

# TOMB OF ANNIHILATION

# DM'S RESOURCES



All published Eventyr Games DM's resources for  
Tomb of Annihilation

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## CREDITS

**Writing:** Dan Kahn & J. A. Valeur

**Layout:** Dan Kahn & J. A. Valeur

**Cartography:** Eventyr Games & DrMapzo ([patreon.com/drmapzo](https://patreon.com/drmapzo))

**Cover Art:** [info@nextmars.com](mailto:info@nextmars.com) (licensed through Adobe Stock)

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**OMB OF ANNIHILATION IS A JUNGLE HORROR campaign that will take characters from 1st to beyond 10th level, as they face zombie dinosaurs, deadly puzzles, evil liches, and forge their own epic journey into the wildest jungles and deepest dungeons.

This campaign has great opportunities for role play, challenging combat encounters, and gripping puzzles, riddles, and traps. It has extremely high stakes and an amazing setting – everything you need to create a memorable experience for your players.

However, as great a campaign as Tomb of Annihilation is, it isn't entirely without issues. For a large portion of the adventure, characters will have free reign of a vast jungle where they have the opportunity to stir up all kinds of trouble. While the maps provided are awesome and there is no shortage of locations to visit, several locations have no more than a paragraph to inspire the DM's creativity. And, although the stakes are huge, it might seem a bit hard to believe that the end of the world lies in the hands of some level 1 characters sent to a faraway land. Furthermore, because of the looming threat, players can easily feel like they have to finish the adventure quickly or everyone will die, which defeats the purpose of an amazing sandbox jungle.

This document seeks to provide you, the Dungeon Master, with the tools and ideas that will help you make Tomb of Annihilation an exciting experience for your players. It's strongly recommended that you read through the campaign book before using these resources. And always remember, the advice and ideas given here are options – you know best what works at your table. This download contains:

**Starting the Adventure.** Suggestions on how to set the stage for a well-paced adventure including meaningful hooks for your players and starting from other campaigns.

**Running Tomb of Annihilation.** Five chapters matching the chapters in the campaign book, packed to the brim with thoughts and advice that will help make running Tomb of Annihilation a fun and enjoyable experience for everyone.

**10 Encounter Maps.** 10 full-color battlemaps in both gridded and ungridded versions primed for virtual tabletops, that will help you run great encounters in both the jungles and cities of Chult.

**Monster Stat Blocks.** Pages and pages of monster stat blocks covering Chapters 3–5, neatly arranged together on pages, so you don't have to flip through several books.

**DM's Cheatsheets.** Neatly condensed notes of all locations in Chapters 3–5 for easy use at the table. Also includes a Tomb of Annihilation Cheatsheet with handy notes about the campaign's plot, and travel in Chult.

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Starting the Adventure</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Adventure Overview.....	2
Adventure Hooks .....	3
From Other Campaigns .....	3
Ticking Clock.....	4
<b>Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Overview & Structure.....	5
Running Chapter 1 .....	6
Sample Structure .....	10
<b>Chapter 2: The Land of Chult</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Overview & Structure.....	11
Running Chapter 2.....	13
The Expedition.....	14
Sample Structure .....	16
<b>Chapter 3: Dwellers of the Forbidden City</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Overview & Structure.....	18
Running Chapter 3.....	19
Sample Structure .....	22
<b>Chapter 4: Fane of the Night Serpent</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Overview & Structure.....	23
Running Chapter 4.....	24
<b>Chapter 5: Tomb of the Nine Gods</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Overview & Structure.....	27
Running Chapter 5.....	27

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout these resources:

- AC = Armor Class
- CG = Chaotic good
- CE = Chaotic evil
- CN = Chaotic neutral
- cp = copper piece(s)
- DC = Difficulty Class
- DM = Dungeon Master
- DMG = Dungeon Master's Guide
- ep = electrum piece(s)
- gp = gold piece(s)
- hp = hit points
- LE = Lawful evil
- LG = Lawful good
- LN = Lawful neutral
- N = Neutral
- NE = Neutral evil
- NG = Neutral good
- NPC = nonplayer character
- pp = platinum piece(s)
- pg. = page
- sp = silver piece(s)
- ToA = Tomb of Annihilation
- TPK = total party kill (when all PCs die)
- XP = experience points



## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

You have bought the book, your players are ready to go – now you just need to get yourself ready. When you're looking at 200+ pages of content, and an introductory chapter several pages long, 'just getting ready' can quickly feel a bit overwhelming.

In this chapter, we will give you an abbreviated overview of the adventure, provide ideas on how to start the adventure, and discuss what makes *Tomb of Annihilation* unique – and how to prepare for them!

### ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

*Tomb of Annihilation* is, in essence, a jungle survival horror adventure that ends in a giant dungeon crawl. The adventure is described in detail on the first few pages of the campaign book, but here is a condensed overview and a flow chart to help visualize the adventure.

- The archlich Acererak has created a device called a Soulmonger to transform an undead horror into a god.
- The Soulmonger is causing a death curse, which prevents resurrection magic from working and causes anyone who has already been resurrected to die slowly.
- The party is hired to find and destroy the Soulmonger, which they are told is located in Chult.
- The characters go to Port Nyanzaru to get ready for their journey into the jungle of Chult.
- The characters can learn from various NPCs that the cause of the death curse lies in the ruined city of Omu, and several other NPCs can show them how to find it.
- When they arrive in Omu, the characters must find nine puzzle cubes to gain entrance to the Tomb of the Nine Gods, where the Soulmonger is hidden.
- One or more of puzzle cubes are taken by yuan-ti and must be retrieved from the Fane of the Night Serpent.
- When they have all nine puzzle cubes, the characters must explore six levels of the Tomb of the Nine Gods before finally reaching the Soulmonger and eventually doing battle with the archlich Acererak himself!

#### CHAPTER 1: PORT NYANZARU

*For character of levels 1+*

The characters arrive in Port Nyanzaru where they can grab supplies, hear rumors, go on side quests, and experience the culture of Chultan society.

#### CHAPTER 2: THE LAND OF CHULT

*For characters of levels 1–6*

The characters explore the dangerous jungles of Chult, while searching for the Soulmonger, and eventually arrive at the ruined city of Omu.

#### CHAPTER 3: DWELLERS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

*For characters of levels 5–8*

The characters visit shrines of nine dead trickster gods in Omu to collect puzzle cubes that will allow them to enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods.

#### CHAPTER 4: FANE OF THE NIGHT SERPENT

*For characters of levels 7–9*

The yuan-ti that live in Omu derail the characters' attempts to get all nine puzzle cubes and need to be dealt with before characters can enter the tomb.

#### CHAPTER 5: TOMB OF THE NINE GODS

*For characters of levels 9+*

The characters get into the tomb with no option for turning back. At the bottom of the dungeon, the party destroys the Soulmonger and fights its creator.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The character hooks described in the campaign book (*ToA*, pg. 10) hinge on the characters being connected to Syndra Silvane. If you want to provide your players with other adventure hooks than the ones presented in the book, here are a few backstory ideas you can present to your players.

### CHULTAN NATIVE

You were born in Chult and have lived in Port Nyanzaru your whole life. You're hoping to improve your status by accompanying some foreign adventurers into the jungle and finding some riches.

### CLEANSE THE LAND OF UNDEAD

You've been recruited by the Order of the Gauntlet to help cleanse the rampant undead from the land of Chult. You know that the order recently lost their forward base called Camp Righteous and has set up a new base called Camp Vengeance under the command of Commander Niles Breakbone (*ToA*, pg. 47).

### FLEEING THE RED WIZARDS

Unknowingly, you used to work with members of the Red Wizards of Thay. When you learned about the true nature of the evil scheme they were involved in, you fled, rather than taking part in it. You escaped to the distant land of Chult in hopes of escaping their wrath.

### RESCUE SOMEONE LOST IN THE JUNGLE

Someone you know or have been hired to rescue is lost in the jungles of Chult. They were last known to have been traveling on a large skyship called the Star Goddess (*ToA*, pg. 83) from Halruaa.

### RIVALRY WITH THE COMPANY OF THE YELLOW BANNER

You work as an archaeologist or anthropologist for an organization who seeks out ruins and artifacts. You've learned that a rival group called the Company of the Yellow Banner has made a big discovery in Chult, but you want to get there first. The Company of the Yellow Banner thinks they have found the location of an ancient valuable artifact called the Eye of Zaltec (*ToA*, pg. 127).

### SOMEONE YOU LOVE

Someone close to you was previously resurrected and has recently begun withering away slowly. Through various rumors, you have determined that the illness is widespread and its origin lies somewhere in the distant land of Chult.



## FROM OTHER CAMPAIGNS

While *Tomb of Annihilation* can start at 1st level, the actual story doesn't begin before 5th level. Thus, it can run very well as a continuation of other official adventures. Below is advice on how to transition from other fifth edition adventures to *Tomb of Annihilation*.

### GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

There are several adventures in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* that can lead to *Tomb of Annihilation*, but *Salvage Operation* and *Isle of the Abbey* work especially well.

In *Salvage Operation*, you can have the characters be hired by Syndra Silvane to retrieve the ship, since it has 'valuable research' on it. The ship has transported a scholar or adventurer employed by Syndra to find out more about the death curse and locate its origin, but who was lost in a storm before returning to her. On the ship, the characters can find journals or other records that trace the origin of the death curse to Chult. When she receives the information, Syndra explains further and hires the party to travel to Chult and end the death curse.

In *Isle of the Abbey*, you can have the cultists on Abbey Isle be survivors of an attack by Red Wizards instead of pirates. The cultists – who may worship Orcus or even be followers of Acererak – had been helping the lich Acererak build the Soulmonger on the isle, but Szass Tam learned of their work and sent Red Wizards to retrieve the artifact. Acererak took the Soulmonger and left to finish the work elsewhere, leaving the cultists to fend for themselves. The survivors can relate what the Soulmonger looks like and what it can be used for. They can also either point the party directly to Chult, if the characters seem likely to head out to stop Acererak right away. Alternatively, you can have Syndra Silvane approach the characters after they have cleared the isle to learn more about the Soulmonger and hire them to find and destroy it in Chult.

### LOST MINE OF PHANDELVER

Characters who have played through the events of *Lost Mines of Phandelver* can be drawn into the adventure by simply having Syndra Silvane approach them with the mission. You can make this contact seem more natural by having the mysterious map the players find in area 14 of the Wave Echo Cave be the map of Chult the characters would otherwise get from Syndra. Through divination magic, she has learned that the characters possess the map, and wants to kill two birds with one stone by also sending them to deal with the Soulmonger.

If the characters ever travel to Old Owl Well, you can also have the Red Wizard Harmun Kost foreshadow the adventure and the Red Wizards' role in it by changing the question he want to ask Agatha the Banshee to: "Where does the lich Acererak hide the Soulmonger?"

### WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST

After playing through the events of *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the characters are approached by one of the NPCs they may have had contact with during their time in Waterdeep, such as Mirt, Vajra Safahr, Laeral Silverhand, or even Jarlaxle Baenre, who hires them to end the death curse. It is perfectly reasonable to imagine that any one of these could have been resurrected during their long and adventurous lives, enabling them to play the exact same part in the adventure as Syndra Silvane otherwise would.

## TICKING CLOCK

A central theme in the adventure is the introduction of a 'ticking clock'. With each day that passes, the Soulmonger devours more souls and anyone who has been brought back from death in the past is slowly dying – including Syndra Silvane, the NPC who hires the characters to stop the death curse.

This creates a tender balance between urgency and exploration in the adventure. On one hand, the characters need to destroy the Soulmonger as quickly as possible. On the other hand, the characters need to acquire experience and items in order to stand a chance in the later chapters of the story. In addition, Chult has a lot of awesome places and quests to explore and characters may feel like they have to choose between exploring and racing to the finish.

### WHAT'S THE HURRY?

First, a quick overview of how the death curse works:

- The death curse started 20 days before the party is hired to find and destroy the Soulmonger.
- The hit point maximum of a revived creature is reduced by 1 for each day the Soulmonger is active.
- While active, the soul of any humanoid that dies anywhere on the planet is trapped within the Soulmonger and devoured within roughly 20 days.

If we assume that the characters are altruistic heroes, who care deeply about the world and those who inhabit it, the mere fact that unnamed people all over the world are dying slowly or having their souls consumed will be enough to motivate them to constantly hurry. If we're dealing with more callous characters, their primary concern may be the survival of their employer, Syndra Silvane, who is slowly wasting away. In this case, Syndra's starting hit points of 79 dictates exactly how long the characters have to destroy the Soulmonger. The characters want to complete the mission before she dies or they won't receive their reward from her.

Assuming the latter is the case, 79 days is probably more than enough time to complete the quest. The trek through the jungle from Port Nyanzaru to Omu is unlikely to take more than 30–50 days, even when you factor in the various detours the characters will probably take along the way. The characters will then spend a few days in Omu, and a few more in the Temple of the Nine Gods. All told, it is unlikely that the whole adventure takes more than 50–60 days to complete, unless the characters intentionally try to avoid completing it!

While the players may realize – by looking at the archmage's statblock – that they have more than two months to find and destroy the Soulmonger, that doesn't really help them much if they have no idea how long it will take to accomplish that feat. This uncertainty is likely to lead them to either hurry as much as possible, or not care about the ticking clock at all.

In the end, whether or not you do anything about the ticking clock – and what you do – depends on the kind of campaign you want to run. If you want the characters to feel a constant pressure to hurry up, travel fast, take risks, and stay constantly focused on the task before them, you will want to play up the effects of the death curse and set a tight deadline. Conversely, if you prefer to let the characters explore the many interesting locations in the jungles of Chult at their own leisure, you will want to ensure that the players have ample time to complete the mission – and that they know they have enough time.

## CHANGING THE DEATH CURSE

You can alleviate or increase the pressure of the ticking clock by changing the severity of the death curse.

**Reducing Urgency.** Instead of having revived characters lose 1 hit point every day, you can have them lose 1 hit die every ten day instead. This means that Syndra Silvane will survive for 180 days from when the Soulmonger was activated, instead of only 99 days.

**Increasing Urgency.** You can increase the party's urgency by having revived characters lose 2 hit points every day instead. This is a significant increase that reduces the timetable to about 30 days, which means that the characters will really have to hurry, since the trek to Omu can easily take about 20 days on its own.

## REDUCING UNCERTAINTY

You can use small reminders and updates to help the party have some sense of how much or how little they should hurry.

**Relax, Everything is Fine.** If the characters appear to feel pressured to move quicker than you actually want them to, you can have NPCs such as the lich Valindra Shadowmantle in the Heart of Ubtao (*ToA*, pg. 58) or the guardian naga Saja N'baza in Orolunga (*ToA*, pg. 80) give them more precise information about how the curse is progressing and how far away Omu is. These knowledgeable and powerful NPCs can even alleviate stress further by explaining how they have seen through divination magic or prophetic visions that the characters will make it in time, as long as they arrive in Omu within X amount of days – X being whatever amount of days seems reasonable to you.

**Hurry Up.** If you find that the characters aren't moving with as much urgency as you would like, you can have the same NPCs give grim warnings to hurry up instead. You can also have Syndra Silvane contact the party with *sending* spells from time to time, asking for updates on their progress and reminding them that her time is running out.

## STARTING BEFORE THE DEATH CURSE

The adventure states that the Soulmonger was activated 20 days before the adventure's start. However, you can have the death curse start after the characters arrive in Chult if they all have other adventure hooks for being there. For example, before anyone knows about the death curse, Syndra Silvane funds an expedition to Chult to uncover riches, find artifacts, chart maps, etc.

Because this mission is less urgent, the players can take their time exploring Port Nyanzaru, get their Charter of Exploration from Fort Beluarian, and then chase various rumors as they head into the jungle. Whenever you think the time is right, you can have Syndra contact the party via *sending* and ask them to return to Port Nyanzaru. The players may welcome this as an opportunity to resupply, cash in on their quests, and offload the treasure they have found.

When they return, Syndra explains that she has the death curse and that Harper agents have learned that it is being caused by a device called the Soulmonger, which is somewhere in Chult. She and/or Wakanga Otamu can suggest seeking out the aarakocra of Kir Sabal, the albino dwarves of Shilku (see *Secrets of Shilku*), or the guardian naga of Orolunga, to learn more. This way, the characters can explore Chult without urgency and acquire much-needed treasure and experience before the clock starts ticking and they have to hurry up.



## CHAPTER 1: PORT NYANZARU

This chapter of the DM's resources provides structure for Chapter 1 of *Tomb of Annihilation*, alternative arrival scenarios, descriptions and tips for handling the side quests, and advice and suggestions for each of the potential guides.

### OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

The first chapter of *Tomb of Annihilation* is in its essence just about the characters preparing themselves to head into the jungles of Chult. The chapter describes Port Nyanzaru and its inhabitants in great detail, and also offer suggestions for various activities. However, it doesn't really provide a structure for the chapter, instead leaving that up to the DM and the players to figure out.

While allowing the characters to figure everything out for themselves is fun, and certainly something you should do, having just a loose plan and some contingencies in mind can help keep both yourself and your players entertained and on track.

### OBJECTIVES

Let's start with the objectives the characters are expected to accomplish while in Port Nyanzaru:

- **Learn information** about Chult and the death curse.
- **Find a guide** who can help them traverse the jungle.
- **Buy supplies** needed to survive a jungle expedition.

Also consider the objectives that you may want to accomplish while in Port Nyanzaru:

- **Entertain** the players with interesting encounters.
- **Foreshadow** various events, locations, and NPCs.
- **Steer the party** towards your favorite jungle locations.

Knowing what your objectives are helps you prepare what you want to happen in the city, and allows you to better communicate to the players what their goals are.

### LOOSE FRAMEWORK

Working from these objectives, we can make a sample structure for us to follow. It is perfectly fine if the characters stray from this structure, we just need one so we have some idea about which locations, encounters, and NPCs we need to prepare. Here's an example of how this structure could look:

- **Arrival.** The characters arrive in Port Nyanzaru.
- **Inn.** The characters learn about two inns and probably visit one of them, where they can meet guides and learn more information.
- **Red Bazaar.** The characters will likely head out into the Red Bazaar to shop for their expedition.
- **Merchant Prince(s).** The characters will probably seek out Wakanga or another merchant prince to get special equipment or information.
- **Departure.** When they're ready, the characters will depart Port Nyanzaru, likely toward Fort Beluarian.

