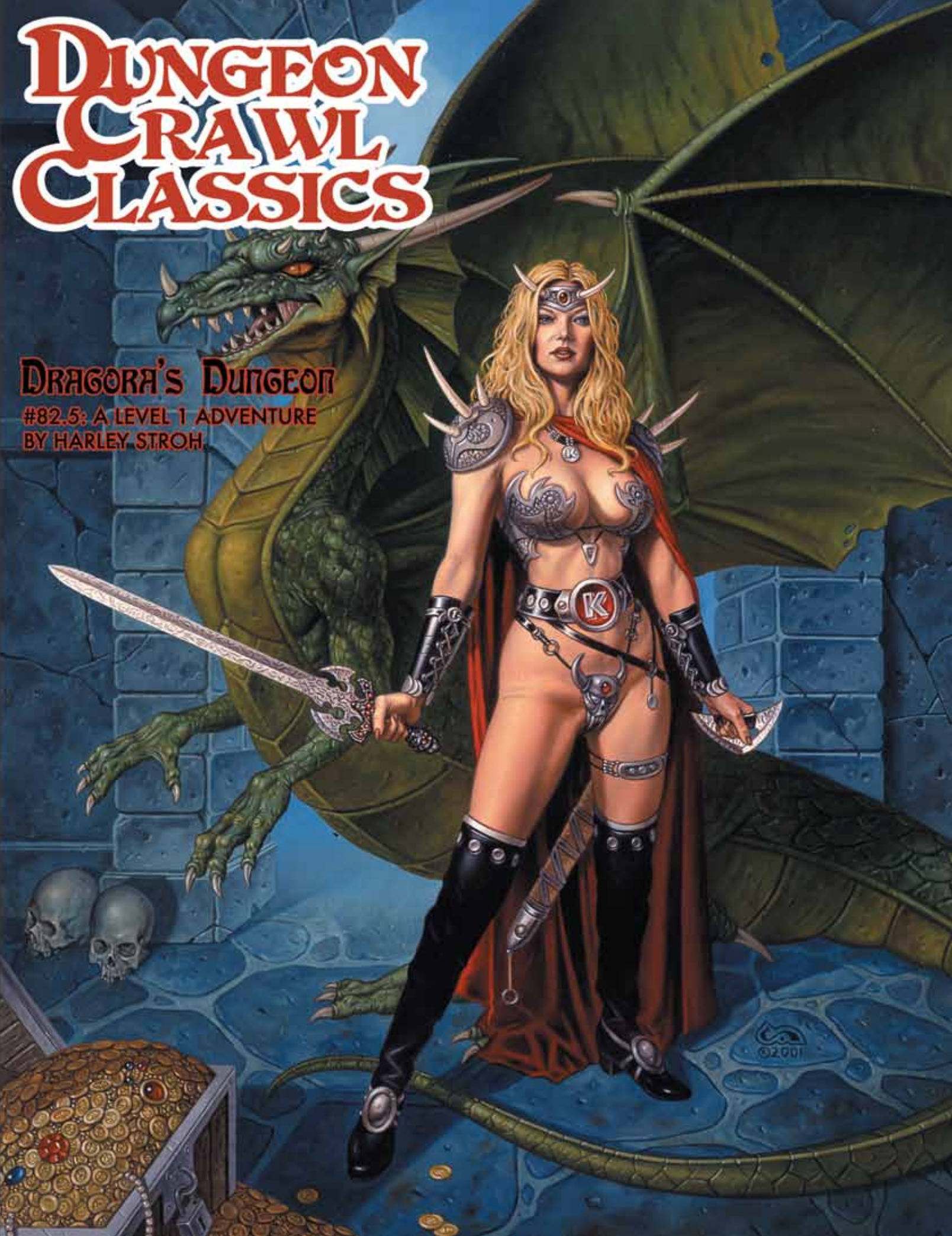


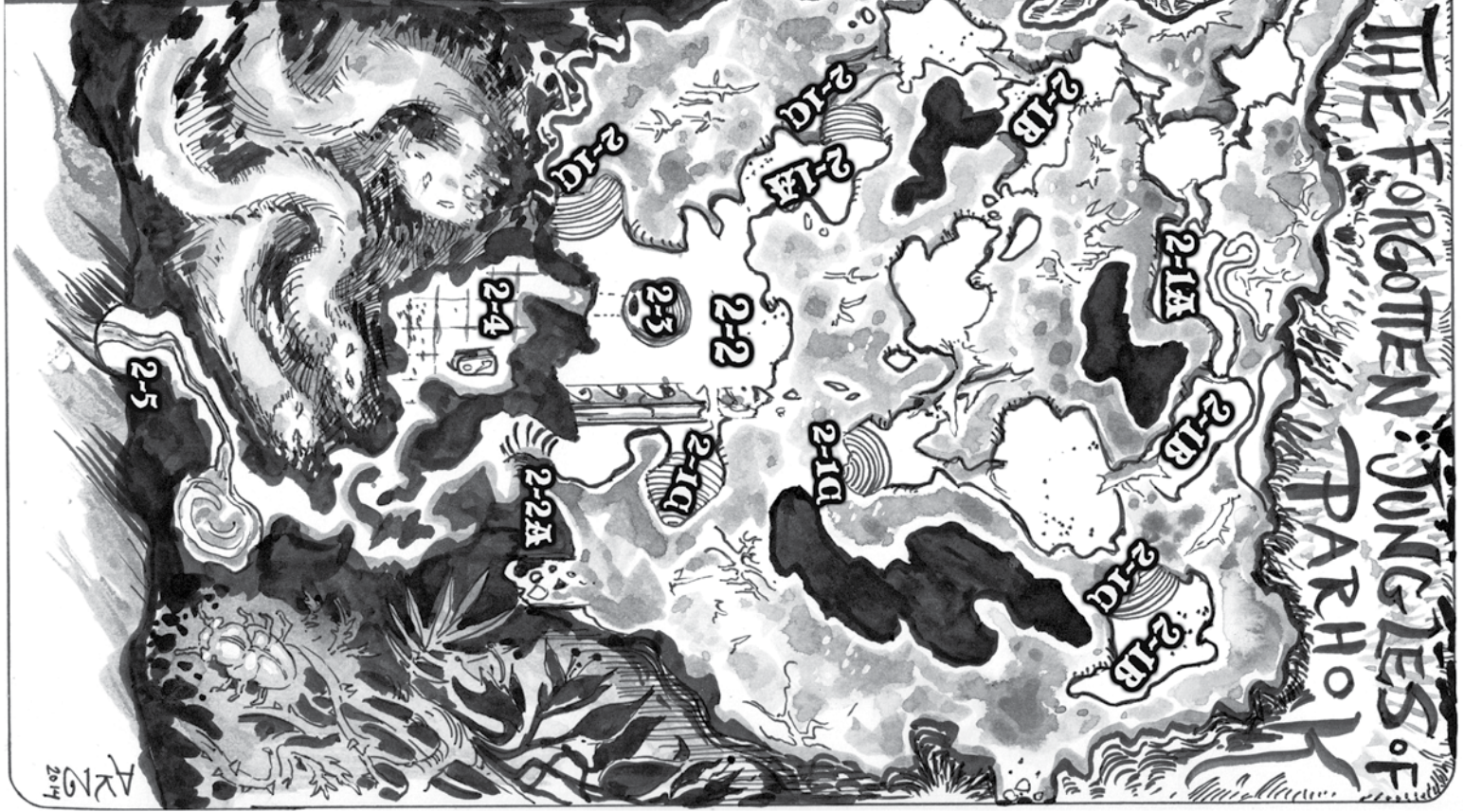
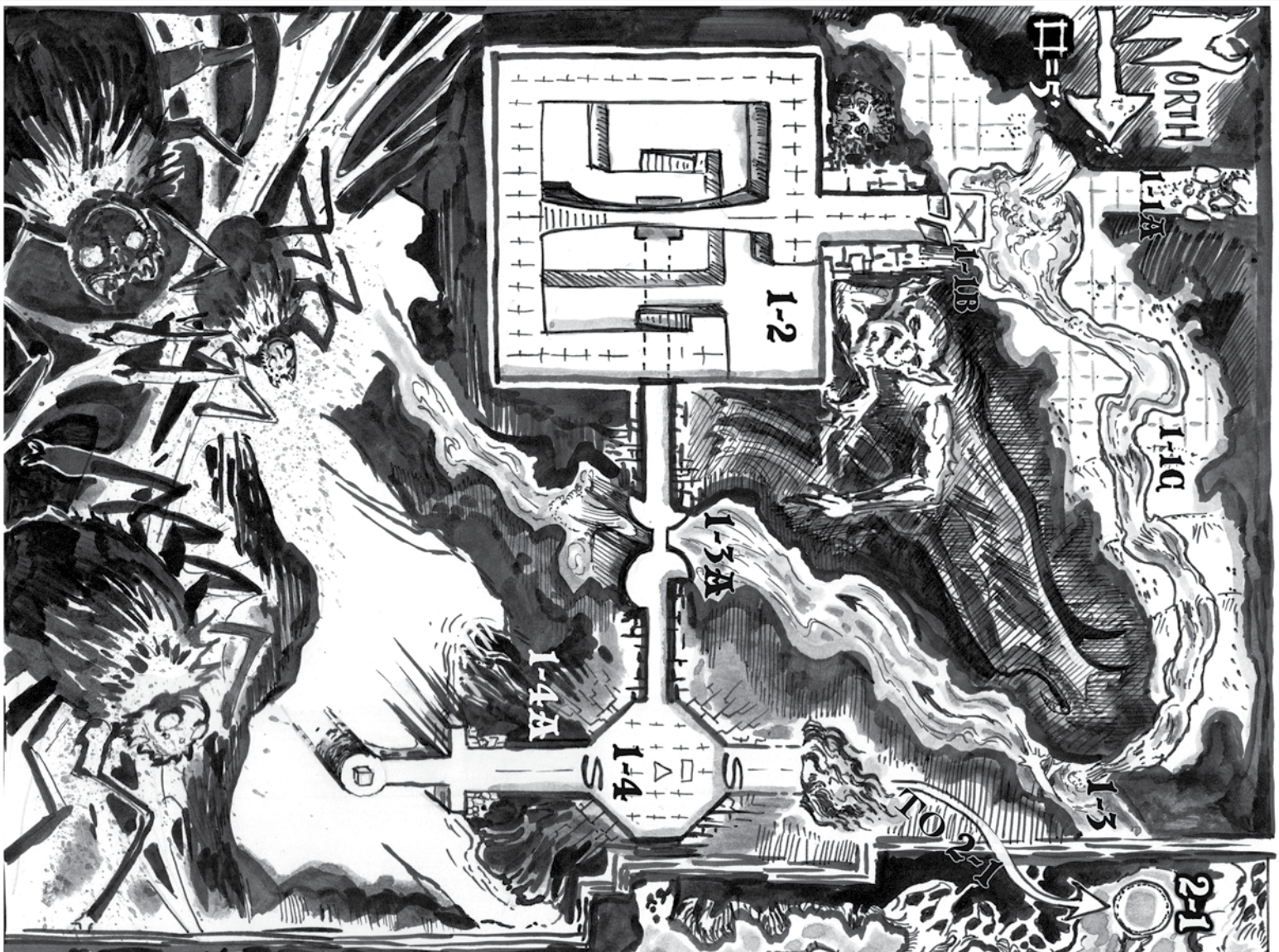
DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

DRAGONA'S DUNGEON

#82.5: A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
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DRAGORA'S DUNGEON

A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Legendary heroes are the result of epic adventures. While some explorers wile away their lives battling kobolds and goblins over grubby pieces of gold, heroes answer the call to high adventure. Many will try and many will fail, but those that survive will have earned the fated title of conqueror.

Dragora's Dungeon is designed for five 1st-level characters but can easily be scaled to accommodate higher-level PCs or larger adventuring companies. A high fantasy adventure that pits the heroes against a warrior-queen, her green dragon lover, and the remnants of an ancient civilization, Dragora's Dungeon is designed to challenge a well-balanced party of adventurers. Players accustomed to cleaving their way through any obstacle will be sorely tested, but careful play coupled with courage (and no small amount of luck) will surely prevail!

Caution: While Dragora's Dungeon is for low-level *characters*, it is not recommended for first-time judges or players. The adventure is designed to reward intelligent play, just as foolish choices must surely be punished. But for players and judges looking for a challenging, dynamic adventure, Dragora's Dungeon will not disappoint.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Many eons ago, the fabled sorcerer-kings of Parhok perished in a rain of eldritch fire. But legends hold that one tribe survived the apocalypse, fleeing with their slaves to a hidden city. There the greatest enchanters of all time slept away the centuries, and awaken in a future age as rulers of a ruined land.

Now, once more the forbidden spells of the Parhok threaten the Known Realms. A kingdom lies ensorcelled, and a royal family is ensnared by the forgotten dweomers of a long-dead race. When the best attempts of seers and diviners have failed, the call goes out for adventurers courageous enough to save a kingdom from certain doom.

Tracking an assassin back to its lair, the PCs discover a yawning chasm opening to seething mists. Plumbing the depths of the chasm, they uncover an arcane vault from a forgotten age. What appears at first to be merely the remnants of a lost civilization is swiftly revealed to be something altogether more sinister: A race of ape-men - once slaves to the enchanters of Parhok - has inherited their master's cruel legacy. Duped by a dragon pretending to be

the living incarnation of the ancient Dragon-God Baphotet Kor, the ape-men are massing for an assault on the surface lands. Can the heroes defeat an army of ape-men and their sinister commanders? Or will they be the latest to succumb to Dragora's Dungeon?

