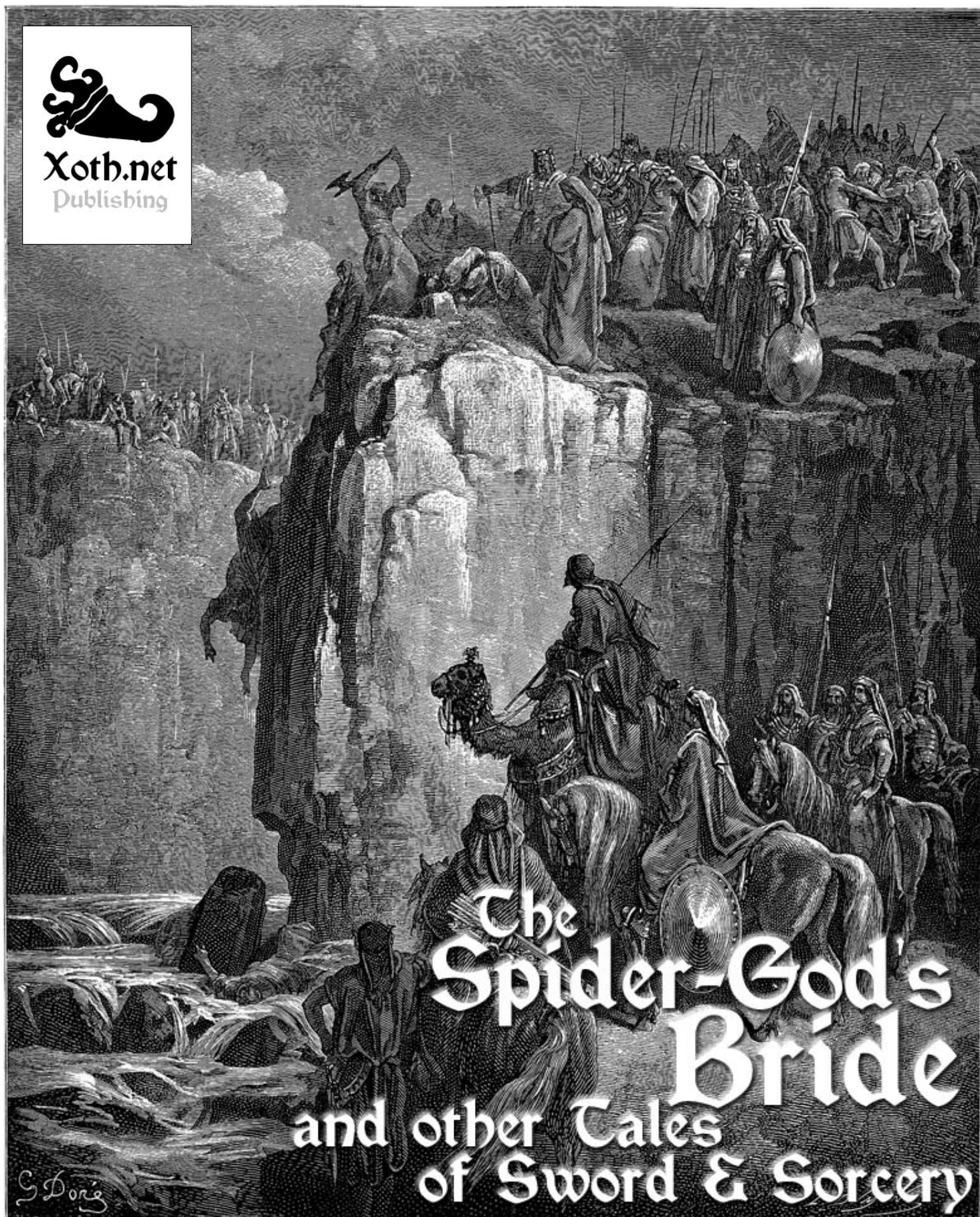


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Sword and Sorcery  
Adventures for Character Levels 1-10

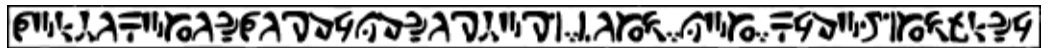


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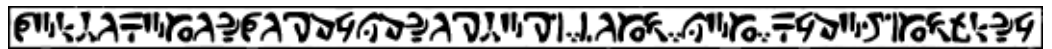


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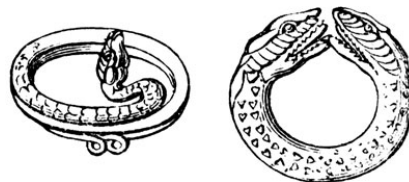
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**Interior Art:** All artwork is public domain art, collected by Karen at <http://karenswhimsy.com>.  
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**Special Thanks:** Thanks to Henning Rege for his advice and encyclopedic knowledge of the d20 rules. Thanks to Jans Carton for his invaluable online reference at [d20srd.org](http://d20srd.org). And maximum respect to the Forus Massive worldwide!

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This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.

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Read on, and prepare for high adventure, as the player characters cut a crimson swath through savage jungle kingdoms and thronged desert cities. From the forbidden catacombs of Belthaar to the sunken temples of Namthu, a world of adventure awaits you!

## A Word to the Wise

This book makes occasional references to mature themes such as human sacrifice, slavery, drugs, racism and perverted sexuality. Such themes, which are staples of the sword and sorcery genre, are simply assumed to be unpleasant but undeniable facts of life in the grim fantasy world described. The sensible reader should quickly note that these themes are not the focus of the book; they are not explored in-depth, nor are they used gratuitously. Remember that this is a work of fiction, and stuff in this book should not be taken as an endorsement of these things in the real world. That said, let's get on with the game.

## How This Book Is Organized

The first part of the book contains new rules and background information. In this chapter (Chapter One), you will find optional rules and advice for running a sword and sorcery campaign. Chapter Two details new feats, races and character classes, including a modified sorcerer class. Chapter Three contains a collection of new spells and new rules for studying and using magic. Chapter Four lists the major cults and religions of the world, and describes their temples, priests, and rituals. Finally, Chapter Five has a selection of new equipment, including regional weapons and alchemical items.

The second part of the book contains a collection of adventures that take the player characters across the world, from the domed palaces and scented gardens of Zul-Bazzir, through the scorching deserts of Khazistan, to the barbaric stone cities of Azimba, into the forbidden temples of Susrah, and beyond. Each adventure has been designed to be played as a stand-alone scenario, but the DM could very well combine them into a grand campaign, in which case they will take the PCs all the way from 1st level to around 10th level.

The book then wraps up with appendices containing new monsters and creature templates, plus a bibliography and other miscellanea.







## Campaign Guidelines and Optional Rules

The worlds of sword and sorcery adventures differ in many respects from the “high fantasy” milieu assumed by the core rules. In sword and sorcery, the world is dominated by human races; other races (usually degenerate survivors of an earlier age) and supernatural monsters exist only in hidden or lost enclaves far from human civilization. Combat is bloody and brutal, and magical healing does not exist. The use of real magic or sorcery is uncommon, and when used its effects tend to be subtle. Sorcerers are almost always villains, tainted by cosmic evil. Permanent magical items are extremely rare, and never for sale.

To establish the proper atmosphere for the adventures contained within this book, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the following optional rules (and the new classes in the Characters chapter) in your campaign.

While everything in this chapter is optional, the adventures as written assume all the following rules to be in effect (except for the “Armor Reduces Damage” rule, as noted below). The DM might have to make adjustments to the adventures in this book if he places them within a world with the standard d20 System level of magic, monsters, and magical items.

### Out With Alignment

*“Torches flared murkily on the revels in the Maul, where the thieves of the east held carnival by night. In the Maul they could carouse and roar as they liked, for honest people shunned the quarters, and watchmen, well paid with stained coins, did not interfere with their sports. (...) In one of these dens merriment thundered to the low smoke-stained roof, where rascals gathered in every stage of rags and tatters -- furtive cut-purses, leering kidnappers, quick-fingered thieves, swaggering braves with their wenches, strident-voiced women clad in tawdry finery. Native rogues were the dominant element -- dark-skinned, dark-eyed Zamorians, with daggers at their girdles and guile in their hearts.”* — Robert E. Howard: The Tower of the Elephant

A staple high fantasy concept, that of inherently evil races (such as orcs and drow) doesn’t make much sense in a mainly humanocentric world such as the one described in this book.

While the sword and sorcery genre certainly has its own set of clichés, it differs from high fantasy in that there is no delicate balance between good and evil, with fair and noble elves valiantly fighting against stupid, evil orcs. Rather, it is a grim world where might makes right; a world of cruel kings, barbarous fighters, beautiful but seductive women, and ambitious sorcerers and foul demons lurking in the shadows.

Individuals within this world are defined by their motivation, culture, and personal ambitions and ethics. Having characters act according to their own motivation creates much more interesting plots and storylines than simply “I’m good, you’re evil” plotlines.

As a consequence, characters, creatures and deities have no listed alignment value (to retain compatibility with the standard stat-blocks, the alignment entry is included, but all characters are simply listed as Neutral). The PCs will have to judge for themselves whether an NPC is “evil” based on his or her actions.

That said, there are certain supernatural creatures and monsters, such as demonic outsiders and most undead, whose alignments can be labeled as “cosmic evil” (CE). A *protection from evil* spell works against these kinds of monsters.

Note that while cosmic evil may exist, there is no such thing as “cosmic good”. This is one of the major differences between high fantasy, where some sort of balance of power between good and evil usually exists, and sword and sorcery worlds, where the outlook is bleak and the heroes usually fight against overwhelming odds.





### Monsters Are Monstrous

*"Only a sudden (...) premonition of danger saved Imaro from the talons of the beast that sprang down from the trees. Despite Imaro's lightning-swift leap to the side, those claws raked across one naked shoulder, adding to the scarlet wounds decorating his dark skin. Thrown off-balance by the glancing blow, Imaro stumbled to the ground. Quickly he leaped to his feet and whirled to meet his attacker. His eyes widened in surprise then, for the beast facing him was like none he had seen before, on the Tamburure or elsewhere. It was a great cat, leanly built, halfway between a leopard and a lioness in size. Its fur was scarlet in hue, spotted like a leopard's with rosettes of a deeper crimson shade. Its glittering claws were fearsome weapons, but more dangerous still were the dagger-like fangs that curved an inch below the cat's tufted chin. The long tail lashed in frustration. Not often did the red panther miss its prey."*

— Charles R. Saunders: *The City of Madness*

Good sword and sorcery tales include a certain element of brooding horror. The monsters encountered by the protagonists are often unique or exist in isolation. Many monsters are simply giant or prehistoric versions of natural animals such as snakes, apes, and bats.

A good rule of thumb is to have the PCs encounter at most one or two different monster types during a single adventuring session. Dungeons stocked with different monsters in each room should be avoided, since it quickly breaks atmosphere and strains credibility.

Whenever a monster or unusual animal is encountered, treat them as having the Frightful Presence extraordinary ability.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** This special quality makes a creature's very presence unsettling to foes. It takes effect automatically when the creature performs some sort of dramatic action (such as charging, attacking, or snarling). Opponents within 30 feet who witness the action may become shaken for 1 minute (10 rounds). This ability affects only opponents with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the creature has. An affected opponent can resist the effect with a successful Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 frightful creature's racial HD + frightful creature's Cha modifier).

If multiple creatures of the same type appear simultaneously in the same encounter, opponents only have to make a single saving throw against the fear effect. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the frightful presence of monsters of the same type for 24 hours. For example, if the PCs are attacked by a pack of five ghouls, each player character makes a single saving throw. Those who make the save do not need to save again if more ghouls are encountered within 24 hours.

### Magic Is Mysterious

*"My name is Pharpetron, among those who have known me in Poseidonis; but even I, the last and most forward pupil of the wise Avyctes, know not the name of that which I am fated to become ere tomorrow. Therefore, by the ebbing silver lamps, in my master's marble house above the loud, ever-ravaging sea, I write this tale with a hasty hand, scrawling an ink of wizard virtue on the grey, priceless, antique parchment of dragons. And having written, I shall enclose the pages in a sealed cylinder of orichalcum, and shall cast the cylinder from a high window into the sea, lest that which I am doomed to become should haply destroy the writing. And it may be that mariners from Lephara, passing to Umb and Pneor in their tall triremes, will find the cylinder; or fishers will draw it from the wave in their seines of byssus; and having read my story, men will learn the truth and take warning; and no man's feet, henceforward, will approach the pale and demon-haunted house of Avyctes."* — Clark Ashton Smith: *The Double Shadow*

While almost every sword and sorcery tale seems to include a foul demon, an ancient wizard risen from the dead, or a cult of snake-worshipping priests, these settings are usually referred to as "low magic", at least when compared to the typical high fantasy, quasi-medieval settings so common in roleplaying games.

The major difference is that in sword and sorcery stories, magic is not used as a replacement for technology. Spells and magic items are not used to perform every little task and to make life more convenient for the caster. Rather, magic is a corrupting force that can be dangerous to both health and sanity; it is only used when the sorcerer deems it absolutely necessary.

Common people working their shops or fields, and the majority of soldiers, thieves and merchants, have likely never seen a true magician or seen a spell cast or held a magical item. Magic is generally feared, and most magicians (but not all) are associated with dark curses, evil gods and unbearable secrets which "Man Was Not Meant To Know". Even priests are usually feared and held in awe by the common man.

In savage areas, magic is widely feared and misunderstood, the province of tribal witch-doctors and shamans, who claim to protect the rest of the tribe from the vengeful spirits and demons that surround them.

The select few who are able to use magic and cast spells guard their secrets jealously and attempt to use it to their advantage, often to the detriment of others, and sometimes also to themselves.







Magical items are rare and are almost never for sale, though on rare events one will turn up in a market, unrecognized for its true value. Spellcasters might be willing to cast some spells for pay, depending on the individual's motivation or greed.

See the Magic chapter for more information about recommended changes to the magic system.

### Combat Is Deadly

*"Jehungir did not try again. That was his last arrow. He drew his scimitar and advanced, confident in his spired helmet and close-meshed mail. Conan met him halfway in a blinding whirl of swords. The curved blades ground together, sprang apart, circled in glittering arcs that blurred the sight which tried to follow them. Octavia, watching, did not see the stroke, but she heard its chopping impact and saw Jehungir fall, blood spurting from his side where the Cimmerian's steel had sundered his mail and bitten to his spine."* — Robert E. Howard: The Devil In Iron

In sword and sorcery stories, the protagonists regularly kill their foes with a single well-placed hit. Altering the massive damage rule makes it possible to simulate such scenes. On the other hand, it makes combat much more deadly for the player characters as well.

**Massive Damage:** Several variations on massive damage thresholds and results are possible. The default assumed in this book is that a character's massive damage threshold is equal to his current Constitution score plus half his character level or Hit Dice (rounded down). Whenever he takes damage from a single hit that equals or exceeds his threshold, he must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of massive damage. For every 10 points of damage dealt by an attack in excess of a character's massive damage threshold, increase the Fortitude save DC by 2.

For example, a 6th-level character with a Constitution of 13 would have to make a DC 15 Fortitude save when taking 16 to 25 points of damage from a single attack, DC 17 for 26 to 35 points, DC 19 for 36 to 45 points, and so on.

**Death Effects:** Since there are no raise dead or resurrection spells, death effects (such as from the finger of death and slay living spells) and death from massive damage drops characters to -8 hp and in immediate danger of bleeding to death instead of killing them outright. Such characters can recover in the normal ways from negative hit points, but they are usually unable to act for the rest of the current encounter.

### Armor Reduces Damage (Optional Rule)

In the abstract d20 combat system, a character's armor defends him by reducing the chance that an attack will deal damage. That

system simplifies the realities of battle in order to streamline combat resolution. An attack that fails due to a character's armor or natural armor doesn't really fail to connect, but rather fails to connect with enough force to deal any damage. (That's why touch attacks ignore a character's armor and natural armor — the touch attack only needs to connect to deliver its effect, and need not actually breach the target's armor.)

If you're willing to add a layer of complexity to your combats, consider this variant. In this system, armor reduces the amount of damage dealt by an attack instead of merely turning would-be hits into misses. Armor still prevents some hits outright, but also reduces the deadliness of attacks that do connect. In essence, the system "gives up" some of armor's ability to turn hits into misses in exchange for a small reduction in damage dealt by any given attack.

**Armor Damage Reduction Values:** In this system, armor offers two benefits against attacks: a minor bonus to AC, which functions just like the armor bonus in the standard d20 rules but is usually lower in value; and damage reduction. To determine the armor's damage reduction, divide the armor's normal armor bonus by 2 (rounding down). To determine the armor's new armor bonus, subtract the DR from the normal armor bonus. For example, studded leather has a normal armor bonus of +3. That gives it a DR of 1/- (half of 3, rounded down) and a new armor bonus of +2 (3 minus 1).

**Stacking Damage Reduction:** The damage reduction granted by armor stacks with other damage reduction of the same type (that is, damage reduction that has a dash after the number). A 7th-level barbarian wearing a breastplate has DR 3/- (1/- from his class levels and 2/- from his armor). A fighter wearing full plate armor who is the target of a stonewall spell, however, has DR 4/- from the armor and 10/adamantine from the spell.

**Shields:** Shields function normally in this variant, granting their full shield bonus to AC. Unlike with armor, a shield's effectiveness is measured wholly by its ability to keep an attack from connecting with your body.

**Natural Armor:** A creature's natural armor also provides a modicum of damage reduction. Divide the monster's natural armor bonus (not including any enhancement bonus) by 5 to determine the monster's damage reduction. The same value is subtracted from the monster's natural armor bonus to find the monster's new AC.

If the creature already has damage reduction, either add the value gained from natural armor (if the existing damage reduction is of the same type) or treat it as a separate DR value (if it is of a different type).

For example, a mummy normally has a natural armor bonus of +10. This gives it DR 2/-, and its natural armor bonus is reduced



by 2 points to +8 (making it's AC 18). Since the mummy already has DR 5/- as a special quality, its total damage reduction becomes DR 7/-.

A mature adult red dragon has a natural armor bonus of +24. This gives it DR 4/-, and its natural armor bonus is reduced by 4 points to +20 (making its AC 28). The dragon's existing damage reduction is 10/magic, so the two damage reduction values remain separate.

Finally, a frost giant has a +9 natural armor bonus, so it gains DR 1/- from natural armor. The chain shirt it wears gives it an additional DR 2/-. If the frost giant were a 7th-level barbarian, the barbarian class levels would give it DR 1/-. These three values add up to DR 4/-. The giant's AC would be 20 (10, +8 natural armor bonus, +2 chain shirt).

### Wounds Heal Quickly

To make up for the scarcity of healing spells and restorative magic, the natural healing rate should be accelerated in a sword and sorcery setting.

**Natural Healing:** With a full night's rest (8 hours of sleep or more), a character recovers 3 + character level + Constitution bonus hit points. Any significant interruption during the character's rest prevents the character from healing that night. If the character undergoes complete bed rest for an entire day and night, he recovers twice the normal amount.

With a Heal skill check (DC 15) that takes 1d6 minutes to perform, a character may provide short-term care for a wounded creature, restoring a number of hit points equal to 3 + character level + Constitution bonus. A creature can only benefit from such care once per day.

**Ability Damage:** Ability damage is healed at a rate of 1 point per hour of rest for each damaged ability score, except when the ability damage is suffered through a disease, in which case the lost ability points return only after the character has recovered from the disease. Permanent ability drain should be used with extreme care, since restoration spells are unavailable (see the Magic chapter).

### The Tale Is Its Own Reward

To focus on a good story rather than mindless monster-slaying, consider giving XP awards for objectives the player characters achieved during a session. This XP replaces the experience points gained from killing monsters. The DM should consider setting up specific story goals that the PCs can achieve, with an associated XP reward.

Alternatively, the DM could just hand out a suitable amount of experience points for each completed session, making sure the player characters advance in levels at an enjoyable rate.

## The Adventures

This section provides some tips for running the adventures in this book.

### Story-Driven versus Location-Driven Play

The adventures in this book are inspired by the sword and sorcery fiction of the pulp era. Each adventure is built around a sequence of scenes — encounters or locations — that (hopefully) combine to form an exciting story, with the player characters acting as the protagonists. To avoid railroading the PCs through a fixed plot, the goal has been to give the player characters plenty of choices with regard to how they resolve a specific situation. Also, there are many possible conclusions to each adventure and often, additional adventures can be extrapolated from the consequences of the PCs' actions during each adventure.

Even so, some DMs and players may not like the sequential nature of such story-driven adventures. Should you prefer a more free-form, location-driven style of play, where the characters are free to wander around, exploring new areas and stirring up trouble, this book presents you with dozens of maps and full descriptions of locations, as well as the statistics and motivations of NPCs, allowing you to take each adventure in whatever direction you desire.

In any case, you should view the "Adventure Synopsis" included in each chapter as merely a possible outline of events. Feel free to ignore it, wholly or in part, inserting your own plots or events to improve upon the scenario as written. The actions of the player characters may derail the original outline, but if this happens, just go with the flow and determine the logical response from non-player characters based on their capabilities and motivations.

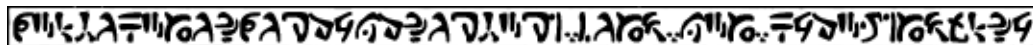
## The Road Ahead

The opportunities for further adventures in the World of Xoth are endless. At the end of the last adventure in this book, perhaps the player characters are shipwrecked on the bleak shores of the cannibalistic Ikuna tribes, or they may encounter a Zadjite merchant-fleet headed for the Silver Lotus Isles. The party can explore the ancient ruins and ziggurat-temples of the Sunken Isles of Ptahaana, or head back to the warring city-states of Susrah to enlist as mercenary captains.

If the player characters have played through all the adventures in this book, chances are that at least some enemies manage to escape alive and might come looking after the PCs for revenge. But these are tales for another day... and perhaps another book.







*"Zobal the archer and Cushara the pike-bearer had poured many a libation to their friendship in the sanguine liquors of Yoros and the blood of the kingdom's enemies. In that long and lusty amity, broken only by such passing quarrels as concerned the division of a wine-skin or the apportioning of a wench, they had served amid the soldiery of King Hoaraph for a strenuous decade. Savage warfare and wild, fantastic hazard had been their lot. The renown of their valor had drawn upon them, ultimately, the honor of Hoaraph's attention, and he had assigned them for duty among the picked warriors that guarded his palace in Faraad. And sometimes the twain were sent together on such missions as required no common hardihood and no disputable fealty to the king." — Clark Ashton Smith: The Black Abbot of Puthuum*

## New Core Classes

The nomad and sorcerer are new core classes suitable for sword and sorcery campaigns. The nomad is a replacement for the ranger archetype. The sorcerer, though having the same name as the PHB class, is a spellcaster that can represent several archetypes, from tribal shamans to cult priests and black wizards, depending on spell and feat selection.

This chapter contains new rules for character creation in a sword and sorcery campaign world, such as new core character classes and human racial variants.

### Existing Core Classes

The following core classes can be used without modification, as described in the PHB. All other classes from the core rules are not suitable and should not be used. Note that for certain non-player characters, the aristocrat, commoner and expert classes may also be appropriate.

**Barbarian:** Savage warriors are found in all wild lands, from the fur-cloaked clans of Tharag Thule, to the tribal spearmen of the Jungle Kingdoms and the pygmies of the Silver Lotus Isles. Many hillmen of Lamu are barbarians, and the piratical Sea Reavers include a few wandering barbarians and other outcasts.

**Fighter:** Fighters fill the ranks of armies and mercenary companies in the lands of Susrah, Khazistan, Yar-Ammon, Zadj, Taraam, Nabastis, and elsewhere. They are expertly trained in the art of war and include swordsmen, archers, pikemen, and cavalry. Nobles are often of the fighter class. Occasionally, fighters and mercenaries abandon the army and turn to a life of banditry along with rogues.

**Rogue:** Every city or town of some size, from the slaver-fortress of Al-Qazir to thousand-columned Achad of the Taraamites, is filled with thieves and assassins, gamblers,

*"Yadar, prince of a nomad people in the half-desert region known as Zyra, had followed throughout many kingdoms a clue that was often more elusive than broken gossamer. For thirteen moons he had sought Dalili, his betrothed, whom the slave traders of Sha-Rag, swift and cunning as desert falcons, had reft from the tribal encampment with nine other maidens while Yadar and his men were hunting the black gazelles of Zyra. Fierce was the grief of Yadar, and fiercer still his wrath, when he came back at eve to the ravaged tents. He had sworn then a great oath to find Dalili, whether in a slave-mart or brothel or harem, whether dead or living, whether tomorrow or after the lapse of gray years."* — Clark Ashton Smith: *Necromancy in Naat*

Nomads roam freely in areas most city-dwellers would consider inhospitable wastelands. Not bound by the laws of civilized men, they often raid and plunder lone travellers, caravans, and even walled cities. But they have their own codes of honor, and under certain circumstances must offer hospitality to all who ask for it. Nomads are known for the swiftness of their attacks, and they quickly travel vast distances on their horses and camels.

## Game Rule Information

Nomads have the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** A high Constitution score helps the nomad survive longer in the inhospitable areas he calls home. Dexterity is important for a nomad because nomads tend to wear light



armor. Wisdom is also important because because several nomad skills are based on Wisdom.

**Abbreviation:** Nom

**Hit Die:** d8

### Class Skills

The nomad's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st Level:** (6 + Int modifier) x 4.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the nomad.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A nomad is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor and shields (except tower shields).

**Mounted Skirmisher (Ex):** When a nomad rides mounts that are not trained for battle (such as heavy horses, light horses and riding camels, as opposed to warhorses and



war camels) into combat, they are not frightened. The nomad is not required to make the usual Ride checks to control such untrained mounts in combat.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Starting at 1st level, the nomad can perform sneak attacks with +1d6 points of bonus damage. This ability is otherwise identical to the rogue ability of the same name. If the nomad gets a sneak attack bonus from another source, the bonuses on damage stack. The nomad gains additional sneak attack dice at 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th level.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Mounted Skirmisher, Sneak Attack (+1d6), Track
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Fast Movement (+5)
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Endurance
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Throat of the Camel
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Sneak Attack (+2d6)
6th	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Fast Movement (+10)
7th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Bonus Feat
8th	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Swift Tracker
9th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Evasion
10th	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Sneak Attack (+3d6)
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	Fast Movement (+15)
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	Call the Clans
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	Camouflage
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	Bonus Feat
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+5	Sneak Attack (+4d6)
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+10	+5	Nomad Prince
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Hide in Plain Sight
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Fast Movement (+20)
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Bonus Feat
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Sneak Attack (+5d6)







**Track:** At 1st level, the nomad gains the Track feat as a bonus feat. If he already has the Track feat, he may choose another feat as a bonus feat.

**Fast Movement (Ex):** A nomad's land speed is faster than the norm for his race. At 2nd level, the nomad adds +5 feet to his speed. This benefit applies only when he is wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor and not carrying a heavy load. Apply this bonus before modifying the nomad's speed because of any load carried or armor worn.

The nomad's fast movement bonus also applies to any mount the nomad rides. It does not stack with the Improved Speed feat. It does, however, stack with the barbarian's Fast Movement ability (but note that the speed increase gained from the barbarian class does not apply to the mount).

The nomad gains additional speed increases at 6th, 11th and 18th level.

**Endurance:** At 3rd level, the nomad gains the Endurance feat as a bonus feat. If the character already has the Endurance feat, he gains the Diehard feat as a bonus feat instead.

**Throat of the Camel (Ex):** Starting at 4th level, a nomad requires significantly less sustenance than other people. Normally, a character can go without food for 3 days, and without water for 1 day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score, before having to make Constitution checks for thirst and starvation (see "Starvation and Thirst" in the DMG).

The nomad can survive without food and water for an additional day per four nomad class levels. For example, an 8th-level nomad with Con 16 can survive without water for 3 days and 16 hours before having to make Constitution checks against thirst, and without food for 5 days.

**Bonus Feat:** The nomad gains a bonus feat at 7th, 14th and 19th level. He must meet the prerequisites of the selected feat as normal.

**Swift Tracker (Ex):** Beginning at 8th level, a nomad can move at his normal speed while following tracks without taking the normal -5 penalty. He takes only a -10 penalty (instead of the normal -20) when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking.

**Evasion (Ex):** At 9th level, a nomad can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the nomad is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless nomad does not gain the benefit of evasion.

**Call the Clans (Ex):** A 12th-level nomad can call together a number of men from nomad clans and tribes to form a warband, of which he becomes the chieftain. The nomad gains the Leadership feat as a bonus feat. Additionally, the nomad gets a +5 bonus to his

Leadership score. The majority of the followers belong to the nomad class. If the nomad already has the Leadership feat, he gains a bonus feat instead.

**Camouflage (Ex):** A nomad of 13th level or higher can use the Hide skill in any sort of natural terrain, even if the terrain doesn't grant cover or concealment.

**Nomad Prince (Ex):** At 16th level, the nomad's reputation spreads far and wide, and entire clans flock to his banner. The number of followers gained from the Leadership feat is multiplied by five.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex):** While in any sort of natural terrain, a nomad of 17th level or higher level can use the Hide skill even while being observed.

### Starting Gear

1d6 x 10 gp worth of equipment, which typically includes a simple khalat desert robe, sandals, a waterskin, a sword, a dagger, and a mount trained for battle (a warhorse or war camel).

## Sorcerer

*"About him were scattered all the appurtenances of his art; the skulls of men and monsters; phials filled with black or amber liquids, whose sacrilegious use was known to none but himself; little drums of vulture-skin, and crotali made from the bones and teeth of the crocodile, used as an accompaniment to certain incantations. The mosaic floor was partly covered with the skins of enormous black and silver apes (...). Books were piled everywhere: ancient volumes bound in serpent-skin, with verdigris-eaten clasps, that held the frightful lore of Atlantis, the pentacles that have power upon the demons of the earth and the moon, the spells that transmute or disintegrate the elements; and runes from a lost language of Hyperborea, which, when uttered aloud, were more deadly than poison or more potent than any philtre."* — Clark Ashton Smith: The Last Incantation

The sorcerer archetype can fill a number of roles, depending on the society and the sorcerer's place in it. Among savage tribes, from the frozen wastes of the north to the steaming jungles of the south, he is a shaman or witch-doctor, who speaks with ancestor spirits and spirits of the mountains, commands animals and the souls of the dead, and curses his enemies with powerful juju. He declares taboos and crafts masks and drums to terrify his enemies; he beseeches the powerful beast-gods of the wilderness for aid; and he knows the secrets of strange herbs and deadly poisons. Such shamans often multiclass into the sorcerer class from the barbarian class, giving them improved combat ability, better Fortitude saves, and useful wilderness skills such as Handle Animal and Survival.





In more civilized lands, sorcerers often take the role of priests, acting as mouthpieces of real or imagined gods. These sorcerer-priests perform rituals and offer sacrifice to the numerous gods and demons that are said to control various aspects of human life. They study the past in libraries filled with great iron-bound books and crumbling papyrus scrolls, and interpret omens and portents and study the night skies to determine the future. Priests build temples in honour of the gods and craft gem-adorned idols in their likeness, amassing hoards of treasure that rival even that of kings and emperors. Even if true gods do not exist, organized religion serve the priests and their cults well. Members of secret or forbidden cults often multiclass with the rogue class, giving them skills with which to disguise and hide from persecution, as well as deadly sneak attacks. Some cults have prestige classes which offer specialized abilities related to the cult's teachings and purpose.

Finally, there are sorcerers who choose to live in isolation, performing weird experiments and abominable studies far away from people, but most sorcerers are possessed of an ambition that drives them to seek power over human society. Whether controlling a kingdom from behind the scenes, or ruling openly as a sorcerer-king, a lone sorcerer is as deadly as a spider and weaves his webs of intrigue across the land. His mere presence frightens lesser men, and his serpent-gaze enslaves the wills of kings. He summons demons and abominations to do his bidding, and knows the ancient words of power. He augments his spells with alchemical powders and strange elixirs.

Some sorcerers band together in covens or sorcerous circles to gain greater power, but such organizations are frequently troubled by infighting as each member schemes to take advantage of the others. Successful covens are

typically headed by a strong leader who demands total obedience from the junior members. Still, it can be advantageous for novice sorcerers to join such magical circles because they offer easy access to spells and other forbidden knowledge. Such "true sorcerers" do not usually dilute their devotion to sorcerous studies with multiclassing, except perhaps to take levels in certain prestige classes that represent covens of sorcerers.

### Game Rule Information

Sorcerers have the following game statistics.

**Abilities:** Intelligence determines how powerful a spell a sorcerer can cast, how many spells the sorcerer can cast per day, and how hard those spells are to resist. To cast a spell, a sorcerer must have an Intelligence score of 10 + the spell's level. A sorcerer gets bonus spells based on Intelligence. The Difficulty Class of a saving throw against a sorcerer's spell is 10 + the spell's level + the sorcerer's Intelligence modifier.

**Abbreviation:** Sor

**Hit Die:** d4

### Class Skills

The sorcerer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (N/A), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

**Skill Points at 1st Level:** (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### Class features

All of the following are class features of the sorcerer.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Sorcerers are proficient with all simple weapons, but not with any type of armor or shield. Armor of any type interferes with a sorcerer's movements, which can cause his spells with somatic components to fail.

**Spells:** A sorcerer casts arcane spells, which are drawn from the sorcerer spell list (see below). He can cast any spell he knows without preparing it ahead of time.

To learn or cast a spell, a sorcerer must have an Intelligence score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a sorcerer's spell is 10 + the spell level + the sorcerer's Intelligence modifier.

A sorcerer can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is given in the table below. In







addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Intelligence score.

The sorcerer does not need to prepare his spells in advance. He can cast any spell he knows at any time, assuming he has not yet used up his spells per day for that spell level. He does not have to decide ahead of time which spells he'll cast.

**Bonus Feats:** The sorcerer gains a bonus feat at 1st level and every 4 levels thereafter. The sorcerer must meet the usual requirements of the selected feat.

**Sinister Presence (Ex):** Sorcerers are loathed and feared by most. At 1st level, the sorcerer has already entered a path of study which sets him apart from normal men.

As a standard action, once per encounter, the sorcerer may loudly declare his name and occupation to all who listen. Following this declaration, all who wish to attack the sorcerer, whether physically or with spells, must make a Will save (DC 10 + half sorcerer's level + sorcerer's Charisma modifier). Those who fail the saving throw are unable to attack the sorcerer for the duration of the encounter. However, if the sorcerer attacks or casts a spell on an affected creature, that creature is immediately free to act against the sorcerer again.

Those affected must be able to see and hear the sorcerer. Creatures of a different creature type than the sorcerer get a +4 bonus to the saving throw. Creatures that do not share a common language with the sorcerer get a +2 bonus to the saving throw. These bonuses stack. Constructs, oozes, plants and vermin are never affected.

**Master of Lost Languages and Ancient Mysteries (Ex):** A 5th-level sorcerer can make a special knowledge check with a bonus equal to his magician level + his Intelligence modifier to see whether he knows some relevant information about cryptic symbols and names, legendary items, or noteworthy places. The Difficulty Class is determined by the table below. A successful check will not reveal the powers of a magic item but may give a hint as to its general function.

A sorcerer may not take 10 or take 20 on this check; this sort of knowledge is essentially random.

DC	Type of Knowledge
10	Common, known by at least a substantial minority of the local population.
20	Uncommon but available, known by only a few people in the area.
25	Obscure, known by few, hard to come by.
30	Extremely obscure, known by very few, possibly forgotten by most who once knew it, possibly known only by those who don't understand the significance of the knowledge.

**Permanent Sinister Presence (Ex):** At 10th level, the sorcerer receives the benefits of

the Sinister Presence ability without having to spend a standard action to activate it. Unless the sorcerer takes measures to conceal his true nature (which requires a Disguise check against DC 15), all who see him will immediately recognize his aura of power and authority. Note that this can also attract unwelcome attention from peasant mobs, local nobles, other sorcerers, and powerful demons.

#### **Thou Shall Whisper My Name In Fear**

**(Su):** A 15th-level sorcerer can sense when another creature speaks his name aloud. The range is 100 miles per level of the sorcerer. When it occurs, the sorcerer knows the exact location and the name of the speaker, and can use this information to scry on that individual using a scrying spell (which must be cast as usual) with firsthand knowledge of the target. The sorcerer is free to ignore any mention of his name as background noise; his concentration cannot be disrupted as a result of other creatures speaking his name.

**Unmortal (Su):** After reaching 20th level, the sorcerer can ignore several mortal limitations. He does not become undead, but his body is sustained magically and he no longer needs to eat or sleep. The unmortal sorcerer does not suffer ability score penalties for aging and cannot be magically aged. Bonuses still accrue. Any penalties he has already incurred, however, remain in place.

The unmortal sorcerer cannot die from old age; he is immortal save for violent death or hostile magic.

#### **Starting Gear**

Depending on his cultural background, the sorcerer can choose any of the following starting gear options:

**Shaman:** 1d6 x 10 gp worth of equipment, which typically includes a loincloth, a bone necklace or a belt with shrunken monkey scalps, a fur cloak, a handful of exotic bird feathers, a few doses of poison, and a staff.

**Apprentice:** 2d6 x 10 gp worth of equipment, which typically includes an embroidered, long-sleeved robe, sandals, a waterskin, several small pouches filled with powders, some glass vials, a metal-tipped staff, and a rune-carved dagger.

**Priest:** 3d6 x 10 gp worth of equipment, which typically includes a priest's hooded robe, sandals, a gold ring or small gem, a small figurine of a god or goddess, a few blocks of incense, and an ornately carved staff.

#### **Sorcerer Spell List**

Sorcerers choose their spells from the following list (an asterisk denotes a new spell). Note that spell acquisition is not automatic; see the Magic chapter for details. Also, certain cults and covens may have mastered unique spells not listed here.



0 level – Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Disrupt Undead, Daze, Ghost Sound, Guidance, Know Direction, Mage Hand, Message, Prestidigitation, Resistance

1st level – Animal Messenger, Animate Rope, Calm Animals, Cause Fear, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Command, Disguise Self, Fertility Charm\*, Hand of Revelations\*, Hold Portal, Hypnotism, Mage Armor, Magic Fang, Magic Weapon, Obscuring Mist, Pass without Trace, Protection from Evil, Ray of Enfeeblement, Sanctuary, Scare, Sleep, Speak with Animals, Spectral Hand, Summon Swarm, Unseen Servant, Ventriloquism, Witch-Fire\*

2nd level – Aid, Arcane Lock, Augury, Barkskin, Command Undead, Death Knell, Delay Poison, Enthrall, False Life, Fog Cloud, Ghoul Touch, Gust of Wind, Hold Animal, Hypnotic Pattern, Incantation of the Broken Limb\*, Knock, Phantom Trap, Protection from Arrows, Pyrotechnics, Remove Paralysis, Shield Other, Whispering Wind

3rd level – Bestow Curse, Deep Slumber, Dispel Magic, Dominate Animal, Explosive Runes, Glyph of Warding, Greater Magic Fang, Greater Magic Weapon, Halt Undead, Hold Person, Keen Edge, Locate Object, Magic Circle against Evil, Nondetection, Obscure Object, Prayer, Remove Curse, Sepia Snake Sigil, Speak with Dead, Suggestion, Summon Animal\*, Ray of Exhaustion, Vampiric Touch

4th level – Altar-Fire\*, Animate Dead, Black Tentacles, Charm Monster, Confusion, Contagion, Curse of Green Decay\*, Death Ward,

Detect Scrying, Dimensional Anchor, Dismissal, Divination, Drums of Panic\*, Enervation, Fear, Fire Trap, Lesser Geas, Phantasmal Killer, Poison, Resilient Sphere, Solid Fog, Spell Immunity

5th level – Break Enchantment, Cloudkill, Commune with Nature, Contact Other Plane, Control Winds, Curse of Double Death\*, Dominate Person, Dream, False Vision, Greater Command, Hold Monster, Insect Plague, Lesser Planar Binding, Lifeleech\*, Lover's Curse\*, Magic Jar, Mark of Justice, Nightmare, Scrying, Sending, Shapeshift\*, Slay Living, Snake Staff\*, Summon Greater Animal\*, Symbol of Pain, Symbol of Sleep, Telekinesis, Waves of Fatigue

6th level – Banishment, Circle of Death, Create Undead, Creeping Doom, Eyebite, Forbidden Dance, Geas/Quest, Greater Dispel Magic, Legend Lore, Mass Suggestion, Planar Binding, Programmed Image, Spellstaff, Sticks to Serpents\*, Stone Tell, Symbol of Fear, Symbol of Persuasion

7th level – Banishment, Control Weather, Finger of Death, Instant Summons, Mass Hold Person, Power Word Blind, Sequester, Raise the Ancient Lizard-Gods\*, Sorcery of the Skull\*, Soul Vulture\*

8th level – Demand, Greater Planar Binding, Mass Charm, Power Word Stun, Protection from Spells, Telekinetic Sphere, Trap the Soul

9th level – Dominate Monster, Earthquake, Gate, Power Word Kill, Temporal Stasis, Weird

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Bonus Feat, Sinister Presence	3/1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3		4/2
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3		4/2/1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Feat	4/3/2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries	4/3/2/1
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5		4/3/3/2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5		4/4/3/2/1
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Feat	4/4/3/3/2
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6		4/4/4/3/2/1
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Permanent Sinister Presence	4/4/4/3/3/2
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7		4/4/4/4/3/2/1
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Bonus Feat	4/4/4/4/3/3/2
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8		4/4/4/4/4/3/2/1
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9		4/4/4/4/4/3/3/2
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Thou Shall Whisper My Name In Fear	4/4/4/4/4/4/3/2/1
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Bonus Feat	4/4/4/4/4/4/3/3/2
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10		4/4/4/4/4/4/4/3/2/1
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11		4/4/4/4/4/4/4/3/3/2
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11		4/4/4/4/4/4/4/4/3/3
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus Feat, Unmortal	4/4/4/4/4/4/4/4/4/4







## Races

The following subchapters describe the various human races found in the World of Xoth. There are no demi-human races; elves, dwarves, halflings and other non-humans are not appropriate in a sword and sorcery campaign, at least not as player characters. Survivors of older, pre-human races, such as the giant-kings of Kuth and the Yalothan snake-men, exist only in small numbers and are primarily intended as non-player characters and villains.

As humans, all races have the following common traits: Medium size, base speed of 30 feet, gain 1 extra feat and 4 extra skill points at 1st level, 1 extra skill point at each additional level, automatically speak their own language and gain 1 additional bonus language (in addition to any bonus languages due to high Intelligence), and may select any class as a favored class, without suffering any XP penalties for multiclassing.

In addition, each race has certain racial traits that distinguish it from the other races. Bonus feats listed as racial traits are in addition to the extra feat all 1st-level humans gain, ignoring any listed prerequisites of the bonus feat. For example, a Zadjite sorcerer begins play with 3 feats; one for being a 1st-level character, another for being human, and finally Zadjite Whip-Mastery as a racial trait bonus feat of all Zadjites.

**Languages:** There is no Common language in the World of Xoth. Each race speaks its own language, and most people know at least one or two additional languages (usually the languages of neighbouring countries), based on their Intelligence score as usual.

### Azimbans

Also known as the “dwellers in the cities of stone” by their tribal neighbours, the Azimbans have an old culture centered around their stone fortresses and bird-worship.

**Physical Description:** The black warriors of Azimba are tall, strong and proud, known for their discipline in formations with shield and spear. The men are usually shaven-headed, and the wearing of brightly colored robes and feathered plumes is common.

**Religion:** The god of the Azimbans is Jul-Juggah, a reptilian bird-god that must be propitiated with human sacrifice. His feather-cloaked priests know the secret spells to summon lesser winged lizards, survivors of a lost age.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Strength; +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills; Azimban Spear-Mastery as a bonus feat.

### Bhangari

The mysterious eastern realms of Laksha, Ghoma and Azjan are inhabited by a multitu-

dinous people known for their fierce warrior castes, master craftsmen, skilled herbalists, and ranks of ascetic priests. The Bhangari live in great walled cities and build temples that soar to the sky.

**Physical Description:** Of medium height, with golden skin and delicate features. The men keep their black hair cropped short and dress in simple cotton garments, while the women wear colorful silken gowns and weave their hair in long braids. The armies of Laksha, Ghoma and Azjan wear medium armor decorated with silver and gold; the officers have turbans set with feathers or gems to denote their station.

**Religion:** Not much is known about the cults of the east. The cult of the ape-god Simatala originated in the land of Laksha, and there are several cults that worship aspects of the elephant.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills; Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); Combat Reflexes as a bonus feat.

### Daka

The Daka are the pygmies inhabiting the Silver Isles of the Eastern Ocean. They live in jungle caves and know the secrets of the rare lotus herbs that grow only on their islands.

**Physical Description:** Short of stature (even adults are rarely 5 feet tall) with curly black hair and dark, wrinkled skin; dressed in loincloths and jewelry of feather and bones, and armed with hunting bows and blowpipes.

**Religion:** The Daka worship as gods the monstrous slugs of colossal size that inhabit the marshes and swamps of the Silver Isles.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Dexterity and -2 racial modifier to Strength; +2 racial bonus to Hide and Survival skills; Expert Poisoner and Eyes of the Cat as bonus feats; Small size (+1 bonus to attack rolls and Armor Class, +4 bonus to Hide skill, -4 penalty to grapple checks); Speed 20 feet.

### Ghazorites

The Ghazorites are a sub-race of the Susrahnites, who dwell in and around the great port-city of Ghazor on the coast of the eastern ocean. The Ghazorites are known both as avaricious merchants, ruthless warriors, and excellent sailors.

**Physical Description:** Slightly smaller of stature than their plains-dwelling brethren, Ghazorite men and women often have some foreign blood, the result of intermingling of races. Such crossbreeding usually manifests as a flat nose, blond hair, green eyes, swarthy skin, or some other unusual feature.

**Religion:** The Ghazorites worship the gods of Susrah, in addition to many strange gods brought to the city by foreign sailors, mercenaries and merchants.





**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Profession (sailor) skills; Weapon Familiarity (suffer only -2 penalty when using weapons without proficiency); racial Sneak Attack (+1d6) that stacks with the rogue ability of the same name.

#### Ikunas

The cannibalistic tribes of the Ikuna lands are a constant plague upon the neighbouring nations. From their homeland south of the Hills of the Dead, between the jungle and the coast, the Ikunas wage a war of terror upon the Zadjites, Azimbans, and anyone venturing into the southern waters. Few dare go into these lands; likewise, an Ikuna raiding party on the warpath is something best avoided.

**Physical Description:** Black-skinned with wavy hair and slightly green-tinted eyes that give them a preternatural, fearsome appearance. The Ikuna warriors are heavily muscled and move with pantherish grace, clad only in loincloths. The women, who are often shamans and tribal priestesses, adorn themselves with necklaces of bone and teeth.

**Religion:** The Ikunas worship several tribal gods, some of which are simply deified serpents, giant bats and great lizards from the nearby jungles of Yalotha. But also on the blood-stained altars in the witch-houses of the Ikuna are grotesque idols of older demon-gods and grinning, inhuman skulls of unnatural proportions.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Hide and Swim skills; +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with Ikuna knives and clubs; natural attack with filed teeth (deals 1d4 lethal damage when grappling); Scent; Cannibalize as a bonus feat.

#### Jairanians

Dwellers in the desert-cities of the west, the Jairanians are renowned as master craftsmen, breeders of fine horses, and cunning thieves. Mercenaries from the cities of Jairan are employed across the continent.

**Physical Description:** Light brown skin, deep brown eyes, wearing loose pants and short vests.

**Religion:** Various grim gods are worshipped among the Jairanians, including Yadar, Othabbhon, and even Al-Tawir.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills; +2 to all saving throws against magic; Stealthy as a bonus feat.

#### Khazistanis

Conquering horsemen of the northwestern steppes, the Khazis or Khazistanis are a proud people, and justly so. From humble nomadic roots, they have established an empire with glittering cities stretching from the Eastern Sea to the deserts of Jairan, and scores of caravans bringing tribute and loot to the proud nobles of Khazabad. The ruling warrior caste consists of mounted archers riding magnificent purebred horses into battle.







**Physical Description:** Tan-skinned, brown-eyed and black-haired. The Khazis are generally lithe of build, although large individuals certainly exist. The men sometimes wear turbans and grow long moustaches or beards. The women usually wear veils and robes.

**Religion:** The Khazis primarily worship Yadar and Nhakhramat, neither of which are native Khazistani gods, but whose cults have replaced former elemental and ancestor worship.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; Khazistani Bow-Mastery as a bonus feat; Mounted Archery as a bonus feat.

#### Khazrajites

The nomadic tribes of the northwestern desert are descended from Khazistani stock. Calling themselves the Khazraj, they are a free-willed, fierce and stubborn lot; a constant menace to caravans and travelers.

**Physical Description:** The Khazrajites are physically identical to the people of Khazistan, but of a slightly darker tan due to their exposure to the desert sun. Adult men usually grow thick, black beards, and wear white khaftan robes and silver-hilted scimitars.

**Religion:** Chief among the gods of the desert is Al-Tawir, the Ancient One, although his name is more often used in curses than in prayer. Still, the nomads fear the Lord of the Empty Wastes and make small offerings to avoid getting lost or suffering from hunger and thirst.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Ride and Survival skills; +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with scimitar; Endurance as a bonus feat; Improved Critical (scimitar) as a bonus feat.

#### Khoran

The Isles of the Sea Raiders are inhabited by dangerous men and cunning women from many nations, and their couplings have brought forth many who are born as natives of the isles, in the fortified pirate-city of Khora. Such children usually inherit the worst traits of both parents.

**Physical Description:** The skin-tone of Khorans range from the icy white of Tharag Thulans to the night-black of Ikunas, but is usually somewhere in-between. They dress in gaudy pantaloons and adorn themselves with gold earrings and ivory-hilted knives pilfered from burning merchant-vessels.

**Religion:** The gods are more feared than worshipped in the lawless port of Khora, but even the Sea Raiders occasionally offer sacrifice to the gods of the sea and the sky. Akhlathu, the god of twisted fate, is also a popular patron of many pirate crews.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Profession (sailor) skills; +1 racial bonus

to attack rolls with all axes, crossbows and knives; Ferocity (continue fighting even while disabled and dying); always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill.

#### Kuthan, Halfbreed

The pureblooded giant-kings of Elder Kuth took human concubines, and the result of these unions were halfbreeds, exceptional humans who would usually (but not always) serve as loyal agents of their powerful masters.

**Physical Description:** Of normal human size, but usually heavily muscled and wielding huge swords crafted by the giant-kings.

**Religion:** Believing themselves the sons of gods, the Kuthan halfbreeds demand to be worshipped as demi-gods.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Strength; +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Use Magic Device skills; Power Attack as a bonus feat.

#### Kuthan, Pureblood

The people of Elder Kuth, known as the "Giant-Kings", is a race believed to have become extinct after the fall of their ancient empire. The decayed ruins of their cyclopean cities can still be glimpsed in the western wastes.

**Physical Description:** Rumored to have been fully 9 feet tall (or even taller, by some accounts), the Kuthans were truly giants among men.

**Religion:** The Giant-Kings of Elder Kuth were themselves worshipped as gods by their human slaves, servitors, and concubines.

**Racial Traits:** +4 racial modifier to Strength; +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (all) and Spellcraft skills; Leadership as a bonus feat; Size Large (-1 penalty to attack rolls and Armor Class, -4 penalty to Hide skill, +4 bonus to grapple checks, natural reach 10 ft.).

#### Lamurans

The men of Lamu are regarded as a degenerate and evil people by other nations, a belief that mainly springs from ignorance, but is strengthened by the fact that the Lamurans have unnaturally keen eyesight in the dark, and that they worship many weird and loathsome gods in the isolation of their remote hill kingdom.

**Physical Description:** Gaunt of build and pale-skinned, with long flowing hair, although the priests are often shaven-headed. The Lamurans dress in flowing robes and wear distinctive tall caps, often wound around with turbans.

**Religion:** The cult of Yot-Kamoth is best-known, but a multitude of other deities is worshipped.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Move



Silently and Sleight of Hand skills; Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result); Eyes of the Cat as a bonus feat.

### Mazanians

Deep in the southern jungles rise the moss-grown palisade walls of the Mazanians, a matriarchal society whose female warriors raid into the surrounding lands for male slaves. The jungle kingdom is ruled by the black sorcerer-queen of Boma-Ya, the forbidden city of the amazons.

**Physical Description:** Female Mazanians are all stunningly beautiful, since all girls with the slightest physical flaw are quickly abandoned in the jungle. These copper-skinned warriors are not shy about using their charms to distract male opponents.

**Religion:** The gods of the Mazanians are not well-known. Some say they worship female snake-beings, others that their queen is the thrall of a male demon-god.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Charisma; +2 racial bonus to Heal and Intimidate skills; Improved Feint and Two-Weapon Fighting as bonus feats.

### Nabastisseans

The sun-drenched land of Nabastis consists of a collection of city-states ruled by petty kings with their own armies of bronze-armored pikemen. While the interior terrain is dominated by rolling hills and forest-covered mountains, the coast has sandy coves nestled amid jagged cliffs. The cities along the coast are centers of trade and are protected by fleets of trireme galleys.

The great city of Khargamum is well-known for the temple of Apsis, with its vast library-halls, founded by the scribes and philosophers of ancient Nabaos and Totha.

**Physical Description:** Bronze-skinned, with gleaming white teeth and curly black hair, and short of stature. The Nabastisseans dress in brightly colored robes, and don breastplates and full helmets when going to war.

**Religion:** The Nabastisseans have few gods of their own, but tolerate the temples of foreign gods to be built in their cities. The coastal peoples usually make small offerings to the gods of the sea before setting out on voyages of trade or war.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Dexterity; +2 racial bonus to Profession (Sailor) and Swim skills; +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls at sea; +2 circumstance bonus to AC when fighting in formation with others of the same race; always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill.

### Ptahaanans

Like the people of Elder Kuth, the Ptahaanans are believed to have become extinct during the last days of their bloodstained empire. The bulk of the Isles of Ptahaana sunk beneath the waves in ancient times, perhaps as a result of failed sorceries.

**Physical Description:** Surviving depictions of the Ptahaanans show them as short of build, with bronze skin, and slightly slanted eyes. Other sources claim they were tall, with elongated skulls and fingers, clad in voluminous robes that concealed blasphemously mutated bodies.

**Religion:** The Ptahaanans are said to have worshipped Ia-Azutlatl, the "Blood-God", atop their stepped pyramids.

**Racial Traits:** +4 racial modifier to Intelligence and -2 racial modifier to Constitution; +2 racial bonus to Bluff and Spellcraft skills; Iron Will as a bonus feat.

### Shomas

The kingdom of Shoma is rich in gold, to the extent that even the king's great herds of cattle wear golden ornaments. There are many skilled artisans and goldsmiths among the Shoma. Outside of the capital city of Katanga, the land is peopled by semi-nomadic tribes.

**Physical Description:** Dark brown skin, with close-cropped curly black hair. The





Shoma dress in simple loincloths, but even commoners are often adorned with golden jewelry.

**Religion:** Nataka, the ivory woman, is worshipped among the nobles and upper class, while various tribal gods are revered by commoners.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills; +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows; +10 racial bonus to Speed; Run as a bonus feat.

#### Susrahmites

The fertile plains of Susrah are home to a race renowned for their skill in war and their religious devotion.

**Physical Description:** Broad-shouldered, with hooked noses and black, curly hair, the Susrahmites are dressed in flowing robes. The men braid their long beards. The women are lithe, wearing golden armbands and necklaces of pearl; they are prized as slaves in Taraamite seraglios.

**Religion:** Nowhere, except perhaps in Yar-Ammon, can there be found as many gods as in the city-states of Susrah. Above the hundreds of lesser gods arise the names of greater deities such as Baal-Khardah, Belet-Lil, Maggash, and Yammosh.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

#### Taikangians

The realm of Taikang is near-mythical, a land of teeming yellow masses, bamboo towers, and serpentine dragons. Few westerners have ventured here, but merchants who brave the unknown can make a fortune when they return with caravans of silks, lotus flowers and painted ceramics.

**Physical Description:** Lithe and yellow-skinned, with slanted eyes and long, black hair. Both men and women dress in silk if they can afford it, although the commoners often wear little more than a loincloth.

**Religion:** The chief god of the Taikangians is Wa-Ying, the so-called "Emperor of Hell".

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Escape Artist and Tumble skills; +2 racial bonus to all grapple checks; Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat.

#### Taraamites

The plains and highlands of Taraam are inhabited by a people known both for the sophistication of their culture and their talent for intrigue. A caste of mounted warriors is the backbone of their army, which threatens the lesser cities of Susrah and Nabastis with destruction unless tribute continues to flow

into the thousand-columned palace of Achad. Taraam's royal palace is also a place of thousand intrigues, where the eunuchs and priests of the court wear coats of golden brocade and baggy silk pants, great scimitars always at their side.

**Physical Description:** Male Taraamites usually favor short, trimmed beards. Warriors carry straight short swords and lances, and dress in robes decorated according to their status, with the king's personal guard wearing gold-trimmed robes and circlets of gold, in the fashion of princes.

**Religion:** Ahyada, the "high god", is the chief god of the Taraamites, served by an influential priesthood of astrologers and omen-readers.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Knowledge (all) skills; Ride-By Attack as a bonus feat; +4 racial bonus to saving throws against poison.

#### Tharag Thulans

Also known as Tharagians, these northern tribesmen inhabit the cold wastes at the edge of the world. In each generation, there are always some northerners who leave their ancestral lands to escape the ancient blood-feuds of their clans and explore the decadent empires of the south.

**Physical Description:** Dressed in wolf-skin cloaks and tall boots of wolverine-fur, these barbarians of the north have long, yellow beards, white skin, and piercing blue eyes.

**Religion:** The Tharag Thulans revere the Moon-God, the Wolf-God, and the Skull-God.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Strength; +2 racial bonus to Climb and Survival skills; +2 racial bonus to saving throws against poison and disease.

#### Yar-Ammonites

Also known as the "kingdom of tombs", Yar-Ammon is a land covered with desert and haunted by ancient sorceries. The silent streets and broad ceremonial avenues of black-templed Amenti is a awesome sight to behold. The papyrus used by the scribes and sorcerers of Yar-Ammon is harvested from the inland marshes of Fakhuum.

**Physical Description:** Tall and slender, with bronze skin, dark hair and black eyes. The nobles and priests wear golden pectorals and masks carved with beastly visages, while commoners dress in simple garments of white linen.

**Religion:** The ancient ancestors of the Yar-Ammonites, who are worshipped as gods, are depicted as beast-headed humanoids. These ancient ones are said to have had lives spanning millennia; they brought humankind knowledge and civilization. Some claim they returned to the stars from whence they came



after being buried in the depths of the black pyramids of Amenti.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Intelligence; +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (arcana) and Listen skills; Stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on Search checks to notice unusual stonework, detect unusual stonework within 10 feet with Search check even if not actively searching, use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can, and intuit depth underground).

### Zadjites

The turbaned fire-worshippers of Zadj are an offshoot of the Jairanian race in the west. They have exploited the riches of their new homeland well, and grown rich as spice merchants and slave-traders. Having brought with them a high level of culture from Jairan, the Zadjites are skilled artisans and Iraab, the marble capital by the sea, is a center of learning as well as rich trade and exquisite craftsmanship. The interior plains and forests of Zadj are dominated by the fortress-city of Al-Qazir, also known as the City of Slave Sultans, for it is held by a council of slavelords who only pay lip service to the emir of Iraab.

**Physical Description:** Swarthy, turbaned, wearing colorful robes and gold-hilted curved daggers. The raven-haired Zadjite women are famed for their sensual beauty; they are often scantily clad and adorned with glittering jewelry.

**Religion:** The Zadjites hold “the Sacred Flame”, a nameless elemental god, above all others.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws; Zadjite Whip-Mastery as a bonus feat.

### Zorabi

These tribesmen inhabit the Zorab mountains that jut up between Lamu and Khazistan. The southernmost tribes have accepted the overlordship of the Khazistanis, at least in name, while the rest are opportunistic raiders who feud incessantly among themselves.

**Physical Description:** These mountain wolves wear white turbans and heavy cloaks, and are armed with scimitars and shortbows. They have long black beards, and their brown skin is wrinkled by the sun and mountain winds.

**Religion:** There are few priests among the Zorabi, but worship of certain Lamuran gods is probable.

**Racial Traits:** +2 racial modifier to Constitution; +2 racial bonus to Climb and Survival skills; Track as a bonus feat.





## New Feats

The new feats described below are available to all player characters, although some will only be useful for spellcasters, and the DM may wish to restrict certain feats to non-player characters.

### Acolyte [General]

You have joined a cult devoted to the worship of a god or demon. Your duties include studies of the cult's religious and sorcerous texts, as well as serving the cult's priests.

**Prerequisites:** You must have passed the cult's rite of initiation (see the "Cults, Gods and Demons" chapter for more information). The initiation ritual should be roleplayed, with or without the other player characters present.

**Benefits:** You live in the local temple belonging to your cult, where you receive food and shelter. You are subject to the command of the temple priests, and are expected to perform any number of duties and tasks the priests deem necessary. Depending on the cult, you may not be allowed to leave the temple except when the priests send you on special missions to the outside world.

During your studies in the temple, you learn the secrets of the cult. Whenever you advance a level in a class capable of spellcasting, you may select two spells (of any level you may cast) from the list of the spells that the cult teaches.

As an acolyte, you gain the respect or fear of the local population wherever your cult is established. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks in places where your cult holds power (elsewhere, your cult might be outlawed and you risk being hunted down and punished for being a member). To gain the bonus, it must be evident that you are a true member of the cult, such as by your clothing, tattoos, or special items worn or carried.

Being an acolyte also has its drawbacks, however. You must obey the priests, and your freedom of movement may be restricted, as described above. In addition, you become the Thrall of a single priest who is your sorcerous Master (see the Magic chapter for more information about Masters and Thralls).

### Azimban Spear-Mastery [General]

Your skill with the longspear is legendary.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 15; must be trained by someone who already has this feat.

**Benefit:** You can strike adjacent foes with the longspear, not just those who are 10 feet away.

**Normal:** A longspear is a two-handed weapon with reach, allowing you to strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but not adjacent foes.

### Blasphemous Gift [General]

Your delvings into forbidden sorceries have resulted in a physical manifestation.

**Prerequisite:** Ability to cast 6th-level spells, Taint 1+.

**Benefit:** You may select (or roll randomly, at the DM's option) one gross, weird or abominable special ability that manifests physically and is hard to conceal. You may select from the following table, or may invent new abilities if approved by the DM.

Die Roll (1d3)	Description
1	A 10-foot rubbery tentacle extends from your abdomen. You can use the tentacle as a natural weapon, making reach attacks dealing 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage.
2	Your hands and arms are covered with slime or leprous scabs. Your touch spreads a disease similar to slimy doom.
3	You gain the Corpulent template (see the New Monsters appendix).

Note that unless you somehow conceal your mutation, using a loose-fitting or long-sleeved robe or similar, you gain a -4 penalty to all Diplomacy and Gather information checks, and a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

### Cannibalize [General]

By consuming the vital organs of a fallen foe, you gain a portion of its power.

**Prerequisites:** Taint 1+.

**Benefits:** You may cannibalize a corporal creature of your own creature type that has either a heart or a brain, and must remove and eat said organ within 10 minutes of its death. After consuming the organ, which takes 1 minute, you gain a temporary enhancement bonus to your ability score equal to the highest ability score bonus of the slain creature. For example, if a barbarian eats the brain or heart of a 5th-level warrior whose highest ability score is Con 16, the barbarian gains an enhancement bonus of +3 to Constitution for 5 hours.

The effect lasts 1 hour per Hit Dice of the slain creature. You cannot cannibalize aberrations, constructs, oozes, plants, or undead or creatures immune to critical hits. You can only cannibalize one creature per day.

### Contacts [General]

You have established a network of useful contacts.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13.

**Benefits:** You have a number of contacts equal to your Charisma modifier. Contacts can be of any middle- or lower-class occupation, such as a corrupt guard captain, the local



lord's favored dancing-girl, or an old sage. In game terms, each contact is an NPC with 1d6 levels in any class, with average ability scores. The DM must approve the selected contacts.

You can call upon your contacts with reasonable requests for aid, assistance, or information, as required. Encounters between you and your contacts should be roleplayed. As long as the contact is treated well, he remains loyal to you; however, the contact may betray or abandon you if he feels ill-treated or abused.

The contact may be asked to do a small favor (such as rolling an Appraise, Heal, Knowledge or similar skill check for your benefit; or lending you up to 1d4 gp per level) up to once per two weeks, or a big favor (such as bribing or drugging a guard to get you out of jail; or joining you on an adventure that lasts no more than a single day and a night) up to once per two months. Dead or alienated contacts are replaced after 2d6 months.

### **Demonic Pact [General]**

You have entered a pact with a demonic, extra-planar creature.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Taint 1+.

**Benefits:** You have the benefit of a demonic master who teaches you sorcery. Whenever you advance a level in a class capable of spell-casting, you may select two spells (of any level you may cast) from the list of the spells that the demon teaches (as determined by the DM).

Instead of learning a new spell, you may choose to ask the demon for a special favor: Either to provide information in response to a specific question (the DM determines what the demon knows), to guard a location or item for a specific interval of time, or to attack your enemies. In the two latter cases, the demon may choose to send one or more of its minions instead of performing the duty itself.

You can also ask for additional favors at any time, but at the risk of gaining Taint and possibly angering the demon with your petty requests. By performing the special summoning ritual (described below), you may call up the demon and ask for a favor. Additionally, you must make a Will save (DC 10 + current Taint score + Hit Dice of demon) or gain 1 point of Taint.

**Special:** When you first enter the pact, you must perform a special summoning ritual that takes 1 hour and involves human sacrifice. At the end of the ritual, you must make a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20). You can apply your current Taint score as a bonus to the roll. If the check is successful, the demon appears and accepts you as its Thrall (see the Magic chapter for more information about Masters and Thralls).

### **Eyes of the Cat [General]**

You see more clearly in the dark than many men can in full daylight.

**Prerequisites:** Spot 1 rank, may only be taken at 1st level.

**Benefit:** You gain low-light vision. That is, you can see outdoors twice as well as ordinary humans by starlight, moonlight, torchlight or other conditions of poor illumination. You can even distinguish colour and detail under these low-light conditions.

### **Expert Poisoner [General]**

You are an experienced poison-user.

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13.

**Benefit:** You do not suffer the normal 5% chance of exposing yourself to a poison whenever you apply it to a weapon or otherwise ready it for use, and you do not have to make a Reflex save to avoid poisoning when you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon.

Furthermore, you gain a +1 resistance bonus to all Fortitude saves against poison, as your frequent exposure to low doses of a variety of poisons has given your body a certain degree of habituation to poisons of all kinds.

Finally, you can take poison directly from such sources as the glands of dead viper snakes and scorpions, without needing to make any particular skill checks. Note that this feat does not help with finding such poison sources, only extracting the poison from them once found.

### **Fanatical Fighting [General]**

You find strength in the company of others who share your beliefs.

**Prerequisite:** Accepted member of religious cult or similar organization.

**Benefit:** You gain a morale bonus to attack rolls when you are in the company of two or more allies from the same organization who also have the Fanatical Fighting feat. The bonus is equal to the total number of allies (including yourself) present and involved in combat, divided by 3 (drop fractions), up to a maximum bonus of +3. You gain no benefits against fellow members of your organization.

For example, a priest or cultist in the company of five other cult members gains a +2 morale bonus to all attack rolls.

### **Grisly Sacrifice [General]**

You are trained in the ritual art of taking lives and stealing the life-force released by the death of your victim. This life-force can be used for your own benefit, or the benefit of a creature you designate, typically a creature you worship.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks





or Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks, Taint 1+.

**Benefit:** By performing a grisly ritual of sacrifice and succeeding on a Sacrifice check, which is either a Knowledge (arcana) or a Knowledge (religion) check, you (or the target you designate) gain one of several possible benefits. The sacrifice check is modified by several factors (see table below). The ritual takes at least 10 minutes, but usually lasts much longer due to the logistics involved when there are many sacrifices, participants, and/or followers. Each victim to be sacrificed must be slain with a successful coup de grace attack. Performing a sacrifice forces a Taint check against the same DC as the Sacrifice check.

Description	Modifier
Victim is a sentient member of your own race or creature type	+0
Victim is an animal of at least Medium size	-2
Victim is a virgin or noble	+1
Victim is a family member or a trusted friend	+1
Victim has 1-5 levels or Hit Dice	+1
Victim has 6-10 levels or Hit Dice	+2
Victim has 11-15 levels or Hit Dice	+3
Victim has 16+ levels or Hit Dice	+4
Primary victim is sacrificed along with 1-9 additional victims (any level or Hit Dice)	+1
Primary victim is sacrificed along with 10-49 additional victims (any level or Hit Dice)	+2
Primary victim is sacrificed along with 50+ additional victims (any level or Hit Dice)	+3
Leader of ritual is accompanied by 1-9 additional participants with the Grisly Sacrifice feat	+1
Leader of ritual is accompanied by 10-19 additional participants with the Grisly Sacrifice feat	+2
Leader of ritual is accompanied by 20+ additional participants with the Grisly Sacrifice feat	+3
Ritual lasts at least 1 hour	+1
Ritual takes place during an uncommon event such as a full moon	+1
Ritual takes place during a rare event such as a solar eclipse	+2
Ritual is conducted in front of non-allied spectators in a public place such as a town square or temple entrance	+2
Ritual is conducted in front of 10-24 followers	+1
Ritual is conducted in front of 25-99 followers	+2
Ritual is conducted in front of 100+ followers	+3

After performing the ritual of sacrifice, you

roll a Sacrifice check against the Difficulty Class specified for the benefit you are after.

#### Benefit Sacrifice check DC

Your effective caster level increases by +1 for every 5 points above the DC. This bonus applies to level checks and the number of spells you can cast per day. You do not gain bonus spells due to high ability scores. Note, however, that this temporary increase in caster level does not grant you knowledge of any new spells, although it may grant you higher-level spell slots (which you can use for metamagic-enhanced versions of lower level spells). The effect lasts for 1 hour, but can be extended for an additional hour by reducing the effective caster level bonus by 1 (to a minimum of 1). For example, if the Sacrifice check succeeded by 15, effective caster level can be increased by +3 for 1 hour, or by +1 for 3 hours, +2 for 2 hours, and so on. DC 25

You are healed 1 hit point for every point above the DC, up to double your normal hit point total. Hit points that exceed your normal hit point total are lost at the rate of 1 hit point per 10 minutes, or whenever you are wounded (as normal). DC 15

You are granted a +1 circumstance bonus to all saving throws of a specific type (Fortitude, Reflex, or Will) for every 5 points above the DC, to a maximum of +6. The effect lasts for 1 hour, but can be extended for an additional hour by reducing the bonus by 1 (to a minimum of 1). DC 25

You gain a +1 circumstance bonus for every 5 points above the DC (to a maximum of +6) to your Charisma check when you use any planar binding spell to compel a summoned creature to perform a service. This stacks with any bonus you may get as a result of offering the summoned creature a reward and the nature of the service. DC 30

You grant the followers who were present during the ritual (up to a maximum of 100 individuals per level or Hit Dice) a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls for every 10 points above the DC, to a maximum of +4. The effect lasts for 1 day, but can be extended for an additional day by reducing the bonus by 1 (to a minimum of 1). DC 20

#### High Priest [General]

You are the high priest of a small- or medium-sized cult, or the chief priest of a large city in case of world-spanning cults.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 15, Priest, must defeat the cult's current high priest or wait for him to die and/or be named his successor.

**Benefit:** Once you become the high priest of a cult, you have full (but not necessarily uncontested) control of the temple, its property, treasures and staff, and can command the lesser priests of the city as you desire. You are the peer of the cult's high priests in other cities. You may become a trusted advisor (or dangerous rival) to the city's secular ruler. At this point, the priest has become an important figure in the campaign world, and the DM should take care to tailor adventures to high-level politics and intrigue.

As a high priest, the social circumstance bonuses you receive on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks (see the



Acolyte feat) increase to +6.

### Improved Speed [General]

You move with lightning speed.

**Prerequisite:** Run.

**Benefit:** You gain a +10 bonus to your base Speed, or a +5 bonus if wearing medium or heavy armor or carrying a heavy load. This increase in speed does not stack with the Fast Movement class ability of barbarians and nomads.

**Special:** You can gain Improved Speed multiple times, up to a maximum of 3 times. Its effects stack.

### Jackal's Guts [General]

You can survive on "food" that city-dwellers would not consider edible.

**Prerequisite:** Endurance.

**Benefit:** You can survive on a diet of larvae, bugs, bitter herbs, roots, even animal feces; since this can be found almost anywhere, even in the most inhospitable and barren environments such as mountains, deserts and wastelands, you are rarely, if ever, in danger of dying from thirst or starvation.

### Jaded Reveler

You regularly enjoy boisterous festivities and debauched feasts, usually combined with alcohol and drug abuse.

**Prerequisite:** Con 13.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to saving throws against alcohol consumption. You also gain a general +1 bonus to saving throws against poison, and to resist mind-affecting magic.

**Normal:** Alcohol is treated as a weak poison. A standard drink is Ingested, Fort DC 10, initial damage 1d2 Int and 1d2 Wis, secondary damage 1 Dex and 1 Con (but stronger drinks certainly exist). Each drink after the first increases the DC by one. If Intelligence or Wisdom is reduced to zero, the character falls unconscious for 2d4 hours. If Constitution falls to zero, the character dies from alcohol poisoning.

### Khazistani Bow-Mastery [General]

Your skill with the composite bow is legendary.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 15; Point Blank Shot; must be trained by someone who already has this feat.

**Benefit:** You automatically gain weapon proficiency with the Khazistani shortbow. Furthermore, any hit within point blank range (30 feet) with this weapon deals an additional +2 points of damage.

**Normal:** The Khazistani shortbow is an exotic weapon which requires Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Khazistani shortbow).

### Lunar Magic [General]

Your spellcasting abilities are strongly influenced by the phases of the moon.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to spontaneously cast arcane spells.

**Benefit:** The moon has long been held to have an influence over magic. In your case, it's literally true. The phases of the moon influence your spellcasting abilities. They increase as the moon waxes, and decrease as it wanes.

During the waxing moon, your caster level is considered one higher for purposes of level checks and the number of spells you can cast per day. During the three nights of the full moon, your caster level is considered two higher for these purposes. Note, however, that this temporary increase in caster level does not grant you knowledge of any new spells, although it may grant you higher-level spell slots (which you can use for metamagical-enhanced versions of lower level spells).

So, for example, a 4th-level shaman with a Wisdom score of 16 during the waxing moon gains two additional 3rd-level spells per day (one spell slot for being treated as a 5th-level shaman, and one bonus spell slot for high Wisdom). However, since a 4th-level shaman doesn't know any 3rd-level spells, he can only use those additional spell slots to cast lower-level spells or spells enhanced with metamagic feats.

This additional power comes with a price. During the waning moon, your caster level is considered one level lower for purposes of level checks and spells you can cast per day. So a 4th-level sorcerer would lose one 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell per day (and a 3rd-level sorcerer would lose the ability to cast 2nd-level spells altogether). During the new moon, your caster level is considered two levels lower. If this reduces your effective level to zero or less, you cannot cast spells during that time, although you retain your other class abilities.

During the the half moon, you are at your normal caster level for level checks and spells per day.

### Master of Sacrifice [General]

You are highly skilled with the cultist's dagger or other sacrificial blade.

**Prerequisite:** Grisly Sacrifice.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to Sacrifice checks (see the Grisly Sacrifice feat). Additionally, you can make a *coup de grace* attack against helpless foes up to once per round as a free action, instead of a full-round action, whether as part of a ritual or during combat.





### Noble Blood [General]

You are the scion of a noble family or clan.

**Prerequisite:** Must be taken at 1st level.

**Benefit:** You have a noble title, granting you certain benefits with regard to local law. For example, nobles can request (and usually be granted) an audience with the king or sovereign at any time. Nobles may also be exempt from paying taxes, and are sometimes immune to arrest until they have been proven guilty of a crime.

You also gain a +2 circumstance bonus when using the Diplomacy skill, and you start with four times the normal wealth for your character class.

Note that you do not have any land rights, either due to not being firstborn or because the family has lost or been driven away from its lands.

And beware, for you can be used to good effect on sacrificial altars (see the Grisly Sacrifice feat).

