

CONAN[®]

ADVENTURES IN THE HYBORIAN AGE



SECOND EDITION

QUILLAMS
2008



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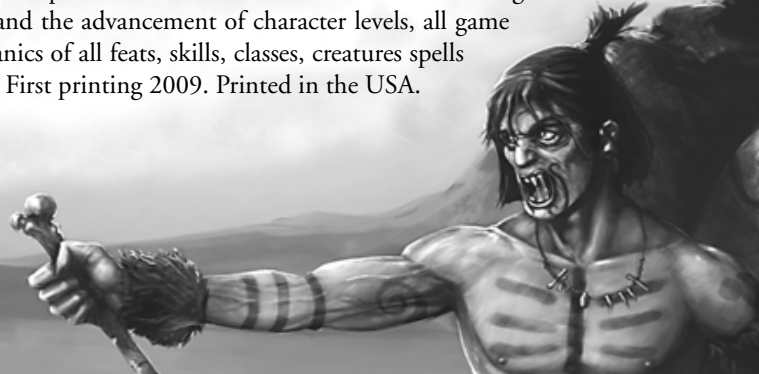
ADVENTURES IN THE HYBORIAN AGE

SECOND EDITION

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Credits

AUTHORS

Eric K. Rodriguez,
Tim Bancroft,
Vincent Darlage,
Uri Kurlianchik

EDITOR

Nick Robinson

LAYOUT

Will Chapman

COVER ART

Chris Quilliams

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Marco Morte,
Jonathan Roberts,
Andrew Dobell,
Jason Banditt Adams,
Carlos Martins,
German Ponce,
Leonel Domingos da Costa,
Michael K Tumey

CREATOR OF CONAN AND HYBORIA

Robert E. Howard





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THE BLACK ALTAR OF KATAR

By Eric K. Rodriguez

A **CONAN 020** adventure set within the dark jungles of Vendhya, bordering the mysterious land of Uttara-Kuru. Characters should be 4th to 5th level, with 4 to 6 players. Any character type can be played, however a Noble type character (Kshatriyas) would be helpful to the adventure.

INTRODUCTION

For 30 long, dark years, the cult of Katar has kept itself hidden among the dank and haunted jungles of Vendhya. The faithful of Katar, mostly assassins and thieves, have secretly worshipped their goddess in the broken ruins hidden deep in the dark jungles or the underbelly of civilization. The king of Vendhya, Bhunda Chan, has placed the highest bounty upon any known members of this death-dealing cult, and has let it be known any who harbour or help the followers of Katar will face royal judgment. To this end Bhunda Chan has assigned his spymaster, Dergith Vrul, the task of rooting out any nests of this dark cult and eliminating their members.

Until recently, very few leads or information about the whereabouts of the Katari assassins have come to the notice of Dergith Vrul. However, four days ago, the spymaster received a message from a mystical source. A Rakhsha named, 'Yurra', contacted Dergith Vrul through a *sorcerous news* spell and advised him many men had been seen travelling to an ancient place of worship within the Misted Wood of Al'Merraz. Two problems immediately became apparent. Firstly, the Wood of Al'Merraz was across the border of Vendhya into the dark lands of Uttara Kuru; second, this ancient place that the Rakhsha spoke of was one of the last known locations of a Black Altar of Katar. Believed to have been crafted

over a millennia ago, the Altars of Katar were said to be imbued with their dark mother's power and any faithful who spilled the blood of innocents upon the altar would be granted powers relative to their sacrifice. The cultists of Katar were hunted down and slaughtered and most of the remaining altars were buried or lost with the passage of time. However, the one truth which was not widely known was the altars could not be destroyed by mortal men and must instead be hidden from the world so that none could call upon their dark powers.

Though the ruined temple lies across the border into Uttara Kuru, Dergith Vrul cannot ignore this possible threat. Royal Vendhyan troops cannot be called upon to cross the border and deal with the dark cultists, subtlety and guile must prevail. Dergith Vrul, through his spy network, makes contact with several independent mercenaries and hires them for a secret mission. He uses one of his lieutenants, Bahu Dasa, as his intermediary and has the characters meet him in the village of Kepthamun, which lies near the border of Uttara Kuru.

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING

Over two years ago one of the last surviving priests of Katar found the destroyed temple of Shirma. Shirma, once a magnificent temple made of dark stone and obsidian, now nothing but ruins among the jungle growth, was found in a lost grove just inside the border of Uttara Kuru. Vadavaa Sharman, faithful priestess of Katar, had been searching for

BLACK ALTAR



Large, red drops of blood flowed down the mail corselet of Harsha, house guard to the Lord Gopali of Cuddapah. Lowered silently to the ground, the body of Harsha exhaled its last breath and spilled his lifeblood upon the marble steps of the garden entranceway. The sound of wind chimes and the smell of incense wafted through the air, giving the garden a semblance of serenity; and a feel of horror. The many candles set about the Lord of Cuddapah's mansion swayed with the shifting of the wind, weaving its path through the many trees set about the estate. The shadowy slayer of Harsha moved quickly, but silently through the gardens entrance. The assassin's blade dripped bright red blood and left a trail as he glided up the staircase that would lead him to the living quarters of Lord Gopali and his doomed family.

As the assassin passed an open window adorned with vines and sweet flowers, the half-moon shed light upon the breast of the intruder. A small, black amulet hung there; identifying the assassin as one of the faithful of Katar. Hertus of Katar crept slowly up to the first marble landing and listened intently for sounds. His animal-like senses took in his surroundings,; letting him know that all was as it should be.

At the end of the corridor the passage way went left and right. The shadowy figure slowly turned to the right, noticing a large double door a mere 30 steps down another corridor. The left hand corridor gradually faded into darkness. Seeing the noble sigil of Lord Gopali upon the double wooden door, Hertus began to slowly move down the corridor, listening for any sounds. When he came to the double door, he put his head against the wood, straining to hear any sounds or movement. When none were heard, Hertus thought to himself how strange the Lord Gopali had not set guard at his bedroom door? However, it did not really matter to Hertus; he had come to kill the Lord and his family, for insulting the honour of another Lord's daughter. It did not matter whether Lord Gopali had been in the right or wrong or the insulted Lord was a follower of Katar, Hertus had been paid and Katar demanded her due.

Slowly, Hertus pushed upon the doors. They opened silently, as if they had been well oiled. The room was very dark and silent as the grave, no candles were lit to reveal the room's occupants. Suddenly a fierce breeze blew through the windows, blowing aside the curtains and letting the half-moons light shine into the room. Immediately it became apparent that this was not the room of the Lord Gopali for the room was littered with boxes, bundles and sacks of grain. Hertus had been deceived; if this was not the Lord's room, then where in the estate was it? The midnight wind blew at the curtains again, bringing with it the sound of chimes in the distant. *No*, thought Hertus, not chimes but bells! He quickly turned around and fled through the double doors out into the corridor. He had barely travelled halfway down the hallway when a large door burst open somewhere along the previously darkened corridor, spilling out a flood of light as well as large group of armed house guards. The room behind him was a dead end, the small windows would not allow him passage. His only possible exit was blocked by Lord Gopali's house guard. There seemed to be no escape. Drawing a viciously curved scimitar, Hertus gave out a cry of rage and contempt, 'May the midnight blade cut my way to salvation!'

Knowing that today might be his last day among the world of mortal men, he charged down the corridor into the wall of gleaming scimitars and warspears...



the ruined temple of Shirma for over five years. Her quest had begun in the Vendhyan capital city of Ayodhya, where she had been taught the ways of Katar from an early age. Trading the lives of men for gold, Vadavaa earned a name and reputation as a skilled assassin. One cloud filled night, Vadavaa killed and murdered a merchant and his entire family. It just happened the merchant had been hosting a learned scholar from a temple of Asura, who Vadavaa most happily killed. After searching through the scholar's bags, Vadavaa came upon an ancient scroll, which spoke of a destroyed temple of the cult of Katar. Since that day, Vadavaa has dedicated her life to the finding of the temple and the raising of it to Katar's glory.

Vadavaa has been slowly been gaining a reputation among the dark underworld of Vendhya, with many assassins and professional murderers believing her to be an incarnation of Katar herself. Vadavaa eventually discovered the Black Altar of Katar, buried among the ruins of the temple. After discovering the lost temple of Shirma, Vadavaa has been slowly gathering her faithful to her. Once it was restored, Vadavaa began to send out the call to all the faithful of Katar, that they come at once and pay homage to the return of their goddess. Since that time, thieves, murderers and assassins have been migrating west, to the village of Kepthhamun, a Vendhyan which lies just across the border from Uttara Kuru and the Misted Wood of Al'Merraz. However, all are disguised and have done everything possible to keep their presence a secret. Vadavaa only had one obstacle in her way – a sorcerer named Yurra resided within his tower a mere six miles from the location of the ancient temple. Not knowing whether the sorcerer would reveal her plans to the authorities, Vadavaa put together a team of assassins to strike at his tower and murder him in his sleep. Yurra, a powerful and skilled sorcerer and not some mere apprentice, was warned by his spells of warding he had laid about his tower. Yurra was able to chase off the assassins and then sent a message to Vendhya to warn of the danger.

Having failed to kill Yurra, Vadavaa was left with no choice but to act immediately. Vadavaa ordered several of her faithful to sneak into the village of Kepthhamun and capture the unsuspecting townsfolk for sacrifice. The adventure starts with the group arriving in Kepthhamun in the aftermath of the abductions.

THE VILLAGE OF KEPTHAMUN

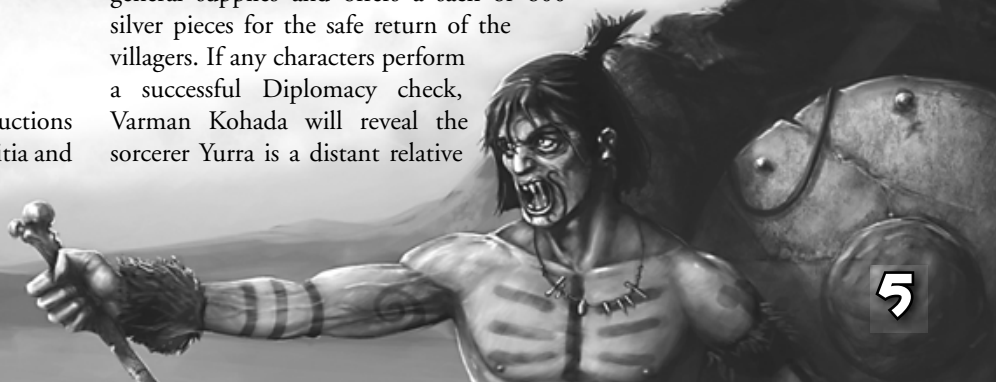
The characters arrive the morning after the mass abductions with the village is in complete chaos and armed militia and



citizens are roaming the streets in mobs. The characters have to make a Diplomacy or Bluff check (DC 15) to convince the angry villagers they had nothing to do with the abductions. The Games Master might consider giving the player characters a royal writ or order showing they have been sent by the royal government on an unrelated mission. After convincing the villagers they had nothing to do with the abductions, they will be approached by the Varman. An elected official speaker for the village, Varman Kohada will approach the group and ask for their help. He has already sent a runner north to the Fortress of Dahatma, seeking aid from the royal troops stationed there.

Unbeknownst to Varman Kohada and the characters, Dergith Vrul has sent Prince Sullima, cousin to Bhunda Chan, and 500 Royal troops to reinforce the fortress and to aid in the eradication of the Katari assassins. It will take one and a half days for Prince Sullima's army to reach Kepthhamun. Varman Kohada believes any royal help will not arrive for several days and fears for the life of his daughter, as well as those of the other 23 missing villagers.

The village of Kepthhamun is not wealthy, but the Varman is willing to provide each of the characters with food and general supplies and offers a sack of 600 silver pieces for the safe return of the villagers. If any characters perform a successful Diplomacy check, Varman Kohada will reveal the sorcerer Yurra is a distant relative





of his and that if the characters safely return with the villagers, he would speak to Yurra on the characters behalf. If the characters agree, then Varman Kohada immediately supplies them with any basic supplies they need and can give the group a list of the names of the missing villagers.

After the group re-supplies and leaves the village, they will immediately be followed by one of Vadavaa's spies. The assassin, Ranjit, and his six companions will be lying in ambush just two miles outside the village (Ranjit, 4th level Thief- Katari Assassin, (4) Vendhyan 3rd level Thieves- Katari Assassins, (2) Vendhyan 2nd level Thieves- Katari Assassins). Ranjit also has two Panthers (see *Conan The Roleplaying Game* page 371) who are trained to attack whomever Ranjit wishes. Ranjit and his assassins will not surrender and fight to the death. Even if the characters manage to capture an assassin alive, they will get no information, even under torture. If one of the characters is a Scholar and is able to use magic to charm an assassin, the only information they will be able to obtain will be the route leading across the border into Uttara Kuru. The only items of value the characters will find on the Katari are 78 silver pieces, 2 gold necklaces (symbols of Katari), one Kukri dagger of Akbitanan quality.

BORDER PATROL

After crossing the border of Uttara Kuru, the group runs into an Uttaran border patrol, consisting of ten soldiers mounted on horseback. It will immediately become apparent, however, that something is wrong with the soldiers and characters should be allowed a Spot check (DC 15). If successful characters will notice that the patrols' clothing is unkempt and dishevelled. They might also notice that the patrol does not handle their mounts well and/or there are bloodspots on some of their uniforms. If by the second round after making contact the group does not take action, the patrol will attack.

The 'patrol' is actually dead, killed by Katari assassins who have taken their uniforms and mounts. When combat starts, most of the assassins will jump off their mounts and use their favoured weapons. (Badari 4th level Thief- Katari Assassin, (5) Vendhyan 3rd level Thieves- Katari Assassins, (2) Vendhyan 2nd level Thieves- Katari Assassins, (2) Vendhyan 1st level Thieves- Katari Assassins). If a thorough search of the assassins and their gear is performed (Search check, DC 20) the group finds the

following items: 55 silver pieces, 9 gold pieces, 13 semi-precious stones, a Khitian Amulet the gives the wearer the ability *Deft Hands* as per the feat and vial of luminous liquid that sheds light in a 5-foot radius, although only at night and with a pale green glow. As in the previous encounter, these Katari fight to the death.

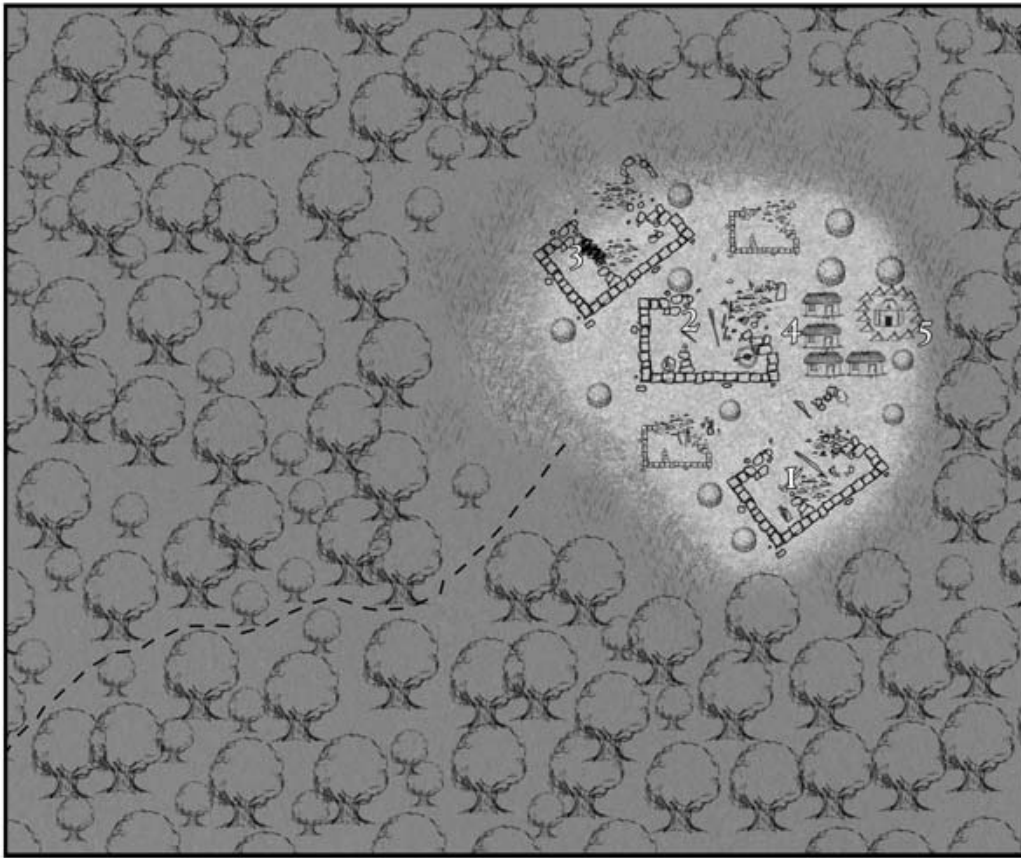
GLADE OF GUSHRUL

After travelling into the Misted Wood of Al'Merraz for two hours the group comes upon a small glade. There is a pomegranate fruit tree by a small spring, situated in a rocky outcrop. Whether the group decides to rest or not, almost immediately after entering the glade they will come under attack by the spring's guardian. The guardian is a 'Grey Devil' (see *Secrets of Skelos*, page 106, hit points 55) and has been guardian of this spring for over 300 years. The Devil, 'Gushrul', is typical of his race, the only exception being his fur has taken on a darker tone instead of the normal grey. Gushrul was a servant to an ancient sorcerer that passed this way over three centuries ago and was given the duty to guard over this spring until he returned. The sorcerer never returned and Gushrul has been bound to this glade ever since.

The spring has a slight regenerative quality and anyone drinking from it is restored 10 hit points per day, however Gushrul gains no benefit from its healing power. No matter if the individual drinks a handful or a gallon; the result will never be more than 10 hit points of curative healing. Even if the group has a way of communicating with Gushrul, he will not ally himself with them, even if his freedom is promised. At the first opportunity he will attack the group and try to kill as many of them as possible.

When the characters defeat Gushrul they will find several torn and dismembered bodies scattered about. Vadavaa had come with a group of her assassins and had tried to bind Gushrul with a *Control Monstrous Humanoid* scroll in the hopes of using him in Katari's service, but the spell failed and Vadavaa barely escaped with her life. If a character makes a Search check (DC 15), they will find some assorted treasure, left over from Gushrul's past victims, lying underwater in the spring (23 gold pieces, 88 silver pieces, 4 pieces of gold jewellery set with semi-precious stones, 2 silver amulets with royal Vendhyan symbols, 23 loose precious stones). A Scholar character making a Knowledge (arcane) check (DC 10) can determine several valuable spell components can be taken from Gushrul's carcass.





THE BLACK ALTAR

The characters should arrive at the ruins of Shirma sometime at night. If the group tries to sneak into the ruins during the day, they will definitely be spotted and the Katari will attempt to overwhelm and capture them. If the group decides to scout the ruins, they can get a general layout of the area.

- 1 This part of the ancient temple houses Vadavaa's personal sleeping quarters as well as the Altar of Katar. Several bookcases line the walls and have many modern and ancient volumes. There is also a spiral staircase, made of well-worn stone, descending into the ancient catacombs beneath the ruins. This stairwell is blocked by debris and even Vadavaa has no idea what lies beneath.
- 2 This part of the ruins contains a serviceable well and gathering place for the faithful of Katar. A large, obsidian statue rests in the corner of this building and depicts Katar in all her evil glory. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals a hidden chamber beneath the statue containing miscellaneous gems valued at 2,000 silver pieces. Any character that manages to destroy the statue should receive a 250 experience point bonus.
- 3 This part of the ruins use to be used to test Katar's faithful through tests of balance and perception. Part of the area is covered in deep crevasses, pitfalls and rotting bails of hay. This is where the Katari dispose of unwanted bodies and their horses are stabled nearby.
- 4 These ramshackle huts house the faithful that have answered Vadavaa's call. Each building can house 20 individuals and all their gear. Currently 49 Katari assassins, of various levels, dwell within the huts.
- 5 The stink coming from this wooden building is almost unbearable. This building is the prisoners' barracks and houses over 30 individuals in its cramped interior. The building is surrounded by a wooden stockade which is trapped with bells and other noise making devices to alert the Katari of any attempted escape. Characters that try to get past the wooden stockade must make a Disable Device check (DC20) not to make any noise. The prisoners' barracks is watched by no more than two guards at any time, but most of the time only one assassins is ever present to watch over the 'sacrifices'. Most of the prisoners



are at half strength and malnourished. Even if they were given weapons, most could not fight even if they wanted to.

The group has several choices available to them, but they should be aware that trying to take on the whole temple is suicidal. Characters should come up with various plans to free the prisoners and to stop Vadavaa, but two ideas should be foremost in their minds.

First would be to sneak into camp and free the prisoners quietly and try to move the prisoners southeast toward Yurra's tower. A second option would be to sneak into camp and try to make it back across the border to the village of Kepththamun. If the group decides to go with the first plan and they reach Yurra's tower, he will be willing to help the adventures, but would ask for a 'favour' in return. If the group decides to try the other option, and they make it to the border, they will find Prince Sullima and his army waiting to ambush any Katari pursuers. If the group decides any other plan, the Games Master will have to improvise. Whatever choice the group makes, if they do not kill Vadavaa in six days time, she will have sacrificed a number of victims (her own assassins if needed) to the Altar of Katar and be granted the ability *Vampire Transformation* as per *Secrets of Skelos* page 43. With her new found powers, Vadavaa will begin a reign of terror and destruction about the region and will begin plans to strike back at the adventures that dared to interfere with her plans.

NON PLAYER CHARACTERS

VADAVAA SHARMAN, KATARI ASSASSIN

Medium Humanoid (7th level Thief/4th level Scholar)

Hit Dice: 7d8+3d6+30 (73 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+4 Dex, +6 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40ft.

DV (Dodge): 20 (+4 Dex, +5 Dodge, +1 Light Footed)

DV (Parry vs. Melee): 17 (+3 Str, +4 Parry)

DR: —

Attack: Kukri Dagger +12 melee finesse (1d8+3/19-20/x2, AP 4) or Scimitar melee +11/+6 (1d8+3/18-20/x2, AP5)

Full Attack: Kukri Dagger +12/+7 melee finesse (1d8+3/19-20/x2, AP 4) or Scimitar melee +11/+6 (1d8+3/18-20/x2, AP5)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack style (Kukri/Scimitar) +5d8 damage, +1 hit; +5d6 with any other weapon she Sneak Attacks with.

Special Qualities: +1 racial Will saves bonus negated by Hypnotism, Trapfinding, Eyes of the Cat, Trap Sense +2, Light Footed, Sorcerous Protection +2, Knowledge is Power +8

Space/Reach: 5ft. (1)/5ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +10*

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills: Balance+16, Bluff+17, Climb+13, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +12, Hide +14, Intimidate +11 Jump +15, Knowledge (Arcana) +20, Knowledge (Nobility) +10, Knowledge (History) +9, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Sense Motive +19, Spot +13, Tumble +16

Feats: Improved Initiative, Fleet Footed, Dodge, Knowledgeable

Corruption: 2

Possessions: +1 Kukri Dagger, Bauble of Bel (Grants *Poison Use* Feat when worn), Black Silk Robes, Mask of Katar (Grants wearer *Blind Fight* Feat when worn), sack of 4 Black Lotus Leaves, coin pouch (1,205 silver)



Spells: Curses: *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Gelid Bones*, Hypnotism: *Entrance*, *Torment*, Necromancy: *Raise Corpse*, *Death Touch*, Oriental Magic: *Calm of the Adept*, *Darting Serpent*, Summoning: *Demonic Pact*

Description: Vendhyan female, 35 years old, shoulder length black hair, dark skinned, 5'9 height, 160 lbs., tattoo of Katar on forehead, brown eyes.

RANJIT, BAḌARI: KATARI ASSASSINS

Medium Humanoid (4th level Vendhyan Thief)

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +12 (+4 Dex, +2 Dodge, +4 Imp Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defence: (Dodge): 17 (+4 Dex, +2 Dodge, +1 Light Footed)

Defence: (Parry vs. Melee): 15 (+3 Str, +2 Parry)

DR: 4

Attack: Kukri +7 melee finesse (1d8+3/ 19-20/x2, AP 4); or Scimitar +6 melee finesse (1d8+3/ 18-20/x2, AP 5)

Full Attack: Kukri +7 melee finesse (1d8+3/ 19-20/x2, AP 4); or Scimitar +6 melee finesse (1d8+3/ 18-20/x2, AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/ 5ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack style (Kukri/Scimitar) +3d8 damage, +1 hit; +3d6

Special Qualities: +1 racial Will saves bonus negated by Hypnotism, Trapfinding, Eyes of the Cat, Trap Sense +1, Light Footed.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +3*

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +12, Bluff +1, Climb +9, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +10, Hide +13, Jump +11, Knowledge (Nobility) +6 Knowledge (History) +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +5, Spot +7, Tumble +12

Feats: Improved Initiative, Stealthy

Possessions: Black Silk Assassins garb, Kukri Dagger (Akbitanan Quality), +1 Scimitar, Khitain throwing stars (8), Vial of Cobra Venom (1), Wire Garrotte, coin pouch (350 silver), Bronze symbol of Katar.

Description: Kosalan male, 25 years old, shaved head, dark skinned, 5'11 height, 176 lbs., tattoo of Katar on shaved head, green eyes.

KATARI ASSASSIN

Medium Humanoid (1st level Vendhyan Thief)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defence: (Dodge): 13 (+3 Dex)

Defence: (Parry vs. Melee): 11 (+1 Str)

DR: 4

Attack: Kukri Dagger +3 melee finesse (1d8+1/ 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Kukri Dagger +3 melee finesse (1d8+1/ 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5ft. (1)/ 5ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack style (Kukri) +1d8 damage, +1 hit; +1d6 with any other weapon Katari Assassin Sneak Attacks with.

Special Qualities: +1 racial Will saves, negated by Hypnotism, Trapfinding

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1*

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +0, Climb +4, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +8 Jump +4 Knowledge (Nobility) +6, Knowledge (History) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Tumble +6

Feats: Stealthy

Possessions: Kukri Dagger, Assassins black clothing, grappling hook and rope, coin pouch, leather weapons harness




CONAN[®]

CONAN AND THE THING THAT LURKS

By Vincent Darlage &
Eric K Rodriguez

INTRODUCTION

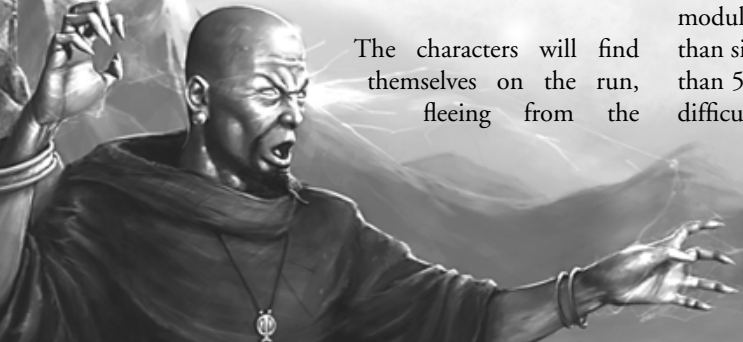


DEEP IN THE bowels of Shadizar some *Thing of Old Times* has lurked for aeons uncounted.

A lascivious husband sacrifices his fat, grumpy wife to this *Thing That Lurks* in exchange for the services of a shapely demones but the gorgeous succubus refuses to remain loyal to the man and is sucking the souls out of as many people as she can, turning his home into a dark bordello he has no desire to be a part of. This bordello, in turn, supplies a certain tavern with fresh meat served to a cult devoted to *The Thing That Lurks*.

In the meantime, King Tiridates, possibly through his alcohol abuse, has not produced an heir yet. In a bid for power, one of his favourite concubines manages to sneak out of the palace and looks to begin an affair, possibly with one or more of the Player Characters without revealing who she is. Her goal is to get pregnant and present her king with an heir.

Throughout this adventure characters will encounter several corrupt figures that lurk in the background of everyday Shadizar life. Many dark and dangerous creatures may also be encountered testing the limits of the characters sanity and their skills in combat.



The characters will find themselves on the run, fleeing from the

cultists that serve *The Thing That Lurks* and from the King's troops. As they escape from each group they slowly come closer to meeting those behind the evil and have an opportunity to stymie their plans.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Conan and the Thing That Lurks is a *Conan Roleplaying Game* adventure set within the sprawling dark alleyways of Shadizar. This adventure gives Player Characters the opportunity to test their mettle against the some of the darkest and most corrupt people to ever walk the streets of the city.

Conan and the Thing That Lurks combines situations and encounters requiring a mix of skills to survive and overcome. Players will find that a party of adventurers from a wide variety of character classes of particular use.

Games Masters should read, and become familiar with the entire adventure before attempting to run it to fully understand how each encounter fits with those which surround it.

This adventure is designed for four to six Player Characters of between 5th and 6th character level. Should Games Masters have fewer players they should use their own discretion and scale down some of the encounters in this module. Conversely, should Games Masters have more than six players, or should the Player Characters be higher than 5th level, then he should be prepared to increase the difficulty of the challenges presented in this adventure.

A Games Master will need a copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, *Shadizar – City of Wickedness*, *The Secrets of Skelos* and a few players to make the most use of this adventure. Players only need access to *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, a Games Master and some fellow players.

*They say foul things of Old Times still lurk
In dark forgotten corners of the world.
And Gates still gape to loose, on certain nights.
Shapes pent in Hell.*

Robert E. Howard. The 'Black Stone

THE CAPTAIN'S QUEST

The darkness of night has settled across Shadizar like a shroud. The characters are in the Desert, the *maul* of Shadizar the Wicked. The Desert is characterised by damp sewage, reeking filth and endless dins where the poor and the destitute live out despairing lives on the crooked streets, often living off the rats of the open sewers and street alleys. Death and disease stride unhindered in these warrens of rotting humanity. Pickpockets, cutpurses and kidnapers swarm in the open markets and bazaars, preying on their chosen marks and victims. Although other quarters of the city are patrolled by city guards, the Desert is not. The streets are little more than sewers and the buildings are ramshackle affairs barely standing. The air is close and uncomfortable, reeking of putrescence and humanity with brown fumes from cooking fires and numerous chimneys hanging in the air, a great stink blanketing the city but centred somehow on the Desert. The noise of the crowds and the ringing of bells are omnipresent. The putrid masses of swarming debauchers can be heard day and night, rising and falling in unpredictable cadences. The jovial cries of children mixed with the screams of ecstatic adults rise, competing with the noisy ring of craftsmen's hammers and temples' bells.

If characters insist on walking about in full armour, the Watch will notice and will assign a few guards to follow the character(s) around. Characters should make a Spot skill check (DC 15) to notice the Watchman following them. A sample Zamorian Watchman is provided in the *Shadizar, City of Wickedness Book 1: Games Master's Guide* if this is necessary. This may further complicate this adventure.

The purple-domed and many-spired city of Shadizar was known as 'the Wicked,' but the debauches of its high-chinned nobles, of the cruel-eyed wives and pearl-draped daughters, paled beside the everyday life of that part of the city known

as the Desert. In those narrow, twisting streets and garbage-strewn alleys, haven of the thief, kidnapper, murderer and worse, the price of a body was silver, the price of life copper, the price of a soul not worth speaking of.

-Robert Jordan, *Conan the Invincible*

THE RAID

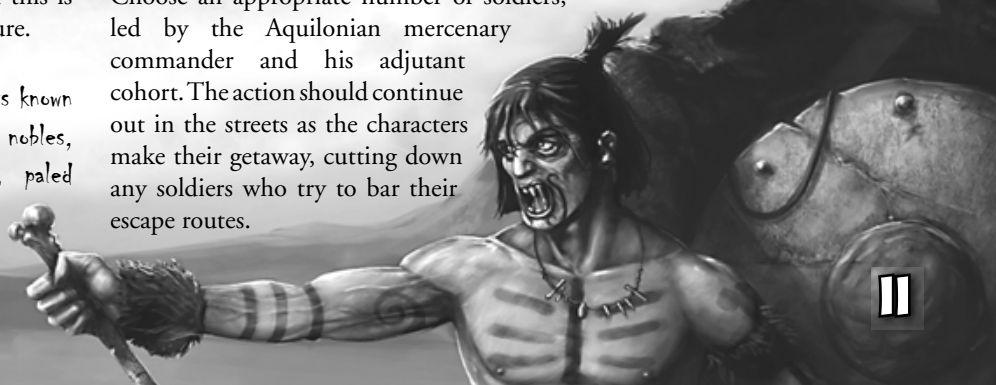
You are in good cheer, spending the silvers earned on your last adventure when suddenly the front doors in the place are flung open. You can see the torchlight glint off the armour of many Zamorian soldiers in the street outside, while two especially large, brutish fellows push their way into the building. An officer shouts orders to his men 'Arrest them all, they have an appointment in the king's dungeons for their treachery!'

The officer is a tall man, his accent and plate armour indicating he is an Aquilonian mercenary in the service of the king. In an instant the room is in chaos as the soldiers bully their way into it, striking down any who get in their way...

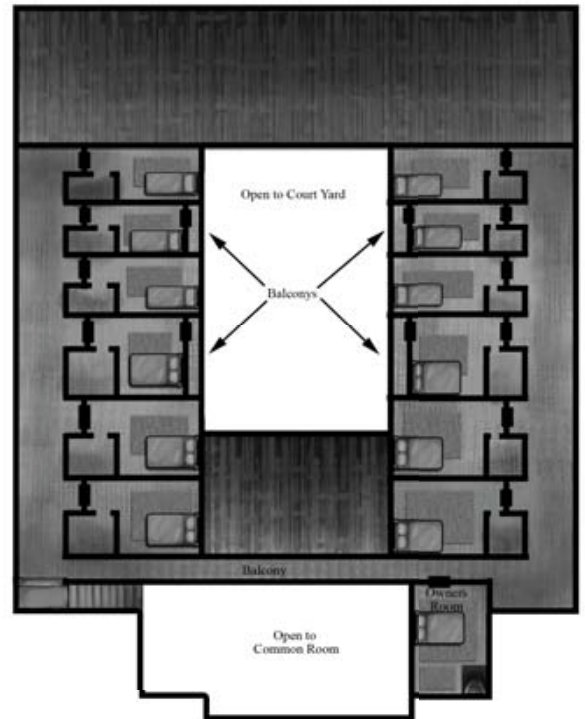
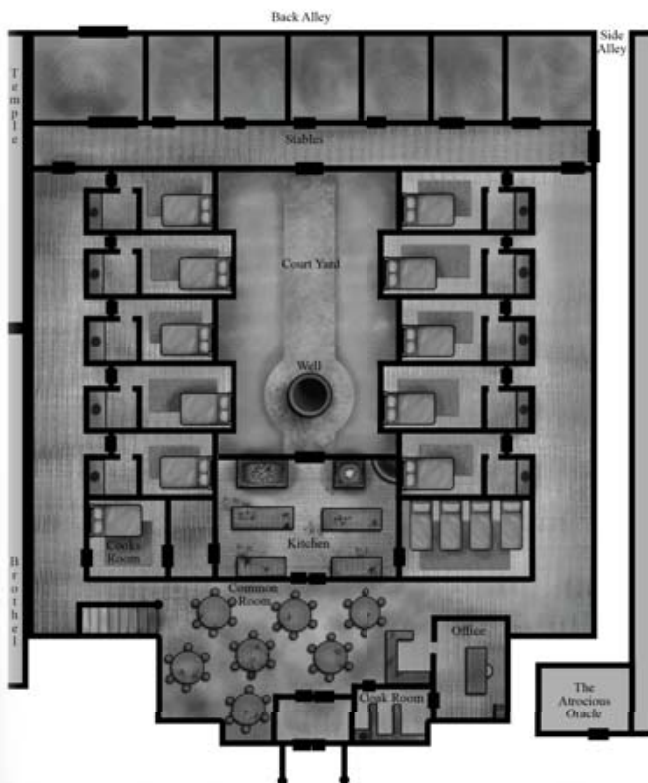
Zamorian soldiers are cleaning out the brothel, so the characters are faced with an immediate choice – flee, surrender or fight. Characters fleeing will be pursued while characters who surrender will be jailed as conspirators against the king. Characters who fight should realise there are many soldiers outside and they will only be delaying the inevitable and the officers shouts of 'Kill them, they must be the ringleaders' should make them realise staying to fight will doom them.

One of the prostitutes trying to flee whispers, 'We are their cattle', close enough to at least one of the characters for him to overhear. Other characters should make a Listen skill check (DC 12) to hear the prostitute. She hands the characters a stone tablet. This appears to be a small, oddly shaped obsidian pebble, polished like glass but one surface seems to have fractured. The web of cracks seems to form a complex glyph and the stone is cold to the touch, and will always remain cold – even if placed into a fire. The prostitute is then captured, kicking and screaming.

Choose an appropriate number of soldiers, led by the Aquilonian mercenary commander and his adjutant cohort. The action should continue out in the streets as the characters make their getaway, cutting down any soldiers who try to bar their escape routes.



THE THING



Medium Humanoid Zamorian soldier 3

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (20 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft. (brigandine coat);

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 level, +3 Dex)

Parry Defence: 13 (+2 level, +1 Str) (+1 shield if wielding short sword)

DR: 7 (+6 brigandine coat, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4

Attack: Bill +4 melee *or* Short Sword +6 finesse melee

Full Attack: Bill +4 melee *or* Short Sword +6 finesse melee

Damage: Bill (2d8+1/x3, AP 7) *or* Short Sword (1d8+1/19-20/x2, AP 2)

Special Attacks: Formation Combat (*heavy infantry*);

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10;

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently*)

and Spot) Bluff +2, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +5 (+7 if the check relates to theft, assassination and the locations or powers of legendary or magical objects), Intimidate +8, Open Lock +6, Search +9, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +6

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Disarm, Investigator, Persuasive

Reputation: 3 (Cruel)

Allegiances: The king of Zamora, the Zamorian army;

Possessions: bill (or spear), brigandine, buckler, steel helmet, short sword, 5-10 silver pieces.

The regular army is usually commanded by foreign mercenaries, as the king trusts them more than Zamorian military leaders, who might be able to gather the power to usurp him. These commanders usually wear a polished bronze cuirass with a helmet sporting a towering horsehair crest. To earn a promotion to command of Zamora's armed forces, the mercenary must prove adept at finding criminals, dissidents and rebels. Skills such as Intimidate, Search, Gather Information and Sense Motive are highly valued in mercenary commanders and feats enhancing those skills are likely to be taken by ambitious mercenaries with an eye for command. Skill at utilising small forces is also necessary, as Zamora does not have a large standing army. However, Captain Ishachus has been careful to select only soldiers loyal to the Cult of Anamelech Pehor for this mission. When one of these soldiers is struck down have him say, 'We are but their cattle.'

CAPTAIN ISHACHUS

Medium Humanoid Mercenary Commander
(Aquilonian soldier 5/ noble 5)

Hit Dice: 5d8+5d10+20 (71 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft. (plate armour)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+4 level)

Dodge Defence (Ranged): 18 (+4 level, +4 shield)

Parry Defence: 23 (+6 level, +2 Str, +4 shield, +1 parry)

DR: 11/12 (+10 plate armour, +1/+2 visored helm)

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+10

Attack: Broadsword +12 melee

Full Attack: Broadsword +12/+7 melee

Damage: Broadsword (1d10+4/17-20/x2, AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/ 5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: +1 bonus to attack rolls with broadsword, hunting bow, heavy lance and war spear, Formation Combat (*heavy cavalry*)

Special Qualities: Hyborian Traits, Adaptability (*Intimidate, Ride*), Background Skills (*Intimidate, Knowledge (nobility), Ride, Search*), Lead By Example +2, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally*), Special Regional Feature +1, Title, Wealth;

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 19

Skills: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Ride +17, Search +9, Sense Motive +6, Spot +7

Feats: Improved Critical (broadsword), Leadership, Mounted Combat, Parry, Persuasive, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Steely Gaze, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Specialisation (broadsword)

Corruption: 4

Reputation: 16 (Wicked)

Leadership: 14 (7th cohort; 50 1st, 2 2nd, 1 3rd)

Allegiances: Feudal lord, tenants, unit

Possessions: Broadsword (Akbitanan quality), Zamorian Mercenary Commander armour, 2 letters and 110 silver pieces.

Captain Ishachus is an Aquilonian serving as a mercenary captain in Zamora. He is seeking his sister, Nika, who is reputed to be living as a prostitute in Shadizar. In addition, he is looking for *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster*

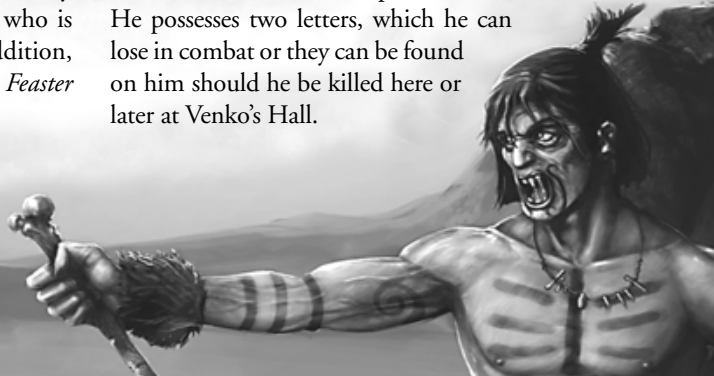


From the Stars, a book the king's favourite advisor, Lady Klia, seeks. In order to search the brothels, he has been convincing the king of Zamora various brothel owners are traitors, holding secret conclaves of rebels plotting to overthrow the current regime. The paranoid king then authorises a raid and as the prostitutes are arrested, he looks each over, trying to find his lost sister.

He dresses in full plate armour of Aquilonian construction and style. Over the armour, Ishachus wears a tabard bearing the royal Zamorian seal. A red cape with ermine trim hangs from the shoulder plates of his armour. At his hip, in a worn leather scabbard, is a heavy Poitanian broadsword. His moustache is of typical Aquilonian fashion.

He often frequents a horrible tavern called Venko's Hall where, for a special fee, cannibals can dine on their favourite flesh in peace. He is in love with a girl, Melcia, from the king's seraglio but keeps that information to himself. In addition to his sister and the tome, he seeks a secret brothel named *Sepharvaun*. If possible, Captain Ishachus (and perhaps his cohort, Wido) should escape the melee alive.

He possesses two letters, which he can lose in combat or they can be found on him should he be killed here or later at Venko's Hall.





Captain Ishachus.

I understand you are cleaning out some of the brothels in the Desert as I suggested. Hopefully you will find your sister as you hope. The prostitutes and the matrons are hiding a specialised brothel named Sepharvaun. Seek there for your sister. During your search, as a personal favour to me, I would like you to keep an eye out for a book, a book called The 'Book of Zandri's Omens: The Feaster from the Stars. Bring me this book, which I believe to be among the brothels of the Desert, and you may find yourself serving in a much more prestigious post and possessing much more than a mere hovel in the soldier's fort.

Lady Klia.

Lord High Inquisitor of Zamora

Captain Ishachus,

You are ordered to act upon your suggestion. The King is aware of how many of his nobles have disappeared lately in the Desert and he shares your belief that the secret brothel, Sepharvaun, is the traitorous culprit. He agrees that there does appear to be a conspiracy afoot. You are permitted to use Zamorian troops in your search instead of the Watch. If you find the secret brothel, you are authorised to use the King's Own for the final assaults.

Aharesus, Chief King's Counsellor

ADJUTANT WIDO

Medium Humanoid, Captain Ishachus's Cohort
(Aquilonian soldier 3/ scholar 4)

Hit Dice: 3d10+4d6-7 (24 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Ref, +2 Dex)

Speed: 25 ft. (5 squares) (mail hauberk and scale corselet)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 level, +2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 13 (+3 level)

DR: 10/11 (+9 mail hauberk and scale hauberk, +1/+2 visored helm)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+6

Attack: Bossonian longbow +8 ranged *or* Arming Sword +6 melee

Full Attack: Bossonian Longbow +8/+2 ranged *or* Arming Sword +6/+1 melee

Damage: Bossonian Longbow (1d12/x3, AP 5) *or* Arming Sword (1d10/19-20/x2, AP 2);

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/ 5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Formation Combat (*skirmisher*);

Special Qualities: Hyborian Traits, Adaptability (*Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (nobility)*), Background Skills (*Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (nobility)*), Knowledge is Power, +4, Scholar, Skill Points

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +9

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 15;

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +12, Jump +4, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +15, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Ride +6, Search +12, Sense Motive +5

Feats: Combat Expertise, Diligent, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bossonian longbow), Far Shot, Investigator, Knowledgeable, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Knowledge (architecture and engineering))

Corruption: 3

Reputation: 10 (Proxy)

Allegiances: Captain Ishachus, Nika, unit;

Possessions: Arming sword, Bossonian longbow and 45 silver pieces.



Adjutant Wido is Captain Ishachus' cohort. An Aquilonian, he is fascinated by Zamorian culture. He has adventured for years with Ishachus, including two Nemedian campaigns and a long stint in a Corinthian mercenary unit. Wido is tall, blonde and has a beard and moustache, his forehead is wide, framing a small mouth and a weak chin. He has a huge Adam's apple and a rather considerable gut from too much ale and bread.

He knows his stuff, however, and is quite intelligent and capable. Valuing success, he is determined to see Captain Ishachus find his lost sister – Wido has a bit of a crush on the girl. He is friendly but abrupt, having no tolerance for stupidity and a lot of respect for intelligence. Sorcery terrifies him, so while a scholar, he is non-sorcerous.

SEWER ENCOUNTER (OPTIONAL)

As the characters flee into the night, one option may be to seek escape through the extensive sewer system snaking along under the streets of Shadizar the Wicked. Characters will find that the sewer system is a complicated maze of twisting tunnels and water sluices which seem to continue on forever. Certain areas of the sewers are not even carved out by human hands and seem to have been pre-existing caverns, before any Zamorians ever set foot here.

Deep beneath one section of tunnels lives a small tribe of Vargs. These dwarfish and cannibalistic folk are normally found in swamps and large fens. However this tribe has long existed beneath Shadizar, sustaining themselves on the abundance of plant and algae and on the steady stream of bodies making their way down into Shadizar's sewers. These creatures speak no languages the characters can understand and will attack anyone on sight, the only thing they fear is bright light and any use of spells or spell-like devices. These Varg have been collecting bodies and refuse over many years and games masters may wish to put unique or special items within their hoard.

VARG (36)

Small Humanoid (1st level Varg Barbarian)

HD: 1d10+1 (11 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 ft.

Defence: 12

DR: -

BAB/Grp: +1/-3

Attack: Primitive war spear +3 melee

Full Attack: Primitive war spear +3 melee

Dmg: 1d10+1 primitive war spear

Special Attacks: versatility

Special Qualities: Varg traits, illiterate, fearless

SV: Fort +3, Ref +3,

Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Climb +6, Hide +11, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Survival +3; Stealthy, Track

INTO THE STREETS

Whether the characters flee into the night during the raid or after, the end result is the same. Captain Ishachus has stationed soldiers outside the inn to make sure people (especially prostitutes) do not escape. Several soldiers will take off after the largest group of characters. Have enough soldiers pursue one or more of the characters to be a threat, but not enough to overwhelm them. Games Masters may wish characters to make an Endurance or Knowledge (local) skill check (DC 13) to avoid the Zamorian soldiers.

Describe the flight, emphasising the narrow streets and alleys, as well as the looming, rickety buildings. Corners and obstacles abound everywhere – stairways going nowhere and doors that open into bricked up walls. They are at risk of becoming lost in the *maul*. Soldiers come at them out of blind alleys or around corners. Finally, during their mad run, an elderly Zamorian in a wet alley motions to them, holding open a door. 'If you'll not be their cattle, come inside.' Inside, the characters find a ramshackle dwelling. The old man cackles to himself as soldiers rush past his door, not seeing it.

SEMIRAMAS

Medium Humanoid, High Priest (Zamorian scholar 10)

Hit Dice: 10d6 (35 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 base)

Parry Defence: 13 (+3 base)

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+7

Attack: Dagger +10 melee finesse

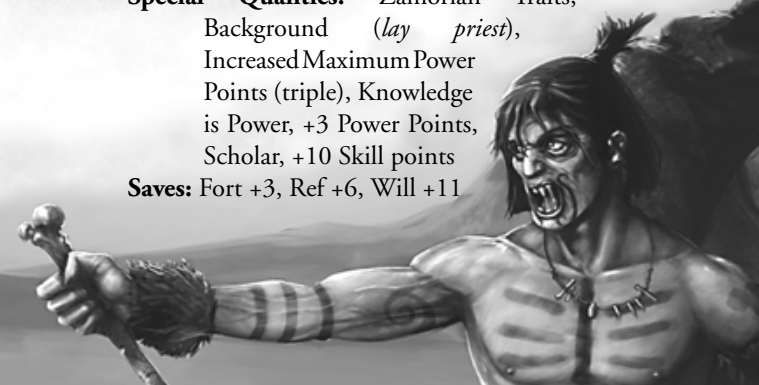
Full Attack: Dagger +10/+5 melee finesse

Damage: Dagger (1d4/19–20/x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*lay priest*), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, +3 Power Points, Scholar, +10 Skill points

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +11





Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 17
Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has Climb +1, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +4 and Spot +3) Appraise +7, Bluff +16, Concentration +1, Craft (herbalism) +8, Decipher Script +17, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (religion) +16, Knowledge (local) +19, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Open Locks +7, Perform (ritual) +14, Profession (priest) +15, Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +7
Feats: Priest, Iron Will, Knowledgeable, Leadership, Ritual Sacrifice
Reputation: 20 (Villain)
Leadership: 13/16 (6th level cohort; up to 70 1st level followers, 3 2nd level and 1 3rd level)
Allegiances: Temple, Followers, Maksym
Base Power Points: 9 (27 maximum)
Magical Attack: +8 (+5 level, +3 Cha)
Sorcery Styles: Hypnotism
Spells Known: *Domination, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mass hypnotic suggestion*
Corruption: 3
Insanity: Minor insanity (*phobia*)
Possessions: Dagger, 66 silver pieces, *Staff of the Eye*.

Semiramas' is a high priest of the Zhemri gods, although Zandru is his personal favourite and is an elderly man with an evil glint in his eye. Once part of a sect that had influence over the king but, because of the awakening of the *Thing*, he has fallen into disfavour. He wants to restore his position and bring about the sleep of the *Thing* once again (until such time as he can awaken *it* and control *it*). The only spell known to put it to sleep was recorded in *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars*, so this book must be recovered. He can tell the characters just about anything the Games Master wants about *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars* except for its current location (although he believes it is in Venko's Hall).

His cohort, Maksym, a 6th level priest, was arrested as an insurgent. However he was taken to Venko's Hall, a supposed tavern in the Desert and was never seen again by Semiramas. However, a young girl claims to have seen Maksym, who told her, 'We are their cattle' and he helped her escape. She also was told to find Semiramas and tell him *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars* is in the tavern. However, she died before she could tell him where Venko's Hall is located. Semiramas

cannot find anyone in the Desert who will tell him its location or even discuss it.

He claims he is in hiding now because of repeated attempts to take his life, due, he believes, to his search for this tavern and thinks Captain Ishachus is involved with this hidden tavern. He further tells the characters a certain stone with a darksome glyph on it is required to gain entrance to this tavern, but he has yet to catch more than a glimpse of this stone. He knows it is black and cold, but has no further information. He also tells the characters if any of their companions have been captured they will be taken to this tavern. In truth, possession of the stone allows one to find *Sepharvaun*, not the tavern, and missing companions will be taken there.

Semiramas will try to hypnotise any character, Will save (DC 14), possessing one of the glyph stones if he cannot otherwise persuade him to give the stone up, but only if he thinks he can get away with it without being harmed or slain by the character's friends. He has a horrible fear of being eaten, either by people or animals. He will shy away from Darfari characters or any sort of carnivorous or omnivorous animal, even small ones such as rats.

At some point during the characters' discussion with Semiramas, a band of cultists led by a rival priest will burst in. He has one of the stones with a glyph on it and is using it to track the Player Characters if they kept the stone the prostitute gave them. He will order his cultists to slay Semiramas first, then all with him, so he can search Semiramas' home for the book and the stone. If he manages to capture any of the Player Characters, he will have them taken to the Dark Bordello. Use enough cultists to send the characters on the run once again.

KHONSIRDAIS

Medium Humanoid, High Priest (Zamorian scholar 10)

Hit Dice: 10d6+10 (45 hp)
Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 base)
Parry Defence: 12 (-1 Str, +3 base)

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+7
Attack: Dagger +10 melee finesse *or* Glass Alchemical Globe +10 ranged
Full Attack: Dagger +10/+5 melee finesse *or* Glass Alchemical Globe +10 ranged



Damage: Dagger (1d4–1/19–20/x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Spells

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*pact*), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, +3 Power Point, Scholar;
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Bluff +5, Craft (alchemy) +17, Craft (herbalism) +17, Decipher Script +17, Disable Device +7, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Open Locks +7, Perform (ritual) +16, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +7

Feats: Negotiator, Ritual Sacrifice, Summoner, Tortured Sacrifice

Magical Attack: +8 (+5 level, +3 Cha)

Base Power Points: 10 (30 maximum)

Sorcery Styles Known: Counterspells, Curses, Hypnotism, Summonings

Spells Known: *Demonic pact, domination, enslave, entrance, greater ill-fortune, hypnotic suggestion, ill-fortune, lesser ill-fortune, ranged hypnotism, savage beast, summon demon, torment, warding*

Corruption: 6;

Insanities: Cannibalism, Hallucinations

Reputation: 13 (Villain)

Allegiances: Venko's Hall, Sharissa

Possessions: 3 Acheronian demon-fire globes (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*), dagger, 2 applications each of *Lotus Blacksmoke*, *Lotus Greensmoke*, 105 silver pieces and *Lotus Greysmoke* and a *Stone of Nahab*.

Khonsirdais is an insane Zamorian sorcerer. He is a cohort to the king's new 'advisor', Lady Kliia. Khonsirdais believes Semiramas stole *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars*. He is travelling with some of his recent Zamorian converts and is a co-founder of Venko's Hall. The sister of Captain Ishachus was once his slave but she now *enslaves* him. He carries a letter from Lady Kliia on his person in addition to his other possessions.

KHONSIRD AIS' CULTISTS

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 6)

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)

Initiative: +12 (+3 Dex, +5 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dearest 'Khonsirdais.

Captain Ishachus is cleaning out some of the brothels in the 'Desert as I had hoped. This should flush out Semiramas, whom, as you know, has stolen The 'Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster from the Stars. I need that book to make sure Sharissa does not use the Thing That Lurks to hold the city hostage in her own bid for power or to control the king or the dynasty. I have directed Captain Ishachus to look for Sepharvaun, but of course he will never find it - but if he does, I will destroy him. He must not find out my involvement in that affair, as well you know. Regardless, I must have that book so that I can put the Thing That Lurks back to rest if I need to. You need to familiarise yourself with the book as well. The more of us to read it at once, the more successful the spell will be.

Lady Kliia.

Lord High Inquisitor of Zamora

Dodge Defence: 17 (+3 Dex, +3 level, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+6;

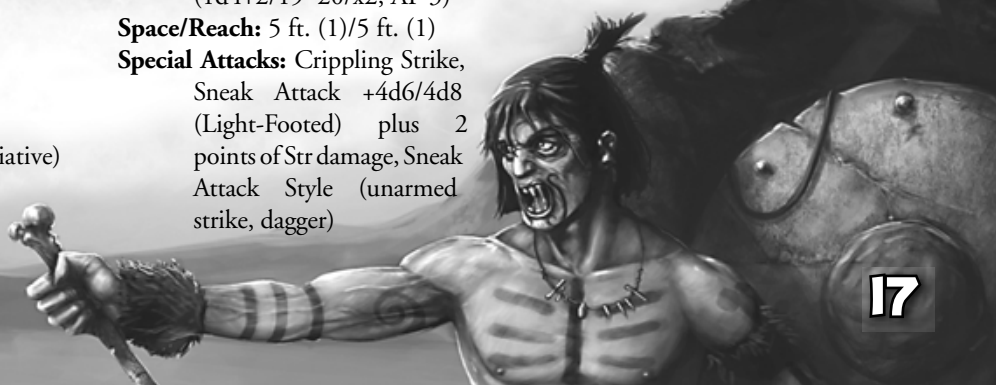
Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee finesse *or* Dagger +7 melee finesse

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee finesse *or* Dagger +7 melee finesse

Damage: Unarmed Strike (1d6+2/x2) *or* Dagger (1d4+2/19–20/x2, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +4d6/4d8 (Light-Footed) plus 2 points of Str damage, Sneak Attack Style (unarmed strike, dagger)





Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +2;

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 13

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Bluff +10, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +12, Gather Information +10, Hide +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Move Silently +8, Open Locks +7, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +8, Tumble +12

Feats: Brawl, Eyes of the Cat ^{bonus}, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Light-Footed ^{bonus}, Sneak Subdual

Reputation: 7 (Cruel)

Allegiances: Gang leader, fellow gang members, family

Possessions: Dagger, 10-20 silver pieces each.

A captured cultist can tell the Player Characters that the stone shows the path to *Sepharvaun*.

THE DARK THRESHOLD

It is still night time. If the characters wander out into the Desert with these stones, they will see aspects of the city differently. Games Masters may wish to allow characters a Spot skill check (DC 15). Shadows seem to be wrong and darksome things seem to lurk out of the corners of their eyes. This is an area of squalor, where houses and buildings have alluring foreign architecture blended with a strange Zhemri flavour, creating a tangle of styles. It is a riot of sound and filth where relics of prosperous times have now given way to the mould of poverty. Furtive hands extinguish candles and lamps, pulling down curtains when the characters pass by. The streets are strangely quiet save for snatches of ancient hymns sung from darkened rooms along the boulevards and for occasional grunts, squeals or screams echoing from decaying buildings looming over the cobblestones. Occasionally secretive groups of whispering people are seen, fleeing once the Player Characters are noticed. If any are stopped or questioned, their only response is 'We are their cattle.' After this, they flee or fight.

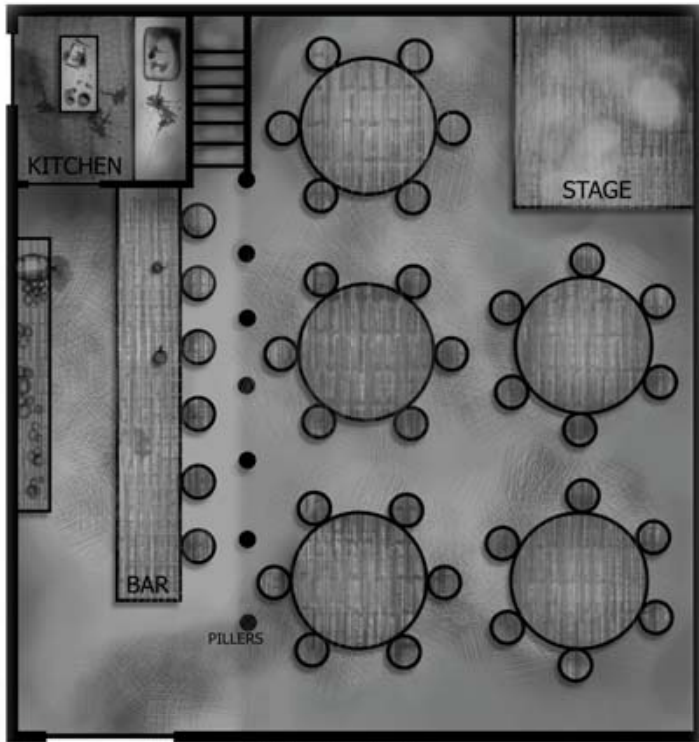
THE UNNAMED INN (OPTIONAL)

If the characters need to rest and they seek a hostel or inn, they can find one easy enough. This inn is not keyed to a specific spot. It is simply there if the characters look for an inn during this adventure. The inn looks inviting enough, but is strangely quiet. The common room is empty save for a single, nude, dark-haired prostitute and the innkeeper. The naked prostitute is slouching at one of the tables in the common area, one elbow resting on the table, her hand holding up her head. The other hand is absent-mindedly toying with her pubic hair. Her eyes are glazed over with drugs recently taken. She will not notice the Player Characters when they arrive, not even looking up. The Innkeeper, however, will take notice of the newcomers. When the Player Characters enter, the gaunt innkeeper welcomes them. He looks one of the Player Characters straight in the eye and says, 'You look as though you need rest. We have a bed with your name on it.' He hands the character the key to room 1. He tells the other characters they may take whatever room they would like as the inn is empty tonight. If pressed for food, he offers a beef stew. He will mention the recipe is an old one from Venko's Hall.