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Location	Type	Encounter
A-1	C	Zain-kin assassin
1-1	C	2 Zain-kin legionnaires
1-1a	T	Rubble trap
1-1b	T	Pit trap
1-2	C/T	Phammut the Imp Needledrake swarm 10 Skeletons Primordial ooze
1-4a	T/C	Crushing boulder trap 3 Bristleback spiders
2-1a	C	Sicuriju
2-1b	C	Vine horror
2-1c	T	Quicksand pit
2-2a	T	Hidden sinkhole
2-3	C	Rock viper swarm
2-4	C	3 Serpentine wraiths
2-5	C	5 Ghost drakes
3-1	C/P	Zain-kin hastati, legionnaires, and centurions
3-2	C/P	Domastrus, zain-kin warlord 3 Zain-kin legionaries
3-3	P	Variable
3-4	P	Variable
4-1	C	Mouringlar the Dragon Various zain-kin
4-2	C	2 Zain-kin legionnaires
4-3	C	2 Zain-kin assassins Pendulum scythes
4-4	C	Lady Dragora
Conclusion	C	Lady Dragora Mouringlar the Dragon



BACKGROUND



The unbridled ambition of mankind has always been its greatest strength, yet history has shown – time and again – those that hunger for power must ever end their lives in tragedy. And perhaps no race of man was more ambitious than the fabled enchanter's of Parhok.

The seers and sages cannot agree on the events that led to Parhok's demise. Some claim that the wizards fell to warring amongst themselves. Others hypothesize that, intoxicated with their god-like power, the enchanter's dared to reshape the world in their vision. Others point to ancient scrolls that hint that the enchanter's, seeking to discover the source of magic, tapped into a fount beyond even their control.

Regardless of the reasons, the outcome is not in dispute: torrents of fire and brimstone rained destruction down upon the golden towers and shining spires, and in a fortnight, the mighty empire of Parhok was no more.

But not all the enchanter's perished in the apocalypse. Legends hold that seven cabals sought refuge from the cataclysm. Their fates are all retold in apocryphal, dubious tales, but whether or not any of the magi survived, many certainly *sought* shelter from the rain of fire.

Chief among them was a cabal of enchanter's known as the Ordo Thraxus, a circle renowned for their love of slavery and devotion to the Dragon-God Baphotet Kor. The Ordo fled underground to wait out the apocalypse, hoping to return in the next eon as rulers over a ruined land. While the magi slept out the ages, their weakening physical shells would be cared for by their creations: a slave race of ape-like creatures called zain-kin.

Their plans worked all too well, and the ape-men displayed far more intelligence and cunning than their masters had ever intended. Once the magi slipped into the ageless sleep, their slaves rose up and cast down their masters. Unable to break the eldritch seals that trapped them beneath the earth, the ape-men settled into lives of isolation, ruling their prison in imitation of their past masters.

THE LOST CITY OF THE PARHOK

When the zain-kin cast down their cruel overseers, it brought an end to the great magics that sustained the city. In the chaos that followed, majestic towers collapsed, blood cascaded down the steps of the Temple of Baphotet Kor, and fires raged. When the slaughter had ended, the fabled enchanter's of Parhok had been laid low by their own slaves.

Some residual enchantments persisted, but they grew weaker by the century. The forgotten city's days were numbered, and the knowledge of this weighed upon the new zain-kin lords. In an attempt to save their kind, the lords revived the old ways, embracing the martial law once im-

posed on them by their slave masters, and taking up the worship of the Dragon-God with religious zeal. Ape-man warred against ape-man, competing for limited resources, and the zain-kin fractured into scores of tribes. Eventually 3 tribes rose to dominate the rest, but with no one powerful enough to quell all challengers, the zain-kin seemed doomed to battle themselves into extinction.

RETURN OF THE DRAGON

The zain-kin might have continued to live undisturbed, were it not for the legacy of the Parhok. Tales of the enchanter's might fired the imaginations of treasure seekers and sages across the Known World. While many sought to acquire the legacy of the Parhok, none were as persistent as Lady Dragora. Aided by her lover, the dragon Mouringlar, the warrior-princess uncovered ancient texts recording the flight of the Ordo, and their retreat beneath the earth. Retracing the steps of the Parhok, Lady Dragora discovered the location of the enchanter's redoubt and dismissed the eldritch seals that had stood undisturbed since before recorded history.

The shattering of the seals released a series of arcane spells intended to herald Parhok's return. The land heaved and trembled, lightning rained down from the heavens, and the earth was rent asunder. A mighty, seething chasm was torn open, and an army of zain-kin emerged.

Exiled from her homeland, the villainous Dragora sought out the lost city of the Parhok. Joined by the dragon Mouringlar, her investigations brought her to a chasm hidden deep in heart of an ancient wood. Together, Dragora and Mouringlar explored the depths of the chasm, and then passed through the ancient portal, arriving in the city of Parhok.

The zain-kin dismissed the arrival of Dragora, her appearance resembling their stories of ancient Parhok slave masters. But when the ape-men saw the dragon that accompanied the warrior-princess, they fell to their knees in abject worship: Baphotet Kor, the god of monsters from out of time, was made manifest before them.

The zain-kin stood in the presence of a god.

United under Mouringlar's leadership (secretly directed by Dragora), the zain-kin have begun rebuilding their ancient city. Once more the ancient wyrmportals crackle with eldritch flames, permitting raids upon the surface lands. The three great tribes, having warred for so long, laid down their blood vendettas, and instead took up the banner of Baphotet Kor.

Of course, not all is as it seems. While each of the three zain-kin lords pay lip service to Mouringlar, only two of the tribes truly believe that the young dragon is the divine avatar of the Parhok's god. And even those that do believe cannot help but wonder at the wisdom of embracing a god worshiped by their former slave masters. The zain-kin are a proud, savage race, and the slightest upset would be enough to return them to bloody, internecine warfare.

PLAYER BEGINNING



The adventure begins at night, with the PCs together in an inn. The beginning can be altered to accommodate another location, if the judge desires.

The inn is eerily quiet. Even the flickering rushlights seem subdued, as if deadened by a fell enchantment. Your heads nod and droop, and the taste of copper is thick on your tongue.

A spell has fallen over the inn, enchanting all within. While the rest of the place has fallen prey to the enchanted slumber, the PCs have a chance at resisting the dread spell. Each PC must succeed in a DC 10 Will save, or will have a -4 penalty to initiative during the encounter (due to drowsiness) and must make a DC 5 Will save to take any action each round. If any PC fails the save to take actions three times in a row, he falls into a deep slumber and can only be awakened by a minute's worth of vigorous shaking (or similar methods).

If any PCs remain awake, read or paraphrase the following:

From beneath your door, you hear a soft scratching, like daggers drawn against the floor.

The beast outside the door is a zain-kin assassin, a hulking, silver-backed man-ape sent to slay those staying at the inn. The zain-kin carries a bronze censor, the source of the wicked spell that has enchanted the castle, and has a short sword slung over its back. If it succeeds in its task, other zain-kin will be sent to loot the inn of food and drink, and its inhabitants of weapons or treasure, all to bring much-needed glory to House Tyrax (see page 13).

The zain-kin tries the door; if it is locked or barred, the beast breaks the door down in 1d4 rounds. The zain-kin is heedless of the noise, mistakenly believing that the entire inn is ensnared in the eldritch spell. Unless the PCs give themselves away, they surprise the zain-kin.

The ape-man fights with deadly skill and speed. If it hits an opponent during combat, it gains an automatic free second attack with its short sword against the same opponent. If the PCs succeed in causing the assassin 10 hp or more damage, it flees through the window, dropping down to the ground and retreating back to the rift.

Zain-kin master assassin: Init +4; Atk short sword +3 melee (1d6+3); AC 14; HD 4d8+4; hp 30; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, free attack following successful attack; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

THE INVESTIGATION

Once the zain-kin has been defeated, the PCs are free to investigate the rest of the inn. Most of the sleeping folk can be awakened, but they react with fear when told of what has occurred - additional help is not forthcoming unless the judge requires replacement PCs. Worse, the characters

For her part, Dragora is not above using the ape-men as an army against those that would thwart her ambitions. But she realizes that the true value of her discovery is the Parhok ruins. She (rightly) believes that if she can tap into just a shard of the enchanters' legendary arcane power, it will rival the might of any army in the world. She races to learn the rituals of the forgotten people, knowing that it is only a matter of time before other adventurers discover the lost city. She has mastered the first of the enchantments (the magical slumber that has overtaken the PCs' realm), but this is only the weakest of the fabled spells.

Like those of the Parhok enchanters before her, Dragora's hunger for power drives her on. Will the PCs put an end to her schemes like the gods did to the sorcerer-kings of Parhok? Or will Dragora emerge as the last enchantress, ruling the Known World by the awful dweomers of the Parhok?



learn rumors of a similar eldritch slumber trapping those of royal blood – it is whispered that the king and all his court have succumbed to a sleep from which they cannot be awakened. It falls to the PCs to track the assassin back to its lair and lift the curse.

Examining the Body: If the PCs succeeded in slaying the zain-kin, their first order of business is likely examining the body. The enormous man-ape dwarfs most humanoid; stretched out, it is over 7 feet in height, weighing as much as 3 grown men. It wore a shirt of armor composed of crude iron links sewn into a leather jerkin. The leather appears to be from some sort of cave lizard. The sword was forged of the same low-grade iron; its haft wrapped in braided dark

elf hair. The weapon has seen battle before and has multiple nicks and scars.

The censor that it carried still stinks from the fumes of the arcane herbs used to power the enchanted slumber. An apothecary, alchemist, or wizard can make a DC 10 Intelligence check to recognize that the eldritch sleep resembles a legendary enchantment of the sorcerer kings of Parhok. The ancient Parhok enchantments were lost eons ago when their empire was destroyed. Many have searched in vain for the lost civilization, in the hopes of acquiring just a sliver of its formidable might. A wizard or elf can use the censor and the ash within it as a means to research the spell *sleep*, but neither is itself magical.

ENCOUNTER AREA 1: TREK TO THE RIFT



f the characters leave quickly, tracking the assassin back to the rift is easily accomplished. With every hour they wait, though, the difficulty increases: 1-3 hours requires a DC 5 Intelligence check, 3-6 hours a DC 10 Intelligence check, 6-9 hours is DC 15, 9-12 hours is DC 20, and after 12 hours the trail is lost. Remember that a character without an appropriate occupation uses a d10 to make this check. Even if the assassin is slain in the first encounter, the PCs may well be able to back-trail it from when he came to the inn.

After a four-day journey through ancient woods and rocky badlands, the tracks end in a wide clearing. The judge may feel free to have the PCs encounter small villages that have fallen prey to the zain-kin, their folk lying dead, and their foodstuffs and treasures looted.

At last your hunt has come to an end: The thick forest parts to reveal a broad clearing, split by a gaping ravine. Broken flagstones, crumbling walls, and fallen pillars litter the clearing – at one time this must have been a grand plaza, but now all is given over to ruin.

As the PCs step onto the plaza, any PC who succeeds in a secret Luck check immediately feels as if they are being watched. A wizard or elf who succeeds in this check will suspect, correctly, that the party is being scryed upon. Dragora is watching the PCs through the scrying pool (see area 4-3), and immediately dispatches a pair of zain-kin to eliminate the PCs (see area 1-1).

A casual examination of the ravine reveals that it was torn open by an earthquake in the last 2 months. The walls are vertical (DC 15 Strength check to climb), and the ravine seethes with dense mists, obscuring its depth (500 feet). The mists sting the eyes and burn the lungs, but otherwise present no threat to PCs.

Descending into the rift will most likely require a series of belays, with the PCs roping themselves off as their companions rappel down to the next ledge.

AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – The Upper Works: *A thundering waterfall punctures the side of the chasm, tumbling down into the swirling mists. The tumbling water crashes atop a pair of matching portals set into the wall of the chasm.*

Once there was a worked-stone corridor here, but when the chasm was torn open, the corridor was broken in two.

Characters rappelling down the walls of the chasm can easily reach one of the portals, but reaching the opposite side is a challenge, made more difficult due to the crashing waterfall. With a DC 10 Agility check, a PC can swing to the far wall, but seizing a handhold and hanging on requires a DC 12 Strength check.

As the first PCs gain the ledge, a pair of Dragora's zain-kin reaches the lip of the chasm. The zain-kin cut PCs' ropes, and then hurl rocks from above. Due to the mists, the zain-kin have only a slim chance of hitting a PC (these attacks are made with a -8 attack modifier). Each rock does 1d12 points of damage and forces the character to make a DC 15 Fort save or be knocked free from the rope. Those failing the check must succeed on a DC 10 Ref save or plummet the remaining 30 feet to the chasm's floor below, taking 3d6 points of falling damage. (Characters that are explicitly tied in can't be knocked free.)

The zain-kin throw a total of 20 stones before withdrawing from the lip of the chasm. The zain-kin retire to the woods to watch the chasm, waiting out any PCs that emerge from the mists.