### Oracle [General]

You have gained a reputation as a skilled diviner and omen-reader, or as a prophet. You can establish yourself as an Oracle, either associated with a temple (if you belong to a cult) or as an independent seer. You attract people (including commoners, adventurers, wealthy merchants, and nobles) who come seeking answers and advice from you.

**Prerequisites:** 12 ranks in any two Knowledge skills, Sense Motive 7 ranks.

**Benefit:** You are assumed to receive divine revelations and to speak with the voice of the gods, but may use your position to influence events and further your own interests. The petitioners will bring gifts and sacrifices and make donations to you according to their wealth and the issue at hand. Special visits should be role-played, but in general the position as Oracle will provide you with enough income (up to 50 gp per level or Hit Dice per month) to live comfortably and to feed and shelter your servants and guards.

### Pantherish Dodge [General]

You are skilled at avoiding blows.

**Prerequisite:** Dodge.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are unarmored, you gain a defense bonus to your AC equal to half your base attack bonus (rounded down). The defense bonus stacks with all other bonuses to AC, including the your shield bonus, natural armor bonus, and so forth. Unlike an armor bonus, a defense bonus does improve your AC against touch attacks. You lose your defense bonus when you are flat-footed, unless you also have the Uncanny Dodge class ability.

### Priest [General]

You have risen in the ranks of a cult to become a fully ordained priest. Your duties include teaching the acolytes, and leading rituals of worship and sacrifice.

**Prerequisites:** Acolyte, Leadership.

**Benefits:** As a priest, you command a number of acolytes and temple guards (as determined by your Leadership feat). The acolytes are also your Thralls (see the Magic chapter for more information about Masters and Thralls).

You receive a monthly stipend of 25 gp per level from the cult's coffers. You must travel to a temple to collect his stipend.

You gain access to the temple's library of secret scrolls and forbidden books. For each day spent researching a specific topic in the library, you gain a +1 research bonus to any Knowledge skill check (maximum +10) related to that topic.

At any time, you can receive basic accommodation in any temple belonging to your cult. You can stay as long as you want, and you can bring one guest per level, who will also receive basic food and shelter.

As a priest, the social circumstance bonuses you receive on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks (see the Acolyte feat) increase to +4.

Despite all these benefits, being a priest also has its drawbacks. You are still the Thrall of a greater priest, and you must obey the high priest of the cult.

### Sailor on the Seas of fate [General]

You have travelled far and wide on the seven seas.

**Prerequisite:** Must have served aboard a seagoing vessel for at least one year.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Balance checks when aboard a ship. Furthermore, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls against aquatic creatures. You can also hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to three times your Constitution score before you begin to drown.

**Normal:** Any character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to twice his Constitution score before he begins to drown.

### Sorcerer's Apprentice [General]

You study the magical arts under the auspices of a great and knowledgeable sorcerer.

**Prerequisites:** Must be accepted as an apprentice by a master sorcerer, perhaps by completing a special test or mission.

**Benefits:** You have the benefit of a master who teaches you sorcery. Whenever you advance a level in a class capable of spellcasting, you may select two spells (of any level you may



cast) from the list of the spells that the master sorcerer teaches (as determined by the DM).

Your master also provides you with food and shelter, and you benefit from the protection of his magical and mundane guards and wards.

However, you are always at the mercy of your master, being his Thrall (see the Magic chapter for more information about Masters and Thralls). The master seldom accepts apprentices out of altruism, but needs pawns to use in his own schemes. You both know that you probably will seek to kill him some day to break the power he has over you.

### Sympathetic Magic [Metamagic]

Using material links, you can cast spells on targets over vast distances.

**Benefit:** With this feat, you can cast a sympathetic spell on any target as if you were touching the target, regardless of the actual distance between you, provided that both you and the target are on the same plane. This means sympathetic magic cannot effect ethereal creatures, for example. The target is entitled to a saving throw against the spell (and spell resistance, if it applies) and the spell has its normal effects and duration.

Spells and effects that block scrying, such as nondetection, have the same effect on sympathetic spells. So the caster of a sympathetic spell would have to succeed at a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) against a DC of 11 + the caster level of the spellcaster who cast nondetection in order for the spell to affect the target. A detect scrying spell can detect a sympathetic spell in progress (that is from the moment casting begins) and allows you an opposed caster level check to get an image of the caster of the sympathetic spell.

A sympathetic spell requires a material component (in addition to its normal components). You must have a piece of the target's substance. For a living creature, this may be some of its blood, flesh, hair, nails, or other parts of its body. For a nonliving object, it must be an integral part of its substance (for example a sliver from a timber of a building, not from a piece of furniture inside it). This material component is consumed in the casting of the spell, as normal.

Preparing a sympathetic spell requires the normal amount of time, but casting it requires 100 times the usual casting time (with casting times of 1 standard action being treated as 1 round). So casting bestow curse (casting time of 1 standard action) as a sympathetic spell requires 100 rounds, or about 6 minutes. Casting mark of justice (casting time of 10 minutes) as a sympathetic spell requires 1000 minutes, or nearly 18 hours, and so forth. Interruptions to the casting may spoil the spell normally if the caster fails a Concentration check, and the GM can require a Concentration check each round for a continuing distraction (making it very

difficult to maintain the casting of the ritual). A sympathetic spell uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level.

### Tainted Presence [General]

Your taint adds to your menacing presence.

**Prerequisite:** Taint 1+, Sinister Presence class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the DC when using the Sinister Presence class ability.

### Wizard's familiar [General]

You have bound a creature to your service. This familiar is a magical beast that resembles a small animal and is unusually tough and intelligent. It acts as your companion and servant.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to cast spells.

**Benefit:** The sorcerer chooses the kind of familiar he gets. As the sorcerer advances in level, his familiar also increases in power. See the description of familiars in the PHB for details.

**Special:** If the familiar dies or is dismissed by the sorcerer, the sorcerer must attempt a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw. Failure means he loses 200 experience points per sorcerer level; success reduces the loss to one-half that amount. However, a sorcerer's experience point total can never go below 0 as the result of a familiar's demise or dismissal. A slain or dismissed familiar cannot be replaced for a year and day.

### Zadjite Whip-Mastery [General]

Your skill with the lash is legendary.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 15; must be trained by someone who already has this feat.

**Benefit:** You automatically gain weapon proficiency with the whip. Furthermore, you deal normal (lethal) damage with the weapon, and can deal damage to any creature regardless of its armor bonus. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity when fighting with the whip.

**Normal:** The whip is an exotic weapon which requires Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip). A whip deals nonlethal damage. It deals no damage to any creature with an armor bonus of +1 or higher or a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher. The whip is treated as a melee weapon with 15-foot reach, though you don't threaten the area into which you can make an attack. Using a whip provokes an attack of opportunity, just as if you had used a ranged weapon.





# Sorcery

This is a detailed black and white engraving of a Mayan or Aztec stone altar and a standing carved figure in a jungle setting. The foreground features a large, rectangular stone altar with a highly decorative front face. The altar's face is adorned with intricate carvings, including a central circular motif with a face, flanked by stylized figures or masks, and topped with a series of horizontal bands. The altar is surrounded by dense, low-lying vegetation. In the background, a tall, narrow stone column or statue stands prominently. It features a large, carved face with a wide, open mouth and a prominent nose, topped with a headdress. The column is set against a backdrop of a dense jungle with tall trees and thick foliage. The entire scene is framed by a circular border, suggesting it might be a vignette or a page from a book. The engraving is signed 'E. T. H. 1857' in the bottom right corner.

## Introduction

At the same time, taking away too much magic or making the magic rules overly restrictive and harsh tends to alienate players, who might consider it unfair that only non-player character should have access to powerful magic. Plus, tampering with the magic rules puts an additional burden on the players, who have to learn the new rules.

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magic rules. The sword and sorcery feel can be achieved in a campaign by restricting or changing a few key elements of the core rules which interfere with the low-magic paradigm, without totally abandoning the fantasy that players expect and enjoy.

### Restricting Spell Lists

First of all, certain spells from the PHB simply do not fit well in a sword and sorcery world. Any class with access to spells (typically the sorcerer class) should have a spell list customized for the proper atmosphere. When determining whether to allow spells from other sources, consider the following reasons for exclusion:

**Artillery Spells:** Avoid spells that turn the spellcaster into a walking piece of artillery, able to wipe out a small army of opponents with a single spell. *Fireball* and its derivatives (*delayed blast fireball*, *meteor swarm*, *flame strike*, etc.) fall into this category, as do such classics as *magic missile*, *lightning bolt* and *disintegrate*.

**Curative and Life-Restoring Magic:** Healing and curative spells do not exist unless they drain or transfer life-force from some unwilling victim (which is why *vampiric touch* is acceptable, but not *cure light wounds* or *cure disease*). Death is final, and characters cannot count on being raised or resurrected. In the extremely rare cases where someone is brought back from the dead, it will always be through black magic (probably requiring blood sacrifice), and always as some hideous mockery of their former selves, whether a soulless zombie, wizened mummy, or restless, mad spirit.

**Convenience Spells:** *Rope trick* is only a 2nd-level spell, yet it creates an extradimensional space where an entire party can hide from the rest of the world; hardly a staple of sword and sorcery. The spell *create water* is certainly convenient, but the wilderness becomes a more dangerous (and interesting) place without such spells. Similarly, characters should rely on their swimming skills and their Constitution scores instead of depending on *water breathing*. And so on.

**Instant Transportation:** *Teleport* and its varieties make a mockery of long wilderness treks and quests into uncharted waters. Neither should *dimension door* and other short-range teleportation spells be allowed, because they make it too easy to circumvent defenses and penetrate castle and city walls. In a low-magic world, there are simply no adequate countermeasures against such spells.

**Powerful Low-Level Divinations:** *Detect magic* might seem innocent enough, but in the hands of power-gamers it tends to be used as a “radar” to scan areas for anything interesting (such as magical items or traps). Roleplaying is enhanced if there is no such clear distinction of what is magical and what is not. *Detect evil* does not apply to a world without align-

ments. *Comprehend languages* is a mere 1st-level spell, but allows you to understand all written languages. That might not seem very important when dungeon-crawling, but if such a spell exists, there is little point in learning ancient and forgotten languages, and the role-playing aspects of trying to decipher ancient grimoires are lost.

**“Superhero” Spells:** Flying (through the *fly* spell) and turning invisible (through *invisibility* and *improved invisibility*) are examples of powers rarely seen in sword and sorcery stories. These abilities are especially powerful (and therefore unbalancing) in low-magic settings, where there are few countermeasures available.

Magical items that duplicate these types of spells should also be removed from the game, of course.

It becomes apparent that in many cases, skills become more important for characters when magic spells are restricted. Skills such as Climb, Decipher Script, Heal, Search, Sense Motive, Swim, Survival, and the various Knowledge skills are good substitutes for many of the spells listed above.

### Restricting Magical Items

Characters should rely on their abilities, not their equipment, which could be destroyed, lost or stolen at any time. In stark contrast to a high fantasy campaign, magical weapons, armor and wondrous items in a sword and sorcery setting should be extremely rare. The very concept that these items can be created through a mechanistically simple process seriously undermines the wondrousness of magic. In a typical campaign using the core rules, the DMG is nothing more than a shopping catalogue of items, since everything has a price and can be bought or manufactured by the player characters.

In a sword and sorcery world, most permanent magical items should be unique, many being left-overs from earlier ages when spellcasters were presumably more powerful. All such items should have evocative names and detailed background stories. For example, a *gem of brightness* might be called the *Jewel of Lar-Karakshat*; it will probably be the only gem of its kind in the campaign world and finding it will be an adventure in itself. In short, treat permanent magic items as if they were artifacts or relics in high fantasy campaigns. Such items will never be for sale.

As a consequence, item creation feats are not available to characters.

## Types of Magic

Casting spells is the act of exerting one’s own willpower, or controlling mystic cosmic forces through force of will, words and gestures of





power, potent runes and symbols, rare material components, and so on. Anyone can learn to cast spells, given the proper training, represented by taking levels in a spellcasting class.

Sword and sorcery stories rarely distinguish between the magic used by sorcerers and wizards, and that employed by priests. There is seldom any evidence that divine beings exist at all; most spellcasting priests are simply magicians who use religions and cults to gain personal power, wealth, and loyal servants.

The distinction in the core rules between arcane and divine magic should therefore be dropped; simply consider all magic to be of the arcane variety.

### Arcane Magic

There is no distinction between arcane and divine magic; all magic is considered arcane. Essentially, all spellcasters use the same kind of magic; they differ only in their methods of study and practice of ritual. For example, a magician typically studies ancient books in solitude; a priest learns new spells from his mentors in the temple; while a shaman sacrifices to (or forces) spirits to teach him magic.

However, there is nothing preventing overlap between these methods of study. A magician, for example, can join a sorcerous coven to learn new spells from his peers, apprentice himself to a master, or summon a demon and try to force it to learn him new spells. A priest can learn spells by studying spellbooks; a shaman who learns to read and write could do the same.

### Divine Magic

The ability to cast spells, even for priests and shamans, is not granted by gods or spirits. A priest may claim to receive his spellcasting ability through prayer and sacrifice, but the truth is that even a priest who has been cast out of the temple and/or actively works against the tenets of his cult, is able to continue casting spells.

See the Cults, Gods & Demons chapter for more information on religion and the nature of the gods.

### Armor Use

Since all spellcasters use arcane magic, they are all subject to arcane spell failure if wearing armor.

## The Study of Magic

The study of magic is a difficult and time-consuming process, prone to errors and terrible backlashes in the case of failure.

### Gaining New Spells

To learn a new spell, the spell must be found,

learned, discovered, or researched. Spellcasters who are acolytes or priests typically have an advantage since they learn many spells directly from the temple, but are at the mercy of their superiors. Sorcerers and shamans may also be apprentices of masters. All spellcasters can take the Demonic Pact feat to gain more initial spells per level, but usually at a terrible price.

### Spells and Spellbooks

Spellbooks are not required to memorize spells. However, they are useful for learning new spells (see below), and some books have magical properties of their own.

### Learning Spells

Spells are written in normal languages, although the language used may be archaic, ancient, or even completely lost to the current age. If learning a spell from a spellbook or other written source, the caster must know the language. If learning from another caster (or spirit, monster, etc.), they must have a common language in which to communicate.

Each spell takes a number of weeks (or months, at the DM's option) equal to spell level to study. In addition, if the spell is contained within a book, scroll, or on a wall, etc., there may be an additional period of study required to decipher hidden meanings, encrypted phrases, mad ramblings, etc. in the text. This extra study time is specified for each book (ie., the Red Tablets of Yibboth requires 4 weeks of study and a Decipher Script DC 30 check before the caster can start to learn the spells contained within).

Assuming the caster knows the language and spends the time required to study the text (or undergoes verbal instruction for an equal period of time), he makes a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level) to understand and learn the new spell. A failed roll cannot be retried until the caster gains another level.

There is no upper limit on the number of spells a caster may learn.

### Researching Spells

Casters can research existing spells by spending time and money, and they can create new, unique spells by the same process (subject to the DM's approval, of course). The specifics of this research process is left up to the DM.

### Preparing Spells

Sorcerers (including priests and shamans) do not need to prepare their spells in advance. A sorcerer can cast any spell he knows at any time, assuming he has not yet used up his spells per day for that spell level. He does not have to decide ahead of time which spells he'll cast.



### Casting Spells

The casting of spells is identical to the process as described in the PHB.

### The Taint of Sorcery (Optional Rule)

Using this optional rule, the magic-user has a choice between staying sane and “human”, or wielding terrible spells at the cost of his sanity. Note that this is one of the reasons why master sorcerers prefer to have thralls (apprentices or acolytes) working for them, casting tainted magic so they don’t have to do it themselves.

Some spells are considered tainted, black magic spells; typically spells which summon evil beings, or which inflict fear, harm, or pain upon others (the specific list of tainted spells is left up to the DM to create based on his own campaign). When casting a black magic spell, the caster must make a Will save at DC 10 + half current Taint score + spell level or gain a point of Taint.

Taint warps the mind, setting the sorcerer on the path to madness and death. A character who has a Taint score equal or greater than to 25% of his Wisdom score is mildly tainted. A character who has a Taint score equal to or greater than 50% of his Wisdom score is moderately tainted. A character who has a Taint score equal to 75% or more of his Wisdom score is severely tainted.

The DM should apply one of the following penalties as soon as a character acquires the appropriate level of taint.

#### Mild Mental Taint Effects

- Mild paranoia (Will save [DC 13] to avoid turning against ally or henchman, once every 3d6 days).
- Disorientation (-2 on Spot and Listen checks).
- Increased aggressiveness (Will save [DC 13] to avoid combat at the slightest provocation).
- Mild hallucinations (during every round of combat, has 5% chance of attacking non-existent foe).
- Nightmares (has 20% chance to prevent restful sleep).

#### Moderate Mental Taint Effects

- Hears voices of evil spirits (-4 on Listen checks).
- Severe paranoia (Will save [DC 15] to avoid turning against ally or henchman, once every 3d6 days).
- Fits of uncontrollable disturbing laughter (-4 on Bluff and Diplomacy checks).
- Prone to fits of extreme rage (Will save [DC 15] to avoid combat at the slightest provocation).

- Addiction to exotic drug (must consume drug worth at least 50 gp per dose once every 1d6 days).
- Cannibalism (must consume freshly killed human flesh once every 2d6 days).
- Deviant sexual behaviour (must engage in sexual behaviour that is considered illegal by local law once every 2d6 days).
- Minor obsession (treat as *lesser geas* spell).

#### Severe Mental Taint Effects

- Irresistible murderous urges (Will save [DC 18] to avoid combat at the slightest provocation).
- Fits of lunatic paranoia (Will save [DC 18] to avoid turning against ally or henchman, once every 3d6 days).
- Utter megalomania (Will save [DC 18] to retreat from combat, even against clearly superior foes).
- Major obsession (treat as *geas/quest* spell).

When the character’s Taint score equals or exceeds his Wisdom score, he dies, falls into a coma, or becomes irrevocably mad and/or the hopeless thrall of a demonic, extra-planar being (DM’s choice).

Taint can be reduced at the rate of 1 point per month by completely avoiding casting spells, avoid any place where magic is cast, and any item or device that may cause taint. At the end of the month, the caster can make a Will saving throw at DC 10 + current Taint score to reduce taint by one point.

In addition to spellcasting, exposure to certain accursed locations and items can also cause taint. For every 24 hours spent in a tainted place or in contact with a tainted object the character must make a Will saving throw. The base DC is 10 + half current Taint score + 5 for every 24 hours of consecutive exposure.

## New Spells

This chapter contains several new spells.

### Altar-fire

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor 4

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

**Area:** All allies and foes within a 60-ft.-radius burst centered on the altar-fire

**Duration:** 2 rounds/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell brings into being a small pillar





of green or purple flame that burns without consuming the surface it emits from. As long as they stay within the fire's 60-foot radius, the caster and his allies gain a +2 luck bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saves, and skill checks, while each of his foes in the same area takes a -2 penalty on such rolls.

The altar-fire cannot be distinguished by normal means, but can be negated with a *dispel magic* spell.

**Material Component:** A pinch of flammable herbs.

#### Black Fist of Ptahaana

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 3

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One humanoid creature

**Duration:** Concentration (see text)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates; see text

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell, originally invented for the sacrificial blood-rites of sunken Ptahaana, uses weak telekinetic force to slowly rip the victim's heart out of his chest.

While the caster concentrates, the target suffers a heart attack, becoming paralyzed and freezing in place. It is aware and breathes normally but cannot take any actions, even speech. The target suffers 1d4 points of damage per round of excruciating pain.

Each round on its turn, the target may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. (This is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.)

If the target is slain by the spell, the victim's still-beating heart is transported to the caster's outstretched hand.

#### Curse of Double Death

Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 5

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Living creature touched

**Duration:** Permanent

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

When cast, this spell creates a permanent necromantic bond between the caster and the target. When the caster dies, whether from old age, disease or violence or by any other means, the target immediately also dies, apparently from the same cause as the caster. The reverse is not true, so if the target creature dies, the caster is unaffected.

This spell can only affect a single target. If

the caster attempts to casts the spell on another creature, the spell no longer affects the previous target.

#### Curse of Green Decay

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 4

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

**Target:** One living humanoid creature

**Duration:** 1 round/2 levels

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This loathsome spell slowly turns the victim's body into a quivering mass of green slime. If the target fails the saving throw, he begins to suffer 1d6 points of Constitution damage per round while his flesh is devoured. If the victim's Constitution score reaches zero, he dies. The decay can be stopped by a *dispel magic* spell.

#### Drums of Panic

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor 4

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Personal

**Area:** All enemies in a 30-ft. radius burst, centered on the caster

**Duration:** Concentration (maximum 1 round/level)

**Saving Throw:** See text

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

To cast *drums of panic*, the caster must have at least one rank in the Perform (drums) skill. All applicable targets within 30 feet of the caster must make a Will save with a DC equal to the result of a Perform (drums) check or become panicked for 1d4 rounds.

If a target successfully saves, the caster can continue to play the drums for a maximum of 1 round per level, re-rolling the Perform (drums) check and requiring a new Will save from those within the area each round.

**Focus:** A set of masterwork drums.

#### fertility Charm

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 1

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Adult creature touched

**Duration:** 1 hour/level

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)





For the duration of the spell, *fertility charm* allows any adult subject to father children (if male) or become pregnant (if female), regardless of physical condition, old age, or disease. The spell works on any creature capable of sexual reproduction, be it humanoid, animal, or other. Though the spell makes conception possible, it does not guarantee it or a live birth.

As a side effect, the subject also gains the free use of the Endurance feat for the duration of the spell.

**Focus:** A small, anatomically correct carving representing the subject's species and gender.

**Band of Revelations**  
Divination

**Level:** Sor 1

**Components:** S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Targets:** One touched object

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

By simply touching the covers of a closed book or a rolled-up scroll, the caster of this spell can read the contents normally. The caster must still know the language used on the written material, and he reads the contents with the same speed as if reading from a normal book. The spell triggers any spells or traps placed on a book or scroll, just as if the book had been opened.

**Incantation of the Broken Limb**  
Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 2

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action







**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
**Target:** Living creature with an internal skeleton and limbs  
**Duration:** Instantaneous  
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial  
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The target of the spell suffers 1d4 points of damage per level of the caster (maximum 5d4), and suffers from an arm or leg injury (caster's choice). If an arm injury, the target has a -2 penalty to all rolls that involve use of the arm (attack rolls, Swim checks, etc.). If a leg injury, the target has a -2 penalty to all rolls that involve use of the leg (Jump checks, Reflex saves, etc.). The penalties remain until all the damage caused by the spell is fully healed through either magical or mundane means.

A target who makes a successful Fortitude save takes only half damage, and does not suffer a limb injury.

**Material Component:** The arm or leg bone of a small animal.

#### Lifefeech

Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 5  
**Components:** V, S, XP  
**Casting Time:** 10 minutes  
**Range:** Touch  
**Target:** Creature touched  
**Duration:** Instantaneous  
**Saving Throw:** No  
**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell is frequently used by evil sorcerers and death priests to achieve a limited form of immortality. Casting the spell requires the sacrifice of a sentient creature of the same race as the spellcaster. The creature to be sacrificed must be helpless and/or bound while the spell is being cast.

At the culmination of the spell, the caster gains an automatic *coup de grace* attack upon the victim. If the victim dies as a result of this attack, his life force is transferred to the caster (or another target within touch range of the caster). The target gains immunity to aging effects for 1 month per Hit Dice or level of the creature sacrificed.

A creature slain by this spell can only be restored to life through the successful casting of a *resurrection*, *true resurrection*, *wish*, or *miracle* spell. *Raise dead* has no effect on a creature slain by the lifefeech spell.

**XP Cost:** 10 XP per Hit Dice of the victim.

#### Lover's Curse

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor 5  
**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action  
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
**Target:** One creature  
**Duration:** Permanent  
**Saving Throw:** Will negates  
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This is a reverse *charm* spell, causing other individuals to regard the target as a hated enemy. All Charisma checks and Charisma-based skills used by the target suffer a -10 circumstance penalty while under the influence of this spell. In addition, no NPC can have a reaction better than Indifferent toward an individual so cursed. Individuals who have a Hostile reaction usually attack the target on sight.

#### Raise the Ancient Lizard-Gods

Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 7  
**Components:** V, S, M, XP  
**Casting Time:** 1 day  
**Range:** Touch  
**Target:** One prehistoric, fossilized creature (up to 1HD per caster level)  
**Duration:** Permanent  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

This mighty ritual animates the bones of a creature that has been in the earth for thousands or millions of years. The animated creature acquires the paleoskeleton template (see Tome of Horrors III). The creature obeys the commands of the caster.

Creatures created by this spell do not count against the number of undead you can create and control using animate dead.

**Material Component:** The skull and at least 20% of the bones of a prehistoric creature.

**XP Cost:** 2,000 XP

#### Shapeshift

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 5  
**Components:** V, S, M  
**Casting Time:** 1 standard action  
**Range:** Personal  
**Target:** You  
**Duration:** 1 min./level (D)

By means of this spell, the sorcerer can take the shape of any creature of the animal or vermin types, between Small and Huge size. The assumed form can't have more Hit Dice than the caster's level, to a maximum of 15 HD at 15th level. The caster's creature type and subtype (if any) change to match the new form.

Upon changing, the caster regains lost hit points as if he had rested for a night (though this healing does not restore temporary ability



damage and provide other benefits of resting; and changing back does not heal the caster further). If slain, the caster reverts to his original form, though he remains dead.

The caster gains the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of the new form but retains his own Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. He also gains all extraordinary special attacks possessed by the form but does not gain the extraordinary special qualities possessed by the new form or any supernatural or spell-like abilities.

**Material Component:** A figurine of the creature type to change into.

### Snake Staff

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 5

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Magical or non-magical quarterstaff

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** Special (see text)

**Spell Resistance:** No

This disturbing spell causes the caster's staff to partially animate, transforming the head into that of a poisonous snake. A staff enchanted by this spell cannot be used as a double weapon. However, a successful hit by the snake staff inflicts 1d8 points of piercing damage and poisons the target. The victim must make a Fortitude save against the normal spell DC or immediately suffer 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. One minute after being struck, the foe must make another Fortitude save or suffer an additional 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage.

The *snake staff* does not run out of venom and can be used any number of times before the spell's duration ends. *Dispel magic* can transform the weapon back into a normal staff, but the poison is non-magical and must be treated normally. It is not possible to "milk" the staff and extract the poison for later use.

**Focus:** A quarterstaff.

### Sorcery of the Skull

Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 7

**Components:** V, S, M, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 day

**Effect:** One skull

**Duration:** See text

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

By means of this grisly spell, the severed head of an opponent is enchanted by peeling off the skin and sewing up the lips and eyelids to trap and paralyze the deceased's spirit within. The skull itself is discarded, while the

head is simmered in an iron pot filled with juices extracted from secret herbs until it is reduced to about half its natural size.

The shrunken head is then placed on a shelf, or worn along with other trophies in the caster's belt or necklace. Up to once per day, the caster can interrogate the enchanted head as if using *speak with dead*. Furthermore, once per day, the caster can temporarily release the captured soul to do his bidding for up to 1 round per caster level. Such souls are similar to wraiths, except that they do not suffer from daylight powerlessness, and do not create spawn when killing opponents.

The enchanted head has Hardness 2 and 15 hit points. If it is destroyed, the victim's wraith-spirit is released and immediately seeks out and attacks the caster. However, a released spirit only has 10 rounds to exact its revenge before it fades and disappears to whatever hell it has been denied while being the caster's prisoner.

The spell must be cast within 3 days of the victim's death.

**Material Component:** The severed head of a captured enemy.

**XP Cost:** 1,000 XP

### Soul Vulture

Conjuration (Summoning)

**Level:** Sor 7

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Effect:** One summoned creature

**Duration:** 1 day/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This evil spell summons an ethereal vulture that the caster can send out to attack a humanoid target. On the physical plane, the vulture attacks with its beak attack, which ignores Armor Class except for deflection, sacred, luck, divine or ability score-based AC bonuses. The attack does no damage, but drains 1d6 Wisdom on a hit. When the target is brought down to 0 Wisdom, the victim falls into a nightmare-filled sleep, and the vulture has captured a portion of his essence.

It then returns to its master and spits the essence out in the form of a worm. If the caster swallows the worm, the victim's lost Wisdom is instantly restored, however, the caster then has established a sensory link and complete control over the individual, as if the victim were subject to a *dominate person* spell.

Outside of a *wish* or *miracle* spell, the only way to reverse the control established by the spell is to remove the worm from the belly of the caster (where it otherwise remains) to be fed to the essence's owner.

The vulture pursues the target for the dura-





tion of the spell. The vulture's stats are as follows:

**Ethereal Vulture:** SZ M Outsider; HD 1d8+2; hp 7; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +0 melee (bite, 1d4+2) and +4 melee (claws [x2], 1d3+2); SA drain 1d6 Wisdom with successful bite attack, ignore material armor; SQ incorporeal, darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 18, Cha 4. Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +5. Feats: Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse (claw, bite).

**Material Component:** Powdered diamond dust (worth 2,500 gp) mixed with earth from a tomb.

### Sticks to Serpents

Necromancy

**Level:** Sor 6

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Effect:** 3 fiendish small vipers/level

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell allows the caster to send the spirits of dead snakes into pieces of wood, bringing them to life. The caster can create 3 fiendish small vipers per caster level, provided sufficient material components are available. The caster can command the creatures as he wishes. The creatures act normally on the last round of the spell, and disappear at the end of their turn, leaving only a pile of twigs behind.

**Material Component:** One twig or small branch for each snake animated.

### Summon Animal

Conjuration (Summoning)

**Level:** Sor 3

**Components:** V, S, F, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Effect:** One summoned creature

**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell summons a natural creature (animal or vermin) of small or medium size. It appears to manifest out of a small figurine held in the caster's hand. It appears where the caster designates and acts immediately, on the caster's turn. It attacks the caster's opponents to the best of its ability. If the caster can communicate with the creature, he can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or to perform other actions.

The animal to be summoned must exist in the local fauna.

**Focus:** A small figurine of the animal to be summoned.

**XP Cost:** 250 XP

### Summon Greater Animal

Conjuration (Summoning)

**Level:** Sor 5

**Components:** V, S, F, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Effect:** One summoned creature

**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell functions like *summon animal*, except that it can be used to summon large and huge animals, as well as dire varieties of small- and medium-sized animals.

**Focus:** A small figurine of the animal to be summoned.

**XP Cost:** 500 XP

### Witch-fire

Evocation

**Level:** Sor 1

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** See text

**Target:** See text

**Duration:** 10 minutes/level, or until discharged

**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

**Spell Resistance:** No

A small flame springs into life in one of the sorcerer's hands. It sheds a sickly green or purple light in a 20-foot radius, and dim light for an additional 20 feet.

The sorcerer can use this light as a torch for the duration of the spell. Although the sorcerer is not burned by the flame, he cannot carry weapons or items in the same hand as the witch-fire.

The caster can end the spell by hurling the flame at an opponent within 15 feet. The sorcerer hits automatically, causing 3d4 points of fire damage. The target is allowed a Reflex save for half damage.

## Alternative Names for Spells

Flavor can be added to the campaign by changing the names of standard spells. Consider the following examples:

- Adoration (*greater command*)
- Black Sign of Ptahaana (*enervation*)
- Blade of Sacrifice (*keen edge*)
- Wind from the Tomb (*cloudkill*)



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥

*"In the temple of the city of Morm, which lies between the desert and the sea, are two images of the god Amanon, a bronze image facing an iron image, across the fires and blood-stains of the alter-stone. When the gory sunset of the day of sacrifice is over and the writhing fires of the sacrifice are dead, and the moon smiles with a cold and marble smile on the blackened altar — then Amanon speaks to Amanon, with a voice of iron, and a voice of bronze..." — Clark Ashton Smith: The Image of Bronze and the Image of Iron*

## The Nature of the “Gods”

Here is the big secret: True deities do not exist. Most of the “gods” are simply monstrous or alien creatures of flesh and blood; others don’t even exist except as an invention of the cult, a ruse by the priests to gain power and influence over the worshippers.

A priest is usually a sorcerer, whose spellcasting ability is independent of the god he claims to worship. The “gods” cannot grant spells and

powers to their followers. They can, however, teach spells and other secrets to humans (just like two humans can teach each other magic), and they often live long and so accumulate a lot of knowledge which they may (or may not) share with their servants. Even so, some of the creatures worshipped as gods have alien minds and/or do not care or know about their followers, making it difficult from the priests to benefit from such knowledge.

On the other hand, the “gods” gain several benefits from having a human priesthood, including sacrifices of food, wealth, slaves, and willing servants. Blood sacrifices from the cult can also empower magic cast by the “god”, or increase its innate powers.

The following types of creatures are often labelled “gods” and worshipped or placated by humans:

— “Demons”, a definition that is itself somewhat problematic. Any creature with innate supernatural or magical abilities may be called a demon. Examples include elementals, proper demons (hezrou, vroek), and unique outsiders such as Yibbbo and Rahma.

— Creatures from other planets and stars, from the void between the stars, and the black gulfs of space (also called aliens or extraterrestrials).

- Monstrous and prehistoric animals, such as giant serpents, lizards, spiders, and dinosaurs.

— Undead and spirits are sometimes worshipped as gods.

## Cults

The following subchapter lists the various religious cults of the world, describing their priests, temples, rituals, and secrets.

## Ahyada, the High God of Taraam





lets of Ahyada are said to be effective wards against demons.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Ahyada teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 1st level — *protection from evil, sanctuary*
- 2nd level — *augury*
- 4th level — *divination*
- 5th level — *dream*

#### **Akhlathu, the God of Twisted fate**

Figurines of this god, who has few temples and no priests, depict Akhlathu as a deformed dwarf, whose facial features even show a hint of retardation. Many Susrahmites swear “By Akhlathu’s Beard!” when in trouble. This is also a god of thieves and gamblers.

#### **Al-Tawir, the Ancient One, the Sleeper Beneath the Sands**

Some say that Al-Tawir dwells in the black gulfs between the stars, others that he sleeps in a sealed and forbidden tomb beneath the desert sand. Al-Tawir is one of the Old Gods. The nomads hear his voice in the howling of the desert winds, and they see his face in the rage of sandstorms. He is the emptiness of the desert, associated with getting lost, with thirst and hunger, with darkness, and with sandstorms.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Al-Tawir teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *darkness, whispering wind*
- 3rd level — *vampiric touch*
- 5th level — *nightmare*
- 8th level — *whirlwind*

#### **Baal-Khardah, the Sun-God of Susrah**

The lord of the sky, protector and judge of humankind, Baal-Khardah is a distant god, usually worshipped only by nobility. The common people tend to favor the more earthly passions of his mate, Belet-Lil. His lavish temples are filled with ram-headed statues, golden sun-discs, and sacred swords.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Baal-Khardah teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *spiritual weapon*
- 4th level — *divine power*
- 6th level — *hold monster*

#### **Belet-Lil, the Moon-Goddess of Susrah**

Voluptuous mate of Baal-Khardah, and earth-mother, Belet-Lil is a goddess of fertility, revelry, and beauty. She is very popular



among the Susrahmites, not least due to the large numbers of temple prostitutes found in every city.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Belet-Lil teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 1st level — *charm person, fertility charm\**
- 2nd level — *delay poison*
- 4th level — *restoration*
- 5th level — *dominate person, lover’s curse\**

#### **Ia-Azutlatl, the Blood-God of Sunken Ptabaana**

The true form of Ia-Azutlatl is unknown, but he is one of the Old Gods; some even claim that he is the greatest and oldest of those ancient ones. It is known that the blood-druids of now-sunken Ptabaana worshipped him with ceremonies of mass slaughter atop their stepped pyramids of green stone. Today, his name survives only in the rituals of primitive savages and mad hierarchs.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Ia-Azutlatl teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 3rd level — *black fist of Ptabaana*
- 4th level — *lesser planar binding*
- 6th level — *planar binding*
- 8th level — *greater planar binding*



### Jul-Juggah, the Devil-Bird of Azimba

The sweltering plains of Azimba are dotted with hundreds of monstrous statues of lizard-birds. Whether these grim effigies were crafted by an older civilization, or placed there more recently by the feather-cloaked shamans of Jul-Juggah, is not known.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Jul-Juggah teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 1st level — *feather fall*
- 5th level — *song of discord*
- 6th level — *stone tell*

### The Living Flame, Nameless God of Zadj

The Zadjites worship a nameless elemental god, the Living Flame, above all other gods. The priests tend everburning fires in their marble temples. Fire is considered pure; both the dead and the unbelievers are cast into the flames to be purified. Fire also imbues metal with a spark of the divine; the priests of the Living Flame are skilled metal-workers and weaponsmiths.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of the Living Flame teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *burning hands*
- 4th level — *greater magic weapon*
- 5th level — *wall of fire*



### Maggash, the Brazen God of Zhaol

Abominable are the brass idols of Maggash, the fire-god of Zhaol, and even worse are the rites of the priesthood, which include the burning of infants as sacrifice. The priests of Zhaol accept no other god than their own, and worship of other gods is strictly forbidden and punishable by death.

Maggash is sometimes depicted as a bull, or a bull-headed humanoid.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Maggash teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *bull's strength, death knell*
- 5th level — *flame strike*

### Nhakhramat, the Six-Armed Woman

The ivory woman, said by some to be the mate of Yadar, is worshipped largely by Khazistanis who disapprove of Belet-Lil's open sensuality, which is a source of conflict between the Khazistanis and the Susrahmites.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Nhakhramat teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *alter self*
- 5th level — *true seeing*

### Nwanga Zhaal, the Lord of Beasts

Known and feared across the Jungle Kingdoms, this bloodthirsty god is master of the beasts that howl at the moon. His shamans are always served by flocks of bonded animals.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Nwanga Zhaal teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *animal messenger*
- 4th level — *drums of panic\**
- 3rd level — *dominate animal, summon animal\**
- 7th level — *animal shapes*

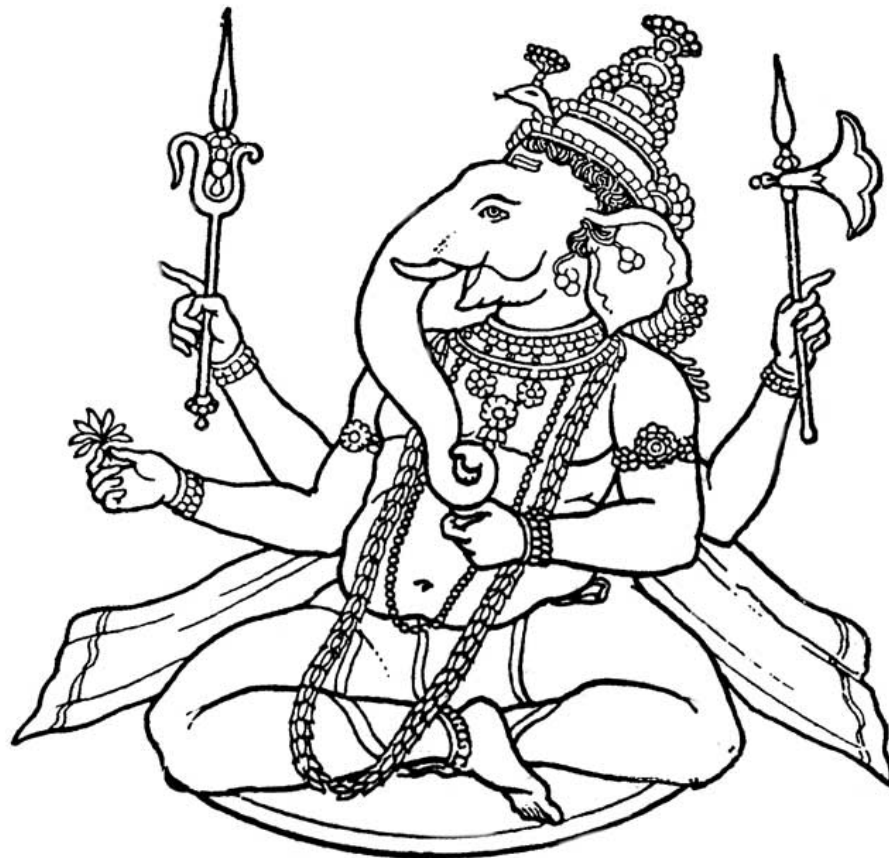
### Othabbhon, the Guardian of the Gates

Depicted as a horse-headed humanoid clutching a bronze key, this mysterious god is a protector of homes and vaults, as well as the guardian of secret and hidden places.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Othabbhon teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 1st level — *arcane lock*
- 2nd level — *obscure object*
- 3rd level — *glyph of warding*
- 7th level — *sequester*





#### **Simatala, the Ape-God of Laksha**

Turbaned priests strangle sacrificial victims on the white jade altars of this grim ape-god of the east, whose cult has even begun to spread to the west.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Simatala teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *death knell*
- 3rd level — *speak with animals* (apes only)
- 6th level — *programmed image*

#### **Vaathra Yok, the Wise One**

This is an elephant-headed god of the east, revered for its great strength and wisdom. Temples of the cult contain rich treasures of ivory.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Yaathra Yok teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *calm emotions*
- 4rd level — *stoneskin*
- 6th level — *find the path*

#### **Yadar, the Lord of Death and Secrets**

The mysterious high god of the Khazistanis, Yadar, is said to live in the desert and to collect the souls of every living man and woman when they give up their final breath.

Yadar is associated with scorpions and bats. Many carry charms and amulets in the image

of Yadar, said to ward against disease and violent death.

Such worship is often personal and unorganized, since the locations of Yadar's temples are generally kept secret and known only to the priests. The cult is suspected to have subterranean shrines in cities, and temples in desert ruins. The nomads stay well away from such ruins, since any who stray too close disappear without a trace.

To be initiated into the cult of Yadar, the candidate must spend a night in a sealed sarcophagus in a masoleum haunted by ghouls.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Yadar teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

- 2nd level — *ghoul touch*
- 3rd level — *contagion, speak with dead*
- 4th level — *death ward*
- 5th level — *slay living*
- 6th level — *lifeleech\**, *true necromancy\**

#### **Yammosh, the Sea-God of Ghazor**

The greatest temple of this Susrahnite sea-god is located in the sinful port city of Ghazor, although sailors from many nations offer sacrifice to him before setting out on long ocean voyages.

To be initiated into the cult of Yammosh, the candidate must survive being plunged into a water-filled pit for 1d4 minutes without drowning.



**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Yammosh teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

4th level — *black tentacles*

6th level — *water breathing*

7th level — *control weather*

#### **Yibboth, the Sacred Toad of Fakhuum**

Despite having its cult-centre deep within the poisoned marshes of Fakhuum, whether Yibboth is part of the true Yar-Ammonite pantheon is uncertain; some claim he is one of the Old Gods. The priests of Yibboth are reputed to worship a “golden frog-thing”, along with mummified crocodiles and all manner of water lizards and giant toads.

2nd level — *gentle repose*

4th level — *control water*

5th level — *greater summon animal\** (frogs, toads, lizards and crocodiles only)

6th level — *lifeleech\**

#### **Yot-Kamoth, the Spider-God of Lamu**

The Lamurans bow before black idols of Yot-Kamoth, the monstrous eight-legged god worshipped for centuries in the mountain fastness of Lamra, the capital city. In truth, the priests of the spider-god are the royalty of Lamu, for they wield considerable influence and for a common man to resist their demands is a certain death sentence.

To be initiated into the cult of Yot-Kamoth, a candidate with the proper qualifications must survive the lethal bite of a temple-bred spider (Fort DC 12; initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con).

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Yot-Kamoth teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

1st level — *spider climb*

2nd level — *summon swarm* (spiders only)

3rd level — *summon animal\** (spiders only), *web*

4th level — *giant vermin* (spiders only), *poison*

6th level — *creeping doom* (spider swarms)

#### **Zanthiss, the Great Serpent**

The ancient demon-serpent of Yalotha, in some worlds known as Hassith-Kaa, is the father of various ophidian races and a master of sorcery. Zanthiss is currently believed to be confined to an extradimensional prison, or perhaps banished to a remote star, after the downfall of the serpent-empire of Yalotha.

However, cults of Zanthiss still lair in ancient temples, with writhing serpent-pits, giant slithering temple snakes, malachite altars

stained with the blood of centuries of sacrifice, and demon-guarded vaults wherein lie hidden the lost papyri of jungle-lost Yalotha.

To become an initiate of the cult, the candidate must survive the lethal bite of a sacred temple cobra (Fort DC 12, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con). Ascension to greater titles within the priesthood may involve the bites of greater and more poisonous snakes.

**Cult Secrets:** The cult of Zanthiss teaches the following additional spells to its initiates (an asterisk indicates a new spell):

1st level — *hypnotism*

3rd level — *summon animal\** (snakes only)

4th level — *poison*

5th level — *greater summon animal\** (snakes only), *snake staff\**

6th level — *sticks to serpents\**

#### **The Gods of Tharag Thule**

Among the gods worshipped in the cold wastes of the north are the Moon-God, the Wolf-God, and the Skull-God.

The Moon-God is served only by female priestesses; old hags and crones are respected omen-readers and oracles among the Thargians.

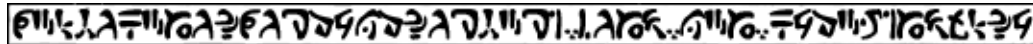
The Wolf-God is a god of strength, war, and bloodlust. Tribal chieftains are often also priests of the Wolf-God.

The Skull-God is the lord of the dead and the king of ghosts; this god has no priests or followers, but each village has a hut set up with a skull-adorned altar where he is placated with offerings.

#### **The Gods of Yar-Ammon**

The Yar-Ammonites worship an ancient pantheon of beast-headed man-gods, disturbing fragments of a lost age. Depictions of these gods, said to have brought knowledge and wisdom to the first civilization of Yar-Ammon, include serpent-headed, vulture-headed, hyena-headed, and crocodile-headed humanoids. The priests of Yar-Ammon often wear masks in imitation of these gods.



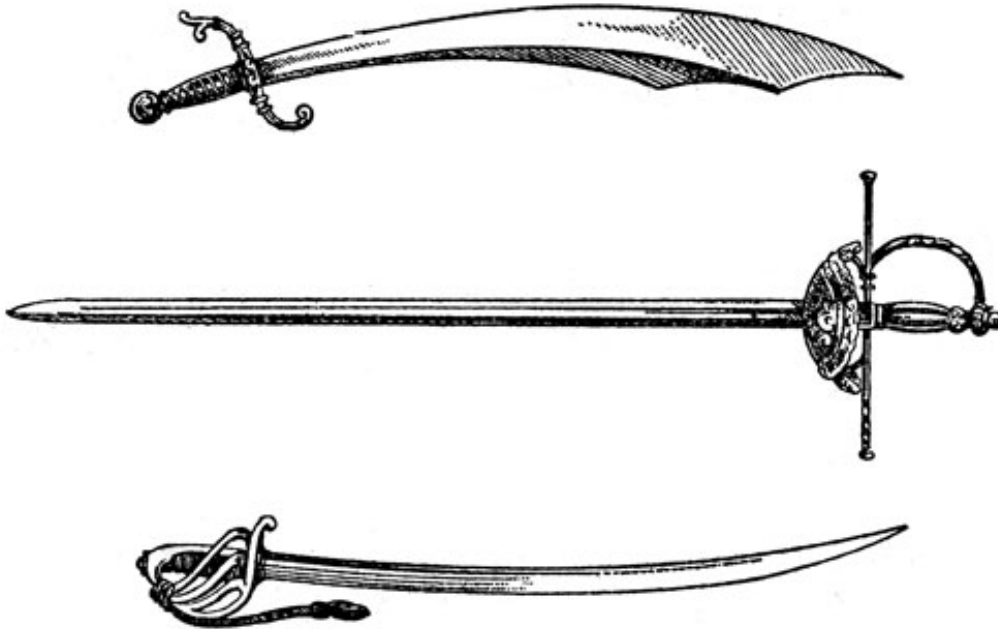


*"The Coven-Master gave to me a phial  
Of the dread opiate that is the key  
To dream-gates opening upon a sea  
Of acherontic vapours; mile on mile  
Stretched ebon coasts untrod, wherefrom  
aspire  
Pylons of rough-hewn stone climbing to  
skies  
Alien-constellated, where arise  
Grey mottled moons of cold and leprous fire.  
I saw — and screamed! And knew my doom  
of dooms  
Learning at last... where the Black Lotus  
blooms."  
— Lin Carter: Dreams from R'lyeh*

Material bonuses or penalties stack with bonuses from masterwork items and magical bonuses, if any. For example, a masterwork steel battleaxe grants a +2 bonus to attack rolls, and a +1 bonus to damage.

**Dagger, Stabbing:** Light simple weapon (melee); cost 4 gp; damage 1d4 (M); critical 20/x3; range increment 15 ft.; weight 1 lbs.; type: piercing. This slightly curved dagger, also known as the *pesh kabz*, has a massive handle but ends in a sharp point. With its good solid grip and perfect balance, warriors of Susrah





and elsewhere value this dagger for its ability to pierce armor and its increased range when thrown. The *karud* is a straight-bladed variation of the pesh kabz, with similar statistics.

**Knife, Ikuna:** One-handed martial weapon (melee); cost 6 gp; damage 1d6 (M); critical 20/x4; range increment 10 ft.; weight 6 lbs.; type: slashing. The name of this heavy sword-knife is something of a misnomer, since they are in fact iron blades from an unknown civilization that predates the Ikunas by several centuries. The weapons are highly prized among the savage Ikunas, who have not yet mastered the art of forging metal weapons, but who occasionally find these knives in ancient ruins in the Hills of the Dead.

**Longbow, Susrahnite:** Two-handed exotic weapon (ranged); cost 125 gp; damage 1d10 (M); critical 20/x3; range increment 120 ft.; weight 4 lbs.; type: piercing. The archers of Susrah are famed for their mighty composite longbows, which can kill a man from great range. All Susrahnite longbows have Strength ratings.

**Scimitar, Great:** Two-handed exotic weapon (melee); cost 75 gp; damage 2d6 (M); critical 18-20/x2; weight 8 lbs.; type: slashing. Also known as the *tulwar* or *kilij*, this mighty curved sword is frequently used by palace guards, eunuchs, and officers of Khazistan and Zadj. The great scimitar grants an additional +2 bonus to opposed rolls when attempting to sunder an opponent's weapon or shield.

**Shortbow, Khazistani:** Two-handed exotic weapon (ranged); cost 100 gp; damage 1d6 (M); critical 18-20/x2; range increment 70 ft.; weight 2 lbs.; type: piercing. This small but powerful weapon is wielded by the horsemen of Khazistan, as well as the nomads of the Khazraj clans. All Khazistani shortbows have Strength ratings.

**Staff, Long:** Two-handed simple weapon (melee); cost —; damage 1d6 (M); critical 20/x2; weight 4 lbs.; type: bludgeoning. The long staff has reach; the wielder can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but cannot use it against an adjacent foe.

**Sword, Sickle:** One-handed martial weapon (melee); cost 20 gp; damage 1d8 (M); critical 19-20/x2; weight 7 lbs.; type: slashing. A shallow-curved blade, the sickle sword is an ancient weapon used first and foremost in Yar-Ammon, as well as certain parts of Susrah. The hooked shape of a sickle sword provides the wielder with a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls when attempting to disarm an opponent (including the roll to keep the user from being disarmed if he fails to disarm his opponent).

## Armor

In sword and sorcery campaigns, characters tend to use light or medium armors. To reflect this, all heavy armor is five times more expensive than the price listed in the PHB.

### New Armors

The following armors are new. As for the new weapons listed above, many of these armors are regional variants, but are less often found in foreign lands than regional weapons. The asking price outside the native region may still be much higher than the listed cost, due to the trophy value of such items.

**Fur Armor:** Light armor; cost 3 gp; armor bonus 1; maximum Dex bonus 8; armor check penalty 0; arcane spell failure chance 5%; speed 30 ft./30 ft.; weight 5 lbs. This armor, while no more than a heavy fur cloak, still provides some measure of protection against blows. It is a very common item, worn by





northern barbarians, Khazistani horsemen, Zorabi hillmen and Ikuna savages, and others.

**Crocodile Hide Armor:** Light armor; cost 35 gp; armor bonus 4; maximum Dex bonus 4; armor check penalty -3; arcane spell failure chance 20%; speed 30 ft./30 ft.; weight 25 lbs. This armor, common only in Yar-Ammon, provides medium protection yet is light and flexible.

## Alchemical and Herbal Items

Characters with the appropriate Craft skills can create quasi-magical alchemical items such as alchemical powders and herbal drugs. Such items typically require time, money, rare ingredients, and a properly-equipped laboratory to craft.

### Powders

The following powders can be created in an alchemical laboratory. Powders can be thrown up to 20 feet from the wielder. The dust spreads in a 20-foot radius cloud, affecting all creatures within the area.

**Berserking-Powder:** This blue-white powder causes madness. Creatures who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15) enter a rage (as per the barbarian class ability) and attack the nearest creature for 1d6 rounds. Craft (alchemy) DC: 25. Market Price: 250 gp.

**Blinding-Powder:** This thick black dust causes temporary blindness. Creatures who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15) are blinded for 3d6 rounds. Craft (alchemy) DC: 15. Market Price: 50 gp.

**Dreaming-Powder:** This pale yellow powder causes hallucinations and strange visions. Creatures who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15) are affected as per a *confusion* spell for 1d8 rounds. Craft (alchemy) DC: 20. Market Price: 100 gp.

**Fire-Powder:** This deep red powder ignites upon contact with air, and is therefore always kept in some kind of container, made from glass, ivory or clay. The explosion causes 5d4 points of damage to all affected creatures. Craft (alchemy) DC: 15. Market Price: 50 gp.

**Smoke-Powder:** A sooty, grey powder that obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature 5 feet away has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target). The cloud dissipates in 2d4 rounds. Craft (alchemy) DC: 15. Market Price: 50 gp.

### Herbal Drugs

The following herbal drugs can be prepared from natural plants using the Craft (herbalism) skill. Herbal drugs are treated as a special form of poison that have beneficial effects but require saving throws against the harmful side effects. Ability damage caused by such herbs does not begin to heal naturally until after the (beneficial) effects of the drug wear off. At the DM's option, repeated use of any of these drugs may cause addiction.

**Grey Desert Lotus:** The powdered leaves of the Grey Lotus is a popular drug among the Khazraj nomads of the al-Khazi Desert.





A creature that drinks a concoction of water mixed with the powdered leaves gains a +2 alchemical bonus to Strength for 1d3 hours, but must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1 point of Wisdom damage. Another save must be made 1 minute later, and if failed the creature becomes nervous and skittish (treat as shaken). Craft (herbalism) DC: 20. Market Price: 20 gp.

**Red Lotus of Ghoma (Ghoma-Weed):**

This herb, with its characteristic red leaves, is calming both for the body and the mind. It is harvested by ascetic priests in the tropical realm of Ghoma. A creature that chews on the red leaves gains the benefits of the Die-hard feat as well as a +4 alchemical bonus to saving throws against fear for 1d4 hours, but must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1 point of Dexterity damage. Another save must be made 1 minute later, and if failed the creature becomes nervous and skittish (treat as shaken). Craft (herbalism) DC: 25. Market Price: 50 gp.

**Silver Lotus:** Found only in the dark depths of certain caves on the Silver Lotus Isles in the Eastern Ocean, guarded by hostile pygmies, the fragile leaves of this lotus are destroyed by direct exposure to sunlight. This potent herb induces sleep, grants pleasurable dreams (but sometimes strange visions and nightmares), and for magic-users, it boosts and restores magical power. A creature that inhales the smoke produced by burning the dried and crushed silver leaves must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 1d3 points of Wisdom damage. Another save must be made 1 minute later, and if failed the creature falls unconscious for 1d6 hours. Craft (herbalism) DC: 30. Market Price: 100 gp.

**Other Alchemical and Herbal Items**

**Barafa-Grape:** Found only in the deep jungles of the south, the bright yellow berries of the barafa-tree can be used to coat blades and arrow-tips. Anyone struck by such weapons must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be slowed for 1d4 minutes. Like other poisons, a new dose must be re-applied to the weapon whether the saving throw fails or not. Craft (herbalism) DC: 20. Market Price: 75 gp.

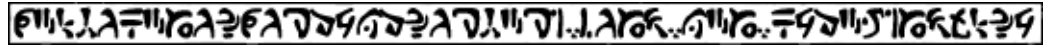
**Globe of Entrancement:** This small blue-white globe can be hurled at an opponent up to 20 feet away (no ranged attack roll is required). The globe explodes in mid-air and releases a sparkling rain of phosphorescent blue mist. The target must make a Will save (DC 15) or become entranced as per the *hypnotic pattern* spell for 1d6 rounds. Craft (alchemy) DC: 25. Market Price: 100 gp.

**Green Fire-Resin:** This sticky resin is prepared from several plants and mixed with secret alchemical ingredients first discovered by the priests of Yar-Ammon. Any torch soaked with the resin burns three times longer than a normal torch, but gives off a weird green light. One dose is enough to treat 10 torches. Craft (alchemy) DC: 15. Market Price: 2 sp.

**Khanquah-Fungi:** Picked from the sheer cliff walls of the Zorab mountains, this fungus is the bane of sorcerers when dried and mixed with blood to produce a foul-smelling soup. Spellcasters who imbibe this concoction must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or be unable to concentrate properly for 2d8+8 hours, which effectively prevents the affected creature from casting spells. This herbal brew is often forced to captured sorcerers, or served to master wizards by ambitious apprentices. Craft (herbalism) DC: 25. Market Price: 100 gp.

**Purple Leaves of Uthjar:** The utility of this rare plant is well-known far outside its native realm, but has never been successfully cultivated elsewhere. A creature that chews on the purple leaf gains a +4 alchemical bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting magic for 3d10 minutes. Craft (herbalism) DC: 25. Market Price: 50 gp.





## A black and white woodcut illustration depicting three men in traditional Middle Eastern attire, possibly scholars or scribes, seated on the ground in front of a stone wall. The man on the right is actively writing in a book with a quill, while the other two men observe. A long staff and sandals are visible on the ground. The scene is set against a backdrop of a rough stone wall.

The chief apprentice, Arakshat, ultimately had all his rivals killed, maimed, imprisoned, or banished; but the infighting had left Ikhtanabu's wealth spent and his precious library scattered. Arakshat took what was left, sold his master's ravaged properties, and left the city of Belthaar, and was never seen in its precincts again.



Years later, a pack of hungry ghouls, attracted by the bituminous scent of Ikhtanabu Xul's mummified corpse, burrowed into the necromancer's private tomb in the catacombs of Belthaar and devoured his well-preserved body. Now it became evident that not all of Ikhtanabu Xul's necromantic studies had been in vain, for certain secret spells protected the wizard's repose, and his evil shade was released after the feasting of the ghouls. The shade was unable to rest before it had exacted Ikhtanabu Xul's revenge upon his treacherous apprentices, but it was bound to the tomb and needed a living host body to leave.

Thus the wizard's shade inhabited a silvered ritual dagger prepared for this purpose until the broken tomb was discovered by a lowly tomb-robber. This thief, Taziz by name, managed to snatch the valuable-looking dagger from the tomb before he was beset by hungry ghouls and was forced to flee.

Out of the catacombs, in the dingy back alleys of the city, the shade of the necromancer possessed the body of the hapless thief, Taziz.

However, before Taziz/Ikhtanabu could return to the tomb or seek out revenge on his former apprentice, the tomb-robber was assailed by a band of thugs, whose leader, Jahwar, had glimpsed the silver knife carried by Taziz and decided to take it from the lone man.

#### Adventure Synopsis

The player characters are passing through the back alleys of Belthaar and come across Taziz/Ikhtanabu just as Jahwar and his thugs slay the thief and take the dagger. These merciless thugs don't want to leave any witnesses to their murder and so attack the PCs.

Assuming the player characters defeat Jahwar and his men, they find the silver dagger. Sooner or later, one of the PCs or an NPC become possessed by Ikhtanabu Xul's shade and this eventually leads the player characters to the wizard's tomb.

The city's catacombs are a maze of tunnels, alcoves, and crypts. A sinister order of priests known as the Keepers protects the entrances

#### The City of Belthaar

This city, located west of the Ophrat river, is one of the smallest city-states of Susrah, with a population of only 12,000 people, yet its foundations are ancient, and its gloomy, serpentine streets wind their way between mighty monuments and hoary towers. There are temples and ziggurats dedicated to Belet-Lil, Baal-Khardah, Yadar, and a multitude of others.

Belthaar is currently ruled by the petty king Simashattar III, whose army of 2,000 pikemen and 500 charioteers is involved in a three-way war with its bigger neighbours, Zhaol and Ghezath. Despite his small army, Simashattar has avoided defeat by capturing a princeling of Ghezath and holding him hostage. At the same time, he is secretly negotiating a separate truce with emissaries of Zhaol.

**City Guard of Belthaar, male Susrahnite Ftr1:** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+3; hp 10; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +6. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (b), Toughness, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, short sword, javelin, 3 gp.

**Description:** These guards wear simple grey uniforms over their armor.

**Tactics:** The city guards hurl their javelins first, before surging into melee with their swords.

**Guard Captain of Belthaar, male Susrahnite Ftr3:** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d10+3; hp 22; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +1 light wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 light wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3, longsword, 19-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Intimidate +6, Jump +9, Ride +7. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (b), Improved Shield Bash, Toughness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Lamuran.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, light wooden shield, longsword, 12 gp.

**Description:** Guard captains are typically in their late twenties, with scarlet sashes over their grey uniforms to denote status.

**Tactics:** Most of these junior officers follow their men into combat, eager to gain glory.





to the catacombs, and the player characters must sneak past these custodians to gain access.

Dire rats, monstrous maggots, and hungry ghouls roam the catacomb tunnels. The PCs must find the defiled tomb of Ikhtanabu Xul and re-imprison or lay his shade to rest. If they fail, the necromancer tries to use one of the PCs as his host body in his quest to gain revenge on his former apprentice. Arakshat is now a powerful wizard in his own right, and the player character's body will surely perish in such a confrontation!

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started.

— Bring the player characters directly into the action with the events described in the first subchapter, “The Trail from the Tomb”. It is assumed that the PCs already know each other, but that they only have a few silvers left and currently live hard in the slum quarters of Belthaar, soon having to resort to thievery if nothing better comes up. Perhaps they player characters are the only surviving members of a mercenary company that was wiped out in a recent battle between two of the Susrahnite city-states.

— Alternatively, the PCs can come into the possession of Ikhtanabu Xul's knife by some other method. Perhaps they stole it from the tomb-robber Taziz themselves, or perhaps one of the player characters bought it in the bazaar (the knife having passed from Taziz, through Jahwar, to a merchant).

## The Trail from the Tomb

The player characters are returning to their current home, the Dirty Dog Inn, from a night of drinking, spending their last silvers in one of Belthaar's cheapest dives, when they walk into a dimly lit square and see a young man (Taziz) being slain by a band of thugs.

Even if the PCs try to avoid trouble, they are attacked by Jahwar's gang who don't want to leave any witnesses to the murder. Lives are cheap in the slums of Belthaar; better to kill a few more strangers than to risk being crucified by the city guard for theft.

**Jahwar, male Susrahnite Ftr2/Rog1:** CR 3; SZ M; HD 2d10+2 plus 1d6+1; hp 20; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, short sword, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +5/+5 melee (1d6+3, short sword, 19-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Open Lock +6, Ride +7, Tumble +8. **Feats:** Acrobatic, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (b), Lightning Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Taraamite.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, short sword, 4 sp.

**Description:** Slightly overweight yet surprisingly nimble, Jahwar has dark hair and a few missing teeth. He claims to have been a gladiator in his youth.

**Tactics:** Jahwar tries to work with his henchmen to get into a flanking position so that he can use his sneak attack.

**Jahwar's Thugs, male Susrahnite Ftr1 (6):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+1; hp 8; Init +4 (+0 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 no armor, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, club, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Intimidate +3, Jump +6. **Feats:** Improved Initiative (b), Power Attack, Self-Sufficient, Weapon Focus (club).

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Clothing, club, 1 sp.

**Description:** Grim-faced and unwashed, these thugs are true gutter-rats of Belthaar.

**Tactics:** Jahwar's henchmen gang up on a single victim at a time, starting with the weakest-looking character, assaulting him with power attacks.

**Development:** Unless the PCs fight for their lives and defeat the thugs, the adventure comes to an abrupt stop here. Assuming they are victorious, the player characters probably loot the fallen bodies, and find, among other things, the silver knife of Ikhtanabu Xul.

### The Necromancer's Knife

The dagger has a handle of ivory and a silver blade, with black runes etched into it. It is evidently an item of some value, and likely a funerary item. The black runes are the personal symbols of the long-dead sorcerer Ikhtanabu Xul, as any sage worth his salt will attest to.

Having found the dagger, there are several things the player characters might do:

— **Keep the dagger and do nothing:** One of the PCs, or an NPC (preferably a close contact), will eventually be possessed by the necromancer's shade and seek out the tomb. The other player characters must follow in order to rescue their friend. If this happens while the player characters are still at the Dirty Dog Inn, there is a half-drunken night-guard



by the name of Zaarek who sees the possessed character leaving, and can point the PCs in the right direction.

— **Try to find out more about the dagger:** A character who succeeds with a Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check (DC 14) may learn that the dagger once belonged to a wizard whose tomb is now unknown, since after his death his apprentice left the city and has not been seen for years. Another check (DC 16) reveals the names of the wizard and his apprentice, and a third check (DC 16) gives the character some clues as to the location of the tomb (in the city's catacombs, near the Square of the Green Peacock). The same information can be obtained from a sage (a well-known sage of the city is called Etanashu and can be found in the Trade District).

— **Sell the dagger:** The PCs may try to sell the dagger. In this case, they reach an agreement with a fence (preferably one they know and will trust to keep the dagger until he finds a buyer) who gives them half the sum up-front, the other half when he has found a buyer. When the PCs return the next day, the fence is gone; he has been possessed by Ikhtanabu Xul and a successful Gather Information check (DC 12) in the area reveals that he was seen headed for the Square of the Green Peacock.

— **Report to the city guard and give them the dagger:** This is unlikely, but possible. The city guard of Belthaar is notoriously incompetent and corrupt, a fact which is revealed with a Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check (DC 10). If the PCs are foolish enough to go to the city guard, they

are detained for questioning in a prison cell while the guard captain investigates and examines the dagger. Unless the player characters resist detainment, they watch helplessly from behind bars as the guard captain is possessed by Ikhtanabu Xul (although there is no visible sign of possession, a successful Sense Motive check [DC 15] gives a player character a suspicion that something is wrong) and suddenly leaves the guard-house with the knife. After a day or two, when the captain fails to return, the junior city guards blame his disappearance on the player characters and the “cursed dagger” they brought to the guard-house; unless the local magistrate is somehow bribed the PCs are likely to be found guilty of witchcraft and crucified. This could take the adventure in a whole new direction and is left up to the DM to develop further.

**Development:** During their investigation, one of the PCs is likely to be possessed, as described above (as long as they keep the dagger, that is; if the PCs leave the knife with a sage, for example, the sage may become possessed instead).

## The Square of the Green Peacock

The Square of the Green Peacock is located at the border between Belthaar's Trade and Pleasure Districts, and as such it attracts a curious mix of merchants and entertainers, the latter including skilled dancers, fakirs and stage-magicians, as well as animal-handlers with trained beasts, and sword-masters stag-

### The Wizard's Shade

**Possession:** The basic premise of this adventure is that someone who comes into contact with the necromancer's silver dagger will eventually be possessed by the shade of Ikhtanabu Xul. It is best if the party includes or seeks out an NPC who can be possessed, since otherwise one player will be prevented from controlling his character for one or more gaming sessions. Ideally, this NPC should be someone the PCs care about, since otherwise they have little reason to try to rescue him from his fate (but see the case of the guard captain, above, for an example of how it can be in the PCs' interest to rescue strangers who have been possessed). Alternatively, let a player character be possessed but let the player control a pregenerated (or create a new) secondary character during this adventure.

**Exorcism:** Once Ikhtanabu Xul succeeds in possessing a victim, the wizard takes control over that character's body while suppressing its mind. The wizard then waits until a suitable moment to leave the party (such as when others are asleep, or when alone on some errand) and head back for the tomb. It is thus highly unlikely that the other PCs will notice that something is wrong (possibly with a Sense Motive check [DC 20], but only if there is good reason to suspect anything) and won't have the chance to try to get an exorcism before it's too late (the possessed character having left for the catacombs already).

Even if the other PCs do somehow detect that their friend has been possessed, and manage to restrain him (as well as protecting themselves from possession), they probably don't have any way to exorcise the shade themselves. It is easiest to deal with the shade in its tomb; however, the shrine of the Keepers also contains a scroll which can prove helpful in dealing with the restless shade (see “The Shrine of the Keepers”, below).

The priests of the major cults in the city (there is a temple to Belet-Lil, and another to Baal-Khardah) are not going to perform an exorcism unless well-paid (at least 500 gp) or if the PCs have good connections (but the adventure assumes they are foreigners or new-comers to the city). In short, unless the player characters (and the DM) are prepared to take this adventure in an entirely new direction as the PCs undertake a quest for a temple, the PCs must likely go to the catacombs to put the wizard to rest.





ing mock combats with their apprentices. And of course there are the ever-present beggars and cutpurses among the crowds, too.

The large square, 100 feet long and 80 feet wide, is practically deserted at night. It is well-known that there is an entrance to the city's catacombs here, and few care to dawdle around after sunset, when the sinister priests known as the Keepers come out to perform their grisly funerary duties.

The entrance doors to the catacombs are sealed and locked during the day, but at midnight the Keepers walk in solemn procession out from the funerary shrine at the eastern side of the Square, across the plaza, and into the catacombs. The priests carry embalmed corpses that reek of bitumen and spices into the crypts, as well as golden urns that contain the ashes of lesser men and women. This they do every night, except on nights when the stars move into certain dire constellations and it is deemed ill-fated to open the doors to the tombs.

**Development:** The PCs have likely come to the Square of the Green Peacock because they know that Ikhtanabu Xul's tomb is located in the catacombs somewhere near the square. However, the entrance to the catacombs is guarded by the Keepers and the priests refuse to let anyone into the tombs in spite of any "wild stories" the player characters may try to impress on the guardians concerning dead necromancers and possessing shades. The silent, skull-masked priests say nothing, but state to the PCs in unmistakable sign language that it is forbidden to enter the tombs.

However, the catacombs are far from impregnable. Both tomb-robbers and ghouls know of secret entrances from dilapidated buildings in the back streets of the Square of the Green Peacock. It is such a hidden entrance Ikhtanabu Xul uses to return to his tomb after he has possessed a suitable host (be it PC or NPC), and he plans to leave by the same way after he has retrieved his items from the crypt (see "The Tomb of Ikhtanabu Xul", below).

There are several ways the PCs can gain entry to the catacombs:

— **Kill or incapacitate the guards:** A simple, but unwise, approach is to attack the Keepers who guard the catacomb entrance. Unless they can be taken wholly by surprise, the priests flee and alert their brethren in the Shrine adjacent to the Square of the Green Peacock, who respond in force. In any case, the priests who guard the entrance do not carry the special keys required to open the doors, which must then either be broken down by force, or picked by a skilled thief.

— **Find a secret entrance:** Player characters who investigate (and possibly break into) the buildings surrounding the plaza might find one of the hidden entrances to the catacombs with a successful Search check (DC 25). Roll 1d3 to determine which entrance was found.

### The Cult of the Keepers

**Note:** The following information can be obtained by a character making a successful Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check at the listed DC, or by consulting with a sage.

It is the custom and the law that all who die within the walls of Belthaar, from commoners to kings, are delivered into the hands of the silent priests of Yadar after their death (DC 10).

It is the sacred duty of these Keepers to remove the corpse, and to wash and purify the body. If the bereaved have left a well-filled purse for the Keepers, the corpse is usually preserved and embalmed with utmost skill by the priests; otherwise the corpse is burned and the ashes placed in urns of clay, bronze, or sometimes even gold (DC 14).

The Cult of the Keepers also maintains and guards the extensive network of catacombs and crypts beneath the city, where the urns and the mummies are placed after the funereal ceremonies. No-one except the priests are allowed to enter the catacombs, but on certain days friends and family of the deceased may come to the Shrine of the Keepers and place offerings on the altar of Yadar to ensure the well-being of lost ones. It is even said that when such offerings are plentiful, the priests may unlock the doors to the catacombs and allow brief visits to private crypts (DC 16).

Others whisper that the mute, cowed priests are actually ghouls, who carry away and eat the dead, and that they guard only empty urns and coffins in the catacombs. Such rumors remain unproven (DC 18).

There is also a secret entrance tunnel from within the Shrine of the Keepers.

— **Infiltrate a funerary procession:** Since the priests wear robes and masks, and usually remain silent during their nocturnal ceremonies, it is possible for suitably disguised PCs to infiltrate a funerary procession passing from the Shrine of the Keepers and into the catacombs. Perhaps the player characters can craft replicas of the robes and skull-masks, or sneak into the shrine (see below) and steal such items, or perhaps they must defeat a couple of priests and take their equipment. Infiltrating the procession requires successful use of the Disguise skill, and possibly also Bluff checks (in case of talking, or if called upon to perform priestly rites).

— **Sneak into the shrine during a procession:** It is easier to sneak into the shrine at midnight, when most of the priests have left as part of a funerary procession. Inside the shrine, the PCs can find the keys to the catacomb entrance, as well as a scroll that enables them to deal with the restless shade of



Ikhtanabu Xul, or they can steal priestly robes and skull-masks that allow them to infiltrate the cult (see above). They might also find a secret tunnel that leads from the shrine and directly into the catacombs; but in this case they must deal with the corrupt priest Othbanes and his ghoulish allies (see Area 8 of the Shrine, below).

— **Play dead:** A party prepared to deal with the consequences could let one or more of the PCs feign death in order to be taken away by the Keepers and carried straight into their temple! Assuming such characters manage to fool the priests, the “corpses” will be left unsupervised on a bier in the embalmer’s chamber for some time, allowing the PCs to get up and sneak around the shrine, hopefully finding the way out before the master embalmer and his entourage arrive... Player characters who pretend to be dead must make a Bluff check (with a +4 circumstance bonus if there is no reason to suspect trickery) opposed by the Spot check of an NPC who examines the body. A character with more than 5 ranks in Disguise or Perform (act) can add a +2 synergy bonus to this use of the Bluff skill.

## The Shrine of the Keepers

As noted above, the player characters may seek to sneak into the fane of the mortuary cult. This charnel house is located on the east side of the Square of the Green Peacock. It is silent and looks abandoned during the day; however, the skull-masked priests within come out at night to perform their duties, including collecting the dead from the streets and houses of the city.

### 1. Portico and forecourt

The entrance to the shrine consists of three huge marble pillars topped by a beam inset with rows of human skulls, upon which the ceiling rests. Beyond the columns, a broad stairway leads up into the forecourt.

Supplicants are allowed to enter the shrine with gifts and offerings on certain holy days, during which the double doors of the fane are wide open, but watched over by 1d3 priests (see Area 3).

### 2. Kennel

The kennel has six large cages, each holding a chained dog. The priests use these huge, snarling, black beasts both to guard the shrine and to track down tomb-robbers when patrol-

ling the catacombs. The dogs obey the priests and quickly jump in the throat of opponents if unleashed. At night, two of these dogs stand guard at the entrance to the catacombs (see Area 1 of the Catacombs).

**Black guard dogs (6 total):** CR 1/3; hp 6.

### 3. Priests’ Rooms

These spartan sleeping rooms belong to the acolytes of the order. The senior acolyte, Tahn Jeigen, bears the special title of Keeper of the Catacombs and holds the keys to the catacomb entrance (see Area 1 of the catacombs) in a silver chain around his neck, even when asleep.

**The Keepers, funerary priests of Belthaar, male Susrahnite Sor1 (16 total):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d4+3; hp 6; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +0/+1; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Concentration +4, Heal +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perform +5. **Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative (b), Toughness.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 3/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +0 Int): 0 — *ghost sound, prestidigitation*; 1st — *chill touch, scare*.

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Clothing, quarterstaff, 8 sp.

**Description:** Dressed in purple hooded robes, with white bone skull-masks, these priests may easily be mistaken for undead by the superstitious, and they may also use their spells to reinforce such beliefs.

**Tactics:** The Keepers prefer to stay out of melee, but if combat breaks out, they use their spells to best effect while a few priests try to flee and alert their superiors.