### CHOOSING CONTENT

Armed with a clear understanding of what you and the characters' objectives in Port Nyanzaru are, as well as a loose structure, you then just need to determine what to fill the structure out with. What information do the characters learn, which potential guides do they meet, and so on. Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru features a wide array of locations, NPCs, guides, rumors, and more, so there's plenty to choose from. Since the choices you make here can influence where the characters end up going, and what they do as they travel into the jungle, it pays to think carefully about the content you present.

On the following pages we will cover these different aspects in more detail, offering quick summaries, advice, and recommendations about the various side quests, locations, NPCs, and guides found in Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru. Afterward, we will go over the sample structure again, this time filling in the specific content we have chosen to present to the party.

## RUNNING CHAPTER 1

Below we go over the information provided in *Tomb of Annihilation*'s first chapter, providing additional advice, insight, and extra content to help make the party's stay in Port Nyanzaru fun and memorable.

### ARRIVAL

In the book, Syndra Silvane teleports herself and the characters to Port Nyanzaru near the harbor ward, and she then leaves them more-or-less on their own. Below, you will find two encounters that can help you make the characters' arrival in Port Nyanzaru more memorable and get things going immediately.

### RACING ACCIDENT

If the characters arrive by teleportation, you can run the encounter below immediately after their arrival. After reading the introductory text as the characters arrive, read the following:

A motley crew of large lizards comes tearing through the streets, each one with a rider on its back. People in the streets hurry to get out of the way, looking amused rather than afraid. Cheers erupt as the riders and their mounts blaze by. The pack has nearly passed through when a bipedal lizard with large claws suddenly flips its rider from its back. The lizard pounces upon its dismounted rider, who is scrambling on the ground about 10 feet from you.

Roll initiative! The lizard is a **deinonychus**, which will attack its rider first before turning its attention to the nearest creature. The rider's name is Makao (CG Chultan human male **commoner**).

Once the dinosaur has been dealt with, guards rush in and survey the scene. If Makao survives, he offers to buy the characters a drink at the inn of their choice, Kaya's House of Repose (quiet inn) or the Thundering Lizard (raucous inn). Makao can also help the characters sign up for dinosaur racing, if they show interest.

If Makao is killed, the guards clear the street while the mess gets cleaned up and recommend that the characters rest up at one of the aforementioned inns.

### PIRATES & TURTLES

If the characters arrive in Port Nyanzaru by ship, you can start the adventure as they glide into the Bay of Chult aboard the Brazen Pegasus, a four-masted merchant ship out of Baldur's Gate. As the captain and the first mate go below deck to get gold to pay the **dragon turtle** Aremag's fee (*ToA*, pg. 42–43), a boarding party of pirates attack from a small boat which had been hiding behind a large rock in the bay.

Roll initiative! Five pirates (CN human **bandits**) board the boat and attack the characters, while the rest of the Brazen Pegasus' crew of noncombatants scurry to safety. As the fight rages, the characters notice that a larger pirate ship is approaching, bloodthirsty pirates filling its deck. Narrate how the larger ship is drawing closer each round, and will soon be close enough to board. Once the characters have defeated the boarding party – or just whenever you feel like it – you can read the following:

Suddenly, the pirate ship explodes into a splintery wreck as if struck by something huge from the waters of the bay.

You can then read the boxed text from page 43 of *Tomb of Annihilation*, which describes the dragon turtle Aremag as it appears from the water. The characters are likely to be spooked at this point, but fortunately the captain and first mate arrive with the chest from below deck and present the proper amount of gold to Aremag to allow for safe passage to Port Nyanzaru.

When the Brazen Pegasus gets to the dock, you can have the captain and crew of the ship relate the details of the pirate attack and the party's heroics to harbormaster Zindar (*ToA*, pg. 17), prompting him to give them the 'Hunt Pirates'-side quest. He can also provide directions to the port's two inns, Kaya's House of Repose (quiet inn) and the Thundering Lizard (raucous inn).





## SIDE QUESTS

Page 17 of the campaign book presents a wide array of side quests the characters can pick up in Port Nyanzaru. The following section breaks down each quest and provides suggestions as to which ones to focus on to get the campaign moving.

### 1. COLLECT A DEBT

A bookie (K'lahu) wants the party to beat up a **gladiator** (Taban) to get him to pay back a debt. If the characters are successful, they get paid and the gladiator follows them around the jungle for free. There are two issues with this quest.

First, a gladiator (CR 5) is far too strong for 1st-level characters to deal with. Second, if the party has a gladiator companion as they travel into the jungle, most encounters in Chapter 2 become trivial. You may want to save this quest for later if you think the party will return to Port Nyanzaru at some point before Chapter 3. Alternatively, you can change Taban from a gladiator to a **berserker** (CR 2), which will make him both a more appropriate challenge and less of an issue as a companion.

### 2. DISTRACTION AT FORT BELUARIAN

A Zhentarim **spy** named Rokah wants the party to create a distraction at Fort Beluarian so he can find dirt on the Flaming Fist commander Liara Portyr.

This quest is great and gets the players on a good starting path since they will need a charter of exploration. You can have Rokah approach the characters if they hang out in the Thundering Lizard.

### 3. ESCORT PRIEST TO CAMP VENGEANCE

An Order of the Gauntlet half-orc **priest** named Undril Silvertusk needs help getting to Camp Vengeance.

This is another great quest as it gets the characters trekking towards Camp Righteous, Camp Vengeance, and possibly even Mbala, which are great locations for level 2–3 parties. You can have Undril approach the characters if they hang out in Kaya's House of Repose.

### 4. EXPLORE ALDANI BASIN

An **acolyte** of Savras named Inete wants help getting to Aldani Basin to investigate visions she's had of red robed wizards.

This quest yields similar results to Escort a Priest to Camp Vengeance, but does not have as clear of a resolution. You may want to save this quest for later if you think the party may return to Port Nyanzaru as this quest can lead the players to Valindra Shadowmantle at the Heart of Ubtao once the players are a bit more powerful.

### 5. FIND ARTUS CIMBER

A half-elf magic user named **Xandala** wants to find **Artus Cimber** and pretends to be his daughter.

Before you present characters with the quest, you need to decide if you want to include Artus Cimber in the campaign. If this is your first time running *Tomb of Annihilation*, you may want to omit him entirely as he and his companion Dragonbait are extremely powerful allies that have the potential to overshadow or trivialize the party's challenges. If you want to include Artus Cimber in the campaign, you may not want to have Xandala reveal her magical abilities until the party finds Artus. She is also very powerful as a 9th-level sorcerer and can trivialize encounters in Chapter 2.

### 6. HELP A DYING MAN

A man named Omala has got in trouble with the law and has been given a death threat. He wants the characters to help him atone for his crime by asking forgiveness from the merchant prince Kwayothe. Kwayothe is willing to forgive Omala if the characters go kill a man named Shago in Fort Beluarian.

The main issue with this quest is that if the party is empathic enough to help Omala in the first place, they are likely going to take issue with assassinating someone no questions asked. Instead, you can have Kwayothe ask the characters to steal 200 gp worth of gems or jewelry from the house of the merchant prince Zhanthi (Kwayothe's mortal enemy). Kwayothe can even have her **succubus** and **incubus** disguise themselves as the guards at Zhanthi's front door to give the players a chance to slip in under cover of night. If you want to use this quest, you can have Omala approach the characters while they are shopping for supplies.

### 7. HELP THE LORD'S ALLIANCE

A Lord's Alliance **spy** named Lerek will trade a ship for a map of Orolunga and Nangalore.

By the time characters visit Nangalore and Orolunga, they should be fairly close to finding the answers and resources they need to get to Omu and are unlikely to want to return to Port Nyanzaru. Instead, you may want to change this quest to have Lerek looking for an accurate map of Mbala. You can have Lerek approach the characters in Kaya's House of Repose or the Thundering Lizard.

### 8. HUNT PIRATES

The harbormaster, **Zindar**, can pay the characters 2,000 gp for each pirate ship they capture and a 500 gp bonus for each pirate captain captured.

If the characters arrived by boat, you can offer them this quest upon arrival (see 'Arrival by Boat' on the previous page). If they arrived via teleportation, you can have Zindar offer this quest if the characters visit the harbor looking for a boat ride to Fort Beluarian or Shilku.

### 9. SAVE AN INNOCENT MAN

A chultan man named Belym wants the characters to help him save his husband Draza, who has been sentenced to Executioner's Run for stealing, but is innocent.

This quest should provide a quick little encounter and gives some insight into Chultan culture, so it is worth considering. You can have Belym approach the characters during shopping. On the following page, you will find advice on running this encounter, and this download also includes a map showing 'Executioner's Run', which you can use when running the encounter.

### 10. SEEK WISDOM AT OROLUNGA

An **acolyte** of Savras named Eshek runs into the characters, whispers, "Speak to the wise guardian of Orolunga, east of Mbala. She can direct you to that which you seek," and then collapses.

You can have Eshek approach the characters during shopping. It is recommended that you have Eshek provide no additional context after waking up and let this statement be weird and mysterious. Orolunga provides the answers about Omu and you may want your players to explore elsewhere before heading straight to Orolunga for story pacing.

## LOCATIONS IN THE CITY

There are a number of fun locations in Port Nyanzaru for the characters to explore. This section focuses on a few of the locations that are most likely to come up, offering additional content for them and/or advice on how to present them to the party.

### 2. EXECUTIONER'S RUN

The pit is 15 feet deep, 50 feet wide, and 200 feet long (see the map 'Executioner's Run' included with the download of this supplement). If the characters head near here for shopping or exploring, you can run the quest 'Save an Innocent Man'.

When the characters arrive at Executioner's Run, two **deinonychus** (the text mentions velociraptors, but the tiny beasts won't be fast enough to chase down prisoners) have already been released in the middle of the large pit. Shortly after, Draza and two other **commoners** are thrown into the pit at the western end. They must make it past the dinosaurs – who notices them immediately – and get to the other end of the pit to escape up the ropes hanging there. The dinosaurs target the other two men first, but even so, Draza is unlikely to survive without aid.

The characters can aid Draza from the edge of the pit by casting subtle spells or using class features to buff him or distract the dinosaurs. You can have characters casting spells with somatic components make DC 11 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to avoid being noticed. If the characters are caught interfering, they may be forced to pay a 10 gp fine, or – if they were very heavy handed – be thrown into the pit themselves!

### 4. GOLDENTHRONE

If the players inquire about racing dinosaurs, perhaps after seeing dinosaurs racing through the streets (see 'Arrival by Teleportation'), you can have any NPC tell them that a dinosaur race is scheduled to start near Goldenthron in a few hours.

During the dinosaur race, characters can either participate or place bets. Placing bets is straightforward: you place a bet and roll to see if you win. The real fun is in participating in the race. For a more elaborate version of the racing rules, we recommend taking a look at the **Tomb of Annihilation Companion** by Sean McGovern.

### 18. RED BAZAAR

Both of these inns are a great place to gather information. You may have people suggest that the travelers gather some rumors from people at the inn. At any time you can have 2d6 patrons at the bar in the Thundering Lizard and 1d8 in Kaya's House of Repose. Below is a table of random NPCs you can use to fill out these two locations, some of which are potential guides or quest-givers.

### 24. TEMPLE OF TYMORA

If the characters explore Malar's Throat or if you need to add some excitement to a day of shopping, you can run **Escape from Malar's Throat** (included with this download if you bought the Complete DM's Bundle) which is a short dungeon adventure based on Random Encounter 6 from Appendix B of *Tomb of Annihilation*, where undead attack the city. The characters will be asked to save children from the Temple of Tymora during the undead attack and need to find a secret exit below the temple through a short dungeon. Upon completion of this dungeon, the characters should have enough experience to reach level 2 and feel more confident before heading into the jungle.

### Thundering Lizard Clientele

d12	Name	Description
1	Rokah	N male Chultan human Zhentarim spy with the quest "Create a Distraction at Fort Beluarian"
2	Lerek Dashlynd	LN male Illuskan human Lord's Alliance spy with the quest "Help the Lord's Alliance"
3	Jade Shoe	CG female tabaxi minstrel who plays a harp
4	Olo Waverider	NG female turtle druid who just got into the port from the Snout of Omgar
5	Atuar	CN male Chultan human who can sell the characters dancing monkey fruit from the black market
6	Timo Glengariff	NG male human from Neverwinter who is a retired archeology professor
7	Jushu	LN male Chultan human ex-town guard who is heading out to Fort Beluarian to join the Flaming Fist
8	Musharib	LG male albino dwarf spirit warrior and potential guide for the party
9	Hew Hackinstone	CN male shield dwarf and potential guide for the party
10	Azaka Stormfang	NG female Chultan human weretiger and potential guide for the party
11	Faroul & Gondolo	NG male Calishite human scout and CG male lightfoot halfling scout who are potential guides
12	River Mist and Flask of Wine	CG female and male tabaxi hunters and potential guides for the party

### Kaya's House of Repose Clientele

d8	Name	Description
1	Undril Silvertusk	LG female half-orc priest of Torm with the quest "Escort a Priest to Camp Vengeance"
2	Cloud on the Mountaintop	CG male tabaxi minstrel who plays a lute
3	Volothamp "Volo" Geddarm	CG male human historian, author and bombastic world traveler who is promoting his new book, <i>Volo's Guide to Monsters</i> , at various taverns and setting up audiences with the seven merchant princes
4	Inete	LG female Chultan acolyte of Savras with the quest "Explore the Aldani Basin"
5	Sunny	CG male gnome tinkerer who knows a thing or two about common traps and how to disable them
6	Selu	LE male Chultan human who is laying low after committing murder for hire
7	Eku	LG couatl disguised as a middle-aged Chultan woman and potential guide for the party
8	Sasha	N female albino dwarf who had enough of living in the jungle and recently moved to the port

## FINDING A GUIDE

A big part of Chapter 1 is finding a guide that will help lead the characters into the jungle. But, before you try to decide which guides you should present to the party, you should first consider if you even want a guide at all.

Guides can be extremely helpful to the party as they can share local knowledge about Chultan history, jungle plants, animals, and so on, which also enables you to better communicate the setting to the players. Guides can also help with combat, allowing the characters to take on more challenging jungle threats. Many of the guides also have agendas that give the characters a place to go when they first set out into the jungle, which can help you get the adventure off to an exciting start.

There are, however, also several reasons why guides may be either unnecessary or potentially unwanted in your campaign. First, you may not want to have to run an NPC that is always with the party. Second, there are plenty of quests in Port Nyanzaru that can give adventurers a clear purpose in the jungle, and since the party has a map, they can usually figure out how to get there on their own.

In the end, whether or not the characters bring a guide, and which guide they bring, is up to them. But you can influence their decision by either having NPCs strongly recommend acquiring a guide or, conversely, only bring it up if the party inquires about guides on their own. Each of the guides found in Port Nyanzaru (*ToA*, pg. 33–35) has their own quirks and agendas. Below we will go over each, offering a brief summary as well as our notes about the guide to help you decide which guide(s) you want to put in front of the characters.

### AZAKA STORMFANG

*NG female Chultan human weretiger*

- Price: 5 gp/day and 30 days up front
- Known Destinations: Orolunga, Firefinger
- Agenda: Recover mask from pterafolk at Firefinger.

Azaka hides her weretiger curse from the party for as long as possible, but once the cat (tiger) is out of the bag, her strength may trivialize combat encounters in Chapter 2.

### EKU

*Couatl disguised as a Chultan human woman*

- Price: 5 gp/day and 30 days up front
- Known Destinations: Orolunga, Mbala, Kir Sabal
- Agenda: Rid the world of Nanny Pu'pu at Mbala

Eku hides her couatl form from the party for as long as possible, but once she reveals herself, her magic may trivialize jungle survival and combat encounters in Chapter 2.

### FAROULA & GONDOLO

*NG male Calishite human scout & CG male lightfoot halfling scout with 13 hit points*

- Price: 5 gp/day and 30 days up front
- Known Destinations: Needle's Bones (have map for it)
- Agenda: Get hired by a group that can get them to the treasure at Needle's Bones

Dealing with two NPCs may be a drag on combat. You can choose to have these guides be cowards and stay out of combat when they can. If you are using experience points for leveling, you may want Faroul and Gondolo only take 1 NPC share of the experience rather than 2.

### HEW HACKINSTONE

*CN shield dwarf berserker*

- Price: 5 gp/day and 30 days up front
- Known Destinations: Wyrmeart Mine
- Agenda: Get hired by a group that he can bring to Wyrmeart Mine to slay the dragon that took his arm.

Hew leads the party directly to Wyrmeart Mine regardless of where they want to go. Fortunately, **Secrets of Shilku** fleshes out the potential adventure that results from using Hew as a guide. If you want your players to spend most of Chapter 2 exploring northern Chult locations, you can omit Hew from the list of guides.

### MUSHARIB

*LG male albino dwarf spirit warrior*

- Price: 5 gp/day
- Known Locations: Hrakhamar, Shilku
- Agenda: Convince the group to help him reclaim Hrakhamar and find Moradin's Gauntlet

Musharib's spell list gives the characters a lot of utility that has the potential to be a lot of fun, such as *speak with animals* and *speak with plants*, but it may require some extra improvisation from the DM.

### RIVER MIST & FLASK OF WINE

*CG female and male tabaxi hunters*

- Price: 4 gp/day or half of the treasure found
- Known Locations: Mbala
- Agenda: Learn more about Artus Cimber and report back to their Zhentarim masters

If your game heavily features Artus Cimber, River Mist and Flask of Wine may be antagonistic to the party's interests.

### SALIDA

*NE female Chultan yuan-ti pureblood*

- Price: 5 gp/day
- Known Locations: Omu, Nsi Wastes (see **Whispers in the Nsi Wastes**)
- Agenda: Inform Ras Nsi of adventurers traveling south with her sending stone.

Salida will essentially betray the party when they get to Omu. If you suspect your party will not enjoy such a betrayal, you may want to omit Salida from the guide options.