Zain-kin legionnaires (2): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+2) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Each legionnaire is equipped with scale mail, a shield, a short sword, and 3 javelins.



Area 1-1A – Rubble and Ruin: *The dark corridor is lined with worked stones, each engraved with scores of runes inset with gold. The corridor ends abruptly before a pile of boulders and debris.*

This corridor collapsed when the chasm was opened. The rubble is unstable at best, and any activity (such as searching) that disturbs the pile triggers a second collapse. A dwarf, miner, or similar character examining the rubble easily notes the likelihood of collapse. Others may do so with a DC 10 Intelligence check. Characters may intentionally cause a collapse from afar, making the area safe to search, but otherwise any character caught in the collapsing rubble takes 2d6 damage (DC 10 Ref save for half), and a natural “6” on either die indicates that the character is pinned until a DC 20 Strength check succeeds. A pinned character takes 1 point of temporary Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage for every three rounds he or she is pinned.

Characters successfully searching the rubble (DC 15 Intelligence check) discover a broken flagstone set into the floor. Beneath the flagstone is a hidden space containing a small leather pouch and a blackened, mummified hand. The hand is locked around a radiant sapphire set within a star-shaped amulet, the point of each arm cast in the shape of a rampant dragon. This amulet is the star-key used to open the portal in area 1-4. Inside the pouch are 40 ancient silver coins.

The mummified hand once belonged to a thief, and now

serves as a Parhok ward against looters. The character that removes the star-key is cursed with avarice; any time the PC comes across coins or gems, he or she is struck by insatiable greed (DC 10 Will save to resist; the curse ends if the character makes 5 successful saves in a row). After the PCs leave the corridor, the mummified hand magically appears in the cursed character’s backpack. The hand continues to follow the PC as long as the curse is in effect. No matter how it might be destroyed, it reappears in amid the PC’s gear 1d4 hours later.

Area 1-1B – Shattered Gates of Parhok: *A portal is set into the chasm wall, partially obscured by the crashing waterfall. A pair of bronze gates stands partially open. Each of the gates is emblazoned with a stylized dragon. Exposed beneath the platform is a mechanism composed of rusted black gears, a massive fly-wheel, and 8 long, rusted glaives.*

Obviously, the gates were once trapped. Much of the mechanism is frozen with rust, but even in its ruined state, the trap presents a peril to brash adventurers.

Originally the trap dropped a victim into a pit, and then slashed the victim with scything blades. Now that the blades are rusted in place, the victim simply falls, plummeting 30 feet to the base of the chasm, taking 3d6 damage. The pit can be detected by a thief with a DC 5 Find traps check, and disarmed with a DC 10 Disable traps check.

Area 1-1C – Chasm Floor: *The base of the chasm is a chaotic maze of enormous boulders, the deafening crash of water and seething mist. The rocks are slick with black slime, and the air is cold and wet, chilling you to the bone.*

There is little to discover here. Amid the boulders are a few pieces of broken tile and worked stone (fallen from the corridor above). The water leaves the ravine via a narrow fissure in the rock.

Exceedingly courageous PCs can follow the river’s course, though this is perilous at best. Descending safely along the seam requires a DC 15 Agility or Climb sheer surfaces check; characters failing the check fall 20 feet down to a rocky slope (2d6 falling damage) before plunging into an underground river. Characters taking basic precautions (such as roping themselves together) improve their chances considerably, aiding another as they descend the dangerous slope.

Even if they survive the descent, navigating the river requires creativity on the part of the PCs; failed Strength checks can quickly prove deadly in the frigid, black waters of the underdeep (see area 1-3).

Area 1-2 – Eldritch Wizardry: *As you inch down the corridor, a sickeningly sweet stench assaults your senses, accompanied with a soft, ceaseless chanting. The floor of the corridor narrows into a slender pathway that arches over a fell laboratory of some sort. Broken into 3 tiers, each level of the chamber is home to a chaotic jumble of arcane experiments and the like. At the very base of the inverted ziggurat is a portal that glints softly in the gloom.*

The chamber was once a way station for apprentices and novitiates ferrying dangerous spell components for their arcane masters. When the rain of fire sealed the city away from the surface world, the chamber fell into disuse and neglect. The way station's keeper, an aging, wicked imp by the name of Phammut, has languished here in boredom for untold centuries. The PCs are the first entertainment to come along in memory (recent or otherwise), and Phammut plans to make the very best of this opportunity.

The chamber is divided into three tiers. Each tier was once home to untold number of arcane secrets, but time has done away with most and Phammut has destroyed the rest.

Tactics: Phammut isn't looking to kill the PCs (at least not right away). Rather, he wants to see them suffer. As the PCs make their way down through the tiers, Phammut launches a series of attacks to waylay and distract the heroes.

- **Sphere of Needledrakes:** Suspended from the ceiling, and hidden amid the dozens of hanging nets, globes and icons, is a large sphere containing a swarm of tiny dragons called *needledrakes*. As PCs pass over the arched pathway, Phammut drops the sphere from above, sending it crashing down onto the lead 2 PCs (DC 12 Ref save or take 1d3 damage and be knocked prone), releasing the swarm. Characters who fail the first save must make a DC 15 Ref save or plummet down into the 3rd tier. (This causes no falling damage, but see Into the Fire below for the potentially lethal consequences of taking the plunge.)
- **Dance of Bones:** While the PCs are distracted with the needledrake swarm, skeletons rise from their tiers, lumbering to the attack. (See the level descriptions for each tier's total number of skeletons.)
- **...Into the Fire:** PCs leaping the tiers, landing directly before the glinting portal, are in for a nasty surprise. The lowest level of the ziggurat (the sole escape from the chamber) is home to a primordial ooze. The enormous ooze occupies the entire level, and cannot climb out of its level.

Phammut is content to watch the action unfold, not partaking in the combat. Alert PCs will hear maniacal giggling throughout the encounter. Phammut remains invisible and follows the party to area 1-3a, where the devil plays its last trick on the PCs.

Investigating the Way Station: Hidden amid piles of ruined crates, broken casks, and rotting sacks, the tiers' contents offer clues and hints as to the nature of the Parhok enchanters and their forbidden city. PCs taking the time to sift through the detritus discover the following:

Tier One: The mummified body of an enormous ape; 7 human brains in cracked casks; 1 *potion of healing* (restores 1 HD); 8 un-dead skeletons.

Tier Two: 3 coffers containing ruined parchment; 2 casks of hardened ink; a narrow wooden box holding 1 dozen writing quills; 4 un-dead skeletons.

Tier Three: The sole occupant of this level is the primordial ooze.

Escaping the Ziggurat: If PCs succeed in defeating the ooze, they can climb through the disintegrating mess to pull the brass portal open. Even in death, the ooze poses a danger. PCs must stand in the collapsed jelly to pull the door open, succeeding in a DC 5 Fort save each round, or taking 1d3 points of acid damage. Opening the portal requires a DC 20 Strength check.

Phammut the Imp: Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1) or tail sting +0 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 17; HD 2d6; hp 7; MV 10' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility, poison, immunity to fire-based attacks, half damage from non-magical attacks; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5; AL C.

Phammut is able to become invisible at will. If the imp makes a successful attack, he becomes visible until his next initiative. His poison tail sting causes grogginess (DC 12 Fort save or 1d3 temporary Personality and 1d3 temporary damage each round for 1d3 rounds). While the poison is not deadly, if either hit points or Personality drop to 0, the victim falls into a comatose slumber.

Needledrake swarm: Init +3; Atk swarming bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 5d10; hp 25; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20 special; SP bite all within 20' x 20' area, immunity to fear effects, half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.

Needledrakes are tiny silver-green flying reptiles, similar to pterodactyls, with sharp, needle-like teeth.

Skeletons (12): Init -2; Atk claw +0 melee (1d3); AC 9; HD 1d3; hp 2 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, death throes; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

These skeletons are ancient, dry, and dusty. When defeated, a skeleton bursts into a cloud of bone fragments and bone dust. Any character within 5' must succeed in a DC 5 Fort save or lose their next action due to coughing and choking.

Primordial Ooze: Init always last; Atk pseudopod +3 melee (1d3 plus paralysis); AC 8; HD 5d10; hp 25; MV 0'; Act 3d20; SP paralysis, engulf, only 1 attack against each target; SV Fort +10; Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.

The primordial ooze causes paralysis with a successful attack (DC 10 Fort save negates), or even contact with bare flesh. Paralysis lasts 1d3 minutes, and during that time the ooze can automatically engulf a target, causing 1d6 damage each round until either the target or the ooze is dead. The ooze can only target a character with a single pseudopod each round; if there are not enough targets in its tier, its extra actions are wasted.

Area 1-3 – Across the Black River: *Through the narrow crevice you can spy a raging black river that churns its way into the darkness. A pair of bleached tree trunks obscures the way.*

Parties finding their way to the Black River have a difficult road ahead of them. Characters attempting to swim in the Black River must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check every

round spent in the water or take 1d3 points of damage from the crashing waves. The river carries the PCs downstream at a rate of 20' per round, taking 5 rounds to reach area 1-3a.

Characters can also dislodge the tree trunks, and cling to them as they race down through the darkness. Clinging to one of the floating trunks grants a bonus of +1d on the dice chain to the PCs' Strength checks to swim.

Area 1-3a – The Devil & the Ford: *The sound of crashing water echoes through the hall, and the walls are slick with condensation. Ahead, the corridor opens onto a dark, raging river. A narrow stone pathway arches over the river.*

Beneath the arched path, the river tumbles down in a 30-foot waterfall, crashing into a pool below. If Phammut the Imp survived the encounter in area 1-2, it has followed the party here. Still invisible, Phammut waits for the last PC to begin crossing the ford before pushing the unlucky soul off the arch and over the falls. The PC shoved by the imp must succeed on a DC 10 Ref save or plummet 40 feet down to the water below, taking 2d6 points of falling damage (which is reduced due to landing in the pool).

The imp immediately becomes visible, and, still cackling maniacally, wings away back to the ziggurat. As soon as Phammut is out of sight of the party, he becomes invisible and flies back to the ford, hoping that PCs might still be lingering on the arch. If so, he repeats his trick, then flies off for good.

Characters swimming down river from area 1-3 must make DC 15 Agility checks to seize the stone supports before being swept over the falls. If a PC fails the check, the current rips him away from safety, pitching him over the 30-foot falls, for 1d6 points of falling damage.

Characters finding themselves in the pool at the base of falls must tread water to stay afloat, but otherwise rescue is not difficult. The current is slowed here where the river is wider. Characters in armor or laden with equipment may be required to make DC 5 Strength checks to avoid sinking.

Characters taking the time to search the bottom of the pool are rewarded for their thoroughness. Hidden beneath the muck is skeletal corpse chained to a silver coffer (worth 50 gp) loaded down with rocks.

Area 1-4 – Wyrmportal: *The simple, octagonal chamber is lit by a large stone globe set in the peak of the arched ceiling. Across the chamber is a broad stone altar, and in center of the chamber is a low, pyramid-like structure. The air is deathly still, and a thick coat of dust covers the rough stone floor.*

This chamber is home to the portal permitting passage from the upper works to the forgotten city of the Parhok.

Characters inspecting the altar discover a depression in the shape of a 5-pointed star, with each point of the star cut in the shape of a rampant dragon. The depression matches the star-key in area 1-1a. A thief succeeding in a DC 10 Find traps check discovers a mechanism concealed beneath the altar, and a DC 15 Intelligence check reveals the chamber's twin secret doors.

The proper way to open the portal is to place the star-key in the slot. Alternately, the PCs can trigger the mechanism by succeeding on a DC 20 Open locks check. Finally, if the PCs discovered the chamber's secret doors, they can be pried open with a DC 25 Strength check.

However the PCs manage to open the secret doors, read or paraphrase the following:

A grating sound echoes through the chamber, and dust begins to sift down from the ceiling. Two of the chamber's eight walls fall away. To one side is a glimmering portal wreathed in blue flames. To the other side is a narrow footbridge arching out into darkness. At the end of the bridge you can spy a glinting silver coffer.

Peering through the portal, the PCs see a dimly lit, otherworldly swamp, shrouded by mists. Heroes venturing through the portal vanish, reappearing in area 2-1.

For characters unlucky enough to investigate the coffer, see area 1-4a.

Area 1-4a – With Baited Death: *A narrow bridge arches over a vast cavern, terminating at a narrow pillar rising from the gloom below. Seated atop the pillar is a simple silver coffer, glinting in the darkness. Each corner of the coffer appears to have a locking mechanism of some sort.*

The silver coffer is nothing more than bait devised to lure explorers to their doom. The coffer is empty, and is merely silver plating over an otherwise worthless wooden coffer. A dwarf automatically notes that the corridor and the bridge angle downward, and that center of both are slightly concave – other characters can notice the same with a DC 10 Intelligence check, if they examine the bridge.

Characters venturing out onto the pillar trigger a pressure plate (DC 15 Find trap to detect, and DC 20 Disarm trap to disarm), setting into motion a deadly series of events. The first round, the enormous stone globe drops from the ceiling of area 1-4, striking the pyramid and sending the 9-foot globe shooting down the corridor towards area 1-4a. At the start of the second round, the globe rolls out onto the bridge, causing 3d6 crushing damage to anyone still in its path (DC 10 Ref save for half). Characters standing to either side of the ledge are safe, and momentarily so are any PCs hanging from the bridge. As the globe continues on its course, the bridge collapses under the weight. The globe continues along its sinking trajectory, and demolishes the top 15 feet of the pillar, before shooting off into darkness.