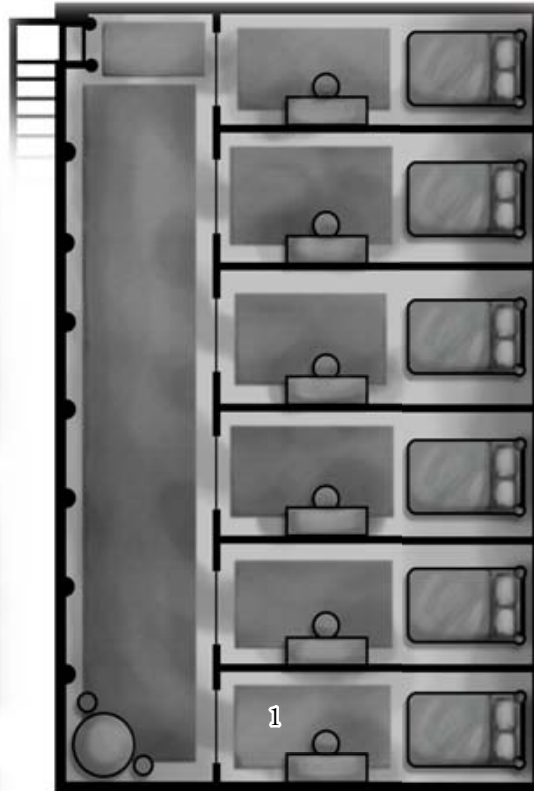
Up the stairs to the landing is room 1. The stairs continue to the other rooms on the second floor. In room 1 is a bed, engraved crudely, as though scratched with fingernails or claws, is the character's name. Downstairs, the innkeeper cackles. If questioned, he knows nothing, but if intimidated or otherwise compelled to answer to this enigma, he will say, 'We are all their cattle, but they know *your* name.'

If the characters spend the night in this inn, there are several possible occurrences depending on the players' strategies. If a Player Character remains asleep alone in room 1, then the innkeeper (Dinak) will get a message out to the cult (via a candle in a certain window or other surreptitious signal). The cult will respond by sending in an assassin or a group of assassins to kill the character. This night, the assassin known as Josyp will be summoned and he may or may not bring other members of his team (depending on the needs of the Games Master). Ingress to the room is achieved via a secret trap door in the room. Room 1 overhangs the street, and there is a trapdoor which can be reached from the street outside using a ladder or through acrobatics. The assassins make a move silent check against the character's listen. If possible they will silently kill the character, take his stone if he has one, and take his head as proof of the kill. If the other characters take individual rooms, they may receive the same treatment at the Game Master's option. The assassins will not attack a group of Player Characters staying in a single room, however.





GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR/BALCONY

If all the characters stay in a room together, then they hear the discordant sounds of things marching but nothing is ever seen. Laughter is heard without source and other strange occurrences may be witnessed. They will, however, be safe. Those with Stones of Nahab will have indistinct nightmares.

DINAK

Medium Humanoid, Innkeeper (Zamorian commoner 3)

Hit Dice: 3d4 (8 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 level)

Parry Defence: 10 (-1 Str, +1 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+0

Attack: Hatchet +1 finesse melee

Full Attack: Hatchet +1 finesse melee

Damage: Hatchet (1d6/x3, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12;

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to *Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently* and *Spot*) Disable Device +4, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +2, Open Locks +4, Profession (innkeeper) +7, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +2

Feats: Dabblers (curses), Skill Focus (Profession (innkeeper))

Reputation: 8 (Perverted)

Corruption: 3

Magical Attack Bonus: +1 (+1 Cha)

Power Points: 1 (2 base, -1 Wis)

Possessions: Hatchet, Stone of Nahab

Dinak is the owner of this inn. He is a lean, dark Zamorian with a gaunt look with unkempt hair and is shabbily dressed. He has webbed toes, but his boots hide this from casual observation, the sides of his fingers are scarred from the removal of similar webbing when he was a child. His green eyes are wide open most times and seem to protrude from the deep, sunken sockets. His mouth, when not in use, hangs open.





Odd delegations of swarthy, evil sorts tend to congregate at his hostel, speaking to Dinak in hushed whispers of forbidden matters, for he is known to those dabbling in the occult as a man who can procure bizarre requests which would make a normal man shudder. His inn is often the scene of weird orgies the likes of which might put a Stygian in fear of his soul. He often babbles about unlimited powers almost in his grasp. Dinak suspects he is the prostitute's (Zlochka's) father, although she is unaware of this. He was also the man who talked her mother into pressing her into prostitution in the first place.

Dinak is a decent innkeeper although those who know him do not trust him. His network of local thieves and occultists serves his favoured clientele in good stead. If the characters need something, he can probably procure it for them (use his Profession skill to make any checks in regards to pricing issues). He dabbles in the blackest of sorceries but has not had time to devote himself fully to the art but knows enough to be dangerous to those around him. Motivated by a desire to become a sorcerer he has been experimenting with spells and sacrifices.

Dinak is also always seeking to enlarge his network of acquaintances. He knows he prefers meat brought in from Venko's Hall, but is unaware of its nature, being an unwitting cannibal. He creates unease in most folk, yet despite this people are still drawn to him.

ZLOCHKA

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 6)

Hit Dice: 6d4+12 (27 hp)
Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 level)
Parry Defence: 12 (-1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+2
Attack: Unarmed Strike +6 finesse melee
Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +6 finesse melee
Damage: Unarmed Strike (1d4-1/x2, nonlethal)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: Venereal Disease

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 9, Dex

16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 14;

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Disable Device +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +1, Open Locks +7, Profession (prostitute) +12, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3, Sleight of Hand +7

Feats: Carouser, Endurance, Skill Focus (Profession (prostitute))^{bonus}

Corruption: 3

Reputation: 8 (Talented)

Allegiances: Dinak the Innkeeper, Kagulat the Lotus-bearer, Lady Klia the Sorcerer

Possessions: Stone of Nahab

Zlochka is a prostitute working for Kagulat the Lotus-bearer, her drug supplier. She works Dinak's Inn because he does not ask for a cut of her earnings. She has to perform sexual services for him once per day, but otherwise he stays out of her affairs. Zlochka was a cute little girl before she was thrust into a life of prostitution to pay for her mother's vices. Now, addicted to drugs and alcohol, she works for Kagulat to pay off her debts to him. She is also a low-ranking member of the Cult of Anamelech Pehor and is an unwitting cannibal. She also helps Lady Klia the Sorcerer gain converts to the cult through sex, making lonely people feel there is a place where they are welcome and wanted.

Although still quite young, she is no longer cute. Her long black hair is usually a barely contained tangle by the end of a given night; she only bothers any more to comb it in the mornings. Most mornings she puts on a bare minimum of clothing, but by early afternoon she is so busy she does not even bother with that, walking around the inn in the nude. Her nose is pert and her lips soft but her dark eyes betray her dying intelligence and willpower, both sapped by drugs. She is short and her skin is paler than most Zamorians. Her breasts are petite, as she is. She has several tattoos: a flower on one calf, an ancient Zhemri pattern on her lower back and a small tiger on her back near the left shoulder.

In addition to her skills as a prostitute, she is also skilled at burglary, being fairly competent at getting around most locks. She can also manipulate bondage devices and often has had to use her skills to escape customers who have attempted to keep her against her will by locking her up. Drugs and the cult are her motivation. Player Characters can usually entice her with drugs, the money to buy drugs or if they seem willing to join her cult. Right now she has taken her drug of choice and will not initiate any contact with the Player Characters, although if they initiate the contact, she is willing to do whatever they are willing to pay for. If the characters do not show interest in her, she shows no interest in them. She has already made today what she feels she needs to in order to survive; she is also



too tired to really care either way right now. If a character seems he wishes to join the cult she is willing to take him to *Sepharvaun*. However, she will only take characters one at a time. She will not take a group since people have more power in groups and are easier to seduce one at a time.

However, she does have some useful knowledge should the Player Characters care to pump her for it. She knows the Stone of Nahab (she keeps hers in a small cubbyhole in room 1) is needed to find *Sepharvaun*. She knows Lady Klia is a sorceress and is pulling the king's strings. She also knows the cult involved is promising those who help it black powers to vanquish their oppressors, supernatural victories to bolster morale and strange kingdoms to rule as kings.

JOSYP THE CULT ASSASSIN

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 10)

Hit Dice: 10d8+10 (55 hp)

Initiative: +18 (+5 Dex, +7 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 21 (+5 Dex, +5 level, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 16 (+1 Str, +5 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+8

Attack: Crossbow +12 ranged *or* Arming Sword +12 finesse melee *or* Dagger +12 finesse melee

Full Attack: Crossbow +12 ranged *or* Arming Sword +12 finesse melee *or* Dagger +12 finesse melee

Damage: Crossbow (2d6/x2, AP 4) *or* Arming Sword (1d10+1/19–20/x2, AP3) *or* Dagger (1d4+1/19–20/x2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Opportunist, Sneak Attack +6d6/+6d8 (Light-Footed) plus 2 points of Str damage, Sneak Attack Style (crossbow, arming sword, dagger)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +3;

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +14, Will +5

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 10

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Balance +8, Bluff +13, Climb +10, Disable Device +7, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +18, Hide +18, Intimidate +14, Jump +14, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +16, Move Silently +18, Open Locks +9, Perform (ritual) +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +12;

Feats: Alertness, Deep Cover*, Eyes of the Cat^{bonus}, Improved Initiative, Leave No Witnesses*, Light-Footed^{bonus}, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Poison Use



Reputation: 10 (Villain)

Corruption: 2

Insanities: Cannibal

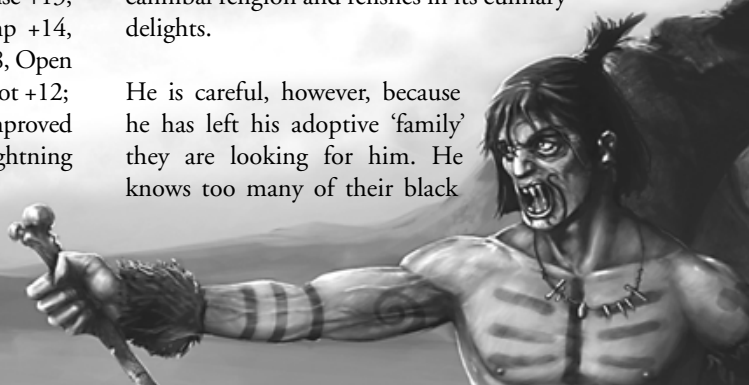
Allegiances: The *Sepharvaun* cult, Lady Klia

Possessions: Arming sword, dagger, Stone of Nahab

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

Josyp is the cult's lead assassin. An orphan, he trained under a local crime family, beginning his training as an assassin by working first with a crossbow. As he became more skilled, he was allowed by his dark masters to get closer and closer to the target, striking next with an arming sword and, finally, a dagger. Whenever possible he uses his Crippling Strike ability (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Seduced by Zlochka, a local prostitute proselytising the cult, Josyp soon proved his worth under Lady Klia's watchful eye. He still prefers to do his assassinations with a dagger but if attacked will defend himself with an arming sword. Once he joined the cult of Anamelech Pehor he quickly rose through the ranks into the inner circle. Josyp knows it is a cannibal religion and relishes in its culinary delights.

He is careful, however, because he has left his adoptive 'family' they are looking for him. He knows too many of their black





secrets to remain alive as a traitor. Although Josyp will never betray them, the crime family wants permanent assurance. Indeed, these criminals want the entire cult eradicated, seeing it as a threat to their power.

Josyp has little personal presence, a trait that helps him to remain undetected and unremembered as he moves through the teeming throngs of people in Shadizar on his way to a target. The best way to describe him is nondescript. He dresses in old clothes (although he can easily afford the latest fashions) worn by commoners, walks like a commoner, looks like a commoner and does little to draw attention to himself. He has no tattoos since such a mark of individuality would make him stand out. People may not remember a bland face but they may remember a distinctive tattoo. He tends to mumble when he talks to people and usually acts ignorant so people do not bother him too much. He tries to be as forgettable as possible.

CULT ASSASSINS

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 6)

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hp)

Initiative: +15 (+4 Dex, +5 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 18 (+4 Dex, +3 level, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 14 (+1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Crossbow +8 ranged *or* Arming Sword +8 finesse

Full Attack: Crossbow +8 ranged *or* Arming Sword +8 finesse

Damage: Crossbow (2d6/x2, AP 4) *or* Arming Sword (1d10+1/19–20/x2, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +4d6/+4d8 (Light-Footed) plus 2 points of Str damage, Sneak Attack Style (crossbow, arming sword)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +2

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +11, Will +4

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 9;

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently

and Spot) Balance +6, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +13, Open Locks +8, Perform (ritual) +1, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +5

Feats: Dabblers (curses), Deep Cover*, Eyes of the Cat^{bonus}, Improved Initiative, Light-Footed^{bonus}, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot

Reputation: 5 (Cruel or Villain)

Corruption: 1 or 2

Allegiances: The Cult, Lady Klia, Josyp

Possessions: Arming sword, crossbow

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

These cult assassins are trained by Josyp. They are not good enough for the dagger, so they perform their assassinations with arming swords. One of them has a loyalty to a certain crime family in Shadizar (the Games Master may wish to choose a crime family the Player Characters have already encountered) instead of to Lady Klia. He intends to betray Josyp at some point in the future (or during this campaign if it suits the Games Master). They are nondescript men.

Games masters may wish to have Josyp and his assassins have a run in with the player characters or perhaps attempt to have them killed because one of the characters shows an interest in Zlochka. This encounter is included if the player characters are too powerful and need some confrontation, or if they need another *Stone of Nahab*.

MEETING A CRIME LORD (OPTIONAL)

The characters may follow up on clues and seek out Ostap Lavagus, the head of one of the crime families of Shadizar, the closest thing Shadizar has to a 'thieves' guild'. He is a large, overweight man and can usually be found at one of the taverns in the Desert where his family conducts business. Intelligent and cruel, Lavagus wants to find Josyp and he wants this mysterious *Sepharvaun* destroyed. He will reward anyone who will give him information and/or help. Player Characters are not likely to be invited to join his ranks, however, as he trusts only family and long-established friends. Ostap knows one of King Tiridates' seraglio girls is at Venko's Hall and a Lady Klia engaged him to provide secret protection. Although he believes this girl will lead him to *Sepharvaun* somehow, he will not discuss why he believes this.



FEAST OF FLESH

VENKO'S HALL

If the characters do not stop at the inn (or after they leave), then they will find Venko's Hall. The Hall is an antiquated and ivy covered stone building with ancient Zhemri dragon-gargoyles leering over the corners of the strangely sloped roof. Amid the stonework, skulls have been inserted and cemented in alongside more conventional stones, although local rumour makes most of the stones out to be ancient tombstones and steles. The grisly walls and unwholesome rumours cause even the toughest of the Desert's denizens to give the Hall a wide berth. The vines themselves look unwholesome and terrible, pale in colour, with reddish veins, as though the vines drew sustenance not from the soil but from ancient revenants lurking in ancient tombs buried beneath the foundation.

Venko's Hall is a place catering to cannibals, although this is not public knowledge. For a special fee, certain customers can go down into the cellar and choose the body parts desired and can eat it raw, cook it themselves or whatever. A member of a local crime family is watching the Hall. His name is Stahir. If the characters make a Spot check against Stahir's Hide check (DC 15), they may notice him watching the Hall. Venko's The Hall is busy when the characters arrive. Venko himself may be in any room the Games Master pleases (his statistics are presented with Room 11, but he will be wherever he logically needs to be).

BOSS STAHIR

Lavagus: Medium Humanoid (Zamorian soldier 2/thief 8)

Hit Dice: 2d10+8d8+20 (67 hp)

Initiative: +12 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 18 (+2 Dex, +5 level, +1 Light Footed)

Parry Defence: 18 (+3 Str, +5 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+11

Attack: Broadsword +12 melee *or* Dagger +12 melee *or* Dagger +10 ranged

Full Attack: Broadsword +12/+7 melee *or* Dagger +12/+7 melee

Damage: Broadsword (1d10+3/19-20/x2, AP 6) *or* Dagger (1d4+3/19-20/x2, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +5d6/5d8 (Light-Footed) plus 2 points of Str damage; Sneak Attack Style (broadsword, dagger, crossbow)



Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +1

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +2

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 17

Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Bluff +16, Climb +8, Disable Device +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +15, Open Locks +6, Profession (crime boss) +16, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +12, Tumble +10

Feats: Brutal Attack*, Concealed Weapon*, Eyes of the Cat ^{bonus}, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Light-Footed ^{bonus}, Poison Use, Quick Draw, Sizing Up the Foe*, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Focus (dagger)

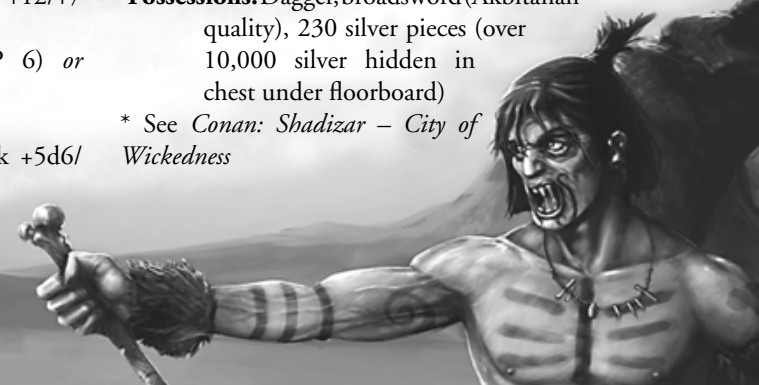
Reputation: 13 (Cruel or Villain)

Leadership: 13 (6th level cohort; 40 1st level, 1 2nd level follower)

Allegiances: Lavagus family

Possessions: Dagger, broadsword (Akbitanan quality), 230 silver pieces (over 10,000 silver hidden in chest under floorboard)

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*





Boss Stahir is the nephew of Ostap Lavagus, the head of the Lavagus crime family in Shadizar and is a street boss responsible for the area around Venko's Hall in terms of 'protection'. He has dark skin, black hair, brown eyes, a moustache and wears a wide-brimmed hat. Stahir is chillingly even-tempered on the surface, formal and polite insofar as business is concerned. In private or in combat, he flies into a frightening rage; when he flies into a rage, he does not expect any witnesses to survive the encounter. He is concerned about 'respect' above all else, wanting his influence and the influence of his family to be recognised. He does not tolerate being thought of as a common thug and is quite ruthless.

Right now, he is hunting for the location of the Cult of Anamelech Pehor, as well as making sure Melcia is safe. He believes Venko's Hall has something to do with the cult and is where his cousin as a bouncer. Stahir has heard a lot of horrible rumours about the Hall but his cousin refuses to discuss any of them with him. Due to his relationship with Ostap, he has nearly limitless resources if he needs to pursue the Player Characters, with access to as many henchmen as needed, such as the samples listed below. He knows a girl from the king's seraglio is inside; his family has been contacted by Lady Klia and protection for Melcia has been arranged. He is to make sure she is not harassed on the streets of Shadizar's *maul*.

LAVAGUS-FAMILY HENCHMEN

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 6)

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +12 (+3 Dex, +5 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 17 (+3 Dex, +3 level, +1 Light-Footed)
Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+6
Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee finesse *or* Dagger +7 melee finesse;
Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee finesse *or* Dagger +7 melee finesse;
Damage: Unarmed Strike (1d6+2/x2) *or* Dagger (1d4+2/19-20/x2, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +4d6/4d8 (Light-Footed) plus 2 pts Str damage, Sneak Attack Style (dagger, unarmed strike)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +2

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 13

Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Bluff +10, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +12, Gather Information +10, Hide +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Move Silently +8, Open Locks +7, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +8, Tumble +12

Feats: Brawl, Eyes of the Cat^{bonus}, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Light-Footed^{bonus}, Sizing Up the Foe*

Reputation: 7 (Cruel)

Allegiances: Lavagus family, Boss Stahir Lavagus

Possessions: Dagger

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

These thugs are either minor relatives or friends of the Lavagus family. One does not just 'join' a thieves' guild in Shadizar. One is born into it or is slowly drawn into their affairs by becoming friends with a family member. These thugs, each of them wanting promotion to 'boss' status or given other privileges, will show total loyalty to Stahir or any other member of the Lavagus family. They will attack with bluffs and their Crippling Strike ability.

RIMMA

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 10)

Hit Dice: 10d8 (45 hp)
Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 19 (+3 Dex, +5 level, +1 Light-Footed)
Parry Defence: 15 (+5 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+7
Attack: Stiletto +10 melee finesse
Full Attack: Stiletto +10/+5 melee finesse
Damage: Stiletto (1d4/x4, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +6d6/6d8 (Light-Footed), Sneak Attack Style (stiletto, dagger, sap)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Skill Mastery (*Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Sense Motive*), Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +3

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 19





Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot, has a +2 bonus on all Cha-based skills vs. females*) Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Disable Device +6, Disguise +19, Forgery +18, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (local) +12, Open Locks +6, Perform (acting) +13, Profession (kidnapper) +16, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +7

Feats: Deceitful, Eyes of the Cat^{bonus}, Glib*, Light-Footed^{bonus}, Negotiator, Persuasive, Poison Use, Seducer*, Sneak Subdual, Steely Gaze

Reputation: 14 (Seductive)

Alliances: Lord Artanes, Cult of Anamelech Pehor;

Possessions: Stiletto, Stone of Nahab, 205 silver pieces

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

Rimma is a kidnapper in the employ of Lord Artanes and the cult of Anamelech Pehor. She and some cultists have been sent by Artanes to capture Melcia and bring her to Sharissa at *Sepharvaun*. She is a smouldering, slim, long-legged, small-breasted, dark-haired, brown-eyed Zamorian spitfire of a beauty. When the cultists engage whoever has the girl she will appear, pretending to come to their assistance, motioning to take her to safety down a back alley (where more cultists wait to assist her if necessary, they stay out of sight if not). She will then lead Melcia to *Sepharvaun*. She will be wary about fighting Stahir or the bouncer of Venko's Hall, not wanting to get into the poor graces of the Lavagus family, although the cultists are fanatical enough to kill anyone. She carries a note from Lord Artanes in addition to her other possessions.

Rimma,

I need you to acquire a highborn lady who will be attending Venko's Hall tonight. She will be watched over by the Lavagus family, but I want her at my home tonight. You will be paid in a similar manner and in similar amounts as you have in the past for these acquisitions. Stop by Sepharvaun and I will assign some of the rougher elements staying here if you feel you need some muscle. Show this note to the butler and he will assign the personnel to you. Mention nothing of this to Sharissa.

Lord Artanes

ARTANES' CULTISTS

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 6)

Hit Dice: 6d4+12 (27 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 level)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5

Attack: Arming Sword +6 finesse melee

Full Attack: Arming Sword +6 finesse melee

Damage: Arming Sword (1d10+2/19–20/x2, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 13

Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*)

Bluff +5, Disable Device +7, Hide +4, Intimidate

+5, Open Locks +7, Perform (ritual or instrument)

+10, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +8

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Skill Focus (Bluff)^{bonus}

Reputation: 7 (Cruel)

Alliances: Rimma, the Cult of Anamelech Pehor, Lord Artanes

Possessions: Arming sword

VENKO'S HALL MAP KEY

1 – Vestibule: When characters enter the Hall, they will step into the vestibule, a place where shoes can be wiped clean of mud. A slight lad sits on a three-legged stool here to assist customers. He also watches to make sure things are not stolen (well, at least not without a bribe first). Cloaks, capes, coats, burdensome weapons and armour may be stored in the cloakroom (room 3).

HISSAR BURY, CLOAK ATTENDANT

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 1)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hp);

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflex);

Speed: 30 ft.;



THE THING



Dodge Defence: 13 (+3 Dex)
Parry Defence: 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+0
Attack: Dagger +3 finesse melee
Full Attack: Arming Sword +3 finesse melee *or* Dagger +3 finesse melee
Damage: Dagger (1d4/19–20/x2, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./(1)/5 ft./(1)
Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (dagger)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Trap Disarming;
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 8
Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*)
 Appraise +1, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Knowledge (local) +1, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Profession (smuggler) +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +5, Tumble +5
Feats: Alertness, Deceitful

Reputation: 1 (Honest)

Allegiances: Venko

Possessions: Arming sword, dagger, 45 silver pieces

2 – Dining Hall: The dining hall is bustling with activity, hurried wenches carrying trays of dark ales and red wines, disguised lords carrying on conversations of sinister intrigue and crimson violence, moneyed merchants carrying bags of black opals and scarlet rubies, over-worked prostitutes carrying their trade of mysterious desires and burgundy lips, sharp-eyed bravos carrying darts of menacing sharpness and threatening accuracy, all swirling in babble madness and noisome confusion. As soon as the Player Characters enter the dining area, a short, dark-haired waitress in a light blue blouse, a dark blue skirt and an orange apron will make her way through the throng to entreat the characters to have a seat and to ask if she can bring them anything. She is attentive and alert, her job is to remember details about people. Her name is Innohka and her statistics are offered at the end of the description for the dining hall. Other tavern wenches and prostitutes can be designed by the Games Master as he needs or the statistics offered in *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness* can be used or modified as desired.

Other notables are among the customers at the tables. Watching three bravos play at darts sits one of the most gorgeous Brythunian women the Player Characters have ever seen. She takes an immediate interest in one of the male Player Characters (probably either the one with the highest Charisma or the highest Strength). She will not discuss who she is and will give the name 'Zina' if pressed.





A character familiar with the royal court of Shadizar might recognise her as a royal concubine with a Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 12) or an Intelligence check (DC 20). She is here to have sex, pure and simple. A servant, named Iraba, is sitting with her and she is obvious in her dislike of the Player Characters, especially the one chosen by 'Zina'.

If Captain Ishachus survived the first scene in this adventure then he is here also. He came here to go down into the cellar and pick a pretty female corpse to have made into a meal, but something has happened to stop him in his tracks. He recognises the royal concubine, with whom he has fallen in love, and is watching her closely. He will follow her if she leaves. Captain Ishachus is off duty and has covered his armour and insignia with a non-descript robe.

He makes an untrained Hide check (DC 12) to stay unnoticed in the shadows. If 'Zina' leaves the tavern, Captain Ishachus may summon some of his soldiers and ambush whoever she is with and make off with her, arguing the king will find out about this and her life will be forfeit if she stays in Shadizar. He is still interested in finding the lost book and in uncovering the secret brothel, *Sepharvaun*. *Sepharvaun* cultists make sure he finds nothing because they know he will report and/or raid them.

Any kind of combat will send the customers sprawling and rushing to escape. The bouncer will try to stop any combat, as will any street brutes in the tavern (see *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness, Book II: Secrets of the Streets*) and cultists. Venko and the cook will also come out of whatever room they are in to help deal with violence. If Captain Ishachus is there, he will also help.

INNOCHKA THE TAVERN WENCH

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 3)

Hit Dice: 3d4 (8 hp)
Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 level)
Parry Defence: 9 (-2 Str, +1 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/-1
Attack: Unarmed Attack +4 finesse melee
Full Attack: Unarmed Attack +4 finesse melee
Damage: Unarmed Attack (1d3-1/x2, non-lethal)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 6, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15
Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Balance +8, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +3, Open Locks +7, Profession (serving girl) +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +9

Feats: Agile, Skill Focus (Spot)
Reputation: 5 (Talented)
Corruption: 1
Possessions: Stone of Nahab

Innochka is one of the tavern wenches of Venko's Hall and does not know she is serving human flesh or that she eats humans (she usually eats there). She has horrible nightmares, however, about the root cellar at Venko's Hall, so she refuses to even go down to it any more. If Player Characters ask her how she is, she will reply she has not slept well since she nearly went down into the cellar to fetch the cook one day. She will mention the horrible but indistinct nightmares, remembering nothing apart from knowing she has had them and wakes up screaming.

Innochka is short, even for a Zamorian, and slight in build. Her favourite colour is orange. Her personality is bubbly and she tries to hide how intelligent she actually is, having a near perfect memory, although she cannot read. She is a new member of the Cult of Anamelech Pehor and is excited to be included. She has worked in many of the taverns in Shadizar and is the most popular serving wench at Venko's. People can come in and, even if she has only seen them once before, perhaps even in another tavern, they can say, 'the usual' and she knows exactly what they had to eat and drink the last time she saw them. Innochka is not beyond doing sexual services for patrons as long as they are willing to pay.

MELCIA (ALIAS 'ZINA')

Royal Concubine, One of the King's Favourites
 Medium Humanoid (Brythunian commoner 3/scholar 3)

Hit Dice: 3d4+3d6+6 (25 hp)
Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 level)
Parry Defence: 12 (+2 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3
Attack: Stiletto +5 finesse melee
Full Attack: Stiletto +5 finesse
 melee
Damage: Stiletto (1d4/x4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)





Melcia was a young farm girl in Brythunia before she was captured by slavers. Pretty enough to be purchased for the king's seraglio once she arrived in Shadizar, she languished there for quite some time before being noticed by the king. Once she was in the king's eye, she began receiving tutoring (thus the class change to scholar) in many subjects, she eventually became one of the king's favourites and shared his bed. She is well liked in the seraglio and has become one of their leaders, looked up to by the other women.

'Zina' is a beautiful blonde girl with a long, thick mane of hair tumbling down her back. She is scared to death to be in the Desert but was assured by her cohort this would be the place to find a virile man. Her cohort, Iraba, led her here and sits next to her. Melcia seeks to be the one who produces an heir to the king since King Tiridates, possibly through his alcohol abuse, has not produced one yet. In a bid for power, she has managed (by using bribes and her network of followers) to sneak out of the palace intent on finding a suitable man, getting pregnant and presenting her king with an heir.

IRABA

Concubine Serving Girl

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 4)

Hit Dice: 4d4 (10 hp);

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref);

Speed: 30 ft.;

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 level)

Parry Defence: 12 (+2 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+2

Attack: Stiletto +4 finesse melee

Full Attack: Stiletto +4 finesse melee

Damage: Stiletto (1d4/x4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 9;

Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen Move Silently and Spot*) Balance +13, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +7, Listen +12, Open Locks +6, Profession (servant) +15, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +12

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Profession (servant))

Reputation: 6 (Talented)

Allegiances: Melcia ('Zina'), Lady Kliia

Possessions: Stiletto

Special Qualities: Hyborian Traits, Adaptability (*Perform (dance)*), Background (*acolyte*), Background Skills (*Craft (sew)*, *Knowledge (nature)*, *Handle Animal*, *Profession (farmer)*, *Gather Information*), Knowledge is Power, +2, Scholar, Skill Points

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6 (+9 vs. corruption)

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 17;

Skills: Appraise +3, Balance +6, Bluff +6, Craft (churn butter) +6, Craft (sew) +8, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +3, Perform (act) +6, Perform (dance) +17, Perform (sing) +7, Profession (farmer) +3, Profession (concubine) +4, Sense Motive +3, Swim +4

Feats: Agile, Leadership, Negotiator, Performer, Skill Focus (Perform (dance))

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation: 9 (Talented) Leadership: 9 (4th level cohort, 12 1st level followers)

Allegiances: King Tiridates and her father;

Possessions: Stiletto





She was assigned to Melcia by the old crone running Tiridates' seraglio when Melcia came to be in the king's eye. They hit it off almost immediately, and Iraba became Melcia's cohort. She is also loyal to Lady Klia, who bought her as a child from slavers and set her up as a servant to the seraglio in the first place. Iraba is dark-haired and green-eyed and wears a bejewelled headdress indicative of her station as a servant of wealth. She wears very little else – a light coloured halter and a copper belt holding up a pair of silken strips (one fore and one aft) is her usual attire aside from a pair of silk slippers.

Iraba encouraged Melcia in her plan for a child; however, she was worried about the king's favourite's safety in the Desert, so she told Lady Klia about the plan. Lady Klia divined today was an auspicious day for a pregnancy and helped them secure an escape from the palace and assigned a man to follow Melcia and Iraba to ensure their safety. She also contacted Venko, who made the appropriate concessions to the various crime lords and families of Shadizar to further safeguard the two women. The man following the pair is also to bring Melcia to a certain place to meet the prearranged father of her child, another arrangement set up by Klia.

TULU ZAMACONA

Professional Kidnapper

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian thief 4/professional (kidnapper) 5)

Hit Dice: 9d8–9 (32 hp)
Initiative: +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflex)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +4 level, +1 Light-Footed);
Parry Defence: 14 (+4 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+6
Attack: Dagger +7 finesse melee or Bill +6 melee
Full Attack: Dagger +7/+2 finesse melee *or* Bill +6/+1 melee
Damage: Dagger (1d4/19–20/x2, AP 1) *or* Bill (2d8/x3, AP 6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Sneak Attack Style (bill, dagger)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Aliases, Profession (kidnapper), Skill Mastery (*Gather Information, Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate, Sense Motive*), Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +4

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18;

Skills: (*In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Bluff +18, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +3, Disguise +18, Forgery +6, Gather Information +18, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (local) +12, Open Lock +3, Perform (acting) +9, Profession (kidnapper) +14, Search +8, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +9

Feats: Deceitful, Deep Cover*, Eyes of the Cat, Investigator, Light-Footed, Negotiator, Persuasive, Steely Gaze

Reputation: 14 (Talented)

Allegiances: Lady Klia

Possessions: Bill, dagger, 55 silver pieces

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

Tulu Zamacona is a professional kidnapper working for Lady Klia. His assignment today is to follow Melcia, then make contact with her. He is to take her to a certain 'inn' (see *The Unnamed Inn* on page 18) where she is to meet the person Lady Klia has chosen to be the father of the heir.

Tulu is successful in his line of work, and success has brought him a certain amount of wealth. He is now addicted to some unwholesome drugs, although Lady Klia is unaware of his addiction and he is in this club making a deal for his drugs when the Player Characters enter. He figures he has plenty of time to seduce the concubine and then whisk her to her rendezvous with Klia's chosen stud and will initially ignore the Player Characters. If one of them starts to talk to Melcia, he and the bouncer (who is aware of the plot) will approach and warn the character(s) off.

Tulu Zamacona has three aliases he uses in the course of his business: Andrij of the King's Own, Prokip the Lord of Savusas and Rustillo the Broker. When using these aliases he gains a +2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate and Sense Motive as they apply to the alias assumed. If encountered at the royal court, he will usually be dressed as a dandy (in his Prokip persona) or as a soldier (including armour, in his Andrij persona).





CYRILADOR THE BOUNCER

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 6)

Hit Dice: 6d4+6 (21 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 level)

Parry Defence: 14 (+1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4

Attack: Unarmed Attack +4 melee

Full Attack: Unarmed Attack +4 melee

Damage: Unarmed Attack (1d6+1/x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 11;

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +4, Open Locks +6, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +6

Feats: Brawl, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Escape Artist)

Reputation: 8 (Observer)

Allegiances: Lavagus family, Tulu, Venko

Possessions: None

Cyrilador is a friend of Tulu and a member of the Lavagus crime family, one of the few true 'thieves' guilds in Shadizar, which are all family affairs. One never just pays a fee and joins; one is either born in or is invited in. Not intelligent enough to go far, he functions primarily as an informant for the more prominent and powerful members of the family. If he is killed or treated disrespectfully, the crime family will probably do their own investigation and undertake their own form of vengeance. Cyrilador is arrogant because of his connections and will use his 'status' to get his way and few in the city bother him because of his connections. He is not knowingly involved with the cult. Indeed, his family wants the cult destroyed. If he sees Josyp the assassin, he will find a way to report to his family.

3 – Cloak Room: This room is where characters may store cloaks, armour, heavy weapons and so on. A slight servant can assist characters if needed. He also watches to make sure things are not stolen (well, at least not without a bribe first). His statistics can be found under room 1.

4 – The Bar: The bar area is attended by an enslaved bartender named Lidochka. She knows a fair amount of information about most of the regulars. Her master is Venko.

LIDOCHKA THE BARTENDER

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 2)

Hit Dice: 2d4 (5 hp)

Initiative: +0;

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 10;

Parry Defence: 9 (-1 Str)

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-1

Attack: Bottle -3 melee

Full Attack: Bottle -3 melee

Damage: Bottle (1d3/x3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Disable Device +4, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +3, Open Locks +4, Profession (bartender) +3, Profession (prostitute) +3, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness

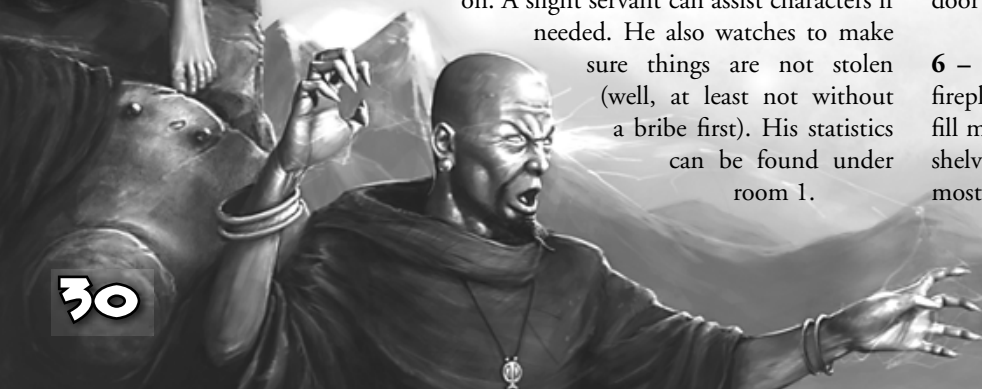
Reputation: 3 (Talented)

Possessions: Bottle

Lidochka is a slave girl owned by Venko, put to work as the bartender for the Hall. She is a pretty girl, short, with short black hair and dark eyes with long, long lashes. She has small breasts and a bit of weight around the middle she has gained as a result of her alcoholism. She is wearing a halter-top and Turanian slave-girl pants.

5 – Table/Chair Storage: There are 13 tables stacked against the far wall and 52 chairs. The legs to the tables are stacked on a shelf along one of the walls. Extra darts are also stored in here as well as sundry odds-and-ends. The door is locked with a poor-quality lock.

6 – Kitchen: The kitchen is dominated by the central fireplace/stove/oven contrivance. Four tables of varying size fill most of the rest of the room. Along one wall is utensil shelving. The head cook and a scullery maid work here most of the day. Area 6A is the serving area. The scullery



maid puts plates along the open window for the serving girls to take to the customers.

PISTAKOCERA THE HEAD COOK

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 6/thief 1)

Hit Dice: 6d4+1d8+7 (27 hp)

Initiative: +13 (+3 Dex, +4 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 level)

Parry Defence: 14 (+1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4

Attack: Knife +6 finesse melee

Full Attack: Knife +6 finesse melee

Damage: Knife (1d4/x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (knife)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy, Trap Disarming

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +2

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 9

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Appraise +12, Craft (fine cooking) +15, Craft (brewing) +12, Disable Device +7, Move Silently +13, Open Locks +7, Perform (food presentation) +11, Perform (ritual) +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +9

Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Craft (fine cooking)), Skill Focus (Perform (food presentation))^{bonus}

Reputation: 5 (Talented)

Corruption: 4

Insanities: Phobia (bibliophobia), Cannibalism, Voices;

Allegiances: Venko, the Cult

Possessions: Knife

Pistakocera is employed by Venko as the head cook of Venko's Hall, trained by the great Zamorian chef, Bartok of Yezud. He is a large man with a thick moustache and thinning black hair combed over a baldpate with large, bushy eyebrows. His nose is strangely small, as is his mouth and his eyes are narrow and sunken with a haunted look. He is in the habit of striking women who anger him, especially his wife or the scullery maid. Often he hears voices and believes the food he is cutting up is screaming in

pleasure and/or pain. He believes some foods enjoy being cut up or cooked and other foods do not. He is an excellent cook and is terrified of books and swears voices from the food have warned him that a book will destroy the world eventually, consuming the world in religious fervour and intolerance.

He is a member of the cult and is their primary cook, knowing the food he serves is human flesh. He is pessimistic about the future, believing too many people are learning how to read. He questions the value of acting ethically and is openly disdainful about organised religion and the Zhemri pantheon as a whole. His speed and accuracy are remarkable and he fights with various kitchen knives. Usually he will silently follow anyone investigating the root cellar and attack them, hoping for a sneak attack. He often uses Sleight of Hand to hide a dagger on his person, and then uses Quick Draw to get the initiative. Before following anyone downstairs, he will motion to the scullery maid to go get the bouncer, Venko and anyone else in the cult. He is no fool and will wait for backup if outnumbered – but he will not let anyone not of the Cult leave the cellar alive if possible.

His paranoia of books has led him to steal the book a carrot told him was especially dangerous – *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars*. It is locked in a strongbox in the cellar. He has laid a carrot on top of the book so it can warn off any potential thieves.

PANTERA THE SCULLERY MAID

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 1)

Hit Dice: 1d4 (3 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+0

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 finesse melee

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 finesse melee

Damage: Unarmed Strike (1d4/x2, nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9



Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to *Climb*, *Hide*, *Listen*, *Move Silently* and *Spot*) Balance +3, Craft (cook) +7, Disable Device +4, Open Locks +6, Perform (dance) +1, Profession (scullery maid) +2, Sleight of Hand +4

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft (cook))

Reputation: 1 (Talented)

Corruption: 2

Insanity: Sleeplessness

Allegiances: Pistakocera, the cult

Possessions: Stone of Nahab

Pantera is the scullery maid of Venko's Hall and is a competent cook in her own right. Sometimes, if she is not busy and Pistakocera (the head cook) allows, she dances naked in the main hall for entertainment. She is also a member of the cult and during one of their orgies she slept with a demon, an event which has corrupted her. She has dark hair kept back in a bun and would have a pretty smile if so many teeth were not missing from Pistakocera's abuse.

She has nightmares almost nightly and tries not to sleep, turning instead to alcohol. She is quiet and usually has to be talked into talking. For purposes of Diplomacy or Intimidation checks, consider her hostile

toward discussing anything, although her demeanour is quiet and unassuming. She knows the name of the demoness, who the demoness is possessing and how to find *Sepharvaun*. She also knows the head cook keeps a special book locked up downstairs, but she does not know the title of it.

7 – The Root Cellar: The root cellar is a dark and foreboding place. Shadowy and monstrous, any character with greater than 10 Wisdom can sense evil lurks here. The sensation is so palpable any character with more than 10 in Wisdom is compelled to make a Terror save (DC 10+ Character's Wis bonus), the wiser the character, the stronger the sensation.

Those making the save (or not required to make the save in the first place) may continue down the stairs. A feeble glow lights the cellar, a detestable glow from phosphorescent fungi growing on the cold, dripping walls. An earthen floor, hard-tamped, seems somehow diseased and a dank, foetid smell lingers in the air. Heavy planks and massive beams loom overhead, supporting the floors above. Rickety doors made of old, cracked planks are fitted into doorframes too crooked and bent to comfortably hold a more substantial door. Great quarter-circle ruts in the uneven earthen floor indicate where the corners and uneven edges of the doors drag.



A – This area is used for the storage of roots, dry goods and junk. Strange sounds can be heard here – snatches of whispered conversation, hideous clinks, unexplained creaks and ominous scratches. The characters will briefly see a vaguely human shape move in the darkness. There is no sign of anyone there if this is investigated.

B – This area is used for the storage of a score of gutted human bodies, all hanging on hooks, covered with damp shrouds. Great tables are in the room with massive cleavers and other instruments of butchery. Massive blocks of ice and straw litter the floor. The fungus on the walls is even denser here, sucking away heat, living off of warmth, making the room cold enough one's breathe can be seen. A great pile of severed human heads moulders in one corner. A small box on the corner of one table contains jewellery taken from the bodies.

C – This area is used to store broken furniture. At one time a craftsman worked here to repair furniture but this function of the room has long since been discontinued. There is a table and a single chair set up with a metal bowl. A Stygian in Turanian clothing is sitting here, gnawing on a human arm. He has paid his special fee and was allowed to come down here for a more personal feast. A bottle of aged Kothic wine is also on the table next to a skull goblet. A whip is on the table next to the grisly bowl.

The Stygian will assume anyone entering is a servant and if the Player Characters attack immediately, he will be surprised. If they stop and gawk, he will come to his senses and grab his whip, ready to defend himself, intending to use his whip to make Crippling Strikes if possible. His Stygian bow and a quiver of 18 arrows are leaning against a shrouded chair to his right.

MOKHTAR

Medium Humanoid (Stygian thief 6)

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +3 level, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 12 (–1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+3

Attack: Whip +6 ranged *or* Stygian Bow +7 ranged

Full Attack: Whip +6 ranged *or* Stygian Bow +7 ranged

Damage: Whip (1d4/x2) *or* Stygian Bow (1d12–1/19–20/x2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack +4d6/+4d8 (Light-Footed), Sneak Attack Style (Stygian bow, whip)

Special Qualities: Stygian Traits, Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +2

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +4 (+2 vs. Corruption);

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14;

Skills: Appraise +12, Bluff +11, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +11, Forgery +12, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +13, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (slaver) +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +13

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Eyes of the Cat^{bonus}, Light-Footed^{bonus}, Predator's Eye*;

Reputation: 8 (Cruel)

Allegiances: None

Possessions: Stygian bow, whip, 134 silver pieces

* See *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness*

D – The well-room is the name of this area with the corner of the area rounded and bricked. Anyone removing the bricks can see into, or enter, the well. In another corner lies the strongbox where *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars* is kept. Also in the box are a wilted carrot and some ritual robes used by the cult of Anamelech Pehor. The box is locked with an amazing-quality lock.

E – This area has a damp, mouldy bed in it. The room used to be where a secret shrine to an ancient evil was located. Anyone sleeping here is visited by a demon in the night, although they think they are dreaming an intensely sexual dream. Women sleeping here have a chance to become impregnated (their offspring will have the Spawn of Dagoth Hill template added to them) and most people of either sex will become corrupt (Corruption save DC 23) from their encounter with the demon, although any memory of the encounter will be fleeting.

8 – Store Room: This room is where janitorial equipment is kept (mops, brooms, brushes, rags, buckets, and so on).

9 – Pantry: The pantry is where dry goods are stored and an old well maintained.

10 – Bath: This room contains a copper tub and a cistern, a character who desires a bath merely pays a small fee to one of the serving girls. She unlocks the door and prepares the bath, carrying water from the well





(room 9) to the bathtub. She will usually remain and help the character bathe if desired. The water is not particularly warm, however.

11 – Venko’s Office: This room is where Venko spends much of his time when he is in the Desert. The books include the business journals for Venko’s Hall and journals detailing the wealth of a person named Choma. Both sets of books include transfers of funds to some place called *Sepharvaun*. The books also name ‘Khonsirdais’ as a co-owner.

VENKO

(Alias, also known as High Priest Choma of the Temple of a Thousand Lights)

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian scholar 10)

Hit Dice: 10d6 (35 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 base)

Parry Defence: 13 (+3 base)

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+7

Attack: Dagger +10 melee finesse *or* Acheronian Demon-Fire Globe +10 ranged

Full Attack: Dagger +10/+5 melee finesse *or* Acheronian Demon-Fire Globe +10/+5 ranged

Damage: Dagger (1d4/19–20/x2, AP 1) *or* Acheronian Demon-Fire Globe (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Spells; Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*lay priest*), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, +3 Power Points, Scholar, +10 Skill Points

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +11

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 17;

Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has *Climb* +1, *Hide* +4, *Listen* +3, *Move Silently* +4 and *Spot* +3) Appraise +9, Bluff +16, Concentration +1, Craft (herbalism) +8, Decipher Script +10, Disable Device +5, Disguise +10, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Open Locks +5, Perform (ritual) +14, Profession (bookkeeper) +11, Profession

(landlord) +8, Profession (priest) +14, Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +7

Feats: Dabbler (curses), Diligent, Iron Will, Leadership, Noble Blood, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion))

Reputation: 20 (Villain); Leadership: 13/16 (6th level cohort, up to 70 1st level followers, 3 2nd level and 1 3rd level)

Allegiances: Temple of a Thousand Lights, The Cult, Lady Klia

Base Power Points: 9 (27 maximum)

Magical Attack: +8 (+5 level, +3 Cha)

Sorcery Styles: Hypnotism; Spells Known: *Domination, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mass hypnotic suggestion*; Corruption: 8; Insanity: Cannibalism

Possessions: Dagger, 6 Acheronian demon-fire globes, 1 application of Lotus Blacksmoke, 2 applications of Lotus Greensmoke

Venko is the founder and owner of Venko’s Hall, a tavern/club for merchants in the Desert. Venko is also known in the Temple and Wealthy districts as Choma, the High Priest of the Temple of a Thousand Lights. He maintains two separate identities and two separate circles of contacts. As Venko he owns four taverns and three brothels in the Desert and uses Venko’s Hall as his headquarters in the *maul*. As Choma, he owns a small estate in the wealthy district of Shadizar and land outside of Shadizar’s wall, a large estate used for herding.

Regardless of his persona, he is a strange human being. Fish-like scales appear on his belly, chest and back, his eyes protrude slightly and he purses his lips a lot. Quite detached, he no longer cares about others’ feelings or comfort, seeing them as no more than tools to be used in his personal pursuit of pleasure, power or knowledge. Venko/Choma adds his Corruption as a circumstance bonus to all Intimidate checks (already included in the statistics given), even those relating to demonic entities or similarly powerful creatures.

He began life as Petruso, a son of one of Shadizar’s elite merchant families, but, as a lesser son, was sent to the temples. He excelled in his philosophical studies but loved visiting the Desert on the sly to indulge his decadent pleasures. He founded his own cult, but it eventually fell prey to a certain scandal and left his religious post for a different life in the Desert.





Using the personality of Venko, one he had built up over time during his sojourns in the Desert, he carved out a new life. He took one of his religious prostitutes and convinced her to work for him in the Desert, buying a brothel and went to work. In time he was able to return to the Temple district in disguise with an alias. As Choma he worked his way up to High Priest in the small temple. With wealth again at his beck and call, he has begun to move among his old circles, fabricating a means of revenge against people he feels turned their backs to him when he most needed them.

As Venko he met Lady Klia in the Desert shortly after she began her rise to influence, and later met her more formally as Choma. Their goals meshed and they formed an alliance. Together they corrupted Lord Artanes of House Slava and managed to get him to summon the power of the foul *Thing of Old Times* they knew to lurk in Shadizar. Now they command Sharissa and her new cult and have been recruiting the decadent noble and wealthy families of Shadizar, bolstering the cult further so it can further their own goals.

12 – Venko’s Bedroom: This private room contains his personal diaries and notes. The characters should find Player Handout #4. Characters can also learn all of the information regarding Venko’s background given with his statistics if they take time to read the documents found here. Venko’s Spellbook can also be found here, with the spells *domination*, *entrance*, *hypnotic suggestion*, and *mass hypnotic suggestion* written within. Anyone who reads from this Spellbook must make a Corruption save as per *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

13 – Lounge/Library: This area, with two divans, a corner book case, a small table with chairs, writing utensils and other items serves as both a lounge and a small reading library for patrons of the Hall. The bookcase is filled with historical, philosophical and religious scrolls.

14 – Meeting Rooms: These are private meeting rooms.

15 – Meeting Room (Chapel): This room doubles as a small chapel to the Zhemri pantheon.

SEPHARVAUN

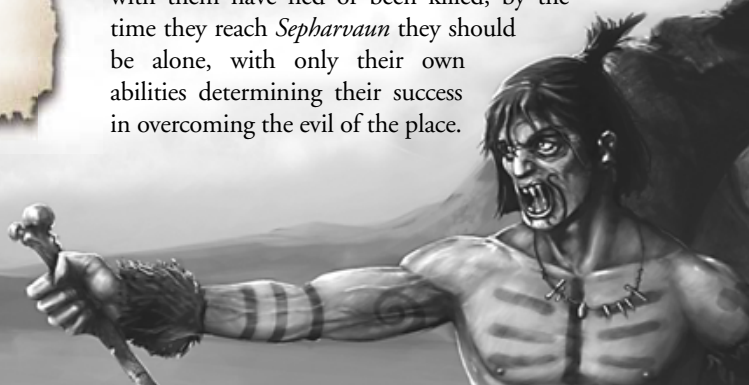
Shadizar’s Desert is comprised of innumerable little lanes walled by huddled, sagging houses of immense antiquity, many of old Zhemri architectural designs. Each darkened corridor between those leaning, gargoylish buildings seems to be a gateway to unknown dangers and unknowable horrors. As the characters move through the twisting lanes their path is little more than a collage of broken steps, unnameable odours, swarthy and unfriendly faces, broken bits of furniture, wagons and chariots, twisted balconies hanging precariously above them and great, crumbling houses reeking of malevolence. The ghosts of old crimes cry out for attention but no one pays them any mind any longer. Refuse lies everywhere, the remnants of generations. Grisly remains of some of these generations can also be found if one is stout enough to search through the garbage.

Those hunting the characters will seek to ambush them as they move through the streets of Shadizar, with both the cultists and the King’s Own hunting them down. The result of these attacks should be to ensure any allies the party have with them have fled or been killed, by the time they reach *Sepharvaun* they should be alone, with only their own abilities determining their success in overcoming the evil of the place.

Dearest Venko,

Have you found that book yet? It needs to be found to make sure I cannot be stopped. Also, I am going to have to sacrifice Lord Delvinsta. He tried to sneak into Sepharvaun through a window and went mad. These lords and nobles need to remember to enter only through the front door.

Sharissa





If the characters still have at least one Stone of Nahab they will find *Sepharvaun*, which has been remoulded in a non-Euclidean manner in such a way that it is imperceptible and inaccessible to those without a stone in the group. The entire building has been slipped outside of the mortal sphere to points unimaginable. Once inside, characters cannot get out except through the front door. Although if one looks through the windows, he will see the city, if he tries to exit through one of those windows, he will find himself hurtling through vortexes of swirling dimensions and utter madness and will be lost forever. Keep in mind the villains are aware of this and may bull rush characters out of windows during combat inside the brothel.

When characters find *Sepharvaun*, they will see the mansion nested strangely in an alley. The alley's sides will seem to be irregular, comprised of strange angles.

The building, a glamorous old mansion, should not fit there, yet it plainly does. Characters may enter the house through the front doors or through the windows – however, approaching the windows is unnerving because nothing seems

right with this building. Characters who try to reach the windows must make a Will save (DC 25) or become obsessed with the house, as per the rules for magic items covered in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. This save is also a Corruption save in every sense, entering through the front door, however, is safe.

FIRST FLOOR

1 – The Front Hall: This is the main foyer. If Rimma did not bring the girl Melcia here, then Lord Artanes will be here. The front hall has a beautiful wooden floor, an ornate staircase going up to the second floor and several works of art hanging on the walls. A Kushite slave named Meconin is also here, serving as a guard.

MECONIN THE BOUNCER

Medium Humanoid (Kushite barbarian 4)

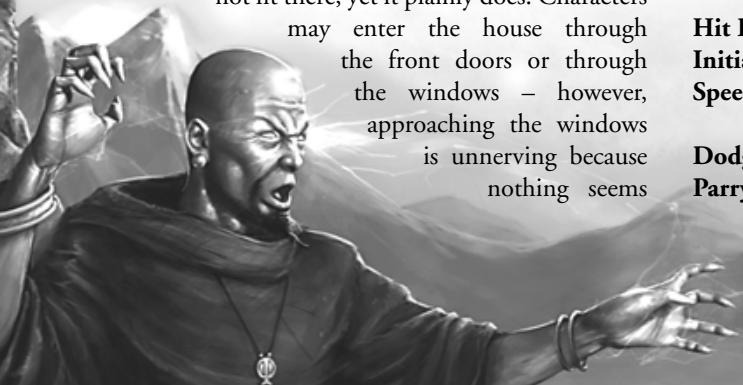
Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26 hp)

Initiative: +10 (+2 Dex, +4 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 level)

Parry Defence: 15 (+4 Str, +1 level)



Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+8

Attack: Tulwar +6 melee

Full Attack: Tulwar +6 melee; Damage: Tulwar (2d8+6/18–20/x2, AP 8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Kushite Traits, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Endurance, Fearless, Illiteracy, Versatility (–2 penalty), Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +4, Listen +8, Intimidate +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +8, Survival +3

Feats: Cleave, Fighting Madness, Power Attack

Allegiances: House Slava, Lord Artanes, Sharissa

Reputation: 4 (Observer)

Possessions: Tulwar

2 – The Dining Room: This is an ornate room with a large dining table in it.

3 – The Family Room: This has been turned into an orgy room. It is filled with divans, pillows, a fireplace, scattered works of art of dubious taste and swords on the walls. No one is in here while the ceremony in room 4 is going on.

4 – The Master Bedroom: This is now Sharissa's dark bordello, the inner sanctum of *Sepharvaun*. In front of large wall stands a naked sorceress, Sharissa. Several dead bodies lie at the base of an altar. Cultists (the number is variable, depending on the Games Master's needs), both male and female, all naked, are in the room, chanting, performing the ritual with Sharissa. If the concealed door between this room and area 7 is opened, see 'The Gate that Gapes' on page 39. Depending how long the characters take to reach this room, Sharissa may be sacrificing a nobleman or noblewoman (see *Conan: Shadizar – City of Wickedness* for some sample nobles), be between sacrifices or even be ready to cast her spell on Melcia (if Melcia was captured by the cultists).

5 – Privy

6 – Linen Closet – There are linens stored here.

7 – The Gate That Gapes: Once the Master Bath with two walk in closets with shelves (areas A and B). See 'The Gate That Gapes' on page 39 if the concealed door between 7 and 4 is opened.

8 – Study with attached closet with shelves. It is in this room that Melcia will be brought for her disrobing prior



to the casting of the spell. If Melcia is still here when the Player Characters arrive, Lord Artanes will be here also. Melcia will have been drugged into compliance and will barely be able to walk, needing to be led by hand anywhere at this point. She is also extremely susceptible to suggestion and should be considered *entranced*. Two handmaidens are helping Lord Artanes undress her.

HANDMAIDENS (2)

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 1)

Hit Dice: 1d4 (3 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 9 (–1 Str)

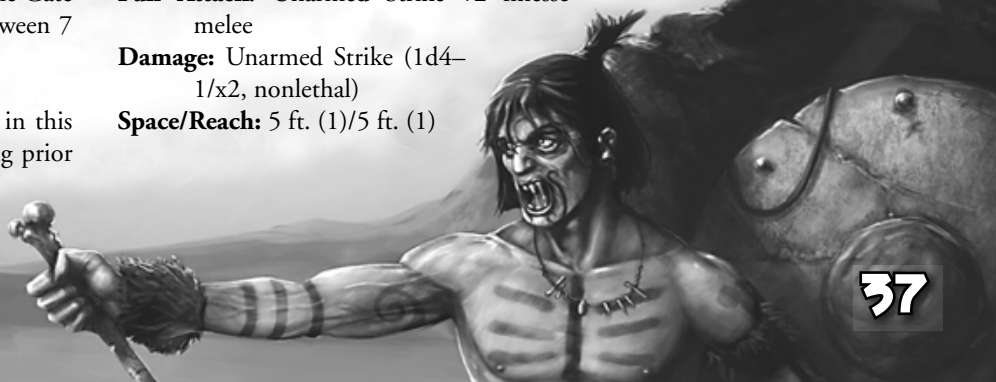
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–1

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 finesse melee

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 finesse melee

Damage: Unarmed Strike (1d4–1/x2, nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)





Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 13
Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot)
 Disable Device +6, Open Locks +6, Profession (prostitute) +6, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +6
Feats: Skill Focus (Profession (prostitute))
Reputation: 2 (Talented)
Allegiances: Lord Artanes, Sharissa
Possessions: None

9 – Gallery: Includes some rare pieces of Zhemri art in the form of statuary, and some tapestries done by famous Zamorians.

10 – Laundry Area: Includes washbasins, lye soap, dirty clothes and linens (many are bloody).

11 – Conservatory: Filled with exotic plants and foods... including a rare lotus plant in the centre of the room. Anyone coming within the room comes under the influence of the plant's miasma.

BLACK LOTUS

Large Plant

Hit Dice: 4d8+20 (38 hp)
Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex save)
Speed: 0 ft.
Defence Value: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)
DR: 2 (natural)
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3
Attack: Touch +6 melee finesse (poison)
Full Attack: Touch +6 melee finesse (poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2)/10 ft. (2)
Special Attacks: Magical Poison, Miasma, Poison

Special Qualities: Plant Traits, Low-Light Vision
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -3
Abilities: Str 2, Dex 16, Con 20, Int, Wis 2, Cha 26
Environment: Warm jungle
Organisation: Patch (5-10) or colony (11-30)
Advancement: 5-6 HD (Large)

Black lotus plants have a weird, semi-sentient life of their own, which can prove hazardous to travellers in the jungles

of Kush. Certain sorcerers and supernatural creatures may exploit the living black lotus's properties so as to drug their victims or capture prey. Black lotus plants are green in colour, but with the infamous black blossoms heading each stalk. Black lotus plants can grow to over 12 feet in height. Though black lotus plants are stationary, their stalks and blossoms are capable of deliberate and fast movement, allowing them to attack in a primitive manner.

Magical Poison (Su): The poisonous miasma (see below) given off by black lotuses is partially physical and partially magical in effect. The black lotus has a strangely seductive quality that seems to make passers-by deliberately want to inhale its poison. This allows the black lotus to add its Charisma bonus to the save DC of its miasma attack (see below).

Miasma (Su): Black lotus plants constantly give off a heady scent that forces all within 20 feet of the plant to make Fortitude saves (DC 25) or be affected as by inhaling black lotus blossom (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). The save DC is Constitution-based, but due to the effects of the black lotus's magical poison special attack, it may also add its Charisma bonus to the save DC (already adjusted).

Poison (Ex): Contact, DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based. Note that this poison is essentially a less concentrated form of black lotus juice (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

12 – Pantry

13 – Kitchen: The kitchen is well stocked and is the domain of Zano, an enslaved cook. He is loyal to his master and is a genius at cooking.

