

CONAN

CATACOMBS OF HYBORIA



SECOND EDITION



CONAN®

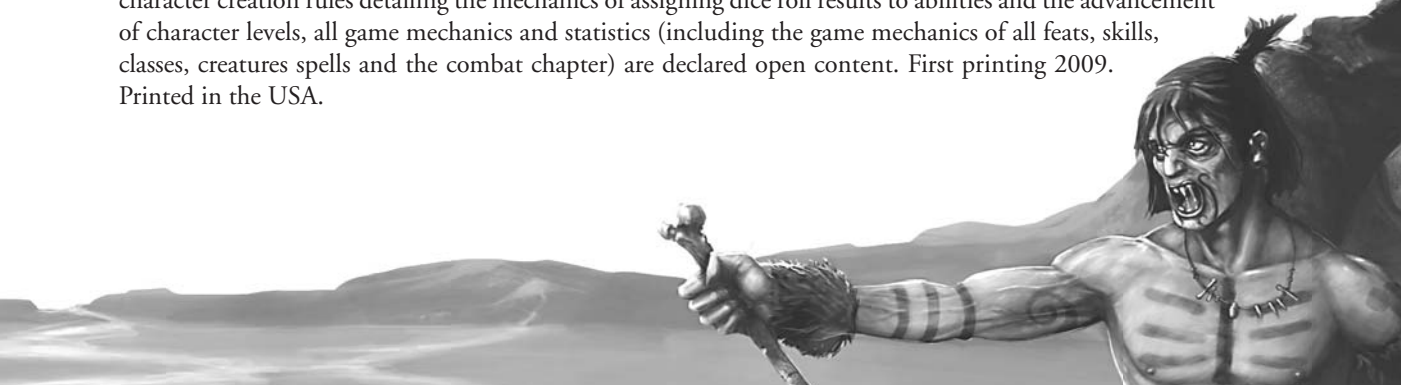
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Introduction

The wilds of the world of *Conan* have been the source of nearly limitless Hyborian Age adventure, pitting savages and barbarians against soldiers and nobles in a variety of locations. Stories tell of swords and sorcery throughout the lands; through deserts, jungles and savannahs alike. We know about all of the fantastic action that occurs on the Hyborian world...but what about beneath it?

Just like our world today, the earth of the Hyborian Age has miles of caverns, caves, mines and other tunnels scattered throughout the world's crust. Some are cut by the hands and tools of men, others by the claws of beasts or perhaps just the touch of time and nature itself. These subterranean locations are no less exciting as those found above ground; many of them are so much more exotic, strange and *dangerous*. If someone falls in a forest they might twist their ankle – fall in a cavern they may never be found again.



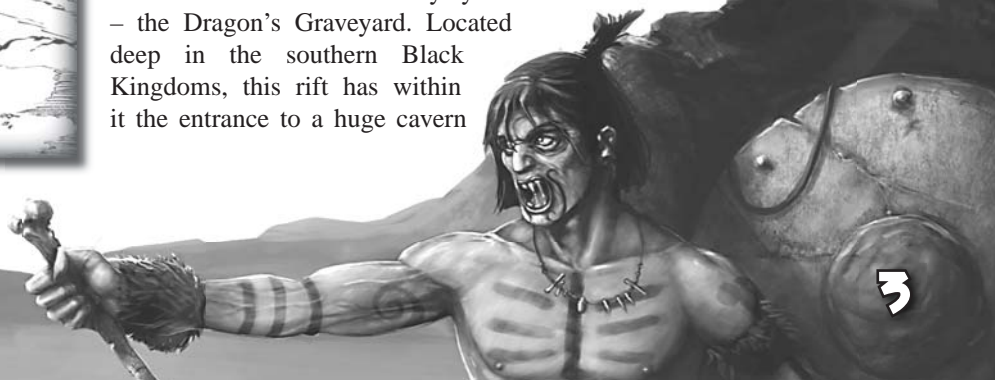
Catacombs of Hyboria is a sourcebook for the creation and exploitation of subterranean terrain and landscapes in *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*. This book allows Games Masters to add new and interesting facets to their own gaming worlds or adventures, revealing new rules for subterranean terrain. What was once a simple recess in a hillside can now be turned into a deep series of caves and mysterious tunnels, if a Games Master wants to add a little something extra to their world. This book is a guide to creating and adventuring in subterranean settings throughout the Hyborian Age, with a collection of several interesting sites designed that Games Masters can add to their own game campaigns to give some more *depth* to the world of *Conan*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Catacombs of Hyboria is written to not only serve as a collection of pre-built subterranean adventure sites; it is also a complete guide and rules system for randomly creating new caves, caverns and similar features. The book includes random tables, found in the first chapter, for Games Masters to use to create new locations underground. It identifies what sorts of hazards and terrain elements exist in subterranean locations and has an assortment of rules associated with these elements. With the first chapter of this book, *Conan* game players and Games Masters can design their own underground sites and have proper rules for all of their various encounter points.

The sourcebook then separates into individual smaller chapters that describe specific underground locations, their unique and interesting backgrounds, features and potential inhabitants. Games Masters can use these locations as a source for side-scenarios and plots or simply as noteworthy locations for their own campaigns.

The first location is known only by one title – the Dragon's Graveyard. Located deep in the southern Black Kingdoms, this rift has within it the entrance to a huge cavern





complex that is home to a distinct and strange lifeform that the locals have only one word for...*draconne*. It would be completely avoided by all sentient life due to their savagery, if it were not for the massive chamber full of clear blue sapphires that many feel are worth risking dozens of slaves to acquire.

Next covered in this book is a mysterious subterranean complex discovered in the sandy wastes of Stygia. Named Ankhenu by the creature in the enigmatic tomb at its heart, this underground structure is a perfectly designed pyramid similar to any other found in the deserts – except it was built upside down and under the sands for the use of an eternally damned thing of darkness!

North of the Ymir Pass in Cimmeria, the next chapter is devoted to a sprawl of natural caves burrowing beneath a range of mountains. The area is collectively known as Cianhogh and is the source of many local legends and rites of passage. Exactly why a barren stretch of rocky caverns and pitfalls receives so much attention from the clans is the real question...

The book then moves on to a large cavernous expanse that exists under the clay layer of Vendhya's caste-worked fields of indigo plants and bowyer-grade ash. Called the Edau Voyha, this spiritually charged location is considered a holy place for one of the more controversial Vendhyan faiths and home to a unique breed of monkey. What else might be found amongst the inky blue stones?

The next chapter pulls the focus away from the monitored and protected locations to a cold and unforgiving stretch of ice and snow called the Snow Devil Hollows. Found under the frozen fields of the Snow Devil Glacier in Asgard, this ice and stone maze of tunnels has claimed the lives of so many... but why?

In the northern tundra, somewhere between Hyperborea and Hyrkania is the city of Scythia; a speck of civilisation in a savage and unforgiving land. Just south of that renowned location is a natural cavern complex that has been used by the like of smugglers, slavers and cultists to hide their activities from prying eyes. No matter the caverns' inhabitants however, it always comes to a total and mysterious end. This chapter reveals exactly why this strange place has claimed so many lives.

The book's next chapter is dedicated to

an interesting underground locale in the thick forests of Khitai. Called Tai Paun Li (Nine Flooded Tunnels), the ground gives way to nine deep mines that were once used to cut amber from the deep sediment around 1,000 year old tree roots. Each of these mines ended their production when they dug just a little too deep and found the rushing waters of the earth; waters that continue to churn wildly through parts of these treasure-rich tunnels.

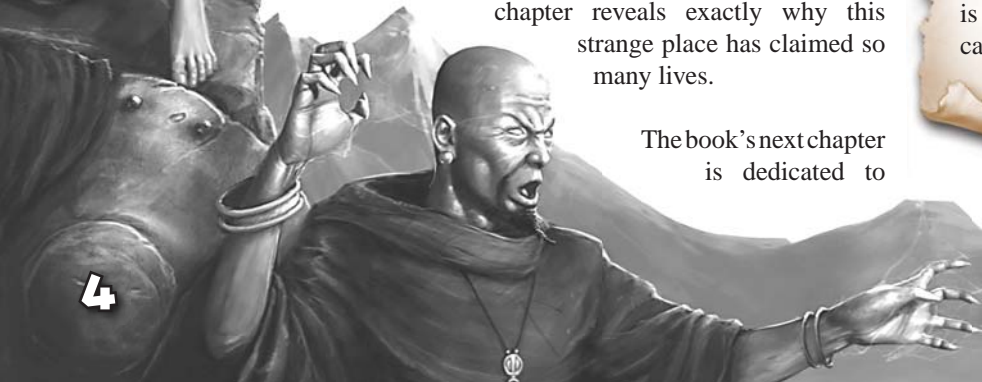
Tucked away in the wilds of dark Zamora there is a gaping cave, protected by sinister creatures bred singularly to keep the unworthy away, that leads down into the dark black heart of the Skarpash mountains. As some ancient texts and local wives' tales claim, this cave leads to the resting place of a long forgotten goddess – the Queen of Nightmares.

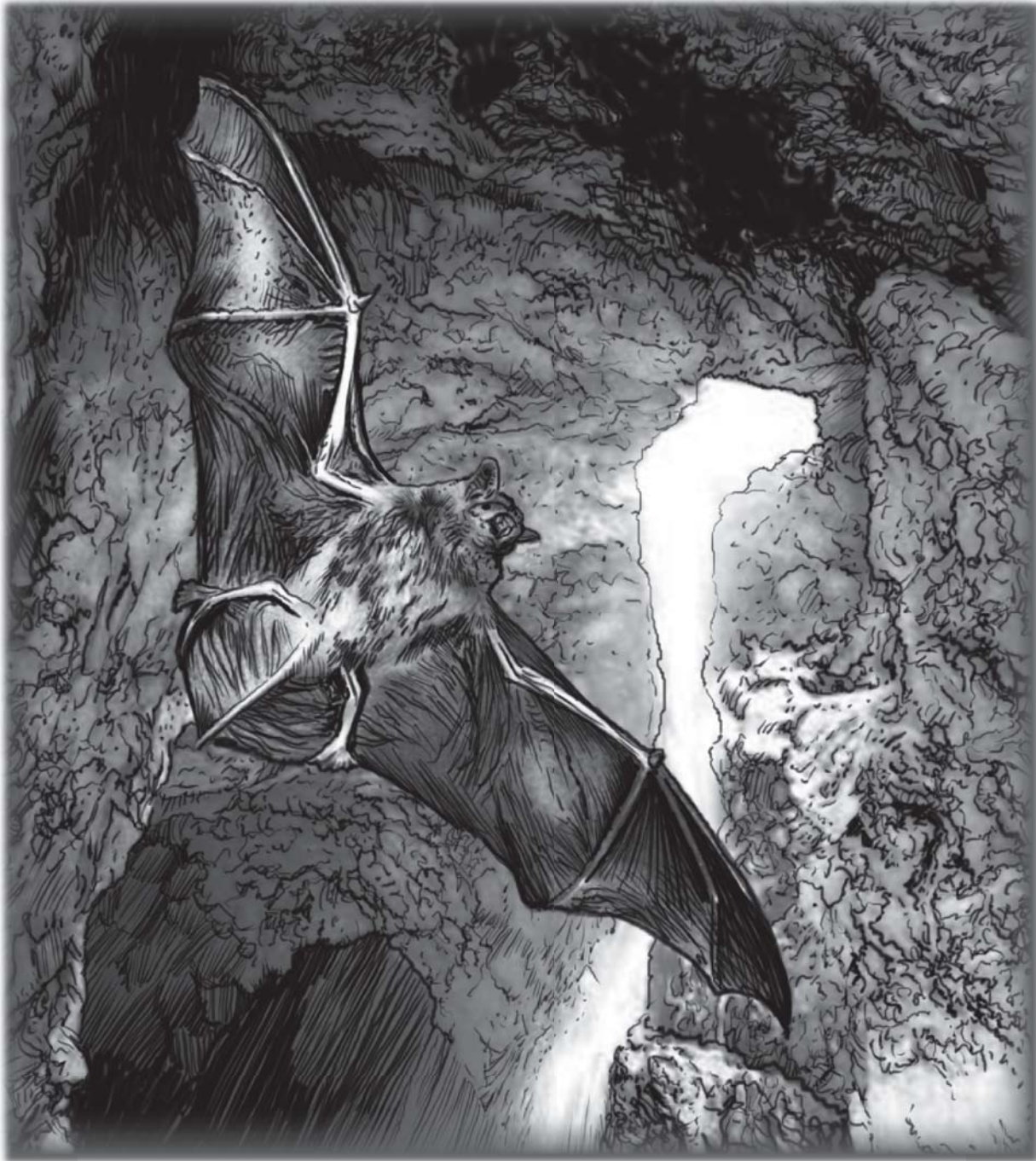
The book ends with a truly massive complex of natural caverns in the grassy plains of Shem; a place collectively called Yhastur den Leona. Known for its connection to the lions of Shem and their holy representative in the Shemite pantheon, these caves are frequently explored by the religious, the adventurous and anyone trying to find – and possibly kill – the mythic 'ivory lion of Shem'.

MAN-MADE TERRAIN BUT NO DUNGEONS?

This book covers several subterranean locations that were originally cut from the earth by sentient tools or hands, making them very similar to the sort of underground structures found in civilised areas but we chose not to add any true dungeons to *Catacombs of Hyboria*. Dungeons are too much like common constructions to be included here; this book is focussed upon older or more specifically subterranean locations and those that exist solely on their own.

This does not mean that an ancient or abandoned dungeon could not be found in the wilderness or would not be able to support some of the rules and terrain elements delivered in this sourcebook. It is simply more likely to find them in true caverns, caves and underground tunnels.







What Lies Beneath

The world of the Hyborian Age is not just mountains, forests and villages to be traversed, explored or pillaged. Beneath the dirt and the rocks there is another world of exotic places that are not so easily overcome by the common adventurer. A traveller with a stout pair of boots can make their way across nearly any overland terrain landscape but it requires skill, care and practice to survive in the underworld of Hyboria. Caves, caverns, tunnels and ancient mines are just some of the locations that Hyborian travellers might discover – all they have to do is look under their own feet to find them.

This chapter is designed to help Games Masters design subterranean landscapes in the world of the Hyborian Age. By following the process as it is described, an entire underground setting can be created to serve a campaign's needs in just a few moments of rolling dice or choices made by the Games Master. These rules can also be used to selectively add natural hazards and obstacles to existing settings if the Games Master wishes to do so; there is nothing like adding a few surprises to a pit-filled ruin!

The following section covers the process of creating a Hyborian Age subterranean locale.

SUBTERRANEAN TERRAIN DESIGN

This section shows how to build the basic outline of a Hyborian Age subterranean terrain site. Games Masters should roll randomly or choose on the tables below to determine the various facts about their developing terrain site.

TYPE OF TERRAIN SITE

The exact type of subterranean landscape that is to be created is the most important part of the creation process. Due to the larger number of smaller terrain sites underground, the die roll is weighted toward certain results, as there are not as

many complex cavern systems as there are simple caves in the world.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the general type of the subterranean terrain being created. If the Games Master decides that the rolled option is not right for his purposes he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether and choose instead.

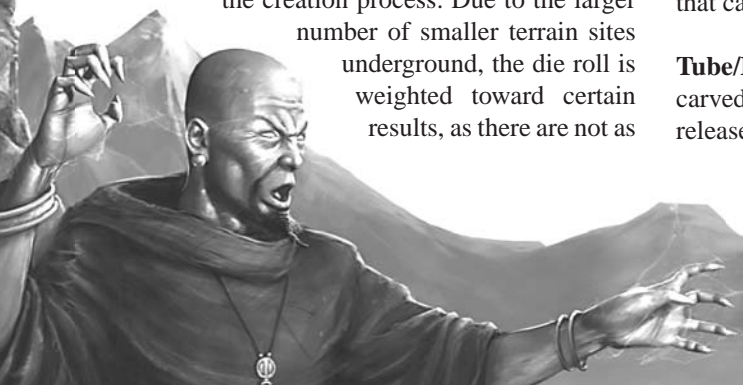
Terrain Type

D20 Result	Terrain Site Type
1 – 5	Hollow
6 – 10	Cave
11 – 13	Tube/Flow
14 – 16	Simple Cavern
17 – 19	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel
20	Cavern System

Hollow: This subterranean terrain type is a very simple site that does not lead very far underground at all. It is more of a cut-out section of earth with a defined edge or overhang that creates the 'entrance' to the hollow. Often wider than they are deep, hollows are frequently formed when something makes a drastic change to the landscape like a landslide, flood or structural collapse. They are the 'youngest' of the natural terrain types that can be formed.

Cave: The most common of the subterranean terrain types, caves are natural underground chambers that have at least one opening to the surface. They minimally extend down to a depth that will create at least some lightless environments, with some reaching hundreds of feet below ground level. They are formed for a variety of reasons but the most common is underground water flow eroding slowly away at the rock and soil to create the main body of the cave. Caves are some of the most diverse of the natural terrain types to be found, with a host of different shapes, depths and mineral make-ups that can occur; depending on where the cave formed.

Tube/Flow: Volcanic or water-based vents that have carved their way up through the crust of the planet to release their contents, creating a generally cylindrical



cave-like structure. Tubes and flows rarely have many natural branches or chambers that are not a part of the initial pressure path, making them directionally very easy to explore. Their volatile origin and often steep incline to unsafe depths can make them much more difficult to traverse.

Simple Cavern: This subterranean terrain type is a larger version of the common cave, except it often extends in several directions to a total depth that is hard to determine without a full exploration. A cavern can be formed when several smaller caves grow and expand until they join together into one expanse but some are simply ancient structures. A cavern will likely have at least two different openings to the surface and multiple inner chambers, some of which can be quite large.

Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel: This group of subterranean terrain structures were not naturally formed but have been abandoned by their creators long enough to become as rough and wild as any natural cave or cavern. Abandoned or collapsed mines or tunnels quickly degenerate into rough caves. Man-made catacomb tunnels will turn into dangerous caverns if they are not monitored and repaired.

Cavern System: Rare amongst subterranean locations, cavern systems are enormous connected chains of caverns that form into a single series of chambers and tunnels. Expanding for miles in area and often depth,

cavern systems are large enough to be explored for years by expert spelunkers and not be completely mapped or seen. They are tremendously spacious and can house underground cliffs, land formations and even communal living centres. Entire populations of rare beasts can live out their existence within a single cavern system – and never see the light of day. They are the largest and oldest of subterranean terrain sites.

SIZE - AREA AND DEPTH

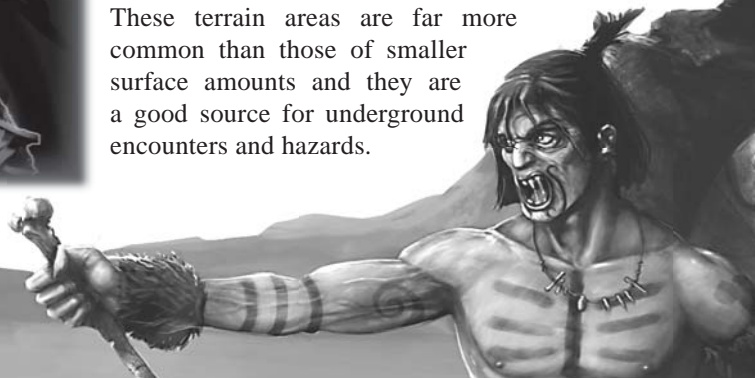
How large a subterranean site is, is a combination of the actual area covered by its traversable surfaces and how far it extends beneath the ground level. These two classifications, area and depth, are what determines how much of the underground site is available to be explored. Measured in square feet and feet below surface, every subterranean location can be described by these two factors.

Roll a d20 for each of the tables below to determine the area and depth of the location being created. The tables give a generic term for the measurement amount and the actual number of square feet or feet below surface of the location. These two measurements can then be used in conjunction with later information to accurately draw the floor plan of the site. Obviously, if the Games Master decides that the rolled size measurements are too small or expansive for his purposes he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.

Uncommonly Small: This level of area is the smallest variety of subterranean terrain, barely even considered an example of its listed type. Many explorers, especially dedicated spelunkers, might not even classify these as their defined version.

Small: Subterranean spaces of this area category are cramped and tight compared to their larger counterparts, with far less area that can be explored. This is often due to lowered ceilings or unstable surface areas but can also be a result of sheer or uneven surfaces as well.

Below Average: Falling below the normal area for its terrain type, this category begins to turn the subterranean sites into functioning places to be explored and potentially mapped for further visits. These terrain areas are far more common than those of smaller surface amounts and they are a good source for underground encounters and hazards.





Subterranean Area Levels

D20 Result	Area Level	Square Feet of Traversable Surface Area by Terrain Type					
		Hollow	Cave	Tube/Flow	Simple Cavern	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel	Cavern System
1 – 3	Uncommonly Small	1d4 x 100	1d6 x 200	2d6 x 300	2d6 x 2,000	3d6 x 1,000	2d6 x 50,000
4 – 6	Small	1d6 x 100	2d4 x 200	3d6 x 300	3d6 x 2,000	4d6 x 2,000	5d6 x 50,000
7 – 10	Below Average	2d3 x 100	2d6 x 200	3d6 x 400	3d6 x 3,000	5d6 x 3,000	2d6 x 100,000
11 – 17	Average	2d4 x 100	3d6 x 200	4d6 x 400	3d6 x 5,000	6d6 x 4,000	5d6 x 100,000
18 – 19	Large	2d4 x 125	5d6 x 200	5d6 x 400	3d6 x 7,500	7d6 x 5,000	2d6 x 200,000
20	Very Large	2d6 x 100	5d6 x 300	5d6 x 500	3d6 x 10,000	8d6 x 6,000	5d6 x 200,000

Average: This is the most common version of each terrain type, making up for nearly half of the examples that can be found throughout the Hyborian continents. They have a good amount of traversable surface area and are what most people think of when they are told about a cave, mine and so on.

Large: Bigger than most versions of terrain of their type, these areas are greatly swollen compared to the average versions. Expanded areas allow greater mobility and exploration, normally in conjunction with additional tunnels or chambers that sprout off from the main body – often unexpectedly so. Going into a ‘large’ classed area without proper equipment can be a very dangerous activity.

Very Large: Extremely rare and ancient, any subterranean locations that have an area of this size are likely to be well-known across the land. Their size and scope makes each terrain location of this size a landmark or legend to the area surrounding it. They are few and far between but entire campaigns might be able to take place within its walls and halls.

Subterranean Depth Levels

D20 Result	Feet Below Surface of Areas by Terrain Type					
	Hollow	Cave	Tube/Flow	Simple Cavern	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel	Cavern System
1 – 3	2d4 x 5	1d6 x 5	2d6 x 100	1d6 x 50	1d4 x 50	2d6 x 50
4 – 6	4d4 x 5	3d6 x 5	3d6 x 100	2d6 x 50	1d6 x 50	3d6 x 50
7 – 15	5d6 x 5	2d6 x 10	3d6 x 200	2d6 x 100	2d6 x 50	2d6 x 150
16 – 18	–	3d6 x 50	4d6 x 200	5d6 x 100	3d6 x 50	5d6 x 150
19 – 20	–	3d6 x 100	5d6 x 250	5d6 x 200	4d6 x 100	4d6 x 300



SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

Every subterranean location will have its own distinct layout and pattern of how its empty space is distributed. The surface area of each terrain location will divide up its traversable area into various types of sections. The general classification and area category of the location determines what percentage of its area is dedicated to each given type, as listed on the table below. As always, a Games Master can choose to alter or adjust these amounts however they feel; the final result must be applicable to where the subterranean site will fit into *their* story or campaign.