Anyone clinging to the bridge or pillar plummets down into the darkness, only to be caught 50 feet below in an enormous spider web (taking no damage). The wreckage from the bridge and pillar rain down all around, also caught in the bouncing webs, while the globe tears through the thick webs, crashing to the base of the chamber, some 200 feet below.

A trio of ancient bristleback spiders lairs in the webs. They scurry down the sticky strands, hoping to make quick meals of those trapped in the webs. The giant spiders lack

venom, but their massive fangs are more than adequate to rip apart characters trapped in their domain.

The webs stretch across the entire chamber and are difficult to move across, requiring a successful DC 10 Agility check to move at half normal speed (a check result of 20+ allows a character to move at full normal speed). The webs are highly flammable, and once ignited, the flames radiate out at the rate of 5' per round in every direction. Characters so foolish as to ignite the area at their feet must succeed in the Agility check described above, or they fall to their doom.

There is little in the way of treasure here, although a trio of corpses hangs from the ceiling of the chamber. Investigating the bundled corpses is a difficult climb, requiring three DC 15 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces checks. Upon cutting open the webbed bundle the PCs discover the desiccated and mummified corpses of long-dead adventurers. A

thorough examination of the corpses reveals a pouch containing 20 gp, a *potion of healing* in a steel flask (which heals 1 HD damage), and a single large sapphire (worth 75 gp).

Similarly, three DC 15 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces checks can bring the fallen characters from the webs back to area 1-4, once they successfully deal with the webs and spiders.

Bristleback spiders (3): Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d7); AC 12; HD 3d6; hp 11 each; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision 60', bristles; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

These man-sized spiders are covered with hairy black bristles. When injured, the spiders fire a cloud of stinging hairs. Those within 5' must succeed in a DC 10 Ref save or take a -4 penalty to all attack rolls for the next 1d5 rounds due to partial blindness and irritation.

ENCOUNTER AREA 2: THE FORGOTTEN JUNGLES OF PARHOK



BCs teleporting from the wyrmportal in area 1-4 appear at area 2-1. The sole escape from the forgotten jungles is through the stone monument of Baphotet Kor in area 2-5.

The Forgotten Jungles were once farmlands, where the Parhok's slaves toiled day in and day out. Enchanted for enhanced fertility, the farmlands were arcane marvels where fruit and vegetables blossomed and reached maturity in mere day.

Following the fall of the city and the collapse of key caverns, the gardens have languished in disrepair. Aqueducts were quickly overrun, standing water filled much of the caverns, and pallid vines, deadly mushrooms, and black rot overtook the crops.

Now the caverns are a sinister mockery of their previous incarnation. A swampy jungle, constantly wreathed in fetid mists and the overbearing stench of decay, the caverns offer death and danger at every turn.

The caverns' artificial sun still shines overhead, but the light is muted by the thick mists. Explorers climbing more than 40 feet above the jungle floor find that the light shines as brightly as surface sunlight, but at the water level the lighting is little better than a perpetual dusk.

The bogs range from 7 to 10 feet in depth (1d4+6).

Area 2-1 – The Sunken Portal: *You step through the portal into knee high tepid water. Through the thick mists you can spy a jungle of pale, lifeless trees, hung with white vines and black moss. The stench of rot is thick in the moist air. Above, you see a rocky cavern wall rising towards a muted light.*

The PCs appear on a raised platform, but even the platform has been overtaken by the rising waters. Explorers will need to leap to the closest fallen tree (DC 10 Strength or

Agility check) or swim through the brackish waters.

Submerged beneath the water is a depression that matches the five-headed dragon star that activated the portal in area 1-4. However, without a ruby star-key, there is no returning through the portal.

Area 2-1a – Death's Coil: These areas are inhabited by a *sicuriyu* (or shimmering boa), a sinuous 20-foot long boa snake, with scintillating, shimmering scales. The creature can target a victim with a mesmerizing combination of shimmering scales and movements, causing the target to refrain from any action for 1d6+2 rounds unless a DC 12 Will save succeeds. Even if the save succeeds, the victim is dazed, taking a penalty of -1d on the dice chain to all rolls for 1 round. If the creature hits with its bite attack, it can attempt to swallow a victim whole in the next round (DC 15 Strength check resists; if the result is 20+, the target is freed and the serpent must make another successful attack to try again). A swallowed victim takes 1d5 damage each round, and any successful attacks against the *sicuriyu* also deal half damage to the swallowed creature. The creature has a low, but malignant, intelligence.

If possible, the *sicuriyu* attempts to mesmerize a lone PC before devouring him. If outmatched, the *sicuriyu* retreats towards one of the vine horrors (see area 2-1b below).

Sicuriyu: Init +5; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5); AC 17; HD 4d8; hp 16 each; MV 30' or climb 30' or swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP mesmerize, swallow whole; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +2; AL C.

In one of these areas, a simple shrine is carved into one of the dead trees littering the pallid jungle. The base of the tree has been carved so that it appears a snake is wrapped around the tree. The snake's "head" is a branch, cunningly carved to resemble a snake's fanged maw. Inside the maw are 20 sp and a single small diamond (worth 100 gp). When



each area marked 2-1a is searched, roll a secret Luck check for the luckiest of the PCs. As soon as the check succeeds, the shrine is found. No matter how many shimmering boas are encountered, this treasure can only be discovered once.

Area 2-1b- Vine Horror: Vine horrors lurk in these areas amid the litter of dead trees. The horror appears as a mass of ropey vines, taking on a vaguely humanoid form. It can make an initial attack on all creatures within 10 feet of it, using its vines, but thereafter focuses its attacks on the weakest of the characters. A vine horror is strong enough to hold a character in place, unless the character breaks free with a DC 10 Strength check (warriors and dwarves may add their Deed Die to this check), but are not strong enough to do automatic damage.

Vine horrors are never impeded by vegetation, passing through the thickest of foliage as though it were not there. If pressed in battle, the vine horror vanishes beneath the murky waters, losing pursuers amid a maze of fallen trees and normal vines. It can drag a grasped character with it if that character fails a DC 7 Strength check as the horror flees. Characters dragged away suffer 1d3 damage and may run the risk of drowning.

Vine horrors: Init +3; Atk ropey vine +1 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 11 each; MV 30' or climb 30' or swim 30'; Act 2d20; SP attack all characters within 10' on first action, grasp, drag away, pass through vegetation; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.

Area 2-1c - Quicksand Pit: The areas marked 2-1c are quicksand pits. Though appearing as somewhat solid land, PCs entering these areas must succeed in DC 10 Ref saves or be dragged down 1d5 feet into the quicksand. A new save is required each round, and the DC to escape is increased by the number of feet a PC is dragged downward, until the character is completely submerged and begins to

drown. Those who might throw a rope or use a pole must succeed on a Strength check (DC 10 + the number of feet a character is submerged), but multiple characters can aid such an attempt.

The monsters in the caverns are accustomed to feeding off creatures trapped in the pits, for every round a character is caught in a pit, there is a cumulative 1-in-12 chance that the commotion draws the attention of either a sicuriju or a vine horror (equal chances for either).

Area 2-2 - Fractured Aqueduct: *A lone isle rises out of the muck and mire, a welcome refuge from the seemingly endless swamp. Through the dying marsh grasses, vines and the rotting stumps of downed trees, you can spy what looks like the ruined structure of an ancient aqueduct jutting out of the cavern wall.*

A narrow sinkhole is hidden by the dense grasses part way up the slope. Characters entering the squares risk plummeting 20 feet down to area 2-3 below.

A ruined aqueduct stands at the top of the isle. A constant flow of water pours from the cavern wall, crashing over a broken water wheel and spilling down into a rocky grotto. Descending the slick stones into the sunken cave requires a DC 10 Agility or Climb sheer surfaces check; explorers failing the check tumble down the rocky slope to the base of the grotto taking 1d6 falling damage.

Area 2-2a - Grotto: *A thin trickle of water splashes down the slick stones into a small cave below. Peering into the darkness you make out the back of the small cave, scarcely 3 paces deep.*

PCs taking the time to explore the grotto discover a small lair at the rear of the cave, where a pair of zain-kin was trapped in the caverns after the fall of the enchanters of Parhok. The ape-men lived out the remainder of the years as prisoners, fending off underdeep beasts and subsisting on bulbs, roots, and the occasional giant rat.

The pair's enormous skeletons rest at the back of the cave, beside a fire ring built of rough stones. Shards of broken clay pottery are scattered about the lair, but at the very back of the lair, where the cave narrows to only a foot or so in height, are a trio of intact clay pots. The first pot contains a handful of carefully harvested seeds. The second holds bowstring fashioned of woven sinew and 6 arrowheads. The last pot, the largest of the three, conceals a large bundle swaddled in ancient cloth that threatens to fall apart at a touch. Inside the cloth bundle is an emerald star-key (the key necessary to activate the portal atop the Fane of Baphotet Kor. Cast in the shape of a 5-pointed star, each point resembles a rampant dragonhead. Set in the center of the key is a glowing, faceted emerald (worth 150 gp, though PCs will be hard pressed to find a buyer for an amulet in the shape of an evil god).

A hidden sinkhole lies at the back of the cave. A character exploring this area who succeeds in a Luck check notes that the ground sags slightly. If the sinkhole collapses, characters affected must make a DC 15 Ref save or plunge down to area 2-3, taking 2d6 damage and falling prone. A character can climb back up with a DC 20 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces check.

Area 2-3 – Snake Pit: *The floor of the sinkhole is buried in two feet of black mud. The walls of the sinkhole are large, black stones riddled with scores of small holes. A narrow, muddy tunnel, set halfway up the sinkhole wall, offers means of escape.*

As indicated by the multitude of small holes, the sinkhole is home to a swarm of rock vipers. The snakes swarm from the walls, attacking any PC with the bad luck to fall into their lair. The swarm is able to attack any creature coming into contact with the walls of the sinkhole.

Characters reaching the tunnel can pull themselves to safety. The muddy tunnel is a tight fit, forcing all but halflings to succeed on a DC 15 Agility check to wiggle through to the other side. This can produce unexpectedly deadly results as the rock vipers continue to attack until every character has exited the sinkhole. The narrow tunnel leads to area 2-4.

Rock viper swarm: Init +5; Atk swarming bite +3 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 16; HD 8d6; hp 30; MV 30'; Act special; SP bite all within area 2-3, half damage from non-area attacks, poison (as viper, see DCC RPG rulebook, p. 446); SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; AL N.

Area 2-4 – Shrine of the Serpent: *A simple stone altar, encrusted with the gore of ancient sacrifices, dominates the small cave. An enormous serpent is curled about the shadowy base of the stone, and a peculiar wooden staff is laid across the head of the altar before a common copper basin. The air is unusually cold here, and the shadows persistent, as if resistant to light.*

Once a holy shrine sacred to rebellious zain-kin refusing to worship Baphotet Kor, this place has lost none of its potency in the centuries since the fall of the city. Even now, after centuries of disuse, the shrine (and its diabolic patron Serbok) wants only for pawns willing to work its sinister schemes.

The serpent curled about the base of the altar is only a mundane skeleton, its skin hanging from the bony ribs. The staff is cut from dark, polished wood, and carved in the shape of a flaring cobra. Both the snake's skin and the staff are potent magic items – if the PCs can win them from the altar's guardian.

The Altar: The altar is formed of a stone slab laid atop two smaller stone blocks. Inside the hammered copper basin is a handful of ancient coins (1d12 cp, 1d6 sp), stained with dried blood.

Coming within 10 feet of the altar causes the shadows surrounding the altar to rise up, in the form of 3 serpentine wraiths. The snakes' hoods flare with aggression, and their shadow-tongues test the air, nervously.

If the PCs make an offering of coins or blood at the altar, the snakes dissipate, returning back to the shadows from whence they came. If the PCs try to take either the staff or the skin without making an offering at the altar, the serpent wraiths attack.

Serpent Staff: The staff seated upon the altar is a +1 weapon whose bite can be commanded to inflict venom as a cobra three times per day with a successful strike (see DCC RPG rulebook, p. 446). It is made of dark wood, carved with the flared hood of a cobra, with two ruby chips for its eyes. This staff is Chaotic, and a Lawful character has a -1 penalty to Luck as long as the staff is borne.

Skin of the Malison: The partial snakeskin is composed of shimmering, scintillating scales and can be worn as a cloak. It shimmers in darkness or dim light, creating a soft glow that dimly illuminates an area up to 5' diameter around the wearer. When the wearer moves, the snakeskin makes a soft, slithering sound. It grants its wearer a +1 bonus to AC, the ability to speak the tongue of serpents at will, and the ability to teleport to a visible location within 30' once per day, with a successful DC 10 spell check. Every time the spell check to teleport fails, however, the wearer must make a DC 10 Will save or suffer minor corruption. This corruption is always interpreted to reflect on the serpentine nature of the skin, as determined by the judge.

Serpentine wraiths (3): Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5 plus shadow venom); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 13 each; MV fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP shadow venom, ignore armor, immune to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +8; AL C.