### QAWASHA AND KUPALUE

*NG male Chultan druid and vegepygmy (Fort Beluarian)*

- Price: 5 gp/day or less if the party is keen on destroying undead
- Known Locations: Detrita in Nsi Wastes (see **Whispers in the Nsi Wastes**)
- Agenda: Lead the players into undead regions so they help purge the land of undead.

Qawasha may lead the party off course to seek undead.

### SHAGO

*CG male Chultan gladiator (Fort Beluarian)*

- Price: 5 gp/day and 30 days up front
- Known Locations: None
- Agenda: Impress Liara Portyr to gain ranks in the Flaming Fist

Shago is extremely formidable in combat and may trivialize combat encounters in Chapter 2.

## PLANNING FOR PORT NYANZARU

Going back to the loose structure presented at the start of this chapter, we can start filling in some of the locations, NPCs, and encounters we have covered on the previous pages. The choices below are meant as examples that can provide inspiration about how to structure and prepare for sessions in Port Nyanzaru.

### MAKING OBJECTIVES CLEAR

Our first priority is to ensure that characters know what they're doing in Port Nyanzaru, as this allows them to control the pace and feel a sense of agency. To that end, we will have Syndra Silvane (or another NPC they encounter shortly after arrival) tell them directly that they should spend some time in Port Nyanzaru learning more about Chult, finding a guide, and buying supplies before heading into the jungle.

### GET THE PARTY STARTED

Once they know what they are supposed to get done in Port Nyanzaru, we can help the characters further by getting them started and steering them toward places where they can learn more. We will do this by running the 'Racing Accident'-encounter immediately after the characters arrive, and have either Makao or one of the guards arriving shortly after tell the characters to head to the Thundering Lizard or Kaya's House of Repose to rent rooms. This may also inspire the characters to inquire about racing dinosaurs, which should be fun.

### GUIDES & SHOPPING

Once at the inn of their choice, we can present the characters with our choice of the guides, as well as various NPCs that can provide quests or information.

While the characters can read a posting with all the guides' names outside the inns, we will have Hew Hackinstone, Musharib, and Salida be inside the inns. We choose these three guides since we would like to run either Wurmheart Mine, Hrakhtar, or the Nsi Wastes during Chapter 2. We can also have Volothamp Geddarm be at one of the inns to provide additional information.

Since the inns are also near the Red Bazaar, the characters will also have the opportunity to stock up for their expedition, and should be able to take the reigns from here. If we don't want to bother with shopping, we can also have the guide the characters choose offer to procure the needed supplies (at a markup, of course).

### ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Now that we have a rough idea of what we can expect the characters to do and where we can expect them to go, we can prepare and sprinkle in small encounters to foreshadow future events and keep things entertaining.

While the characters are at the inn, we can have either Undril Silvertusk or Rokah (depending on the inn they choose, see pg. 10 of this supplement) approach the characters and present their sidequests to the party.

While they are at the Red Bazaar or in the streets, we can have Omala, Eshek, and/or Belym (*ToA*, pg. 17) approach the characters and present their side quests. If we choose Omala, we will prepare their encounter with Kawyothé, and if we choose Belym, we will prepare to run the 'Executioner's Run'-encounter. To make the characters' stay in Port Nyanzaru longer and more exciting, we will also prepare to have the undead overrun Malar's Throat as the characters are traveling through the streets, and then run the adventure **Escape from Malar's Throat**.

## SAMPLE STRUCTURE

When we bring everything together, we end with a structure for Chapter 1 that looks something like this:

- **Arrival.** The characters arrive in Port Nyanzaru.
- **Encounter: Racing Accident.** Run the 'Racing Accident'-encounter letting the characters know that dinosaur racing is a thing and steering them organically towards one of the inns.
- **Inn.** The characters can meet the guides Hew Hackinstone, Musharib, or Salida, the quest-givers Rokah or Undril Silvertusk, and Volothamp Geddarm.
- **Red Bazaar.** The characters may meet Omala, Eshek, and/or Belym while shopping for supplies.
- **Merchant Prince(s).** The characters will probably seek out Wakanga and/or Kwayothé at some point.
- **Additional Encounters.** We prepare to also run 'Dinosaur Racing', if the characters seek it out themselves, 'Executioner's Run', if the characters take up Belym's offer, and 'Escape from Malar's Throat', which we will spring on the characters when they are well rested and have nothing better to do.

By preparing each of these scenarios, we should have more than two sessions worth of content in Port Nyanzaru alone. This both serves to make the city more memorable, and also helps us to put some levels on the party before they head into the jungle. As mentioned, this is just an example of how a structure can look, but hopefully it provides you with an idea of how to prepare for and run Chapter 1: Port Nyanzaru.





## CHAPTER 2: THE LAND OF CHULT

In Chapter 2: The Land of Chult the characters venture into the jungle to find the Soulmonger. During this journey in the jungle, they are meant to find treasure, gain experience, and eventually find the lost city of Omu.

In the following chapter of this supplement, you will find advice, suggestions, and tools meant to simplify survival mechanics, help get the party off to a good, purposeful start in their jungle exploration, and provide some guidance for random encounters. Additionally, we will highlight some of the locations that may be most entertaining for your players so that you can steer them towards those, if you want to.



### OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

The second chapter of *Tomb of Annihilation* is about the characters exploring the jungles of Chult until they find Omu. The chapter describes a handful of rules for travel and then jumps right into describing a multitude of locations spread out across Chult. The book provides no real structure for the chapter, instead leaving that up to the DM and the players to figure out. This sandbox-approach can be freeing, but can also create some issues for the DM.

With careful planning in Chapter 1, you should have some idea of where the characters are likely to go at the start of Chapter 2. However, due to the sandbox-nature of this chapter, you still won't be able to plan too much without taking away agency from your players. Chapter 2 of this supplement explores how and what to plan to keep the jungle experience open for your players to explore, while having a clear plan (or two) for how to transition to Chapter 3.

### OBJECTIVES

To get a sense about how we can structure Chapter 2, we first take a look at the objectives the characters are expected to accomplish while in the Land of Chult:

- **Learn that the Soulmonger is in Omu.**
- **Find Omu** so that they can destroy the Soulmonger.

Also consider the objectives that you may want to accomplish while in the Land of Chult:

- **Entertain** the players with interesting encounters.
- **Level up** the characters with experience and treasure so that they are equipped to face the threats ahead.
- **Steer the party** towards your favorite jungle locations.

Knowing what your objectives are helps you prepare what you want to happen in the jungle, and allows you to better communicate to the players what their goals are.

## THE SOULMONGER AND OMU

The first objective is for the characters to learn that the Soulmonger is in Omu. *Tomb of Annihilation* lists three NPCs from whom they can learn this information:

- Grandfather Zitembe in Port Nyanzaru (pg. 21)
- Valindra Shadowmantle in the Heart of Ubtao (pg. 58)
- Saja N'baza in Orolunga (pg. 80)

The second objective is for the characters to learn how to find Omu. There are a number of NPCs that can offer this information.

- Salida and Eku in Port Nyanzaru (pg. 34–35)
- Aarakocra in Kir Sabal (pg. 68)
- Saja N'baza in Orolunga (pg. 80)
- Tzindelor in the Wyrmeheart Mine (pg. 75)
- Valindra Shadowmantle in the Heart of Ubtao (pg. 58)
- Zalkoré in Nangalore (pg. 74)

The book provides optional NPCs that can also share this information in the event that characters get stuck:

- Krr'ook in Dungrunglung (pg. 49)
- Nephyr in Firefinger (pg. 52)
- Nanny Pu'pu in Mbala (pg. 72)
- Bwayes O'tamu in the Wreck of the Narwhal (pg. 84)
- Survivors in Wreck of the Star Goddess (pg. 84)
- If you are running **Secrets of Shilku**, the albino dwarves of Shilku Outpost know the location of Omu.

Of course, these are just the sources that are mentioned in the book. You can always decide that other locations or NPCs may provide the information that the characters are after. If the players seem to tire of the jungle at any point, you should never hesitate to simply have the next NPC they encounter provide the way to Omu, so you can keep things moving and not drag Chapter 2 out too long.

## LOOSE FRAMEWORK

Working from these objectives we can try to make a sample structure for us to follow. It is perfectly fine if the characters stray from this structure, we just need one so we have some idea about which locations, encounters and NPCs we need to prepare. Here's an example of how this structure could look:

- **Fort Beluarian.** The characters set out to Fort Beluarian to get a Charter of Exploration.
- **Follow Chapter 1 Quests or Guide Agendas.** The characters likely head towards a location learned from a guide or side quest during Chapter 1.
- **Encounters that lead to fun locations.** While in the jungle, we make sure that lead to encounters that are fun and/or gives them information about the Soulmonger and the ruins of Omu.
- **Arriving at Omu.** The characters arrive at Omu and Chapter 3 begins.

## CHOOSING CONTENT

Armed with a clear understanding of what you and the characters' objectives in the Land of Chult are, as well as a loose structure, you then just need to determine what to fill the structure out with, including which encounters you want to run, which survival mechanics you want to implement, and which locations you want to offer up once they complete their initial quests from Chapter 1.

On the following pages we will cover these different aspects in more detail, offering quick summaries, advice and recommendations about survival mechanics and locations in Chapter 2. Afterward, we will go over the sample structure again, filling in our content of choice.



## RUNNING CHAPTER 2

In this section, we will go over the party's expedition into the jungle, offering advice and resources that will help make traveling in Chult more manageable.

### SURVIVAL MECHANICS

The *Tomb of Annihilation*-campaign book lays out rules for surviving in the jungle (*ToA*, pg. 11) and at the start of Chapter 2 (*ToA*, pg. 37–40). There's a lot of information on those pages, but to summarize, the three most important components of survival mechanics you need to keep in mind are: weather, food, and water.

#### WEATHER

The volatile weather of Chult can affect the characters speed of travel, their access to resources such as food and water, and even pose a direct danger to the party in extreme circumstances. To determine the weather on any given day, you can roll for random weather conditions (temperature, rain, and wind) using the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg. 109) or the *Tomb of Annihilation* Cheatsheet provided with this product.

If you don't want to get bogged down doing this each day of travel, you can also set up a 30-day calendar before the characters even start their journey into the jungle (a template and a sample calendar are provided with this product). Having the weather planned out from the start saves you time on each day of travel and allows you to focus on and prepare for the few times where weather actually matters, such as when there's extreme rain, extreme heat, or long periods without rain.

#### FOOD

Since the party is sponsored by Syndra Silvane, you can have her cover the cost of 30 days of rations for each member of the party. Alternatively, you can allow the characters to harvest food from the monsters they kill in the jungle. All told, food is unlikely to be an issue for the party, so unless you want to maintain full realism, tracking food is unlikely to be worth the hassle. You can simply assume that the characters manage to keep themselves well fed throughout their trek into the jungle.

#### WATER

Dehydration is probably the biggest danger for the party, but luckily it rains a lot in Chult. If the party purchased rain catchers in Port Nyanzaru, or find them along the way, they should have no trouble collecting enough water except for when there's a long period of dry weather. If you have made a pre-rolled calendar, you can consult it to determine if there are any longer dry periods (or intentionally create one). You can use those periods of drought to create a few challenging days of travel for your characters where they may be fighting with a level of exhaustion, or risk drinking from the water infected with throat leeches (*ToA*, pg. 40). The rest of the time – when the party has ready access to drinkable water because of consistent rain – you can choose to not bother with tracking water at all.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

There are approximately 100 different random encounters in Appendix B of *Tomb of Annihilation*. The book suggests that you roll a d20 three times per day of game time, checking for encounters each morning, afternoon, and evening or night. An encounter occurs on a roll of 16 or higher. You then roll percentile dice and check the Wilderness Encounters table for the terrain appropriate to where the characters are.

If you want your players to have a truly random experience in the jungle, you can try to predict where they are headed and roll the terrain-appropriate encounters before each session and mark them on your weather calendar (see the previous section on this page).

### USING RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Before you start thinking about *how* you want to use random encounters, you may want to consider whether or not you want to use – truly – random encounters at all. The main issue with encounters rolled at random on a table is that they often have very little meaning or consequence, and that they are often more tedious than fun – and this holds true for many of the encounters provided by the *Tomb of Annihilation* campaign book. Losing a few hit points to a randomly encountered constrictor snake, just to have a long rest and be no worse for wear, has no impact on the game or the story, and is unlikely to be an exciting encounter in itself. That means it's probably just a bad encounter – and why would you want to have bad encounters waste valuable game time?

**Running 'Bad' Random Encounters.** If you decide that you want to roll for random encounters, but don't want to bog down sessions with meaningless altercations with jungle critters, it's perfectly fine to just breeze past boring encounters. When you roll an encounter that you can immediately tell will be meaningless and inconsequential, such as the aforementioned constrictor snake, you can instead just describe how the snake attacked one of the party members, but was quickly shaken off. You accomplish largely the same thing – you show the players that there's snakes in the jungle – but it takes you half a minute instead of half an hour to get done.

**Planning 'Random' Encounters.** To avoid bothering with meaningless encounters, you can also take a little time to plan out your random encounters better. Of course, that makes them less random, but random isn't really the *true* goal of these travel encounters – having fun is. Non-deadly combat encounters only have purpose if they serve to drain the party's resources, so you need something else to happen before the party can rest and get back to full power. You can place a random combat encounter either right before the party arrives at a major location (where they will need their resources), during a period of drought or during a tropical storm (where they can't get a good long rest), or on the same day as other random encounters, that in combination will make for a tense and challenging day of adventure. The rest of the time – during the middle of a five-day journey to another location, for example – you can run fun and interesting non-combat encounters such as 'Explorer, dead' or 'Chwinga' (*ToA*, pg. 199 & 197, respectively).

**Additional Reading.** If you want to read more about making better encounters, you can also check out our **blog post on the subject at [eventyrgames.com](http://eventyrgames.com).**

## ENCOUNTERS WITH PURPOSE

Rather than rolling on the random encounters table in the book, you can select encounters that you think will be meaningful and place them in a way that moves your story along, providing a segue between the jungle and the location the party is approaching.

For example, if the party nears Kir Sabal, you can run the aaracokra random encounter. If the party nears Mbala, they may encounter flying monkeys. If the party nears Hrakhamar or Wyrmeheart Mine, they may encounter albino dwarves. If the party nears aldani basin, they may encounter aldani, and so on.

For times when the party is far from a destination or you prefer to just run encounters that are fun and exciting, we recommend the following encounters from Appendix B of *Tomb of Annihilation*:

- **Almiraj, frogemoth, jacculi, zorbo, kamadan, flail snail, su-monster.** Introduce your players to the unique animals of Chult that represent the nine trickster gods of Omu before they get there. No need to include eblis if you think the party will go by way of Kir Sabal and Nangalore. Grungs are mentioned in detail further down on this list.
- **Chwinga.** These creatures are unique and iconic to Chult and can make for fun non-combat encounters. You can have a chwinga show up several times during the party's travels, playing small pranks and offering minor assistance in the form of food or a clutch *guidance* spell when a character just misses a DC.
- **Dinosaurs.** Fighting or witnessing these majestic creatures helps create the fantasy world of Chult for your players. A brief encounter with a non-threatening herbivore such as brontosaurus or stegosaurus can be fun, while a pack of allosauruses or velociraptors can make for a deathly combat encounter.
- **Explorer, dead.** The book has a fun table to give your characters a gruesome scene showing how deadly the jungle can be. This is a good encounter to include early in the chapter.
- **Flaming Fist.** Reinforce the idea that getting a Charter of Exploration was worth it, or that skipping getting one has consequences.
- **Grungs.** As described later, Dungrunglung is an awesome location, but there are no quests that lead to it. Consider throwing in a random grung encounter that leads the characters to Dungrunglung. Perhaps the grungs capture an NPC, steal supplies, or try to enlist the characters to help them back at their base.
- **Mad Monkey Mist.** The idea of Mad Monkey Mist is super scary and fun. Consider combining this with a combat encounter for extra fun.
- **Night Hag.** If you are into heavy foreshadowing, have one of the Sewn Sisters visit the party one night.
- **Rare Plants.** Discovery of these unique Chultan plants are nice to break up combat encounters or can be used to set the stage for a combat encounter, such as a jaculi hiding in a wukka nut tree.
- **Statue of Ubtao.** This encounter provides some intrigue to jungle exploration and can be a nice setting for a combat encounter. For example, a group of su-monsters watch the characters try to deal with the statue and attempt to seal their packs while distracted.
- **Undead.** Any time characters travel in undead areas, you have free reign to throw undead monsters at them. The ankylosaurus zombie is highly recommended. You may want to save the tyrannosaurus zombie for Chapter 5 in the Tomb of the Nine Gods.

## THE EXPEDITION

In this section, we take a look at how the characters' journey into the jungles of Chult can look, and give advice on specific locations, encounters, and events.

### STARTING WITH FORT BELUARIAN

If you have underscored the need for a Charter of Exploration, it is likely that the party's first stop on the expedition is Fort Beluarian. If you want to make this more likely, you have potential guides insist that the characters pick up a Charter of Exploration to avoid being robbed and beaten by any patrol of Flaming Fists they encounter. You can also have the spy Rokah give the characters the quest 'Create a Distraction at Fort Beluarian' (*ToA*, pg. 17) to motivate them further and make their visit to Fort Beluarian more exciting.

### RUNNING FORT BELUARIAN

While Fort Beluarian is described in great detail in the campaign book (*ToA*, pg. 54–58), the characters won't have much to do here except pick up their Charter of Exploration, some additional supplies or guides, and perhaps a few side quests (see the following page). If you want to keep it that way, you can keep the characters stay at Fort Beluarian short and to the point.

If you want to make a bit more out of the characters' visit to Fort Beluarian, you can have Rokah approach them with the quest to create a distraction, so he can sneak in and find proof of Liara Portyr's treachery. If you are already past Port Nyanzaru, you can also have Rokah approach the characters when they arrive at the fort, as he notices the newcomers and hope they are ready to aid him in his plan.