	Hollow	Cave	Tube/Flow	Simple Cavern	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel	Cavern System
Uncommonly Small	10% Tunnel, 90% Chamber ¹	5% Tunnel, 95% Chamber	90% Tunnel, 10% Chamber	20% Tunnel, 80% Chamber	95% Tunnel, 5% Chamber	25% Tunnel, 75% Chamber
Small	10% Tunnel, 90% Chamber ¹	10% Tunnel, 90% Chamber	80% Tunnel, 20% Chamber	20% Tunnel, 80% Chamber	90% Tunnel, 10% Chamber	30% Tunnel, 70% Chamber
Below Average	10% Tunnel, 90% Chamber ¹	15% Tunnel, 85% Chamber	80% Tunnel, 20% Chamber	25% Tunnel, 75% Chamber	85% Tunnel, 15% Chamber	15% Tunnel, 80% Chamber, 5% Chasm
Average	10% Tunnel, 90% Chamber ¹	20% Tunnel, 80% Chamber	75% Tunnel, 25% Chamber	30% Tunnel, 70% Chamber	80% Tunnel, 20% Chamber	25% Tunnel, 70% Chamber, 5% Chasm
Large	15% Tunnel, 85% Chamber ¹	20% Tunnel, 80% Chamber	75% Tunnel, 25% Chamber	20% Tunnel, 75% Chamber, 5% Chasm	80% Tunnel, 20% Chamber	20% Tunnel, 70% Chamber, 10% Chasm
Very Large	20% Tunnel, 80% Chamber ¹	25% Tunnel, 75% Chamber	70% Tunnel, 30% Chamber	20% Tunnel, 70% Chamber, 10% Chasm	80% Tunnel, 20% Chamber	15% Tunnel, 70% Chamber, 15% Chasm

¹ When drawing the area of a *Hollow*, it may only ever have a single Chamber

Tunnel: This distribution of space includes any form of throughway; either between the surface and the site, between the various chambers or perhaps leading to a dead-end. Hallways, mines, tunnels and passageways fall into this category. A ‘tunnel’ cannot have a ceiling height of more than half-again its width when being drawn upon a map (a 10 foot wide tunnel will not have a ceiling height of more than 15 feet and so on).

Chamber: The most common distribution of space is the ‘chamber’. This includes any form of room, open area or otherwise expanse that is at least half as wide as it is long. A ‘chamber’ can have a ceiling height of up to one-half the maximum Depth of the entire subterranean location. Oftentimes this is much smaller but

some extremely large caves and caverns have accordingly large chambers within them.

Chasm: This is a classification of spatial distribution that is essentially a chamber that has no true flooring. Although it could be explored through specific means, it is often mapped as empty space on the ground that would be dangerous to traverse haphazardly. A ‘chasm’ area follows the same ceiling rules as chambers do but can extend downward as far as the Games Master wishes. This is commonly up to twice its ceiling height. This drop does not calculate into the locations depth, as it is considered ‘non-navigable’.



NUMBER AND TYPE OF SUBTERRANEAN TERRAIN ELEMENTS

The exploration and traversing of a subterranean site can be dangerous enough for the unskilled or unprepared but much of this is due to a variety of unique, underground-only terrain elements. These elements are what make each site individual and give the Games Master a collection of building blocks to create and diversify his subterranean encounters.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the number of subterranean terrain elements that exist in the underground site being designed. If the Games Master decides that the rolled number does not give enough or adds too many terrain elements for their purposes they can re-roll or ignore the roll altogether. These rules are here to help randomise the creation process, not permanently define it.

Once the number of terrain elements has been calculated, it must be determined which *types* of elements exist within the site. For each terrain element the Games Master wishes to add to his subterranean site, he rolls a d20 on the appropriate column in the table below, recording the results.

The depth classification of the site will add or subtract from this die roll, allowing for some of the stranger and more unique terrain elements to become available to be added. Those modifiers are listed below.

- ⊗ Less than 50 feet deep (-2)
- ⊗ Less than 100 feet deep (-1)
- ⊗ More than 500 feet deep (+1)
- ⊗ More than 1,000 feet deep (+2)
- ⊗ More than 5,000 feet deep (+3)

Types of Terrain Elements

Terrain Element Type	Terrain Elements by City Classification					
	Hollow	Cave	Tube/Flow	Simple Cavern	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel	Cavern System
Structural	1 or less	3 or less	0 or less	2 or less	1 or less	2 or less
Surfacing	2 – 9	4 – 9	1 – 9	3 – 8	2 – 3	3 – 7
Ceiling	10 – 17	10 – 14	10 – 16	9 – 13	4 – 6	8 – 12
Man-Made	18	15	–	14 – 15	7 – 15	13 – 14
Flora	19	16 – 18	17	16 – 18	16 – 17	15 – 17
Fauna	20 or higher	19 – 20	18	19 – 20	18 – 20	18 – 20
Vast Depth	–	21 or higher	19 or higher	21 or higher	21 or higher	21 or higher
Unique¹	–	2%	1%	2%	3%	4%

¹ There is no ratio for Unique terrain elements but rather a percentage chance that one is present in a subterranean site (eliminating one terrain element die roll).

Number of Terrain Elements

Number of Terrain Elements ¹	Classification of Subterranean Location					
	Hollow	Cave	Tube/Flow	Simple Cavern	Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel	Cavern System
	1d3	1d4+1	1d6+1	1d8+2	1d6+2	3d10

¹ These numbers are adjusted by the Area classification of the site: Divide by 3 (round up) for *Uncommonly Small*, divide by 2 (round up) for *Small*, multiply by x2 by *Large* and x3 for *Very Large*.



TERRAIN ELEMENT DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

This section explains all of the various terrain elements that can be found in subterranean sites and how they function in gaming mechanics (if necessary). Games Masters should roll randomly or choose on the presented tables below to determine the individual terrain element types.

This section is divided up into several subsections, each one designed to explain several different varieties of terrain elements that fall into a greater category. Each subsection gives details on specific terrain elements, with each element being noted as to the *minimum* depth of the subterranean site required to support that type of element (if any). There is no maximum depth limitation, as a terrain element can appear at great depths once it has begun to appear at all. Volcanic pools do not appear at 50 feet below the surface but fragile mineral pillars can appear even in the deepest of abyssal caverns. Should this minimum not be met the result should be re-rolled.

STRUCTURAL

The parts of a subterranean site that hold its ceiling up and prevent its walls from collapsing in, the structural soundness of the site is a priority. While walls and ceiling supports are definitely part of the structural integrity of the location, they are not included here. The terrain elements that are included in this subsection are considered *additional* to the essentials, altering the basic structure of the site rather than supporting it fully.

There are countless reasons why the structural terrain elements of a site are important to a scenario that includes them but here are a few examples.

- ✦ Some Player Characters might venture into a location in search of certain mineral or gemstone deposits.
- ✦ Player Character thieves could make good use of hidden alcoves.
- ✦ Knowing that strong pillars exist in a site can give a group of Player Characters a good location to get cover from ranged assailants.

The following are examples of different structural terrain elements that could appear within a subterranean location.

Air Pockets

Minimum Depth: 35 feet

The walls of the location have several pockets formed in them that contain stale but breathable air. Although these pockets make it far more possible to live longer in a cave-in (adding +2 to Survival skill checks and Fortitude saves against suffocation), it makes the walls potentially more susceptible to collapse. Any percentage chance that a location will suffer a collapse is considered 15% higher if Air Pockets are present.

Cut/Set Stone

Minimum Depth: None

Whether originally created or altered by the hands of a sentient species, the location has shaped stonework making up portions of its load-bearing walls. This means that the subterranean location is either not natural in its origins or that it has been frequented by sentient beings over the years. This added structure element reduces any percentage chance that the location will suffer a collapse by 10%.

Mineral Deposits

Minimum Depth: 25 feet

This subterranean location has thick mineral deposits that make up the consistency of much of the site's structure. These deposits can be mined through the proper Craft skill check, earning the appropriate profits. The general type of substance that makes up the deposits can either be decided by the Games Master or rolled on the following table.

D6 Result	Mineral Type	Worth per Man Day of Mining
1	Course Base	1d3 x 5sp
2	Clays and Workable Materiel	1d6 x 5sp
3	Salts	1d6 x 10sp
4	Reactant Elements	2d4 x 10sp
5	Hazardous Elements	2d6 x 10sp
6	Rare Ores	2d4 x 20sp





Softer Stone

Minimum Depth: None

The subterranean site has areas of well-packed but easily dug structure consisting of 'softer' substances like clay or pumice. These areas have half the normal hardness and Hit Points if attacked (purposefully or accidentally) and increase burrowing movement or mining efforts through them by +50%.

Thick Pillars

Minimum Depth: 50 feet

This terrain element represents several supporting columns of stone, minerals or sediments that extend from the ceiling to the floor. These pillars were either formed through wind/water erosion or through stalagmite/stalactite connective growth. There are 1d6 pillars for every 250 square feet of surface area, each one taking up a single five foot square.

Unstable

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element is a hazard for spelunkers and explorers, hanging the threat of collapse all around those who venture within the location. Veins of gases, sand or just shifting stone make the walls and load-bearing areas of the site prone to fracture and release. Anytime the walls or ceiling of the location suffers some kind of damage (at least 1 Hit Point penetrates Hardness), there is a 5% per point inflicted chance that a 1d6 x 5 foot radius of wall/ceiling will collapse inward. Anything unlucky enough to get caught in that area when it does so must pass a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

Surfacing

The walls and flooring of any subterranean location are the constant encounter for any group exploring it, remaining in contact for the duration of the characters' involvement with the site. While they might take for granted the type of surface that they walk or rest upon when above ground, they will find that something as simple as underground gravel or pitted stone can be a major hazard. The types of terrain elements that appear as part of a locations surfacing can be some of the most important an explorer can happen upon.

There are many reasons why the surfacing elements of a subterranean location are vital to the scenario that interacts with it but here are a few examples how they can affect the Player Character group doing so.

- ⊗ Dangerous footing can make slopes and tunnels into dangerous encounters in and of themselves.
- ⊗ Going from graded footing to slick flowstone in the dark can result in group members getting lost, separated or injured.
- ⊗ The Player Characters know the extent of the stalagmites in an area of the location, luring enemies there to be tripped, thrown and impaled.
- ⊗ Good swimmers will want to know areas of a subterranean location they could perhaps navigate quicker or more proficiently in a site with waterway accesses.

The following are examples of different surfacing elements a location might contain.

Gorge/Cliff

Minimum Depth: 100 feet

This terrain element represents a major drop off point on the flooring of the location. This drop off is located at the centre of a large chamber or tunnel, spans 3d6 x 5 feet in width (or half the location's area; whichever is less) and is 2d6 x 10 feet deep.

Jagged Rock Face

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element means that 1d10 x 10% of the location's wall surfaces are covered with sharp, jagged stone protrusions that can inflict injury against those who move quickly near them – or run into them unexpectedly.



RANDOM TERRAIN ELEMENT SELECTION

Games Masters may wish to simply choose the structural terrain elements for their sites but we have devised this table to help those who want to keep the process completely random. When rolling to determine the nature of a specific structural element within the subterranean area, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

Random Structural Element

2d6 Result	Structural Element
2 – 3	Unstable
4 – 5	Air Pockets
6 – 8	Thick Pillars
9 – 10	Cut/Set Stone
11	Softer Stone
12	Mineral Deposits

Any character moving at more than half their normal speed while adjacent to a wall noted as having a jagged rock face will need to pass a DC 12 Reflex save or suffer damage equal to 1d6 +1 per five feet moved that round. Alternatively, any character that runs (or is Bull Rushed, Tripped or Grappled into) directly into the jagged rock face suffers damage equal to 1d6 + 1d4 per five feet moved that round.

Loose Gravel

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element shows that 1d10 x 10% of the subterranean location’s traversable flooring is covered in a few inches of loose gravel chips and small stones. This makes the area difficult to move quickly upon as it causes travellers to lose their footing, balance and traction. Any movement within the gravel area suffers a -5 penalty to speed and a -1 penalty to Reflex saves and Dodge Defence.

Pitted Stone

Minimum Depth: 25 feet

Some of the walls and floor of the location contain shallow pits and handholds that can be very useful when requiring additional support for movement. 1d10 x 5% of the surface area of the location contains these hollow points, half of which should be flooring as well as walls. Slow and purposeful movement (half normal speed)

across these areas adds +2 to any Balance or Climb skill checks required. The pitted areas can be treacherous if moved across too quickly however, imposing a -2 penalty to Reflex saves and Dodge Defence after moving through the area.

Smooth/Slick

Minimum Depth: 100 feet

This terrain element means that the walls or flooring of the subterranean location have been worn, melted or grated smooth. Such surfaces are not dangerous in and of themselves but are extremely difficult to get traction or handholds upon. 1d10 x 10% of the location’s total traversable surface area will be considered ‘smooth’, imposing a -5 penalty to speed, a -2 penalty to Reflex saves and Dodge Defence on *smooth* flooring and a -5 penalty to any Climb skill checks on *smooth* walls.

Stalagmite Field

Minimum Depth: 25 feet

Slow droplets of mineral-laden fluids have created a large field of conical stalagmites that might impede movement, grant cover or even pose a threat to anyone falling down in their area. The field will cover an area equal to 2d6 x 50 square feet that can span several chambers and tunnels but will have a constant presence of these mineral formations. The following table is used to calculate the average stalagmite height, their effect on movement through the field and the additional damage inflicted to characters that fall in the area (DC 15 Reflex for no damage) from a height of 10 feet or more.

D6 Result	Stalagmite Average Height	Movement Penalty	Fall-Upon Damage
1	2d6 inches	-5 feet	1 point, AP 0
2	2d8 x 2 inches	-5 feet	1d3 points, AP 1
3	1d3 feet	-10 feet	1d4 points, AP 2
4	2d3 feet	-10 feet	1d6 points, AP 3
5	1d6+4 feet	-10 feet	1d8 points, AP 4
6	2d6 +2 feet	-10 feet	2d6 points, AP 5





Tombscape

Minimum Depth: 30 feet

Any subterranean location that has this surfacing has walls that visually show the remains of dead beings, animals or creatures. Most often the bones of long-dead and buried humans tossed in a grave, these macabre images line 2d4 x 5 feet worth of walls which can span several chambers and tunnels (but should be connected). Any Will saves taken by sentient beings that have a Corruption of less than 3 are taken at a -2 penalty while within line of sight of the *tombscape*.



Waterway Access

Minimum Depth: 25 feet

This subterranean location has some of its flooring dedicated to an open surface of water. Where the water comes from varies but it originates from somewhere underground. The following table randomises where the waterway comes from, its depth and its adjustment to any Swim checks made within it.

D6 Result	Water Source	Water Depth	Swim Check Adjustment
1	Spring	2d6 feet	-1
2	Under ground River	1d6 x 3 feet	-2d3
3	Man-Made Well	2d6 x 5 feet	+1
4	Under ground Lake	1d6 x 10 feet	-
5	Waterfall	1d4 x 3 feet	-2
6	Runoff Flow	1d2 x 5 feet	-

CEILING

Whenever travelling into a subterranean locale, explorers are taught to always make note of what lies above them. Any falling stone or stalactite can seriously injure or even kill a man but falling objects are not only the elements that make a subterranean ceiling something noteworthy. What a ceiling area consists of is a rather important piece of information to have when venturing down into the depths of the site.

Player Characters may want to know the traits of a location's ceiling as they explore but they should also keep notes for future traversing into the area. Here are a few examples how a Player Character group might choose to use this information to their advantage.

- ✦ The Player Characters have pre-set several traps that will bring deadly stalactites down upon their enemies if they can get them to chase them into a particular chamber or tunnel.
- ✦ Areas that have natural sunshafts make for excellent hideouts and secret lairs for Player Characters with something to hide from outsiders.
- ✦ A tunnel or chamber with a low ceiling can be the perfect obstacle for more agile or flexible Player Characters.
- ✦ Any chamber with natural reinforcement is a safe place from most cave-ins, something that any explorer will want to keep in mind if things get hectic or shaky in the depths.





D6 Result	Stalactite Average Length	Chance of Dropped Stalactite per 5 feet of movement/round	Impaling Damage
1	3d6 inches	2%	1d6 point, AP 2
2	3d8 x 2 inches	4%	1d8 points, AP 4
3	1d6 feet	5%	1d10 points, AP 6
4	2d4 feet	10%	2d6 points, AP 8
5	1d8+4 feet	15%	2d8 points, AP 10
6	2d6 +4 feet	20%	2d10 points, AP 12

The following are examples of different ceiling terrain elements a subterranean location might support.

Falling Stones

Minimum Depth: 30 feet

This terrain feature means that the subterranean location has a ceiling that threatens certain areas with the risk of falling stones, perhaps from high altitudes. An area of ceiling over 3d6 x 5 square feet is potentially dangerous because of these stones, which have a 25% chance of dropping any time that there is a loud noise or impact against a wall within 30 feet of its edge. These falling stones can be dodged with a successful Reflex save DC 15. Failing the save means that the character is struck by a stone and suffers damage based on how tall the ceiling is. For every 10 feet the stone falls it inflicts 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage, maximum 10d6.

Low Ceiling

Minimum Depth: 20 feet

This terrain feature is a simple adjustment to the process of deciding the ceiling height of a given chamber or tunnel in a subterranean location, making it much lower than normal. One chosen tunnel or chamber area within the location should calculate its ceiling at a mere 2d4 feet high instead of the normal height. This will make travelling through the area slow and difficult for most explorers.

Natural Reinforcement

Minimum Depth: 75 feet

Subterranean locations that exist beneath a layer of sedentary stone can sometimes benefit from the thick and strong arches of the material that naturally form. These reinforced chambers tend to have high ceilings that have withstood the test of time. Any subterranean chamber with this terrain element reduces any chance for cave-in or collapse by -50%.

Optical Illusion of Height

Minimum Depth: 30 feet

Something about the ceiling's visual image gives the impression that it is much higher and more spacious than it really is, potentially fouling up plans to make use of such space. Such is the nature of this terrain element that it requires a DC 18 Spot or Search skill check to figure out that the ceiling is deceptively low – DC 22 to know exactly how low that might be.

Stalactite Overhang

Minimum Depth: 25 feet

Areas of the ceiling in this location have seen the growth of conical stalactites that could fracture and fall, impaling anyone unfortunate enough to stand beneath. The overhang will cover an area equal to 2d6 x 10 square feet that can span several chambers and tunnels. The above table is used to calculate the average stalactite length, their chance of falling when someone moves under the overhang and the damage inflicted to characters that fail to get out of the way (DC 15 Reflex for no damage).

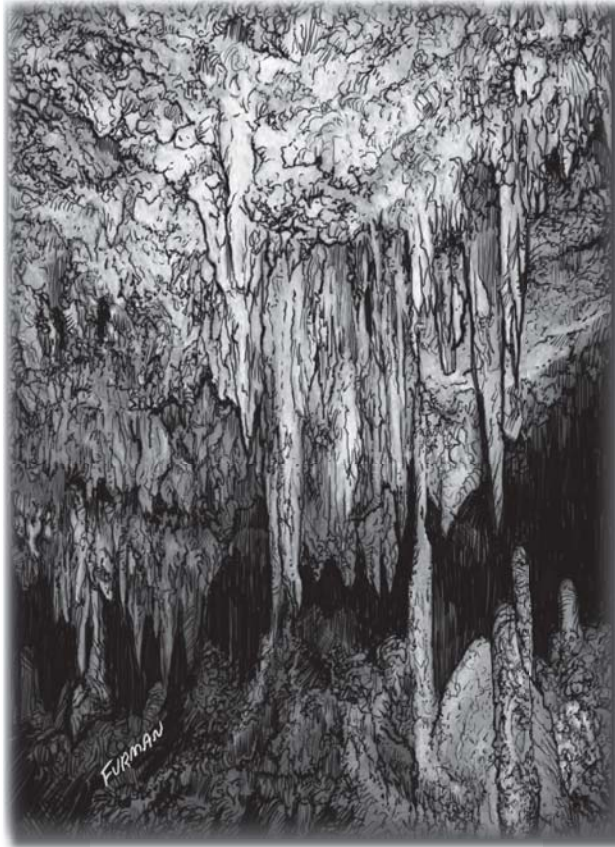
RANDOM TERRAIN ELEMENT SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to add surfacing elements to their subterranean locations but this table is designed to help those who want to randomise the process. When rolling to determine the types of surfacing elements that a location contains, roll 3d6 and consult the table below.

Random Surfacing Element

3d6 Result	Surfacing Element
3	Jagged Rock Face
4 – 5	Gorge/Cliff
6 – 7	Waterway Access
8 – 9	Loose Gravel
11 – 14	Stalagmite Field
15 – 16	Pitted Stone
17	Smooth/Slick
18	Tombscape





RANDOM TERRAIN ELEMENT SELECTION

Games Masters may wish to select the ceiling terrain elements for their random sites but this table was designed to give those who want to keep the process random the chance to do so. When rolling to determine the nature of a specific ceiling terrain element within the subterranean area, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

Random Ceiling Element

2d6 Result	Ceiling Element
2 – 3	Falling Stones
4 – 5	Low Ceiling
6 – 8	Stalactite Overhang
9 – 10	Optical Illusion of Height
11	Sunshafts
12	Natural Reinforcement

Sunshafts

Minimum Depth: 10 feet

This terrain element represents pipes of open air that lead all the way to the surface, letting in glowing shafts of sunlight to illuminate the tunnel or chamber. Each application of this element adds 1d6 of these shafts to a single area, at least 10 feet from one another. So long as it is daylight outside the shafts will cast suitable illumination to a 10 foot radius around each sunshaft, potentially leaving areas of shadow and darkness amidst the shining columns of light.

MAN-MADE

Wherever sentient creatures go they tend to leave their mark; many underground locations solely exist because of their shovels, picks and ingenuity.

Places like mines, catacombs and so on, fall into this category; but they are not alone in bearing the permanent touch of mankind's attentions.

The terrain elements of this subsection are all additions or alterations imposed upon the site by mankind (or other sentient sources).

Places where people have made adjustments or changes are likely to be important to explorers and travellers for a multitude of reasons; after all, it was important enough for someone to spend their time and energy leaving their mark in the first place. There are many different plot-based reasons why man-made terrain elements of a location are important to a scenario but here are a few other examples how a Player Character group might take advantage of man-made terrain elements.

- ❖ The Player Characters know where an old burial chamber lies, protected by local superstitions about its dead inhabitants; and uses it to hide their ill-gotten loot.
- ❖ While being chased by hostile forces, the Player Characters can use a subterranean living space as their hideout, especially if it has a heavy door that can be barred.
- ❖ Making note where all of the un-sprung traps lay, the Player Characters can lead or herd their enemies through a location into the deadly hazards.
- ❖ A dangerous artefact is locked away in an underground reliquary, right where the Player Characters chose to entomb it. Now they must protect its location or risk an enemy discovering it.

The following are examples of different man-made terrain elements a location might contain.