These wraiths are non-corporeal, like ghosts, and although they are not un-dead they can be *Turned* by Lawful or Neutral clerics. Their bite ignores armor. When a bite attack succeeds, ethereal venom made of shadow-stuff enters the wound unless a DC 12 Will save succeeds. This venom causes an additional 1d6 damage, and the wounded area appears to be cast in deep shadow until this damage is healed. A character slain while suffering from the shadow venom rises as a shadow (DCC RPG rulebook, pp. 425-426) 24 hours later, and seeks out his old companions, both to punish them for his death, and to seek an escape from the piteous half-life the character now endures.

Area 2-5 – Above the City: *A stream of fetid swamp water courses down the center of the corridor. After twenty paces or so, the corridor ends, the stream tumbling away into open air. Crouching at the edge, you stare out into a dusky vista. Before you stretches the largest cavern you have ever seen, home to a city of ruins. The occasional flicker of distant torches and bonfires, and the telltale smell of cooking meat, affirms the impossible: the forgotten city of Parhok lives.*

Below, seated in the heart of a great plaza, is a mighty temple surrounded by braziers that dance and writhe with flames. The temple, plaza, and indeed all the city, seems oriented towards your vantage point. And for good reason: peering above and below, you realize that you are seated in the stone maw of an enormous dragon – carved from living rock, and looming over the city like a god.

The monument of Baphotet Kor rises over halfway up the cavern wall, and it is 500 feet to the base of the cliffs. Falling from this height means almost certain death, though not if the characters take commonsense precautions (such as tying into their ropes, and descending one at a time). If the characters insist on descending on their own, without the aid of ropes, the judge should feel justified in calling for no less than five DC 20 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces checks.

Of more immediate threat is the host of ghost drakes lairing atop the monument. These small, pale green dragonettes swoop down from above, snatching small items from the

PCs. The drakes pose little danger unless one of them is harmed. Then the entire flock turns on the heroes, focusing their attacks on the character highest on the monument. The ghost drakes make their lair in a small cavern above the aqueduct. Characters investigating the cavern discover a nest of twigs, reeds, and grasses. Tucked into the cracks and crevices of the nest are 32 sp.

Ghost drakes (5): Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3) or claws +0 melee (1 and snatch); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 10' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP fly-by attack, snatch; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

These winged reptiles are so pale a green as to be almost white. They are able to make a claw attack mid-move, so that they can attack while flying past an opponent. An opponent can choose not to act so as to wait for this attack. While the claw attacks are less damaging, the target must succeed in a DC 10 Ref save, or the ghost drake snatches some small object in the target's possession as part of the attack. They like shiny objects to place in their nests, but otherwise drop the snatched item so that it falls to the base of the aqueduct. Depending upon the object, the judge may require a successful Luck check, or spending a point of Luck if the check fails, for a dropped object to be found. An item must be held, or at least visible, to be snatched.

PARLAYING WITH THE ZAIN-KIN

In all likelihood, at some point in the adventure the PCs will attempt to parlay with the zain-kin, either in an attempt to dupe the leaders or turn one faction against another. While it is highly unlikely to dissuade any of the 3 factions from their ultimate goals, a few well-placed words of diplomacy can easily earn the PCs an edge over the less sophisticated ape-men.

Old Common: The zain-kin speak only a halting, antiquarian dialect of Common. If the party includes a sage, scribe, or similar character – or a long-lived character, such as an elf or dwarf – the judge may allow the character to shine by serving as a translator between the party and the zain-kin. If no such character exists, a DC 15 Intelligence check will allow another to do the same.

Each tribe has a different tolerance for diplomacy before the zain-kin leader calls an end to negotiations. House Zamosh is the most tolerant, House Tyrax slightly less so, and the warlike House Vedrius is the most likely to move from diplomacy to violence. As the PCs talk to the zain-kin, they glean a bit more information about the city and its politics. Judges are encouraged to role-play this, with the brutish ape-men growing ever more angry at each other as they let their “secrets” slip. Through clever diplomacy and careful role-playing, the PCs should be able to discover some or all of the following:

1. The bloodthirsty zain-kin have always warred with one another. Internecine warfare is always just one word away.
2. The avatar of Baphotet Kor, a verdant-scaled dragon calling itself Mouringlar, arrived with its human concubine not long ago.
3. Mouringlar and its concubine reside in the Fane of Baphotet Kor, the mighty temple situated in the heart of the grand plaza. They can come and go from the city through a portal hidden inside the Fane.
4. Only House Vedrius really believes Mouringlar is the avatar of Baphotet Kor. The agnostics of House Zamosh refuse to decide, while the heretics of House Tyrax secretly worship a snake god.
5. Be cautious trusting the Houses. The zain-kin of Tyrax are nothing but cowards, those sworn to House Zamosh always look out for themselves, and those loyal to House Vedrius are blindly devoted to their dragon god.

ENCOUNTER AREA 3: THE FORGOTTEN CITY OF THE PARHOK



The City of Parhok is home to thousands of apemen. Three tribes dominate the ruined city: House Tyrax, House Vedrius, and House Zamosh. The tribes have a bloody history of internecine warfare, battling one another for precious resources like food and water, and the prestige that comes with occupying the sacred territory between the Fane of the Dragon and the monument of Baphotet Kor. Each tribe keeps vigilant watch over its territory; strange ape-men and foreigners are immediately captured and brought before the House's leader.

The arrival of Dragora and Mouringlar brought an end to the blood wars, but running skirmishes and raids take place every night, and it would take only the slightest misstep to bring back the wars of old.

Judge's Note: Unless the PCs take extraordinary precautions (and are exceedingly lucky), they will encounter one or more of the various zain-kin factions. While PCs might be able to battle their way through many encounters, the combined might of any one faction is sufficient to slaughter the hardiest band of explorers. Adventurers hoping to survive and infiltrate the Fane of the Dragon (area 4-1) will need to think (and speak!) on their toes.

The zain-kin are not a monolithic group, and it is a mistake to portray them as a single-minded band of "dumb monsters." Your game will benefit immensely once the players recognize the feuding factions, and their characters turn the age-old rivalries to their advantage.

Running these encounters requires a degree of skill as a judge, as you will have to assume the roles of the various warring factions. Study the encounters beforehand, and you should have little trouble capturing the multi-layered plots of the feuding zain-kin. It is up to the players to determine how best to turn the warring factions against one another. The PCs' success or failure can hinge upon which camp (if any) they throw their lots with.

Following is summary of the 3 dominant houses, their goals and leaders:

House Tyrax: Weakest of the three, what House Tyrax lacks in might, it makes up for in guile. A band of assassins and toughs, the zain-kin of House Tyrax respect stealth and cunning above brute strength. They are recognized for their dyed black armor and weapons, and dark hoods.

Adventurers venturing into Tyrax neighborhoods will meet little resistance at first. The zain-kin permit the PCs to press into Tyrax territory, then stage an ambush composed of 10 hastati, 2 zain-kin assassins, and one zain-kin centurion. The centurion and hastati surround the party, while the assassins work to pick off exposed healers and sneaky thieves.

Zain-kin of House Tyrax don't seek to kill the PCs. Instead they try to capture the PCs and bring them before their

master: Scains the Black (see area 3-4).

The leaders of House Tyrax are heretical, secretly denying the divinity of Mouringlar. Instead, the zain-kin worship Serbok, an ancient snake god (the same found in area 2-4). If the PCs possess the *serpent staff* or *skin of the malison*, or convincingly profess their dedication to the snake god, the zain-kin welcome them as brother devotees. If the PCs can convince Scains the Black that they seek to slay Mouringlar and Dragora, House Tyrax may even aid them in their quest. (For more details, see area 3-4).

House Tyrax disdains open war, but if forced onto the battlefield, the zain-kin of House Tyrax can summon a total of 150 hastati, 30 assassins, and 15 centurions.

House Vedrius: Strongest of the three factions, House Vedrius dominates its fellows through force of violence. A tribe of warriors, House Vedrius recognizes only martial prowess, disparaging all other sources of power as unclean and wicked. The warriors of House Vedrius are easily recognized by their polished bronze armor and distinctive shields emblazoned with a stylized rampant dragon.

House Vedrius maintains a strict watch over its territory. Adventuring parties who fail to act with great stealth are stopped by a troop of 7 legionnaires and 3 centurions. The troop demands the immediate, unconditional surrender of the PCs. Any resistance is instantly met with force, with reinforcements of an additional troop arriving every 1d12+5 rounds. The zain-kin have little interest in sparing the PCs, save for two exceptions: wizards and elves will be captured to sacrifice to Baphotet Kor, and the party's strongest warrior will be captured and brought to the Test of Arms in area 3-2.

The masters of House Vedrius are fanatical devotees of Mouringlar, believing the green dragon to be an incarnation of the dread wyrm Baphotet Kor. Explorers proclaiming faith to a different god will be struck down without a thought. Those claiming to worship Baphotet Kor will be held in suspicion until they can be brought directly before the Scion of Baphotet Kor (Mouringlar, see area 4-1).

Always eager to do battle, the zain-kin of House Vedrius can field 100 hastati, 75 legionnaires, and 25 centurions.

House Zamosh: The rising star among the 3 factions, House Zamosh came to power a mere quarter century ago, when its elders rediscovered the art of magic. Vilified by the Vedrius, and feared by Tyrax, the masters of House Zamosh alone dare to dabble in the lost enchantments of Parhok. The casters of House Zamosh are known for wearing simple black tabards, embroidered with a large, silver skull.

Of the 3 dominant houses, Zamosh alone offers to parlay with explorers. If the PCs enter its territory, they are met with a group of 10 hastati, 3 signifiers, and 3 guardian drakes. The zain-kin are cautious but courteous, inviting

ZAIN-KIN GAME STATISTICS



The zain-kin are a race of intelligent ape-men, descended from the barely sentient slave race of an ancient, sorcerous empire. Zain-kin society is marshaled into different tiers, or ranks, each possessing a specific duty within zain-kin society. Warriors are the most common, but assassins and magicians also have their place.

Although not necessarily rapacious or cruel, the zain-kin cleave to a philosophy of might makes right. Those unable to best the militant ape-men in combat are not worthy of life or freedom.

Zain-kin hastati: Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, +1 bonus to AC and saves when 3+ work together; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL C.

The hastati form the bulk of the zain-kin military. They are often young males looking to make a name for themselves, with the hope of ascending through the ranks to legionnaire, and finally centurion. Although individually weak, when 3 or more hastati work together, they each gain a +1 bonus to AC and all saves.

Zain-kin legionnaire: Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+2) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, +1 bonus to AC and saves when 3+ work together; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

The zain-kin legionnaire is the backbone of zain-kin military might. Strong, determined, and highly skilled, each legionnaire is a potent adversary, but when 3 or more work together they become even more potent, gaining the same +1 bonus to AC and saves that the hastati do. All legionnaires arise from the ranks of the hastati, and each is a veteran of dozens of combats. Legionnaires are equipped with scale mail, shields, short swords, and 3 javelins.

Zain-kin centurion: Init +3; Atk longsword +3 melee (1d8+3); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 14 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, commanding presence; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C.

Each centurion is handpicked for bravery, skill at arms, and defiance in the face of death and adversity. Centurions lead other zain-kin into battle, inspiring and rallying their troops with a commanding presence and the direct threat of capital punishment should their commands be disobeyed. When a centurion is on the field, all zain-kin gain a +3 bonus to Will saves, but if a centurion is slain, the zain-kin must succeed in a DC 10 Will save or lose morale and flee. Centurions are equipped with chainmail, shields and longswords.

Zain-kin signifier: Init +2; Atk signum spear +1 melee (1d8+1); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, call upon zain-kin gods; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

Each signifier carries a mighty spear bearing the standard of his troop. With this spear, the signifier can call upon the might of the zain-kin gods. A signifier can attempt to heal all allies within 30'; the signifier must succeed on a DC 10 Will save; allies receive 1d6 hit points of healing. Alternatively, a signifier can call upon the wrath of the gods, causing 1d5 bolts to strike from the heavens, each bolt doing 1d8 damage. A target can negate this attack with a DC 15 Ref, Fort, or Will save. A signifier can use either of these abilities once each day, but not both.

Zain-kin assassin: Init +4; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, free follow-up attack, +3 bonus to stealth checks; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

Disdaining the honor of face-to-face combat, the zain-kin assassin does his killing from the shadows, seeking out the enemies of the zain-kin silently and dispatching them. When a zain-kin assassin hits a foe, he automatically gains a free attack against the same foe (to a maximum of one free attack each round). Although not trusted by the zain-kin warriors, the assassins serve a useful purpose and are generally tolerated.

Guardian drakes: Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6) or claw +0 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 12 each; MV 30' or swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, keen sense of smell; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

Guardian drakes are reptiles the size of large dogs with glistening black scales. They appear to be a cross between monitor lizards and crocodiles, with two dimetrodon-like dorsal sails where the ancestral breed once had wings.



the PCs to return to their tower (area 3-3) for an audience with The Seven. If the PCs insist on resorting to blows, the zain-kin make a cautious withdrawal, before rallying their allies and launching a focused assault on the party.

Zamosh's courtesy shouldn't be mistaken for weakness. The House has but a single aim: using the PCs to their advantage against House Vedrius.

The elders of House Zamosh are not fanatical devotees or heathen rebels. Rather, they recognize Mouringlar for what he is: a powerful ally. Their aim is to win the favor of the dragon and his human lover, earning them the right to rule the lost City of Parhok uncontested.