### 4. Hallway

This spacious area connects the forecourt (Area 1) with the sanctum (Area 10). Visitors and supplicants must pass through two sets of iron double doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30), each guarded by a single priest, to reach the shrine.

#### The Shrine of the Keepers

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms and corridors.

**Lighting:** All areas of the the shrine, except the kennel, are lit with wall-hung torches. An acolyte of the cult is assigned to make sure that the torches are always burning, day and night.





### 5. Furnace

This room is usually unbearably hot. It contains a huge stone furnace, fuelled by coal, that is used to cremate the corpses of the poor. When the furnace is burning, black foul-smelling smoke rises from the shrine's roof through a chimney that is just large enough for a Medium-sized creature to squeeze through and descend (or ascend, if seeking to escape) with a Climb check (DC 15).

There is a 25% chance that 1d2 acolytes are here, refilling or cleaning out the furnace.

### 6. Chamber of Urns

The walls of this chamber are filled with wooden shelves, upon which are set hundreds of urns. Most of the urns are of clay, but 20% are of bronze (worth 10 gp each), and 5% are of gold (worth 25 gp each). A few of these urns are filled with ashes from the furnace (Area 5), to be taken down and placed in the catacombs; the remaining urns (80%) are empty.

### 7. Morgue

The two doors leading into this large room are both adjacent to short stairs of worn stone. The stairs are 10 feet tall and the ceiling height is 20 feet. In the chamber are several rectangular stone slabs. The skull-masked priests carry the dead from the city on biers of blackened leather with handles of polished bone, and place their bodies here, covering the corpses with purple funerary shrouds until they are ready to be taken either to the furnace (Area 5) or the embalming chamber (Area 8).

Since the room is below ground level, it is somewhat cooler than the rest of the building, which slows decay and helps prevent the outbreak of diseases. Yet, the stench of death and decay is overwhelming and living creatures who stay in the room for more than 1 round must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes.

There is a 10% chance that 1d3 acolytes are here, carrying a fresh corpse into the room or preparing to move a body away.

### 8. Embalming Chamber

This grisly chamber is the domain of Othbanes, senior priest of Yadar and master embalmer (see Area 9). The room features a workbench filled with mummification tools, such as knives, hooks, and saws, as well as jars filled with herbs, oils, and resins.

Before mummification, the corpses are drained of blood and the blood is collected in small golden bowls, which is later poured into the large bowl in the sanctum (see Area 10). Then, the internal organs are removed, and moisture is removed by covering the body in salts. The body is treated with special herbs and resins, then wrapped up in cloth and in some cases decorated with protective amulets, jewelry, and face masks.

In the northwestern corner of the room, beneath a loose flagstone, is the secret entrance (Search DC 25) to a tunnel that leads into the catacombs beneath the Shrine of the Keepers. Only Othbanes and his ghoul-allies know about this secret door.

Often, ghouls emerge from the secret tunnel and feast upon the corpses that Othbanes has brought into the embalming chamber from the morgue (Area 7). The corrupt priest provides the eaters of the dead with fresh corpses in return for jewelry and other items the ghouls have stolen from the tombs below.

There is a 20% chance that 1d4+1 ghouls suddenly emerge from the tunnel when the PCs are here, and a 40% chance that Othbanes is present in the room.

**Ghouls (2-5):** CR 1; hp 13; see Area 4 of the Catacombs.

### 9. Master Embalmer's Office

This is the study and sleeping quarters of Othbanes. A small bookcase is filled with a number of scrolls and parchments that deal mostly with medicine and anatomy. When not working in the embalming workshop or studying his books, the priest rests on a comfortable divan of green silk.

A sturdy chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) stands in one corner; Othbanes has the key. This trapped chest (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee [1 plus poison, needle]; poison [blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17) contains several items traded from the ghouls, including four pieces of green silk, each wrapped around an object.

Inside the first are two ancient books on alchemy (worth 50 gp each). The second piece contains a small cedar box inlaid with painted ceramic tiles (worth 5 gp). The box holds six linen handkerchiefs embroidered with a script H (worth 1 gp each). Inside the third piece are five daggers, balanced for throwing (worth 12 gp each). Each one is set with a small obsidian in the pommel. The fourth length of silk is wrapped around a small jewelry box, which holds a jewelry set consisting of a gold ring (worth 20 gp), a bracelet (worth 40 gp), and a necklace (worth 55 gp).

Under the silk-wrapped bundles are three belt pouches. The first holds copper (187 cp), the second contains silver (141 sp), and the third has some gold with a smattering of platinum (7 pp and 54 gp).

**Othbanes, master embalmer and corrupt priest, male Susrahnite Sor4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d4+8; hp 18; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex, +4 *mage armor*), touch 15 (+1 Dex, +4 *mage armor*), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, curved dagger, 18-20/x2); SA +1 racial





bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Concentration +9, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Profession (embalmer) +9, Spellcraft +9, Use Magic Device +7.  
**Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative (b), Spell Focus (necromancy).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int): 0 — *disrupt undead*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*; 1st — *chill touch*, *mage armor*, *scare*; 2nd — *command undead*, *death knell*, *ghoul touch*.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Lamuran, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** Clothing, masterwork curved dagger, 24 gp, 1 dose of blinding-powder.

**Description:** Dressed in purple and silver robes, with a green jade skull-mask. Othbanes deals with the ghouls that haunt the catacombs of Belthaar, and he knows of several secret tunnels beneath the city. The ghouls bring items pilfered from the tombs to Othbanes, while he keeps the locations of their lairs secret.

**Tactics:** Othbanes will trade the information about the secret tunnels for his life if he is in mortal danger.

## 10. Sanctum

In the gloom of this ghastly chapel stands a 10 feet tall statue of the death god of Susrah, cloaked in a hooded robe of real cloth, its arms held out to receive offerings. The statue itself, which has the body of a young and powerful man but whose hidden face is that of a grinning skull, is of polished ebony, while the cloth is embroidered with golden thread. In each of its outstretched hands is a yellowed scroll; the scroll in the right hand contains the *dispel evil* spell, while the left contains the following spells: *false life*, *contagion*, and *magic circle against evil*.

In front of the idol is an altar, also made from polished ebony, with inlays of ivory and silver in the shape of skulls. There is a scattering of gold and silver coins and other valuables upon the altar (a total of 250 gp), left there by supplicants who have dared visit the charnel temple to pray for the deceased. Black, greasy candles burn slowly on the altar, representing the dwindling of life force within every living person. It is said that the priests can kill a person simply by extinguishing a candle that has been inscribed with the true name of the victim.

To the left of the altar is a large golden bowl (worth 350 gp) inscribed along its rim with the archaic cuneiform script of Susrah. A successful Decipher Script (DC 20) check allows a character to read the following on the bowl: *"The bones of the dead go to the tomb but the*







*blood serves forever the god*". The bowl itself contains a dark crimson, semi-solid liquid, which upon examination proves to be coagulated blood.

At the chief priest's command, or when the items on the altar or the statue are disturbed, the blood in the bowl comes alive as a large, slug-like creature, crimson in color and terrible to behold as it rears up from the bowl and moves to devour the profaners, after which it returns to the bowl.

There is a 30% chance that the chief priest, Kuri-Ussar, is here along with 1d4+1 lesser priests, performing a grisly ritual.

**The Guardian of the Shrine (blood golem):** CR 5; SZ L Aberration; HD 6d8+3; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +4/+7; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 plus blood consumption, slam); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d8+3 plus blood consumption, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA blood consumption, cell division; SQ damage reduction 10/magic and bludgeoning, fast healing 3, immune to mind-affecting effects and spells, resistance to fire 10, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Listen +6, Spot +7. **Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness.

**Blood Consumption (Su):** Each time a blood golem hits a living opponent with a slam attack, it gains a number of hit points equal to the damage dealt. These bonus hit points are added to the blood golem's total even if the addition takes it above its current maximum hit points. A blood golem cannot gain more hit points than the maximum hit points allowed by its HD (not including any bonus hit points it may have from its Con score). For example, a 6 HD blood golem cannot gain more than 48 hit points.

If a blood golem successfully hits an opponent with both of its slam attacks in a single round, that opponent suffers catastrophic blood expulsion, taking 2d4 points of Constitution damage (DC 15 Fortitude save for half).

A blood golem gains 5 hit points per point of Constitution damage it deals. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

When a blood golem reaches its maximum hit points for its Hit Dice, it divides (see cell division, below).

**Cell Division (Ex):** When a blood golem absorbs enough blood to raise its hit points to the maximum for its HD, it splits into two identical blood golems, each with half the original's hit points. For example, a 6 HD blood golem that reaches 48 hit points splits into two 6 HD blood golems with 24 hit points each.

## II. Vestry

This is the antechamber to the chief priest's office (Area 12), but it is also where the acolytes prepare for ceremonies and put on their purple vestments. Hanging on pegs along the walls are 1d6+1 such robes, as well as the grisly skull-masks of bone that the lesser priests use (the senior priests have skull-masks of jade and gold).

There is a 20% chance that 1d2 acolytes are here, preparing for a ceremony in the sanctum.

## 12. Chief Priest's Office

The chief priest administers the cult from this opulent room, filled with expensive hardwood furniture. Along a wall are several small cages filled with poisonous black desert scorpions.

Behind a silken curtain is Kuri-Ussar's private quarters, furnished with a bed and wardrobe. Also here is a big chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) that is trapped (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee [1 plus poison, needle]; poison [blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17). The chest contains 4,000 gp.

**Kuri-Ussar, chief priest, male Susrahnite Sor6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d4+9; hp 27; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex, +4 mage armor), touch 15 (+1 Dex, +4 mage armor), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, scimitar, 18-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Concentration +10, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perform +11, Spellcraft +11. **Feats:** Acolyte, Great Fortitude, Grisly Sacrifice, Improved Initiative (b), Leadership, Priest, Toughness.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int):  
0 — *disrupt undead, daze, prestidigitation, resistance*; 1st — *cause fear, chill touch, command, mage armor, scare*; 2nd — *aid, ghoul touch, knock*; 3rd — *dispel magic, hold person, prayer, speak with dead*.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Lamuran, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Clothing, scimitar, 43 gp.

**Description:** The chief priest of the temple wears purple robes with gold trim and wears a golden skull-mask. Behind the mask is an unwholesome and ugly face, and an unpleasant



ant personality to match, for Kuri-Ussar lusts after the dead.

**Tactics:** Kuri-Ussar precasts *mage armor* and *aid* if he has the time, and *prayer* if combat is joined. He delights in using his scimitar against weak enemies. However, he is no fool and does not attack heavily armed foes, instead using *hold person* spells against such opponents. As a special trick, Kuri-Ussar may grab tiny black scorpions he keeps in cages, and use them as weapons or throw them at opponents (range increment 10 feet). If he scores a hit, he deals normal damage with one of the scorpion's natural attacks, including poison damage.

**Tiny monstrous scorpions (8):** CR ¼; hp 4.

## In the Catacombs of Belthaar

The main entrance to the catacombs of Belthaar is located on the north side of the Square of the Green Peacock. A few secret entrances also exist. The Keepers guard the main entrance but are unaware of the secret entrances used by tomb-robbers and ghouls.

The catacombs are a true maze of tunnels, alcoves, and crypts. Many wandering creatures may be encountered here, as well as tomb-robbers and purple-robed priests with their guard dogs.

A few sample tombs are described along with Ikhtanabu Xul's tomb; the DM may wish to expand the adventure by placing additional encounters and tombs that can be explored by the player characters.

### The Catacombs of Belthaar

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are stone doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked, although most tombs do not have locks as they are not intended to be re-opened). Ceiling height is 15 feet in tunnels and normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The tunnels are unlit. The Keepers carry torches when they patrol the catacombs.

**Encounters:** Roll a random encounter check on 1d20 once per 10 minutes:

- 1-2. 1 rat swarm
- 3-4. 1d8 dire rats
- 5-6. 1d3 tomb robbers (Rog2)
- 7-8. 1d4+1 small monstrous spiders
- 9-10. 1d4 ghouls
- 11. 1d3 Keepers (see Area 3 of the Shrine)
- 12. 1 gray ooze
- 13-20. No encounter

### 1. Tomb Entrance

The forbidding, heavy double doors to the catacombs are of iron (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 35). The keys to the doors are held by the so-called Keeper of the Catacombs, a senior priest (see Area 3 of the Shrine of the Keepers). If there is a procession carrying urns or mummies from the shrine to the catacombs, the Keeper of the Catacombs walks in front of the procession and unlocks the doors.

From sunset to sunrise, when most people shun the Square of the Green Peacock, four priests stand guard at this entrance, along with two guard dogs. During the day, the entrance appears unguarded, but there are secret servants of the Keepers (1st-level commoners) who mingle with the crowds in the Square and keep watch, alerting the priests if anyone tries to breach or bypass the doors to the catacombs.

**Keepers (4):** CR 1; hp 6; see Area 3 of the Shrine of the Keepers.

**Black guard dogs (2):** CR 1/3; hp 6.

### 2. Mausoleum

Beyond the entrance doors is a large hall, its roof upheld by a dozen square columns. The Keepers sometimes use this room to perform rituals.

To the sides of the hall are alcoves, protected with iron portcullises (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift DC 25; Break DC 28) that contain the sarcophagi of Belthaar's nobles and royalty. None of the bodies within have been buried with treasure (unless the DM deems otherwise), but any violation of the royal crypts is punishable by death.

Several tunnels lead from the mausoleum hall to the network of lesser crypts that make up the catacombs.

### 3. Secret Entrances

There are four different hidden entrances, including one from the Shrine of the Keepers (see Area 8 of the Shrine). The other three entrances are located in the cellars of dilapidated buildings nearby. After having found the correct building, it requires a Search check (DC 20) to discover the actual tunnel entrance, which is typically concealed by rubble or loose flagstones.

Both tomb-robbers and ghouls use these secret entrances to come and go; make an extra check for random encounters each time the player characters pass by.

### 4. Catacomb Tunnels

The walls of the catacomb tunnels are plain and unadorned. To the sides of each tunnel are alcoves and doors, some of which are broken down or burrowed around. On unbroken doors, the names of the deceased are usually





inscribed, but a successful Decipher Script check (DC 15) is required to read the names.

The tunnels are rather narrow and claustrophobic. To avoid getting lost in the maze-like tunnels, a Survival check (DC 15) must be made every 10 minutes.

Also remember that the player characters must carry torches to see in the darkness, while many of the creatures that roam the tunnels have low-light vision, darkvision, and/or scent abilities, allowing them to effectively ambush the PCs.

#### 5. Sample Tomb 1

This is a typical crypt, a small, sealed chamber filled with dozens of urns (roll 4d10 if an exact number is required). One-tenth of the urns are of bronze (worth 10 gp), the rest are made from clay. The name of the deceased is usually carved on the urn. Each urn is stoppered and then sealed with wax; inside is a handful of ash (worthless in most cases, although the ashes of certain individuals might be of interest to sorcerers and necromancers).

#### 6. Sample Tomb 2

Family crypts such as this one are uncommon in the catacombs. The door is nondescript so as not to attract tomb-robbers. The interior walls are covered with plaster and painted in bright colors with scenes of family life and pleasures. The tomb has not been violated and still contains four wooden coffins. Inside each coffin is a mummy, coated with resin and wrapped in cloth. Each mummy wears amulets and jewelry worth 3d6 x 10 gp.

#### 7. Sample Tomb 3

The door to this T-shaped tomb has been broken down long ago. The floor of the main corridor is littered with broken clay urns and the ashes of the dead mingled with the dust of ages. In each of the two alcoves at the end of the corridor stands a stone sarcophagus, its heavy stone lid broken and shattered. The mummies within have been stripped of all valuables and jewelry; pieces of decaying cloth hang in tatters around their ill-treated bodies.

#### 8. The Tomb of Ikhtanabu Xul

The door to Ikhtanabu Xul's tomb is still sealed with a heavy stone slab (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28), but there is a half-concealed tunnel (Search DC 14) not far away, burrowed by the ghouls, that leads into the chamber.

The wizard's name and title is chiseled into the door, but it requires a Decipher Script check (DC 15) to recognize it. More obvious, the door is carved with the same black runes as found on Ikhtanabu Xul's silver knife.

Realizing that he was dying, the old wizard paid the cult of the Keepers handsomely to be

able to construct a private tomb, and to allow his apprentices to enter and leave the tomb freely as they prepared for his burial.

Ikhtanabu Xul was mummified by one Shalgi-Ram, the predecessor of the current master embalmer, Othbanes (see Area 9 of the Shrine). Shalgi-Ram was also bribed so that he would allow the necromancer's apprentices to return and retrieve the corpse at some future date, when they had mastered a dark spell of resurrection. But due to the infighting amongst the apprentices (see the Introduction), this scheme never came to fruition. Furthermore, Shalgi-Ram died himself a few years later (some suspect that he was poisoned by Othbanes), and Ikhtanabu Xul's tomb was forgotten until the ghouls found it.

The stone sarcophagus rests on a raised dais in this chamber which is 30 by 30 feet. Ghouls have broken the lid and devoured the necromancer's corpse, leaving his bones scattered around in the tomb; a Search check (DC 12) reveals that the marrow has been sucked out of the bones.

There is a secret compartment (Search DC 20) within the base of the sarcophagus that contains a pouch of semiprecious, uncut gems (worth 250 gp in total) as well as two large, iron-bound spellbooks (see sidebar). The wily Ikhtanabu Xul placed these items here, unbeknownst to his apprentices, while his tomb was being built. Retrieving his spellbooks is the reason why the wizard must return to his tomb before he seeks revenge on his apprentice.

#### The Shade of Ikhtanabu Xul (haunt):

CR 4; SZ M Undead; HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grapple +2/—; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus 1d3 Dex, incorporeal touch); SA Dexterity damage, malevolence, strangle; SQ alternate form, immunity to turning, incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, undead traits, vulnerability; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str —, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills:* —. *Feats:* Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

The haunt is the spirit of a person who died before completing some vital task. A haunt inhabits an area within 60 feet of where its body died and never leaves this area. (Note — a haunt in possession of a material body can in fact leave its area and must do so in order to finish its task.) It desires but one thing: its final rest. To accomplish this, it must possess a living creature and finish the task that prevents it from achieving everlasting slumber. A haunt only attacks humanoid creatures.

*Combat:* A haunt attacks with its incorporeal touch. It concentrates on a single foe, attempting to render it helpless by draining its Dexterity. Once that victim reaches Dexterity 0, the haunt uses its malevolence ability to possess the body and then attempts to complete the



task that binds it to this plane. If the haunt is attacked while possessing a body, it uses all the abilities of the host to defend itself.

**Dexterity Damage (Su):** The touch of a haunt deals 1d3 points of Dexterity damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to 0 Dexterity by a haunt is subjected to its malevolence ability. Dexterity damage dealt by a haunt cannot be healed by any means while the haunt possesses the host's body.

**Malevolence (Su):** Once per round, a haunt can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane whose Dexterity has been reduced to 0 (either through the haunt's touch or some other means). This ability is similar to a magic jar spell (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle.

To use this ability, the haunt must try to move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 17 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same haunt's malevolence for one day, and the haunt cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the haunt vanishes into the target's body (whose Dexterity temporarily returns to normal) and attempts to complete its unfinished task. If the haunt completes its task, it leaves the host and fades away forever.

When the haunt leaves the host, the host's Dexterity drops back to 0. If the host body is slain while the haunt is in possession of it, the creature becomes tied to that area and can never leave. Its unfinished task remains the same.

**Strangle (Su):** If a creature possessed by a haunt has an alignment opposite to that of the haunt, it attempts to strangle the host using its own hands (i.e., the hands of the host body). Unless precautions are taken to restrain the possessed victim's hands, they immediately reach for the throat and begin strangling the hauntpossessed body. An opponent takes 1d4 points of damage each round until its hands are forcibly restrained (opposed Strength rolls to pry the host's hands loose), the haunt is ejected from the body, or the victim dies.

**Alternate Form (Su):** A haunt's natural form is that of a translucent image appearing much as the person did in life. As a standard action, it can alter its form so as to appear as a floating, luminescent ball of light (possibly being mistaken for a will-o'-wisp in this form). In this form, it cannot use its Dexterity damage attack or its malevolence attack. It retains its incorporeal form and can make an incorporeal touch attack that deals normal damage (but not Dex damage).

A haunt remains in one form or the other until it chooses to assume a new one (as a standard action). A change in form cannot be dispelled. A haunt cannot change forms while using its malevolence attack (that is, while possessing a host).

### The Comes of Ikhtanabu Xul

Written in Susrahnite; Madness: none; Areas of Knowledge: arcana — magic traditions — immortality +2; Secrets: none; Spells: contains the spells *magic jar*, *circle of death*, and *enervation*; Copies: fragments of the tomes are possibly found in the spellbooks of Ikhtanabu Xul's apprentices; Market Price: 8,000 gp.

Each of the two tomes is protected with a *sepia snake sigil* placed there by the dying sorcerer.

**Rejuvenation (Su):** In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a haunt through simple combat. The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 1d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A haunt that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its area with a successful level check (1d20 + haunt's HD) against DC 16. The only way to get rid of a haunt for sure is to use dispel evil or allow it to finish the task that holds it to the material world.

**Note:** In this adventure, in addition to the means specified above, the spirit of Ikhtanabu Xul can also be laid to rest by destroying (burning) his spellbooks.

## Conclusion

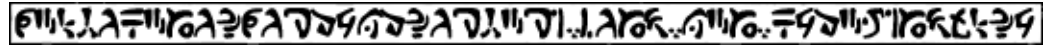
When Ikhtanabu Xul possesses a character, he heads first back to his tomb to retrieve his spellbooks and treasure. He stays in the tomb for several days, studying his spellbooks, then eventually leaves the city of Belthaar in search of his former apprentice, now a powerful sorcerer in his own right.

To be successful, the PCs must intercept the possessed character in the tomb or before he leaves the city, and lay Ikhtanabu's shade to final rest, either by casting a dispel evil spell, or by destroying the necromancer's spellbooks.

Alternatively, they can strike a deal with the restless spirit and help it gain revenge by tracking down the former apprentice. In this case, a whole mini-campaign could be built around the hunt for Arakshat.

**If the PCs fail:** Using a possessed body, Ikhtanabu Xul will seek out his former apprentice Arakshat to gain revenge. Unless the player characters intervene, the possessed body must surely perish when the two wizards clash!





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During the attack, Yetara flees down into the dungeons of the mansion with the girl Daniya. To the Lamuran priest's surprise, she backstabs him and feeds upon his life-energy to spark the birth of the spawn of Yot-Kamoth that she carries in her womb. After the birth, she hides the corpse of Yetara.

Assuming the player characters are successful in driving the assassins from Lamra away, the PCs investigate Yetara's disappearance and explore the dungeons of Zheng-Ya's house. They discover a webbed cocoon; inside is the spawn of Yot-Kamoth. The adventure climaxes with a bloody confrontation between the player characters and the spawn of the spider-god, as well as Daniya and her secret lover Sefu.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started:

— Penniless in the small city of Belthaar, the PCs sign up as caravan guards on a small caravan headed for Zul-Bazzir, a city in the al-Khazi desert.

— Fleeing some enemy (possibly the authorities), the PCs need to get away fast. They hire on as caravan guards to disguise and get away from the city unnoticed.

— The PCs, while traveling in the desert, are beset by raiders, looted of their equipment, and left to die of thirst in the unforgiving heat of the trackless waste. Yetara's caravan comes across the half-dead characters. Sefu offers to help the PCs if they join the caravan as guards after they recover.

## The Master's Caravan

The spider-priest Yetara, his servant and bodyguard Sefu, and the dancing-girl Daniya are fleeing from Lamu, headed for the deserts of Khazistan and the golden-domed city of Zul-Bazzir. Their small caravan consists of Sefu on his warhorse, four mercenaries from Khorsul on foot, as well as Yetara and Daniya, who each ride their own camel in a canopied howdah that conceals the rider from prying eyes. In addition, there are four pack camels that carry dried food rations and water-skins.

Sefu hires the PCs somewhere along the way, preferably before the caravan reaches the mountain pass at Kharjah. The characters are offered a pay of 1 gp per day, and a bonus of 25 gp each if they successfully reach Zul-Bazzir (adjust this amount if the PCs are higher-level).

Day-to-day leadership of the caravan is handled by Sefu; Yetara and Daniya mostly remain behind the veils of the canopies atop their camels. The PCs are simply told that these camels are occupied by "the Master" and one of his female slaves. On the rare occasions that the PCs see the Master, he is wearing a long-sleeved, hooded robe that conceals his hands and face.

Any attempt to try to talk to the slave girl is quickly stopped by Sefu. If the PCs somehow manage to speak with Daniya, she feigns to be a simple dancing-girl, a slave owned by Yetara. She does not appear to have much information to offer the PCs. The girl might, if she thinks she can benefit from it, pick a strong but weak-willed character among the party and try to seduce him during the long trek (either role-played, or through use of her Bluff skill), like she has done with Sefu (see below). Daniya will then try to turn this character against his friends and companions at the most opportune time.

The travel time from Belthaar to the Kharjah Pass (170 miles) is approximately seven days (assuming the caravan is slowed by the Khor-sulan mercenaries who don't have mounts, the caravan can cover 24 miles per day on plains with roads). Crossing into the trackless al-Khazi desert, it takes a fortnight to reach the Oasis of Yirlat (another 170 miles), where the water-skins must be refilled and new food rations must be bought. The caravan then proceeds south towards Zul-Bazzir (150 miles from Yirlat), finally seeing the ivory minarets and spires of the city after another 12 days.

**Yetara, the Outcast Priest of Yot-Kamoth, male Lamuran Sor6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d4+9; hp 27; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Move Silently and Sleight of Hand skills, Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result), Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Concentration +10, Decoder Script +12, Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +12. **Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Eyes of the Cat (b), Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Tainted Presence, Toughness.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int):  
0 — *arcane mark, guidance, resistance*; 1st — *command, mage armor, sanctuary, spider climb*; 2nd — *augury, death knell, summon swarm*; 3rd — *hold person, prayer, web*.

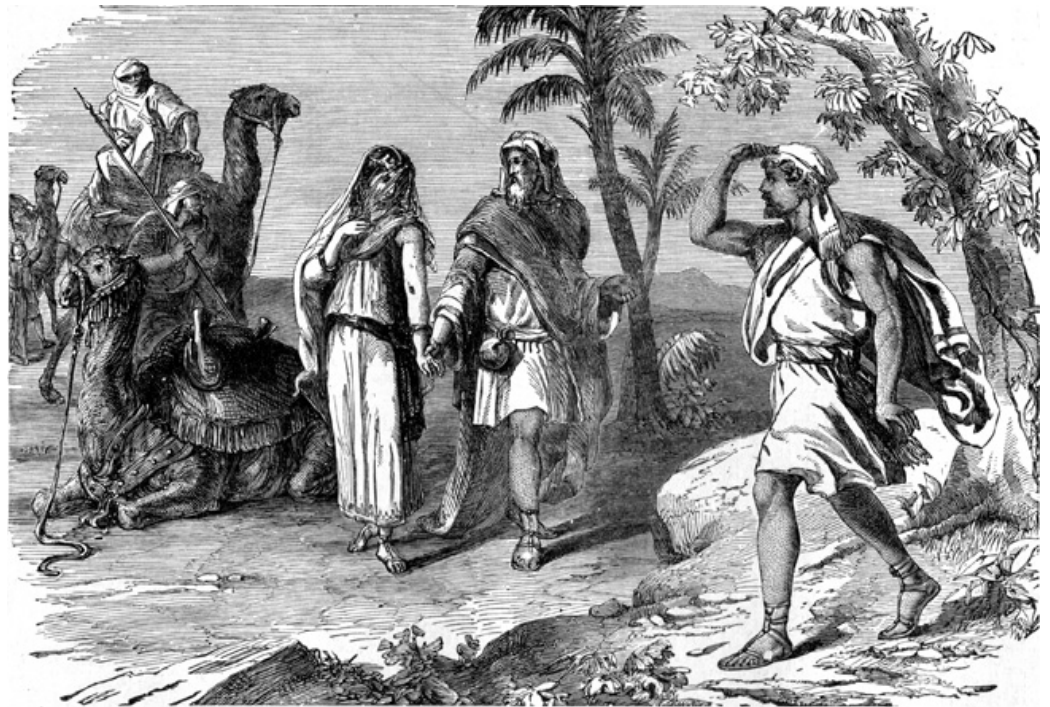
**Languages:** Lamuran, Susrahnite, Khazistani, Taikangian.

**Possessions:** Quarterstaff, grey hooded robe, Lamuran turbaned cap, emerald spider signet ring (worth 75 gp), 1 dose of blinding-powder, 1 dose of dreaming-powder, 150 gp.

**Description:** Yetara is middle-aged, thin and wiry, with a clean-shaven pate and staring dark eyes lined by heavy eyebrows. He wears a grey hooded robe with long sleeves, as well as a turbaned cap in the Lamuran fashion. Now an outcast from the cult of Yot-Kamoth, he has vowed to some day return to Lamra and exact revenge upon his former cult brothers, claim-







ing the position of high priest that he thinks he deserves.

*Tactics:* In general, Yetara stays away from physical combat and lets Sefu deal with opponents. Given time, he precasts defensive spells. The priest uses his staff to strike against lightly armored opponents, and finally uses offensive spells when in personal danger.

*Special Note:* Since Yetara has been cast out from his cult, he does not currently gain any benefit from his Acolyte feat.

**Sefu, Yetara's Bodyguard, male Shoma Bbn4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d12+12; hp 39; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +4/+7; Atk +7 melee (1d10+3, bastard sword, 19-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills:* Climb +10, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +9, Jump +10, Ride +8, Survival +8. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Power Attack, Run (b).

*Languages:* Shoma, Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Bastard sword, dagger, chainmail, lion-skin cloak, 45 gp.

*Description:* Sefu is a black-skinned giant, with a muscular body and gleaming white teeth. He wears a lion-skin cloak over his armor. His demeanor is rather social and outgoing, even towards relative strangers (such as the player characters). He has been a loyal servant of Yetara for over a decade, but has recently been seduced by Daniya and is now secretly her thrall.

*Tactics:* Sefu lacks any effective ranged weapons and prefers to close with enemies as fast as possible, using his rage ability to deal increased damage. He risks his own health to protect Daniya from harm.

**Daniya, the Bride of the Spider-God, female Lamuran Rog4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d6+8; hp 22; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+3; Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus poison, curved dagger, 18-20/x2); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Move Silently and Sleight of Hand skills, Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result), Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills:* Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +10, Hide +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Perform (dancing) +10, Tumble +10. *Feats:* Eyes of the Cat (b), Expert Poisoner, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

*Languages:* Lamuran, Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Curved dagger, two doses of medium spider venom (injury DC 14, dmg 1d4 Str/1d4 Str), red silk dress, veil set with pearls (worth 20 gp).

*Description:* Daniya appears as a simple but beautiful slave girl, wearing only a gauzy dress of red silk, held around her slim waist by a gilded belt. She has black hair and the face below her dark, seductive eyes is hidden by a short silvery veil set with pearls.

*Tactics:* The spider-god's bride does not risk her life in direct confrontation, but prefers to use her skills of persuasion and seduction to further her goals. She appears to be harmless,



but can strike suddenly with a poisoned dagger in the back. If forced into melee, she attempts to flank and sneak attack enemies, using her Tumble skill to get away from dangerous opponents.

**Mercenaries of Khorsul, male Susrah-nite Ftr1 (4):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +5 melee (1d12+3, greataxe, 20/x3) or +3 ranged (1d8, longbow, 20/x3); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Climb +6, Intimidate +2, Ride +6.

*Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (b), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

*Languages:* Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, greataxe, longbow, 20 arrows, 5 gp.

*Description:* These mercenaries are battle-hardened men with plenty of scars. They have irregular clothing and worn equipment. They follow orders and remain loyal only as long as they get paid.

*Tactics:* The mercenaries stay behind cover and attack enemies using bows, if possible. In melee, they charge and use Power Attack.

**Sefu's Light Warhorse:** CR 1; hp 22.

**Riding/Pack Camels (6):** CR 1; hp 19.

## Guardians of the Kharjah Pass

The caravan eventually reaches the foothills of the mighty Zorab mountains separating the plains of Susrah from the steppes and deserts of Khazistan. The only easily accessible crossing for hundreds of miles is at the Kharjah Pass (although several secret passes, known only to the Zorabi mountain peoples, are rumored to exist).

The pass is guarded by mountain tribes loyal (at least in name) to the *padishah* of Khazistan. The Zorabi inhabit small, impregnable stone towers carved into the mountainsides. At the western end of the Kharjah Pass, there are two stone towers, each housing around 50 warriors. Travelers are typically approached by troops consisting of 10 warriors; several more if large caravans are coming through.

The tribesmen collect taxes from caravans passing through the pass. They claim one-tenth of the value of trade goods carried (the majority of this tax is in turn supposed to be brought as tribute to Khazabad), as well as 1 sp for each man, horse or camel making the passage. However, the tribesmen are not above

demanding much more if they think they can get away with it.

### Warriors of Kharjah, male Zorabi

**Bbn2 (10+):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+2; hp 15; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 fur armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 11 (+1 fur armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, club, 20/x2) or +4 ranged (1d6+1, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); SA Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial modifier to Constitution, +2 racial bonus to Climb and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Listen +6, Survival +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Iron Will, Track (b).

*Languages:* Khazistani.

*Possessions:* Club, shortbow, 20 arrows, fur cloak, horn, 1d4 gp.

*Description:* These mountain-men wear cloaks of wolf fur, white turbans, and all warriors have full beards bristling with curly black hair.

*Tactics:* If combat breaks out, the Zorabi tribesmen fight long enough to sound the alarm (each warrior carries a horn for this purpose), then withdraw up into the mountains while their allies in the stone towers rain down a deadly hail of arrows upon the troublemakers. PCs who have offended the Zorabi at the entrance to the pass can expect to be ambushed by several groups of mountain tribesmen while traveling through the ravine. In the case of combat, remember that Yetara's caravan includes several Khorsulan mercenaries that fight alongside the PCs.

**Development:** Sefu pays the toll for the entire party using Yetara's funds. However, if the PCs look like easy targets (ie., they look wealthy and/or easily bullied), the guardians of the pass try to extort some extra valuables from the travelers (in addition to money, the tribesmen could also claim weapons, jewelry, or other equipment from the PCs as "gifts"). The player characters may have to make Diplomacy or Intimidate checks to avoid conflict (as it is also in the interest of Yetara and Sefu to enter the pass peacefully, consider using the higher skill rolls of these NPCs to determine the outcome; the PCs can assist by making skill rolls against DC 10, each success adding +2 to the NPCs' roll).

## The al-Khazi Desert

The wastelands of the al-Khazi Desert are harsh and inhospitable to city-dwellers, ignorant of the secrets of the nomads. Essential information regarding danger from starvation, thirst, heat and weather hazards can be found in Chapter 3 of the DMG. Some of the most important information is summarized below.







### Terrain and Climate

The majority of this desert is covered with vast sand dunes, broken up here and there by areas of stony desert with hills, jagged rocks and wind-worn cliffs.

The al-Khazi desert is very hot (the average daytime temperature is 92 degrees Fahrenheit).

Each hour, unless they get the chance to cool off (by reaching shade, traveling at night, doused with a gallon of water, etc.), characters must make Fortitude saves (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or suffer 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort suffer a -4 penalty to the saving throw. A character who takes any nonlethal damage from heat exposure suffers from heatstroke and is fatigued.

Once unconscious from nonlethal damage, the character starts to take normal damage at the same rate (1d4 points of damage per hour of heat exposure).

A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus to his saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. A successful Survival check (DC 15) allows a character to gain +2 on all Fortitude saves against severe weather while moving up to one-half the character's overland speed, or gain +4 if stationary. The character may grant the same bonus to one other character for every 1 point by which the check result exceeds 15.

To avoid the deadly heat of the desert sun, caravans often travel at night instead of during the day, but this brings an increased risk of encountering predatory animals and other things that shun the rays of the sun.

### Hunger and Thirst

Creatures without food and water will suffer a slow and painful death. In normal climates, Medium characters need at least a gallon of fluids and about a pound of decent food per day to avoid starvation. (Small creatures need half as much, while large creatures need double the base amount.)

In very hot climates, such as deserts, creatures need double the base amount of fluids to avoid dehydration (2 gallons per day for Medium-sized creatures). This does not apply to those who rest during the day and travel only by night, or those accustomed to the hot environment, such as nomads and their camels, and other desert natives.

Creatures carrying more than a medium load require an additional day's worth of water for each day spent under the hot sun. One gallon of water weighs around 8 lbs.

A character can go without water for 1 day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10,

+1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

A character can go without food for 3 days, in growing discomfort. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Camels suffer no damage the first six days without water. Horses suited to the desert environment are light horses and light warhorses. They need to rest and drink water daily.

Characters who have taken nonlethal damage from lack of food or water are fatigued. Nonlethal damage from thirst or starvation cannot be recovered until the character gets food or water, as needed.

Characters with the Survival skill can survive by hunting and foraging. A successful Survival check (DC 20 for food, DC 30 for water) allows a character to move up to one-half the character's overland speed while hunting and foraging for food and water. Only one skill check is made for finding both food and water; the result of this check is applied to both DCs. The character can provide food and water for one other person for every 2 points by which the character's check result exceeds the DC.

### Random Encounters

Refer to the following encounter table for random encounters in the al-Khazi Desert. Each day, an encounter occurs on a roll of 1-4 on 1d20. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d6: The encounter occurs during the day (1-2) or at night (3-6). Then roll 1d10 to determine the nature of the encounter. Add +2 to this roll if the previous die indicated a nocturnal encounter.





## al-Khazī Desert Random Encounters

## Roll Encounter

1	Abandoned campsite (60%), water-hole (30%) or oasis (10%)
2	Clean-picked bones (70%), recently-dead corpse (20%), or half-dead straggler (10%)
3	Severe heat (50%), duststorm (40%) or sandstorm (10%)
4	Caravan (60%), lone travellers (20%), or wild horses/camels (20%)
5	Tracks/footprints or signs of recent battle
6	Sand trap (60%) or treacherous sand dune (40%)
7	Nomads
8	Vultures (70%) or jackals (30%)
9	Scorpion (40%), sand viper (40%) or giant lizard (20%)
10	Ruined, desolate or crumbled obelisk (15%), tower (25%), shrine (20%), fortress (15%) or city (5%)
11	Dire bat (70%) or ankheg (30%)
12	Desert ghouls (50%), cultists (30%) or wight (20%)

**Abandoned Campsite:** The remains of a recent campsite. There is a 10% chance that some minor, usable trinket (roll randomly on the equipment table) is found with a Search check (DC 15).

**Ankheg:** Encountered only at night, this feared predator hides beneath the sand before it burrows up to attack.

**Caravan:** A merchant caravan consisting of 3d10 camels. Each camel carries 1d3 x 100 gp worth of goods or valuables. For every two camels, there is a mercenary guard (Ftr1). The caravan master is a fighter or rogue of level 1d4+2. Roll 1d4 to determine the direction of travel (north, south, east, west).

**City (Ruined):** The crumbling, sand-choked remains of a lost city. A few remaining columns and walls may provide some cover against sandstorms or shade against the sun, but the ruins may also have attracted brigands, predatory animals, or monsters.

**Clean-Picked Bones:** A scattering of sun-bleached human or animal bones, with a 50% chance for each. There is a 25% chance that scavengers (vultures or jackals) are still present. For human bones, there is a 50% chance of finding 1d10 x 10 gp worth of treasure with a Search check (DC 15).

**Cultists:** Encountered only at night, this is a roving band of cultists worshipping some evil desert god, such as Al-Tawir. There are 2d6 cultists (2nd-level rogues) armed with daggers and scimitars, led by a 5th-level sorcerer. The cultists may be performing some secret rite (25% chance) or be looking for innocents to capture and sacrifice (75% chance).

**Desert Ghouls:** Encountered only at night, these are flesh-eaters from some nameless ruin.

**Dire Bat:** Encountered only at night, these large and stealthy beasts swoop down upon unsuspecting victims.

**Dust Storm:** Most duststorms are accompanied by severe winds. These winds extinguish unprotected flames, extinguish protected flames 50% of the time, and ranged attacks and Listen checks are at a -4 penalty. Duststorms typically last for 2d4-1 hours.

**Fortress (Ruined):** A partly collapsed structure. There is a 20% chance that the fortress is inhabited by brigands or a monster.

**Giant Lizard:** This is a rock reptile from the Tome of Horrors. If this nocturnal hunter is encountered during the day, it is resting, using its chameleon powers to hide.

**Half-Dead Straggler:** A lone human, perhaps the survivor of some battle, or simply an unlucky traveller. Determine race, class and level randomly (rolling 1d10 for level). He or she is currently fatigued and has half normal hit points.

**Jackals:** These scavengers only attack single, weakened foes. They have statistics similar to dogs.

**Lone Travellers:** A small group of 1d3+1 individuals. Determine race, class and level randomly (rolling 1d6 for level). They might be merchants, cultists or brigands in disguise, pilgrims or mercenaries.





**Nomads:** A band of 3d6 nomads, either hostile Khazraj raiders (50% chance) or indifferent roamers (50% chance). See the “Wolves of the Desert” subchapter for statistics.

**Oasis:** A fertile or green spot next to a small pool or underground stream. There is a 75% chance of meeting other human or monstrous visitors here, and a 10% chance that the water has been poisoned or otherwise fouled.

**Obelisk (Crumbled):** An ancient stone pillar, with a 50% chance of being carved with archaic script. A successful Decipher Script check (DC 25) reveals clues that point to buried treasure (worth 1d10 x 100 gp) nearby. There is also a 10% chance that the writing on the obelisk is a spell of level 1d6 that can be learned by a sorcerer as if it was contained in a spellbook.

**Recently-Dead Corpse:** A human corpse, not yet discovered by carrion eaters. There is a 50% chance that the corpse is infested with a rot grub (see the Tome of Horrors), and a 90% chance that it carries treasure and equipment worth 1d10 x 20 gp.

**Sandstorm (Greater Dust Storm):** Greater dust storms are accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds which deal 1d3 points of nonlethal damage per round to anyone without shelter, and also pose a choking hazard (see the DMG). Sandstorms typically last for 2d4-1 hours.

**Sand Trap:** Unwary creatures can fall into air pockets beneath the ground in valleys between sand dunes. A successful Survival (DC 20) or Spot (DC 25) check is required to detect the sand trap. A creature that crosses a sand trap is pulled under unless it makes a successful Reflex save (DC 15, +2 circumstance bonus if the creature has at least 5 ranks in Survival). Creatures failing the Reflex save are pulled 1d4 feet per round into the sand for 1d6+1 rounds. A Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 10 + 1 for each foot sunk) can be made each round, and a creature can pull itself up through the sand 1 foot for each point of the check above the DC until it is completely free. A creature that becomes submerged in the sand is pinned as if buried in an avalanche and will drown (see the DMG) unless pulled or dug free.

**Sand Viper:** This is a medium viper snake. A random party member should roll a Spot check against the viper’s Hide skill (assume that it takes 10). If the check is failed, the viper attacks the flatfooted opponent with surprise.

**Scorpion:** This is a medium monstrous scorpion. A random party member should roll a Spot check against the scorpion’s Hide skill (assume that it takes 10). If the check is failed, the scorpion attacks the flatfooted opponent with surprise.

**Severe Heat:** A change in the weather causes the temperature to rise above 110 degrees Fahrenheit. This condition lasts for 2d10 hours. Characters must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per each 10-minute period). A character who takes any nonlethal damage from heat exposure now suffers from heatstroke and is fatigued.

**Shrine (Ruined):** The abandoned or cursed ruins of a temple to some nameless god or demon. There is a 60% chance that there is still a cult statue in the shrine (although badly weathered), and a 30% chance that some monstrous temple guardian is still present.

**Signs of Recent Battle:** There are obvious signs (such as blood, corpses, and/or carrion eaters) of a recent (25%) or long-ago (75%) battle or combat.

**Tower (Ruined):** A partly collapsed structure. There is a 20% chance that the tower is inhabited by brigands or a monster.

**Tracks/Footprints:** There are tracks and/or footprints in the sand, belonging to a camel train (20%), animals (40%), a beast (20%) or humans (20%). Roll 1d4 to determine the direction of travel (north, south, east, west).

**Treacherous Sand Dune:** While walking near the top of a sand dune, a character or mount missteps and may fall down. Falling is avoided by a successful Reflex save (DC 15) or Ride check (DC 15) if the character is mounted. The fall is 1d4 x 10 feet.

**Vultures:** An ominous cloud of 2d10 vultures (use eagle statistics) is seen in the sky overhead. These carrion birds do not attack until their prey appears severely weakened, but may follow the party from the air for hours.

**Water-Hole:** A small, natural wellspring of clear water, which provides up to 10 gallons of water each day.

**Wight:** Encountered only at night, this is a single undead, perhaps the accursed remains of a dead sorcerer, who uses its Move Silently skill to sneak up on unsuspecting, lone victims (such as camp guards).



**Wild Horses/Camels:** A flock of 2d10 wild horses (30% chance) or camels (70% chance). They bolt and flee from anyone approaching them, unless stealth is used. A successful Handle Animal check (DC 20) can also be made to approach the wary animals.

## The Wolves of the Desert

At the fringes of the Khazistani empire, the wild Khazraj nomads (themselves descended from the same racial stock as the Khazistani peoples) are a constant menace to caravans and travelers; sometimes even outlying villages and towns of Khazistan, Yar-Ammon and Jairan are subject to raids from these free-willed nomad clans.

If the encounter tables indicate a confrontation with these nomads somewhere between the Zorab mountains and the city of Zul-Bazir, use the following statistics.

**Yilgrah, Nomad Subchief, male Khazrajite Nom3:** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d8+9; hp 29; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 35 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, scimitar, 15-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d6+3, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with scimitar, Sneak Attack (+1d6); SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Survival skills, Mounted Skirmisher, Track, Fast Movement (+5); AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Handle Animal +7, Heal +6, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +7, Ride +8, Spot +6, Survival +6. **Feats:** Diehard (b), Endurance (b), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Khazistani shortbow), Improved Critical (scimitar) (b), Mounted Combat.

**Languages:** Khazistani, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** War camel, gold-embroidered saddlecloth (worth 30 gp), dagger, gold-hilted scimitar (worth 45 gp), Khazistani shortbow (+3 Strength rating), 20 arrows, 20 gp.

**Description:** Yilgrah, son of a Khazraj *shaykh*, sports a drooping moustachio that frames his wicked smile. He rides a rare grey-haired camel with a gold-embroidered saddlecloth. He is a harsh leader, feared among his men, not least because of his family connections.

**Tactics:** Yilgrah values his noble hide and stays behind his men during combat, targeting weak-looking opponents with his own attacks. If things go against him, he attempts to flee; if cornered he will promise anything (including a great ransom paid by his father) to be set free, but his word cannot be trusted and he betrays the player characters at first opportunity.

**Khazraj Raiders, male Khazrajite Nom1 (8):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d8+2; hp 10;

Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, scimitar, 15-20/x2) or +3 ranged (1d6+1, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with scimitar, Sneak Attack (+1d6); SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Survival skills, Mounted Skirmisher, Track; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Handle Animal +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +4, Ride +6, Search +5, Spot +4, Survival +4. **Feats:** Endurance (b), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Khazistani shortbow), Improved Critical (scimitar) (b), Mounted Combat.

**Languages:** Khazistani, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** War camel, dagger, scimitar, Khazistani shortbow (+1 Strength rating), 20 arrows, 1d4 gp.

**Description:** These Khazraj raiders are lean, wolfish men dressed in gleaming white khalats and green turbans. Their skin is a wrinkled bronze. The nomads sit easily atop their camels, striking down foes with curved swords.

**Tactics:** In the event of a direct confrontation, the Khazraj attack from a distance, using their bows from atop their war camels. They attempt to circle around the caravan until their foes close. As long as they stay atop their camels, they gain +1 to attack rolls against non-mounted opponents due to higher ground. Being opportunistic raiders, they flee into the desert if their leader is slain, if more than half their number is slain, or if they face a group of well-equipped and clearly skilled opponents (but no one dares retreat before their leader flees).

**War Camel:** CR 2; SZ L Animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 13 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 12 (-1 size, +3 Dex), flat-footed 10; BAB/Grapple +2/+11; Atk +3 melee (1d4+3, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

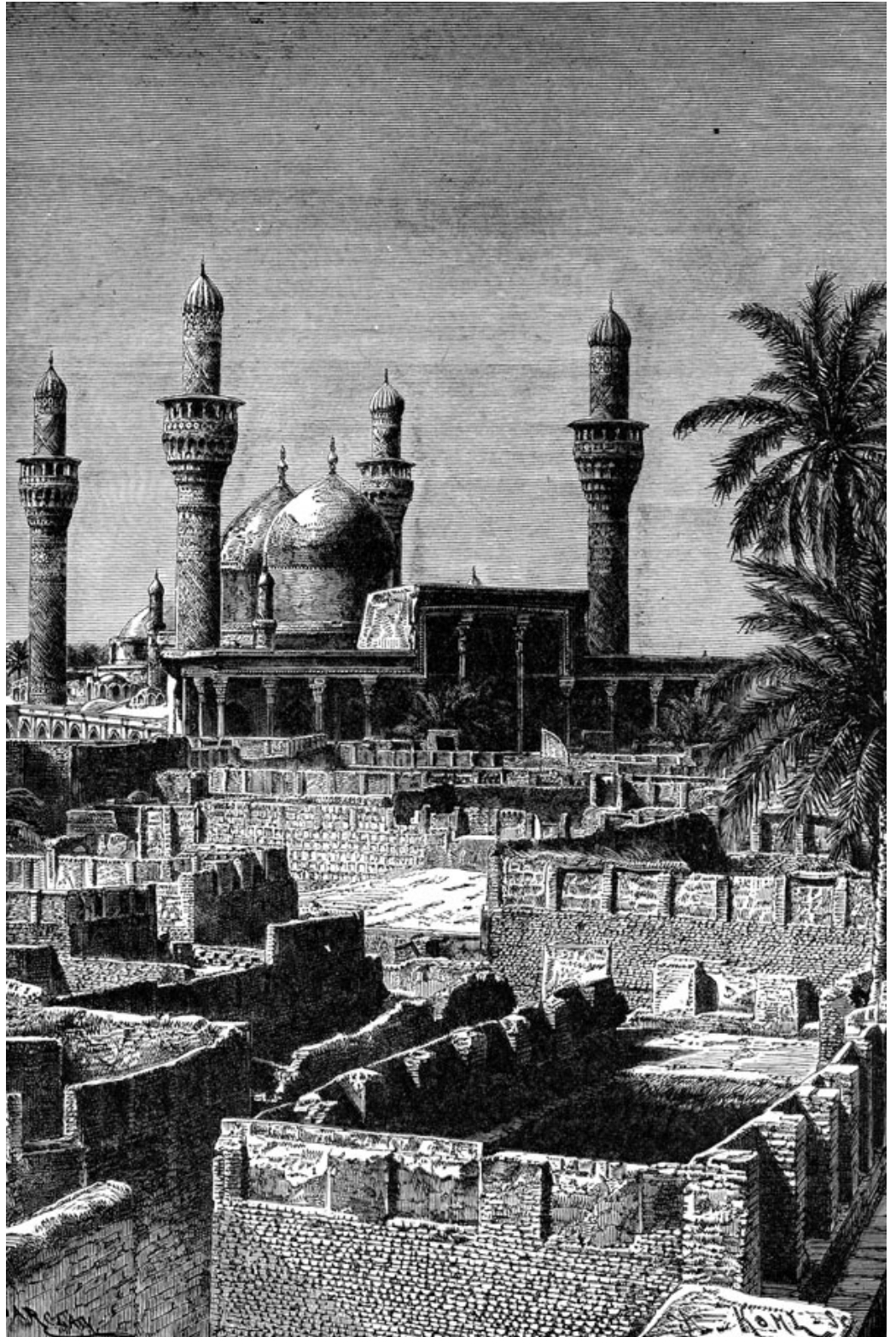
**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +5.

**Special Notes:** War camels are trained to fight while carrying a rider, but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 12). The camel's bite is treated as a secondary attack and adds only half the camel's Strength bonus to the damage roll.

**Development:** The nomads prefer to strike at night, sneaking into their opponents' camp to steal or kill their animals, and likewise steal or foul their water. They then retreat, but trail the caravan and pick off starved and weakened characters in the following days. If the Khazraj manage to disable the camp guards without being detected during the initial attack, they simply proceed to slay the remaining caravan members in their sleep.







### The Gates of Zul-Bazzir

After the hardships of the burning desert, approaching the city of Zul-Bazzir ringed by its lush green palm groves is at first like seeing a shimmering mirage rise from the red sands. The long journey has come to an end, but the PCs' adventures may just have started.

**Development:** Yetara leads the group on to a short stop at the caravanserai to feed and water the camels before seeking out Zheng-Ya's house. Sefu informs the characters that they will be paid as soon as they reach the

Taikangian's mansion (however, once at the mansion, Sefu asks them to stay on as guards for the next few weeks; see the "The House of the Dragon" section for more information).

Party members may become the targets of unwelcome attention from the beggar-thieves operating in the caravanserai area. Any open fighting in this part of the city during daytime will attract the city guard (1d4+4 city guards led by 1d2 guard captains) who arrive in 1d10+10 rounds.



**Leprous Beggar-Thieves of Zul-Bazzir, male and female Khazistani Rog1:** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d6; hp 5; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +0/+0; Atk +2 melee (1d4, dagger, 19-20/x2) or +2 ranged (1d4+0, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows, Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills, Trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Appraise +4, Bluff +3, Disguise +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Sleight of Hand +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Mounted Archery (b), Weapon Finesse.

*Languages:* Khazistani.

*Possessions:* Dagger, filthy ragged cloak, 1d10 cp.

*Description:* Clad in rags, these beggar-thieves are the dregs of society in Zul-Bazzir. Their dark bronze skin is severely wrinkled from sun exposure, and their dirty faces show only a few good teeth left. Simply by being exposed to them for more than a few minutes, the player characters risk being infected with disease (filth fever, Fort DC 12, incubation 1d3 days, dmg 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con).

*Tactics:* These thieves work in groups, mingling with and harassing the party, begging for coins, while using their Sleight of Hand skills to steal the PCs' possessions. They generally avoid combat, seeking to flee and disappear into nearby buildings or crowds, but if cornered, they gang up on a single opponent, hoping to gain flanking bonuses and use their sneak attack.

**City Guards, Mercenaries of Yemar, male Jairani Ftr1:** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+1; hp 9; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+2 leather armor, +4 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +1/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills:* Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Ride +4. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Stealthy (b), Weapon Focus (scimitar).

*Languages:* Jairanian, Khazistani.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, scimitar, heavy wooden shield, javelin, 1d8 sp.

*Description:* The mercenary men of Yemar are stone-faced killers, known for their callousness. They wear uniforms of red leather.

*Tactics:* The foreign city guards (grudgingly)

do as they are told by their Khazistani officers. They summon help only if sorely outnumbered.

**Guard-Captains of Zul-Bazzir, male Khazistani Ftr4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+5, falchion, 18-20/x2) or +6 ranged (1d6+2, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills:* Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Ride +8. *Feats:* Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Mounted Archery (b), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

*Languages:* Khazistani.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, falchion, Khazistani shortbow (+2 Strength bonus).

*Description:* The guard-captains are powerful and broad-shouldered, hand-picked soldiers of the Khazistani army, clad in gleaming armor and gilded helmets. They are often assigned to guard duty in the palace and as officers on special missions, and are fiercely loyal to their noble superiors.

*Tactics:* The officers stand and fight as a matter of personal honour, and often refuse to summon help even if defeat seems imminent.

### The City of Zul-Bazzir

**Zul-Bazzir (metropolis):** Conventional; 100,000-gp limit; Assets 165,000,000 gp; Population 33,000; Mixed (Khazistani 70%, Yar-Ammonites 15%, Susrahmites 10%, Others 5%).

**Authority Figures:** Khadim Bey, male Khazistani Ftr12 (governor).

**Important Characters:** Abu Khafi, male Jairanian Rog6 (tavern-owner and lotus-trader); Khadar Tarka, male Khazistani Ftr10 (commander of the palace guard); Kojo, male Zimban Rog6 (ivory and gold trader); Melik Khan, male Khazistani Ftr8 (general addicted to the silver lotus); Murad Shah, male Khazistani Ftr11 (noble plotting against the governor); Onura, female Khazistani Rog4 (harem-girl); Osan Kadri, male Khazistani Ftr5 (courtier and secret agent of the padishah); Ramzan, male Shoma Bbn7 (chief eunuch); Shalmasar, male Sushrahnite Sor8 (governor's chief astrologer and vizier).

**Others:** Mercenary city guards, Yemarite Ftr1 (2,000); Royal cavalry, Khazistani Ftr2 (800); Palace guards, Khazistani Ftr4 (300).

**Notes:** Zul-Bazzir was founded by Yar-Ammonite traders settling in the Oasis of Zul some five centuries ago. The city grew quickly







into a major center of trade, a stopover for all major caravan routes through the al-Khazi desert. In the last century, Zul-Bazzir was conquered by the Khazistani horsemen coming out of the western steppes. A sizeable population of Yar-Ammonites remain, along with people from Susrah, Jairan and elsewhere, and the city remains a thriving place of commerce. Located on the westernmost edge of Khazistani influence, the city is often threatened by foreign invasion and raids. Despite this, Zul-Bazzir is unwalled, although the governor's sprawling palace-citadel is protected by a tall inner city wall. The bey (governor) of the city depends heavily on mercenaries, mostly from Yemar, to defend against occasional Yar-Ammonite intrigues, Jairanian ambitions, and the raids of wild Khazraj nomads.

Typical houses are one- or two-story buildings with flat roofs. Nobles and wealthy merchants live in walled mansions with lush gardens and artificial pools. Between the outer districts where foreigners and slaves throng, and the golden minarets and spires of the inner citadel, are bustling markets and bazaars. Lesser streets wind their way through the maze-like districts of the city, where thieves skulk and revelers feast at night.

**The Citadel:** The great citadel of the governor rises above the crowded streets of Zul-Bazzir. This walled district contains the governor's palace, the grand court, a labyrinthine harem said to have a hundred bedrooms, a temple dedicated to Nhakhramat the six-armed ivory goddess, as well as barracks housing Khazistani officers and Yemarite mercenaries.



**Noble District:** Occupied by Khazistani nobles, officers and merchants, this district has broad streets and walled mansions. Slaves care for the desires of the Khazistani nobles in their lush gardens here, day and night.

**Caravanserai:** The caravans entering and leaving Zul-Bazzir are based in this district, with its warehouses, stables and sleeping-halls. Camels and horses are bought and sold here as well. The area is plagued by beggars and thieves preying on new-comers, as well as more respectable-looking people trying to attract customers to the Pleasure District. In reality, many foreigners are led into ambushes by such people.

There are plenty of mercenaries and hired guards here, looking after valuables from the caravans and guarding the warehouses in the area.

**Bazaar:** The bazaar is bustling with activity during daylight hours. Almost anything can be bought or bartered for here, including food and drink, clothing, silks of distant Taikang, equipment and tools, weapons and armor, pottery, Jairanian carpets, gems, and jewelry fashioned by Susrahnite and Zadjite artisans. Camels and horses are offered across the street, in stables near the caravanserai. Among the more special offerings in the bazaar are caged exotic animals and birds, medicinal herbs, talismans and amulets said to ward off evil, rare books and maps, as well as large and small statuettes of gods and demons.

Extraordinary items, such as poison, silver lotus juice and certain alchemical powders, are usually not found in the Bazaar, and are only available to those who have special contacts (a Gather Information check [DC 18] in the Pleasure District directs a player character in the right direction if he wishes to buy such items).

**Slave Market:** An adjunct to the bazaar, the slave market is filled with imports from the empire of Khazistan. Largely run by slavers from Khazabad, the slave market is busy, with daily displays of human wares. Once a week, special offers such as daughters of nobles, virgins, and mighty warriors whose wills have been broken by the whip, are auctioned off.

**Foreign District:** Home to people of predominantly Susrahnite origin, this district contains a small shrine to Belet-Lil. Many of the Yemarite mercenaries in the city's employ, as well as other foreigners, have their houses here. This district is also the place to look for healers and those skilled in the use of medicinal herbs.

**Artisan District:** Here one finds the workshops and warehouses of the city's artisans. Makers of expensive wares, such as sword-smiths and gem-cutters, usually do not trust the governor's soldiers and keep a few hired guards as backup in the case of burglary.

**Old Town:** This is the oldest existing district of the city, hailing from the time when the city was little more than a collection of mud-brick



houses clustered around a central well. The old town is still important, due to the existence of underground tunnels that lead water from here to the rest of the city. The district is otherwise noted for its many sages, scholars and students of the arcane.

**Temple District:** In this maze of alleyways and tall walls is a number of temples and shrines devoted to various gods.

Located here is a temple dedicated to the beast-headed Yar-Ammonite pantheon. Near the temple is a small necropolis, where mummified Yar-Ammonites as well as preserved animals lie entombed for eternity. Poor and desperate people from the nearby slums sometimes try to break into these tombs to steal valuables, which then surface for sale in the bazaar. However, buying such tomb jewelry is associated with a certain risk: it might be cursed, or the priests of Yar-Ammon might take offense and send assassins after the blasphemers.

**Slum District:** Home to the poor, homeless and diseased, and plagued by the occasional fire, this is a place best avoided. Unless, of course, one needs to hide from the authorities. The Yemarite mercenaries of the city guard rarely venture into this part of the town.

**Pleasure District:** A large district filled with all manner of depravities, including gambling-houses, drinking-houses, bordellos, fighting-pits and lotus-smoking dens. Thieves, thugs, prostitutes and slavers abound. This is a great place to waste silver coins quickly. One of the most notorious locations of the district is the House of Abu Khafi (see the adventure “The Jewel of Khadim Bey” for more information about this location). Also in this district is a “temple” to Belet-Lil, in reality little more than a gathering-place for orgiastic revelers.

### Zul-Bazzir Encounter Tables

Refer to the following encounter table for random encounters in the city of Zul-Bazzir. Roll 1d10 and add +4 to the roll if the player characters are in the Bazaar, Caravanserai, Pleasure District, Slave Market or Slum District. Likewise, subtract 4 from the roll (minimum result of 1) if the PCs are in the Citadel, Noble District, or Temple District. Add a cumulative +2 to the roll at night. Then roll percentile dice to determine the exact nature of the encounter.

Unless specified otherwise, each NPC is either male (50%) or female (50%); use the population breakdown for the city (see sidebar) to determine the race of each NPC (for example, a random NPC is 70% likely to be a Khazistani, 15% likely to be a Yar-Ammonite, and so on).

#### Roll Encounter

1	Noble (20%), commander (30%) or courtier (50%)
2	Priest (60%), astrologer (30%) or soothsayer (10%)
3	Palace guard (70%), torturer (10%) or guardian animal (20%)
4	Doctor (50%) or healer (50%)
5	Eunuch (20%), entertainer (30%), concubine or courtesan (50%)
6	Sage (30%) or scribe (70%)
7	Laborer (25%), servant (25%), slave (30%) or messenger (20%)
8	Soldier (20%), mercenary (30%), bandit (10%), nomad (20%), city guard (20%)
9	Merchant (60%) or trader (40%)
10	Craftsman (75%) or artist (25%)
11	Thief (40%), thug (25%), smuggler (15%) or beggar (20%)
12	Drunken reveler (30%), prostitute (30%), escaped slave (20%) or gambler (20%)
13	Cultist (25%), assassin (25%) or slaver (50%)
14+	Wild/escaped animal (60%) or madman (40%)

**Artist:** Expert, level 1d3

**Assassin:** Rogue, level 1d6+4

**Astrologer:** Expert, level 1d6

**Bandit:** Rogue, level 1d2

**Beggar:** Commoner, level 1d3

**City Guard:** Fighter, level 1d2

**Commander:** Fighter, level 1d6+4

**Concubine:** Female aristocrat, level 1d6

**Courtesan:** Female commoner, level 1d2

**Courtier:** Aristocrat, level 1d6





**Craftsman:** Expert, level 1d3  
**Cultist:** Rogue, level 1d4  
**Doctor:** Expert, level 1d4  
**Drunken Reveler:** Any class, level 1d6  
**Entertainer:** Expert, level 1d2  
**Eunuch:** Male commoner, level 1d4  
**Gambler:** Any class, level 1d6  
**Guardian Animal:** These include trained dogs, leopards and lions.  
**Healer:** Expert, level 1d4  
**Laborer:** Commoner, level 1d2  
**Madman:** Any class, level 1d10  
**Mercenary:** Fighter, level 1d6  
**Merchant:** Expert, level 1d4  
**Messenger:** Any class, level 1d6  
**Noble:** Aristocrat or fighter, level 1d10  
**Nomad:** Nomad, level 1d6  
**Palace Guard:** Fighter, level 1d4+4  
**Priest:** Sorcerer, level 1d8  
**Prostitute:** Commoner, level 1d2  
**Sage:** Expert, level 1d10  
**Scribe:** Expert, level 1d4  
**Servant:** Commoner, level 1d2  
**Slave:** Any class, level 1d8  
**Slaver:** Fighter or rogue, level 1d6+1  
**Smuggler:** Fighter or rogue, level 1d4  
**Soldier:** Fighter, level 1d2  
**Soothsayer:** Expert, level 1d3  
**Torturer:** Fighter, level 1d6+1  
**Thief:** Rogue, level 1d10  
**Thug:** Fighter or rogue, level 1d4  
**Trader:** Expert, level 1d4  
**Wild/Escaped Animal:** Almost any kind of animal, including exotic ones, could have escaped from captivity.

## The House of the Dragon

Zheng-Ya's mansion is located on a quiet street in the Foreign District of the city, well hidden by a tall masonry wall. Behind the nondescript but heavy gate, the house stands out as a special dwelling with its Eastern-style architecture, slanted roofs, well-trimmed gardens, pagodas, and dragon-flanked entrance doors.

Construction of the mansion began three decades ago, when Zheng-Ya, an affluent, silken-robed sorcerer of Taikang, came to the city of Zul-Bazzir to study the lost languages and forgotten arts of the Giant-Kings of Elder Kuth. The slant-eyed sorcerer arrived from across the sea with an entourage of slaves and servants, settled among the golden domes and ivory minarets in the desert, and built the mansion now known as the House of the Dragon.

The garden, ringed by the outer wall, contains a small dwelling for the servants and a set of stables near the main gate. A freshwater well is located within a circular clearing in the garden. A small pagoda stands west of the main house. The broad stairway leading up to the double entrance doors of the mansion is flanked by two massive dragon statues carved from green stone.

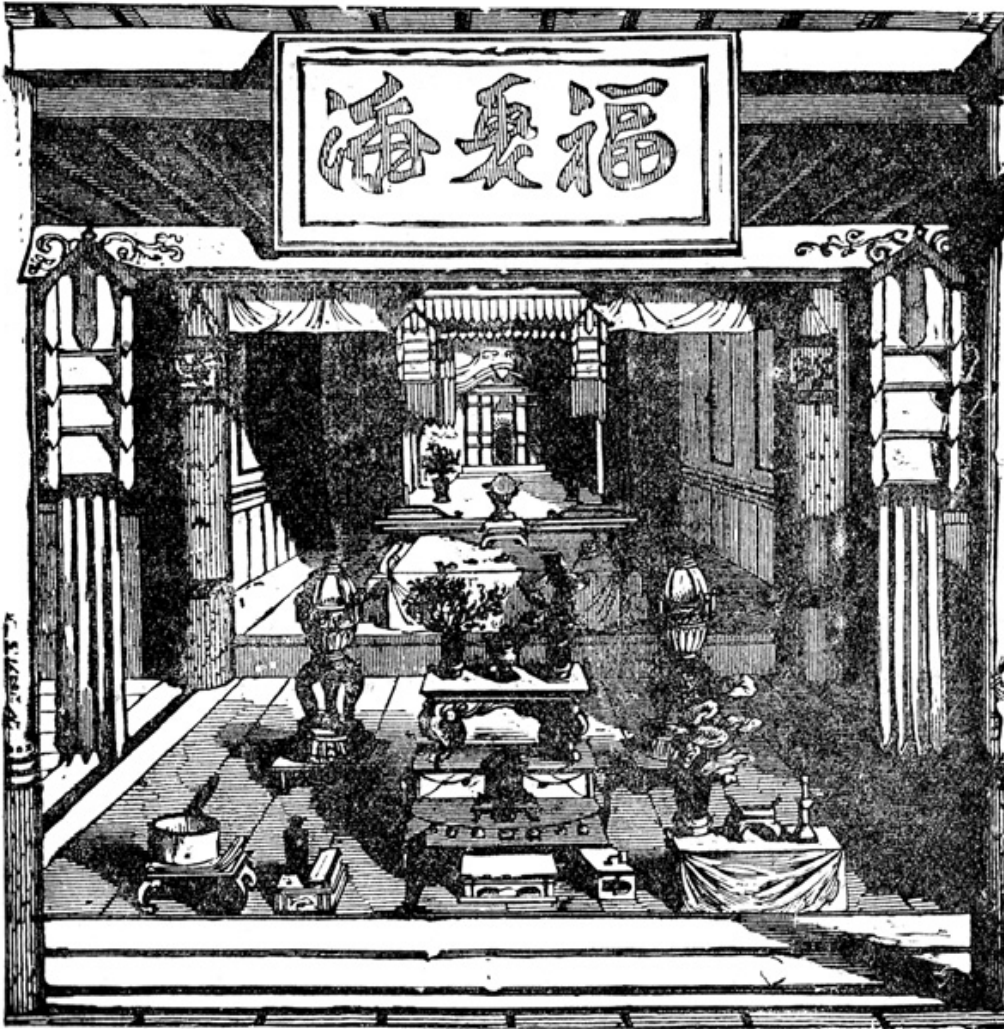
**Development:** Yetara arrives at the mansion with his caravan, but finds the house empty and his former acquaintance missing. The priest of Lamra takes up residence in the house, awaiting Zheng-Ya's return. He dismisses the Khorsulan mercenaries that followed his caravan, but asks the PCs to remain hired guards in his service for a few more weeks. If they accept, the player characters are quartered in the servants' house, and assigned to guard duty in the garden surrounding the mansion and outside the main gate.

### The House of the Dragon

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 ½ in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** During the day, rooms facing the garden are lit by sunlight coming through narrow, barred windows. Interior rooms are lit by small oil lamps carved to resemble fire-spitting dragons, while rooms below ground are illuminated by wall-hung torches.





If the PCs say no to Yetara's offer, he offers them a higher wage to stay on. If the characters still refuse, consider moving the timing of the cultist attack (see the "Daggers from Lamra" section) so that it happens before the PCs have a chance to leave the house. Optionally, the cultists of Yot-Kamoth might ambush the PCs after the characters have relocated to another part of the city (probably still within the Foreign District), in order to capture and interrogate the PCs before the assassins assault the mansion itself. If the PCs defeat the cultists and return to the mansion, continue with the "Spawn of the Spider God" section.

#### 1. Outer Wall and Garden

The outer wall is a 10 feet tall masonry wall (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 15). Facing the palm-lined main street to the north is a heavy wooden double door that can be barred from the inside (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25). On the south side of the outer wall, facing nondescript residential houses, is a smaller door (but with the same statistics) that can be similarly barred.

#### 2. Servants' House

This house is a simple one-room barrack. It contains very little in the way of furniture;

Zheng-Ya's servants slept on the floor and kept their belongings in small wooden boxes in the corners. Yetara places the PCs in this house if they stay on as his guards.

#### 3. Stables

Each of these three small buildings can hold two horses or camels. The stables currently house Sefu's warhorse and the camels of Yetara and Daniya, as well as any mounts the player characters may have brought to Zul-Bazzir.

#### 4. Well

The well is 10 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep. The water comes from a natural well-spring that itself originates in the underwater springs that formed the oasis of Zul before the city was built. Private wells such as this are rare in the desert city; most houses are supplied by small aqueducts or by water carried from central wells.

#### 5. Pagoda

Next to the main house is a small garden pavilion, built in imitation of the great towers of Taikang's cities. It overlooks the garden and the courtyard in front of the mansion.







## 6. Courtyard and Dragon Statues

A broad, open space opens up in front of the mansion-house of Zheng-Ya. A broad stairway descends from the massive double doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25). The doors are flanked by a pair of crouching dragon-statues. Each statue weighs in excess of 1,000 lbs. and is carved from a curious, but non-precious, green stone.

## 7. Entrance Hall

The main doors open up into a grand entrance hall whose walls are hung with a handful of long, narrow silken tapestries inscribed with Eastern calligraphy. Doors lead from the hall to the library, the meeting room, and to the a corridor that connects with the bedrooms.

To the left of the entrance stands a great metal gong, held suspended in ropes from a wooden rack. A padded hammer rests below the great disc. When struck with the hammer, the gong produces a loud, sonorous tone that can be heard easily throughout the entire house and even in the rooms below ground with a successful Listen check (DC 14).

## 8. Meeting Room and Dining Hall

The sorcerer of Taikang used to receive visitors here, in a large room dominated by an oval teak table. Eight regular chairs are placed around the table, while a ninth chair, furthest away from the door, is high-backed with armrests carved in the shape of lion claws. Zheng-Ya and his guests also usually took their meals in this room.

## 9. Kitchen

In addition to a well-furnished kitchen, this room also contains a walk-in pantry, filled with salted meats, dried rice, bottles of oil, and similar foodstuffs. Several sleeping mats are tucked away in a corner, having perhaps belonged to the cook and his serving-girls.

## 10. Library

Zheng-Ya used this large room as his study. The doors are secured with good locks (Open Lock DC 30). A thick, handwoven Khazistani carpet (worth 250 gp) covers the floor. Surrounding a massive hardwood desk and a comfortable chair are several hundred books, scrolls, journals, and maps, all neatly stored in bookshelves along the walls.

The collection includes historical chronicles of Taikang, Khazistan, and Jairan; a Taikangian dictionary; collections of prayers and incantations of the East; several texts containing spells (as determined by the DM); as well as Zheng-Ya's own work-in-progress, the *Scrolls of the Shadow Dragon*. The entire collection is easily worth over 7,000 gp if sold to a collector, but the books are probably most useful to scholarly player characters who can use the

collection in their own research. Consider adding a circumstance bonus to certain Knowledge checks if the PCs study relevant material in these books beforehand. Most books in the library require knowledge of the Taikangian language to be useful, of course.

## 11. Stairway

The stairway leads from the ground floor and down to the dungeons below.

## 12. Master's Bedroom

The walls of this opulently furnished chamber are painted with erotic scenes in the Eastern style. Next to the large bed is a wooden wardrobe filled with Taikangian silken robes of various colors. The bedroom smells of scented candles and sweet incense.

## 13. Bedrooms

Next to the master bedroom are several smaller bedrooms, usually intended for guests and sometimes for Zheng-Ya's concubines. The furniture of each room is plain and includes a bed, a small table, a pair of chairs, and a shelf able to hold clothes and personal items.

## 14. Prison Cells

Of these twin cells, each 10 feet by 10 feet, one is empty while the other contains the bones of a rat-gnawed skeleton, its forearms still held by rusty iron chains. The yellowed skull rests in a corner, staring blindly ahead. Behind the skull lurks a small monstrous spider; if disturbed, it attacks using its web. The doors of the cells are still locked, but the locks are in poor condition (Hardness 5; hp 15; Open Lock DC 20).

**Monstrous Spider, Small:** CR 1/2; hp 4.

## 15. Corridor

The 10 feet wide corridor leads from the stairway to the double doors of the sorcerer's arcane workshop.

## 16. Storeroom

The door to this side chamber is locked. The room itself contains several jars and boxes filled with miscellaneous tools and equipment, such as ropes, picks and shovels, hammers, some sheets of canvas, and several flasks of flammable oil.

## 17. Arcane Workshop and Spider Shrine

This large underground chamber was the secret laboratory of Zheng-Ya. The heavy wooden door is bronze-reinforced (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30). Coal burning slowly in a large brazier illuminates the room with a flickering light, casting long shadows onto the walls. The



marble floor is inscribed with arcane symbols and summoning circles. To the north is a clean marble slab, 5 feet tall, used as a work table or to place sacrifice upon. To the east is a raised platform, 10 feet tall, with stairs leading up from the lower floor and towards a recess in the eastern wall. Total ceiling height is 20 feet.