Burial Chamber

Minimum Depth: 20 feet

This terrain element represents a section of underground structure that has been specifically built to house the remains of the dead. Whether it is part of a larger catacomb structure, tomb complex or just a simple alcove where something stashed their kills, the burial chamber contains the remains of the dead. Choose or roll randomly on the following table to determine the state of the remains within, the chance that treasures were left with the bodies and what those treasures would be worth.

D6 Result	Classification of Remains	Chance for Treasure	Collective Treasure Worth
1	Fresh	50%	1d4 x 10 sp
2	Recent	25%	1d6 x 50 sp
3	Decrepit	20%	2d6 x 100 sp
4	Venerable	10%	2d6 x 200 sp
5	Bones	5%	2d6 x 500 sp
6	Ashes	1%	2d6 x 1,000 sp

Doors/Gates

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element shows that some or all of the transitions between tunnels and chambers in this location have had artificial separation devices installed. Each time this element is rolled, 1d6 archways have a door, gate or shutter that can be closed and barred against being opened.

Light Source

Minimum Depth: 10 feet

This terrain element adds several added torch or lantern sconces to the walls of the subterranean location, allowing explorers to light them and illuminate the places they will go. Each example of this terrain element adds 2d6 individual light sources to the location spaced at least 30 feet apart from one another. These light sources are bolted or somehow held to the walls with pitons and Games Masters may wish to roll a 50% chance to see if each one is currently fuelled and usable; otherwise the characters will have to 'fix' it before use.

Living Space

Minimum Depth: None

A section of this subterranean location has been renovated to be suitable for a small family

or travelling group to live somewhat comfortably, albeit without fresh air. The area is 2d6 x 20 square feet in size, contains one to three sleeping mats or simple beds and likely at least one small shelf or cabinet for community storage.

Portcullis/Grate

Minimum Depth: 20 feet

This terrain element adds a metal closure device at the end of a single subterranean tunnel, latching and locking into the stone walls of the location. Some of these devices swing open; others slide into grooves cut in the wall. Regardless how they open, it takes either a Strength check DC 25 or an Open Locks skill check DC 30 to do so once they have been latched.

Previous Exploration Materials

Minimum Depth: None

Earlier explorers of the location left behind some of their equipment and resources when they were killed, run off or abandoned their exploration. The equipment could possibly be merely useful to new explorers or perhaps exactly what the characters need to survive the dangers of the location. Roll on each of the columns below to determine what the materials are, how much is found and what condition it is in.

D6 Result	Materials Found	Amount Found	Item(s) Condition
1	25 feet of rope w/ pitons	1	Brand new/ Undamaged
2	Box of rations	1d3	Heavily used
3	Flask of lamp oil	1d6	Slightly damaged
4	Miner's pickaxe	2d4	Heavily damaged
5	Shovel	2d6	Broken but repairable
6	Bedroll	2d8	Rotten/ Destroyed

Reliquary

Minimum Depth: 50 feet

This terrain element adds a special chamber to the subterranean location; one with a heavy door that can be barred and a possible collection of treasures within. The room is 2d6 x 5 feet by 2d6 x 5 feet in shape, added to the largest/deepest chamber or tunnel in the location. Depending on the state of its construction and how long it has existed, there is a chance that it still





contains valuable artefacts. The following table is used to determine randomly this quality.

D6 Result	Classification of Reliquary	DC to Open Locks on Door	Chance for Artefacts	Collective Artefact Worth
1	New	30	75%	1d4 x 100 sp
2	Recently Visited	26	50%	1d6 x 500 sp
3	Recently Abandoned	22	25%	2d6 x 1,000 sp
4	Old and Vacant	18	10%	2d6 x 2,000 sp
5	Long Forgotten	14	5%	2d6 x 5,000 sp
6	Ancient	10	1%	2d6 x 10,000 sp

Traps

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element adds a number of dangerous traps to the location, making the whole area somewhat treacherous to traverse unwarily. Each time this terrain element is rolled 1d3 traps are created using the table below, adding them to random locations within the location. To generate a trap, roll 1d6 on each column and put all of the results together as a single randomised trap.

D6 Result	Trap Type	DC to Spot	DC to Disable Device	Damage Potential
1	Spring-Blade	10	12	2d6
2	False Floor	15	14	2d8
3	Falling Weights	20	16	2d10
4	Thrusting Spike	25	18	4d6
5	Spinning Hook	30	20	4d8
6	Launched Arrows/Darts	35	22	4d10



FLORA

What kinds of fungus, moss and plantlife exist inside of a subterranean location can be all-important to cave spelunkers and unexpected explorers – literally the key to life or death. A breed of moss could bring food to the starving, a special flower might cover the presence of dangerous gases or even a poisonous mushroom could claim an unwary imbiber. What sorts of flora exist, if any, within a subterranean location is integral to a complete underground site.

There is very little about the plantlife within a location that does not affect the Player Characters but here are a few examples of how the characters might choose to become involved with a flora terrain element.

- ✿ A special flowering lichen grows in a deep cavern that is said to cure any poison when eaten, even the dire substance coursing through one of the Player Characters at the moment.



**RANDOM TERRAIN
ELEMENT SELECTION**

Games Masters may want to simply choose to add man-made terrain elements to their subterranean sites but this table is included to aid those who want to randomise the creation process. When rolling to determine the types of man-made elements that a location contains, roll 3d6 and consult the table below.

Random Man-Made Element

3d6 Result	Man-Made Element
3	Traps
4 – 5	Portcullis/Grate
6 – 7	Doors/Gates
8 – 9	Light Source
11 – 14	Previous Exploration Materials
15 – 16	Burial Chamber
17	Living Space
18	Reliquary

- ✿ The Player Characters know where in the cave grows an edible and invigorating plant that fetches a high price in faraway markets and plan to make a fortune on it.
- ✿ Using a dangerous fungus as a poison on their blades, the Player Characters add a much higher lethality to their weaponry after discovering where it can be harvested.



The following are examples of different flora terrain elements that might be found in a subterranean location.

Dangerous Growth

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element represents a living plantlife or fungus species (or colony of species) that thrive in the dark corners of the subterranean location. It is an organism that actively seeks to do damage of some kind to anything that gets within a few feet of its location. The type of plantlife, the area it covers in the location and the damage it inflicts on those who walk through those areas can be determined by rolling once on each column in the table below. Alternatively, the Games Master can look through the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age* to find a suitably dangerous plant or fungus and add it to the location instead.

D6 Result	Type of Flora	Total Area of Coverage	Damage Inflicted on Passersby
1	Slime Mould	1d3 x 5 feet	1d4
2	Spore Mould	1d6 x 5 feet	1d6
3	Lichen	1d3 x 10 feet	1d8
4	Moss	1d6 x 10 feet	2d6
5	Ferns	2d3 x 15 feet	2d8
6	Vines	2d6 x 15 feet	2d10

Common Growth

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element covers a large area of the subterranean location with some kind of normal, natural plant or fungus. It might be thin or thick, unobtrusive or brilliantly coloured; it is simply a sensory addition to 1d10 x 10% of the location's floors and walls. A DC 15 Craft (Herbalism) or Survival skill check can allow a character to draw enough nutrients from a five foot square of the plants to survive for one day.

Flowering Growth

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element adds a sizeable section of flowering plantlife to the subterranean site. The Games Master decides the colour, odour and (if necessary) taste of the plants; but it always grows in a total area 2d6 x 10 feet square, sometimes spread out over





several chambers or tunnels. A DC 15 Craft (Herbalism) or Survival skill check can allow a character to draw enough nutrients from a five foot square of the flowers to survive for one day, a DC 20 Craft (Alchemy) skill check can turn a 10 foot square into a potent floral perfume oil.

Poisonous Growth

Minimum Depth: None

This terrain element adds a living plantlife or fungus species to the subterranean location that can be harvested to create a powerful natural poison. This species of flora secretes, injects or projects its vile toxins at or into anything unprotected that comes into contact with it. Leather gloves or riding boots are normally thick enough to keep the stuff out but clothing or armour (which has gaps) cannot. The type of flora, the area it covers in the site and the rules for the poison it will use on those who walk through their areas can be determined by rolling once on each column in the table below.

D6 Result	Type of Flora	Total Area of Coverage	Poison Equivalent ¹
1	Slime Mould	1d3 x 5 feet	Apple of Derketa Juice (Contact)
2	Spore Mould	1d6 x 5 feet	Black Lotus Blossom
3	Mushroom	1d4 x 10 feet	Black Stygian Scorpion Venom
4	Moss	1d6 x 10 feet	Great Serpent Venom
5	Flowering Stalk	2d4 x 10 feet	Green Lotus Dust
6	Hanging Vines	2d6 x 10 feet	Purple Lotus Juice

¹ Although not the same exact poison, use the same damage and other information for this flora's toxins as the ones described on page 279 of *Conan the Roleplaying Game Second Edition*. Consider all flora poisons 'Contact' poisons, however.

Useful Growth

Minimum Depth: None

A subterranean terrain location with this element has a patch, colony or crop of some kind of extremely useful plantlife growing within it. This plantlife can be harvested by someone who knows to do so (requiring a Craft (Alchemy)

or Craft (Arcana) skill check DC 20) with a successful Craft (Herbalism) or Survival skill check DC 12. Each five foot square section of the plant can generate one 'dose' of the helpful substance and will only grow back over 2d3 months of natural conditions or careful tending. To determine what this plant is, how large of an area it covers and what beneficial substance it can create, roll 1d6 on each column in the table below.

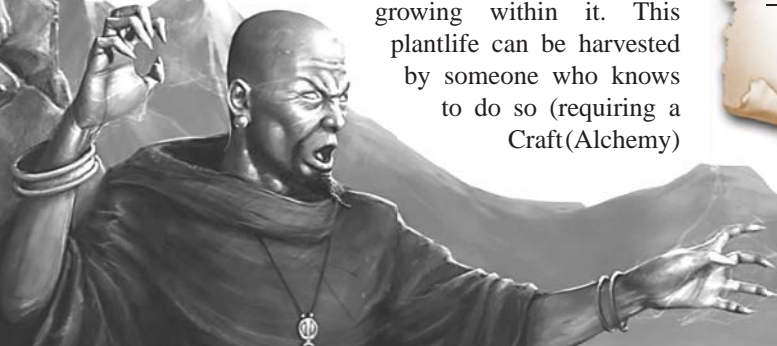
D6 Result	Type of Flora	Total Area of Coverage	Benefits of Harvested Substance
1	Slime Mould	1d2 x 10 feet	Water for 1d3 Day
2	Mushrooms	1d3 x 10 feet	Food for 1d6 Days
3	Lichen	1d4 x 10 feet	Heals 1d3 Hit Points
4	Moss	1d6 x 10 feet	Restores 1 Point of Ability Damage
5	Ferns	1d8 x 10 feet	Restores 1d3 Points of Ability Damage
6	Flowers	1d10 x 10 feet	Cures <i>any</i> natural poison, toxin or venom.

RANDOM TERRAIN ELEMENT SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to add flora terrain elements to their subterranean locations but we included this table to aid the Games Masters who want to randomise the creation process. When rolling to determine the types of flora elements that a location contains, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

Random Flora Element

2d6 Result	Flora Element
2	Dangerous Growth
3 – 5	Poisonous Growth
6 – 9	Common Growth
10 – 11	Flowering Growth
12	Useful Growth



FAUNA

There are many things that could live and lurk within the depths of a subterranean location. Each species of insect, worm or fish that might appear in the deep and dark places could be the key to an explorer’s survival or the final creature that ever crosses his path. The appearance of lifeforms in a subterranean location is a good indication of an older or natural site and the existence of food and water in some form can be used by the characters who require it.

Animal life in a subterranean location will always be noteworthy to underground explorers but here are a few good examples why characters might become involved with a fauna terrain element.

- ☛ A rare breed of insect lives in the darkest corners of a cavern that can be cooked as a local delicacy, giving the Player Characters a steady supply to sell to local pubs, taverns and chefs.
- ☛ The Player Characters know how dangerous a small breed of fish can be if stepped on or brushed against unwarily. They plan to catch several of them in order to create a very deadly trap in the local bathhouse.
- ☛ A sizeable type of cave lizard is extremely adept at catching vermin and the Player Characters believe that any village or town with a rat problem would surely pay them handsomely to bring their ‘pets’ into the area to let them feast.

As a note, the Games Master can always forego this roll altogether and choose a suitable subterranean creature from other Conan sourcebooks, such as the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

The following are examples of different fauna terrain elements that might be found in a subterranean location.

Parasitical

Minimum Depth: None

A subterranean terrain location with this element is home to a species of animal that exists to draw the life from other animals that pass through or exist in their area

– perhaps even each other. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 15. To determine what this parasite is, how many adults live in the location and what interesting facts might be uncovered about the creatures, roll 1d4 on each column in the table below.

D4 Result	Type of Parasite	Total Population	Interesting Quirk
1	Amoebic	1d6 x 100	None
2	Worm/Slug/Leech	2d6 x 100	Creature can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal
3	Insect	2d6 x 1,000	Creature is the middle life-stage of a larger predatory animal.
4	Flying Insect	2d6 x 5,000	Creature is attracted to any heat source (including fire), perhaps to the point of suicide.

Burrowing

Minimum Depth: None

A subterranean terrain location with this element is the home to a species of creature that burrows through the dirt, clay or stone. It makes small holes and tunnels for its species throughout the walls and floors of the location; adding +5% to any chance the area will suffer a cave-in or collapse. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 15. To determine what this burrowing animal actually is, how many adults live in the location and what interesting facts might be uncovered about them, roll 1d6 on each column in the following table.



WHAT LIES BENEATH



D6 Result	Type of Burrowing Animal	Total Population	Interesting Quirk
1	Amoebic Slime	1d3 x 100	None
2	Worm	1d6 x 100	Animal is of Medium-Size (+25% to cave-ins)
3	Insect	2d6 x 100	Animal can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal
4	Crustacean	2d6 x 500	Animal possesses dangerous self-defence toxins ¹ in its flesh.
5	Reptile	2d6 x 1,000	Animal is of Large-size (+50% to cave-ins)
6	Mammal	2d6 x 5,000	Animal is naturally venomous ¹ and predatory.

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth* Flora table above to determine the animal's Poison Equivalent.

Aerial

Minimum Depth: None

A subterranean terrain location with this element is the roost for a species of animal that naturally can glide or fly through the air on wings or patagia (flaps of skin used for gliding). The animals are often found clinging to the ceiling or ledges of the location, ready to drop and flutter by toward their next meal or away from startling sounds. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 15. To determine what sort of aerial animal exists for this terrain feature, how many adults live in the location, how fast it can fly and what interesting facts might be uncovered about them, roll 1d6 on each column in the table below.

D6 Result	Type of Aerial Animal	Total Population	Flight Speed	Interesting Quirk
1	Moth/Lacewing	1d6 x 100	10 feet	None
2	Insectoid	1d6 x 200	20 feet	Animal is of Medium-Size (-5 feet its flight speed)
3	Reptile	2d6 x 500	30 feet	Animal can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal
4	Avian	2d6 x 1,000	40 feet	Animal has perfect sonar and possesses the Blind-Fight feat.
5	Mammal (Gliding)	2d6 x 5,000	50 feet	Animal is of Tiny-size (double its flight speed)
6	Mammal (Flying)	2d6 x 10,000	60 feet	Animal is naturally venomous ¹ and predatory.

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth* Flora table above to determine the animal's Poison Equivalent.



Crawling

Minimum Depth: None

A subterranean terrain location that possesses this element is the home to a species of animal that scurries along the floor, wall and ceiling with unmatched dexterity and speed. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 15. To determine what kind of crawling animal is present, how many adults live in the location and what interesting facts might be uncovered about them, roll 1d6 on each column in the table below.

D6 Result	Type of Crawling Animal	Total Population	Interesting Quirk
1	Amoebic Slime	1d2 x 100	None
2	Insect	1d4 x 100	Animal is of Medium-Size
3	Amphibian/Fish	1d6 x 100	Animal's waste is prodigious and slick, subtracting -2 from Dodge Defence and Reflex Saves.
4	Reptile (Serpent)	2d6 x 100	Animal can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal
5	Reptile (Lizard)	2d6 x 500	Animal is naturally predatory and has lethal natural weaponry.
6	Mammal	2d6 x 2,000	Animal is naturally venomous ¹ and predatory.

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth* Flora table above to determine the animal's Poison Equivalent.

Large

Minimum Depth: 30 feet

A subterranean terrain with this element is where a species of large animal can be found making its home. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 15. To determine what kind of large animal lives here, how many adults exist and what interesting facts might be uncovered about them, roll 1d6 on each column in the table below.

D6 Result	Type of Large Animal	Total Population	Interesting Quirk
1	Amoebic Slime	1d2 x 10	None
2	Worm	1d4 x 10	Animal's waste is prodigious and slick, subtracting -2 from Dodge Defence and Reflex Saves.
3	Insect	1d6 x 10	Animal's waste is prodigious and slick, subtracting -2 from Dodge Defence and Reflex Saves.
4	Amphibian/Fish	2d6 x 10	Animal can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal
5	Reptile	2d6 x 25	Animal is naturally venomous ¹ and predatory.
6	Mammal	2d6 x 50	Animal has an advanced intelligence (INT 3) and can utilise problem-solving techniques.

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth* Flora table above to determine the animal's Poison Equivalent.





Subterranean

Minimum Depth: Special (see below)

An underground terrain site with this element is where a species of subterranean animal has come up from the depths to make a home and breeding ground. This animal can be recognised for what it is with a successful Knowledge (Nature) or Handle Animal skill check DC 18. To determine what kind of subterranean animal lives here, how many adults exist and what interesting facts might be uncovered about them, roll 1d6 on each column in the table below. Additionally, roll one extra 1d6 and determine the minimum depth that the creature will appear naturally; if this site does not qualify for this depth the Total Population for the animal is always a straight 1d6 in number.

D6 Result	Type of Subterranean Animal	Total Population	Interesting Quirk	Minimum Natural Depth
1	Amoebic Slime	1d4 x 5	None	50 feet
2	Worm	1d6 x 5	Animal produces bioluminescence equal to a simple torch.	100 feet
3	Insect	1d4 x 10	Animal has perfect sonar and possesses the Blind-Fight feat.	200 feet
4	Crustacean	1d6 x 10	Animal can be eaten as a nutritious but foul-tasting meal	500 feet
5	Amphibian/Fish	2d6 x 20	Animal is naturally venomous and/or toxic ¹ .	750 feet
6	Reptile	2d6 x 40	Animal has a secondary trait (burrowing, aerial, and so on) that should be rolled on the Random Terrain Element Selection table below (ignoring further Subterranean results).	1,000 feet

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth* Flora table above to determine the animal's Poison Equivalent.

VAST-DEPTH

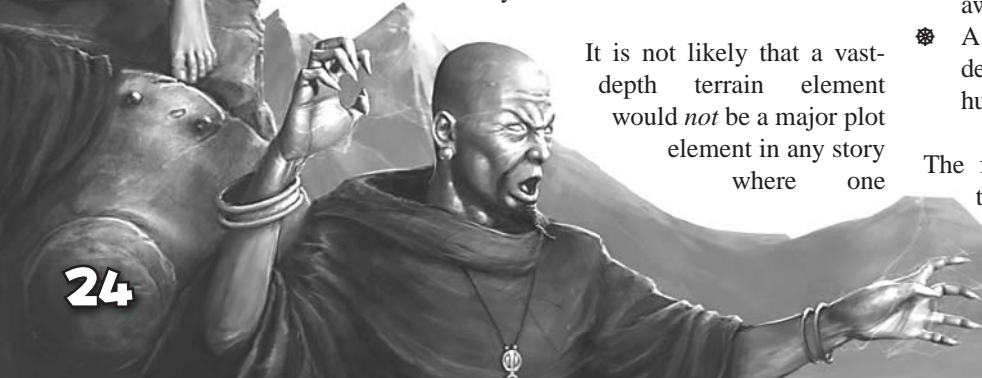
When a subterranean location reaches deep down into the world's crust far enough, a host of new and interesting things begin to take shape. Describing a world within a world, these terrain elements are unheard of near the surface and often take days of spelunking to discover. Player Characters that come into contact with these depths had better be skilled underground explorers or they have been very lucky in their descent so far.

It is not likely that a vast-depth terrain element would *not* be a major plot element in any story where one

came up but here are a few examples how they can be used by the Player Character group directly.

- ✦ The Player Characters could spend weeks trying to decipher the 'hidden message' in a set of ancient hieroglyphs, hoping that it reveals to them the entrance to a treasure trove.
- ✦ Any Player Character that knows where a gemstone field exists knows where they can dig up and carry away tens of thousands of silvers worth of gems.
- ✦ A Player Character sorcerer prays to a god of fire and destruction, making the existence of a volcanic pool a huge boon in his worship, rites and rituals.

The following are examples of different vast depth terrain elements a location might contain.



**RANDOM TERRAIN
ELEMENT SELECTION**

Games Masters may want to simply choose to add fauna terrain elements to their subterranean locations but we added this table to aid the Games Masters who want to randomise the process. When rolling to determine the types of fauna elements that a location contains, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

Random Fauna Element

2d6 Result	Roll	Fauna Element
2		Parasitical
3 - 4		Burrowing
5 - 6		Aerial
7 - 9		Crawling
10 - 11		Large
12		Subterranean

Abyssal Crevasse

Minimum Depth: 500 feet

This terrain element represents a huge and sheer drop off point in the floor of the location. This crevasse is always located at the deepest point of the deepest chamber, spans 5d6 x 10 feet in width (or two-thirds the chamber's area; whichever is less) and is effectively bottomless. Someone that falls or is thrown into the abyssal crevasse without a safety rope or magical assistance is sure to fall for several minutes before plunging into death.

Ancient Art/Symbols

Minimum Depth: 1,000 feet

Several parts of the walls and ceiling of this location are decorated with ancient carvings, faded paintings and similar markings from civilisations long since extinct. Stygian caverns show the writings of the ancient giant-folk, Cimmerians have seen Atlantean script on rock walls and the horrid pictograms of the serpent-men appear in the very heart of Hyboria. There are 2d6 x 10 total square feet of wall and ceiling that contains these symbols. A character could spend 1 eight-hour day per five foot square in deep study, calling for a Knowledge (Arcane) skill check of DC 25. Success translates some of the symbols and points the character toward many possible pieces of information (Games Masters discretion).



Gemstone Field

Minimum Depth: 750 feet

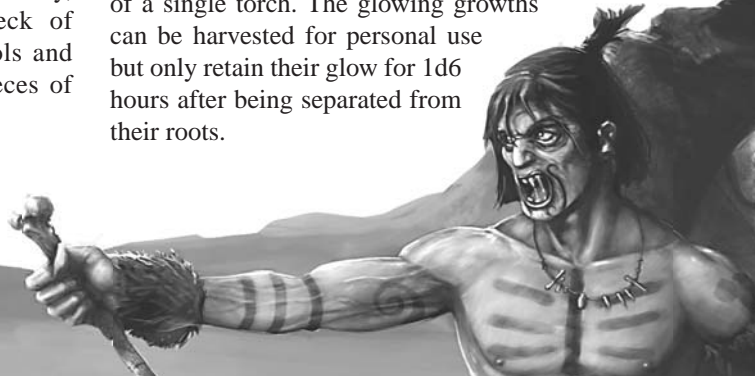
This subterranean location has a chamber that is littered with natural gemstones and crystalline minerals that could be collected and sold. These crystals and gems can be mined through the proper Craft skill check, earning the appropriate profits. The general type of gemstone that makes up the field can either be decided by the Games Master or rolled on the following table.