If a battle suits their aims, the zain-kin of House Zamosh can field a total of 75 hastati, 25 trained guardian drakes, and 35 zain-kin signifiers.

ADVENTURES WITHIN THE CITY



ocumenting every cranny and secret of the lost City of Parhok would be an encyclopedic undertaking. For the purposes of this adventure, we have included sufficient detail to allow judges to run a convincing scenario in the city. Judges are encouraged to add their own details. See Further Adventures at the end of the adventure for ideas on launching entire campaigns set within Parhok.

A large eldritch globe lights the cavern, hanging in the air high above the city. It alternates between 4-hour cycles of day and night. The globe's magic has weakened considerably since the fall of the Parhok, so that now the "daytime" cycle offers little more light than dusk on the surface lands, and during the "nighttime" cycle the city is inky black, save for the faint outline of the blue globe hanging above in the darkness.

Wandering Encounters: The map of the lost City of Parhok includes any number of potential city encounters.

Unless the PCs are in the company of the zain-kin, there is a 20% chance of a wandering encounter. If the PCs rest amid the ruins, this chance is doubled unless they take pains to conceal their camp. If a wandering encounter is indicated, roll 1d12 and consult the following table. Note that if the PCs have succeeded in eluding the zain-kin's usual defenses, encountering additional ape-men will certainly bring a swift and violent reprisal.

1d12 Encounter

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-3 | 1d5 giant rats or 1 rat swarm (equal chances of each; see DCC RPG rulebook, p. 424) |
| 4-5 | 1d3 bristleback spiders (see p. 9) |
| 6-7 | 1d4 feral guardian drakes (see below) |
| 8 | 1 mad wraith (see below) |
| 9 | 1d3 giant hunting bats (see below) |
| 10 | 10 zain-kin hastati and 1 zain-kin centurion (see page 14) |
| 11 | 5 zain-kin legionnaires and 1 zain-kin centurion (see page 14) |
| 12 | 2 zain-kin assassins (see page 14) |

Feral black guardian drake: Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus infection) or claw +1 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 9 each; MV 30' or swim 30' or glide 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, keen sense of smell, infection; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

Although smaller and leaner than their domesticated brethren, with dirty greyish-black scales, feral guardian drakes are able to glide on their wing-sails for distances of up to 30'. They prowl the ruins, seeking unwary prey. The thick saliva drooling from conical teeth festers in wounds, doing an additional 1 point of damage each hour unless treated. A DC 10 Fort save prevents infection, and a DC 10 Intelligence check allows the wound to be treated. The judge should remember that characters without appropriate occupations roll this check on 1d10 instead of 1d20.

Mad wraith: Init +0; Atk ethereal touch +10 melee (1d3 Personality, DC 10 Will save); AC 8; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immunity to non-magical attacks, touch causes Personality damage and madness, whispering causes temporary Personality damage; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +6; AL C.

A mad wraith is the ghostly remnant of some ancient sorcerer of Parhok. A mad wraith whispers insane secrets which cause listeners to make a DC 5 Will save each round or suffer 1d3 temporary Personality damage. Worse, its ethereal touch forces the target to make a DC 10 Will save or take 1d3 Personality damage and attack his or her nearest ally (moving up to its full move to do so, and gaining a free attack if the target has already acted in this round). A character whose Personality drops to 0 due to these attacks does nothing but rock and gibber until healed back to at least 3 Personality. Temporary Personality loss heals at a rate of 1 point per minute. Mad wraiths are un-dead, and can be *Turned* by Lawful or Neutral clerics.

Giant hunting bat: Init +6; Atk tail slash +5 melee (1d5, 10' range) or bite +3 melee (1d3); AC 19; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 5' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, echolocation; SV Fort +0, Ref +8, Will +0; AL N.

Giant hunting bats are man-sized predators that hunt using echolocation, making them able to pinpoint the location of invisible objects and creatures. Their long tails can be used to slash at targets up to 10' away, and giant hunting bats typically slash from the air until victims fall, only then descending to feed.

Exploring the Ruins: When the PCs elect to explore ruins as they make their way through the city, roll 1d12 and consult the following tables to determine the ruin's contents. Individual ruins can be as small as a single building, or as large as a block stretching along the crumbling roadway.

Table A: Ruins

1d12	Result
1-4	Empty ruin. Rough stone walls, broken tiles and plaster are all that remain.
5-6	Appears empty. A close search reveals otherwise. See table B. Each result on Table B can only occur once.
7-9	Squatters. The ruin is home to 1d6+2 zain-kin has-tati. The ape-men flee from a fight, summoning their comrades at the first opportunity.
10-11	Lair. See table C.
12	Special. See table D.

Table B: Secrets

1d12	Result
1	Corpse: The PCs discover the ancient, mundane skeleton of a Parhok enchanter. The skeleton still wears the tattered robes of its order. In the ruins around the skeleton are 1d20 ancient gold coins, an empty scroll case, and a rusted ceremonial dagger.
2	Cache: The explorers uncover a locked coffer (DC 15 Open Locks check) buried amid the rubble. Inside the coffer are 10 silver bars (worth 5 gp each) swaddled in crumbling silk.
3	Ruined Library: The PCs discover a library beneath the fallen debris. If they perform a thorough search of the rubble (2 hours or more) they discover a bejeweled dagger with a pommel forged in the shape of a raging demon (worth 25 gp). The zain-kin of House Zamosh recognize the blade, and will stop at nothing to possess it. If the judge so desires, the PCs may also find scrolls or tomes allowing wizards or elves to potentially learn 1d3 random 1 st -level spells.
4	Ancient Armory: The ruins conceal an armory. If the PCs can remove the fallen granite pillar (DC 22 Strength check), they discover a trove of 3 suits of ancient zain-kin scale armor. The armors are considered heirlooms, and PCs donning the scale mail draw the enmity of the zain-kin of House Vedrius. Because of the size difference in zain-kin and humans, any donning this armor gains only +3 to AC, but has a d16 fumble die.
5	Slavehold: The PCs discover the ruined quarters of a Parhok slavemaster. Amid the fallen stones and scattered rubble, the PCs uncover a horned great helm that completely covers the face of the wearer: a <i>helm of the dread lord</i> . This item allows the wearer to attempt to intimidate others by making opposed Will saves. Each attempt requires the wearer to use an Action Die, but the wearer can continue to make attempts so long as he succeeds. If the target's Will save is lower than the wearer's, it must either flee, or suffer a -1d penalty to all attack rolls during the encounter. A creature can be targeted more than

once, and the penalties stack, but once a creature has beaten the wearer's Will save, it cannot be successfully targeted again for 24 hours. The wearer of this horned helm has a -1 penalty to Luck while it is worn.

6	Healing Spring: A trickle of clean, pure water drips from the basin of a shattered fountain. Drinking directly from the fountain allows a PC to heal 1 HD, and grants 1d12 temporary HP in the next encounter. This effect only occurs 1/day.
7	Ruined Alchemist Lab: Beneath a fallen beam the PCs discover a crushed shelf. Most of the shelf's contents were ruined ages ago, but 3 <i>potions of healing</i> (each of which heals up to 2 HD) yet retain their potency. However, when imbibed, the character drinking must succeed in a DC 10 Fort save or take 1 point of Stamina damage from the failing alchemical ingredients.



8	Hidden Tomb: The PCs unearth a stone sarcophagus carved in the likeness of a demonic wizard. Prying loose the lid (DC 20 Strength check) releases a mad wraith (see page 15).
9	Orb of the Parhok: Gleaming beneath the sand is a forgotten obsidian orb that glows with a cold inner light. The orb grants a +1 bonus to arcane spell checks, but draws the immediate attention of the signifiers of House Zamosh. So long as a PC possesses the <i>orb</i> , he cannot hide from agents of House Zamosh.
10-12	Forgotten Bolt Hole: The PCs uncover a cellar that survived the fall of the city. Though tight quarters, the cellar offers a safe place for the PCs to rest undisturbed (no chance of wandering encounters).

Table C: Lairs

1d12	Result
1-3	Rats! The heroes are overtaken by a seething tide of 1d3 rat swarms (see DCC RPG rulebook, p. 424).
4-5	Spider-haunted ruins: The ruins are home to 1d4 bristleback spiders (see p. 9).
6-7	Bats' Nest: The PCs disturb 1d3 lurking giant hunting bats (see p. 15).

- 8-10 **Drakes:** The ruins are home to 1d4 feral guardian drakes. If the PCs withdraw, the drakes hiss threateningly but do not attack, but if the PCs attack the drakes, they respond in kind (see p. 15).
- 11 **Mad Hermit:** The ruins are occupied by a zain-kin driven insane from studying the magic of the Parhok. The wild-eyed ape-man leaps immediately to the attack, doing his best to destroy the PCs with his spells.
- 12 **Re-roll on table D: Special.**

Mad zain-kin hermit: Init +3; Atk signum spear +1 melee (1d8+1); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 18 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, harmful spell; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +10; AL C.

Hermit encounters are with zain-kin signifiers who lost their sanity studying Parhok's ancient secrets. Although they still carry their spears of office, they cannot call upon the gods, instead being able to call upon harmful spells three times per day that do 1d8 damage (DC 10 Ref save for half).

Table D: Special

1d12 Result

- 1-3 **Residual Enchantment:** The explorers unleash trapped magic that washes over the party in a flash of light (forcing an immediate roll on the wandering encounter table on page 15). The rush of magic empowers wizards and elves, granting them a +2 bonus to their next 3 spell checks. However, until the extra magical energies are used, a natural roll of "2" on a spell check is treated as the same as a "1."
- 4-6 **Anointed Blades:** The PCs discover a towering statue of an armored zain-kin wielding a broken greatsword. The statue's shattered blade continually weeps oil, which has pooled on the ground before the statue. Any weapon anointed in the oil receives a temporary +2 bonus to damage rolls, but the anointed weapon breaks whenever a natural 1 is rolled on an attack. Both effects last for 3 hours.
- 7-9 **Lost Shrine:** The PCs unearth a small clay idol depicting a woman, heavy with child. Sheltered inside a wooden coffer, the idol adds +2 to clerical spell checks, but also doubles the likelihood of wandering encounters. The idol shatters after empowering three spell checks.
- 10-12 **Black Anvil:** The heroes discover an enormous black stone anvil carved out of the rock that forms the cavern floor. Beside the anvil rests a large, dusty hammer. A character striking a bladed weapon between the hammer and anvil, endows the weapon with the ability to deal an extra 2d5 points of necrotic damage with its next three successful attack rolls. Until discharged, the necrotic energy causes the weapon to glow with a faint, sickly purple light.

Area 3-1 – Monument of Baphotet Kor: *The wall of the cavern has been carved into an enormous statue depicting a horrific dragon, its head cast back, as if to roar divine fury. A small stream runs from the base of the monument, feeding a dark, silent lake. A crumbling tower stands guard over the lake, and watchfires burn in the darkness.*

Across the stream are the ruins of a once-mighty city. Through the gloom you can spy small campfires and torches moving in the darkness. And at the heart of the city, a towering black pyramid, lit by massive braziers.

Characters descending from area 2-5 arrive at area 3-1. The tower across the small lake is home to House Zamosh (area 3-3). The temple in the heart of the city is the Fane of Baphotet Kor (area 4-1).

Explorers that exercise caution as they descend the face of the monument go unnoticed by the city's inhabitants. If the adventurers insist on using lights, or fight a prolonged battle with ghost drakes (see area 2-5), a troop from House Vedrius is sent to investigate. The troop is composed of 10 hastati, 7 legionnaires, and 3 centurions. The zain-kin call for the PCs' immediate surrender. If the characters resist, the ape-men try to hold them off until reinforcements arrive. Once the war horn is sounded, reinforcements of an additional 5 hastati and 3 legionnaires arrive every 1d12+5 rounds.

Zain-kin hastati, legionnaires, and centurions: See p. 14.

Area 3-2 – Plaza of the Kingmaker: *The large plaza is lit by dozens of smoking torches evenly placed around its circumference. The air stinks of spilled blood, and the stained flagstones are sticky with gore. At the center of the plaza is a solitary boulder. Buried into the side of the stone is an enormous longsword. In the dim light you can see that the weapon is wreathed in faint purple flames.*

The Plaza of the Kingmaker is the Old Common meeting ground for zain-kin of House Vedrius. Adventurers that are captured, or that seek to parlay with the house are brought here before Domastrus, an enormous, silver-backed zain-kin warlord. The master of House Vedrius bears the scars of hundreds of battles, and since his throat was slit in battle, his voice is no more than a deep, growling whisper. Though a cunning leader, Domastrus is exceedingly confident in the martial might of House Vedrius. This overconfidence leads him to dismiss the PCs as inconsequential, cowardly worms.

The Test of Arms: If the PCs are brought here, either through capture or parlay, Domastrus interrogates them, and then orders their execution. If PCs protest (an act of valor that surprises Domastrus) he offers them a gambit: defeat him in combat and he will turn them free. Domastrus orders the PCs to select a champion and stages the battle before the entire House, in the heart of the Kingmaker Plaza. While Domastrus battles the PCs' champion, the rest of the party is watched over by 5 hastati.

The combat is anything but fair. Domastrus fights with a pair of centurions as his shield men. At first the centurions do not attack, simply warding their master and hemming



in the PC. But if Domastrus is injured, the centurions leap into the fray, attacking in defense of their master. An uproar surges through the crowd, granting quick PCs the opportunity to make their escape.