Yetara has taken over the room for his own dark purposes. He has placed a small cage filled with tarantulas (statistics similar to tiny monstrous spiders) atop the marble table. Hung on the eastern wall, left of the raised platform, is a large black tapestry embroidered with a purple spider (worth 300 gp). The outcast priest stole the tapestry from the temple of Yot-Kamoth before fleeing from Lamra.

**Monstrous Spider, Tiny (10):** CR 1/4; hp 2.

**Development:** See the “Spawn of the Spider-God” section for more information about possible developments in this room.

### 18. Secret Room

A secret door (Search DC 30) on the southern wall of the workshop leads into a small hidden vault. On the vault's floor lies the black-robed body of an old man; this is the corpse of Yetara hidden here by Daniya (if the PCs investigate this room before the events of the “Daggers from Lamra” section, the priest has yet to be slain and so this chamber is empty). Yetara's right hand still wears a gold ring set with an emerald; inside the small gem is the frozen shape of a tiny black spider. This ring identifies Yetara as a priest of the spider-cult of Lamu; characters may recognize its significance with a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 12).

Next to the corpse stands a locked wooden box (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 25). It contains 500 gp in mixed coins (mostly Khazistani silvers, but also 150 square golden coins from Taikang), as well as a cloth-of-gold bag with an orb of witch-fire (see the Magic chapter).

## Daggers from Lamra

Hamadara, the high priest of the spider-god's temple in Lamra, has dispatched a group of assassin-cultists to hunt down and slay Yetara, and to retrieve the dancing-girl Daniya from the clutches of the outcast. These fanatical disciples of Yot-Kamoth have trailed Yetara's caravan across the al-Khazi Desert, and have finally caught up with the rogue priest.

**Disciples of Yot-Kamoth, Cultists from Lamra, male Lamuran Rog3 (6):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d6+3; hp 17; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+2; Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus poison, stabbing dagger, 20/x3) or +6 ranged (1d8 plus poison, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 80 ft.);

SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Move Silently and Sleight of Hand skills, Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result), Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Balance +10, Climb +6, Disguise +6, Hide +10, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Spot +7, Tumble +10.  
**Feats:** Eyes of the Cat (b), Expert Poisoner, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Lamuran, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Stabbing dagger, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, five doses of secret venom (injury DC 13, dmg unconsciousness/unconsciousness for 2d4 hours), masterwork thieves' tools, rope and grappling hook, 1d10 gp.

**Description:** The assassins sent after Yetara by the temple of the spider-god in Lamra are swarthy-skinned men, trained to move with feline grace and strike with the suddenness of a cobra. On missions, they are clad in close-fitting clothes and dark cloaks, but at all other times blend in by wearing regular clothes. Each cultist has a small black tarantula tattooed on his chest, identifying him as a member of the cult of Yot-Kamoth.

**Tactics:** The cultists employ poisoned crossbow bolts from a distance. If opponents come close, they attempt to flank and sneak attack, with daggers likewise poison-tipped. Being fiercely loyal to the cult, and fearing the consequences of a failed mission, they fight to the death rather than surrendering to superior opponents. They reveal little or nothing if interrogated, even on the pain of death.

**Development:** The assassins strike at night, after having scouted out the defences of Zheng-Ya's mansion for some days. They quickly scale the outer wall with grappling hooks and attack from several directions at once. They use their Move Silently skill to close with any guards posted in the garden (most likely one or more of the player characters, if they are still hired by Yetara as guards), then sneak attack, firing their poisoned crossbow bolts from within 30 feet of the opponent. When the guards in the garden are pacified, they proceed to the main doors and breach them using their Open Lock skills.

If the PCs detect the intruders and sound the alarm, Sefu arrives in the garden after 1d4+2 rounds (he has not had the time to don his armor) and joins the player characters in the fight against the assassins.

Meanwhile, unknown both to Sefu and to the player characters, Yetara and Danyia flee down into the dungeons beneath the mansion. If the disciples of Yot-Kamoth are defeated, Sefu asks the PCs to join him while he goes to check if his Master is safe. If Sefu is slain during the fight, the player characters probably enter the mansion to report back to Yetara or to investigate his whereabouts.





## Spawn of the Spider-God

When the assassins from Lamra attack the mansion, Yetara knows his enemies have finally caught up with him and he flees down into his workshop (Area 17) with Daniya and bolts the door from within. To the old priest's great surprise, however, Daniya drives a dagger into his back while he is busy locking up the chamber. Then, the darksome dancing-girl uses Yetara's blood to fuel a blasphemous ritual that climaxes with the agonizing birth of the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth, a hideous hybrid of man and spider. Daniya's loins sprout long, sticky strands of cobweb that attach to the floor and the ceiling. In the center forms an opaque cocoon, where the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth quickly grows to maturity. Regaining her strength, Daniya drags Yetara's corpse into the secret vault (Area 18) and hides it there.

When the player characters reach the bronze-reinforced doors of the chamber, Daniya removes the bolt from within when she recognizes the PCs' voices, or that of Sefu. Once they are inside the chamber, Daniya tries to deceive them into believing that the form inside the cocoon is Yetara, who ordered her not to open the doors to anyone and then sealed himself with the cocoon.

She pretends to break down, and with tears flowing, she tells the story of how she was kidnapped from the temple of Lamra, where she was forced to dance before the black idol of Yot-Kamoth, and brought southwards by the rogue priest Yetara. She claims to have no wish to return to Lamu, and pleads to stay under the protection of the PCs.

However, strangely, she also resists the destruction of the cocoon ("the old priest did not harm me in any way on the long road from Lamra to Zul-Bazzir"). She attempts to convince the player character most likely to support her (using her Bluff skill).

It is not possible to determine who is inside the cocoon from the outside; the webs are simply too thick. If the cocoon is cut open, the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth emerges and attacks the nearest creature (but not Daniya). If the cocoon is set on fire (something Daniya attempts to prevent at all costs), the flames quickly consume the cocoon and a badly burned spider-thing emerges 1 round later, with only half its normal hit point total.

If the party leaves the cocoon alone and retreat up to the mansion above, Daniya sneaks down into the chamber later that night, cutting open the cocoon and sending the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth after the PCs, while she and Sefu follow behind.

If the PCs insist on harming or destroying the cocoon, Daniya draws a hidden dagger at the most appropriate moment and uses her sneak attack on an unsuspecting victim. At the same time, the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth breaks out of its cocoon (taking 1d2 rounds to break down the webs), and then attacks the PCs.

If Sefu is present, he is revealed as a thrall of Daniya if combat breaks out. He seeks to defend the woman while the thing in the cocoon starts to twitch and break out of its webs to attack the PCs.

Note that after a day or two, the stench from the corpse in the vault (Area 18) will make the vault's location evident to anyone present in the workshop (Area 17) with a successful Wisdom check (DC 10).

**The Spawn of Yot-Kamoth:** CR 7; hp 45; see the New Monsters appendix.

## Conclusion

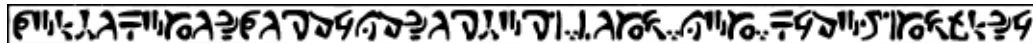
If the player characters manage to slay or drive away the Spawn of Yot-Kamoth, Daniya realizes that she has been defeated and tries to bargain with the PCs. She claims that she, as the mortal bride of the spider-god, is now very valuable to the cult, and pleads with the PCs to return her to Lamu, where the high priest of Yot-Kamoth would pay a sizeable ransom for her return. There is some truth to this, and such a deal could lead to several interesting adventures as the PCs become embroiled with the spider-cult. Characters less motivated by wealth may simply decide to kill the troublesome dancing-girl, but others may have objections to slaying an opponent (and especially a woman) who has surrendered.

If both Sefu and Daniya perish, the PCs most likely claim the Taikangian's mansion for themselves. It is up to the DM to determine what has happened with Zheng-Ya, and why he suddenly left his house along with all his servants. The sorcerer may eventually return, and with the help of Khazistani magistrates and soldiers attempt to force the PCs out of the mansion; or the Taikangian could deal with the player characters on his own, using spells and summoned demons from afar.

**If the PCs fail:** If the PCs lose the fight with the spider-god's bride and her unholy spawn, Daniya attempts to capture the PCs alive. They can then be transported back to Lamra by other cultists and sacrificed to Yot-Kamoth, while Daniya and Sefu remain in Zul-Bazzir as agents of the spider-cult. The PCs can attempt to escape along the way or when they reach the temple of Lamra.







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## A Cry for Vengeance

Read or paraphrase the following to the player characters. This text describes events that happen off-stage and foreshadow the PCs' meeting with the thief Sabiha.

*The night is black under a faint crescent moon. Silence hangs over Khadim Bey's domed palace like a thick veil. Two cloaked figures climb silently over the towering wall. Time passes; the palm trees in the palace garden rustle softly in the sultry night wind. When the two figures emerge and descend the citadel wall a half-hour later, the hood of one falls temporarily away to reveal the face of a female, with long black hair and yellow eyes, like those of a cat. Suddenly, torches flare on the battlements and guards shout out alarms. Chaos ensues, but the two figures disappear into the shadows of the city.*

The following day, the player characters are out on some trivial errand, perhaps visiting the bazaar or the city square. The same rumors can be heard everywhere: Daring thieves entered the grand palace last night and stole a very valuable emerald from the *bey*; a gem which on special occasions sat squarely in the navel of the governor's favorite concubine, a beautiful girl from Azjan in the East. A successful Gather Information check reveals that the emerald is said to be worth over 5,000 gp (DC 15); that the jewel was cut more than six hundred years ago by the peerless master artisan Shembuj (DC 20); and that it was supposedly once set in the crown of the wicked Raj of Uthjar (DC 25).

Confirming that there is more to these tales than mere rumors is the fact that the city watch are conducting random searches in the bazaar and elsewhere. The player characters are approached by an especially haughty and devoted Khazistani officer, named Hassan Sadi, and his troop of Yemarite mercenaries. He interrogates the PCs very thoroughly, asking uncomfortable questions, and orders his men to inspect the belongings of the party







in search of the stolen jewel. The less resistance the PCs offer, the better; if necessary, the guard-captain orders the PCs stripped naked or even arrested. The player characters should walk away from this encounter with an extreme dislike of Hassan Sadi.

**Hassan Sadi, Guard-Captain of Zul-Bazzir, male Khazistani Ftr4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+5, falchion, 18-20/x2) or +6 ranged (1d6+2, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Ride +8. **Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Mounted Archery (b), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion).

**Languages:** Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Chainmail, falchion, Khazistani shortbow (+2 Strength bonus).

**Description:** Hassan is clean-shaven, heavily muscled, with shoulder-length black hair and slanted eyes. He wears a golden helmet, burnished armor, and a cloak of leopard-skin slung across his shoulders. He is reputed to be a distant relative of Khadim Bey, and a rising star in the Khazistani army.

**Tactics:** If combat breaks out, Hassan targets the most powerful-looking opponent, in order to gain as much glory as possible.

**City Guards, Mercenaries of Yemar, male Jairani Ftr1:** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+1; hp 9; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+2 leather armor, +4 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +1/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Climb +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Ride +4. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Stealthy (b), Weapon Focus (scimitar).

**Languages:** Jairanian, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, scimitar, heavy wooden shield, javelin, 1d8 gp.

**Description:** The mercenary men of Yemar are stone-faced killers, known for their callousness. They wear uniforms of red leather.

**Tactics:** The foreign city guards (grudgingly) do as they are told by their Khazistani officers. They summon help only if sorely outnumbered.

## A Woman Scorned

Later the same day, the PCs are approached by a cloaked female character. This is Sabiha, an agent of the scheming nobles of Zul-Bazzir. She reveals to the PCs that she was one of two thieves who stole the jewel from the bey's palace, but that her partner Osan betrayed her and fled east into the desert to meet and sell the gem to a third party (a merchant or noble from the rival realm of Zadj to the southeast).

Her story is mainly true, except that Osan was not involved in the theft, of course, and that the rebel nobles still have the jewel and will use it to fund their secret insurrection against the governor and the padishah.

Sabiha offers to split the spoils if the PCs go and kill the "traitor" and bring back the gem. She confirms that the emerald is worth 5,000 gp or more, if the right buyer can be found.

The player characters might wonder why this unknown woman has chosen to confide in them. Some questions the PCs might ask are:

### — Why choose us for this mission?

"Time is precious and I don't have much time to look for suitable allies. You seem able and hopefully you are trustworthy."

### — Why shouldn't we just report you

**to the city guard?** "I assume you are more interested in sharing the profits from the sale of the gem, than in helping that viper, Hassan Sadi, gain glory in the eyes of his superiors?" (If the earlier encounter with the city guard captain was played out properly, this argument should certainly strike a chord with the players.)

### — Why don't you go after Osan your-

**self, or at least follow us along?** "The treacherous dog Osan tried to kill me. He didn't succeed, but his blade cut deep into my leg. I can't fight, much less run." (Indeed, the woman walks with a limp — the wound is real but she fakes the limping.)

### — Where do we meet up with you once

**we return?** "If you are able to slay the traitor — and by Aklathu's beard I hope you do! — bring me his head so I can know that revenge is mine. If you are successful, meet me in the Yar-Ammonite necropolis in the Old Town. There is an empty tomb near a faceless black sphinx. I'll be waiting for you there."

The DM should extrapolate answers to any other questions the player characters might have from the information given above.

## Sabiha, Betrayed Thief, female Jaira-

**nian Rog4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d6+4; hp 22; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 leather armor, +3 Dex, +1 Two-Weapon Defense), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +6 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +4/+4 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information



skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Climb +8, Disguise +9, Hide +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Stealthy (b), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Jairanian, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, two short swords, dagger, 41 gp.

**Description:** Tan, with long dark hair and yellow eyes, Sabiha is an exotic beauty, although she often uses her disguise skills to appear far less attractive to avoid undue attention.

**Tactics:** Sabiha tries to avoid combat if at all possible, but if forced into melee she attacks with her twin blades.

## Rendezvous in the Ruins

Sabiha gives the player characters directions to track down Osan. As far as she knows, he took his horse on a direct eastern path out of the city, towards a ruined temple in the desert, where he was to meet with certain Zadjite merchants or thieves who would bring the stolen gem on to their own masters in marble-walled Iraab by the Eastern Ocean.

Osan, the king's agent, has indeed ridden east towards the ruins, but he does not carry the stolen gem, nor is he to meet with Zadjite thieves. The purpose of his nocturnal trip is to meet with messengers of the padishah from Khazabad, to report his latest intelligence and to receive new instructions from the king.

It is approximately 20 miles of trackless desert from the city to the ruins and it takes 5-6 hours to get there on horseback. If the PCs are mounted, there is an incident along the way: One of the horses, randomly determined, missteps on the top of a sand dune, falls down, and badly damages its leg. The rider must make a Ride check (DC 15) or suffer 1d6 points of falling damage as the horse trips and falls. A successful Heal check (DC 15) makes the horse able to walk, but at half speed. Otherwise, the horse's leg is broken; the animal cannot walk at all and is better left in the desert.

If the PCs ride at half speed (or walk), darkness has fallen when the party approaches the ruins; if they abandon the wounded horse and move at full speed they get to the ruins at dusk.

### I. Upper Ruins

In the vicinity of several sandy hills, and somewhat obscured (Spot DC 12) by a cluster of palm trees, stands a partly ruined building of black stone. Though the presence of vegetation marks this as a valuable source of water, the place has an evil reputation and is avoided







### The Ruined Temple of Yadar

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors were originally of wood and have long since rotted away. Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** During the day, the crumbling ruins are illuminated by sunlight penetrating through cracks in the walls and ceiling. The underground chambers are unlit and pitch black, though there are wall-set sconces where new torches can be placed.

by locals and travelers alike (see the sub-chapter “Blood of the Brotherhood” for more information).

Only fragments remain of a wall that once ringed the shrine. Three riding horses are tied to the trees nearby. Osan and his two contacts are holding a meeting in the columned hall below (Area 4).

Two arched doorways, to the north and west, provide entry into the main building, which is silent and cloaked in pitch darkness. Remember that the PCs need torches inside and in the chambers below, and that, even with torches, visibility is quite limited. NPCs are able to detect the player characters by the torches they carry, and vice versa.

### 2. Priests' Chambers

The main room of the temple's ground level is empty, its floor covered with sand and strewn with shards of broken pottery and other worthless refuse.

The smaller chambers — to the northwest and southeast — are less sandy. In each chamber is a staircase that winds its way down 45 feet to the subterranean level of the temple.

On a landing halfway down the stair from the northwestern room are the skeletal remains of an ancient priest. The clothing has long since rotted away, and the skull was evidently cracked open by a bronze mace that still rests in the dust a few feet away (Search DC 12).

### 3. Vault with Iron Door

Used as a vault by the old priests of Yadar, this chamber is sealed by a black iron door (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 25). The image of a great fanged bat with outstretched wings is carved in bas relief upon the door's surface, ringed with cryptic writing. A successful Decipher Script (DC 20) reveals that the text is a curse that threatens to bring the “demons of the night” upon those who enter the chamber unbidden. The lock was originally of very good quality but is now time-worn and somewhat easier to pick open.

Under some rubble (Search DC 15) in the northwestern corner of the room is a treasure chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open

Lock 30) that contains a pile of silver coins (500 gp total), a silver mirror, an ivory buckle in the shape of a serpent (worth 80 gp), and a set of twin daggers set with tiny gems (worth 100 gp each).

There is a secret door in the southern wall of the vault (Search DC 25) that connects with the columned hall (Area 4) through another secret door.

### 4. Columned Hall

Eight large columns of stone are spaced evenly out in this rectangular chamber. The walls are painted with scenes of death, disease and decay, in the tradition of Yadar's cult. There is a secret door hidden within a painting of a skeleton (Search DC 25) that leads to the vault (Area 3).

When the player characters reach the ruined temple, Osan is in this chamber conducting a meeting with his contacts, the messengers from the padishah's court in Khazabad. They have set a single torch in an old sconce on the northern wall, providing shadowy illumination for the edges of the room.

Osan has brought his pet, a trained leopard, with him and the great cat now lurks in the dark square chamber east of the columned hall. Due to the leopard's low-light vision, it is likely to detect any intruders carrying torches before they spot the cat.

**Osan Kadri, the Padishah's Secret Agent, male Khazistani Ftr5:** CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d10+8; hp 48; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+5 chainmail, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+3, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+3, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Climb +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +11, Ride +10. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Investigator, Iron Will, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Mounted Archery (b), Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar).

**Languages:** Khazistani, Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Riding horse, chainmail, scimitar, Khazistani shortbow, 20 arrows, sealed scroll with message to padishah (written in Khazistani), 50 gp.

**Description:** Osan has plain features and a drooping moustache.

**Tactics:** Osan values his own hide, and lets his henchmen protect him, although he is a skilled fighter and does not flee from combat unless the odds seem overwhelming.

**Messengers from Khazabad, male Khazistani Ftr3 (2):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d10+6; hp 20; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved



Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, Khazistani shortbow, 18-20/x2, range increment 70 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +8, Jump +8, Ride +7. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Mounted Archery (b), Point Blank Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar).

**Languages:** Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Riding horse, studded leather, scimitar, Khazistani shortbow, 15 gp.

**Description:** Hook-nosed, with turbaned helmets and cloaks over their armor.

**Tactics:** These spies take orders from and protect Osan, but not if their own lives are at stake. However, they know that they are doomed if they flee and Osan survives. Therefore, they are much more likely to flee if Osan is killed first.

**Osan's Pet (Leopard):** CR 2; hp 19.

**Development:** Unless the PCs enter the columned hall through the secret door, or approach in total darkness, they are likely to be seen first by the leopard. Each player character should make a Listen check against the leopard's Move Silently skill. Characters who fail cannot act during the surprise round, when the leopard uses its pounce attack to charge (+2 to attack roll, -2 to AC until next round) the foremost party member and make a full attack with its bite, claws and raking with its hind legs.

At the same time, the leopard lets out a great roar that alerts Osan and his allies to the presence of enemies. The Khazistanis draw their weapons and prepare for combat. If the PCs are getting thrashed by the leopard, Osan and his men charge into the fray; conversely, if the leopard is quickly slain by the PCs, the Khazistanis withdraw towards the sacrificial pit (Area 5) where Osan's henchmen take up positions near the entrance, trying to cut down their opponents as they cross into the chamber. Osan places himself south of the pit and fires upon the opponents with his bow. He might also try to push opponents into the pit during melee (using a bull rush attack).

If the PCs simply wade into combat and try to cut down Osan, he fights back and does not reveal his position as royal agent if he thinks he and his men can beat the party. Should they manage to slay Osan (remember that Sabiha asked for his head as proof of his death) or take him prisoner, the player characters probably learn the truth, either from the scroll found on Osan's corpse, or through interrogating the royal agent. Osan may also reveal who he really is if the PCs attempt to parley with

the Khazistanis instead of attacking outright.

In any case, at the end of this encounter the player characters are likely to learn that they have been fooled by Sabiha (and worse, the stolen gem is nowhere to be found). Their next course of action depends to a certain degree on whether Osan is still alive or not:

— If the PCs killed Osan (and learned the truth from the scroll he carried, or through interrogation of his allies), they probably wish to return to Zul-Bazzir and confront Sabiha, both for revenge and to learn more about the stolen gem. Clever characters should suspect that the female thief has set up a trap for them, and proceed with caution.

— It is also possible, of course, that the PCs remain ignorant of the true identity of Osan (by not bothering to search his corpse, or not being able to read Khazistani, for example) and return to the appointed meeting with Sabiha, only to walk straight into a trap (see the subchapter "Treachery in the Tomb").

— If the PCs learn the truth about Osan before he is killed, and assuming they are able to convince the royal agent of their loyalty to the Khazistani empire (a successful Diplomacy check can influence Osan in the right direction, but this check should be made with severe penalties if the PCs attacked and almost killed him), they might be able to form a temporary alliance with Osan. The royal agent believes he can use the PCs to track down the nobles who plot against Khadim Bey, as well as retrieve the stolen jewel (which the player characters probably intend to keep for themselves, should they find it). If they reach an agreement, Osan asks the PCs to return to Zul-Bazzir to find Sabiha, while he himself pretends to be dead.

## 5. Sacrificial Pit

The muffled priests of Yadar the death-god disposed of the bodies of sacrificial victims in this grisly pit. The pit is 20 feet deep, and is now filled with the cracked skulls and yellowed bones of dozens of victims. A small viper snake hides among the bones, striking out against anyone who enters the pit (characters may fall into the pit while fighting against Osan and his allies; see Area 4).

**Snake, Small Viper:** CR ½; hp 4.

## 6. Inner Shrine

The ceiling of this domed chamber is 35 feet above the smooth stone floor. In the southern end of the room, on a raised dais 5 feet high, is a faceless statue of black stone, fully 25 feet tall. The statue is sculpted to hold a stone bowl in its cupped, outstretched hands. The contents of the bowl is not visible from below. A Climb check (DC 15) is required to climb up the statue to reach the bowl.

In the bowl lurks a gray ooze that appears as a puddle of water. It takes a successful Spot





check (DC 15) to detect the ooze for what it is. A character who fails to notice it is automatically hit with a melee attack for slam and acid damage (which may ruin the character's armor, if any).

The ooze moves very slowly and the best way to flee from it is probably to jump down from the statue to the floor below (a 20 feet drop).

**Gray Ooze:** CR 4; hp 31.

### 7. High Priest's Chamber

Accessible from either of the two corridors leading from the inner shrine (Area 6), or through a secret door behind the cult statue (Search DC 22), this large chamber once belonged to the high priest of Yadar's cult.

Sitting on a massive, high-backed chair carved from stone, the wizened form of the mummified high priest is still present in the chamber, covered with dust and cobwebs. A tattered black cloak with gold trim hangs on the shoulders of the resin-soaked corpse; the cloth crumbles as soon as it is touched.

In the high priest's lap rests a masterwork curved dagger whose black onyx handle is scorpion-shaped. Around the mummy's neck hangs a golden amulet (worth 150 gp). At its feet is a small copper chest (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20) that contains a pile of ancient coins (5d8 x 10 gp and 10d8 x 10 sp) and a single bottle of dream-elixir.

The chest is trapped with a poison needle trap (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (black adder venom, DC 11 Fortitude save resists [poison only], 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17).

### Blood of the Brotherhood

The now-ruined temple was originally built by the priesthood of Yadar some six or seven centuries ago. The small shrine was sacked and burned by a passing army of Yar-Ammonites two centuries later, who also put the majority of the grisly death-priests to the sword. As the Yar-Ammonites settled in the nearby Oasis of Zul, and that place grew into the city of Zul-Bazzir, the last high priest of the death-cult died, and the nameless temple fell into desolation and decay. Due to its evil reputation, the place was shunned by all, except those that willingly seek out the dark places of the earth where the tomb-worm gnaws upon the marrow of those who died knowing blasphemous secrets and forbidden spells.

In recent times, the ruined temple has attracted a group of cultists known as the Brotherhood of the Red Seal. This cult consists of men from different Khazrajite nomad clans who meet in secret every month, at nights when the moon is not visible in the night sky. They worship the lord of the empty wastes,



al-Tawir, the Ancient One, with murder and blood sacrifice, believing that the god will in turn grant them protection against hunger and thirst and the evil spirits of the desert, and give them strength to overcome their enemies (several of these boons are supposedly gained through the eating of human flesh). The cult's leader carries the object that has given the brotherhood its name, a small disc crafted from an unknown red metal, inscribed with what the sorcerer believes to be the nine secret names of al-Tawir.

As it happens, the moon is hidden this particular night, and the night sky is illuminated only by a gem-studded carpet of stars. As the PCs are about to leave the ruined temple, whether they are alone or in the company of Osan, the Brothers of the Red Seal are gathering in the vicinity of the ruins.

There is a 50% chance that the cultists have already discovered any horses belonging to Osan, his contacts, or the player characters. If this is the case, the cultists are alert, with drawn weapons, and are already moving towards the ruins to investigate. If the horses remain undiscovered, the cultists are scattered in small groups some 50-100 feet away from the temple ruins. Among them is a group of 1d3+3 bound and gagged captives, who are about to be sacrificed. The captives are either from Zul-Bazzir (40%), Khazrajite nomads (30%), or travelers from other regions (30%).

Characters who succeed at Listen and/or Spot checks (DC determined by distance) when they emerge from the staircases in the temple may detect the cultists before the party stumbles upon them by accident.

**Brothers of the Red Seal, Cannibal-Cultists of a Dark God, male Khazrajite Bbn1/Rog1 (20):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 1d12 plus 1d6; hp 11; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, scimitar, 15-20/x2); SA



+1 racial bonus to attack rolls with scimitar, Rage 1/day, Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +7, Listen +4, Survival +4, Tumble +5.  
**Feats:** Cannibalize, Dodge, Endurance (b), Improved Critical (scimitar) (b).

**Languages:** Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Clothing, scimitar, 2 gp.

**Description:** The cultists wear red robes, and black scarves that conceal the lower half of their faces.

**Tactics:** The cultists attempt to surround enemies and stab them to death. The leader (who has maximum hit points and the Toughness feat instead of Dodge) carries a red disc that, when sprinkled with blood, can be used to unleash a *confusion* spell within 100 feet upon all non-cultists in a 15 feet radius burst.

**Development:** The cultists attempt to capture and sacrifice — and eat — the PCs. They flee in all directions if more than three-quarters of their number is slain (the cultists are fearful of failing their grim god, but they are not mad — not yet, anyway). If the PCs are able to detect the cultists before they themselves are spotted, they may be able to sneak past the Brotherhood (as determined by a combination of Hide and Move Silently checks). Any characters sneaking out are sure to see the captives who are about to be sacrificed, and must determine if they want to risk their own lives to save the innocent.

## Treachery in the Tomb

Assuming the PCs return to Zul-Bazzir, they can either go directly to the agreed-upon meeting with Sabiha in the tomb, or they can be more cautious and seek out the yellow-eyed woman elsewhere (where she is more likely to be unprepared).

If the PCs have slain Osan and go directly to the tomb, they walk straight into a trap. Sabiha has delivered an anonymous message to the governor, and Khadim Bey has sent a squad of city guards to the tomb with orders to seize and arrest the PCs for the murder of Osan. The city guards hide around the empty tomb, moving in when the PCs have entered the building. The Khazistani captain leading the city guards is none other than Hassan Sadi (see the “A Cry for Vengeance” subchapter, above). If the PCs have brought with them the severed head of Osan, per Sabiha’s wishes, their fate is sealed unless they can fight their way out of the tomb (see below for how they can find Sabiha if the party survives the trap).

While the city guards have orders to capture the PCs, they do not hesitate to use lethal force if their own lives are threatened. If the PCs are

captured, or allow themselves to be captured, they are taken in chains to the dungeons beneath the citadel for torture and interrogation. Unless the PCs are capable of talking themselves out of this situation, a chance to escape should present itself to the PCs before they are beheaded or impaled outside the gates of the citadel; perhaps a slave girl that is the secret spy of some palace faction catches the eye of a handsome player character and helps them escape by drugging the jailkeeper, or something similar.

**Hassan Sadi, Guard-Captain of Zul-Bazzir, male Khazistani Ftr4:** CR 4; hp 32; see “A Cry for Vengeance”.

**City Guards, Mercenaries of Yemar, male Jairani Ftr1 (12):** CR 1; hp 9.

If the player characters killed Osan, but take precautions before going to the tomb, a successful Gather Information check (DC 20) in either the Bazaar, Caravanserai, Pleasure District, Slave Market or Slum District reveals that a woman that matches Sabiha’s description frequents a place called the House of Abu Khafi, often in the company of a black mercenary (if the skill check succeeds by 5 or more, the PCs also learn that this man’s name is Ibo). The PCs may repeat the Gather Information check if it fails the first time, but this may draw attention and alert Sabiha to the fact that the player characters are asking around for her. The DM should also roll for random encounters if the PCs venture into these city districts.

If Osan is still alive and allied with the PCs, he warns them against going to the meeting in the tomb (which he correctly suspects is a trap). Osan wants Sabiha and her masters to believe that he is dead, and instructs the player characters to go looking for the raven-haired thief while he hides and observes from afar. He does not want to involve the governor or the city guard, because the news that he is alive will soon spread through the palace, and the disloyal nobles will be harder to root out. The player characters can use Gather Information checks, as described above, to find Sabiha. The clues all point to the House of Abu Khafi.

## The House of Abu Khafi

The notorious House of Abu Khafi is located in the Pleasure District of Zul-Bazzir. To outsiders, it looks like an ordinary (though perhaps disreputable and bawdy) tavern and gambling house, but those who frequent it know that the proprietor, Abu Khafi, offers more than strong drink and games of dice to his clientele. There are private rooms beneath the house where lotus-smokers lie in drugged sleep, and other lusts can be sated, too, for a price.

**Development:** The player characters are here to look for Sabiha, who is known to frequent the place along with a male companion named Ibo. A good approach is to enter the house as regular guests, possibly in disguise,





and simply wait for either Sabiha or Ibo to appear. They can then be shadowed when they leave the tavern, and dealt with in some dark alley without alerting Abu's many thugs and guards.

If the PCs simply walk into the tavern and start asking questions about Sabiha and Ibo, the staff become suspicious and report back to Abu, who in turn warns the two thieves and sets up a trap for the PCs: He instructs one of his henchmen to pose as a regular guest and approach the player characters, offering information in exchange for a handful of silver coins. This "guest" then tells the PCs that he has seen Ibo lying comatose in one of the private rooms in the basement, enjoying the strange visions and pleasurable sensations of the silver lotus. If the PCs investigate, the door to the basement is slammed shut behind them as soon as they enter the corridor (Area 9), and Abu's thugs attack through several secret doors. Abu, Ibo and Sabiha watch from the secret corridors (Area 10) but lend their strength to the thugs if necessary.

**Ibo, Sabiha's Companion, male Ikuna Bbn1/Rog3:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 1d12+2 plus 3d6+6; hp 30; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+2 leather armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+9; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, Ikuna knife, 20/x4) or +5 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with Ikuna knives and clubs, natural attack with filed teeth (deals 1d4 lethal damage when grappling), Rage 1/day, Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Hide and Swim skills, Scent, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Trap-finding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Ride +8, Survival +4, Swim +6, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Cannibalize (b), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will.

**Languages:** Ikuna, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, Ikuna knife, 5 gp.

**Description:** Tall, black-skinned, with a simple robe used to conceal his armor.

**Tactics:** Ibo employs a variety of tactics. He always enters a rage, and then either flanks and sneak attacks, or tries to grapple weak-

looking opponents. Being lightly armed and armored himself, he stays well away from people in heavy armor wielding heavy weapons. He is difficult to surprise due to his racial scent ability.

### 1. Entrance and Hall

The main door to Abu's gambling-house is a strong wooden door (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; OpenLock DC 30) that can be barred from the inside, and has a small peek-hole used by the guards to screen would-be visitors.

Abu currently employs eight guards; three watch the doors and the others remain on alert to deal with troublemakers inside the house or in the basement. Weapons are not allowed inside the house and must be left with the guards in the entrance hall. The guards search guests for hidden weapons, but they are not very diligent; they take 10 on their Search checks, opposed by a Sleight of Hand check by the player character. Note that even characters without ranks in the Sleight of Hand skill can conceal weapons on their body, but they add only their Dex bonus to the opposed roll against the guard's Search check. See the Sleight of Hand skill description for more information. With a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20) and a handful of gold coins, the guards can also be bribed to allow a guest to enter with a small (concealed) weapon.

**Abu's Guards, male Jairani Ftr2 (8):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+7; hp 19; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, club, 20/x2); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +8. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Stealthy (b), Toughness, Weapon Focus (club).

**Languages:** Jairani.

**Possessions:** Clothing, club, 2 gp.

**Description:** Little more than street thugs, these mercenary guards have unkempt hair and beards and filth-stained clothing.

**Tactics:** Used to dealing with drunken patrons and other bothersome customers, these guards are ill-suited to fighting well-armed

### The House of Abu Khafi

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The ground and upper levels of the house are lit by a multitude of oil lamps and candles. The corridors in the basement are illuminated by wall-hung torches, while the private chambers below ground have medium-sized braziers that provide both warmth and illumination.



and armored opponents (but neither will Abu Khafi allow such people into his establishment).

## 2. Main Room

This large, rectangular room has a ceiling height of 15 feet. A dozen round tables are placed throughout the room. At each table, a handful of patrons are busy gambling and betting in various games, which include dice-throwing (2 gp to enter, roll highest of 4d6 to win), knife-throwing directed at the eastern wall (5 gp to enter, highest ranged attack roll at 30 feet range wins, rolling a natural 1 means another guest was accidentally hit), and arm-wrestling (any amount the contestants agree on, opposed Strength checks).

Any moderately lucky or successful PC (having won at least 100 gp) might be accused of cheating (35% chance) or be approached by one of the serving-girls working for Abu (20% chance).

“Cheaters” are surrounded by 1d3+2 other patrons who try to pick a fight with the character using concealed or improvised weapons (taking a -4 penalty to attack rolls in the latter case). Determine the nationality and profession of such brawlers randomly.

Conversely, the serving-girls join a lucky winner at his table for a while, while tempting him to spend his hard-won coins in the comfort of the private rooms below (where he can be drugged and robbed).

**Abu's Serving-Girls, female Jairani Rog2 (4):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d6; hp 9; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+1; Atk +4 melee (1d4, stabbing dagger, 20/x3); SA Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic, Trapfinding, Evasion; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Appraise +6, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Perform (dance) +7, Sleight of Hand +8. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Stealthy (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Jairanian, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Scanty clothing, stabbing dagger, 1 gp.

**Description:** The very definition of saucy wenches, these girls have been carefully recruited by Abu Khafi to be his eyes and ears among the customers, providing him with a wealth of information that he can use to blackmail or influence others.

**Tactics:** Although they prefer to stay out of combat, the serving-girls can be deadly if they work together to flank and sneak attack unsuspecting victims.

## 3. Bar

The bar serves local specialties (such as palm wine, 1 sp per cup) as well as exclusive imports (Susrahnite grape wine, 5 sp per cup; Taikangian rice-liquor, 10 sp per cup).

The bartender is a gaunt and swarthy, middle-aged man named Yazd, who hails from the Eastern realm of Laksha. He becomes suspicious if strangers come asking for Sabiha or Ibo, but feigns indifference and claims not to have seen them (“not recently, anyway”). A successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) can reveal that the barkeep is lying. As soon as he gets the chance, Yazd sends one of the serving-girls to alert Abu, who arranges a trap for the PCs as described above.

**Yazd, Barkeeper, male Bhangari Ftr4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10+8; hp 35; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+10; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, handaxe, 20/x3) or +7 melee (1d3+4, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills; AL N; SV Fort +6 (+4 base, +2 Con), Ref +3 (+1 base, +2 Dex), Will +1 (+1 base, +0 Wis); Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Intimidate +7, Jump +9, Swim +9. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes (b), Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike).

**Languages:** Bhangari, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Clothing, handaxe, 3 gp.

**Description:** Middle-aged and swarthy, with a short white turban wrapped around his head.

**Tactics:** Yazd keeps a hand-axe ready behind the bar in case of emergencies, but can also fight well without weapons.

## 4. Semi-Private Booths

For two silver coins, patrons can be seated in one of these twelve booths, where a measure of privacy can be had behind a thin curtain. Some guests use the booths to talk with each other in private, others to play exclusive dice-games with higher stakes than in the main room, and yet others enjoy the exotic dancing skills of Abu's serving-girls here. Each room is comfortably furnished with silken cushions, up to four chairs, and a low table.

## 5. Fighting-Pit

On special nights, brutal gladiatorial games are held in this square pit, 5 feet deep and floored with stone. It costs 2 gp to watch, and spectators huddle in the cramped space around the pit, betting on their favorites. Abu usually hires a couple of broke and penniless thugs or mercenaries to fight one-on-one





duels; he sometimes throws in a wild beast for good measure. The winner gets the prize money, usually around 40-50 gp.

All kinds of weapons are allowed, as long as the two combatants agree. Fights are supposed to end when the first combatant is incapacitated (at 0 hp), but people are killed more often than not. Such would-be champions are hauled out of the pit and disposed of through the back door nearby.

#### 6. Back Door

This door has the same statistics as the front door (Area 1). It exits to a dark alleyway littered with filth and refuse. Rats and stray dogs scurry about in the shadows. Several other narrow streets connect with this alley here; Abu's henchmen and contacts often use this door to come and go on their illicit errands.

#### 7. Conference Room

A massive wooden table, ringed by half a dozen chairs, stands in the center of this large room, where Abu and his contacts often meet to discuss business. Ibo and Sabiha might be found here, too. There is a 25% chance (rolled separately for each NPC) that any of the three are present in the room at any given time.

There is an elaborate marble fireplace in the eastern corner of the room; the floor is carpeted with a heavy Jairanian rug (worth 200 gp).

#### 8. Office and Bedchamber

Abu is a man who likes to mix business and pleasure; his office is next door to his lavish bedchamber. In the tavern-keeper's desk is a locked compartment (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 25) that contains a pile of gold coins (2,000 gp total), a silver collar (worth 75 gp), and a golden snuff box (worth 25 gp). The compartment is trapped with a poison needle trap (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (rattlesnake, DC 15 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d6 Con/1d2 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17).

Next door, a circular bed, covered with the pelts of exotic animals (various furs, worth 150 gp), is usually kept warm by a handful of off-duty serving-girls (see Area 2 for statistics).

**Abu Khafi, Tavern-Owner and Lotus-Trader, male Jairanian Rog6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d6; hp 29; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14





(+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +9 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, curved dagger, 18-20/x2); SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Gather Information skills, +2 to all saving throws against magic, Trapfinding, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Bluff +11, Craft (herbalism) +10, Diplomacy +11, Forgery +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +10, Tumble +13. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Stealthy (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Jairanian, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Fine clothing, masterwork curved dagger, two doses of large scorpion venom (Injury DC 18, damage 1d6 Str/1d6 Str), keys to all doors in house, 99 gp.

**Description:** Shaven-headed, with a well-oiled beard and a sly grin to match. Abu is a native of Jairan to the west, and so are most of his staff.

**Tactics:** If forced to fight, Abu positions himself so as to gain flanking and sneak attack with his poisoned dagger.

## 9. Lotus-Rooms

The basement of Abu Khafi's house has six special rooms where a guest's lusts, whether for the sensuous dreams of the silver lotus, or for other, more obscene desires, can be satisfied. The door to each room is of average quality (Open Lock DC 25) and can be locked by the guest from the inside; Abu also has a key with which he can unlock any of these doors from the outside.

Inside each chamber is a low table surrounded by comfortable cushions. A silvered brazier (worth 30 gp) stands in the corner, providing illumination and warmth. The powdered leaves of the silver lotus can also be burned in the brazier to produce a thin grey smoke that instils pleasant dreams and visions in the mind of any who inhale the vapors.

For each room, there is a 50% chance that it is occupied by 1d3 lotus-smokers, with a 75% likelihood that each is asleep. Player characters entering an occupied chamber without holding their breath must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) to avoid the effects of the residual (but diluted) vapors (initial damage 1 Wis, secondary damage unconsciousness for 3d10 minutes). Another saving throw must be made 1 minute later, even if the first saving throw was successful.

There is a secret peek-hole in the wall farthest from the door in each chamber, which Abu's henchmen use to spy upon his guests, to learn secrets that can be used for blackmailing. The peek-hole is itself set within a secret revolving door that can be locked (Open Lock DC 30) from the outside (from Area 10). The

presence of both peek-hole and secret door must be detected separately with a successful Search check (DC 30).

## 10. Secret Corridors and Escape Tunnel

A narrow corridor runs along the back wall of each lotus-room, and connects with the main corridor through several secret doors (Search DC 30). Abu's guards and serving-girls know about these secret doors; but only Abu knows about the secret door in the far eastern wall that runs for another 40 feet and then connects with a sewer tunnel. There is a spiked pit trap 25 feet down the secret tunnel (40 ft. deep; CR 3; no attack roll necessary [4d6], +10 melee [1d4 spikes for 1d4+4 points of damage per hit]; Reflex save DC 20 avoids; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20).

## 11. Lotus Vault

This room has a strong wooden door (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30). The door is trapped with a wall scythe trap (CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee [2d4+8/x4, scythe]; Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 18). The vault contains Abu's supplies of silver lotus (worth over 10,000 gp) and other items, including a rack with three silvered scimitars (worth 105 gp each) and a large bronze bowl inscribed with Susrahnite cuneiform around its rim (worth 200 gp). The room can also be used as a safe retreat in case of trouble, since the door can be barred from the inside (adds +2 to Break DC).

## Slaves of the Silver Lotus

The player characters can confront Sabiha and her companion Ibo either inside the House of Abu Khafi, or the PCs can shadow the two thieves when they leave the gambling-house. This night, Ibo's mission is to deliver a dose of silver lotus from Abu Khafi to Sahiba's master, the Khazistani general Melik Khan. The general is addicted to the lotus and must cooperate with the rebel nobles to get what he craves. Note that Melik Khan does not know the identity of the rebel nobles; Sabiha is the link between the nobles and the general.

Ibo and Sabiha stop and talk briefly in a dark and deserted square some streets away from Abu's house, then Sabiha returns to the gambling-house while Ibo heads for the general's mansion. The PCs can track Ibo as he leaves the Pleasure District and heads for the wealthy Mansion District. Ibo stops at certain points to make sure he is not being followed; make a Spot check opposed by the Hide skills of the player characters at such occasions (opposed Listen and Move Silently checks may also be appropriate).

Unless hindered by the PCs somewhere along the way, Ibo reaches the walled mansion of Melik Khan, where he approaches the main





gate and is let inside by the guards. Usually Sabiha delivers the goods to the general, so neither the gate guards nor Melik Khan himself are familiar with Ibo and his appearance, but the black mercenary knows a secret password — “*achad*” — that gets him past the guards.

If the PCs stop and confront Sabiha as she returns to the gambling-house, or if they confront Ibo before he enters the mansion, they discover that neither has the stolen gem; they say Melik Khan has it. Both Ibo and Sabiha can help the PCs get past the general’s guards if they are forced to do it (with a dagger pressed against their back). The thieves may also try to recruit the PCs to their cause, and to double-cross Osan if they are allied with him.

If the PCs are allied to Osan, he asks the PCs to sneak into the general’s mansion and learn what they can, rather than sending in a squad of city guards, which would alert the rebel nobles.

### 1. Outer Wall

The general’s mansion is surrounded by a 15 feet tall superior masonry wall (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20) covered with white plaster and decorated with bas-reliefs of scenes of hunting and warfare.

The double doors at the gate are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; Open Lock DC 30) that can be barred from the inside. Two guards are posted outside at all times, including one guard captain, while a third guard stands inside, behind the barred gates, looking out through a small peephole. The guard on the inside only opens the gates on orders from the guards outside. In case of trouble, he runs back to the house to alert the remaining guards.

**Guard-Captain, male Khazistani Ftr4:** CR 4; hp 32. *Note:* This guard-captain use the same statistics as Hassan Sadi (see above).

**Guards, male Jairani Ftr1 (2):** CR 1; hp 9. *Note:* These soldiers have the same statistics as the city guards (see above).

### 2. Garden

The large mansion-house is fronted by a lush garden planted with palm trees and bushes, tended to by meticulous gardeners and servants. In the southeastern corner of the garden is a large pool, 10 feet deep, filled with fresh-water. The general often entertains important guests here, comfortable in the shade of a silken canopy, attended by slaves who wield large fans of ostrich feathers.

### 3. Stables

This small stone building has a wooden roof. It can accommodate up to six mounts; currently there are two light riding-horses,

### The Mansion of Melik Khan

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 ½ in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The interior of the mansion is lit by wall-hung torches. The garden is unlit and cloaked by darkness during the night; the guards carry torches when doing their rounds outside.

two light warhorses, and Melik Khan’s own heavy warhorse here. The general’s steed, called White Crescent, is a magnificent black Khazistani stallion with a single white sickle-shaped spot on its forehead. It has maximum hit points and can easily be sold for triple the normal price outside Zul-Bazzir (it would instantly be recognized as the general’s property in the city).

### 4. Main Entrance

From the garden, a short but broad stairway (5 feet tall) leads up to a portico. Two guards are always stationed in front of the double doors leading into the main court (Area 7).

**Veteran Guards, male Jairani Ftr2 (2):** CR 2; hp 16; see Area 1.

### 5. Servants’ Room

This simple room is shared by a dozen servants, cooks, gardeners and stable-boys. The servants take turns sleeping on the cold stone floor when they are not on duty. The tyrannical master of the servants is the eunuch Abdur, who is also the steward of the house and, as the general’s cup-bearer, tastes all food and drink brought before Melik Khan.

**Abdur, Cup-Bearer and Steward of the House, male Zadjite Com5:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 5d4+5; hp 18; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+2, whip, 20/x2, reach 10 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 9.

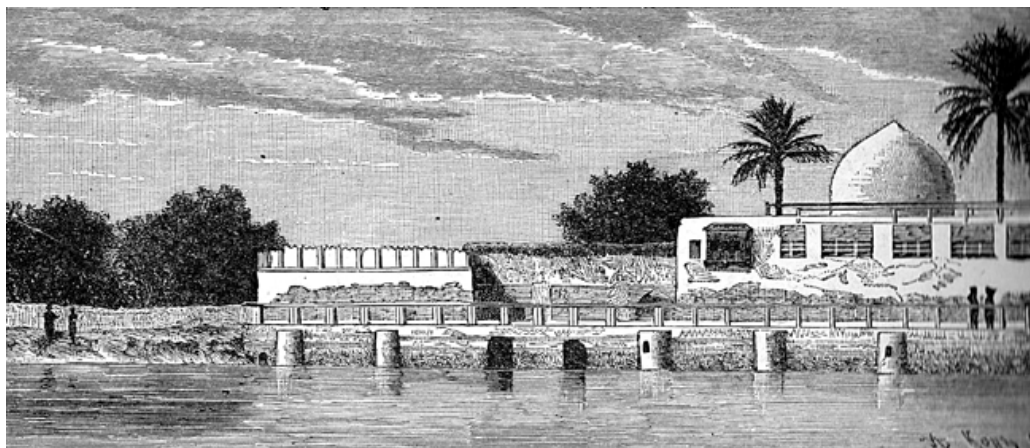
**Skills:** Handle Animal +7, Listen +9, Profession (steward) +9, Spot +9. **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Investigator, Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

**Languages:** Zadjite, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Clothing, whip, 23 gp.

**Description:** The eunuch is potbellied, with ponytail hair. He wears an eyepatch, for his left eye was put out many years ago for some unknown crime, and he was banished from his native land of Zadj.





*Tactics:* Abdur is not much of a fighter, but he knows how to wield a whip effectively. However, he is more likely to flee and summon the guards than to oppose a group of armed intruders. He knows that Nishat, the general's wife, has an affair with a guard captain and uses this to blackmail her. Abdur also knows about Melik Khan's addiction to the silver lotus, but remains loyal as long as it serves his own interests.

**Servants, male and female Khazistani Com1 (12):** CR 1/2; hp 4.

#### 6. Guards' Room

Slightly more comfortable than the servants' room (Area 5), this is the living room of the general's house guards. These include two guard captains, one of which is always posted outside the gates (Area 1), while the other is in charge of security in the rest of the house or rests in this chamber (50% chance of either). The guards (but not the officers) sleep in their armor and are ready to respond to trouble in a few rounds after shaking off sleep.

**Guard-Captain, male Khazistani Ftr4:** CR 4; hp 32; see Area 1.

**Guards, male Jairani Ftr1 (6):** CR 1; hp 9; see Area 1.

#### 7. Inner Court

This huge courtyard is open to the skies above, but has been designed to be covered in comfortable shadows during most of the day. Along each long wall are five slender stone columns topped by carved eagle heads.

The general receives guests and takes his meals here, reclining on a pile of cushions and pillows in the southern end of the courtyard, with his comely wife Nishat (female Susrahnite Ari4) and two small children at his side.

**Melik Khan, Cavalry General and Secret Slave of the Silver Lotus, male Khazistani Ftr8:** CR 8; SZ M; HD 8d10+16; hp 57; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +8/+11; Atk +13 melee (1d6+5, scimitar, 15-20/x2); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+5,

scimitar, 15-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Ride and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills:* Intimidate +12, Jump +14, Ride +12, Swim +14. *Feats:* Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Sunder, Khazistani Bow-Mastery (b), Leadership, Mounted Archery (b), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar).

*Languages:* Khazistani, Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, masterwork scimitar.

*Description:* Middle-aged, bald-headed, with haggard eyes and a drooping moustachio, Melik Khan appearance is slowly starting to take on the look of a lotus-addict. Even so, he is a wealthy and influential man, and he commands several cavalry companies.

*Tactics:* Although weakened by age and drugs, the general is still a formidable foe when armed with his weapon of choice, the scimitar.

#### 8. Kitchen

Close to the inner court is a large kitchen, filled with fresh food and good wine. Servants scuttle to and from this area on their way to other parts of the general's mansion. At night, there is a 25% chance of meeting a desperate servant who is here stealing food from the pantry. If caught by Abdur, he faces flogging or worse.

#### 9. Master's Bedroom

This square room is the bedchamber of Melik Khan and his young wife Nishat, a noble lady of Susrah. Nishat has given her husband two children, and the marriage is seemingly a good one, but as Melik Khan drifts ever stronger into the addictive ecstasies of the silver lotus, his wife has sought consolation in the arms of one of the guard-captains of the house. At any night when Melik Khan is downstairs (see Area 12), comatose from the vapors of the lotus, there is a 75% chance that his wife summons her lover to the general's own bedchamber.





### 10. Stairway

The staircase is 40 feet deep, and ends in the chambers below the mansion-house.

### 11. Cells

There are two large cells in the basement. They are rarely used, except to hold fresh slaves who have not yet learned to obey Abdur; the steward enjoys purchasing rebellious individuals (at a cheap price) from the slave market, then breaking their wills using his whip here.

### 12. Private Chamber

This simple room has a low divan set against one wall, next to a medium-sized brazier. It is where Melik Khan sates his desire for the silver lotus. Abdur makes sure no one enters the cellar when the general lies in drugged slumber here.

### 13. Storeroom

Secured by a simple lock (Open Lock DC 20) is a storeroom filled with supplies and equipment required to run the estate, such as clothes, dried food, blankets, bottles, ropes, and torches. Under a loose flagstone in the floor (Search DC 25) is a small hidden compartment that contains a small wooden chest.

The chest is trapped (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee [1 plus poison, needle]; poison [deathblade poison, DC 20 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d6 Con/2d6 Con]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17).

Inside the chest is a silken pouch containing the Jewel of Khadim Bey.

## Conclusion

The outcome of this adventure depends on several circumstances, among them whether the PCs allied with Osan, or killed the royal agent, and also how deep into the conspiracy against the governor the player characters are willing to go (or be dragged, as the case may be).

One possible outcome is that the PCs ally with Osan and help him find and capture or kill the agents of the disloyal nobles (and perhaps even expose the lotus-addicted general), and deliver the stolen jewel back to the governor. If successful, the PCs may be rewarded by Khadim Bey himself and perhaps recruited as his trusted agents, no doubt to the envy of many courtiers and palace toadies; the player characters then have to fight enemies both inside and outside the palace.

Another possibility is that the player characters end up on the side of the rebels, joining their secret insurrection that works to assassinate Khadim Bey and seize power in

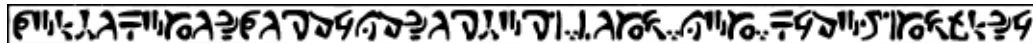
Zul-Bazzir. Even if they are successful in this long-term goal (which might be the climax of several adventures), the PCs have probably outlived their usefulness by then and their reward from the city's new rulers may ultimately be a dagger in the back or a poisoned chalice.

A third outcome occurs if, at any point, the PCs simply decide to leave the city behind and seek their fortunes somewhere else. Although somewhat cowardly, it is certainly possible. If the PCs manage to flee with the Jewel of Khadim Bey, that should be considered a victory, although they will be chased by agents of the governor to the borders of Khazistan and beyond.

**If the PCs fail:** There are several opportunities for the PCs to fail during this adventure. They can be eaten by cannibal-cultists, imprisoned by the city guard, ambushed by Abu's thugs in his lotus-house, or simply defeated in battle. The text offers several suggestions along the way for how failure can be handled. In general, remember that the player characters can always try to shift their allegiances if and when things go sour; for example, if they have allied with Osan and get caught by Melik Khan's guards, they can always betray the royal agent and join up with the rebels. Hopefully, the PCs are able to play the two factions against each other and end up on top of the game. Otherwise, they may find it best to flee the city of Zul-Bazzir.







## A detailed black and white line drawing of the four symbols of the Japanese Imperial Household Agency. On the left is a dragon, depicted in a dynamic, coiled pose with its head turned towards the center. On the right is a phoenix, shown in profile facing left, with its long, flowing tail feathers extending downwards. In the upper center is a chrysanthemum flower, rendered with multiple layers of petals radiating from a central point. In the lower center is a paulownia flower, featuring broad, rounded petals and a central stem with leaves. The entire composition is set against a plain white background.



— An item of considerable value is said to be safeguarded inside the temple of the ape. Perhaps the talons of the ape-god's statue are said to be of pure gold, or the high priest owns a scroll that contains (the missing fragments of) a rare and powerful magical ritual. Based on such rumors, the PCs decide to sneak in and steal the item (or someone hires the player characters to do so).

— A rival cult spreads rumors of the valuable item(s) mentioned above. The rumors may or may not be true; the primary goal of the rival is to tempt thieves and adventurers to attack the temple of the ape.

## The Sewer Tunnels

The player characters can learn that there is a network of sewer tunnels beneath Jhaddar, and that one of these tunnels is said to pass by the dungeons of the temple of Simatala. A successful Gather Information check (DC 20) provides the PCs with the necessary information.

Such sewer entrances are sealed with iron grates (1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 25; Break DC 27; Open Lock DC 25). They are otherwise unguarded.

The sewer tunnels themselves are unlit and filled with knee-deep, stinking, fetid, brown water. It costs 2 squares of movement to move into a square filled with knee-deep water, and the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks in such a square increases by 2.

### Sewer Encounters

Check for random encounters every 10 minutes in the sewer tunnels. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. Then roll 1d8 to determine the nature of the encounter.

Roll	Encounter
1	Collapsed (60%) or flooded (40%) tunnel
2	Pit
3	Pocket of poisonous gas
4	Slime, mold or fungi
5	Water serpent
6	Rat swarm
7	Giant slug
8	Thieves

**Collapsed Tunnel:** The tunnel has collapsed, making it impassable. There is a 10% chance that the tunnel collapses while the PCs are present, dealing 3d6 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 14) reduces damage by half.

**Flooded Tunnel:** The tunnel gradually slopes into a water-filled section, 3d6 x 10 feet long, before it emerges on the other side. The submerged tunnel is pitch black, but daring characters may swim through it.

**Giant Slug:** This is in fact a gray ooze. It takes a Spot check (DC 15) to notice it before it attacks.

**Pit:** Debris covers a narrow pit, 1d6 x 10 feet deep. It takes a Search check (DC 20) to detect the pit.

**Pocket of Poisonous Gas:** A square room adjacent to a sewer tunnel is filled with poisonous gas. It takes a Wisdom check (DC 14) to detect the presence of the invisible, near-odorless gas. After 2 rounds, all present must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1d6 points of Strength damage, and another 1d6 points of Strength one minute later if a second save is failed.

**Rat Swarm:** This is either a swarm of normal rats (50% chance), who usually run away, or 1d10+10 dire rats (50% chance) who are more aggressive.

**Slime, Mold or Fungi:** Although a glistening organic sludge coats almost every wall in the sewers, this is an encounter with a yellow mold (60% chance), green slime (30% chance), or violet fungus (10%).

**Thieves:** A group of 2d4 thieves, lepers, beggars or other outcasts who make their home in the sewers. They are 2nd-level rogues, but their leader is a Rog2/Ftr2.

**Water Serpent:** This is a regular (medium-sized) constrictor snake, although there is a 10% chance that it will be a giant constrictor snake.





## The Lower Temple

For each corridor the PCs enter into, there is a 20% chance of encountering 1d3 adepts (see Area 3 for statistics).

### 1. Sewer Landing

A sturdy stone landing is raised 10 feet from the floor of the sewer tunnel. From the landing, a narrow corridor with steep stairs leads up (to Area 2). A short distance away from the landing, there is a hidden door (Search DC 30) that also leads into the temple, through a narrow corridor, a locked door, and another secret door at the end of the corridor.

### 2. Chamber with Ape Statue

A medium-sized stone statue of a grinning ape with outstretched arms stands in the center of this square chamber. It can be recognized as a representation of Simatala with a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 12).

The door in the east wall leads to a narrow corridor, which is trapped with a pit trap (CR 2; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep [4d6, fall]; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20). In addition, a stone slab closes over the pit once the trap is triggered (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28).

In the west wall is a hidden stone door (Search DC 30) with the same statistics as the stone slab described above. The door can be opened by placing a small weight (2 lbs. or more) in the ape statue's outstretched hands; it stays open for 2d6 rounds before it slowly slides back into position.

### 3. Spartan Rooms

These three rooms are identically furnished with eight simple sleeping-mats on the floor of each room. The rooms contain practically nothing of value. There is a 35% chance of encountering 1d4 adepts in each room, with a 50% chance that any adepts encountered are asleep (determined separately for each NPC).

**Adepts of the East, Cultists of Simatala, male Bhangari Ftr2 (24 total):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10; hp 14; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+9; Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently

skills; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +8, Swim +8, Tumble +8. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes (b), Fanatical Fighting, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike).

**Languages:** Bhangari, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Simple white robe, black turban.

**Description:** Dressed in tight-fitting Eastern robes and adorned with white turbans, the cultists of Simatala move stealthily like slithering serpents.

**Tactics:** The adepts use Tumble to surround opponents and grapple. They always attack in groups, gaining the bonus from their Fanatical Fighting feat, as well as use of the Aid Another action.

**Special Note:** The training of these adepts allow them to take ranks in the Tumble skill even though it is not on their class skill list.

### 4. Square Hall

This large square hall has double doors on the western and eastern walls, and simple doors to the north and south. The double doors are of bronze, carved with bestial ape-images. All doors are unlocked.

### 5. Trapped Chamber

A narrow corridor opens into a small square chamber. A curtain on the east wall conceals a dead end. When someone steps on the floor in front of the curtain, three jade jars fall from the ceiling; each cracks and releases a small venomous scorpion in the vicinity of the creature that triggered the trap. The scorpions, once released, attack the nearest creature.

**Monstrous Scorpion, Small (3):** CR 1/2; hp 6.

### 6. Master Strangler's Room

The double doors to this room are locked and trapped with poisonous needles (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee [1 plus poison, needle]; poison [king cobra, DC 15 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d8 Con/1d4 Str and 1d4 Con]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17).

Beyond the doors is the chamber of Ranuga, the Master Strangler and second-in-command

### The Temple of Simatala

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The corridors of the lower temple are dimly illuminated by a weird green light from torches dipped in a secret alchemical substance. The upper temple is lit by oil lamps both a night and during the day.



of the temple. His chamber is furnished with soft Jairanian rugs, a silken couch, and a ceiling of beaten copper carved with scenes of human sacrifice. A tiger fur (worth 35 gp) hangs on the northern wall. There is a 25% chance that Ranuga is here, sleeping behind locked doors; he is otherwise performing a ritual in the inner sanctum (50% chance) or meeting with Sog Sodhi in the upper temple (25% chance).

**Ranuga, the Master Strangler, male Bhangari Ftr6/Sor2:** CR 8; SZ M; HD 6d10+6 plus 2d4+2; hp 54; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +7/+15; Atk +11 melee (1d6+6, quarterstaff, 20/x2) or +12 melee (1d3+6, unarmed strike, 20/x2); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+6, quarterstaff, 20/x2) or +12/+7 melee (1d3+6, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging), Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Climb +13, Concentration +6, Heal +7, Jump +13, Swim +13, Tumble +12. **Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Reflexes (b), Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Speed, Run, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +1 Int): 0 — *daze*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1st — *animate rope*, *hypnotism*, *mage armor*.

**Languages:** Bhangari, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Green silk robe, black turban, quarterstaff, two gold rings (worth 100 gp each), monkey-shaped talisman on golden chain (worth 50 gp).

**Description:** Clad in voluminous Eastern robes of the finest silk and a black turban, Ranuga sports a goatee and a perpetual smirk on his handsome face. Despite the teachings of the cult, Ranuga is vain and enjoys material pleasures. The acolytes fear him, perhaps even more than the high priest.

**Tactics:** Ranuga prefers to stay back and let his underlings fight, although he quickly steps in if opposition seems stiff, for failing to deal with intruders would limit his chance of advancement in the cult. In any case, he precasts *mage armor* before entering combat.

**Special Note:** Ranuga's training allows him to take ranks in the Tumble skill even though it is not on his class skill list.

## 7. Meditation Rooms

The rooms along the southern corridor are used by the adepts of the temple for prayer and meditation. A secret corridor (Search DC 20) connects the two rooms. There is a 25%

chance of encountering 1d3 adepts here (see Area 3 for statistics), with a 50% chance that any adepts encountered are busy meditating (suffering a -4 penalty to Spot and Listen checks).

## 8. Alchemical Lab

South of Ranuga's chamber is an alchemical laboratory in which certain temple adepts experiment with various concoctions. Glass vials, clay jars, and small boxes of mineral powders are neatly stacked on shelves along the walls. Two doses of smoke-powder and one dose of fire-powder can be found among the boxes (Search DC 15).

A set of merchant's scales stands on a table, next to a pair of tongs. In one corner is a pedestal with a human skull on top; the skull is trapped and filled with fire-powder that bursts into flame when the skull is moved or otherwise disturbed. The explosion causes 4d6 points of damage in a 15 ft. radius (Reflex DC 18 for half damage) and the noise may also alert any temple priests in adjacent rooms.

There is a hidden door (Search DC 20) in the south wall that exits to the corridor outside, nearby the staircase to the upper temple.

## 9. false Door

Close to the staircase that leads to the upper temple level is a false door. It appears locked, but resists any attempts to pick the lock. This iron door is magnetic, causing metal weapons striking it to become stuck; a successful Strength check (DC 25) is required to pull stuck items free. Those wearing breastplates or heavier armor and come within 5 feet of the door must make a Dexterity check, with a penalty equal to the armor bonus, to avoid being stuck.

## 10. Temple Ape Lair

Six months ago, Ranuga and a handful of acolytes travelled to the docks of Khazabad at the behest of the high priest and secretly purchased a captured flesh-eating jungle ape from a merchant-captain of distant Laksha. The red-furred monstrosity was drugged and hidden in a wagon, then smuggled back into the city of Jhaddar, where it was chained in the temple dungeons. Sog Sodhi hopes to procure a female specimen also, in order to breed several additional man-apes in captivity, which can be used to guard the temple or be unleashed upon the high priest's enemies.

The current temple ape lairs in this chamber, leashed to a long chain that allows it to move about the entire chamber. Along the corridors leading into the ape lair are pressure-sensitive flagstones (Search DC 20) that trigger hidden iron portcullises (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift DC 25; Break DC 28). These fall down 10 feet behind the character stepping on the flagstones, effectively imprisoning such





intruders with the rabid ape and possibly cutting them off from allies. Characters who stand in the squares adjacent to the falling portcullis must make a Reflex save (DC 16) to dodge it; those who fail suffer 3d6 points of damage and are knocked prone. There are hidden levers (Search DC 20) near each of the doors which can be used to open and close the portcullises. A secret tunnel (Search DC 20) leads from this chamber to the Inner Sanctum (Area 13); the tunnel is likewise trapped with a falling portcullis.

The red-furred man-ape has maximum hit points. It quickly moves in to attack and rend anyone foolish enough to enter its lair. The mere sight of the dire ape forces a saving throw against its Frightful Presence ability.

**Dire Ape:** CR3; hp 53 (max).

## II. Prison Cells

Along the southern corridor are cells holding prisoners to be sacrificed to Simatala. There is a 50% chance of each cell being occupied by 1d3 prisoners. Determine the race and profession of each prisoner randomly.

Prisoners who detect the PCs will plead with them to be released; if ignored they become frustrated and noisy, which may alert any temple priests nearby.

## 12. Inner Sanctum

This sanctum is smaller than the shrine (Area 3) of the upper temple, and is used for smaller ceremonies as well as certain grisly rituals best performed below ground where screams are muffled by heavy stone walls. There is a 50% chance that Ranuga and 1d4+4 adepts are here when the PCs enter.

A set of double bronze doors open up into the inner sanctum. The ceiling height is 25 feet. A raised platform, 10 feet high, runs along the south wall. In the center of the room is a large, 15 feet tall, green jade statue of Simatala. Around the statue is a raised dais, 5 feet tall.

The spots marked (T) are trapped with metal claws that immobilizes the victim (treat as entangled) if the trap “hits” (CR 2; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 melee [3d6, metal claws]; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; Note: Break DC 22 to break free once immobilized, each attempt causes 1d6 points of damage to held creature whether check is successful or not).

## 13. Columned Hall

Two curtains on the north wall of the inner sanctum conceal exits to a columned hall. The eastern exit is trapped with a metal claw trap (as described in Area 13, above). A single locked door in the columned hall leads to the high priest’s study.

## 14. Study

The study is furnished with silken wall hangings, a ceiling of beaten silver, a high-backed hardwood chair, and a mahogany desk inlaid with ivory. Atop the desk are ink and quill and a selection of papers, parchments, and papyri that include the administrative records of the temple.

The desk has three drawers; inside the second is a locked box (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 30) with 500 gp and a vial of silver lotus juice.

## The Upper Temple

Note that the upper temple is a dangerous place for low-level player characters, as they risk running into the high priest and his bodyguards. Nevertheless, the ground level of the temple is detailed here in case the PCs are reckless enough to attempt a direct assault on the fane of Simatala, or to sneak or bluff their way through the upper level. Also, the cultists are no fools and Sog Sodhi will respond in force if the adepts in the lower temple discover the PCs and manage to flee and alert their superiors.

## I. Temple Wall and Courtyard

The main temple building is ringed by a 20 feet tall superior masonry wall (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20). The main gate, in the western wall, is of iron (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30).

The courtyard is patrolled by eight temple guards, half of which are always stationed at the gate. During the day, the gate is generally left open; it is closed and barred at night. The temple receives few visitors and the guards have orders to thoroughly inspect all strangers, who must state their business with the temple or be turned away. If in doubt, the guards summon one of the high priest’s bodyguards (see Area 13) to deal with the situation.

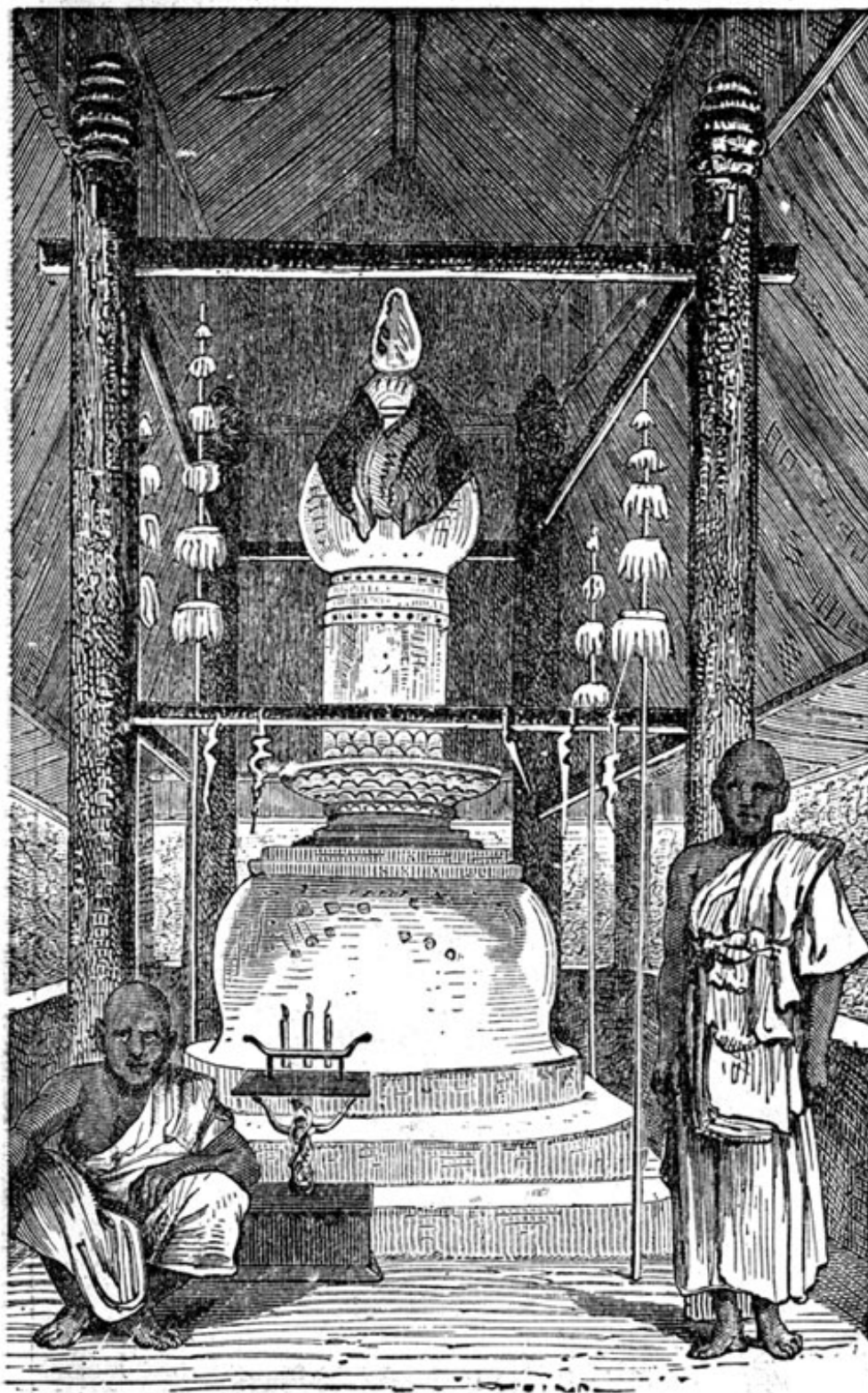
**Temple Guards, male Bhangari Ftr1 (8):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d10+4; hp 11; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +1 buckler, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 buckler); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, kukri, 18-20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Ride +5. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes (b), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (kukri).

**Languages:** Bhangari.

**Possessions:** Studded leather, buckler, kukri, keys to temple gate and temple entrance, 1d6 gp.





*Description:* Eastern warriors, with distinctive curved blades and colorful armor.

*Tactics:* These guards are not part of the religious hierarchy of the cult. They are loyal to the temple as long as they get paid, but do not risk their lives unless they believe that failure will cause the cult to hunt them down.

## 2. Temple Entrance

A broad stairway leads up to a columned portico. Beyond a pair of strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock 30) is the shrine of the ape-god. An additional four temple guards are posted on the portico. There are auxiliary doors at the back of the temple used by the temple guards to enter and exit the building; the wandering guard patrols check these doors with regular intervals.

**Temple Guards (4):** CR 1; hp 11; see Area 1.







### 3. Shrine of Simatala

This huge rectangular room is dominated by a 15 feet tall white jade statue of a grinning man-ape with taloned hands and feet. There is a secret door (Search DC 30) in the wall behind the bestial idol. At any given time, there is a 50% chance that 1d3+2 adepts are here, engaged in meditation and prayer (see Area 3 of the Lower Temple for statistics). The high priest, Sog Sodhi, is here 15% of the time, along with two of his bodyguards (see Areas 13 and 14 for statistics).

A number of continually burning bronze censers fill the shrine with the sickly sweet smell of incense of hallucination. The priests and adepts of the temple are immune to its effects due to long-term exposure, but any others (including the temple guards) must either hold their breath here or suffer the effects of a confusion spell (Will DC 17 negates).

### 4. Temple Guard Barracks

Several spacious rooms at the back of the temple house the temple guards. Each room is furnished with eight simple beds, a few chairs and a table, upon which is a scattering of copper coins, food scraps, dice, and a few half-empty bottles of wine. Half of the temple guards are sleeping or relaxing in these rooms while the other half is on duty, but if alerted to trouble they quickly gather their weapons and hastily don their armor.

**Temple Guards (12):** CR 1; hp 11; see Area 1.

### 5. Stairway to Lower Temple

The stair in this crescent-shaped room at the back of the temple leads down to the Lower Temple. An iron portcullis (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift DC 25; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30) can be lowered from the ceiling at a landing 15 feet downstairs. The high priest and his adepts may use this portcullis to seal the upper or lower temple level if they are alerted to the presence of intruders.

### 6. Kitchen

The temple kitchen is spartan and the pantry contains little except large sacks of rice and water-filled clay jars, as befits an order of ascetics. Junior priests perform all menial tasks such as cooking and cleaning as part of their training; the temple does not employ any slaves or servants.

### 7. Dining Hall

The dining hall seats up to 30 people around a sturdy wooden table. The junior priests eat once per day at sunrise, while the high priest and his henchmen eat at sundown.

### 8. Meditation Rooms

The priests of the temple practice meditation techniques in several large rooms, sitting immovable and silent in the lotus position for hours on end on the cold stone floors.

There is a 25% chance of encountering 1d2 adepts here (see Area 3 of the lower temple for statistics), with a 75% chance that any adepts encountered are busy meditating (suffering a -4 penalty to Spot and Listen checks).

### 9. Training Hall

When not meditating or sleeping, cult members can perfect their martial arts skills using this well-equipped training hall. It is furnished with soft mats, racks with wooden practice swords and staves, and several different training apparatuses.

### 10. Acolyte Rooms

These six rooms are reserved for members of the cult who have gained the special title of Adept of the Yellow Mountain. The title alludes to the fact that the ape-god Simatala is believed to live atop a mist-shrouded "Yellow Mountain". To advance beyond 3rd level within the cult, each adept must undergo a special trial of strength, willpower and martial arts prowess.

**Adepts of the Yellow Mountain, male Bhangari Ftr4 (6):** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10; hp 31; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+12; Atk +9 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Climb +11, Jump +11, Swim +11, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes (b), Fanatical Fighting, Improved Initiative, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike).

**Languages:** Bhangari, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Yellow robe, black turban.

**Description:** Similar to the other adepts of the temple, but with golden robes to mark their status.

**Tactics:** Grapple attacks is a favorite of these unarmed fighters.

**Special Note:** The training of these adepts allow them to take ranks in the Tumble skill even though it is not on their class skill list.