A quick structure for the characters' visit at Fort Beluarian could look something like this:

- The characters arrive and are greeted by the soldiers. The soldiers allow them inside and ask them to wait in the courtyard while they report to the Commander.
- If they haven't already received the quest from Rokah, the spy approaches them while they wait in the courtyard, and asks them to create a distraction. If one of the characters is a stealthy character, Rokah may also suggest that the character sneaks into Portyr's quarters with him (giving that character a chance to find the *sending stone*).
- The characters are brought before Liara Portyr, who can present them with one or more quests (see the following page), as well as give them a Charter of Exploration in exchange for a 50 gp fee.
- Before leaving the fort, the characters create a distraction, which could be done by challenging some of the Flaming Fist to a jousting contest (area 7), opening the Raptor Pen (area 10B), or ringing the alarm bell in the Bell Tower (area 10F). Remember to point these features out to the characters when they arrive, so they have a chance to realize their options.
- Depending on their plan and how discrete they are, the characters may find themselves being chased into the jungle by Flaming Fist soldiers.



## QUESTS IN THE JUNGLE

When the characters have acquired their Charter of Exploration (*ToA*, pg. 54) – or if they have decided to chance the expedition without it – they are likely to either follow up on some of the quests they got from Port Nyanzaru or Fort Beluarian, or be driven by their guide's motivations. Because you control what information is available to the characters and which quests are given to them, you can get at least a rough idea of where their journey will take them, which in turn allows you to plan ahead.

Below is an overview of the quests that are likely to guide the characters' expedition into the jungles of Chult, including advice on how to handle them.

### QUESTS FROM FORT BELUARIAN

Because Fort Beluarian is the most likely first destination for the characters, this section explores some of the quest lines that stem from there (*ToA*, pg. 54–58).

**Creating a Distraction at Fort Beluarian.** If one of the players help Rokah break into Liara Portyr's office and find her *sending stone*, you can have Zaroum Al-Saryak (the pirate captain who has the other sending stone) try to contact Liara while one of the characters is holding it. If you have Zaroum mention Jahaka Anchorage, it may propel the players to hunt down the pirates per Zindar's quest 'Hunt Pirates'.

**Ghoul Hunters.** Liara wants the characters to hunt down some ghouls and bring back their heads for a free charter of exploration and some gold. This quest does not lead to a specific location, and characters may be hesitant to backtrack all the way to Fort Beluarian once they have the heads. You may want to have Liara let the characters drop off the ghouls at a Flaming Fist outpost in Mezro, and get their charter there.

**Shilku Reconnaissance.** Liara wants the characters to explore Shilku Bay and will pay for their passage by boat. If the characters are interested in this quest, you can run the adventure **Secrets of Shilku** (included with this product if you have purchased the Complete DM's Bundle).

**Strangers in a Strange Land.** Liara wants the characters to explore an area south of Fort Beluarian where giant footprints have been reported. The characters will have to explore Hvalspyd to complete the quest. This quest is a bit of a dead end as meeting with the giants does not lead the characters in any particular direction and there is no map or particularly exciting events at this location. If you are not interested in including the Artus Cimber sub-plot, consider omitting this quest.

### QUESTS FROM PORT NYANZARU

There are four quests (*ToA*, pg. 17) that take the party from Port Nyanzaru into the jungle.

**Escort a Priest to Camp Vengeance or Explore Aldani Basin.** If the characters are excited about either of these quests, you may want to prepare Yellyark, Camp Righteous, and Camp Vengeance (especially if they are traveling up River Shoshenstar). Once they arrive at Camp Vengeance, they may continue on to Mbala (see **Ruins of Mbala**), Aldani Basin (see **Curse of the Aldani**) or head back to Port Nyanzaru.

**Help the Lord's Alliance.** Nangalore and Orolunga are not on the Player's Map so it is unlikely that the players head right to either location. At your discretion, someone in Port Nyanzaru or a guide may know where these are.

**Hunt Pirates.** Jahaka Anchorage is not on the Player's Map so it is unlikely that the players head right to this location. See 'Side Quests from Fort Beluarian' for further advice on setting a pirate hunt in motion.

**Seek Wisdom at Orolunga.** Orolunga is not on the Player's Map so it is unlikely that the players head right to this location. At your discretion, someone in Port Nyanzaru or a guide may know where this is.

**Recommendation.** Of the four quest presented above, 'Escort a Priest to Camp Vengeance' has some significant advantages. It has a clear and obtainable objective, gets the characters fairly deep into the jungle where they can encounter a few fun locations, and the quest's destination (Camp Vengeance) is on the Player's Map.

### GUIDES WITH AGENDAS

The guide your party chooses may play a huge role in where the party goes when they start adventuring in the jungle. The following guides all have agendas and will try to influence the party into following those agendas and exploring specific places (*ToA*, pg. 33–34).

**Azaka Stormfang.** Azaka will encourage the party to head to Firefinger. In Firefinger, the party may save the aaracokra, Nephyr, who is held captive by the pterafolk of Firefinger. If they save Nephyr, she will encourage the party to go to Kir Sabal. If the party pursues this quest, you may want to add in a grung encounter that leads the players further up the River Tyriki to Dungrunglung if you want them to explore a little more before reaching Kir Sabal.

**Ekul.** Eku will encourage the party to head to Mbala to destroy Nanny Pu'pu. If the party starts heading in this direction, you may want to prepare Yellyark, Camp Righteous, and Camp Vengeance (especially if they are traveling up river Shoshenstar). If the characters are interested in this quest, you can run the adventure **Ruins of Mbala** (included with this product if you have purchased the Complete DM's Bundle).

**Faroul and Gondolo.** Faroul and Gondolo want to head right to Needles Bones. Along the way, the characters are likely to cross Ataaz Muhahah. You can also place Yellyark along the way if you want to add more pre-written locations to their travels. After Needles Bones, the party may head to Kir Sabal, since it's nearby and shown on their map.

**Hew Hackinstone.** Hew Hackinstone will lead the party directly to Wyrmeart Mine. If the opportunity does not present itself for Hew to lead the characters to Shilku Bay via boat, Hew will suggest the party head up River Shoshenstar and cut through Aldani Basin. You may want to prepare Yellyark, Camp Righteous, and Camp Vengeance for starters followed by Mbala and Wreck of the Star Goddess. Once the characters near Wyrmeart Mine, you can use material from **Secrets of Shilku**.

**Musharib.** If the opportunity does not present itself for Musharib to lead the characters to Shilku Bay via boat, Musharib will suggest the party head up River Shoshenstar and cut through Aldani Basin. You may want to prepare Yellyark, Camp Righteous, and Camp Vengeance for starters followed by Mbala and Wreck of the Star Goddess. Once the characters near Wyrmeart Mine, you can use material from **Secrets of Shilku**.

## LOCATIONS IN CHULT

In this section, we take a closer look at some of the locations described in Chapter 2 of *Tomb of Annihilation*. Some of the locations in Chult come outfitted with maps and well-described encounters and scenarios, making them easy for you to run as they are. Other locations have interesting concepts that can be improved upon with minimal work or with one of the adventures from the **Tomb of Annihilation Adventure Bundle** (included with this product if you have purchased the Complete DM's Bundle for *Tomb of Annihilation*).

Below are our picks of the best locations in Chult, including our thoughts about why they're good, and how you can make it more likely that the party will get there.

### CAMP RIGHTEOUS (PG. 43–46)

This location is a fantastic little dungeon with a few traps to give players a nice introduction to ruins in Chult. If your characters take River Soshenstar out of Port Nyanzaru, you may want to make sure that their boat takes them by this location.

### DUNGRUNGLUNG (PG. 49–51)

The encounter at Dungrunglung is unlike anything else in Chult. Your players will need to convince a delusional grung king that the trickster goddess Nangnang shares his love but cannot come to the material plane. The book details a fun skill challenge for the characters that involves a lot of creativity. The main issue with this location is that no quests naturally lead characters here. Feel free to plop this location anywhere in the jungle if you think your players will not stumble upon it naturally.

### HRAKHAMAR (PG. 60–64)

Hrakhamar has an awesome dungeon map, but the location could benefit from some tweaking. You may want to run the supplement **Secrets of Shilku** for an improved Hrakhamar adventure and follow up quests including Mount Todra and Wurmheart Mine.

### MBALA (PG. 72–74)

Nanny Pu'pu is an iconic NPC in *Tomb of Annihilation*, but the location as-written in the book lacks a map, as well as things to do in Mbala. If the characters head here, you can run the adventure **Ruins of Mbala**, which provides maps, additional lore, and improvements to the encounters with the Pterafolk and Nanny Pu'pu.

### NANGALORE (PG. 74–80)

This location is another great Chultan ruin that comes with a battlemat. The map of Nangalore is beautiful and the plant monsters make for fun combat encounters. One of the main ways to get to Omu is to visit Kir Sabal (*ToA*, pg. 68–72), the home of the aaracokra. Characters are fairly likely to visit Nangalore if they visit Kir Sabal since they will be looking for the black orchid to perform the Dance of the Seven Winds (*ToA*, pg. 69).

### NSI WASTES (PG. 80)

The Nsi Wastes houses a ruined fortress that was once carried on the backs of giant undead turtles – how cool is that? Unfortunately, the book offers almost no details about what characters may find in this location. You may want to run **Whispers in the Nsi Wastes** to bring this location into the main quest to get to Omu, foreshadow Ras Nsi, and run a fun and mysterious dungeon.

### SHILKU (PG. 82–83)

*Tomb of Annihilation* provides almost no details about Shilku Bay, yet a quest to explore this location is presented by Liara Portyr of Fort Beluarian. You may want to run the supplement **Secrets of Shilku**, which provides an albino dwarf outpost in Shilku Bay where characters can resupply and get launched into quests pertaining to Wurmheart Mine and Hrakhamar.

### WYRMHEART MINE (PG. 85–89)

Wurmheart Mine has another awesome dungeon map, but the location ends with a dragon fight that may be far too deadly for characters in Chapter 2. In *Tomb of Annihilation*, once players get to Omu, they are unlikely to leave for the remainder of the adventure, so they probably won't find their way to the Wurmheart Mine once they're actually strong enough to handle it. As mentioned above, you can run **Secrets of Shilku** for an improved dragon fight and mine cart chase encounter that will be more achievable for characters in the typical level range for Chapter 2.

### YELLYARK (PG. 89–90)

If your players are ever feeling down about the dangers of the jungle, you can have them stumble across the comic relief of Yellyark. Yellyark is a Batiri goblin village that is built like a catapult so that the village can escape from large predators. You can set up an encounter where a Tyrannosaurus Rex attacks the village shortly after the characters arrive, at which point the goblins launch their village off into the jungle – that should serve to lighten the mood and give the players something to talk about!

## SAMPLE STRUCTURE

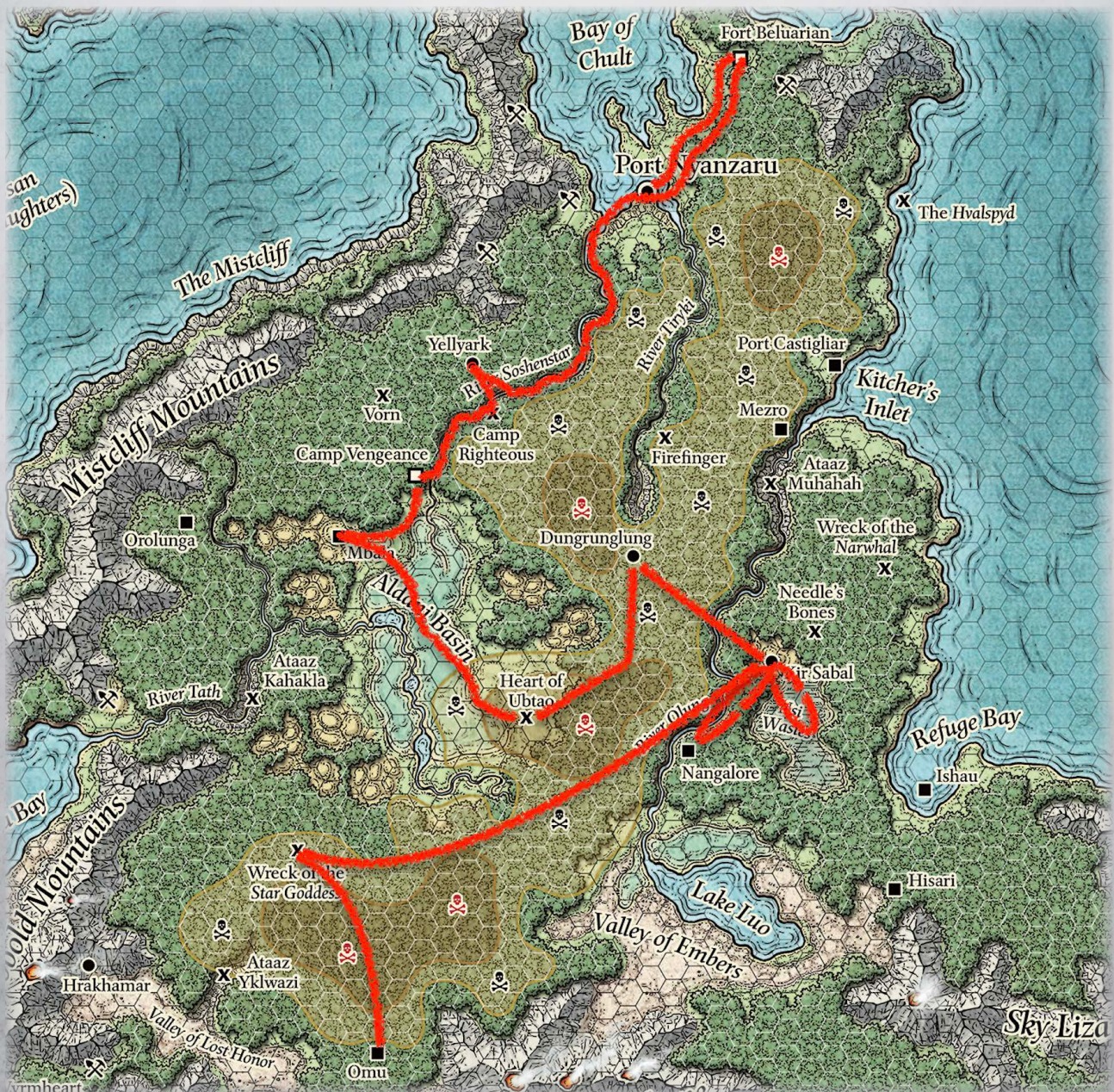
Bringing everything together, we have crafted a sample structure for the characters' expedition into Chult that looks something like this. Of course, we don't know that the characters will actually follow this structure (and they shouldn't at any point feel forced to), but making some qualified guesses and being careful about the information we present to them, enables us to use this structure as a guideline when preparing sessions.

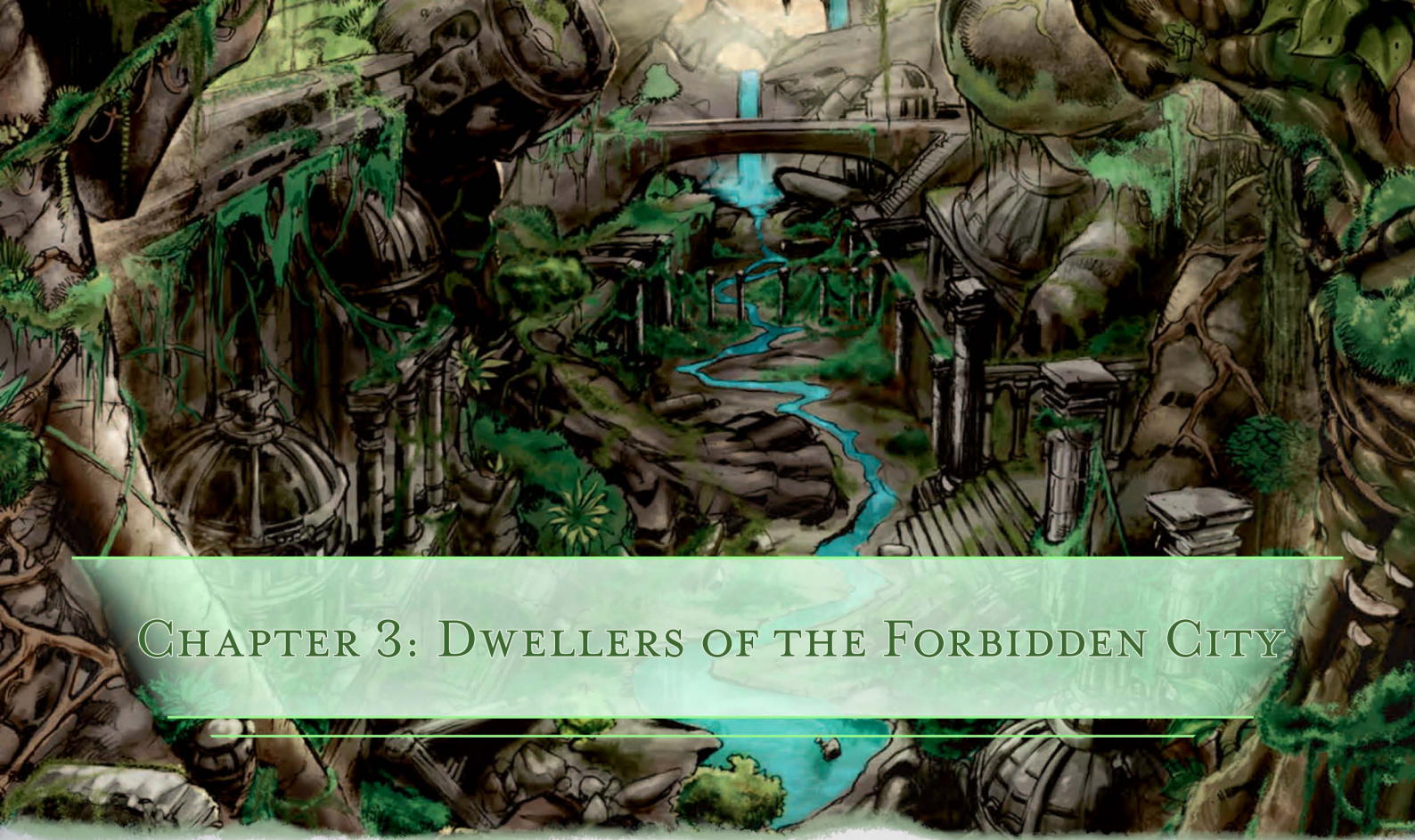
- **Fort Beluarian.** The characters set out to Fort Beluarian to get a Charter of Exploration and make a distraction for the NPC Rokah from Chapter 1.
- **River Soshenstar.** The characters have a quest from Port Nyanzaru to travel to Camp Vengeance up River Soshenstar with Undril Silvertusk from Chapter 1. Good random encounters to throw at characters will be grungs and aquatic dinosaurs like the plesiosaurs.
- **Yellyark.** On their way to Camp Vengeance we will throw a goblin attack at the characters to foreshadow Yellyark and then run that location. We can encourage characters to go there by kidnapping their guide or having the goblins steal their gear.
- **Camp Righteous.** On the way to Camp Vengeance our characters will pass right by Camp Righteous. After finishing Camp Righteous, we can have our characters run into the Flaming Fist to make sure the characters are carrying the proper Charter of Exploration.
- **Camp Vengeance.** Characters will arrive at Camp Righteous to complete their quest. Commander Niles Breakbone will provide adventure hooks to Aldani Basin and Mbala, so we can run either **Ruins of Mbala** and/or **Curse of the Aldani**.
- **Mbala.** At Camp Vengeance the characters hear about a mysterious ancient lady and want to explore Mbala to

speak with her. On the way to Mbala we can have our characters run into some almiraj, jacculis, kamadans, su-monsters, or zorbos.