The Kingmaker: The Kingmaker Plaza takes its name from *Kingmaker*, a +2 spear buried in the stone set in the heart of the plaza. Vedrius legend holds that the spear can only be drawn from the stone by the True King of the Zain-Kin. The arrival of Mouringlar and Dragora ended all attempts at drawing the spear, but the legend lives deeply with the zain-kin. If one of the PCs succeeds on a DC 25 Strength check, *Kingmaker* tears free of the stone. All zain-kin, save Domastrus, ceases all actions, stunned into silence, affording the PCs three free rounds. In subsequent rounds, the zain-kin forces dissolve into chaos, with some ape-men fleeing, others giving half-hearted chase to the PCs, and others attacking Domastrus and the centurions.

Regardless, once *Kingmaker* has been stolen, the might of House Vedrius is broken. So long as the PCs have the long spear in their possession, they need not fear reprisal from the zain-kin of House Vedrius.

Kingmaker is a Lawful weapon, capable of communicating with its wielder via empathy. Its purpose is to unite the Houses of the zain-kin under a single ruler. When thrown at a creature up to 60' away, who opposes the unification of the Houses, or who is an enemy of the zain-kin, the wielder adds his Strength modifier to the weapon's damage, and *Kingmaker* always returns to the wielder's hand. Attempts to take it from Parhok are doomed to fail, as the spear simply becomes heavier and heavier, until it is too difficult to lift.

Domastrus is able to use up one of his next Action Dice to avoid a critical hit or a successful Mighty Deed of Arms.

The highest Action Die available must be used first.

Domastrus, zain-kin warlord: Init +5; Atk longsword +6 melee (1d8+4); AC 17; HD 5d10+15; hp 50; MV 25'; Act 1d20 + 1d16; SP low-light vision, avoid critical or Deed; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; AL C.

3 zain-kin legionnaires: See p. 14.

Area 3-3 – Tower of the Magi: *The crumbling tower stands on the shore of the still lake, like an ominous specter of the past. Carefully polished stone, gracefully arching buttresses, and impossibly delicate spires – all have returned to rubble and dust. Now pelts hang from the crude windows bored into the tower, the walls are shored up with piles of granite blocks, and a sooty fire burns atop a makeshift wooden tower rising from the stonework.*

The ruined tower is the home of the elders of House Zamosh. Though crude and barbaric by most standards, the tribe is composed of the finest spellcasters to emerge from the ranks of zain-kin.

Of the three dominant tribes, House Zamosh is the most cunning. Their study of lost tomes has taught them to turn the unexpected to their advantage. The other tribes of zain-kin see the PCs' arrival as a threat, but House Zamosh sees it as an opportunity.

The once-mighty tower is now little more than a hollowed out ruin. The tower still has its original ground floor, but the second and third floors are built of wooden planks, scabbed together with rotting rope and dried sinew.

Test of the Magi: The House is ruled by 3 elders. If the PCs seek to parlay with the House, or are captured in battle, they are brought back to the tower and welcomed by the elders. The PCs are treated with the utmost courtesy (though the zain-kin never let their guard down). If needed, the zain-kin offer to protect the party from other Houses, offering the PCs shelter and sustenance, all the while working the PCs for information, eager to determine their purpose in the city. For their part, the elders willingly share all they know about the city. (Their "trust" is calculated; see below.)

Clever PCs might try to turn this to their advantage, asking the zain-kin for an audience with Mouringlar. Trusting PCs might reveal their quest, and ask that the zain-kin smuggle them into the Fane of Baphotet Kor.

Regardless, the Zamosh have one plan: to escort the PCs to the Fane of Baphotet Kor, and then betray them to Mouringlar. (See area 4-1 for more details.)

Treasure: In the course of their studies, House Zamosh has amassed a fair quantity of eldritch lore. Much of this is worthless (either destroyed by careless zain-kin or basic arcane knowledge understood by every wizard or elf) and sorting the wheat from the chaff requires a skilled eye.

Characters examining the tower find a collection of chests, coffers, and scroll cases. Each contains scores of fragile vellum scrolls. Many are non-magical in nature or have been ruined in the centuries since the fall of the Parhok. However, a DC 15 Intelligence check, combined with successful Luck checks turns up a wealth of ancient knowledge. For

every successful Luck check roll 1d8 and consult the following table. Each search attempt takes 1 hour, and any PC succeeding on the requisite Intelligence check can search up to 5 times.

1d8 Discovery

- 1 Books or scrolls that allow a wizard or elf to learn a random 1st-level spell.
- 2 Books or scrolls that allow a wizard or elf to learn a random 2nd-level spell.
- 3 Books or scrolls that allow a wizard or elf to learn a random 3rd-level spell.
- 4 A scroll of *shatter* that requires the user to spellburn 3 points in order to use it (these points do not affect the spell check). It is good for three uses before crumbling into dust.
- 5 A scroll that contains both the spells *mending* and *patron bond*. Written in the tongue of dragons, the scroll can only be used by one who speaks that language or if translated. It can be used twice (either both spells once, or one spell twice), and then bursts into flame, disintegrating into fine ash.
- 6 A scroll of *runic alphabet, mortal*. It can be used eight times without a spell check, starting with the highest spell check result and then reducing one step each time until a result of 12-13 is reached. If the scroll is rashly attempted a ninth time, the ground opens beneath the reader and he is swallowed up by the earth, gone forever, unless a DC 15 Ref save succeeds. In any event, the scroll fades out of existence after the ninth reading.
- 7 A scroll of *charm person*, but one that affects reptiles instead of humanoids. The ink fades with each use, disappearing altogether after the third use. The result of this fading is that the second attempt to read the scroll causes a -2 penalty to the spell check, and the third attempt causes a -6 penalty.
- 8 Roll twice.

The Zamosh elders refuse to allow anyone close to their collections of lore, defending it with their lives.

Zamosh elders, zain-kin warlocks (3): Init +3; Atk mave +2 melee (1d6+1); AC 12; HD 5d5; hp 21 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, spells (see below); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +9; AL C.

The Zamosh elders can cast three spells, each once per day. The first is a fiery bolt that does 2d6 damage to its target and 1d5 damage to any adjacent target (Reflex DC 10 for half in both cases). The second is an eruption of eldritch fire that causes 1d6 damage to all targets in a 30' area (DC 10 Fort negates). The final spell is a curse that allows the elder to do an additional 1d6 damage with each successful attack against a target, and causes the elder to heal 1d8 hp if the target is reduced to 0 hp (duration 12 hours, Will DC 15 negates).

Area 3-4 – Rogue's Hollow: *The city gives way here, opening to a large rocky depression. Perhaps once a sinkhole or collapse, the rocky depression has been cleared, forming a series of descending tiers. Each rocky tier is lit by a number of flickering candles, lending the depression an eerie aura, as if it were shifting just beyond your line of sight. The ground here is littered with thousands of strange white flecks.*

Rogue's Hollow is the name given to the old sinkhole used as a meeting place by House Tyrax. PCs inspecting the "white flecks" littering the ground discover that they are small scales – literally thousands of individual snake scales. Though the hollow appears empty, the PCs cannot press this far into Tyrax territory without the zain-kin's notice. If they investigate the hollow, zain-kin silently emerge from the shadows of the surrounding ruins in groups of twos and threes, until there are over 50 zain-kin watching from the top of the sinkhole (25 hastati, 15 zain-kin assassins, and 10 centurions.)

A single zain-kin in blackened leather armor steps forward to address the party. Scains is the leader of House Tyrax, an aged ape-man whose years in the ruined city have taught him great cunning. Scains calls down to the PCs, offering to parlay. If the PCs refuse, Scains gives the signal and all 50 zain-kin pour into the sinkhole, howling bloodthirsty battle cries as they charge to the slaughter.

If the PCs are wise enough to parlay with the ape-man, he asks that they elect a representative. Scains and the PCs' delegate retire to a nearby camp, while the remaining PCs are guarded by the watchful zain-kin.

Treating with the Rogues: Scains maintains a quiet, civil demeanor. He questions the PCs, trying to determine the party's reason for coming to the city. (Scains is aware of the assassination attempt on the PCs, but doesn't reveal this.) Scains is not above threatening to kill the remaining PCs to coerce the delegate into revealing their reasons for coming to the city. This is spoken in a pragmatic, matter-of-fact manner, not as an angry threat.

If the PC bear the *serpent staff* or the *skin of the malison* (both items can be found at the shrine in area 2-4), express an interest in casting down Mouringlar (the zain-kin don't know the true power behind the dragon), or otherwise make a good impression upon the old ape-man, Scains reveals that House Tyrax doesn't place any stock in Mouringlar's claims to divinity. Moreover, the House Tyrax offers to side with the PCs, joining them in a raid against the temple. While Scains has every intention of following through on his bargain, his cowardice proves to be his undoing (see area 4-1 for more information on the bloody consequences of Scains' ambitions).

Scains, zain-kin master assassin: Init +6; Atk short sword +4 melee (1d6+2); AC 13; HD 5d8; hp 24; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20 + 1d14; SP low-light vision, free follow-up attack, thief abilities; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; AL C.

Scains has all of the abilities of a 5th-level Chaotic thief. Like other zain-kin assassins, he gains an immediate follow-up attack if his first attack succeeds.

ENCOUNTER AREA 4: THE FANE OF BAPHOTET KOR



Set in the heart of the ruined city of Parhok, the Fane has been commandeered by Dragora and Mouringlar in the name of Baphotet Kor. The pair has duped the zain-kin into believing that Dragora is nothing more than the dragon's concubine, but the inverse is true. Mouringlar lives for Dragora, and will lay down its life for its mistress, while Lady Dragora cares for nothing but herself.

Peaking at 100 feet above the city floor, the pyramid displays the flawless - though soulless - craftsmanship of spell-worked stone. Naught but the slenderest hair could slip between the fitted stones, and the pyramid radiates an aura of mingled divine and arcane magic that generates a feeling of unease in all who approach.

Four flaming braziers set in the corners of the plaza light the temple's exterior. At any time, there is a 20% chance that 6 zain-kin hastati are tending the sacred flames. The hastati will attempt to deter the PCs, but retreat if more than 2 of their fellows fall in combat.

The pyramid has a series of steep stone steps. The western stairs climb 50 feet before ending before a giant-sized (more accurately, *dragon-sized*) brass portal (area 4-2). The eastern steps rise to the very top of the pyramid. A troop of 6 legionnaires led by a single centurion constantly marches around the base of the pyramid, and a pair of legionnaires stands guard before the brass portal at area 4-2.

Area 4-1 - The Fane of Baphotet Kor: *A wide plaza opens before you. Mighty braziers stand at the plaza's corners, belching smoke and red flames. Standing in the center of the plaza, is an ominous pyramid of black stone. Two sets of stairs ascend the pyramid's steep walls, one rising halfway up the pyramid to a pair of brass portals, the other rising up the back of the pyramid to its peak.*

Judge's Note: If either House Zamosh or Tyrax accompanies the PCs, go to **Ambush!** below.

A pair of legionnaires stands guard before the brass portal. In addition, 6 legionnaires, led by a single centurion, march a constant circuit around the base of the pyramid.

Characters that wait for the troop to circle around to the back of the pyramid can rush the stairs, facing only the 2 legionnaires. At the furthest point of their march, it takes the troop 8 rounds to reach the stairs at the front of the pyramid, virtually assuring the PCs' success.

Ambush! If the PCs are brought to the temple as part of scheme fostered on the parts of either House Zamosh or Tyrax, they are in for a grim surprise:

House Zamosh, accompanying the PCs with 5 signifiers and 15 hastati, betray the PCs at the very last moment. As the PCs begin to ascend the stairs, a signifier sounds a war horn. On the signal, 10 legionnaires emerge from every side of the plaza, charging towards the PCs as the zain-kin of House Zamosh encircle the PCs, preventing flight. Last, and worst

of all, Mouringlar himself silently glides in from the gloom, landing in the plaza, cutting off the PCs' hope of flight.

House Tyrax, accompanying the PCs with 5 assassins and 20 hastati, breaks morale at the last instant. Their courage shattered, the rogues flee, leaving the PCs alone on the steps of the temple. House Vedrius, anticipating the raid, is waiting outside the plaza with their legionnaires. As the cowardly rogues of House Tyrax flee, 10 legionnaires (led by 1 centurion) charge into the plaza. Meanwhile, Mouringlar drops from above, like a verdant arrow, landing on the plaza behind the PCs, ending any hope of escape.

Regardless of who betrayed the PCs, the outcome is the same: Overwhelming forces charge.

Escape! The odds are stacked against the characters - in order for the PCs to survive, they will need to act with courage, cunning, and conviction! The zain-kin expect the PCs to die trying to flee back into the city. In the open terrain of the plaza, the zain-kin can use their numbers against the PCs to great advantage. The PCs' best hope for survival is to fight their way into the temple, in the hopes of finding a choke point where they can even the odds.

If the PCs are somehow successful in defeating the temple's guardians, Mouringlar retreats, winging away to lick his wounds. He returns in the conclusion of the adventure below.

Statistics for various zain-kin are found on p. 14.

Mouringlar the Dragon: Init +5; Atk bite +7 melee (1d12) or claw +7 melee (1d8); AC 17; HD 5d12; hp 20; MV 40' or fly 80'; Act 4d20; SP breath weapon, immunity to fire, transformation, spells; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C.