### 11. Secret Corridor

A secret corridor leads from the shrine (Area 3) to the back of the temple, near the high priest's chamber (Area 14). Each door in the



secret corridor is concealed to appear as part of the wall (Search DC 20); they can be opened by pressing small, hidden pressure-plates near the floor.

## 12. The Apes of Wisdom

The cult of Simatala worships the strength of the great jungle apes of Laksha, but through his studies in the west, Sog Sodhi has learned of the religious significance of baboons in the nearby land of Yar-Ammon, where these small but aggressive and carnivorous creatures are associated with bloodthirst, fertility, oracles, and hidden wisdom.

The high priest has procured a number of baboons from Yar-Ammonite temples, often through bribery and theft of sacred animals believed to have oracular powers. In the babbling and screaming of such sacred baboons, the adepts of Simatala seek to find wisdom and hidden truths, so far without much luck.

Each of these square cells contain two baboons. They are highly aggressive and attempt to bite anyone coming near.

**Baboons (20):** CR ½; hp 5.

## 13. Antechambers

Each of these large and comfortable rooms is occupied by one of Sog Sodhi's bodyguards, who are hand-picked fighting-men from Ghoma. They attend the high priest at a moment's notice whenever he requests it. They do not belong to the religious hierarchy of the temple, but command the temple guards, and often go on special missions outside the temple.

**High Priest's Bodyguards, male Bhangari Ftr7 (2):** CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 chainmail); BAB/Grapple +7/+11; Atk +12 melee (2d6+8, great scimitar, 18-20/x2); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+8, great scimitar, 18-20/x2); SA Brutal Charge (use full attack action in same round as charging); SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Climb +14, Intimidate +10, Jump +14.  
**Feats:** Combat Reflexes (b), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (great scimitar), Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (great scimitar), Weapon Specialization (great scimitar).

**Languages:** Bhangari.

**Possessions:** Chainmail, great scimitar, white turban.

**Description:** These bearded and turbaned brutes carry large oriental swords, and have embroidered tunics over their glittering armor.

**Tactics:** These skilled fighters employ Power Attack, charges, and bull rushes to good effect.



## 14. High Priest's Chamber

The high priest Sog Sodhi works and sleeps in this large but surprisingly spartan chamber, furnished only with a simple bed, a chair and a desk, and a cupboard filled with sorcerous paraphernalia.

A heavy chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) is hidden under a flagstone in the floor (Search DC 30); it is protected with an explosive runes spell and contains the funds of the temple (currently some 30,000 gp worth of silver and gold coins).

There are two secret exits (Search DC 25) in the room which can only be opened from the inside (treat as a regular wall from the other side). Only the high priest knows about these means of escape.

**Sog Sodhi, High Priest of Simatala, male Bhangari Ftr4/Sor8:** CR 12; SZ M; HD 4d10 plus 8d4; hp 55; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +8/+10; Atk +12 melee (1d6+5, quarterstaff, 20/x2); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+5, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA Brutal Charge





(use full attack action in same round as charging), Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Move Silently skills, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Concentration +11, Craft (alchemy) +14, Decipher Script +14, Handle Animal +9, Heal +13, Intimidate +9, Jump +9, Knowledge (religion) +14, Spellcraft +14, Swim +9, Tumble +9. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes (b), Dodge, Extend Spell, Fanatical Fighting, Grisly Sacrifice, Leadership, Mobility, Spell Focus (illusion), Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff), Weapon Specialization (quarterstaff).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/3/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int): 0 — *daze, guidance, know direction, resistance*; 1st — *animate rope, hypnotism, mage armor, sanctuary, speak with animals*; 2nd — *augury, death knell, hypnotic pattern, protection from arrows*; 3rd — *dispel magic, hold person, prayer*; 4th — *confusion, lesser geas, phantasmal killer, resilient sphere*.

**Languages:** Bhangari, Khazistani, Jairanian, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** Blue silken robes, turban inset with fire opal (worth 1,000 gp), masterwork quarterstaff, globe of entrancement.

**Description:** Oiled black beard, turban set with gem, unnaturally tall, blue silken robes with gold trim. Sog Sodhi does not care for material wealth in itself, but craves power over other people, who are seen as inferior by the conceited magician.

**Tactics:** The high priest precasts *mage armor* and *protection from arrows* as soon as any alarm is raised. He expends his highest-level spells first, using *phantasmal killer*, *resilient sphere* and *hold person* to kill or immobilise heavily armed fighters and rival spellcasters. If he runs out of high-level spells, he leaps into melee, using his Tumble and Spring Attack to hit opponents, then retreat before they can strike back.

**Special Note:** Sog Sodhi's training allows him to take ranks in the Tumble skill even though it is not on his class skill list.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this adventure depends on the original mission of the player characters and their reason for going into the temple of Simatala. Even if the PCs successfully infiltrate the temple and manage to get out alive, they may have further adventures in which they are hunted down by the acolytes of the cult.

**If the PCs fail:** PCs captured by the cultists of Simatala face a horrible sacrificial death on the white jade altar of the grisly ape-god. If he is in a good mood, the high priest Sog Sodhi might instead employ a *lesser geas* spell on any player characters captured alive, sending them on a mission to further his own evil plans.







# The Crypt-Thing of Khorsul

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On the other hand, if the PCs manage to steal back the amulet without uncovering the truth, Numas sends them into the mountains to find and destroy “a sorcerous abomination created by Gasparus”. If Gasparus is still alive, he arrives with his men to make sure Numas falls victim to his own sorcery.

Of course, once the crypt-thing is destroyed, Numas has no more use for the player characters, and will seek to betray them as soon as possible.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started:

- One of the player characters is a distant relative of Numas. The PC receives a plea for help from Numas and is honor-bound, by virtue of his noble blood, to come to his relative's assistance.

- The party is traveling through the mountains and valleys near the Lamuran border when they are attacked by an overwhelming force of hill bandits (who may or may not be in league with Gasparus). The PCs are rescued by a troop of mercenaries in the employ of Numas, and are invited back to his mansion.

- A servant of Numas hires the player characters as mercenaries in one of the southern cities. With the servant as guide, the PCs travel north towards the mountainous border area between Taraam and Lamu.

## The Sorcerer and the Wolf

The adventure begins when the player characters arrive at the estate of Lord Numas in the valley of Khorsul. Servants take care of baggage and bring the player characters refreshments. Then Numas meets with the PCs in the dining hall and tells them about his feud with Gasparus, “the Wolf”, whose Lamuran horsemen are a constant harassment to his estate and the peasants working the fields and orchards. Gasparus has become wealthy from this raiding, while Numas is on the verge of financial ruin.

Worse yet, it is rumored that Gasparus is dabbling in sorcery and Numas fears that he may soon be the target of a dread curse or death spell. But Numas knows that Gasparus has a medallion of Susrahnite origin, which can protect the wearer against sorcery. Numas wants the PCs to sneak into the castle and steal the amulet, then return to the estate with it. Gasparus himself should not be harmed, since that could spark off a full-scale war between Lamu and Taraam.

Furthermore, if possible, Numas also wants the PCs to kidnap Gasparus’ “son” (here he gives a description of Iskander, who has an ugly red scar across his right cheek), so that Numas may hold him for ransom to negotiate and get back some of the wealth which Gasparus’ raiders have stolen from the estate.

### The Amulet of Belet-Lil

This small golden amulet, carved with the image of the goddess and hung from a thin golden chain, was crafted by the priest Narnash-Girbu of Ghezath.

If the wearer is a spellcaster, the amulet raises his effective level by +2 with regard to castable spells per day (including the ability to cast spells of a higher level than normal, although such spells must be studied and learned as usual). It does not grant any other level-dependent benefits.

For any wearer, the amulet confers a limited protection against undead, for the wearer can employ a *halt undead* spell at caster level 12 and Will DC 18 against nearby undead. However, for each round that this power is in effect, the wearer is drained of life and suffers 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. If Constitution reaches zero, the wearer dies. The amulet of Belet-Lil cannot be used by creatures without Constitution scores.

**Development:** Unless one or more of the PCs are honor-bound or willing to help Numas for free, the Taraamite lord offers to reward each player character with up to 250 gp (adjust as appropriate to your player characters) for retrieving the amulet and kidnapping Iskander.

The player characters might wonder why Numas doesn't send his own mercenary guards to Castle Gasparus, in which case he responds that the Susrahnite mercenaries are good for guard duty and fighting, but other, more specialized skills are required for sneaking into the castle.

The DM might allow a Sense Motive check (DC 25) to get the feeling that something is wrong, but only if a player has a specific reason to suspect Numas.

Numas expects the player characters to set off for Castle Gasparus as soon as possible, although the PCs might want to explore the estate, or speak with Numas' servants. Numas is no fool and has one or more of his guards follow the PCs around to make sure that they can't do either. Determined player characters might still be able to create a diversion. For exploration of the estate, see the description below. With regard to an interrogation of the servants, although the servants fear their master and are reluctant to speak with the strangers, a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) allows the PCs to learn that Numas is not as poor as he pretends, and that he is quite a harsh master towards his serfs; sometimes people have been whipped to death for disobedience or indolence, but after all, that is the rightful privilege of a feudal lord of Taraam. The servants do not know about Numas' sorcerous dabbling, however, and the Susrahnite mercenaries are not talking.





## The Valley of Khorsul

The valley is divided by the Suliyah river. On the north side of the river is the small village which gives the valley its name. Further to the north is the foothills of the Lamuran mountains. Castle Gasparus is built in a steep hillside there. The south end of the valley is covered with forest, except for the fields and orchards belonging to Numas' estate. There is a lake in the center of the valley; the south shore is snake-infested marshland, while the north shore of the lake is rocky with several small bays. A dozen fishing vessels belonging to the villagers of Khorsul can be found there.

### The Goat-Herder's Story

A small but well-kept stone bridge spans the Suliyah in the center of the valley. The bridge is unguarded.

Near the bridge is a little-used trail (Search DC 18) that leads towards the western forest. The main road continues due north from the bridge.

**Development:** If the player characters choose to follow the trail, they reach the forest when they see a young boy (male Lamuran Com1) being attacked by a monstrous boar. The boy has climbed up a tree, but the boar is about to crush the tree with a powerful charge.

If the PCs save the boy, Pavlas, he offers them information in return. Pavlas tells the player characters that he saw a group of men transporting a large, bulky object, some sort of box or crate, drawn by two horses, up into the mountains some weeks ago. The leader had an ugly red scar across his face. The PCs may make an Intelligence check (DC 15) to recognize this as Iskander from Numas' description of Gasparus' "son". Pavlas memorized the location and can actually lead the party to the secret cave in the mountains. If the PCs go to the cave, don't forget that they are likely being shadowed by the mercenaries of Numas.

**Dire Boar:** CR 4; hp 52.

### The Village of Khorsul

**Khorsul (hamlet):** Conventional; 100 gp limit; Assets 1,100 gp; Population 220; Isolated (Lamuran 96%, Taraamites 3%, Others 1%).

**Authority Figures:** Zhakov, male Lamuran Ftr2 (village elder).

**Important Characters:** Baikar, male Lamuran Ftr3 (blacksmith); Mihalek, male Lamuran Rog2 (agent of Gasparus).

**Notes:** The village of Khorsul sits in the foothills of the Lamuran mountains a few miles away from Castle Gasparus. The place stinks of garbage and filth, and the buildings are ramshackle, built from crudely hewn logs and stone from the hills. The poor souls who call this home and eke out a living here are goat-herders, hunters, and fishermen of the nearby

lake. Still, they are men and women of Lamu and live under the protection of Gasparus and his horsemen.

Noteworthy locations in the village include the market square, a smithy, and a small tavern. The place rarely receives visitors, and the locals look upon all strangers with great suspicion. Gasparus has a few spies among the men here, reporting back to him on any unusual events.

**Development:** If the PCs make a stop in the village, they quickly realize that the people are impoverished, and find the villagers (male and female Lamuran Com1) quite unfriendly, if not outright hostile. It requires a successful Diplomacy check (DC 25) to learn anything useful from the villagers. This includes commonly known facts about the valley and Castle Gasparus. If asked directly about it, all in the village will deny that Gasparus has anything to do with sorcery. If the Diplomacy check was successful, a Gather Information check (DC 15) can be made to learn that a former servant from the estate across the river has recently taken up abode in Castle Gasparus and now works as Gasparus' lieutenant.

## The Estate of Numas

The estate of the Taraamite noble Numas covers several acres. There are grain fields, orchards, and groves of citrus trees. Close to a hundred serfs work on the estate. In addition, there are two dozen mercenaries employed by Numas to keep guard against Gasparus and the Lamurans on the other side of the river.

### 1. Outer Wall

The gravelled road leading up the estate is flanked by neat rows of planted trees. The outer wall is a 15 feet tall superior masonry wall (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20).

### 2. Main Gate

The gate is a strong wooden door (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30). The gate can also be barred from the inside; this adds +2 to the Break DC. The coat-of-arms of Numas is painted in silver and red across the door.

There are two mercenary guards (see Area 13) posted at the gate.

### 3. Stables

This simple, rectangular building holds half a dozen horses, including a white mare used by Numas himself. This has the statistics of a light warhorse. The remainder are auburn stallions, heavy horses used as workhorses on the fields.



### The Estate of Numas

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The estate is illuminated by wall-hung torches in most rooms.

#### 4. Storehouse

This large toolshed is locked. It contains a collection of various tools and farming equipment, including hammers, shovels, picks, baskets and boxes, lengths of rope, and flasks of oil.

#### 5. Well

The well is 40 feet deep, fed by an underground stream of the Suliyah river to the north. The well is protected by a wooden roof.

#### 6. Portico

The entrance to the estate is decorated by five circular columns of stone, carved with the heraldry of Numas. The main door is a strong wooden door (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30).

There is a single mercenary guard (see Area 13) posted outside the main door.

#### 7. Dining Hall

This large hall is decorated with rows of antlers set along the walls. The floor is covered by carpets of intricate Taraamite design. Candles set in silver candlesticks illuminate the room. There is a great table of hardwood here, with chairs for eight persons to dine in addition to the lord of the estate, whose high-backed chair is placed against the eastern wall.

#### 8. Kitchen

Here are tables and cupboards with wooden utensils, dried herbs, fresh meat, and a collection of fine wines. There are 1d3 servants here at any time during the day.

#### 9. Servants' Wing

The servants of the estate (male and female Taraamite Com1) live in these small chambers in the north wing of the mansion. Their situation is slightly better than that of the serfs working the fields, but on the other hand they are more frequently subject to the sadistic whims of Numas. The unmarried girls among the servants are often taken to the master's bedroom; those who refuse are flogged or worse.

There are around 15 servants in the mansion, and more than 80 working in the fields.

#### 10. Lounge and Library

The outer room has four cedarwood chairs, one in each corner. Behind a crimson curtain to the west is a small library. The modest collection of books, parchments and even some Yar-Ammonite papyri is quite valuable (worth a total of 2,000 gp), but is mostly poetry, historical treatises and other quite ordinary books. The sorcerous tomes Numas has procured are hidden in his secret chamber (below Area 12).

#### 11. Master's Office

This opulent room has a fireplace, several silver-framed paintings with motifs from the court life of Achad, and a cedarwood desk set with a feathered inkpen and a stack of papers related to the administration of the estate. The door to the room is always locked.

#### 12. Master Bedroom

Like Numas' office (Area 11), this room is also always kept locked. A large bed covered with stained silken sheets stands against the northern wall. The floor is a mosaic with erotic scenes of horned satyrs and winged succubi. A secret trapdoor is cleverly hidden within the mosaic (Search DC 25). If the trapdoor is not opened the proper way, the intruder risks releasing a dose of contact poison (CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger [attached]; manual reset; poison [nitharit, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, o/3d6 Con]; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 19).







The secret entrance leads down, by a short flight of stairs, to a rectangular room which has the same dimensions as the bedroom above. This is Numas' secret magic-working room. There is a great pentacle painted with blood on the floor, and heavy black candles are placed along the walls. On a shelf along the northern wall are several clay tablets of Susrahnite origin. These contain magical spells, necromantic rites, and studies on the subject of eternal life.

**Lord Numas, Master of the Estate, male Taraamite Ari2/Sor7:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 2d8+2 plus 7d4+7; hp 46; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +8 melee (1d10+3, bastard sword, 19-20/x2); SA Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Knowledge (all) skills, +4 racial bonus to saving throws against poison, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14.



**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +7, Concentration +11, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +7, Heal +11, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Ride +7, Spellcraft +13, Spot +6, Swim +7. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Leadership, Ride-By Attack (b), Silent Spell, Sympathetic Magic, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int): 0 — *arcane mark, know direction*; 1st — *mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, witch-fire*; 2nd — *augury, false life, incantation of the broken limb*; 3rd — *bestow curse, speak with dead, vampiric touch*; 4th — *curse of green decay, lesser geas, poison*.

**Languages:** Taraamite, Susrahnite, Lamuran, Nabastissean.

**Possessions:** Noble's clothes, masterwork bastard sword, two gold rings (worth 100 gp each).

**Description:** Lord Numas is middle-aged, but still handsome, tall and regal. He wears a purple cloak of Ghazorite wool and always carries his heirloom sword in his belt, to keep up the appearance that he is a fighting-man rather than a spellcaster.

**Tactics:** Numas does not yet master many directly offensive spells, so he prefers to stay away from melee, relying on his Sinister Presence ability to avoid opponents. He precasts *mage armor* and *false life* if he has the opportunity.

### 13. Barracks

These spacious rooms hold the mercenary guards which Numas employs. In the outer room are ten comfortable chairs and a worn table upon which are scattered scraps of food, playing-cards and dice. The inner room is furnished with a dozen green divans. Hidden under a loose floorboard (Search DC 18) is a silver helmet (worth 40 gp) and a pile of gold coins (a total of 85 gp).

**Zaltutim, Mercenary Captain, male Susrahnite Ftr6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d10+6; hp 52; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+5 breastplate, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 breastplate); BAB/Grapple +6/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+6, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +10 ranged (1d10+4, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+6, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +10/+5 ranged (1d10+4, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +13, Intimidate +9, Jump +13, Swim +13. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow),

Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative (b), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Taraamite.

**Possessions:** Breastplate, scimitar, Susrahnite longbow (+4 Strength rating), 30 arrows, 45 gp.

**Description:** Zaltutim is the leader of a mercenary company and Numas' current right-hand man. He was ever in the shadow of Iskander, Numas' former favorite, and looks forward to getting his revenge on the man now that he has fallen out with Numas.

**Tactics:** Zaltutim's tactics are simple. Like his fellow mercenaries, he attempts to take down as many opponents as possible with his bow first, then leaps into melee with his scimitar.

**Mercenary Guards, male Susrahnite Ftr2 (20 total):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d10+3, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +8, Jump +8, Swim +8. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow), Improved Initiative (b), Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (scimitar).

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Studded leather, scimitar, Susrahnite longbow (+3 Strength rating), 30 arrows, 1d8 gp.

**Description:** These are mercenary warriors from the Susrahnite city-states to the south. They are dressed in a variety of styles, reflecting their individual natures.

**Tactics:** The guards use their bows (with Rapid Shot) to wear down opponents before they close with their swords.

## Castle Gasparus

The castle is located among the steep slopes of the Lamuran mountains, just above the tree line, overlooking the Khorsul valley from a strategic position. A narrow, winding path leads from the valley up to the castle. The hills around the fortress are steep and difficult to Climb (DC 20).

### 1. Gatehouse

The winding trail from the valley eventually leads up to the forbidding, 20 feet tall castle walls (Climb DC 20). Right in front of the gatehouse is a 60 feet deep ravine; the bottom of





the chasm is filled with a mix of bones and garbage. A drawbridge can be lowered from inside the gatehouse to allow visitors entry. It takes a move action to lower the drawbridge, but the bridge doesn't come down until the beginning of the lowering character's next turn. It takes a full-round action to raise the drawbridge; the drawbridge is up at the end of the action.

Further back, there is a wooden portcullis (3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Lift DC 25; Break DC 25). In the gatehouse above, there is a murder hole for pouring boiling water (2d6 points of damage, unload every other round) or rocks (1d6 points of damage) down on intruders while they assault the portcullis.

The gatehouse towers have arrow slits which provide cover to the guards, who are armed with longbows. Archers in the towers gain a +1 to attack rolls for attacking from higher ground.

There are two guards (see Area 3) posted in each tower at any time. They can be assumed to take 10 on Spot and Listen checks.

## 2. Stable

This long wooden building holds two dozen light warhorses of Lamuran breed, as well as grain-sacks, saddles, and one suit of chain shirt barding for Gasparus' steed, a magnificent black stallion with maximum hit points. The door to the stable is locked.

## 3. Barracks

This hall is filled with bunk beds and dust-stained blankets. Scraps of food, small weapons and pieces of armor are scattered around the room. Around a third of Gasparus' men can be found here at any time, with a 70% chance that they have 1d3 visiting girls from the village.

The smaller room to the east is the private quarters of Iskander, who used to be Numas' henchman but betrayed him and is now the lieutenant of Gasparus. It has plain and unadorned blue tapestries hanging on the walls, a medium-sized bed, and a worn but comfortable chair.

**Lamuran Warriors, the "Wolves of Gasparus", male Lamuran Ftr2 (30 total):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+5; hp 18; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+4 scale mail, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 scale mail); BAB/Grapple +2/+6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4, battleaxe, 20/x3) or +6 melee (1d8+4, lance, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.) or +6 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 120 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Move Silently and Sleight of Hand skills, Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

## Castle Gasparus

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The castle halls are illuminated by greasy torches set in wall sconces.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Jump +9, Ride +8. **Feats:** Eyes of the Cat (b), Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow).

**Languages:** Lamuran.

**Possessions:** Scale mail, battleaxe, heavy crossbow, 12 bolts, light warhorse, 1d4 gp.

**Description:** Fierce mountain-men with grizzled beards, mistrust in their eyes and cold steel in their hands, these men are very loyal to Gasparus and seek to protect his lands and villages against any intruders.

**Tactics:** If encountered outside Castle Gasparus, these men are mounted on light warhorses and use lances to deal double damage with a charge. When defending the castle, they employ their heavy crossbows from behind arrow slits, gaining cover, or otherwise wield battleaxes.

**Iskander, the Traitor, male Taraamite Ftr4/Rog3:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 4d10+4 plus 3d6+3; hp 43; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+4 chain shirt, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 chain shirt); BAB/Grapple +6/+9; Atk +10 melee (1d10+6, glaive, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.) or +11 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d10+6, glaive, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.) or +11/+6 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Knowledge (all) skills, +4 racial bonus to saving throws against poison, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +10, Gather Information +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +7, Jump +10, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Ride +12, Spot +7, Swim +10, Tumble +11. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Ride-By Attack (b), Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (glaive), Weapon Specialization (glaive).

**Languages:** Taraamite, Susrahnite, Lamuran.

**Possessions:** Chain shirt, glaive, four daggers, 25 gp.

**Description:** With beady eyes, and greasy dark hair framing a thin face, Iskander is no ladies' man. Furthermore, he has a sizeable red scar across face, the result of a sword-duel some years ago.





*Tactics:* Iskander uses Spring Attack and Tumble to get into position to deal sneak attacks using his reach weapon; he may also throw daggers at short range and gain sneak attacks.

#### 4. Well

The well is 50 feet deep, fed by a small mountain-stream of ice-cold water. Any character falling into the well suffers 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from hypothermia per minute of exposure, in addition to the falling damage.

#### 5. Secret Door

This door is well-hidden (Search DC 30) and only Gasparus and a few of his men (including Iskander) know about it. It offers a quick escape path into the mountains behind the castle.

#### 6. Kitchen

A cooking-pit is in the west corner of this room. On a round table are leftover pieces of meat and a half-empty bottle of wine. A small pantry has two shelves with dried cheeses, herbs, and bottles of goat-milk. A serving-boy-cum-chef is everpresent; he sleeps under the table when not making or serving food.

#### 7. Feasthall

The walls of this grand hall are hung with displays of crossed axes and longswords. Placed in the middle of the room is a long wooden table which seats two dozen men. Against the east wall, below a canopy of black

cloth embroidered with silver thread, is the great cedarwood chair where Gasparus sits when he holds his revelries here. After a feast, the place is usually strewn with wooden food-trays, half-empty drinking-horns and pools of greenish vomit.

#### 8. Armory

These locked storehouses are filled with weapon racks and crates of supplies and equipment. The weapons include throwing axes, longswords, arrows and quivers, and a few swords.

#### 9. Private Chambers

Gasparus has several rooms to himself in this section of the castle. The main entrance door from the courtyard outside is always locked. Inside these quarters is a bedroom with a large bed and a wardrobe, and a lounge with a small fireplace and several stuffed animal-heads on the walls. Finally, there is a locked treasure room which contains Gasparus' modest wealth; three small bags filled with gold coins (a total of 1,500 gp), a wooden box stuffed with straw and filled with delicate Taikangian porcelain (worth 700 gp), and finally an iron chest with various bits and pieces of silver and bronze jewelry (worth 800 gp).

**Lord Gasparus, "the Wolf", male**  
**Lamuran Ftr9:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 9d10+36; hp 102; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+6 banded mail, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 16 (+6 banded mail); BAB/Grapple +9/+14; Atk +15 melee (2d6+9, greatsword, 17-20/x2); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+9, greatsword, 17-20/x2); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Move







Silently and Sleight of Hand skills, Uncanny Luck (once per day, reroll any die roll and keep best result); AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +17, Intimidate +13, Jump +17, Ride +13. **Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat (b), Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

**Languages:** Lamuran, Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Banded mail, greatsword, cloak.

**Description:** A giant of a man, Gasparus is bald-headed but full-bearded. He wears a great cloak of dire-wolf skin over his heavy armor, and wields a great two-handed sword. True to his name, he keeps a pair of trained wolves as his pets.

**Tactics:** Gasparus delights in battle, and a favorite tactic is to crush opponents' weapons using Improved Sunder. He also uses Power Attack to good effect.

**Wolves, Trained Pets of Gasparus (2):** CR 1; hp 13.

## The Thing in the Cave

The secret caves where Iskander and his men hid the undead thing which Numas raised during his necromatic experiments is located in far up in the mountains, north of the village of Khorsul and east of Castle Gasparus.

### 1. Cave Entrance

The entrance to the caverns is located behind several large boulders. It takes a Search check (DC 18) to find the cave opening. It is pitch dark within the tunnel.

### 2. Spider-Cave

This large grotto is the lair of a cave-spider, one of Lamu's many native monstrous spiders. It hangs in the darkness of the ceiling and drops down on unsuspecting victims.

#### The Secret Caves of Khorsul

**Standard Features:** Ceiling height is 15 feet in all caves unless described otherwise. Moving across the rough and uneven cavern floor requires Balance checks (DC 10). Several large boulders are scattered around, these may provide cover or a place to hide for ambushing creatures. There are several chasms of variable depth; assuming creatures survive a fall they may climb up with a Climb check (DC 18).

**Lighting:** The caverns are unlit.

**Lamuran Cave Spider:** CR 5; hp 42.

**Notes:** This creature has identical stats to a phase spider, except the *ethereal jaunt* ability.

### 3. Grotto with Great Chasm

This huge cavern is split in two by a wide chasm, 50 feet deep. At the bottom of the fissure is a silver ring with Numas' heraldic emblem on it (worth 35 gp); it was lost by one of Iskander's men when they carried the sarcophagus (see Area 6) through here. It takes a Spot check (DC 17) to see the ring.

**Development:** If a fight breaks out here, opponents may try to bull rush the PCs into the chasm.

### 4. Natural Bridge

This is a narrow natural bridge, 5 to 10 feet wide, that spans a 70 feet deep chasm. Iskander and his men had great difficulty dragging the sarcophagus across the bridge.

### 5. Bat-Cave

Several thousand small bats rest here during the day. The floor is covered with guano, making the floor slippery and increasing the DC of Balance and Tumble checks by 5. The stench forces creatures to make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or become sickened for 1 minute.

If the bats are disturbed, they seek to flee out of the cavern. A swarm deals automatic damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

**Bat Swarms (3):** CR 2; hp 13.

### 6. Sealed Cave

The cave is sealed with a pile of rocks, placed as to make it appear natural (Search DC 15). Inside the cave is a plain and unadorned stone sarcophagus (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35) which holds the unkillable crypt-thing that Numas raised during his necromatic experiments.

**Development:** If the sarcophagus is broken open, the "thing" within emerges and fights its way through whoever stands nearby, seeking to leave the cave and find Numas. It cannot truly die before its creator is killed — for who can kill what is already dead? Its dead flesh heals itself, and it suffers no harm from fire or acid. It could possibly be destroyed, or perhaps only delayed, by throwing it into a ravine and dropping a rockslide on top of it.

If Numas knows the player characters (or anyone else) are going to the caves, he sends his mercenaries after them to locate the cave and stop anyone from breaking open the sarcophagus, at least until he knows how to destroy the monster for good.

**The Crypt-Thing of Khorsul, Undying Creation of Numas (blood wight):** CR 9; SZ L Undead; HD 12d12+36; hp 114; Init +6;



### The Mountains of Khorsul

The area is criss-crossed by goat-trails, many of which are nothing more than narrow ledges bordered by sheer drops. Heavy fog that obscures vision can roll down from the upper mountain slopes in minutes, and rockslides are a common danger. To make matters worse, several large packs of wolves hunt in these mountains.

For every half-hour of travel in the mountains, roll on the table below:

Roll	Encounter
1	Narrow ledge
2	Rockslide
3	Heavy fog
4	Pack of wolves
5	High pass
6-8	No encounter

**Heavy Fog:** A heavy fog appears in 1d6 rounds. The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance). The fog lasts for 3d10 rounds before it dissolves.

**High Pass:** Ascending to the highest slopes of low mountains, or most normal travel through high mountains, falls into this category. All nonacclimated creatures labor to breathe in the thin air at this altitude. Characters must succeed on a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or be fatigued. The fatigue ends when the character descends to an altitude with more air. Acclimated characters do not have to attempt the Fortitude save.

**Narrow Ledge:** The sloping trail passes a narrow ledge, slippery from recent rain or fog, which requires a successful Balance check (DC 14) to pass. There is a 20% chance of the presence of a field of shifting gravel, which increases the DC of Balance and Tumble checks by 5. Creatures failing their check fall 2d4×10 feet down into a chasm below. It takes a Climb check (DC 15) to climb out the chasm.

**Pack of Wolves:** A hungry pack of 1d6+10 wolves starts to track and hunt down the player characters. There is a 50% chance that the alpha male of the pack is a dire wolf. The pack flees if more than half its members are killed, or if the alpha male is slain.

**Rockslide:** Rocks fall from above in a 30-foot wide field. Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage at all if they make a Reflex save (DC 15). Characters in the slide zone who fail their saves are buried.

Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a Constitution check (DC 15). If it fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Characters who aren't buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs one ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. You may allow a buried character to free himself with a Strength check (DC 25).

Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 19; BAB/Grapple +6/+15; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5 plus wounding, claw); Full Atk +11/+11 melee (1d8+5 plus wounding, claw); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA engulf, wounding; SQ damage reduction 10/bludgeoning and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, resistance to fire 10, undead traits, +4 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 21, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Climb +20, Escape Artist +17, Listen +18, Move Silently +10, Search +16, Spot +18, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings). **Feats:** Alertness, Death's Blessing, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw).

**Tactics:** A blood wight enters combat slashing with its claws. Given a chance, it grabs the closest opponent and engulfs it, holding it inside its body until it drowns. Drowned foes are ejected from the blood wight's body into a heap on the ground (the blood wight later devours any creature it kills). A blood wight's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Engulf (Ex):** A blood wight can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The blood wight attempts a grapple check that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it





establishes a hold and claws its opponent with a +4 bonus on the attack roll.

Attacks that hit an engulfing blood wight deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim. An engulfed victim must hold its breath as long as it remains trapped or begin to drown (see the DMG for the rules on drowning). A trapped victim can break free with a successful grapple check. A Large blood wight's body can engulf 1 Medium, 2 Small, 4 Tiny, 16 Diminutive, or 32 Fine or smaller opponents.

**Wounding (Ex):** The damage dealt by a blood wight's claw attack causes a persistent wound that bleeds for 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding. The blood loss can be stopped by a Heal check (DC 16) or the application of a cure spell or some other healing magic. The check DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills:** Because its body is covered in blood, a blood wight can easily escape most bonds and confinements. It gains a +8 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks.

## Conclusion

The PCs may go to Castle Gasparus directly, or they may try to investigate the situation first. Several clues should suggest that not everything is as it seems.

If they go to the castle, the player characters can sneak in, or assault Gasparus' guards directly. The PCs ultimately face either Gasparus or Iskander or both, and these reveal the truth to the PCs; that Numas is the real sorcerer, and that the crypt-thing he created is hidden in the mountains. Gasparus will not give the amulet to the PCs in any event.

The PCs may either go back to the estate for a show-down with Numas (in which case Numas will be waiting for them with an ambush or some other treachery), or they may try to unleash the crypt-thing on Numas. In the latter case, Numas will have followed the party with a band of Susrahnite mercenaries, and there is a showdown in the caves as the PCs try to open the sarcophagus before they are overwhelmed by the mercenaries.

There is also the possibility that the player characters stumble upon the forest-trail near the bridge across the river Suliyah and meet Pavlas the goat-herder, who can take them directly to the secret cave, although in this case they are likely followed by Numas' mercenaries and the final showdown plays out much like the previous case.

If the PCs have reason to suspect early on that Numas is lying, they might decide to confront him before going to Castle Gasparus. Still, unless they find the secret sorcery room, it is hard to prove anything more than dishonesty. Numas has plenty of guards to hide behind, making him difficult to kill even if the PCs find out the truth. Once Numas decides that the player characters are not the useful pawns he thought them to be, he seeks to have them killed.

**If the PCs fail:** The player characters have little value to either of the two lords of the valley except as pawns and servants. Swift death awaits once they become useless, either from a dagger in the back or a poisoned chalice. Smart characters may decide to switch sides one or more times during the adventure to avoid such a fate.







# The Vault of Vigthrahotep

A detailed black and white engraving of an ancient Egyptian temple interior. The perspective is looking down a long, open-air colonnade. On both sides, massive papyrus-bundle columns are decorated with hieroglyphs and have statues of deities or pharaohs carved into their capitals. The columns are supported by a heavy entablature. In the center of the distance, a statue of a deity, possibly Osiris, stands on a pedestal under a small canopy. The ground is uneven and appears to be a dirt path. The sky is filled with clouds and several birds are shown in flight. The overall style is that of a 19th-century archaeological illustration.

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claim to the throne were soon slain or exiled, for the new queen was a witch who used curses and necromancy against her enemies. Having mastered an abominable rite of longevity, Nugga-Tikanda started a reign of terror which has lasted for two centuries.

### Adventure Synopsis

The player characters are hired by a group of Susrahnite traders who have found clues to the whereabouts of a lost gold mine. These traders are in fact inphidians, serpent-men, in disguise, survivors of a lost age who seek to free a serpent-king, the ancient Yigthrahotep, who lies slumbering in the prehuman vaults beneath the mine.

The PCs travel along with the “Susrahnites” through the desert and into the kingdom of Shoma. The final piece of the key to open the vault, which was re-sealed by the priests of the Ishrah, can be found in the temple of Katanga, the capital city of Shoma.

Reaching the lost mine, the PCs must deal with the Wamuba tribesmen and their mad witch-queen, then explore the tunnels and chambers beneath the mine. When the vault is found, the serpentmen drop their disguises and attempt to sacrifice the player characters to the awakened serpent-king Yigthrahotep.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started.

— A scholar among the PCs finds and studies a clay tablet that contains tantalizing hints of a lost gold mine in the jungles south of Shoma. The player characters set out on an expedition on their own. As they search for the keys to the lost mine, they are approached by a group of foreign merchants.

— The player characters are hired as mercenaries or caravan guards by foreign merchants who are travelling south. When the caravan reaches Shoma, it becomes apparent to the PCs that the merchants are looking for a lost gold mine somewhere in the jungle. The player characters are promised a share of the loot if they help find the lost mine.

## The Legend of the Purple Spires

The Ishrahnites wisely re-sealed the ancient vault they unearthed in their mines (see the Introduction), by placing powerful warding spells on the doors to prevent anyone from going into (or breaking out of!) the vault. But according to the laws of sorcery, there is no magic that cannot be undone, and for all seals there must exist a key.

The priests of the Ishrah therefore covered the vault doors with hundreds of arcane sigils and cuneiform script. Three of the symbols,

placed randomly among the other sigils, are the keys to opening the vault. To preserve the keys (as they must be, otherwise the seal is voided), the priests carved each symbol on separate objects, which were then handed on to different guardians and carried away. Over the centuries, the keys changed hands multiple times, and eventually their significance was lost.

The three objects each containing a part of the key to the vault are a clay tablet, a golden figurine, and a marble flagstone. The clay tablet is assumed to somehow fall into the possession of the player characters (see below), while the golden figurine has been found by a group of serpent-men. The marble flagstone is currently set in the floor of the inner shrine of Nataka in the city of Katanga.

### The Clay Tablet of Zhaol

The clay tablet written by the priests of the Ishrah eventually found its way to the city of Zhaol the Accursed (so called by its neighbouring peoples for its wickedness) where the stone rested for centuries. Only recently, the tablet came to the city of Zul-Bazzir through a merchant, or perhaps a thief or sorcerer. It is assumed that the player characters start this adventure with the tablet already in their possession, but a separate introductory adventure could easily be created wherein the PCs find or steal the tablet.

The tablet, little more than a square foot in size, has now broken up into three pieces, of which the largest is missing (and is, in fact, forever destroyed).

The first remaining piece is covered with cuneiform script. It requires a successful Descripher Script check (DC 25) to read what turns out to be a myth-poem:







*Men of bronze, masters of fire  
Kings of black jungles beneath a purple spire  
Mad blind hands reach into the night  
To plumb abysses dead to human sight  
The Sons of Ishrah adorned with glittering  
stones  
The earth yields riches but claims black  
bones  
Tunnels in the earth, and vaults, too  
Secrets of a lost age remain taboo  
The one-eyed keeper of secrets knows the  
way  
To the ivory goddess who holds the key all  
must pray*

Further research on the “Sons of Ishrah”, for example with a Knowledge (history) check (DC 20), makes it apparent that the myth-poem refers to the area which is now the black kingdom of Shoma. A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 22) also reveals that the “ivory goddess” is Nataka, a female deity whose temple is in Katanga. If the PCs lack the appropriate knowledge skills, they might seek out a sage to help them study the clay tablet.

The other remaining fragment contains a single cuneiform symbol, whose large size makes it of special significance. This is, of course, one of the keys to the vault of Yigthra-hotep, although the player characters have no way of knowing this yet.

### Three Men of Susrah

Whether the player characters begin to prepare for an expedition to the south or not, they are eventually approached by a group of three men, claiming to be merchants of Susrah. Through rumors and a network of spies and informants, they have learned that the PCs have the clay tablet.

The chief merchant, who calls himself Ursib, carries a small, 1-foot tall golden figurine of Aklathu, a minor god in the pantheon of Susrah. The statuette is in the shape of a potbelly, bearded dwarf with deformed, perhaps even retarded, facial features and a wicked grin. Also of note, the left eyesocket of the figurine is empty, while the right socket is set with a small gem. Carved under the feet of the

figurine is a cuneiform symbol. It only takes an Intelligence check (DC 12) to figure out that this symbol is somehow related to the symbol on the clay tablet (see above).

Ursib does not initially show the figurine to the player characters. Rather, he states flatly that he and his fellow merchants are looking for a lost gold mine somewhere to the south of the black kingdom of Shoma, which is supposedly sealed by sorcery that requires knowledge of three sacred symbols to open. Since both the merchants and the PCs have a part of the puzzle, Ursib suggests that they cooperate to find the mine, and split evenly any treasure found. The player characters have (or at least are assumed to have) expert fighting skills, while the merchants have money to pay for mounts, supplies and equipment. Play out these negotiations as you see fit.

If he gets a chance to study the clay tablet, Ursib concludes that the third and final part of the key is kept in the temple of Katanga. If the player characters are on their own, or refuse to let the merchants study the tablet, this information could be given to the PCs through a sage (unless they figure it out from the poem themselves, of course).

**“Merchants of Susrah”, male inphidian “Walkers-Among-Men” Rog3 (3):** CR 5; SZ M; HD 4d8+8 plus 3d6+6; hp 44; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+0 no armor, +5 Dex, +4 natural), touch 15 (+5 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+0 no armor, +4 natural); BAB/Grapple +6/+9; Atk +11 melee (1d4+3, kukri, 18-20/x2) or +11 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+3, kukri, 18-20/x2) or +11/+6 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA Blinding Spray, Poison, Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ Darkvision (60 ft.), Alter Self, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Craft (poisonmaking) +8, Disguise +7, Hide +12, Gather Information +7, Move Silently +12, Tumble +11. **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Yalothan, Susrahnite.

### Secret History: The Children of Zanthiss

Aeons ago, a race of highly intelligent ophidians known as the “serpent-kings” ruled the primeval jungles of the continent. It is said that the great demonic serpent-god Zanthiss created this race from ordinary reptiles, and taught them the secret of sorcery. The serpent-kings used ape-men and primitive humans as slaves, and crossbreeding is said to have produced the inphidians, who had the bodies of men and the heads and hands of serpents, and some among them had the sorcerous ability to disguise as true men.

A sudden slave uprising, perhaps assisted by disloyal serpent-men, caused the decline and fall of the serpent-kings. They were driven back into the dwindling jungles of Yalotha, and Zanthiss himself is said to have been banished to a frozen star when his cyclopean black fane was sacked and destroyed at the height of the uprising.

Only in isolated pockets did there remain serpent-men, servitors of Zanthiss who were able to blend into human society. The once-great and immortal serpent-kings went into hibernation to survive, sleeping through the ages in sealed vaults beneath the earth.



**Possessions:** Merchants' clothing, kukri, 3 daggers, 100 gp, golden figurine of Akhlatu (carried by Ursib).

**Description:** Dressed as regular caravan-masters, these inphidians are similar to normal men in all respects. It is only when they shed their magical disguises that their true nature is revealed: Blue-green scaly skin, a snake-like head, and arms which end in viper-heads instead of hands.

**Tactics:** The walkers-among-men stay disguised as humans as long as possible, dropping their disguises only when they are sure that they are going to kill their surprised victims. They open combat using their blinding spray, then Tumble to get behind and flank opponents, so that they can sneak attack.

**Blinding Spray (Ex):** Once every 1d4 rounds, a common inphidian can spew forth a line of milky-white liquid that causes blindness (as the *blindness* spell) for 6 rounds to any creature struck. A Reflex save (DC 15) negates the effects. The save is Constitution-based. The spray has a range of 20 feet.

**Poison (Ex):** A common inphidian delivers a debilitating poison with a successful bite from its snake-hands. The save is Constitution-based. Common Inphidian Poison: Injury, Fortitude DC 15 negates, initial damage 1d4 Strength, secondary damage 1d4 Strength.

**Note:** The breed of inphidians called the "walkers-among-men" are similar to common inphidians (see Tome of Horrors 2), except that they have the ability to use *alter self* as a spell-like ability at will to assume human form. If slain, they revert to their true form.

**Unmasking the Serpents:** Although the player characters are likely to distrust the "merchants", the true nature of the serpent-men is revealed only near the end of the adventure. That said, it is possible for the PCs to discover the truth earlier. For example, if a "merchant" is killed, he reverts back to his true, serpent-headed self. The DM may also allow especially suspicious player characters to use Sense Motive checks (DC 30) to try to see through the (magical) disguises of the serpent-men.

If the "merchants" are unmasked, there will probably be a violent confrontation with the PCs. Even if the player characters defeat the serpent-men, the PCs are unlikely to discover the true purpose of the false merchants. The serpent-men would rather fight to the death than surrender and reveal that they are seeking to free the ancient serpent-king Yigthrahotep (in which case the PCs might decide to stay away from the mines altogether).

Thus, barring any additional research by the player characters, it is likely that the PCs continue on their quest to find the "lost gold mine" even if the true nature of the "merchants" is revealed.

## Across the Desert

The expedition must travel the long way from Zul-Bazzir to Katanga. The first leg of the journey is through the trackless sand dunes of the al-Khazi Desert, then through the desert wasteland known as the Desolation of Elder Kuth, and finally into the Parched Lands, a bleak savannah teeming with wild beasts.

Refer to the description of the al-Khazi desert in "The Spider-God's Bride" for details of terrain and climate, the dangers of hunger and thirst, and random encounters on the first leg of the journey.

It is assumed that the player characters and their allies, including the merchants of Susrah and any Khazistani soldiers or mercenaries following them, travel on horses or camels. Additional pack camels are probably required to carry extra water, supplies and equipment through the desert.

Under normal circumstances, it takes around 35 days for a party on horseback or camel to reach Katanga (700 miles from Zul-Bazzir, through trackless desert and plains).

As the expedition travels across the desert, the DM should roll for random encounters or insert appropriate encounters as he sees fit. There are a few special events which should happen in the listed sequence, as described below.

### Wrath of the Khamsin

Somewhere past halfway to Katanga, an oppressive wind suddenly blows up. A character who makes a Survival check (DC 15) realizes that this is the dreaded sandstorm known among the local nomads as the *khamsin*.

In game terms, this is a greater duststorm (a duststorm accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds) that deals 1d3 points of nonlethal damage per round to anyone caught out in the open without shelter and also poses a choking hazard (see the DMG).

Fortunately, the howling winds also reveal a range of rocky outcroppings, about half a mile (2500 feet) away, where the PCs can seek shelter. Horses and camels with a base speed of 50 feet can run 200 feet per round, reaching shelter in 12-13 rounds. Heavily loaded steeds might move slower. To reach shelter in time, it might be necessary (depending on the current hit points of the PCs and the damage inflicted by the sandstorm) to spur the mounts to greater speed with Ride checks (DC 15). Note that this deals damage to the mount, in addition to the damage caused by the sandstorm itself.

**Development:** Regardless of whether the player characters manage to reach shelter, a number of the Khazistani soldiers who accompany the PCs, as well as several pack camels or horses carrying water and equipment, are killed by the raging sandstorm (it is assumed that the NPCs were blinded by the storm and lost sight of the hills, or that they had too few hit points to reach shelter in time).





As the storm recedes, the player characters find that the only other survivors are the three merchants of Susrah and 1d3 of the Khazistani soldiers. There is little water left and the party eventually faces the danger of death by thirst. Exactly how much water is left after the sandstorm is left up to the DM to determine. Nevertheless, it is too late to turn back, and the merchants of Susrah insist that the party should continue south.

### Slavers from the East

The expedition (or rather, what remains of it after the sandstorm) eventually reaches the Parched Lands, which is the savannah between the Desolation of Elder Kuth and the kingdom of Shoma. The terrain changes from a sandy wasteland to dry plains dotted with rock outcroppings, areas of short grass, and the occasional tree.

As the PCs and their companions cross this landscape, they spot a column of people moving in the distance, going from west to east, directly crossing the path of the PCs. Assuming the player characters move closer, it becomes apparent that this is a band of mounted slavers herding a number of slaves towards the east.

These slavers are in the employ of the infamous Slave Sultans of al-Qazir, a notorious fortress-city of Zadj. There are 12 Zadjite slavers on riding horses led by a slavelord riding a Zadjite light warhorse. They have captured 32 slaves, among which are 12 men and 20 women, mostly of Shoma origin but also some Azimbans (1d3 men and 1d8 women — male/female Shoma/Azimban Com1).

**Makhtisar, Zadjite Slavelord, male Zadjite Ftr7:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d10+7; hp 51; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 chain shirt, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 chain shirt); BAB/Grapple +7/+11; Atk +12 melee (1d10+6, bastard sword, 19-20/x2) or +11 melee (1d3+4, whip, 20/x2, reach 15 ft.) or +9 ranged (entanglement, net, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d10+6, bastard sword, 19-20/x2) or +11/+6 melee (1d3+4, whip, 20/x2, reach 15 ft.) or +9/+4 ranged (entanglement, net, range increment 10 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Intimidate +12, Jump +14, Ride +12, Swim +14. **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Track, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

**Languages:** Zadjite, Azimban.

**Possessions:** Chain shirt, bastard sword, net, whip, 24 gp.

**Description:** Clad in expensive clothing beneath his armor, this is a broad-faced, tall man

with a hoarse voice. He is ruthless and seeks only to maximize profit.

**Tactics:** Makhtisar attempts to disarm or trip opponents with his whip, or entangling them using his net. Only if this fails does he fall back on his sword-skills.

**Warhorse, Light:** CR 1; hp 22.

**Zadjite Slavers, male Zadjite Ftr2 (12):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+2; hp 14; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, scimitar, 18-20/x2) or +4 ranged (entanglement, net, range increment 10 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Ride +7. **Feats:** Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

**Languages:** Zadjite.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, scimitar, net, 1d10 gp.

**Description:** Dressed in simple grey kaftans, with leather armor on top, and red turbans wound around their heads.

**Tactics:** These hardened men work in teams; some use their scimitars against armed and armored opponents, while others throw their nets to entangle foes.

**Horse, Light (12):** CR 1; hp 19.

**Development:** Assuming the party suffered the fury of the sandstorm and that several of their mounts and supplies were destroyed during that event, the PCs might be weakened by heat, hunger and thirst when they encounter the slavers.

If the PCs hold back, the slavers ignore them and continue on towards the east. On the other hand, defeating the slavers can provide the player characters with fresh mounts, water, supplies, weapons, and the gratitude of any liberated slaves. But keep in mind that if the PCs do liberate the slaves, some of which are severely dehydrated already, they must take care of them and make sure they can return safely home (to Katanga or Zimballah, depending on their origin).

## The Nameless Oasis

Approximately 100 miles north of Katanga is a small oasis that is the first (or the last) stopping-point for many caravans bound out of (or into) the city of Katanga. There is a small pool of fresh water here, ringed by palm trees.

Roll on the provided encounter table to determine what happens when the PCs approach the oasis.



## Nameless Oasis Random Encounters

Roll	Encounter
1	Merchant caravan
2	Wild animal
3	Fouled or poisoned water
4	Curse
5	Ghost
6	Tentacled horror
7	Ambush
8	Drought
9	Narcotic flowers
10	Sunken or buried treasure
11	Feud
12	Treachery

**Ambush:** A group of 2d8 bandits (male Ftr1/Rog1) or slavers (male Ftr2) are hiding in the undergrowth near the oasis pool, waiting to rob or enslave those who approach.

**Curse:** A curse of madness affects those who sleep in the oasis or drink of its waters. If a Will save (DC 15) is failed, the character will either try to drown himself in the pool, or suddenly attack his friends in a mad rage (50% chance of either).

**Drought:** The waters of the oasis have dried up. The oasis is strewn with the bleached bones of animals and men.

**Feud:** Members of two rival nomad clans have entrenched themselves on different sides of the oasis. There are 2d6 nomads (male Nom3) in each group, and each tries to recruit the PCs to their cause. Those who ignore the feuding groups risk getting caught in the crossfire between them.

**Fouled or Poisoned Water:** The water is either naturally fouled (perhaps by a sunken animal corpse) or deliberately poisoned (50% chance of either). Characters who drink the water must make a Fortitude save or be infected with blinding sickness (DC 16) or fall unconscious from oil of taggit poisoning (DC 15).

**Ghost:** The oasis is haunted by a single wraith (70% chance) or a spectre (30% chance). Note that both lack the ability to create spawn. Encounters with the ghost happen only at night.

**Merchant Caravan:** A caravan with 3d6 camels, carrying 100 gp worth of furs, raw metal, lumber, wine or pottery per camel is camped at the oasis, along with 1 guard (male Ftr1) per 3 camels. There is a 25% chance that the caravan has suffered a bandit attack in the last 24 hours, and that the assistant caravan-master was abducted, in which case the caravan-master (male Exp4) offers a reward for his or her return.

**Narcotic Flowers:** A blue lotus-flower occasionally blooms in the oasis, causing nearby creatures to make a Fortitude save (DC 17) or fall asleep for 2d6 hours with strange and sensuous dreams. Affected creatures may awake at the mercy of bandits, cultists or wild animals.

**Sunken or Buried Treasure:** With a successful Search check (DC 20), the PCs stumble upon 500 gp worth of treasure, either at the bottom of the pool, or buried beneath the sand. There is a 50% chance that the treasure is associated with a curse, ghost, bandits, or a tentacled horror (see other descriptions).

**Tentacled Horror:** A loathsome creature lurks in the oasis, preying upon visitors. The horror is either buried in the sand (in which case it is a dust digger from Tome of Horrors), or in the pool itself (in which case it has statistics similar to a giant octopus).

**Treachery:** There is a camp at the oasis which appears inhabited by 2d6 friendly nomads. In reality, these are cultists (male Rog2/Sor1) or slavers (male Ftr2) who offer the PCs food and hospitality, while waiting for an opportune moment to enslave the characters (and sacrifice them to their dark gods, in the case of the cultists). The PCs might be served drinks laced with sleeping-poison, backstabbed after their weapons have been stolen or removed, or attacked while sleeping.

**Wild Animal:** A pride of 1d6+4 lions or 1d10+6 hyenas come to the oasis seeking food.





## The Gold of Katanga

Katanga is the only city of importance in the kingdom of Shoma; the lesser “cities” are merely crude villages scattered across the grassy plains. South and east of Katanga are the Shining Hills, jungle-covered highlands that abound with gold.

Approaching the city, great herds of cattle can be seen; these belong to the king himself and many of the animals wear ornaments of beaten gold. Each herd consists of 1d4 x 100 animals; about 10% of these wear gold worth 20-50 gp each. The herds are protected by Shoma spearmen (one spearman for every five cattle).

**Royal Cattle-Herders, Spearmen of Katanga, male Shoma Bbn2:** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+2; hp 19; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6, shortspear, 20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +5, Survival +5. **Feats:** Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Run (b).

**Languages:** Shoma.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, heavy wooden shield, shortspear, shortbow, golden armband (worth 10 gp).

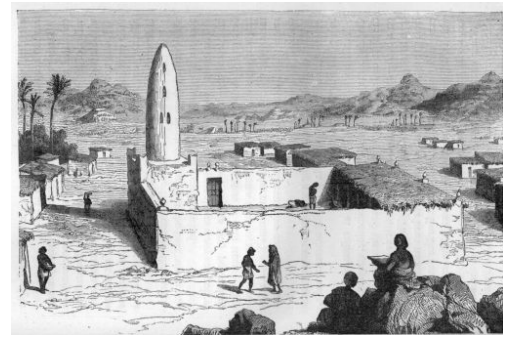
**Description:** The Shoma spearmen wear headdresses of ostrich plumes and carry large wooden shields covered with rhinoceros-hide.

**Tactics:** These warriors use their bows from a distance, then enter a rage and attack with their spears. They can quickly close with their enemies due to their great speed.

### The City of Katanga

Katanga is surrounded by a wooden palisade, inside which over 8,000 people huddle together in wretched huts. The spacious inner city (which includes the royal palace and cattle pens, the temple of Nataka, and the goldsmiths' workshops) is ringed by a great mud-brick wall. The inner city gates are adorned with massive ivory tusks taken from the greatest specimens of elephants; there are 12 spearmen at each gate who make sure that only nobles, royal guards, priests, merchants and foreign dignitaries are allowed entry.

The average citizens of Katanga are poor, but free, for the rulers of the Shoma do not keep slaves. However, people do not live to be old, so a large percentage of the population



are children and young adults. Most live in buildings of sun-dried mud with roofs of straw along with their animals, such as goats and fowls.

The current king is Mashota (male Shoma Bbn8/Ari2), a middle-aged man with many wives and several young heirs, all fighting for the king's attention and favors. Should the PCs for some reason seek an audience, it would be unwise to mention their mission to find and loot the lost mine; the king's soothsayers and priests will warn against disturbing the sealed mines, and beside, the greedy Mashota would want the gold for himself were anyone to break the ancient taboos.

## The Temple of the White Goddess

The ancient Ishrahnites worshipped a mother-goddess known as Belet-Lil. The members of that race are long dead, but reverence for the white goddess has survived among the upper classes of Shoma, who know her as Nataka. In the inner city of Katanga, there is a great circular tower which is home to the black priests who study and preserve the ancient lore of the Ishrahnites who once sealed one of the mines with mighty spells.

A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 15) reveals that Belet-Lil and Nataka are equivalent, even though the name and the rites of the latter have been garbled by centuries of local language and traditions.

**Development:** The third part of the key to open the sealed vault of Yigthrahotep is a symbol carved on a marble flagstone in the temple of Nataka. If Ursib and his henchmen is with the PCs, he asks the player characters to go into the temple to find and copy the symbol. (While it would be possible for one of the “merchants”, as a serpent-man, to take the shape of and impersonate a priest, this would

### The Temple of Nataka

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 20 feet.

**Lighting:** All rooms of the temple are lit with torches set in wall brackets of carved ivory.



obviously reveal their true nature to the player characters, and besides, the serpent-men prefer to let the PCs deal with the guardians and traps of the temple.)

Of course, non-priests are not allowed into the inner shrine, so the player characters must use bribes, stealth, create some diversion, or even risk a direct assault on the temple to gain access. If using bribes, Diplomacy checks can be used to determine the reactions of the priests (assume an initial attitude of Unfriendly, with a circumstance modifier applied to the check based on the size of the bribe). A successful Gather Information check (DC 25) points the PCs in the direction of a corrupt priest named N'Kruma (see Area 4) who might be willing (if the price is right) to drug one of the temple gate guards at night, allowing the party to enter the sanctum.

### 1. Temple Compound

The temple is an ancient stone tower, circular in shape, four stories and 80 feet tall. The tower is surrounded by a 15 feet tall wall with three gates. One priest (see Area 4 for statistics) is always posted at each gate, day and night.

During the day, both priests and visitors to the temple can be found wandering around in the spacious yard in front of the tower. In the southeastern corner of the compound is a set of great wooden drums, which the temple priests employ to communicate with fellow priests in the villages of Shoma using the secret language of the talking drums.

### 2. Entrance

A huge wooden door is the only entrance into the temple tower; during the day, this door is wide open and even at night it is rarely locked. The high priest relies on the guards (and the temple guardian; see Area 7) to keep out those who attempt to enter the temple unlawfully.



### 3. Chamber of Worship

The worshippers of the ivory goddess Nataka (who include the nobles, merchants and artisans of Katanga, but not the common people) are only admitted into the ground floor of the tower. In this great audience chamber, the priests accept the offerings and gifts of the faithful, in return for blessings and omens. Occasionally, if a noteworthy visitor comes to the temple, the high priest makes an appearance and utters an important prophecy after the sacrifice of a gold-adorned bull.

The walls of the torch-lit chamber are painted white and decorated with brightly-colored patterns. Along the walls are flat stone altars with small piles of skulls, having once belonged to important people such as nobles and priests.

### 4. Priests' Quarters

The shaven-headed priests live in large common rooms on the first floor of the tower. Each room holds six priests and their personal belongings. Among the priests, there is an individual named N'Kruma who is willing to betray his fellow priests if the reward is great enough (see above).

**Priests of Nataka, male Shoma Sor2 (24 total):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d4+3; hp 8; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, light mace, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +5, Heal +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perform (ritual) +6, Spellcraft +6. **Feats:** Acolyte, Great Fortitude, Run (b), Toughness.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +1 Int): 0 — *arcane mark, ghost sound, resistance*; 1st — *command, fertility charm, mage armor*.

**Languages:** Shoma, Azimban.

**Possessions:** Green robe, light mace, golden armbands (worth 10 gp), 1d10 gp.

**Description:** Shaven-headed, dressed in flowing green robes and adorned with golden armbands, these priests perform the day-to-day duties in the temple.

**Tactics:** The priests rely on their great numbers if facing intruders. Some cast mage armor and attack with their maces, while others try to cast command on opponents to disable them.

**N'Kruma, Corrupt Priest of Nataka, male Shoma Sor6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d4+3; hp 23; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk +7 melee





(1d6+1, light mace, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +10, Heal +10, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Spellcraft +11.  
**Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Run (b), Toughness, Weapon Finesse (light mace).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int): 0 — arcane mark, ghost sound, prestidigitation, resistance; 1st — charm person, command, fertility charm, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd — aid, augury, delay poison; 3rd — hold person, prayer, suggestion.

**Languages:** Shoma, Azimban, Mazanian.

**Possessions:** Green robe with gold trim, masterwork light mace, large golden earrings (worth 20 gp each).

**Description:** In his early thirties, N'Kruma is tall and gaunt, and very quick. He is in fact a spy of the southern realm of Mazania, although he will take a bribe from anyone if he thinks he can get away with it.

**Tactics:** N'Kruma avoids battle if possible, using his Sinister Presence ability. He prefers to use spells from a distance, and quickly flees if he feels cornered.

### 5. Antechamber

At the top of the stairway to the second floor hangs a black silken curtain. Behind the curtain is a small antechamber. At the other end of the antechamber is a locked wooden door inset with ivory pieces in the shape of a skull. Only the high priest, Yama-Thembu (see Area 8), has the key to this door.

### 6. Inner Sanctum

The door to this room is locked. The inner sanctum is a large chamber. It appears to be square, with black silken tapestries hanging from ceiling to floor, but the sanctum does in fact fill the entire second floor of the tower except for the antechamber (Area 5). Standing on a circular dais is a life-size ivory statue of a voluptuous woman, seemingly carved from a single piece of ivory.

The marble floor around the dais is covered with cuneiform in archaic, proto-Susrahnite script. A Decipher Script check (DC 25) is required to read the words: “Praise the Ivory Goddess! Praise the Mother Goddess! Her lips are sweet, life is in her mouth.” Those foolish enough to kiss the statue or otherwise touch her lips discover that the opposite is true, for the statue’s mouth has been smeared with a lethal contact poison (Fortitude DC 20, initial

and secondary damage 3d6 Con) by the priests to prevent such blasphemies.

One of the flagstones on the floor is of a slightly different coloration than the rest (because it is far older), which can be discovered with a Spot check (DC 15). This flagstone contains a single symbol which is the third part of the key to Yigthrahotep’s vault.

There are several incense burners in the room, and the whole chamber smells slightly of lotus fumes. A chair is set near the center of the room, with its back to the statue. This chair is used by female oracles who, according to the teachings of the priests, are possessed by Nataka and speak prophecies from the goddess.

### 7. Temple Guardian

Hidden behind the silken tapestries of the sanctum is the monstrous guardian of the temple. A terrible four-armed demon-ape is chained to the western wall, but the leash is long enough to allow it to roam freely on the whole second floor of the tower. It obeys only the high priest, who has instructed it to kill anyone else entering the sanctum. The demon-ape scents intruders and tears down one of the three large tapestries as it attacks.

**Temple Guardian, Demon-Ape (girallon):** CR 6; hp 58.

### 8. High Priest’s Quarters

The high priest, Yama-Thembu, occupies a spacious chamber on the topmost floor. A curtain separates his bedroom and the study, from where he administers the temple and the cult. During the day, there is a 50% chance that Yama-Thembu is here; otherwise he is in the royal palace, offering his advice to the king. At night, the high priest can be found sleeping in his bedchamber, but he keeps a trained panther in the study to warn him of intruders. A small wooden box (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17) in the high priest’s study contains 2,000 gp worth of gold ingots; hanging on the walls and heaped on Yama-Thembu’s bed are half a dozen lion and leopard furs (worth 75 gp apiece).

**Development:** The player characters do not really need to enter the high priest’s chamber to complete their mission within the temple, but they might be tempted to explore the upper levels of the tower. Depending on how the PCs deal with the temple guardian (see Area 7), the noise from battle might alert the high priest (as well as the common priests) to the party’s presence. If caught trespassing the temple, any surviving intruders are hauled to the royal palace and likely face a death sentence unless quick wits (Bluff or Diplomacy) or brute force is employed to avoid it (it is also possible that Ursib and his henchmen can help the PCs to escape).

On the other hand, if the player characters are detected but manage to defeat and/or kill



the priests of the temple, they become outlaws and will be hunted by members of the king's own personal guard. In this case, it would be best to flee the city of Katanga as soon as possible.

**Yama-Thembu, High Priest of Nataka, male Shoma Sorg:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 9d4+21; hp 45; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +13, Concentration +14, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +16, Diplomacy +13, Heal +14, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (religion) +16, Spellcraft +16. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Dodge, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Run (b), Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +4 Int): 0 — *arcane mark, ghost sound, prestidigitation, resistance*; 1st — *charm person, command, fertility charm, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd — *aid, augury, delay poison*; 3rd — *hold person, prayer, suggestion*; 4th — *confusion, divination, fear*; 5th — *dominate person, dream, symbol of sleep*.

**Languages:** Shoma, Azimban, Zadjite, Yarammonite, Mazanian.

**Possessions:** White robe with gold trim, quarterstaff, golden pectoral (worth 150 gp), key to inner sanctum.

**Description:** The high priest is middle-aged and potbellied. He has great influence at court and has the king's ear and protection.

**Tactics:** Yama-Thembu is no melee combatant, relying solely on his spells, acolytes, and trained pet to protect him.

**Panther (black leopard):** CR 2; hp 19.

## 9. Temple Library

The shelves in this room are filled with clay tablets inscribed by the long-dead priests of Belet-Lil. Many of the tablets have not yet been deciphered by the black priests. A character who spends 6d10 minutes searching the library and makes a successful Decipher Script check (DC 25) gains a basic understanding of the history of the Ishrah as described in the introduction to the adventure, except (of course) the last part about the coming of the Wamuba tribe, which happened after the clay tablets were inscribed.

Also, with a successful Search check (DC 25), a clay tablet containing 1d3 randomly determined spells can be found in the library.

## Beneath the Purple Spire

After their visit to the temple of the ivory goddess, the player characters have learned the last piece of the secret that enables them to re-open the sealed mines of the Ishrah. From the city of Katanga, the expedition must continue into the jungled hills south of the city.

### Into the Jungle

The uplands south and east of Katanga are known as the Shining Hills. Like the Ishrahites before them, the Shoma people operate several gold mines in these hills, all owned by the king and protected by his loyal spearmen.

To reach the lost mine, the player characters must travel due south of Katanga, into trackless, jungle-covered hills. Horses and camels are useless in such terrain; but mules or donkeys are a good alternative that can be used to carry supplies and equipment through the rugged hill terrain.

Vines, roots, and short bushes cover much of the ground. A space covered with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way.

The climate of the Shining Hills is very hot. Characters must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armor of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per hour).

Refer to the following encounter table for random encounters in the Shining Hills. Each day, an encounter occurs on a roll of 1-8 on 1d20. Roll 1d12 to determine the exact nature of the encounter.

The maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 2d8 x 10 feet. The background noise in the jungle makes Listen checks more difficult, increasing the DC of the check by 2 per 10 feet, not 1 (but note that Move Silently is also more difficult in undergrowth).

### The Village of the Wamuba

The lost mine of the Ishrahites is approximately 150 miles south of Katanga. Treat the terrain as trackless hills, covered with jungle. A "purple spire", actually the ruins of a small fortress built from purple stone, marks the site of the mine (although the actual mine entrance is overgrown by vines and hidden from sight).

The ruined fortress stands on the eastern slope of a jungled valley. A black tribe known as the Wamuba settled in the valley two cen-





### Shining Hills Random Encounters

Roll	Encounter
1	Disease
2	Insect swarm
3	Fungi
4	Carnivorous tree
5	Giant dire frog
6	Constrictor snake
7	Heavy rain and flood
8	Rockslide
9	Monstrous spider
10	Carnivorous ape
11	Native tribesmen
12	Mazanian warband

**Carnivorous Ape:** This aggressive band of 1d3+2 man-eating apes attack by jumping down from the trees above the party.

**Carnivorous Tree:** A single assassin vine uses its long, tentacle-like main vine to grab and strangle a passing victim, while using its lesser vines to entangle others. It takes a Spot check (DC 20) to detect the assassin vine before it strikes.

**Disease:** The characters are exposed to a tropical disease while passing a mosquito-infested area. The disease is similar to the red ache (Fortitude DC 15, incubation 1d3 days, damage 1d6 Str). If the initial saving throw succeeds, the disease has no effect. Otherwise, the character takes damage after the incubation period. Once per day afterward, the character must make a successful Fortitude saving throw to avoid repeated damage. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that the character has fought off the disease and recovers, taking no more damage. These Fortitude saving throws can be rolled secretly so that the player doesn't know whether the disease has taken hold.

**Fungi:** A large patch of 1d3+1 violet fungi are found in the moist and dark shade of a rotted tree.

**Constrictor Snake:** Constrictor snakes usually are not aggressive and flee when confronted, especially if Ursib and the other serpent-men are with the party.

**Giant Dire Frog:** A pair of large, feral amphibians with razor-sharp teeth and dark mottled skin with black splotches leap out from hiding in a marshy area. See the Tome of Horrors for statistics.

**Heavy Rain and Flood:** A massive downpour of rain causes severe flooding of a nearby river. Characters are caught in the river stream and must make Swim checks (DC 20) every round to avoid going under. If a character gets a check result of 5 or more over the minimum necessary, he arrests his motion by catching a rock, tree limb, or bottom snag — he is no longer being carried along by the flow of the water. Escaping the rapids by reaching the bank requires three Swim checks (DC 20) in a row. Characters arrested by a rock, limb, or snag can't escape under their own power unless they strike out into the water and attempt to swim their way clear. Other characters can rescue them as if they were trapped in quicksand (see the DMG).

**Insect Swarm:** A centipede swarm approaches the party's campsite. The swarm is immune to weapon damage, but a lit torch swung as an improvised weapon deals 1d3 points of fire damage per hit. Also, a lit lantern can be used as a thrown weapon, dealing 1d4 points of fire damage to all creatures in squares adjacent to where it breaks.

**Mazanian Warband:** A raiding-band from the southern realm of Mazania, consisting of 2d6 x 10 female warriors (Ftr2), wearing leather armor and helmets set with ostrich feathers. They are armed with clubs, javelins and composite shortbows. Their leader is a female 6th-level fighter with rhino-hide armor and armed with a dire flail. The Mazanians seek loot and the capture of male slaves.

**Monstrous Spider:** A colony of 1d4+1 large monstrous spiders have spun several webs to trap the unwary. A Spot check (DC 20) is required to avoid stumbling into the webs.



**Native Tribesmen:** This is a band of 1d10+10 native warriors, unrelated to the Wamuba tribe. Their initial attitude is hostile. They are 2nd-level barbarians, armed with shortspears and carrying large wooden shields. Their leader is a 4th-level barbarian armed with a great-club.

**Rockslide:** A sudden rockslide threatens to bury one or more of the party members. A character can spot the danger with a successful Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Craft (stonemasonry) check (DC 20). Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage at all if they make a Reflex save (DC 15). Characters in the slide zone who fail their saves are buried.

Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a Constitution check (DC 15). If it fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Characters who aren't buried can dig out their friends. In 1 minute, using only her hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs one ton (2,000 pounds). Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand. You may allow a buried character to free himself with a Strength check (DC 25).

turies ago, clearing away the vegetation in the eastern part of the valley and constructing a wooden palisade across the valley floor. They built their small huts of wood and mud inside the palisade, in the shadow of the purple ruins. The tribe avoided the ancient fortress, believing it to be cursed, but the chieftain's oldest wife, Nugga-Tikanda, secretly delved into the ruins. It was whispered that she learned the dark arts of witchcraft from the dead spirits of the Ishrah within the ruins. Not long after, the chieftain died from a sudden wasting disease, and Nugga-Tikanda seized rulership of the tribe.

The Wamuba live in almost total isolation from the outside world. There are currently around 300 members of the tribe; two-thirds are adult warriors and the rest are young boys. If the player characters enter the village, they soon notice that there are no women to be seen anywhere. Also, due to inbreeding (see below), many of the tribesmen have gross physical defects, such as missing or bulging eyes, weirdly twisted arms or feet, purple boils or cysts, extra or missing digits on hands or feet, and so on. The majority are still capable warriors, however.

*Note:* The Wamuba use the same statistics as the Shoma race, except that they do not get the racial +10 bonus to Speed.

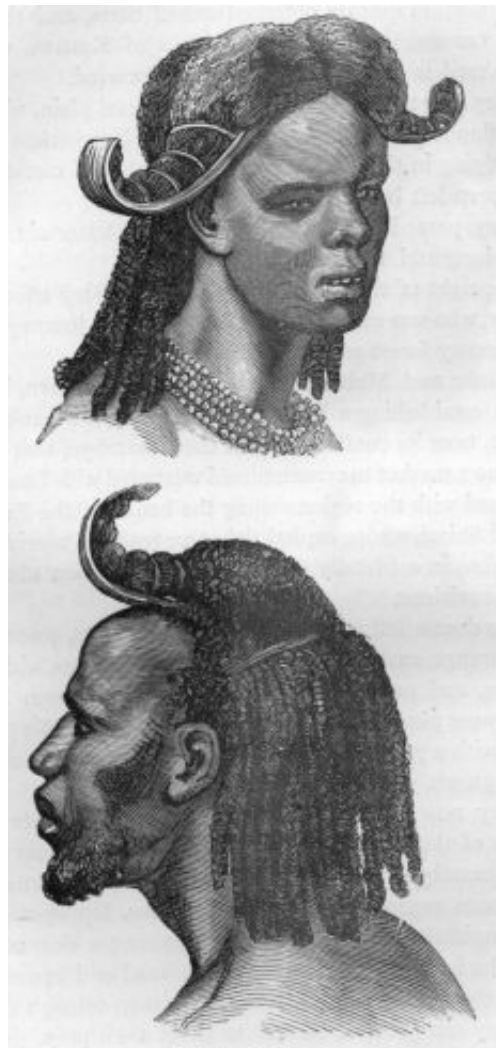
The important non-player characters of the village include:

— Nugga-Tikanda, Witch-Queen of the Wamuba: Nugga-Tikanda is the despotic female ruler of the tribe. She is in fact a two hundred year old crone, sustained by sorcery, although her physical form is young but massively obese. The witch-queen is not wholly sane.

— Tibaa, Tribal Champion and Royal Consort: Tibaa, a powerful warrior, is Nugga-Tikanda's current favorite, champion and consort. He enjoys his current position and acts ruthlessly in order to preserve it against any potential rivals.

— Mwanza "the Hunchback", Village Elder and Chief Steward: Mwanza is an old, hunchbacked man who oversees the village and acts as the queen's messenger. He speaks a basic form of the Shoma language, which allows him to communicate with strangers.

**Development:** As the PCs approach within a mile or two of the valley, they are spotted by Wamuba sentries who hide in the dense







undergrowth. Imitating animal sounds, the sentries alert the tribe to the presence of intruders. Mwanza and the villagers have orders to bring any foreigners back to the village, if necessary as captives. A band of 2d10+30 Wamuba warriors surrounds the party and herd the PCs along back behind the palisade wall.

Unless the PCs resist, they are escorted to the village behind the palisade wall by the tribal warriors. Once inside the village, the strangers are directed into a hut where some simple food has been prepared for them. Mwanza appears and tells the PCs that they must select a “champion” among themselves, who is to “entertain” the “queen” of the tribe, Nugga-Tikanda. If the player characters refuse to appoint a champion, Mwanza declares the strongest-looking male character to be the champion.

It is possible, of course, that the player characters choose to fight the tribesmen instead of following the Wamuba to their village. If a fight breaks out, the tribesmen attempt to capture the PCs alive, but they do not hesitate to kill opponents that they consider too dangerous to let live. If the PCs are defeated, any survivors are taken back to the village. The strongest-looking character is selected to fight against the tribal champion, and things develop more or less as described below. On the other hand, if the PCs manage to defeat or flee from the Wamuba, despite being severely outnumbered, this part of the adventure plays out somewhat differently. The player characters can either sneak into or attack the village and/or the purple ruins, or try to avoid the Wamuba while they look for the hidden entrance to the mine which must be somewhere in the vicinity of the purple ruins. Meanwhile, Nugga-Tikanda will send out search parties to find and capture the intruders. Adjust the following events as you see fit.

**Wamuba Tribesmen, male Wamuba Bbn2 (200 total):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+2; hp 17; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6, shortspear, 20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +5, Survival +5. **Feats:** Dodge, Expert Poisoner, Run (b).

