	Scent, darkvision (60 feet), low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +26, Ref +24, Will +17
Abilities:	Str 42, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills:	Climb +36, Hide +17, Listen +33, Move Silently +23, Sense Motive +15, Spot +24
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Awesome Blow, Improved Sorcerous Sight, Lightning Reflexes

SATHA

This massive and terrible serpent is a full eighty feet long, its scales white with a grey sheen. Wicked foot-long fangs curve down from its mouth dripping with a deadly venom. Its great yellow eyes see well in darkness and in light, and its gaze is evil and cold.

Though Tsotha-lanti employs fierce tribesmen from the Southern Islands as guards, Satha is the real prison-keeper of the Halls of Horror. This monster wanders the Halls at will, feeding on prisoners left by Tsotha-lanti or anything else unlucky enough to be caught in one of the larger tunnels under the Citadel. Even the other horrors in the pits give Satha a wide berth.

Satha is drawn to motion, and will not attack an unmoving target. It uses its slam attack to knock out its prey, then wraps its meal in its coils to break all its bones before swallowing it.

Potential food is safest around the serpent immediately after it has fed. Like all snakes, it spends time digesting its food, and will not attack likely prey if it has fed recently.

Poison: Save DC 34, primary damage 2d4 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con

YOTHGA

Yothga is not native to Earth. Its seeds scattered out from the planet Yag into space. Some found their way to Earth in times forgotten, but could only take root in hell. In time Yothga grew out and up in vine-like stalks till it burst through the floor of the Halls of Horror. Now Tsotha-lanti uses it to torture his most hated captives. Its latest victim is the sorcerer Pelias.

Yothga feeds on the souls of humans. Its tendrils lash out and wrap around anyone that approaches within reach, then pull the victim closer. The poison oozing from its flesh serves to dull the wits of its prey. When its captive's mind is gone (reduced to 0 Int), Yothga dips one of the sickly red blossoms that bloom along its length toward the human's mouth, slowly drinking out its soul. Its foul caress forces a Corruption Save (DC 21) in the target once per month. A target brought to Corruption 10 in this way is consumed, body and soul, by Yothga. The evil plant then grows in size by 1 HD and waits for another victim.

Poison: Save DC 19, Initial and secondary damage 1d4 Int

	Large Plant
Hit Dice:	9d8+45 (85 hp)
Initiative:	+10 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex save, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	0 ft
Dodge Defence	14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)
DR:	2
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+18
Attack:	Tendrils +11 melee (1d6+4+poison, AP 5)
Full Attack:	4 tendrils +11 melee (1d6+4+poison, AP 5)
Space/Reach:	10 ft/10 ft
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, poison, charging slam, loathsome caress, powerful grapple
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, plant traits
Saves:	Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 19, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 24
Skills:	Listen +11, Spot +4
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Listen), Weapon Focus (tendrils)

TREASURES OF THE SCARLET CITADEL

The Scarlet Citadel contains a mix of earthly and scholarly treasures. The domed rooms on the second floor of the Inner Keep contain jewels in the walls, goblets carved from a single sapphire, silks on the couches, and fine wines in abundance. Tsotha-lanti's library on the same floor is vast, accumulated over a lifetime of sorcerous study. His alchemical lab is similarly well-equipped, with all the ingredients necessary to make his Kothic Demon-Fire. Even his crystal ball can be found lying on a divan in a room on the second floor (see **Layout**, above).

Most of these things, however, will likely remain out of the player characters' hands. If the characters assist Pelias in overthrowing Tsotha-lanti (see below), Pelias will take up residence in the Scarlet Citadel and consider all its treasures as his. Characters caught prying jewels off of arched doorways will be treated as thieves. If Tsotha-lanti controls the Citadel at the end of the characters' adventure, they are likely fleeing for their lives from the Citadel, with no time to stop and loot the place.

Either way, the Games Master should not worry overmuch about the characters becoming suddenly wealthy. In the unlikely event the characters become masters of the Citadel, they will have to answer to the King of Koth, who may or may not welcome their presence.

USING THE SCARLET CITADEL IN YOUR GAME

The Scarlet Citadel offers a challenging location for characters to explore whether your game is set before or after the events in Howard's story. No matter who commands the Citadel, just getting into it will be an adventure in and of itself.

Should the characters be the ones to free Pelias and help him topple Tsotha-lanti, a number of possibilities open up.

Perhaps Pelias grants the characters one boon each, but as with most sorcery, the boon granted is a mixed blessing. A scholar character may be offered a period as apprentice to Pelias, forcing an interesting choice for both player and character.

Of course, the characters could free Pelias, try to kill Tsotha-lanti, and fail. Even if they manage to drive Tsotha-lanti out of the Scarlet Citadel, they will have made a terrible enemy in the half-demon wizard. Tsotha-lanti could then become a recurring villain in the campaign, always trying to regain his Citadel or revenge himself on the characters.

Even after Conan escapes from the Halls of Horror, most of its monsters are still alive and free. Characters exploring the tunnels beneath the Citadel will face Satha, the Gelid Abomination, Bodiless Slimers, and any other horrors the Games Master decides to place in the underground passages. In addition Pelias, while more human than Tsotha-lanti, will not treat trespassers lightly. If the characters break into - or out of - the Citadel without Pelias' permission, they will have to deal with the sorcerer's wrath.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Whether your campaign is set before or after Conan was imprisoned in the Halls of Horror, several different scenarios might lead the characters to explore underneath the Scarlet Citadel.

The characters might be hired to break some noble out of the Citadel. The noble might be held in the Inner Keep, awaiting torture or sacrifice, or have been thrown into the dungeon to be eaten by Satha. This would be a desperate mission, a race to get to the noble before he or she dies. Such an adventure would work whether Tsotha-lanti or Pelias holds the Citadel; neither sorcerer would hesitate to capture and kill a perceived enemy.

As an alternative to having to free a noble, perhaps one of the characters crossed the master of the Citadel and was caught. The remaining characters would have to break into the Citadel and free their companion. Again, this would be a fast paced, high tension adventure that makes sense no matter which sorcerer controls the Citadel.

Perhaps the characters are hired by a sorcerer who wants to sneak into the Halls of Horror and go down the well into hell. They would serve as both escort and body-guard for breaking into the Citadel and descending into the tunnels. This adventure would have many of the same risks as the previous two, but without the critical time element. Rather than worrying about getting to someone in time, the characters would worry about surviving their exploration of the tunnels. This scenario would be even more interesting if a scholar character decided to brave the pit himself. The consequences of exploring - and possibly surviving - such an expedition to hell are left up to the Games Master's imagination.

A still risky, but more mundane adventure could start with the characters hired to steal a sample of Satha's venom or a cutting from Yothga. The characters might begin by asking to purchase such a sample from the current master of the Citadel. Tsotha-lanti would likely refuse such a request outright. Pelias might grant the character's wish for some exorbitant price, but insist they gather the samples on their own, without his aid. Either way, gathering the ingredients will not be easy.