ZANO THE COOK

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian commoner 6)

Hit Dice: 6d4+6 (21 hp)
Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 level)
Parry Defence: 14 (+1 Str, +3 level)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4
Attack: Knife +6 finesse melee
Full Attack: Knife +6 finesse melee
Damage: Knife (1d4/x2, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Illiteracy
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 9





Skills: (NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot) Appraise +12, Craft (brewing) +12, Craft (fine cooking) +15, Disable Device +7, Endurance, Handle Animal +8, Open Locks +7, Perform (food presentation) +11, Spot +12, Sleight of Hand +7

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft (fine cooking)), Skill Focus (Perform), Skill Focus (Spot) ^{bonus}

Reputation: 5 (Talented)

Allegiances: House Slava, Lord Artanes, Sharissa

Possessions: Knife

flies past them with another Reflex save (DC 18) followed by a Strength check (DC 16) to continue to grasp whatever the character is holding onto.

The wind will howl around the characters and ice will start to form around the characters as a frost. All the furniture and Non-Player Characters (except Sharissa if she is still alive) will fly into room 7, possibly striking the Player Characters for nonlethal damage. Objects strike Player Characters with a base attack bonus of +6. Mocking laughter can be heard coming from blackness within, the sound of giggling whispers and the booms of lustful guffaws. Sentient tendrils of madness will coil around the characters.

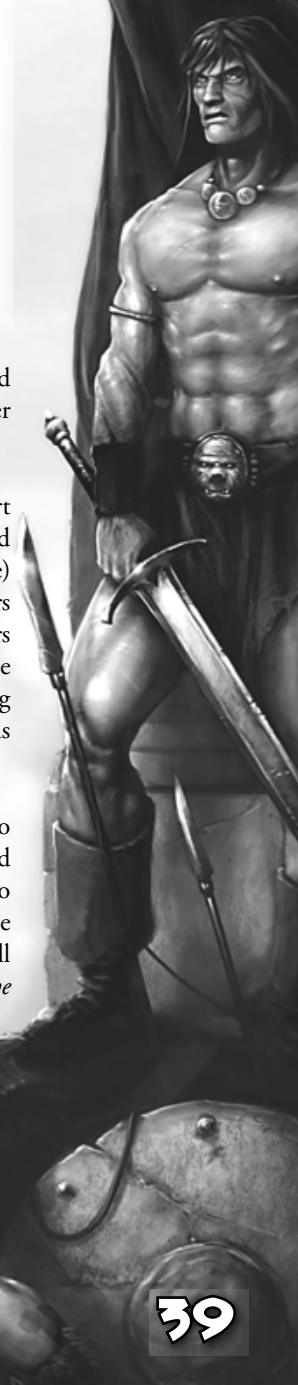
THE SECOND FLOOR

A map of the second floor is also provided in case Player Characters want to explore there, but right now the upstairs is empty and no part of the adventure takes place there.

THE GATE THAT GAPES

If characters try to break down this weak wall, the whole door will crack with a resounding snap and be sucked into the next room with a force from the deepest of Zandru's Hells. Characters must make a Reflex save (DC 23) or be sucked in likewise. Success means the character has managed to grab hold of something. Other characters can catch the outstretched arm of a lost character as he

This is Anamelech Pehor, *The Thing That Lurks*, also known as *The Feaster from the Stars*. The characters should make Terror checks (DC 20) and, if they do not try to fight back or flee, Corruption saves (DC 18). If the gate is not somehow stopped or blocked the entire house will be eventually sucked into the gate. Characters can use *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars* to close the gate, as detailed in the item description (page 30). Anyone holding, touching or reading from *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars* is immune to the suction effect.





Games masters must remember this encounter should be more of a plot device than an actual 'monster encounter'. Anamelech Pehor is a demon of monstrous stature, with power and strength to match. Games masters are advised to use caution when using this encounter.

ANAMELECH PEHOR

The Thing That Lurks (demon lord): Colossal Outsider

Hit Dice: 24d8+216 (324 hp)

Initiative: +14

Speed: 30 ft.

Defence Value: 18

DR: 10 (demon lord)

Base Attack/Grapple: +24/+60

Attack: Tentacle +32 melee

Full Attack: Tentacle x4 +32 melee *or* Bite +27 melee

Space/Reach: 30 ft. (6)/30 ft. (6)

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Possession, Spells, Suction, Swallow Whole

Special Qualities: Manifest (see below)

Saves: Fort +22, Ref +14, Will +20

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 12, Con 28, Int 26, Wis 20, Cha 30

Skills: Balance +24, Climb +38, Craft (alchemy) +35, Craft (herbalism) +35, Intimidate +37, Jump +38, Knowledge (arcana) +35, Knowledge (religion) +35, Listen +32, Perform (ritual) +37, Search +35, Spot +32

Feats: : Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack

Spells Known: *Draw forth the soul* (see below)

Anamelech Pehor is an ancient entity which has been trapped beneath Shadizar. Also known as *The Thing That Lurks*, Anamelech Pehor is a typical demon lord of the type humans may make pacts with. He is even quite willing to dwell upon Earth if this is requested of him, so long as he is well supplied with sacrifices. As with any demon lord, he can teach a mortal any spells he wishes, although Anamelech Pehor himself is not very effective when it comes to casting magic.

He appears as a flaming mass of swirling chaos with a multitude of tentacles and a massive maw. Mocking laughter can be heard coming

from blackness within, the sound of giggling whispers and the booms of lustful guffaws. Sentient tendrils of madness will coil around his enemies. He was trapped by a reading of *The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster From the Stars*, which cancels out his Manifest ability. Another reading in Shadizar will free him.

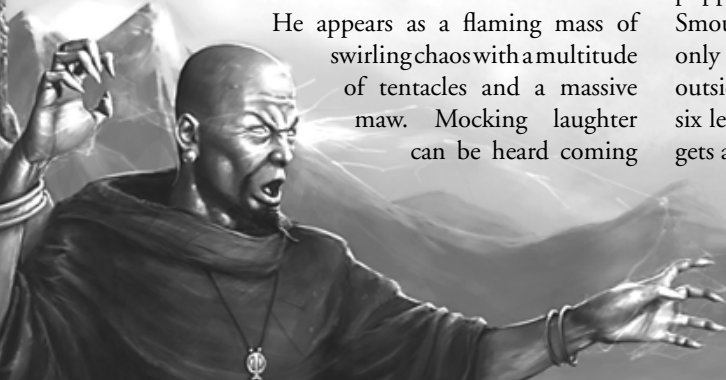
Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Anamelech Pehor must hit with his tentacle attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can use his Swallow Whole ability.

Manifest (Su): As a full-round action, *The Thing That Lurks* can either leave Earth and return to his home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, he manifests at the new location at the end of his action.

Possession (Su): There are two stages to possession: initial contact and full possession. When initially coming into contact with its victim, the victim must attempt a Will save. The DC of the save is 10 + ½ the possessing creature's Hit Dice + the possessing creature's Charisma modifier (+20 in this case). If the saving throw succeeds, then the victim hears phantom voices, is overcome with chills and feels a strong sense of foreboding but is otherwise unaffected. *The Thing That Lurks* cannot attempt to possess the victim again for a full week.

If the saving throw fails, then the victim's mind has been corrupted by *The Thing That Lurks* and the character gains a point of Corruption. Each day, the possessing spirit can attempt to force the victim to perform some action of its desiring, typically, something which would debase the victim or result in blasphemy of some sort. At this level of possession, the victim cannot be forced to do something which is immediately lethal to itself or to someone else but there is otherwise no restriction as to what the possessing spirit can force its victim to do, subject to the limits of the victim's capabilities. The victim is allowed another Will save against the same DC; if the save fails, the victim succumbs and performs the act.

To achieve full possession, *The Thing That Lurks* must spend 12 hours working at it. Once it has full control over its victim, it can do with the victim as it wills with its new puppet. Its puppets gain the Soul Destroying Kiss and Smouldering Glance powers (see Sharissa on Page 44). It can only possess one person at a time. The puppet becomes an outsider, loses all class levels and takes six levels of 'demon', six levels of scholar and one level of thief. The puppet also gets a +14 enhancement to his Charisma score.





LORD ARTANES OF HOUSE SLAVA

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian noble 10)

Hit Dice: 10d8+10 (55 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16

Parry Defence: 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+8

Attack: Poniard +12 melee finesse

Full Attack: Poniard +12/+7 melee finesse

Damage: Poniard (1d6+1/19-20, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, +2 bonus to Reflex saves, Enhanced Leadership, Lead By Example +4, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally, family ties*), Special Regional Features, Title, Wealth ;

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +7

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot*) Appraise +10, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Disable Device +5, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Open Locks +5, Perform (ritual) +8, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +7

Feats: Dabbler (Summonings), Knowledgeable, Leadership ^{bonus}, Negotiator, Persuasive

Code of Honour: None

Corruption: 9

Leadership: 17 (8th level cohort; 85 1st level, 3 2nd level, 1 3rd level followers)

Allegiances: The Thing That Lurks

Reputation: 14

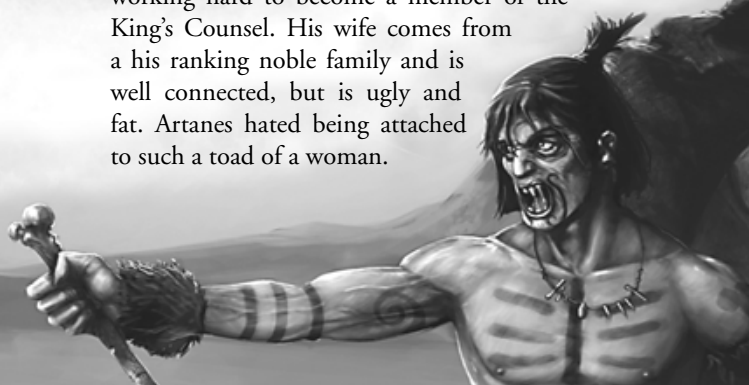
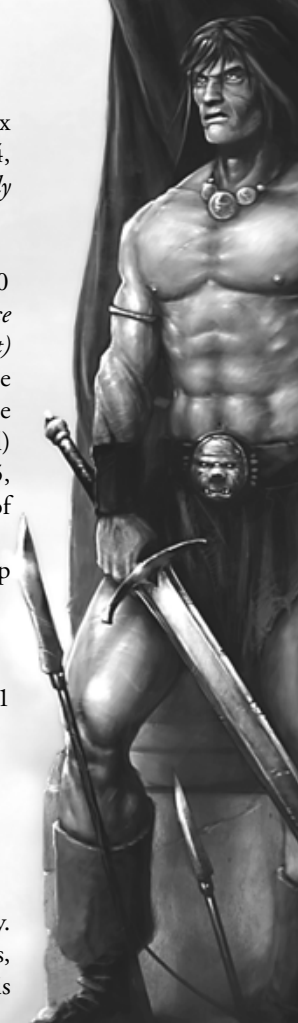
Possessions: Poniard, 344 silver pieces

Spells: Although he can teach any spell, he can only cast *draw forth the soul*, and only on anyone he has swallowed.

Suction (Su): Characters in his presence must make a Reflex save (DC 23) or be sucked into his maw and swallowed. Success means the character has managed to grab hold of something. Other characters can catch the outstretched arm of a lost character as he flies past them with another Reflex save (DC 18) followed by a Strength check (DC 16) to continue to hold onto whatever the character is holding onto. The wind will howl around the characters and ice will start to form around the characters as a frost.

Swallow Whole (Ex): Anamelech Pehor can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 2d8+20 points of bludgeoning damage and eight points of acid damage per round from the demon's innards (however, Anamelech can sustain the character at -9 hit points indefinitely), plus Anamelech Pehor will start to draw out his soul as per the *draw forth the soul* spell from *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Lord Artanes is a member of the prestigious Slava family. Well respected at court, especially for his diplomatic skills, Artanes is valued by the king and his counsellors, he is working hard to become a member of the King's Counsel. His wife comes from a his ranking noble family and is well connected, but is ugly and fat. Artanes hated being attached to such a toad of a woman.





Artanes is lithe and moderately athletic. He prefers to fight with a poniard if he must fight but he usually lets his cohort Kulekma do his fighting for him. He is swarthy and has oily black hair with a thin moustache, often wearing strong perfume with a hint of lotus in it (not enough to cause any effects). He dresses in layers of silk robes and almost always wears a colourful hat with a very wide brim. He has many of these hats, each of a different colour to match either his mood or his outfit. Lady Kliia the sorceress and Choma the High Priest of the Temple of a Thousand Lights found his favour and he was slowly indoctrinated into the ways of sorcery. Corrupted by them, he began to dabble in the occult but they refused to teach him to become a full-fledged scholar, which he resents.

This lascivious man, helped by Choma, determined to learn the ways of sorcery, stole an ancient book from Lady Kliia, using it to summon the power of *The Thing That Lurks*. He hated his fat, gross wife and used the power of the demon to grant him a beautiful wife. *The Thing That Lurks*, also known as *The Feaster Beyond the Stars*, possessed the sister of Ishachus and became the wife of Lord Artanes and called herself Sharissa. As a wife she has proved less than loyal, insisting on sucking the souls out of as many people as she can, turning his home into a dark bordello he had no desire to be a part of. This bordello, in turn, supplies a certain tavern with fresh meat served to a cult devoted to *The Thing That Lurks*.

The book he stole from Lady Kliia was, in turn, stolen from him by a member of his cult, Pistakocera. Lady Kliia wants him to impregnate Melcia, with her sorcery calculating today is the day Melcia can become pregnant. He intends to comply but he also plans to gain revenge on Lady Kliia by allowing *The Thing That Lurks* to transfer its soul into the embryo. Not only will his child be declared the heir to the throne, but also he will be demonic to boot, a thorn in Kliia's side, he hopes.

Lord Artanes has considerable resources. For example, he has up to 85 1st level, 3 2nd level and 1 3rd level followers and many of them are cultists in *Sepharvaun*. The Games Master can assign as many as desired, but keep in mind part of his power is his leadership skills. He should not be unprotected, and should he escape can use his influence to cause future problems for the Player Characters.

KULEKMA, COHORT OF LORD ARTANES

Medium Humanoid (Kushite barbarian 4/soldier 2)

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (45 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft

Dodge Defence: 17 (+4 level, +3 Dex)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 level, +3 Str)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+9

Attack: Tulwar +7 melee

Full Attack: Tulwar +7/+2 melee

Damage: Tulwar (2d8+4 /18–20/x2, AP 7)

Special Qualities: Kushite Traits, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Fearless, Versatility (–2 penalty), Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11

Skills: Hide +10, Intimidate +9, Jump +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Perform (ritual) +2, Spot +1, Survival +3

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance^{bonus}, Fighting-Madness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Track^{bonus}

Reputation: 6 (Cruel)

Corruption: 2; **Allegiances:** Lord Artanes

Possessions: Tulwar

LORD ARTANES' ACOLYTE FOLLOWERS (85)

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian scholar 1)

Hit Dice: 1d6–1 (3 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 9 (–1 Str)

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–1

Attack: Sling +2 ranged *or* Heavy Mace –1 melee;

Full Attack: Sling +2 ranged *or* Heavy Mace –1 melee;

Damage: Sling (1d8/x3, AP 1) *or* Heavy Mace (1d10–1/x2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)



Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*lay priest*), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

Saves: Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14;

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has Climb +0, Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3 and Spot +2*) Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Craft (herbalism) +6, Decipher Script +8, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Open Locks +6, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (priest) +3, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +6

Feats: Diligent^b, Noble Blood

Reputation: 3 (Villain)

Allegiances: Lord Artanes, *Sepharvaun*

Corruption: 1; Possessions: Heavy mace, sling

LORD ARTANES' TEMPLE WARDER FOLLOWERS (3)

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian scholar 1/soldier 1)

Hit Dice: 1d6+1d10-2 (7 hp)

Initiative: +4; Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 14 (+4 large shield)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1; Attack: Sling +3 ranged *or* Heavy Mace +2 melee

Full Attack: Sling +3 ranged *or* Heavy Mace +2 melee

Damage: Sling (1d8/x3, AP 2) *or* Heavy Mace (1d10/x2, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*individual*), Scholar, Knowledge is Power

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 14

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has Climb +0, Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3 and Spot +2*) Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Craft (herbalism) +6, Decipher Script +8, Disguise +3, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Open Locks +6, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (temple warder) +3, Search +3, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +6

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)^{bonus}

Reputation: 3 (Villain)

Allegiances: Lord Artanes, *Sepharvaun*

Base Power Points: 5 (10 maximum)

Magical Attack: +3 (+1 level, +2 Cha)

Sorcery Styles: Summonings

Spells Known: *Demonic pact*

Corruption: 1

Possessions: Heavy mace, sling

LORD ARTANES' OCCULTIST FOLLOWER (1)

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian scholar 2/thief 1)

Hit Dice: 2d6+1d8-3 (9 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 9 (-1 Str); Base

Attack/Grapple: +1/+0; Attack: Sling +3 ranged *or* Heavy Mace +0 melee; Full Attack: Sling +3 ranged *or* Heavy Mace +0 melee

Damage: Sling (1d8/x3, AP 1) *or* Heavy Mace (1d10-1/x2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Qualities: Zamorian Traits, Background (*individual*), Scholar, Knowledge is Power, New Sorcery Style x2, +1 Power Point, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (sling), Trap Disarming

Saves: Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +4

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills: (*NB. In urban environments also has Climb +0, Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3 and Spot +2*) Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Craft (alchemy) +7, Craft (herbalism) +7, Decipher Script +9, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Move Silently +5, Open Locks +6, Perform (ritual) +8, Profession (occultist) +4, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Tumble +3

Feats: Diligent^b, Point Blank Shot, Stealthy

Reputation: 3 (Villain)

Allegiances: Lord Artanes, *Sepharvaun*

Base Power Points: 6 (12 maximum)

Magical Attack: +3 (+1 level, +2 Cha)

Sorcery Styles: Counterspells, Curses

Spells Known: *Lesser ill-fortune*
Corruption 1;

Possessions: Heavy mace, sling



SHARISSA THE DARK MADAM

(Formerly Nika, sister of Captain Ishachus)

Medium Outsider (demon 6/scholar 6/thief 1/noble 1)

Hit Dice: 7d8+4d6+26 (71 hp)

Initiative: +13

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 25

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+12

Attack: Dagger +14 melee finesse *or* Glass Alchemical Globe +14 ranged

Full Attack: Dagger +14 melee finesse *or* Glass Alchemical Globe +14 ranged

Damage: Dagger (1d4+2) *or* Glass Alchemical Globe (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for the effects of alchemical items)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Advanced Spells x5, Possession, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Soul Destroying Kiss

Special Qualities: Background (*demonic possession*), Darkvision 60 ft., Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Manifest, New Sorcery Style x3, +2 Power Points, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Scholar, Smouldering Glance, Title, Trap Disarming, Wealth

Base Power Points: 14

Magic Attack Bonus: +15

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +16

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 28

Skills: Bluff +20, Concentration +17, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +19 (+21 acting), Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +16, Listen +19, Move Silently +13, Perform (ritual) +21, Perform (sexual techniques) +22, Search +12, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Tumble +9, Use Rope +9 (+12 with bindings)

Feats: Dodge, Iron Will ^{bonus}, Mobility, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice, Sorcerer's Boon x3

Sorcery Styles: Hypnotism, Prestidigitation, Summoning

Spells Known: Animate swords, conjuring, domination, enslave, entrance, greater telekinesis, hypnotic suggestion, master

words and signs, ranged hypnotic suggestion, summon demon, telekinesis

Possessions: Dagger, 6 Kothic demon-fire globes (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*); 2 applications each of Lotus Blacksmoke and Lotus Greensmoke and 1 application of Lotus Greysmoke

Nika was once the sister of Captain Ishachus but was possessed by Anamelech Pehor, *The Thing that Lurks* and became Sharissa, the Dark Madam. Nika was chosen by Anamelech Pehor to be his vassal when Lord Artanes woke him, and her goal is to further the influence of Anamelech Pehor. She has turned Artanes' home into a dark bordello where victims are killed in order so their souls can feed her. Her body is burning from carrying the demon lord's spirit and she requires these souls to maintain it. Eventually she wants Lady Kliia's body, believing it will be a better vessel.

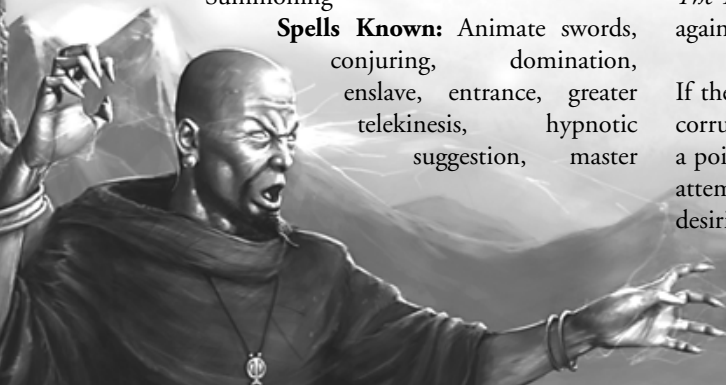
She now functions as a high priestess of the cult and is married to Lord Artanes. Through Lord Artanes' connections, Sharissa is becoming known in noble circles and has been bedding many to earn favours – and killing those who have little to offer her. Lord Artanes has asked Sharissa to help him father the heir to the throne, seeing in this an opportunity to increase his own power and influence. With Lady Kliia's help and advice, they conceived a plan to impregnate one of King Tiridates' harem girls. The wizard Khonsirdais is *enslaved* by her.

COMBAT

Her preferred tactic when dealing with heroes is to feign friendship and create an opportunity to be alone with one of them, whereupon she applies her Soul Destroying Kiss. She is a monstrous entity and causes a Terror saving throw (Will DC 16) as covered in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Scholar is treated as a favoured class for this demon.

Possession (Su): There are two stages to possession: initial contact and full possession. When initially coming into contact with its victim, the victim must attempt a Will save. The DC of the save is 10 + 1/2 the possessing creature's Hit Dice + the possessing creature's Charisma modifier (+20 in this case). If the saving throw succeeds, then the victim hears phantom voices, is overcome with chills and feels a strong sense of foreboding but is otherwise unaffected. *The Thing That Lurks* cannot attempt to possess the victim again for a full week.

If the saving throw fails, then the victim's mind has been corrupted by *The Thing That Lurks* and the character gains a point of Corruption. Each day, the possessing spirit can attempt to force the victim to perform some action of its desiring, typically, something which would debase the





victim or result in blasphemy of some sort. At this level of possession, the victim cannot be forced to do something which is immediately lethal to itself or to someone else but there is otherwise no restriction as to what the possessing spirit can force its victim to do, subject to the limits of the victim's capabilities. The victim is allowed another Will save against the same DC; if the save fails, the victim succumbs and performs the act.

To achieve full possession, *The Thing That Lurks* must spend 12 hours working at it. Once it has full control over its victim, it can do with the victim as it wills with its new puppet. Its puppets gain the Soul Destroying Kiss and Smouldering Glance powers. If Sharissa uses this power to send *The Thing That Lurks'* consciousness to another person, Sharissa's body becomes Nika again, who will have no memory (except as haunting nightmares) of her months as Sharissa.

Smouldering Glance (Su): She can cause an irrational lust in another being just by looking at them. This ability can be used a number of times per day equal to her Charisma modifier. She makes a ranged touch attack against a living creature within 30 feet. The creature must make a Will save (DC 10 + her Hit Dice + her Charisma modifier) or find themselves utterly captivated. This is a mind-affecting charm.

A captivated victim walks directly toward her, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a



dangerous area, such as through flames, over a cliff, into a lake and so on, the victim may make a second saving throw. Captivated victims can take no actions other than to defend themselves. A victim within five feet of her stands unmoving and offers no resistance to any actions made against him by the succubus. This effect continues for a number of rounds equal to her Charisma modifier.

Soul Destroying Kiss (Su): This demon drains energy from a mortal it lures into some act of passion. Her sex act takes all day and is essentially a casting of *draw forth the soul* from *Conan the Roleplaying Game* but does not require material components and does not require her to spend the initial 20 Power Points. Her kisses and passionate acts pull forth the very soul from a single target, a pleasant but agonising and maddening process taking hours.

The victim makes a Will saving throw. If he succeeds, he is able to partially resist the effects of the spell – he is helpless for the next hour, though he is still able to speak in a somewhat rambling and pained manner. If he succeeds by ten or more, he completely throws off the spell and the sorcerer may not attempt to cast it on him again for at least one day. If he fails, his body dies after 10 + 5d6 minutes (during which he rambles and is helpless, as above) and his soul is forced into a demonic entity, to spend eternity in torment.

A character who partially resisted the spell must make another saving throw after the hour is up, if the sorcerer elects to spend a further ten Power Points on continuing the spell after the first hour. The second save is at a circumstance penalty of -1, but otherwise has the same effects as the first one. This process continues until the sorcerer chooses not to spend any more Power Points on the spell, the target succeeds by ten or more, or the target fails his saving throw.

A target that is killed by this spell counts as having been sacrificed by the Tortured Sacrifice feat, with his hit points and the time it took him to die determining the amount of Power Points gained by the sorcerer as usual.

CONCLUSION

If any character opts to own *Sepharvaun* or in any way take it as their own, then the building is to be considered a tainted magic item, making everyone living there make Corruption saves (DC 25) as detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.





CONAN[®]

KINGDOM OF APES

By Uri Kurlanchik

“Apes are apes, though dressed in scarlet”

– Ben Johnson

“**THE KINGDOM OF APES**” is a wilderness exploration and dungeon adventure suitable for a group of four to six 5th-6th level characters. Because of the many challenges the group will face during the adventure, a good mix of characters is advised. Especially useful will be barbarians and borderers for their ability to follow tracks and cope with the dangers of the wild. Since the climax of the adventure includes an exploration of the ruins of an ancient and evil temple, the stealthy skills of the thief and the mystical knowledge of the scholar may also prove helpful, though not vital.

Nobles and temptresses, used for the comfort and safety of urban civilization, will find this adventure especially challenging, but no less rewarding.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

“The Kingdom of Apes” begins with the Player Characters’ arrival to the remote Kushite village of Lumba, the locals are a peaceful race of tall, ebony-skinned people. While many of their neighbouring tribes have recently been victims of a series of murderous raids leaving many of them slain or captured, the Lumbans have so far been spared similar atrocities, but not for much longer.

A short while after the Player Characters’ arrival another attack occurs, this time against the peaceful and unprepared tribe. During the raid the Player Character’s are forced to

fight for their lives against inhuman invaders that fight with the ferocity of animals and the intelligence of men. Ibunga, the priestess of the tribe, is captured and carried away into the jungles by the hairy assailants, who appear to be a strange breed of maliciously intelligent apes, some of which carry advanced weapons of unknown origins.

Tracking the raiders through the uncharted jungles of Kush, the Player Characters encounter many strange locals, including a white girl from Stygia raised by panthers who may become a vital ally or a deadly stalker, depending on the Player Characters’ diplomatic skills.

Finally, the Player Characters discover the ape’s base of operations, an ancient temple constructed by an evil and decadent cult put to the sword thousands of years ago. Unfortunately, the corrupted spirits of greed, lust and gluttony worshipped by these depraved people lingered on and possessed a couple of troops of normally peaceful gorillas, turning them into a deadly raiding band. The Player Characters must act quickly for the possessed apes plan to sacrifice the kidnapped priestess to evil spirits, making her a vassal for their dark will and a threat to the entire region.

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to draw the Player Characters into the adventure. If the Player Characters are locals, then defending their home and saving their beloved matriarch would be the most natural course of action to choose and they will require no further motivation. Simply start the adventure during the gorilla raid and remind the Player Characters their home and their leader are being threatened by the monstrous enemies.

However, since it is extremely unlikely for the Player Characters to play Kushites of this particular tribe, the following hooks can be used to draw and motivate Player Characters who are strangers to the village of Lumba and its dark-skinned inhabitants.

The Player Characters can be passing through the village, en route to some other destination, or serving as the body guards of a merchant who deals with the locals, possibly even Emilius Juno (see below for more details). However, witnessing the attack will not necessarily motivate to the Player Characters to help, especially if they are the mercenary type. If kindness or curiosity about the strange raiders and their fabulous equipment does not encourage the Player Characters to look for the villains, then the chief N'bunga offer them a meagre reward for returning the prisoners and dealing with the threat.

Another possibility is to have a loyal henchman, the Player Character's employer, or some other vital Non-Player Character also captured in the raid, drawing the Player Characters into the conflict in an attempt to rescue their friend regardless of their sentiments towards the Lumba's plight.

ANIMAL FEROCITY, HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

"Cursed greed of gold, what crimes thy tyrant power has caused!"

– Virgil

Lumba is a small but moderately wealthy Kushite village stationed on the edge of a vast and nameless jungle whose steaming depths have not been penetrated by civilized men for many centuries.

The Lumbans are a tribe controlling a vast patch of fertile pasture land located by the north-eastern border of the black kingdom. They have very dark skin, even by Kushite standards, and are generally tall and blessed with a perfect physique. Because of the hot and humid climate, they limit their clothing to grass or hide loincloths but those fortunate enough to own Aquilonian clothing usually wear it to boast of their wealth. Since the tribe has not fought for more than two decades, weapons are mainly used as decorations or by a small minority of the tribe for hunting. The Lumbans are great singers and storytellers and their nights are filled with fantastic stories and ballads about the exploits of legendary heroes and ancient gods, most of which are skilfully improvised on the fly.

The Lumbans are expert herders and farmers who have forsaken their traditional hunting-gathering way of life in favour of the safer and easier practice

of agriculture, learned from passing Northern merchants. Their contact with the outside world is minimal, they are occasionally visited by an Aquilonian merchant and adventurer named Emilius Juno, who trades the little ivory the Lumbans recover from the occasional dead elephant they uncover in the savannah for superior northern weapons, jewellery, cloth and other highly-technological goods. Other foreigners sometimes pass by the village, but rarely see a reason to visit it.

The village includes about fifty extended families and is ruled by two people; Chief N'bunga, who represents the will of the people and high priestess Ibunga, who represents the will of the Cattle Spirits. Both do very little governing, however, and their duties are mostly limited to conducting ceremonies and settling minor disputes between the families.

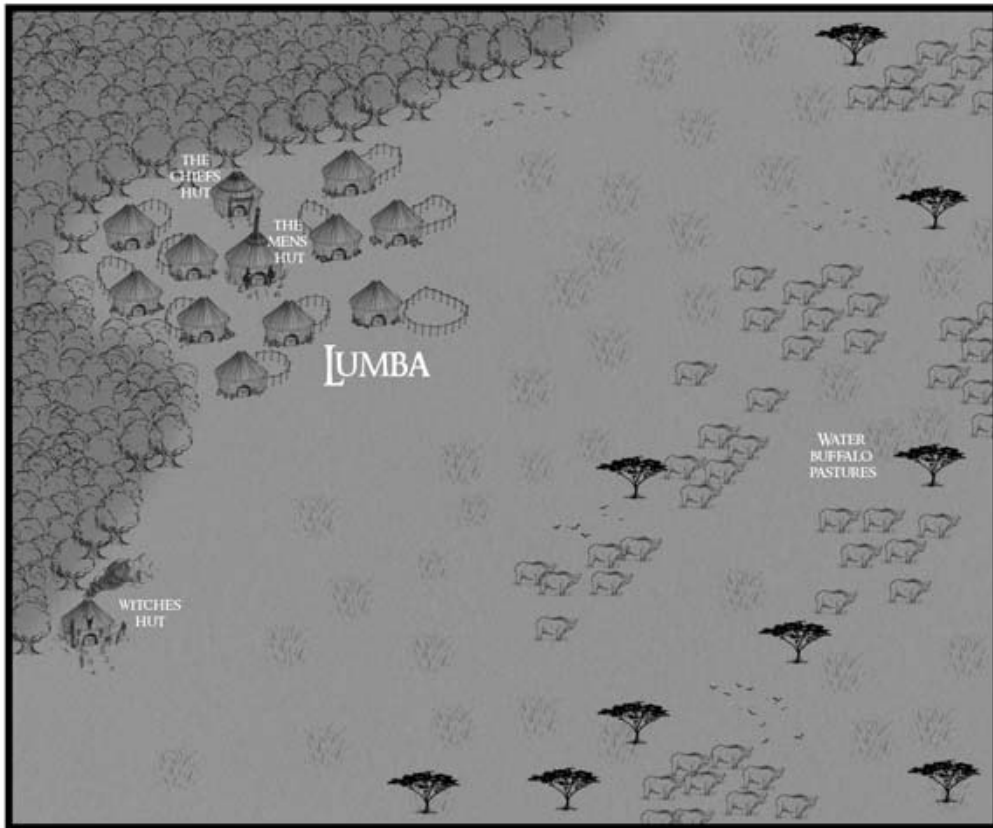
Water buffalo are the most prized possessions among these agrarian people and are treated with great reverence and respect. Animals are only slaughtered during religious rituals, with most food coming from milking and controlled bleeding performed by carefully making a small, non-fatal cut in the neck. Because of the generally mild and favourable climate, conflicts over land or water are all but unheard of. An average family owns between 30 and 40 water buffalo, which are never sold and traded; a buffalo's birth is a cause for song and celebration while the death of one is marked by mourning and crying. Traditionally, the men watch over the water buffalos while the women tend for the crops and maintain the huts.

In order to keep the village free from insects, campfires always burn in and around the village, creating a "smoke wall" that defends Lumba from the pesky insects and the deadly diseases they carry, but also make the village visible from many miles away. However, because of the near-total isolation of the Lumba this has not been a problem... until now.

1. THE MEN'S HUT

Although this round hut is larger and better decorated than any other hut in town, it has a very low entrance, forcing anyone to duck as he enters. A large carved pole juts from its rooftop. Two young men stand by the entrance, armed with ritual ivory swords and woven shields, both rumoured to be highly effective against the evil spirits of the jungle but obviously of less use against more mundane evils.

The men's hut is the most important building in Lumba; it is here that the men of



the tribe gather to make important decisions, such as going to war or performing a major sacrifice to appease the cattle or jungle spirits. However, due to the Lumba's exceedingly safe and boring life for the last few decades, its function has become more of a place of gathering and drinking and, exceedingly rarely, negotiating with foreign merchants. Only men of 16 or older may enter the men's hut. For younger men and females of all ages (even revered priestesses) the entrance to this sacred place is punishable by agonizing death.

The walls of the men's hut are adorned with dozens of weapons and other ornaments, both of local and foreign manufacture. The only furniture in the room is a crude clay throne decorated with a few precious stones and some foreign gold coins. Only the chief is allowed to sit on this chair; for anyone else even touching the sacred seat of power is punishable by death.

According to Lumba tradition, all newcomers must speak before the chief in the men's hut and the priestess in her witch hut, before otherwise interacting with the Lumbans (see individual Non-Player Character description for more details). For more details on the chief, see Dramatis Personae.

2. WITCH HUT

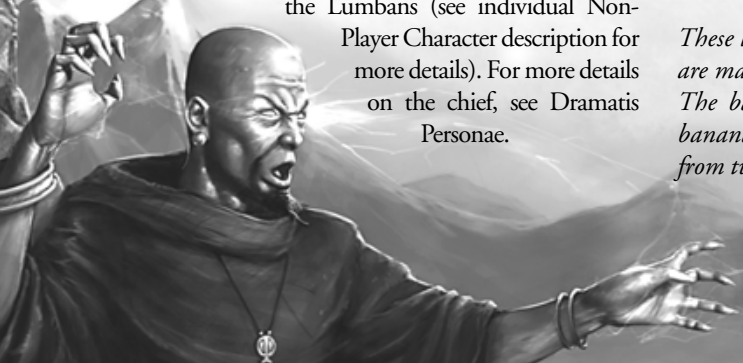
This hut is made from twigs but is reinforced with hides and bones of various creatures. Blue, ill-smelling smoke rises from its roof and mad chanting in a shrill but hoarse voice comes through its crooked walls.

This is the home and seat of power of the village's priestess, Ibunga, a teenage girl who was chosen by the spirits themselves to be their bride. It is located far from the main village because it is believed people will get sick and eventually die simply from being in the presence of such a potent mystical location.

Nevertheless, whenever some family has a supernatural problem, they come to the priestess, bearing gifts of food, clothing or jewels and humbly ask her to plead their case before the spirits. For more details on the priestess, see Dramatis Personae.

3. FAMILY HUT

These large huts usually house an entire extended family and are made only from materials gathered in the nearby jungle. The basic structure is a bent sapling, overlaid with large banana leaves for waterproofing. Most huts have walls made from twigs and stones, reinforced with clay mixed with dung,





and are decorated with colourful pieces of cloth acquired from merchants.

Each family hut houses around 20 people and lacks any furniture. Various Northern objects are scattered around and function as decorations and marks of one's wealth. One of the few hobbies the Lumbans enjoy is pottery, and most huts are filled with lovely pots, bowls, cauldrons, bottles and other kind of earthenware, all unusually decorated and lovingly finished.

Although considered little more than litter by the Lumbans, these pots can fetch a rather good price (1d10 sp per pot) in the North, especially among collectors and eccentric merchants. Unfortunately, the Lumbans are not aware of this fact and simply throw away their old pots when they run out of space.

4. CHIEF'S HUT

The chief's hut is no different than any other hut, except being slightly better decorated and free from the endless mounds of pottery, the chief and his family are warriors and it is not proper for them to practice this lowly art.

Any stranger visiting the village will be politely but firmly invited to stay in the chief's hut, refusing the invitation would be taken as an offence to the chief and his home and would result in the Player Characters getting kicked out of the village unless they sincerely apologise and offer a gift as recompense for this insult.

The merchant Emilius Juno (see *Dramatis Personae* for more details) is a frequent guest here, for which purpose he installed a bed and a table in the hut.

5. WATER BUFFALO PASTURES

In the luscious grasslands around the village of Lumba, dozens of water buffalo roam, tended by naked young boys equipped with sticks and a near endless amount of zeal and stamina.

No fences or guard towers dot the peaceful savannah where the buffalos herd, reminding once again of the peace and prosperity this isolated tribe enjoys.

There are about 600 water buffalo in the pasture, watched over by about 40 boys from different families. Usually there are two or three armed men patrolling the pastures as well, just in case.

At nightfall, each family herds its buffalo to an enclosed area by its hut and makes sure someone remains awake to watch after the buffalo because the light fence surrounding can hardly stop one, let alone an entire herd, of these massive animals.

THE ATTACK

The attack setting the adventure in motion may occur any time during the night following the Player Character's arrival. It should catch the Player Characters unprepared and as far away from Ibunga's witch hut as possible. The Lumbans heard of the "hairy men" attacks from travellers but did not prepare for the attack, assuming no one would attack such a peaceful and remote tribe. Read or paraphrase the first description for any Player Characters inside the chief's hut and the second for any Player Characters exploring the village or its surrounding.

CHIEF'S HUT

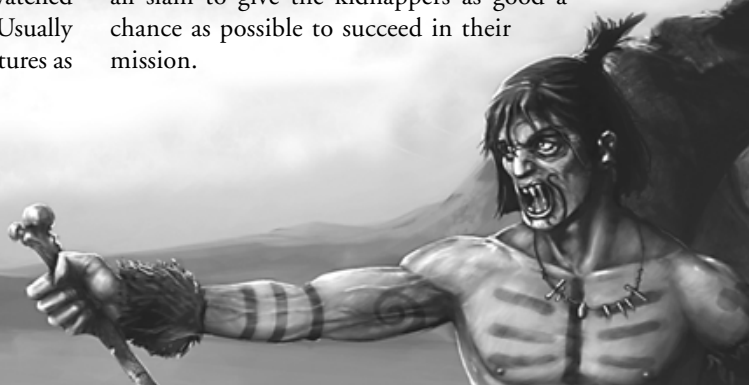
Suddenly a shrill but powerful scream pierces the night, drowning the sleepy cicada humming. Shortly afterward you hear an agonized human scream followed by the clash of weapons. The village is under attack!

ANYWHERE ELSE

A number of shambling humanoids walk out of the smoke, their dark bodies almost invisible in the night save for the metal glinting in their hands, and the glare of murder in their bestial eyes. Suddenly, one of them, a large specimen wearing a golden helmet and a crimson cloak gives out a horrible, inhuman roar. The creatures storm the village, screaming and hitting their wide chests like mad devils.

Despite its chaotic appearance, the raid has a very specific purpose – to kidnap Ibunga, whom the greed spirits consider the only suitable vassal for their unholy possession. To achieve this aim, the gorillas sent two raiding parties – a larger group that will cause havoc in the village and create a distraction while a second, more stealthy, group raids Ibunga's hut and carries her unnoticed back to the temple.

The larger group includes 13 regular gorillas commanded by two silverback chiefs and will fight until they are all slain to give the kidnappers as good a chance as possible to succeed in their mission.





During the nocturnal raid, the Player Characters will not have to fight alone—chief N’banga and Emilius Juno join the fray immediately and fight alongside the Player Characters. Also, for each passing round, three more Lumban warriors arrive to reinforce the defenders, although they will generally limit their attacks to spear and stone hurling.

ARMOURED GORILLAS (3)

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)
DR: 10

BAB/Grp: +4/+13
Attack: Claws +7 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: claw +7 melee (1d10+5) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: Large shield, great helm, breastplate

SWORD GORILLAS (3)

HD: 6d8+18 (45 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2; **BAB/Grp:** +4/+13

Attack: Claws +7 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: greatsword +7 melee (2d10+7) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 9, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: greatsword

JAVELIN GORILLAS (6)

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 17 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+13
Attack: Claws +7 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: claw +7 melee (1d10+4) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2) or javelin +7 ranged (1d8+4)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: 5 javelins

SILVERBACK GORILLAS (2)

HD: 9d8+27 (68 hit points)
Initiative: +14 (+4 Dex, +10 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +6 natural)
DR: 2

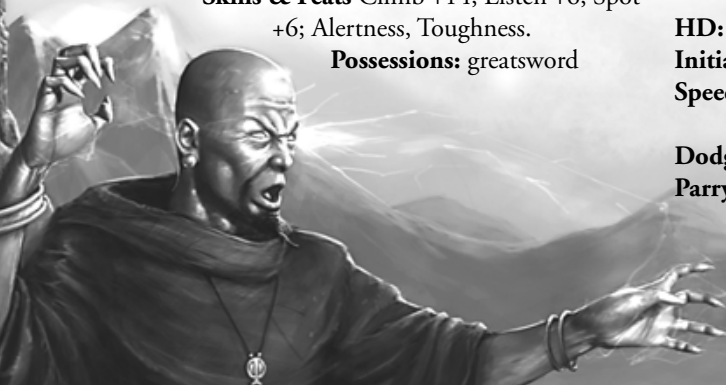
BAB/Grp: +6/+16
Attack: Bardiche +11 melee (2d10+10)
Full Attack: Bardiche +11 melee (2d10+10) or 2 claws +12 melee (1d10+4) and bite +6 melee (1d8+3)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+10
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11.
Skills & Feats Climb +19, Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: Bardiche

LUMBAN VILLAGERS

Kushite commoner 1

HD: 1d4 (3 hit points)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 10
Parry Defence: 11; **DR:** –



BAB/Grp: +0/+1

Atk and Full Attack: hunting spear +1 melee (1d8+2) or hunting spear +1 ranged (1d8+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Illiteracy

SV: Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Climb +2, Handle Animal +3, Hide +2, Jump +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Spot +5, Survival +2; Track.

TRAILS OF BLOOD AND MUD

“Now this is the Law of the Jungle — as old and as true as the sky; And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.”

–Rudyard Kipling

While examining the damage done by the apes’ bloody raid the Lumbans make a terrible discovery – among the missing and dead is their priestess, Ibunga.

Even a casual examination of the area by daylight, or a lucky search by night (Search DC 17), will reveal the deep footprints left by the inhuman invaders. As soon as the discovery is made, Emilius exclaims “I am going to save the fair lady! Who is with me?” at which point most of the locals will look down in shame – they love their priestess, but warriors they are not.

Unless the Player Characters volunteer to help the young aristocrat, he will address them himself saying “you, gentlemen, look like fine and courageous warriors; would you like to aid me in saving these poor people’s beloved priestess from the clutches of evil and madness. Surely, if love and honour will not move you to this charitable deed, the lustre of gold shall! Come now, I have plenty of it...”

The most Emilius can offer is 1,000 silver coins and if this does not move the Player Characters to help saving the young priestess, than they are probably in the wrong profession and should settle down and start farming instead.

THE JUNGLE

The Gorilla’s ruined temple lies about 55 miles east of the village. Tracking the large group through the jungle is easy due to the chaos and destruction they leave in their passing (DC 7 during the day, DC 17 during the night).

However, the jungle is teeming with ferocious beasts, gorilla patrols and even more

sinister abominations. For every four hours the Player Characters spend roaming in the jungle roll 1d4, on a result of 1 during days, or 1-2 during nights, an encounter occurs.

Note unique encounters such as Batteva or the gorillas’ ambush can occur only once – if you roll this number again on this occasion assume no encounter occurs.

Since the jungle is vast and unexplored, feel free to add other encounters suitable for your campaign, the below are only suggestions and should in no way limit your imagination.

Day Encounters

1d10	Encounter	Source
1	Gorilla Ambush	See below
2	Dead adventurers	See below
3	Jungle fever	See below
4	Normal Gorillas	Tales of the Black Kingdoms
5-6	Medium Viper	Core Rulebook
7	Crocodile	Tales of the Black Kingdoms
8	Hippopotamus	Tales of the Black Kingdoms
9	Rhinoceros	Tales of the Black Kingdoms
10	Batteva	See below





Night Encounters:

1d10	Encounter	
1	Dead adventurers	See below
2	Jungle fever	See below
3	Medium Viper	Core Rulebook
4	Panther	Core Rulebook
5-6	Gorilla Ambush	See below
7	Lesser Son of Set	Core Rulebook
8	Batteva	See below
9	Wolves	Core Rulebook
10	Tormented ghost	See below

DEAD ADVENTURERS

The flayed and disembowelled bodies of three young men hang upside down from the trees. One of them is missing his head and is partially eaten. Judging by the fine armour and the bows half sunken in the wet mud, these were no common travellers but well-equipped warriors.

These men were a group of young Stygian nobles who wanted to earn a name for themselves by slaying the beasts who have been troubling the area for the last few months. However, they made a fatal mistake – they went to sleep without a guard...

Treasure: each warrior was equipped with a chainshirt, a broadsword, a dagger and a composite longbow. The leader of the group's armour is of superior quality, and his sword is Akbitanan. He also carried two doses of Stygian tomb dust he never got to use.

ENCOUNTER DESCRIPTIONS

BATTEVA

See dramatis personae for Batteva's description.

CROCODILE

Any crocodile encountered has a 50% to be hungry, in which case he will attempt to snatch one of the Player Characters and drag him or her deep under water. Otherwise, the crocodile will ignore the Player Characters unless physically harmed.

CROCODILE (I)

HD: 3d8+9 (23 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 20 ft. swim 30 ft.

Defence: 13

DR: 4

BAB/Grp: +2/+6

Attack: Bite +6 melee or tail slap +6 melee

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d8+6) and tail slap +6 melee (1d12+6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft

Special Attacks: Improved Grab

Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light vision

SV: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills & Feats: Hide +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +12; Alertness, Skill Focus (Hide)

GORILLA AMBUSH

Knowing many locals and the occasional Northerner pass through this portion of the jungle, the possessed gorillas designed a series of crude but deadly traps in order to catch hunters and adventurers to serve as food and sacrifices for the ever-hungry spirits of greed.

Four gorillas are watching the trap from a concealed position 60 feet away, waiting for some hapless traveller to walk into it. Note both the Player Characters and the gorillas suffer a -1 check penalty to their Listen checks for every 10 feet they are removed from one another. As soon as the Player Characters set the trap, the gorillas attack, showering the Player Characters with rocks and hunting spears from the safety of the trees and thick bushes (cover and 20% concealment). The gorillas will continue to hurl rocks and spears at the Player Characters for two more rounds or until melee is forced upon them, in which case they charge with their melee weapons and try to bull-rush weakened characters into the pit or simply beat them into submission if the former fails.

If the gorillas find the Player Characters too tough to handle alone, they will attempt to retreat back to their stronghold, preferably carrying any disabled characters along with them (they will drop them, however, to save their lives). Any survivors will alert the rest of the tribe and later come en masse to hunt for the Player Characters.



STONE AND STICK GORILLAS (2)

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (-1 size, +6 Str, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+14
Attack: War club +8 melee (2d6+9)
Full Attack: War club +9 melee (2d6+9) or 2 Claws +9
melee (1d10+6) or rock +4 ranged (2d4+6) and bite +4
melee (1d8+3)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+6
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 14, Int
2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats: Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Power
Attack, Bull Rush.
Possessions: 4 rocks, war club

KNIGHT GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 21 (-1 size, +4 Str, +4 natural, +4 shield)
DR: 6

BAB/Grp: +4/+14
Attack: Greatsword +6 melee (2d10+6)
Full Attack: Greatsword +6 melee (2d10+6) or 2 Claws +6
melee (1d10+4) and bite +1 melee (1d8+1)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 14, Int
7, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills & Feats: Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness,
Toughness.
Possessions: Large brigandine coat, large shield,
greatsword

JAVELIN GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +13 (+4 Dex, +9 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 17 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+12;
Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d10+4)
Full Attack: 2 claw +7 melee (1d10+4) or javelin +7
ranged (1d8+4) and bite +1 melee (1d8+1)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+4
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 19, Con 14, Int
2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats: Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness,
Toughness.
Possessions: 5 javelins

Trap: A well-camouflaged net is tightly stretched above a
20-foot-deep pit and tied to a powerful branch 30 feet above
with four thick vines. As soon as more than 200 pounds are
placed on the net, it springs into the sky, trapping anyone
still inside 20 feet above the pit. It is possible to cut the
vines holding the net by inflicting 20 points of slashing
damage on them but this will cause the net, and everyone
inside to plunge 40 feet down into the pit. The 10-foot-
wide pit is crude and uneven and its walls are covered in
roots and vines making the Climb DC a mere 10.

Camouflaged Net Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger;
manual reset; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. Note:
Characters in 10-ft. square are entangled and can not move if they
fail a DC 16 Reflex save. Creatures can escape from the trap by
making a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 25 Escape Artist check

Treasure: A few weeks ago, another adventuring group
went through the area and was attacked by the gorillas.
During the pitched battle, the group's scholar, Neiviza, was
hit by a massive stone and fell headfirst into the pit.

Abandoned by her fleeing companions and unnoticed by
the battle-crazed apes, she slowly drowned in the mud,
powerless to resist because of her grievous head injury.
Most of her equipment had since rotted away, but the
following remains in working condition: an Akbitanan
dagger, a pouch with 256 sp, a 50-foot-long silk rope and
an empty parchment diary in perfect condition (kept in
a waterproof leathercase). The latter has only writing on
the first page, with only the following:

Today we embarked on an expedition into the uncharted jungles
of the Black Kingdoms, following wild rumours of
apes that fight like men and historical ruins
of great significance. I hope to write
more as the journey proceeds.

- Neivizia, daughter of Baslama



The Spot DC to notice the body and the equipment is 15 (5 from inside the pit).

HIPPOPOTAMUS

The hippopotamus is a deeply territorial herbivore, which means it will not attack the Player Characters unless they enter its territory (usually a lake or a portion of a river) and will cease attacking them as soon as they leave its territory.

HIPPOPOTAMUS

HD: 9d8+54 (95 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 15 ft., swim 20 ft.

Defence: 12 (-2 size, +4 natural)

DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +6/+21

Attack: Bite +11/+6 melee (1d10+10)

Full Attack: Bite +11/+6 melee (1d10+10)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./15 ft.

Special Qualities: Low-light vision

SV: Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 25, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills: Hide -5, Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +17

JUNGLE FEVER

The Player Characters arrive to a contaminated spot and must make a Fortitude check (DC 14) for every ten minutes spent in the area or contract Jungle Fever. This deadly disease has an incubation period of 1d3 days, after which the patient suffers 1d3 Strength and Constitution damage per day until he either makes two successful Fortitude checks (DC 14) in a row or dies from constitution loss.

LESSER SON OF SEE

See page 374 in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*

MEDIUM VIPER

See page 375 in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*

NORMAL GORILLAS

These gorillas are shy and peaceful creatures which do not fight except in self-defence. However, since previous experience may have taught the Player Characters to attack all apes in sight, this encounter has a good chance of becoming violent.

GORILLAS (2-8)

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+13

Attack: Claws +8 melee (1d10+5)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d10+5) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

SV: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.

PANTHER

See page 371 in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*

RHINOCEROS

Rhinoceroses are ill-tempered and powerful beasts that attack without warning anyone who walks into their territory, being too dumb and aggressive to evaluate their physical condition these formidable creatures fight to the death.

HD: 8d8+40 (76 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+6 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Defence: 12 (-1 size, +6 natural)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grp: +6/+18

Attack: Gore +13 melee (2d6+12)

Full Attack: Gore +13 melee (2d6+12)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.



Special Attacks: Powerful charge
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
SV: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2.
Skills & Feats: Listen +14, Spot +3; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (gore).

WOLVES

See page 375 in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*

TORMENTED GHOST

A morbidly thin old man silently steps out from behind a tree and stares at you intensely. His hair is filthy and dishevelled, his beard is white and filthy and the rags he wears are worn to the point of almost being non-existent.

That pathetic creature is one of the knights who originally raided the Temple of Greed all those centuries ago. Realizing the temple is once again a threat because of the knights' failure to destroy the spirits within, he manifests before the Player Characters and delivers the following speech, before finally vanishing and disappearing from this world forever.

"Young heroes," the apparition hisses, its grotesque visage twisting with pain and effort, as if every word cuts at its un-living flesh, "hear me out! I was too a hero once, a great



and noble knight who led his brethren against the vile cult of this jungle... we put them to the sword and set fire to their altars... but the gold... the jewels... the EVIL... you have no right to them!" The old man's voice gains a note of hysteria, "this is greed, YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO THEM!" and with this last scream, the old man's voice turns into gruesome gurgling and he collapses into nothingness, leaving nothing but the smell of an opened grave in his wake.

THE RUINS OF EVIL

*"All changed, changed utterly
 A terrible beauty is born"*
 -William Butler Yeats

The apes' tracks end by the gaping entrance to a massive vine-covered temple curved in the side of a large, bald hill. The nameless architects who constructed it had considerable skill but utterly perverse and wholly offensive imagination. The few engravings still visible on the blackened walls depict creatures that are neither men nor beasts perform acts of wanton debauchery on naked, defenceless humans.

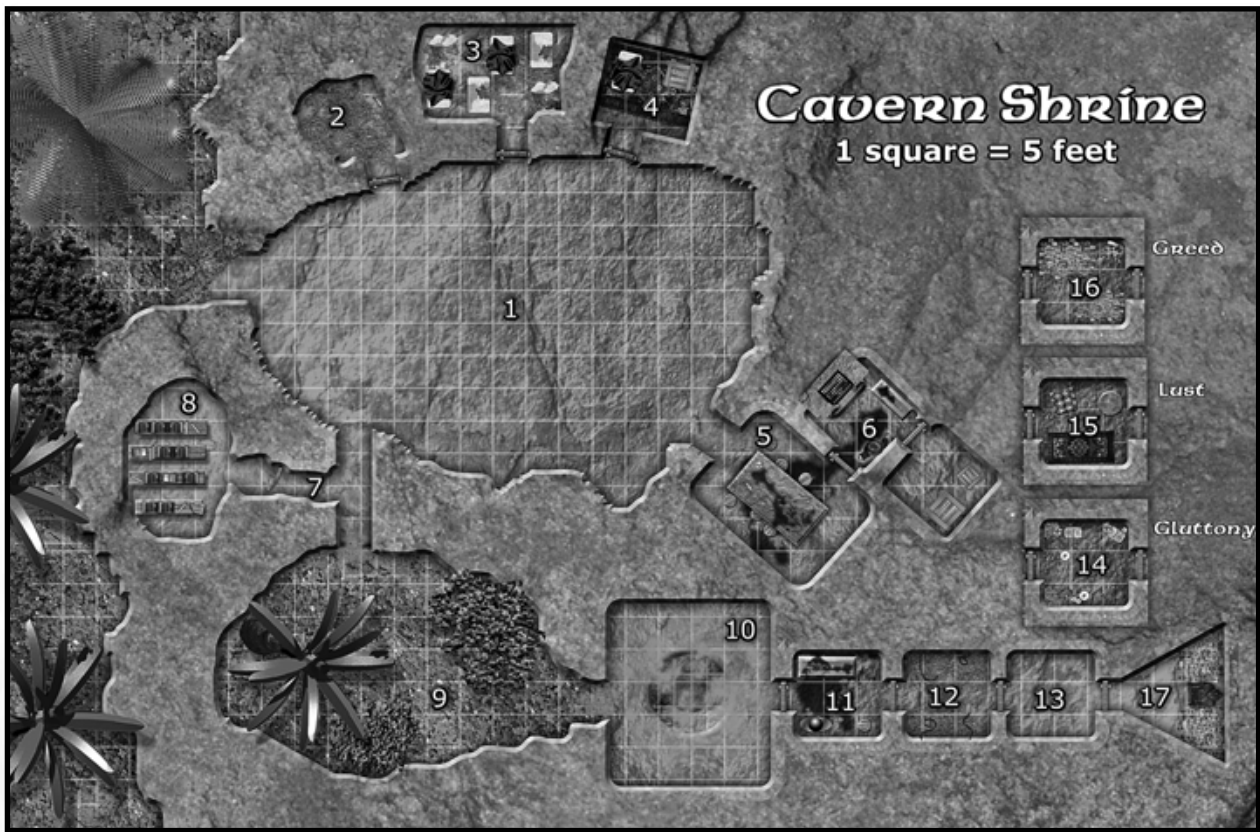
It seems that the temple has not been tended for a long time; many of its features crumbled and mighty trees have grown into the area from the base of the hill, ruining many of the images and decorations.

This wicked-looking temple was constructed by primordial creatures thankfully extinct many millennia ago. However, the spirits of greed taking residence in this sink hole of malevolence and perversion were so powerful they continued to harass the people of Kush long after the original builders were dead and forgotten.

In later years it served as the home base of an especially dangerous gang of murderous brigands who made the temple their stronghold and its dark spirits their gods and masters. Later, after the brigands were wiped out by an army of Northern knights seeking to make the area safe for commerce, it became the stronghold of the possessed gorilla raiders. As long as the temple remains intact and the ill-gained treasure in its vault continues to shine and amuse the spirits of greed, there will be no peace in the jungles.

While the tale of this specific temple is too obscure for any scholar to fathom, a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check will reveal the temple to be dedicated to the spirits of greed, while a DC 25 Knowledge (local) will reveal





that in primordial times the inhuman civilization which ruled these jungles worshipped Greed, Gluttony and Lust and performed terrible rites to satisfy these foul urges. Although that race is now extinct, the cult still exists, though outlawed and hunted by all sane nations.

Features: Unless otherwise stated, all doors are made of strong wood (2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25) and have good locks that are usually left unlocked (gorillas are too clumsy to operate a lock, even when possessed by a human-like intelligence).

1. GRAND HALL

This large, roughly-rectangular cavern has three moss-covered wooden doors on its northern wall, one on the eastern wall and a wide, dark corridor leading south. Apish laughter and inhuman gibbering come from two of the rooms, mixed with the occasional sound of breaking ceramics.

If the Player Characters make noise in this hall they may be noticed by the cheering apes in rooms 3 or 4 (who take a -10 on

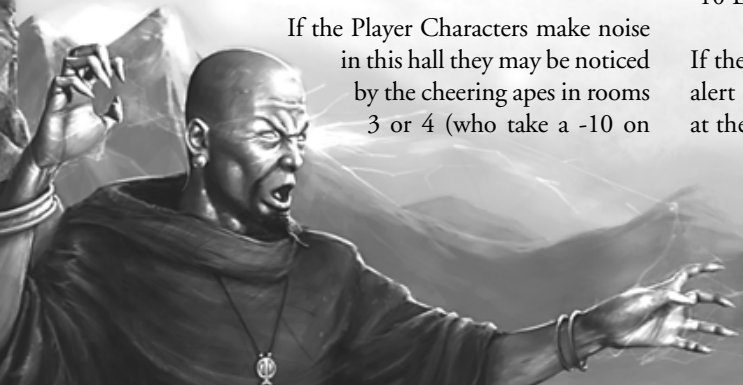
their Listen checks because the doors are very thick and the gorillas are making a terrible racket themselves). Gorillas who notice the Player Characters sound a fearsome battle roar and charge, fighting to the death.

2. GUARDROOM

This small crudely hewn room is completely empty save for some straw on the ground and a few discarded banana peels.

In theory, this room is supposed to house a fully armed and armoured group of warriors ready to stall an attack on the temple until reinforcement arrives. However, apes being apes, there are only two guards in the guardroom, both of which are sound asleep. Their thundering snores can be heard from any spot in area 1 by a successful DC 15 Listen check. Note that even sleeping gorillas have a chance to hear approaching characters, as years of living in the wilderness had honed their alertness to perfection, reducing the usual -10 Listen penalty for sleeping to merely -4.

If the gorillas become aware of the Player Characters, they alert the entire level by emitting a mighty roar and charge at the Player Characters, fighting to the death.





Creatures: The two guards are regular gorillas; one has a massive copper shield which it uses both for bashing and protection while the other is wearing rusty but still deadly barbed gauntlets.