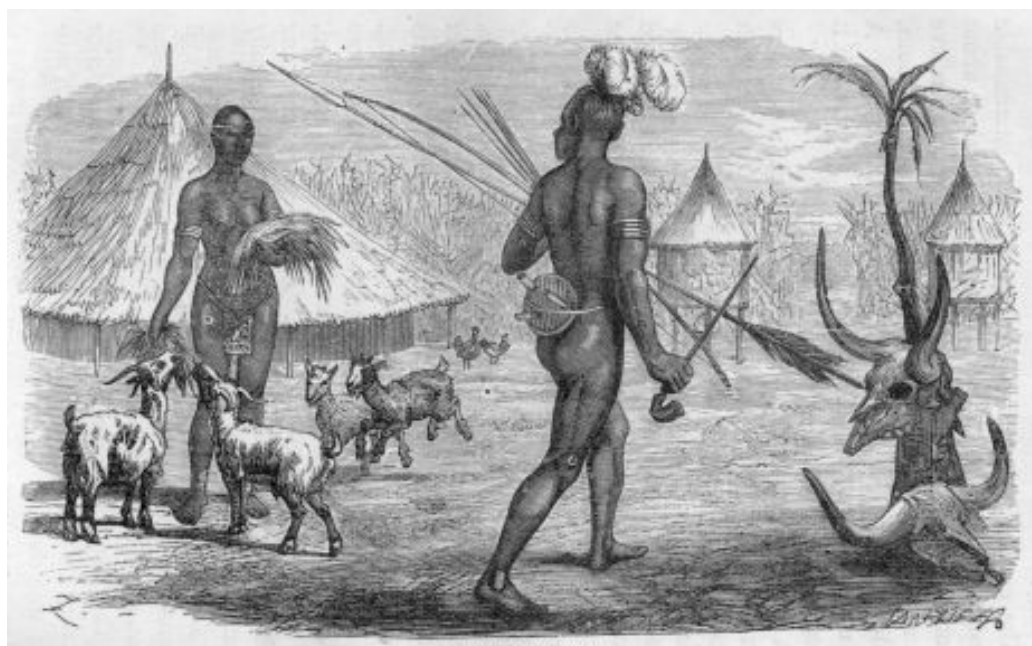
**Languages:** Wamuba.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, bone necklace, heavy wooden shield, shortspear, shortbow, 1 dose of sassone leaf residue.

**Description:** The Wambua are naked except for simple loincloths. Their skin is tattooed, and they wear bone necklaces and carry wooden shields. Around 20% of these warriors have gross physical defects due to inbreeding.

**Tactics:** Fighting with bow and spear, these warriors occasionally coat their weapons with poison.

**Mwanza, the Hunchback, male Wamuba Bbn4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d12+4; hp 34; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff, 20/x2) or +6 ranged (1d6+1, throwing axe, 20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.





**Skills:** Craft (herbalism) +9, Craft (weapon-smithing) +9, Handle Animal +8, Listen +9, Ride +9, Survival +9, Swim +8. **Feats:** Dodge, Iron Will, Run (b), Track.

**Languages:** Wamuba, Shoma, Azimban.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, cloak of monkey-skin, quarterstaff, throwing axe, pouch with herbs, pouch with 10 small obsidian stones (worth 10 gp each).

**Description:** An old and hunchbacked man, Mwanza is both smarter and faster than he looks. His knowledge of the Northern languages makes him useful to Nugga-Tikanda.

**Tactics:** Mwanza rarely gets into combat himself; as the village elder he commands the other tribesmen.

### Winning the Queen's favor

Assuming the chosen player character accepts his role as champion, he is escorted (along with the rest of the party, including the merchants of Susrah) from the village to the purple ruins in the hills above. Here, the tribe gathers in the courtyard of the fortress, the partly crumbled walls of which serve as an amphitheater.

The champion selected from among the PCs must prove his worth by defeating the current tribal champion, Tibaa. The rules are simple: The fight is to the death. Wearing armor is forbidden, and use of sorcery is of course considered cheating. The champions must fight on a 5 feet wide log which rests across a 30 feet deep pit. At the bottom of the pit are several cave openings; a giant centipede lurks inside one of the cave tunnels and darts out to attack anyone who falls into the pit. The walls of the pit have been greased with animal fat to prevent the centipede (as well as combatants falling in) from climbing up. During the fight, a dozen spearmen guard against interference from the other player characters.

**Development:** Before the fighting begins, the obese queen of the tribe is carried into her seat by six bearers, who strain under the weight of the litter. At Nugga-Tikanda's signal, the combatants face off against each other.

If the player character wins, he is declared the new tribal champion and a great feast is to be held to celebrate his victory. On the other hand, if defeat seems imminent for the PC, Nugga-Tikanda stops the fight by ordering Tibaa to stand back instead of delivering the fatal blow. In this case, it is assumed that the queen of the Wamubas has taken a liking to the player character despite his lacking fighting skills, and declares the stranger to be her new consort. If this happens, the PC gains the enmity of Tibaa and his henchmen. Either way, a feast is held to celebrate the player characters and the new champion among them.

**Tibaa, Tribal Champion, male Wamuba Bbn8:** CR 8; SZ M; HD 8d12+16; hp

82; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +8/+13; Atk +14 melee (1d10+7, greatclub, 20/x2); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+7, greatclub, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 3/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2, Damage Reduction 1/-; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +16, Intimidate +11, Jump +16, Listen +12, Survival +12. **Feats:** Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Run (b), Weapon Focus (greatclub).

**Languages:** Wamuba.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, hide armor (not worn in arena), greatclub.

**Description:** Tall, heavily muscled and fearsome, Tibaa's face is disfigured by purple boils, a birth defect caused by the tribe's inbreeding. Owing more to his great strength than his looks, Tibaa is the queen's current favorite.

**Tactics:** Tibaa seeks to defend Nugga-Tikanda, the Tribal Mother, at all costs. When fighting above the pit, he uses bull rushes to try to push opponents into the pit.

**The Thing in the Pit, Huge Monstrous Centipede:** CR 2; hp 33.

### A feast for the Champion

The feast is held in the village at nightfall the same day; it quickly develops into drunken revelry as the tribesmen consume prodigious quantities of banana wine. Nugga-Tikanda herself is not present during the feast.

Player characters who use the occasion to speak with the hunchback, Mwanza, can learn the following about Nugga-Tikanda with a successful Gather Information check: "She is very old" (DC 10); "it is said that she murdered her husband, the last chieftain of the Wamuba" (DC 14); "she knows the secrets of witchcraft which has made her immortal" (DC 17); "she is the mother of us all — every living man of the tribe is both her husband and her son" (DC 20).

With a successful Diplomacy check that alters Mwanza's attitude from indifferent to friendly (DC 15), the hunchback can also tell the PCs about the long-abandoned mines of the Ishrah, and how to find the mine entrance despite the heavy jungle growth which now conceals it. If the Diplomacy check changed Mwanza's attitude to helpful (DC 30), he adds that the upper level of the mines is now inhabited by a band of degenerate savages, the descendants of those Wamuba tribesmen who were driven away by Nugga-Tikanda when she usurped the last chieftain.

During the feast, the tribesmen get drunk and it is easy for the PCs to sneak out of the





village, should they so desire (possibly to try to find the mines, or even to confront Nugga-Tikanda). If the player characters do stay until the height of the feast, around midnight, a group of Nugga-Tikanda's personal guards appear and talk to Mwanza. The hunchback then announces to the PCs that the queen wishes to mate with her new consort; the celebrated champion must follow the queen's guard alone back to the purple ruins.

**The Queen's Guard, male Wamuba Bbn4 (8 total):** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d12+8; hp 39; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+3 hide armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 hide armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, longspear, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.) or +7 melee (1d6+3, handaxe, 20/x3); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Skills:** Climb +10, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Listen +8, Survival +8. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Run (b), Weapon Focus (longspear).

**Languages:** Wamuba.

**Possessions:** Hide armor, longspear, handaxe.

**Description:** These are the elite guardians of the queen; four of them are always at the queen's side.

**Tactics:** Keep opponents away using their reach weapons, working together to form a spear-wall.

### The Kiss of Death

Nugga-Tikanda has lived for two centuries by mating with her own sons, but this abominable inbreeding produces both physically and mentally retarded children, and each subsequent generation weakens the effects of the immortality rite. The witch of the Wamuba needs the blood of outsiders to improve the genetic pool of the tribe and boost the effect of her rituals, and has therefore selected the most physically impressive member of the party as her new consort. (Note that if the queen's former favorite, Tibaa, is still alive, he tries his best to bring the new consort into disfavor, but at the same time cannot act directly against the orders of the queen.)

**Development:** The actions of the player character who has been chosen as the queen's new consort determines what happens next. If the PC agrees to fulfil his duties as the queen's consort, the player character is escorted by the queen's guard back to the purple ruins. He must surrender his weapons and armor to the guards before being allowed into the royal bedchamber. The guards remain within earshot of the bedchamber while Nugga-Tikanda mates with the chosen consort. Due to her

sorcerous preparations, a single union is 80% likely to result in pregnancy and can produce as many as 2d6 children. Even so, the queen keeps the PC around for up to 1d3 months before she tires of him and orders him killed (and then takes a new consort from among the other PCs). In the meantime, the player character enjoys the privileges of being the queen's chosen consort. He and his friends are free to wander around the village and the surrounding area (including the lost mine), but are only allowed into the purple ruins when summoned by the queen.

If the player character refuses to go with the queen's guards, a fight likely breaks out in the village as the guards try to grapple and pin the PC, then tie him up with ropes and drag him along forcefully. If the PCs defeat the guards, one or more loyal tribesmen (who have not already passed out from excessive consumption of banana wine) flee from the village and try to warn Nugga-Tikanda, who sends more guards after the player characters.

**Nugga-Tikanda, the Witch-Queen of the Wamuba, female Corpulent Wamuba Bbn1/Sorg:** CR 10; SZ L Aberration; HD 1d12+6 plus 9d4+54; hp 90; Init +3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 8 (+0 no armor, -1 Dex, -1 size), touch 8 (-1 Dex, -1 size), flat-footed 9 (+0 no armor, -1 size); BAB/Grapple +5/+16; Atk +7 melee (1d4+3, unarmed strike, 20/x2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 1/day, Spells, Crush (2d6+3); SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, Run as a bonus feat, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 11.

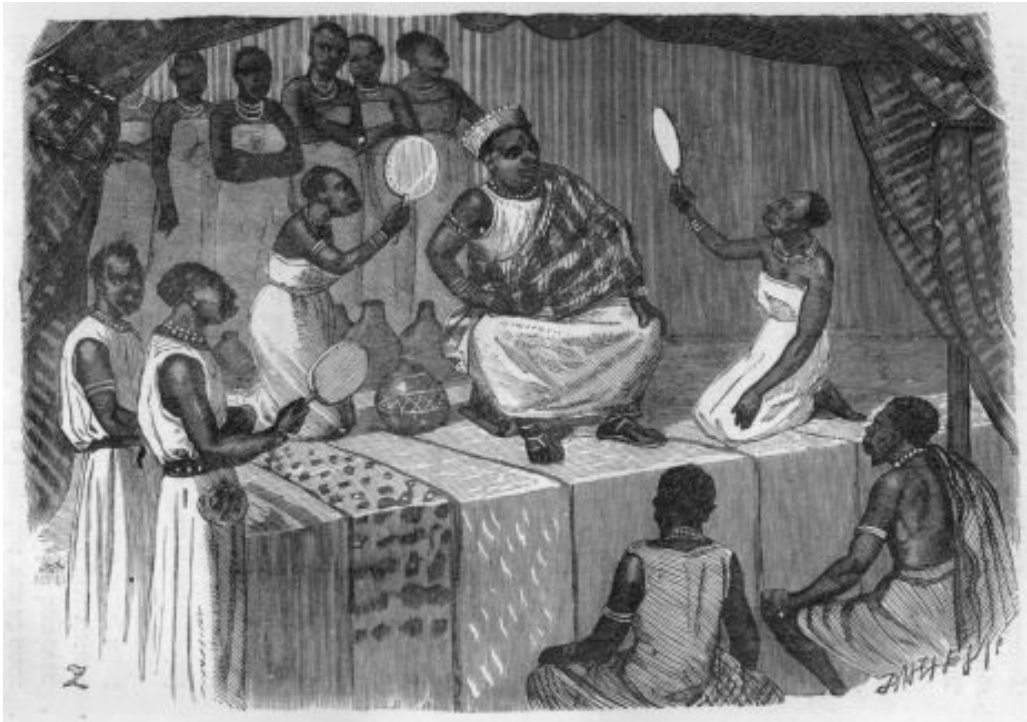
**Skills:** Concentration +18, Craft (herbalism) +6, Decipher Script +14, Handle Animal +4, Heal +14, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Listen +6, Ride +3, Spellcraft +14, Survival +6, Swim +7. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Grisly Sacrifice, Improved Grapple (b), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lunar Magic, Run (b), Spell Focus (necromancy), Sympathetic Magic.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int): 0 — arcane mark, dancing lights, mage hand, resistance; 1st — animal messenger, charm person, fertility charm, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, spectral hand; 2nd — death knell, false life, incantation of the broken limb, whispering wind; 3rd — bestow curse, dispel magic, speak with dead, vampiric touch; 4th — animate dead, contagion, curse of green decay, enervation, lesser geas; 5th — dominate person, lifeleech, lover's curse, slay living, telekinesis.

**Languages:** Wamuba, Mazanian, Yalothan.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, bone necklace, gold nipple rings (worth 25 gp each).





*Description:* Obese beyond imagining, Nugga-Tikanda is a repulsive sight as she is carried around half-naked on a litter by four of her bodyguards.

Nugga-Tikanda is in fact the mother of the entire tribe; female babies are slain shortly after birth. The queen's sons mate with their own mother in an abominable fertility rite when they reach the age of manhood, a sorcerous process which extends the lifespan of the sorceress at the expense of her sanity and the well-being of her offspring.

*Tactics:* Nugga-Tikanda relies on her bodyguards for protection, but relishes the casting of destructive and necromantic spells. If her Sinister Presence doesn't keep her out of melee, she tries to grapple and crush opponents under her revolting body mass.

The queen has some treasure in her personal chamber: A golden cup (100 gp), a bag filled with pearls (400 gp), a wooden box with 4 large pieces of gold (250 gp each), a damaged bronze timekeeping device (of Ishrahnite origin, appears broken but is worth 800 gp if repaired for 100 gp), three large worn silver-embroidered tapestries (100 gp each), two human skulls painted with green paint, the dried husk of a black scorpion, four dark crimson poison berries (Ingested DC 18; initial damage 2d6 Con; secondary damage 1d6 Con + 1d6 Str; lose their potency in 1 week), and some withered herbs (worthless).

## The Lost Mines of the Ishrah

When the ancient Ishrahmites discovered the prehuman vaults below their own mine tunnels, the lower tunnels were blocked with rubble and the mines were eventually abandoned. Centuries later, when Nugga-Tikanda seized leadership of the Wamuba tribe, a group of

male warriors opposed her rule. After a short power struggle, most of these warriors were killed by Nugga-Tikanda's followers and the rest were driven away from the village, along with their women. Seeking refuge in the upper levels of the abandoned mines, these outcasts eked out a meager life here for generations, plotting to return to overthrow Nugga-Tikanda, but inevitably falling into sharp decline due to their isolation. After a time, the men were killed in battle with Wamubans loyal to Nugga-Tikanda, or fell prey to wild animals.

However, several of the outcast women were captured by a local tribe of man-apes, who forcibly mated with the captives. From this union has sprung a tribe of semi-intelligent ape-men, who inhabit the mine's upper caverns. They master the use of fire, primitive weapons and simple tools, but are otherwise as apes. These primitives viciously defend their territory against any intruders, including Nugga-Tikanda's tribesmen (who now mostly ignore the savages but sometimes clash with the ape-men's hunting bands).

### I. Cave Entrance

The cave entrance is concealed by several layers of thick vegetation. It can be found with a Search check (DC 25), or by observing the coming and going of the ape-men who inhabit the mines beyond. It is also possible to find the cave entrance by spotting these ape-men outside the mines and using the Track feat to follow them back to their lair.

For each hour, there is a 20% chance to encounter 1d4 ape-men outside the cave.

**Ape-Men, male Bbn3 (30 total):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d12+6; hp 35; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 no armor, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+7; Atk +7 melee







(1d6+4, club, 20/x2); SA Rage 1/day; SQ Low-Light Vision, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Climb +10, Intimidate +5, Listen +6, Survival +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude, Power Attack.

*Languages:* None (primitive grunting only).

*Possessions:* Furry loincloth, club.

*Description:* Stunted and filthy, with unkempt long hair and beards, these ape-men could easily be mistaken for true apes were it not for their simple clothing and use of weapons.

*Tactics:* The ape-men attack in packs, using a combination of charge, power attack and rage to deliver a devastating first blow. If facing superior foes, they quickly retreat into the darkness of their caves to regroup and prepare another ambush.

## 2. Great Cave

There is a 50% chance that a band of 1d4+4 ape-men are encountered in this large cave. In the cavern wall is a hidden entrance (Search DC 25) to the tunnel leading upwards to the cavern of the ape-men (Area 3).

## 3. Upper Cave

This cavern is 100 feet in diameter, and the ceiling is 20 feet tall. There are 1d10+10 ape-men warriors in the cavern, as well as twice that number of non-combatants (women and children). Scattered in the corners of the cave are various items such as bone and stone tools, scraps of food, and heaps of debris and offal.

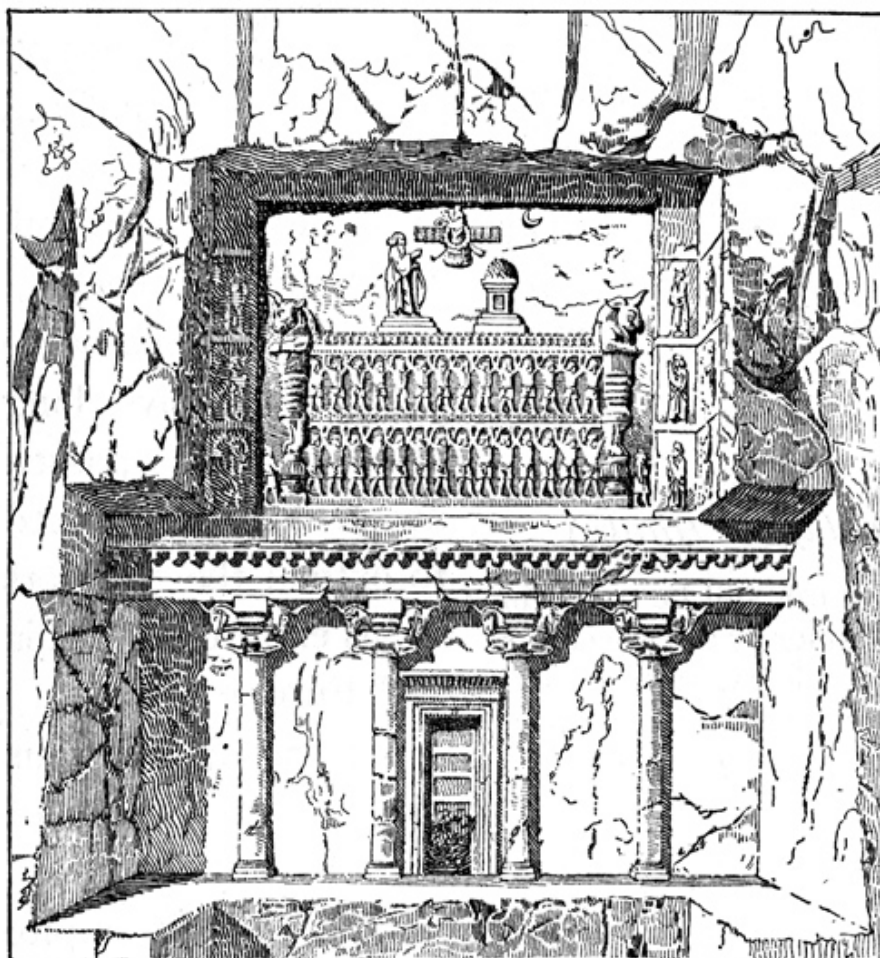
## 4. Dead End

A tunnel leading from the main cave (Area 2) is filled with various mining equipment, but most is in poor shape, being broken, rusted, or decayed.

## 5. Mine Shaft

A tunnel leads down to the main shaft. There is no "elevator" in the shaft; such equipment of wood and rope has decayed long ago. A Climb check is required to descend (DC 20, or DC 5 with a knotted rope).

If there are surviving ape-men in the mines, they might hide in the dark tunnels opening up upon the shaft and throw rocks down on the PCs as they attempt to descend (treat such thrown rocks as improvised weapons with a -4 penalty to attack rolls, dealing 1d3 points of damage [plus any Strength bonus], and with a range increment of 10 feet).





On the far side of the shaft is a primitive forge hall with cobwebbed furnaces, bellows of near-decayed animal-skin, dry vats that once held water, rusted pincers, and so on.

## 6. Mine Tunnels

The shaft is 140 feet deep. Along the length of the shaft are several mine tunnels. These are wholly or partly excavated. The ape-men might retreat and hide in these dark tunnels if they are defeated in the upper caverns. They take 10 on their Climb skills to ascend and descend the main shaft (Area 5).

## 7. Fungi Cave

One of the mine tunnels ends in a large natural cavern filled with weird fungi. Several of the fungi are edible, as identified with a successful Survival or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15). The ape-men also harvest fungi here.

## 8. Natural Cave and Chasm

On the lowest level of the mine, to the west, is another natural cavern, then a tunnel leading to a deep natural fissure, 100 feet deep. The edges are jagged and it requires several Climb checks (DC 25) to climb down. The bottom of the chasm contains several bones, both human and animal.

Also on the bottom is a fast-flowing, freezing cold underground river. The river leads to a boggy marshland, about 2 miles from the village of the Wamuba, which is the abode of a giant dire frog (see the Tome of Horrors). The murky swamp water is 3 feet deep, and creatures without Swim speeds must wade through it as if entangled (half speed, cannot run or charge, -2 to attack rolls, -4 to effective Dexterity).

## 9. Abandoned Tunnels

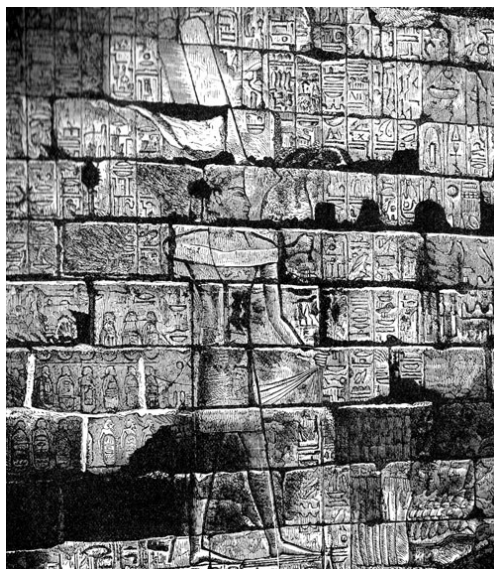
These tunnels are the deepest tunnels dug by the ancient Ishrahnites before they discovered the prehuman chambers beneath the mines. The walls are rough and the floor is covered by loose rocks and debris.

## 10. Blocked Tunnel

The main tunnel, which leads to the sealed door beyond, has been blocked by a huge pile of stones. It is apparent with an Intelligence check (DC 14) that the pile has been placed there by human hands; in other words, it is not a natural cave-in. It takes several hours to clear away the rocks from the tunnel to allow passage.

## 11. Sealed Door

To the east, behind a partly collapsed tunnel, is a massive door of a curious metal, inscribed with cuneiform symbols. Only by pressing three specific symbols in a specific sequence



(or by destroying the three items on which the symbols are written) can the door be opened. Refer to the adventure introduction for more information.

If the wrong glyphs are pressed, or if force is used against the door, a deadly blast affects the intruder. This is a blast of lightning that deals 8d6 points of damage to anyone in front of the door (Reflex DC 18 for half damage). The door instantly recharges itself and can discharge one lightning bolt each round. The metal door itself is nigh-impenetrable (Hardness 20, 120 hp, Break DC 38).

## 12. Octagonal Chamber

Behind the sealed doors are several chambers of a weird, curved architecture. With a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 17), a character realizes that the chambers were probably built by the prehistoric "serpent-kings", a race of intelligent ophidians that ruled the world in ages past. This realization is reinforced by paintings on the walls, which depict scenes of primitive men being sacrificed to giant snakes.

**Development:** The player characters hardly have time to ponder the implications of these revelations. As soon as the PCs enter the main chamber, they hear a slithering sound as a large human-headed snake appears. This is Yigthrahotep, one of the ancient serpent-kings of Yalotha, who has been awakened from aeons of slumber. As Yigthrahotep attacks, the "merchants" of Susrah, who have taken up positions behind the PCs, finally drop their disguises. Their leader, Ursib, shouts out: "*O great Yigthrahotep, we have come to awaken you from your slumber and release you from centuries of imprisonment! We now offer you these humans as a celebration of your freedom!*"

**Yigthrahotep, Ancient Serpent-King of Yalotha:** CR 10; SZ L Aberration; HD 11d8+44; hp 93; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex), flat-







footed 16 (-1 size, +7 natural); BAB/Grapple +8/+17; Atk +12 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, bite) or +9 ranged (poison, spit); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, bite) or +9 ranged (poison, spit); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA charming gaze, constrict, improved grab, poison, spit, spells; SQ darkvision (60 ft.), telepathy (120 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Bluff +18, Concentration +19, Listen +13, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +6, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +17, Spot +13. **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials (b), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

**Charming Gaze (Su):** As charm person, 30 feet, Will DC 19 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Constrict (Ex):** On a successful grapple check, a serpent-king deals 1d6+7 points of damage.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a serpent-king must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury or contact, Fortitude DC 19, initial and secondary damage 1d10 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Spit (Ex):** A serpent-king can spit its venom up to 30 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment. Opponents hit by this attack must make successful saves (see above) to avoid the effect.

**Telepathy (Su):** Serpent-kings can communicate telepathically with any creature within 120 feet that has a language.

**Arcane Spells Known (Spells per day:** 4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int):  
0 — ghost sound, know direction, resistance;  
1st — animal messenger, hypnotism, magic fang; 2nd — delay poison, protection from arrows, whispering wind; 3rd — greater magic fang, sepia snake sigil; 4th — divination, spell immunity; 5th — dominate person, sending.

**Description:** Yigthrahotep is a survivor from a lost age, when the serpents ruled beneath the youthful sun from the primeval swamps and jungles of Yalotha, the serpent kingdom. Despite being immortal save for violent death, the cold-blooded serpent-kings were driven into retreat and hibernation as climate changes and slave uprisings ended their aeon-long reign.

**Tactics:** Yigthrahotep uses 1d4 rounds to fully recover from his long period of hibernation, during which he cannot cast spells. While highly intelligent, his tactics are simple; he spits his poison, then moves in to grab and constrict victims.



### 13. Serpent-Bowl

This side chamber is dominated by a large, lidded stone bowl engraved with ancient Yalothan hieroglyphs. The bowl has hinges near the lid which allows carrying rods to be inserted, so that servitors of the serpent-kings can transport their slumbering masters. This is where Yigthrahotep has hibernated through the aeons.

### 14. Snake-Idol

A giant stone idol of Zanthiss, 10 feet tall, dominates this room. The statue is cold to the touch. The serpentine body is adorned with three heavy bands of gold (worth 1,000 gp each).

The smaller chamber beyond is accessed through a heavy curtain of snake-skin. On a raised dais next to the wall is a black staff set with a golden cobra head. To a priest of Zanthiss, this staff functions as a *rod of the viper*. Any non-worshipper touching it is subject to a *phantasmal killer* spell (DC 18), in the form of a striking snake.

### 15. Meeting Room

This spacious chamber features several weird, curved benches, ideal for snakes to climb and recline upon. The walls are decorated with serpentine patterns and ancient writings that glorify the might of Zanthiss, including paintings that depict large groups of enslaved humans, dragging massive stones and building cyclopean cities of black stone, overseen by tall serpentine taskmasters.

### 16. Cells

This section of the vault has three small cells, doubtlessly used to hold human prisoners or sacrifice in ages past. There is nothing but bones and dust here now.

### 17. Fire-Ravaged Chamber

This large room might have been a library or study, but seems ravaged by fire. There is



nothing of interest here now, unless perhaps the DM wishes to place some kind of clue to the whereabouts of the lost city of serpents in the jungles of Yalotha among the charred documents here.

## Conclusion

Even if the player characters confront and defeat Yigthrahotep, there might be several loose threads. Nugga-Tikanda and her consort Tibaa could still be alive. If Tibaa is alive, he and his men enter the mines, battle any remaining ape-men, and find the shaft. They remove any ropes the PCs used to descend to the bottom, and guard the shaft night and day, trying to starve the PCs to death. The PCs can survive for a long time in the mines if they harvest and eat the fungi in the fungi cavern. However, they will eventually run out of light sources (torches), and water is only available by climbing down to the underground river.

Despite the lure of a “lost gold mine”, there is little loot to be found in the mines. Some DMs might wish to expand the purple ruins with a set of dungeons that once belonged to the Ishrahnite priests and sorcerers, which are still haunted by their ghosts today, and which contain ancient treasures.

In any case, the party must haul whatever loot they find back through the jungle, facing monsters, tribesmen, raiders from Mazania, and royal spearmen of Shoma (for if the king hears about the mine, he claims it as his property). The PCs might also have made enemies among the priests of Nataka.

**If the PCs fail:** There are plenty of places where the player characters could fail during this adventure. Remember that unintelligent beasts usually devour slain enemies, while intelligent foes might prefer to keep the PCs alive as prisoners, either to extract information, claim ransom, or force them to accept some kind of dangerous mission. If the PCs are captured by Yigthrahotep and his serpent-men minions, they might be taken east to the jungles of Yalotha, and into the heart of the lost city of serpents.





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agents of the other factions seeking to capture or kill the weaponsmith.

Learning that the master-smith resides in the dungeons of the royal palace, the player characters must decide how to gain access, either by force, stealth, bribes, diplomacy or trickery.

After locating the ironsmith, the PCs must defeat him and his mysterious mentors, and then escape the heavily guarded city of Zimballah with the captive.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started:

— The player characters are employed by an agent of the royal price of Shoma, Gamba, to kidnap the master weaponsmith of Azimba. The reward for bringing him back alive to Katanga is 3,000 gp (adjust as appropriate). The PCs are instructed to seek out a dancing-girl named Aisha when they reach Zimballah.

— The player characters are employed by a Zadjite priest named Yilan (who might also accompany the PCs). The mission is to kill the king's smith, but bring back the rogue priests alive for punishment. In this case it is possible that the party is approached by agents/mercenaries of Shoma who suggest a temporary alliance with the PCs to get into the royal palace. Once there, however, conflict ensues as a result of different goals.

## The Plains of Azimba

The terrain of northern Azimba is dominated by savannah (treat as trackless plains), while the southern regions are covered by jungles. The main city, Zimballah, is situated to the west, in the foothills of the Shining Hills.

It is approximately 200 miles between Katanga and Zimballah, which means the trip takes around 11 days on foot, half that if riding light horses.

Refer to the following encounter table for random encounters on the plains of Azimba. Each day, an encounter occurs on a roll of 1-8 on 1d20. Roll 1d12 to determine the exact nature of the encounter.

### The White Gold

This encounter may be the result of a random roll, or the DM might choose to place it deliberately somewhere along the player characters' route towards Zimballah.

**Development:** Initially, the PCs see a flock of vultures some distance away. If they approach and chase away vultures and hyenas, they discover the stinking carcass of a huge elephant with its tusks removed; a successful Wisdom check (DC 14) allows a character to realize that the tusks have been chopped off near the base using heavy axes.

There are tracks near the carcass, easily followed due to the heavy load the ivory hunt-

### Northern Azimba Random Encounters

Roll	Encounter
1	Azimban warband
2	Elephants
3	Wild boars
4	Rhinoceros
5	Hyenas
6	Lions
7	Merchant caravan
8	Zadjite slavers
9	Thunderstorm
10	Disease
11	Stone totem of Jul-Juggah
12	Devil-bird of Azimba (25% chance) or ivory hunters (75% chance)

**Azimban Warband:** A unit of 4d6 black spearmen (male Azimban Bbn2) on patrol, protecting the countryside against foreign raiders, brigands, and the like. They carry war spears, large wooden shields, and are commanded by a subchief of level 1d4+3.

**Devil-Bird of Azimba:** The sighting of this monstrous creature is very rare, and certainly an ill omen (unless one is a priest of Jul-Juggah, that is). It attacks from the sky, swooping down and grabbing an unwary target, attempting to carry its victim back to its lair.

**Disease:** While travelling, the party is subject to a nasty disease (treat as cackle fever) carried by mosquitoes.





**Elephants:** A large herd of elephants (6d6) can be spotted in the distance, near a watering-hole. The elephants ignore the player characters unless the PCs approach in a threatening manner, in which case the elephants flee. If cornered or otherwise angered, the herd charges the party using its trample ability.

**Hyenas:** A pack of 1d10+6 hyenas; these scavengers do not attack unless the party looks weak or exhausted, in which case they send a few individuals against the party's front while the rest of the pack circles and attacks from the flanks or rear.

**Ivory Hunters:** The PCs come across the trail of an experienced band of ivory hunters. See "The White Gold", below, for details.

**Lions:** A pair of lions hide in an area of tall grass, attacking player characters walking or riding at the back of the party. Both lions charge and pounce a single opponent.

**Merchant Caravan:** A single merchant (male Jairanian Com5) with a retinue of 2d4 servants (male and female Jairanian Com1) and 1d10+10 mercenary guards (male Jairanian Ftr2). The caravan's "goods" are actually 40 light warhorses of excellent breed (maximum hit points), headed for the markets of Zimballah, where they will fetch an excellent price (at least 200 gp each).

**Rhinoceros:** This herbivore ignores the player characters unless they approach within 50 feet, in which case the black rhino charges and fights savagely until it has lost at least half its hit points.

**Stone Totem of Jul-Juggah:** The player characters spot a winged stone statue, 2d10+10 feet tall. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 14) allows a character to realize that this is a totem dedicated to Jul-Juggah, the reptilian bird-god of the Azimbans. There is 5d6 x 10 gp worth of offerings scattered on the ground around the statue, and a 25% chance that there are 1d6 priests of Jul-Juggah (male Azimban Bbn2/Sor2) about to perform a human sacrifice in the vicinity.

**Thunderstorm:** While the climate of Azimba is hot and generally dry, sudden rainfalls and thunderstorms do occur, but are always of short duration (3d10 minutes). Thunderstorms are accompanied by lightning that can pose a hazard to characters without proper shelter (see the DMG).

**Wild Boars:** A herd of 1d4+4 wild swine charge when disturbed. These ill-tempered animals are generally avoided by the locals, believing them to be possessed by the evil spirits of dead witch-doctors.

**Zadjite Slavers:** This is a band of cruel men from Al-Qazir on a slaving mission. They have not yet captured any slaves. There is a 50% chance that they are encountered at night, attacking the camp of the PCs. Use the slaver statistics from "The Vault of Yigthrahotep" for this band of slavers.

ers are carrying (+2 bonus to Track check). The trail is less than a day old and leads to a temporary camp on a plain next to a small outcropping of rocks, some 40 feet tall. There is a water-hole nearby. Some lone trees grow on the grassy plain. A few gazelles and other small game roam the plain.

There are 3 light warhorses in the camp (the pygmy, Pokot, does not ride), along with a sizeable collection of equipment and supplies (including dried food and waterskins, enough to last 1 week for 4 persons; these are emergency rations for the leaders, the party otherwise hunts while travelling).

In the center of the camp is a pile of elephant tusks. There are 9 standard (20 kg) tusks, 4 prime tusks (40 kg), and a single exceptional tusk (100 kg). The total value is 2,200 gp.

During the day, the hunters have 2 guards stationed around the camp. At night, there are 3 guards, plus one of the leaders (roll 1d4 to determine who; each has a 2-hour guard shift). The spotting distance is 6d6 x 10 feet. At night, it is 3d6 x 10 feet if there is moonlight, else

the spotting distance is limited to the range of torchlight.

In the case of an attack by night, sleeping characters get a Listen check (DC -10 to hear sounds of battle or shouted warning, but -10 penalty to check while sleeping, so DC becomes 0, +1 for every 10 feet of distance). Sleeping characters are basically prone, and require a move action to get up. They may also have to put on armor, but drawing a weapon is a free action (when combined with a move) if the character has a base attack bonus of at least +1.

If successful in defeating the hunters, the PCs may sell the ivory in Azimba for a nice profit.

**Arahua, Mercenary-Captain of Susrah, female Susrahnite Ftr7:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d10+14; hp 58; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 chain shirt, +2 heavy wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 16 (+4 chain shirt, +2 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +7/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+3, bastard sword, 19-20/x2) or +11 ranged (1d10+3, Susrahnite longbow, 20/



x3, range increment 120 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+3, bastard sword, 19-20/x2) or +11/+6 ranged (1d10+3, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17.

**Skills:** Climb +13, Handle Animal +13, Jump +13, Swim +13. **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow), Improved Initiative (b), Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Chain shirt, heavy wooden shield, bastard sword, Susrahnite longbow (+3 Strength rating), 120 gp.

**Description:** The former captain of a mercenary company in one of the city-states of Susrah, Arahua is attractive but battle-scarred, with short-cropped black hair. She is the leader of the band and Zama is her lover and bodyguard (although she can hold her own in battle, of course). Born of a Taraamite officer and a Susrahnite princess, Arahua took to a life of adventuring to escape the constraints imposed on females in Susrahnite society.

**Tactics:** Arahua uses her powerful bow from a distance, then closes and uses Power Attack.

**Raneb the Tomb-Robber, male Yar-Ammonite Rog6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d6+6; hp 31; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 leather armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ +2 racial modifier to Intelligence, +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (arcana) and Listen skills, Stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on Search checks to notice unusual stonework, detect unusual stonework within 10 feet with Search check even if not actively searching, use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can, and intuit depth underground), Trapfinding, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Climb +10, Decipher Script +10, Disable Device +10, Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Search +10, Tumble +13, Use Magic Device +9. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Yar-Ammonite, Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, short sword, dagger, obsidian amulet in the shape of a beetle (worth 25 gp), masterwork thieves' tools, flint and steel, bedroll, green cloak.



**Description:** Raneb is lithe, black-haired, with pale skin for a Yar-Ammonite. He is dressed in green hooded cloak. He is hunted by priests in his native land for tomb-robbing.

**Tactics:** Raneb fights with one sword in each hand, to maximize the possible damage from sneak attacks.

**Zama, "the Giant", male Shoma Bbn6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d12+12; hp 59; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +6/+11; Atk +11 melee (1d10+7, halberd, 20/x3) or +9 ranged (1d6+5, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+7, halberd, 20/x3) or +9/+4 ranged (1d6+5, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Climb +14, Intimidate +12, Jump +14, Survival +9, Swim +14. **Feats:** Athletic, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Run (b).

**Languages:** Shoma.

**Possessions:** Loincloth of white ox-skin, halberd, javelin, large golden belt (worth 50 gp).

**Description:** This huge barbarian has very dark skin, and a handsome face with gleaming white teeth. He is Arahua's lover and protector.

**Tactics:** Easy to anger, Zama simply enters a rage, charges and Power Attacks.

**Pokot, the Pygmy, male Daka Nom2/Sor5:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 2d8 plus 5d4; hp 25; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 25 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex, +1 size), touch 13 (+2 Dex, +1 size), flat-footed 11 (+0 no armor, +1 size); BAB/Grapple +4/+3; Atk







+7 melee (1d4-1 plus poison, short sword, 19-20/x2); SA Sneak Attack (+1d6), Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Hide and Survival skills, Small size (+1 bonus to attack rolls and Armor Class, +4 bonus to Hide skill, -4 penalty to grapple checks), Speed 20 feet, Mounted Skirmisher, Track, Fast Movement (+5), Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +8, Craft (herbalism) +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +11, Hide +7, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Speak Language (Zadjite, Ikuna, Azimban, Shoma, Mazanian, Susrahnite), Survival +8. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Endurance, Expert Poisoner (b), Eyes of the Cat (b), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Jackal's Guts, Weapon Finesse.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +1 Int): 0 — *dancing lights, know direction*; 1st — *animal messenger, mage armor, pass without trace, speak with animals*; 2nd — *delay poison, incantation of the broken limb*; 3rd — *locate object*.

**Languages:** Daka, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, short sword, 3 doses of sassone leaf residue (Contact DC 16, initial damage 2d12 hp, secondary damage 1d6 Con).

**Description:** Pokot is a pygmy from the Silver Lotus Isles, one of the few of his race to have left his homeland. He has the body of a child and the face of an old man. He is quite knowledgeable, speaks a lot of languages, and is a good tracker.

**Tactics:** Pokot main function is outside of battle, as a tracker, healer, diviner and interpreter. He is an opportunist with an instinct for survival, so if his allies are about to be defeated, he will either flee, or offer his services to new masters.

#### Trading Ivory

The value of elephant tusks is as follows:

Type	Weight	Value
Standard tusk	20 kilos	100 gp
Prime tusk	40 kilos	200 gp
Exceptional tusk (3 meters long)	100 kilos	500 gp

These values apply when raw ivory is traded in the jungle kingdoms (Shoma, Azimba and Mazania). The value increases substantially when the ivory is carved and/or traded in other regions. Dead ivory or that which is found on the ground is of inferior quality and very brittle.

A person with average strength can carry one or two tusks, perhaps 3-4 on the back of a horse or ox.

**Bearers and Guards, male Azimban Bbn1 (4):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d12+1; hp 8; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3, longspear, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.); SA Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +4, Survival +4. **Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Dodge, Weapon Focus (longspear).

**Languages:** Azimban.

**Possessions:** Clothing, shortspear, 1d4 gp.

**Description:** These men are dark-skinned and tall, wearing rag-tag clothing; a mix between loincloths, cloaks and desert robes. They are lean from walking long distances and carrying heavy weights.

**Tactics:** The guards fight well with the longspear. They flee or surrender if Arahua and one other leader is killed, or if all three leaders except Arahua are killed.

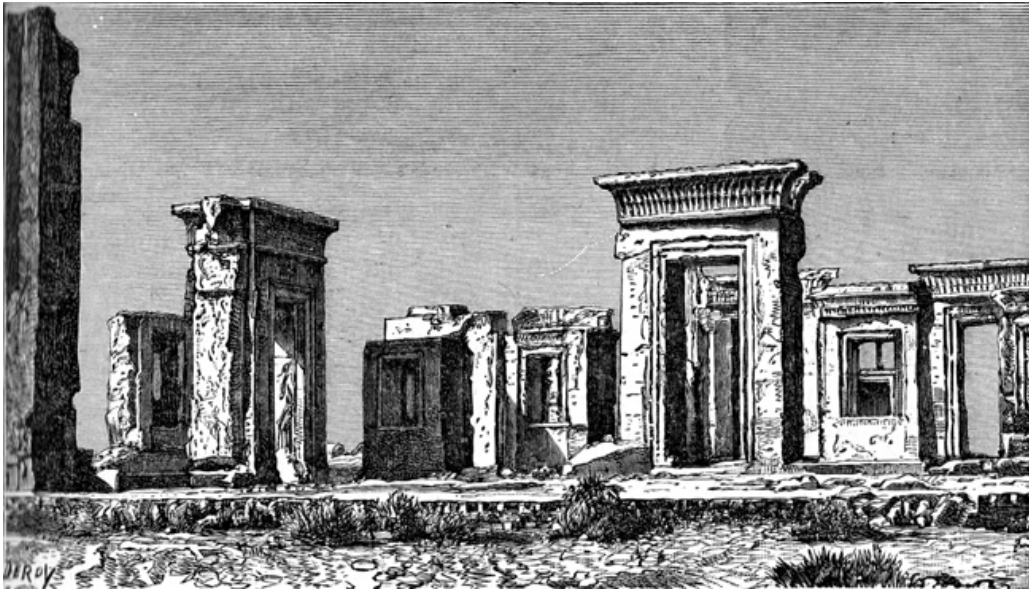
## The City of Zimballah

Zimballah, the capital city of Azimba, is sometimes simply called "the city of stone" by virtue of its size and importance. Surrounded by hills, the city has massive walls, towers, and multiple interior gates. Close to 18,000 inhabitants throng its inner districts, with several hundred merchants, animal-herders, peasants, mercenaries and beggars living in semi-permanent caravan camps outside the city walls.

Although there are dozens of lesser stone-walled settlements within Azimba's borders, whoever holds Zimballah dominates the region and can claim to be king of Azimba. However, the king must be on good terms with the cult of Jul-Juggah, whose high priest formally appoints new kings and provides advice and auguries to the royal house. Throughout the land are hundreds of stone statues in the likeness of Jul-Juggah, a great lizard-bird with monstrous features and outstretched, leathery wings. The statues range from 10 to 30 feet in height. They are sacred and offerings (sometimes including blood sacrifice) are regularly placed in front of the statues by the priests of Jul-Juggah. To touch the statues or steal the offerings is an offense punishable by death.

Zimballah is an important trading center in the jungle kingdoms region. Cattle and ornaments of beaten gold from Shoma, steel swords and cut gems from Zadj, jungle herbs and animal-skins from Mazania, carpets and peacock feathers from Jairan, and even silks and ceramics from far-off Taikang finds its way here. The king levies a tax on all trade; five percent of the market value of all trade goods must be paid to the city guards upon entry into the city.





No one knows who reared Zimballah's massive, concentric walls and circular towers. The outer walls are 35 feet tall and 10 feet thick, and are fitted seamlessly together without the use of mortar (Climb DC 30). The city gates (exterior and interior) are gatehouses with two wooden portcullises and murder holes above the space between them. The gates are usually open during the day and locked and barred at night, with 1d4+6 guards (male Azimban Bbn1) stationed near the gate at all times.

Foreigners are free to roam the market and residential districts, although all must return to the foreign district at night, when the gates are closed. At the top of the hillside in which Zimballah nestles is the noble district, which houses the royal palace and temple of Jul-Juggah, the houses of the nobles, as well as the barracks of the king's guard and the city's granaries.

In a desolate valley north of the city walls are the "Caverns of Bone", ancient burial-places for the Azimban dead. The high priest of Jul-Juggah has placed a taboo on the valley, preventing people from worshipping their ancestors, claiming the caverns are haunted by the restless and malign ghosts of the dead.

**Development:** As the PCs reach Zimballah, they have to deal with the other factions in the city, or they might be hunted down by these factions themselves, depending on who the player characters work for.

The following sections describe the relevant factions interested in Abbas, the king's weaponsmith.

#### Aisha, the Agent of Shoma

The voluptuous temptress Aisha is an agent in the employ of the prince of Shoma. She works as a simple dancing-girl in one of the taverns in the foreign district, but has several bodyguards who carry out her orders. Aisha also dabbles with magic; her grandmother was a witch-woman in a small Shoma village.

If the PCs are on a mission for the prince of Shoma, they have been told to seek out Aisha. The girl knows that the Azimban king's weaponsmith, Abbas, has started making weapons of iron, although she does not know about the Zadjite priests. She knows that Abbas resides within the royal palace. Aisha knows that there are spies from Mazania in Zimballah, and she knows the location of their safehouse.

**Aisha, female Shoma Rog4/Sor3:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 4d6 plus 3d4; hp 29; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+4; Atk +8 melee (1d4, stabbing dagger, 20/x3); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Sneak Attack +2d6, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +11, Gather Information +11, Heal +7, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Spellcraft +8, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Run (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int): 0 — daze, message; 1st — charm person, witch-fire; 2nd — aid, enthrall; 3rd — bestow curse, suggestion.

**Languages:** Azimban, Shoma, Zadjite.

**Possessions:** Silken loincloth, stabbing dagger, silver armbands (worth 20 gp each), golden earrings (worth 25 gp each).

**Description:** Always with a lewd smile on her full red lips, Aisha is dark, with curly hair and a full body, which she knows to use to full effect when she deals with men.







*Tactics:* Aisha prefers to let her henchmen deal with opponents. She also has numerous powerful contacts who would be angered if she were harmed in any way.

**Aisha's Henchmen, male Azimban Bbn2 (4):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+4; hp 20; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, club, 20/x2); SA Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +5, Survival +5. *Feats:* Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (club).

*Languages:* Azimban.

*Possessions:* Clothing, club, 1d6 gp.

*Description:* These are men which Aisha has charmed, both magically and naturally, and which are intensely loyal to her, each one fighting for her special favor.

*Tactics:* Aisha's loyal henchmen would rather die than flee while protecting her.

#### Servants of the Living Flame

The chief priests of the Living Flame in Iraab have sent a group of mercenaries to Azimba to track down and capture the rogue priests. While they have orders to kill anyone who have learned the secret of iron-smithing, the mercenaries are to bring back the rogue priests alive; simply killing them would be too mild a punishment for betraying the cult and revealing its secrets. The mercenaries are commanded by a senior fire-priest named Yilan.

If the PCs are on a mission to kidnap Abbas, they might come into conflict with this group who seek to kill the master-smith due to his knowledge. On the other hand, the PCs might actually be these mercenaries if the adventure hook starts with the player characters being hired by the Zadjite priesthood.

**Yilan, Senior Priest of the Living Flame, male Zadjite Sor6:** CR 6; hp 29; see Area 10 of the Royal Palace (Dungeon Level). *Note:* Yilan is dressed like a merchant; he does not reveal that he is a fire-priest by dressing as one.

**Mercenaries of Iraab, male Zadjite Ftr4 (5):** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10+8; hp 34; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 chain shirt); BAB/Grapple +4/+7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, scimitar, 18-20/x2); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Climb +10, Jump +10, Ride +8, Swim

+10. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar), Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

*Languages:* Zadjite, Azimban.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, scimitar, 2d10 gp.

*Description:* These mercenaries are young but experienced men from the frontier settlements of Zadj.

*Tactics:* The mercenaries do as they are told by Yilan, but they are only loyal as long as they get paid.

#### The Men of Mazania

The Queen of Mazania has three male agents in Zimballah. They know that a group of rogue Zadjite priests reside in the royal palace along with Abbas, but they do not have the resources to infiltrate the palace and kidnap the weapon-smith. Unless they are neutralized before the PCs enter the palace, these agents of Mazania prepare an ambush for the party as the PCs try to leave the city, hoping to snatch the king's smith from them and escape back to Mazania.

**Agents of Mazania, male Mazanian Rog6 (3):** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d6+6; hp 29; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 80 ft.); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 80 ft.); SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Heal and Intimidate skills, Trapfinding,





Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10, Forgery +10, Gather Information +10, Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Tumble +13. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Feint (b), Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting (b), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

**Languages:** Mazanian, Azimban.

**Possessions:** Merchants' clothing, short sword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, 50 gp.

**Description:** The men dress in nondescript clothes and try to pass off as Azimban merchants. Their call themselves Chekwi, Dabir and Idi.

**Tactics:** The Mazanians try to stay out of range of heavy weapons. They attack with one weapon in each hand, and work in concert to gain flanking and sneak attacks.

### The Cult of Jul-Juggah

Gonda, the high priest of Jul-Juggah, resents the influence of the foreign priests, but seeks to learn their secrets. He has turned one of Abbas' apprentices to his cause. As soon as this apprentice has learned all he can from Abbas and the Zadjites, Gonda plans to kill them off and blame their deaths on Akia, the royal herald. Old Gonda is wily and watches closely any strangers that appear at court.

## The Mazanian Safehouse

The Mazanian agents in Zimballah pose as simple merchants trading dried fruit and animal-skins. Usually only one of them is seen in the marketplace, while the two others remain in their safehouse, a windowless building in the foreign district of Zimballah. This is a walled house with a central garden (which is not visible from the street). The brick walls are 15 feet tall (Climb DC 25).

**Development:** Assuming they know who to look for, the PCs may scout out the market and shadow one of the agents back to their safehouse in the foreign district. If they kill him, or he doesn't return in a reasonable amount of time, the others realize something is wrong and may send a warning message to Mazania. The Mazanian agents have carrier pigeons that they can send back to Boma-Ya with messages. They have no way of receiving instructions from Mazania, though, except from messengers that come to the city.

### 1. Entrance

From the outside, the safehouse is nondescript, windowless, with a solid wooden door (hardness 5, 20 hp, Break DC 23, Open Lock DC 25). The door has a small slit that can be opened to gaze upon and speak with visitors.

The inner door (to Area 2) is always closed and locked when visitors are let into the entrance chamber.

### 2. Meeting Room

This plain room is furnished with a low table and wooden chairs. It is used to meet with merchants (some of whom are messengers in disguise).

### 3. Storeroom

This square room has shelves along the walls filled with various pieces of equipment, including large crates of dried fruit.

If the house is attacked, one of the Mazanian agents may choose to prepare an ambush in this room, hiding next to the door which opens into the room from Area 2, and try to sneak attack intruders as they enter.

### 4. Garden

In this lush but ill-kept garden are rows of tall bushes and palm trees and a small well (25 feet deep, with 5 feet of water at the bottom). In the southeastern corner is a cage with 6 carrier pigeons, while to the northeast is a secret exit (Search DC 20) to the street outside.

Chained to the northern wall of the garden is a flesh-eating gorilla. Its leash is 30 feet long, allowing it to reach most of the garden. It does not molest the Mazanians, for they feed it a special herbal drug to which the ape is addicted, but attacks anyone else without provocation.

**Dire Ape:** CR 3; hp 35.

### 5. Trapped Chamber

This room is trapped. The purpose of the trap is to delay intruders while the inhabitants of the safehouse flee through to Area 6. Stepping outside the shaded area on the map releases a weighted net from the ceiling. The net hits automatically and entangles its victim. Only light slashing weapons can be used to cut the net from the inside (5 hp). It can be burst with a Strength check (DC 25) or an Escape Artist check (DC 20), both of which count as full-round actions.

### 6. Private Chamber

This is where the Mazanians usually dwell. There is a hidden trapdoor in the floor (Search DC 20) that leads to cramped escape tunnel exiting in the street behind the house.

The doors to the west lead into two identical bedchambers. In the southernmost bedchamber is a chest with 400 gp and one dose of sleeping draught (treat as oil of taggit).

There is no need for a third bedchamber, as one of the Mazanians is always awake, taking his turn guarding the house.





## The Royal Palace of Zimballah (Ground Level)

The royal palace is situated at the top of the hill, overlooking the city to the east, and the peaks of the Shining Hills to the west. The northern wing of the palace is a temple dedicated to Jul-Juggah, whose high priest is a trusted advisor to the king. The palace is well-guarded and close nearby are the barracks of the royal guard, with several hundred additional warriors which may be called upon in the event of an attack.

**Development:** The player characters need to get into the palace, and there are several viable approaches. The PCs can attempt a direct assault, enter by stealth (sneaking in, climbing the walls, or searching for a hidden entrance), bluff their way in (from disguising as palace servants to posing as foreign diplomats and requesting an audience with the king), or poison, bribe or even hypnotise the palace guards. They may also create some kind of diversion (from starting a fire to arranging an attack on the city, and so on).

The player characters will come up with some kind of scheme to get into the palace, and the DM should use the provided descriptions of areas and non-player characters to react appropriately. Responses from NPCs should be played out according to their intelligence, loyalties and motivations, of course.

### 1. Outer Compound

The great compound to the east of the palace building is ringed by a 20 feet tall wall (Climb DC 25). Past the gate, which is guarded by eight palace guards, is a massive stairway, flanked by huge stone bird-statues, that leads into the palace (Area 2). Next to the main entrance is a lesser door that is used by the guards to enter the barracks (Area 3).

In the northern end of the compound is an outdoor platform (Area 13) used by the priests of Jul-Juggah. The platform is 15 feet above ground level.

**Palace Guards, male Azimban Bbn2 (8):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+2; hp 17; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, longsword, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.); SA Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +5, Swim +7. **Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Languages:** Azimban.

**Possessions:** Loincloth of monkey-skin, longsword, necklace of animal-claws.

### The Royal Palace (Ground Level)

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). The outer palace doors (Area 1) and the doors to the throne room (Area 7) are bronze doors (hardness 10, 60 hp, Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 30). Ceiling height is 20 feet in normal rooms.

**Lighting:** The ground level of the palace is illuminated by huge bronze braziers placed in each room.

**Description:** These men are drawn from the king's countless companies of spearmen.

**Tactics:** The palace guards fight in formation with their longswords, using their reach to good effect.

### 2. Antechamber

This is a waiting area for courtiers, diplomats and other petitioners to the court. A set of double doors lead into the throne room (Area 7); the doors are carved with scenes of a spear-wielding king, a slayer of lions who triumphs in war and receives tribute from his defeated enemies. Four palace guards stand to attention here, opening the doors for visitors when the royal herald calls them into the court.

### 3. Barracks

The barracks house a contingent of 24 warriors, a third of whom are asleep at any time. The others are either on guard duty elsewhere in the palace, or relaxing here with food and games of throwing-bones. The room has sleeping-mats, racks for spears and shields, and small wooden boxes filled with equipment and a few personal trinkets.

In case of an emergency, dozens of additional warriors may be summoned from the barracks outside the palace (see the city map).

### 4. Guest Quarters

The southern wing of the palace contains the guest quarters, which are simple but well-furnished rooms. There are four suites; each with several "beds" that consist of monkey-skins and wooden head-rests. There is a 50% chance that each room is occupied by a foreign diplomat (male or female Ari5) and his or her entourage (1d4 male Ftr3); determine the nationality of such individuals randomly.

### 5. Slave Quarter

This large room is used both as a kitchen and as a sleeping-chamber for the palace slaves and servants (male and female Azimban Com1), with the two areas divided by a curtain of palm leaves. The servants sleep on the floor on straw mats. They have access to most of the areas of the palace, except the dungeon level,





often being called upon to deliver food and other goods and services to the throne room and the king's quarters.

Among the servants is a young girl, Taita, who is in fact a Mazanian girl (female Mazanian Rog2) captured in an Azimban raid. She resents her enslavement and seeks to flee from Zimballah if the opportunity presents itself. Taita has been sneaking around the palace, eavesdropping on conversations in the palace. She has learned quite a few secrets, and knows that there are turbaned strangers who craft weapons of iron down in the dungeons.

## 6. Stairway

A stairway leads down to the dungeons beneath the palace. There are two palace guards stationed in the chamber, and another two guards next to the door in the corridor outside.

## 7. Throne Room

This large chamber is furnished with the splendor of a barbaric court. The stone floor is strewn with scented purple jungle flowers. Spears, axes and shields decorate the walls. On a raised platform, 5 feet tall, at the far end of the chamber is a great throne of ivory, carved from the massive tusks of a dozen elephant bulls. Visitors lounge on piles of animal-skins, eating tropical fruits and sipping on banana wine.

When king Mkazwe is present at court, the throne room is filled with nobles, courtiers, concubines, priests, petitioners, entertainers, servants and guards. Four palace guards are stationed at each of the stairs leading up to the raised platform. Sitting at the king's right hand is Gonda, the bird-masked and feather-cloaked high priest of Jul-Juggah, who often whispers

into the king's ear while clutching a feather-adorned staff.

Crouching in front of the ivory throne is a pair of male lions. The lions also protect the king when he sleeps (see Area 9).

Next to the entrance stands the royal herald, Akia. He calls visitors from the antechamber (Area 2) and announces the purpose of their visit to the king. Akia is also the king's food-taster and the chief administrator of the palace, commanding the palace guards and overseeing the servants.

**Akia, the Royal Herald of Azimba, male Azimban Bhn5:** CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d12+15; hp 58; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+3 hide armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 hide armor); BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe, 20/x3); SA Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1, Improved Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +11, Listen +9, Ride +10, Swim +11.  
**Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

**Languages:** Azimban, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Loincloth of monkey-skin, cloak of lion-skin, masterwork battleaxe, gold necklace (worth 175 gp).

**Description:** Akia is middle-aged, yet athletic of build. His head is clean-shaven, and he wears a cloak of lion-skin to denote his station, as well as a necklace of gold. Akia is loyal to the kind, and resents Gonda the high priest.

**Tactics:** Enter rage and Power Attack with axe. Defend the king from harm.







### 8. Antechamber

This room between the throne room (Area 7) and the king's quarters (Area 9) is used by the king to prepare for appearances in the court. It is also sometimes used for private conferences between the king and his advisors and important foreign envoys. Two elite royal guards are stationed here.

**Elite Palace Guards, male Azimban Bbn5 (2):** CR 5; hp 58; see Akia's statistics above.

### 9. King's Chambers

This large apartment is split in two, with the outer area being occupied by the royal wives and concubines. This antechamber is decorated with fresh, rainbow-colored jungle flowers. Copper trays with fresh fruits and clay jugs of banana wine abound among piles of gazelle-skin cushions and walls hung with erotic sculptures of ivory. In various small wooden chests and ivory boxes are cosmetics, copper bracelets, gold rings, silver mirrors and small gems worth a total of 2,000 gp. Drawers and wardrobes contain a collection of richly colored dresses, silken loincloths, gem-studded belts and gold-trimmed shoes, to a total value of 1,200 gp.

The inner chamber is reserved for the king himself. A large wooden bed, blanketed by unblemished zebra-skins, stands in the middle of the room. When the king sleeps or enjoys the company of his wives and concubines in this chamber, his two pet lions doze near the door. Under the bed is a sturdy chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) that contains several bags of semiprecious gems (worth a total of 3,000 gp), a dozen small figurines of gold (worth 250 gp each), and a skull-carved bronze urn filled with diamond dust (worth 1,500 gp).

The royal wives and concubines (female Azimban Ari2) wear earrings and bracelets of brass and copper (worth a total of 75 gp). They are unarmed, but will try to parley with intruders and serve them poisoned food and drink.

**King Mkazwe of Azimba, male Azimban Bbn8:** CR 8; SZ M; HD 8d12+8; hp 89; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+3 hide armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 hide armor); BAB/Grapple +8/+13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7, longsword, 19-20/x3, reach 10 ft.); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7, longsword, 19-20/x3, reach 10 ft.); SA Rage 3/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2, Damage Reduction 1/-; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +16, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +12, Jump +16, Ride +13. **Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Improved Critical (longsword), Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Languages:** Azimban, Shoma, Zadjite.

**Possessions:** Purple robe, lion-skin cloak, hide armor, masterwork longsword, ivory and gold pectoral (worth 450 gp).

**Description:** The current king of Azimba is tall and lean, with grey hair at his temples. Despite his age, he is a fearsome warrior. He wears an ivory and gold pectoral and a cloak of lion-skin over his purple robe. If he expects combat, he dons an armor of rhino hide.

**Tactics:** The king has trained all his life with the longsword. He rages and uses Power Attacks to strike down opponents.

**King's Pet Lions (2):** CR 3; 32 hp.

### 10. High Priest's Chamber

This locked room is the personal chamber of Gonda, high priest of the cult of Jul-Juggah. In one corner is an empty wooden cage, apparently used to hold a large bird; the bottom of the cage is covered with the bones of rodents. Shelves along the walls are set with bird-skulls, bundles of black feathers, and jars filled with strange powders and liquids. Next to a simple bed is a large wooden table with three black eggs, about the size of ostrich eggs, protected with a covering of dried twigs. These are dire bat eggs. They can easily be crushed (Hardness 1; hp 3; Break DC 18), but Gonda plans to hatch the eggs and train the hatchlings as his servitors.

A successful Search check (DC 20) finds two doses of black lotus extract and a small copper vial filled with burnt othur. There is also a hidden compartment under a loose flagstone (Search DC 30) that contains a chest with several golden bracelets and rings (worth 800 gp) and a single black opal (worth 1,000 gp).

**Gonda, High Priest of Jul-Juggah, male Azimban Sorg:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 9d4; hp 42; Init +4 (+0 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 no armor, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Concentration +12, Craft (herbalism) +15, Diplomacy +16, Heal +15, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Spellcraft +15. **Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Grisly Sacrifice, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Sympathetic Magic, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int): 0 — arcane mark, know direction, resistance; 1st — animal messenger, cause fear, feather fall, fertility charm, mage armor, spectral hand, witch-fire; 2nd — aid, augury, death knell, protection from arrows; 3rd — dispel



**Spores of Jul-Juggah**

These spores are taken from the nests of the so-called devil-birds of Azimba. They lose their potency after about three months. A clutch of spores can be thrown up to 10 feet from the wielder with a ranged attack roll. The spores deal 1d8 points of damage to a creature that is hit. They then penetrate the skin and grow, dealing an additional 1d4 points of damage each round for 10 rounds. At the end of this time, the victim is covered with a tangle of viny growths. (The vines are harmless and wither away in 1d4 days.) A successful Heal check (DC 15) kills the spores.

*magic, hold person, prayer, summon animal; 4th — contagion, divination, phantasmal killer; 5th — cloudkill, song of discord.*

*Languages:* Azimban, Shoma, Ikuna, Zadjite.

*Possessions:* Bird-mask, loincloth, vulture-feathered staff topped with bird-skull, golden armbands (worth 100 gp each), 3 spores of Jul-Juggah.

*Description:* Gonda is old, scrawny and tall, with a wrinkled face partly hidden by his bird-mask. He wears a black loincloth, and armbands decorated with vulture-feathers. The rest of his naked body is tattooed with red paint, depicting various birds and flying creatures.

*Tactics:* The high priest precasts *aid*, *mage armor* and *protection from arrows*. He hurls offensive spells at opponents, and summons the devil-birds of Azimba if necessary. Gonda can summon these beasts by spending a full-round action chanting and cavorting, then making a successful Perform (ritual) check (DC 15).

**II. Lesser Priests' Chamber**

This large room is shared by the lesser priests of Jul-Juggah. Each priest has a sleeping-mat and a small chest with personal belongings. Several of the priests also keep small flying creatures such as eagles and bats in cages here, training them as their familiars.

**Priests of Jul-Juggah, male Azimban Bbn2/Sor2 (8):** CR 4; SZ M; HD 2d12 plus 2d4; hp 18; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, longspear, 20/x3, reach 10 ft.); SA Rage 1/day, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Climb +7, Concentration +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +7, Survival +7, Swim +7. *Feats:* Acolyte, Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Fanatical Fighting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longspear).

*Arcane Spells Known* (Spells per day: 4/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +1 Int): 0 — *dancing lights, daze*; 1st — *cause fear, mage armor, speak with animals*.

*Languages:* Azimban, Shoma.

*Possessions:* Feather-covered black robes, bird-mask, longspear.

*Description:* With faces hidden by bird-masks and bodies covered in voluminous black robes decorated with feathers of vultures and eagles, these priests strike fear into Azimban men and women.

*Tactics:* The priests precast *mage armor* before battle, then *cause fear* before they rage and attack with their spears.

**12. Temple of Jul-Juggah**

It is a testament to the cult's influence in Zimballah that the shrine of Jul-Juggah is more grand and imposing than the palace's throne room. The large chamber, 30 feet high, is illuminated by sun- or moonlight filtering in from somewhere above, and smells of exotic drugs and incense.

A huge, 25 feet tall stone statue stands in middle of the chamber, carved with the mixed features of a flying lizard and a bat. The statue's outstretched wings and small base makes it somewhat unstable; it is possible to topple it over with a Strength check (DC 25) to crush anyone caught below it, dealing 6d6 points of damage, with a Reflex save (DC 15) for half damage.

On the east wall of the shrine is a pair of doors that lead out to the sacrificial platform (Area 13).

There is a 50% chance that 1d4+1 priests of Jul-Juggah are here at any given time.

**13. Sacrificial Platform**

A set of stairs, 10 feet above the ground of the outer compound (Area 1) lead from the temple of Jul-Juggah (Area 12) to this raised platform which juts out over the adjacent hillside and is 60 feet above the rocks below.

On the platform are three bloodstained stone slabs where victims are tied while the high priest performs the rituals which summon the devil-birds of Azimba. The monstrous birds then feast on the still-living sacrifices, hacking out their entrails with their sharp beaks. Later, the clean-picked bones are thrown over the edge of the platform, leaving the rocky ground deep below filled with sun-bleached skulls and bones. Anyone jumping or falling from the platform is subject to damage from these sharp bones as if they were spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each), in addition to normal falling damage.

**Devil-Birds of Azimba (2-5):** CR 5; hp 45; see the New Monsters appendix.





## The Royal Palace of Zimballah (Dungeon Level)

In the dungeons beneath the royal palace are several prison cells, as well as the royal crypts, storage areas, living quarters, and a large forge used by the king's weaponsmiths.

**Development:** The actions of the player characters will depend on their exact mission. The fire-priests of Zadj and the king's master-smith, Abbas, are able to defend themselves well if attacked and also seek to raise the alarm, bringing in reinforcements of guards from the upper level.

The PCs may be able to create a nice diversion by freeing the prisoners (in Area 4) and staging a slave riot, although this may put the entire city on full alert and make it difficult for the PCs to escape Zimballah.

### 1. Stairway

This broad stairway leads 50 feet down from Area 6 in the upper level of the palace. The corridor continues to Area 2.

### 2. Wide Corridor

This wide corridor connects the various areas of the palace dungeons. Two palace guards patrol the length of the corridor.

### 3. Cistern

The roof of this chamber is held up by four massive columns. In the middle of the room is a large cistern, 15 feet deep, filled with fresh-water, fed by underground pipes which are too small for a medium-sized creature to enter.

### 4. Prison Cells

The cells are well-filled with prisoners who await hard work in the forge, torture and interrogation by Tisa the master-torturer, or death upon the altars of Jul-Juggah. Each of the eighteen cells holds an average of three captives, 90% of which are male. Among the prisoners, who are predominantly Azimban natives, is a swarthy, turbaned Zadjite who seeks to escape and wants the player characters to help him (see Gilzan, below).

The larger rooms consist of a torture-chamber and the dwellings of Tisa and the prison guards. There are 4 guards with the same statistics as the palace guards. There is a 25% chance that 1d3 priests of Jul-Juggah are here to pick out victims for their next grisly sacrifice (see Area 13 of the upper level).

**Tisa the Master-Torturer, male Azimban Ftr6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d10+15; hp 51; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 no armor, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +6/+11; Atk +12 melee (2d4+9, spiked chain, 20/x2, reach 10 ft.); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d4+9, spiked chain, 20/x2, reach 10 ft.); SA none; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Spot skills; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8.

**Skills:** Intimidate +8, Jump +14, Ride +9, Swim +14. **Feats:** Azimban Spear-Mastery (b), Combat Expertise, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Trip, Persuasive, Toughness, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain).

**Languages:** Azimban, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Loincloth, spiked chain.

**Description:** Tisa is potbellied, with huge muscled arms. His long and curly hair hangs down on his back in matted dreadlocks.

**Tactics:** Although Tisa prefers to abuse helpless prisoners, he is quite adept with the spiked chain and uses it to trip opponents.

### Gilzan of Al-Qazir, male Zadjite Nom4:

CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d8+3; hp 25; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 35 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA Sneak Attack (+1d6); SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills; +1 racial bonus to all saving throws, Mounted Skirmisher, Track, Fast Movement (+5), Endurance, Throat of the Camel; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Handle Animal +8, Heal +7, Hide +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Move Silently +10, Ride +10, Spot +7, Survival +7. **Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

**Languages:** Zadjite, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Loincloth.

**Description:** This is a Zadjite slaver who has now himself become imprisoned after a failed slave raid on Azimba. He knows of a way out of the palace (through the temple of Jul-Juggah), and may bargain with this information if the player characters agree to set him free.

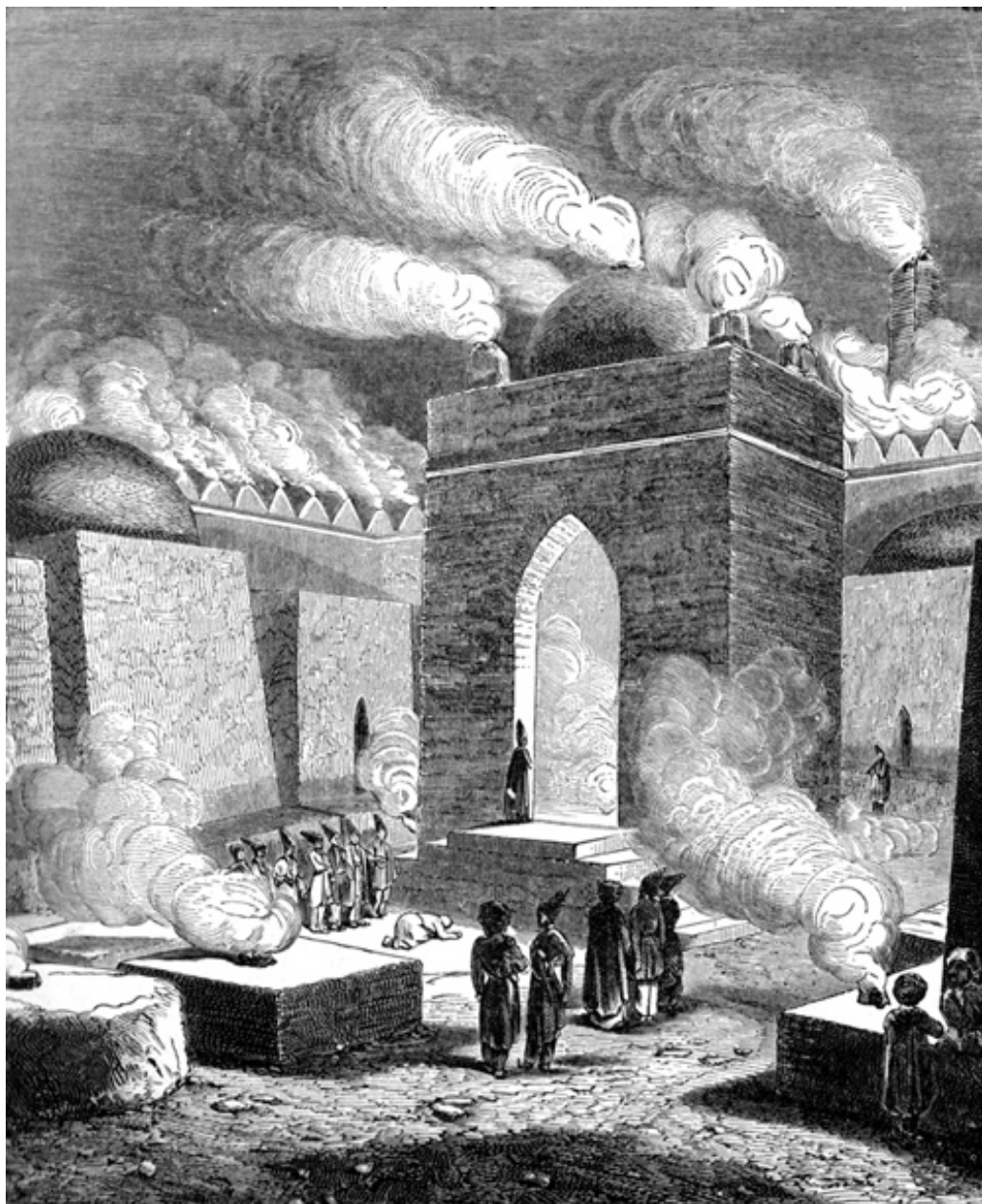
**Tactics:** If he is freed, Gilzan seeks to arm himself with scimitar and bow as soon as possible.

### The Royal Palace (Dungeon Level)

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 10 feet in normal rooms, and 30 feet in the forge (Area 10).

**Lighting:** Illumination is provided by torches set in brackets along the walls at 40 foot intervals.





### 5. Storeroom

This storeroom contains dozens of large wooden crates filled with raw iron ore. A pair of locked doors connects this room to the armory (Area 6).

### 6. Armory

All doors to this room are locked; the key is carried by Abbas the master-smith (see Area 10). Wooden shelves and racks in this chamber are stacked with a growing collection of iron weapons, including swords, axes and war spears. Some of the weapons are ready for use, others lack hilts and shafts. A handful of the weapons are masterwork items, including a pair of longswords decorated with vulture feathers and a battleaxe carved with an image of a roaring lion.

### 7. Latrine

This simple latrine, little more than a 10 feet pit in the floor, reeks of excrement and

the walls carry disgusting stains. A character spending more than 5 rounds in the room (for whatever reason) must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become sickened for 10 minutes.

### 8. Crypts

The entrance to the crypts is locked. The door is inset with a row of yellowed human skulls. A successful Listen check (DC 15) reveals the scuttling of a pack of tomb rats in the corridor behind the door. This cobwebbed corridor leads to three separate tombs. Each tomb contains a large stone sarcophagi and several wall-alcoves; the resting-place of former kings of Zimballah and their wives and concubines.

Each sarcophagus has a heavy lid (2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 30; Break DC 24) and contains the rotted remains of a king along with 1d6 x 100 gp worth of gold ornaments and other grave offerings. The alcoves contain the skeletons of females.