- **Aldani Basin.** After Mbala, while the characters are in Aldani Basin we can run **Curse of the Aldani**, which concludes near the Heart of Ubtao. This leads characters into undead territory so we can throw some zombie dinosaur random encounters at them.
- **Heart of Ubtao.** The characters can see the Heart of Ubtao from Mbala or Aldani Basin. Valindra knows the Soulmonger lies in Omu, but her Red Wizards are still trying to pin down the location. She encourages the characters to seek out the aaracokra of Kir Sabal who can help them find Omu by air. While traveling to Kir Sabal, we can have a grung encounter that leads the party to Dungrunlung.
- **Dungrunlung.** This location is a side-quest for the characters, but a really fun one. After the characters wrap up here, they can continue to Kir Sabal. On the way to Kir Sabal we can run almiraj, jacculi, kamadan, su-monster, or zorbo encounters we haven't run yet.

- **Kir Sabal.** The aaracokra can give the characters the ability to fly with the Dance of the Seven Winds if they retrieve a black orchid from Nangalore. If we want to run **Whispers in the Nsi Wastes**, we can also have the aaracokra ask the party to investigate Nsi Wastes.
- **Nsi Wastes.** If the characters decide to investigate Nsi Wastes, we will run the adventure **Whispers in the Nsi Wastes** as they visit this location.
- **Nangalore.** The characters retrieve a black orchid from Nangalore and are given the gift of flight upon returning to Kir Sabal, and are ready to head toward the ruins of Omu.
- **Wreck of the Star Goddess.** On their way toward Omu, the characters notice the Wreck of the Star Goddess and may descend to speak with the survivors.
- **Trek to Omu.** The characters arrive at Omu and Chapter 3 begins.





## CHAPTER 3: DWELLERS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

Chapter 3 is where the characters begin to approach the final stretch of the adventure. The party has arrived in Omu and must now face the shrines of the nine trickster gods to recover the puzzle cubes needed to enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods. This section goes into detail with some of the locations in the chapter, and discusses some of the challenges an expedition into the ruins of Omu presents to both players and the DM.

### OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

The third chapter of *Tomb of Annihilation* is about the characters exploring Omu to collect the puzzle cubes required to enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods. The chapter describes the nine shrines and several other locations but provides no structure, instead leaving that up to the DM and the players to figure out.

Fortunately, Chapter 3 is much easier to prepare for than Chapter 2, as there are far less locations. Once the party enters Omu, you may be able to give them free reign to decide which shrines to visit with only a little guidance from a helpful NPC. To help make things more manageable, you may still want to steer them toward certain shrines, and leave out other shrines (because they have already been looted), which we'll discuss in more depth on the following pages.

In essence, the characters need to accomplish the following objectives while in Omu:

- **Locate the Tomb of the Nine Gods** and learn that they need 9 puzzle cubes to enter it.
- **Collect puzzle cubes**, although they need not to collect all of them.

While they aren't required to accomplish the following objectives, they may have fun doing so:

- **Interact with the various factions in Omu**, including the yuan-ti, the Red Wizards, kobolds and grungs.
- **Learn more about Acererak and the Tomb.**

### LOOSE FRAMEWORK

Working from these objectives, we can try to make a sample structure for us to follow. It is perfectly fine if the characters stray from this structure, we just need one so we have some idea about which locations, encounters and NPCs we need to prepare. Here's an example of how this structure could look:

- **Arrival.** The characters find Omu and enter it.
- **Meeting Orvex.** The characters run into the helpful NPC Orvex shortly after arrival. Orvex can read Old Omuan and explain the legend of Omu and the trickster gods.
- **Explore the shrines.** The characters start collecting puzzle cubes from the shrines.
- **Encounter with Red Wizards.** The characters learn they are not the only group attempting to enter the tomb.
- **Explore more shrines.** The characters continue collecting puzzle cubes until all but one are claimed.
- **Encounter with yuan-ti.** The characters learn that the final cube has been claimed by the yuan-ti and they need to get it back.

### A Note on Leveling

*Tomb of Annihilation* recommends that characters be level 5–8 for Chapter 3 Dwellers of the Forbidden City and level 9 by the time they reach the Tomb of the Nine Gods. Because Chapter 3 and 4 are relatively short chapters compared to the rest of the adventure, leveling may feel accelerated at these locations. Consider the following leveling scheme if you are using milestone leveling:

- When the characters arrive in Omu they advance to level 6.
- When four of the nine puzzle cubes are claimed, they advance to level 7.
- When the characters enter the Fane, they advance to level 8.
- When the characters enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods, they advance to level 9.

## RUNNING CHAPTER 3

The following sections describe important locations and advice for running Chapter 3.

### PACING CHAPTER 3

Omu is something of a cross between a dungeon and a sandbox-style environment, which can make pacing the chapter a challenge. If the characters aren't too worried about the time sensitivity of their mission, or are unsure about how to progress, they may choose to proceed cautiously and rest often, which makes most of the encounter in the city's many shrines and other locations easy to deal with – and thus not very exciting.

Below are some steps you can take to avoid things bogging down and becoming boring.

#### ESTABLISH OBJECTIVES

To help avoid Chapter 3 becoming a frustrating and aimless endeavor, you can make sure that the characters realize that they need to find the puzzle cubes early on. The book states that they may learn about the puzzle cubes from Orvex in '2. Walled Compound' or the journal in '9. Adventurer's Camp'. They may also learn about the cubes from the Red Wizards, either through a random encounter or by saving the petrified wizard Voj in '19. Obo'laka's Shrine'. How they learn about the puzzle cubes isn't important, as long as they do so before they become too frustrated with the ruined city.

#### ESTABLISH URGENCY

By establishing early that the characters are competing with the Red Wizards to find the puzzle cubes, you can make the characters more likely to hurry up and take risks. Having them encounter Orvex in '2. Walled Compound' (or stumbling wounded down the street elsewhere in Omu) early on allows you to inform the characters of the Red Wizards and the yuan-ti – and gives them a convenient translator and tour guide.

#### USE ENCOUNTERS

Omu comes with a list of 'Random Encounters' (*ToA*, pg. 204), which you can use to stir things up if you feel the characters are being too cautious. While Omu has more than enough content to make most of these encounters superfluous, some of the more interesting ones include:

- **King of Feathers (pg. 204).** The King of Feathers is an interesting creature, and the characters shouldn't be cheated of an encounter with it even if they don't visit its lair in '13. Amphitheater'.
- **Kobolds (pg. 204).** An encounter with 1d4 + 1 kobolds and a kobold inventor is unlikely to be dangerous, but can be fun and setup a potential meeting with Kakarol in '15. Ruined Bazaar'.
- **Red Wizards (pg. 103).** While reserved for '9. Adventurer's Camp', the encounter with a mage and two thugs can easily be sprung anywhere else, and serve to introduce the Red Wizards. See 'Running the Red Wizards' on page 24 for more information.
- **Yuan-ti (pg. 94 or 96).** Three yuan-ti malisons and six yuan-ti purebloods, or the five yuan-ti malison who trails the characters from '1. City Entrance', makes for tough encounters and foreshadows the characters' future dealings with the yuan-ti.

You can use encounters such as these whenever the characters are looking for a place to rest, or when they have already decided to rest, and you don't quite feel like they have been challenged enough for the day.

## THE NINE TRICKSTER SHRINES

This section discusses how to handle the nine trickster shrines in Omu, discusses the potential challenges each shrine poses, and offers advice on how to run them. It is recommended that you first read through Chapter 3 of *Tomb of Annihilation* and then review this section.

### APPROACHING THE SHRINES

Some of the trickster shrines have pretty creative solutions that your players may not think of. Fortunately, the book gives a perfect solution to shrines that the characters are unable to finish, or that you think they may not find interesting: the characters are competing with the Red Wizards. The book states that the Red Wizards have a 25% each day of retrieving a puzzle cube from a random shrine, but you are free to decide exactly when and where the Red Wizards claim a puzzle cube.

You can use the Red Wizards as a handy excuse to 'skip' uninteresting shrines (as the characters arrive at the shrine, they find it already ransacked), and even to create tension, as the characters slowly become aware that they have competitors. If your characters are having fun with the shrines, you can also choose not to have the Red Wizards' interfere too much.

### TIPS FOR THE DM TO REMEMBER

The hunt for the nine puzzle cubes can be great fun, but can also become frustrating. It pays well to keep the following things in mind when running this chapter:

**Skipping Shrines.** The players do not need to solve all of the shrines. If they are getting stuck or frustrated, you can gently encourage them to move on knowing that the Red Wizards or Ras Nsi will loot the shrine later anyway.

**It's Okay to Help a Little.** It is okay to modify the shrines or give hints. Characters are epic heroes that can often be a lot smarter than the people playing the characters – they may put some pieces together that the player may not have. Allow the players time to figure things out on their own, but intervene with discrete aid if they become frustrated by a puzzle.

**Warming Up for the Tomb.** The shrines are a warm-up for the Tomb of the Nine Gods. It is okay for the players to struggle a little bit and think outside of the box. If they do not exercise their creative thinking in Omu then the 'Tomb of the Nine Gods' may become the 'Tomb of the Nine Gods and a Handful of Dead Adventurers'.

**Plan Ahead.** With the above in mind, you can plan ahead a little for each shrine, picking and choosing the ones you want to steer the party toward, as well as the ones you want to skip (have been cleared out already by yuan-ti or Red Wizards), as well as thinking a little about how to handle any issues that may arise. On the following pages we will go over each tomb, discussing what they offer, and give advice on how to run them.

### Reading Old Omuan

Without a way to decipher Old Omuan, the characters will have a harder time learning the history of the trickster gods and solving the shrines' puzzles. If the characters don't have access to spells such as *comprehend languages* or have a background as cloistered scholar or sage (see 'Old Omuan' in *ToA*, pg. 93), you may want to ensure that they either run into Orvex in '2. Walled Compound' or find the Queen's Decree in '11. Chwinda Wagon' before they start exploring the shrines.

### 3. KUBAZAN'S SHRINE

In this shrine, the characters must first get past a **froghemoth** to enter the shrine. Inside, they must leap across boards over a spiked pit and then replace the puzzle cube with something of equal weight or the door locks behind them and the room fills with poisonous gas. The characters get a hint: "Kubazan urges us to tread without fear and to give back as much as we take".

It is important to note that if the characters do not figure out that they need to place an object on the pedestal, they may take 10 instances of 3d6 poison damage, which is likely to kill anyone trapped in the shrine. The characters can circumvent the danger by using *mage hand* or a familiar to grab the puzzle cube and avoid jumping along the planks. If they don't figure it out, you can have the gas be non-lethal. The characters are knocked unconscious when reduced to 0 hit points – but don't die. The characters wake up in the shrine hours later, robbed clean by kobolds – or as captives of the Red Wizards or yuan-ti!

Additionally, the froghemoth in the pool is a CR 10 creature and is potentially deadly for most parties level 5–7. Fortunately, there is plenty of open space for characters to maneuver strategically – and escape!

### 4. SHAGAMBI'S SHRINE

In this shrine, the characters must defeat chultan gladiators in order to claim their spears and give them to the statues on the first floor. At the entrance, there is a hint: "Shagambi teaches us to fight evil with honor."

Four CR 5 **gladiators** in a confined space is a deadly encounter for most parties at level 5–7. If you are concerned about a TPK in this shrine, consider having only two gladiators enter the arena at any one time.

### 6. MOA'S SHRINE

In this shrine, the characters will have to sort through some deceptive illusions and find the real puzzle cube. This is hinted at with the inscription in the hall that reads: "Moa teaches us that secrets hide the truth."

Inside the shrine, characters may uncover the inscription that reads "Death rewards a thief deceived. Truth comes from the serpent's mouth." Characters must identify that the obvious puzzle cube is fake (a thief deceived), identify which of the cubes in the side rooms is real, and then find secret doors that lead to the real cube. The real cube is in the mouth of the serpent statue.

Be aware that a character who can Wildshape or *polymorph* into something small, or turn into gas using *gaseous form* can enter through the holes in the wall without finding the secret door and grab the cube.

### 8. UNKH'S SHRINE

In Unkh's Shrine, the puzzle cube is locked inside a pedestal and the characters need to find the right key to open it. The right key can be found by taking six keys found in the room with the pedestal, overlapping the teeth, and finding the matching key in the ruined workshop outside the shrine. A hint is inscribed at the entrance to the shrine: "Unkh urges us to contrast all options before acting."

The players may get stuck trying to solve this puzzle, since there are no in-game mechanics to solve it. You may want to encourage the players to roleplay as if they are in the room and describe specific investigative activities they are doing to try to find the solution. If they do anything that resembles overlapping the keys, you can state that they notice that the teeth do not align and seems to create a new key when observed from above.

### 10. I'JIN'S SHRINE

In I'jin's shrine, characters must cross the puzzle floor tiles and then find their way through a labyrinth filled with traps. The hint for the puzzle floor is "I'jin teaches us to take the path least expected." This rather vague hint refers to the fact that stepping on the same animal twice triggers the shrine's trap.

The first issue with this shrine is that the puzzle floor itself is only 15 ft. long, as shown on the map of the shrine (*ToA*, pg. 99). This means that characters can potentially jump over most of the puzzle, making it significantly easier. If you want to make the puzzle floor more challenging, you can have the dart trap activate when any character steps on an animal that has already been stepped on (even by another character).

The second issue is that the X's that indicate the pressure plates for the traps in the labyrinth are at the end of dead end corridors. The characters are likely to see the dead end and immediately turn back. You may want to move the pressure plates to the first square after each hallway turns to a dead end so that the traps are activated even if the characters don't walk all the way to the back wall of an obvious dead end.

### 12. WONGO'S SHRINE

In Wongo's shrine, the characters must solve a riddle to determine where the water should be poured on the statue of Wongo. There are 4 masks, each with a line of the riddle. The masks depict a lion, a boar, a zebra, and a vulture. Looking through each mask shows a different body part of the monkey statue and the correct one shows where to pour the water. The riddle is as follows:

The lion ate one of the boar's friends.

The vulture is lucky to be alive.

The zebra's only friend starved to death.

Someone who is not the vulture has no friends.

The players must think logically to solve this riddle. The zebra's only friend starved to death, so the zebra is not friends with the lion who ate someone that isn't the boar. The vulture is alive so the lion must have eaten the zebra and the boar must have starved. The zebra and boar were friends so the lion has no friends. That leaves the vulture, which points to the left hand of the statue.

This puzzle can also be solved through trial and error. The consequences for pouring the water on the wrong place are pretty minimal (a few CR 1/4 **steam mephits** appear). You can make wrong answers more punishing by having a **water elemental** appear instead of mephits.

## Not all Shrines are Created Equal

Each group's experience with the shrines is certain to be unique, but here are some standouts:

- **3. Kubazan's Shrine** is a very fun shrine that can be solved a number of ways and has a throwback to where Indiana Jones swaps the golden idol with a bag of the same weight.
- **4. Shagambi's Shrine** is a straight combat encounter, which is something martial characters may enjoy.
- **12. Wongo's Shrine** is another fun shrine with a logic puzzle that is neither too hard nor too easy for the players to solve.
- **18. Nangnang's Shrine** has another puzzle that is solvable, and also has the party encountering Omu's grung denizens.
- **19. Obo'laka's Shrine** has an interesting and potentially frustrating logic puzzle, but gives the characters a chance to encounter a Red Wizard in the flesh (pun intended).

## 16. PAPAZOTL'S SHRINE

In Papazotl's shrine, there is a riddle that the characters can solve to have an easier time finding a secret tunnel behind the bat statue. Once they find the secret tunnel they find a strange grid pattern that is actually a cypher that instructs them to cover the eyes of the statues, causing the puzzle cube to emerge from the pedestal.

The cypher can present some difficulties. The patterned grid uses the words from the first riddle with no spaces and reveals the text "Cover Eyes". However, players may not connect the fact that they need to use the words from the original riddle for the patterned grid – especially because the lines of the riddle do not match up with the lines of the grid. You may want to stress the fact that Riddle 1 is written in common rather than Old Omuan, which suggests that the letters have some importance. If you think your characters may struggle with the connection, consider providing them Riddle 1 with each character written on a grid like a mosaic.

## 18. NANGNANG'S SHRINE

In Nangnang's shrine, the party must solve a riddle to gain access to the room with the puzzle cube in it. The riddle reads: "Whoever among you is the richest, bring me your gifts." If a character approaches the door with treasure, the door opens if nobody else is carrying any of the treasure as hinted at by the inscription in the Chamber of Greed: "Nangnang teaches us to serve only ourselves." This shrine is also complicated by the fact that there is a whole grung tribe living in it. The grungs may be violent towards the characters unless the characters saved the grung from the vegepygmies in '5. Great Rift'.