D6 Result	Gemstone Type	Worth per Man Day of Mining
1	Quartz	1d6 x 50 sp
2	Onyx/Turquoise	1d8 x 50 sp
3	Diamonds	1d10 x 100 sp
4	Emeralds/Opals	2d6 x 100 sp
5	Rubies/Sapphires	2d6 x 200 sp
6	Unknown Gem	2d10 x 200 sp

Phosphorescent Growths

Minimum Depth: 500 feet

This terrain element adds intermittent patches of subtly glowing fungus and plants that give the entire lower reaches of the location a dim illumination similar to moonlight. 1d10 x 10% of the lower half of the location's area is always considered to be lit by the equivalent of a single torch. The glowing growths can be harvested for personal use but only retain their glow for 1d6 hours after being separated from their roots.





Steam Vents

Minimum Depth: 750 feet

This terrain element is a dangerous hazard that represents 2d6 random areas that will occasionally vent huge plumes of boiling hot steam. The vents are placed in random five foot squares and have a 5% chance of firing whenever a character gets within 15 feet of them. When they fire they fill an area 1d3 x 5 feet in radius with boiling hot steam, inflicting 3d6 points of damage with no damage reduction possible.

Underground Lake

Minimum Depth: 500 feet

This terrain element represents a large body of water that has formed underground that is likely the root of the entire subterranean location. It will be found in the deepest chamber of the entire site and might have any number of interesting traits hidden away in its waters. Roll 1d6 on each of the columns in the table below to determine the exact nature of the lake.

D6 Result	Water Area	Water Depth	Lake Quirk
1	2d10 x 5 square feet	1d4 x 3 feet	None
2	2d10 x 10 square feet	1d4 x 5 feet	Very Cold Waters (1d2 nonlethal damage per round of exposure)
3	3d10 x 10 square feet	1d6 x 5 feet	Jagged shore that inflicts 1d3 points of damage to anyone falling/crawling upon the shore.
4	4d10 x 10 square feet	1d8 x 5 feet	Carnivorous Fauna (roll above)
5	5d10 x 10 square feet	1d10 x 5 feet	Sulphurous waters that inflict 1 point of poison-based damage per round of exposure.
6	5d10 x 20 square feet	2d6 x 5 feet	Toxic waters ¹

¹ Roll on the *Poisonous Growth Flora* table above to determine the water's Poison Equivalent.

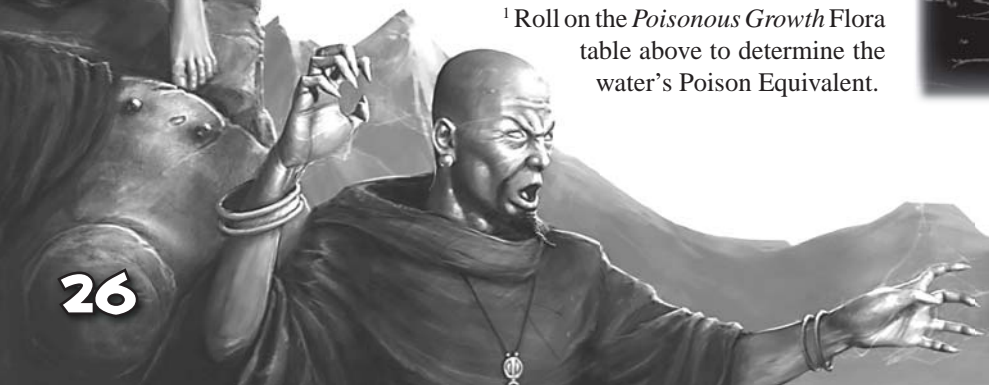
Underground River

Minimum Depth: 400 feet

This terrain element represents a large underground waterway that flows through the bottommost chamber of the subterranean location. The river is 2d6 x three feet wide, moves quickly and can easily sweep unwary swimmers under the stones into a dark and lonely grave.

Roll 1d6 on each of the columns in the table below to determine the exact nature of the river.

D6 Result	Water Depth	Penalty to Swim Checks	Damage Per Unsuccessful Swim Check
1	1d4 x 2 feet	-1	1d6
2	1d4 x 3 feet	-2	1d8
3	1d6 x 3 feet	-4	2d6
4	1d6 x 5 feet	-6	2d8
5	1d8 x 5 feet	-8	2d10
6	1d10 x 3 feet	-10	3d10



Volcanic Pool**Minimum Depth:** 1,000 feet

This terrain element brings a large open rift in the world's crust, boiling up liquid stone in the form of lava that belches sulphurous smoke, skin searing steam and is hot enough to liquefy flesh and bone almost instantly. The volcanic pool will bubble up in the lowermost chambers and have a total surface area of 5d6 x 50 square feet. Any living thing breathing in the fumes of a volcanic pool suffers 1 point of nonlethal damage per minute of exposure. Anything coming into direct contact with the lava itself instantly suffers 5d10 fire and heat-based damage.

UNIQUE TERRAIN ELEMENTS

In the case that a subterranean location is determined to have a Unique terrain element in it, the Games Master can add one of these special and interesting elements. These sorts of elements are going to be something unbelievably special and will undoubtedly be the core of any plot or storyline that involves the underground site being created. The Player Characters might just be exploring the location specifically to interact with the Unique element. These Unique terrain elements are the kinds of things that entire lifetimes are spent in search for – or running away from.

Games Masters should be very aware what adding one of these terrain elements to their subterranean sites actually means – and consider themselves warned about what they might be adding to their campaign.

Ancient Tomb

Lurking in the depths of the underworld is the burial site for an ancient and powerful race of sentient beings. Whether it is Atlantean, dragon-men or the race of Stygian giant-folk, this tomb is the final resting place for the remains of legends. There are things lurking in the caskets and sarcophagi that defy explanation and modern Hyborian history. There are some that say that these places are not truly at rest at all; rather merely *waiting* for a new age to return to power.

Home of the Beast

A mighty creature, some kind of terrible legend in the lands surrounding, lives in the depths of this location. This creature has existed in its underground lair for decades – perhaps centuries. It is a true horror that preys on the local populace, sliding up and out from its dark home to terrorise the land. The subterranean site that contains this unique terrain element is generally feared and avoided by the normal Hyborian commoner;

RANDOM TERRAIN ELEMENT SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to add terrain elements to their subterranean locations with qualifying depth below the surface but this table is designed to help those who want to randomise the process. When rolling to determine the types of vast depth terrain elements that a location contains, roll 3d6 and consult the table below.

Random Vast Depth Element

3d6 Roll Result	Vast Depth Element
3	Volcanic Pool
4 – 5	Abyssal Crevasse
6 – 7	Steam Vents
8 – 9	Underground River
11 – 14	Underground Lake
15 – 16	Phosphorescent Growths
17	Gemstone Field
18	Ancient Art/Symbols

but sought after by heroes and thrill-seekers to try and make history.

Lair of the Dead

Something about the dark energies of this catacomb gives way to the risen dead. A central hub at the bottom of the cavern has a strange stone or crystal that emanates a force that reanimates dead creatures and sends them outward to devour the flesh of the living. Because of the presence of this terrible artefact, the entire area is teeming with zombified animals and men – oftentimes the foolish adventurers that previously came to stop the undead horde.

Lost Land

Beyond the last tunnel of this dark complex is an archway that gives way to the unbelievable – a complete ecosystem within the confines of the underground. A jungle that thrives kilometres below the surface, a frozen wasteland full of ice and snow or even a field of gigantic flowers; these are the kinds of strange and wonderful landscapes that make up these unique locations. The lost lands almost always have some kind of long forgotten race of men or beasts that thrive only there, making their discovery momentous and potentially disastrous.



CATACOMB PLOTS - THE PERSONALITY OF THE UNDERWORLD

Catacomb Plots are specific events that are actively taking place when the subterranean location is first encountered, whether planned in a campaign or randomly discovered. Catacomb Plots, the devices used to work them into the story, can be how the location becomes part of the Player Characters' greater adventure.

The Hyborian Age world should always be rife with adventure and excitement. New events and legends should shine beyond that of the everyday grind of peasant life. Discovering an underground complex should put butterflies in the stomachs of the adventurers, especially as they step over the threshold into the underworld. Anytime a group of Player Characters enters a subterranean place they have not yet explored, there should be something more than rocks and darkness waiting for them. In order to create a random way of determining these Plots without drawing up a different table for each kind of terrain location, all Catacomb Plots are rolled on the following table – but the location's Terrain Type determines what dice are used to roll upon it.

Portal to Darkness

The curtain between the dimensions is thinner than normal in this deepest chamber, leaving a place where crossing between them is possible – especially for the supernatural horrors that lurk in the land beyond. These portals are confined in a circle of standing stones or stalagmites, an abyssal crevasse, a shining lake or a natural archway formed in the side of a wall. A dark portal can be opened by the right incantation – making their very existence dangerous and attractive for amoral sorcerers looking for infernal connections.

Sign of the Gods

This cavern was marked in some strange way by the forces of the holy, the touch of the gods themselves. Something defies the laws of logic and reality in the heart of this place and the locals all claim it is due to the presence of some kind of divine conduit. Whether it is a place where wounds heal almost instantly, a circle of stones that replenish magical power or perhaps a rejuvenating pool that increases strength and vitality...something powerful and otherworldly has made its mark in this place.

RANDOM UNIQUE TERRAIN ELEMENT

Most Games Masters will definitely want to choose which unique element they are adding to their location in order to best fit their own campaign but some purists might want to be truly random in their design process. In order to randomise what kind of unique element they are building in their caves and caverns, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the type of unique terrain element the Player Characters will have to interact with, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

Random Unique Element

2d6 Result	Unique Element
1	Lair of the Dead
2 – 4	Ancient Tomb
5 – 6	Lost Land
7 – 9	Home to a Beast
10 – 11	Portal to Darkness
12	Sign of the Gods



The dice used by a city are as follows: Hollow 1d4; Cave 1d6; Tube/Flow 1d8; Simple Cavern 1d10; Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel or Cavern System 1d12.

Roll Result	Catacomb Plot
1	Predatory Squatter
2	Den of Thieves
3	Buried Treasure
4	Unseasonal Growth
5	Bat Migration
6	Unearthed Graves
7	Bandit Hideout
8	Flooding
9	Weapon Cache
10	Local Celebration
11	Cave-In Survivors
12	Underworld Rising

Predatory Squatter

The subterranean location has become the temporary home to a dangerous predatory creature that is not normally found in the area. The locals have lost livestock and they require someone to deal with the carnivorous visitor before more people get hurt.

Den of Thieves

A small group of bandits or highwaymen have moved into the underground location, believing it to be the perfect place to lay low for a while. These thieves are not very organised or loyal to one another but they are well-equipped and moderately wealthy after their last big score. They will not take kindly to anyone coming into their den, especially not a bunch of would-be heroes.

Buried Treasure

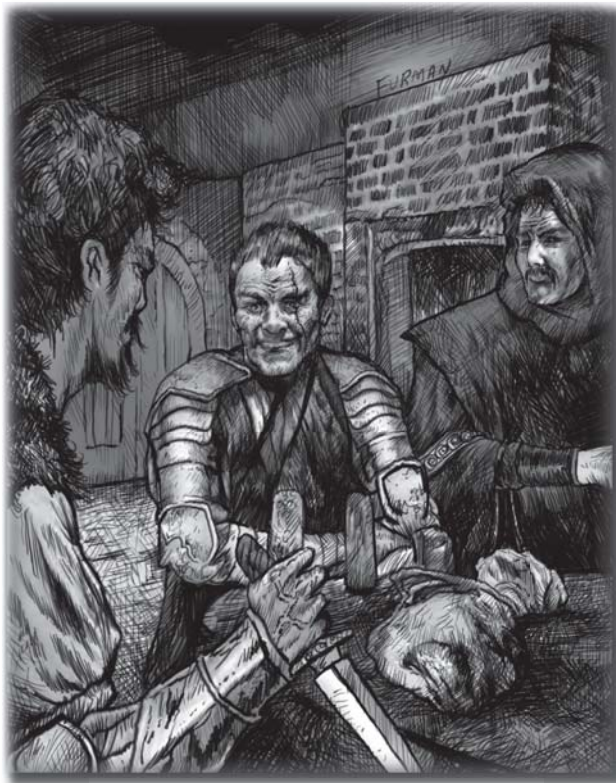
Someone decided to drop off a chest or trunk full of silver coins, jewellery and other expensive goods in this subterranean location, covering it loosely with gravel and soil. The treasure will be easy to find and worthwhile to dig up but whoever initially buried it will eventually come looking to retrieve it – finding signs of the Player Characters instead.

Unseasonal Growth

The foliage and plantlife around the cave or catacomb is unnaturally thick for this time of year, making it more difficult to explore comfortably. If there is a flora terrain element here, it is wildly out of control and dominates the majority of the area the subterranean location covers. If there is growth of useful plantlife, this site will become prized by those who know how to harvest it during this strange growth pattern.

Bat Migration

A huge flight of bats not indigenous to the area has migrated through the area and chose to roost



within the subterranean site. The number of individual bats is irrelevant, no matter how big the location may be it becomes choked with streams of flying mammals for several hours per evening. Explorers trying to manoeuvre through the resulting stench and slick of guano will find a simple cave journey becomes a dangerous endeavour.

Unearthed Graves

Something has recently shifted in the location and uncovered several previously buried grave sites. Remains of long dead explorers, adventurers or locals suddenly are exposed to the open air. Depending on how long they have been dead, how they died and what they might have been buried with; this could seriously alter someone's decision to explore the rest of the catacomb.

Bandit Hideout

A large crew of cutthroats and bandits moved into the underground site some time before the Player Characters reach it, allowing them to make it and the entire area surrounding into a dangerous territory of theft, violence and savagery. The common populace in the general territory around the site will be in a constant state of terror making any aid the Player Characters can give a welcome sight.





Flooding

The bottommost half of the cave or cavern has become filled with cold water from an underground source but seems to not be leeching away at all. The entire subterranean site is slowly becoming too flooded to explore properly, potentially endangering anyone that might be still inside when exit tunnels fill with water.

Weapon Cache

A merchant, trader or weapon smith on a nearby road was given reason to tuck his wares away for safe keeping, hoping to come back for it later when the way was safer. He never returned however and now his stash of quality weaponry is up for grabs. The Player Characters can stand to make a good amount of money if they can find and claim it before someone else does.

Local Celebration

A large celebration has started within the nearest community at the moment. The celebration is some kind of local holiday that is focussed upon the existence of the subterranean site. The gala event has games, gambling and musical pleasantries that anyone visiting can partake in. Exactly what the locals celebrate about the site is potentially unknown to even them, making it nothing more than a local tradition but it could be something far more.

Cave-In Survivors

The cavern system has suffered a terrible cave-in just before the Player Characters arrived and they are immediately informed that

several people were trapped in the depths by the collapse. They might be able to save the survivors before things get worse and win the adoration of the local people – or anger the real cause of the collapse in the first place.

Underworld Rising

Some caverns dig too deep or reach too far; this one definitely does. Something odd has happened and all of the denizens of the subterranean location have begun evacuation to the local surface. Although they are not evolved for life above ground, they will surely try their best to carve, chew or cut out a piece of it for themselves. The Player Characters are caught in an interesting exodus; they can either venture down into the dark to find out why everything is leaving or they can try to clear the surface of the subterranean refugees. No matter which way they choose, something must be done.

RANDOM SUBTERRANEAN ENCOUNTERS

Unlike travelling across the plains or forests of Hyboria, delving down into the underground world that lies below is foreign to most people of the Hyborian Age. Most folk know that they should be worried about bears and wolves when travelling through the forested foothills of Aquilonia but what should they prepare for in the catacombs under Zingara?

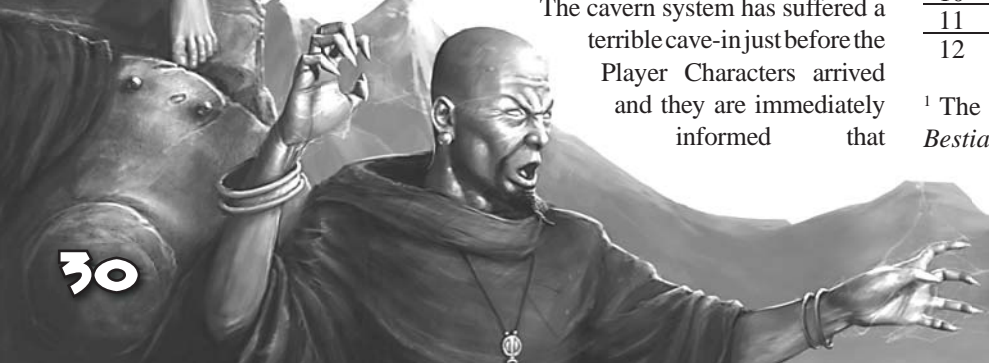
This section gives Games Masters several random encounter tables based on the general *overland* terrain types as to what might be found in the subterranean locations they design using the rules in this chapter. Note that these encounters are not necessarily indigenous to the location (that would fall under the Fauna elements discussed earlier) but are simply easy-to-add encounters for subterranean explorations.

Grasslands/Plains

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath flat plains, savannahs and grassland terrain types.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Children of the Night
3	Snake
4 – 5	Giant Bat
6 – 7	Bat Swarm
8	Badger
9	Giant Mantid
10	Giant Centipede
11	Lion (or similar great cat)
12	Were-Beast

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.



Forests/Woods

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath wooded areas and forested terrain types.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Children of the Night
3	Bear
4 – 5	Wolf
6 – 7	Bat Swarm
8	Snake
9	Spider, Giant
10	Giant Bat
11	Tiger (or similar great cat)
12	Great Bear

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

Deserts

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath hot and arid terrain types.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Yizil
3	Giant Bat
4 – 5	Scorpion
6 – 7	Bat Swarm
8	Snake, Viper
9	Giant Centipede
10	Scorpion Swarm
11	King Scorpion
12	Mummy

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

Jungle/Marshes

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath wet wooded areas with high water tables and precipitation.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Children of the Night
3	Alligator
4 – 5	Giant Bat
6 – 7	Bat Swarm
8	Panther
9	Giant Slug
10	Snake, Constrictor
11	Swamp Demon, Lesser
12	Naga

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

Hills/Mountains

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath hilled, mountainous or craggy terrain types.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Children of the Night
3	Wolf
4 – 5	Giant Bat
6 – 7	Bat Swarm
8	Bear
9	Lynx
10	Badger
11	Wild Men
12	Great Bear

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

Frozen/Tundra

The following table should be used in any subterranean locations beneath extremely cold, frozen or tundra terrain types.

2d6 Result	Creature Encounter ¹
2	Frost Giant
3	Giant-kin
4 – 5	Bear (Polar Bear)
6 – 7	Wolf
8	Lynx
9	Great Bear
10	Nordwolf
11	Crawler
12	Frost Worm

¹ The statistics for these creatures are found in the *Bestiary of the Hyborian Age*.

NEW SUBTERRANEAN FEATS

This section is devoted to several new feats that are based on the sorts of skills and traits needed or desired of a subterranean explorer in the Hyborian Age.

Ear for Echoes (General)

You are attuned to the ambient noises and echoes that ring around inside of a subterranean environment and you can effectively tune out the parts you need to ignore to hear what is important to you at the time. From singling out a set of footsteps in a dripping watery cavern to seeking out the heavy breath of a beast in its den, your ears can do it.





Prerequisites: Listen 4 ranks

Benefit: Not only do you get a +2 bonus on all Listen skill checks while underground or completely within closed doors but you can call for a Listen skill check DC 15 to know *exactly* which direction and how far a particular sound is coming from if successful.

Natural Compass (General)

You have a knack for remembering which direction is which at all times, even in the twists and turns that a cavern or mineshaft might confuse you with. With a moment of remembering and mentally re-tracing a route, you can point out the way unerringly.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13+, Survival 6 ranks

Benefit: By spending a minute in thought and passing a Concentration skill check DC 10, you can automatically know the four compass directions. When underground this skill check is increased to DC 15 but you are also 75% likely to know which paths to take to reach the surface.

Quick Catch (General)

Falling while travelling underground can be an instant death sentence depending on where you land so you have trained your hands and feet to act instinctively and independently of your conscious thoughts when you might get close to a fall.

Prerequisites: Climb 6 ranks, Lightning Reflexes.

Benefit: So long as you have one free hand you may re-roll any failed Climb skill check or Reflex save to avoid falling. If you pass one of these rolls and another character within 5 feet did not, you may instead re-roll for *both* of you, accepting the new results.

Spelunker (General)

You are very much at home in the twists and drop offs of the underground world. You are not daunted by long crevasses or jagged cliffs and enjoy the sight of sharp stalagmites looming overhead.





Prerequisites: Constitution 10+.

Benefit: You add +1 to all skill checks using the following skills whenever in an underground setting: Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot, Survival and Swim.

Tomb Raider (General)

Having made your life dedicated to finding all of the best places to discover loot, be it coins or artefacts, you are extremely adept at knowing where to look. You are also adept at avoiding the common traps laid out to stop grave robbers and other pilferers – just like you!

Prerequisites: Appraise 5 ranks, Search 6 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a special bonus whenever you are in a catacomb, tomb, mausoleum or other burial site. You add +2 to all Appraise, Disable Device, Search and Spot skill checks when looking for hidden, buried or stashed treasure of some sort. Additionally, whenever in a situation where you can find a variable amount wealth you are allowed to count any one die worth of the variable as its maximum value (a d6 becomes '6', d10 a '10' and so on).

Tunnel Rat (Turanian)

For you, the tighter the squeeze the happier you are. When the walls come in closer and the ceiling forces you onto your belly, you find a strange comfort in the pressure that would make most people weep from fear.

Prerequisites: Constitution 13+, Escape Artist 5 ranks.

Benefit: Your movement score is never altered to slower than half its normal rate due to physical restrictions (tight walls, gravel floors, crawling and so on.) and you gain a bonus to your Will saves the smaller an area you occupy. This bonus is +1 if you are in an area with walls/ceiling no farther than 20 feet apart, +2 at no farther than 10 feet and +3 for 5 feet or closer.





The Dragon's Graveyard

Located in the wet jungles east of Abombi, a massive cavern complex waits for the foolish to come and try to claim the exquisite clear sapphires are rumoured to exist in its belly. This place, called the Dragon's Graveyard, is the home and breeding ground to a mighty and deadly lizard that preys upon those who draw too close to this infamous Black Kingdoms locale. Marked with dozens of different tribes' warnings to stay away, some people will always dare to risk their lives when riches are involved.

THE DRAGON'S GRAVEYARD

'Beware the draconne, friend. They do not call its home a graveyard because of its bones...but for the bones it has collected of its kills.'