There is a 50% chance that one sarcophagus actually contains an undead creature (similar to a wight but without the ability to create spawn) instead of a mere corpse.

**Dire Rats (11-20):** CR 1/3; hp 5.

**Undead Thing (wight):** CR 3; hp 26.

### 9. Living Chambers

This area contains the living-quarters of the king's master weaponsmith, Abbas, and his apprentices (male Azimban Exp4), as well as the foreign priests of Zadj who have been hired by the king to teach Abbas the art of iron-smithing. The rooms are furnished in spartan fashion with sleeping-mats of animal-skins and wooden tables set with food, tools and equipment.

There are two secret tunnels here; they may be found with a successful Search check (DC 25).

### 10. Forge

The forge is a huge room with a 30 feet tall ceiling. On each side of the chamber, a set of stairs leads up to a 10-feet wide balcony that follows the wall around the room. In the center of the chamber is a large clay furnace, a heavy anvil, and a stone vessel filled with water. Scattered around the room are heaps of charcoal, raw ore, waste slag, and equipment such as tongs, hammers and aprons.

**Development:** Working in the forge is Abbas the Master-Smith (male Azimban Exp10) and 1d3 of his apprentices, supervised by the rogue priests of Zadj. If combat breaks out, the Zadjites run up the stairs and cast spells from atop the balcony, while the apprentices of Abbas attempt to protect the master-smith using hammers and tongs as improvised weapons.

**Rogue Priests of the Living Flame, male Zadjite Sor6 (3):** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d4+9; hp 29; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+0 no armor, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, curved dagger, 18-20/x2) or +4 melee (1d3+1, whip, 20/x2, reach 10 ft.); SA Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Knowledge (geography) skills, +1 racial bonus to all saving throws, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Decipher Script +12, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +12. **Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Fanatical Fighting, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (curved dagger), Zadjite Whip-Mastery (b).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/3/3/2; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int): o —

*guidance, prestidigitation; 1st — command, hypnotism, magic weapon, witch-fire; 2nd — burning hands, knock, pyrotechnics; 3rd — explosive runes, hold person, keen edge.*

**Languages:** Zadjite, Azimban, Shoma, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** Yellow robes, tall red turban, golden talisman set with tiny ruby (worth 150 gp). The leader carries has a flask of sacred oil which he can pour out to summon a large fire elemental.

**Description:** These fire-worshippers wear yellow silken robes and tall red turbans. Their motivation for abandoning the cult is simply wealth; in Iraab, the acolytes of the Living Flame are forced to live ascetic lives, while the senior priests profit greatly from their part in the ironsmithing industry.

**Tactics:** The priests stand back and use spells from a distance while their leader summons a fire elemental to fight.

**Large Fire Elemental:** CR 5; hp 60.

## Conclusion

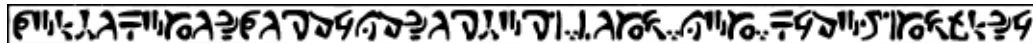
The conclusion to this adventure depends on who the player characters work for, and the strategy they choose for entering the royal palace of Zimballah. As noted above, there are several options to choose among. They could, for example, start a slave revolt by releasing the prisoners in the palace dungeons, and use the confusion to escape with the weaponsmith. If the PCs escape the palace, the priests of Jul-Juggah may use divination spells to determine the identity and location of the culprits, and summon one or more devil-birds to hunt the player characters down on the savannahs of Azimba.

**If the PCs fail:** Again, this depends on the exact nature of the PCs' actions while they are in the land of Azimba. They could very well end up on the sacrificial altars of Jul-Juggah, or they could be stabbed to death by the king's spearmen, or perhaps be engulfed by a fire elemental summoned by the fire-priests of Zadj.









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The current Natari sees the arrival of the PCs as an opportunity to destroy the remains of Ur-Kharra and break his ancient spells. However, she does not want her family's curse to be revealed, so she orders her kin to leave the foreigners alone during the days of the full moon.

Natari's younger brother, an ambitious prince named Kasozi, seeks to usurp the queen, and realizes that he might use the PCs as pawns. Kasozi, himself a wereleopard, sends one of his kinsmen to sneak in and attack the player characters at night. The assassin attacks in animal form and reverts to human form if slain by the PCs. Interrogating the servants, who have been instructed by Kazosi, the PCs learn that the queen and her kin are in fact were-leopards, and that they terrorize the city during the full moon; the people would surely be grateful if the "evil queen" was removed.

Assuming the player characters attack or sneak into Natari's palace, the so-called "Temple of the Moon", they witness the royal family devouring a hapless slave, confirming the words of the servant.

Confronting the queen, who attempts to negotiate if the PCs defeat her, Natari admits that she is cursed with turning into a beast during the full moon but says the source of the curse is said to be found in the vaults beneath the temple. This curse also prevents anyone from leaving the city, so it is in the interest of the player characters to lift the curse even if they don't care about the queen's fate.

If the PCs descend into the dungeons beneath the palace, they confront the remains of Ur-Kharra the sorcerer-king. If his soul-essence is defeated, a vision of his death at the hands of Maka flashes into the minds of the player characters.







Kazosi sends some of his henchmen after the player characters, hoping to make the PCs believe that Natari has betrayed her deal with the PCs. If they survive the ambush and return to the throne room, a three-way battle may ensue between the player characters and Natari and Kazosi, as well as their remaining followers.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started.

— The player characters are traveling through a remote mountain region. Pursued by a large pack of hungry mountain lions, the PCs flee towards a mist-filled valley. The distant walls of Kumara appear out of the mists and offer a refuge against the lions.

— The party is pursuing some fugitive (perhaps a criminal, traitor or former ally) across the wilderness. The tracks lead into a mist-filled valley. The fugitive has taken up refuge in the city.

## The Valley of Mists

The city of Kumara is located in a narrow valley ringed by forested hills. The city sits on the top of a sloped hillside in the center of the valley and is ringed by massive stone walls. There are two main gates, and a trail leads down from the city to the plains below from each of them.

To the east of the city is a river which is the source of drinking-water for the Kumarans. Water from the river is also used to irrigate the fields south and east of the city where peasants work to produce the city's food.

The city and its environs is ringed with a wall of dense mist which has hidden Kumara from the eyes of foreigners for countless generations. The mist is a side effect of Ur-Kharra's powerful bounding spell (a unique variant of an *antipathy* spell) which prevents anyone from leaving the area. Creatures are free to enter the valley by walking through the mist, but cannot leave unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 40). Those who fail the saving throw are wracked by pains and cannot retry.

Hidden in the hills a few miles east of the city, outside the mist and the bounding spell, is the sacred grove of Nwanga Zhaal where Maka found the bane-dagger of Ur-Kharra (see the adventure background).

### The Sacred Grove of Nwanga Zaal

Located in the hills east of Kumara, this is an ancient place of worship, used by the native tribesmen before the coming of the elder Kumarans to worship Nwanga Zhaal. The black witch-doctors would visit the grove on the nights of the full moon and offer human sacrifice to the ever-hungry animal-god.

In the center of the grove is a clearing and an outcropping of rock. A large and weathered stone idol stands in the clearing, near a cave entrance in the rock. The cave is filled with skulls and bones and is the lair of the grove's guardian, a huge prehistoric beast believed to be an incarnation of Nwanga Zhaal — or perhaps this creature is the “god” himself.

The moss-grown idol of black stone is carved in the shape of a snarling leopard's head. It has hardness 8 and 180 hit points (Break DC 50). If the idol is disturbed, the guardian of the grove appears from the cave opening, pouncing upon the creature damaging the idol. The very sight of the creature may scare off the weak-willed.

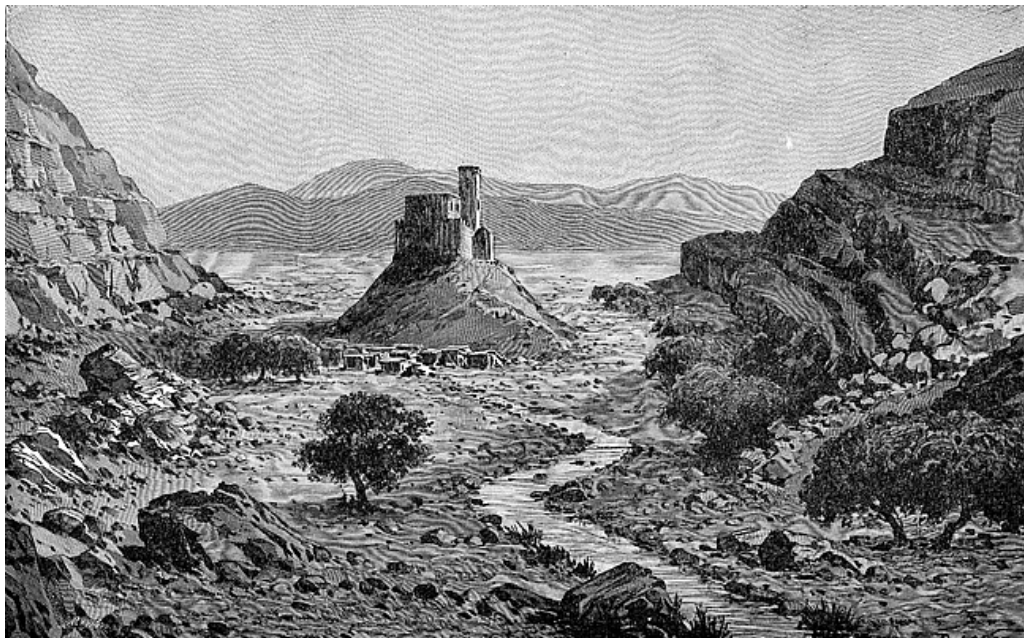
**The Guardian of the Grove:** CR 8; SZ L Animal; HD 16d8+48; hp 120; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +12/+24; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8, claw); Full Atk +20/+20 melee (2d4+8, claw) and +14 melee (2d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful Presence, Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake (2d4+4); SQ Low-Light Vision, Scent; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Hide +7\*, Jump +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Spot +7, Swim +10. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw).

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** The Guardian of the Grove can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically when the Guardian appears, and affects opponents within 30 feet with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the Guardian has. Creatures that fail a Will save (DC 18) become frightened for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the frightful presence of the same creature type for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.







**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the Gurdian of the Grove must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If the Guardian of the Grove charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +18 melee, damage 2d4+4.

**Skills:** The Guardian of the Grove has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. \*In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

**Development:** It is extremely unlikely that the player characters find this hidden grove before their encounters with the inhabitants of Kumara, but they may come here at the end of the adventure (see “Concluding the Adventure”, below).

If the idol is destroyed, Nwanga Zhaal’s curse of lycanthropy is lifted from Maka’s descendants. Also, the guardian of the grove is instantly slain if the idol is broken (although it fights for its life to prevent this, of course).

## The City of Kumara

Kumara is currently inhabited by around five hundred dark-skinned natives, and a roughly equal number of light-skinned descendants of the elder Kumarans. Since each people has enslaved the other in turn, crossbreeding is not tolerated and children of such unions are quickly put away.

Since the death of Ur-Kharra the sorcerer-king, and the subsequent black rebellion, the blacks have ruled the city with a succession of women named Natari as their queen. The royal family is cursed with lycanthropy but has kept this fact hidden from the general population.

To keep their secret, and because the city is isolated, Natari and her kin usually feed upon kidnapped slaves, but as the population slowly dwindles away people are starting to suspect that something is wrong.

### Approaching the City

At first look, the city of Kumara appears as a deserted ruin, but as the player characters close in they realize it is inhabited. The cyclopean stone of the city walls is partly crumbled in several places and crudely repaired with patches of wood and mud-brick. The harvesting season is over and the fields on the plains around the city are abandoned and dry during this time of the year.

**Development:** Player characters who approach the city walls peacefully find that the gates are opened to them after a short discourse with the guards on the walls. Although the Kumarans speak an archaic language, anyone who knows either Shoma or Azimban will be able to converse with the inhabitants of the city. The arrival of the PCs is reported to the royal palace. The player characters are not free to wander the city, but are escorted to a stone building not far from the south gate, where they are quartered until a feast is held in their honor (see below). During their time in the guest-house it becomes apparent that a light-skinned people are kept as slaves by the natives, although the servants (male and female Kuthan Halfbreed Com1) are forbidden to speak with the foreigners.

Should the PCs for some reason decide to attack the city, or act aggressively against the guards, the Kumarans defend themselves as appropriate and attempt to capture the foreigners alive. Captives are taken to the guest-house in chains. No feast is held; instead Kazosi arranges for the servant Upi to free the PCs and beg them to slay “the bestial black queen”, Natari.







**Kumaran Warriors, male Shoma Bbn2:** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d12+2; hp 19; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 12 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, shortspear, 20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d6, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Jump +7, Listen +5, Ride +7, Swim +7. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Run (b).

**Languages:** Kumaran.

**Possessions:** Clothing, heavy wooden shield, shortspear, shortbow, 20 arrows, 1d6 gp.

**Description:** These warriors wield spears and large black wooden shields decorated with a white mountain motif.

**Tactics:** These guards fire their bows before closing with spears.

#### A Feast Before the Moon Rises

If the PCs avoid aggression against the Kumarans, they are received as guests and a great feast is held in their honor the next day. The people of Kumara gather in the open area below the Temple of the Moon while the queen and her court watch from high atop the temple-hill. The player characters will not be permitted to speak with the queen or her nobles, who are protected by a full regiment of guards. Should the PCs try to reach the queen by force, Natari and her nobles retreat behind the walls of the palace-temple, while the guards rush in to subdue the assailants.

Entertainment at the feast includes male and female dancers leaping and cavorting to the primal sounds of wooden drums and bone pipes; games of wrestling and club-fighting; and the display of trained animals.

Food is served by light-skinned slaves. The player characters may be surprised to learn what the Kumarans eat; the wooden trays brought by the servants are filled with all manner of disgusting food. Nothing happens to those who refuse to eat, although the player characters may believe that they should taste the dishes so as not to offend their hosts.

PCs who taste the different dishes must make a saving throw or vomit and become weakened. The Kumarans are used to this food and are unaffected. The dishes include fried grasshoppers and red beetles (Fort DC 12, dmg 1 Str/1d3 Str), fist-sized green snails (Fort DC 14, dmg 1 Str/1d4 Str), and finger-thick pale white maggots (Fort DC 16, dmg 1d3 Str/1d6 Str). Damaged ability scores heal at the normal rate.

The feast ends well before darkness falls, after which the full moon quickly appears. After the feast, the player characters are escorted back to the guest-house by a dozen guards.

#### The Leopard Hunts in Darkness

The player characters share a common room in the guest-house. The room has a 20-foot-tall ceiling. Through a narrow window (too small to climb through for a medium-sized creature) high on the outer wall the full moon can be seen rising. There are six guards patrolling the corridor outside. The door to the room is of iron and is barred from the outside (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 30).

In the southeastern corner of the room is a secret door (Search DC 30) that can only be opened from the outside.

**Development:** In the middle of the night, one of Kazosi's henchmen attacks the party through the secret entrance. He crawls through the corridor in leopard-form and tries to attack by surprise, leaping upon anyone awake within the chamber. If slain, he reverts to human form. When the guards posted outside hear the sounds of battle from within the chamber, they open the iron door and investigate in 3d4 rounds. The guards are loyal to queen Natari and know nothing of Kazosi's plot to stir up the PCs against the queen; their job is to keep the player characters imprisoned.

After the attack, one of the light-skinned servants (male Kuthan Halfbreed Com1; secret agent of Kazosi) in the guest-house approaches the player characters. He calls himself Upi and reveals to the PCs that the queen and her kin are were-leopards who terrorize the city during the full moon. He also suggests that the slaves of the city will rise up against their masters if the "evil queen Natari" is slain (but they dare not act before she is dead). While there is some truth to this story, Kazosi's plan is to get the player characters to kill Natari, and then claim the throne of Kumara for himself.

#### Henchman of Kazosi, male Shoma Were-Leopard Bbn4 (animal form):

CR 7; SZ M Humanoid [Shapechanger]; HD 4d12+12 plus 3d8+6; hp 65; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +6/+10; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +5/+5 melee (1d3+2, claw); SA Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake (1d3+2); SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Low-Light Vision, Scent, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction (10/silver), Lycanthropic Empathy, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +11, Hide +10, Intimidate +7, Jump +11, Listen +8, Swim +11. **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will (b), Run (b), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.



*Languages:* Kumaran.

*Possessions:* None.

*Description:* In their animal form, the were-leopards look just like regular leopards, although they revert to their true human form if slain.

*Tactics:* A were-leopard in animal form charges his opponents and makes a full attack which includes two rake attacks.

## The Temple of the Moon

Originally a fortress-palace of the elder Kumarans, the central building of the city is now also a temple dedicated to moon-worship in honor of Nwanga Zhaal.

The temple sits on a hill, like an acropolis, with a steep zig-zagging set of stairs that lead to the top, 60 feet above the level of the other buildings in the city. The walls of the temple are 30 feet tall and of superior masonry (1 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20). There are no windows, only arrow slits. Area 18 has no ceiling and is open to the sky, although this is not apparent when viewing the temple from the ground level outside.

There is a single side entrance (Area 12) that can be reached by climbing (Climb DC 25), but the guards posted there may easily spot any climbers unless they climb under cover of darkness (but remember that this adventure is set during the nights of the full moon). In daylight, the side entrance can be seen from below the temple-hill with a successful Spot check (DC 20).

### 1. Grand Staircase

This large stairway zigzags up to the main gates (Area 2) far above ground level. A creature's speed is halved when navigating the stairs (each square costs double movement). The archers in the guardrooms (Areas 3 and 4) have excellent line of sight to anyone approaching this way.

### 2. Main Gates

The massive front gates are made of iron (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 30) and can be barred from the inside. Six warriors guard the gates.

**Development:** If intruders are detected, the guards sound the alarm by blowing a goat-horn, then close and bar the doors. They run

to take up positions in the guardrooms to each side, from where they fire their bows against the intruders through the arrow slits.

**Kumaran Warriors (6):** CR 2; hp 19.

### 3. Western Guardroom

The arrow slits in this chamber provide excellent cover (+8 bonus to Armor Class and +4 bonus to Reflex saves). Archers firing upon intruders also gain a +1 bonus to attack for being on higher ground.

To the back of the room are several small bedrooms where the guards sleep when not on duty.

### 4. Eastern Guardroom

This room is similar to the other guardroom (Area 3). Hidden under a rug in one of the bedchambers is a masterwork dagger and a small amethyst (worth 75 gp).

### 5. Great Corridor

This corridor is of great size. A huge mural covers the wall opposite to the entrance (from Area 2). The painted mural depicts a beautiful black female, with a small girl in her arms, sitting upon a throne surrounded by black courtiers. Everyone in the temple-palace, if interrogated, can tell the player characters that this is a painting of Maka, the first black queen of Kumara, and her daughter Natari.

### 6. Guard Captain

This is the office and bedroom of the guard-captain, a young and strong man named Kiuma. The plastered walls are covered with crimson tapestries. A large bed stands against the north wall, with a stand of carved wood to one side. In the other corner a wooden folding-screen separates a shelf, sofa and couch from the rest of the place.

**Kiuma, Guard Captain, male Shoma**  
**Bbn6:** CR 6; SZ M; HD 6d12+12; hp 62; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+3 hide armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+3 hide armor, +2 heavy wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +6/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+4, shortspear, 20/x2) or +9 ranged (1d6, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+4, shortspear, 20/x2) or +9/+4 ranged (1d6, shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 60 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears

### The Temple of the Moon

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 30 feet in all rooms except the moon-pool (Area 18).

**Lighting:** The corridors and rooms of the temple are illuminated by wall-hung torches. Due to the ceiling height and the limited range of the torches (20 feet), the upper 5 feet of all rooms are shrouded in shadows which provide concealment to any creature hiding there.





and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Climb +13, Intimidate +9, Jump +13, Listen +9, Ride +11, Survival +9. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Run (b).

**Languages:** Kumaran, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Hide armor, large wooden shield, shortspear, shortbow, silver armbands (worth 35 gp each).

**Description:** The guard-captain wears armor of rhino hide, and silver armbands to denote his rank.

**Tactics:** Kiuma joins his men in defense of the temple. If facing overwhelming opposition, he flees to warn Queen Natari and the other nobles.

## 7. Antechamber

This chamber is empty save for a few worn rugs on the floor.

## 8. Hall of Three Columns

In the middle of this hall are three slender stone columns carved with images of war. The room is illuminated by a single torch set in the middle column, leaving the rest of the room in shadowy illumination.

A were-leopard, one of Kazosi's henchmen, hides in the semi-darkness here, with orders to attack any intruders.

### Henchman of Kazosi, male Shoma Were-Leopard Bbn4 (hybrid form):

CR 7; SZ M Humanoid [Shapechanger]; HD 4d12+12 plus 3d8+6; hp 65; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 19 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 19 (+0 no armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +4 Dex, +3 natural); BAB/Grapple +6/+10; Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, heavy mace, 20/x2) or +10 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+4, heavy mace, 20/x2) or +10/+10 melee (1d4+4, claw) and +5 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Low-Light Vision, Scent, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction (10/silver), Lycanthropic Empathy, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +11, Hide +10, Intimidate +7, Jump +11, Listen +8, Swim +11. **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will (b), Run (b), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Kumaran.

**Possessions:** Clothing, heavy wooden shield, heavy mace.

**Description:** The moon-cursed nobles of Kumara, in their hybrid form, are leopard-headed with eyes that glow red in the dark, and arms which end in claws.

**Tactics:** The were-leopards use their low-light vision to good effect, hiding in the shadows until opponents approach, then strike with great speed and surprise.

## 9. Laboratory

The door to this chamber is decorated with strange symbols. A successful Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 10) is required to recognize the sigils as alchemical symbols. The door is locked and trapped with a poison needle trap (CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass [Open Lock DC 30]; Atk +17 melee [1 plus poison, needle]; poison [blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17).

Behind the door is a long disused alchemical lab; with crates, boxes, canisters, flasks, jars of dried herbs, animal parts, and other strange items; books, scrolls, bottles and dissection tools litter the tables and dust is everywhere. Among the rubble (Search DC 15) is a wooden box with 2 doses of fire-powder, a vial of anti-toxin, and a colored glass vial (worth 20 gp).

Against the northern wall are three small rooms; two of the doors are unlocked and the third door is locked. If the locked door is broken down by force, several fragile vials of chemical fluids fall down from a shelf and combine to form an explosion that causes 6d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 16 for half damage) to all within a 15 feet radius. Such an explosion also alerts any nearby guards, who come to investigate in 1d6 rounds.

## 10. Large Hall

This large hall contains a number of headless statues. Further inspection reveals that the sculpted stone bodies do not resemble the black Kumarans, but men of a taller and more powerful build. These are in fact statues of the elder Kumarans, who were themselves descended from the giant-kings of Kuth. The heads of these statues have been smashed in rage by the now-ruling Kumarans, as indicated by the rubble around the feet of the statues.

## 11. Inner Gates

This antechamber is decorated with red tapestries with gold trimming. There is a 25% chance to encounter a Kumaran noble (a were-leopard in human form) making his way to the pool chamber (Area 18) with an entourage of 1d4 guards.



**12. Watchpost**

This small guard-station is 70 feet above the ground. The natural rock surface below is rough (Climb DC 25). A single guard is stationed here, with a goat-horn to sound the alarm. The door behind the guard is barred from the inside; the guard knows a secret knock that summons a guard from the nearby guardroom (Area 13) to open the door when required.

**Kumaran Warrior:** CR 2; hp 19.

**13. Guards**

Housed in this simple, unlocked room are six guards; two of them are resting here at any time. There are six sleeping-mats here, as well as a weapon rack with spears, clubs and bows. Two large wooden shields are placed in one corner. On a small wooden table is an opened flask of banana wine, some throwing-bones, and a dagger.

**Kumaran Warriors (2):** CR 2; hp 19.

**14. Personal Chambers and Lounge**

Beyond an open archway from the guardroom (Area 13), is a large reception room. Three stone pillars support the ceiling. Half a dozen chairs draped with baboon-skins are placed around a large table, upon which is a selection of fresh fruits, two silver decanters of wine (worth 25 gp each), and an ivory figurine of a dancing woman (worth 50 gp).

Along the southern wall are several locked chambers; these are the bedrooms of lesser nobles and courtiers. Each room contains 1d4 x 100 gp worth of assorted bronze and silver jewelry.

**15. Great Antechamber**

Four black warriors guard the doors inside this antechamber. If the alarm has been sounded, the doors are barred from the inside (add +2 to Break DC), else they are unlocked.

**Kumaran Warriors (4):** CR 2; hp 19.

**16. Kitchen**

A cooking-pit is in the far end of this room. On a table is a pile of fresh meat and vegetables. Jars of spices (worth 200 gp) line the shelves. Currently in the kitchen is a cook and a serving-boy; the former is sleeping and snoring.

**17. Disused Storeroom**

Entrance to this pantry is through a broken door. In addition to half a dozen empty barrels, boxes, and ewers, a small, sealed clay amphora can be found (Search DC 20) that contains a handful of ancient gold coins (worth 200 gp). A successful Knowledge (history) check (DC 16) reveals that the coins are from the fabled era of Elder Kuth.

**18. The Moon-Pool**

This huge ceremonial chamber is open to the sky above, from which moonlight shines down into a large water-filled pool in the middle of the room. The pool is 20 feet deep and rimmed with white marble tiles. On the far side of the chamber is a high-backed wooden throne set with 12 large pieces of lapis lazuli (worth 50 gp each). The room is illuminated by two large bronze braziers with supports carved in the shape of rhinos.

Gathered here on the night of the full moon is Natari and her kin, the nobles of Kumara, all of whom are cursed with the appetite for human flesh during the full moon. The nobles are were-leopards, lycanthropes able to assume leopard form as well as a hybrid form with the head and paws of a leopard, and the torso and legs of a human. When the full moon shines, they must assume either hybrid or animal form, although even then they can revert to human form for a limited time (a successful Will save [DC 15] allows the were-leopards to assume human form for 10 minutes per Hit Dice even during the full moon).

Natari and her kin are not able to spread lycanthropy with their bite or claws; the curse only affects the children of Natari (that is, the girls descended directly from Maka) and the children of any wereleopards who mate with each other. A wereleopard (except Natari) mating with a normal human always produces a stillborn child.

**Development:** To conceal their true nature, Natari and the other nobles remain isolated during the nights of the full moon, keeping only a few trusted guards and servants around. The wereleopards share the flesh and blood of a few unlucky victims, usually old or homeless people who have been kidnapped from the streets of the city, and almost always of the light-skinned slave-caste.

If the player characters enter the Temple of the Moon during this night, they come upon this ghastly scene of wereleopards about to feast upon a pair of bound male slaves. If combat breaks out, the nobles attack and try to drive the intruders away from the pool. Natari and Kazosi remain at the back near the throne, along with a few bodyguards.

If the queen senses that defeat is possible, she assumes human form and pleads with the PCs to cease hostilities. She explains that she and her kin are cursed and that the curse originates from an "ancient demon" imprisoned in the nether vaults of the city. If the PCs agree to slay the demon they may take any treasure it guards.

The wereleopards have high damage resistance, but are vulnerable to silver. Weapons dipped in the moon-pool are effectively silvered for a 1d3 rounds (if the PCs need a hint, describe to them how the moon reflects in the pool, making the water look like liquid silver). If a wereleopard is bull rushed into the pool, he suffers as if he was burned by strong acid







(1d6+2 points of damage for each round he remains in the water).

**Queen Natari of Kumara, female Shoma Were-Leopard Ari5 (hybrid form):** CR 7; SZ M; HD 5d8+15 plus 3d8+6; hp 51; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8 melee (1d4+3, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +8/+8 melee (1d4+3, claw) and +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Low-Light Vision, Scent, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction (10/silver), Lycanthropic Empathy; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 17.

**Skills:** Diplomacy +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Listen +10, Perform (dance) +11, Sense Motive +10, Swim +11. **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Iron Will (b), Negotiator, Run (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Kumaran, Shoma.

**Possessions:** Gold-trimmed red robe, short-sword, silver headband set with lapis lazuli (worth 250 gp), golden serpent-armband (worth 75 gp).

**Description:** Natari is beautiful, with soft black skin and long curly hair held up with a silver headband. She wears gold-trimmed red robes, and a golden serpent-armband.

**Tactics:** Natari stays behind the protection of her wereleopard kin and any regular guards present. She favors negotiations if more than four of her kin are killed.

**Kazosi the Traitor, male Shoma Were-Leopard Bbn7 (hybrid form):** CR 10; SZ M Humanoid [Shapechanger]; HD 7d12+21 plus 3d8+6; hp 98; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 17 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural);

BAB/Grapple +9/+15; Atk +16 melee (1d12+9, greataxe, 20/x3) or +15 melee (1d4+6, claw); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d12+9, greataxe, 20/x3) or +15/+15 melee (1d4+6, claw) and +10 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 2/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Low-Light Vision, Scent, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction (11/silver), Lycanthropic Empathy, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 22, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +16, Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Jump +16, Survival +11, Swim +16. **Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will (b), Power Attack, Run (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Kumaran.

**Possessions:** White loincloth, belt with golden buckle (worth 35 gp), masterwork greataxe, 2 golden rings (worth 100 gp each).

**Description:** Kazosi is dark-skinned and powerfully built, with short curly hair and a short-cropped beard. Kazosi does not like to conceal his true nature; he wants to be free to roam the city and hunt and kill and receive the worship of humans, whom he considers "lesser creatures".

**Tactics:** Kazosi has trouble controlling his bloodlust, so at the slightest provocation he enters a rage and Power Attacks with his formidable axe.

**Natari's Kin, the "Slaves of the Moon", male and female Shoma Were-Leopard Bbn1 (hybrid form; 8 total):** CR 7; SZ M Humanoid [Shapechanger]; HD 1d12+3 plus 3d8+6; hp 25; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +3/+7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +7 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +7 melee



(1d6+4, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +7/+7 melee (1d4+4, claw) and +2 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all spears and bows, Rage 1/day; SQ +2 racial bonus to Craft and Survival skills, +10 racial bonus to Speed, Low-Light Vision, Scent, Alternate Form, Damage Reduction (10/silver), Lycanthropic Empathy, Fast Movement, Illiteracy; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Climb +8, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +5, Ride +8, Swim +8. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will (b), Run (b), Weapon Finesse.

*Languages:* Kumaran.

*Possessions:* Purple robes, shortsword, golden jewelry (worth 50 gp).

### 19. Private Chambers

This comfortable room is the private lounge and bedchamber of Kazosi, Natari's younger brother. The floor is carpeted with thick rugs, and the walls are hung with wooden shields and weapons such as swords, axes and spears. Behind a blue curtain is a large bed; a female slave is always here. On the southern wall is a secret door (Search DC 25) that conceals an alcove that is large enough for one medium-sized creature to hide in. Kazosi might retreat here and hide if defeat seems imminent.

### 20. Cell

Behind a wooden portcullis (3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Lift DC 25; Break DC 25) is a small cell that holds 3 prisoners; one young woman and two old men. They were kidnapped from the streets of the city a few days ago and will soon be slain and eaten by Natari and her kin.

### 21. Disused Room (With Secret Trapdoor)

A few pieces of worn furniture sit and collect dust in this little-used room. Unknown to most, except Natari, there is a hidden trapdoor (Search DC 30) in the corner of the room that leads down to the catacombs beneath the palace.

### 22. Storeroom

Serving as a storage room for the palace-temple, this chamber is filled with chests, baskets and shelves containing dried meats, clothing, and various tools and equipment. There is also a small collection of wine bottles (worth 150 gp in total).

### 23. Servants

This chamber houses four trusted servants who know the true nature of Natari and the other nobles. There is little of value in this room.

### 24. Queen's Lounge

The door to this chamber is locked. In each corner of the room is a large red clay vase with white paint depicting the ancient masters of Kumara. On the walls are wooden masks crafted by the black Kumarans. The floor is covered by red, black and white carpets.

### 25. Queen's Bedroom

This chamber is lit by half a dozen small oil lamps of silver (worth 15 gp each) and smells pleasantly of perfume. A large mirror (worth 100 gp) stands against one wall. Next to a bed of cedarwood is a cupboard containing Natari's make-up, oils and perfumes (worth 75 gp in total). Several wardrobes contain a large collection of fine clothes (worth 1,000 gp in total).

### 26. Shrine

The entrance to this shrine is locked, and the door is decorated with scenes of leopards killing prey. The interior walls of the shrine are covered with thin sheets of ivory. Close to the far wall is a raised stone slab, covered with purple cloth and set with a small silver figurine (worth 150 gp) of a leopard-deity; this is an image of Nwanga Zhaal, of course.

### 27. Treasure Room

The door to this chamber is locked; Natari has the key. In addition, the doorknob is smeared with contact poison (CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger [attached]; manual reset; poison [nitharit, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, o/3d6 Con]; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 19).

Inside the small square room are four wooden boxes. The boxes contain a small pile of silver fox fur from far-away Tharag Thule (worth 250 gp in total), a masterwork iron longsword in a fine scabbard (worth 100 gp), a dozen golden rings and armbands (worth 350 gp in total), six bales of silk (worth 150 gp), and a small collection of parchment scrolls that describe the founding of the city (value variable).





## The Crypt of Ur-Kharra

The tunnels and chambers beneath the palace were extensive, but most of them have caved in since Ur-Kharra's death. From a hidden trapdoor (see Area 21, above), a spiral staircase descends about 150 feet before it ends in a square chamber (see Area 1, below).

### 1. Square Chamber

The stairs from the upper level of the temple-palace end in this empty and undecorated room.

### 2. Corridor and Bronze Door

The corridor is strewn with dust-covered rubble. Nothing appears to have moved here for years. The corridor ends in a locked bronze door (treat as stone door) inscribed with an image of a crowned and robed man who must be around nine foot tall, judging by the size of the servants depicted next to him. A successful Knowledge (history) check (DC 16) reveals this to be tantalizing evidence of the fabled giant-kings of Kuth.

### 3. Cobwebbed Room

The spiders from the pillared hall (Area 5) have placed their near-invisible but strong webs across this room. Approaching creatures must succeed on a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. If any noise is made during attempts to untangle from the web, the spiders quickly come to investigate.

### 4. Secret Tomb

The door to this secret tomb is hidden (Search DC 30). The chamber is sealed and opening it releases a cloud of poisonous grey dust. Creatures within 10 feet of the door must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) or suffer from madness and hallucinations, entering a berserk rage (similar to the barbarian's rage ability) and attacking the nearest creature. The effect lasts for 1d10 rounds.

The tomb contains a large, unadorned stone sarcophagus. The heavy lid can be smashed or lifted (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Lift DC 25). The sarcophagus is empty except for a gem-set diadem (similar to the crown depicted on the mural in Area 5). Ur-Kharra hid the crown here, deep beneath the earth, to prevent other sorcerers of Elder Kuth from discovering its location by scrying. Discovering the true history and properties of the diadem would be an adventure in itself.

### 5. Pillared Hall

This is the lair of a pair of monstrous spiders. They have grown big and hungry by feeding on rats and other vermin entering this chamber through small ventilation shafts. The far cor-

### The Crypt of Ur-Kharra

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are stone doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30 if described as locked). Ceiling height is 20 feet.

**Lighting:** The chambers in the crypt are unlit. The creatures here detect victims by tremorsense. If the player characters bring light sources into the crypt, hostile creatures will usually be able to detect the PCs first and attack with surprise.

ner of the room is covered with webs, but this requires a Spot check (DC 20) to detect.

This ceiling of this great hall is upheld by six square pillars of unadorned, partly cracked stone. Each pillar is actually in rather fragile condition (Hardness 4; hp 30; Break DC 22). It is also possible to topple a pillar instead of breaking it (Break DC 18). A toppled pillar causes 6d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 18 for half damage) to characters in two adjacent squares opposite of the creature pushing the pillar. Note that breaking or toppling over more than three of the pillars causes the entire ceiling to fall down, with dire consequences for those caught beneath it (a massive damage saving throw at DC 40). If this room caves in, it seals off the chambers beyond for further exploration unless several days or weeks are spent clearing the rubble.

The entire northern wall of the hall is covered with a grand mural which depicts Ur-Kharra, the ancient sorcerer-king of Kumara, a light-skinned man of giant (9-foot-tall) proportions, draped in dark green robes and crowned with a gem-set diadem. He is surrounded by light-skinned men of lesser stature as well as kneeling ranks of black servants. There is a secret door cleverly hidden (Search DC 18) within the painting; it is opened by pressing the left hand of the image of Ur-Kharra.

**Crypt Spiders (2):** CR 5; hp 52. *Note:* These spiders have statistics similar to huge monstrous spiders, but their actual size is large, not huge.

### 6. Side Chamber

This floor of this room is strewn with debris, including a rusted battle-axe, an empty scroll case, and a pile of rat bones.

### 7. Secret Room

This is the antechamber to the throne room (Area 8), reached through the secret door in the mural on the other side (see Area 5).

### 8. Old Throne Room

A grand throne stands against the far wall of this lavish chamber. The throne is flanked by a pair of large, ornately carved bronze braziers. In front of the throne are a dozen age-worn





wooden chests. The chests have all but crumbled due to rot, causing their contents to spill out across the floor; a large pile of gold coins interspersed with gems and golden jewelry such as armbands, necklaces and rings. This is truly an ancient king's hoard!

**Development:** The hoard appears to contain around 8,000 gp worth of ancient gold coins and jewelry. However, it is unlikely that the player characters will be able to appraise the hoard. After a few rounds, preferably when the PCs are busy collecting the treasure, the pile of gold suddenly starts to melt and flow together into a single amorphous blob of molten gold. This is actually the current shape of Ur-Kharra, whose insane soul-essence has taken residence in the sorcerer-king's hoard of yore. It lashes out against the nearest creature and fights until destroyed.

If the golden ooze is defeated, it dissolves into a pool of stinking acid. A spectral scene flashes past the PCs' eyes during its death-throes: A vision of the city of Kumara in its prime with a tall, robed man sitting on a throne; a black harem-girl kneeling in front of an idol of a snarling leopard; the same girl caressing the king, then backstabbing him with a fang-shaped dagger; and finally a spectral figure emerging from the dying king's body and merging with the treasure chests next to the throne. This vision of past events should leave the player characters with quite a few questions for Natari when they return to the palace above.

**Soul-Essence of Ur-Kharra, Sentient Golden Ooze (hoard-ooze, advanced):** CR 8; SZ L Ooze; HD 15d10+120; hp 202; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 4 (-1 size, -5 Dex), touch 4, flat-footed 4; BAB/Grapple +11/+14; Atk +14 melee (1d8+4 plus acid and poison, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA acid, irritating fumes, poison; SQ blindsight

(60 ft.), ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 1, Con 26, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Climb +11. **Feats:** —.

**Tactics:** A hoard ooze lies still until it detects a potential meal within range. It then forms a pseudopod and pummels the opponent. Creatures killed by a hoard ooze are devoured.

**Acid (Ex):** A hoard ooze's protoplasmic form secretes acid that dissolves organic matter but not metal or stone. Any melee hit deals acid damage. Non-metal armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds on a Reflex save (DC 25). Wooden weapons that strike a metallic ooze dissolve immediately unless they succeed on a Reflex save (DC 25). The save DCs are Constitution-based.

A hoard ooze's touch deals 25 points of damage per round to wooden objects, but the ooze must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

**Irritating Fumes (Ex):** If a hoard ooze is subjected to a heat or fire effect, it emanates a cloud of semitransparent vapor that irritates the eyes and respiratory system of living creatures within a 10-foot radius. Affected creatures must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 25) or take 2d6 points of acid damage initially and suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls for 3 rounds. The cloud disperses in 1d4 rounds and can be affected by wind. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Poison (Ex):** A hoard ooze's touch is poisonous. Each time it deals acid damage it poisons its target. The save DC is Constitution-based. **Metallic Ooze Poison:** Contact, Fortitude (DC 25) negates, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dexterity.



#### The fang of Nwanga Zhaal

This bone dagger resembles the fang of a huge, saber-toothed prehistoric cat. It may (or may not) be an actual tooth from the guardian-beast of Nwanga Zhaal's sacred grove (see "The Sacred Grove of Nwanga Zhaal", above). It once functioned as a sorcerer-bane weapon, allowing spellcasters to be slain with a single hit, but this ability was lost with Ur-Kharra's death. However, it is still usable for other means; it is treated as a silver weapon and inflicts an additional 1d6 points of damage against lycanthropes.



**Blindsight (Ex):** A hoard ooze's entire body is a sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

**Skills:** A hoard ooze has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

**Special Note:** Due to Ur-Kharra's dying curse, any native of Kumara is completely unable to harm the sorcerer-king's soul-essence, whether by weapons or magic.

#### 9. Looted Chamber

This was obviously once a pleasure-chamber, for the plastered walls are painted with all sorts of decadent scenes of erotic pleasures and drug abuse. Furniture such as silken divans and heaps of pillows have long since rotted away, leaving only traces of the former splendour.

Lying face-down in the middle of the room is a giant, 9-foot-tall skeleton. These are the lifeless remains of Ur-Kharra; his life-force escaped his body at the time of death and took refuge in the pile of gold coins in the nearby throne room (Area 8). Next to the yellowed bones of the skeleton is a fang-shaped dagger with a silver sheen.

#### 10. Sealed Chamber

The doors to this small, square room are locked, but a secret door (Search DC 30) exists in the wall against the throne room (Area 8). Along the walls are shelves and book-cases lined with iron-bound books, heavy tomes, ivory scroll-cases and maps in all shapes and sizes. This is, of course, the library of Ur-Kharra. Most of the books are written in the lost language of Elder Kuth, which means it will take months or years to decipher the texts, but this is nonetheless a very valuable collection to any sorcerer or sage.

Among the non-Kuthan books are the following:

— *The Lectures of Ong the Wise:* Written in ancient Bhangarian, it takes 1 week to study, and contains a description of the marvels of Laksha, including the Pearl Tower of Nyugara-jah and the Seven Veiled Witches.

— *Oxanu's Revelations:* Written in Lamuran on parchment, it takes 17 days to study, and contains a prophecy involving a Taraamite warlord.

— *The Red Codex of Totha:* Written in ancient Ptahaanan, using black pictograms on red monster hide, it takes 3 weeks to study, and contains a description of the rites and worship of Ia-Azutlatl as well as a false treasure map. The book is trapped with a *sepia snake sigil* spell (Reflex DC 18 negates).

#### 11. Bone-filled Room

The floor of this chamber is strewn with broken skulls, cracked bones and crushed rib-cages. In the middle of the room is a circular pit with a 10-foot diameter. The pit is 50 feet deep, leaving the bottom cloaked in darkness unless a torch is thrown down. Coiled up in the bottom of the pit is a giant snake, a half-demonic creature summoned by Ur-Kharra to devour the remains of the men who had failed him and the women he had tired of. The serpent lies dormant in the pit, but is roused by loud noise, bright lights or other disturbances, in which case it slithers up to devour its next meal.

**Ur-Kharra's Serpent of the Pit (fiendish giant constrictor snake):** CR 5; hp 63.

### Concluding the Adventure

The adventure can take many directions depending on how the player characters approach Natari and her fellow were-leopards, and the schemes of Kazosi, which should be adjusted according to the actions of the PCs. In any case, the player characters must destroy Ur-Kharra in order to break the bounding spell that prevents them from leaving the city.

If the sorcerer-king's spirit is laid to rest, the Kumarans can leave the accursed city. By locating the hidden valley with the grove sacred to Nwanga Zhaal, and destroying the stone idol of the beast-god, the curse of Natari and her kin can be lifted. But there are some of the were-leopards, such as Kasozi, who enjoy the power of their cursed form and would seek to prevent the destruction of the idol.

In any case, the black Kumarans remain lords of the city and cruel masters of the light-skinned descendants of the elder Kumarans. Whether Natari is deposed or not, the player characters might get involved in a bloody uprising by the light-skinned Kumarans, with savage fighting in the streets of the city to gain control over its districts.

**If the PCs fail:** If the PCs are defeated by Natari in the pool-chamber, they are imprisoned and then slain during the next full moon. Or perhaps Natari takes one of the PCs as a hostage, forcing the others to enter the crypt of Ur-Kharra. Kazosi's goal is to get the player characters to kill the queen, but after that they are useless to him and he seeks to get rid of them.





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## A feast for the Vultures

The player characters are traveling through the deserts of Susrah when they spot the corpse of a horse and its rider. A small metal box glints in the sun next to the horse. A flock of vultures is busy picking clean the bones. The vultures defend their meal fiercely, but retreat to safe distance if more than two birds are killed.

**Vultures (11-20):** CR ½; hp 5. *Note:* Use eagle statistics. In addition, vultures can spread filth fever with their talons and bite.

### The Package

The package is a nondescript, sturdy metal box (Hardness 7; hp 15; Break DC 22), approximately one square foot in size. It is secured with a very good lock (Open Lock DC 40). The key is nowhere to be found.

Inside the box is a rolled parchment sealed with wax, and another box, half the size of the outer box. On the parchment is written the (apparently gibberish) message:

“DAGERN OONM IN MHAAR FO STUHAD-  
ERG HET”

Unless you prefer to let the players solve the riddle in person, the message can be deciphered with a Decipher Script check (DC 25). When unscrambled and read from right to left, the message read reads:

“THE DAUGHTERS OF RAHMA IN MOON  
GARDEN”

The parchment is signed “Serathu”.

The wooden inner box (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 25) contains a small device of black metal. It is shaped like some sort of tiny claw or paw. With a successful Intelligence check (DC 15), a character realizes that the claw may be some kind of key.

**Development:** The claw-key was stolen by the Yar-Ammonite, Serathu, who sneaked into the hidden temple of the cult. After he had sent the item to his master, he was caught by the cult. The Daughters of Rahma have tortured Serathu to find out where the claw has gone, but he has so far resisted the torture and kept his secret. If the PCs spend too much time getting to Yaatana, Serathu gives in to the torture and reveals the destination of the item. If this happens, assassins from the cult travel to Ghezath to find the item. If the PCs go to Yaatana within reasonable time, they might save Serathu and learn his story.

### Researching the Daughters of Rahma

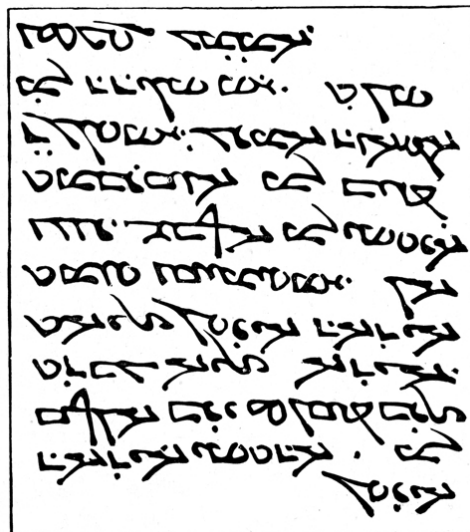
The cult of Rahma is unknown outside Yaatana, but a successful Gather Information or Knowledge (geography) check (DC 15) associates the “Moon Garden” with that city. The garden is known as a place where fertility rituals are held.

## The City of Yaatana

This wealthy trading post along the route from the city-states of Susrah to Khazistan and Jairan in the west is noted for its sinful back alleys and nefarious inhabitants. It is a city of furtive sorcerers, strange and depraved cults, and a place where the most perverted desires can be fulfilled by the arrangements of fat merchants eager to sell anything.

The city is old and surrounded by ancient clay walls which stand 20 to 30 feet high. Tarnished golden domes and marble minarets are visible beyond the walls as one approaches the city. The massive main gate is over 600 years old and receives a constant stream of visitors entering and leaving. With close to 14,000 inhabitants, Yaatana has over 100 temples (and probably double that number of hidden or secret underground shrines), a dozen public bath-houses, and more than 6,000 houses, most of which are several stories high, topped with flat roofs, and decorated with elaborate friezes and intricately carved windows. In the central souk (market), a variety of goods, including meat, spices, cotton, silverware, copper, and pottery can be bargained for. There are a number of smaller, more specialized souks dealing with slaves, weapons and drugs scattered throughout the city.

Yaatana is ruled by an elected governor (currently a middle-aged man named Akhdari Marza), but the real power is in a council of seven men drawn from the ranks of wealthy merchants, sorcerers, and high priests. The armed forces of the city are mostly comprised of mercenaries; law is enforced haphazardly and most laws are ignored as long as money from trade keeps flowing into the city. The local magistrates are notoriously corrupt and rule in favor of the biggest bribe.







#### At the Gates of Yaatana

When the PCs come to Yaatana, they may know some or all of the following: That a group or organization called “the Daughters of Rahma” are associated with a place known as “the Moon Garden”, where “fertility rituals” are held. Also, someone named Serathu sent an item belonging to this group with a caravan towards the neighbouring city of Ghezath.

**Development:** The player characters can either ask around for Serathu, the Moon-Garden, and/or the Daughters of Rahma. A successful Gather Information check (DC 15) reveals the location of the Moon-Garden. Another check (DC 20) is required for some details on the cult; such as when fertility rites are held and how to join them (you must be invited by someone who has participated before). If asking around for Serathu, a Gather Information check (DC 15) leads to the House of Imran, the inn where the Yar-Ammonite stayed before he disappeared.

The player characters may get the chance to begin their investigations even before entering the city, for the Daughters of Rahma have spies among the lepers and beggars at the city gate who are on the lookout for foreigners asking about Serathu or the cult. One such beggar-spy, named Abu, approaches the player characters at the city gate, asking for alms and offering information and gossip in return. Abu serves the PCs lies about the cult but directs them to the House of Imran if asked about Serathu.

**Abu “the Leper”, Spy of the Cult of Rahma, male Susrahnite Rog7:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d6+7; hp 38; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex); BAB/Grapple +5/+6; Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial

bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +4d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Disguise +11, Gather Information +11, Hide +14, Knowledge (local) +11, Move Silently +14, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +11, Tumble +14. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative (b), Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Lamuran.

**Possessions:** Tattered and dirty clothing, short sword, dagger, wooden beggar’s bowl, 2 gp.

**Description:** Clad in tattered brown robes that fail to conceal the signs of leprosy (however, this is just part of Abu’s disguise and not his real condition).

**Tactics:** Abu conceals his sword and dagger beneath his clothing. If the situation calls for it, he aims for surprise and uses Quick Draw to gain a sneak attack before he flees.

#### The House of Imran

This squalid but cheap tavern and boarding-house is located in the foreign quarter of Yaatana, not far from the city gates. The player characters get directed here if they have asked around for Serathu the Yar-Ammonite. The PCs may also choose to sleep here while they are in Yaatana.

Imran the innkeeper (male Lamuran Rog5) can confirm that Serathu stayed at the inn, but that he disappeared around a week ago. Since the Yar-Ammonite owes him money, Imran is also interested in his current whereabouts.



**Erishti's Honey-pot**

The cult of Rahma believes the player characters to be in league with Serathu, and they also have the Claw of Rahma which the cult wants back. Once the high priestess, Erishti, learns about the party's arrival from Abu and the other beggar-spies, she tries to lead the PCs into a trap.

**Development:** The senior priestess Elipa seeks out the PCs, preferably while they stay at the House of Imran. Elipa calls herself Eanna and claims to know Serathu. In fact, her story goes, she is a junior member of the cult called the Daughters of Rahma. Serathu was a thief who tried to steal from the cult, but was captured and imprisoned in the temple. Eanna has fallen in love with the prisoner, and she wants to rescue him and flee from Yaatana with him. There are guards watching over Serathu, and she begs the player characters for help (if necessary, she offers her body as reward). Eanna can smuggle the PCs into the temple during a fertility ritual, disguised as male worshippers.

If the PCs agree to help, Elipa/Eanna tells them how worshippers are drugged by drinking the "Moon-Juice" served by the priestesses (see Area 5 of the Moon-Garden), and instructs the PCs to pretend to fall asleep to be brought into the temple, where they can wake up, surprise the priests, and interrupt the ceremony. (The priestesses and the cultists will be prepared for this, of course, and it is the player characters who will be surprised.)

Eanna claims not to know much about what happens in the actual ritual, since she is just a junior member of the cult. She claims that "Rahma" is another name for the moon, which is why the "daughters of the moon" arrange their orgies during the nights of the full moon. Eanna can feed the PCs with all kinds of misinformation, but she is careful not to lie about facts which can be verified elsewhere.

If the PCs refuse to help, the beggar-spies of the cult continue to shadow the player characters. Rahma and the priestesses simply wait, expecting the lure of the mysterious Moon-Garden to be irresistible to the PCs in the end.

**Elipa ("Eanna"), Secret Priestess of Rahma, female Susrahnite Rog4/Sor3:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 4d6+4 plus 3d4+3; hp 36; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+0 no armor, +5 Dex), touch 15 (+5 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+0 no armor, +5 Dex); BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) and +8 melee (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2), or +10 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +2d6, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge, Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17.

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Concentration +7, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10, Heal +7, Hide +12, Knowledge (local) +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +12, Spellcraft +8, Tumble +12. **Feats:** Acolyte, Improved Initiative (b), Iron Will, Persuasive, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +2 Int): 0 — *dancing lights, daze, message*; 1st — *charm person, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd — *enthrall, ghoul touch*.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Nabastissean, Yarammonite.

**Possessions:** Scanty clothing, short sword, dagger, pearl necklace (worth 25 gp), 10 gp.

**Description:** This pretty blonde girl, in her early twenties, appears rather naïve, but is in fact a clever temptress. She serves the cult of Rahma and the high priestess Erishti as a spy and agent.

**Tactics:** In melee, Elipa fights with a sword in one hand and a dagger in the other hand, using Tumble to get into flanking position to sneak attack. She also has a small selection of spells she may use both before and during combat.

## The Garden of the Moon

The garden is located in a secluded area some distance away from the noise and bustle of the other city districts. Originally constructed by a wealthy merchant and filled with obscene obsidian statues, it was abandoned and is now a tangled wilderness of palm trees, small ponds and shadowy groves. The place comes alive at night, when strange birds and bats flutter in the air, and other night-animals croak and hiss.

In the center of the garden is a pavilion surrounded by weird, erotic statues. A half-ruined structure stands on a raised platform; a secret entrance to the sewer-temple can be found here.

### The Garden of the Moon

**Standard Features:** The wall surrounding the garden is made of hewn stone (20 ft. tall, 3 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 22). The gates are stone doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28).

Overgrown areas of the garden (see the overview map) effectively entangles a character moving through it. An entangled creature moves at half speed, cannot run or charge, and takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls and a -4 penalty to Dexterity.

**Lighting:** Illumination is provided by moonlight, as well as by torches carried by the cultists and possibly the PCs.





If the PCs come to the garden during the day, they find it deserted and silent. The secret entrance is difficult but not impossible to find, as the PCs will probably concentrate their searching efforts around the pavilion.

### 1. Main Gate

The main gate is in the southeast corner of the garden. There are several small, dilapidated buildings near the gate; two male cultists hide in the buildings and keep watch over the gate.

*Development:* If the guards spot intruders, they may deal with them directly (through sneak attacks) if the intruders are few or seem weak. Otherwise, they signal to the other guards (in Area 2) by imitating the call of a night-bird. A character may make a Listen check (DC 20) to notice that the bird-call was fake.

**Sons of Rahma, Servants of the Cult, male Susrahnite Rog3 (2):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +7 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills:* Climb +7, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Jump +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Search +6, Spot +6, Tumble +10. *Feats:* Expert Poisoner, Improved Initiative (b), Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Finesse.

*Languages:* Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Grey robes, short sword, 3 daggers, 2 doses of terinav root poison (Fort DC 16, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage 2d6 Dex), 1d4 gp.

*Description:* These are servants of the cult, recruited from among the beggars, thieves and other scum of the city, that have not yet received the “blessing” of Rahma.

*Tactics:* The guards attack with poisoned blades and sneak attacks.

### 2. Ruins Near Gate

Another set of ruined buildings are located close to the gate (Area 1). Another two cultists hide here, looking for trespassers.

*Development:* If they are alerted to danger by the guards at the gate (Area 1), one of the cultists sneaks back to the pavilion (Area 5) and enters the temple to warn the priestesses.

**Sons of Rahma (2):** CR 3; hp 16; see Area 1.

### 3. North Wall Ruins

Some crumbled ruins are located near the north wall of the garden. There are three cultists here, keeping watch and spying on any intruders. There is a secret entrance to the temple (see Area 4 of the temple) among the buildings here (Search DC 30).

**Sons of Rahma (3):** CR 3; hp 16; see Area 1.

### 4. Southwest Wall Ruins

Near the southwest wall is a cluster of buildings surrounded by a tangle of palm trees. A swarm of bats nests in the trees; they do not attack unless disturbed.

**Bat-Swarm:** CR 2; hp 13.

### 5. Central Pavilion

In the center of the garden is a great marble pavilion. In each of the four corners of the pavilion stands a 25-foot tall monolith carved with shapes of intertwined, naked human bodies. A building once stood in the middle of the pavilion; now only parts of the walls remain standing. The entrance to the sewer-temple below is hidden among the rubble, but can be found with a Search check (DC 25).

*Development:* The Daughters of Rahma arrange their “fertility rites” on the grass in front of the pavilion. The lesser priestesses, naked except for loincloths of diaphanous green silk, dance and cavort around the pavilion and caress the monoliths. Male worshippers must wear voluminous dun-colored robes and observe.

At some point in the ritual, the worshippers are offered a sip of the “Moon-Juice” from the priestesses; no one are allowed to touch the priestesses before they drink, so participants are typically eager to taste in order to get on with the “fertility” part of the ritual. The Moon-Juice induces a drugged sleep (and strange dreams). While sleeping, the victims are brought down into the temple (see Area 8) beneath the garden, where they are drained of power by Rahma’s rotting touch and begin the slow transformation into leprous, half-ghoul servants of the rat-headed demon. The victims are carried back to the garden, where they wake up several hours later. They have no memory of the draining, but (false) pleasant memories from the dreams, and are likely to return to the Moon-Garden for the next ritual.

If the cultists are aware that the player characters are attempting to infiltrate the cult (in which case the PCs likely pretend to drink the Moon-Juice), the Daughters of Rahma place the “drugged” player characters in large canvas bags before they are taken down to the temple, to prevent the characters from seeing where they are taken.

**Daughters of Rahma, Lesser Priestesses of the Cult, female Susrahnite Rog2 (15):** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +7 (+3





Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+1; Atk +5 melee (1d4, curved dagger, 18-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding, Evasion; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Perform (dance) +7, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +6, Tumble +8. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative (b), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Nabastissean.

**Possessions:** Green silk loincloth, small curved dagger.

**Description:** The Daughters of Rahma are beautiful temptresses, who lure men into the Moon-Garden of Yaatana to become the unwitting prey of Rahma.

**Tactics:** The lips of each priestess are smeared with moon-juice, enabling them to poison victims by kissing them. In addition, each priestess wears a small concealed dagger in case seduction doesn't work.

**Lecherous Worshippers, male Susrahnite Com2 (30):** CR 1; SZ M; HD 2d4+5; hp 9; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+0 no armor, +0 Dex), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, club, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Fanatical Fighting, Improved Initiative (b), Toughness.

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Dun-colored robes, club, 1d3 gp.

**Description:** Armed with clubs, sticks and knives, and dressed in loose-fitting robes, these are common men of Yaatana, attracted to the Moon-Garden by the promise of participation in sensuous "fertility rites".

**Tactics:** This is a formidable mob which fights to protect the priestesses, benefiting from their Fanatical Fighting feat.

#### Moon-Juice of Yaatana

This purple liquid is a special fruit juice mixed with sleeping draught (ingested, Fort DC 17, initial damage none, secondary damage unconsciousness for 2d4 hours).

**Market Price:** 110 gp.







## The Sewer-Temple of Rahma

The pleasure pavilion of the Moon-Garden was built atop the ruins of an old sewer system. The cult of Rahma has restored part of the complex, but there are still many passages which are partly submerged in foul sewer-water. Of course, this does not really bother the rat-headed demon or his leprous servants, but should make the player characters more wary when exploring the tunnels.

### 1. Sewer Tunnels

The entrance from the pavilion above leads down to this sewer tunnel (1A on the map). There is a 20% chance of encountering 1d3 cultists here. The other tunnels (1B and 1C) lead further into the ancient sewer complex and may eventually (at the DM's option) surface elsewhere in the city.

### 2. Pit

This pit is 40 feet deep and its bottom is filled with 10 feet of murky water. There is no way to cross the chamber, except to jump across the pit (or otherwise cross it). There is a hideous beast dwelling in the pit. It is barely intelligent and lurks in the water using its Hide skill, and attacks anyone who comes nearby. The cultists know about the beast and occasionally feed it with human corpses and other garbage.

**The Dweller in the Pit (otyugh):** CR 4; hp 36.

### 3. Diseased Cultists

In each of these foul-smelling chambers are 1d4 male cultists. There is a 25% chance for each cultist that he has been "blessed" by Rahma's rotting touch and turned into a ghoulish creature.

Next to the room closest to the entrance (Area 3A) are two secret alcoves hidden by pivoting stone slabs (Search DC 25) that the cultists use to keep watch over the entrance tunnel; one alcove is accessible from the cultist room (Area 3A). If intruders approach down this corridor, the cultist in each alcove opens the secret door and attempts to sneak attack the character at the rear of the party (who is flat-footed, and possibly surprised unless he succeeds at a Listen check opposed by the cultists' Move Silently skill).

**Sons of Rahma, male Susrahnite Rog3 (1-4):** CR 3; hp 16; see Area 1 of the Moon-Garden.

**Blessed Sons of Rahma, male Susrahnite Rog3 (1-4):** CR 5; SZ M; HD 3d6+3; hp 16; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex), touch 14 (+4 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +7 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Sneak Attack +2d6, Stench (Fort DC 13); SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Darkvision (60 ft.), Immunities; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Search +6, Spot +6, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Expert Poisoner, Improved Initiative (b), Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Grey robes, short sword, 3 daggers, 2 doses of terinav root poison (Fort DC 16, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage 2d6 Dex), 1d4 gp.

**Description:** These members of the cult have received the "blessing" of Rahma, and resemble undead creatures (although they are not).

**Tactics:** The Blessed Sons of Rahma are able to see in darkness and use it to their advantage.

### 4. Secret Entrance

A long, slowly descending corridor leads from the ruins in the garden (see Area 3 of the garden) to this part of the temple. There are no guards here, but a 40-foot deep spiked pit trap protects this entrance (CR 3; no attack roll necessary [4d6], +10 melee [1d4 spikes for 1d4+4 points of damage per hit]; spikes covered with scorpion venom [Injury DC 18, dmg 2d4 Con/1d4 Con]; Reflex save [DC 20] avoids; Search [DC 20]; Disable Device [DC 20]).

### 5. Cells

There are six small cells in this part of the temple complex. Four cells are currently

#### The Sewer-Temple of Rahma

**Standard Features:** The doors to most rooms are good wooden doors (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). The doors to areas 8, 9 and 10 are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30 if described as locked).

Several areas are partially flooded by knee-deep sewage (see the map). This is a thin, black liquid that slows movement by half, and no running and charging is possible.

Unless otherwise specified, secret doors require a Search check (DC 20) to detect.

**Lighting:** The sewer tunnels are unlit. Other rooms are lit by torches set into wall brackets.



empty; the fifth holds a male captive (male Susrahnite Ftr3). In the sixth cell, chained to the wall, is Serathu the Yar-Ammonite. He has undergone torture to reveal where he sent the Claw of Rahma, but has so far resisted interrogation (unless the PCs have spent an undue amount of time getting to Yaatana, of course).

**Serathu, the Captured Yar-Ammonite, male Yar-Ammonite Rog4/Ftr3:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 4d6+4 plus 3d10+3; hp 46; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+0 no armor, +2 large wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+0 no armor, +2 large wooden shield, +2 Dex); BAB/Grapple +6/+9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+3, Ikuna knife, 20/x4) or +8 ranged (1d6+3, composite shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 70 ft.); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+3, Ikuna knife, 20/x4) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6+3, composite shortbow, 20/x3, range increment 70 ft.); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (arcana) and Listen skills, Stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on Search checks to notice unusual stonework, detect unusual stonework within 10 feet with Search check even if not actively searching, use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can, and intuit depth underground), Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Climb +10, Disable Device +8, Gather Information +9, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Search +8, Ride +8, Swim +9, Tumble +9. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Ikuna knife), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (Ikuna knife).

**Languages:** Yar-Ammonite, Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Loose green robe, sandals, Ikuna knife, composite shortbow (+3 Strength bonus), 20 arrows, small gold scarab amulet thought to bring luck (worth 25 gp).

**Description:** Serathu is handsome; hawk-nosed, shaven-headed and bronze-skinned. He wears a loose green robe and sandals.

**Tactics:** If he expects combat, Serathu tries to get into armor and to carry a shield.

**Special Note:** The statistics above reflect Serathu with full equipment. In his current state, he is naked except for his loincloth, and has one-fifth of his maximum hit point total.

## 6. Chambers of the Priestesses

These two rooms (marked A and B on the map) are similarly furnished with dun-colored tapestries, hardwood tables, and chairs. However, one room is well-kept and orderly, while the other chamber (Elipa's room) is strewn with silken clothing, slippers, scraps of food, and small pieces of jewelry. This reflects the different personalities of the two senior priestesses who serve Erishti and Rahma. Elipa is blonde, while Trizia is red-haired.

**Elipa and Trizia, Senior Priestesses of the Cult, female Susrahnite Rog4/Sor3 (2):** CR 7; hp 36; see Elipa's statistics (above).

## 7. Chamber of the High Priestess

The door to this room is locked. The chamber beyond is opulent, decorated with Jairanian carpets and wall hangings from Taikang, furniture of Susrahnite cedarwood, silverware from Taraam, and crystal cups and decanters from Nabastis (worth a total of 1,600 gp). There is a secret door (Search DC 30) in the southern wall. Erishti might flee through this door and hide in the sewer tunnels (Area 1C) if she is defeated.

**Erishti, High Priestess of the Cult, female Susrahnite Sor9:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 9d4+27; hp 43; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +4/+6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, quarterstaff, 20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Concentration +15, Craft (alchemy) +15, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +16, Heal +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Spellcraft +15. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative (b), Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Grisly Sacrifice, Leadership, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).







**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +3 Int):  
0 — arcane mark, daze, message, resistance;  
1st — charm person, fertility charm, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, summon swarm;  
2nd — aid, enthrall, ghoul touch, hypnotic pattern; 3rd — deep slumber, prayer, suggestion, vampiric touch; 4th — altar-fire, contagion, lesser geas; 5th — cloudkill, dream, lesser planar binding, waves of fatigue.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Lamuran, Nabastissean, Yar-Ammonite.

**Possessions:** Green silk dress, gold-adorned sandals (worth 15 gp), masterwork ceremonial quarterstaff, golden necklace (worth 200 gp), pearl earrings (worth 25 gp each).

**Description:** Past her youth, but still attractive, Erishti has golden skin, and long, dark hair (which she dyes to conceal grey streaks). She dresses in revealing silken dresses and wears ornaments of gold and pearl.

**Tactics:** Erishti precasts *mage armor* and *aid* before joining combat. She assists the lesser priestesses and Rahma himself with spells, and resorts to attacking with her staff only if she has no other choice.

## 8. Temple and Pit

This large chamber reeks of old filth and sewage. There is a 20-foot pit in the center of the room, once serving as a basin of some kind but now empty and bloodstained. The floor around the pit is littered with skulls and bones.

## 9. Inner Sanctum

This is the throne room of Rahma himself. Against the far wall is a massive throne of black stone, flanked by twin braziers of bronze and silver. Behind the throne is a secret door (Search DC 30).

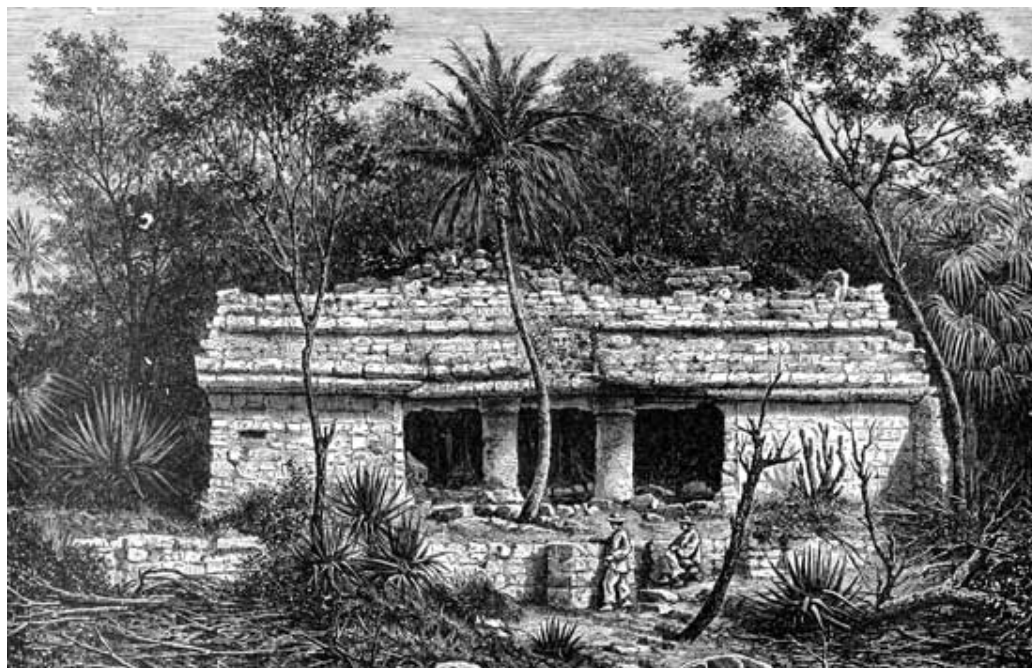
There is a portcullis near the entry doors which can be dropped down to trap intruders (CR 2; +10 melee [3d6/x2 crit]; Search [DC 20]; Disable Device [DC 20]; damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis; portcullis blocks passageway [2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift DC 25; Break DC 28]). A lever in the throne chair can be used to reset the portcullis.

**Rahma the Diseased, Obese Rat-Headed Demon from the Outer Dark:** CR 11; SZ L Outsider; HD 9d8+27; hp 99; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 21 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +8 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17; BAB/Grapple +9/+20; Atk +16 melee (1d8+7 plus rot, claw); Full Atk +16/+16 melee (1d8+7 plus rot, claw); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Crush (3d8+10), Improved Grab, Rotting Touch, Stench; SQ Damage Reduction (10/silver and magic), Darkvision (60 ft.), Scent, Summon Rat Swarms; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 24, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Climb +19, Escape Artist +16, Hide +16, Intimidate +16, Jump 19, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Spot +15, Swim +19, Tumble +16. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack.

**Description:** Rahma, the living rat-god, is an obese rat-headed humanoid with black skin and long, wicked claws. Those stuck by his claws instantly start to rot and decay, eventually turning into ghoulish servants, slaves to Rahma's will. Rahma is dressed in a simple loincloth of purple silk beneath his fat black belly. Rahma needs the claw-key that Serathu stole to be able to leave the temple; otherwise he is confined to the area he was summoned into by Erishti.

**Crush (Ex):** When Rahma gets a hold, he can make a single crush attack in place of his two claw attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 3d8+10 points of damage on the target.





*Improved Grab* (Ex): To use this ability, Rahma must hit with both claw attacks. If he gets a hold, he can crush.

*Rotting Touch* (Su): Rahma's claws carry a rotting disease (Fort DC 17, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con). When the victim reaches 0 Con, it transforms into a ghoulish "Blessed of Rahma" in 1d3 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Stench* (Ex): A terrible stench surrounds Rahma. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17) or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by Rahma's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Summon Rat Swarms* (Su): Rahma can summon 1d4 rat swarms up to 3/day.

**Rat Swarms (1-4):** CR 2; hp 18.

## 10. Vault

The vault is protected by two sets of doors. The inner door is trapped with poison gas (CR 10; no attack roll necessary; Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 25); trap releases berserking-powder fumes in a 10-foot radius [Inhaled, Fort DC 20, dmg 2d6 Wis + madness/1d6 Wis]).

The vault contains the following treasure: A scattering of gold coins (a total of 1740 gp), an armband of lapis lazuli (worth 40 gp), a small pouch filled with semi-precious gems (worth 200 gp), a masterwork two-bladed sword decorated with Azjani symbols (worth 400 gp), an empty iron box with a good lock (worth 100 gp), an hourglass (worth 25 gp), a small ivory figurine of a Taraamite mounted lancer (worth 75 gp), several long sheets of Yar-Ammonite papyrus (worth 50 gp), and a dozen bottles of green wine (worth 15 gp each).

## Conclusion

What happens in the Moon-Garden of Yaata depends on whether the PCs have been tricked to participate in the fertility ritual, or if they attempt to sneak into or even attack the temple directly. In any case, unless the player characters have taken appropriate counter-measures, the spies of the cult have been shadowing the PCs and the Daughters of Rahma will be ready with an ambush (although if possible, the cultists prefer to disable the intruders without combat using the Moon-Juice). The temple is full of dangers and there are many hidden tunnels where defeated cultists can hide and regroup before launching a counter-attack.

Even if the PCs are victorious against Rahma and his priestesses, the male cultists who hide in various parts of the garden may strike against the player characters when they exit the garden.

**If the PCs fail:** If the PCs are captured by the cultists, they end up as leprous, half-ghoulish servants of Rahma. Smart player characters may escape this fate by offering to work for the cult, and convincing the high priestess that they are more valuable allies without Rahma's "blessed" touch.





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cyclopean temples and sunken treasures. The priest, Dar-Tiglat, learns the story of Namthu and the Horn of Bhaomog through these dreams, though he does not realize that he has become the unwitting thrall of Bhaomog.

Dar-Tiglat plans to depose Uktha-Akkar, the current high priest of the cult of Yammosh. He hopes to use the horn to control Bhaomog and his servitors, the “bloated ones” of Namthu, and to learn the ancient ritual of creating such creatures. With a horde of amphibious warriors and a monstrous sea-god under his control, bringing him the sunken treasures and secrets of the deep seas, Dar-Tiglat can overthrow Uktha-Akkar and become high priest, and perhaps even king of Ghazor.

Through his divination spells, Dar-Tiglat learns that the PCs have come into the possession of the Horn of Bhaomog. Since the scheming priest’s resources are limited, he thinks he may use the PCs as useful pawns. Dar-Tiglat knows where the ancient priests of Namthu are entombed, and that their tomb contains a map to the now-lost isle. Recognizing the PCs as capable individuals, he drops clues so that the PCs are led towards the tombs to find the map to the island.

When the player characters find a map point-

ing to a lost isle with fabled treasures, they need to find a ship that can take them to the island. There are not many vessels in Ghazor’s harbor that can make the long trip across the open sea, and Dar-Tiglat arranges it so that the PCs gain passage on a ship where many of the crew are cultists loyal to Dar-Tiglat.

As the PCs’ vessel leave Ghazor, a pirate captain of the Sea Raiders follows the player characters, intent on finding and taking the treasure for himself, as well as taking revenge for the murder of his first mate at the hands of the PCs.

Once on the island, after the characters have served their purpose, Dar-Tiglat plans to betray and capture the PCs, transforming them into bloated ones, the amphibian slaves of Bhaomog.

Meanwhile, Bhaomog himself slumbers and waits patiently in his abyssal prison for the day when he shall once again awaken and rise above the waves to become master of the southern seas.

### Starting the Adventure

Consider any of the following hooks to get the adventure started.







— Unless you want to play out how the PCs find come into possession of the Horn of Bhaomog as a prelude, this adventure simply starts with “roll initiative!”. The player characters have come to Ghazor and to the Harpy’s Breath tavern (see below) in search of more information about the mysterious conch shell they have found, and have been drawn into a bar brawl with a band of drunken, swaggering freebooters.

## The City of Ghazor

**Ghazor (large city):** Conventional; 40,000-gp limit; Assets 44,000,000 gp; Population 22,000; Mixed (Susrahmites 60%, Nabastisseans 10%, Taraamites 10%, Others 20%).

**Authority Figures:** Rahim-Dul, male Susrahnite Ari13 (king).

**Important Characters:** Nerurki, female Ghazorite Rog7/Ari4 (chief royal concubine); Hatmash-Ukin, male Ghazorite Ftr12 (navy admiral); Zalzu Khalil, male Taraamite Ftr10 (commander of the royal chariots); Nofruset, female Yar-Ammonite Sor9 (royal advisor); Kin-Nashu, male Susrahnite Ftr9 (commander of the city guard).