SHIELD GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 20 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+13
Attack: Claws +8 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: claw +8 melee (1d10+5) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.; **SV:** Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2
 Str 21, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: Large copper shield

GAUNTLET GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (-1 size, +6 Str, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+14
Attack: Claws +9 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: 2 barbed gauntlets* +9 melee (1d10+5 plus 1d4) and bite +4 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5 plus 1d4
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: barbed gauntlets (too big for humans)

*The barbed gauntlets count as weapons and enable the gorilla to parry attacks.

TROOP QUARTERS

This cavern is roughly rectangular and is obviously artificial. A dozen beds of different styles are scattered randomly on the floor, most of them bent, scratched and soiled into uselessness. There are many art pieces and decorations nailed to the walls but they are in the same condition as the beds, and are placed without any logic or taste, making the room look more like a storage, rather than a living, area.

This is the gorillas' main quarters, it includes 12 beds in various states of disrepair and an almost infinite amount of junk that the gorillas find amusing. The mounds of junk often reach the ceiling, which does not obstruct the gorilla's movement but makes every step a challenge for most humans. Every 5 feet moved in the room counts as a full action that provokes an attack of opportunity unless the character succeeds on a DC 10 Balance check, in which case he or she moves ten feet as a Move Action. Critical fumble on this check results in the character being buried under an avalanche of trash, sustaining 1d4 points of damage and losing their next round crawling from under the rubble.

The amount of gorillas in this room constantly varies as some go on raids, some sleep outside, some "dine" in the mess hall while others simply loiter around the temple. During the day there are 2d6 gorillas in the room and during the night there are 3d6+2, probably asleep. Reroll every hour.

ARMOURED GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)
DR: 10

BAB/Grp: +4/+13
Attack: Claws +8 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: claw +8 melee (1d10+5) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: Large shield, great helm, breastplate





SWORD GORILLA

HD: 6d8+18 (45 hit points)
Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+13
Attack: Claws +8 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: greatsword +8 melee (2d10+7) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 9, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: greatsword

JAVELIN GORILLA

HD: 6d8+12 (39 hit points)
Initiative: +22 (+2 Dex, +9 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 17 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +4/+12
Attack: Claws +7 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: claw +7 melee (1d10+4) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2) or javelin +7 ranged (1d8+4)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.
Skills & Feats Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: 5 javelins

SILVERBACK GORILLA

HD: 9d8+27 (68 hit points)
Initiative: +14 (+4 Dex, +10 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft. (6) climb 30 ft.

Defence: 19 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +6 natural)

DR: 2

BAB/Grp: +6/+16
Attack: Bardiche +11 melee (2d10+10)
Full Attack: Bardiche +11 melee (2d10+10) or 2 claws +11 melee (1d10+4) and bite +6 melee (1d8+3)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+10
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
SV: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11.
Skills & Feats Climb +19, Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Toughness.
Possessions: Bardiche

*These are just for quick reference, feel free to equip your gorillas as you see fit. However, keep in mind that gorillas are far larger than humans are unlikely to wear armour or carry small weapons. Also, describe most gorillas as wearing odd and mismatching bits of clothing.

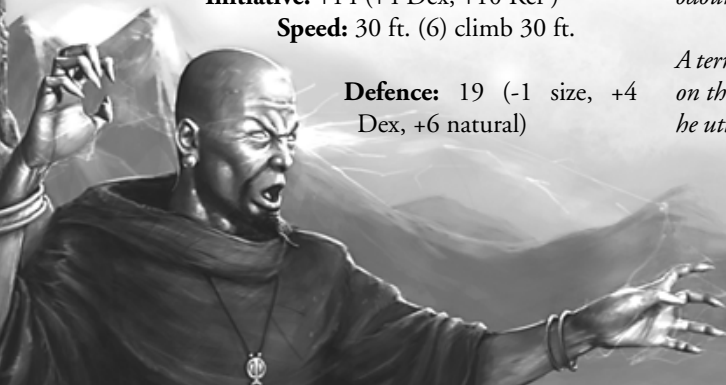
Treasure: Careful examination (Search DC 17) of all the rubbish in this room will reveal the following useful items (one per successful roll):

- ✦ A warhammer
- ✦ A whip
- ✦ 2 steel caps
- ✦ 10-foot chain
- ✦ Crowbar
- ✦ 50-foot hemp rope
- ✦ 7 Torches
- ✦ 5 robes in good condition

4. HIGH-PRIEST'S ROOM

This once opulent bedroom now looks like the study of a raving lunatic. Old scrolls covered in strange sigils are scattered on the floor, along with chunks of rotting flesh and discarded clothing. The air is thick with the smells of death and refuse. The foul odours bring tears to your eyes and nausea to your throats.

A terribly warped giant of a man scribes images of pure madness on the stone walls with a crude ivory dagger. Without turning he utters in broken Stygian "the truth can only be written with



bones!!!! THE TRUTH CAN ONLY BE WRITTEN WITH BONES!!!!

This room was once the living quarters of the cult's military commander, who died with his daggers red surrounded by the bodies of half a dozen knights. After the spirits possessed their first silverback, they sent his troop after a human, which they reasoned would make a better host than a lumbering primate.

However, being spirits of greed, all the temple spirits tried to enter the captured Stygian at once, twisting his mind and body beyond recognition in the process. Realizing their experiment failed, they just left the broken man in the room, occasionally tossing him a prisoner as entertainment.

Although most of the madman's scribbling are just that, the senseless musings of a psychopath, some of them give the educated viewer glimpses into a remote and monstrous past, too mad to be fully comprehended by mortal men. If a Player Character tries to decipher the writings, let him or her make a DC 20 Decipher Script check followed by a DC 16 Wisdom check in case of success. Success in both rolls grants the viewer a +2 permanent bonus to all Knowledge checks dealing with the remote past while failure on the second roll inflicts 1 point of permanent Wisdom damage.

As soon as the madman spots the Player Characters, he attacks, fighting to the death. However, he will not follow the Player Characters outside the room unless attacked with ranged weapons – he has more important thing to do than to chase young hooligans around.

TWISTED MADMAN

HD: 8d6+16 (52 hit points)

Initiative: +10 (+2 Dex, +8 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft. (6)

Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class)

DR: 4; NA

BAB/Grp: +6/+10

Atk or Full Attack: bone dagger +10/+5 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks: sadist

Special Qualities: barbed, fast healing 5, insane

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

SV: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 3, Cha 13.

Skills & Feats: Intimidate +12; Diehard, Power Attack, Steely Gaze, Toughness

Possessions: bone dagger

Barbed (Ex): The twisted madman has bones growing out of his body to form short but very tough barbs. While extremely painful to him and unpleasant to look at, these bony barbs are very helpful in combat; unarmed attacks against the twisted madman inflict 1d4 points of damage to the attacker and grant the madman DR 4.

Sadist (Ex): Any creature hit by the twisted madman's boner dagger must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or suffer a -4 penalty on all rolls made the following round due to unspeakable pain. Rejoicing at the agony of his victims, the twisted madman becomes even more violent and bloodthirsty; for each failed saving throw (but no more than once per round) he gains a +2 temporary bonus to Str and Con, but suffers a -2 penalty to AC and all saving throws. The bonuses or penalties can never exceed +/- 8.

Insane (Ex): Enjoying the clarity of true madness, the twisted madman adds his Wisdom penalty to his Will Saving Throw instead of subtracting it.

5. MESS HALL

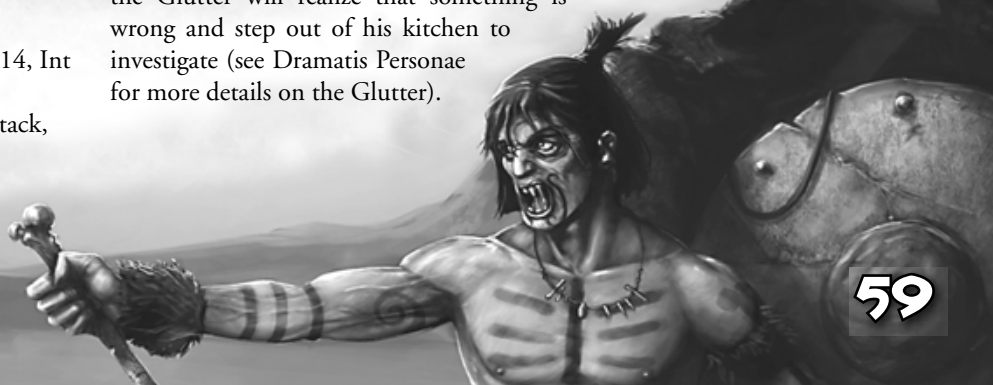
This large and dimly lit hall is dominated by a long stone table with eight stools standing or lying around it. Bones and banana peel are scattered all over the floor, filling the air with a terrible smell of putrescence. There is a closed wooden door to the north of the room.

The seven gorillas from the Glutter's troop spend most of their free time in this room, gorging on various "delicacies" prepared by their obese master. Every time the Player Characters enter the room there will be 2d4-1 gorillas there, with each gorilla being 50% likely to be passed out on the table.

Because of the multiple peels and bones on the floor, both the Player Characters and the gorillas must succeed on a DC 5 balance check every time they move more than 5 feet or trip and fall prone.

Combat in this room will alert neither the gorillas from areas 2 and 3, nor the Glutter in area 7, because they are used for the gorillas brawling and howling in the room.

However, if the Player Characters speak loudly enough, the Glutter will realize that something is wrong and step out of his kitchen to investigate (see Dramatis Personae for more details on the Glutter).





Use the same statistics as sword the gorillas in area 3, only with +2 to Con and -2 to Dex. The gorillas of gluttony are healthy and well fed but somewhat sluggish from inactivity and excessive eating and drinking.

6. KITCHEN

This nightmarish room looks like a kitchen from hell; human body parts hang from the walls and drip blood on the stained and soiled floor. The ancient oven burns with infernal fire, spilling terrible heat and crimson light on dozens of greasy pans and pots. A huge and morbidly obese silverback gorilla toils in the hellish kitchen, its razor sharp cleaver going up and down on what used to be kushite warrior.



This gruesome gorilla is the Glutter (see *Dramatis Personae* for more details), busy preparing yet another feast for its troop of seven apes. Arrogant and fearless, the monster will launch an attack against the Player Characters without bothering to call for reinforcement. However, since losing such a fine body would inconvenience the evil spirit, it will attempt to retreat first into the mess hall and then try to use the pit of the Holy Abomination to defeat the party (see area 10 for more details) if brought to 10 or less hp. If that fails, it will retreat further,

trying to lure the Player Characters into as many dangers as possible before making a final stand in the vault.

The other door from the kitchen leads to a storeroom, where there are more carcasses and much fruit hanging from hooks and on shelves.

7. UNSCABLE PASSAGE

A narrow and obviously artificial passage of about 40 feet leads to a poorly lit room stacked with large wooden closets. Seven cracked wooden beams support the ceiling and an eighth one lies on the floor, broken in half.

This passage was never very stable to begin with and all the fighting taking place in the temple since it was restored by the bandits did little to stabilize it. Any violent action taken in this passage has a 25% chance to trigger a cave-in. Destroying any of the beams automatically brings down the ceiling.

Except for its obvious effects, a cave-in is also heard by everyone in the temple.

Characters in the bury zone of a cave-in take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried.

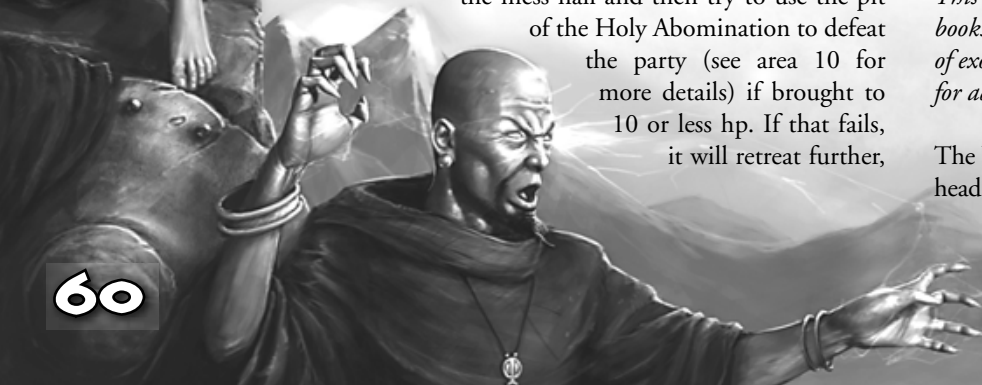
Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check every round. If he fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Characters who are not buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only his or her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs one ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. Conscious, buried characters can also free themselves with a DC 25 Strength check.

8. LIBRARY

This clean and quite room is occupied by half a dozen bookshelves laden with scrolls and mouldy tomes in hundreds of exotic languages. Otherwise the room is unremarkable, save for admirable cleanliness and silence.

The books in this library have been collected by the original head of the cult, who enjoyed leafing through the stolen





9. INNER GARDEN

As you finish descending the slippery staircase to the lower level you are surprised to suddenly find yourself in a luscious garden whose leaves shine like emeralds and apples glitter like rubies. A very quiet and melancholic singing in a strange tongue can be heard from between the thick bushes.

The garden was raised by the original builders of the temple for their own incomprehensible reasons. Of all the maddening horrors once living in this garden, only the Head Tree still lives on, patiently waiting for new victims to decapitate.

Normal gorillas are forbidden from entering the garden as it is considered to be the first step of the “Mysterious Path,” of which they are considered unworthy, but the three hosts (Greeder, Glutter and Luster) and the silverbacks sometimes wander in the garden.

Check for wandering monsters once every ten minutes. Roll a 1d2; an encounter occurs on a 1. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 to determine the creature encountered. If all the creatures of a certain type were killed treat this roll as if no encounter has occurred.

books in search of new places to rob and despoil. It is in this room that he died, crushed to death by one of the heavy closets. The feelings of hatred and frustration he experienced as he slowly suffocating, unable to do anything but stare helplessly at the faces of his cheering enemies caused his malignant ghost to remain in the library, determined to inflict the same fate on his enemies as was inflicted on him.

A short while after all the Player Characters entered the library, the ghost causes the bookcases to collapse one by one in an attempt to pin the Player Characters underneath. Each Player Character inside the room must make a DC 13 Reflex save or be hit for 2d6 points of damage and pinned under a bookcase. Each round spent under the bookcases inflicts additional 1d3 points of damage. Escape requires a successful DC 13 Strength check.

The collapse causes a tremendous racket heard by all creatures in the first floor plus the Inner Garden (area 9).

Treasure: among the hundreds of trivial or hopelessly rotten books, there is an ancient spellbook containing the following spells:

- ✦ Divination: *Dream of Wisdom, Psychometry,*
- ✦ Hypnotism: *Entrance, Hypnotism, Hypnotic Suggestion*

1d6	Encounter	Amount
1	Silverback	5
2-3	4 Assassin vines	2
4-6	Head Tree	1

The thick vegetation and the cacophony of noises impose a -4 circumstance penalty on all Spot and Listen checks made within the garden and limit vision to 60’.

10. PIT OF THE HOLY ABOMINATION

A deep pit is dug in the middle of the room, vomiting forth unspeakable stench and some dark and foul smoke that hangs heavily in the small room. All around the pit there are strange scratches on the ground – jagged gory marks leading towards the hole.

For those inside the pit:

You land waist deep in crystal clear, frozen water. Below your feet is some sort of a grate made from a dozen or so metal bars driven deep into the





stone walls of the pit. All over the grates, bleached bones and rusty weapons are scattered.

The sacred beast is a grotesque abomination from the time of the temple's original construction. While not needing to eat, its hatred to this new and reasonable world which it can not understand or inhabit causes it to snatch at creatures coming too close to its home and prison. The apes are well aware of the creature and use it as a trap and a pet. Occasionally they feed prisoners and small animals to the creature, mistakenly believing it needs to be fed in order to survive.

The gargantuan body of the creature is submerged deep under the cavern but its countless tentacles constantly squirm around, looking for new victims to tear apart into little bits that can be pulled through the adamantine grate that separates it from the rest of world.

Any living creatures coming within 10 or less feet from the pit is immediately attacked by the monster. It attempts to drag its victims into the pit and press them against the bars, causing 1d8+6 points of damage per round, plus the added risk of drowning in the frigid water. Fortunately, the creature has one fatal weakness – it is pathological afraid of fire. Even a single point of fire damage causes the damaged tentacle to recoil in horror for 1d3 rounds. After six or more tentacles were burned or destroyed the creature retreats for a hour, nursing its wounds and once again cursing its prison.

II. TORTURE CHAMBER

This small room is equipped with a wide variety of torture devices collected from many lands. Ranging from the exquisitely decadent to the sadistically crude, all these instruments of death are kept in perfect order and glitter in the dim torchlight. A young kushite woman is strapped to a spiked chair, completely naked save for the leather strips that bind her to the chair.

A large orang-utan with crimson fur and maliciously intelligent eyes is shaving the poor woman, rather crudely, it seems, as blood streams freely down her face.

This orang-utan is the Luster, who thought it would be amusing to have a body different from all other the apes. As soon the creature spots the Player Characters, it smiles apishly at them and slits the woman's throat, killing her on the spot.

Next, it charges at the Player Characters, slashing wildly with its razor, while trying to escape back to the upper level and call some gorillas to deal with the intruders. If the fight seems to go the Player Characters' way, or if all the upper level apes are already dead, it will sprint for the vault, hoping the "mysterious path" will finish the Player Characters off. In any case, it will attempt its last stand in the vault, possible aided by the two other hosts. See Dramatis Personae for more information about the Luster.

12. HUMAN PENS

Almost twenty people, mainly young Kushites, are huddled in this small and bare room. The stench of sweat and refuse coming from this room is all but overpowering.

This room was originally used as storage space, but since the gorillas have nothing to store they decided to use it as living quarters for their prisoners, not caring that it was too small for ten, let alone twenty people to stay in. The prisoner's conditions are horrendous – they are fed with leftovers and are occasionally given a few buckets of warm, murky water. Three of the people in the room are dead, but their bodies remain upright because of how tightly the prisoners are packed.

Most prisoners do not know anything about the temple's contents and want nothing but to escape this hellish captivity, two of the eighteen prisoners, however may be of special interest to the Player Characters.

Agag Dar Khakam (Pelishtim scholar 7): Agag is a sorcerer and a philosopher who heard of the fabled treasure of the Temple of Greed and decided to investigate the rumours first hand and possibly claim the fabled fortune for himself. However, as soon as he entered the ruined temple he was seized by the gorillas and locked in with the rest of the prisoners until some use could be devised for him.

Although he never got to see the lower level, he read about it in ancient tomes and interviewed descendents of the original raiders and can tell the Player Characters the following:

The lower level is called "the mysterious path" and is designed to test one's understanding and capacity for greed, gluttony and lust before letting him in to the inner sanctum, rumoured to be the seat of a legendary treasure. If legends are to be believed, the path includes a pleasure garden to prepare the traveller's body, a shrine to cleanse his soul, a series of arcane tests to test his mettle and, lastly, the vaults themselves – rich with ill-gained gold and bloody gems!



THE LONG WAY HOME

Highly moral Player Characters will feel obliged to escort the prisoners back to Lumba, because it is quite obvious that the starved and unarmed wretches have no chance of surviving the deadly passage on their own.

The first and most obvious source of danger for the prisoners are surviving apes – as long as at least one of the hosts or silverbacks is alive, the gorillas will fight to hinder the prisoner's escape, including following the Player Characters through the jungle and launching hit and run attacks against the slow and vulnerable prisoner procession. The apes will attempt to snatch prisoners and carry them back to the temple, using their superior agility and climbing skills to evade pursuit. If kidnapping prisoners turns out to be too difficult, the apes will resort to simply dropping heavy objects on the prisoners' heads and fleeing to the safety jungles by jumping from treetop to treetop.

However, even if all the apes were slain or chased away, the way back is still dangerous – such a large group is bound to draw the attention of various hazards; be them Stygian slavers, ravenous predators or cannibal pygmies. Do not let the encounter table on page 51 limit you, the Black Kingdoms are vast and ancient and no one knows what eldritch horrors can be attracted to a large group of vulnerable humans...

Because of the prisoner's poor physical condition and large number, they can move up to 12 miles per day and need to rest for at least eight hours before proceeding.

THE MYSTERIOUS PATH

Areas 13-16 are called "the Mysterious Path" and are designed to check if those who enter the Holiest of Holies, the vault, are truly worthy. While the first challenge is a mundane trap that can be easily bypassed by simply avoiding coming too close to the pit, the other three are more complicated. Each of the doors is a portal to a magical domain, representing one of the vices which the cult that constructed the temple promoted. In order to pass to the next domain, one has to successfully pass the current domain's challenge. After a person has successfully passed all three challenges, he is transported back to the real world and can never visit the vice domains again – the Mysterious Path becomes nothing more than an empty corridor separated by three mundane doors.

The rationale behind this test is that anyone visiting the vault should be the master of his vices, and not the opposite. Because the magic used to create the test far surpassed anything known in the current age, there is no way to "cheat" in the tests. Modern magic is just too weak to affect them in anyway.

All items taken and all damage sustained in the Mysterious Pass disappear as soon as the Player Characters complete it. Items left behind disappear forever, however, and those slain remain dead, though without any visible wounds.





Akhot Teva (Stygian Noble 3): Akhot is the daughter of a Stygian merchant who disappeared, along with his entire family, while returning from a business trip to Kush. Upon reaching maturity the headstrong young woman went to look for her family, hoping to ransom them from captivity or at least to grant them a proper Stygian burial. Although accompanied by two Stygian bodyguards and a skilled archer herself, the civilized woman was no match to the gorillas and soon found herself locked with a group of sweating and starving Kushites, occasionally taken out by the apes to torment her.

Even a casual observer will notice that Akhot and Batteva have extremely similar features – this is because the two are sisters. While the concept of sisterhood means nothing to Batteva, it is everything for Akhot, who will beg the Player Characters to help her “restore” her wild sister to civilization.

See “Concluding the Adventure” on page 66 for possible future adventures related to both Non-Player Characters.

None of the prisoners can provide any further assistance to the Player Characters and it will be many weeks before they will be able to wield a weapon again.

B. THE TEST OF GLUTTONY

A morbidly obese figure, too fat and ungainly to be called a man, sits in the corner of the room and gnaws on a large femur. Cakes, exotic cheeses, smoked meat and other delicacies are scattered around the room, just out of the creature’s reach.

“Could you do me a little favour, sweeties?” the creature speaks, sweating even from this minor effort, “bring me something to eat, will you?”

The exit from this room is completely blocked by the Fat Man’s gigantic bulk. As soon as any Player Character comes within the obese creature’s reach, it immediately tries to grab and eat the Player Character, saying “oh, but you look DELICIOUS!” It will continue to chew the held character until either the character escapes from its hold or is completely eaten, bones and all.

The only way to defeat the thing is by throwing food at it for 4 consecutive rounds; unable to stop eating, the spirit of gluttony

soon bursts, showering the Player Characters with guts and undigested food, clearing the way for the next test.

THE FAT MAN

HD: –

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 0 ft. (6)

Defence: 5 (–1 size, –4 Dex)

DR: NA

BAB/Grp: +4/+14

Atk or Full Attack: unarmed +10/+5 (1d3+6)

Special Attacks: improved grab, chew

Special Qualities: invulnerable

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.; Str 23, Dex 0, Con –, Int –, Wis –, Cha –.

Eat (Ex): The fat man can chew a creature which it holds, dealing 2d6+6 points of damage per round.

Invulnerable (Su): The fat man is formed from a soft, but infinitely strong, semi-amorphous matter which can be stretched and deformed, but never pierced or slashed.



14. THE TEST OF LUST

This oval room is dimly lit by black candles and smells of aromatic oils. The walls are draped with velvet curtains that gently undulate in the warm wind. On the elegantly tiled floor there are beautifully carved oriental divans with pillows of the softest silk. But all this pales compared to the unearthly beauty of the people who occupy this room, laughing, drinking and making love on the divans and carpets.

This is the most subtle of the temple's tests, and also the most mentally challenging. The people in the room are very friendly and polite, gladly accepting the Player Characters into their midst, offering all kinds of pleasure, ranging from fascinating debates and poetry reading for dry scholars to merry drinking and lovemaking for hot-blooded barbarians.

Resisting these offers requires a successful Will save (DC 13) but leaving the room or harming these people is practically impossible (Will DC 30) – they are just too beautiful to be ignored.

However, if the Player Characters take out the candles lighting the room, thus plunging it into utter darkness, the temptation dies and leaving the room becomes a simple matter of walking across and stepping through the unlocked door.

If the Player Characters try to interact with the beautiful people while the room is darkened they simply will not be able to find them – what good is beauty when no one can see it?

15. THE TEST OF GREED

This rectangular room shines with wealth and opulence. Bursting bags of coins are scattered along the walls, exquisite pictures and tapestries of Khitain silk hang on golden walls and marble statues adorned with sapphires, rubies and diamonds stand in the room, depicting great rulers and conquering generals.

A gruesome abomination, appearing as gigantic greenish-golden ball with dozens of living human hands rolls slowly along the wall, "Quick! Give me everything you have! Quick! Quick!" it screams at you with a shrill voice and extends a dozen muscular hands in your direction.

Anything the Player Characters give the Hand Ball is quickly pushed inside it with a disgusting fleshy sound. Being the very manifestation of greed, the spirit will not rest until it has taken from the Player Characters

everything they have, including their clothing, flesh, bones and their very souls.

To kill the monster, the Player Characters must give it harmful items, such as weapons or sharp tools; each such item taken by the beast causes it to scream to bleed and scream in agony and inflicts maximum damage on the creature's vulnerable entrails. After 40 or more points of damage were inflicted on the monster, it dies, though anything sacrificed to it remains safely locked inside, as the carapace is impenetrable even after the Hand Ball's death.

HAND BALL

HD: –

Initiative: +4 (+4 Dex)

Speed: 20 ft. (4)

Defence: 14 (+4 Dex)

DR: NA

BAB/Grp: +10/+18

Atk or Full Attack: unarmed +14 (1d3+4)

Special Attacks: legion, surge

Special Qualities: invulnerable;

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; Str 18, Dex 18, Con –, Int –, Wis –, Cha –.

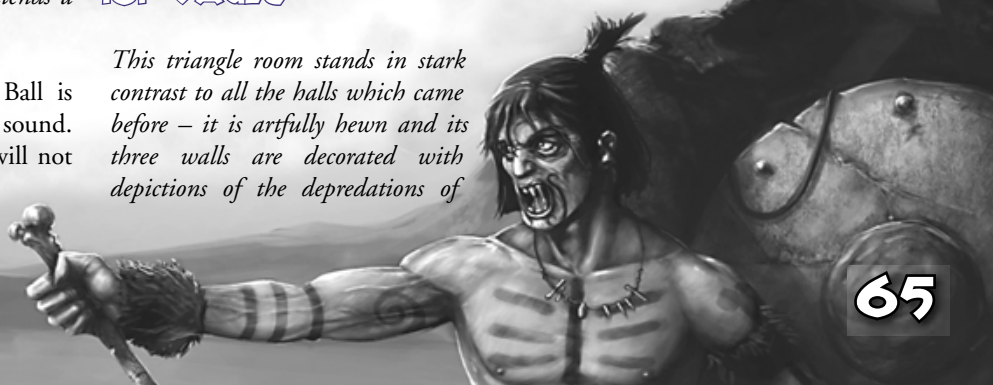
Legion (Ex): Each of the hands that grow from the carapace is fully autonomous and acts independently of the other hands. For each adjacent 10-foot square, the hand ball can make up to 3 attacks.

Surge (Ex): As a Full Round Action, the usually awkward hand ball can shoot itself at the amazing speed of 120 feet, smashing and crushing everything in its path. Creatures in its course must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer 6d6+8 points of damage and be flattened on the floor.

Invulnerable: While the carapace of the Hand Ball is too tough for any mortal weapon to penetrate, its hands are normal human hands that can be severed or disabled by inflicting 6 or more points of damage with a targeted attack. The hand ball has 24 hands and regrows lost hands after 6 minutes.

16. VAULT

This triangle room stands in stark contrast to all the halls which came before – it is artfully hewn and its three walls are decorated with depictions of the depredations of





some elder race, followed by humans killing and raping their own kind and ending with evil-looking apes staring hatefully from a dark jungle.

The floor shines and glitters with hundreds of thousands of coins from various ages and cultures, mixed with beautiful gems and exotic artefacts ranging from delicate Khitain mirrors to harsh Cimmerian steel.

Something dark and alive sticks from the coins and twitches occasionally.

The movement under the coins is the bound and gagged Ibunga who is slowly suffocating under the treasure's immense weight. Her body, having been host to various spirits and minor gods, is the perfect vessel for the spirits of greed, who are anxious to leave the boorish ape bodies which they now occupy. However, in order for the transformation to work properly she must die in the proper fashion, which is "drowning" in gold and jewellery. From the moment she is taken by the apes, the Player Characters have about 96 hours to save her, if they arrive to the vaults any time later than this, then they find the ape hosts dead with no visible signs of violence (except for any they killed themselves) and witness the following sight:

A terribly beautiful feminine shape of onyx and gold rises from the coins in a single fluid motion. You would have taken it for a masterfully crafted sculpture of a Kushite woman, if not for the very living malice in the diamond eyes and the angry balled up fist with jewelled fingers.

"You have come for my rescue," the creature speaks, without moving its lips, "how selfless..."

For the possessed Ibunga's statistics see "Avatar of Greed" in Dramatis Personae.

Otherwise, all living hosts will be in this room, prepared to guard Ibunga with their lives. After they are defeated, the Player Characters are free to dig Ibunga from the coins; although badly hurt and probably unconscious, she is alive and is quick to recover, both physically and mentally. For more information on what follows the defeat of the hosts, see "concluding the adventure" below.

scattered, their slaves freed and restored, the spirits still pose a threat to the area as it is only a question of time until some weak-willed man or beast wanders yet again into the wicked temple. The only way to permanently and utterly destroy the spirits and free the jungles from the evil is by removing all treasure from the vault and returning at least half of it to its rightful owners' families, tribes or even nations.

This may serve as an adventure in itself and should award the Player Characters at least half as much experience points as did the purging of the temple.

If the Player Characters managed to save Ibunga and at least ten of the prisoners then the people of Lumba will be eternally grateful – while having little to offer by way of gold or weapons, this peaceful tribe will always be happy to provide the Player Characters with shelter and advice during the Player Characters' exploration of the mysterious jungles of the Black Kingdoms.

If the Player Characters defeated the evil cult, but at the price of most of the prisoner's lives they will receive cold and polite thanks and little else.

More possible future adventures can revolve around the prisoners rescued from the temple.

Agag Dar Khakam: After his rescue and recovery by the Player Characters, the greedy and ungrateful sorcerer will try to rob his benefactors of their rightfully-earned treasure by sending them on various "important missions," which will be nothing but elaborate death traps designed to kill the Player Characters, leaving the treasure free for the taking. If these fail to dispatch the Player Characters, he will try more direct methods, such as hiring thugs to kill the weakened group when it returns from yet another futile mission, or cursing his "dear friends" from afar. All the while, the treacherous Agag pretends to be the Player Characters' loyal ally and advisor, even as he schemes their unnatural demises.

Akhot Teva: As soon as she is able to pull a bowstring, the headstrong young noblewoman will begin badgering the Player Characters to help her "re-civilize" her savage sister. Unfortunately, the only home the animal-like Batteva knows and loves are the jungles of the Black Kingdoms and the only way to bring her back to Stygia is through coercion. While helping the two sisters reconcile is not a very "heroic" adventure, it can certainly create some interesting roleplaying and earn the Player Characters two useful allies – one wealthy and well-connected and the other ferocious and well versed in the laws of the jungle.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Even after all the hosts were destroyed; their ape servants killed or



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRIESTESS IBUNGA

3rd level Kushite scholar

Hit Dice: 3d6 (11)
Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 class, +1 Dex)
Parry Defence: 12 (+1 class, +1 Str)

DR: 0
Base Attack/ Grapple: +2/+3
Attack: hunting spear +3 melee (1d8+2)
Magic Attack: +1
Power Points: 7
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Sorcery

Special Qualities: Knowledge is power, lay priest background

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 15;
Skills: Craft (Herbalism) +5, Heal +7, Hide +2, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (arcane) +5, Knowledge (geography) +1, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Survival +8
Feats: Athletic, Improved Initiative
Spells: Counterspells – *warding, incantation of Amalric's witchman*

Possessions: hunting spear, shaman's tiara

Although dressed in little more than a leopard loincloth and a copper-and-feather tiara, the ebony skinned woman has the bearing of a true noble. Her coal-black stare is severe and judgemental and she moves with the grace and intention of a wild panther.

Ibunga is the high-priestess of the Lumbans, chosen by the Spirits of the Jungle to be their servant, bride and prophet. She is considered theirs alone and no man is allowed to touch her under the penalty of excruciating death.

Although proud and aloof, Ibunga is very loyal to the ideals of her tribe and would gladly sacrifice her life if it will benefit her people or the spirits she serves.

Ibunga is in her late teens, with pearl-white teeth, perfect feminine figure and a deep, hypnotic voice.



BATTEVA, NATURE'S CHILD

5th level Stygian Barbarian

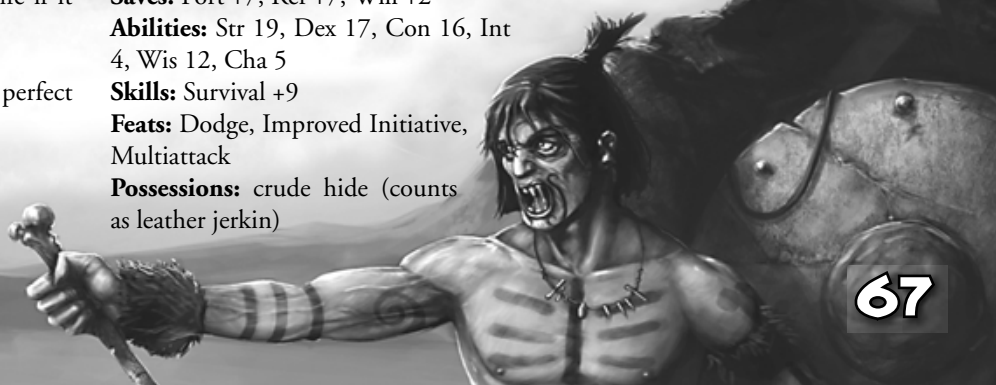
Hit Dice: 5d10+15 (43)
Initiative: +14 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +7 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft

Dodge Defence: 17 (+3 class, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge)
Parry Defence: 15 (+1 class, +4 Str)

DR: 4 (hide)
Base Attack/ Grapple: +5/+8
Attack: 2 Claws +7 melee (1d6+4) and Bite +7 melee (1d8+2)
Magic Attack: +2
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Track, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), bite sword, crimson mist, trap sense +1, endurance, uncanny dodge, mobility

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 5
Skills: Survival +9
Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Multiattack
Possessions: crude hide (counts as leather jerkin)





This young woman is short and stout but her figure is decidedly feminine and even attractive in a wild, untamed way. Her pale and strong body is covered by a crude, almost shapeless leather garment stitched with twigs and bones. Her dark hair is filthy and unkempt and her face is unremarkable, except for ferocious eyes that constantly scan the horizon. The girl's walk is stooped, more animal-like than human.

Batteva was the youngest member of a Stygian family butchered in the jungle by a Kushite raiding party. She survived by pretending to be dead, even as the raiders searched her little body for jewels or coins.

Despite her tender age, the girl survived in the deadly environment by preying on little animals and feasting on their raw flesh. Her strength and shrewdness gained her respect among the panthers of the forest, who viewed her as a small and yet deadly creature to be feared and respected. Batteva, in turn, learned from them how to stalk, hunt and fight with one's natural weapons.

Later, Batteva found a starving panther cub abandoned by his mother and nursed him back to good health. He has never left her side ever since. She simply calls him "cat" and often talks to him in a mixture of broken Stygian and animal grunts.

While Batteva is inherently hostile to black-skinned people, whom she associates with the raiders who killed her family, she will try communicating with brighter skinned Player Characters, before deciding whether they are friends or foes. Unfortunately for the Player Characters, Batteva is sadistically playful and is likely to lead them in a wild cat-and-mouse game leading them through many traps and beast lairs before finally approaching them. Depending on how the Player Characters treat the wild girl this may lead to anything ranging from a fight to an alliance against the gorillas.

Just like a savage animal, Batteva is fickle and irresponsible and may desert or even attack her new "friends" in a sudden fit of unexplainable rage; although not evil, she is still an unpredictable and dangerous creature who can never be truly tamed or befriended.

CHIEF N'BANGA

4th level Kushite soldier

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26)

Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Ref)

Speed: 40 ft;

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 class, +3 Str)

DR: 0

Base Attack/ Grapple: +4/+6

Attack: hunting spear +8 melee (1d8+5) or +7 ranged (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Formation Combat

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 13;

Skills: Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (Local) +2

Feats: Athletic, Fleet-Footed, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (hunting spear), Weapon Specialization (hunting spear)

Possessions: Akbitanan hunting spear, large wooden shield

The young man immediately stands out among the peaceful and slender Lumbans due to his stern and warlike features and powerful body. Unlike most of his brethren, he is well-armed with Northern steel and a wooden shield, which he carries on his back.

Chief N'bangá is the undisputed leader of the Lumba tribe and its most powerful warrior. Despite his fierce appearance he is a warm and friendly man who speaks perfect Aquilonian and is secretly in love with the Northern culture. He is always happy to host foreign guest and especially enjoys discussing culture and politics, in both of which he displays surprising knowledge for someone who never travelled more than 20 miles away from his home village. Despite the cultural façade, N'bangá is a proud and brave man who will respond violently to any offence, provocation or challenge to his rule.

Considering himself a civilized person, N'bangá is rather sceptical about the existence of spirits and their role in Man's life but keeps his opinions to himself because, like all of his subjects, he experiences an instinctive fear of Ibunga and her "dark" magic.

SIR EMILIUS JUNO

5th level Aquilonian noble/ 1st level soldier

Hit Dice: 5d8 plus 1d10 (29)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft

Dodge Defence: 13 (+1 class, +2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 19 (+2 class, +2 Str, +3 Cha, +2 buckler)



DR: 6

Base Attack/ Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: broadsword +8 melee (1d10+3) or arbalest +7 ranged (2d8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.;

Special Qualities: Social Ability: Savoir-Faire, Lead By Example;

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 16;

Skills: Bluff +14*, Diplomacy +14*, Knowledge (Nobility) +5, Knowledge (History) +4, Listen +6, Spot +11

Feats: Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Weapon Focus (arbalest), Weapon Focus (Broadsword)

Possessions: Mail hauberk, buckler, broadsword

Standing out among the black-skinned and half-naked natives is a young man with fair complexion, carefully trimmed blond hair and beard and a dreamy, somewhat comical expression in his sky-blue eyes. Although not as athletic as the Lumbans, he is in good shape and carries his solid frame effortlessly, always careful not to stain his expensive-looking boots or elegant sword sheath.



Emilius Juno is a merchant and an adventurer from Aquilonia who set himself an impossible task – to seduce Ibunga. Not because he is in love with her, gods forefend (such feelings would be way too vulgar for a fine gentleman such as himself) but because he

heard from his friend N’banga no man has ever seduced a Lumban priestess.

Because it is impossible to seduce a dead girl, the Player Characters can count on the brash duellist’s help in raiding the gorillas’ ruins, although the former will retreat as soon as Ibunga is reclaimed.

LUSTER

3rd level Orang-utan thief

Hit Dice: 5d8+5 plus 3d6+3 (42)

Initiative: +10 (+4 Dex, +6 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft, climb 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +2 Class, +1 Dodge)

DR: 2

Base Attack/ Grapple: +5/+13

Attack: straight razor +10/+5 melee (1d4+6/X4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d10+4) and or straight razor +9/+4 melee (1d4+4/X4) and bite +3 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+4, Sneak Attack Style (Razor), Sneak Attack +2d6/2d8

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, Scent

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +3

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 17

Skills: Move Silently +15, Hide +15

Feats: Dodge, Eyes of the Cat, Weapon Focus (straight razor), Weapon Specialization (straight razor)

Possessions: Straight Razor

Luster is the most cowardly and sadistic of all the spirits of the temple. His favourite tactic is manoeuvring on the battlefield, using his own apes as living cover until an opportunity presents itself to slit or snap a flanked opponent’s throat.

GLUTTER

3rd level Gorilla barbarian

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 plus 3d6+6 (50)

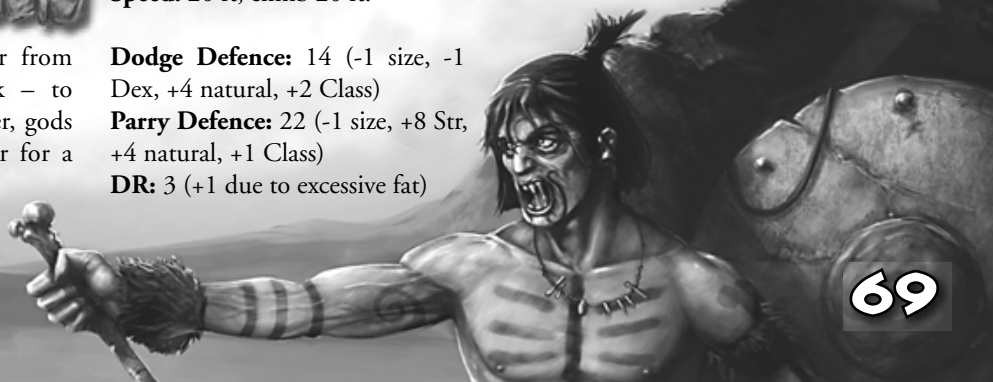
Initiative: +5 (–1 Dex, +6 Ref)

Speed: 20 ft, climb 20 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +4 natural, +2 Class)

Parry Defence: 22 (–1 size, +8 Str, +4 natural, +1 Class)

DR: 3 (+1 due to excessive fat)





Base Attack/ Grapple: +6/+18
Attack: Cleaver +13 melee (2d8+12/x3)
Full Attack: 2 claws +13 melee (1d10+8) and bite +8
 melee (1d8+4) or cleaver +13/+8 melee (2d8+12/X3) and
 bite +8 melee (1d8+4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+8, Crimson
 Mist

Special Qualities: Low-Light Vision, Scent, Fearless, Bite
 Sword; **Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +3
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 10
Skills: Profession (Cook) +13, Listen +13, Spot +13
Feats: Endurance, Diehard, Toughness (x2)
Possessions: Large cleaver

Glutter is the dumbest and most straightforward of the evil
 spirits. This fat and loud beast likes nothing more than to
 hack at its victim with its gigantic cleaver until they are
 reduced to a shapeless mound of squashed meat.

GREEDER

5th level chimpanzee (Noble)

Hit Dice: 1d8-1 plus 5d6-5 (17)
Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Ref)
Speed: 40 ft. (8), climb 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 class)

DR: 1;
Base Attack/ Grapple: +4/+5
Attack: Staff of death +6 melee (2d4+2)
Full Attack: Staff of death +6 melee (2d4+2) and Bite +1
 melee (1d6)
Magic Attack: +5 (+3 when casting curses)
Power Points: 7 (currently 11)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spells;

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent, background:
 pact, knowledge is power;
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +7;
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 14
Skills: Bluff +11, Concentration +8, Climb +10,
 Decipher Script +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12,
 Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge
 (religion) +12, Sense Motive +8;
Feats: Iron Will, Ritual
 Sacrifice, Opportunist
 Sacrifice, Tortured
 Sacrifice;

Spells: Summoning – *demonic pact*; Curses – *lesser ill-fortune*,
ill-fortune; Hypnotism – *entrance, domination, savage beast*;
 Divination – *astrological prediction, mind read*;
Possessions: golden robes, staff of death

Despite his grotesque and even somewhat comical
 appearance, the host of the Spirit of Greed is the most
 cunning and dangerous of the three ape hosts. What he
 lacks in monstrous power and animal bloodlust, he more
 than makes up with magical power and cunning.

His favourite combat tactic is to hide behind its “cannon
 fodder” (preferably after they were strengthened by the
savage beast spell) and to use his staff to deliver various
 harmful spell, usually against bigger warrior types, who are
 less likely to withstand his magic.

If it seems that the Greeder is about to run out of Power
 Points, he simply sacrifices an *entranced* or *dominated*
 enemy.

AVATAR OF GREED

Unique Medium Outsider (Demon)

Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95)
Initiative: +15 (+4 Dex, +11 Reflex)
Speed: 30 ft

Dodge Defence: 21 (+4 Dex, +7 natural)

DR: 7
Base Attack/ Grapple: +10/+17
Attack: Slam +17 melee (1d8+5)
Full Attack: Slam +17/+12 melee (1d8+5)
Magic Attack: +2
Power Points: 13
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Eat, improved grab, pilfer, sorcery

Special Qualities: Darkvision 90 ft., immune to poison;
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +13
Skills: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +18,
 Jump +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion)
 +16, Sense Motive +18
Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack;
Abilities: Str 25, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 21, Cha 16

Eat (Ex): The avatar of greed can chew a creature which it
 holds, dealing 2d6+7 points of damage per round.

Pilfer (Su): Any creature hit by the avatar of greed’s
 slam attack has a 20% chance of having a random item
 transported to the Avatar of Greed. The transported



item appears on the avatar on same place it was on the target, or simply false to the ground if the former is impossible. Magical items receive saving throws as per item description. Consult the following table to decide on the item transported:

1d10	Item
1	Shield
2	Armour
3	Headgear
4	Held weapon
5	Cloak
6	Belt
7	Gauntlets
8	Clothing
9	Jewellery
10	Stowed item

HEAD TREE

Large Undead (Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 12d12 (65 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Improved Initiative, +4 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft. (0 squares)

Dodge Defence: 13 (-1 size, +4 Natural)

DR: 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+19

Attack: Claw +15 melee (1d6+9)

Full Attack: 2 claws +15 melee (1d6+9)

Magic Attack: +5

Power Points: 10

Space/Reach: 10 ft./50 ft.

Special Attacks: Consume soul, sorcery

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., rooted, spell deflection, spell resistance 21, undead traits

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +11

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 10, Con —, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +18, Knowledge (Nature) +18, Listen +18, Move Silently +15, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +18, Survival +5

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claw)

Spells: Hypnotism – *Entrance, Hypnotic Suggestion*; Necromancy – *raise corpse*

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary

Advancement: 13-24 HD (Large); 25-36 HD (Huge)

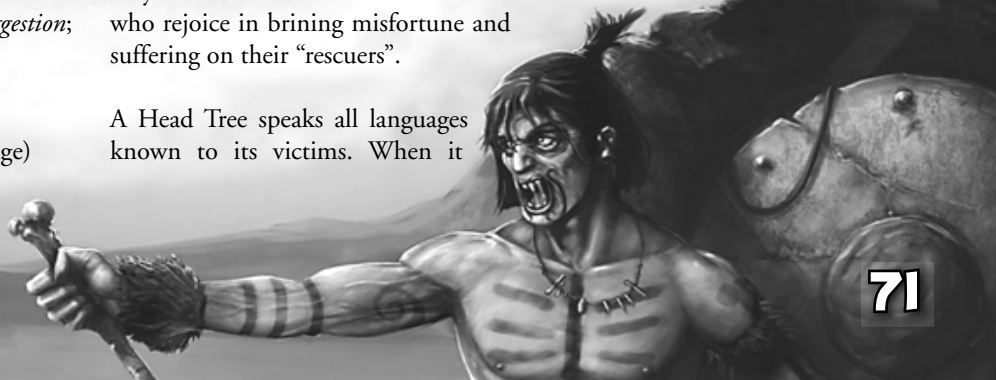


This ugly plant is gnarled and pitch-black, but its most grotesque feature is the “fruit” it boasts – detached human heads whose expressions are twisted in unspeakable fear and agony and whose bloodless lips constantly move and mumble.

A Head Tree is created when a person falls asleep under a particularly ancient tree and never wakes up, the poor traveller’s soul is trapped inside the tree’s branches and can not escape, giving the tree a cruel sentience and an unnatural mockery of life. These gnarled, pitch-black trees are made even more grotesque by their “fruit;” the detached heads of their previous victims, their expression forever twisted in unspeakable fear and agony. These heads are obviously alive and occasionally wail and moan.

Legends have it that should a head be detached from this horror, it will become alive again and enjoy all the wisdom stolen by the Head Tree from its victims, usually experienced adventurers and wise nymphs. These legends are only half-true, while stolen heads do live on and have access to all the memories and personalities stolen by the Head Tree, they are hateful and treacherous advisors who rejoice in brining misfortune and suffering on their “rescuers”.

A Head Tree speaks all languages known to its victims. When it





chooses to speak, it does so through the heads hanging from its branches, who speak in perfect and terrible unison.

COMBAT

Head Trees are forever hungry for souls, trapping and killing hapless travellers even when they are full. Their preferred tactic is to lure lone passers-by with *Hypnotic Suggestion* to rest in their “soothing shadow” and suddenly attack the unprepared victim when he or she are sleeping or otherwise occupied. Head Trees prefer to avoid groups but can be tempted to attack a party that includes nymphs or dryads (which they despise for their beauty and purity) or loving couples (whose heads they enjoy placing just an inch too far for a kiss).

Consume Soul (Su): The Head Tree is so named for its ability to consume its enemies’ soul. To do so, it must forgo its normal melee attacks and make a consume soul attack. This requires a normal attack roll but deals no damage.

New Martial Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
Straight Razor*	25 sp	1d4	x4*	1	10	3	1	Slashing
Cleaver, large	10 sp	2d8	x3	8	3	7	10	Slashing

*Becomes x2 after four hits.

Special Awards:

Each prisoner rescued	150 xp
Ibunga rescued	1000 xp
Akhot and Batteva reconciled	600 xp
Agag Dar Kakham exposed	500 xp
50% of gold donated	1500 xp

The save DC is Charisma-based. A slain creature’s soul is trapped within the Head Tree, and one of the tree’s fruits takes on that victim’s features. A Head Tree can hold up to ten souls at a time.

The trapped soul provides a Head Tree with 1 Power Point for each Hit Die or level of the most powerful trapped creature. As this energy is expended, the twisted soul fades away until it evaporates completely.

Large Cleaver: The large cleaver is not a weapon per-se but rather a tool used to dismember meat and as such is far less durable than most weapons. However, its massive bulk and sharp blade make it a deadly weapon in the hands of a trained large creature.

Straight Razor: The infamous “cut-throat” razor is many thieves’ and thugs’ weapon of choice as it can be easily hidden and leaves a deep and painful cut. Although initially extremely sharp, the straight razor quickly loses its keenness when scraped against hard materials such as metal or bone and breaks in case of a fumble.





CONAN[®]

CURSED TOMB OF AL'AMAR

By Eric K Rodriguez

A **CONAN 320** adventure set within the Hyrkanian Steppes, east of the Vilayet Sea. Characters should be 3rd to 4th level, (average 4-6 players). Any character type can be played, however at least one Nomad type character is highly recommended.

SYNOPSIS

Until recently, the Shah of the Hyrkanian city of Onagrul was happy and his kingdom flourished. With large caravans of silk and spice from distant Khitai flowing through his city, the royal coffers were overflowing with coin and jewels and the populace was content. However, the Shah's one true challenge was his son, Prince Asram Ibn'Arlath. The prince was educated, skilled and above all a true noble, however Prince Asram had no desire or penchant for political skills or ambitions. As much as the Shah would try to involve his son in the day-to-day activities of the city, the prince would have nothing to do with it. Prince Asram seemed to be more interested in books and scholarly learning. He would spend days in the royal archives pouring over mouldering texts describing ancient Turanian and Hyrkanian kings and heroes.

The Shah would listen to his son relate these ancient stories with a mix of disinterest and disdain, until one day Prince Asram appeared before his father in a state of exhaustion and excitement. Prince Asram told his father he had found reference, in a particularly ancient text, to the final resting place of the ancient warrior-king known as Khajah Al'Amar. In ages past, Al'Amar was a chief of one of the greatest horse tribes of the steppes, he had conquered a large swath of the open steppes, from the Wahuan desert to the Vilayet Sea. But like all men who

attain great wealth, he became the object of jealousy and envy by his peers, several horse chieftains gathered together and made war upon Al'Amar. For two years the steppes ran red with the blood of warrior and innocent alike. Finally, at an unnamed site, Al'Amar's remaining warriors were surrounded and annihilated by an overwhelming force of their enemies.

However, as the story goes, the horse chieftains had nothing but respect for Al'Amar as a warrior and leader and did not loot his body as they his warriors. In fact, it was said Al'Amar was buried with his weapons and personal wealth he had gained during his years of conquest, as a true horse chieftain should be. After hearing his son's latest story, the Shah dismissed it as he had done with so many others. However, the prince was not to be dissuaded this time. Two days later, during the midnight watch, Prince Asram left the royal palace, along with a retinue of about 30 retainers and guards and was last seen heading north along the trade route to the town of Vekthalah.

The adventure starts ten days after the prince has fled the city. The Shah, in a fit of anger and desperation since his son has not returned, has commanded his Wazier, Junmir Jazmal, to seek out mercenaries or bounty hunters to bring back his son, alive and unharmed. The Wazier will make contact with the characters either as a group or individuals, stating that he has heard of their skills and exploits and wishes to hire them for a discreet mission. When the characters agree, they are escorted to the palace,



where they meet with the Shah. The Shah explains to them the need for speed and discretion and offers each man 100 pieces of silver for the safe return of his son. If the group has a character with a high Diplomacy score, then the Shah is also willing to provide supplies and one horse for each character. After accepting their mission, the characters should gather whatever supplies they require and depart immediately.

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING

Prince Asram, after arriving in the town of Vekthalah, resupplied and headed due east of the village of Hazalah. When he arrived in Hazalah, he was greeted with anger and distrust. The people of the village had long held stories and ancient superstitions about the Barrow Mounds east of their village. The elders of the village pleaded with Prince Asram not to disturb the mounds because of an ancient curse that has been laid upon them. The prince, too excited about the chance to uncover ancient knowledge and wealth, ignored the villagers' warnings and pleas and took his entourage east, towards the mounds.

THE ADVENTURE

ENCOUNTERS

KOZAKI BANDITS

Toward the end of the first day, the characters should come under attack by a band of Kozaki bandits, led by the Hetman Bekesh Al'Yullef. A minor Hetman among the Kozaki, but no less brutal than his contemporaries, Yullef has received word from his spies in the city of Onagrul that the royal prince has gone missing. Yullef is hoping to capture the prince and use him as a bargaining chip against the Shah. However, not knowing which way the prince has fled, Yullef has broken up his raiders into several groups and they are scouring the lands around Onagrul, looking for signs of the missing prince.

These Kozaks are no different than most others, hailing from many different races and cultures; they only follow the strongest leaders. If Al'Yullef were first to fall, then most likely the other bandits would flee. However if the battle is going badly for Al'Yullef, he will flee and gather together more of his raiders and come back and attack the characters at a later date.

BEKESH AL'YULLEF

Medium Humanoid Hyrkanian Nomad 6

HD: 6d10 +18 (51 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 25 ft.

Dodge Defence: 16

Parry Defence: 17

DR: 6

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +1

Attack: Scimitar +6 melee finesse (1d8+2/18-20x2); or Hyrkanian bow +6 ranged (1d10+2/19-20x2)

Full Attack: Scimitar +6 melee finesse (1d8+2/18-20x2); or Hyrkanian bow +6 ranged (1d10+2/19-20x2)

Damage: Scimitar (1d8+2), Hyrkanian bow (1d10+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: -

Special Qualities: Hyrkanian qualities, -2 racial penalty on saves against hypnotism; +1 bonus to Intimidate if within Hyrkanian zone of influence, Track, Favoured Terrain +1, Born to the Saddle, Mounted Archery, Endurance, Nomad Charge +1, Favoured Terrain +2, Mobility, Diehard

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10

Skills & Feats: Craft (bowyer) +6, Intimidate +6, Ride +8, Spot +5, Survival +5; Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Ride-by Attack, Weapon Focus (Hyrkanian Bow)

Possessions: Desert Warhorse, Scimitar, Hyrkanian bow with 60 arrows, targe, mail hauberk, steel cap, dagger, 150 silver pieces.

HYRKANIAN BANDITS (8)

Medium Humanoid Hyrkanian Nomad 2

HD: 2d10+2 (13 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 25 ft.

Dodge Defence: 13

Parry Defence: 15

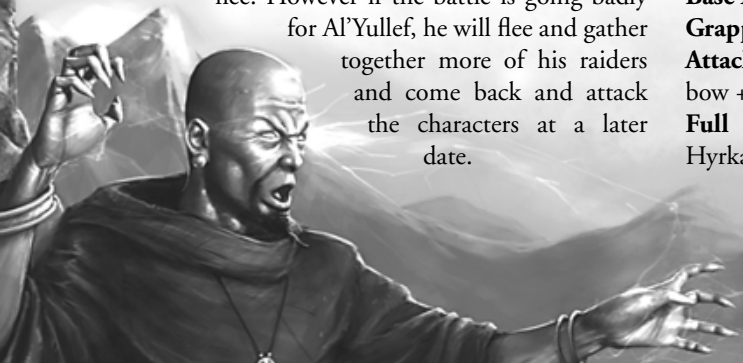
DR: 7

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +0

Attack: Scimitar +5 melee finesse (1d8+1); or Hyrkanian bow +5 ranged (1d10/19-20)

Full Attack: Scimitar +5 melee finesse (1d8+1); or Hyrkanian bow +5 ranged (1d10/19-20)





Damage: Scimitar (1d8+1) or Hyrkanian bow (1d10/19-20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: +1 to attack with bow if target at least 6 range increments away, +2 if 9 or more range increments away

Special Qualities: Hyrkanian qualities, Track, Favoured Terrain +1, Born to the Saddle, Mounted Archery, -2 racial penalty on saves against hypnotism; +1 bonus to Intimidate if within Hyrkanian zone of influence

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

Skills & Feats: Craft (bowyer) +3, Intimidate +4, Ride +7, Spot +4, Survival +2; Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot

Possessions: Desert or Steppe Warhorse, Scimitar, Hyrkanian bow with 60 arrows, targe, mail hauberk, steel cap, dagger, 10-20 silver pieces.

Defence: 17

DR: 4

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +11

Attack: Claw +6 melee

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee and sting +1 melee

Damage: Claw (1d6+4) and sting (1d6+2 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 10 ft/ 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Poison, Constrict

Special Qualities: Low Light Vision, Tremor sense 60ft, Vermin Traits

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills & Feats: Climb +8, Hide +0, Spot +4

SCORPION ATTACK

Sometime during the second or third day of travel, the characters come upon a bloody scene. As the characters ride over a small rise, they come upon two wagons that have been overturned, and their horses and riders strewn across the steppe, bloody and in pieces. Moving among this nightmarish scene are four Large Scorpions. The scorpions seem to be methodically moving over the wagons, picking up sealed wooden barrels and smashing them. One of the scorpions, dark red in colour, seems to be herding the others and keeping them to their task.

It does not matter whether the group tries to find another route around the Scorpions or not, one of the Scorpions will see them and then signal to the others. The Scorpions will attack with the large red one leading the assault up front. If the red Scorpion is killed first, there is a cumulative 5% chance per round any remaining ones will flee. If the characters search the over turned wagons, they find the barrels they were carrying were filled with a variety of salted meats. A successful Search check (DC 14) reveals a loose floor board on one of the wagons, concealing a pouch with 122 Silver pieces. Neither of the two human bodies possess any identification or written documents.



SCORPION, LARGE (4)

Large Animal (vermin)

HD: 5d8+10 (33 hp)

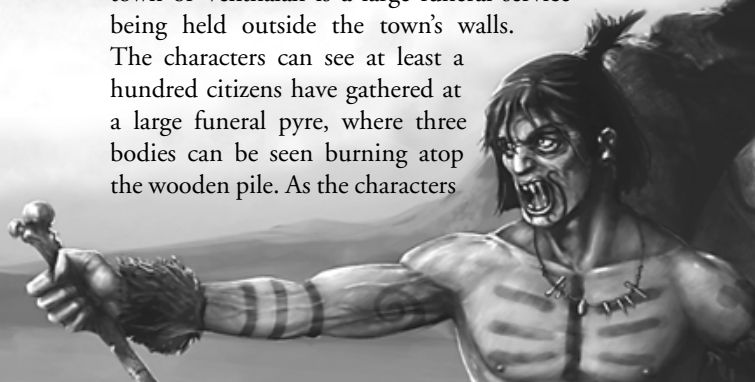
Initiative: +1

Speed: 50 ft.

TROUBLED TOWN

The first thing the characters notice when they arrive in the town of Vekthalah is a large funeral service being held outside the town's walls.

The characters can see at least a hundred citizens have gathered at a large funeral pyre, where three bodies can be seen burning atop the wooden pile. As the characters





get closer, several armed men approach them with fear and apprehension in their eyes. If the characters do not act in a hostile manner, an elderly man dressed in fine robes approaches and introduces himself as Husram, the speaker for the town.