Terrain Type: Cavern System
Total Subterranean Area: 1,800,000 square feet
Depth Below Surface: 800 feet
Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 450,000 tunnels, 1,260,000 chambers, 90,000 chasms
Important Terrain Elements: Thick Pillars, 70% Loose Gravel, 50% Common Flora Growth, Large Reptile Fauna (Draconne), Gemstone Field (Sapphires)

HISTORY

It is said that the first draconnes were the pets of the dragon-men that once ruled so much of the Hyborian continent. Serving as war beasts when young and mounts when older, each draconne was a prized member of the clan that bred it; no dragon-man would dare put his beasts into harm's way unnecessarily. When the dragon-men began to suffer at the hands of the Atlanteans, they knew that their empire was in dire straits. The ancient tales say that this is why the Dragon's Graveyard was cut from the crust of the world – to help protect the draconnes.

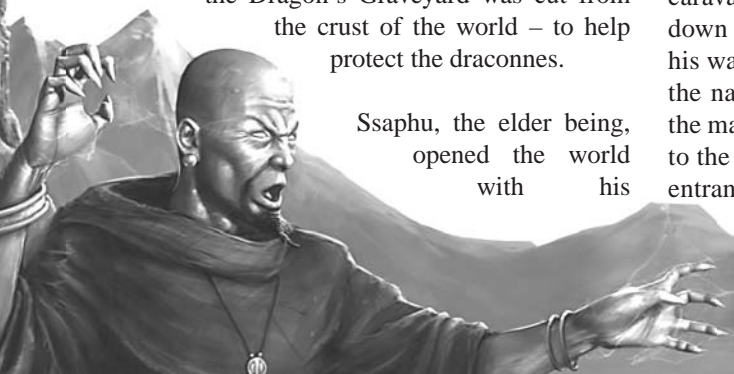
Ssaphu, the elder being, opened the world with his

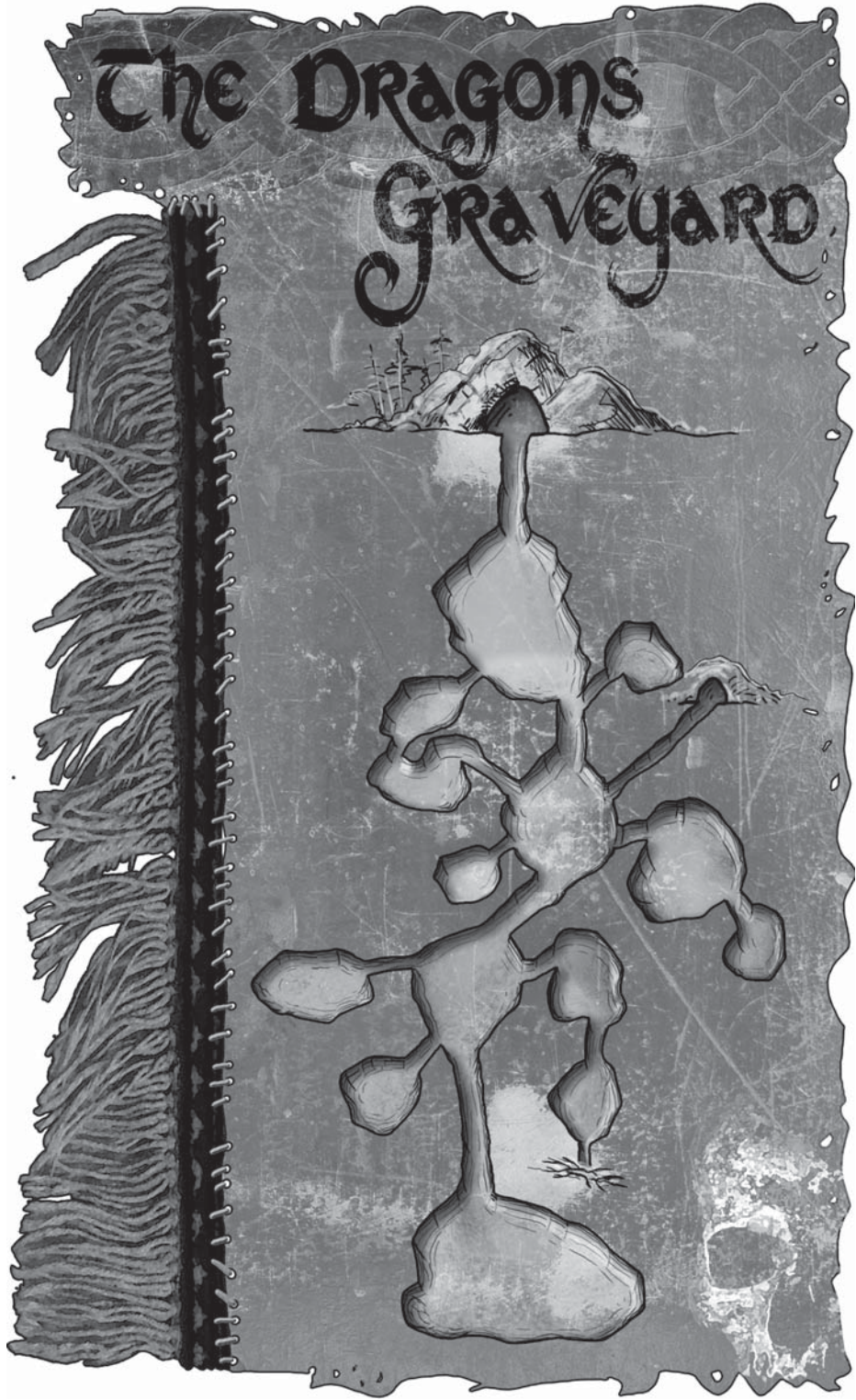
primal magics and the dragon-man clans ushered their draconnes into the dark of the caverns below, sealing them up afterwards. They had hoped to one day be able to retrieve the creatures, after the war was over. Unfortunately, they did not win and did not survive. If the tales can be trusted, the draconnes bred and went completely feral.

For as long as any of the tribes in the area can remember, the Dragon's Graveyard has been a location to be avoided. The draconnes must have eventually dug their way out in search of food animals 100 years ago or more. Black Kingdoms historic drawings in the area show large reptilian creatures erupting out from the ground to do battle with the locals, proving that the draconnes have been around and hunting for several generations. The jungle surrounding the mouth of the Dragon's Graveyard has been a dangerous stretch of wilderness for a long time.

In the earliest known explorations of the Dragon's Graveyard there are notes from Iranistani treasure hunters that tell of 'huge fields of clear blue sapphires as large as a man's fist' and 'invisible monsters that scale walls'. The Iranistani called the place *Shanara Murn*, loosely translated as 'blood mine' and of the initial 20 explorers that went into the cavern's mouth...only four returned to the surface. The survivors did not have anything but stories concerning the sapphires in the cavern's heart but they did have many lengthy and frightening tales about the chameleonic beasts that tore their friends apart before their very eyes.

Decades after the Iranistani exploration, their map ended up in the hands of Turanian noble named Shorif. The wealthy man ignored the numerous warnings of 'dragons' and 'ghost lizards' scrawled on the map, seeing only the faded word *sapphire*. He gathered a caravan and followed the map, paying off or cutting down the Black Kingdoms tribes that dared to stand in his way, making a name for him as an invading devil to the natives. Eventually Shorif and his 100 men found the markings that matched the map, chopping their way to the vine-covered boulder rift that serves as the main entrance to the Dragon's Graveyard. They set up a camp







by the entrance, preparing to send workers down to find the sapphire fields. It was not until the night camp fires were lit that Shorif discovered five of his workers were missing; stoking his paranoia that his men were heading into the cavern early to steal *his* sapphires. He sent 10 of his soldiers into the dark after them. They never returned. People continued to disappear around the camp and by the fourth day Shorif was well below half their original number. Having gotten over 50 of his own men killed without a single gemstone found, Shorif gave the order to pack up and leave. Unfortunately for him however, the draconnes heard the commotion and came to the surface to see what was happening. The resulting massacre not only claimed Shorif but bankrupted his family back in Turan.

Other than foolish explorers and would-be treasure seekers, no one goes near the Dragon's Graveyard in large numbers. The draconnes do not often come to the surface to hunt more than a few times a week; but the sort of noise that a crowd makes has never failed to bring them running for a feast.

Whenever outsiders discover the Dragon's Graveyard they come flocking in search of riches; always believing that they will be the ones to overcome the draconnes and find the gemstones. These expeditions have only ever ended in blood and death.

LAYOUT

The Dragon's Graveyard is a huge complex of caverns joined together by large and winding tunnels large enough for a man on horseback to plod along within them comfortably. A total of 16 chambers span out and descend from the cavern's main entrance, a cracked, half-buried boulder with a mouth nearly 20 feet wide. From its source seven kilometres east of Abombi, the Dragon's Graveyard winds downwards for several hundred feet beneath the surface.

It has three connections to the surface; the main entrance, a second venting tube that is only a man's width across located a half-mile away and a third water inlet that is only a foot or two wide was cut by rainwater. Most of the cavern's traffic goes through the main entrance, as draconnes grow too large to use the secondary ones after only a year of growth. This makes the main tunnel and chamber of the Graveyard the most travelled area of

the whole cavern system – unfortunately they are most frequently travelled by the draconnes.

The main shaft leads down steeply into the first chambers, opening up into enormous mid to low-ceilinged hollows that each has no fewer than two tunnels attaching to them. These tunnels empty into other chambers; small ones used for food storage and hatcheries or larger ones that end up as sleeping dens and lairs. Much of the Graveyard's flooring is covered in loose gravel and soil kicked and scraped up by the draconne's sharp claws, forcing people to trudge and slide through it while they scramble effortlessly over the walls, pillars and ceiling.

Four main chambers form the spinal centre of the cavern system, with 11 smaller ones branching off from them. The 16th chamber of the Dragon's Graveyard is the deepest point of the cavern system; a large, high-ceilinged cave room that is home to hundreds of thousands of silvers in sapphires...and the largest of the draconnes, the alpha female.

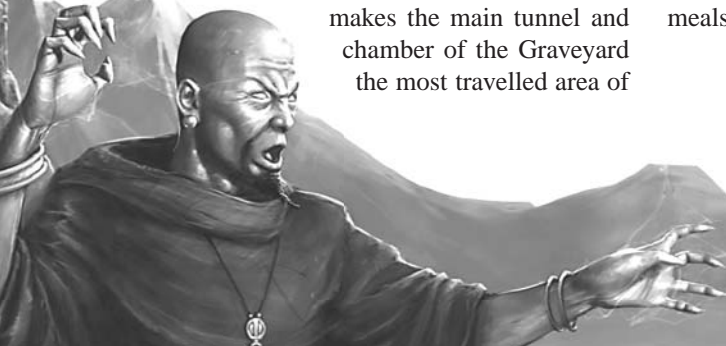
EXPLORATION NOTES

Entrance Tunnel

Beginning just after the wide boulder-mouth entrance, the sloping main tunnel extends 100 feet down into the cavern system before levelling out in a large landing where the deep gravel starts. It has a rather steep grade to it, requiring a Climb skill check DC 10 to descend or ascend safely at a movement rate faster than 10 feet per round. The draconnes are unaffected by this due to their natural wall-climbing ability, giving them superior mobility against anyone caught on their way in or out of their home.

Main Chamber Spine

Held up by old and thick pillars of limestone and sediment, the central chain of chambers contain hollows that are all longer than they are wide, connected by broad tunnels. This is where most of the draconnes spend their time playing with one another, sharing each others' body heat and digesting their meals. Much of their days find them clinging to the pillars or walls in these chambers, sometimes piled two or three deep. These chambers are very large, some stretching several hundred feet from end to end and are covered in sporadic patches of thick moss. Within the moss there are often small colonies of mammals that come to scavenge amongst the rotting meals, sometimes becoming meals themselves but the



echoing sound of their tiny claws across the gravel covers up the warning signs of the much bigger – and much stealthier – threats that lurk in these huge chambers.

Breeding Hatcheries

Several of the chambers that sprout off the sides of the main spine are actually used by the cavern's inhabitants as a breeding area. The chambers are smaller than any others, no larger than 20 by 20 and only have one or two pillars to support the ceiling. These rooms are filled with faeces, rotten regurgitated meat and packed moss surrounding a dozen or more incubating eggs. These eggs are greenish brown in colour, similar to the scales of the draconnes themselves and require the heat of the rotting filth to hatch properly within 10 weeks of resting within these hatcheries. Explorers that accidentally find themselves in a breeding hatchery should take care; there is always a good chance that a few copulating couplings could be here – a very deadly encounter for a human stumbling upon them.

Food Storage

Similar in size and structure to the breeding hatcheries, the food storage pens are less likely to have living draconnes occupying them. Half-eaten or regurgitated corpses of men, beasts and even other draconnes are brought to these rooms and left in heaps to 'culture' for later eating. The peculiar dining habits of these great lizards make these food storage areas necessary and the collective colony fills each one with the remnants of their previous meals to sate their dietary requirement for rotting meat. These rooms are not where the lizards come to dine however; they normally grab a few mouthfuls of what they need and carry it away to feast in solitude. This fact makes it less likely to run into a draconne inside the storage rooms but it does guarantee that any encounter with one in the area will be with a *hungry* one.

Secondary Surface Tunnel

About halfway down the main chamber spine there is a rough pressure venting tube that formed a century or so ago that leads away and up to the surface, creating the secondary exit/entrance point into the Dragon's Graveyard. Only five feet wide and four feet tall but close to 500 feet in length from the surface; the surface tunnel is extremely difficult to traverse due to cramped conditions, slick moss and few handholds on its somewhat steep incline. This means anyone trying to use the tunnel must pass a Climb skill check DC 15 each minute or fall back downward 1d6 x 5 feet, potentially suffering falling damage, knocking into other explorers or landing in the



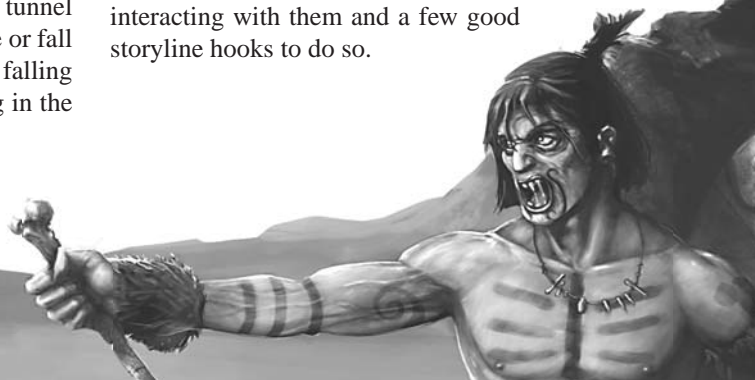
waiting jaws of a juvenile draconne – the only members of the colony that use the secondary tunnel.

The Alpha's Den

At the root of the Dragon's Graveyard is a massive chamber nearly 1,000 feet across and half that distance in width in which the eldest female draconne makes her nesting grounds. Choosing the largest chamber for her home, the alpha female also surrounds herself with the cavern system's most attractive stones – the naturally clear sapphires that uncovered themselves over the centuries. This huge chamber has only one entrance in and out that leads to the main cavern spine and is supported by 17 enormous pillars that are nearly 10 feet thick and over 100 feet tall. The alpha female herself – a beast that is 30 feet from snout to tip of tail – is commonly found coiled lazily around the centremost pillar, chewing on whatever meal her harem of suitor males bring her. The total estimated value of the sapphires that can be collected in this chamber surpass the *millions* of silver pieces; an attractive number that must be weighed against the value of one's own life.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are important individuals found in or near the Dragon's Graveyard. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.





DUKE AUSTER WELINE, ROYAL EXPLORER

A cousin to the king of Nemedi, Duke Auster Wellne bought an ancient Iranistani map that he was told led to riches from a Turanian con artist. So obsessed with the idea of finding this cavern of treasures, Auster stole a tremendous amount of funds from his family's coffers, travelled south and began to look for a caravan crew to go exploring – to the Dragon's Graveyard.

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian Noble 9)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Nemedian (Literate), Zembabwean

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

Parry Defence: 12 (–1 Str, +4 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 50 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +13

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +5 melee (1d4, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +5/+0 melee (1D4, AP 1)

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

Base Attack: +6/+1

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: +2 to hit with Broadsword, Hunting Bow, Heavy Lance and War Spear, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 19

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Diplomacy and Sense Motive), Enhanced Leadership, Lead By Example +2, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*comeliness*, *refuge*), Title (Duke), Wealth

Feats: Iron Will, Leadership, Negotiator Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Survival)

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +8, Hide +4, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Move Silently +6, Perform (dance) +6, Sense Motive +15, Survival +10

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 10 (+4)

Possessions: Exquisite Traveller's Outfit, Dagger, Ancient Map to The Dragon's Graveyard

Raised to always respect those adventurer types that would come and go through his family's court and estate, mostly due to his brother's choice to become a sellsword in their teenage years, Auster always wanted to become an explorer. He had aspirations to leave his homeland and see the world like his favourite Nemedian legends but unfortunately was listed into the courtly service early enough in life that adventure was never an option – until late in his 24th year.

A few weeks after his 24th birthday, Astor took charge of a mercantile negotiation with some people from Turan. This was where he purchased an old and faded copy of the original Iranistani map that had led so many men to their deaths in the depths of the Black Kingdoms. On the six week journey back to Nemedi; Auster pored over the map with any sage and scholar he could hire along the way. This eventually revealed to him the location of adventure, treasure and mystery – everything he had always wanted from his life.

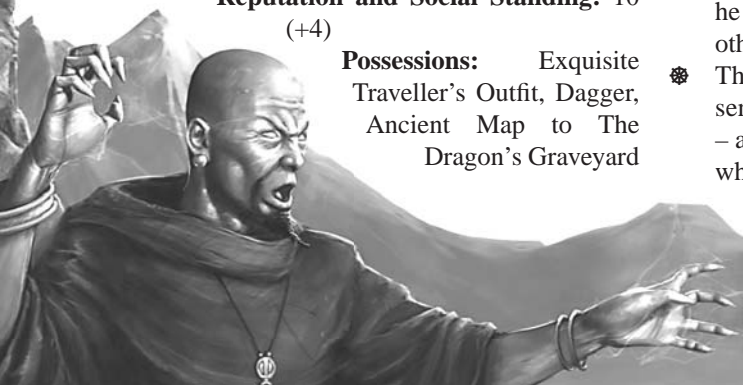
After being denied by the king for leave to see the Black Kingdoms and follow his treasure map, the young duke stole away into the night anyway with a cart full of his family's wealth and two loyal spearmen at his side. He crossed the continent against the wishes of the Nemedian court on stolen coin, coming eventually to the coastal city of Abombi. Having run out of funds getting as far as he has, the Nemedian has yet to follow the last leg of the map. He has come to a stopping point; but has yet to run short of his obsession with the Dragon's Graveyard.

Combat

Auster was trained in 'courtly combat' techniques with his curve-bladed dagger but prefers to deal with conflict by throwing purses of coin toward his mercenary allies long before drawing a weapon. If the young duke ends up at the end of a blade, he will almost assuredly surrender before risking a true fight.

Plot Hooks

- ❖ Duke Auster is in need of a few good souls to help get him through the last few kilometres of his journey. He may or may not tell the Player Characters exactly where they are going at all – merely that they are up to take home a part of the fortune. He does not mean them any harm by not telling them about the cavern; he merely knows that local legends have dissuaded others from helping him so far.
- ❖ The Nemedian court where Auster hailed from has sent an emissary in search of their wayward son – and the thousands of silvers that he took with him when he left. The emissary may speak of a peaceful





reclaiming of what is owed to them but he is actually a skilled assassin that cares very little for the money – all he was paid to do was kill the thief. Perhaps he might hire the Player Characters to help him; but unfortunately Auster has run off to the Graveyard as soon as he heard he was being hunted.

TACHUNGA THE WATCHMAN

Charged by his tribe with watching the easiest jungle path leading to the Dragon's Graveyard, Tachunga is a non-sense reminder that anyone stirring up the beasts of the cavern system endangers more than just themselves.

Medium Humanoid (Black Kingdom Tribesman Barbarian 5 / Noble 4)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +7

Languages: Bamulah, Kushite, Watai, Zembabwean

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)

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

DR: 1 (leopard half-cape)

Hit Points: 54 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4 (+1 versus Terror)

Defensive Specials: Mobility, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: War Spear +11 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: War Spear +11/+6 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

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

Base Attack: +8/+3

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear or javelin, +1 to hit with war spear and hunting bow, Crimson Mist, Power Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

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

Special Qualities: +1 to Perform (ritual) and Craft (alchemy) checks, Bite Sword, Illiterate, Social Ability (*family ties*), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Title (watchman), Wealth

Feats: Brawl, Endurance, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Track, Weapon Focus (war spear), Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +10, Craft (hunting) +7, Diplomacy +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +8, Survival +12, Swim +7

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+2)

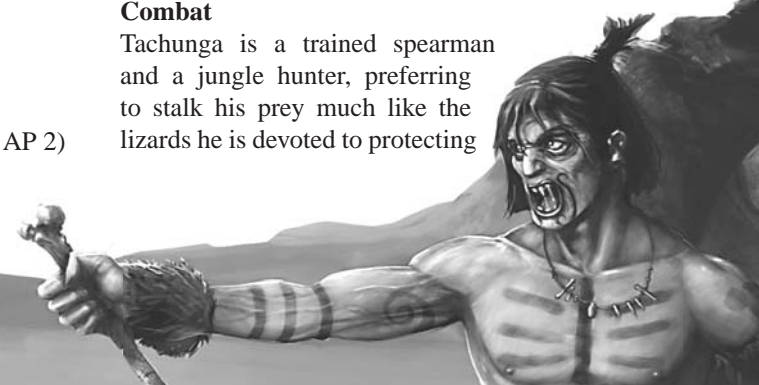
Possessions: Leopard Fur Half-Cape, War Spear, Knife, Necklace of Draconne Claws and Fangs

Born to the local offshoot of the Wasai tribe, Tachunga was given the duty of trying to keep people away from the mouth of the Dragon's Graveyard. The horrible 'dragon lizards' from the cavern will occasionally steal away one of the tribe's children or wandering hunters but it is a rare occurrence that the Wasai have learned to accommodate for. Every time someone comes and tries to explore the Graveyard however, the draconnes grow highly agitated and increasingly aggressive. Tachunga is supposed to keep outsiders from stirring up the colony; a task that occasionally means he must hunt travellers.

Tachunga is an athletic man, his dark skin marred with several scars from a lifetime of combat and hardship, as the Wasai push their warrior sons very hard growing up. He is not unattractive by Black Kingdoms tribal standards, as shown by his three wives and nine children but his eyes always have a cold and hard glare to them signifying the determination he has. Too many friends and relatives have been carried screaming away into the night to the cavern for him not to take his role seriously.

Combat

Tachunga is a trained spearman and a jungle hunter, preferring to stalk his prey much like the lizards he is devoted to protecting





from outside influence. His war spear is never slowed by hesitation or doubt of his mission's tasks – if he has to plunge its sharpened copper head into the heart of pale-skin explorer he will. He is capable of any amount of bloodshed and combat; so long as it helps keep the Dragon's Graveyard safely undisturbed.