If your players get stuck on this riddle, you may want to have all of the treasure in each characters' hands fly back to where it was resting each time someone approaches the door with treasure and someone else is also holding treasure. This shows the players that the riddle has something to do with the treasure, but they happened to get it wrong that time.

## 19. OBO'LAKA'S SHRINE

In Obo'laka's shrine, the characters must enter a pool that magically leads into another room. From there, the characters must figure out a way to get the lit torches from this room back to the entrance where the empty sconces are as per the hint at the entrance, which reads "Obo'laka teaches us to tread warily and stay in the light." This is impossible through the pool because the torches will extinguish. Instead, the characters must find a secret room that leads around back to the entrance.

Be aware that the cube causes characters to become petrified. Unless your characters are level 9, nobody will have *greater restoration* to cure petrification, so this could be a game ender for any curious characters. You may want to stress that the statue next to the cube is reaching for the cube and looks very lifelike to give your players a significant hint of the consequences. You can also have any petrified characters be restored to flesh when the puzzle cube is removed from the shrine. Note that this would also transform the Red Wizard back to flesh, which makes for a potentially interesting encounter and a cool way to introduce the Red Wizards.

If the players get stuck and cannot find the secret door, you can allow an intelligent character to realize that the geometry of the shrine suggests that there's some area they have not yet explored, which may set them looking for a secret door.



## RUNNING THE RED WIZARDS

One of the most important factions in Omu is the Red Wizards. As described in the campaign book (*ToA*, pg. 93–94) the Red Wizards are also looking for the puzzle cubes, which means the characters will eventually have to face them to access the Tomb of the Nine Gods.

### FORESHADOWING THE RED WIZARDS

If the characters have been to the Heart of Ubtao during their expedition in the jungle, they may already know about the Red Wizards in Omu. If not, we can have ‘2. Walled Compound’ be one of the first locations they come by if the characters enter Omu through the southwestern gates – or have Orvex (the Red Wizards’ translator) stumble towards the characters in the street, if they enter from anywhere else. Meeting Orvex allows the party to learn that the Red Wizards are active in the city, and increases the likelihood of an alliance.

### ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RED WIZARDS

The book states that the characters are accosted by a Red Wizard (**mage**) and two mercenaries (**thugs**) if they spend more than an hour in ‘9. Adventurers’ Camp’. You don’t have to restrict yourself to this location, though, but can have this encounter happen at any time the characters decide to take a rest, and you need to control the pace with an encounter (see ‘Pacing Chapter 3’).

While the Red Wizard and their mercenaries are immediately hostile, Orvex (if he’s with the party) may be able to broker a peaceful solution. Additionally, if the Red Wizard or the thugs are facing certain death, they may also be willing to share information about the Red Wizards’ plans, and offer to show the characters to their leader, Zagmira, to discuss a potential alliance.

If the characters defeat their attackers before such an offer can be made, or choose not to follow up on it, you can have the characters encounter Zagmira and her henchmen in the streets (see ‘Meeting with Zagmira’ below). You can also have the characters find a link to the Red Wizards as they explore Obo’laka’s Shrine and rescue Voj, who can contact Zagmira via *sending*.

### MEETING WITH ZAGMIRA

The book states that the characters can form an alliance with the Red Wizards, but doesn’t go into much detail about such an alliance should be facilitated.

A meeting with the Red Wizards could play out in the streets of Omu, with Zagmira (**mage**) floating over the ground (using *fly*) in the middle of the street, flanked by a handful of mercenaries (**thugs**). Any other surviving red wizards (**mag**s) are hiding nearby with *invisibility*.

Zagmira offer the following argument for an alliance: the Red Wizards don’t care who destroys the Soulmonger, as long as it is destroyed (this is not entirely true – the Red Wizards would prefer to obtain the Soulmonger for themselves). If not all cubes have been recovered, she proposes that the two groups split the remaining shrines between them and then share the cubes and enter the tomb together. If all but Ras Nsi’s cube has been recovered, Zagmira offers to aid the characters if they will enter the Fane of the Night Serpent to retrieve it, by telling them about Ish-makahl (*ToA*, pg. 94 & 120) and casting *invisibility* on them.

Of course, Zagmira has no intention on entering the tomb with the characters, but intends to ambush the them once they return from the fane (forming up in the same way as described above). Even if the characters realize this with a good Wisdom (Insight) check, they may choose to play along to gain the wizards’ aid.

## SAMPLE STRUCTURE

Now that we have a grasp of the important aspects and challenges of Chapter 3, let’s fill out a sample structure that will help us prepare and run the chapter.

- **Arrival.** The two most likely points of entry are by scaling the cliff on the north side of the city (most parties will be approaching Omu from the north) or by walking down the stairs at the main entrance on the southwest side of the city. If they enter from the cliffs, we can run a **gargoyle encounter** (*ToA*, pg. 204) while they’re halfway down the cliff to get things going. If they enter from the main entrance, their first encounter is likely to be with the five **yuan-ti malison** stationed there (*ToA*, pg. 95–96).
- **Meeting Orvex.** If the characters are not near ‘2. Walled Compound’ as they enter, we stray from the book and have Orvex seek out the adventurers after hearing their battle with the gargoyles. Orvex lets them know about the Red Wizards, the yuan-ti, the puzzle cubes, and then leads them to the entrance of the Tomb of the Nine Gods to examine it.
- **Exploring Shrines.** Now that our players know their mission, they can get started conquering shrines. We have a good feeling that ‘Wongo’s Shrine’ is going to be a fun one to start with and it happens to be the closest shrine to the tomb, so Orvex will bring the characters there first. From there, the characters more or less have free reign to move about, but we can have our least favorite shrines (let’s say ‘8. Unkh’s Shrine’, ‘10. I’jin’s Shrine’ and ‘16. Papazotl’s Shrine’) already be cleared, so we don’t have to prepare those.
- **Resting & Encounters.** While the characters continue to explore Omu, we use random encounters to fill out adventuring days and maintain pacing. If the characters set a hard pace and push themselves, we may opt for less dangerous encounters such as kobolds (*ToA*, pg. 204), but if they try to rest often, we push them with encounters such as the King of Feathers (*ToA*, pg. 204) or yuan-ti (*ToA*, pg. 94), if they haven’t faced yuan-ti already.
- **Encounter with the Red Wizards.** Once the characters have claimed a handful of puzzle cubes, tire of exploring the shrines, or seem anxious to get on with the adventure, we spring an encounter with Zagmira and the Red Wizards, giving the characters a chance to form a tentative alliance with the powerful spellcasters from Thay.
- **Encounter with the yuan-ti.** Once all but one of the cubes have been claimed, Ras Nsi claims the final cube and leave a yuan-ti patrol at the shrine to ambush the characters – while clear tracks show other yuan-ti heading back to the Fane of the Night Serpent. To make things even more obvious, we can have surviving yuan-ti taunt the characters by saying that they’ll never get into the tomb because Ras Nsi has the final cube. After this conflict resolves, the characters will need to enter the Fane of the Night Serpent. If the characters haven’t already allied themselves with the Red Wizards, we will have Zagmira approach the characters at this point to offer her alliance.





## CHAPTER 4: FANE OF THE NIGHT SERPENT

The fourth chapter of *Tomb of Annihilation* is about the characters infiltrating a yuan-ti temple called the Fane of the Night Serpent to recover the final puzzle cube required to enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods. There are a couple ways characters can approach this chapter and depending on what you think will be the most fun, you can steer them in a particular direction by using the NPCs within the Fane.

### OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

The chapter describes the dungeon, but leaves navigating it up to the players and the DM. In this chapter, we discuss how to handle the infiltration, summarize the Fane's politics and offer general advice on running the Fane of the Night Serpent.

### OBJECTIVES

The characters' objectives in Chapter 4 are simple:

- **Infiltrate the Fane of the Night Serpent.**
- **Obtain the final puzzle cube** held in Ras Nsi's lair.

Our focus in this chapter is to present an interesting dungeon filled with intelligent beings to our players so that they can work out how to accomplish their goal.

### LOOSE FRAMEWORK

Working from these objectives we can try to make a sample structure for us to follow. It is perfectly fine if the characters stray from this structure, we just need one so we have some idea about things might play out for the characters. Here's an example of a loose framework:

- **Planning.** The player characters debate the best approach to take for infiltration.
- **Infiltration Attempt.** The characters attempt to take on the Fane through deception, stealth, or combat.
- **Infiltration Failure.** The characters are defeated in combat or surrender, and are captured.
- **Information Gathering.** While captured, the characters gather information about the fane.
- **Breakout from Prison.** The characters break out (or are released) and make a second attempt at Ras Nsi.
- **Showdown with Ras Nsi.** The characters get to Ras Nsi and either fight or negotiate for the puzzle cube.

Again, we're not expecting all of this to happen, but by assuming that it *could* happen, we can prepare better for the party's infiltration of the Fane of the Night Serpent.



## RUNNING CHAPTER 4

In this section we will summarize and discuss the various ways the characters can infiltrate the Fane, the politics of the yuan-ti, as well as offer some additional advice for certain problem areas within the Fane.

### PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Planning and running an infiltration, such as the one laid out in Chapter 4, can be very fun and rewarding for the players, but can just as easily end up being more frustrating than fun. To increase the likelihood of the former result, make sure that the players have as much important information available to them as possible, so they are able to formulate a good plan and run a successful infiltration. This information can include:

- **Humanoids can disguise themselves as yuan-ti purebloods.** The characters can learn this from Zagmira, a captured yuan-ti, or with a DC 10 Intelligence (History or Nature) check.
- **The main entrance is heavily guarded.** The characters can learn this from Zagmira, or a captured yuan-ti, or by scouting out the Fane's main entrance.
- **There's a back entrance to the lair.** The characters can learn this by investigating the area around '20. Royal Palace' in Omu, or from a captured yuan-ti.
- **There's a Red Wizard spy in the Fane's harem.** The character can learn this from Zagmira or any other Red Wizard they interrogate in Omu.
- **There's tension between Ras Nsi and the nightmare speaker Fenthaza.** The characters can learn this information from a captured yuan-ti.

Make sure to give the characters ample opportunity to learn this information, and don't be afraid to summarize or remind the players of it as they formulate their plan. You don't have to tell the players if their plan is bad or unlikely to work, but if their plan is flawed because the players forget information that their characters would clearly be aware of, it's perfectly fine to remind them, as long as you try to remain objective ("I'm not telling you what to do, but your character remembers that the yuan-ti you captured told you that the main entrance was locked by heavy gates and well-guarded").

#### Yuan-Ti Type What?

Yuan-ti have a hierarchical society. Here are a few points to help with descriptions:

- **Yuan-ti broodguards** are the lowest on the totem pole. They are dumb and are the result of unwilling transformation.
- **Yuan-ti purebloods** are the second lowest caste. They have minor snakelike features, but otherwise appear as human.
- **Yuan-ti malisons** are the next highest caste and have undergone transformations to gain snakelike features (type 1; snake head, human body. Type 2; human head, snake lower body. Type 3; human head & body, snakes for arms).
- **Yuan-ti abominations** are the highest caste. The Fane of the Night Serpent has no yuan-ti abomination leader. Ras Nsi took over when the previous one died.

## POLITICS OF THE FANE

The yuan-ti NPCs in this chapter can potentially have a big impact on how the characters approach this chapter. Below is a brief summary of the information given throughout Chapter 4 about the five most important figures in the Fane, and their possible influence on the characters' plans.

### RAS NSI

- Commands the yuan-ti of Omu.
- Turned into a yuan-ti malison by Fenthaza.
- Is growing weak due to the death curse, and is starting to cede power to his loyal champion Sekelok.
- Has a deal with Acererak to guard the Tomb of the Nine Gods.
- Will break his deal with Acererak and aid the characters if he learns that they are looking to end the death curse, and that the tomb is holding the device causing the curse.

### FENTHAZA

- A yuan-ti nightmare speaker and the Fane's spiritual leader in worship of Dendar the Night Serpent.
- Thinks Ras Nsi is growing weaker and seeks to supplant him for the glory of the Night Serpent.
- Will aid the characters and give them access to Ras Nsi if they promise to bring her the *black opal crown* from the tomb.
- Will betray the characters once they have outlived their usefulness.

### YAHRU

- Yuan-ti spymaster.
- Enjoys playing Fenthaza and Ras Nsi off against each other.
- Can bring the characters to an audience with either Fenthaza or Ras Nsi.
- Can provide information about the politics of the Fane, including Ras Nsi's deal with Acererak and Fenthaza's desire to supplant Ras Nsi.

### SEKELOK

- Ras Nsi's champion.
- Fiercely loyal to Ras Nsi.
- Has an illicit nightly affair with Neema, one of Ras Nsi's concubines. If Ras Nsi learns of the affair, he will have Sekelok flayed and fed to the pet hydra.

### ISHMAKAHL (DOPPELGANGER SPY)

- A doppelganger spy for the Red Wizards posing as a yuan-ti pureblood in Ras Nsi's harem.
- Will help the characters if they mention they are sent by the Red Wizards.
- Knows the Fane's layout, that there's a secret door in '11. Throne Room', that Ras Nsi's lair can be reached through teleporters, and that Sekelok has an affair with Neema.
- Is contemplating a defection to the yuan-ti, and may betray the characters if a plan seems likely to fail.

## INFILTRATING THE FANE

It's impossible to consider and prepare for all the ways your players may choose to tackle the infiltration of the Fane of the Night Serpent, but there are a few ways that seems most likely, which we'll quickly go over below.

### COMBAT

The characters may decide to dispense with caution and just tackle the problem head-on and weapons first. This approach is unlikely to be very successful, but luckily there's a few ways you can salvage the situation.

**Handling Combat.** If the characters try to approach with hostility through '1. Main Gate', they probably won't even get past the gates, which are opened by tugging on heavy chains on the other side. In this case, you may want to have the yuan-ti on the other side of the gate try to defuse the situation, while they call for Fenthaza (the closest NPC of note), who may deign to give the characters an audience and present her bargain. If the characters approach from '23. Secret Entrance', they have a decent chance of actually making their way to the center of the Fane without raising the alarm. If the alarm is raised, however, they will likely be quickly overwhelmed (see 'Developments' on the next page).

### DECEPTION

Characters may try to pose as yuan-ti purebloods by dressing and acting appropriately, or – if you allow it – try to convince the yuan-ti they are tribal warriors or cultists bringing tribute to the Fane of the Night Serpent.

**Handling Deception.** If the characters attempt to infiltrate the Fane disguised as yuan-ti purebloods, they will be challenged by yuan-ti at various points throughout the Fane. The book sets a DC of 15 for any Charisma (Deception) checks to pass themselves off as yuan-ti purebloods on page 112, but later puts the DC at 10 on page 124. You can have the DC be 15 for yuan-ti purebloods and malisons and 10 for the low-intelligence broodguards. Regardless of what the DC is, non-humans make the check with disadvantage. When you have the players attempt this check, you can make it a group check – if half or more of the party succeeds against the DC, they all succeed. All-in-all, deception makes for a fun infiltration of the Fane, even if it fails and devolves into open combat halfway through!

### STEALTH

The characters are unlikely to get far into the Fane using only natural stealth, but can use magic such as *invisibility*, *polymorph*, or Wild Shape to sneak around the Fane unnoticed.

**Handling Stealth.** Even characters that are invisible will have to make Stealth checks when passing through rooms occupied by other creatures. You can have the characters make a group Dexterity (Stealth) check against the passive Perceptions of all creatures in a room to determine if they get through unnoticed. Characters disguised with *polymorph* or Wild Shape can probably sneak around without having to make any checks at all (especially as a snake), but it is unlikely that the whole party will be able to enter this way.'



## DEVELOPMENTS

The characters are likely working their way towards either '10. Harem' to meet with Ishmakahl, or '11. Throne Room' to confront Ras Nsi.

### MEETING ISHMAKAHL

If the characters manage to reach Ishmakahl in '10. Harem' and inform him they are sent by the Red Wizards, they will receive information on how to reach Ras Nsi's lair (through a secret door in '11. Throne Room' or with a teleporter) and be advised to attempt their break-in during one of Sekelok's nightly visits to the Harem. Following this advice, the characters will have to fight 2 **yuan-ti malisons**, 3 **yuan-ti broodguards** and 4 **ghouls** in '11. Throne Room' (which should be a tough, but manageable encounter) before entering '12. Ras Nsi's Lair' to face **Ras Nsi**.

### MEETING RAS NSI

If the characters get to '11. Throne Room' during the day, either using deception, stealth, brute force, or a combination of all three, they will have to contend with Ras Nsi and his guardians before they can enter '12. Ras Nsi's Lair'. This is a potentially deadly encounter, so you may want to have Ras Nsi defuse the situation, inquire what the characters' are doing in the Fane, and give them at least a chance to discuss the death curse and make a bargai, before combat breaks out.

If you feel that such a peaceful resolution is too easy, you can have Ras Nsi privately ask the characters to dispatch of Fenthaza, who he (rightfully) suspects of treachery. Ras Nsi can't ask any of the yuan-ti to do the job for him, since they all hold the religious figure in high regard, but if the characters can accomplish the task, he will allow them to leave with the cube. If you do this, you may want to give Fenthaza some additional aid (see '5. Fenthaza's Quarters' in the next column).

### MEETING FENTHAZA

If at any point the characters' infiltration becomes dull or problematic – the characters become unsure where to go or what to do, things get too confusing for you to handle, or a combat situation is getting out of control – you can have Yahru approach the characters. The spymaster may have received reports about unknown purebloods in the compound, be able to see through spells of *invisibility*, or just choose to break up a pitched battle to parlay with the characters. In any case, you can use the spymaster to get things moving by leading the characters to an audience with Fenthaza, who can present her bargain.

### CAPTURE

It's a well-documented fact that D&D-players rarely realize when it's time to surrender. Even in a situation where they're clearly outmatched, the characters may choose to fight on instead of allowing themselves to be captured. This can lead to character deaths or a split party, both of which are less than optimal outcomes.

To avoid such a scenario, you can have the yuan-ti use weapons coated in *drow poison* (DMG, pg. 258), which will cause characters to potentially fall asleep making them easier to capture rather than kill. Shortly after their capture, Fenthaza can arrange a private meeting with one or more of them at which point she can arrange for their release in exchange for their services. Alternatively, if the characters have allied with the Red Wizards, you can have the doppelganger spy Ishmakahl help the characters break out.