Once Husram speaks to the characters for a little while, he seems convinced they are not bringing trouble to his town and allows them entrance. A character with a high Diplomacy skill can speed up the process. Once inside the town, Husram asks the characters to join him in his home, so they may speak of serious matters. After feasting in Husram's home, the characters learn a great evil has visited itself upon the people of Vekthalah. Husram explains, about four weeks ago, merchants and travellers began to complain about wolf attacks while journeying to Vekthalah. At first it was just horses or beasts of burden being targets, but then reports of full-grown men being attacked started to trickle in. Then, about three weeks ago, a merchant staggered into town, claiming his two drivers and manservant had been savagely slain in the night by demon possessed wolves. The merchant claimed the wolves ignored fire and arrows and swept into his camp, slaying anyone they met. The merchant was barely able to escape – he related a harrowing tale of how he was forced to jump onto the back of a terrified horse, only just managing to hang on as he rode bareback into the night. Since this first attack many more people have died, with all the attacks occurring after dark.

Husram states about ten days ago, a young noble from Onagrul arrived in Vekthalah with a small entourage of followers. Husram and the other town elders pleaded with the young noble to help them, but he refused stating that he had more important matters to attend to. If the characters question Husram about the young noble, he will describe the missing Prince in detail. Husram says the young noble only stayed long enough to gather supplies and then left Vekthalah to its fate. Luckily, Husram and the other elders had sent for aid from the renowned Seer, Kata'Vul, two weeks earlier. Kata'Vul, unfortunately, was not able to come to the town's aid; however he did send his apprentice in his stead. Habrath of Khoraf arrived in Vekthalah almost six days ago and has told Husram he knows the answer to their problems. However, it will take men of courage and a strong sword arm to solve the problem.

Husram begs the characters to help his town and to save them from this evil. He tells the characters if they will see Habrath and save the town, then 100 pieces of silver will be given to each man, along with a fine Hyrkanian Steppe horse. A character with a high Diplomacy skill can get Husram to give 200 pieces of silver for each character, but only after proof the curse has been lifted from their town. If the characters agree to Husram's pleas, they should immediately go and see Habrath of Khoraf.

Habrath of Khoraf is found at the 'Silk & Scimitar', an average quality Inn located on the south side of town. Habrath lets the characters know they face normal steppe wolves; however, they are being led by an unnatural creature. Habrath calls the creature a 'Werewolf', and tells the characters at one time this creature was a man. For whatever reason the man became cursed and was possessed by an evil spirit forcing him to change back and forth between man and wolf with the changing of the moon. Habrath states only by killing this creature with fire or silver will the attacks stop and the curse be lifted from Vekthalah. Habrath can show the characters how to coat their weapons in silver, using his alchemical skills; however the characters will have to provide the silver for the process. Weapon size will determine the amount of silver needed, at the Games Master's discretion.

It will take at least one day for Habrath to treat the characters weapons with the 'Were-bane' solution that he concocts, this gives the characters at least one day to repair and re-supply before leaving Vekthalah.

HABRATH OF KHORAF

Medium Humanoid Stygian/Hyrkanian scholar 5

HD: 5d6 (22 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 11

Parry Defence: 11

DR: –

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +3

Attack: Dagger +3 melee *or* Hyrkanian bow +4 ranged

Full Attack: Dagger +3 melee *or* Hyrkanian bow +4 ranged



Damage: Dagger 1d4, 19–20/x2 AP 1 *or* Hyrkanian bow 1d12, 19–20/x2, AP 3, Range 100 ft.

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Spells

Special Qualities: Hyrkanian qualities, Background (lay priest), Iron Will, Knowledge is Power, Scholar

MAB: +5

PP: 8 (4 base, +3 Wis, +1 bonus) (16 maximum)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +9 (+7 vs. Corruption);

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills & Feats: Bluff +9, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (herbalism) +10, Decipher Script +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcane) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Perform (ritual) +13, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Sleight-of-Hand +4; Persuasive, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice

Sorcery Styles: Curses, Hypnotism, Prestidigitation

Spells: *Conjuring, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, lesser ill-fortune, ill-fortune, greater ill-fortune*

Possessions: Dagger, robes, Hyrkanian bow and 20 arrows, 3 doses of flame-powder, 2 doses of Stygian tomb-dust, alchemical products to silver weapons

VILLAGE MASSACRE

Arriving in the village of Hazalah, the characters find a scene of carnage and destruction. Scattered about the ruins of the village are corpses in various stages of decay. The village has 15 buildings, most of them thatch and animal hide. Only three structures look to still be in fairly good shape, the others are now complete ruins. A character with a good Spot check (DC 14) will notice even with the scattering of rotting corpses around no carrion creatures are anywhere to be seen. If the characters make a difficult search check they will find a trap door in one of the still standing buildings. Covering inside the dark hole is a man named 'Bekesh', a retainer of Prince Asram. Bekesh, looking malnourished and barely conscious. If the characters are able to heal him, and provide some food and water, Bekesh should regain full consciousness within a few hours. Bekesh will relate to the characters he was with Prince Asram over a week ago when they found the ancient burial site he had talked about and they were in the process of uncovering the burial chamber. All Bekesh can remember after this there was

a loud sound, like of boulders falling down, then many screams of terror.

At first Bekesh thought there had been a cave in and several men were trapped. However, after several minutes of screams, and horrible sounds which could belong to no mortal man, Bekesh saddled a horse and fled to the west. When he reached the Village of Hazalah he tried to tell the villagers about what had happened, but they treated him with disdain and mistrust, beating him severely. They told him he and his Prince had awoken an ancient curse and nothing but bad would come of it. They locked Bekesh in the cellar of one of the buildings and left him there until they could decide what to do with him. Later that night, the sounds of screams and slaughter woke him up from his uneasy sleep. Bekesh does not remember seeing anything, and only remembers the sounds of people screaming and the unearthly howling of a wolf (*At this point, the Games Master should try to keep the characters in the village until nightfall, at which time the Werewolf will have his wolves attack*).

As soon as the wolves attack, Bekesh will scream in terror and either run off into the night, or drop back down into the cellar and barricade himself in. The Werewolf will lead his pack into the remains of the village and begin a methodical search of all the buildings. Once the characters are found, the Werewolf orders his pack to attack. The Werewolf has 13 wolves with him and orders them to attack the characters. The Werewolf will not stay back out of the fight, but instead will join in the slaughter, remaining in its hybrid form throughout the battle. If the characters are able to kill the Werewolf, then every round after its death there is a 10% chance the pack will lose heart and flee into the night. Once the Werewolf is killed, it reverts back to its human form, the body is of a middle-aged man, who looks of Hyrkanian descent. He has no distinguishing marks and his only possession is a bronze talisman in the shape of a sun with a large topaz jewel in the middle. A character with a high Spellcraft roll can read the ancient glyphs on the back of the talisman. The glyphs call the talisman, 'The Eye of Hossuth', a long dead god of the ancient Lemurians. If a character is a Scholar, or they speak with Habrath, and conduct a little research, it can be determined the wearer of the *Eye of Hossuth* gains the ability to see at night just like the Eye's of the Cat feat. This ability is constant and remains unless the wearer removes the talisman. No other items are to be found on the body.





WEREWOLF, WOLF FORM

Medium Humanoid (Shapechanger)

HD: 1d10+1 plus 2d8+6 (23 hp)

Initiative: +9

Speed: 50 ft.

Defence: 15

DR: 6

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +4

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d8+3)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d8+3)

Damage: Bite 1d8+3

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Trip

Special Qualities: Alternate form, wolf empathy, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills & Feats: Craft (leatherworker) +2, Handle Animal +1, Hide +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +6, Profession (farmer) +1, Spot +1, Survival +4; Toughness, Track

WOLVES (13)

Medium Animal;

HD: 2d8+8 (13 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 50 ft.

Defence: 13

DR: 2

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +1

Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d8+1)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d8+1)

Damage: Bite (1d8+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Trip

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, Scent

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills & Feats: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4; Survival +4

TOMB OF DEATH

As the characters approach Prince Asram's campsite, they can see that most of the camp's equipment and supplies are scattered about in a haphazard manner. Although everything has been spread over a wide area, most of the items are still in good condition. A Search check (DC 10) reveals there are five barrow mounds on the east side of the campsite and one of them has torches, digging tools and supplies stacked next to it. If the characters approach closer, they see a large hole dug into the side of the mound, with hand carved steps leading down into the dark earth. Read the following out loud to any players venturing into the tomb:

A musty, rotting odour overwhelms you as you and your companions step down into the dark earth. The light of your torches flickers on the walls, showing they are encrusted with the bones of many men. You descend almost forty feet, before the tunnel opens up into a large, circular chamber almost fifty-feet in circumference. Your light reveals a stone bier, on which rests a body, clad in ancient armour and covered in coins and treasure. Before you can investigate further, dark shadows from the other side of the chamber move and come into your view. Shadowy illumination shows they are men far past life and they move with slow, methodical purpose as they advance upon you.

These are the remains of Prince Asram and his retainers. Although the Prince did find the burial place of Khajah Al'Amar, he did not research further into the nature of his burial. A curse was placed upon the Khajah's remains when he was buried, stating any who disturbed the sleep of Khajah Al'Amar would be consumed by death and then forced to serve him. Prince Asram and his followers fell to an ancient spell which released a black cloud of death, which killed them, and transforming them into Risen Dead. Now they are forced to protect the tomb against any who violate it. There are a total of 15 Risen Dead, including Prince Asram.

RISEN DEAD (16)

Medium Undead

HD: 3d12+3 (22 hp)

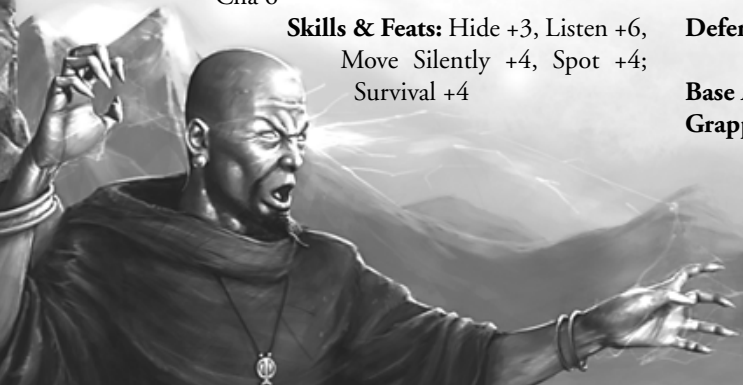
Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft.

Defence: 10

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +4





Attack: Unarmed +4
Full Attack: Unarmed +4
Damage: Unarmed 1d6+3
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Undead qualities, Limp Stumble
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 8, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1
Skills & Feats: Brawl, Toughness

Once the characters have defeated the undead, they will be free to search the chamber. None of the characters need to fear the curse upon the tomb; the mystical force was spent as soon as the Prince opened the door. A search of the chamber reveals items that the Risen Dead had carried while in life: 14 gold eagles, 159 silver pieces, 45 bronze pennies, miscellaneous jewellery valued at 200 silver pieces and assorted weapons and armour of average quality. Prince Asram remains still wear his royal signet ring and his royal turban and characters should bring these items back to the Shah as proof of his son's death.

The body of Khajah Al'Amar is dressed in ancient armour that has rusted and become unusable. However, laid across his chest is a quality composite bow and an empty

quiver that looks to be made of ivory. Spread around the Khajah's body are various ancient coins and jewellery (59 gold pieces, 300 silver, 14 semi-precious stones and 21 pieces of miscellaneous jewellery valued at 600 silver pieces). Characters that make a Search check (DC 25) find a matching pair of jewelled scimitars underneath the Khajah's body.

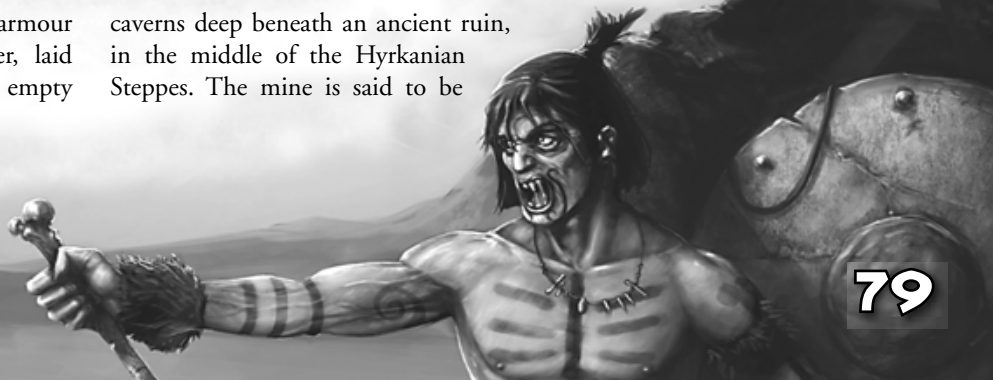
Characters with Spellcraft or Ancient Language skill can determine that the composite bow is called 'The Might of Al'Amar' (consider the bow Akbitanan quality, and any arrow fired from it causes an extra 1d4 damage when it hits, the character who uses this bow must have a Strength score of at least 17). The two scimitars are made of high quality steel, with silver scabbards that are decorated with semi-precious stones. The blades are inscribed with ancient Lemurian runes, which reveal their names to be 'Swift' and 'Death'. Each sword has a ruby at the bottom of the pommel the size of a pigeon egg (consider the swords Akbitanan quality, when used together the wielder gains +2 to his Initiative, used separately the wielder gains no bonus).

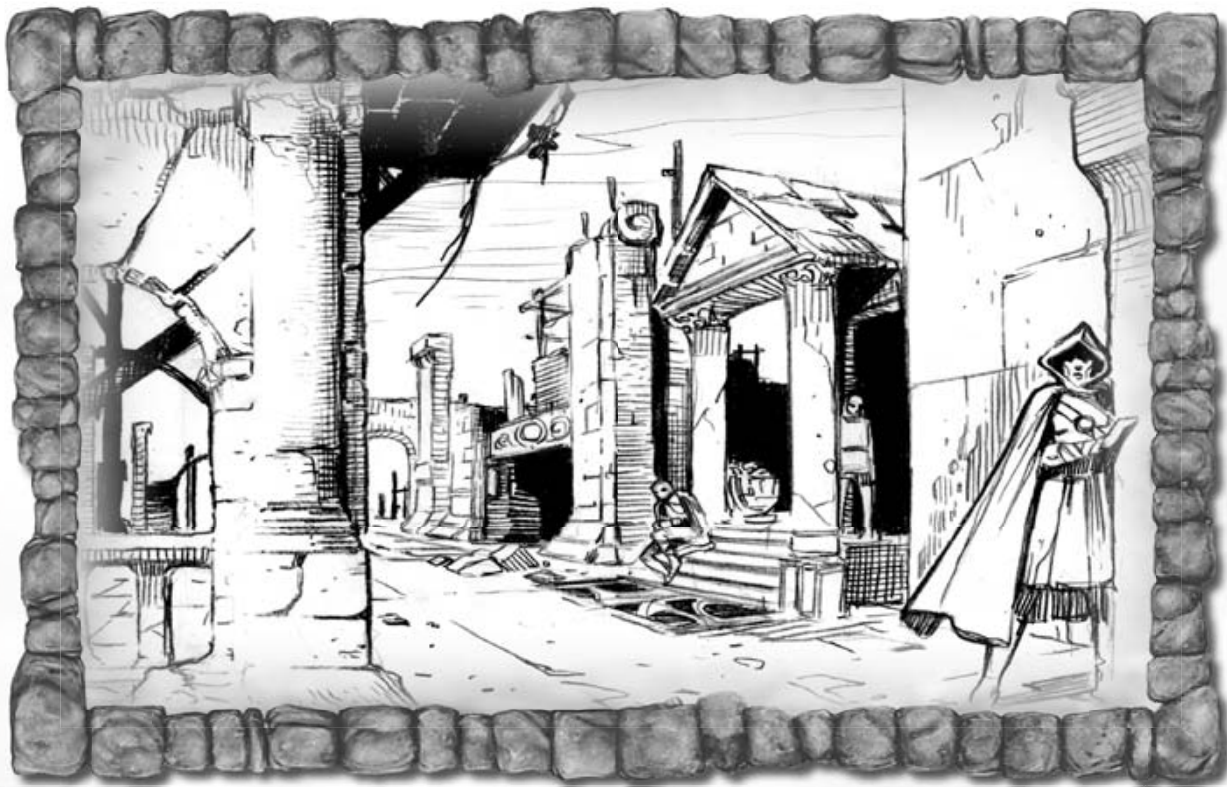
RESOLUTION

The group should head back to Onagrul as soon as possible. However, a short stop in the town of Vekthalah will allow the characters to collect their reward and to use the skills of Habrath if necessary. When they return to Onagrul with the proof of the Prince's death, the Shah is visibly distraught. However, he will not express any anger at the characters for what has happened, but will in fact shower them with praise for their discretion in such a serious matter. The Shah will allow the characters to enjoy the pleasures of his palace for the next two weeks and will heap rich foods and strong drinks upon them, as much as they desire. The Wazier will spread a tale that the Prince had ridden with a city patrol outside of the city, when they were beset by a large number of Kozakis. The story will say that Prince Asram died a hero, allowing his soldiers to escape while he held the Kozakis off. If the Games Master wishes to use this area for further campaigns, then the Shah or the Wazier can send them on future adventures. Below are some of the other notable sites in the area around Onagrul.

LOST MINE OF GUL'GULARATH

The Lost Mine of Gul'Gularath is a series of caverns deep beneath an ancient ruin, in the middle of the Hyrkanian Steppes. The mine is said to be





laden with thick veins of silver. Over the last 100 years, several merchants and nobles have sent large caravans to the site to claim the site and mine the ore. None have ever been heard from again. A tribe of the Horse folk, the Wal'Azir, believes the ruins are haunted by the spirits of those that died in the ruins above the caverns. No records can be found about who built the ruins, but several legends state that the ruins were an ancient outpost of the evil Acheronians.

CURSED RUINS OF BARAZ'KUL

Baraz'kul was an ancient castle which was transformed into a way-town, between the cities of the Vilayet and the far off land of Kusan. Large trade caravans and vast amounts of wealth passed through Baraz'kul, making it as wealthy as cities five times its size. One day a white robed figure entered the city and claimed that he spoke for the spirits of the land and the city was angering the earth. Most of the people laughed at the old man,

but others realized this 'prophet' could hurt trade with his blasphemous talk, so they had him jailed under false pretences and then quietly executed him. Before the robed prophet died, he cursed the people of Baraz'kul stating, 'The Sun is your Jailer and Executioner. To look upon the Sun is to look upon your own death.' It has been over 40 years since anyone has come or gone to Baraz'kul and lived to tell of it.

RUINS OF MARTHAG'GUL

Marthag'Gul was a city up to 70 years ago, until the combined armies of Rhamdan and Onagrul destroyed it. Marthag'Gul was said to have been a corrupt city of greedy merchants, shadowy thieves, and death dealing assassins. No proof of this can be found in any records or documents of history; however it can be surmised Marthag'Gul was cutting profits from both cities and was destroyed for simple economic reasons. Today, the ruins are said to be filled with bandits, slavers and escaped political prisoners.



THE POISONED POOL OF AMANARATH

Amanarath was a lieutenant to the ancient horse chieftain, Khajah Al'Amar. Amanarath betrayed Al'Amar to his rival chieftains at a crucial time in a major battle. Al'Amar survived the battle and captured Amanarath before he was able to escape. Al'Amar bound and gagged Amanarath to a palm tree at a remote oasis and cursed him to watch over the oasis, even in death, and to allow only those who have not 'betrayed' another to drink from the oasis's waters. Few have gone to the oasis and returned.

DEVIL'S EYE

A 100-foot plateau, rising out in the middle of the Hyrkanian Steppes, Devil's Eye has stood for over 400 years. Ancient Horsemen claim it was an ancient burial site for a renowned horse chieftain. Others state it is a temple to some forgotten god who for his faithful to return and worship him. The only fact known about the plateau is on nights when the sky turns violent and the clouds let loose their fury, large bolts of lightning can be seen striking the top of Devil's Eye in quick succession. Many believe an artefact, left by the ancients, still rests upon the top of the summit.

KATA'VUL THE SEER

For 30 years, Kata'Vul has lived within his 'Blood Tower', along the eastern coast of the Vilayet. Kings and commoners alike have come to his tower to seek knowledge and wisdom and to have him read their futures. Each person is required to pay for this service, but not every person pays the same price. Kata'Vul is eccentric, and will ask coin of one person and then ask service of another. Whatever the case, it is whispered Kata'Vul is not only a Seer, but a powerful Sorcerer as well. More than one pirate ship of the 'Red Brotherhood' has attacked the Blood Tower, only to have their ship struck down by mysterious storms which seem to appear instantly, and disappear just as quickly. Kata'Vul does take apprentices, and has been known to make offers to the most unusual of people.

VILLAGE OF MATA'KAI

A small village nestled along the eastern Vilayet coast; Mata'Kai has long held a tradition of sacrificing virginal women to the sea at the Harvest of Waves. The Harvest of Waves was a tradition which started over 50 years ago, when the village was on the verge of starvation due to the lack of fish being pulled from the sea and the infertile land not producing. One day, a villager named Olagrah stated she was the last, faithful, follower of an ancient sea god who would save the village, and in return asked only a virgin be sacrificed to Olagrah's god on the first day of the New Year. The village had nothing left to lose, and did as Olagrah asked. Within the month, fisherman's nets were full, and the ground began to produce food. Since then, Olagrah has had a temple built in the middle of the village and has preached the word of her god to all in the village. However, recently the villagers have begun to realize if sacrificing one virgin a year brings great fortune, then sacrificing more victims will bring even more. Since this would soon depopulate the village, if the villagers keep using their own for sacrificial victims, they have begun to look elsewhere.

THE OASIS OF YATAZUL

The oasis of Yatazul borders the great Wahuan Desert and the southeastern Hyrkanian Plains. The last and first stop between the Wahuan and the Hyrkanian plains, the oasis has traded hands many times over the years. Recently, a large band of Hyrkanian Horsemen have set up camp at the oasis and charge a high fee to any who wish to use the waters. The leader of this group, Chief Ali Ben'Massul, has let it be known he is in need of clan-less nomads and hardy mercenaries for a war against another, unknown tribe. Rumours persist that Chief Massul has heard of an ancient tomb, located within the heart of the Wahuan, said to contain the wealth of an ancient civilization. However the ruins are guarded by a fanatical tribe of desert warriors, who protect the tomb with their lives.



CONAN[®]

MOONLIGHT ON THE OCEAN

By Vincent Darlage
& Eric K Rodriguez

MURDER BY MOONLIGHT

*'Drain the cup while the ale is bright.
'Brief truce to remorse and sorrow!
I drink the health of my friend tonight -
I may cut his throat tomorrow.'*

'Robert E. Howard. Reuben's Brethren'

THE ADVENTURE IN SUMMARY

THE PLAYERS ARE serving upon a ship, *Dagon's Valour*, when the Quartermaster is murdered and the players discover the motive involves a map in the quartermaster's cabin, behind a painting called *Moonlight on the Ocean*. Behind the painting, but in the frame, is a map to the *Nakhthorheb Codex*, a treatise of demonic and arcane lore, but the players will not be aware of this. The murderer is another member of the crew and a sorcerer. He has killed the quartermaster (Xeremo) and framed one of the characters, who should be the captain of the vessel.

A bevy of suspects to be interrogated and eventually eliminated are provided. As the suspects drop away one by one, the players will be able to hone in on the real criminal. This is accomplished by delving into the victim's background. Who knew him and why did they want him dead? The Games Master might want to provide the other suspects with both access to similar weapons and motives. All the while the characters will need to hurry in their investigation, since most of the crew will be aware one of the characters appears to have committed the crime.

One of the crew (the murderer) is a scholar, Baldomero, the quartermaster recognised the sorcerer and was going to go to warn the captain he had a mutineer, who had killed his old crew with the help of demons, amongst the crew. The quartermaster and the scholar once served together in their youth, Xeremo (the quartermaster) duelled the captain of their craft and killed him, taking command but the captain was the brother of Baldomero (who was called Bannachio at this time). He tried to raise a mutiny, but the crew held to Xeremo, a storm then struck before Baldomero could be marooned for his mutiny and the ship smashed into an unseen island because of Xeremo's inept commands. Baldomero struck a bargain with the demons of the island who slew the crew of the ship, but Xeremo managed to escape the slaughter. Xeremo was picked up by a passing merchant ship and never looked back whilst Baldomero remained on the island for six months before he could make his escape, and it was another three years before he could return to Kordava.

In the meantime, Xeremo caused Baldomero's family to believe him dead, so Baldomero's wife married Xeremo, eventually she left after his excesses had impoverished them. All Xeremo kept was Baldomero's favourite painting, feeling there was something special about it, but not knowing exactly what. After he came on board, Xeremo did not recognize Baldomero immediately due to the passage of years, other than an uncertain feeling he knew the fellow from somewhere. Baldomero needs a ship, the map, and he wants Xeremo dead. He wants to punish Xeremo because of his brother's death and has resolved to pin the blame on others.

After the murder mystery is resolved, the characters may go exploring, looking for the mysterious islands and grim mysteries portended by the discovered map. The map behind the painting, but in the frame, leads to the Isle of Bakenptah's Bats. Near this island is a stranded pirate ship and on the island are the remains of an ancient sorcerous garden where an ancient book of lore is hidden within an altar. The characters may or may not be able to recover the book, as the garden is hostile and inimical to human life. Also on the island lurks the remnants of the ancient people who once dwelled on this mountain top before their kingdom sank beneath the oceans and they continue to worship a horrible demon which commands the bats of the island.

PREPARATION

You will need a copy of *Conan the Role Playing Game*, *Secrets of Skelos* and *Pirate Isles* to get the most out of this scenario. If you lack either of these latter books feel free to substitute feats, spells and monsters as needed. The adventure is designed for 4 to 6 Player Characters of 5th to 7th level.

As Games Master, choose one appropriate player character to be captain of the ship (preferably one who has some navigation skills). The player characters need to be the ones calling the shots although this captainship is largely Honourary. Perhaps the ship was given to the character as a reward or the ship could belong to the player's family and familial duty has found him on board as captain. A lot of the captain's traditional role on this ship is in the hands of the quartermaster, who is technically second-in-command but is in reality a co-captain. The quartermaster represents the best interests of the crew to the captain and is in charge of maintaining order, distributing rations and supplies, delegating work, and only he can give out punishments to the crew, but only if the captain or the crew agreed.

Be familiar with the characters presented in the Appendix. A sound knowledge of who they are, how they relate to each other, and their motivation is essential to run this scenario smoothly.

As with any *Conan* game, action should always be present, either in the form of combat, disaster or the threat of such. If at any time this scenario slows down, then introduce a violent complication or the discovery of more incriminating evidence by the crew. Perhaps the assassin attacks a player character, a secondary plot is introduced or a storm brews. If the action propels the plot or helps the characters discover a clue, so much the better. From the moment the Vendhyan steps aboard the ship, the players should feel death hovering over them and the omnipresent threat of violence.

*For deep in my soul the old gods brood -
And I come of a restless breed -
And my heart is blown in each drifting mood
As clouds blow over the mead.*

-Robert E. Howard, 'Reuben's Brethren'

THE VENDHYAN

The player characters are on the high seas on a ship called *Dagon's Valour* (see page 99 for statistics), and are at least four days away from any known shore. As the crew watch the quartermaster, Xeremo, administer a lashing to Amador da Senon for shirking his duty, Gebellez or a player character, high in the rigging, sees a man on a raft floating on the waves. The man, wears a black dhoti and a turban sporting a distinctive feather plume of purple and white.

The man is Samaj the Raven, a Vendhyan born into the merchant caste (see page 96 for his statistics). If he is brought onboard, he freely tells the captain that his Vendhyan craft was sunk by Black Corsairs. He offers his assistance to man any ship-board weapons or to ply



his skills at selling any goods the craft may carry, he may also offer a reward if the ship will return him to Vendhya.

The Games Master should indicate the quartermaster does not like the captain or the player character(s) and argues with them constantly about nearly anything. The Games Master is encouraged to role-play this and create a hostile environment, but not so hostile that the quartermaster is called out by the players and killed in a legitimate duel. Make it clear that the quartermaster has the loyalty of the crew, not the players.

Brutal Traditions: There is a time honoured tradition of baiting strangers among the Freebooters, where they test the stranger with violence, establishing the stranger's status among the crew. The testing is both brutal and bloody with the pirates pressing around the stranger menacingly. One man pushes the brawl, beginning with taunts and insults, then the fight starts. It is a one-on-one fight, and how the stranger comports himself establishes his 'rank' among his new comrades. The stranger does not need to win, but he must not prove himself a coward or a weakling. The games master can run this as a descriptive narrative or, if one of the players is inclined to be the pirate who pushes the brawl, it can be run as a combat scenario.

Afterwards, the Vendhyan performs his duties well and, although he is standoffish, does not provoke any ill-will from the crew, although Xeremo is continually complaining about him. He may even go to the captain and express his paranoid feelings about

the Vendhyan, complaining Samaj is plotting his murder (or mentions this to the Player Characters if one of them is not the captain).

IT SCREAMS WHEN FREED!

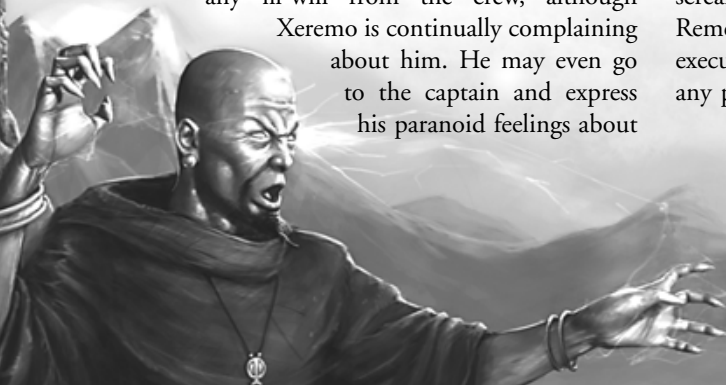
THE MURDER

It is night. The Vendhyan is meditating serenely on deck, his turban missing its distinctive plume. Just prior to the next event, the character may notice his weapon is missing. (How this can be arranged depends on the Games Master. Perhaps the character awakens just before the next event and it was stolen during his sleep, he set it aside to do some work or it is just left unexplained). The games master should either arrange for a player character (preferably but not necessarily the captain) to go into Xeremo's quarters. If that option is not available, then have Xeremo stumble into the player character's quarters. In either case, Xeremo stumbles forward, clutches the character (smearing blood all over him) and mumbles, 'It screams when freed!' before dying of his injuries. The character's weapon is the murder weapon and is present in Xeremo's cabin.

Several members of the crew (including Bastiario, Vinicio and Baldomero) enter at this point and see the character with the dead man and the character's weapon blooded. The quartermaster has been murdered and the crew believes the character killed him out of hand and out of code with the crew wanting to hang the character from a yard arm. If the 'murderer' is the captain, a mutiny is now brewing. Allow the character to talk the crew into giving him two days (at most) to prove his innocence. This creates a time limit to add to the tension, and provides the character with motivation to hurry. The ship will not land at a port within this time in order to allow the accused to make his escape, so he will have to solve the murder or be hanged, along with anyone seen to be on his side (meaning the other player characters).

THE INVESTIGATION

The discovery of clues can happen in nearly any order. The crucial clue is the discovery of Baldomero's vial, which screams when freed and this should be discovered last. Remember to keep the tension high, the crew is ready to execute the characters and they are not inclined to believe any protestations of innocence or be helpful. The risk of





mutiny is high, and the games master may want to make mutiny checks now and again. The players should discover the motivation of the characters presented in the Appendix during the course of their investigation. Crew members may offer bits of 'helpful' knowledge about various crewmen, such as 'The bos'n has been saying for a long time that *he* should be the quartermaster. He's always hated Xeremo.' Below is a list of some of the physical evidence that can be found by the players or by the crew.

- ✦ **The Body of Xeremo:** Xeremo died of wounds of whatever sort are inflicted by the accused character(s) weapon(s). The weapon(s) is nearby, either on the floor, or clutched by Xeremo and is blooded.
- ✦ **Xeremo's Cabin:** The quartermaster's area is scattered and splattered with blood, this is where the murder took place. On a desk where Xeremo did much of his work is the painting which once sat upon the wall of the room. It is lying face down, the back covering ripped open and a map of two unfamiliar islands is easily visible, scrawled on the back of the painting itself. It looks as though someone was cutting the map from the painting but was disturbed by Xeremo in the act, for there is blood upon it, indicating the map was being cut free prior to the fight. The map indicates that on

the larger of the two islands there is great treasure and the astronomical information provided on the map will allow the islands to be found by a skilled navigator.

The painting is of a scene of a small merchant ship sailing past an island in moonlight. There is a dedication to it '*To my darling Xosefa, you are always in my heart. Bannachio.*' Beneath it can be found a purple and white feather.

- ✦ **The Player's Cabin:** Hanging from the back of the ship, outside the windows of the player's quarters, is one of the player's shirts, all torn and bloody, as if from combat. If the players do not find this quickly the crew will and it will further condemn the player in the crew's mind. It looks as if the clothing was being disposed of, but it was caught on an ornamentation beneath the window.

RUMOURS AND MOTIVATION

The player characters should discover the following bits of information about the various



characters on board the ship, but should discover nothing about Baldomero. No one is willing to risk talking about him, knowing he is bad news and they fear him.

- ❖ **Amador da Senon** disliked the quartermaster because of the harsh lashing administered that day.
- ❖ **Bastiaro the Bos'n** wants the position of quartermaster, and hated Xeremo. He has had fights with Xeremo many times in the past and would be in a position of advancement if anything happened to the quartermaster.
- ❖ **Gebellez** dislikes the quartermaster because of a harsh lashing administered earlier in the week.
- ❖ **Vinicio da Ovando** believes the bos'n should be the quartermaster and thinks the captain is worthless.
- ❖ **Xeremo** was seen arguing with Samaj upon the deck just prior to the crime. The cause of their argument was not overheard, but is it not strange Xeremo was found dead not long afterwards?
- ❖ **Xeremo** once had a wife called Xosefa. He was a close friend to her first husband, who died at sea, but she left him some years ago.

COMPLICATIONS

If the characters get close to discovering who murdered the quartermaster, Baldomero will take action to see that the character is killed. He will also continue to try to muddy the evidence. The Games Master might want to provide the other suspects with both access to similar weapons and motives.

One action Baldomero may take is to sit down with one of the player characters and offer him a glass of wine, casting *Blood and Water* on it. If the character fails the saving throw and is poisoned, Baldomero will likewise pretend to be poisoned alongside the character. Both may be carted off to a section of the ship to be cared for. If left alone, Baldomero will then rise to kill the poisoned character.

Baldomero may get one of his cohorts to kill the characters, either in secret or in a duel. If a character stumbles onto a clue Baldomero does not want them to find, he will arrange to have that character assassinated, and will try to do it in such a way that the captain discovers the body alone, and he is then discovered with the body.

He will attempt to implicate the captain or player characters in as many murders as possible.

Baldomero will also try to get the ship to sail in a certain direction (towards Bakenptah's Isle, but

he will not name the location or give the real reason for the destination). He would prefer it if the ship sails there after the discovery the map and it is others who push for the voyage, however he knows this is an excellent opportunity to retrieve the book and will push to investigate the island if no others suggest this.

If the characters figure out Baldomero is the killer, he will attempt to summon monsters and animals to protect himself. He will likely have one of his cohorts or allies prepare a boat while he crushes the ship with *Jaws of Atlantis*. This may cripple the ship. There is another ship available in the next part of this scenario for the characters to capture if this happens.

If the Vendhyan is suspected by the players, he will try to investigate on his own and may also get killed. At the same time Baldomero will try to implicate the Vendhyan further through the use of a whispering campaign against the newest crew member.

RESOLUTION

Baldomero is discovered and proven to be the culprit. He may or may not survive the exposure. He may try to buy his freedom with information about Bakenptah's island and the treasure reputed to be there. Characters may or may not follow the map found in the picture frame, if they do it will lead the ship to the Isle of Bakenptah's Bats.

GRIM ISLANDS AND

*Small poets sing of little, foolish things.
As more befitting to a shallow brain
That dreams not of pre-Atlantean kings.
Nor launches on that dark uncharted Main
That holds grim islands and unholy tides.
Where many a black mysterious secret hides.*

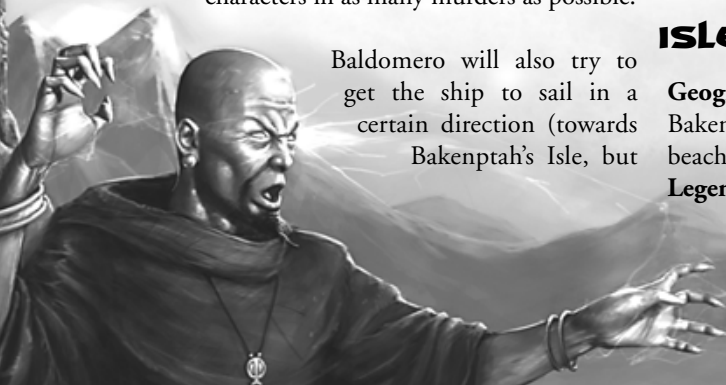
Robert E. Howard, 'Which Will Scarcely Be Understood'

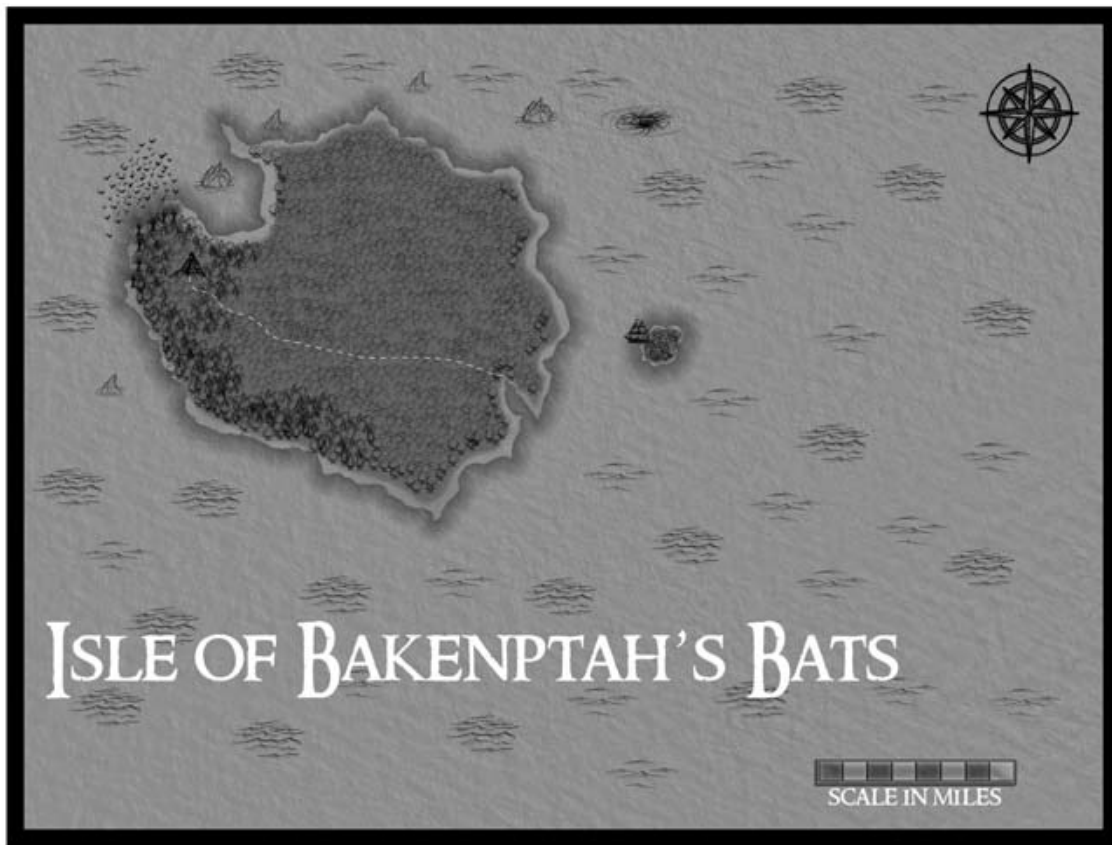
UNHOLY TIDES

ISLE OF BAKENPTAH'S BATS

Geography: Uncharted (save for the single map Bakenptah made) and far from the mainland. Sandy beaches, wooded terrain.

Legend: Great statues of gold are said to be on this island.





Ancients: A permanent sorcerous garden has grown around the jade altar where the book is hidden; a remnant race still exists, worshipping a demon on the island.

Current: On the little island next to this one is a pirate craft moored in a bay. It is stuck there due to the lack of a navigator and too few crewmen.

The promise of treasure on the map discovered behind the painting *Moonlight on the Ocean* may lead the characters to follow it, taking them to the Isle of Bakenptah's Bats. This island was discovered by a Stygian scholar nearly twenty years ago, where he identified a new species of mundane bat on the island, which he promptly named after himself. He reported finding great statues of gold on the island and claims to have seen an ancient Atlantean text, but was prevented from taking the tome with him when he fled the island in terror. He intended to return to the island, and had a map created to help his return, unfortunately the ship he was on was intercepted by pirates and he was slain. The map was discovered by Baldomero when looting the vessel and he hid it from his comrades. Later he had it copied on the back of a picture he commissioned for his wife to keep it safe and hidden and was trying to persuade his brother to

undertake the long voyage to the island when Xemero took over command of their ship.

The island lies nearly a thousand miles to the southwest of Khemi and will take a considerable amount of time to reach. Ships sailing that far will be a long way from shipping lanes and supplies. Read over the 'Perils of the Road' section of *Pirate Isles* to determine any desired obstacles or hindrances along their route. Most of the crew will be extremely dubious about this trip so far from the mainland. Any form of natural event may cause a mutiny as the crew becomes more and more frightened.

Eventually the ship, unless a mutiny turns the craft around, will arrive at the Isle of Bakenptah's Bats. The island is, as the map indicates, really two islands, one much larger than the other. Jungles cover the majority of both the islands and the sounds of animals can be heard for miles at night. If they arrive during the hours of darkness a colony of bats (1d10+10 swarms) will overtake the ship, wreaking havoc among the lightly armoured crew. Depending on which side the characters approach the island from, they may see the other pirate ship in the bay of the smaller island. For a greater



challenge, the Games Master may have harsh weather, such as a rain storm, strike the island at the same time as the characters.

BAT SWARM

Diminutive Animal (Swarm)

Hit Dice: 3d8 (14 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Speed: 5 ft. (1 square), fly 40 ft. (good)

Defence Value: 16 (+4 size, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/—

Attack: Swarm (1d10)

Full Attack: Swarm (1d10)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Distraction, wounding

Special Qualities: Blindsight 20 ft., half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, swarm traits

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

Environment: Temperate deserts

Organization: Solitary, flight (2–4 swarms), or colony (11–20 swarms)

Advancement: None

A bat swarm, consisting of some 1,500 bats, is nocturnal, and is never found above ground in daylight. Bat swarms are extremely difficult to fight with physical attacks. However, they have a few special vulnerabilities:

- ✦ A lit torch swung as an improvised weapon deals 1d3 points of fire damage per hit.
- ✦ A weapon with a special ability such as flaming or frost deals its full energy damage with each hit, even if the weapon's normal damage can not affect the swarm.
- ✦ A lit lantern can be used as a thrown weapon, dealing 1d4 points of fire damage to all creatures in squares adjacent to where it breaks.

COMBAT

A bat swarm seeks to surround and attack any warm-blooded prey it encounters. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it



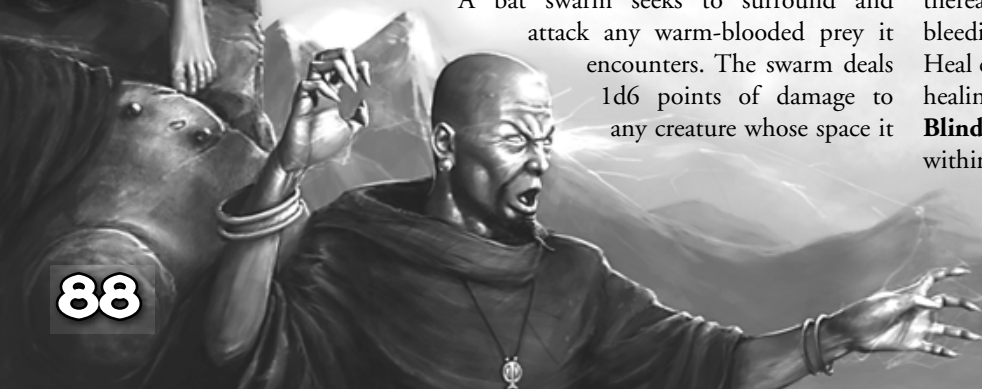
occupies at the end of its move. In order to attack, a single swarm moves into opponents' spaces, which provokes an attack of opportunity. It can occupy the same space as a creature of any size, since it crawls all over its prey, but remains a creature with a 10-foot space. Swarms never make attacks of opportunity, but they can provoke attacks of opportunity.

Unlike other creatures with a 10-foot space, a swarm is shapeable. It can occupy any four contiguous squares, and it can squeeze through any space large enough to contain one of its component creatures.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Wounding (Ex): Any living creature damaged by a bat swarm continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic.

Blindsight (Ex): A bat swarm notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have total concealment



against the bat swarm (but swarm attacks ignore concealment).

Skills: A bat swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

THE ISLAND OF BAKENPTAH'S BATS

The characters have a choice of which island to land on: the larger island or the smaller satellite island, with the map indicating the treasure is on the larger island. If characters land on the smaller island, then proceed to the next section, returning here if the characters manage to get over onto the larger island. Regardless of which island the characters choose to land on, the demon of the island is hungry for souls. It will cast either *Grip of the Deep* or *Choke Harbour* as needed to keep the ship at the island. The use of either spell may create the circumstances for a mutiny.

THE SHORE

The larger island has a long stretch of beach in a natural harbour. A longboat can be found in the sands, and footprints lead away from the boat to the jungle. The rest of the island rises out of the ocean as a vast mountain of rock and jungles. Landing at any of these cliffs will be difficult, as will climbing the cliffs to the top of the island. Unfortunately, the shore of the island is home to several salt-water crocodiles sunning themselves on the sand. These crocodiles are hostile and will defend their nests if bothered or approached other crocodiles also infest the various streams and small rivers crisscrossing the large island.

CROCODILE, GIANT SALTWATER

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 7d8+28 (60 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Ref)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.

Defence Value: 16 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15

Damage Reduction: 7 (thick skin)

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+21

Attack: Bite +11 melee (2d10+12/ AP 10) or tail slap +11 melee (1d12+12)

Full Attack: Bite +11 melee (2d10+12/ AP 10) or tail slap +11 melee (1d12+12)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab

Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light

vision

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Hide +1*, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +16

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide)

Environment: Salt water, tropical rivers

Organization: Solitary or colony (6–11)

Advancement: 8–14 HD (Huge)

These huge creatures usually live in salt water and can be more than 20 feet long. They lie mostly submerged, with only their eyes and nostrils showing, waiting for prey to come within reach. Larger specimens usually take Improved Initiative for their next feat to help them catch prey. They often achieve surprise with their sudden attacks.

COMBAT

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a crocodile must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, the crocodile establishes a hold on the opponent with its mouth and drags it into deep water, attempting to pin it to the bottom.

Hold Breath (Ex): A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skills: A crocodile has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*A crocodile gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks when in the water. Further, a crocodile can lie in the water with only its eyes and nostrils showing, gaining a +10 cover bonus on Hide checks.

THE JUNGLE

The Island is comprised of dense jungle once the sandy shores are left behind. At one end of the island characters may find a trail inland, marked with painted white stones. The stones rise up two feet from the ground, but are the rounded tops of stone shafts, sunk nearly eight feet into the ground. The jungle is alive with monkeys, apes and other jungle animals, although most of the predators save the snakes will only be active at night. At some point, the characters will have to cross streams where crocodiles lurk, waiting for the unwary. The jungle is labyrinthine and humid. Other than the five foot wide trail, the forest is considered dense. Any



particular five foot square in a dense jungle has an 50% chance of containing a typical tree and a 10% chance of containing a massive tree. Each square is also 50% likely to contain light undergrowth and 50% likely to contain heavy undergrowth. Trees do not preclude the existence of undergrowth.

Trees: The most important terrain element in a jungle is the trees. A creature standing in the same square as a tree gains a +2 cover bonus to Defence Value and a +1 cover bonus on Reflex saves (these bonuses do not stack with cover bonuses from other sources). The presence of a tree does not otherwise affect a creature's fighting space, because it is assumed that the creature is using the tree to its advantage when it can. The trunk of a typical tree has DV 4, hardness 5, and 150 hp. A DC 15 Climb check is sufficient to climb a tree. Medium and dense forests have massive trees as well. These trees take up an entire square and provide cover to anyone behind them. They have DV 3, hardness 5, and 600 hp. Like their smaller counterparts, it takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb them.

Undergrowth: Vines, roots, fallen trees and short bushes cover much of the ground in the jungle on this island. A space covered with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way. Heavy undergrowth costs 4 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). It increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 5. Heavy undergrowth is easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Hide checks. Running and charging are impossible. Squares with undergrowth are often clustered together. Undergrowth and trees aren't mutually exclusive, it is common for a 5-foot square to have both a tree and undergrowth.

Jungle Canopy: It is common for animals and other jungle dwellers to hunt from far above the surface floor. Creatures on branches in a forest canopy are considered to have cover when fighting creatures on the ground, and in medium or dense forests they have concealment as well. Snakes and many other animals found in the bestiary of *Conan the Role Playing Game* can be encountered here.

Other Jungle Terrain Elements: Fallen logs generally stand about 3 feet high and provide cover just as low walls do. They cost 5 feet of movement to cross.

Forest streams are generally 5 to

10 feet wide and no more than 5 feet deep. Pathways wind through most forests, allowing normal movement and providing neither cover nor concealment. These paths are less common in dense forests, but even unexplored forests will have occasional game trails.

Stealth and Detection in the Jungle: In a sparse forest, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 3d6×10 feet. In a medium forest, this distance is 2d8×10 feet, and in a dense forest it is 2d6×10 feet. Because any square with undergrowth provides concealment, it is usually easy for a creature to use the Hide skill in the forest. Logs and massive trees provide cover, which also makes hiding possible. The background noise in the forest makes Listen checks more difficult, increasing the DC of the check by 2 per 10 feet, not 1 (but note that Move Silently is also more difficult in undergrowth).

GETTING LOST

If the characters move off the trail of stones for any reason, they may become lost.

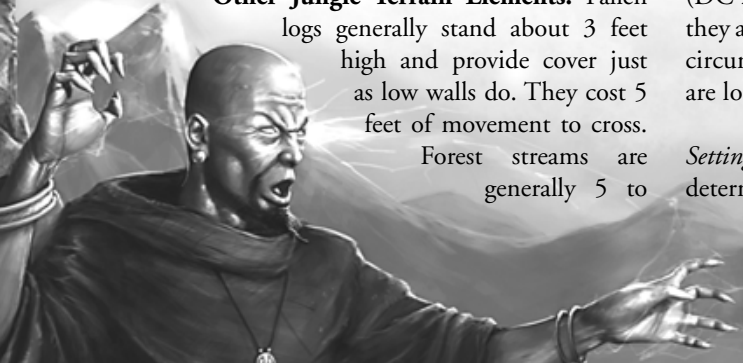
Chance to Get Lost: If conditions exist that make getting lost a possibility, the character leading the way must succeed on a Survival check (DC 15) or become lost. A character with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) pertaining to the area being travelled through gains a +2 bonus on this check.

Check once per hour (or portion of an hour) spent in local or overland movement to see if travellers have become lost. In the case of a party moving together, only the character leading the way makes the check.

Effects of Being Lost: If a party becomes lost, it is no longer certain of moving in the direction it intended to travel. Randomly determine the direction in which the party actually travels during each hour of local or overland movement. The characters' movement continues to be random until they blunder into a landmark they are unable to miss, or until they recognize that they are lost and make an effort to regain their bearings.

Recognizing You Are Lost: Once per hour of random travel, each character in the party may attempt a Survival check (DC 20, -1 per hour of random travel) to recognize that they are no longer certain of their direction of travel. Some circumstances may make it obvious that the characters are lost.

Setting a New Course: A lost party is also uncertain of determining in which direction it should travel in order



to reach a desired objective. Determining the correct direction of travel once a party has become lost requires a Survival check (DC 15, +2 per hour of random travel). If a character fails this check, he chooses a random direction as the 'correct' direction for resuming travel.

Once the characters are travelling along their new course, correct or incorrect, they may get lost again. If the conditions still make it possible for travellers to become lost, check once per hour of travel as described in Chance to Get Lost, above, to see if the party maintains its new course or begins to move at random again.

Conflicting Directions: It is possible that several characters may attempt to determine the right direction to proceed after becoming lost. Make a Survival check for each character in secret, then tell the players whose characters succeeded the correct direction in which to travel, and tell the players whose characters failed a random direction they think is right.

Regaining Your Bearings: There are several ways stop being lost. First, if the characters successfully set a new course and follow it to the destination they're trying to reach, they're not lost any more. Second, the characters through random movement might run into an unmistakable landmark. Third, if conditions suddenly improve—the fog lifts or the sun comes up—lost characters may attempt to set a new course, as described above, with a +4 bonus on the Survival check. Finally, magic may make their course clear.

THE SORCEROUS GARDEN

After an appropriate number of encounters with the wildlife (as determined by the Games Master), characters will eventually reach the centre of the northern portion of the island where ruins lie, now completely overgrown by the jungle. Ancient, vine-encrusted pyramids and broken spires can be seen crumbling beneath the vegetation. These ruins are the site of an Atlantean city that did not sink beneath the waves. For all that the characters know, ancient kings and grim wizards sleep in lacquered cases beneath those awesome piles, dead as mortal men know death, but only sleeping as they await a day of awakening.

Near the centre of the city, in one of the great courtyards of the ruin, stands the sorcerous garden of an unbelievably ancient sorcerer, whose power was nearly unrivalled in his time and could create magic of such potency even time has barely undone his efforts. Around the edge of this garden are massive golden statues of exaggerated aspect and grossness. These statues are heavier than an entire crew could lift, and encrusted with brilliantly coloured vines and other plants. At the heart of the garden is a jade altar.

The verdant garden is home not only to black lotus plants, which grow and twist around the golden statues, but also is home to a horrid Yothga plant (see *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age* for details of both plants). Other varieties of rare plants and sorcerous herbs may also grow here at the Game Master's discretion. Ungodly, slimy shapes glide and crawl among the writhing brambles, hissing thorns and horrible blooms. Grinning skulls, with plants sprouting out of the empty eye sockets litter the damp soil. The huge (14 HD) Yothga plant, whose roots reach down to the blackened pits of Hell, is growing around and above the jade altar – and within the altar is hidden the antiquated tome hinted at in the darkest of legends surrounding this elder isle. The thick miasma of the lotus plants and the gruesome blossoms of the Yothga dominate this grim garden.

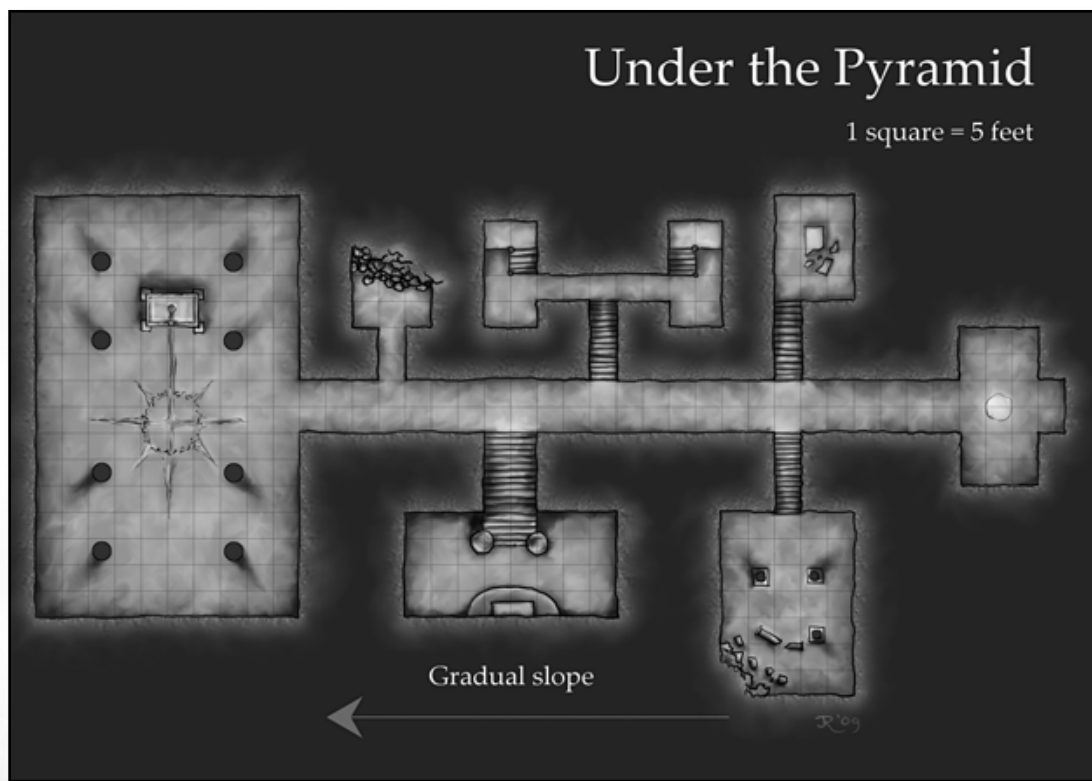
At some point during the exploration of this garden, or immediately afterwards, the jungle noises in the background suddenly cease as the piercing scream of a woman in mortal danger rips through the humid air.

THE LURKING PEOPLE

Also on the island lurks the remnants of the ancient people who once dwelled on this mountain top before their kingdom sank beneath the waves. They worship a horrible demon which commands the bats of the island and one of them stands atop one of the great piles of stone not far off. This black, misshapen anthropoid can see the garden and the player characters. In one mighty arm he holds a nude woman with golden hair. The other muscled arm is held aloft as he issues a guttural but incoherent challenge to the people below. The woman screams again as he drops out of sight, dropping down through an unseen opening at the top of the crumbling pyramid.

The characters must make climb checks to clamber up the gradually disintegrating pyramid, but they will be aided by vines and other encroaching vegetation, especially at the lower levels. At the top of the brooding monument, they find an opening. A temple used to exist at the top of this structure, but all that remains now is a few stones from the foundation of the wall. Where the altar used to hide a secret passage on the floor now exists only a hole. The hole drops down six feet into a corridor. Hiding just out of sight are two of the horrible aboriginal monsters, waiting patiently for any who drop down into their lair.

The creatures are the descendants of ancient Atlanteans, degenerated from their human state to a more primitive one. For all intents and purposes, they are the same thing as the Man-Apes found in *Conan*



the Role-Playing Game. They have faces of madness and are covered in black hair. Their small, red, pig-like eyes glare above a flat nose and their loose lips pull back in snarls to reveal dog-like teeth. These degenerates are only slightly more intelligent than those found east of Zamora, and have Hide +11 in addition to the skills given to them in the core rules.

After the pair of Man-Apes are defeated, the characters can move further down the corridor. The corridor quickly becomes a ramp going down deep into the heart of the pyramid.

As the characters pass by empty chambers and steep stairwells, they begin to hear inhuman chanting. A foul odour wafts up and a coldness in the air is distinctly felt in the otherwise humid atmosphere of the island. The characters have no visual or audible clue, but they can still sense the presence of a horrific evil too grisly for human comprehension somewhere ahead.

Deep in the heart of the brooding pyramid lies a black chamber where a dozen Man-Apes dwell. Although the language is now gibberish and they understand nothing of what they do, they still perform the

ancient ceremonies. One Man-Ape is dressed in an antique costume of curious aspect, which includes a strange, unearthly headdress of alien splendour and is disturbingly opulent and weirdly lustrous. Its design belongs to another time, another place, its patterns hinting at remote secrets and potent powers of the most sinister aspect. This Man-Ape is both inhumanly primal and hauntingly intelligent.

DEGENERATE ATLANTEAN HIGH PRIEST

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 9d8+18 (59 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.

Defence Value: 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

Damage Reduction: 5

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+22

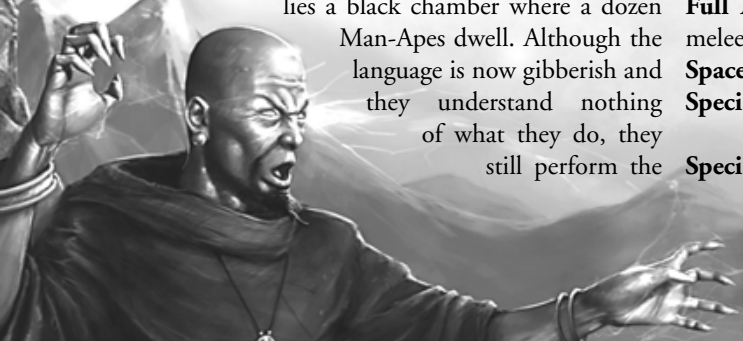
Attack: Slam +17 melee (1d8+9)

Full Attack: 2 slams +17 melee (1d8+9) and bite +15 melee (1d10+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab, crush 3d8+13

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent



Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +5

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +13, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +11, Perform (mimic) +9, Perform (ritual) +8, Search +8, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Multiattack, Dabblers (summonings), Performer

Environment: The Island of Bakenprah's Bats

Power Points: 3 (6 maximum)

Advancement: 10 HD (Large)

This degenerate Atlantean high priest is both horrible in physical appearance and in its mental abilities. He dresses in ancient Atlantean fashions and serves a gruesome demon-god, having entered into a pact with the demon long aeons ago.