Plot Hooks

- ✦ The Player Characters are on an active search for the Dragon's Graveyard and Tachunga knows that he has to stop them from getting there. He will try fear, misdirection and sabotage before direct contact; but knows that some stubborn northerners will only be turned away by violence and bloodshed.
- ✦ The Wasai have sent an emissary to the city of Abombi with a terrible tale – Tachunga was taken in the jaws of a dragon lizard into the Dragon's Graveyard. He is likely dead but the tribal mystic claims to still feel him in the life-force of the jungle. The Wasai have a huge sack of scavenged turquoise, amber and copper nuggets that they will give over to the Player Characters as payment to go in and find him – despite the odds that he will not be seen alive again.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

DRACONNE (BLACK KINGDOMS DRAGON LIZARD)

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm to tropical jungle

Organization: Solitary or small pack (2 – 5)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 7

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (70 hp)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +2

Defensive Specials: Chameleonic¹

Speed: 30 ft., (wall-climbing 15 ft.)

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d12+4, AP 3 plus infection) or tail slap +8 melee (1d8+2)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d12+4, AP 3 plus infection) and 2 claws +8 melee (1d8+4, AP 2); or tail slap +8 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +14

Special Attacks: Infection, Rending Bite

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Chameleonic¹

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills: Climb +20, Hide +20¹, Jump +12, Move Silently +6, Survival +13

Advancement: 10 – 12 HD (Large), 13 – 15 HD (Huge), 16 – 18 (Gargantuan)

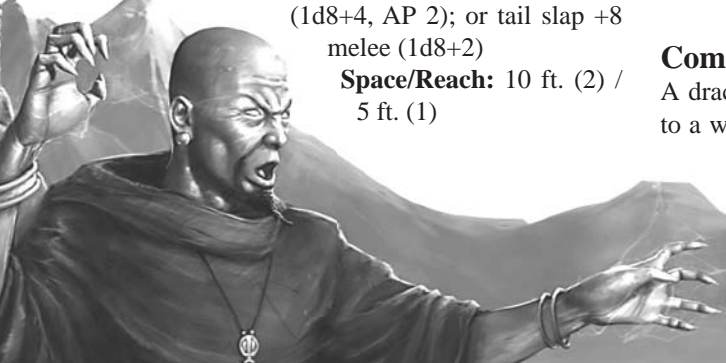
Originally bred by an extinct inhuman race 1,000 or more years ago, the draconnes are now a localised threat to the Black Kingdoms; particularly around the area of jungle surrounding the Dragon's Graveyard. Although they are found in very small numbers elsewhere in the southern Black Kingdoms, these enormous lizards are primarily the inhabitants of that infamous cavern system. Even when they are not using their naturally colour-shifting scales to hide from view they are a rare sight.

A normal adult draconne is roughly 12 feet in length and about four wide, tipped by a thick-snouted head filled with long, curved fangs at the front and a heavy tail at the back. Their chameleonic scales allow them to subtly alter their colours to match their surroundings but their natural colour is a greenish brown that is similar to moss or lichen. Their scales are slightly raised and thorny in appearance, turning away spears and blades like plated armour without losing any of the flexibility required of a subterranean predator.

Draconnes are voracious carnivores when hungry, eagerly attacking targets much larger or more numerous than they are but do not eat much of their kills initially. A few bites to replenish lost energy from the actual killing but not much more. The kill is instead carried off to the feeding dens to be added to the colony's communal rot heaps, where any draconne can come and take away rotted meat, filth and other disgusting elements of their diet. Chewing on rot and decay like a cow chews its cud, these lizards take more nutrition away from the maggoty flesh piles than fresh kills. This does not stop them from enjoying a live and kicking meal; it just limits them to rare occasions.

Combat

A draconne is an ambush predator that prefers to cling to a wall, ceiling or tree trunk until unwary prey is just





a few dozen feet away. It then springs off and is upon them with jaws tearing and claws raking, hopefully killing the target quickly and efficiently. If a draconne is forced into a straight conflict or battle, it will try to use its three-dimensional mobility to steer targets between pack members, into corners or even off chasm cliffs to make the kill that much easier to accomplish.

Infection (Ex): A draconne that bites a living creature with its deadly jaws will likely pass on a dose of the collected rot and filth that accumulates in its saliva and gum tissue. The damaged target must immediately pass a Fortitude save DC 15 or become infected by the bacterial drool. After 2d6 hours of incubation the target will lose 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con daily until the target can overcome the infection.

Rending Bite (Ex): The jaws of a draconne are extremely strong and wide, hooking into and ripping off gobbets of meat with one snapping pull. This means that any wounds inflicted by the draconne's bite attack are difficult to heal or treat naturally; adding +3 to any Heal check DCs involving them.

Skills: Draconnes have a +8 racial bonus on any Survival check due to their hardy health and predatory instincts. They also have a natural +10 bonus to all Climb skill checks due to their gecko-like feet and thickly muscled bodies.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can lead the Player Characters to investigate The Dragon's Graveyard.

- ✿ A copy of the ancient map used by the original Iranistani explorers falls into the hands of the Player Characters. It reads easily in places but is smeared in others; the only real words that can be made out with translation are 'cavern', 'huge' and 'fortune'. The map is mostly accurate to the Dragon's Graveyard, steering them into the dangerous tribal lands surrounding it. Will they heed the 'ignorant tribals' or will they be faced with dozens of sets of snarling teeth shining in the darkness?
- ✿ Artisimius is a Tarantian scholar studying the ancient writings of long lost Atlantis, particularly their



war against the enigmatic and mythic dragon-men of the deep south. He has found several clues that lead him to believe that he knows where one of the last Atlantean battles was fought on the mainland and needs a group of adventurer types to help get him there in one piece. Unfortunately for everyone involved his studies are correct; leading them all to the Dragon's Graveyard.

- ✿ A small Black Kingdoms tribal community has recently stopped sending traders and goods to Abombi, something that has the locals worried. These weekly trips into the city were what kept the tribe alive in the wilderness and to go a full month without resupply is extremely out of the ordinary. The Player Characters are asked to go and investigate the problem, only to find out that unseasonal flooding in the feeding chambers has driven the draconnes out in large numbers to hunt and replenish their food stock – starting with the missing tribal community.





Ankhenu, The Fallen Pyramid

The sands of Stygia blow hot and hard around the pyramids and stone walls of the current age, wearing away at the stones and bricks ceaselessly. In the sandy wastes near the Kheshatta there is one pyramid tomb that has been spared the ravages of the scouring winds – a pyramid build under the ground itself. This place, Ankhenu, is the home to a dark and terrible being as old as the stones entombing it.

ANKHENU, THE FALLEN PYRAMID

Terrain Type: Catacomb/Mine/Tunnel (actually a Tomb Complex)

Total Subterranean Area: 700,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 250 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 25,000 tunnels, 675,000 chambers

Important Terrain Elements: Cut/Set Stone, Ancient Symbols, Burial Chamber (Bones), Doors/Gates, Ancient Reliquary, Ancient Tomb (Apophal Ras)

HISTORY

When the Lemurians were young and the Stygian giants were beginning to understand the ramifications of their tyranny, a striking man with milk white skin and thin black hair named Ras (pronounced *raysh*) lived as a hermit in the sands. This enigmatic man's only friends were the beasts that shared his sandy home – and the shadowy spirits of ancient gods that he devoted himself to.

Bartering life eternal for endless servitude to the dark god Apophis, Ras had been transformed into an eternal being; a creature of darkness and undeath that cannot permanently be destroyed by mortal means. With such great power came a heavy weight; Ras would be forced to claim those his entropic god requested of him. Lemurians, giants,

Atlanteans and the blossoming Stygians all fell to his supernatural powers, all rising to become his Apophal legion. Through the immortal actions of Ras, Apophis was creating an undead army in the world of men.

Such actions are not viewed lightly by the other gods of Stygia and soon the minions of the other deities were moving in on the Apophal Ras and his mummified legion. Ras had collected a vast number of mortal worshippers over the centuries and among them the warning of these godly huntsmen began to circulate – eventually reaching Ras' ear. He knew that he had to devise a plan to survive their coming.

The architects were found and lashed until they designed a fortress of protection; a perfect funnel of arcane might that would flow in and out of Ras, amplifying his power and his ability to defend himself against outsiders. This place was Ankhenu, a basalt and onyx pyramid built downward into the sands of the desert. Over a decade of defending himself against godly warriors sent by his lord's foes passed before the structure was complete, at which point Ras began the finalising ritual that would pour the pyramid's power into him.

Unfortunately for him, another undying being had learned of what Ras was trying to do. Thulsa-Doom divined the potential future for the creature that shared his eternal state and chose to sabotage Ras' attempts; after all, Thulsa did not want to share eternity with anyone, let alone some former mortal thing that made a pact with darkness! Thulsa-Doom used his considerable magic to make Ras' ritual imperfect, adding new glyphs to his markings and casting a few spells of his own.

The result – a powerful funnel of arcane forces that indeed found the Apophal Ras sitting on a golden throne at the bottom 'peak' of Ankhenu. These forces were now unstable however and Ras was bonded to the building on a spiritual level. Thulsa-Doom did not destroy his potential rival; he anchored him to this eternal tomb.





Although he could not take his newfound powers out into the world, Ras became focussed upon manipulating those that could. He would send dreams and visions to mankind, calling and luring them to Ankhenu with promises of gold and riches but giving only undeath and oppression when they found the Fallen Pyramid. The eternal resident began this over 10,000 years ago, yet today Ankhenu remains an infamous and dangerous place avoided by all but the bravest and feared by all but the most ignorant.

For centuries upon centuries since the power and influence of Apophal Ras, his undying legion has preyed upon the people of Stygia. Caravans inexplicably change their route, bringing them to where Ras' Apophal mummies can fall upon them. Those that fight against them are broken and brought before Ras for judgment; only the worthy receiving the transformation into the undead.

It is because of these undead minions that Ankhenu is such a dangerous place and has been for as long as written Stygian history reaches back. There are many tales of the limitless fortunes and relics to be found within the dark rooms of the Fallen Pyramid, begging treasure hunters and adventurers to come to test their mettle. Most of them are never seen alive again...

...but it does not mean they are *never* seen again.

LAYOUT

Constructed using an infernal design dreamed up by tortured madmen, Ankhenu is a pyramid built to a very specific set of plans and designs. These designs essentially take a normal burial pyramid, turn it upside down and then drive it into the sand like a tent stake, making sure that the only thing that remains above the sand is a small stone rise that covers a set of heavy double doors. Beyond the doors lies the top of a spiralling stairwell carved from black stone and set in a rosy crystalline pillar that serves as their banister; the path through the floors of Ankhenu.

The first and largest floor of Ankhenu is six main chambers interwoven with short tunnel passageways that are more akin to oversized archways. The six chambers are representations of the six elements of Stygian immortality – heat, sand, wind, river, light and darkness.

Each room is decorated in accordance to its element, adding its power to the

cunningly crafted focussing points that feed into the central stairwell's crystalline banister.

The next floor is accordingly smaller than the one above it, is divided into three equal-sized rooms. Due to the slight slope of the building's walls and the reduction in number of rooms, these rooms are actually bigger than those above them. These three chambers are dedicated to the ideals of the eternal timeline – past, present and future. By adding the energies of time itself to the building's invisible focussing vortex, the funnel of power could transcend eternity. These rooms have a strange and eerie quality about them, the mixing of arcane forces making everything somewhat surreal to the uninitiated.

The penultimate floor of the Fallen Pyramid, the next descent comes to two rooms; again, strangely larger than those above them despite the reduction in overall space. These two rooms are the simple devotions to life and death, each one thickly decorated and stocked with Ras' worldly goods and treasures he chose to take with him into the pyramid. Additionally, the equipment and findings of the Apophal legion often end up here as offerings to the eternal one. The rooms complete the focussing process, sending the complete energetic collection down into the peak to be infused with Ras.

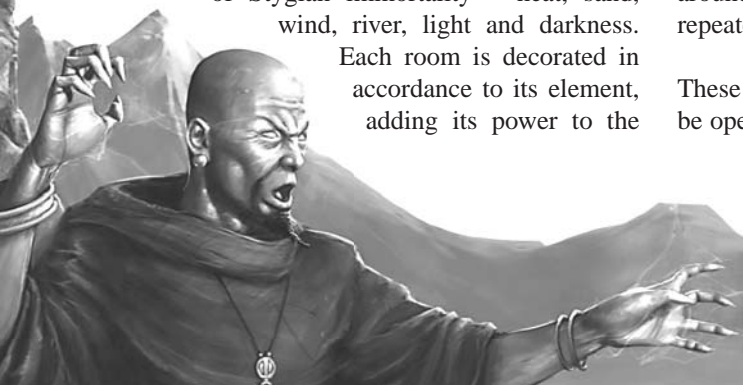
The peak of the pyramid – a small 50 foot square room at the very bottom of Ankhenu – is devoted to the gold and onyx throne on which Ras sits, absorbing the invisible energies funnelled to him by his tomb. The room is littered with ancient bones of failed servants, heaps of gold and silver trinkets that Ras surrounds himself with to remind him of his past successes and the high-backed throne. Thulsa-Doom turned Ankhenu into Ras' eternal prison as much as it his palace, making the first Apophal mummy a permanent addition to the throne room.

EXPLORATION NOTES

The Gates of Ankhenu

Sitting oddly above the sands in the middle of seemingly endless desert, only six hours away from the city of Kheshatta, is a 25 foot square basalt building of sorts that has no markings, no signs or inscriptions upon it. Its only distinguishing feature is a pair of heavy stone doors that show thousands of years of wear from the world around it and more than a few chips and grooves from repeated attempts at unwanted entry.

These doors are easily one ton of stone and only can be opened by pressing on the right place while walking



forward, a task that requires either a Search skill check DC 20, a Mysteries skill check DC 25 or a Knowledge (Arcane) DC 30 to discover. Once the counterweight point has been found it is only mildly labour intensive to open the doors. Without the counterweight's aid, the doors require a DC 30 Strength check to force open.

Once past the doors, only a single spiralling staircase made of black stone descends into the darkness. The rail-less stairs are set around a thin crystal banister made of smoky quartz flecked with gold and is cool to the touch no matter how hot the desert air is at the time.

The Elemental Chambers

The six identically-designed chambers on the main floor are each decorated, engraved and inlaid with different materials depending on which element the chamber is aligned with. All have basalt walls with glyphs of set onyx along the floor running through the archways between the rooms to the staircase in order to pass their energy along. The décor in the six chambers is as follows:

- ✿ **Heat** – Bronze and copper braziers are scattered throughout the room are sometimes lit with oil-soaked scat, giving the room a smoky glow that raises the temperature dramatically. At least one brazier is left burning at all times by Ankhenu's inhabitants.
- ✿ **Sand** – Several small vents in the ceiling of the chamber can be opened to allow streams of desert sand to cascade down into the chamber. It always has a few inches of sand on the floor but as it gets tracked through the rest of the pyramid, the vents are used to replace it.
- ✿ **Wind** – Several sets of large bone and glass wind chimes hang throughout the room, tinkling loudly with the slightest passing of someone through the chamber. Any movement faster than a walk turns the tinkling chimes into an erratic cacophony.
- ✿ **River** – A raised clay model of the River Styx cuts this room in half, at about two feet in height and one-foot wide. There is water flowing through the model river but this is muddy and thin. Once every few weeks the water is replenished in some way; through gathering or rituals by the Ankhenu inhabitants.
- ✿ **Light** – The centre of the room supports a single tall white candle that burns with a six-inch flame. The ceiling and walls are adorned with meticulously polished mirrors of silver, reflecting the candle's

light onto one another, making the room always as bright as the midday sun.

- ✿ **Darkness** – Positioned farthest away from the light and heat rooms, this room's archways are positioned at specific angles to keep any reflected light from entering. Unless someone brings their own light source into the chamber, it is pitch dark. Otherwise, the room is only adorned with a small statuette of a man carved out of black onyx.

The Temporal Chambers

The three chambers of the second floor are slightly larger than those of the first, dividing the decreasing amount of floor area between fewer rooms. The second floor is devoted to the passage of time and how Ras' pyramid defeats it. All have floors made of basalt, like the walls but have inlaid copper sigils in rows leading to the centre of the whole floor. The individual rooms have very different décor.

- ✿ **Past** – This room is an ancient library of scrolls, tomes and tablets from all over Stygia. It contains scrolls and tomes from recent scholarly authors, writings taken from the collection at Khemi and tablets written in ancient Lemurian dialects. It is a complete history of Stygia gone by, including some of the great mysteries that mortal men are yet to know.
- ✿ **Present** – This large room is much like a sitting room full of black stone sarcophagi; the resting places for the eldest Apophal mummies (see below), who are given the basic tasks of upkeep for the pyramid. The younger mummies come and go from the outside world but the oldest and most powerful creatures are allowed to regenerate their energies within this chamber.
- ✿ **Future** – A collection of foreign artefacts, items and occasionally *captives* are kept in the chamber devoted to the future. As Ras can only affect his local Stygia, these items of the world beyond its borders remind the eternal creature that he will break Thulsa-Doom's spell and claim this world for his dark god.

The Mortality Chambers

With only two rooms to split the shrinking surface area, the third floor down of Ankhenu is devoted to the energies of life and death. The two rooms cut the





floor in half around the staircase, which is located at the centre of a 30 foot long corridor between the mortality chambers. Running along the floor of this corridor are numerous lines of script, carved in stone and filled with molten gold, that lead to the descending stair.

The 'life' room is carved from basalt but tiled in alabaster; yellowed and filthy from centuries of exposure but decorated with relief sculptures of dozens of animals, men and plants. Despite the passage of time and the existence of very few living things in the entire pyramid, this room always feels warm and inviting to lucky explorers that make it this far into the structure.

The room dedicated to death is cold, dark and stacked with the canoptic jars that contain the stolen hearts of the Apophal mummies that Ras has created over the centuries. As the mummies are destroyed over the jars are broken as part of the ritual, meaning that they are constantly having to be replaced as new mummies are transformed.

The Throne Room

The 'peak' of the upside-down pyramid, the throne room of the Apophal Ras is part

royal seat, energetic focussing chamber and eternal prison. The throne room is tiled in gold and silver, a high-backed chair of beaten gold and onyx sitting directly under the flanged points of the crystalline banister. The whole room thrums with the arcane essences being funnelled down into the throne on which, almost always, sits the eternal Ras.

It was in the golden script that is written around the ceiling of the room that Thulsa-Doom added his mystic curse, warding any creature of Ras' power from ever climbing up into the rest of the building. Others may come and go as they please but a timeless being such as Ras or Doom can never cross. Ras is left with a difficult decision; destroy the ceiling and ruin his focus of power or remain imprisoned forever until someone manages to bring final destruction to the damnable Thulsa-Doom.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is the single most important individual found in or near Ankhenu. The entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with it and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

RAS, THE PROGENITOR OF THE APOPHAL LEGION

Eternal worshipper of the dark god of entropy Apophis, Ras gave up his free will in exchange for true immortality and vast arcane power. He became the leader and progenitor of a new breed of undead that threatened to overtake mortal Stygia, if it were not for the combined efforts of the gods to try and stop him. Undermined by the only other true immortal the Hyborian Age has known, now the powerful beast waits at the bottom of his pyramid for the day when he can return to his unholy work.

Medium Undead (Pre-Atlantean Scholar 17 / Noble 6)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: True Sight, Listen +18, Spot +22

Languages: All Human Tongues (prefers Stygian)

Dodge Defence: 21 (+3 Dex, +8 class)

Parry Defence: 24 (+5 Str, +9 class)

DR: 10 (+10 Natural)

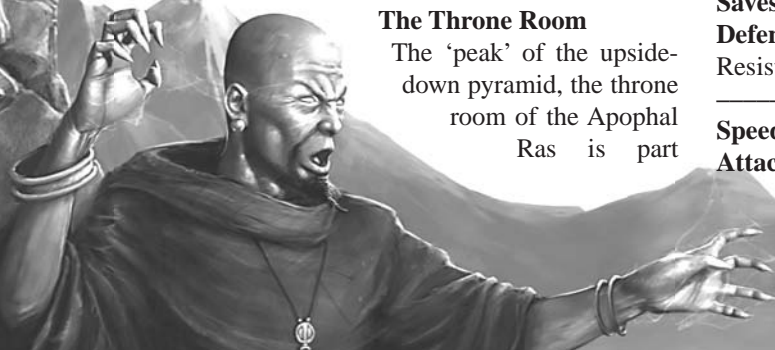
Hit Points: 69 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +15

Defensive Specials: Apophal Boon, Regeneration, Resistant to Blows, Spells

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Khopesh +22 melee (1d8+5, AP 6)



Full Attack: Khopesh +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+5, AP 6)

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

Base Attack: +17/+12/+7/+2

Grapple: +22

Special Attacks: Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Counterspells, Curses, Immortality, Nature Magic, Necromancy and Summonings; 66 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +16 (+9 class, +6 Charisma, +1 Regional Bonus)

Spells Known: *Agonising Doom, Awful Rite of the Were-Beast, Command Weather, Children of the Night, Chill of the Grave (Defensive Blast), Death Touch, Desperate Ward (Defensive Blast), Doom, Draw Forth the Soul, Eternal Youth¹, Greater Warding, Ill-Fortune, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Life Drain¹, Raise Corpse, Spirit of the Land Summon Beast, Unnatural Strength¹, Ward by Will, Warding, Witch's Vigour¹*

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 17, Con –, Int 26, Wis 26, Cha 22

Special Qualities: Apophal Boon, Background (Priest), Enhanced Leadership, Eternal Life, Increased Maximum Power Points (quadruple), Knowledge is Power, Lead by Example +2, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Scholar, Social Ability (*refuge*), Wealth

Feats: Craft Magic Item¹, Improved Evil Eye¹, Iron Will, Leadership, Menacing Aura, No Honour, Steely Gaze, Touch of Power¹

Skills: Appraise +20, Bluff +28, Concentration +21, Craft (alchemy) +27, Craft (herbalism) +22, Craft (embalming) +30, Decipher Script +30, Diplomacy +26, Disguise +25, Forgery +20, Gather Information +14, Heal +14, Hide +14, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +30, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (religion) +24, Move Silently +14, Perform (ritual) +26, Ride +12, Search +12, Sense Motive +22

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 16 (–3)

Corruption and Insanity: 25; Fully Corrupted

Possessions: Exquisite Khopesh, Exquisite Noble's Clothing, Rings of Ten Kings

¹ This feat or spell can be found in the *Secrets of Skelos* sourcebook.

Ras is tall and wiry; built on a frame that looks athletic and tough. His pale white flesh and long dark hair is oiled frequently with embalming oils, giving him an unnatural sheen. The gilded garb he wears has been intricately woven with threads of silk and spun copper over centuries of crafting, making the smallest scrap of his loose-fitting clothing worth a small fortune. His eyes are as blue as the sea he will never look upon, his lips the colour of a sunset he barely remembers.

He could pass for a pale man in poor light, which his throne room always is, if he were not wrapped in wisps of darkness that flow around his movements like ink. Like blood trailing in water, all of Ras' motions leave behind wisps of blackness that seem to devour light and heat, revealing him to onlookers as something terribly otherworldly.

When Ras speaks his voice is monotone and unnerving, only changing in volume rather than tone when upset or anxious. He has waited, bound in a prison of his own making, too long to care anymore about social graces. He simply wants to know how to break Thulsa-Doom's wards upon his chamber so he may fulfil his destiny and bring the Apophal army into the realm of mortals in Apophis' name.

Combat

Ras rarely has to battle anything anymore, having broken and battered trespassers brought to him by his Apophal mummies but when he does feel it necessary to inflict harm directly he generally uses his impressive spell repertoire to do so. He has not had to unsheathe his blade, which often hangs in its loop over the back of the throne, in over five centuries – what could possibly make him do so now?