## LOCATIONS IN THE FANE

Below is advice on handling select locations within the Fane of the Night Serpent.

### 2. HALL OF WAR

If characters get petrified by the basilisks in the Hall of War and do not have access to *greater restoration*, you can have Fenthaza offer to fix them in exchange for the characters' compliance.

### 5. FENTHAZA'S QUARTERS

If the characters arrive in this room looking to do battle with Fenthaza – perhaps send by Ras Nsi to dispatch of the treacherous priestess (see 'Meeting Ras Nsi') – you can enhance combat by having her make use of the flying shields from '12. Ras Nsi's Lair', if the characters haven't already seen Ras Nsi use them. This makes it more likely that Fenthaza will actually last a little while against the characters.

### 7. EVIL ORACLE

You can use the Oracle Pool to foreshadow future events in the Tomb of the Nine Gods. If characters gaze into the Oracle Pool, in addition to giving characters a vision of Dendar the Night Serpent, you can also give the characters a vision of Area 49C in Tomb of the Nine Gods. "In this central open space, a gold crown topped with a glittering black opal rests on a marble pedestal."

### 8. PRISONER PITS

There are a lot of prisoners in the Prisoner Pits. If you want to eliminate some of them or simply send a message to the characters consider having Fenthaza sacrifice one or more of the NPC prisoners while the characters are imprisoned. If the characters are planning a prison break, Oloma, Pottery Shard, Gorvax, and Zilla will be the most helpful – the rest are more dispensable.





## CHAPTER 5: TOMB OF THE NINE GODS

The fifth chapter of *Tomb of Annihilation* is about the characters getting into the Tomb of the Nine Gods, navigating to the bottom of the tomb, picking up powerful upgrades, and then destroying the Soulmonger without being utterly annihilated. Running this chapter can be a challenge to run as the characters have a lot of options and many of the 81 rooms in this mega-dungeon are quite complicated.

### OVERVIEW & STRUCTURE

The chapter describes the dungeon, but leaves navigating it up to the players and the DM. In this chapter, we discuss how to prepare for and handle the troublesome rooms in the tomb.

#### OBJECTIVES

The characters' objectives in Chapter 5 are:

- **Enter the Tomb of the Nine Gods.**
- **Collect five skeleton keys** to open the skeleton door allowing access to the Soulmonger.
- **Obtain magic items and resources** so they can survive the challenges that await them.
- **Destroy the Soulmonger** at the bottom of the tomb.
- **Defeat the atropal and the lich Acererak!**

### RUNNING CHAPTER 5

This chapter can absolutely be the highlight of the adventure, but requires a bit of planning and tailoring to your players so that everyone gets the most out of it. In the next few sections we discuss adjusting difficulty, handling rests, and dealing with dungeon fatigue, before taking a closer look at some of the more troublesome locations in the Tomb of the Nine Gods.

#### CHARACTER DEATHS & DIFFICULTY

The Tomb of the Nine Gods is difficult. There are ways for characters to die at every turn. By this point in your campaign, you hopefully have a feel for how your players feel about character death, and can decide how difficult this chapter should be for everyone has a good time. If you run this chapter straight out of the book, you should be ready for characters to die. The book even anticipates character death and offers a number of suggestions for replacing characters (*ToA*, pg. 128).

Of course, you control the difficulty and can adjust things so that character death is far less likely, while still entertaining and challenging the players. Many of the deadliest points in the tomb are discussed later in this chapter of the DM's resources, so that you can be ready for them and make your own decisions.

As a general tip, one very important way to manage the difficulty is how you deal with secret passages, which in the case of Withers' Office yield great benefits for the characters. If you want to keep things challenging rather than having characters with a passive Perception of 20 being able to spot every secret door, you can have the passive DC be 25 and DC for active checks be 20. Another very important way to control the difficulty is how you handle rests, which we'll discuss on the next page.



## HANDLING RESTS

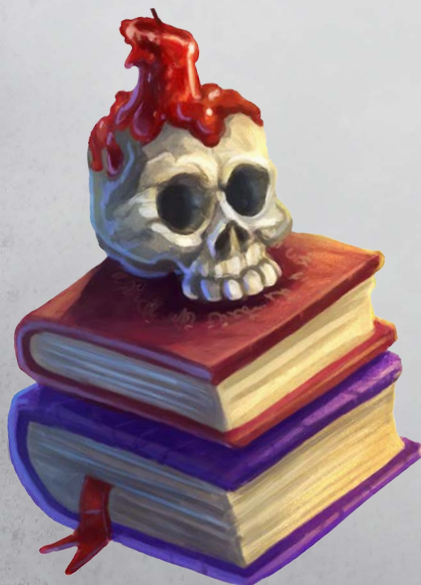
Resting in the Tomb of the Nine Gods can be as easy or as difficult as you want it to be. Since the characters are often under surveillance from Withers and the tomb dwarves, who can send a **tomb guardian** to mess with resting characters, you always have the option to disturb their rest, if you want to. So how often should you allow the characters to rest?

**Long Rest.** If we're going by the core rules, characters can only benefit from a long rest once per 24 hours. This means that unless the characters choose to sit down and twiddle their thumbs for a whole day, there should probably only be one or two long rests during the whole tomb. The best places to take long rests undisturbed are '28. Withers' Office' and '36. Chamber of Respite'. Of course, you can allow the characters to take long rests more frequently – and probably should, if you want them to have a better chance at surviving the tomb – but just be aware that allowing too many long rests may reduce tension and make many of the tomb's challenges less exciting.

**Short Rests.** The characters are likely also going to want to short rest often, and if you are keeping the rooms deadly, you may want to let them get their short rests undisturbed. Keep in mind, however, that certain character classes, such as warlocks, fighters, and monks, benefit more from short rests than other classes. If your party has a large number of short-rest benefiting classes, or you want to keep the balance between different classes, you can consider only allowing two or three short rests per long rest. If you are feeling particularly cruel, parties abusing short rests within the tomb may receive haunting hallucinations and suffer from madness.

## DEALING WITH DUNGEON FATIGUE

The Tomb of the Nine Gods is huge, and can take somewhere between 10 to 20 sessions to complete. Some players (or even the DM) may start to experience "dungeon fatigue". If you sense this happening, you can expedite things by having the skeleton keys be in easier to access locations (see 'The Skeleton Keys' below). You can also choose to take a break from the campaign, such as by playing a light-hearted one-shot adventure for a week in a location the party skipped in Chapter 2 with some fun new characters.



## THE SKELETON KEYS

To gain access to the Soulmonger, the characters must find five skeleton keys, which are hidden on each of the first five levels of the tomb. Before the characters realize this, they are likely to skip floors – that they will then have to return to later – which makes preparing for, and running, the Tomb of the Nine Gods that much harder.

If you want to promote a linear exploration of the tomb, you should make sure that the players realize the existence and importance of the skeleton keys early on. You can do this by adding a hint about the keys somewhere immediately inside the tomb (see our suggestion for '5B. Devil's Face' later in this chapter).

For a more direct solution, you can also put a *wall of force* in the grand staircase at each level, blocking the way down to the levels below. The *wall of force* on each level is dispelled once the level's skeleton key is placed in a relief at the top of the stairs. This does limit your players' agency a bit, which is never optimal, so use it only if you think you have to.

### LEVEL 1: TRIANGLE SKELETON KEY

You can have the first skeleton key briefly reveal itself to the characters and run away from them soon after they arrive in the Tomb of the Nine Gods, encouraging them to follow it. This works especially well if the characters arrive at the grand staircase and seem like they want to go below – you can have the skeleton key show up across from them, before running toward area '14. Moa's Tomb' or '16. Wongo's Tomb', causing them to explore more.

Alternatively, you can put the skeleton key in the last room the characters explore on this floor if you want them to explore everywhere. However, you may not want to put it in the river as there is a chance your players may not find the way into the river and miss the skeleton key entirely.

### LEVEL 2: SQUARE SKELETON KEY

For the second floor, you may want to have the skeleton key be hanging out in '22. Papazotl's Tomb' to begin with. Once the characters notice it and it notices them, you can have it dart out of view and make its way through the secret doors to '24. Nangnang's Tomb'. When the characters explore '22. Papazotl's Tomb' and don't find the skeleton key, it will tip them off that there's a secret door nearby. In '24. Nangnang's Tomb', you can have the skeleton key dance around in the salt pentagram taunting the players to come get it.

### LEVEL 3: PENTAGON SKELETON KEY

If you want your players to fully explore this floor, place the skeleton key in '44. Vault of the Beholder'. Otherwise, the characters will not need to encounter the beholder to move on from this floor.

### LEVEL 4: HEXAGON SKELETON KEY

You can put the skeleton key in any room on this floor. If you want your players to find and complete '47. Elemental Cells', you can have the skeleton key be strolling outside of the secret door leading to the fire cell and have it suddenly disappear behind the secret door.

### LEVEL 5: OCTAGON SKELETON KEY

You can put the skeleton key in any of the rooms on this floor. The main challenge of this floor is to get the gears oriented correctly to get players down to Level 6. If you want the players to explore the gargoyle statue in '62B. Sloped Hall', consider having it dart behind the curtain when it sees the party.

## ENTERING THE TOMB

As they arrive at the tomb, your players are likely pumped up and super excited. They are “off to see the wizard”, so to speak, with nine puzzle cubes in their packs, ready to fight the big bad evil guy and save the day. Unfortunately, getting into the Tomb of the Nine Gods is not easy. Here is a breakdown of what the characters must accomplish to enter the tomb.

### 1. ACERERAK’S WARNING

The first thing the characters will see is the obelisk with Acererak’s first warning. The characters may either explore ‘2. Gallery of Tricksters’ or head straight for the ‘3. False Entrance’.

### 2. GALLERY OF TRICKSTERS

Exploration of the Gallery of Tricksters is key because Unkh’s statue is hidden at the end of the hallway and has a magic pendant that pulls characters towards ‘4. True Entrance’.

### 3. FALSE ENTRANCE

If they head for the False Entrance, the fact that there are only 8 slots for the puzzle cubes should be an indication that something is wrong. If Orvex is with the party, you can have him suggest as much to give them a hint.

### 4. TRUE ENTRANCE

At the true entrance, the characters must pass through two puzzle doors.

- **4A. First Puzzle Door.** At the true entrance, the characters must arrange the puzzle cubes in the ‘4A. First Puzzle Door’ so that the enemy trickster gods are across from one another and Unkh is in the middle. ‘
- **4B. Second Puzzle Door.** The trap by ‘4B. Second Puzzle Door’ is one of the most devious traps in the entire tomb. When the characters activate the hourglass, you can read the boxed text from the book, and ask your players: “What, if anything, do your characters do?”, before counting down from 10, so that your players feel the pressure of the sand trickling down the hourglass. As written in the book, the solution is to do nothing and after ten seconds, the door opens. At this point feel free to loudly announce something to the effect of “welcome to the Tomb of the Nine Gods, good luck!”

### Acererak’s First Warning

Acererak’s Warning foreshadows much of the content in ‘Level 1: Rotten Halls’. Here’s a quick summary with the warnings linked directly to what they foreshadow:

- **The enemies oppose.** (The puzzle cubes must be placed so that enemy trickster gods are across from one another)
- **One stands between them.** (Unkh’s Statue is hidden at the end of the hallway of ‘2. Gallery of Tricksters’)
- **In darkness, it hides.** (A shadow demon lurks in the darkness of the ‘5B. Devil’s Face’)
- **Don the mask or be seen.** (Characters who wear the masks in ‘10. Obo’laka’s Tomb’ will not be seen by the Disk of Eyes and will not be attacked by the wights in that room)
- **Speak no truth to the doomed child.** (Characters who tell the truth to the scared girl Nepartak in ‘14. Moa’s Tomb’ will turn her into a flameskull)
- **The keys turn on the inside only.** (The keys to the chests in ‘16. Wongo’s Tomb’ only turn from inside the chests)

## Fabled Treasures

The book (*ToA*, pg. 127) lists four fabled treasures in the tomb. If you want to make these treasures more exciting you can make them powerful magical items to aid your characters, as shown below.

### BLACK OPAL CROWN

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

While attuned to this crown, you gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to psychic damage.
- Your Charisma score increases by 2.
- You can touch a *sphere of annihilation* without taking damage.

**Spells.** The crown has 5 charges. While wearing the crown, you can use 1 or more charges to cast the following spells (save DC 17): *shadow of moil* (1 charge), *negative energy flood* (2 charges), and *eyebite* (3 charges). The crown regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

**Curse.** While attuned to the Black Opal Crown you have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws.

### EYE OF ZALTEC

*Wondrous item, legendary*

Using the Eye of Zaltec, you can cast the spell *true resurrection* once without any spell components. The Eye of Zaltec is powerful enough to resurrect a soul within the Soulmonger, as long as it hasn’t been consumed yet. Once this feature is used, it can’t be used again until 100 years have passed.

### NAVEL OF THE MOON

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

While attuned to the Navel of the Moon, you can peer through possible futures and magically pull one of them into events around you, ensuring a particular outcome. When you or a creature you can see within 60 feet of you makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can use your reaction to ignore the die roll and decide whether the number rolled is the minimum needed to succeed or one less than that number (your choice). When you use this feature, you gain one level of exhaustion. Only by finishing a long rest can you remove a level of exhaustion gained in this way.

**Time Stop.** While attuned to the Navel of the Moon, you can use an action to cast the spell *time stop*. Once this feature is used, it can’t be used again until 100 years have passed.

### SKULL CHALICE OF CH’GAKARE

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

While attuned to the chalice, you are immune to being frightened.

**Inspiring Leader.** You can spend 10 minutes inspiring your companions, shoring up their resolve to fight. When you do so, choose up to six friendly creatures (which can include yourself) within 30 feet of you who can see or hear you and who can understand you. Each creature can gain temporary hit points equal to your level + your Charisma modifier. A creature can’t gain temporary hit points from this feat again until it has finished a short or long rest.

If you already have the Inspiring Leader feature, the temporary hit points are doubled when using this feature.

## LEVEL 1: ROTTEN HALLS

The first level of the tomb is a bit of a sandbox. The characters have no specific objectives, other than locating the skeleton key (although they will not know at this point that the skeleton keys are needed), and finding a few trickster gods and their magic items to gain power.

### 5B. DEVIL FACE

While hinted at in Acererak's warning "in darkness it hides" the devil's mask at '5B. Devil's Mask' doesn't actually do anything other than house a **shadow demon**. If you want to quickly underscore the importance of the skeleton keys, you can alter the devil's mask a little, as described below. When a character sticks part of its body inside the magical darkness, you can have the character hear the following riddle, instead of being attacked by the shadow demon: "Skeleton shapes live on each floor, collect them all to open the door."

### 7. GRAND STAIRCASE

It is entirely possible that your players take the stairs all the way to the bottom of the tomb at the first opportunity. The Tomb of the Nine Gods is massive and even the most experienced DMs may have trouble reviewing all of the rooms on a single floor before a session. Do not panic! If the players ever go in a direction you were not ready for, feel free to encourage everyone to take a 5 or 10 minute break while you review your notes.

### 8. MAGICAL ATTRACTION

There is a secret door here that leads down to Withers' Office. If characters find this door it could disrupt the flow of the dungeon. You may choose to have this door be barred from the inside, if you're not ready for the characters to descend.

### 9. MAGIC FOUNTAIN

Characters who drink from the fountain are at risk of instantly dying or losing the ability to speak for 8 hours. The former is a pretty unheroic way for someone to lose a character so you may want to remove the consequence that if the damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it dies and turns to dust. The latter may take the fun away from a session or two from one of your players. If you think your player would be pretty upset if they could not talk (or cast spells with verbal components) for 8 hours, consider having the effect last for 1 hour instead. Alternatively, you can change the effect so it causes the character to giggle uncontrollably, giving them disadvantage on Stealth checks for the duration instead.

### 16. WONGO'S TOMB

If the characters are not careful here, there's a high risk that one of them could end up disintegrated. You may want to change the trap on the onyx button so that it doesn't reduce its victim to a pile of dust.

Wongo's spirit can also be problematic since it imparts the flaw: "I act without concern for the well-being of others." This has the potential to upset the delicate problem-solving camaraderie needed to survive the tomb. You may consider revising the flaw to: "I sometimes like to act in unpredictable ways."

### 17. UNDERGROUND WATERFALL

If your characters venture down the river and go over the waterfall down to 'Level 5: Gears of Hate', they may quickly come face to face with an **abolet**. If you want to avoid this scenario, you can omit access to the river simply by removing the secret doors that lead to it in '10. Obo'laka's Tomb' and '14. Moa's Tomb'.

## LEVEL 2: DUNGEON OF DECEPTION

In 'Level 2: Dungeon of Deception' the party is still mainly trying to find trickster gods to obtain their powers. Once they find the square skeleton key on this floor – assuming that they found the triangle on the previous floor – they should realize that these are important. The other key feature of this floor is '28. Withers' Office', which is hidden behind two secret doors. Withers and his tomb dwarves keep the dungeon in working order. If the characters find their way into this area, it could change their understanding of how the tomb works.

### Acererak's Second Warning

The bronze plaque in '7B. Acererak's Second Warning' foreshadows much of the content in 'Level 2: Dungeon of Deception'. Here's a quick summary with the warnings linked directly to what they foreshadow:

- **The ring is a path to another tomb.** (Traveling around '19. Gravity Tomb' leads to a mirror tomb that Acererak uses to test traps).
- **The dead abhor sunlight.** (If the sunlight '20. False Tomb' strikes the plaque in the coffin, a trap is triggered)
- **Only a jewel can tame the frog.** (The control gem for the grey slaad in '24. Nangnang's Tomb' is in '28. Withers' Office'.)
- **Bow as the dead god intoned.** (Bowling to the statue in '22. Papazotl's Tomb' causes enemies to stop attacking).
- **Into darkness descend.** (Descending into '18. Devil Pit' leads to '35. I'jin's Tomb. This is the only nonmagical way to enter 35. I'jin's Tomb without disrupting the block and obstructing the medallion normally visible through 34. Peephole).