COMBAT

Degenerate Atlanteans attempt to grapple their victims, then settle down to crush and gnaw them at leisure.

Crush (Ex): A Degenerate Atlantean that gets a hold can make a single crush attack in place of its two claw attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 3d8+7 damage on the target. A degenerate Atlantean has a +4 circumstance bonus to its bite attack when targeting the

victim of a crush.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the degenerate Atlantean must hit with a claw attack. If it gets a hold, it can crush.

Skills: Degenerate Atlanteans have a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

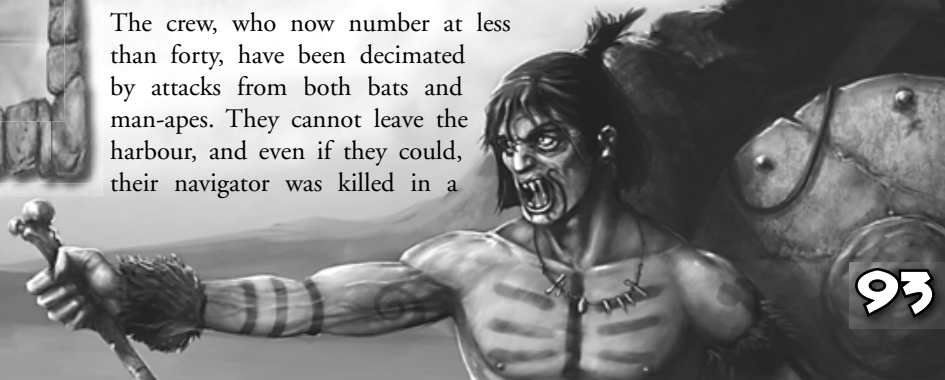
On a grim and bloody altar lies the blonde girl, naked and screaming. Two powerful degenerate Atlanteans (use standard Man-Ape statistics) are holding her down as the High Priest lifts high the sacrificial dagger. Above her, something otherworldly is going on. A strange atmospheric effect is swirling above the assembly, like a drain of multi-coloured water going up – and horrible tentacles are coming down... (Horror check DC 20)

The girl is the missing pirate captain from the ship in the harbour of the smaller island. Her name is Masia, her statistics can be found on page 97. If the characters interrupt the ceremony, the twelve degenerate Atlanteans will fight, enraged at the intrusion and the demon will not manifest in full if the ceremony is interrupted. All the demon can do is stop their ships from leaving the harbour – if the degenerate Atlantean High Priest is still alive. If the characters do not stop the ceremony, then they may be considered peaceable bystanders and when the demon emerges from the dimensional rift to consume Captain Masia, they risk corruption. If the characters kill the high priest, the demon, angered, starts to sink the islands. The characters need to make a mad dash back to their ships or be swallowed up by the deep, green seas. The demon's statistics can be found on page 98.

THE SATELLITE ISLAND

The characters have a choice of landing on either the larger or smaller island. The map indicates the treasure is on the larger island, but a pirate ship is moored in the harbour of the smaller satellite. If the characters decide to investigate this craft first, they may do so. The ship is named *Raffel's Chariot* and is obviously a Zingaran craft, although it flies Barachan colours. It was once a Zingaran ship, but was captured by Barachans and now is crewed by Argosseans and captained by the infamous Captain Masia, a ruthless female pirate.

The crew, who now number at less than forty, have been decimated by attacks from both bats and man-apes. They cannot leave the harbour, and even if they could, their navigator was killed in a





crocodile attack. With their captain and three ranking officers missing they do not have the crew to adequately man the ship. On the verge of an mutiny, but completely lost as to what to do, the pirates will support anyone who will get them away from this desolate jungle island. They will tell the players the Captain, quartermaster, bos'n and another crewman went to the larger island in a boarding boat and never returned. They know the captain was in search of gold and a rare volume of witchery she intended to sell to a buyer in Stygia.

If the player characters try to get the ship out of the harbour, the demon of the island will choke up the harbour or otherwise try to punish the craft. Although the demon is trapped in an otherworldly Hell, it can be summoned up by the degenerate Atlantean high priest on the island and can also act through the priest.

There is nothing but jungle, crocodiles and other animals on the smaller island.

RESOLUTION

If the characters rescue Captain Masia, she will reward them however the Games Master deems appropriate. Certainly they might have a new contact among the Barachans. Award an appropriate amount of experience points for your campaign, and the characters will probably deserve a Fate Point.

CHARACTERS:

AMADOR DA SENON

Medium Zingaran/ 1st level Pirate/1st level soldier/ 1st level thief

Hit Dice: 2d8+1d10+3 (18 hit points)

Initiative: +12

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 16 (+0 level, +2 Dex, +1 Seamanship, +3 shield)

DV (Parry): 16 (+0 level, +2 Str, +1 Seamanship, +3 shield)

BAB/Grapple: +1/+3

Attack: Broadsword +4 melee (1d10+2/19-20/AP 5)

Full Attack: Broadsword +4 melee (1d10+2/19-20/AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, +1 attack with broad or arming sword, sneak attack +2d6/+2d8, sneak attack style (broadsword)

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope, -1 penalty to Diplomacy, trapfinding

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +0

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Appraise +6, Balance +10, Bluff +0, Climb +9, Diplomacy -1, Escape Artist +5, Forgery +3, Gather Information +0, Jump +5, Listen +1, Profession (sailor) +5, Search +2, Sense Motive +1, Tumble +8, Use Rope +7

Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Agile, Acrobatic

Amador da Senon is a deck hand. He grew up on a pirate ship, but tired of the life and became a mercenary for a short time. He deserted the unit when that life proved too harsh and was forced to live for a time in the alleys of a Hyborian city. He grew disenchanted with life on the streets, so he decided to return to the life of the sea. He signed on *Dagon's Valour*, but has learned too much laziness in his life. He would like to retire in wealth and luxury, and longs to own slaves. He gets along badly with people because he thinks he has better ideas, should be allowed to make everyone bend down to his ideas and visions, is only interested in himself, and quits when the going gets too harsh. He dislikes the quartermaster because of a lashing administered earlier, not long before the murder.

BALDOMERO DE DEVANTE

Medium Zingaran/ 2nd Pirate-5th Scholar

Hit Dice: 2d8+5d6-14+7 (20 hit points)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 17 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +1 Seamanship, +2 Wave Dance)

DV (Parry): 15 (+2 level, +0 Str, +1 Seamanship, +2 Wave Dance)

BAB/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Cutlass +4 melee (1d10/19-20/AP 2)

Full Attack: Cutlass +4 melee (1d10/19-20/AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, +1 attack with broad or arming sword, sneak attack +1d6

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use



Rope, -1 penalty to Diplomacy, Sorcery Style x3, scholar, pact background, base power points, knowledge is power, advanced spell x4, bonus spell

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +8

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 7, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18

Skills: Balance +9, Bluff +9*, Climb +6, Diplomacy +3*, Disguise +9, Gather Information +14*, Intimidate +9*, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perform (ritual) +14, Profession (sailor) +14, Sense Motive +8*, Swim +1, Use Rope +9

Feats: Iron Will, Freebooter's Fortune (may reroll failed Swim or Profession check at -4), Wave Dance, Toughness, Leadership

Sorcery Styles: Summoning, Sea Witchery, Nature Magic

Spells: *Demonic pact, Sense Currents, Summon Beast, Greater Summon Beast, Deep's Wrath, Tentacles of the Deep, Grip of the Deep, Blood and Water, Jaws of Atlantis*

Power Points: 7 (max 14)

Magic Attack: +6 (+2 level, +4 Cha)

Corruption: 5 (*may add +5 to all Cha skills to manipulate Non-Player Characters for his own schemes)

Leadership: 8 (1 4th level cohort, 8 1st level followers)

Baldomero de Devante is a Zingaran pirate who ran afoul of demons on an unknown, uncharted island after his ship ran aground during a major storm three years ago. He made a pact with the demons on the isle, and led his shipmates to be slaughtered. After being rescued, he resumed the life of a pirate, but practised his magic in secret, hungry for the alien lore and the power he intends to wield.

He carries with him a bottle that holds a red ruin of flesh and blood within. Mouths appear within the bloody mass and scream constantly – the bottled horror of his former shipmates and he must carry this with him at all time, but if it is corked, the screams cannot be heard.

He is lean and wiry with a black moustache and dark green eyes, he dressed in silk pantaloons, with a wide sash, and a bandana on his head. He has a deep scar across his bottom lip.

A skilled sailor, he is especially at home on ships, although he is not fond of swimming, as he is terrified of sharks. He has an especially weak constitution and tires easily. Luckily, he is very well-liked, saving him from serious derision due to his lack of endurance and works as hard as he can, not shirking from his duties. Sick a lot, he is constantly badgering his demonic mentors to help him endure.

He is charming when dealing with others, usually able to tell what the other person wants to hear. He does not, however, care for others' feelings or comfort, as he considers all to be

nothing more than tools to his ends. Although he knows much of demons, he tends to keep that knowledge to himself.

Baldomero wishes to sail to the island depicted on the map on the back of the picture. For this reason he did not take the map with him when he killed Xemero, the lure of great treasure should prove irresistible for any pirate and he does not want to be seen as the person pushing for investigation of the map.

BASTIARO THE BOS'N

Medium Zingaran/ 6th level Pirate

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hit points)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 18 (+3 level, +3 Dex, +2 Seamanship)

DV (Parry): 15 (+2 level, +1 Str, +2 Seamanship)

BAB/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Cutlass +5 melee (1d10+1/19-20/AP 3) or Unarmed Strike +5 (1d6+1+3d6)

Full Attack: Pair of Cutlasses +5/+5 melee (1d10+1/19-20/AP 3) or Unarmed Strike +5 (1d6+1+3d6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, +1 attack with broad or arming sword, sneak attack +3d6, sneak subdual

Special Qualities: Seamanship +2, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope, -1 penalty to Diplomacy, uncanny dodge, mobility

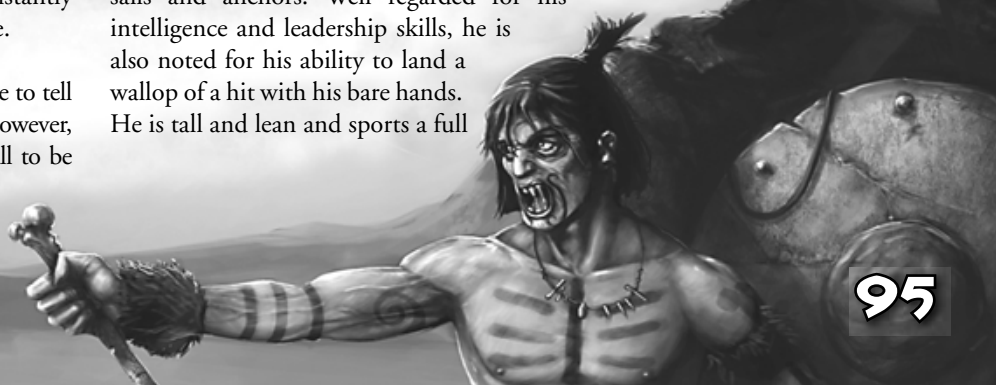
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +11, Balance +15, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Jump +7, Profession (sailor) +14, Sense Motive +1, Spot +6, Swim +10, Use Rope +15

Feats: Freebooter's Fortune (may reroll failed Swim or Profession check at -4), Brawl, Hard Hands, Up the Rigging, Improved Unarmed Strike

Bastiaro the Bos'n is the Boatswain of *Dagon's Valour*, overseeing the junior officers. His responsibilities include the crew's morale and work efficiency as well as the maintenance and repair of the hull, rigging, lines, cables, sails and anchors. Well regarded for his intelligence and leadership skills, he is also noted for his ability to land a wallop of a hit with his bare hands. He is tall and lean and sports a full





beard and moustache, often wearing a wide-brimmed hat with a feather in it. He is more comfortable in the rigging than most and is always ready for a fist fight, with a volatile temper he often misinterprets the motivation of others, leading him into unnecessary fights.

He wants the position of quartermaster, and hates the current title-holder. He has decked the quartermaster many times in the past and would be in a position of advancement if anything happened to his rival. He has no idea who killed the quartermaster, but is glad the man is dead and wishes he was the one who did it. He may try to help the characters if they seem willing to promote him, as anything increasing his power on the ship is good for him. If he thinks hindering the characters is in his best interest, then he will happily be an obstacle.

GEBELLEZ

Medium Zingaran/ 4th level Pirate

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hit points)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 20 (+3 level, +4 Dex, +1 Seamanship, +2 Wave Dance)

DV (Parry): 16 (+2 level, +1 Str, +1 Seamanship, +2 Wave Dance)

BAB/Grapple: +3/+4

Attack: Cutlass +4 melee (1d10+1/19-20/AP 3)

Full Attack: Cutlass +4 melee (1d10+1/19-20/AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, +1 attack with broad or arming sword, sneak attack +2d6, sneak subdual

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope, -1 penalty to Diplomacy, uncanny dodge

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Balance +13, Climb +11, Diplomacy -2, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +1, Spot +6, Swim +10, Use Rope +12

Feats: Freebooter's Fortune (may reroll failed Swim or Profession check at -4), Wave Dance, Athletic



Gebellez is the cohort of Baldomero de Devante, he recently took up with him after years of casual acquaintanceship. He is thin and lean, with an athletes physique and mien with black hair and moustache, with deep brown eyes. He has a deep burn scar on one side of his head from an accident in his youth.

A skilled sailor, he is also an excellent swimmer and climber, and is usually in the rigging as a lookout. He values his freebooting lifestyle and lives to get drunk and plunder others, tending to be a little surly and prone to getting into fights. He knows who killed the quartermaster, but will plant evidence to protect his master and disliked the quartermaster because of a harsh lashing administered earlier in the week. Anything that affects Baldomero positively also affects Gebellez positively; likewise for the negative.

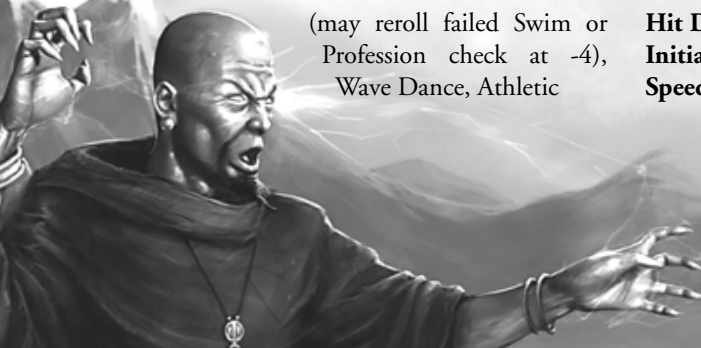
SAMAJ THE RAVEN

Medium Vendhyan/ 4th level Pirate

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hit points)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft.



DV (Dodge): 16 (+3 level, +2 Dex, +1 Seamanship)

DV (Parry): 12 (+2 level, -1 Str, +1 Seamanship)

BAB/Grapple: +3/+2

Attack: Arming Sword +5 finesse melee (1d10-1/19-20/AP 1)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +5 finesse melee (1d10-1/19-20/AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, sneak attack +1d6, sneak subdual

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, pirate code, to sail a road of blood and slaughter, uncanny dodge

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills: Balance +3, Bluff +8, Climb +0, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +8, Sense Motive +6, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Knowledge (religion) +7, Profession (sailor) +10, Profession (merchant) +12, Move Silently +7, Use Rope +3

Feats: Knowledgeable, Skill Focus (profession-merchant)

Samaj the Raven is a Vendhyan born into the merchant caste. Dressed in a black *dhoti* and a feathered turban, he was cast adrift when his craft was sank by black corsairs. He is wealthy enough to have two wives back in Vendhya, but of course that is also where his wealth is and is effectively penniless right now. He has an olive skin tone, a slim body-style and straight black hair. He is not particularly strong, but has a decent endurance. He is both cultured and well-educated. He tends to meditate a lot and worships Asura, believing strongly in fate and astrology.

He usually mans the ship's weapons on craft he sails on, and takes charge of selling merchandise at the ports. He gets along well with others and respects authority, always deferring to the more experienced or higher ranked personnel. He has a birthmark on his neck in the shape of a bird, which he likens to a raven. He is armed with an arming sword and has a small quantity of green lotus blossom in a pouch under his sash. His feather is in the quartermaster's quarters because Baldomero plucked it from him during the brutal initiation and used it to muddy up the evidence.

VINICIO DA OVANDO

Medium Zingaran/ 1st level thief - 3rd level Pirate

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hit points)

Initiative: +9

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 20 (+2 level, +4 Dex, +1 Seamanship, +3 shield)

DV (Parry): 17 (+1 level, +2 Str, +1 Seamanship, +3 shield)

BAB/Grapple: +2/+4

Attack: Dagger +6 finesse melee (1d4+2/19-20/AP 3) or Unarmed Strike +6 finesse (1d6+2+3d8)

Full Attack: Dagger +6 finesse melee (1d4+2/19-20/AP 3) or Unarmed Strike +6 finesse (1d6+2+3d8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft x 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, +1 attack with broad or arming sword, sneak attack +3d6/+3d8, sneak attack style (unarmed strike), sneak subdual

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope, -1 penalty to Diplomacy, trapfinding, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), to sail a road of blood and slaughter

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +0

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Appraise +6, Balance +12, Bluff +4, Climb +7, Diplomacy +3, Hide +8, Jump +7, Move Silently +11, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +4, Search +9, Tumble +11, Use Rope +8

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Hard Hands, Brawl

Vinicio da Ovando is a junior officer on *Dagon's Valour*, and helps the boatswain maintain the ship. He is a known knife fighter and brawler. Lean and mean, he has a chiselled appearance despite his youth and has a thin beard on his chin, but his attempts at cultivating a moustache have failed. He believes the bos'n should be the quartermaster and thinks the captain is worthless. He wants to travel to Vendhya one day and see the wonders of that far-flung nation. He has heard rumours the Vendhyan has a pet demon that screams.

He often steals things at the request of Baldomero and may have stolen a character's weapons so they could be used in the killing. Anything good for the bos'n is good for him, and he will usually follow the bos'n's lead.

CAPTAIN MASIA THE BARACHAN

Medium Female Humanoid / 10th level Pirate

Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflex save)



Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

DV (Dodge): 19* (+7 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 17* (+5 level, +2 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +7/+9

DR: 7 (breastplate and steel cap)

Attack: Cutlass (+10 melee, 1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Cutlass (+10/+5 melee, 1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +3d6, Sneak Subdual

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (Barachan

13, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +16, Climb +7, Balance +16, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +18, Profession (sailor) +16, Use Rope +16

Feats: Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Leadership, No Honour, Weapon Focus (cutlass), Feet-footed, Pirate Code Expert

Reputation: 13 (villain)

Leadership: 13 (10 level, +3 Cha; followers: 40 1st level pirates; cohort 6th level pirate)

Captain Masia the Barachan is a notorious pirate captain and someone not to be crossed. She is ruthless and more than able to defend herself. She is motivated by greed, and longs to retire as a wealthy empress on an island she alone rules. She is a golden-haired, curvaceous woman and dresses in typical pirate fashion, although she dons a vest instead of going bare-chested as many of her male crew does. She will not hesitate to double cross her enemies, and, if the reward is high enough, her friends.

She knows much about the Barachan Islands and could be an excellent contact for the player characters if the campaign continues. She may know other reputed treasure troves if the Games Master wants her to travel with the Player Characters for a spell. She may plan to steal the players' ship and add it to her own fleet. Her cohort died when the degenerate Atlanteans attacked and kidnapped her.



THAGULGOS

Huge Outsider (demon)

Hit Dice: 20d8+300 (390 hp)

Initiative: +8 (-4 Dex, +12 Reflex)

Speed: 20 ft.

Defence: 19 (-2 Size, -4 Dex, +15 natural)

DR: 4* (demon lord)

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+43

Attack: Tentacle +33 (2d6+15)

Full Attack: 2 tentacles +33 (2d6+15, AP 20), bite +28 (2d8+15, AP 22)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3)/15 ft. (3)

Special Attacks: Spells, improved grab

Special Qualities: Manifest

Power Points: 55 (base 50, +5 Wis)

Magic Attack Bonus: +20 (+10 natural, +5 Charisma)

Saves: Fort +27, Ref +8, Will +17

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 2, Con 40, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 20

Skills: Balance +19, Climb +38, Craft (alchemy) +27, Craft

Smoke and Rockets), Navigation

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 17, Wis





(herbalism) +27, Intimidate +28, Jump +38, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (religion) +27, Listen +28, Perform (ritual) +28, Spot +28

Feats: Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Critical (bite), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun

Power Points: 13 (65 maximum)

Environment: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: -

Thagulgos is enormous, a twenty foot tall and wide monstrosity of tentacles and shadow. All that can be seen are his flailing tentacles and burning eyes as he is always shrouded in deep shadows. Thagulgos loves to make pacts with mortals. He is even quite willing to dwell upon Earth if this is requested of him, so long as he is well supplied with sacrifices. As with any demon lord, he can teach a mortal any spells he wishes. He is able to cast any spell from Nature, Sea Witchery, and Weather Witching styles.

Combat

Thagulgos's combat style is simple and brutal. He will simply wriggle over to his enemies, rip them apart with his tentacles, and devour them as they fall.

Manifest (Su): As a full-round action, Thagulgos can either leave Earth and return to his home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, he manifests at the new location at the end of his action.

Improved Grab (Ex): If Thagulgos hits with a tentacle, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No initial touch attack is required. Unless otherwise noted, improved grab works only against opponents at least one size category smaller than the creature. The creature has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use

the part of its body it used in the improved grab to hold the opponent. If it chooses to do the latter, it takes a -20 penalty on grapple checks, but is not considered grappled itself; the creature does not lose its Dexterity bonus to AC, still threatens an area, and can use its remaining attacks against other opponents.

SHIPS

DAGON'S VALOUR

Large (190 ft. long, 28 ft. beam) (69,000 sp);

Hardness/Hit Points: 5/400;

Components: 4 (Deep Water Hull, Cargo Hold, Passenger Rooms, Barracks);

Crew: 8/32 (plus 50 marines);

Speed (Sail): 2; **Max Cargo:** 1;

Maintenance: Profession (sailor) DC 25 (1 Component, 1 Component, 10% Hit Points)

RAFFEL'S CHARIOT

Large (75,000 sp); 120 ft x 20 ft;

Crew: 56/224;

Hardness/HP: 5/400;

Speed (Rowed): 2;

Speed (Sail): 5;

Tactical Movement: 2/3;

Modifiers: +1 tactical movement when the wind is behind, +3 overland movement;

Max Cargo: 1;

Components: Banks of Oars, 1 cargo hold, Passenger Rooms, Zingaran Rigging

Although a Zingaran carrack, it was captured by Argossean pirates. This carrack has three masts, rigged in the Zingaran style, making her very fast when under sail, but does cause her problems when she must face contrary winds.





CONAN[®]

SCROLL OF TSOthemENES

By Tim Bancroft



THIS IS A *Conan* scenario for a group of five Player Characters of 3rd-4th level. Though it starts in Messantia, it takes the Player Characters to Tortage and the coasts of the Pictish Wilderness. The scenario is primarily investigative with a long-distance chase and a barely known foe with challenges which will confound the less capable.

As a result, the encounters can be adapted for characters of higher level but may be a challenge for those of 2nd level or below. Whilst *Across the Thunder River* and *Pirate Isles* could be useful, the scenario does not assume that Games Master has these books.

MESSANTIA, ARGOS

The Player Characters are resting after their latest escapade in Messantia, the premier port on the coast of Argos. The grapevine is buzzing with their exploits: whilst heroes here are a-plenty, their tales are frequently mundane. Unsurprisingly, they are approached by a potential sponsor, Ameline Pompilius, with a request to find the lost Scroll of Tsothemenes.

If the Player Characters are already playing in a Messantia based Campaign they may already have met Ameline Pompilius and, if any magic-wielding scholars are in the party, she could have spoken to them

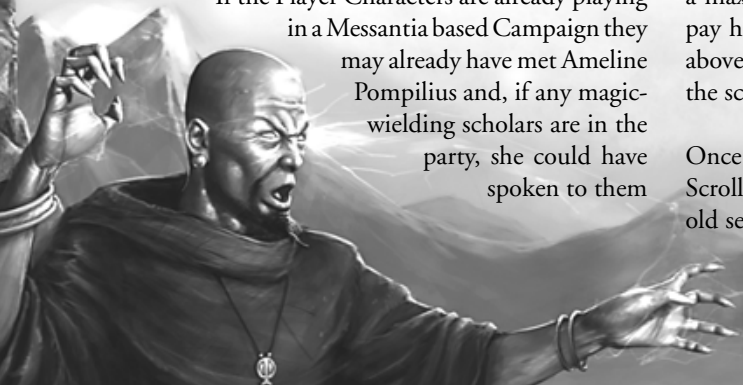
frequently to gain information on sorcery, either as an occasional guest at her lodgings or in eating houses around the city. If not, introduce her as a young, stunning, raven-haired beauty, a relative of the House Pompilius, who is known to be working towards its reinstatement in the affairs of Messantia – and has recently escaped slavery at the hands of the political enemies of the house.

Ameline is now looking haggard and worn, with signs of sleeplessness around her eyes. Her robes are as rich as always, though they are looking a bit creased, and her hair, whilst coiffured, is a little unkempt. She wears the minimum of make-up necessary to appear seemly in the streets of Messantia.

THE COMMISSION

Ameline asks the Player Characters to travel to Tortage and retrieve a scroll for her. If pushed on payment, she will offer 200 silver each, but can be bargained up via an opposed Diplomacy check (she has a Diplomacy skill of +8): for each plus 5 points by which her check is exceeded, she will offer an additional 50 silver per character up to a maximum of 2,400 silver for the whole group. She will pay half now and half later. Before increasing payment to above 1200 silver in total, she will offer sharing access to the scroll for a month with a sorcerer.

Once agreed she will state that she is looking for the lost Scroll of Tsothemenes, apparently in the possession of an old sea-dog by the name of 'Broso' or something similar – she is not sure of the exact name.





He is an old pirate quartermaster who has been around for a while and is now in retirement. A Profession(sailor) or Knowledge(local: Barachan Isles) check (DC 24) will bring to mind someone by the name of Valbroso Quantillo, an ex-Zingaran, who joined the Barachan pirates after being hounded by his own people.

If the Player Characters have their own transport, she will expect them to use that but will pay crew wages and basic maintenance costs for the cruise. If pushed she will allow a Player Character with a Profession(sailor) skill of +10 or more to act as captain of her own family's ship, but will otherwise provide a competent captain of her own. She will also give 300 silver in expenses, which she expects back unless their use is justified, and will also provide a contract for purchasing the scroll from its current owner which the Player Characters can complete, to pay up to 2500 silver for the scroll. If the owner of the scroll pushes for more, she will inform the Player Characters they can bring the owner back for negotiation.

If meeting in a public place, unless the Player Characters specifically state they are checking, allow a single, highest Spot roll against a Hide of +9. If successful, the Player Character notices a man in the shadows beside the door, watching Ameline whilst chewing tobacco. The person is hooded and cloaked but sea-boots and light treds can be seen. Any movement towards the watcher will be spotted and the watcher will disappear into the crowds. If brought to Ameline's attention she will sigh, and comment

'There is always someone watching every major member of the merchant houses. It is meaningless.' If questioned as to why he is wearing naval gear, she will shrug. *'Probably one of the other naval houses, then.'*

If not in a public place, or if they meet her in the street, roll once as she leaves as above to spot the watcher moving after her. The watcher will not be present immediately after she leaves.

CHECKING THE INFORMATION

The Player Characters may ask how Ameline came by the information. She will need persuading, but will reveal it was an informer. If they try and check on the informer, he is nowhere to be found (he has been killed, but the body is in the sewers and by now will be overrun with rats).

PREPARATIONS

It will take two days to prepare the ship, a Barachan sloop, during which time the Player Characters can sort out their affairs and buy kit. They also have a chance to spot the watcher each time they leave, or once/day of they stay in an inn and do not go out.

Within hours of Ameline seeing the Player Characters, another watcher will be present at the their lodgings. He, too, will slip away if challenged or seen, but if caught by some exceptional stratagem the watcher will be too terrified to say anything (giving him a +4 circumstance bonus when resisting interrogation skill checks such as Intimidate or similar). If pushed he will crunch down hard on his tobacco wad, releasing a poison that kills him instantly. If the Player Characters manage to persuade him to talk by some means, he will only acknowledge his employer is keeping watch on House Pompilius, that it is another of the major Houses, and he does not know which one. He is a crewman on a galley and is too scared to admit its name, even when faced with death (the torture he fears if he gives its name will be far worse than anything the Player Characters can do).

FROM MESSANTIA TO TORTAGE

As the sloop leaves Messantia with the Player Characters on board, allow the Player Characters to state whether or not they are scanning the harbour for anything odd. If not, allow a single (highest) Spot





roll (DC 18) to notice a red-painted galley pulling out of the harbour at approximately the same time as the sloop. Of course, there are a number of other vessels leaving, but the others are fishing smacks, merchant vessels, private yachts and Messantian naval ships.

If spotted, a Profession(sailor) check (DC 22) or knowledge(local: Barachan Isles) (DC 20) will identify her as the Red Trident, a Zingaran galley with 70-80 crew.

The journey to Tortage should take 8 days. The galley is following the characters but will try and stay out of sight. It will travel at average speed for the journey, checking the characters are staying on the same course by moving up in the morning and checking her progress. If the Player Characters are suspicious, a single check to Spot her should be allowed every morning (DC 15) by a character climbing the mast into the tops of the Player Characters' sloop. She will not be visible from deck unless the Player Characters keep the sails of their sloop down.

It is likely the Red Trident will come into Tortage a between 12 and 16 hours after the Player Characters dock there unless they took precautions, managed to outrun it or otherwise managed to divert it. The Games Master should keep careful track of when the Red Trident reaches port.

TORTAGE

Approaching Tortage may be problematic if the Player Characters fly a flag of a merchant house. Otherwise if they fly a pirate flag or no flag, they are likely to be left alone. If flying a merchant flag, have them boarded by one of the Barachan Isles pirate vessels: they will be left alone after the crew finds they are carrying nothing.

The harbour and reaches at Tortage are packed with a wide variety of vessels at anchor. The Player Characters will be able to find a place to anchor or, if they feel more secure, at a mooring on the docks for 20 silver per day.

It is up to the Games Master whether or not the Player Characters are faced with any trouble from any locals (for example, if they leave their sloop unguarded).

Finding 'Broso', or Valbroso, requires a Gather Information check (DC 18) with DMs of +2 per day spent Gathering Information, with possible assists from a single character making a Profession(sailor) check (DC 10) and

another making a successful Gather Information check (DC 10). The cost for such activity 10 silver plus 5 silver per person assisting per day (so Gather Information with will cost a maximum of 20 silver per day).

Once the *Red Trident* comes into dock, she will begin checking on what the Player Characters are doing. They may, of course, not spot her or her crew if they are not expecting her. If not, once per day they will have a chance to Spot (DC 20) a pirate tracking them when out on the street (use highest Spot), but if wary they will have a chance at an opposed Spot vs. Hide +10 (+8 +2 circumstance bonus due to the pirates fitting in with the people of Tortage). Refer to the section on the *Red Trident* below. It is possible that the crew of the *Red Trident* will find Valbroso and the map before the Player Characters, in which case the group will have his shack pointed out to them and they will find his dead body. Refer to the section *Valbroso's Shack* for information on searching for the map.

VALBROSO QUANTILLO

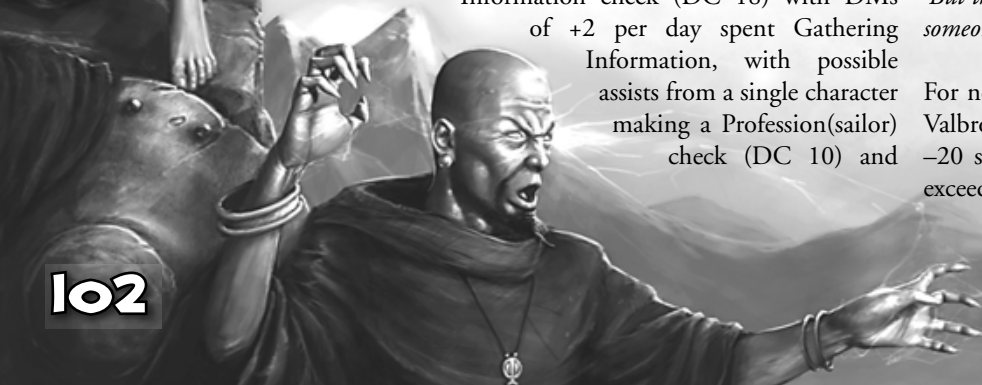
Valbroso is an old sea dog and will be found in a tavern, the 'Brace and Tackle', in which he takes all his meals and drinks. There will always be someone in the tavern apart from the staff. He will greet the Player Characters in a friendly manner and ask what he can do for them. On being asked for the Scroll, he will smile.

'Well, I wouldn't rightly say I had the scrolls, so much as knowledge of how to get to the scrolls, you see?' he looks round at you all. 'Cap'n Turello. Of the Green Serpent. It was him who tried to find the scroll of Tsothemenes, and it were him who landed. But he never came back. So I took note of where it was, and we returned.' He takes a sip of his beer. 'Mind you, that were 20 year ago.'

He stares absently into space, then jerks back to reality. 'I guess you'd like a copy of the map, am I right?' he looks up at you all and beams. 'O' course. It will cost.'

If asked about the map or the location he will just say that it is somewhere along the coast of the Pictish Wilderness, that there was a village nearby and that wild animals ranged the coast. *'O' course,' he chuckles. 'That's not saying much about the Pictish coast.'* He smiles at you all once more. *'But that's why you'll be needin' a map. It's only 300 silver for someone like you – 'cos I likes the look of you.'*

For negotiating a price, make a Diplomacy check against Valbroso's Diplomacy of +8. The price will be 300 silver, -20 silver for each 5 points the bargainer's check result exceeded Valbroso's (up to -100 silver).



He has not yet given a copy of the map to anyone else, and can be persuaded to delay making further copies for 80 silver. He will not hand out the original and will not be persuaded to stop handing out copies unless he is paid 3000 silver.

VALBROSO'S SHACK

Once the Player Characters pay, he will lead them to a small shack a few streets back and off the main streets. The door is locked with a good quality lock (DC 18 to pick) but Valbroso has the key. In his room are pens, ink and quills and working knives, parchment and papyrus, a cot, some rusty weapons and armour which have not been used for some time, and a sea chest. The sea chest contains spare clothes and a pouch at the bottom with 160silver. If asked about the number of pens and quills, Valbroso will be quite open about the fact he makes his money from dealing in maps given to him from various pirate bands. *'Of course, this one is a copy of my map, one I made in the original, from when I was there.'*

If the Player Characters follow him, Valbroso will ask the Player Characters to stay inside for a moment and leave via a back door, returning a few moments later with the map. If they do not respect his wishes and are successful on a Move Silently check (against his Listen of +10) they will see him lift up a stone against his shack, reach in to a cavity beyond and bring out the scroll. He will not retrieve the scroll if anyone is looking, and will not deal with anyone who makes his life difficult. If he is not seen retrieving a map from the cavity behind the stone, a blind Search check (DC 23) is required to find it under normal circumstances.

Valbroso will show the characters the map and swear it is an accurate copy (a Sense Motive will reveal that he is not bluffing, but the Games Master should roll for his Bluff in secret anyway). The Player Characters have a choice after buying or finding the map: either go forward and retrieve the scroll or return to Ameline with the map. If they just return with just the map she will be furious, demand her money back and also demand her expenses returned. If they offer to immediately go and retrieve the scroll, she will be mollified but will not offer any more money. If they do not go on, she will hound them for her money and spread the word around Messantia that they are untrustworthy and cowards: the Player Characters will suffer a -1 penalty on Reputation in Messantia, -3 if they have a Code of Honour, until they perform the quest or otherwise give good service to House Pompilius.

If the Player Characters check his secret cavity they will find two more copies of the scroll, the original, plus three copies of two other maps apparently showing buried treasure. The treasure maps are likely to be out of date and the treasure already recovered, but the Player Characters are not to know this and a Games Master could use the opportunity to create another, treasure-hunting scenario. There are also two other, original maps from which he has not yet been able to make a copy.

THE RED TRIDENT

The ship is painted red, is very well kept, always has a guard of at least 20 men on board, with a badge on her prow of a red trident outlined in black, the tips painted in gold. When she arrives at Tortage she will moor at the dock, paying premium charges to do so, especially as she is Zingaran, so will be seen when the Player Characters walk in and out of the port from their sloop. The crew of the *Red Trident* are typical Zingaran Pirates except that they will be more disciplined than most, and not just because they are Zingarans in a Barachan port. They are all equipped with arming swords and poniards.

The first day the *Red Trident* comes her crew will be gathering information on what the Player Characters are doing. On subsequent days, they will be searching for Valbroso just like the Player Characters. When they get to him they will pretend to buy a copy of the map but, as soon as he gives it to them, they will kill him in his shack and leave, sailing for Tsothemenes Island.

The *Red Trident* can be used by the Games Master to hurry the players along, or as a regularly occurring plot device. Crew can be spotted at odd times, and their ability to stay ahead, get ahead or trail the Player Characters can create tension.

VALBROSO'S MAP OF TSOthemENES ISLE

This is the map provided to the Player Characters, or otherwise obtained by them, showing the approximate location of Tsothemenes Isle and the key landmarks enabling them to find the location.





KNOWLEDGE AND TSOthemENES

It is possible that a Scholar with the Knowledge Is Power class ability or anyone with Knowledge(arcana) could recall who Tsothemenes is and for what he is famous. One assist is allowed from a character who has Knowledge(arcana) or Knowledge(local: Pictish Wilderness) at 5 or more ranks. DMs for the roll are +2 if the library in Messantia is used (for a 5silver per day research charge), +2 if the researching character has Knowledge(history) at 5 ranks or more or Knowledge(local: Pictish Wilderness).

The knowledge obtained is dependent on the final result.

Knowledge (arcana) result	Knowledge is Power result	Information obtained or recalled
10+	12+	Tsothemenes is a well-known Corinthian sorcerer who lived many years ago. He left Corinthia sometime during his life and was not heard of again in his homeland.
12+	15+	Tsothemenes was famed for creating magic devices.
18+	20+	Rumours said he move to a private estate somewhere in the north-west, possibly the Pictish Wilderness or Cimmeria.
20+	20+	The estate was on an island in an almost hidden bay in the south-west of the Pictish Wilderness, visited only by the occasional trader hired by himself or pirates looking for plunder.
22+	25+	Tsothemenes was a powerful sorcerer, feared by all who knew him. He is said to have written a scroll with all the clues to his secrets and research, including information on how to cast the spells he knew and create the items he made.
25+	25+	Tsothemenes was really a Stygian, Soth Amon-Aas, and as evil, corrupt and feared as any Stygian sorcerer. Rumours say he was killed by one of his hideous creations or when invoking some dark power. Amongst the skills he possessed was that of Demonology and Permanency.
30+	30+	Soth Amon-Aas, a student of the school of eternal life, died shortly after turning into a vampire. Many of the items he created were cursed, and given to his enemies as false gifts of reconciliation.

As a result of the above, if mentioned to a Pirate character, he may attempt to recall something about the map. Use Profession(sailor) or Knowledge(local: Barachan Isles), whichever is the highest, with a synergy of +2 if the other skill has 5 ranks or more. On a result of 18 or more, the character will remember that a map to the estate was said to be made once by a group of Zingaran Freebooters who came across his island, a result of 21 or more will enable the character to recall that a map is said to be in the possession of a Barachan Pirate but just who is not known.







TSOthemENES ISLAND

The journey to Tsothemenes Island on the south-west coast of the Pictish Wilderness will take around five days, depending on whether or not the Player Characters try and get more speed out of their sloop. If the *Red Trident* has not already left, the group has a chance to try and sneak out. Given reasonable precautions, at night and with a successful Profession(sailor) check (DC 20) from its captain, the sloop will leave undetected. The next day, however, the *Red Trident* will continue in its search for the isle.

If the Player Characters leave in daylight, the *Red Trident* will summon its crew and follow them out. The Player Characters will not see it leave unless they wait for a few hours outside the harbour, but they will see signs of increased activity on deck as they leave the port of Tortage if they are explicitly watching the pirate galley.

Access to what was once the river is now blocked: the entrance has silted up leaving a vegetation-covered, stinking lagoon beyond it. The river itself was never a salmon river, despite what the pirates believed, and was merely another outlet for the river running through the swamp at the south of the map. The island itself is just visible from offshore, but the only way to it appears to be via a ship's boat, though the boat will need to be portaged over the sand and shingle into the choked lagoon. Any rowing or paddling through the swamp-lagoon will be hazardous and subject to losing oars on failed Profession(sailor) checks (DC 12) and will also disturb a skulking *servant in the swamp*.

ANCHORAGE

Apart from the village six miles to the south, there is another eight miles to the north (if the group sails north to find it). There is also a hidden creek four miles north in which the sloop can be rowed and moored, but which the *Red Trident* is also likely to use, and another sandy cove two miles north. Of course, there is plenty of sheltered landing and mooring within the banks around the southern Pict village's bay. Refer to the Games Master's map of the area for details.

THE PICTISH VILLAGES

The Player Characters may wish to bargain or approach the Picts to see what

they know about the island. The Picts around here are the Grey Seal clan (see page 118), and there will always be fishermen-hunters in canoes (one or two in each canoe) along the coast surrounding their village. The villages are built at the top of a gently sloping beach with trees behind and comprise of a large number of small, personal huts and between three and five large huts. Some of the large huts always have closed doors and smoke coming from their roofs (fish-smoking huts). Nets and fish will be spread out to dry. Any ships will have to send in a ship's boat to land on the beach.

A landing party will be met by a chief and a shaman, both armed with ceremonial harpoons and both wearing old sealskin cloaks. The chief will be wearing an Aquilonian broadsword and both have good-quality, long, curved knives in their belts (1d6^F damage). They will be open and neutral, if not Friendly, and *trade* news and information. The chief will do most of the talking. If asked, they will be open to offers of trade, suggesting they can provide dried fish and various native goods in return for weapons and worked metal goods.

The Island itself is called 'The Forbidding Island' by the Picts, perhaps sometimes understood to be 'The Forbidden Island'. If the chief and shaman are asked directly about it, read the following:

The chief and shaman glance at each other. 'We do not go there,' says the chief. 'It is prohibited for any Pict to visit the island or the surrounding lagoon.' He shudders. 'The lagoon has a number of sickly dwellers, guardian products of an ancient shaman set there to keep enquirers away. Some of our young do still travel into the forbidden area. Some never come back and others come back ... unsettled by what they have seen and experienced. Few have any wish to venture to the Forbidding Island now.'

If pushed further, the shaman will interpose: read the following to the players:

The shaman adopts an oratorical pose and his eyes turn distant, as if recalling ancient knowledge. 'A great sorcerer once lived on the isle,' he chants, 'imposing his rule on many who lived around. We called him Southerman, for so his name seemed to us and he came from the south. There were forges in his keep, and pits and cages from which came the screams of the anguished. We, the People of Honour, rose up and overthrew him when his growing evil became oppressive, but even our shamans of old were not able to remove all the curses and evil from his island, so the land is left as forbidden and they set the guardians.'





He drops his stance and focuses on you all. 'Do you really wish to travel to the isle, knowing this evil is there?'

If the Player Characters affirm this is the case then he will shrug and give his assent. *'There is no law forbidding it, but you have been warned. Beware the guardians in the waters.'*

If either are asked about the sandbank they will smile and nod. *'Twenty years ago,' says the Shaman, 'the high waters broke through the bank, allowing the river to flow. We thought the guardians might have been released or swept out to sea, but they remained in the lagoon when the waters returned to their natural flow.'*

If the southern village chief is offered something useful in exchange (20 to 50 silver in value, no coins) he will offer to take the Player Characters to the island himself, to a place where they can fairly easily wade across the water to the island.

Red Trident timeline at Tsothemenes Isle

Daylight hours since anchored	Action
0-4	Patrol the immediate area to make sure it is safe, gradually expanding the radius of exploration down to the swamp-lagoon.
5-6	Patrols return to the Red Trident having discovered traversing the swamp-lagoon is problematic.
7	Eat; discuss approach, pick up a ship's boat and start constructing two basic rafts. The rafts will not be complete until 24 hours have elapsed since the Red Lagoon anchored.
8-10	A group of 12 returns to the shores of the swamp-lagoon with the ships boat.
11	Group of eight crosses to Tsothemenes Isle to carry out initial exploration (takes around half hour including an attack from guardians).
11.5	Patrol lands on island with one injured in boat and one dead taken by a servant in the swamp, leaving six. Begin basic explorations, focusing on mount up to keep.
12	Red Trident group reaches the keep. Possible combat with remaining Chakan. Will lose one member per combat-capable Chakan and will then retreat after killing one Chakan.
13	Remaining crew in patrol returns to north bank, losing one more and having one more injured from guardians.
13.5-15	Injured group (including four left behind on north shore) returns to Red Trident with news of defenders.
16-20	Wait for rafts to finish. Load onto Red Trident.
21	Red Trident sails to shingle bank with rafts and ships boat.
22	Both ship's boats and both rafts sent over shingle bank with eight men apiece to row and paddle to island. Two men are lost in the journey but the numbers are too great for the servants.
23	30 crew and marines from the Red Trident land on Tsothemenes Isle, including the captain. All begin searching the ruins, methodically driving out the Chakan and bats, and begin exploring the underground passages.

STRATEGY OF THE RED TRIDENT

If the Red Trident beats the Player Characters to the island it will be waiting in the hidden creek to the north. At all times they will try and keep out of sight of the Player Characters vessel and will be as disciplined and professional as possible. The strategy of the crew of the Red Trident will be to use their ship as a solid base for a number of scouting parties consisting of three to four crew (vary according to the Player Characters strength) and similar numbers of marines.

The timetable for the exploration by the crew of the Red Trident is indicated on the following table. If any travel other than returning to the boat cannot be fitted in the available time till nightfall it will not be started. It is easiest to assume 12 hours of daylight per day with any extra time being taken up by eating, carousing, and rest.





The Player Characters may face a Red Trident patrol on the island or coming from the swamp. If they encounter the crew they will be challenged and, if it looks as if the Player Characters have something, the crew will demand it is handed over whilst claiming the rest of their crew will soon join them. If the crew seriously outnumber the player's group they will be fairly non-aggressive providing the Player Characters are peaceful: they will try to search the Player Characters and if they have no scroll (or tome) on them will question them, but will otherwise release them to go back to their own ship. If the Player Characters are aggressive, the crew will have no compunction about using the force required to quell any opposition. Small patrols will challenge from afar but will always send a messenger back to the Red Trident to warn them of the presence of the Player Characters.

THE SWAMP-LAGOON

The lagoon surrounding the island is partially salt-water, filled during a heavy storm and very high tides. Nonetheless it is mostly stagnant, filled with vegetation and rotting vegetation, storm-deposits, reeds and swamp scrub. The water is dirty and beginning to stink. Birds flit from reed to reed and water rats can be seen from time to time. There are fish, of sorts, amphibians and water snakes,

but whilst there are plenty of logs no alligators can be seen in its murky waters; at least, not yet...

There is only one ford over to the island, mostly waist deep (refer to the Games Master's map for its location). The village chief will guide the Player Characters or whoever else asks to the ford, tell them to go straight across – a distance of about 1¼ miles – and will return to his village (see page 118). The waters of the swamp-lagoon across the ford will reach up to the waist of any normal sized human, though the shallow area is around 400 yards wide. In areas other than the ford the water is at least shoulder-height and normally deeper. The wade across will take an hour and 15 minutes or, if individual times are required, 85 minutes minus the Strength score of the wader minus an extra half again of the strength score if the character has the Endurance feat.

LURKERS IN THE WATER

Within the lagoon are *servants in the swamp*, a few being the remnants of a those initially sent there but most are those who were summoned by outsiders. They have instructions to kill, drown or maim any humanoids who enter the water, the intention being to prevent anyone reaching the island, prevent the Chakan on the island escaping or stop any who manage to return from the ruins from reaching to shore.

On the party's return, a fully-formed *servant of the swamp* will attack, having been ordered to attack any who leave the island, anywhere. Additional servants may attack, if the Games Master wishes.

PART-FORMED SERVANT IN THE SWAMP

Medium Aberration

HD: 4d8 (30hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 25'/Swim 30'/burrow 1'

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 natural)

Parry Defence: 11

DR: 2 (leathery hide)

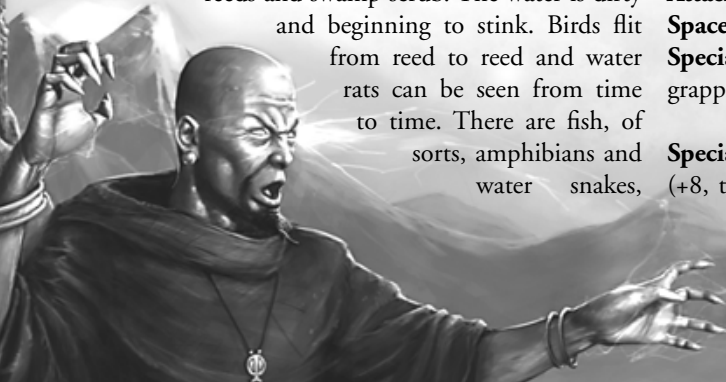
BAB/Grp: +3/+8

Attack/Full Attack: Bite +4 (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1);

Special Attacks: Improved Grab (No AoO, +4 on grapple)

Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light vision, swim (+8, take 10), +4 Hide in water/+10 if motionless, rapid





regeneration from normal weapons, darkvision 60'
Saves: Fort +5 Ref +4 Will +4
Abilities: Str: 13 Dex 14 Con 17 Int 6 Wis 11 Cha 6
Skills: Hide +7/+11/+17, Spot +3, Swim +12
Feats: Improved natural weapon*2;

Saves: Fort +5 Ref +4 Will +4
Abilities: Str: 13 Dex 14 Con 17 Int 6 Wis 11 Cha 6
Skills: Hide +7/+11/+17, Spot +3, Swim +10
Feats: Improved natural weapon*2;

The *servant's* tactics are to wait in the water ahead of anyone crossing, surprise a single character or the character at the rear of the file, grappling them to drag them underwater, biting all the while as opportunity presents. If down to approximately a quarter of its starting hit points the servant will release its target and retreat underwater. Anyone attempting to attack a *servant* whilst it is underwater must make a Swim check. Whilst not fully formed, the *servant in the swamp* is still partially resistant to damage from normal weapons: all such damage heals within 2d8+4 minutes, plus another 20 if it was reduced to -10 hit points or lower. Damage from silvered weapons or fire heals at the normal rate and can kill the creature.

These *servants* each have their own sector of the swamp-lagoon to themselves and will first attack anyone crossing within 2d6+10 minutes of anyone entering the water. If fought off, they will return as soon as they are healed. It is recommended that the Games Master keeps track of time between attacks and rolls the Player Characters Spot checks themselves.

If the *servant* is killed, another will take its place within two hours of its death.

FULL-FORMED SERVANT IN THE SWAMP

Medium Aberration

HD: 3d8+9 (22hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 25'/Swim 30'/burrow 5'

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 natural)
Parry Defence: 11

DR: 2 (leathery hide)
BAB/Grp: +2/+7
Attack/Full Attack: Bite +3 (1d6+1)
Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1);
Special Attacks: Improved Grab (No AoO, +4 on grapple)

Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light vision, swim (+8, take 10), +4 Hide in water/+10 if motionless, immune to physical attacks other than silver or fire, darkvision 60'

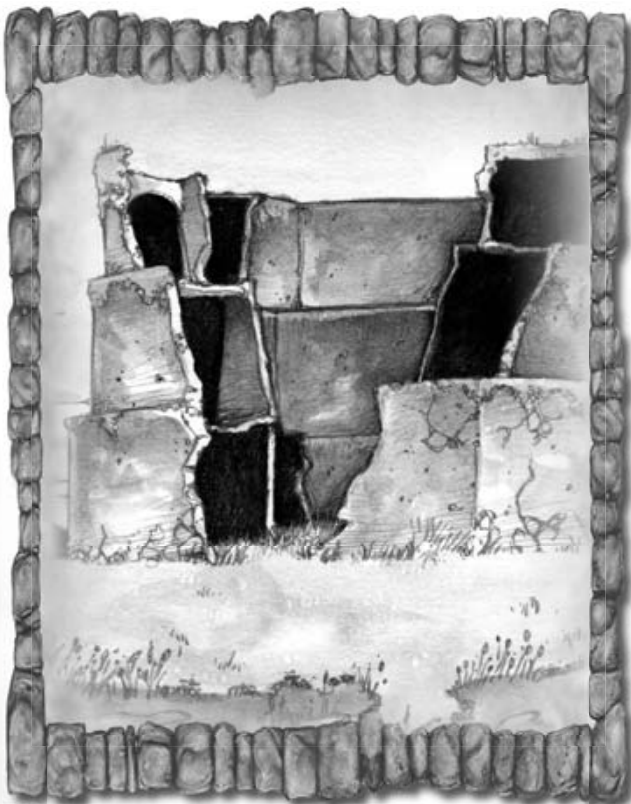


THE ISLAND

The island is covered in vegetation, trees and undergrowth. At one end of the island the keep has been built on a steep hill, which has precipitous drops to the swamp-lagoon apart from the slope facing the rest of the island. Two narrow, ruined 'towers' rise above the trees. The other end of the island is on a low rise edged by low cliffs varying in height from 25 to 35 feet. Birds call from the treetops, creatures scurry through the undergrowth and a squirrel peers quizzically at any humans arriving on the island.

There are two groups of Chakan living on the island, also put here by the ancient Picts. They are scared of the Servants in the





the crevasses, and grass has obtained a foothold on some ledges. From the walls project the weathered remains of hideous gargoyles, between them infrequent, projecting carvings hint at half-human creatures. Over and around the door are some sigils or lettering spelling out a message, though the script does not appear to be one you are familiar with. Through the entrance tunnel can be seen an inner courtyard, though it is overgrown with large bushes and small trees gaining a foothold.

A Knowledge(architecture & engineering) check (DC 15) will show that the design is not what would be expected from a Corinthian building and, moreover, it is extremely old. If the carvings are examined, a Knowledge(religion) check (DC 15) by a non-Stygian will realise the creatures are from the Stygian Pantheon, though any Stygian receives a +10 on this roll and a Stygian priest automatically recognises the carvings. Amongst the carvings, the walls are carved with ancient, stylised sigils in Old Stygian, required both a Decipher Script (DC 20) to appreciate the alphabetic set and Old Stygian to appreciate what the words say. Over the doorway the writing says “The Keep of Soth Amon-Aas” and on either side of the 10’ wide doorway “Only those worthy of the words should enter.”

Swamp knowing they are out of their element in the water. As a result they have adapted to life on the island, dropping down to the shore for fish when needed but otherwise keeping their numbers low (when too many are bred, the adventurous juveniles try crossing the swamp). A small family group of 2 adults, 1 juvenile and 1 child is nesting in the upper reaches of the keep whilst at the other end of the island is a larger group of eight: four adults, two juveniles and two youngsters.

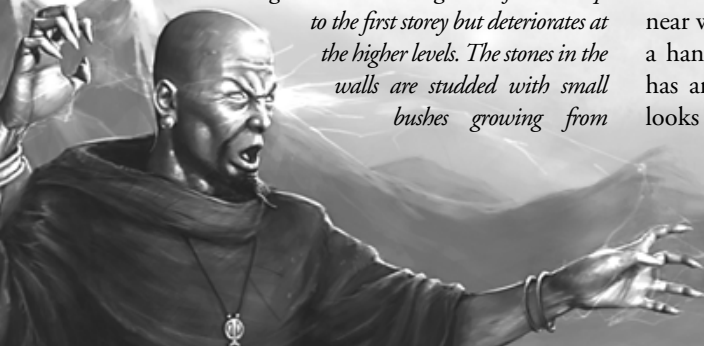
If the Player Characters explore the western end of the island, use the statistics for the adult Chakan and juvenile Chakan given on page 113.

THE KEEP OF SOTH AMON-AAS

At the top of the hill, the octagonal keep looms out of the forest, a dark mass above the trees. As you get closer you see it is in ruins and the two ‘towers’ are merely the rising remnants of something more solid than the rest of the walls. The front is still in reasonable repair up to 50 feet, as is the right hand side, though the left is solid up to the first storey but deteriorates at the higher levels. The stones in the walls are studded with small bushes growing from

The windows are of an ancient design, arching to a central peak. All are now merely bare holes, any glass or oilcloth having long ago been broken or ripped off, and any wooden fittings having corroded to nothing. There are no external windows on the ground floor. Throughout the keep, the doors above ground have long since corroded and collapsed, as also have all the internal wooden partitions and stairs. The floors marked on the map are of stone. The fireplaces have rubble collapsed into them from the chimneys. Whilst the keep has, or had, plenty of privy’s, they were separated off from the rest of the rooms with wooden partitions though if a determined search is made of the building the now-defunct and broken sewerage system can be found, draining off along ceramic pipes into the surrounding swamp. A well in the old kitchen (now collapsed and filled in) provided water.

The main entrance is now a gaping hole leading to a covered way flanked by massive, rusted hinges. If searched, a Search (DC 15) will uncover some fresh claw marks scratched into the stone work (less than a day old), the claws perhaps from a hand half again the size of a human. Once these are found, the external walls can be checked and similar scratch marks can be seen on the outside walls, particularly near windows or ledges, as if something was scrabbling for a handhold. The covered way into the central courtyard has an arrow-slit on either side, behind which are what looks like guardrooms.





From the left hand guard room a spiral stair leads up to the first and second floor and further up to non-existent floors. This is one of the two towers. A similar spiral stair, in a similar condition, leads up (or down) to what might have been a guard houses and store room on the opposite side of the keep, though the store rooms and guard house are not accessible from ground level other than through the old windows. Every floor is covered in a centuries-old layer of detritus and supports all manner of moss, grass and weeds, though no vegetation is substantial, with the depth only a few centimetres. In places it has been scuffed by claws and ripped up.