**Others:** City guards, Ghazorite Ftr2 (900); Galley-crews, Ghazorite Ftr1 (1,100); Royal charioteers, Susrahnite Ftr3 (250).

**Notes:** The harbor city of Ghazor is located strategically at the mouth of the Ophrat river. It has a large navy of triremes, which is used to defend against the raids of the Sea Reavers, as well as in occasional clashes with the Nabastissean fleet. As one of the Susrahnite city-states, Ghazor is ruled independently by the petty king Rahim-Dul, but is allied with the other cities of Susrah through treaties and intermarriage.

Much trade flows through the city, arriving by boats from the south, and carried inland by river barges or donkey caravans. Trade goods include Susrahnite wine, spices from Laksha and Azjan, dried fruit, slaves, and pearls harvested off the coast of Zadj.

The main ziggurat of the city is dedicated to Baal-Khardah, but the sea-god Yammosh is more popular among the many sailors and merchant-captains. Offerings of gold and animals are often made to the temple of Yammosh before any sea-voyage.

The southern quarters of the city, home to sailors, slavers, mercenaries and other foreigners, is well-known outside Ghazor for its many depraved vices and lawless atmosphere. The king and his nobles, busy with their own schemes and pleasures behind massive palace walls to the north, largely ignore the unruly docks. Thus the southern seafront is rarely patrolled by the city guard, but the naval docks to the northeast are well-guarded.

**City Guard of Ghazor, male Susrahnite Ftr2:** CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d10+3, halberd, 20/x3) or +4 ranged (1d10+2, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Jump +7, Swim +7. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow), Improved Initiative (b), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (halberd).

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

### The Horn of Bhaomog

This gnarled conch shell is yellowish in color and covered by black and purple stains. Approximately 1 foot long, it is quite heavy for its size. It looks very ancient and frail, but is in fact an artifact and cannot be destroyed except by Bhaomog himself. It is primarily a device used to communicate with Bhaomog, although it may have other powers not yet known to man.

Blowing the horn forces a Taint save (DC 20), while placing it next to the ear forces a Taint save (DC 15). Blowing it in a land-locked area causes all liquids in small containers (such as water flasks, wineskins, and similar) in a 50 feet radius to turn sour and undrinkable (Fort DC 13, dmg 1d3 Str/1d3 Str if ingested). Blowing the horn near the ocean causes the local weather to worsen considerably, possibly creating a storm with up to hurricane force winds. If blown within 25 km of the isle of Namthu, it summons 2d10 bloated ones but does not give the summoner any command over the summoned creatures.

A character placing the horn next to the ear will initially hear the whisper of distant waves, but suddenly feels several small tentacles extend from the conch shell, trying to grab the brain of the character. If the Taint save is failed, the tentacles will actually appear to pierce the brain through the character’s ear, and the character’s brain is suddenly filled with brief flashes of something large and tentacled moving about in murky waters, accompanied by strange and wailing sounds muffled as if shouting underwater. However, the tentacles is purely a mental effect, a hallucination that causes no physical damage.

At the DM’s option, Bhaomog may deliver cryptic whispered messages through the horn, and may even try to mentally dominate creatures who listen too long, using its enslave ability through the horn.



*Possessions:* Studded leather, halberd, Susrahnite longbow (+2 Strength bonus), 20 arrows.

*Description:* The city guards are dressed in distinctive blue guard uniforms.

*Tactics:* The guards control crowds using their polearms. They attack with Power Attack against lightly armored foes, and otherwise assist allies with the Aid Another action. The guards do not risk their lives in fights against superior foes.

**City Guard Captain of Ghazor, male Susrahnite Ftr4:** CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d10+8; hp 34; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 chain shirt); BAB/Grapple +4/+7; Atk +8 melee (1d10+6, halberd, 20/x3) or +6 ranged (1d10+3, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

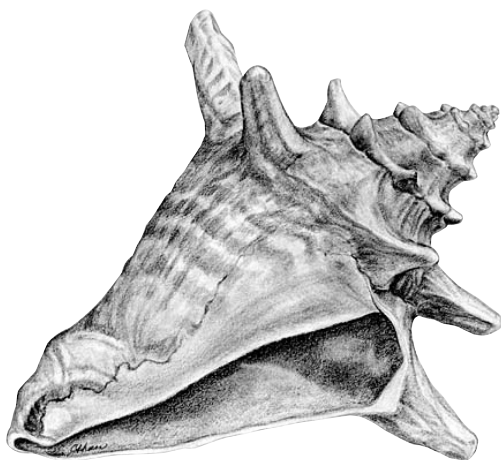
*Skills:* Intimidate +8, Jump +10, Ride +8, Swim +10. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow), Improved Initiative (b), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd).

*Languages:* Susrahnite, Nabastissean.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, silver helmet, halberd, Susrahnite longbow (+3 Strength bonus), 20 arrows.

*Description:* The guard captians dress in burnished chain shirts, and wear tall silver helmets as a mark of rank.

*Tactics:* These officers employ essentially the same tactics as the regular guardsmen. However, before joining battle, the officer sends one of his underlings to alert other city guards.



## Death at the Docks

The player characters have come to the Harpy's Breath Tavern to meet up with Alcides, a Nabastissean smuggler, thief and spy (male Nabastissean Rog5). Alcides knows the following: That the conch shell was brought to Ghazor hundreds of years ago by "priests of a sunken isle", and that these priests were buried in the royal crypts of Lamki-Ushra, situated on the tip of the peninsula that juts out into the harbor of Ghazor.

*Development:* While the PCs wait for Alcides in the tavern, a drunken, swaggering Khoran freebooter picks a fight with them. If one of the player characters takes the bait, the rest of the crew quickly join in, turning the fight into a classic bar brawl. Their leader, Zurka, is a friend of the tavern-owner, so the guards remain passive, at least as long as Zurka's men seem to win.

Even if the PCs are victorious, they should flee the tavern quickly, before more of the Barracuda's crew arrive. Having heard the clamor of battle from outside, Alcides waits for the PCs in the shadowed streets outside the tavern. He demands 250 gp (adjust as appropriate to the wealth of the PCs) to reveal the existence of the secret tunnels leading into the royal tombs of the peninsula (see below). In any case, Alcides does not join the player characters on any expedition into the tombs.

## The Harpy's Breath Tavern

Situated not far from the great lighthouse of Ghazor, this tavern is a run-down affair with stained wooden floors where sailors from many nations revel in the flickering lights of greasy torches. The rowdy establishment is owned by one Yatim, a former sailor. In fact, he is a secret spy for the captains of the Sea Reavers of Khora and his tavern is an occasional safehouse for many pirates.

### 1. foyer

This cloakroom has pegs on the walls where guests can hang their outerwear in the cold season. The heavy wooden door (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23) can be locked and barred from the inside (Open Lock DC 25; Break DC 25).

### 2. Guardroom

Yatim's guards are stationed here. The guards confiscate any weapon larger than a shortsword (this does not apply to Yatim's favored guests, such as Zurka and his men). Such confiscated weapons are delivered back to the owner when he leaves the tavern.

**Yatim's Guards, male Ghazorite Ftr3 (4):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d10+6; hp 25; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+0 no armor, +1 light wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11 (+1 Dex), flat-footed 11 (+0 no armor, +1 light





wooden shield); BAB/Grapple +3/+10; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, club, 20/x2) or +6 melee (1d3+3, unarmed strike, 20/x2); SA racial Sneak Attack (+1d6) that stacks with the rogue ability of the same name; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Profession (sailor) skills, Weapon Familiarity (suffer only -2 penalty when using weapons without proficiency); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Intimidate +5, Jump +9, Swim +9.  
*Feats:* Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness, Weapon Focus (club).

*Languages:* Susrahnite.

*Possessions:* Clothing, club, 1d6 gp.

*Description:* These men are hardened thugs from the gutters of Ghazor.

*Tactics:* The guards beat down troublemakers with their clubs, although they may also use furniture, bottles, etc. as improvised weapons in a brawl. Another favorite tactic is to grapple opponents.

### 3. Common Room

The large common room has eight wooden tables and a scattering of worn chairs. In the corner to the south is a well-stoked fireplace. There are 3d6 patrons here, male rogues and fighters of levels 1d6+1, as well as 1d3 harlots.

### 4. Bar

The bar is worked by three young, unpretty, but experienced girls (female Ghazorite Com2). The nearby guards (from Area 2) quickly arrive if the girls are harassed by the patrons.

A long corridor from the bar ends in a back door. This sturdy door has the same statistics as the front door (see Area 1).

### 5. Private Lounge

This semi-private chamber is separated from the common room by a tattered green curtain. It is spacious and furnished with slightly better chairs and tables, and those who pay extra to sit here are well-served by Yatim's girls.

The lounge is currently occupied by a freebooter named Zurka and other members of the crew of the pirate vessel Barracuda.

**Zurka, First Mate of the Barracuda, male Khoran Bbn4/Rog3:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 4d12+4 plus 3d6+3; hp 66; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+4 chain shirt, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 17 (+4 chain shirt, +3 Dex); BAB/Grapple +6/+9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe, 20/x3) or +10 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe, 20/x3) or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+3, dagger, 19-20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all axes, crossbows and knives, Ferocity (continue fighting even while disabled and dying), Rage 2/day, Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Profession (sailor) skills, always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills:* Appraise +7, Climb +10, Intimidate +9, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Profession (sailor) +6, Survival +7, Swim +10, Tumble +9. *Feats:* Jaded Reveler, Power Attack, Sailor on the Seas of Fate, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

*Languages:* Susrahnite, Nabastissean.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, battleaxe, 4 daggers, 3 gold rings (worth 40 gp each).

*Description:* Zurka is tall and thin, with a drooping moustache and his long hair in a ponytail. This swaggering freebooter is the first mate aboard the Barracuda and is Captain Yajal's trusted henchman.

*Tactics:* Although Zurka has been drinking heavily, he is not noticeably affected by the alcohol. He throws his daggers, then rages and charges into battle and uses Power Attacks with his axe.

**Crew of the Barracuda, male Khoran Bbn2/Rog1 (10):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 2d12 plus 1d6; hp 20; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex); BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, handaxe, 20/x3) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, throwing axe, 20/x2, range increment 10 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all axes, crossbows and knives, Ferocity (continue fighting even while



disabled and dying), Rage 1/day, Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Profession (sailor) skills, always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Jump +7, Listen +4, Profession (sailor) +3, Survival +4, Swim +7, Tumble +6. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Sailor on the Seas of Fate, Weapon Focus (handaxe).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Nabastissean.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, handaxe, throwing axe, 1d10 gp.

**Description:** These men are the stereotypical Khoran pirates; clad in a mix of silks and common sailors' clothes, some with eye-patches or silken bandanas. Their skin is a deep bronze, and their arms and faces are scarred by the swords and spears of countless enemies.

**Tactics:** The crewmembers enter a rage, then use gang tactics to surround a foe to gain flanking and sneak attacks.

## 6. Storeroom

This storeroom contains barrels of ale, dusty bottles of cheap Yaatanan wine, and sundry bits and pieces of equipment and furniture. Under a loose floorboard (Search DC 25) beneath an empty crate is a secret chamber, 10 by 10 feet. The chamber is currently empty, but is often used to temporarily hide persons or items.

## 7. Backoffice

This is the office of Yatim, the tavern-owner. The floor is covered with a stained Jairanian rug. A big mahogany desk stands in one corner; inside its locked drawers (Open Lock DC 30) are two curved daggers with ivory handles (worth 20 gp each), a pouch filled with semi-precious gems (worth 350 gp), and a golden bracelet in the shape of a serpent (worth 125 gp).

**Yatim, Tavern-Owner, male Ghazorite**  
**Rog7:** CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d6; hp 32; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex, +2 Pantherish Dodge), touch 16 (+4 Dex, +2 Pantherish Dodge), flat-footed 16 (+0 no armor, +4 Dex, +2 Pantherish Dodge); BAB/Grapple +5/+7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, short sword, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +5/+5 melee (1d6+2, short sword, 19-20/x2); SA racial Sneak Attack (+1d6) that stacks with the rogue ability of the same name, Sneak Attack +4d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Profession (sailor) skills, Weapon Familiarity (suffer only -2 penalty when using weapons without proficiency), Trapfinding, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Appraise +12, Bluff +9, Escape Artist +14, Forgery +12, Hide +14, Jump +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Open Lock +14, Profession (sailor) +11, Sleight of Hand +14, Tumble +14. **Feats:** Dodge, Iron Will, Pantherish Dodge, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Zadjite.

**Possessions:** Clothing, 2 short swords, silver necklace (worth 25 gp).

**Description:** Clad in rich clothes, with a long face and greasy dark hair, Yatim is in secret league with Yajal and other captains of the Sea Reavers.

**Tactics:** If Yatim gets involved in combat, he fights two short swords, trying to get into position to flank and sneak attack.

## The Ancient Royal Tombs of Ghazor

The peninsula that juts out into the bay of Ghazor today was originally an island. A causeway was eventually built to connect it to the mainland, and it was used for centuries as a fortress, palace, and crypt.

As detailed in the introduction to this adventure, the priests of Namthu who arrived in ancient Ghazor with treasures stolen from the temple of Bhaomog befriended the current king, Lamki-Ushra, and were given the honor of burial in the royal tombs when they died. Thus the bodies of the priests Takahla, Yezir-Kot and Karuma were interred beneath the palace on the peninsula.

However, due to unfavorable weather conditions, with crashing waves and battering winds slowly wearing down the stonework, the old palace-fortress was eventually abandoned. As the city on the mainland grew, a new and grander palace was built on gentler slopes in the middle of the city. The bodies of the old kings and nobles were relocated from the crypts on the peninsula to the new palace in the city, but some tombs, like those of the Namthuan priests, were left untouched.

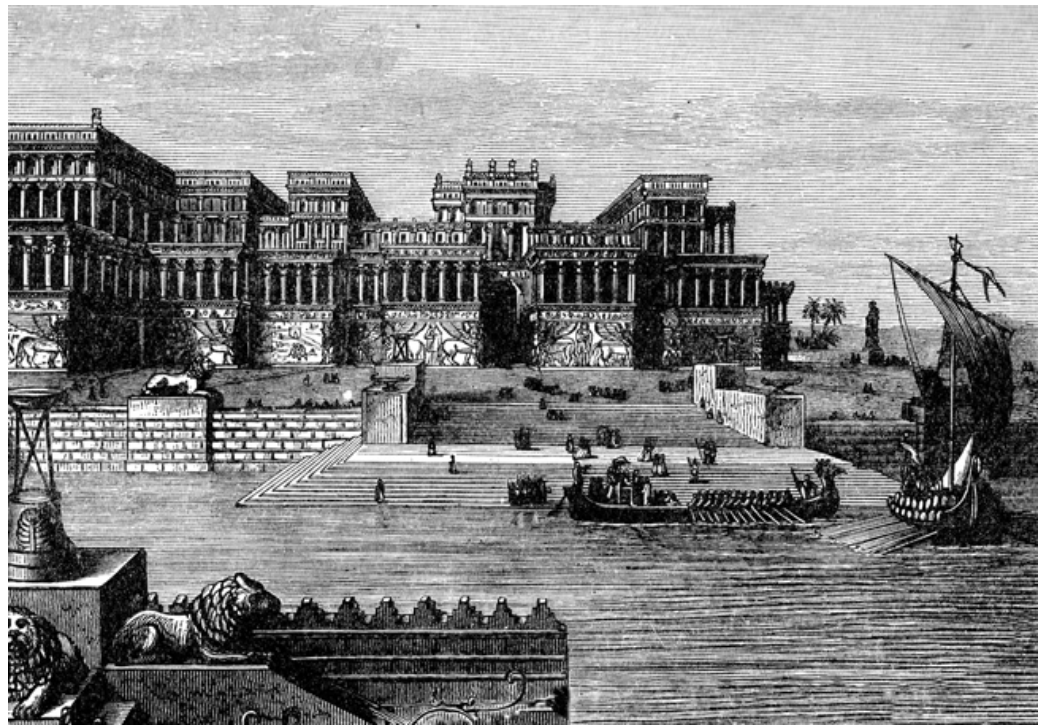
**Development:** The player characters have several options for getting into the old royal tombs, including sneaking past the guards on the causeway to the ancient palace, or swimming or taking a small boat across the bay. Once on the peninsula, the PCs must locate the secret cavern and underwater tunnel that takes them into the tombs (since the entrance from the palace above is buried under tons of rock).

### The Causeway and Gatehouse

Although the peninsula is abandoned, a 20 feet tall gatehouse of stone (Climb DC 25) has been placed across the causeway to prevent traffic to and from the ancient palace. The gatehouse is manned by 12 city guards and 2 guard captains. Two-thirds of the guards and one officer are on duty at any time, while the others are asleep or relaxing.







*Development:* If the guards are attacked, they attempt to raise the alarm using a horn, in which case reinforcements arrive from the north city in 2d6+6 minutes. One of the guard-captains (determined randomly as to which one) has a huge gambling-debt and may accept a bribe if the offer is substantial.

#### The Bay of Ghazor

The water of the bay is cold, and the waves crash upon the cliffs of the peninsula, making it dangerous to swim (Swim DC 15) and to maneuver in small boats (Profession [sailor] DC 12), although the waves are a bit more calm on the northern side facing the bay (Swim DC 13).

If the player characters approach the tip of the peninsula in a boat, they must make a Jump check (DC 10, but remember the armor check penalty) to get from the boat to the cliffs, due to the crashing waves. Swimming PCs, or PCs in the water from failed Jump checks, must make a Climb check (DC 15) to climb up from the water.

Before getting to the peninsula, however, the PCs must deal with the great sharks that infest the bay of Ghazor. A large shark approaches and attacks any swimmers or small boats without provocation. A Spot check (DC 15) can be made to detect a big fin in the water before the shark dives and disappears, only to reappear under the boat a few seconds later, attempting to overturn the boat (or simply attack any swimmers). Unless the PCs spotted the shark, it attacks with surprise and the player characters are flat-footed.

As long as the shark is submerged in the water, it has total cover; on the surface it has improved cover (+8 to AC, +4 to Reflex saves).

Each round the shark charges the boat, each PC must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or fall into

the water. See the DMG for more information about the effects of water on combat.

**Large Shark:** CR 2; hp 38.

#### The Secret Cavern and Underwater Tunnel

There is a hidden cavern (Search DC 20) near the cliffs, with a long tunnel eventually leading to the ancient royal crypts (see Area 1 of the crypts). A long stretch (200 feet) of this tunnel is underwater, meaning that player characters must swim through it to reach the crypts.

A character with a Speed of 30 feet can swim 15 feet with a full-round action (by making a Swim check against DC 10). It thus takes 13 rounds for a character with average speed to swim through the tunnel. A character with a Constitution score less than 13 cannot hold his breath this long and must start taking Constitution checks to avoid drowning (DC 10, +1 for each additional round).

Note that if there is combat along the way, the number of rounds a character can hold his breath is halved (ie. 1 round of combat “costs” 2 rounds of breath).

#### The Ruins of the Ancient Palace

The ruins of the old palace are severely weathered. The outer walls are 30 feet tall (Climb DC 20) but broken in several places. Everything of value that was not relocated to the new palace has long since been carried away by looters. A successful Search check (DC 15) allows the player characters to find a tunnel that leads down towards the crypts, but they soon find this tunnel collapsed. It quickly becomes apparent that it would take weeks to clear the tunnel of rocks. The PCs will have better progress searching for the secret cavern with the underwater tunnel (see above).



**The Ancient Royal Crypts of Ghazor**

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all doors are stone doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked).

**Lighting:** The crypts are unlit.

**1. Flooded Chamber**

The underwater tunnel from below terminates in this large square chamber. Three doors are apparent; two are locked while the third is a false, trapped door (Falling Block Trap: +15 melee [6d6]; Search [DC 20]; Disable Device [DC 25]; Can strike all characters in two adjacent squares).

**2. Collapsed Chamber**

A narrow stairway leads up to this chamber, where the walls have collapsed, blocking further progress into the palace ruins above.

**3. Slimy Corridor**

This corridor is plain and unadorned. With a successful Spot check (DC 20), a player character can detect a faint glistening streak of slime across the ceiling. This is a trail left by the monster currently in the antechamber (Area 6).

**4. Hall of the Sea**

The walls of this chamber are decorated with the shells of snails and fossilized crustaceans. In the center of the chamber is a large, square pillar painted with blue waves and various types of ancient sailing-vessels.

**5. Corridor With Alcoves**

There are ten small alcoves in this T-shaped corridor. Each alcove contains a copper urn whose lid is shaped like an octopus, with the tentacles hanging down the sides of the urn. The urns are inscribed with archaic cuneiform script; a successful Decipher Script check (DC 20) reveals that the urns contain the ashes of great sea-captains. The urns are worth 75 gp each, but the dust inside is worth even more to a knowledgeable sorcerer, for it can be used as a material component to cast a double-strength lower water spell.

**6. Antechamber**

The door to this chamber is slightly ajar. Along the south wall is a row of life-size statues of people with unknown racial features.

The opposite wall is painted with scenes that form a story: A group of people lived on an island rich from sea trade, and their temple was heaped with sacrifice to the sea-gods. One image shows a priest with a gold-embroidered robe that seems to receive wisdom and revelations through a conch shell placed next to the

priest's ear. The next images show the people fleeing from the island, which is wracked by earthquakes, and coming to Ghazor as it must have existed many centuries ago. The priests among the sea-people are shown offering tribute to the king of Ghazor, and the final image is of the priests being buried under the palace on the island.

In the middle of the room is a human body lying face-down. If the body is turned around, the PCs see that it is a corpse, which is covered in some sort of slime, and has begun to decay. This is in fact the body of the Namthuan priest Takahla, which has recently been exhumed from his sarcophagus and absorbed by an abominable creature that feeds upon sorcerous energies. The creature attempts to lash out against a surprised opponent, and then withdraw into the grand crypt (Area 7) where its progenitor lurks.

**Slime-Covered Corpse (arcanoplasm):**

CR 7; SZ L Aberration; HD 7d8+42; hp 73; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grapple +5/+11; Atk +7 melee (2d4+3 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+3 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Constrict (2d4+3 plus 1d6 acid), Improved Grab, Arcane Spell Mimicry; SQ Absorb Arcane Magic, Amorphous, Arcanesense (100 ft.), Blindsight (60 ft.), Immunities; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Climb +18, Hide +2, Move Silently +6.  
**Feats:** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam).

**Tactics:** Arcanoplasms always target arcane spellcasting creatures first. Their innate ability to detect such creatures allows them to do so with precision and accuracy. Because of its ability to replicate spells cast near it, the arcanoplasm always tries to stay within 30 feet of an arcane caster. Mimicked spells are cast at the foe deemed most threatening.

**Acid (Ex):** An arcanoplasm secretes a highly corrosive acid that dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit deals acid damage.

**Constrict (Ex):** An arcanoplasm deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, an arcanoplasm must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

**Arcane Spell Mimicry (Ex):** An arcanoplasm can mimic any arcane spell of 4th level or lower that is cast within 30 feet of it. The spell takes effect on the arcanoplasm's next action, has a caster level of 7th, and does not require any components. The save against a mimicked spell has a DC of 12 + the level of the spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.





**Absorb Arcane Magic (Ex):** Any arcane spell cast at an arcanoplasm is automatically absorbed. This cures 1 point of damage per 3 points of damage the spell would otherwise deal (non-damaging spells cure 1 point of damage per spell level of the spell). Spells that affect an area are not absorbed, but neither do they affect an arcanoplasm. An arcanoplasm cannot absorb divine magic and is affected by it normally.

**Amorphous (Ex):** Arcanoplasms have no discernable front or back and are not subject to critical hits. They cannot be flanked.

**Arcanesense (Su):** An arcanoplasm can automatically detect the location of any arcane spellcaster within 100 feet. This functions as a detect evil spell but there is no chance the arcanoplasm is stunned and it is not blocked by stone, lead, or other material.

**Blindsight (Ex):** An arcanoplasm's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

**Immunities (Ex):** Arcanoplasms are immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning.

**Skills:** An arcanoplasm has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

### 7. The Lurker in the Crypt

This large chamber contains three stone sarcophagi, all with their lids removed, adorned with ancient Susrahnite cuneiform script. A successful Decipher Script check (DC 25) reveals the names of the deceased: Takahla, Yezir-Kot and Karuma, who are further titled "the leaders of the refugees of Namthu, who rest under the protection of king Lamki-Ushra".

There is no time for such sage work initially, however, for the two innermost sarcophagi are covered by a huge, amorphous slime creature, inside which are visible the remains of two human bodies. These are the corpses of the Namthuan priests Yezir-Kot and Karuma, who have been consumed by a vile creature that somehow crept into the crypt and, feeding upon their lingering sorcerous energies, has grown to monstrous proportions.

**The Lurker in the Crypt (arcanoplasm, advanced):** CR 10; SZ H Aberration; HD 16d8+128; hp 200; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 18 (-2 size, +10 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18; BAB/Grapple +12/+24 (+12 base, -2 size, +6 Str, +8 size); Atk +16 melee (2d6+3 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Full Atk +16 melee (2d6+3 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Constrict (2d6+3 plus 1d6 acid), Improved Grab, Arcane Spell Mimicry; SQ Absorb Arcane Magic, Amorphous, Arcanesense (100 ft.), Blindsight (60 ft.), Immunities; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 23, Dex 9, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Climb +31, Hide -4, Move Silently +14.  
**Feats:** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam).

**Treasure:** Inside the amorphous body of the monster is an intact copper scrollcase from Yezir-Kot's sarcophagus that contains a map showing the way to the isle of Namthu.

## Sails of fate

With the map pinpointing the location of Namthu in their possession, the PCs need a ship to take them to this remote location in the Eastern Ocean.

**Development:** The PCs look for a ship to take them out to sea. One of the few vessels that is able to make such a long journey on the open seas, and which is currently in port, is the Water Dragon, a Nabastissean ship. The first mate, Rashat, is an old henchman of Dar-Tiglat, and he helps the priest and several other cultists to join the crew. Dar-Tiglat masquerades as the new ship doctor, after the old one suddenly falls ill and dies.

As the player characters search the docks for a suitable ship, they are directly to the Water Dragon. The PCs must negotiate with the captain, who demands a share of any treasure found for himself and his crew. Diplomacy, Bluff or Intimidate checks may determine how successful the negotiations are.

It is possible, but unlikely, that the player characters do not want to charter the Water Dragon, preferring instead to find some other means of transport. This should be difficult, but not impossible. Perhaps there are other captains with vessels worthy of a long voyage, after all, or the player characters might even buy or commission the building of their own ship (although this certainly does not come cheap). If this happens, the adventure unfolds in a slightly different manner, with both Dar-Tiglat and the Water Dragon, as well as the Khoran freebooters of the Barracuda, following the PCs towards the Isle of Namthu, for a three-sided showdown on the shores of the accursed lagoon of Bhaomog.

### The Water Dragon

This is a large vessel, 25 feet wide and 105 feet long, built by Nabastissean shipwrights and primarily designed for carrying cargo, although there is a great ballista in the bow. It has three masts, no oars, and moves at an average speed of 2 miles per hour. There are three decks, including the top deck, the crew cabins, and one cargo hold. It has a crew of 40 sailors and 10 officers, including the captain, first mate, and a ship doctor. The ship is worth 10,000 gp. The Water Dragon also carries two large rowboats on board.

**Gallas, Captain of the Water Dragon, male Nabastissean Ftr10:** CR 10; SZ M; HD 10d10+10; hp 86; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+5



breastplate, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 15 (+5 breastplate); BAB/Grapple +10/+14; Atk +16 melee (2d6+8, greatsword, 17-20/x2) or +13 ranged (1d10+4, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+8, greatsword, 17-20/x2) or +13/+8 ranged (1d10+4, Susrahnite longbow, 20/x3, range increment 120 ft.); SA +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls at sea; SQ +2 racial bonus to Profession (Sailor) and Swim skills, +2 circumstance bonus to AC when fighting in formation with others of the same race, always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Climb +17, Jump +17, Profession (sailor) +14, Swim +17. **Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Susrahnite longbow), Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword), Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

**Languages:** Nabastissean, Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Breastplate, greatsword, Susrahnite longbow (+4 Strength bonus), 30 arrows.

**Description:** While Gallas is from Nabastis, his crew is recruited predominantly from Ghazor. The captain is in the prime of his years, and has previously sailed as far south as the Cannibal Coast, and as far east as the kingdom of Laksha.

**Tactics:** While he is skilled with the Susrahnite longbow, it is with the greatsword that Gallas is most deadly, cutting a red swath through enemy crews using Power Attacks.

**Rashat, First Mate of the Water Dragon, male Ghazorite Ftr5/Rog4:** CR 9; SZ M; HD 5d10+5 plus 4d6+4; hp 61; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB/Grapple +8/+10; Atk +12 melee (1d6+4, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +11 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 120 ft.); Full Atk +10/+10/+5 melee (1d6+4, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +11/+5 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 120 ft.); SA racial Sneak Attack (+1d6) that stacks with the rogue ability of the same name, Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Profession (sailor) skills, Weapon Familiarity (suffer only -2 penalty when using weapons without proficiency), Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Climb +10, Intimidate +9, Swim +10, Hide +10, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Profession (sailor) +7, Tumble +10. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sailor on the Seas of Fate, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword).

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Studded leather, 2 short swords, heavy crossbow, 12 crossbow bolts, 35 gp.

**Description:** Dressed in blood-stained armor and quite feared among the crew, Rashat is in reality Dar-Tiglat's secret henchman, after the priest saved the sailor's life many years ago.

**Tactics:** Rashat fights with two short swords. He is thoroughly brainwashed by Dar-Tiglat and is willing to die to defend the priest.

**Dar-Tiglat ("Sarru the Ship-Doctor"), Secret Priest of Yammosh, male Susrahnite Sor11:** CR 11; SZ M; HD 11d4+11; hp 45; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+0 no armor, +3 Dex), touch 13 (+3 Dex), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +5/+6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff, 20/x2) or +7 melee (1d4+1, curved dagger, 18-20/x2); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all weapons, Spells; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Knowledge (religion) skills, Sinister Presence, Master of Lost Languages and Arcane Mysteries, Permanent Sinister Presence; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Bluff +16, Concentration +15, Craft (alchemy) +18, Decipher Script +18, Diplomacy +16, Heal +16, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perform (ritual) +16, Spellcraft +18. **Feats:** Acolyte, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Grisly Sacrifice, Improved Initiative (b), Leadership, Priest, Sympathetic Magic, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

**Arcane Spells Known** (Spells per day: 4/4/4/4/3/2/1; Spell DC 10 + spell level +4 Int): 0 — guidance, know direction, prestidigitation; 1st — command, disguise self, mage armor, protection from evil, speak with animals (aquatic creatures only); 2nd — augury, death knell, gust of wind, protection from arrows, whispering wind; 3rd — deep slumber, dispel magic, hold person, locate object, ray of exhaustion; 4th — altar-fire, black tentacles, curse of green decay, divination, solid fog; 5th — control winds, curse of double death, slay living; 6th — symbol of fear, water breathing.

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Nabastissean, Lamuran, Taraamite, Khazistani.

**Possessions:** Plain clothes, quarterstaff, curved dagger, 2 doses of blinding-powder, 1 dose of flame-powder, small lapis lazuli amulet (suppresses Permanent Sinister Presence class ability while worn).

**Description:** The elderly "Sarru" is clad in worn clothes, and his head is clean-shaven. This is in fact Dar-Tiglat, a secret priest of Yammosh, who masquerades as the ship's doctor in order to follow the player characters to the Isle of Namthu. Among the ship's crew, there are 15 secret cultists who are loyal to him. Dar-Tiglat's ambition is to use the treasure and magical secrets he expects to find on





the island of Namthu to depose Uktha-Akkar, the current high priest of Yammosh in Ghazor.

**Tactics:** While posing as the ship doctor, Sarru/Dar-Tiglat does not use spells in public. Only at the most opportune moment, when he chooses to reveal himself as a priest of Yammosh, is he free to hurl his deadly spells and curses upon enemies.

**Crew of the Water Dragon, male Ghazorite Ftr3 (40):** CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d10+6; hp 24; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +2 Dex), touch 12 (+2 Dex), flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, 19-20/x2, range increment 120 ft.); SA racial Sneak Attack (+1d6) that stacks with the rogue ability of the same name; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise and Profession (sailor) skills, Weapon Familiarity (suffer only -2 penalty when using weapons without proficiency); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Climb +7, Jump +7, Swim +7. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Sailor on the Seas of Fate, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Toughness, Weapon Finesse.

**Languages:** Susrahnite.

**Possessions:** Studded leather, short sword, heavy crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, 1d4 gp.

**Description:** Experienced sailors, many of these men have been across the Eastern Ocean with Gallas and his ship. Around 15 of these crewmembers are secretly loyal to Sarru/Dar-Tiglat, the ship-doctor.

**Tactics:** The crewmembers are well-disciplined and fight under orders from Gallas or Rashat (except the secret cultists who do not obey Gallas once Dar-Tiglat has revealed himself as a sorcerer-priest). Even so, the rest of the crew could also possibly be incited to a mutiny if they become dissatisfied with their officers, their part of the loot, or if facing supernatural dangers way out of their league.

#### Eastern Ocean Random Encounters

Assuming good winds, it takes around 15 days from Ghazor to the Isle of Namthu (approximately 700 miles away). Roll on the following encounter table to determine what happens during the sea voyage. Note that many of these events have the potential to derail the player characters from their primary goal (getting to the island of Namthu); use the encounters as you see fit, or simply skip ahead to the section entitled "Claws from the Abyss".

##### Roll Encounter

1 Heavy storm

2 Rats in the hold

3 Broken mast

4 Landfall for repairs

5 Pursued by pirates

6 Mutiny

**Broken Mast:** Bad weather breaks the mast of the ship. There is a 25% chance that a pirate ship (the Barracuda) approaches as the Water Dragon lies helpless in the water.

**Heavy Storm:** During a heavy storm, a great wave washes over the deck, taking 1d4 crewmembers with it. Any character caught on deck must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or fall overboard, where a pack of 1d6+5 sharks await hungrily.

**Landfall for Repairs:** Bad weather damages the ship, and the Water Dragon must make landfall along the savage Cannibal Coast for repairs.

**Mutiny:** Rumors spread aboard the Water Dragon about the "accursed" isle of Namthu, and mutinous crewmembers capture the captain, demanding that he throws the PCs overboard and returns to Susrah with the ship.

**Pursued by Pirates:** A pirate ship is sighted, possibly by one of the PCs. Its flag is a red barracuda on black background. Determine the distance between the two vessels when the pursuit starts. Each round thereafter, the captain makes a Profession (sailor) check. The captain with the highest result wins, and may move his vessel a number of squares equal to the Speed rating of the ship. If the distance between two vessels is reduced to zero, melee combat can ensue as one vessel is boarded by the other.

**Rats in the Hold:** Rats have fouled and/or devoured the food onboard, and the remaining food must be rationed. As men grow lean and hungry, a group of sailors may be tempted to mutiny; the PCs must join the captain in striking the mutineers down (or perhaps join the mutiny).



### The Barracuda

This sleek, ocean-going Khoran galley is 20 feet wide and 110 feet long, and fitted with an iron ram at the bow. It has two sails, forty oars, and moves at an average speed of 3 miles per hour. There are two decks. It has a crew of 60 pirates (who also man the oars when required) and 5 officers. The vessel is worth 12,000 gp. The Barracuda also carries three small rowboats on board.

**Yajal, “the Serpent”, Captain of the Barracuda, male Khoran Ftr11:** CR 11; SZ M; HD 11d10+22; hp 102; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+0 no armor, +2 Dex, +5 Pantherish Dodge), touch 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Pantherish Dodge), flat-footed 10 (+0 no armor); BAB/Grapple +11/+16; Atk +18 melee (2d6+9, great scimitar, 15-20/x2) or +13 ranged (1d6+5, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d6+9, great scimitar, 15-20/x2) or +13 ranged (1d6+5, javelin, 20/x2, range increment 30 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all axes, crossbows and knives, Ferocity (continue fighting even while disabled and dying); SQ +2 racial bonus to Intimidate and Profession (sailor) skills, always treat Profession (sailor) as class skill; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Climb +19, Intimidate +17, Profession (sailor) +15, Ride +16. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (great scimitar), Improved Critical (great scimitar), Jaded Reveler, Leadership, Pantherish Dodge, Power Attack, Sailor on the Seas of Fate, Weapon Focus (great scimitar), Weapon Specialization (great scimitar).

**Languages:** Susrahnite, Nabastissean.

**Possessions:** Blue silken loincloth, masterwork great scimitar, javelin, bronze bracers adorned with lapis lazuli (worth 110 gp).

**Description:** Yajal is middle-aged and potbellied, but big and powerful with rakish good looks. Strangely, Yajal is afraid of water and cannot swim, a fact he has managed to hide from his crew so far. Two decades ago, Yajal was the only son of a powerful merchant house of Nabastis. A rival merchant house arranged for his father to be assassinated, and the young son was accused of the misdeed. Facing corrupt and bribed court officials and city guards, the rightful heir was forced to flee with one of his father's vessels. With his loyal crew, Yajal took up a life of piracy, targeting the vessels of the rival merchant house.

As the years went by with little success, however, Yajal's heart turned black and he began to prey on other, less well-defended ships. There are few of his original crew left, most having been killed and replaced with true pirates from the Isles of the Sea Reavers. His mind and memories (but not his fighting ability) clouded by strong drink, the pirate captain has now all but forgotten his original mission, but if he was somehow reminded of his past and given a chance to strike against



his old enemies, Yajal could perhaps yet gain his rightful revenge.

**Tactics:** Yajal wields his massive scimitar with both hands, dealing death to left and right with Power Attacks.

**Crew of the Barracuda, male Khoran Bbn2/Rog1 (60):** CR 3; hp 20; see Area 5 of the Harpy's Breath Tavern.

### Claws from the Abyss

The night that the vessel carrying the PCs comes within 30 miles of the island of Namthu, a horde of bloated ones attack by climbing the ship's sides. They can sense the presence of the Horn of Bhaomog, and the voice of their god within. After dealing with any guards on deck (which may include the PCs), they concentrate their attacks on whoever carries the horn.

Throughout the encounter, a heavy storm batters the ship. The rain and waves washing over the deck reduces visibility to half normal (assume starlight conditions). Spellcasting requires a Concentration check (DC 10 below decks, DC 15 on deck). Each round, there is a 20% chance that a big wave crashes into the side of the ship, and everyone must make a Balance check (DC 17) or be knocked prone.







**Bloated Ones, the Accursed Servants of Bhaomog, male Ikuna Bbn2 (20+):** CR 4; SZ M Aberration; HD 2d12+7; hp 22; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft. (-10 bloated one, +10 Fast Movement), swim 40 ft.; AC 14 (+0 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10 (+0 Dex), flat-footed 14 (+4 natural); BAB/Grapple +2/+10; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, Ikuna knife, 20/x4) or +7 melee (1d6+4, claw); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with Ikuna knives and clubs, natural attack with filed teeth (deals 1d4 lethal damage when grappling), Rage 1/day, Improved Grab, Kiss of the Deep (Fort DC 13), Stench (Fort DC 13); SQ +2 racial bonus to Hide and Swim skills, Scent, Fast Movement, Illiteracy, Uncanny Dodge, Longevity, Resistant to Blows, Restricted Movement, Water Dependent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Climb +9, Jump +9, Listen +6, Survival +6, Swim +17. **Feats:** Cannibalize (b), Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple (b), Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw) (b).

**Languages:** Ikuna.

**Possessions:** Rust-covered Ikuna knife.

**Description:** Bloated ones resemble corpses that have been soaked in water for days or weeks. Their putrid bodies are covered with the slime of the sea, and they exude a nauseating stench.

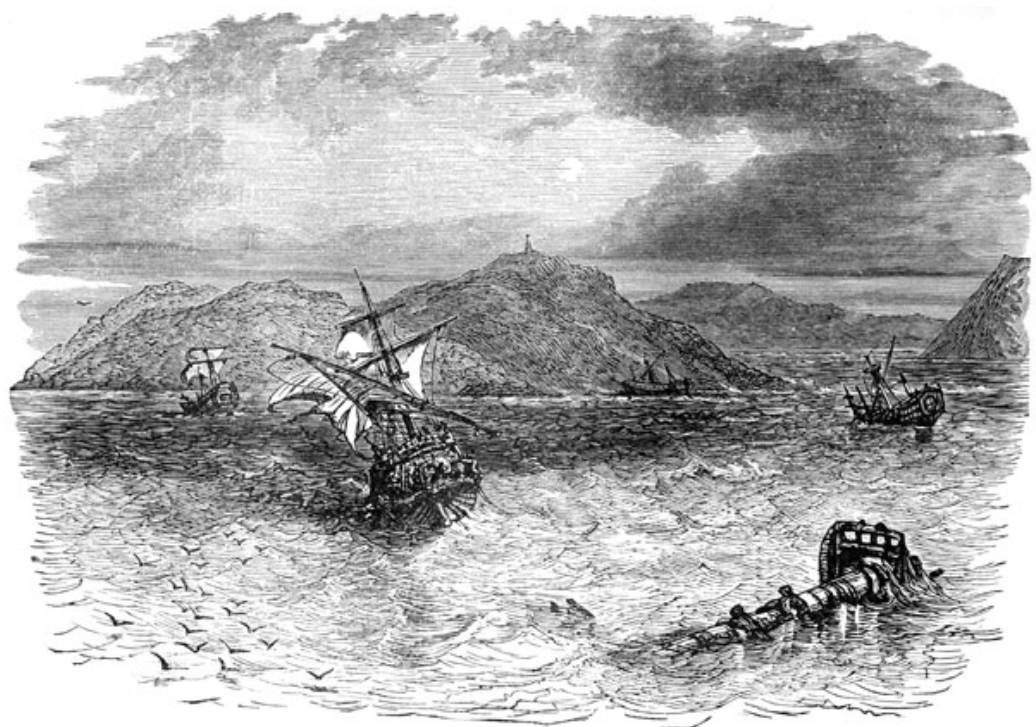
**Tactics:** The bloated ones try to grab opponents and throw them overboard, where more of their brethren await, or they may just use their Kiss of the Deep ability to drown held opponents. They are after the Horn of Bhaomog; the bloated ones can sense who carries it, and concentrate their attacks on him or her.

## The Island of Namthu

The island of Namthu rises majestically above the azure ocean that surrounds it. Namthu is ringed on all sides by jagged, vegetation-covered steep hills (Climb DC 25) which are, on average, more than 200 feet tall. The highest peak on the island, located to the west, is 300 feet tall. The island itself measures 4 by 3 miles, and the huge lagoon is approximately 2 miles by 1.5 miles across. The water in the lagoon is murky but calm (Swim DC 10). The lagoon is more than 400 feet deep in places; the earthquake-shattered ruins of the Namthuan civilization rests somewhere on the bottom, haunted by bloated ones and other terrors of the deep.

The only entrance to the lagoon is to the east, through an area of broken cliffs and crashing waves (Swim DC 15). The water there is too shallow for large vessels to cross, so smaller rowing-boats must be used to enter the lagoon. A successful Profession (sailor) check (DC 15) is required to keep a boat away from the cliffs. If this check is failed, the boat is hurled against the cliffs (but not destroyed), and everyone aboard must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to stay in the boat; failure means they fall into the water.

There is a small isle to the south of the main island, which is jungle-covered and teeming with thousands of centipede swarms, as well as large and huge monstrous centipedes. The Isle of Worms has never been inhabited. If anyone were to brave the plague of centipedes, they would find that barafa-grapes (see the Equipment chapter) grow plentiful here.





### The Secret of the Lagoon

The temple of the ancient Namthuans is located against the hillside on the eastern shore of the lagoon. Due to earthquakes, the rock upon which the temple stands has sunken several feet, so that during high tide, the outer temple is flooded with water. High and low tide occurs twice each day, with approximately six hours between a high tide and a low tide.

Unless the player characters wait until a specific time, determine randomly (using 1d12) the time of day when the PCs arrive in the lagoon, and whether it is high or low tide. During the high tide, the temple is completely hidden below water. If the PCs arrive during the high tide, they probably start to explore other parts of the island first. When the water level sinks, the temple is revealed. Refer to the following chart:

Hour	Tide	Water Level (Outer Temple)
0.5		Chest-high
1		Waist-high
2		Knee-high
3	Low	Shallow pools of water on floor
4		Knee-high
5		Waist-high
5.5		Chest-high
6	High	Completely flooded
6.5		Chest-high
7		Waist-high
8		Knee-high
9	Low	Shallow pools of water on floor
10		Knee-high
11		Waist-high
11.5		Chest-high
12	High	Completely flooded

Make a note of the time when the PCs enter the temple. They have up to six hours before the temple is re-flooded. Be careful to track how much time the PCs spend searching, studying walls, opening locks, breaking down doors, removing rubble, loading and carrying treasure, etc. Combats usually only last less than a minute each, but if the player characters stop to use the Heal skill, several minutes will pass each time. Consult the core rulebooks for the effects of moving and fighting in water.

**Development:** When the Water Dragon arrives at the island, the captain sends the player characters, along with Rashat the first mate and Sarru the ship doctor and several crew members, into the lagoon in two rowboats. Eventually, the tide recedes and reveals the temple. Unless the PCs venture into the temple on their own initiative, Sarru insists that the landing-party should explore it. Blowing the Horn of Bhaomog has no effect at this time, except to summon more bloated ones, who attempt to snatch the conch shell from whoever holds it.

### The Ghosts of the Eyrie

A 300-foot tall mountain peak rises from the western hills of the island, overlooking the lagoon. On the north side of the peak is a cave which is the lair of a flock of giant, flesh-eating birds. The birds can be seen, circling around the peak, from the beach area with a successful Spot check (DC 15). It requires a long series of Climb checks (DC 20) to reach the top. The hillsides are strewn with clean-picked human and animal bones (although the human bones are obviously very old).

Priests loyal to Pathag Thuul pursued the slayers of the high priest, but were defeated and slain on the beach as earthquakes wracked the island. The huge birds which nested atop the mountain snatched up the corpses of the priests and flew them to their eyrie, where they picked their bones clean. Even now, the innermost grotto of the eyrie is haunted by the ghosts of these priests; they cannot rest until their bones receive a proper burial. The birds shun the inner caves, of course.

Outside the caves is a great ledge, strewn with bones, feathers, and bird droppings. The Namthu-birds drop any victims they have snatched up elsewhere onto the ledge, where the victim is beset by the flock, including the young.

The cave entrance leads to a tunnel that splits up into two tunnels. The northern tunnel leads to a series of small caves, where the birds keep their young and their eggs.

The southern tunnel leads to a big grotto, now abandoned by the birds because it is haunted by several ghosts. The ghosts cannot leave the grotto, but can retreat into the walls and hide there. The ghosts cannot rest before they receive a proper burial. The clean-picked bones of three human skeletons are scattered across the cavern floor. Among the bones (Search DC 15) is the following valuables: A buckle adorned with lapis lazuli (worth 75 gp), 42 ancient gold coins, and a masterwork curved dagger. The final item is a fist-size glass orb filled with milky-white smoke. The orb is far more sturdy than it looks (hardness 10, hp 30), but if it is smashed against the wall of force in the temple (see Area 8), it breaks easily and shatters the wall as well, ending the spell.

**Giant Flesh-Eating Birds of Namthu (12):** CR 4; SZ L Magical Beast; HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grapple +4/+12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, claw); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d6+4, claw) and +2 melee (1d8+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful Presence, Improved Grab, SQ Low-Light Vision, Evasion; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +6, Sense Motive +4, Spot +15, Survival +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Flyby Attack.





**Tactics:** Giant Flesh-Eating Birds of Namthu typically attack from great heights, diving earthward at tremendous speed. When they cannot dive, they use their powerful talons and slashing beaks to strike at the heads and eyes of targets. The birds fight to the death to defend their young in the eyrie.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** A Giant Flesh-Eating Bird of Namthu can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically when the bird appears, and affects opponents within 30 feet with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the bird has. Creatures that fail a Will save (DC 12) become shaken for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the frightful presence of the same creature type for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the bird must hit a creature of medium-size or smaller with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the bird gets a hold, it may fly away with the victim.

**Evasion (Ex):** With a successful Reflex save against an attack that allows a Reflex save for half damage, a Giant Flesh-Eating Bird of Namthu takes no damage.

**Skills:** Giant Flesh-Eating Birds of Namthu have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

**Ghosts of Slain Namthuan Priests (spectres, 3):** CR 7; hp 45. *Note:* These creatures lack the Create Spawn ability of common spectres. They cannot leave the cave, but they can withdraw into the walls if “cornered”.

## The Temple of Bhaomog (Outer Level)

When the water level recedes during low tide, the cyclopean temple of the Namthuans appears from out of the lagoon. Its massive, slime-glistening walls are covered with seaweed, algae and corals, and a variety of creatures such as snails and starfish crawl across its surface.

### 1. Pier and Temple Entrance

A 100-foot long pier extends from the temple entrance and into the lagoon. The pier was used as a dock for the boats of the Namthuans when the priests and their servants approached the temple.

The temple entrance has no doors, just a huge gaping hole that leads into the darkness inside. Around the entrance are piles of stones that have fallen off the main structure during the earthquakes that shook the temple centuries ago.

### 2. Immense Hall

This great hall branches off to several lesser chambers along its sides. Straight ahead are

### The Temple of Bhaomog

**Standard Features:** Unless noted otherwise, all doors are stone doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 25 if described as locked). Refer to the sidebar for the effects of moving around and fighting in the flooded temple.

**Lighting:** The temple is unlit.

chambers devoted to the worship of Bhaomog (see Areas 9 and 14), but entrance to these areas is blocked by an invisible force wall (see Area 8).

The walls of the hall, like the building outside, is covered with corals and seaweed. The vast room smells of stagnant water and dead fish.

Since the hall is regularly flooded with water, several marine creatures can potentially be washed into this area and the adjacent rooms. Check every 30 minutes using the following table (this table can also be used for random encounters in the lagoon itself):

Roll	Encounter
1-2	Bloated ones (2-5)
3	Giant clam (ToH)
4	Giant moray eel (ToH)
5	Water snake (large viper)
6	Large stingray (ToH 2)
7	Large shark
8	Giant octopus
9	Monstrous crabs (2-12) (ToH)
10	Monstrous jellyfish (2-5) (ToH)
11	Kelp devil (ToH)
12	Large barracudas (2-5) (ToH)

### 3. Side Chamber

This small chamber is filled with broken pottery. Murals on the walls show the temple being constructed by the early Namthuans. Golden treasures are shown heaped upon altars glistening with seawater and slime. One disturbing image shows a priest blowing a conch shell to call a tentacled monstrosity out of the depths of the lagoon.

### 4. Lair of the Bloated Ones

This large room is the dwelling-place for two dozen bloated ones, once-human abominations created by the Namthuan priests using a spell learned from Bhaomog, the god of the deep. These creatures seek to free Bhaomog, but cannot penetrate the wall of force (see Area 8) that keeps them out of the inner areas of the temple. The bloated ones haunt the temple and the lagoon. They attack anyone entering the temple. If a player character or NPC carries the Horn of Bhaomog, all bloated ones





concentrate their attacks on this character, attempting to snatch the conch shell from him or her and use it to awaken their sleeping master.

**Bloated Ones, Aquatic Servitors of Bhaomog (24):** CR 4; hp 22; see “Claws from the Abyss”, above.

### 5. Chamber

The entrance to this room and the chambers beyond (Areas 6 and 7) is blocked by a large pile of stones, as the walls here have partly collapsed. The amount of loose stone that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs one ton (2,000 pounds). In 1 minute, using only his hands, a character can clear rocks and debris equal to five times his heavy load limit. Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger can clear loose stone twice as quickly as by hand.

### 6. The Golden Siren of Death

A life-sized golden statue, with the voluptuous upper body of a woman and the lower body of a serpent, stands against the far wall of this small shrine. The statue is very valuable (worth 4,000 gp), but carries a terrible curse: Anyone touching the statue must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) or succumb to a telepathic, seductive voice that orders the victim to slay all his companions and then drown himself in the nearest pool of water.

### 7. Chamber With Wall-Scrawl

Used by lesser priests in ancient times, this room contains a scattering of stone utensils decorated with red and black paint. The wall to the north is covered with a crude mural that

has been carved into the stone with a dagger. The mural depicts the high priest of the temple being stabbed to death by traitorous acolytes; the temple being sealed by the spells of the dying high priest; the traitors killing more loyal priests and fleeing from the island with much stolen treasure; and the bodies of several dead priests being carried by huge birds to the island's highest mountain peak.

The skeletal remains of the priest who etched the mural onto the wall before he died rest in a heap on the floor. Among the bones is a bronze necklace (worth 75 gp) and a worn knife, blunt from its use on the wall.

### 8. Wall of force

The entry to the hall beyond is sealed with a *wall of force*. Curiously, the force wall does not stop water from flowing through, but it stops solid objects. This allows the bloated ones imprisoned in the inner temple to survive, since they get soaked in water during every high tide.

The wall was raised by the spells of the Namthuan priests and, in addition to the normal ways of dispelling it, can be broken by destroying a white orb that the priests used as a focus for the permanent spell. The priest who held the orb was slain, and his corpse later taken by the flesh-eating birds to their eyrie (see “The Ghosts of the Eyrie”, above). The bloated ones in the temple and lagoon seek to dispel the force wall, but are unable to retrieve the orb, for they cannot be out of the water for long. Besides, the bloated ones are not good climbers, and the Namthu-birds would easily pick them off as they climbed the mountain-side.







**Development:** Unless the PCs have some spell that can dispel the force wall, they must climb the peaks to get to the cave and retrieve the orb that acts as a focus for the permanent wall of force. Clues to the logic behind this can be found on the murals in the temple (see Area 7). If the player characters don't figure this out (allowing them an Intelligence check at DC 15), Dar-Tiglat probably will.

#### 9. Tentacled Idol

A huge and monstrous idol dominates this great hall. The idol is crafted from dark green stone, perhaps jade, and resembles a cross between a giant insect and a squid with demonic features. This is a statue of Bhaomog, of course. It is so expertly crafted and so lifelike that anyone seeing it for the first time must make a Will save (DC 17) or become shaken for 1 minute.

#### 10. Altar of the Sea-Gods

This small shrine adjacent to the huge green stone idol of Bhaomog has a great altar placed against the northern wall. There is a secret compartment within the altar (Search DC 30) that contains a silver box filled with 101 perfect white pearls (worth 5,000 gp), and a scroll of *control water* and *nightmare* (caster level 12).

However, anyone approaching the altar without uttering certain arcane phrases sacred to Bhaomog triggers a *black tentacles* spell (caster level 10) which covers the entire room with rubbery tentacles that attempt to grab and crush the interlopers.

#### 11. Preparation Chamber

Ancient bronze bowls and other priestly vessels, green and blue with verdigris, are scattered in this room, once used by the acolytes of the temple for various ceremonial purposes.

#### 12. Antechamber

All furniture in this small room has long since rotted away, leaving an empty room with bare walls.

#### 13. High Priest's Chamber

Once the richly appointed sanctum of Pathag Thuul, the high priest of the Namthuans, this chamber is now filled with rubble. Among the floating debris (Search DC 25) is a set of three lapis lazuli cylinder seals (worth 50 gp each) indicating Pathag Thuul's position, a small iron shield (worth 160 gp), and half a dozen clay figurines of various aquatic creatures, each of which can be broken in two to summon a creature of the appropriate type in any water-covered area (use the random encounter table in Area 2 to determine creature type, but note that the summoner does not gain any kind of control over the summoned creature).

#### 14. The Pool of Bhaomog

This vast pit is filled with murky water even at low tide. The pit is ringed by stone, a circular wall 3 feet tall. The pit leads down 110 feet to the collapsed underwater cave where Bhaomog sleeps and dreams and whispers to the minds of weak-willed men who heed the call from the abyss.

Bhaomog used to come into the temple through underwater tunnels beneath the temple building and surface in this pool, receiving the adorations of his priests as well as his due offerings and sacrifices. The earthquakes that shook Namthu during the failed ritual when Pathag Thuul was killed sealed the tunnels and even the horde of bloated ones lacks the strength to excavate them.

If the Horn of Bhaomog is blown 3 times in the temple, in the inner temple beyond the *wall of force* area, Bhaomog is awakened from his slumber. It takes him 1d3 x 10 minutes to excavate the rubble and fallen stones that imprison him at the bottom of the pit.

**Development:** If Bhaomog awakens, he waits for the high tide to flood the temple so that he can swim out and into the lagoon and beyond. If this abomination of the deep detects intruders in the temple, he attempts to grab them with his far-reaching tentacles and drag them to their deaths in the depths of the pit.

The trashing of Bhaomog's tentacles may cause great pieces of stone to fall from the walls and the ceiling. Creatures caught underneath the falling rocks suffer 4d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 17 for half damage). A failed save means a creature is stuck underneath the crushing weight of the rock and must make a Strength check (DC 18) to break free.

**Bhaomog, the Sleeper in the Abyss, Ancient God of the Namthuans:** CR 12; SZ G Magical Beast; HD 20d10+180; hp 290; Init +4; Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (-4 size, +14 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 20; BAB/Grapple +20/+44; Atk +28 melee (2d8+12, tentacle, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +28/+28 melee (2d8+12, tentacle, 19-20/x2) and +23/+23/+23/+23/+23/+23 melee (1d6+6, arms) and +23 melee (4d6+6, bite); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (60 ft. with tentacle, 30 ft. with arm); SA Improved Grab, Constrict (2d8+12 or 1d6+6), Enslavement; SQ Darkvision (60 ft.), Ink Cloud, Jet, Low-Light Vision, Spell-like Abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +21, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 34, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 20.

**Skills:** Concentration +21, Diplomacy +7, Hide +0, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (geography) +17, Knowledge (nature) +16, Listen +30, Search +28, Sense Motive +17, Spot +30, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks), Swim +20, Use Magic Device +16. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will.



**Tactics:** Bhaomog strikes his opponents with his barbed tentacles, then grabs and crushes with his arms, or drags victims into his huge jaws. An opponent can make sunder attempts against Bhaomog's tentacles or arms as if they were weapons. Bhaomog's tentacles have 20 hit points, and his arms have 10 hit points. If Bhaomog is currently grappling a target with one tentacle or arm, he usually uses another limb to make his attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing Bhaomog's tentacle or arm deals damage to Bhaomog equal to half the limb's full normal hit points. Bhaomog usually withdraws from combat if he loses both tentacles or three of its arms. Bhaomog regrows severed limbs in 1d10+10 days.

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

**Constrict (Ex):** Bhaomog deals automatic arm or tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

**Enslavement (Su):** Three times per day, Bhaomog can attempt to enslave any one living creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 25) or be affected as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 20th). An enslaved creature obeys Bhaomog's telepathic commands until freed by *remove curse*, and can attempt a new Will save every 24 hours to break free. The control is also broken if Bhaomog dies or travels more than 1 mile from its slave. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Jet (Ex):** Bhaomog can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. He must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

**Ink Cloud (Ex):** Bhaomog can emit a cloud of jet-black ink in an 80-foot spread once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which Bhaomog normally uses to escape a fight that is going badly. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day — *control weather*, *control winds*, *dominate animal* (DC 18), *nightmare* (DC 20). Caster level 9th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills:** Bhaomog has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. He can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.

## 15. Chamber of Skulls

This room contains hundreds of human skulls, heaped in a crude pyramid, stained

by red algae and green sea slime. They are the remains of sacrificial victims who were not deemed worthy to be fed to Bhaomog or turned into bloated ones.

## 16. Corridor and Stairs to Hillside Temple

The tunnel leads into the mountain and the inner level of the temple.

## The Temple of Bhaomog (Inner Level)

This part of the temple has been carved out of the bedrock of the steep hillside against which the outer temple stands. Even at low tide, some parts of the inner temple (Areas 3 and 4) remain submerged. Due to its location at the top of several flights of stairs, the outer sanctum (Area 5) and beyond is never submerged, not even during high tide.

### 1. Antechamber

The corridor from the outer temple (see Area 16 of the outer temple) ends in this square, nondescript chamber.

### 2. Square Hall With Statues

The ceiling of this great hall appears upheld by four huge, squat statues of humanoids whose hands push against the ceiling. The gigantic statues are carved in black stone and have the features of bloated ones. The room reeks of rotten seaweed and dead fish.

### 3. South Wing

A narrow staircase leads down to a chamber which is always submerged in water, even at low tide. The water is murky and stagnant. Those who dive into it find several items of treasure in the flooded storage magazines here, including a bronze scimitar (worth 25 gp) and copper visored helm (worth 30 gp), a bronze breastplate decorated with gold (worth 250 gp), three small horse figurines in silver (worth 40 gp each), a pile of ancient gold coins (a total of 613 gp), and an iron medallion in the shape of a spider (worth 35 gp).

However, in the water is also a swarm of Namthuan spinal leeches. These vermin appear as 3-inch long transparent leeches. They attach to their prey and drain spinal fluid, thereby inducing paralysis in the victim. When first encountered, a Spot check (DC 15) can be made to avoid them entirely. If this check is failed, the spinal leeches go unnoticed and crawl onto their victim, moving quickly to its spine. A spinal leech needs only a single round to reach its destination. If the target is wearing medium armor, an additional round is added to the time as the leech finds a way underneath its host's armor; two rounds are added if the victim is wearing heavy armor.





When a leech attaches itself, the victim may attempt a Wisdom check (DC 15). If successful, he feels a strange sensation run down his spine; otherwise, the spinal leech's bite goes unnoticed.

Each round thereafter, a Fortitude save (DC 17) must be made or the victim takes 1d6 points of Dexterity damage. At Dexterity 0, the victim is paralyzed until his Dexterity score is brought to 1.

The application of fire instantly kills all leeches. They can also be pulled from a host with no ill effects.

#### 4. North Wing

Like the south wing (Area 3), this chamber is always submerged. A group of bloated ones lair here. They hide underwater and attempt to attack with surprise, grabbing victims and pulling them underwater to drown them in the murky water.

**Bloated Ones (5):** See Area 4 of the outer temple.

#### 5. Outer Sanctum

On the floor of this large sanctum are four square pools filled with murky water. Painted images on the walls portray rituals wherein captives are offered up as sacrifice to a tentacled monster (Bhaomog, of course) and turned into bloated ones, aquatic servitors of the monstrous god.

Between the pools, in the center of the chamber, stands a pedestal of stone that holds an iron-bound book. This is a spellbook that contains the spell used to transform humans into bloated ones. If the book is disturbed, opened or removed, its invisible guardian-elemental is instantly summoned and attacks.

**The Guardian of the Sanctum (invisible stalker):** CR 7; hp 52.

**Development:** If Dar-Tiglat is with the PCs, he lets them spring any traps the iron-bound book might have. If the invisible stalker attacks one of the PCs, the priest uses this opportunity to betray the player characters, ordering his men to attack the other PCs. If possible, Dar-Tiglat tries to capture the PCs in order to turn them into bloated ones under his command, but his first priority is to get the spellbook, as well as the Horn of Bhaomog, from the PCs. If he gets the chance, Dar-Tiglat blows the horn to awaken Bhaomog, but to the priest's great surprise, wielding the horn does not give him any sort of control over or favor with the monstrous god of the deep.

#### 6. Inner Sanctum

The marble floor of this inner sanctum is inscribed with a symbol of death spell that protects the treasure in the chambers beyond. The symbol is 15 feet in diameter and placed in front of the door to the central treasure cham-

ber (Area 9), although its burst effect easily covers the entire room. The symbol appears as a green and gold mosaic of a great octopus. The senior priests of Namthu were attuned to the symbol when it was created, and thus did not suffer any ill effects from it.

#### 7. South Treasure Chamber

This locked room is stacked with hundreds of painted amphorae, clay jars and copper vessels. However, the exotic wines and strange oils that are contained within these containers have become spoiled after centuries of storage.

#### 8. North Treasure Chamber

Similar to the south treasure chamber (Area 7), this room is locked. It once held large crates of animal furs and bales of exotic cloth from far-away lands, but only tatters of these decayed treasures now remain here.

#### 9. Central Treasure Chamber

The door to this room is arcane locked (caster level 14). The treasury beyond is filled with golden bowls and gem-studded drinking-cups, chests with gems and coins, a chariot adorned with golden lion heads, heaps of pearls and opals, and an abundance of silver, lapis lazuli and golden rings and bracelets (the whole collection is worth in excess of 75,000 gp).

Any character who finds this great treasure must make a Will saving throw (DC 17) or become fascinated for 2d6 rounds by the glittering treasure hoard, doing nothing except staring at the gleaming riches. If the saving

#### New Spell: Create Bloated One Transmutation

**Level:** Sor 6

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target:** One humanoid creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

Also known as *An Offering to the Abyss*, this spell transforms a helpless victim into a bloated one, an abominable aquatic creature which is forced to serve the creator, or whoever the creator appoints as the creature's master.

The victim is plunged into a watery pit while the spell is being cast, but instead of drowning, the creature emerges from the pit as a Bloated One (see the template of the same name).

**Material Component:** A flawless pearl from the depths of the ocean (worth at least 500 gp), which is forced down the victim's throat during the casting.



throw is failed by 5 or more, the character becomes obsessed with the treasure, claiming all of it as his own and doing everything in his power to secure and appraise the treasure for 1 hour, after which a new saving throw is allowed to shake off the effect. Such treasure-obsessed characters may easily come to blows with other characters if they insist on sharing the treasure.

## Conclusion

Multiple developments are possible once the PCs reach the Isle of Namthu. Can they retrieve the ancient treasures without awakening Bhaomog? Or will Dar-Tiglat's meddling unleash a monster which spells doom for all? A three- or four-way battle could easily be fought on the island, between the PCs, Dar-Tiglat and his cultists, Gallas and his sailors, and the bloated ones who serve Bhaomog.

Then there is the matter of Yajal and his pirates, who have followed the Water Dragon

to the isle. If the PCs have not encountered the pirates earlier, they may emerge from the lagoon only to find the Water Dragon attacked, and perhaps burned, by the captain of the Bar-racuda.

And back in Ghazor there is the powerful high priest of Yammosh, Uktha-Akkar (male Ghazorite Sor14), who may take an interest in the player characters if they return with the sunken treasures of Namthu. Perhaps he even has his own spies among the crew-cultists who serve Dar-Tiglat.

**If the PCs fail:** Dar-Tiglat prefers to capture the PCs alive, in order to turn them into bloated ones. Bhaomog himself crushes anyone standing in his path unless they surrender, either willingly or through his enslavement ability. No vessel is safe as the awakened god seeks to restore his sea-empire.

If the PCs are defeated by Yajal and the Sea Reavers, the pirates will try to ransom them, if possible, instead of killing the player characters outright.



# Appendix A: New Monsters

## Bloated One (Template)

Bloated One is an acquired template that can be added to any living humanoid creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature). The template is applied to creatures who are subject to the Create Bloated One spell.

A bloated one uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to Aberration. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves.

**Speed:** As the base creature minus 10 feet, to a minimum of 10 feet or the base creature's original speed (whichever is lower). The bloated one also gains a swim speed at the base creature's original speed.

**Armor Class:** The base creature's natural armor bonus improves by +4.

**Attack:** A bloated one retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a claw attack if it didn't already have one (damage 1d6 for Medium-sized creatures). If the base creature can use weapons, the bloated one retains this ability.

**Special Attacks:** A bloated one has all the special attacks of the base creature, plus the following special attacks.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the bloated one must hit a creature of its own size or smaller with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can use its Kiss of the Deep ability.

**Kiss of the Deep (Ex):** The bloated one can fill a held victim's lungs with water, causing drowning unless a Fortitude save is made. If the saving throw is failed, the victim starts to drown. In the first round, he falls unconscious (0 hp). In the following round, he drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he drowns. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Stench (Ex):** When a bloated one is on land, its putrid, slime-dripping body emits a nauseating stench. All living creatures (except other bloated ones) within 30 feet of a bloated one must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the bloated one's Hit Dice + bloated one's Constitution modifier) or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same bloated one's stench for 24 hours. A delay poison or neutralize poison spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to

poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

**Special Qualities:** A bloated one has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

**Longevity (Ex):** Bloated ones can live for hundreds of years as long as they remain in periodic contact with water.

**Resistant to Blows (Ex):** The bloated one takes only half damage from bludgeoning attacks.

**Restricted Movement (Ex):** The bloated one can never travel more than 30 miles away from the area in which it was created.

**Water Dependent (Ex):** A bloated one can survive out of the water for 1 hour per 2 points of Constitution (after that, refer to the drowning rules).

**Abilities:** Adjust from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Dex -4, Con +4.

**Skills:** Bloated ones have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Otherwise same as the base creature.

**Feats:** Bloated ones gain Improved Grapple and Weapon Focus (claw), assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and doesn't already have these feats.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.





## Corpulent (Template)

Corpulent is an acquired template that can be added to any living humanoid creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature).

A corpulent creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to Aberration. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves. Size increases by one size category (from Medium to Large, from Large to Huge, etc.). Note that this may result in the creature gaining natural reach attacks.

**Speed:** As the base creature minus 20 feet, to a minimum of 10 feet or the base creature's original speed (whichever is lower).

**Special Attacks:** A corpulent creature has all the special attacks of the base creature, plus the following special attacks.

**Improved Grapple (Ex):** The corpulent creature gains the Improved Grapple feat as a bonus feat.

**Crush (Ex):** The corpulent creature deals 2d6 (+ Strength bonus) points of lethal damage with a successful grapple check.

**Special Qualities:** A corpulent creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

**Resistant to Blows (Ex):** The corpulent creature takes only half damage from bludgeoning attacks.

**Abilities:** Adjust from the base creature as follows: Dex -4, Con +4.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +1.

## Devil-Bird of Azimba

Large Magical Beast

**Hit Dice:** 6d10+12 (45 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (+3 Dex)

**Speed:** 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 80 ft. (average)

**Armor Class:** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+15

**Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d8+5)

**Full Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d8+5) and 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. /5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Frightful Presence, Maddening Screech, Poison

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., Improved Grab, Low-Light Vision, Scent

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 11

**Skills:** Hide +5, Listen +5, Search +4, Spot +10

**Feats:** Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack

**Environment:** Temperate and tropical mountains and forests

**Organization:** Solitary or flock (2-5)

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 7-12 HD (Large); 13-18 HD (Gargantuan)

*The "devil-birds" of Azimba are dire remnants of a lost age, a cross between flying lizards and giant vampire-bats.*

The devil-birds are said to be the offspring of Jul-Juggah, who is sometimes called "the last of the once-dreaded lizard gods". The cult of Jul-Juggah knows secret magic spells and rituals that allow the priests to summon and control these creatures. However, the species are close to extinction, and the priests have taken to capturing eggs and trying to cross-breed the devil-birds with other species such as vultures and bats.

The sight of a devil-bird forces a saving throw against its Frightful Presence ability, except to the priests of Jul-Juggah, who are used to the sight of these creatures and often summon them to offer up sacrifices to their god. Victims are typically bound to stone slabs under the open sky to make it easy for the devil-birds to snatch up the sacrifice, or devour it in place.

### Combat

Devil-birds attack by diving down on targets, striking them down with razor-sharp claws while they utter their sanity-shattering screeches. They may also attempt to grab victims and fly away with them, or drop opponents from great heights.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** A Devil-Bird of Azimba can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically when the devil-bird appears, and affects opponents within 30 feet with fewer Hit Dice or levels





than the devil-bird has. Creatures that fail a Will save (DC 13) become shaken for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the frightful presence of the same creature type for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Maddening Screech (Su):** Up to 3 times per day as a free action, the devil-bird can utter a screech that causes confusion in all creatures within a 15-foot radius. The effect lasts for 1d6 rounds. A successful Will save (DC 14) negates the effect. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the devil-bird must hit a creature of medium-size or smaller with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the devil-bird gets a hold, it may fly away with the victim.

**Poison (Ex):** The bite of a devil-bird is poisonous. Creatures hit by the devil-bird's bite must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1d4 points of Strength damage. One minuter later, the victim must save again or suffer 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Rahma's Blessed (Template)

Rahma's Blessed is an acquired template that can be added to any living humanoid creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature). The template is applied to those who have been drained to zero Constitution by Rahma's rotting touch.

A creature blessed by Rahma uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's size and type does not change. While these creatures might easily be mistaken for undead, they are not, and have none of the weaknesses of undead.

**Special Attacks:** A creature blessed by Rahma has all the special attacks of the base creature, plus the following special attacks.

**Stench (Ex):** The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half creature's Hit Dice or levels + Charisma modifier) or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same creature's stench for 24 hours. A delay poison or neutralize poison spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

**Special Qualities:** A creature blessed by Rahma has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

**Darkvision (Ex):** Range 60 ft.

**Immunities (Ex):** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Abilities:** Adjust from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Cha +4.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.



## Spawn of Yot-Kamoth

Large Aberration

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+18 (45 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 15 ft.

**Armor Class:** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+10

**Attack:** By weapon +5 melee or bite +6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** By weapon +5 melee and bite +6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. /5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison, Web

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., Frightful Presence, Tremorsense 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16

**Skills:** Climb +14, Concentration +9, Hide +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Spot +9

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or brood (3-5)

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Double standard

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

*A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth has the lower body of a large, black-haired tarantula, and a human torso extending from where the spider's head should be.*

These dreadful abominations are born from the union of the temple spiders of Yot-Kamoth and a human female, usually one of the so-called temple-virgins that dance and cavort obscenely before the black idols of the spider-god of Lamu during sacred rituals.

The Spawn may be either male or female, though they lack reproductive organs and cannot produce offspring themselves.

### Combat

**Poison (Ex):** A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth has a poisonous bite (Fort DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str/1d6 Str). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Web (Ex):** Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the Spawn. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 16) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 21). The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus.

Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can create sheets of sticky webbing up to 30 feet square. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they

stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 12 hit points, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically when the Spawn appears, and affects opponents within 30 feet with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the Spawn has. Creatures that fail a Will save (DC 13) become shaken for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the frightful presence of the same creature type for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Tremorsense (Ex):** A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the Spawn's webs.

**Skills:** Spawn of Yot-Kamoth have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A Spawn of Yot-Kamoth can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Spawn of Yot-Kamoth use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. Spawn of Yot-Kamoth have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.





## Appendix B: References and Bibliography

The following is a sampling of various literature that has been inspirational for this author and should be of interest to any DM running a sword and sorcery campaign.

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# Appendix C: Miscellanea

The following is a randomly ordered table of various items, events, names and creatures that would appear in sword and sorcery tales. Use the table to spur your imagination when designing or running sword and sorcery adventures.

Roll	Description
1	curved dagger
2	Dao-Khee
3	caravan or caravanserai
4	jewelry or gem
5	pirate ship
6	corrupt advisor
7	sewer tunnel
8	temple guardian
9	feat of desperate strength
10	cursed artifact
11	burglary or kidnapping
12	treachery or betrayal
13	naked female captive
14	perverted aristocrat
15	Amoth
16	sorcerous trap
17	drunken orgy
18	ancient law that demands a life be taken
19	blood-red
20	gladiatorial pit
21	mad magician or ancient mummy
22	old god from the stars
23	Pathar
24	maze of city streets
25	barren wildlands
26	savage or neanderthal
27	girdle of silk
28	elaborate human sacrifice
29	double-crossing
30	smuggler
31	peacock feathers or ostrich plumes
32	ancient chariot
33	spider or spiderweb
34	escape under of cover of night
35	well-guarded fortress
36	oath or exclamation
37	human vice or addiction
38	living for the day
39	port
40	concubine or temptress
41	black
42	dungeon
43	high priest
44	pyramid or ziggurat
45	forbidden tower
46	local guide
47	chance meeting
48	chieftain or prince
49	ghoul
50	pantherish grace
51	poisoned weapon or drink
52	cannibal
53	tent city
54	masked nomad
55	winged demon
56	slaver or kidnapper
57	arrogant noble
58	tyrannical government
59	wealthy merchant
60	secret society or hidden complex
61	carnivorous ape
62	king of thieves
63	slave
64	yellow
65	grinning bronze idol
66	inhuman skull
67	Zhuul
68	lotus-flower
69	two-handed sword
70	fist-sized gem
71	blue and gold tapestry
72	prison
73	ambush
74	sleeping giant snake
75	Ykhanthra
76	duel
77	eunuch
78	marketplace or bazaar
79	incense-burner
80	voluptuous princess





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