Mouringlar is a green-hued dragon of small size (for a dragon). He is only a young adult, and his relative inexperience has allowed Dragora to dominate him. Twice a day he can breathe an 80' line of fire, causing damage equal to his current hit points (DC 16 Ref save for half). The dragon is completely immune to curses, and can transform into a human male (and back) once each day. He can cast the following spells, with a +4 bonus to the spell check: *comprehend languages*, *magic shield*, and *scorching ray*.

Area 4-2 - The Portals: *A pair of fierce zain-kin stands before the large portals, their blades gleaming in the red light of the braziers! Just past the gate you can see a hall and some sort of capstan resembling the kind used to raise and lower a portcullis.*

The zain-kin are charged with the defense of the holy fane of Baphotet Kor, and do everything in their power to defend the breach. Both would rather die than fail at their task. They hurl javelins at the PCs as they charge up the stairs, then draw their swords and close for melee.

The brass portals are opened and closed through an elaborate system of counterweights. Spinning the capstan caused the brass portals to slam closed. The interior of the doors has an enormous bronze bolt that can be driven home with



a DC 15 Strength check. Once the portals are closed and the bolt set in place, there is little any creature in the city can do to breach the gate. The characters may not know this, however, and the deafening thunder of the zain-kin hammering on the doors is sure to spur the PCs to action.

Zain-kin legionnaires (2 or 10): Init +2; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+2) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, +1 bonus to AC and saves when 3+ work together; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Area 4-3 – Hall of Divination: *The wide hall is hung with numerous tapestries and religious icons, all depicting the cruelty and divine malevolence of wicked Baphotet Kor. The hall is punctuated on either side by small, nondescript doors. Ahead, at the end of the hall, is a shallow pool flanked by stairs rising into darkness.*

A pair of zain-kin assassins hide atop a catwalk concealed by the tapestries hung across the vaulted ceiling. Once the PCs enter the hall, the assassins trigger a swinging pendulum trap, sending terrible blades whistling through the darkness.

There is one blade for each of the hall's first 10 rows (with each "row" being approximately 5' on the map). At the beginning of each round, secretly roll 1d12. A roll of 1 through 10 indicates which row that will be attacked this round. On a roll of 11 or 12, at least two blades strike that round (roll 1d12 twice to determine the rows, doubling 11s and 12s as per above).

Crossing the hall can be accomplished in two ways: either by beating an attacking pendulum on initiative as the PC crosses the area where it swings, or by destroying the blade as it slices across the chamber (AC 15, 8 hp). Otherwise, the pendulums strike with a +3 bonus to their attack rolls for 1d8 damage each.

The pendulums continue to swing until all the blades are destroyed, or a PC climbs into the vaulted loft above (DC 10 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces check) and succeeds on a DC 15 Disarm traps check, deactivating the clockwork mechanism.

The assassins remain hidden on the catwalks, only revealing themselves if attacked or if a PC reaches the catwalk. Otherwise, they wait for the PCs to exit the hall before descending to ambush the PCs as they enter area 4-3.

Scrying Pool: The pool is filled with a thick liquid resembling dark quicksilver. Characters gazing into the pool and succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence check see themselves, depicted as if watched from above. Wizards, elves, and those with appropriate occupations roll 1d20; others roll 1d10. If the assassins are still alive, the scrying PCs also see the zain-kin lurking on the catwalk above.

A DC 20 Intelligence check allows the PCs to scry Lady Dragora. If the PC succeeds on the check, read the area text to area 4-3.

Abandoned Quarters: Those investigating the rooms off of the great hall discover small, sparse rooms that once served as quarters for priests tending the sacred temple. Now the quarters are inhabited by naught but mice and memories.

PCs find ancient, moldering bunks, simple stools and writing desks destroyed by dry rot, and ink wells, long gone dry.

Zain-kin assassins (2): Init +4; Atk short sword +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, free follow-up attack, +3 bonus to stealth checks; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

Area 4-4 – Throne of the Queen: *The stairs rise to a dark throne room lorded over by a mighty statue of a monstrous dragon. At the center of the chamber a great black throne sits in the center of a low stone dais. A woman lounges atop a great black throne, a scarred longsword close at hand. The air here is thick with the breath of reptiles and the smell of burning wax. Flickering red light shines in from the wide circle cut into the ceiling.*

Once a chamber used exclusively for blood sacrifices in the honor of Baphotet Kor, Dragora has commandeered the chamber for her own.

Unless the PCs succeeded in infiltrating the temple without alerting the guards, Dragora is prepared for their arrival. With a wave of her hand, she beckons the PCs to enter, motioning towards a cask of wine and the piles of luxurious pillows situated along the west wall of the chamber.

In preparation for the PCs' arrival, Lady Dragora has drugged the wine and sprinkled poison on the lounging pillows with substances that require a new save each round until one succeeds. Poisoned characters instantly realize the duplicity. If the assassins from area 4-3 yet live, they take this opportunity to launch an attack on the PCs.

Drugged Wine: DC 10 Fort save; the target takes 1d3 points of temporary Agility damage per round until a save succeeds; if Agility drops to 0, the character is rendered unconscious for 1d4 hours.

Dusted Pillows: DC 15 Fort save; The target's speed is reduced by 5' per failed save. This effect lasts 2d5 minutes.

Dragora's first goal is to survive to fight another day; the defeat of the PCs is alluring, but there is never a shortage of opportunities to humble would-be heroes. If the PCs press the attack and succeed in causing the sword-maiden 10 hp of damage or more, she immediately shouts a command word in the Draconic tongue; instantly the temple shudders, and the throne dais rises towards the hole bored in the ceiling.

PCs not standing on the dais can attempt a DC 15 Agility check to leap aboard the rising pillar, but those left behind will be forced to climb the sides of the pillar to rejoin the battle (DC 15 Strength or Climb sheer surfaces check). It takes the dais a single round to rise 30 feet to the ceiling, allowing Dragora to leap from the pillar onto the top of the temple.

Characters atop the dais note that it has depressions in the shape of 5-headed dragons, identical to the depression used to activate the wyrm portal in area 1-4.

See the adventure's **Conclusion** below for details on the final battle.

Several treasure chests sit along the walls of the chamber, strewn with tapestries, furs, and moldering bolts of ancient

silk. While most of the Parhok's ancient treasure has fallen to the passage of time, some wealth yet remains: 200 gp, 550 sp, 2 *potions of healing* (each of which heals up to 2 HD), and 5 gems (worth 50 gp each).

Dragora, human warrior 5: Init +7; Atk longsword +1d7 melee (1d8+1d7); AC 14; HD 5d12; hp 36; MV 30'; Act 1d20 +1d14; SP Mighty Deed 1d7; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

Conclusion: The dread dragon Mouringlar waits atop the pyramid. As the dais comes within sight, the dragon leaps to the defense of his mistress. Mouringlar and Dragora fight back-to-back, affording Dragora the chance to effect the pair's escape.

Meanwhile, the plaza below has filled with hundreds of zain-kin. Witness to the battle against their living god, the enraged zain-kin storm the sides of the pyramid, charging towards the top. The ape-men stop just short of the peak, too terrified to join in the battle.

While Mouringlar holds off the PCs, Dragora fishes a ruby star-key from her pouch. She places the star-key in one of the depressions set into the dais, activating a shimmering portal over the throne. Through the portal, PCs can see a quiet, sun-dappled wood overlooking an ancient plaza

sundered by a chasm, where the adventure began.

(Note that if the PCs prevent Dragora from riding the dais to the outside of the pyramid, Mouringlar drops down from above. Dragora does her best to scale the raised dais, where she uses the *wyrmportal* to flee the city.)

Dragora and Mouringlar fight as long as they can, doing their best to stave off the PCs, but when it becomes apparent that they cannot win this battle, the lady and her dragon plunge through the portal, fleeing into the woods.

With Dragora and Mouringlar dead or fleeing before the PCs, nothing can forestall the wrath of the zain-kin. Scores of hastati ape-men, spears raised in fury, charge the top of the pyramid. No matter how many of the zain-kin the PCs defeat, hundreds more remain. The adventurers' only hope for survival is to follow Dragora and Mouringlar through the portal.

As the PCs tumble back into the surface lands, followed by a dozen hurled javelins, the arcane portal snaps shut, leaving the forgotten city of Parhok and its legions of ape-men behind.

THUS ENDS THE REIGN OF DRAGORA

FURTHER ADVENTURES



he defeat of Dragora and Mouringlar need not bring an end to adventures in the Lost City of the Parhok. A wealth of eldritch might lurks within the ruins, calling out for adventurers brave enough to venture back to the city.

Returning characters will discover a political landscape that is at once familiar and foreign. Tribes that suffered heavy losses in the PCs' assault are slaughtered by their rivals, and weaker tribes rise to power. With this in mind, consider the following story seeds for further adventures in the Lost City of the Parhok:

- **Dreaming Crypts of the Parhok:** Not all of the fabled enchanters were slain by the raging zain-kin. Some still slumber in hidden crypts beneath the city. Masters of unmatched eldritch might, awakening (and defeating!)

these dweomer-crafters is an epic task!

- **The Prophet of Baphotet Kor:** Zain-kin lore has long held that a prophet of Baphotet Kor will be born among their kind, and at long last the chosen one has emerged from the rabble, uniting the squabbling tribes under a single banner. Endowed with divine cunning and powers by the Mother-Goddess of Monsters, this prophet presents a deadly foe to explorers hoping to loot the city's eldritch secrets.
- **Vault of the Archmages:** An immense treasure vault, filled to overflowing with magical relics, awaits the return of the city's masters. Looting this vault requires defeating ancient wards and devious traps, the likes the world has never seen.

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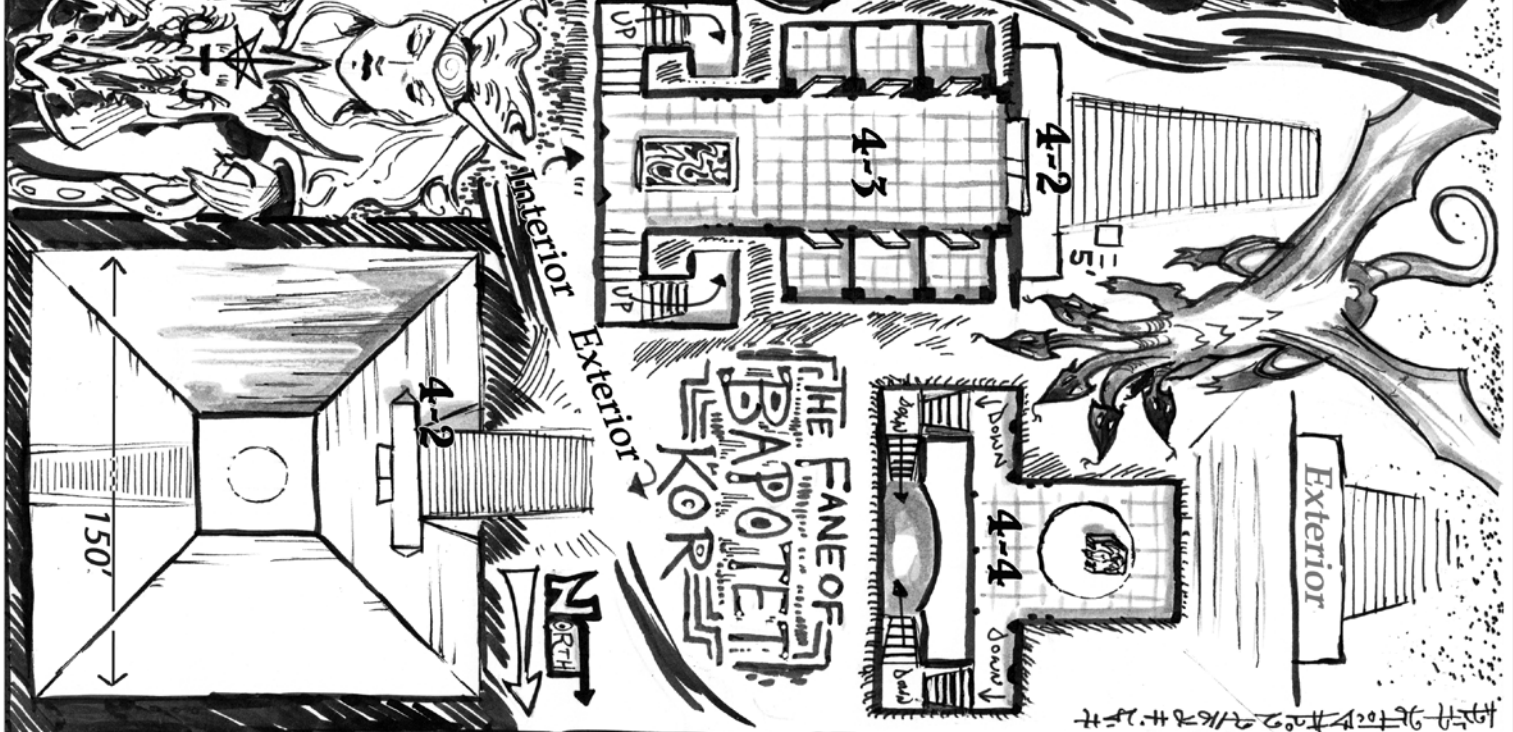
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