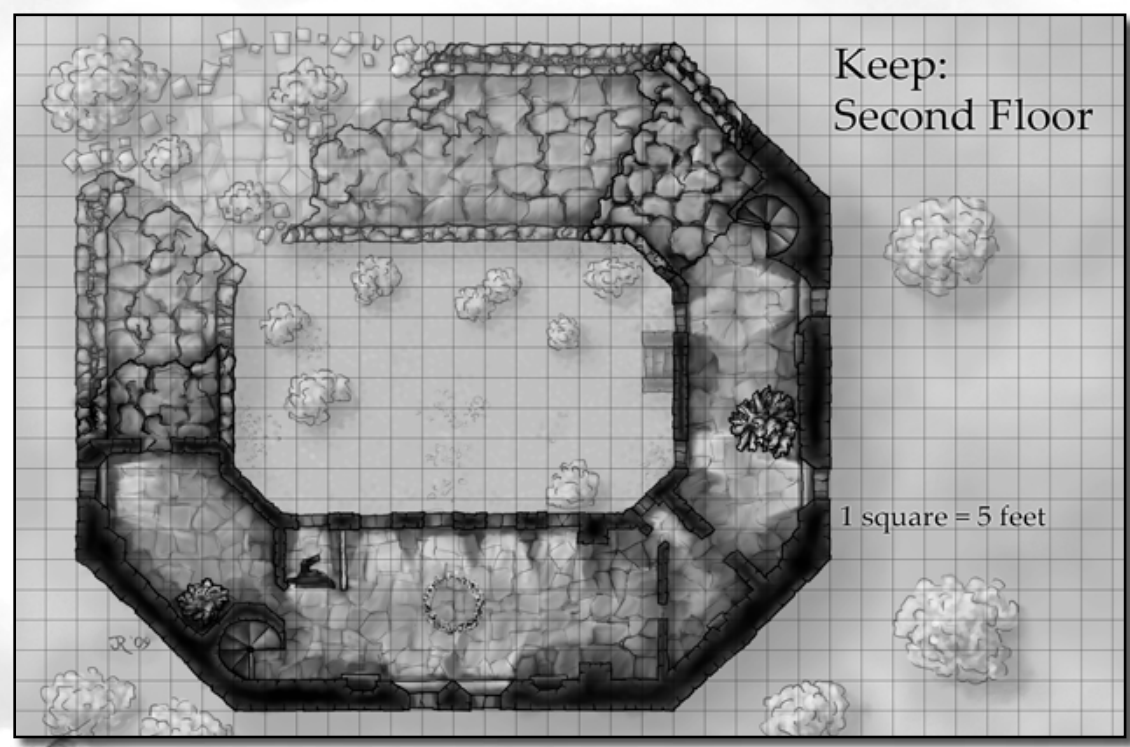
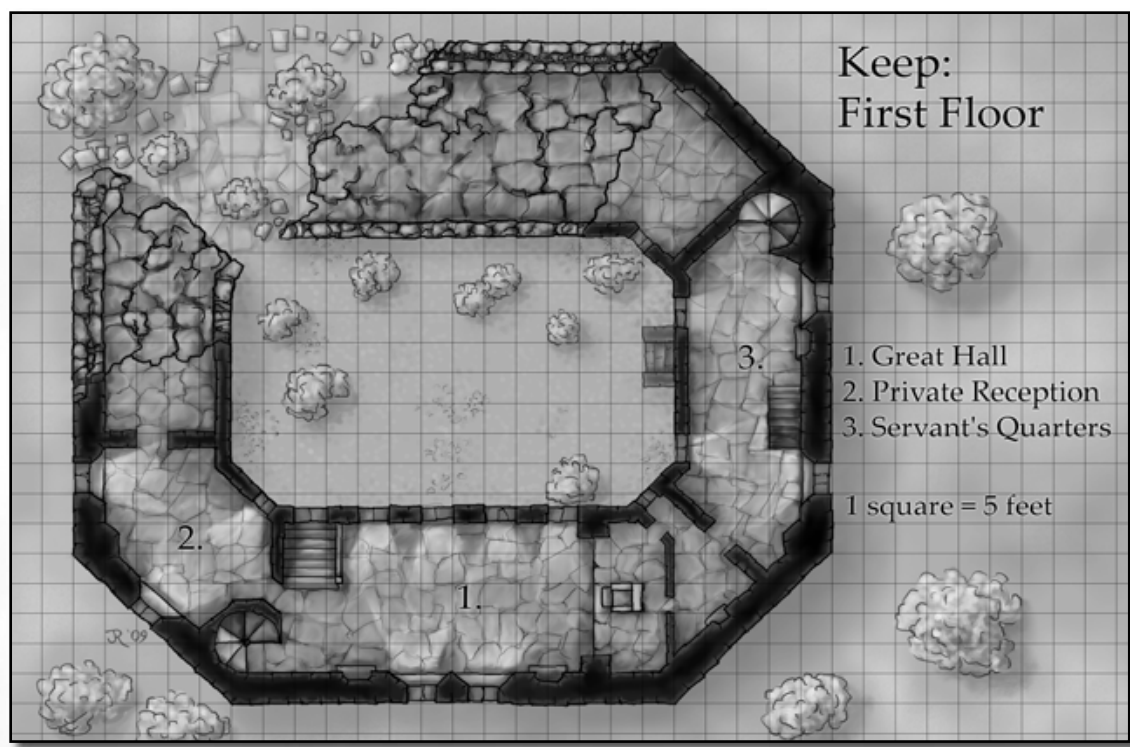
From the entrance to the courtyard the steps leading down (D) and up (U) can be seen, as well as the overgrown courtyard. If Player Characters stand in the doorway or in the courtyard for more than 30 seconds read the following:

A dislodged stone tumbles into the courtyard. You glance up to the right and see a shape appear at one of the windows overlooking the courtyard. It is like a man, though gnarled

and misshapen, and it has long black nails like talons. Its face is chinless, its low-browed head like that of an ape but there is an intelligence, of sorts, in its hooded eyes. This abomination grabs the edge of the window and leans out, fifty feet above your heads, surveying the intruders in its domain. It reaches a decision and shrieks, the roar echoing around the ruins. Moments later another appears at a window a few yards away from the first and then, seconds later, a third at a window on the opposite wall.

These are the family of Chakan living in the ruins. The third, on the left-hand window, is the juvenile and is a little smaller than the other two. They will posture for a while, trying to frighten the Player Characters away, but if they are hurt or ignored they will disappear behind the stonework on the second floor. The parents have a large, 10' diameter nest on the second floor on the right hand side, in which is a youngster, whilst the juvenile has been trying his own hand at making a nest in the room on the left on the second floor. Though large, it contains more sticks and wood as opposed to bracken and fronds that his parents' nest.





ADULT CHAKAN

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

HD: 3d8+3 (17hp)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex, +4 feat)

Speed: 40' (+8 on climb checks, can always Take 10)

Dodge Defence: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 3 (natural)

BAB/Grp: +3/+5

Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d6+3)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d6+3) and claw +1 melee finesse (1d4+2)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: none (see tactics)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60'

Saves: Fort +2 Ref +6 Will +4

Abilities: Str: 15 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 5 Wis 12 Cha 4

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Survival +6

Feats: Track, Improved Initiative

JUVENILE CHAKAN

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

HD: 2d8+2 (11hp)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflex)

Speed: 40' (+8 on climb checks, can always Take 10)

Dodge Defence: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 3 (natural)

BAB/Grp: +2/+3

Attack: Bite +5 melee finesse (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee finesse (1d6+1) and claw +0 melee finesse (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: none (see tactics)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60'

Saves: Fort +1 Ref +5 Will +2

Abilities: Str: 13 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 5 Wis 10 Cha 4

Skills: Climb +9, Hide +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +6, Survival +6

Feats: Track

Tactics: The Chakan will try to make best use of their stealth and climbing ability. For example, if the Player Characters retreat to the covered way, one will climb down to a ledge just above it, wait for a character to step out then surprise them by jumping down on top of them (counts as a single attack in a surprise round). Similarly, they will hide in the ruins and stalk the Player Characters who invade their domain. If

the Player Characters explore the ruins, one of the adult Chakan will take the youngster into the woods and hide him away before returning to the ruins to drive off the invaders. The juvenile will attempt to help its parents but it is not so skilled and will tend to be a little isolated from them: it is quite likely the adults will regard the juvenile as a possible decoy or distraction for their prey, the Player Characters. Chakan will not go underground, though may wait to attack any who come out by hiding behind the other side of the wall around the steps.

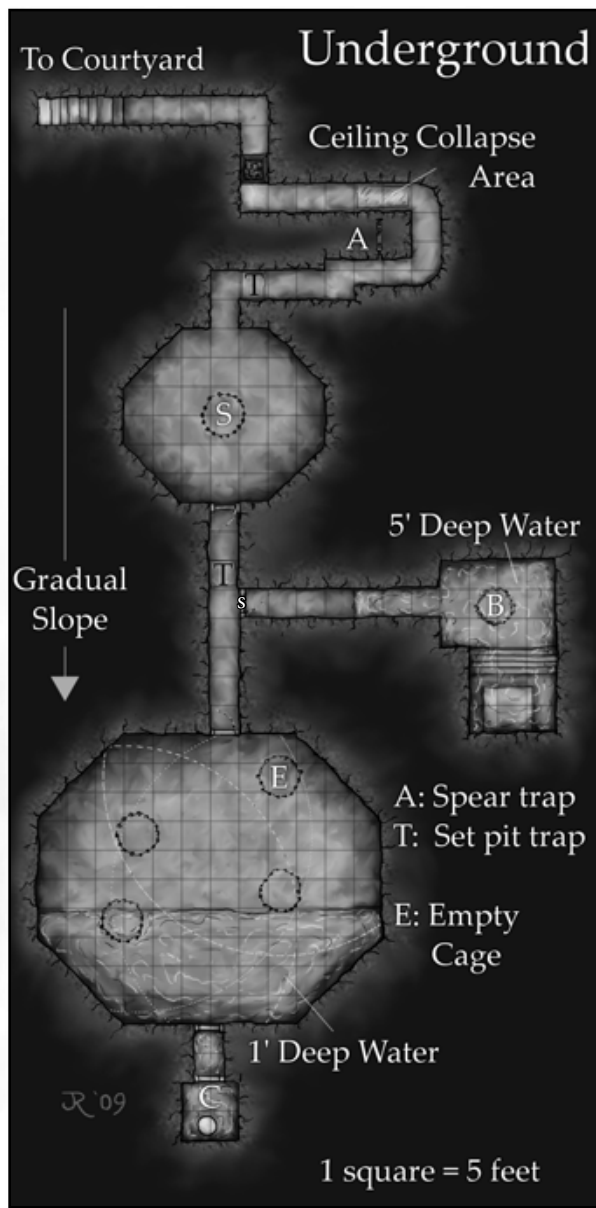
UNDERGROUND PASSAGES

'D' marks the steps leading down into darkness for 35', a little above the waterline at this end of the island. There are no doors and no barriers leading into the passages. The passages gradually slope down towards the Scroll Chamber, 'C', becoming more and more damp as they do so until the bottom end of the large Octagonal chamber is a pool up to 6" deep in water and the Scroll chamber itself is 1' deep in water. The walls are fitted stone, except where noted.

There are bats after the first 15' of steps, clinging to the ceilings and walls of the passage almost up to the first corner. Their guano will be smelt and sensed after a successful Track check. The bats can be disturbed by anyone noisily passing through, by smoke and fire, or by any significant strange noise (perhaps a sword clattering along the passage). Once startled they will have sufficient numbers to form a bat swarm and will merely try to flee their roost rather than attack anyone in the way: such attacks will be incidental but they will not stop, attacking anyone in their path once then travelling onto the next person (at 5' a round if necessary).

Released Pit Trap: The first pit is a released trap: the floor was hinged on one side and the trap collapsed when too much weight was put on it. Though there are spikes at the bottom of the 15' pit and the sides are polished marble, the pit is filled with stagnant and stinking water to 5' from the brim. If explored through diving a skeleton can be found pinned on the spikes. All his weapons are broken bar one, a tarnished silver knife, and his torn and decaying clothes look as if they might once have been gaudy; in the remains of a pouch at his belt are 20 silver. A Knowledge(nature) check (DC 15) will discover that the flesh was eaten away by rats (though seeing the body in the darkness will be a problem).

Ingesting the water in this and in any Pit Trap may cause an infection, as detailed below under 'Pit Trap'.



Linked ceiling collapse and spear trap: Around the switch back in the passage there is a spear-trap. This is easy to spot as the spear tip is pointing out of a hole in the wall and is badly camouflaged, needing a relatively simple Spot check (DC 15) to be seen. The trap is triggered by a 50lb weight treading on a section of floor in front of it and can be readily avoided when triggered with a Reflex save (DC 15). It inflicts only 1d6+1 damage if it hits due to the age of the spring, though the tip of the spear can be seen to be coated with a dark substance that is now solidified with age. If

BAT SWARM

Diminutive Animal (Swarm)

HD: 3d8 (14hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 5' (1)/ fly 40' (good)

Dodge Defence: 16

DR: –

BAB/Grp: +2/–

Attack/Full Attack: Swarm (1d6)

Space/Reach: 10' (any shape)/0'

Special Attacks: Distraction, wounding

Special Qualities: Blindsense 20', ½ damage from slashing/piercing weapons, low-light vision, swarm traits

Saves: Fort +3 Ref +7 Will +3

Abilities: Str: 3 Dex 15 Con 10 Int 2 Wis 14 Cha 4

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11

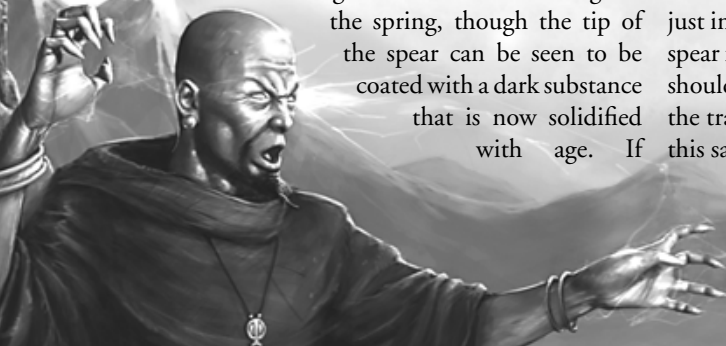
Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

Swarms: A bat swarm consists of thousands of flying bats, can take up any four contiguous squares and can squeeze through any gap larger enough to allow passage to one of its bats. It attacks by enveloping creatures, possibly invoking an attack of opportunity as it does so. A swarm attack ignores concealment. It is vulnerable to lit torches, which do 1d3 damage if they hit, and lit lanterns do 1d4 fire splash damage to all spaces adjacent to where it hits.

Distraction: A living creature which begins its turn within the swarm must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 11) or be nauseated for one round.

Wounding: A living creature damaged by the swarm will continue to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round until a Heal check (DC 10) is carried out to stop the bleeding. This is not cumulative, so multiple wounds will not result in multiple hit points being lost per round.

examined a Disable Device check (DC 15) will reveal the basic trigger mechanism a simple 'safety' on the mechanism just inside the spear hole which acts as a lock to prevent the spear flying out. A secret Craft (trapmaking) check (DC 22) should be made at this time to allow the examiner to realise the trap was meant to be seen by a careful person. Flicking this safety to 'on' sets off a collapsing trap on the other side



of the wall: this causes 2d6+2 damage (AP 7) for anyone standing in the squares indicated, though a successful Reflex save (DC 18) allows half damage. The real 'safety' mechanism is a well-hidden (Search DC 25) switch under a very slightly raised stone on the opposite wall.

Spiked Pit-Traps: There are two other, well-disguised pit-traps, able to be seen on Spot check (DC 20, DM +2 if specifically stating that a Spot for such traps is being made) or successful Search (DC 15) of the area. They still operate but with the water now so high will just drop a character into a stagnant pool of water. A successful Reflex save (DC 15) will allow the character to throw himself clear, backwards. Unfortunately ingesting the water could cause gastroenteritis or similar stomach disorder: those falling into the water must make a Will save (DC 15) to avoid accidentally swallowing the water. If some water is swallowed, a Fortitude save (DC 15) must be made to avoid contracting the illness. The illness takes one day to incubate, after which the character must succeed on the Fortitude save every day or take 1d4 points of damage to Constitution. Once two successive Fortitude saves are made, the character recovers.

The first pit has water to just over 4' from the brim and the second to only 1'.

As with the switchback trap, the 'safety' mechanisms are well-hidden (Search DC 25) push-stones to the side of the passage which are reset whenever a heavy weight (50lb or more) is put on the swinging gates to the pits. Of course, if the pits are triggered then the trap cannot be reset without some effort.

Doors: the doors in the passages are made of stone or metal and are seized: each requires a Strength check (DC 20 or DC22 if opening towards the opener) to be opened. Only two characters can assist in the check at any one time.

First, asymmetrical chamber (S): This is an offset octagonal chamber arching to 15' high, in the middle of which is a cage approximately six foot in diameter and seven foot high made from delicate ironwork, now rusting and corroded. The cage is embedded in the floor and with an arch at the peak upon which is an ankh (symbolising, in this case, the lack of life in the foes of Soth Amon-Aas). In the middle of the cage is what appears to be a green-grey, writhing spiral column. Whilst the colours have faded, the walls and ceiling are decorated in scenes representing the gods of Stygia. Read the following when first entering the room.

As you enter the room what you have taken to be a central pillar begins to move, the spirals uncoiling and alternatively solidifying and fading. With growing horror you realise the pillar is alive, a sinuous, headless serpent of smoke. Trails of smoke disappear in the air behind it as it moves and, even as you watch, the sickly serpentine shape drifts towards you, then silently darts forward.

Check for initiative as the coil of smoke is a Smoke-serpent, put here to attack any entering the room from the passages. The Smoke-serpent cannot move more than 30' from the centre of the room (the cage) as that is its focus but if any part of the cage is destroyed or broken the serpent is released and will immediately return to whatever hell from which it was summoned (see page 380 of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

The focus for all the Smoke-serpents is their cage. If the Player Characters are smart enough they may attack the cages. Any break in a cage, including breaking off the ankh, will release the Smoke-serpent it holds, the serpent dissipating in all directions from the chamber. Once released, the serpents will not return. The cages are rusted, the bars now having Hardness 8 and hp 4 and requiring a DC 24 Strength check to break. It is suggested that the Games Master allows bonuses for leverage.

Secret Door: This well-hidden door requires a successful, difficult Search check (DC 28) in the area of wall in which it is set to be found. Once found the opening mechanism is a straightforward, simple, stone panel (like much else in this area). A Search roll which succeeds by more than 5 points above that needed for success will also uncover a second, smaller panel on the opposite side of the door to the first. A Disable Device check (DC 20) will reveal the first panel will not only open the door but is trapped with a small needle. If triggered, the needle flies out as if an attack of +6 and causes 1d2 points of damage if it hits, reduced by DR (characters may be flat-footed depending on their actions). If it causes damage the character may become susceptible to blood poisoning, a DC 10 infection with an incubation of 1 day causing 1d3 Strength damage (see above for fighting infections).

Large Octagonal Chamber: This is similar to the smaller chamber but is 25' high and has four cages spread about the floor. One, 'E', is otherwise identical to the others but is empty, with a closer examination (Spot DC 18) showing some of the iron has rusted through causing the cage to no longer function as a focus. The other three cages are intact and, as soon as a character enters their radius, the serpents will attack, as



SMOKE-SERPENT

Medium Outsider (demon)

HD: 8d8+0 (36 hp)

Initiative: +16 (+10 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: 40'

Dodge Defence: 27 (+10 Dex, +1 Dodge, +6 natural)

DR: –

BAB/Grp: +8/+18

Attack/Full Attack: Strangle (Grapple) +19 melee finesse (2d6+3, ignores DR from armour)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: Grapple

Special Qualities: Immunities, manifest

Saves: Fort +6 Ref +16 Will +6

Abilities: Str: 16, Dex 30, Con –, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha –

Skills: Hide +29, Move Silently +37, Spot +2

Feats: Dodge, toughness, weapon focus(strangle)

The serpent can be bypassed if occupied in attacking one character. Unless partially corporeal it is immune to all but silver weapons. It must become partially corporeal to attack a character and can only attack by grappling its target and strangling it to death. Once it disengages from combat it becomes incorporeal again.



and is also deteriorating. If handled or touched a successful Dexterity or Decipher Script check (DC 18) is required to avoid the scroll collapsing in the hands of the character handling it (Decipher Script assumes the character has some knowledge of how to handle such deteriorated manuscripts).

instructed many years ago. The possible radius of each of the surviving serpents is given on the plan for the Games Master's use but, for careful Player Characters, there is a route to the opposite door to the scroll chamber which involves being attacked by only a single serpent at a time.

Scroll Chamber 'C': This is a plain-walled room with a single pedestal upon which is an ancient, leather scroll case. The case looks aged and deteriorated with time.

If handled or wrapped, the character must make a successful Dexterity check (DC 15) or the case will collapse. Within the case is a vellum scroll which also looks aged and faded

The scroll has a great deal of highly decorated writing in assorted alphabets known to the Old Stygians. The first portion can be read in a day by any character with a knowledge of Old Stygian who makes a successful Decipher Script check (DC 20). Unfortunately, the scroll is a decoy and contains nothing but *scrolltraps* (see below in the section *Scroll of Tsothemenes*).

Tome Chamber 'B': The passage leading to this chamber slopes down such that, by the end, it is 5' deep in stagnant water (see the *Pit Traps* above for potential ingestion and the risk of disease). If the centre of the floor is examined



underwater a faded circle used in arcane rites can be seen, in the middle of which is the deteriorating skeleton of a massive snake. The walls are faded, but decorated with paintings of rites associated with the gods of Stygia. On a raised pedestal is a tome wrapped in oilcloth: on touching the outer cloth it will crumble revealing an ornate, leather-bound tome. This is the *real* scroll of Tsothemenes, the Tome of Soth Amon-Aas. Details of the tome are provided below.

RETURNING FROM THE ISLAND

The Player Characters will probably have to face the Chakan, again, and also the Servants in the Swamp as they wade back to the mainland. There they will be greeted by a Pictish hunter (or chief if the group is higher than 3rd level) from the tribe who will announce he was told to wait for them. Refer to the *Role of the Grey Seal Picts* section below for details of what the Picts will do, but in summary the waiting hunter will lead them back to the village, politely asking if they were successful: a Sense Motive check opposed by his Bluff will allow the character to whom he is talking to sense that 'something' is wrong, but quite what is unknown. If the Pict believes they were successful he will lead them into an ambush comprising the chief, the shaman and 1d8+4 hunters.

Of course, the Player Characters may also face a shore-party from the *Red Trident* as well, as detailed previously. Refer to the *Useful Non-Player Characters* section for details of Picts and pirates.

On return to Messantia, Ameline Pompilius will be delighted in the Player Characters have brought back an intact scroll and she will reward them as initially mentioned and will waive the expenses. If they inform her that the scroll is destroyed and have proof (the crumbled and rotted remains of the scroll, perhaps) she will still be delighted as they will have succeeded at the House's aims and will reward them as agreed. If they do not have proof, and do not have the scroll, she will not pay them the final instalment.

Ameline will be distrustful of the tome and will take it away for a days study. After this she will be delighted that the Player Characters managed to find the "true scroll" and will reward them as promised, completing any earlier offer to share the book with a scholar or sorcerer for a month.

EXPOSE

THE ROLE OF THE RED TRIDENT

It may seem as if Ameline is attempting to discover something for herself and is being foiled by a revenge plot by the *Red Trident*. The opposite is really the case. One of the other major houses of Messantia heard of the rumours regarding the map showing the whereabouts of Soth Amon-Aas' northern hideaway and decided to retrieve the scroll for themselves. Having done some research the House decided a fully-kitted expedition was needed, so hired the *Red Trident* and her crew through an intermediary and requested they travel to Tortage, get the map, then travel on to the Pictish Wilderness to retrieve the scroll from the island, in force.

Ameline got wind of the plot through her informers and, fearful of what might happen if such a useful scroll got into the 'wrong' hands (that is, another house), decided to recover it herself. She had the informer slain in case he told the crew of the *Red Trident* they might have competition. Informing the powers in House Pompilius she was given leave to use enough money to outfit and reward a small expedition to purchase the map and recover the scroll first. She decided on a small expedition to try and ensure she was ready and at sea before the *Red Trident*: in fact her group (the Player Characters) only just made it in time.

THE SCROLL OF TSOTHEMENES

If the Player Characters manage to retrieve the tome, it will appear to be gibberish. Written on a soft, clear vellum it is heavily decorated and well preserved despite the passing years. It is a combination of a journal, detailing both the steps taken by Soth Amon-Aas in his exploration of new magic and the final spells, as well as the potential perils and pitfalls of using such magic.

A scholar can only make sense of the scroll if he has extensive knowledge of the language and writing of Old Stygian in all its most obscure and ornamental forms. In games terms this means a character with good Decipher Script (7+ ranks), who is able to speak Old Stygian and who also has a Knowledge(arcana) total skill bonus of 12 or more and has at least 7 ranks in the skill.



The tome holds the knowledge of some spells and a number of defences, writings intended to warp and twist the reader's mind. These are referred to as Scrolltraps and are indistinguishable from other writing in the tome. Moreover, like other spell descriptions they have promising beginnings and appear to be good lines of exploration.

USEFUL NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

GREY SEAL PICTS

In a similar fashion to the process outlined in the *Secrets of Skelos*, the scholar must study the tome, unaided and uninterrupted for a fortnight. It is an exhausting and mentally taxing process as Soth Amon-Aas frequently changed writing style, ornamentation style and sometimes even changed alphabet mid-sentence. At the end of that period the scholar may make a Decipher Script check, comparing the result on the table below. As always, the discovery of a spell means the scholar can copy it into his own tome for later use

This Pictish tribe model themselves on one of the great survivalists of the oceans: the Grey Seal. They live on the shores of the Western Ocean and live primarily off fish, cephalopods (such as lobster and crab) and sea birds, and a little seaweed, though have been forced to supplement this high protein diet with a variety of fruit and vegetable crops grown near their villages, typically fertilised with seaweed and ground fish. The hunters can be male or female, often travelling great distances along the coast in their canoes to favourite fishing grounds, normally singly or in mentor-pupil pairs. They hunt at sea in all weather with net, harpoon and line as well as by diving and use of woven crab

Decipher Script check result	Benefit
15 or less	No benefit. The tome could not be deciphered and the scholar is exhausted by his study and must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be fatigued for 1d4+2 days, during which time no further study can be carried out.
16-19	Scrolltrap: The writings are so insidious their full, horrific nature was not realised until the scholar nearly finished the section. The scholar must make an immediate Corruption save (DC 20) or gain a point of corruption.
20-24	No benefit. The fortnight has been wasted.
25-29	The insights in the scroll grant the scholar a +2 bonus to all Knowledge(arcana) checks for the next 2 months.
30-33	One of the following spells was discovered (roll randomly to determine which one): <i>bind demon</i> ¹ , <i>children of the night</i> , <i>control monstrous humanoid</i> , <i>control magical beast</i> , <i>creeping doom</i> ² , <i>demonic pact</i> , <i>greater summon beast</i> , <i>master-words and signs</i> , <i>summon beast</i> , <i>summon demon</i> .
34+	One of the following Cosmic Sorcery ¹ or Immortality ¹ spells was discovered (roll randomly to determine which one): <i>eternal youth</i> , <i>life drain</i> , <i>the time is right</i> , <i>the stars are right</i> , <i>witch's vigour</i> ,

¹ See *Secrets of Skelos* for details. ² See *Stygia – Serpent of the South* for details



and lobster pots, the diversity of their catch giving rise to a wide range of fishing and hunting techniques. They rarely hunt on land so their racial bonuses to hunting apply at sea or on coastline, not within forests.

Reproductively they try to emulate the grey seals so those with more Reputation try and mate with more women and frequently invite them to enter under their protection. However, like their namesakes, the women are as independent as the men, having the same status, and tend to choose their own partner (or partners) and often have their own, small huts even if nominally under the protection of a strong brave. Babies, once fully weaned at around a year or so, are not so much abandoned by their mothers as given over to the care of the clan, frequently the older and more sedentary men and women. Youngsters are taken under the wing of a single older hunter (male or female), the mentor teaching the younger hunter his own skills and techniques for hunting.

The Grey Seal Picts are a mix of strong individualists and highly sociable. They enjoy communal life and have a strong affiliation with their home community. Their nature means they are not warlike, though they are renowned for their boat-building skills and their ocean-going war canoes are respected by all who deal with them. The villages are very often surrounded by canoe building areas and nearby woods are carefully husbanded, sometimes thinned to produce straighter boles. The older hunters, or those who have been injured, look after the settlement and carry out what gathering the village requires, as well as providing indispensable roles like healers and blacksmiths. A Variant Race of Picts, their focus on the seashore means their Background Skills are Swim, Survival and Spot. They also gain a +2 bonus on Swim checks.

They are not keen on the Shark Tribes, who they seldom encounter, and detest the Orcas Tribe, who occasionally try and emulate their namesake by killing and eating Grey Seal Picts. They have good relations with inland tribes, mainly because they do not compete for hunting territory. Their sociable and open nature means they are likely to greet strangers with less hostility than other tribes, if not with a degree of warmth if the strangers show themselves to be friendly. Some of their hunters have been known to be drawn to the larger ocean-going ships of the nations to the south and have joined as crew, picking up levels in the Pirate class. To many Picts the Grey Seals have departed so much from the Pictish ways that they are barely Picts at all. Nonetheless, amongst the elder Picts and Shamans they have a great deal of respect, not just for being to survive on a coastline which is harsh and forbidding in winter, but also for their skills and strong tradition of drum-mastery and strength in their shamans.

Though their skills and approaches vary widely, all Grey Seal Picts have skills in Craft(boatbuilding), Spot, Survival and Swim skills. A Grey Seal gains an additional +1 Reputation for each of these skills in which he possesses 10 or more ranks. These Picts have a variety of headwear and ornaments depending on their preferred catch, but seabird feathers feature widely. Chiefs and shamans try to wear a seal skin cloak made from the skins of aged (and therefore wise) seals that have died of natural causes. All people have their harpoons decorated according to their status, whether with dyes, feathers or shark teeth. Typically they have high Constitution or Wisdom scores, a good Charisma and Intelligence score (for Picts), but vary widely in Dexterity and Strength depending on their approach to fishing.

LOCAL ROLE OF THE GREY SEAL PICTS

Many years ago, the Clans of the Grey Seal Picts around this area were tasked with maintaining the guardians in the swamp and seawater lagoon surrounding the Isle of Tsothemenes. They were also tasked with allowing enquirers to approach the isle but were to prevent them from taking away the scrolls, if they are powerful and wily enough to find and return with them.

To that end their senior shaman always take the *put them in the swamp* spell as soon as possible and puts foreign captives into the swamp as *servants in the swamp*. The commands traditionally given to these are to attack any humanoids entering the water in their area and each *servant* is given an area of the swamp to patrol, in which they hunt. Lately though, after a horrific accidents where a band of youths from the clan were wiped out in a dare, the *put them in the swamp* spell has been ended early, creating the part-formed *servants*. The shaman in the village closest to Tsothemenes' Isle also have a tradition of talking and learning Old Stygian, the language used by Soth Amon-Aas, in case of any problems arising from the retrieval of his scrolls.

The Grey Seals will guide any who come to them to the borders of the swamp-lagoon but will go no further, typically using the chief to do so. The chief or a hunter will also greet the explorers on their return from the isle, apparently cordially, and ask if they were successful. If so, on the way back the hunter will signal to a waiting ambush that they are to attack. The ambush will comprise the chief, the shaman and those hunters who were able to be gather in a short time (typically 1d8+4 but this should be adapted).

Furthermore, if the Player Characters succeeded and escaped, the Grey Seals will approach the inland tribes and use whatever scent they can to train the



Chakan on the island to hunt down the Player Characters. Of course, the sea will be an obstacle, but if the Player Characters ever return they will find the Chakan a continuing problem.

If they recover the scroll or tome, they will return it to the depths beneath the keep, but not knowing of the side chamber will leave either in the Scroll Chamber (C).

TYPICAL GREY SEAL PICT

The Grey Seal hunter depicted here has a few options depending on his style of hunting. Whilst most will have a Hunting Bow, a hunter will not have more than one type of harpoon. If caught whilst hunting they will typically fire their bow at longer ranges, throw a harpoon, then fight with harpoon and net. The statistics below include bonuses due to the Point Blank Shot feat (shown as ^{PBS}) which is frequently taken to enhance close-range hunting with the harpoon.

Their high wisdom also gives the Grey Seals a strong tradition of Pictish mysticism and the need for long-distant communication amongst those within a village means the use of drums is also more prevalent. Their shaman must prove themselves as Seals (hunters) either before being accepted as true apprentices or during their juvenile years if already adopted as a pupil by a shaman, so all their shaman have a level of Barbarian. Within each village will be 1d4+2 lower-level or apprentice shamans as well as the clan shaman. If the village is large enough there will also be a drum master, typically with levels in *drummer in the dark* (if using *Across the Thunder River*).

GREY SEAL HUNTER

Medium Human Pictish Barbarian 1

HD: 1d10+1 (11hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 10

Parry Defence: 10

DR: 0

BAB/Grp: +1/+0

Attack/Full Attack: Harpoon +0 melee finesse/+2 ranged 10'^{PBS} (1d6+1^{PBS}, 20/x2, AP 0, Hd1, HP1) or Long Harpoon +0 melee^R/+2 ranged^{PBS} 20' (1d10+1^{PBS},

20/x3, AP 0, Hd3, HP3) and either Net +2^{PBS} ranged 10' (entanglement, HP 5)¹ or hatchet +0 melee (1d6,20/x2,AP 0, Hd 2, hp 2,10'); or Hunting Bow +2 ranged^{PBS} 50' (1d8+1^{PBS}, 20/x2, AP 0, Hd2, HP 2)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1) or 10'(2) with Long Harpoon

Special Attacks: Versatility (-2), +1 Attack/Dmg vs Animals

Special Qualities: Variant Pictish qualities², Fearless(+2 vs Fear), illiterate; **Saves:** Fort +3 Ref +2 Will +2

Abilities: Str: 9 Dex 10 Con 13 Int 10 Wis 15 Cha 10

Skills: Climb +0, Craft(boatbuilding) +3, Hide +5, Jump +0, Listen +6, Profession(fisherman)³ +4, Spot +8, Survival +7, Swim +8, Tumble +1

Feats: Endurance, Point Blank Shot (+1 Attack/Dmg in 30'), Track

Languages: Pictish, Zingaran, Talking Drum

Possessions: Feather hair ornaments, simple kilt, traded furs, Hunting paint, knife, Hunting Bow, 2 x Harpoons, net, canoe, dried fish

¹ If a net hits the target is entangled, taking a -2 penalty on attack rolls, -4 on Dexterity, move at half speed and cannot charge or run, and must make a Concentration check (DC 15) to cast spells. An opposed Strength check made whilst the Pict controls the trailing rope means the entangled creature cannot move beyond the reach of the net or rope. Entangled creatures can escape using Escape Artist or a Strength check (DC 25) to break it.

² The Grey Seal Picts +2 circumstance bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks only applies when the Grey Seal is at sea or within 300 foot of the coast, or on or within 100 foot of rivers or coastal lagoons.

³ Profession(fisherman) can substitute for Profession(sailor) in all coastal waters, for navigation and in smaller craft. It does not apply for handling larger, sailed ships.

GREY SEAL CHIEF

Medium Human Pictish Barbarian 5

HD: 5d10+5 (33 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 14

Parry Defence: 11

DR: 0

BAB/Grp: +5/+5

Attack/Full Attack: Harpoon +6 melee finesse/+7 ranged 20'^{PBS} (1d6+1^{PBS}, 20/x2, AP 0, Hd1, HP1) or broadsword





GREY SEAL APPRENTICE SHAMAN

Medium Human Pictish Barbarian 1/Scholar 1

HD: 1d10+1d6 (10 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 10

Parry Defence: 10

DR: 0

BAB/Grp: +1/+0

Attack/Full Attack: Harpoon +1 melee finesse/+1 ranged 10' (1d6-1, 20/x2, AP 0, Hd1, HP1) and hatchett +0 melee(1d6-1,20/x2,AP 0, Hd 2, hp 2)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: Versatility (-2), +1 Attack/Dmg vs Animals, spells

Special Qualities: Variant Pictish qualities, Fearless(+2 vs Fear), illiterate, Knowledge is Power +1

Saves: Fort +2 Ref +2 Will +4; Str 8 Dex 11 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 15 Cha 12

Sorcery Style: Curses.

Spells: *lesser ill-fortune*

MAB: +1 (**Attack:** +2)

PP: 6

Skills: Craft(herbalism) +2, Craft(talking drum) +4, Heal +4, Hide +4, Jump +1, Knowledge(arcana) +4, Knowledge(nature) +2, Listen +7, Perform (ritual) +3, Perform(talking drum) +3, Profession(fisherman) +4, Spot +6, Survival +8, Swim +7, Tumble +1

Feats: Endurance, Self-sufficient, Track

Languages: Pictish, Zingaran, Talking Drum, Aquilonian.

Possessions: Feather hair ornaments, simple kilt, shaman paint, knife, hatchet, decorated harpoon, pouch

+5 melee (1d10, 19-20/x2, AP 0, Hd3, HP3) and curved longknife (1d6, 20/x2, AP 1, Hd 8, hp 1); or Hunting Bow +7 ranged^{PBS} 75' (1d10, 19-20/x2, AP 3, Hd10, HP 5)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: Versatility (-2), +1 Attack/Dmg vs Animals, Crimson Mist

Special Qualities: Variant Pictish qualities, Fearless(+2 vs Fear), illiterate, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Saves: Fort +3 Ref +2 Will +2

Abilities: Str: 10 Dex 12 Con 13 Int 12 Wis 15 Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +1, Craft(boatbuilding) +4, Diplomacy +8, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +1, Listen +8, Profession(fisherman) +7, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +9, Survival +11, Swim +10, Tumble +1

Feats: Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Mobility (+4 Dodge vs AoO), Point Blank Shot (+1 Attack/Dmg in 30'), Track

Languages: Pictish, Zingaran, Talking Drum, Aquilonian, Argossean

Possessions: Chiefs Sea Falcon feather hair ornaments, simple kilt, curved knife, Hunting Bow, 2 x Harpoons, net, canoe, sealskin cloak

GREY SEAL VILLAGE SHAMAN

Medium Human Pictish Scholar 4/Barbarian 1

HD: 4d6+1d10 (20 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 12

Parry Defence: 11



Tsothemenes



DR: 0

BAB/Grp: +4/+3

Attack/Full Attack: Harpoon +4 melee finesse/+4 ranged 10' (1d6-1, 20/x2, AP 0, Hd1, HP1) and hatchett +3 melee(1d6-1,20/x2,AP 0, Hd 2, hp 2)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: Versatility (-2), +1 Attack/Dmg vs Animals, spells

Special Qualities: Variant Pictish qualities, Fearless(+2 vs Fear), illiterate, Knowledge is Power +4, background: lay priest;

Saves: Fort +3 Ref +3 Will +6; Str 8 Dex 11 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 15 Cha 13

Sorcery Style: Curses, Nature Magic, Counterspells.

Spells: *lesser ill-fortune, summon beast, greater summon beast, ill-fortune, warding*

MAB: +2 (**Attack:** +3)

PP: 7

Skills: Bluff +3, Craft(herbalism) +5, Craft(talking drum) +5, Heal +6, Hide +3, Jump +1, Knowledge(arcana) +8, Knowledge(nature) +8, Listen +6, Perform (ritual) +6, Perform(talking drum) +9, Profession(fisherman) +, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6, Survival +11, Swim +9, Tumble +1

Feats: Endurance, Self-sufficient, Drum Focus, Track

Languages: Pictish, Zingaran, Talking Drum, Aquilonian (Old Stygian for those close to Tsothemenes Isle).

Possessions: Feather hair ornaments, simple kilt, shaman paint, own drum, knife, hatchet, decorated harpoon, pouch

Dodge Defence: 12

Parry Defence: 11

DR: 5

BAB/Grp: +1/+2

Attack/Full Attack: Arming sword +2 finesse melee and poniard +1 finesse melee or thrown poniard +3 ranged 5' or crossbow +3 ranged 60' or +2 fist melee

Dmg: Arming sword^F 1d10, 19-20/x2, AP 2 (Hd 10, hp 4) and poniard^F 1d6 or thrown poniard^F 1d6+2, 20/x2, AP 1** (Hd 10, hp 2) or Crossbow 2d6, 20/x2, AP 4** (Hd 5, hp 4) or 1d6+1 fist melee (lethal or non-lethal)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1);

Special Attacks: +1d6 sneak attack, Two-weapon combat

Special Qualities: Zingaran qualities

Saves: Fort +3 Ref +2 Will +0

Abilities: Str: 12 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 11 Cha 13

Skills: Balance +, Climb +5, Diplomacy +0, Intimidate +, Profession(Sailor) +4, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Use Rope +5

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Brawl, Precise Shot

Languages: Zingaran, Argossean, Stygian, Pictish, Aquilonian

Possessions: Arming sword, poniard, crossbow, belt pouch with personal possessions (2d10sp), clothes, boots, leather jerkin, steel cap.

Notes: In a group, several will always have their crossbows ready whilst others will close with melee weapons hoping to surround opposition and wear them down.

CREW OF THE RED TRIDENT

These are provided in case the Player Characters are unlucky enough to encounter them either on their way to Tsothemenes Isle or on their return. Other pirates from *Pirate Isles* would do as well. The key aim of the pirates is not to hurt the Player Characters, though they will if they have to, but to recover the scroll from them or the island.

RED TRIDENT MARINES

Medium Human Zingaran Soldier 1

HD: 1d10 (10hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30'

RED TRIDENT EXPERIENCED CREW

Medium Human Zingaran Pirate 2

HD: 2d8 (9 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 12*

Parry Defence: 12*

DR: 4 (leather jerkin)

BAB/Grp: +1/+2

Attack/Full Attack: Cutlass +0 melee and left-handed poniard^F +0 finesse melee

Dmg: Cutlass 1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2 (Hd 8, hp 5) and



poniard^F 1d6, 19-20/x2, AP 1 (Hd 10, hp 2)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: +1d6 sneak attack, ferocious attack

Special Qualities: Zingaran qualities, allegiance(*Red Trident*), seamanship +1, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Saves: Fort +2 Ref +4 Will +0

Abilities: Str: 13 Dex 12 Con 9 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 12

Skills: Balance +5*, Climb +5*, Diplomacy +0, Knowledge(geography) +4, Profession(sailor) +8*, Sense Motive +2, Use Rope +6*

Feats: Freebooter's Fortune**, Viper's Speed **

Languages: Zingaran, Argossean, Aquilonian, Shemite

Possessions: Knife, cutlass, poniard, belt pouch with personal possessions (2d6sp), loose clothes, boots.

** From *Pirate Isles*

RED TRIDENT CAPTAIN

Medium Human Zingaran Soldier 3/Pirate 3

HD: 3d10+3d8 (37 hp)

Initiative: +9

Speed: 30'

Dodge Defence: 15

Parry Defence: 16

DR: 4

BAB/Grp: +5/+7

Attack/Full Attack: Arming sword^F +5 melee and left-hand poniard^F +4 melee OR two-handed broadsword +8 melee

Dmg: Arming sword 1d10, 19-20/x2, AP 2 (Hd10, HP4) and poniard^F 1d6, 20/x2, AP 1 (Hd 10, HP2) or two-handed broadsword 1d10+3, 19-20/x2, AP 3 (Hd10, HP5)

Space/Reach: 5' (1)/5' (1)

Special Attacks: +2d6 sneak attack, ferocious attack,

formation combat(marine), sneak subdual, to sail a road of blood and slaughter, two-weapon combat

Special Qualities: Zingaran qualities, allegiance(*Dark Wind*), seamanship

Saves: Fort +4 Ref +5 Will +4

Abilities: Str: 15 Dex 13 Con 13 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 14

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +, Climb +, Intimidate +7, Knowledge(geography) +6, Profession(Sailor) +17, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Swim +5 (+3 after weight), Use Rope +5

Feats: Cleave, improved initiative, improved sunder, pirate code expert, power attack, skill focus(profession(sailor))

Languages: Zingaran, Aquilonian, Argossean, Cimmerian, Kothian, Ophirian, Pictish, Shemite, Stygian, pirate code(Zingaran trumpets, Barachan smoke and rockets, Black Coast drums, Vilayet sea flags)

Possessions: Arming sword, poniard, broadsword in cabin, belt pouch with personal possessions (1d10sp), good clothes, boots, leather jerkin (ACP -1), raked hat. He wears a well-made arming sword (200sp) rather than his normal broadsword. He has a +2 bonus to charisma from his *allegiance* when dealing with the sailors on board the *Red Trident*.

Formation combat(marine): This comes from *Pirate Isles*. If alone, he will tend to not use his 'ferocious attack' feature except if cornered *and* wielding his broadsword, but will do so if backed up by 2 or more marines or 4 or more sailors.

Seamanship (Sms): His seamanship gives him a +1 to Balance, Climb, Profession(sailor) and Use Rope as well as to defence aboard the *Red Trident* (included in the above).

GAMES MASTER'S MAP OF TSOTHEMENES' ISLE

This shows the island plus key portions of the surrounding area. The *Red Trident* will settle in the creek marked either after seeing the Picts (of whom they are suspicious) or after seeing the Player Characters' vessel.



TSOTHEMENES





CONAN[®]

THE CHILDREN OF ISHITI

By Vincent Darlage
& Eric K Rodriguez

THIS ADVENTURE IS designed to run with information presented in *Conan: Stygia – Sands of Death*.

OVERVIEW

The Player Characters are lost in the deserts of Stygia and stumble upon a hidden den of evil. The sorcerer in charge of the dual temple complex wants to sacrifice one of the Player Characters to his demonic patron, Ishiti.

REQUIREMENTS

A games master will need a copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game, Stygia – The Sands of Death, The Secrets of Skelos*, and a few players to make the most use of this adventure. Players only need access to *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, a games master and some fellow players. This adventure is designed for 4 to 6 Player Characters of 2nd to 4th level.

LOST IN STYGIA

The characters were part of a caravan who stole over Stygia's borders to explore or rob ancient tombs found in Stygia's deserts. After the plundering, the caravan was overtaken by a sandstorm of magnificent proportions, ripping the caravan to shreds, killing almost all of them. The Player Characters are the only survivors of this doomed expedition. Now they are lost in Stygia and have been without mounts and had precious little water for nearly two days. The characters are fatigued, the Player Characters are unable to run or charge and takes a penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity.

The terrain around the characters is predominantly sand dunes. Created by the action of wind on sand, sand dunes function as hills which move. If the wind is strong and consistent, a sand dune can move several hundred feet in a week. Sand dunes can cover hundreds of square miles. They always have a gentle slope pointing in the direction of the prevailing wind and a steep slope on the leeward side (Climb DC 15 to climb the leeward side of a dune).

Stealth and Detection in the Desert: The maximum distance in desert terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 6d6×20 feet, beyond this distance, elevation changes and heat distortion in warm deserts makes spotting impossible. The presence of dunes in sandy deserts limits spotting distance to 6d6×10 feet.

The desert imposes neither bonuses nor penalties on Listen or Spot checks. The scarcity of undergrowth or other elements offering concealment or cover makes hiding more difficult.

Darkness is falling across the desert, and the cool air relieves some of the discomfort of your struggles. As you mount yet another dune, a bit higher than most, you see a small oasis a few hundred feet away, across four more dunes. Small trees and bushes grow in the fertile soil, and a small stone building can be seen, half buried in the sand, at the far periphery of the oasis.

THE CHILDREN



Surrounding the oasis are several jackals (with at least 1d2 jackals per Player Character). As the characters stagger forwards and climb the dunes toward the oasis, if they make sufficient noise, the jackals will be alerted. Some may run toward the characters, taking a round-about path to investigate.

After the final dune, there is a patch of desert quicksand between the characters and the water of the oasis. Desert quicksand is a waterless mixture of fine sand and dust.

Quicksand: Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) which may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters do not have a chance to detect the danger before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter, the momentum of a charging or running character carries him 1d2x5 feet into the quicksand.

Effects of Quicksand: Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread sand and dust in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown when he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

Characters below the surface of a bog may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

Rescue: Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool enabling him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole, or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

If any characters fall into the quicksand, the jackals will attack those trying to help the others if the opportunity presents itself. Otherwise they wait at the periphery for someone to pull himself out.



THE OASIS OF BESH-BESSU

Once the characters get past the jackals and quicksand, they may enter the Oasis. There are three Stygian crocodiles lurking in the heavily vegetated waters, two have 7 HD, the other has 10. One particularly large crocodile, with 14 HD, is sunning itself on the far side of the oasis. Reeds, lily-pads, lotus and other water growth, as well as frogs, insects, serpents and fish, live in the waters of this oasis. The crocodiles have a +10 bonus to their hide checks if anyone is looking for crocodiles in the water. If not, this is the risk adventurers sometimes take. If not driven off, they will attack anyone getting into the water, even if but a hand is thrust in. One crocodile with charge forward with lightning speed, grab its prey, then retreat into the water to drown the prey. The other two will converge on the victim to help devour the prey, unless other prey immediately presents itself. They may shake the prey to tear it apart. The crocodile sunning itself may or may not slide into the water to join the feast (at the Games Master's discretion).

Non-Stygian characters drinking the water should make saving throws against gastroenteritis (see page 37 of *Stygia: Serpent of the South*). All characters in the region should make saving throws against malaria and/or Styx fever (see page 37 of *Stygia: Serpent of the South* for both these mosquito-born diseases) because of the insects.





Characters investigating the ominous building on the other side find it has a locked, wooden door between two 8 foot tall pylons decorated with images of crocodiles, flying serpents and nagas. If characters knock, the door is opened to them. If characters ignore the building, the door will soon open anyway. A shaven priest wearing a nearly-transparent linen kilt of purest white, several pouches, a dagger at his waist and a pair of papyrus sandals on his feet steps out and gives a greeting to the Player Characters. Two nude girls, hands crossed over their chest, walk behind him. He will invite the Player Characters into the Temple of Besh-Bessu, a dual temple complex devoted to both Set and Seshet.

BEQAI NEB TEMU

(Priest of Set and Seshet, Keeper of Set's Fourth Mystery, Keeper of Seshet's Fourth Mystery, Acolyte of Ishiti, Lord of the Black Ring)
Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 10 / Lord of the Black Ring 1

Hit Dice: 10d6+0 (35 hit points)
Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref, +4 imp. initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge defence: 15 (+3 level, +2 Dex)
Parry defence: 14 (+3 level, +1 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +7/+8
Attack: Dagger +9 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +10 ranged
Full Attack: Dagger +9/+4 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +10/+5 ranged
Damage: Dagger 1d4+1/19-20 x2/ AP 2 or Stygian Bow (+1) 1d12+1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 3
Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)
Special Attacks: Spells

Special Qualities: Stygian traits, base power points, sorcery styles x4, advanced spells x9, bonus spells x2, scholar, background (*acolyte*), knowledge is power, +4 power point, increased maximum power points (triple), scholar levels, demonologist
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +15 (+8 vs. corruption)
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 19
Skills: Bluff +12, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +16, Craft (herbalism) +9, Decipher Script +15, Gather Information +11, Handle Animal +6, Heal +11, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +15, Knowledge (Mystery: Seshet) +15, Perform (ritual) +19, Perform (drums) +12, Profession (scribe) +6, Sense Motive +11, Sleight-of-Hand +12, Spot +15

Feats: Bleed Dry, Hexer, Improved Initiative, Iron Will ^{bonus}, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 21 (Villain)

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Father Set, Lords of the Black Ring, Ishiti

Base Power Points: 11 (4 base, +3 Wisdom, +4 bonus) (33 maximum)

Magical Attack: +9 (+5 level, +4 Cha) or +11 (+5 level, +4 Cha, +2 hexer) with curses

Sorcery Styles: Counterspells, Curses, Prestidigitation, Summonings

Spells Known: *Animate Statue, Animate Swords, Burst Barrier, Conjuring, Curse of Yizil, Demonic Pact, Greater Demonic Pact, Greater Ill-Fortune, Greater Telekinesis, Greater Warding, Ill-Fortune, Incantation of Amalric's Witchman, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Summon Demon, Telekinesis, Warding*

Corruption: 5

Insanity: One minor insanity (*sleeplessness*), one major insanity (*paranoia*)

Possessions: Kilt, sandals, dagger, Stygian bow, 1 dose of Acheronian demon fire, 1 dose of Kothic demon-fire, 2 doses of Stygian tomb-dust, 1 dose of black lotus smoke, 1 dose of grey lotus smoke, 2 doses of green lotus smoke.

Beqai Neb Temu is a dusky-skinned, hawk-nosed Stygian. He is methodical, careful, calculating, patient and truthful. He does not abide lying, believing it throws the cosmos out of balance and, like most Stygians, he likes balance. He is superb at handling detail, never losing sight of a goal, always keeping an eye on the bigger picture. He puts his faith in logic and always is pursuing some secret goal. He has an air of authority and disapproves of the frivolities of others since life is serious business to Baqai and he usually can only see its darker sides, but he does possess a dry sense of humour, though.

Duality seems to be a common theme in Beqai's life (which is why he is a priest of two gods, a keeper of mysteries for two gods and bisexual) and he sees duality everywhere. He wants more than one of everything and hates odd numbers. There are four pools in his oasis, four crocodiles and so on. He has a restless nature and is always searching for new ideas and experiences, but fritters his energy away on too many projects instead of concentrating his intelligence on just one, thus his laboratories are filled with unfinished experiments and his journals recount endless half-finished quests and research (he has never taken the priest feat and so has never become an ordained High Priest of either of the temples he works





for, even though he is qualified to do so). He takes notes on virtually everything. He is persuasive and could sell sand to a desert nomad if he wanted to. His mind is quick and he can justify nearly anything anyone might do because he is a mental magpie, always picking up titbits of knowledge and information everywhere he goes. He is so arrogant, however, that he quickly sizes up situations and ideas by its superficial characteristics, then makes a judgement about it without exploring its depths – or even to find out if it has depths. This is because he is quick to grasp concepts and situations and see the entire picture. However, because of this, if he decides something has nothing else to offer (from not having bothered to explore it past the surface), he dismisses it as understood and catalogued. He hates routine and monotony and often travels from his oasis home to Khemi, Kheshatta and Luxur. He often visits with the mighty Thoth-amon, who advises him. Indeed, he was brought into the Black Ring by the invitation of Thoth-amon. He has a demonic pact with Ishiti, a demon-goddess of snakes.

Currently, he is researching a spell which will either make him both male and female, a unification of a natural duality, or split him into male and female persons (he is essentially trying to research two spells at once). He hates being but half of a duality – he wants to encapsulate that duality and be both halves of the whole. Stumbling in his research, he has begged his demonic patroness for help. She has promised to help him if he sacrifices certain persons to her. She described one of the Player Characters (Games Master's choice) to Baqai a week ago and he has been waiting for them to show up. He must sacrifice them the following sunrise, so he will entertain them through the night, whilst keeping them ignorant of his real goal. He knows where he is in the desert but will withhold that information from the Player Characters as long as he can, promising to tell them in the morning. He wants to make sure the Player Character he wants to sacrifice to Ishiti is firmly in his grasp before letting the others leave. In any combat, he will order no one is to engage the chosen Player Character.

If Baqai summons Ishiti to his aid, her statistics can be found in *Conan: Stygia – Sands of Death*.

TWO NUDE GIRLS

Medium Outsider (demon) (Child of Ishiti)

Hit Dice: 3d8 (14 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 level, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 level, +0 Str)

DR: 2 (scales)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Unarmed strike +5 melee finesse

Damage: Unarmed strike 1d4/ 20 x2/ AP 0, bite (1d4 plus poison)

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Stygian (hybrid) qualities, child of Ishiti properties, performer background skills, illiteracy

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 7

Skills: Balance +3, Concentration +2, Jump +6, Listen +10, Perform (dance) +11, Perform (drums) +4, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Tumble +5

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Performer, Skill Focus (Perform (dance))

Reputation: 1 (Talented)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: –

Allegiances: Ishiti

Possessions: None; completely nude

Their names (should anyone ask) are Nemm Khesefu and Khesday Khetita. In reality they are reptile-headed monsters but have used their *shape-shifting* to appear as young girls. They serve the priest Beqai Neb Temu in all ways by the whim of Ishiti and are talented dancers.

Combat

They avoid combat unless they can grab up weapons. However they will defend themselves by biting – and they may shape-shift in order to create a Terror check to give themselves an advantage.

Poison (Ex): Child of Ishiti venom blocks nerve impulses, causing respiratory failure. Symptoms include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In addition, the



effects of the bite include darkening and blistering of the flesh around the fang punctures and rot will set in within 48 hours of the bite. The wound typically smells quite putrid within minutes of the bite or injection of the venom by a poisoned weapon. If a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison does not affect it. Characters who take damage from a child of Ishiti's bite must make a Fort save (DC 12) or take 2d4 Strength damage in 10 minutes, with secondary damage of 1d4 Strength a minute later. 48 hours later the character must make a save or contract gangrene around the wound.

Shape-Shifting (Su): These fiends can take any human form they will by flinging a web of sorcery about their faces, as an actor dons a mask, so they resemble anyone they wish to. They gain a +10 competence bonus to Disguise checks. If a child of Ishiti is killed, he automatically reverts to normal form. If a child of Ishiti hears the *Words that Unweave*, they also revert to normal form. Reflective surfaces also reveal their true form, for the sorcery which clouds the minds of men does not fool a mirror, which has no mind to cloud.

Sorcerous Phrase Vulnerability (Su): Children of Ishiti cannot say the words 'Ka nama kaa lajerama.' These words cause a child of Ishiti pain and forces him to reveal his true nature. All men retain a racial memory of these haunting words, and will feel a sense of déjà vu when hearing them, feeling they know the words but had simply forgotten them. It takes a Knowledge (arcana) check DC 20 to remember the words for the first time if someone has not already told the words to the character. The pain lasts for 1 round and imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. This phrase is sometimes known as the *Words that Unweave*.

THE DUAL-TEMPLE COMPLEX OF BESH-BESSU

The shaven priest will lead the characters into the temple, which lies mostly buried in the sand dunes on the periphery of the oasis. Characters may notice alcoves along the wall near the ceiling. They are difficult to see into, but sometimes glimpses of linen shrouded forms may be caught. If asked Baqai will tell the characters the truth, these are mummified crocodiles. Occasionally crocodiles die and, since they are holy to this area, are mummified, placed in the alcoves to honour Sobek, the hungry god. He will add that in ancient history, this was no mere oasis but part of a river system

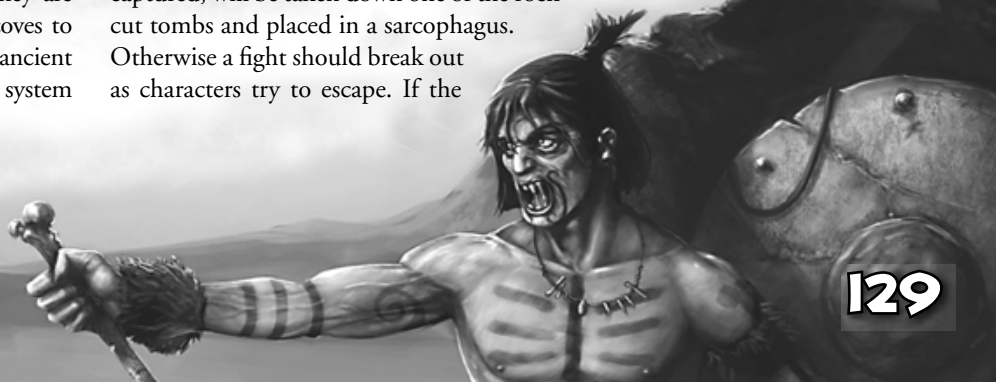
teeming with life, especially with crocodiles. Most of these mummies date back to then.

After passing through the vestibule, the characters are led down a sloping ramp to a long hallway. The hallway has two openings. One opens into the Temple of Set and the other to the Temple of Seshet. He will not permit characters to enter these areas since they are not priests of Set or any other Stygian god or goddess. If any insist, they will be attacked by the priests inside, as well as by Baqai. However, he will take them down a stairway to another floor, where they are shown to individual rooms. Each room has a single bed, a portable toilet, a bowl of water and a small chest for the storage of personal belongings. He offers to have servants come and take their clothes for laundering (nudity does not bother him either way, but if characters want replacement clothes, he will provide linen kilts). He also indicates a meal will be ready soon. He asks if any want to be shaved and bathed before the feast.

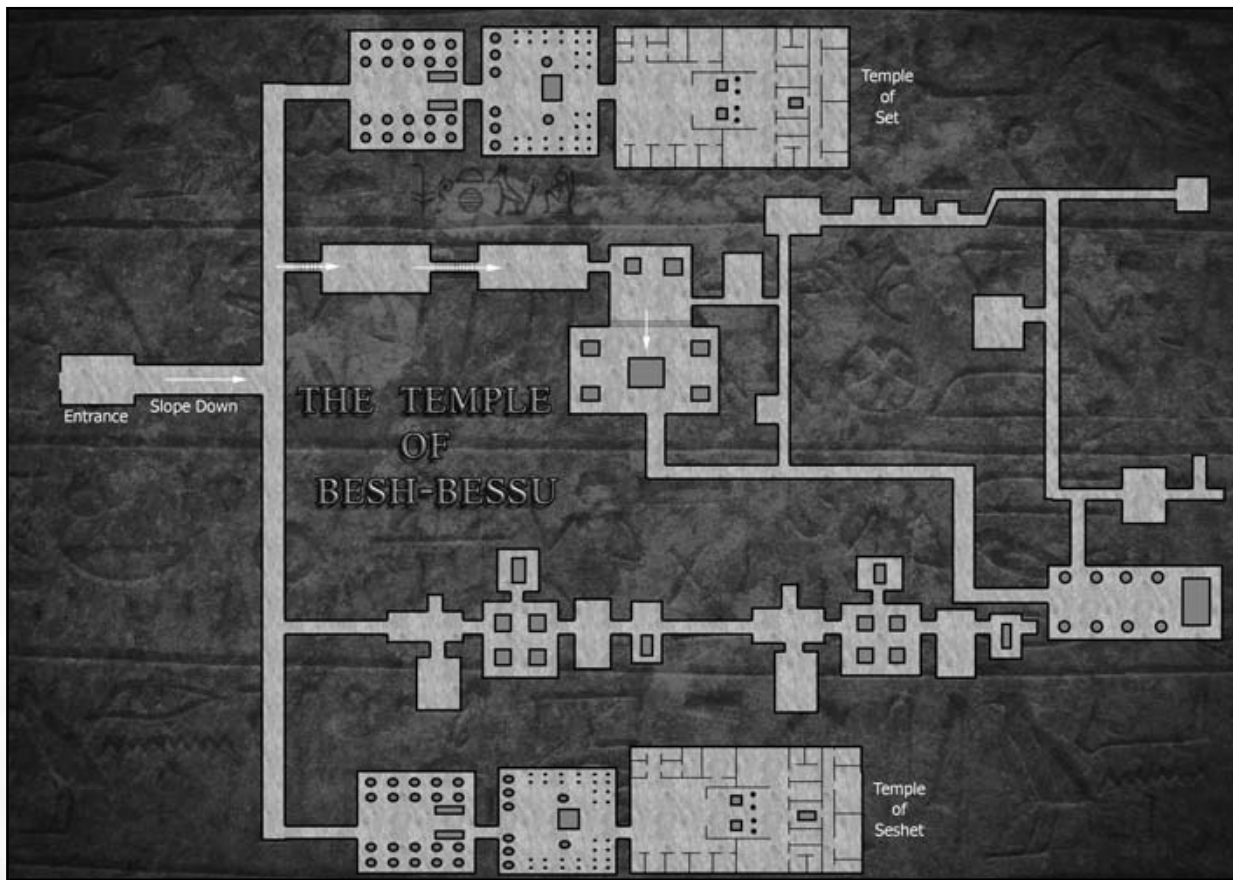
If the characters need anything, a nude serving girl or boy (a child of Ishiti in reality) will come in to take care of those needs. If any Player Characters ask for women for sex, a harlot will be provided, who will wait until the most opportune moment to unveil herself, then bite the character with her poisonous fangs. Plenty of water is provided for drinking, although any brought for the Player Characters will be laced with laudanum.