Eternal Life (Su): Ras was transformed into a strange undead being that returns from death after each time he is killed. After Ras is brought to 0 Hit Points or less he is forced to make a Fortitude save (DC equal to 18 plus the amount of damage below 0 he currently has suffered). If the save is passed Ras is rendered unconscious and must regenerate his damage normally, regaining consciousness when he reaches his normal maximum of Hit Points. If the save is failed however, his body crumbles to dust (leaving only his skull) and he must then go into Deathstate.

Being in Deathstate means that Ras' body remains as ash and dust but still contains the power to regenerate. Any time living blood is shed within 30 feet of the largest portion of dust however, there is a percentage chance equal to the number of Hit Points spilled that Ras' body will begin to immediately regenerate, returning him from the dead once more. This is often why the Apophal mummies sacrifice their captives to Ras, as good practice should he ever be physically destroyed.

Apophal Boon (Su): The darkness that surrounds Ras is a powerful entropic energy that leeches the life from anything



standing near to him. Any living thing within five feet of Ras suffers one point of temporary Constitution damage. Should this damage bring someone to zero Constitution they will die and be automatically raised as a loyal Apophal mummy (see below). Additionally, the flow of darkness makes it difficult to see precisely where the creature is, granting it Partial Cover.

Regeneration (Ex): Ras' eternal body knits damage remarkably fast. He regains 2d6 Hit Points at the end of every round of combat. This ability is tied to his use of magic though and any round in which he casts a spell or performs a ritual will have its regeneration rate reduced to 1d6 Hit Points instead.

Resistant to Blows (Ex): All Apophal mummies are made of incredibly resilient flesh permeated with unearthly darkness and they can weather remarkable amounts of damage. Physical attacks only do half damage, applied before any DR.

True Sight (Su): The clear blue eyes of Ras can see through nearly any disguise or trickery and so long as he passes a DC 25 Spot skill check he can see through *any* form of visual deception (hiding, invisibility, disguises and so on).

Plot Hooks

- ✦ One of Ras' mummies has brought him a letter from King Ctesphon IV that talks of wanting to free him; so long as he works in the best interest of the current Stygian regime. The response – a lie wrapped in an affirmation – is on its way back from Ankhenu to Khemi. The Player Characters need to stop that letter from getting to the king before he makes a terrible mistake and frees the horrid being from its tomb.
- ✦ Ras has seen in his rituals the presence of a scholar that might be able to break his wards; one of the Player Characters. He sends one of his 'freshest' and least monstrous Apophal mummies to fetch the unsuspecting man and bring him unharmed to the throne room to discuss his possible options. The rest of the Player Characters need to save him – or join forces with the undying thing.



ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around Ankhenu.

APOPHAL MUMMY

Medium Undead

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organization: Solitary, hunting pair (2) or elder guardian detail (3 – 5)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +8, Spot +10

Languages: Stygian



Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dexterity, +3 Natural)

DR: 6

Hit Dice: 9d12+9 (68 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8

Defensive Specials: Apophal Boon, Resistant to Blows, Undead traits

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Slam +16 melee (1d4+10)

Full Attack: Slam +16 melee (1d4+10)

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

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +16

Special Attacks: Choke, Despair, Improved Grab

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 12, Con –, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 15

Special Qualities: Apophal Boon, Canoptic Link, Undead traits

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness

Skills: Hide +10, Move Silently +6

Possessions: Occasional weaponry

Advancement: 9 – 18 HD (Medium)

Apophal mummies are the ritually reanimated and embalmed corpses that serve the will of Ras, the eternal mummy of Apophis. They are gifted with undeath by the unearthly darkness that permeates Ras or his minions, their life force replaced with Apophal darkness. Ras also removes the heart of his mummified servants, placing them in special canoptic jars that make them completely and unquestioningly loyal to him alone.

Apophal mummies can look very similar to common embalmed mummies. They are wrapped in funeral cloths, smeared with resins, perfumes and oils; but they do not wear clothing or jewellery unless they are one of the elite 'elder' mummies Ras uses to protect his pyramid. They also have a thin aura of inky blackness that trails after them when they move; an immediate warning that this is not just a commonplace mummy.

Combat

Apophal mummies use their powerful and relentless strength to bash their enemies but prefer to get a vice-like grip to strangle and drain the life from them, if they can. Unless Ras (or the holder of the mummy's canoptic jar) tells it otherwise, the mummy will fight until destroyed or until it fulfils its given tasks.

Apophal Boon (Su): The darkness that surrounds an Apophal mummy is a powerful entropic energy that leeches the life from anything standing nearby. Any living thing grappled by the mummy suffers one point of temporary Constitution damage automatically each round. Should this damage bring someone to zero Constitution they will die and be automatically raised as an Apophal mummy. Additionally, the flow of darkness makes it difficult to see precisely where the creature is, granting it Partial Cover.

Choke (Ex): During a grapple, the Apophal mummy may use a special action called choke. It can choke the its opponent for 1 round by winning an opposed grapple check (made in place of an attack). Normal suffocation rules apply but it is considered a violent suffocation – meaning that the target can only hope to hold its breath for 1 round per point of the target's current Constitution score. Due to the wrenching grasp of the mummy, the victim of a choke suffers 1 round of being stunned after the grapple is broken.

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of an Apophal mummy, the viewer must succeed in a Will save DC 18 or be paralysed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Targets cannot be affected again by despair for 24 hours, whether or not they pass the save.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent with a slam attack. It can then automatically choose to make a free Grapple attack against that target, suffering no attack of opportunity for doing so. This grapple check can be used to begin to choke the target.

Resistant to Blows (Ex): Apophal mummies are made of incredibly resilient embalmed flesh permeated with unearthly darkness and they can weather remarkable amounts of damage. Physical attacks only do half damage, applied before any DR.

SCARAB SWARM

Tiny Vermin (Swarm)

Climate/Terrain: Any desert or subterranean

Organization: Solitary, tangle (2 – 6 swarms) or colony (7 – 12 swarms)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 size)

DR: –



Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 hp)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1
Defensive Specials: Swarm traits

Speed: 20 ft.
Attack: Swarm (1d4 plus poison)
Full Attack: Swarm (1d4 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)
Base Attack: +0
Grapple: –
Special Attacks: Distraction, Poison
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2
Special Qualities: Swarm traits, Vermin traits
Feats: –
Skills: Climb +4, Hide +12
Possessions: –
Advancement: –

The Fallen Pyramid of Ankhenu is often home to rotting corpses and the walking dead, filling the air for a mile in every direction with the sickly sweet smell of decay. This has, over the centuries, attracted countless members of the scarab beetle family to come and scavenge amongst the detritus and remnants of past explorers. The dark energies that permeate the place make these two-inch long insects frenzied with carnivorous hungers that will turn a few thousand of their number into a single flowing swarm that devours any meat it crawls over in seconds.

Swarm Combat

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.

Vulnerabilities of Swarms

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit.

A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.

A scarab swarm crawls across warm bodies in search of open flesh to bite and feast upon. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move, requiring the requisite poison saves as detailed below from the potentially infectious bite of a carrion eater.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a scarab swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 11 or be nauseated for 1 round by the overwhelming pricks of thousands of spiny legs, chitinous shells and pincers.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a scarab swarm's attack is also affected by the following poisonous effect:



Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Scarab Infection	Injury DC 15	1 Con	4	One per round

Skills: A scarab swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Spot checks and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A scarab swarm can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with Ankhenu, the Fallen Pyramid.

✦ The Player Characters are travelling across the Stygian desert and find a completely deserted caravan. Camels alive and many of the goods intact, they know it is not likely to be raiders or slavers. There is a single column of tracks that lead away from the scene. If the Player Characters choose to

follow them, soon they will find themselves standing in front of the heavy doors of Ankhenu.

✦ Thulsa-Doom believes that his spell of warding against Ras might be weakening but cannot risk revealing himself to the mortal world while Conan still lives. He must then deal with this potential threat through outsiders, dream visions and far-reaching arcane rituals. The Player Characters may not realise they are pawns in a titanic game between two immortals but what can they hope to accomplish if they do?

✦ A very wealthy Stygian mercantile master knows that his eldest son and daughter have been taken prisoner by the horrible mummies of the Kheshatta wilderness and thinks he knows where they are headed. He employs the Player Characters to go and bring back his children, which they will want to do *before* the mummies drag them down into the Fallen Pyramid. They may have no choice when they arrive; a powerful Stygian is not someone they will want upset with them.





Cianhough, The Veins of the Mountain

North of the infamous Ymir Pass there is another frequented mountain thoroughway known to the Cimmerian people. This path does not lead over the mountains to the other side; instead it leads *into* and *under* the mountains themselves. This long and twisting cavern does not actually lead anywhere but many of the local clans believe that walking its tunnels and making a mark next to a peculiar stone formation will turn any young man into a grown warrior.

CIANHOUGH, THE VEINS OF THE MOUNTAIN

'Every warrior in our clan has fought the challenges of Cianhough. found the Heart and now wear a chip of its stone flesh to show their passage into manhood to all the world. We are as strong as the mountains because of this.'

Terrain Type: Simple Cavern

Total Subterranean Area: 60,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 225 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet):
40,000 tunnels, 20,000 chambers

Important Terrain Elements: Rare Ore Deposits (Blue Steel), Natural Reinforcement, Various Large and Subterranean Fauna

HISTORY

Beginning as a natural cavern opened by the passage of time in the mountains of Cimmeria, the Cianhough (pronounced *see-ahn-hoh*) was discovered 10 generations before Conan's birth by scouts looking for wintering holes to tuck away their clans when the Nordheimer snows would come blowing southward. At first they believed it to be a simple bear den that would need to be cleared out of the dangerous beasts but it turned out to be much more.

When the scouts returned to the cave with the clan's hunters and warriors, there were no bears at the mouth of the 'den' as they expected. Instead they were forced to light peat torches and move deeper inside; a dangerous endeavour when possibly entering a bear's den. They never found bears but they were definitely not alone either.

The first clan to scout the Cianhough were forced to fight off what they described as 'cave cats' in the first few hundred feet of cavern. These cats were said to be ferocious and daring but were too afraid of fire to engage the clansmen for very long. After getting thoroughly lost within the twists and turns of the cavern while constantly being pounced upon by large cats, the clan called off the exploration and turned back.

Within a few years another clan had heard of this untamed cavern and sent warriors of its own to try and claim the sizeable terrain feature. Having a northward home to hide and weather out the cold season would be a great benefit – and no Cimmerian clan can turn away from a good challenge. This new clan's warriors fought several of the cavern cats but were ambushed by something *else* that came up from the root of the Cianhough. These creatures were like men for the most part but with no discernable language other than barks and clicks to one another. Calling them the 'fiormol' after a legendary underground race of trolls, this second clan pulled back out of the cavern as well – but not before seeing what the fiormol were protecting.

The clansmen that returned told the chiefs about the dangers of the cavern and that they found long stretches of blue iron ore in the walls the deeper they explored. One returning Cimmerian claimed to have seen a huge boulder of the stuff in the cavern near where the fiormol appeared, calling it by an ancient term from his clan's myths – the Heart of the Mountain. The assembled chiefs made the decision that no clan should try and claim the cavern for themselves; instead it would be a place of pride and self-testing for warriors. Only the strongest members of the clans could go and hunt the tighogh or try to bring back the heads of the fiormol.





Soon all of the local clans were sending their warriors to the Cianhogh to test their strength and courage. Some returned with shocking tales of other beasts found in the darkness, others with pelts and heads of the cavern's denizens and still others did not return at all. A warrior's first trip into and out of the Cianhogh quickly evolved into a rite of passage, adding in another element to the trip to ensure that a young warrior did travel through the twisting darkness to emerge a man.

When the first warrior emerged from the Cianhogh with a small chip of blue iron ore from the huge 'heart' at the root of the cavern— all other warriors entering the Cianhogh to prove themselves had to do the same. Now these young Cimmerians spend days searching the tunnels to find the Heart, fending off the cavern's inhabitants while trying not to become lost in the darkness. They emerge broken, bleeding and battered; but if they have a piece of the Heart with them they are assured to have a long and wonderful life as a clan warrior.

LAYOUT

The Cianhogh has only one entrance and exit point; the wide mouth at the edge of a rock outcropping in the mountains a few hours north of Ymir Pass. The mouth is only 10 feet wide and 12 tall, quickly sloping into the standard ten by eight tunnels that dominate much of the entire cavern. The first 50 feet or so are well illuminated by light from the outside but it quickly grows too dark to see and requires torches or lanterns to manoeuvre through the rest of the cavern.

The cavern is a spiralling mix of tunnels and small chambers scattered around the Heart chamber, which is also the lowest point in the Cianhogh and the hidden path that the fiormol use to enter the cavern from their own strange subterranean home. Most of the tunnels are disorienting and tight, rarely wider than two men shoulder-to-shoulder and the chambers are more like exaggerated widening of the tunnels that connect them. There is little that differentiates one part of the Cianhogh from another, which is why it is so easy to become lost in the maze of tunnels. All skill checks used to decipher direction or determine pathways made while inside the Cianhogh are made at a -3 penalty.

The only real places in the whole cavern that truly stand out are the main Heart chamber and the den of the tighogh; both of which are

larger than normal chambers that only have one way in or out. The tighogh den is closer to the surface, sprouting off at the end of a dead-end tunnel only 200 feet from the mouth of the cavern. The Heart chamber however, is the deepest point of the cavern; a full 225 feet below the surface.

EXPLORATION NOTES

Cianhogh Chain of Tunnels

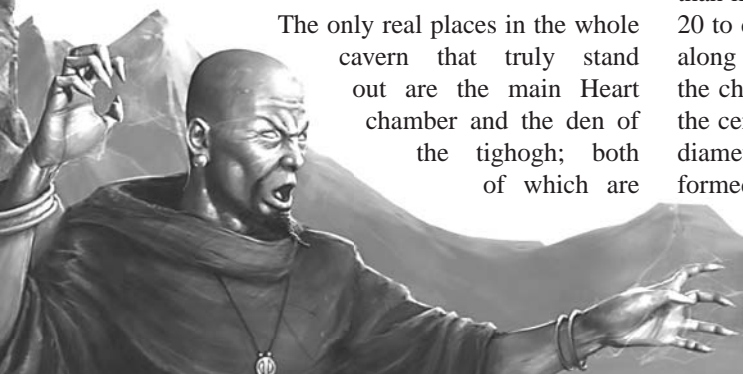
The raw, packed stone tunnels of the Cianhogh wind and twist through a large section of the mountain. These tunnels are sporadic and seemingly random; dipping beneath one another, connecting at odd intervals and doubling back on themselves like some geological ball of yarn tucked into the side of the mountain. The tunnels are never more than 15 feet wide and never have a ceiling higher than 12 feet, widening into the occasional chamber that might double or triple those dimensions for a hundred feet or less. Other than the confusing layout of the tunnel chain, there is little that makes the Cianhogh stand out from other local caves and caverns.

Den of the Tighogh

A few hundred feet from the mouth of the cavern lays a short declining tunnel that twists back upon itself, creating a tight angle that feeds into a larger chamber covered in stone ledges and depressions – the nesting pads of the tighogh cavern cats. This chamber is their den and one of the most dangerous places to be stumbled upon within the Cianhogh. Twenty or more adult cats lounge and live in the den when not actively out in the caves or mountains, often with several of their growing kittens. The chamber stinks of ammonia and faeces, is littered with dark grey tufts of shed fur and a small trickle of spring water running down the walls in several places. Few explorers could ever hope to survive an encounter with this room without special circumstances but the tighogh will not hesitate to escape should their numbers be truly threatened.

Heart Chamber

Deep within the snarl of tunnels and chambers there lies a single large chamber that serves as the 'goal' for all of the tested Cimmerians looking to make their name at the Cianhogh. It is difficult to find through normal navigation of the tunnel network, calling for no less than five Survival (or tunnel-related) skill checks at DC 20 to discover. The chamber is thick with blue iron ore along the walls and floor but the most famous feature of the chamber is the gigantic ore boulder that dominates the centre of the space. Fifteen feet in height and 10 in diameter, the Heart is solid blue iron ore that somehow formed in the rough shape of a human heart.





Over the decades of being used as a rite of passage, the Heart is covered in countless pits and gouges from prideful Cimmerian warriors taking chips and chunks from its surface as the physical trophy of their quest. The Heart has a natural Hardness of 20 and requires at least one point of damage to be inflicted to chip off a piece to serve as this trophy but finding and claiming it has a profound effect upon a Cimmerian doing so. Any Cimmerian that travels his way through the Cianhogh to find the Heart Chamber, take his piece of the Heart itself and then survives to wear it as a trophy automatically gains a +1 to his Reputation score and +2 to all Will saving throws against Terror or similar negative emotional effects.

found a sweeter meat to fill their collective bellies. They slide out of the gravel patch behind the Heart silently, then scrambling into the tunnels to try and find unwary or wounded explorers to scoop up and bring back to their families.

Finding the secret gravel patch is a Search skill check DC 35.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around Cianhogh.

CENTIPEDE, GIANT CIMMERIAN

Medium Animal (vermin)

Climate/Terrain: Underground

Organization: Solitary, tangle (2 – 4) or colony (5 – 20)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

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

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 (33 hp)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Specials: Vermin traits

Speed: 40 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 40 ft. climb

Attack: Pincer +8 melee (1d4+2 plus poison)

Full Attack: 2 pincers +8 melee (1d4+2 plus poison)

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

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 15, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 5

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Feats: Run, Track

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +12

Possessions: –

Advancement: 6 – 8 HD (Medium), 9 – 12 HD (Large)



Secret Passage to the Fiormol Underworld

Unknown to all but the creatures that use it, there is a patch of shifting stones at the rear of the Heart Chamber that opens up into a short tunnel filled with loose gravel and sand making it seem like normal cavern floor material to the untrained eye. This tunnel is the connecting point between the Cianhogh and a larger cavern that is the subterranean home of the feral fiormol people. Their home is one large cavern that is filled with fiormol family units.

The fiormol originally ventured through the ‘gravel gate’ into the Cianhogh to hunt down the tighogh cats for food but with the introduction of the much softer and easier to catch humans that appear in the cavern – they have

Looking like a piece of grey-brown cord darting across the cavern floor the giant Cimmerian centipede is lined with many pairs of long legs





and has a pair of thin pincers coated in a mild neurotoxin, Giant Cimmerian centipedes are an ancient breed that escaped the last great freeze by going underground, where it thrives on smaller insects and mammals. They are the primary food source of the tighogh cavern cats, who learn to hunt the fast-moving creatures as kittens.

Combat

Giant centipedes of any kind are not known for their tactics, preferring to ambush their prey repeatedly over several encounters until their poison manages to paralyse them. After the target collapses, the centipede colony can emerge to feast on the numb and motionless flesh.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a giant Cimmerian centipede's pincer attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Giant Cen-tipede Toxin	Injury DC 15	1d4 Dex	5	One per round

Skills: A giant Cimmerian centipede has a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A giant Cimmerian centipede can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

FIORMOL (UNDERMEN)

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Any Subterranean

Organization: Solitary, patrol (2 – 4) or pack (5 – 20)

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

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 120 ft., Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: Primitive Barks and Clicks

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

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 5d8+15 (37 hp)

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

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 5 ft. burrow, 20 ft. climbing

Attack: Claw +9 melee (1d4+3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee (1d4+3), bite +7 melee (1d8+1,

AP 2)

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

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Power Attack, Relentless jaws

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 3

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Multiattack, Toughness

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +12, Jump +8, Move Silently +12

Possessions: Occasional fur strips or meat trophies from recent kills

Advancement: By character class (favoured class: barbarian)

The fiormol (pronounced *fee-ohr-mohl*) or 'undermen' as they are commonly called are a race of long lost subterranean humanoids that gave in to their feral ways countless generations ago. They have a strange pack mentality that revolves around the conservation of meat and flesh, including their own when some of their number is killed. They are dark-skinned like slate, yellow-eyed and long limbed creatures that could scarcely pass for human in the lowest of light conditions – especially when they open their saw-toothed maw in hungry anticipation.

Combat

Fiormol are straightforward savages when they engage in combat. Springing from hiding with their claws and teeth tearing at what they consider to be the easiest meal, the pack often concentrates its efforts on the largest person first. They have numbed pain sensations when fighting however and very rarely leave a battle without at least some meat in their bellies.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the fiormol must hit with a bite. If it gets a hold, it can use its Relentless Jaws attack the following round.

Relentless Jaws (Ex): Once a fiormol has hold of an opponent in its jaws (see Improved Grab, above) it can continue biting him each round thereafter, dealing standard bite damage. This also gradually chews through its opponent's armour – each round the fiormol uses Relentless Jaws, including the first round, the AP rating of its bite increases by +1.

Skills: Fiormol have a +4 racial bonus to their Climb, Hide and Move Silently skills.





TIGHOGH, CAVERN CAT

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Mountainous Subterranean

Organization: Solitary or pair (2) or den (10 – 20)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +6

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 6d8+18 (46 hp)

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

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft. (20 ft, climbing)

Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d8+6, AP 4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d8+6, AP 4) and bite +3 melee (1d8+3, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake 1d8+4, AP 4

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus (Climb), Track

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +5 (+12), Jump +10, Move Silently +12, Survival +10

Possessions: –

Advancement: 7 – 10 HD (Large)

As large as a man and covered in slate-gray fur that is only mottled when caked with blood, the tighogh (pronounced *teeg-hoh*) cavern cat is a mountain cavern inhabitant cousin of the panther or leopard. It has thick fur on its paws and between its toes for walking on mountain snow or on loose gravel, parting to reveal truly huge sabre-like claws just before it slashes outward to cripple its target.

Although only known to nest in the Cimmerian mountain ranges, sub-breeds of these cats could be found in other regions as well.

Combat

Cavern cats are brutal combatants that are adept at ripping open their targets with their claws with a quick pounce, trapping the wounded creature under its weight while it tries desperately to sever its neck with its jaws. They are not frenzied fighters however and will tend to retreat into darkness to escape from anything that reduces them to half Hit Points.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a tighogh 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 a tighogh charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d8+4, AP 4.





Skills: Tighogh have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Climb, Hide and Move Silently checks. If in areas of mountainous or subterranean terrain, their Hide bonus increases to +12.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Players Characters into direct encounter with Cianhogh, the Veins of the Mountain.

- ❖ One of the Cimmerian Players Characters is being sent to the Cianhogh to prove himself a man and a warrior despite years of adventuring and exploring the continent. He has no choice but to travel to the cavern and get his piece of the Heart; but nothing in the traditions forbid him from bringing his allies with him.
- ❖ An unexpected earthquake has opened a large second entrance into the Cianhogh – through the lair of the fiormol. The undermen have already begun emerging on the surface at night, seeking out the local populace to fill their bellies. The Players Characters have been tasked with somehow closing up this second entrance by the clans' chiefs, who are less concerned about the fiormol than they are about the new surface tunnel. They believe that a second way in or out will somehow cheapen the rite of passage and they would rather risk a total cave-in than keep this 'back door' open.
- ❖ A merchant in Tarantia claims that he has found the perfect fur for his capes and coats – cavern cat pelts. He knows where to find some to be hunted and is willing to pay the Players Characters 100 silver per pelt retrieved for him. All they have to do is go into this Cianhogh place and drag out a few of them; and it just so happens that this merchant has a quality map that will get them there. What they do when they arrive is a different story altogether.