### 19. THE GRAVITY RING

This area has the potential to completely derail your campaign. Because it leads to the tomb as it stood a year ago, there is no Soulmonger in the basement. Your players may be furious if they conquer the entire tomb only to find an empty room at the end. You may want to candidly explain to your players that you removed this puzzle from the adventure and to cross the warning off their handout. Alternatively, you can put an explanation that this ring leads to a tomb set a year in the past in Devlin's Journal (which is in this room).

### 25. SCRYING POOL

If the characters discover the secret entrance to the '25. Scrying Pool', '26. Spiral Staircase', '27. Forge of the Tomb Dwarves', and '28. Withers's Office' they will gain a lot of flexibility within the tomb. Withers's Office provides a safe place to take a long rest after the characters defeat Withers. The *amulet of the black skull* is potentially problematic as it allows characters to teleport through walls (with the potential consequence of petrification and a nasty curse) so you may want to stress that it gives off very evil vibes to characters inspecting it.



## LEVEL 3: VAULT OF REFLECTION

In 'Level 3: Vault of Reflection', characters will need to collect all ten eye crystals from the different rooms on this level in order to open the door to '44. Vault of the Beholder' (assuming the skeleton key resides here, otherwise the characters need not collect the eye crystals to move on). At this point, the characters' resources should be running low. Clever parties will identify that the Room of Respite is a good place for a long rest.

### Acererak's Third Warning

The bronze plaque in '7C. Acererak's Third Warning' foreshadows much of the content in 'Level 3: Vault of Reflection'. Here's a quick summary with the warnings linked directly to what they foreshadow:

- **Walk through water with weapon in hand.** (Characters must carry a trident from one of the walls to pass through the waterfall in '31. Reflected Hall').
- **Slake your shadow at the font.** (Characters must have their shadow drink the liquid from the font in '33. Chamber of Opposition' in order to get the crystal eyes from the bottom of it).
- **The vulture is the first step.** (The first puzzle floor tile in the sequence to open '35B. I'jin's Tomb' is the vulture tile)
- **Right the gods.** (Turning the god statues to the right causes creatures to be teleported above or below the *wall of force* in '39. Golem Pit')
- **The walls of history tell all.** (The steps of the ritual to open Kubazan's tomb are shown in the pictures on the wall '42. Kubazan's Tomb').

## 31. REFLECTED HALL

The description of the room states that the murals of the humanoids brandish real weapons hanging from the wall. You may want to clarify that these weapons stick out from the wall, so that your players suspect that they can be removed from the wall. Acererak's warning suggests that the players should "walk through water with weapon in hand". It is not obvious that the weapon needs to be a trident, although that is the only aquatic weapon on the wall. Additionally, there are crystal eyes behind the hawk-headed females. The trick here is that they are suspicious because they are the only humanoids not holding weapons. You can draw further attention to this by revising the description of the room to state:

"The walls are slick with moisture and set with murals showing animal-headed humanoids in armor, all but one of which appear to brandish weapons, hanging on the walls."

## 33. CHAMBER OF OPPOSITION

There is a bit of a confusing description in the book regarding how the shadow works. The book states that the shadow "perfectly matches the motions of the character who created it, always keeping its back to its creator as though it was a projected image 15 feet ahead". However, due to the dimensions of the room if a character backs all the way up to the wall outside of '33. Chamber of Opposition', the shadow will be standing in the front, not standing facing it. To address this, you can either allow the shadow to drink from the font while standing in it, or you can have the shadow turn as the character turns so that a character cannot face its own shadow.

## 35. I'JIN'S TOMB

I'jin's tomb is described across four different areas (29, 34, 35A, and 35B). Here is the basic gist of how the puzzle floor works and how the characters can solve it:

- There are a bunch of tiles on the floor depicting animals, the correct sequence to step on to open the tomb is vulture, serpent, door, reed, scarab, scepter, foot, and urn.
- Characters know that the first step is the vulture from Acererak's Third Warning.
- The rest of the sequence must be determined by a character looking through '34. Peephole' to read a medallion on the jackal-headed painting on the stone block. The dial on the medallion shows what tile must be stepped on next. Characters standing in this area can communicate telepathically with creatures in '35B. Tomb'.
- If the characters travel into '35B. Tomb' by pushing the button to make the stone block descend into the floor, the medallion becomes unreadable. The block resets when a wrong button is pushed.
- If characters enter this area via '18. Devil's Pit' they won't disturb the block.

## 39. GOLEM PIT

The god statues in this room are Azuth and Torm. The book does not state which god is on the right or left side of the pit, so you can assume Azuth (hooded bearded male) is on the left and Torm (armored male knight) is on the right. The book states that in order to teleport characters above or below the wall of force, the gods must be turned to the right (also from Acererak's warning says to "right the gods").

## 42. KUBAZAN'S TOMB

Frescos 1, 2, and 4 are fairly straightforward to follow - toss five coins, eat a bug, and light a candle. Fresco 3 is not as obvious. The fresco shows a woman holding a knife and a headless chicken, the ritual requires spilling the blood of a living creature, and the shrine has copper bowl with rat bones. You can have the ritual succeed if the characters cut off the head of the rat skeleton or something close to what is depicted in the Fresco.

## 44. VAULT OF THE BEHOLDER

This encounter has a huge potential for character death and even a TPK. Essentially, there is a beholder in this room who has permanent *invisibility*, which is not ended when he uses his eye rays. When the characters enter this room, the beholder will uncover the drape on the iron sphere, which causes anything metal (or characters wearing metal armor) to get stuck. In order to give the characters a fighting chance, while still running this encounter as written, keep the following in mind:

- Allow the characters to see where the eye rays shoot from so that they can get a rough idea of where the beholder is.
- Since it cannot move during other creatures' turns, the characters should be able to pinpoint it when it uses legendary actions.
- The candles in the room are all magically lit, so the characters should be able to determine the exact placement of the antimagic field based on which candles go out each round.
- If you place the skeleton key in this room, the players do not necessarily have to defeat the beholder, just get the key's head and make it out of the room alive.

## LEVEL 4: CHAMBERS OF HORROR

The Chambers of Horror is the last level of the Tomb of the Nine Gods proper. This is the last floor that characters will have opportunities to get trickster god upgrades and receive helpful hints from Acererak. Once characters find the hexagon skeleton key on this floor, they can drop down into the Gears of Hate.

### Acererak's Fourth Warning

The bronze plaque in '7D. Acererak's Fourth Warning' foreshadows much of the content in 'Level 4: Chambers of Horror'. Here's a quick summary with the warnings linked directly to what they foreshadow:

- **Death to fire, dine or drown, precious air, and falling sand.** (Characters must extinguish the candle, eat the shellfish, inhale air from the aarakocra bones, and avoiding falling in the pit as sand builds up in '47. Elemental Chambers').
- **The army sleeps in silence.** (The terracotta warriors in '48. Shagambi's Tomb' attack when they hear sound).
- **The mirror holds twelve.** (The mirror in '50. Mirror of Life Trapping' can hold twelve creatures).
- **Find the iron scepter's twin.** (The iron scepter in '52. Throne Room' is not the real one – the real one is in '53. Crypt of the Sun Queen' behind a secret door).
- **The maze holds the key.** (Keys that can open the tomb in '55. Unkh's Tomb' are located in the maze on the wall).

### 47. ELEMENTAL CELLS

The elemental chambers can be a lot of fun, but Acererak's warning is only helpful for two of the rooms.

**47A. Fire Cell.** The fire cell is straightforward – there is a lit candle and the hint is “death to fire”. Putting out the candle with water brings characters to the water cell. Putting the candle out by smothering brings characters to the air cell.

**47B. Water Cell.** The water cell is also straightforward – there are shellfish everywhere and the hint is “dine or drown”. Eating an oyster brings characters to the air cell and eating a snail brings characters to the earth cell.

**47C. Air Cell.** Here's where things get a bit abstract. In order to beat the air cell, characters have to pierce the aarakocra bones and suck air out of them. Anyone who's specifically studied avian biology would know that birds have hollow bones, but for the rest of us, this room may be a bit of a stretch given that the only clue is “precious air”. You may want to have the bones be particularly brittle and when a character interacts with them at all, you can tell them they hear a faint hissing sound as if air is escaping the bones. There is not too much else in the room, so they should mess with the bones eventually.

**47D. Earth Cell.** In order to defeat the earth cell, characters have to wait 2 rounds until the sand opens the trapped floor before the medusa pendant button unlocks that allows access to '48. Shagambi's Tomb'. Acererak's hint “falling sand” is not particularly helpful. If you want to be merciful, you can allow the button to be pressed before the pit opens, assuming characters find it in time.



### 49. MAZE OF DEATH

To open the Maze of Death, a character must hold out their hand like the humanoid on the slab door. Once someone disturbs the *black opal crown*, the slabs close and two **bodaks** emerge. The back side of the slab can only be opened if a character holds their hand out with their arm severed at the elbow. If you think this is a bit extreme, you can allow players to chop off the arm of an unseen servant or summoned creature instead.

If the characters have not yet explored '55. Unkh's Tomb', they have a chance to restore a lost limb by finding the purple key in the maze. If you are a particularly benevolent DM and one of the characters bravely chopped off their arm, feel free to fudge the result of the percentile dice so that they find the purple key in the maze.

### 50. MIRROR OF LIFE TRAPPING

The *mirror of life trapping* is one of the best ways to replace dead characters. The command words for the mirror are written in Withers's spellbook in '28. Withers's Office', but there is almost no way anyone would make that connection. The most likely scenario is that characters will either identify the mirror and reveal its command words, or just blast it to bits. If the mirror is destroyed, all nine occupants (three of which are large creatures) suddenly emerge. If that happens, you may be wondering how they all fit in that 15-foot by 15-foot room. There are a few ways to manage this. One is to enter combat and roll initiative for each creature in the mirror. On each creature's turn, they appear in the room and can act and move from there (conveniently getting out of the way so more creatures have room to arrive). Another way is to have the creatures instead appear at the bottom of the stairwell in '45. Gargoyle Guardians' where there is more room to maneuver. The invisible stalker and troll can intercept the players as they run towards the chaos.

## LEVEL 5: GEARS OF HATE

The Gears of Hate is where the Tomb of the Nine Gods and all of its traps gets powered. There are no trickster god upgrades on this level. On this floor, characters must figure out how to orient the gears so that they can move around, defeat the wardrobe challenges on the Cog of Blood, and find the octagonal skeleton key. Based on the recommended locations in the book, the octagonal skeleton key should be in a pretty obvious location, such as '61. Control Room'.

### COG SOLUTION

Assuming the cogs start at orientation 3 and the party's only goal is to get to 'Level 6: Cradle of the Death God', there are a few solutions to the cogs which will allow them access. Two of the most straightforward are:

- Someone is in '61. Control Room' and sets the cogs to orientation 1 while the rest of the party is in the '58. Cog of Rot'. The party will be able to walk into '60. Cog of Blood', defeat the monsters in the wardrobes and head north out of the cog. Someone will have to let the control room character out through the secret hallway when they get to '70. Armillary Sphere'.
- Someone is in '61. Control Room' and sets the cogs to orientation 5 while the rest of the party is in the '58. Cog of Rot' or '59. Cog of Acid'. From there, the whole party will be able to leave the cogs and fly or swim/climb into '60. Cog of Blood'.

### 61. CONTROL ROOM

The control room may be a bit frustrating for players since there are no clues on this level. The controls are simply trial and error. Note that if the red button is hit, the door to the control room will shut for an hour, trapping anyone inside for the duration. This doesn't really serve a purpose and may just work to frustrate your players, so you can consider omitting that feature.

### 62C. BROKEN STATUE

The juggernaut is a very exciting trap, but requires that characters first solve a fairly vague riddle:

*Three I need,  
Then three more,  
Three more still,  
Opens the door.*

If your players do not think of giving the gargoyle statue a bunch of gems, you can have three of anything work (gold pieces, rations, etc).

### 67. HALL OF THE GOLDEN MASTODON

This area features a lot of enemies in quick succession. Unless the characters have significant allies remaining from the mirror of life trapping, a bargain with the Erinyes may be the only way to prevent a TPK. Aside from the invisible beholder, this is the hardest combat encounter in the tomb before the atropol and Acererak due to the sheer number of enemies.

### 70. ARMILLARY SPHERE

If you want the Armillary Sphere Conjunction to feel really significant and not leave it up to chance, feel free to allow the player mounting it to increase any of their ability scores by 2.

## LEVEL 6: CRADLE OF THE DEATH GOD

The Cradle of the Death God is where the characters will find the Soulmonger. In order to access the Soulmonger, the characters must have collected the five skeleton keys from the floors above. However, in order to insert the keys into the skeleton gate, the characters must complete five trials set forth by the Sewn Sisters, a coven of night hags that live on this level. Once the challenges are complete, the characters can insert the keys and face the Soulmonger. Once the Soulmonger is destroyed, the characters can face Acererak. If (and that's a big if!) Acererak is defeated, the characters may face a final challenge to escape the tomb through a portal.

### 71. LAIR OF THE SEWN SISTERS

The Sewn Sisters' lair has a lot going on.

**The Clone.** The Sewn Sisters have cloned one of the characters to interrogate it for information regarding the party. The clone is held in a cage. This is a great opportunity to introduce a replacement for a dead player character rather than giving the clone the statistics of a commoner.

**The Dolls.** If the characters are untrustworthy of the dolls and kill them, you can have the dolls reform after an hour with no memory of the attack.

**Facing the Sewn Sisters.** After the characters defeat the five trials and reveal the keyholes for the skeleton keys, the Sewn Sisters attack and try to steal the keys from the characters and return to the Border Ethereal. You can have each of the Sewn Sisters use their action to make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by a character's Strength (Athletics) check when trying to pry a skeleton key away. If the hags succeed in taking a skeleton key back to the Border Ethereal, the only way characters can get the keys back is to use Strawbundle's charm to cast *etherealness*. If the characters have used up Strawbundle's charm, you can have Strawbundle bestow a new charm to avoid having an abrupt end to the adventure.



### 73. TRIAL OF THE SQUARE

In the trial of the square, the characters must defeat a **dust mephit** under the effects of mirror image and then figure out how to pull an ethereal lever. A dust mephit is a trivial challenge for a party of level 10 characters. If you want to make this encounter more challenging and give the mephit time to unleash the command words from this room, you can use a **dust devil** instead. Any character with Strawbundle's charm can simply turn ethereal and pull the lever. If players are struggling with this challenge, you can have Strawbundle suggest they try using *ethereality*.

### 74. TRIAL OF THE PENTAGON

Although the book does not directly state this, you can have a character with Clay No-Face's charm be immune to the hunger induced by not partaking in the food in the trial of the pentagon. For characters partaking in the frothy beer, the book states: "The character gains a special die: a d6. Anytime in the next 24 hours, the character can roll this die once and add the result to a d20 roll he or she just made." Due to the power that characters are losing in having their trickster god be suppressed, you may interpret this as the character can roll one d6 and add it to the result every time they roll a d20, rather than only once ever.

Finally, the only solution to finding the lever in this room is to locate the devil's face with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On the off chance that none of the characters roll high enough to find this, you can have anyone who inspects the tapestries with a passive Perception of 15 or higher automatically succeed the check. If no characters have a passive Perception of 15 or higher, you can allow anyone who spends an hour searching the room to automatically find it.

### 75. TRIAL OF THE HEXAGON

If characters do not think to search under the stone shelf for the sixth candle during the trial of the hexagon, you can have one of the **wereboars** be carrying a candle in its pocket if the false lever is pulled.

### 76. TRIAL OF THE OCTAGON

The nursery rhyme book in the trial of the octagon requires that one of the players speak infernal. Fortunately, Joho's charm grants characters the benefit of a *helm of comprehending languages*. If the characters do not figure out that the rhyme must be read backwards after reading it forwards the first time you can have the childish dolls giggle at the rhyme and ask characters to read it again, then read it faster, then read it backwards.

**Spider Fan Trap.** The spider fan trap in this room has a single saving throw or characters take 8d10 slashing damage per round for 1 minute. If you think this is excessive damage so close to the final boss fight, you can instead allow characters to make Dexterity saving throws at the start of each of their turns to dodge the fan. A *bead of force* from '44. Vault of the Beholder' may also be able to protect a character from the blades.

## FIGHTING ACERERAK

Players may suspect that Acererak will be making an appearance at some point, and they are certainly correct.

**Making the Fight Harder.** Acererak is one of the most iconic villains in all of Dungeons & Dragons so defeating him should not be guaranteed. At a glance, he does seem more than powerful enough to challenge the party, but when you factor in the benefits given by the trickster gods – including 50 temporary hit points each turn and +3d6 psychic damage on attacks – they should be more than a match for the old lich. If you want to make Acererak more challenging, consider doing one or more of the following:

- Increase the damage caused by the *sphere of annihilation* from a measly 4d10 to 10d6 + 40 (the same damage as the spell *disintegrate*).
- Acererak has *lightning bolt* and *fireball* on his prepared spell list, so he has something worthwhile to spend his At-Will-Spell Legendary Action on.
- Acererak shows up to the fight with *mind blank* already cast upon himself.
- The trickster gods' only give the characters their 50 temporary hit points at the start of the fight, or 3 times in total (whichever you think makes the fight most exciting).

Note that if you make the above changes to the fight with Acererak, you may want to have him hold on to *power word kill* until things are potentially looking rough for him, especially if the characters don't have *revivify* or similar magic available. A character getting killed in the first round of combat without a save isn't very fun for the player controlling that character.

**Handling Defeat.** Acererak is a powerful adversary and certainly has the potential to TPK the party, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. Fortunately for the rest of Faerûn, by the time Acererak arrives, the characters have already been successful in lifting the death curse. If Acererak kills the whole party, you can have an epilogue where the characters' bodies are retrieved from the tomb a year later by the Harpers and resurrected (the world can certainly spare a few diamonds to bring back these amazing, world-saving heroes).



# AN EVENTYR GAMES COMPENDIUM

We hope you've enjoyed the content in this compendium. If you find any errors, have a good idea, or just want to get in touch, you can reach out to us at [jvaleur@eventyrgames.com](mailto:jvaleur@eventyrgames.com) or [eventyrgames.com](http://eventyrgames.com).

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