Laudanum: Laudanum, or black draught, is a mixture of opium, alcohol and sugar. It was introduced in Zamora as an analgesic and is frequently used to produce sleep. It is often the drug of choice by many professional kidnapers and brothel-keepers. Any who imbibe the black draught must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 23) or fall fast asleep for 1d8 hours. Unlike the sleep of the black lotus blossom, this sleep is not useful, nor can one under its effect be awakened.

At this point, unless all the characters fall asleep, some of the characters will get the hint they are in danger. Soldier-priests wait at the top of the hall to come down and capture the Player Characters. Any characters awake will have to make a Terror check. The Chosen One, the Player Character ordained for sacrifice, will be retrieved through a secret panel in his or her room, if possible. Other characters, if captured, will be taken down one of the rock-cut tombs and placed in a sarcophagus. Otherwise a fight should break out as characters try to escape. If the



THE CHILDREN



Chosen One has been captured, the characters may need to try and find their companion. Use however many soldiers of Ishiti as will challenge the characters but not insure their deaths. Others can join the fight later as they run from different areas of the temple. The temple complex only holds 30 priest soldiers in any event.

PRIEST-SOLDIERS OF ISHITI

Medium Outsider (demon) (Child of Ishiti) commoner 3/soldier 3

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 19 (+3 level, +1 Str, +4 shield bonus, +1 parry)

DR: 2 (scales)

Base	Attack	Bonus/
Grapple: +6/+8		

Attack: Bronze Khopesh +8 melee or bite +8 melee

Damage: Bronze Khopesh 2d4+1/ 18-20 x2/ AP 4, bite 1d4 plus poison

Special Attacks: Formation Combat (skirmisher), poison

Special Qualities: Stygian (hybrid) qualities, child of Ishiti qualities, farmer background skills, illiteracy, shape-shifting, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 3

Skills: Climb +4, Handle Animal +9, Listen +12, Profession (farmer) +8, Search +3, Sense Motive +6, Spot +9, Survival +2, Swim +5, Use Rope +7

Feats: Alertness, Athletic, Dodge, Parry, Weapon Focus (khopesh)

Reputation: 1 (cruel)

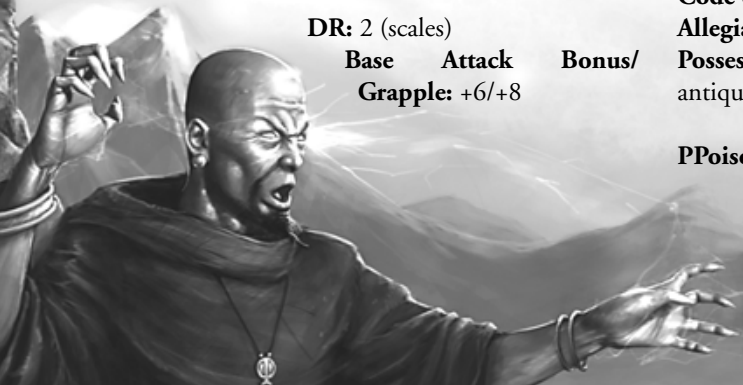
Leadership: -

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Ishiti

Possessions: Bronze dagger, bronze khopesh, steel cap, antique large shield

PPoison (Ex): Child of Ishiti venom blocks nerve impulses,





causing respiratory failure. Symptoms include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In addition, the effects of the bite include darkening and blistering of the flesh around the fang punctures and rot will set in within 48 hours of the bite. The wound typically smells quite putrid within minutes of the bite or injection of the venom by a poisoned weapon. If a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison does not affect it. Characters who take damage from a child of Ishiti's bite must make a Fort save (DC 12) or take 2d4 Strength damage in 10 minutes, with secondary damage of 1d4 Strength a minute later. 48 hours later the character must make a save or contract gangrene around the wound.

Shape-Shifting (Su): These fiends can take any human form at will by flinging a web of sorcery about their faces, as an actor dons a mask, so they resemble anyone they wish to. They gain a +10 competence bonus to Disguise checks. If a child of Ishiti is killed, he automatically reverts to his normal form. If a child of Ishiti hears the *Words that Unweave*, they are forced to revert to normal form. Reflective surfaces also reveal their true form, for the sorcery clouding the minds of men does not fool a mirror, which has no mind to cloud.

Sorcerous Phrase Vulnerability (Su): Children of Ishiti cannot say the words 'Ka nama kaa lajerama.'

These words cause a child of Ishiti pain and forces him to reveal his true nature. All men retain a racial memory of these haunting words, and will feel a sense of déjà vu when hearing them, feeling they know the words but had simply forgotten them. It takes a Knowledge (arcana) check DC 20 to remember the words for the first time if someone has not already told the words to the character. The pain lasts for 1 round and imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. This phrase is sometimes known as the *Words that Unweave*.

Other inhabitants of the complex include:

PHYSICIAN OF ISHITI

Medium Outsider (demon) Child of Ishiti Scholar 3rd level

Hit Dice: 3d8-3 (11 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge defence: 14 (+1 level, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

Parry defence: 11 (+1 level, +0 Str)

DR: 2 (scales)

BAB/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Alchemical weapon +5 ranged or bite +3 melee

Full Attack: Alchemical weapon +5 ranged or bite +3 melee

Damage: Alchemical weapon (varies) or bite 1d4 plus poison

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Stygian traits, child of Ishiti traits, sorcery style, base power points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, 2 bonus feats (instead of sorcery styles), +4 skill points (instead of advanced spells and bonus spells), shape-shifting, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 7

Skills: Bluff +3, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (herbalism) +13, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +0, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (mystery: Djehuty) +7, Knowledge (mystery: Set) +4, Heal +9, Listen +11, Perform (ritual) +3, Profession (physician/surgeon) +7, Profession (priest) +5, Profession (scribe) +5, Sense Motive +14, Sleight-of-Hand +6, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Stygian Physician, Surgery, Skill Focus (craft (alchemy)), Skill Focus (craft (herbalism))

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 5 (Talented)





Leadership: –

Allegiances: Ishiti

Base Power Points: 8 (4 base, +3 Wisdom, +1 bonus) (14 maximum)

Magical Attack: -2 (+0 level, -2 Cha)

Possessions: Kilt, priest's mantle, surgeon's kit, alchemical weapon (Games Master's choice)

Poison (Ex): Child of Ishiti venom blocks nerve impulses, causing respiratory failure. Symptoms include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In addition, the effects of the bite include darkening and blistering of the flesh around the fang punctures and rot will set in within 48 hours of the bite. The wound typically smells quite putrid within minutes of the bite or injection of the venom by a poisoned weapon. If a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison does not affect it. Characters who take damage from a child of Ishiti's bite must make a Fort save (DC 12) or take 2d4 Strength damage in 10 minutes, with secondary damage of 1d4 Strength a minute later. 48 hours later the character must make a save or contract gangrene around the wound.

Shape-Shifting (Su): These fiends can take any human form at will by flinging a web of sorcery about their faces, as an actor dons a mask, so they resemble anyone they wish to. They gain a +10 competence bonus to Disguise checks. If a child of Ishiti is killed, he automatically reverts to his normal form. If a child of Ishiti hears the *Words that Unweave*, they are forced to revert to normal form. Reflective surfaces also reveal their true form, for the sorcery clouding the minds of men does not fool a mirror, which has no mind to cloud.

Sorcerous Phrase Vulnerability (Su): Children of Ishiti cannot say the words 'Ka nama kaa lajerama.' These words cause a child of Ishiti pain and forces him to reveal his true nature. All men retain a racial memory of these haunting words, and will feel a sense of déjà vu when hearing them, feeling they know the words but had simply forgotten them. It takes a Knowledge (arcana) check DC 20 to remember the words for the first time if someone has not already told the words to the character. The pain lasts for 1 round and imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. This phrase is sometimes known as the *Words that Unweave*.

SCRIBE OF ISHITI

Medium Outsider (demon) Child of Ishiti Scholar 1st level

Hit Dice: 1d8-1 (4 hit points)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex, +0 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge defence: 13 (+0 level, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

Parry defence: 10 (+0 level, +0 Str)

DR: 2 (scales)

BAB/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Dagger +3 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +3 ranged or bite +1 melee

Full Attack: Dagger +3 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +3 ranged or bite +1 melee

Damage: Dagger 1d4/ 19-20 x2 / AP 1 or Stygian Bow 1d12 / 19-20 x2/ AP 2 or bite 1d4 plus poison

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Stygian traits, child of Ishiti traits, sorcerystyle, base power points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, shape-shifting, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

Saves: Fort -1, Ref +1, Will +7

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 7

Skills: Appraise +2, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +8, Decipher Script +6, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +0, Intimidate +0, Listen +13, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering and architecture) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perform (ritual) +4, Profession (scribe) +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11, Sleight-of-Hand +8; **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Knowledgeable

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 1 (Talented)

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Ishiti

Base Power Points: 7 (4 base, +3 Wisdom) (12 maximum)

Magical Attack: -2 (+0 level, -2 Cha)

Possessions: Kilt, stylus, quill, wig

PRIEST OF ISHITI

Medium Outsider (demon) Child of Ishiti Commoner 3/Scholar 1

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 13 (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

Parry Defence: 12 (+1 level, +1 Str)



DR: 2 (scales)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Primitive flint dagger +5 melee or bite +5 melee

Damage: Primitive flint dagger 1d4+1/ 20 x2/ AP 0, bite 1d4+1 plus poison

Special Attack: Poison

Special Qualities: Stygian (hybrid) qualities, child of Ishiti qualities, farmer background skills, illiteracy, scholar, background (lay priest), base power points, knowledge is power, shape-shifting, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 2

Skills: Bluff -3, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate -3, Knowledge (arcane) +1, Knowledge (mystery: Set) +1, Knowledge (any other) +1, Listen +13, Perform (ritual) -3, Profession (farmer) +12, Profession (priest) +2, Sense Motive +7, Spot +10, Survival +3, Swim +2, Use Rope +7

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Priest, Skill Focus (profession (farmer))

Reputation: 2 (Talented)

Leadership: -

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Ishiti

Power Points: 5 (+4 base, +1 Wis) 8 maximum

Possessions: Priest's mantle, loincloth (or nude), wig, alchemical weapon (Games Master's choice)

PRIESTESS - HARLOT OF ISHITI

Medium Outsider (demon) Child of Ishiti Scholar 6th level Priestess

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hit points)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft

DV Dodge: 16 (+3 Dex, +2 level, +1 dodge)

DV Parry: 11 (-1 Str, +2 level)

BAB/Grapple: +6/+5

Attack: Stiletto +9 melee finesse or bite +6 melee

Full Attack: Stiletto +9 melee finesse or bite +6 melee

Damage: Stiletto 1d4-2 / x4 / AP 0, bite 1d4-1 plus poison

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Child of Ishiti traits, 3 bonus feats, base power points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, +2 power points, +8 skill points, increased maximum power points (triple), shape-shifting, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +10

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10

Skills: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +4, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +15, Open Locks +7, Perform (ritual) +11, Perform (dance) +8, Perform (sing) +6, Profession (temple prostitute) +16, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +18

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Iron Will, Negotiator, Skill Focus (profession - temple prostitute), Priest, Performer, Improved Unarmed Strike

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 9 (talented)

Leadership: -

Allegiances: Ishiti

Possessions: Dagger

OPTIONAL COMPLICATIONS

- ✦ The Player Characters could find a Stygian princess held hostage for a future ceremony. She asks for help from the Player Characters
- ✦ The High Priest may want to mate the Chosen One to Ishiti instead of sacrificing him to her.

CONCLUSION

The characters may have survived the horrors of Ishiti, but they still have to escape Stygia. Award the characters an appropriate amount of Experience Points for your campaign and style of play.



CONAN[®]

HONOUR OF MEN

By Eric K. Rodriguez

A **CONAN THE Roleplaying Game** adventure set along the border between north-western Brythunia and the Border Kingdom. Characters should be 6th to 7th level, with an average of 4 to 6 players. Most character types can be used, with Leadership and Survival skills being very useful. The Games Master can easily modify the adventure for weaker or more powerful characters.

'I'm Lord of a dead land, protector of a degenerate people and servant of an evil god. Life couldn't get much worse.'

-Statement made by Argen Muthren, exiled lord of Aquilonia, right before his death in the Border Kingdom.

OVERVIEW: DARK AND DESPERATE TIMES

The land of Brythunia has long been known for its pastoral plains, open prairies and fair-haired women. With King Eldran's union between himself and Queen Thrine of Kelbaza, he has managed to loosely unify the city-states of Brythunia under his banner. Until recently, King Eldran of Brythunia's only problem was keeping the noblemen of his country from fighting each other and preventing the constant slaver raids into his kingdom. King Eldran's continuous

pleading with Nemedra and Corinthia for aid against the slavers and his attempts to build up an army has kept him from the everyday affairs of his own family and his daughter, Elora, has grown to be a beautiful young woman whose independent nature and youthfulness has begun to put her in dangerous situations.

Recently, Elora has grown tired of her father's inattentiveness and she decided to travel to the wooded Fortress of Magdalon, west of the new capital city of Kelbaza. As a child Elora was taken to the woods around Magdalon, to hunt with her father and enjoy the niceties of life. She saw the trek as a way of recapturing some of the happier times she had as a little girl. Elora left the capital city and travels with a retinue of 40 men-at-arms and her personal bodyguard, Sir Agric Lashmal, to the Fortress of Magdalon. The princess and her retinue arrived safely and for several days she enjoyed the hunt and quiet country life. However, because of a wish to relive her childhood happiness without the usual, large entourage, Elora slipped away from her retainers one morning and went on the hunt by herself. Deep within the King's Wood, she was ambushed and captured by brigands. These dark and desperate men are led by Lord Tragen, a banished Nemedian noble who has established himself around the ancient ruins of Hergoth Keep, located within the Border Kingdom. Lord Tragen is not an evil man, but his actions have been guided by an evil sorcerer.

Lord Tragen's partner in this abduction is an evil Sorcerer who calls himself Logannis. Logannis is a Sorcerer who studies under the tutelage of 'Tsotha-Lanti', the real ruler of Koth, and has been sent to the Border Kingdom to



recover an ancient scroll believed to have been written by the famed scholar 'Vathelos the Blind'. Logannis, through his sorcerous research, has determined that the scroll is somewhere within the ruins of Hergoth Keep, however his powers are not strong enough to locate the exact location of the ancient scroll. Logannis believes that the sacrifice of a virgin, of pure noble blood, will give him the power to find the hidden scroll and has used his magic to convince Lord Tragen the abduction of princess Elora was absolutely necessary. Logannis needs only seven more days to complete the necessary preparations for his spell, then the princess will be sacrificed and the scroll will be in his hands.

The adventure begins when the characters are summoned to the audience hall of King Eldran of Brythunia. There they are questioned by the king concerning their reputation and renown among the nearby lands, he wants to be sure that the men he entrusts with such an important mission will be worthy and capable. After he is convinced of the characters skills and background he will relate the story of his daughter's abduction.

The king is a strong-willed man with the weight of an entire country upon his shoulders, yet when he speaks of his daughter all the fire goes out of him and he seems to be like any other concerned father worrying over the fate of his lost child. King Eldran will emphasise the necessity for speed and secrecy concerning his missing daughter, for if any of the other Brythunian lords were to find out about Elora's abduction they might consider seizing the throne for themselves, or at the very least start another civil war. The king will offer 1,000 silvers to each adventurer for the safe return of his daughter, a significant outlay for the cash strapped ruler. The king will also offer to make each adventure a noble, with title and lands along the Lema Plains, next to the Border Kingdom. If the group agrees to the mission, he will give them a scroll with his royal seal, which will state the bearers have the king's full authority and confidence and are to be treated accordingly. The king's seneschal will step in at this point and remind the adventures the kingdom is in turmoil and not everyone they meet will be sympathetic to the king's representatives.

The characters should accept the king's offer and start their journey west to the Fortress of Magdalon. After arriving at the fortress and gaining some allies, the group will head into the King's Wood where they find an old trail, possibly used by the abductors. The group should follow the Yellow River through the Yellow River Pass into the Border Kingdom. After several encounters, the adventures will find the ruins of Hergoth Keep. Finding the ruined

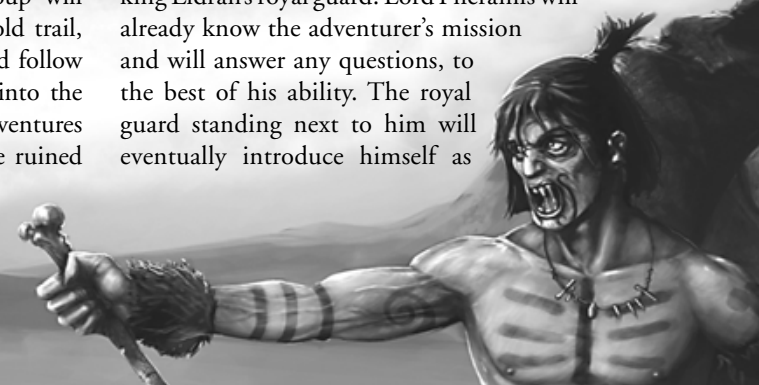
hunting lodge and using it as a base of operations they will be able to plan the rescue of the princess. The Games Master should keep track of time and keep in mind that Logannis will sacrifice Elora once seven days have past. Hopefully the characters will stop the sacrifice and put an end to Logannis's life before he is able to do more evil.

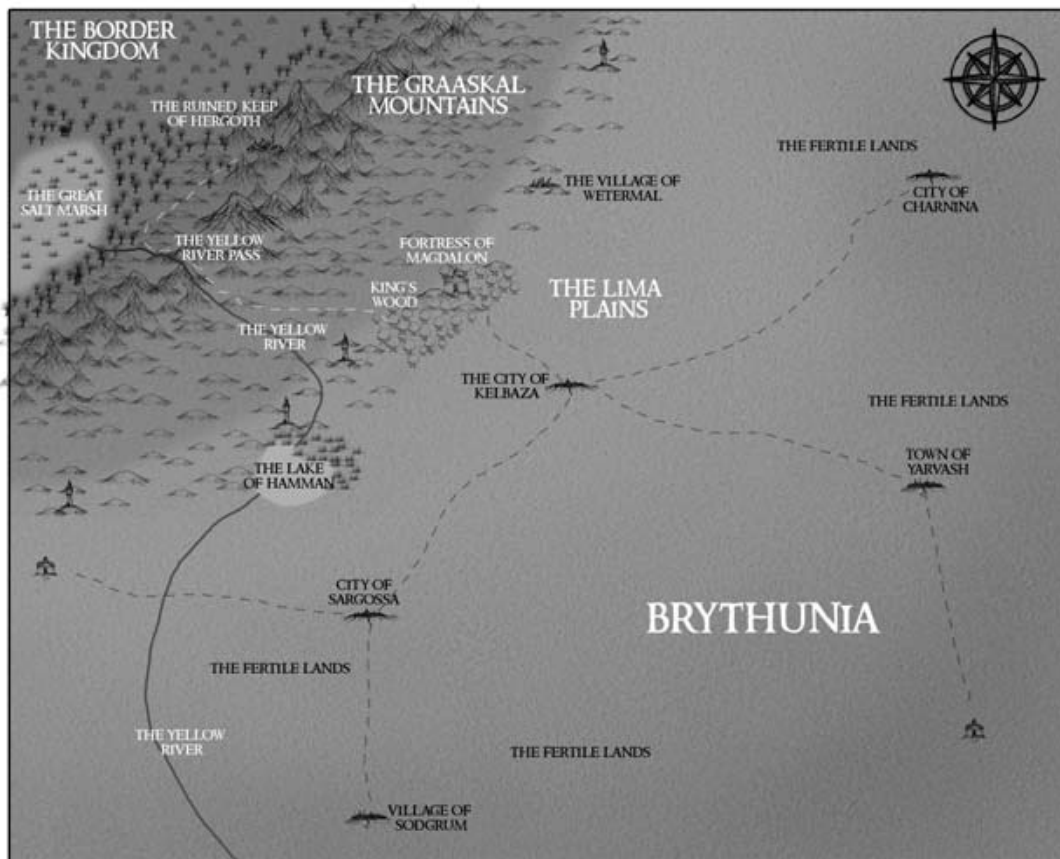
FORTRESS OF DESPAIR

After a day of hard riding, the exhausted group will arrive at the Fortress of Magdalon. They notice the fortress sits on a wooded hill, surrounded by a small village. The villagers seem to be wary of the adventures and have a very sombre manner. The group should head straight for the fortress, where they are greeted by several men-at-arms in the livery of Lord Pheramis, lord of the fortress and cousin to the king. Once the characters show their royal scroll, they should not have any problems and be given immediate audience with Pheramis. After arriving in the keep's main audience hall, the group is soon joined by



Lord Pheramis and another man dressed in the livery of king Eldran's royal guard. Lord Pheramis will already know the adventurer's mission and will answer any questions, to the best of his ability. The royal guard standing next to him will eventually introduce himself as





Sir Agric Lashmal, personal guard of the princess. Sir Agric will seem quiet and reserved and will only speak up if some important piece of information is needed regarding of the abduction.

As soon as Lord Pheramis finishes his tale of the missing princess, Sir Agric will immediately ask for permission to accompany the characters with his men. Although at first the characters may not wish for his company, careful reasoning should show they may be dealing with a large group of bandits or professional kidnappers and the aid of a company of trained soldiers may come in handy. A successful Leadership check will convince Sir Agric and Lord Pheramis that the characters are not only heroes, but born leaders. Sir Agric believes time is of the essence and the group should leave early the next morning, giving the adventurer's time to purchase any supplies and to sharpen or repair any weapons or armour. With King Eldran's scroll, the characters will be able to purchase common items at half the normal listed price and uncommon items and weapons at three quarters

the listed price. Early the next morning, Sir Agric and his company of 30 men-at-arms will be waiting outside the fortress gates.

BRYTHUNIAN SOLDIERS MEN-AT-ARMS

1st level Soldier (29) Medium Brythunian

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (7 hit points)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 11 (+1 Dex, +0 base)

DV (Parry): 15 (+1 Str, +0 base, +4 shield)

DR: 9 (mail hauberk/Scale Corselet, steel cap)

BAB/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: +2 Heavy Mace (1d10+1/x2/ AP 5)

Full Attack: +2 Heavy Mace (1d10+1/x2/ AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12
Skills: Climb +5, Diplomacy +0, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Search +8, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Ride +5
Feats: Power Attack, Combat Expertise
Magical Attack: +1 (+0 base, +1 Cha)
Power Points: None
Possessions: Mail hauberk/Scale Corselet, steel cap, shield, heavy mace, lance, dagger

SERGEANT

4th level Soldier (1) Medium Brythunian

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26 hit points)
Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)
Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 13 (+1 Dex, +2 base)
DV (Parry): 19 (+2 Str, +3 base, +4 shield)

DR: 10 (mail hauberk/Breastplate, steel cap)
BAB/Grapple: +4/+6
Attack: +6 Heavy Mace (1d10+2/x2/ AP 6)
Full Attack: +6 Heavy Mace (1d10+2/x2/ AP 6)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Attacks: Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry)

Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12
Skills: Climb +6, Diplomacy +0, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Ride +5, Search +10, Knowledge (local) +5
Feats: Mounted Combat, Combat Expertise, Ride-By Attack, Power Attack
Magical Attack: +2 (+1 base, +1 Cha)
Power Points: None
Possessions: Mail hauberk/Breastplate, steel cap, shield, heavy mace, lance, dagger

SIR AGRIC LASHMAL, ROYAL GUARD

6th level Soldier; Medium Brythunian

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (45 hit points)
Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)
Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 14 (+1 Dex, +3 base)
DV (Parry): 22 (+3 Str, +4 base, +1 parry, +4 shield)

DR: 10 (mail shirt/breastplate, great helm)

BAB/Grapple: +6/+9
Attack: +9/+4 Broadsword (1d10+3/x2/ AP 3)
Full Attack: +9 Broadsword (1d10+3/x2/ AP 3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Attacks: Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry)

Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13
Skills: Climb +6, Diplomacy +0, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +10, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Search +13, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Ride +6, Survival +4
Feats: Mounted Combat, Combat Expertise, Ride-By attack, Power Attack, Improved Disarm, Parry, Improved Bull Rush
Magical Attack: +2 (+1 base, +1 Cha)
Power Points: None
Possessions: Mail shirt/breastplate, great helm, shield, broadsword, lance, dagger

THE KING'S WOOD

The King's Wood is a relatively small expanse of forest made up of pine, spruce and a few redwoods at its heart. Tales of monsters and demons prancing about its groves in the dead of night have surrounded the wood for as long as anyone can remember. No creatures of myth or legend have been found among its dark swaying branches, but on occasion a hunter or forester will disappear under mysterious circumstances. The characters will find there are several marked paths along the outskirts of the wood, however once they begin to travel deeper into the wood the paths disappear and movement becomes much more difficult.

Forest Terrain Features

	Category of Forest		
	Sparse	Medium	Dense
Typical trees	50%	70%	80%
Massive trees	—	10%	20%
Light undergrowth	50%	70%	50%
Heavy undergrowth	—	20%	50%

Trees: The most important terrain elements in a forest are the trees, obviously. A creature standing in the same square as a tree gains a +2 cover bonus to Defence Value and a +1 cover bonus on Reflex saves (these bonuses do not stack with cover



bonuses from other sources). The presence of a tree does not otherwise affect a creature's fighting space, because it is assumed that the creature is using the tree to its advantage when it can. The trunk of a typical tree has DV 4, hardness 5 and 150 hp. A Climb check (DC 15) is sufficient to climb a tree. Medium and dense forests have massive trees as well. These trees take up an entire square and provide cover to anyone behind them. They have DV 3, hardness 5 and 600 hp. Like their smaller counterparts, it takes a Climb check (DC 15) to scale.

Undergrowth: Vines, roots, fallen trees and short bushes cover much of the ground in the King's Wood. A space covered with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way. Heavy undergrowth costs 4 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). It increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 5. Heavy undergrowth is easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Hide checks. Running and charging are impossible. Squares with undergrowth are often clustered together. Undergrowth and trees are not mutually exclusive; it is common for a 5-foot square to have both a tree and undergrowth.

Forest Canopy: It is common for animals and other forest dwellers to hunt from far above the surface floor. Creatures on branches in a forest canopy are considered to have cover when fighting creatures on the ground, and in medium or dense forests they have concealment as well.

Other Forest Terrain Elements: Fallen logs generally stand about three feet high and provide cover just as low walls do. They cost five feet of movement to cross. Forest streams are generally five to 10 feet wide and no more than five feet deep. Pathways wind through most forests, allowing normal movement and providing neither cover nor concealment. These paths are less common in dense forests, but even unexplored forests will have occasional game trails.

Stealth and Detection in a Forest: In a sparse forest, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 3d6×10 feet. In a medium forest, this distance is 2d8×10 feet and in a dense forest it is 2d6×10 feet. Because any square with undergrowth provides concealment,

it is usually easy for a creature to use the Hide skill in the forest. Logs and massive trees provide cover, which also makes hiding possible. The background noise in the forest makes Listen checks more difficult, increasing the DC of the check by 2 per 10 feet, not 1 (but note that Move Silently is also more difficult in undergrowth).

Sir Agric will volunteer to lead the characters when they first leave the fortress because he is familiar with the woods and the area where the princess disappeared. The characters will find the journey very easy at first and should only begin to make skill checks once they are near to the centre of the woods. After about two hours of riding at a moderate pace the group will arrive at the abduction site. Sir Agric will inform the characters that something is seriously wrong, pointing out that the area has been swept clean, clear signs of struggle are no longer present and someone has deliberately hidden the tracks that were once easily visible. The Games Master should allow the characters to make moderate Spot or Listen checks (DC 12). On a successful check, characters will either see a faint trail, or hear a strange sound coming from a dense thicket. As the characters approach the thicket, a faint tearing sound can be heard. As soon as the first character approaches within 30 feet of the thicket, the creature feeding within leaps out and attacks.

DIRE SWORD-TOOTHED LEOPARD

Large Animal

Hit Dice: 16d8+48 (120 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+2 Dex, +12 Reflex)

Speed: 40 ft.

Defence: 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+24

Attack: Claw +20 melee (2d4+8)

Full attack: 2 claws +20 melee (2d4+8), bite +14 melee (2d4+4 plus puncture, AP 12)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Pounce, improved grab, rake 2d4+4, puncture, tooth breaking

Special Qualities: Scent, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +11

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +7, Jump +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Spot +7, Swim +10

Feats: Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Stealthy, Weapon





COMBAT



Sword-toothed leopards prefer to stalk their prey, dropping from a hidden position atop a tree or rock and slaying their victims within instants. A large victim such as an elephant or bull will be attacked until the sword-toothed leopard causes a puncture (see below), then the sword-toothed leopard will retreat until its victim bleeds to death. This allows them to avoid the risk of injury, since although they are tough they must eat a fair amount to survive and any serious wound may impede their hunting ability to such a degree that they starve to death. In open combat with a determined and well-armed foe, the sword-toothed leopard will consider fleeing, particularly if it is injured.

Pounce (Ex): If a sword-toothed leopard leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even it has already taken a move action.

Puncture (Ex): A sword-toothed leopard's bite attack which does a critical hit on an opponent is considered to have punctured a major blood vessel. The victim will lose a further 1 hp per round (in blood loss) until the wound is healed by either the Heal skill or some sorcerous means.

Tooth Breaking (Ex): A sword-toothed leopard whose bite attack does maximum damage on a critical hit (that is, a roll of 16 on 2d8 on a critical hit) loses one of its large canine teeth. This sticks in the wound, doing an additional 1d6 damage, but the sword-toothed leopard's bite damage drops to 2d6 + damage bonus and it can no longer do the puncture attack (above). It is possible for the second canine to break off if maximum damage is done a second time (12 on 2d6), in which case the bite damage drops to 2d4 + damage bonus.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the sword-toothed leopard must hit with a claw or bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake.

Rake (Ex): A sword-toothed leopard that gets a hold can make two rake attacks (+20 melee) with its hind legs for 2d8 +3 damage each. If the sword-toothed leopard pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

Skills: Sword-toothed leopards receive a +6 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

This particular, starving creature has left its normal mountain habitat in search of food. Having entered the King's Wood, it came upon a

Focus (claw)

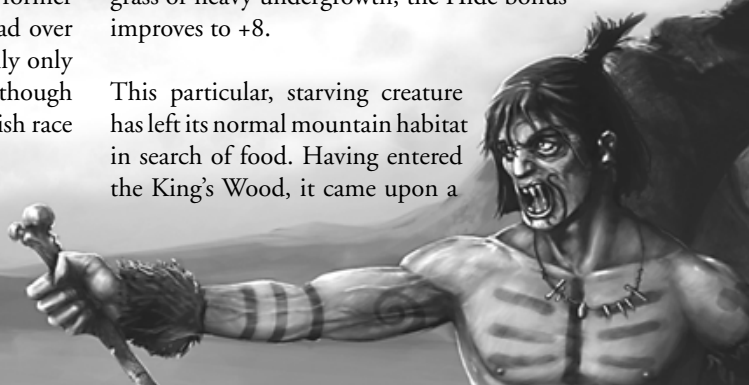
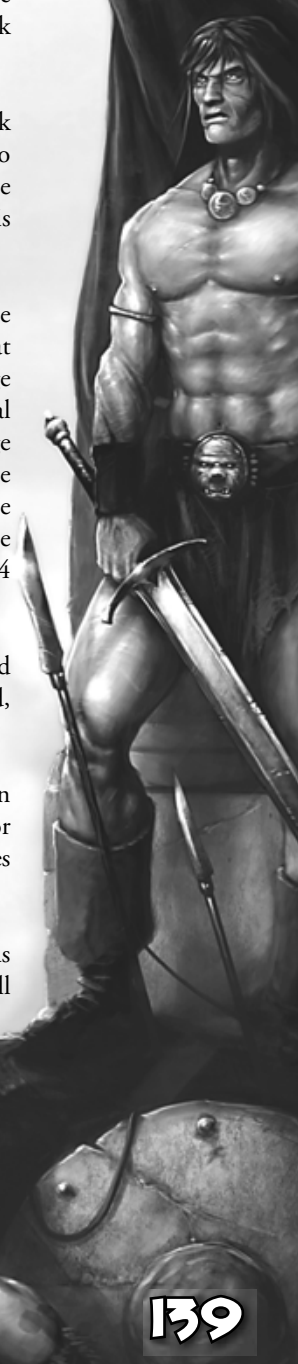
Climate/Terrain: Brythunian Mountains, Pictish Wilderness

Organisation: Solitary or pair

Advancement: 17-32 HD (Large); 33-48 HD (Huge)

In appearance, sword-toothed leopards resemble huge panthers or other big cats, but have silvered, speckled fur. These cats have extremely powerful forequarters in comparison to other big cats, though even their hindquarters are more powerful than those of a lion. This makes them very strong, but their bulk makes them slower than most big cats and has contributed to their quick and savage hunting style. Their most distinctive feature, though, is the pair of vast teeth that give them their name - huge curved fangs, bigger than daggers and capable of inflicting the most devastating injuries. Though these fangs are enormously powerful weapons, they are far more brittle than smaller fangs and older sword-toothed leopards often have one or both of their great teeth broken off.

Sword-toothed leopards are not as common as in former times, now that humanity and wild cats have spread over many of their old hunting grounds. They are usually only found deep in the forests of the Pictish Wilderness, though they can still be found wild and shamans of the Pictish race often call upon them as powerful allies.





man alone in the woods and saw an easy meal. It was in the middle of feasting on this poor soul when the characters disturbed its meal. Hungry and far from its normal feeding grounds its first move will be to attack when someone approaches within 30 feet of it and then attack any other creature getting in its way. The sword-toothed leopard will not leave its meal unless killed or driven off (it will retreat if reduced to under half its hit points). Once the creature is killed or driven off, the characters find the remains of the luckless woodsmen. A moderate Search check (DC 15) reveals that the man, although little is left of him, has a rucksack under his body that contains some trail rations, change of clothes and a folded up piece of parchment. Any character that can read Nemedian finds the following:

Jasper,

Take whatever steed is the most refreshed and head back to the place of my disgrace. Make sure that you erase any signs of our wrongdoing and ensure this deed will never be traced back to me. Travel our original path along the Yellow River and through the Yellow River Pass and make sure that no trail is left that can lead back to me. Be wary of the Bog Men, they become more brazen every day.

Lord Tragen.

Characters that have Survival skills can make a moderate skill check (DC 12) to determine the route from the King's Wood to the Yellow River. A successful Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 15) reveals Lord Tragen is a name of a banished Nemedian noble who unsuccessfully rebelled against King Tarascus, but was never caught. He was not known to be a bad lord and was beloved by his people.

No more information can be found on the dead scout's body and characters should begin their journey west, towards the Yellow River.

THE YELLOW RIVER

After six hours of hard riding, the characters should come to the Yellow River somewhere within the hills bordering the Graaskal Mountains. The hour will be getting late and the group should decide to rest for the night. If not, then Sir Agric suggests to the characters the horses and men need rest if they are to begin their ascent up the Yellow River pass on the morrow. The group should acquiesce and set up camp near the river. As long as the group is within 50 yards of the river, they will encounter one of its most dangerous denizens.

Snake, Border Devil

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 13d8+13 (72 HP)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares) climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Defence: 19 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)

DR: 5

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+24

Attack: Bite +14 melee (1d10+10)

Full Attack: Bite +14 melee (1d10+10)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3)/10 ft. (2)

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d8+10 (AP 8), improved grab

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Border Kingdom/Yellow River, swamp or marsh

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 12-16 HD (Huge); 17-33 HD (Gargantuan)

The border devil snake is one of the most dangerous constrictor snakes, its normal habitat being the dank, festering swamps and bogs of the Border Kingdom. This creature is easily recognised by its sickly yellow colour and brown blotches that cover its body in a haphazard manner. The devil snake grows to such sizes that it soon loses interest in the normal food coming its way such as swamp rat and wild goat. Eventually these creatures grow to such gargantuan sizes only creatures as large as a man are able to sate its appetite. These creatures are very territorial and are most often seen in titanic battles



amongst themselves, fighting over choice pieces of river or swampland.

Border devil snakes encountered will always be solitary individuals either on the hunt, or protecting their territory from 'invaders'. Their preferred method of attack is to take a creature unawares and constrict them until death. After the creature is dead, the devil snake will drag it back into the water where it will consume it, whole, digesting its meal at leisure. Some snakes have even been known to develop lairs, where their victims' bodies are stored for later consumption.

COMBAT

Border devil snakes of all sizes hunt by grabbing prey with their mouths and squeezing it with their powerful bodies.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a border devil snake deals damage depending on its size (1d8+10; 2d8+16; 4d8+22).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a border devil snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and constrict.

AMBUSH PASS

After following the Yellow River for at least six hours, the group begins to leave the barren hills and start their ascent up the Graaskal Mountains. Depending on the speed of travel and the care taken, the Games Master may wish the characters to make several Ride or Climb checks when appropriate. As the group nears the peak of the Yellow River pass, they will notice that the path narrows and will be forced to walk their horses single file through the narrow canyon. At some point near the top, unless the characters have sent men to scout the way, a group of bandits will surprise them and will attack from above.

BORDER BANDITS

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Soldier)

Hit Dice: 2d10+2 (13 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 25 ft.

Defence: (Dodge vs. Ranged): 16 (+1 level, +2 Dex, +3 large shield), (Dodge vs. Melee): 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex), (Parry vs. Melee): 15 (+1 level, +1 Str, +3 target)

DR: 7 (mail hauberk +6, steel cap +1)

Attack: *Depending on weapons used

Full Attack: *Depending on weapon used

Special Attacks: *Depending on weapon used

Special Qualities: +1 to Surprise/+1 to all Hide checks

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/ 5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort+3, Ref +2, Will +2*

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

Skills: Hide +3, Intimidate +4, Ride +4, Spot +4, Survival +4, Search +3

Feats: Deceitful, No Honour, Track

Climate/Terrain: Border Kingdom, any

Organisation: Raiding party 6-10 plus 1 leader of 3rd-4th level, Large raiding party (20-30 plus 1 leader of 4th-5th level), or Bandit King (100+, with assorted lieutenants and leaders)

Advancement: By character class (probably soldier or barbarian)

Possessions: Varies by character type, at least two weapons, one piece of armour and 20 silver pieces worth of equipment.

Variants: Several variants of Bandits exist and the Games Master is encouraged to customise bandit raiding parties for each individual campaign.

This particular band of criminals has only recently arrived in the pass within the last few days. Their leader 'Olerg' is as ruthless as bandit leaders come and leads a group of 19 men. He shows no mercy to those unfortunates his band waylays and prefers to leave no witnesses. Once the surprise attack begins, Olerg will have his men use loose rocks and what few missile weapons are available to them, to rain down upon the characters. Olerg is hoping the characters will retreat, leaving their horses and pack animals behind. Once the group defeats Olerg and his bandits they will be able to continue through the pass unmolested.

If the characters are able to capture one or more of Olerg's band, they will be able to gather little information, however, if a successful Intimidate check is made (DC 15), the characters will learn one of the bandits did see a large troop of soldiers move through the pass about half a day ahead of Olerg's men. The bandit will also relate that he saw a woman, matching the description of the missing princess, riding with the armed men. He followed the soldiers as far down into the Border Kingdom as he could, before he lost sight of the troop heading northeast along the Graaskal Mountains.



BORDER KINGDOM

The land was called the Border Kingdom. It was a dreary waste of desolate, empty moors that swept off to the dim horizon. Here and there gnarled and stunted trees grew sparsely. Water birds rose flapping from misty bogs. A cold, uneasy wind whined through rattling reeds with a lonely song.

-L. Sprague De Camp. 'The Witch of the Mists'

As the group enters the Border Kingdom, their senses are assaulted by a stagnant and stale wind blowing slowly through the desolate land. A low fog hangs over most of the land, lending it an air of dark mystery. At first a path is easily followed through the misshapen hills bordering the Graaskals, however the path soon disappears among the soggy ground and patches of dead trees. A character with the Survival skill or Tracking feat must make a successful skill check (DC 16) to keep the group heading in the right direction. Approximately two hours after entering the Border Kingdom, they are attacked by a large band of howling and screaming Beast-Men.

BEAST-MEN

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (6 hp)
Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.

Defence: 12 (+1 Des, +1 natural)

DR: 1

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+2
Attack: Club +2 melee (1d8+2/x2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)
Special Attacks: Improved grab

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +2, Move Silently +2, Spot +2, Survival +2

Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: The Great Salt Marsh and the surrounding bogs

Organisation: Solitary, patrol (2-4) or horde (6-30)

Advancement: By character class (favoured class: barbarian)

These are wild, feral natives living in the swamps and fens around the Great Salt Marsh. They live on crayfish, wild dogs, bats, frogs and any human prey they can find and wield the most primitive of weapons. Their eyes glitter with a feral light and their hands have long fingernails that serve as primitive talons, a beast-man usually will not single-handedly attack a foe, they fight in hordes whenever possible.

The beast-men are the result of centuries of inbreeding among escaped criminals hiding in the moors, degenerating to the point that they are barely human anymore. They have, over the centuries, developed a taste for human flesh and are also cannibals and do not leave their dead when they leave the scene of an ambush.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a creature with this special attack hits with a melee weapon (usually a claw or bite attack), it



deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No initial touch attack is required. The Beast-Men can use this ability to grapple opponents of the same size. The beast man has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use the part of its body it used in the improved grab to hold the opponent. If it chooses to do the latter, it takes a -20 penalty on grapple checks, but is not considered grappled itself; the beast-man does not lose its Dexterity bonus to DV, still threatens an area, and can use its remaining attacks against other opponents. A successful hold does not deal any extra damage. When a beast-man gets a hold after an improved grab attack, it pulls the opponent into its space. This act does not provoke attacks of opportunity. It can even move (possibly carrying away the opponent), provided it can drag the opponent's weight.

The beast-men are not organised and do not try to surprise the characters at all, rushing to the battle, seeking to drag men off their horses and into the fog-shrouded bogs. Approximately 25 of these creatures come out of the bog, none of which look to be a leader type, simply attacking in a horde like manner, screaming unintelligible words and waving their arms in wild circles. The beast-men are a very superstitious lot and if a Scholar or character with the Dabbler feat were to display some sort of magic, there is a 30% chance that the horde would immediately break and flee back into the fog. These degenerates have nothing of value on them.

HERGOOTH KEEP

'Let them come and lay siege to my castle! No enemy of mine shall ever breach these walls!'

-Statement made by Hergoth Mo'theren, Lord of lands of Graaskal, right before the sacking of his keep.

It should take the group the better part of a day to reach the outskirts of Hergoth Keep. Characters should not spend much time within the moors and bogs surrounding the ruins due to the inhospitable environment and creatures residing there. They should send scouts out and eventually find the ruins of an old hunter's lodge not far from the keep. This ruin will provide the group with shelter and secrecy, until they can come up with a plan to rescue the princess. However, if the characters do not look for shelter, or simply cannot find it, then they will be forced

to sleep in the open. Games Masters are encouraged to use as many encounters as necessary to convince the group that camping in the open is a bad idea (Swarms of insects, poisonous snakes, beast-men, Border snakes and quicksand are just a few examples).

If the characters set up a spy or scout to watch the keep, they will see a patrol of ten men leave the keep and head off into the moors. If the characters plan it properly, they can ambush the foraging party away from the keep or as they return. If the group manages to capture one of Lord Tragen's men, they can learn the following.

- ❖ Lord Tragen has been acting very strangely for the last couple of months, ever since the sorcerer Logannis arrived. Logannis is always making strange demands upon Lord Tragen, but the lord always agrees to them. Lord Tragen even went as far as to travel to Brythunia and capture a noblewoman. At first the men thought he was seeking a bride, but when they returned to the keep, Logannis had the woman taken to the dungeon and chained there like a common brigand. The soldier overheard Logannis speaking with the servants, stating that the 'dark chamber' was to be ready for use during the next full moon. The dark chamber is the name given to the ancient torture room, located in lowest most dungeons.
- ❖ The characters will be told that Lord Tragen's men respect him and would die for him, but he seems to be under some strange spell of late. His men-at-arms believe it is the sorcerer Logannis's hand that seems to be corrupting their lord, but they are powerless to stop him and do not wish to defy their lord. If the characters prove they are honourable and will do no harm to Lord Tragen, the captured soldier will tell the characters of a secret entrance into Hergoth Keep. The entrance lies in the back of the keep, through the ruins of the bathhouse and privy. The group can enter through the ancient sewer pipes and come into the first level of the dungeon. The princess is being held in the second level of the dungeon.

The dungeons beneath Hergoth Keep are ancient and foreboding. They have lain empty for years with the only residents being vermin and the ghosts of times past. The Games Master is encourage to add encounters, whether they be creatures or monsters, if their group is too powerful and needs more challenges. None of Lord Tragen's men venture into the dungeon unless specifically ordered to do so. However, if no



new encounters are added, then the only thing they will run into will be Loganni's servants.

STATUE OF HERGOTH, ANIMATED OBJECT

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 4d10+30 (41 hp, due to age)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft./+10

Defence: 10 (-1 size, +1 natural)

DR: 8 (stone)

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+10

Attack: Slam +5 melee (2d6+4)

Full Attack: Slam +5 melee (2d6+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2)/10 ft. (2) (tall)

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; also see text

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con--, Int--, Wis 1, Cha 1

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Example (attacks): 10' tall humanoid statue (standard)

COMBAT

Animated objects fight only as directed by the animator. They follow orders without question and to the best of their abilities. Since they do not need to breathe and never tire, they can be extremely capable minions.

Hardness (Ex): An animated object has the same hardness it had before it was animated (Stone).

Improved Speed (Ex): Objects with two legs (statues, ladders) or a similar shape that allows faster movement have a +10 foot bonuse to speed.



Trample (Ex): An animated object of at least Large size and with a Damage Reduction of at least 8 can trample creatures two or more sizes smaller than itself, dealing damage equal to the object's slam damage + 1-1/2 times its Strength bonus. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the object can attempt Reflex saves (DC 10 + 1/2 object's HD + object's Str modifier) to halve the damage.

Logannis, through his sorcerous means, has animated two aged statues depicting the ancient lord of the keep, Hergoth. Both statues depict Lord Hergoth in his full battle armour, wielding sword and shield, however they are very worn and cracked and can not take much damage. If the characters manage to destroy these statues, they will find an ancient silver scroll tube amongst the broken stone and ashes. The scroll tube contains the very scroll that Logannis has been searching for and a successful Decipher Script skill check (DC 18) reveals it is the scroll of Vathelos. Although the character will not be able to read the scroll at this time or use any spells upon it, they may think to use it later on as a bargaining tool for the release of the princess. The characters should find the staircase leading down and move on to the final confrontation.

HONOUR OF MEN

'Honour? What know you of honour!? I embody that which is most honourable among men and kings. My shield defends you. My sword protects you. My eyes see the enemies that would slay you. All I ask is in return is your fealty and worship; as a god should be worshipped! You know nothing of honour.'

-Statement made by Lord Hergoth Mo'theren, right before his execution by his own retainers.

As the group descends into the final dungeon, the timeline will have an effect on what is happening. If the Games Master has kept track of the days, or 'guided' the party, then it should be the seventh day. The group will come upon Logannis as he begins his ceremony and sacrifice. If the characters are early, then the Games Master will have to decided where Logannis is and what he is doing. It is suggested that Logannis not be totally surprised by the

characters (such as asleep) so gameplay will be much more enjoyable. Logannis will fight to the death and use every spell and item at his disposal, if the characters managed to avoid the animated statues of Hergoth in the dudgeon level above, then Logannis will summon them down to this level to aid him.

LOGANNIS OF KOTH

Medium Humanoid (10th level Kothian Scholar)

Hit Dice: 10d6+10 (45 hit points)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (dodge): 15 (+2 Dex, +3 base)

DV (parry): 12 (-1 Str, +3 base)

BAB/Grapple: +7/+6

Attack: Dagger +9 melee finesse (1d4-1/x2/ AP 3)

Full Attack: Dagger +9 melee finesse (1d4-1/x2/ AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Spells

Special Qualities: sorcery style x4, scholar, independent background, base power points, knowledge is power, maximum power points (triple), +3 power points

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +12

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20

Skills: Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +9, Craft (herbalism) +18, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (history) +10, Perform (ritual) +20, Perform (sing) +17, Perform (oratory) +17, Perform (string) +17, Perform (percussion) +17, Profession (minstrel) +10, Search +13

Feats: Iron Will, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Performer, Magic Power Attack, Improved Evil Eye, Opportunistic Sacrifice

Power Points: 10 (30 maximum)

Magic Attack: +10 (+5 base, +5 Cha)

Styles Known: Divination, Summoning, Necromancy, Hypnotism

Spells Known: *Astrological prediction, demonic pact, raise corpse, summon beast, visions, dream of wisdom, summon demon, form demon, Entrance, death touch, sorcerous news, psychometry, mind reading, hypnotic suggestion, domination*

Corruption: 8 (corrupt)



Reputation: 15 (talented)

Insanities: Voices, delusion (believes Tsotha-Lanti is constantly watching him), sleeplessness, phobia (Snakes), delusion (the dead speak with him and are on his side)

Possessions: 2 doses of black lotus smoke, Amulet of Vetherel (gives wearer the Tortured Sacrifice Feat), Spellbook of Amun-She (contains all the above spells with 33 blank pages), *The Dagger of Shurki* (allows wielder a +2 bonus to spells when used to sacrifice a victim), chest of coins (1,200 silver pieces, 300 gold talents, 23 pieces of misc. jewellery, 22 semi-precious stones, 10 priceless stones).

Logannis will use every spell and item at his disposal and he will not willingly surrender, knowing that Tsotha-Lanti will punish him far worse than anything the characters can do to him. If the battle is going badly for the characters, the Games Master should have Lord Tragen appear, with his men-at-arms, and help turn the tide of battle. Lord Tragen, having finally slipped free of Logannis's magical domination, will seek revenge upon the evil sorcerer. He will not stop until Logannis is dead and his honour restored. If the group does kill Logannis with Lord Tragen's help, then he will beg their forgiveness and that of princess Elora and explain he was under the evil sorcerer's spell. Sir Agric, along with the princess Elora, will realise an honourable man and competent leader like Lord Tragen would make a valuable ally among the squabbling lords of Brythunia. If the characters convince Lord Tragen to leave the Border Kingdom and return with them to Brythunia, then the princess and Sir Agric will agree to speak on his behalf to King Eldran. The characters should return to Brythunia having saved the princess and gained the new friendship of Lord Tragen and his loyal followers.

RESOLUTION

Having saved the princess and returned her to the king, characters should receive a 1,000 experience bonus. Capturing Logannis should give characters an 800 experience bonus. Befriending Lord Tragen and gaining his support should give the characters a 500 experience point bonus. Having found the lost scroll of Vathelos

should gain the characters a 1,000 experience point bonus. As always, the Games Master is encouraged to set the experience point gains based on their individual campaigns so as not to upset game balance.

The Games Master will note that several adventures or ongoing campaigns can occur using this adventure as a starting point. Below are a few possibilities:

- ✿ Getting the princess back to her father while passing through lands that may still be openly rebelling against his claim to the crown of Brythunia.
- ✿ Convincing the Brythunian nobility to accept a rebel lord of Nemedra.
- ✿ Holding on to a scroll which is wanted personally by Tsotha-Lanti of Koth.
- ✿ Lord Tragen may be given lands within Brythunia and may need stout adventures to help him hold them.
- ✿ King Tarascus of Nemedra may hear of Lord Tragen's newfound friends and declare open war upon Brythunia for harbouring a known Nemedian criminal.

MAGIC ITEMS

AMULET OF VETHEREL

Crafted by priests of Nergal over 500 years ago, the *Amulet of Vetherel* was named after its first owner. The High Priest of Nergal, Vetherel, was said to have sacrificed thousands of souls to appease his dark god. After years of faithful service Nergal gave to his servant a golden amulet for his dedication. The amulet is made of gold, circular in shape with a large onyx stone set in the middle. The amulet gives the wearer the Tortured Sacrifice Feat. This amulet is a unique item crafted by a demon lord and cannot be duplicated or recreated. Any who wear the amulet automatically gain one point of corruption, with no save.



DAGGER OF SHURKI

One of six daggers of this type in existence, the *Dagger of Shurki* was crafted by a cabal of sorcerers who resided within the ancient land of Kosala. Their sole purpose was the eradication of all followers of Asura by sorcerous means. Eventually followers of Asura tracked down the Shurki cabal and destroyed them. Their dark tower was burned and items of sorcery were taken and scattered to the winds. The *Daggers of Shurki* were not destroyed due to their ability to aid in any magic; however use of these daggers usually leads to corruption and sacrifice. The *Dagger of Shurki* allows its wielder a +2 bonus to spells when used to sacrifice a victim.

Manufacturing Cost: 35,500 sp.; 22,800 xp; *Requirements:* Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks, Craft (weaponsmith) 10 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks; blood sacrifice of at least 30 men.

SCROLL OF VATHELOS

This is one of the few remaining works of this genius and madman. Vathelos the Blind spent years in research studying the occult and planes beyond man's normal existence. Eventually driven mad, he had his studies and findings written down by his apprentices. Most of his famous works were in great iron bound books. However a few scrolls were said to exist and were taken by his apprentices without his knowledge. These scrolls are unique in that they are written on an unknown type of parchment and drawn in blood. The scrolls are written in the same, insane and unorthodox style as the iron bound tomes. However any person that spends two weeks studying the scroll and makes a difficult Decipher Script check (DC 18) will gain one spell style, permanently (GM's choice). The scroll can only be used once for a person, but can be read by others. If a person fails his Decipher Script check, he may not try again. This is a unique item and cannot be duplicated or re-created.

SPELLBOOK OF AMUN-SHE

Bound long ago by a Stygian wizard, the *Spellbook of Amun-She* has no special powers other than it gives its owner the ability to study any spell written in it at half the normal time. The *Spellbook* has a number of spells

already written in it, but does have 33 blank pages. The *Spellbook* is made of dark charcoal colored leather, bound with brass and copper bindings and has ancient symbols and writings carved into its face. The following spells are already written within the tome: *Astrological prediction, demonic pact, raise corpse, summon beast, visions, dream of wisdom, summon demon, form demon, Entrance, death touch, sorcerous news, psychometry, mind reading, Hypnotic Suggestion, Domination.*

Manufacturing Cost: 185,500 sp.; 52,000 xp; caster level 15th *Requirements:* Craft (alchemy) 15 ranks, Craft (herbalism) 15 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks; at least ten days of ritual per; sacrifice of one blood offspring

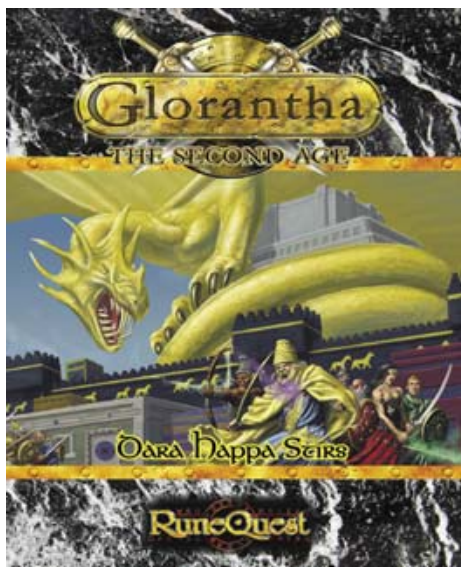




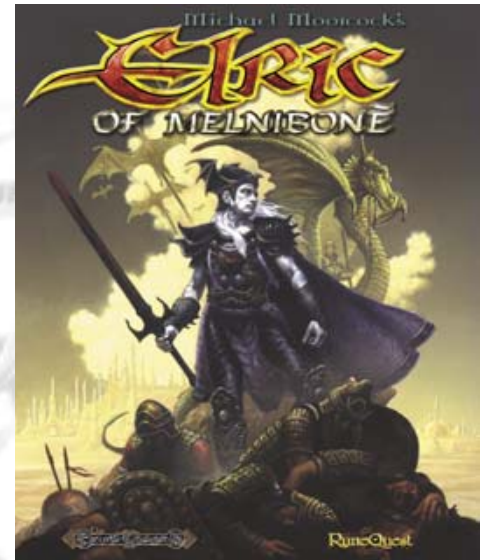
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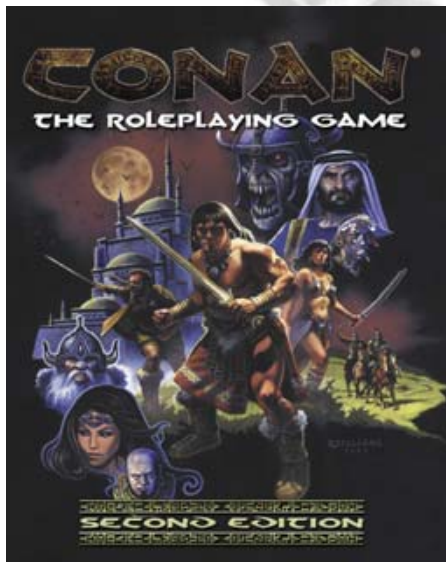




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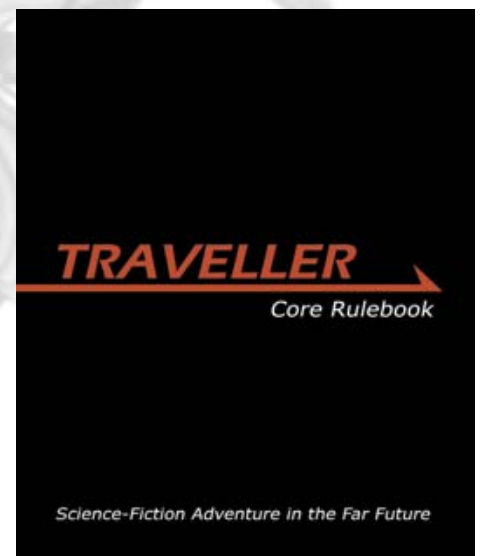


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Captain Ishachus.

I understand you are cleaning out some of the brothels in the Desert as I suggested. Hopefully you will find your sister as you hope. The prostitutes and the matrons are hiding a specialised brothel named Sepharvaun. Seek there for your sister. During your search, as a personal favour to me, I would like you to keep an eye out for a book, a book called The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster from the Stars. Bring me this book, which I believe to be among the brothels of the Desert, and you may find yourself serving in a much more prestigious post and possessing much more than a mere hovel in the soldier's fort.

Lady Klia.

Lord High Inquisitor of Zamora

Captain Ishachus,

You are ordered to act upon your suggestion. The King is aware of how many of his nobles have disappeared lately in the Desert and he shares your belief that the secret brothel, Sepharvaun, is the traitorous culprit. He agrees that there does appear to be a conspiracy afoot. You are permitted to use Zamorian troops in your search instead of the Watch. If you find the secret brothel, you are authorised to use the King's Own for the final assaults.

Ahariusus, Chief King's Counsellor

Dearest Venko,

Have you found that book yet? It needs to be found to make sure I cannot be stopped. Also, I am going to have to sacrifice Lord Delvinsta. He tried to sneak into Sepharvaun through a window and went mad. These lords and nobles need to remember to enter only through the front door.

Sharissa



Dearest Khonsirdais,

Captain Ishachus is cleaning out some of the brothels in the Desert as I had hoped. This should flush out Semiramas, whom, as you know, has stolen The Book of Zandru's Omens: The Feaster from the Stars. I need that book to make sure Sharissa does not use the Thing That Lurks to hold the city hostage in her own bid for power or to control the king or the dynasty. I have directed Captain Ishachus to look for Sepharvaun, but of course he will never find it - but if he does, I will destroy him. He must not find out my involvement in that affair, as well you know. Regardless, I must have that book so that I can put the Thing That Lurks back to rest if I need to. You need to familiarise yourself with the book as well. The more of us to read it at once, the more successful the spell will be.

Lady Klia,

Lord High Inquisitor of Zamora

Kimma,

I need you to acquire a highborn lady who will be attending Venko's Hall tonight. She will be watched over by the Lavagus family, but I want her at my home tonight. You will be paid in a similar manner and in similar amounts as you have in the past for these acquisitions. Stop by Sepharvaun and I will assign some of the rougher elements staying here if you feel you need some muscle. Show this note to the butler and he will assign the personnel to you. Mention nothing of this to Sharissa.

Lord Artanes

Jasper,

Take whatever steed is the most refreshed and head back to the place of my disgrace. Make sure that you erase any signs of our wrongdoing and ensure this deed will never be traced back to me. Travel our original path along the Yellow River and through the Yellow River Pass and make sure that no trail is left that can lead back to me. Be wary of the Bog Men, they become more brazen every day.

Lord Tragen.





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The Hyborian Age has many opportunities for adventure, the chance for fortunes to be made and legends to be forged. Of course they can equally lead to disgrace, slavery or death (or worse!), but to fear such a fate is not the stuff of heroes.

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The Scroll of Isothemenes: Approached by a Messantian noblewoman you have to track down a map leading to a fabled book of magical lore. Between pirates, Picts and the supernatural beings guarding the treasure you will have their work cut out for them!

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