Edau Voyha, Beneath The Indigo Fields

In the deep and rich lands of Vendhya, where the people grow the indigo plant for dyes and inks, there is an area that most of the local population steers clear of whenever they can. A field of wild indigo surrounding groves of ash trees lies above an underground temple-turned-cavern that has been the central point of worship for the dangerous and wild rakhshas of the dread god, Yizil.

EDAU VOYHA

'We wash in the crushed essence of the indigo plants to stain all that we are in the holy colours of our lord. Our skin, our hair, our clothes...all of these things should display our dedication to Yizil's power.'

Terrain Type: Simple Cavern

Total Subterranean Area: 100,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 75 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 10,000 tunnels, 90,000 chambers

Important Terrain Elements: Cut/Set Stone, Waterway Access (Spring), Light Sources, Useful Growth, Numerous Mammals

HISTORY

The monkey-masked, blue skinned god of chaotic violence Yizil attracts many forms of worshippers in the darker lower castes of Vendhya. These low worshippers secretly pray to the dangerous deity do so in private, donning their vestment robes and making the journey to Edau Voyha (pronounced *ee-dow woi-ha*) to bath in the attentions of his high priests and rakhshas. Such was the way the faith was built many generations ago; but it would not stay that way forever.

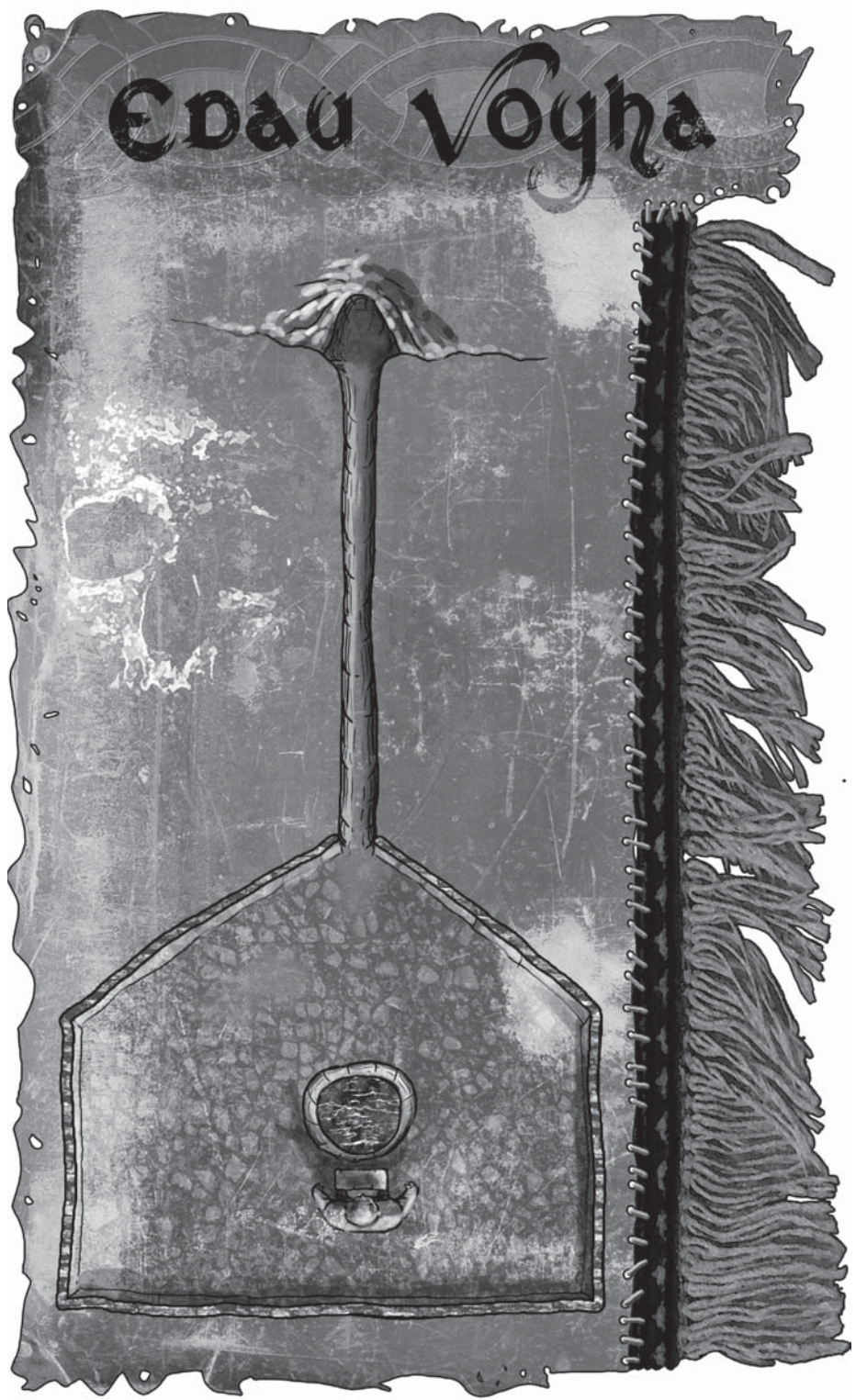
At the beginning of written history in Vendhya, the primary temple of Yizil was located amongst the ash trees and indigo fields of Edau Voyha. The priests and worshippers would stain themselves deep blue with the indigo inks and dance under perfumed lamps hanging from the tree branches, filling the entire area with scents, songs and prayers. Although Yizil has always been a chaotic and frenzied god who teaches illumination

through experience as much as through traditional practices, the area was well-known to the common Vendhyans as a place of wild excesses.

A hundred generations before Conan was in swaddling clothes, the blue priesthood of Yizil made a heinous error in angering the high priest of Yama, the Vendhyans god of destruction. They threw a massive celebratory feast on one of Yama's most holy of days, drawing people away from his annual services to come and participate in the monkey god's gala. Half of Yama's priests sacrificed the other half as an offering of apology to their god, who they begged would punish the foolish and prideful followers of Yizil.

The legends claim that Yama leapt down from the heavens and breathed a curse down upon the frolicking Vendhyans throughout the grounds at Edau Voyha. His curse was simple – forego the duties of men in worship to act like animals, then animals you should be. The highest of clergy were cast into the shape of apes while the drug-hazed revellers were turned into monkeys; their bodies warping and shifting to match their shameful activities. Not satisfied with his punishment, Yama then dragged his mighty claws around the temple grounds, cutting a deep groove in the ground and pushing the temple underground. Pulling the ground closed on top of the temple, Yama was pleased and left to go back to the heavens. Such is the myth of how Edau Voyha was buried and became the breeding ground for the inked monkeys and midnight apes.

Over the centuries the temple became a part of the natural stone crust surrounding it and the man-made feel of Edau Voyha mixed with that of a natural cavern. Worshippers became more devout as a whole; it took bravery and skill to gain access to the temple, cutting the chaff from the wheat, so to speak. The remaining worshippers were truly zealous and devoted to Yizil. While this purified his followers to only the most loyal of stock, it also made his faith very small and concentrated at Edau Voyha.



Ever since the temple became a permanent piece of the Vendhyan underworld and Yizil became a far less popular religion amongst the common castes, Edau Voyha has been a sort of mystery for outsiders – especially foreigners – who stumble upon it. Many explorers and adventurers have discovered Yizil's secret temple under the indigo fields, found the packs of strange blue-furred monkeys and perhaps even met with the ink-stained rakhshas. For the Vendhyans it is a reminder that the gods are not to be taken lightly and that every action taken can have an impact on the body and soul.

LAYOUT

With an extremely basic shape to its overall form, the cavern temple of Edau Voyha has only two main elements. It is a single long tunnel that leads shallowly underground for over 1,000 feet and a single titanic chamber that was once the main hall of the Yizil temple. Despite the natural terrain elements that have overtaken much of the original architecture, the basic layout remains the same.

A long and straight tunnel is the only access point to Edau Voyha, opening up above ground in a hillock between indigo patches and extending down under the soil at a slight decline for roughly 1,000 feet due west. This tunnel leads directly into the main hall chamber, where the Yizil clergy (if you can call them such) dance, pray and practice their bloody rituals.

The main hall is a single chamber with 50 foot high ceilings and walls of moss and root covered tiles that surround over 85 thousand square feet of open hall. One hundred feet across and 900 feet deep from the tunnel's adjoining point, the only major layout or construction point of reference in the hall is the 25 foot radius bright blue pool of water at the rooms rough centre.

Edau Voyha is not terribly complex; it is large and imposing in its simplicity.

EXPLORATION NOTES

Monkey Road

The local title for the long and straight entrance tunnel, 'monkey road' is a 10 foot wide path of packed earth and clay that has been thoroughly stained blue by the constant crushing of indigo plants into the mud and stones. Anything that touches the walls or floor will likely come back stained blue as well, especially the feet and fur of the numerous bellow monkeys (see below)



that use Edau Voyha as their home and shelter. So many of the curious blue primates can be found lounging or playing in the tunnel that there is no question how it got its name.

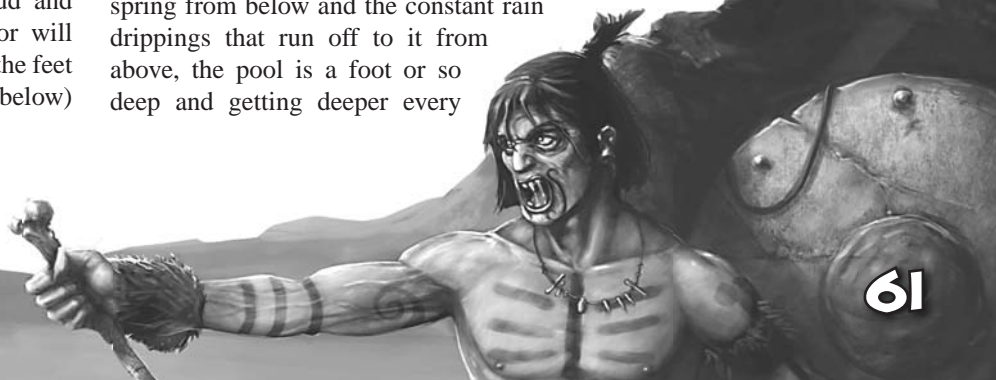
Yizil's Hall

The gigantic single chamber that makes up Edau Voyha, Yizil's Hall was obviously once a beautiful work of craftsmanship and skill. Its tiled walls are now covered in caked dirt, protruding roots and blue-streaks of muddy water that trickles down from the ceiling. There are several areas of the chamber dedicated to benches, chairs and ever bedrolls – not that many of Yizil's followers would want to stay still long enough to sleep here.

The floor of the hall is sticky with indigo-root sap crushed under heels and small droplets of leeches water occasionally drips from the ceiling. Monkeys and larger apes wander about in this chamber a great deal, ignoring the blue-inked rakhshas but becoming visibly agitated toward outsiders. Perfumed oils and incense burners give the whole chamber a floral odour that helps stifle the presence of blood from sacrifices, waste from the monkeys and rotten flesh from any deceased have yet to be collected.

The Inkwel Spring

At the centre of Yizil's Hall there is a large, shallow pool of brilliantly blue water. Fed by both a natural spring from below and the constant rain drippings that run off to it from above, the pool is a foot or so deep and getting deeper every





year by a miniscule amount. The waters inside are completely safe to drink and sustain life, as all of the temple's inhabitants do so on a regular basis. They are also heavily tainted with the pigments from the indigo fields, giving it and the lips/mouth of anyone drinking it a bright blue hue.

The Altar

Set nearly 700 feet back from the tunnel's exit into the main hall, a large sculpted and painted statue of Yizil himself – depicted wearing his monkey-faced mask while sitting in a lotus-pose – looms over all those who come to worship. There are always a dozen monkeys or more sitting or lounging around the statue, proving to the zealous followers of the chaotic faith that Yizil has indeed been with them despite the temple's savage relocation underground.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are some of the most important individuals found in or near Edau Voyha. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

DASHWAR PARLIM, HOCAR OF YIZIL

Dedicated to the somewhat eclectic faith of Yizil, Dashwar Parlím is a thinly built but athletic Vendhyan that lives his life according to the number one rule of the monkey-faced god – experience is the essence of immortality. If it can be experienced, he must do so; pain, pleasure, sadness...even rage. This sort of holy journey to 'enlightenment through sensation' has placed him in strange or even dangerous situations throughout the years.

Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan Scholar 12)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +12, Spot +15

Languages: Aquilonian, Khitan (Literate), Old Stygian, Stygian, Vendhyan (Literate)

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

Parry Defence: 16 (+2 Str, +4 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 61 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +15 (+14 against Hypnotism; 11 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +11 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +11/+6 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

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

Base Attack: +9/+4

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Counterspells, Curses, Necromancy, Prestidigitation, Summonings; 8 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +9 (+11 with Curses) (+6 class, +3 Charisma; +2 Hexer)

Spells Known: *Animate Statue*¹, *Animate Swords*¹, *Awful Rite of the Were-Beast*, *Burst Barrier*, *Conjuring*, *Curse of Yizil*, *Death Touch*, *Doom*, *Greater Ill-Fortune*, *Greater Telekinesis*, *Greater Warding*, *Ill-Fortune*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Magic Builder*¹, *Master Warding*¹, *Master Words and Signs*, *Raise Corpse*, *Telekinesis*, *Warding*, *Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)*,

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 17

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Knowledge (Arcana) and Sleight-of-Hand), Background (Priest), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar, Weapon Familiarity (tulwar)

Feats: Adept (Curses), Brawl, Craft Magic Item¹, Foul is Fair², Hexer, Iron Will, No Honour, Ritual Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Tortured Sacrifice

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (herbalism) +15, Craft (pigment) +15, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +14, Intimidate +12, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (religion) +18, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Search +10, Sense Motive +14, Sleight-of-Hand +12, Survival +10

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+3)

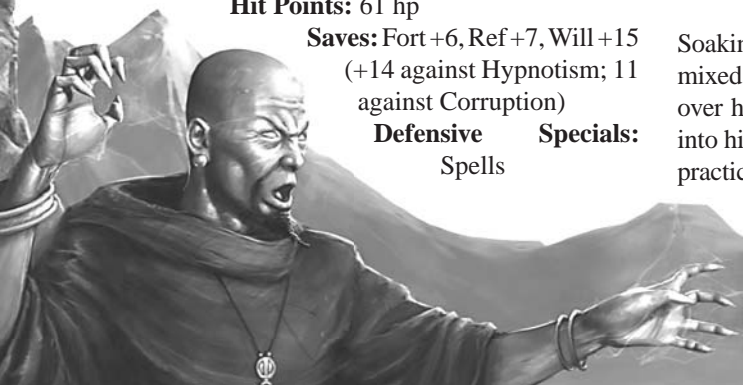
Corruption and Insanity: 4; Mania

Possessions: Loincloth of Blue-Dyed Fur, Bone-Hilted Dagger

¹ This feat or spell can be found in the *Secrets of Skelos* sourcebook.

² This feat can be found in the *Return to the Road of Kings* sourcebook.

Soaking his body in distilled indigo ink nightly, often mixed with hallucinogens, Dashwar is a deep colour of blue over his entire body. Some of the fluid has even leached into his eyes over the three decades he has performed this practice, giving his white eyes strange swirls of blue. The



constant wild look in his eyes and his consistently erratic behaviour ensures that Yizil's Hotar is unsettling to look upon, interact with or otherwise be around.

Dashwar lives in the main chamber of Edau Voyha, the spiritual leader of all who would come to worship or partake in the monkey god's dances and orgy-like celebrations. The blue-tinted primates that are constantly present in the cavern temple consider him one of their own and it is not unheard of to find him play wrestling with the bellow monkeys or dancing with the midnight apes.

The Hotar is not without a serious side however and anyone who would dare come to his home with ill intentions toward the temple or its inhabitants would soon find Dashwar and all of the militant rakhshas leading a monkey-and-ape charge upon them!

Combat

Dashwar is a powerful magician, gifted the use of sorcery through his visions, which he prefers to use against most enemies when he has to confront them. He never goes far without his bone dagger but rarely wants to use it. If his blue-furred allies do not deal with a target before he even has to think about it, he will just as soon join in on the clawing, biting and beating of the enemy – just as Yizil intended it!

Plot Hooks

- ✿ There is a desert ghoulish creature that bears the same name as the monkey-masked god and Dashwar has only just realised this. He wonders if the beasts are some kind of long-lost members of his flock and wants to know more about them but he cannot leave the temple to go to the desert to find one. He sends a messenger to someone that a member of his faith knows; one of the Player Characters. They are to go out and find one of these 'yizil ghouls', catch it and bring it all the way back to Edau Voyhan for Dashwar to study. What a blue-dyed, half-crazed mystic priest can pay them with might just surprise them...
- ✿ Something has recently made most of the animals that live in the indigo fields, ash trees and temple chamber very ill and nothing Dashwar is doing with his magic or his alchemy seems to be helping. He knows that perhaps all he needs are the ideas of some outsiders to heal his co-inhabitants – so he has the Player Characters all kidnapped and brought to him. When they are unmasked and explained to about what is going on, what will they do; fight their unwanted host for the inconvenience or help him and make a powerful (and strange) new ally?



RUNDI HAGEM, AMBITIOUS RAKHSHA

A part of the Edau Voyha temple guardians for over five years, Rundi is an attractive young woman that has huge aspirations to take the role of Hotar from Parlim. She is young, brash and full of spirit; perfectly suited to being a ranking member of Yizil's worshippers. Even in a religion that teaches giving up of private goals in favour of instinctual ones, Rundi manages to stay power hungry.

Medium Humanoid (Vendhyan Soldier 7 / Scholar 1)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Hyrkanian (Literate), Vendhyan (Literate)

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

Parry Defence: 18 (+2 Str, +5 class, +1 Parry)

DR: -

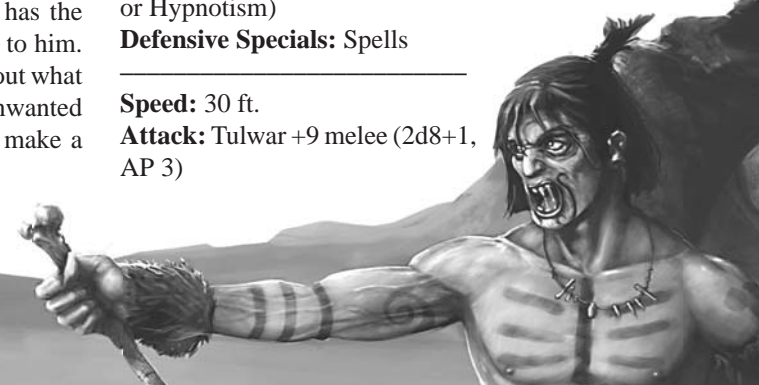
Hit Points: 51 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +10 (+9 against Corruption or Hypnotism)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Tulwar +9 melee (2d8+1, AP 3)





Full Attack: Tulwar +9/+4 melee (2d8+1, AP 3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +7/+2
Grapple: +9
Special Attacks: Cleave, Formation Combat (Light Cavalry, Skirmisher), Power Attack, Spells
Sorcery Knowledge: Curses; 6 Power Points
Magic Attack Bonus: +5 (+1 class, +4 Charisma)
Spells Known: *Lesser Ill-Fortune, Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)*

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18
Special Qualities: Background (Acolyte), Knowledge is Power, Officer (1), Scholar, Weapon Familiarity (tulwar)
Feats: Combat Expertise, No Honour, Weapon Focus (tulwar)
Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +10, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +4, Craft (pigment) +8, Decipher Script +6, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perform (dance) +12, Perform (song) +10, Search +7, Sense Motive +6, Survival +10
Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+2)
Corruption and Insanity: 1; None
Possessions: Silken chemise, tulwar,

Learning about the controversial faith of Yizil through the chidings of her father, Rundi left her home and pre-arranged fiancée to find the underground temple at Edau Voyha at the age of 16. She was forced to live a hard life for a few years as she crossed Vendhya but she managed to find the indigo fields and tried to gain entrance to the temple. It took her two full years of camping closer and closer to the mouth of the Monkey Road before the blue-skinned worshippers believed her to be ready.

No sooner than she was accepted in the fold that her father's men found her and tried to bring her home – with disastrous results. As soon as these oppressors arrived and one made the motion to grab her, the monkeys fell upon them. Rundi watched as men she had known since childhood were torn to pieces by the primate swarm...and she could not have cared less. Her transition to the faith of Yizil was complete; no one else would ever be coming for her.

Rundi is a very attractive Vendhyan woman who wears little in the

way of clothing; barely a silk smock and weapon harness to hold her shining tulwar on her back. Her long, dark hair is woven into a dozen thin braids that hang from her head behind her and she keeps most of her body stained with indigo ink whenever possible. Those who have witnessed her during Yizil's sensational celebrations know that she is graceful, beautiful and has a voice like a soothing wind chime. She is the perfect rakhsha; beautiful, devoted and quite deadly.

Combat

Rundi is one of the most devoted warrior-priests in the faith at Edau Voyha, fighting alongside man and beast alike in the name of the monkey-masked god. She charges headlong at her foes, her tulwar flashing in front of her like a harvest scythe. Occasionally using her minor magical talents to hinder a stronger foe, she is not necessarily an honourable combatant. She knows that victories are won through the death of one's enemies – in any way that can be achieved.

Plot Hooks





✿ Several Kshatriyas in northern Vendhya have been saying many hateful things toward the people willing to worship Yizil; comparing it to cultish demon-worship instead of a proper faith. In retaliation, Rundi is leading a small group of her fellow Yizil worshippers up and out of the cavern temple, heading toward the northern city of Khorala to confront these vocal few. The Player Characters will soon find themselves caught between a group of blue-stained religious zealots and the loud-mouthed noblemen who talked themselves into their predicament.

✿ Rundi has decided to make her move against Dashwar and is ready to try to take his role. She knows she cannot risk going after him directly without aid, as his magics are too strong, so she seeks out the Player Characters to help her. She is very convincing that her ideals are going to help make Edau Voyha into a proper temple again instead of the secret cavern it has become but will they believe in her mission enough to stand against the spiritual leader of an entire faith?

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around Edau Voyha.

BELLOW MONKEY

Small Animal

Climate/Terrain: Vendhyan Forests

Organization: Small pack (5 – 15) or Colony (30 – 120)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +4

Languages: –

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

DR: 0

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d4+2)

Full Attack: 2 Slams +3 melee (1d4+2) or Bite +3 melee (1d6+1)

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

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Bellow

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Iron Will

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +6, Jump +10

Possessions: Scavenged bones, jewellery or strips of cloth

Advancement: 2 – 3 HD (Medium)

In myths and legends the bellow monkeys were created when the god Yama cursed the worshippers of Yizil, a tale that likely formed because of the constant presence of the creatures around the cavern temple at Edau Voyha. This, combined with the unbelievable stubbornness and tenacity of the breed, lends some credence to the tale.

No matter how the bellow monkey came to be, they are small ground-dwelling primates with thick grey fur that is thoroughly dyed a splotchy blue from the indigo fields they live and play in. Through contact with the flowers, dining upon the stems and occasionally just crushing the leaves onto themselves (for scent perhaps), these monkeys always have a blue tint to them; growing deeper and darker at the ends of their limbs, tail and mouth.

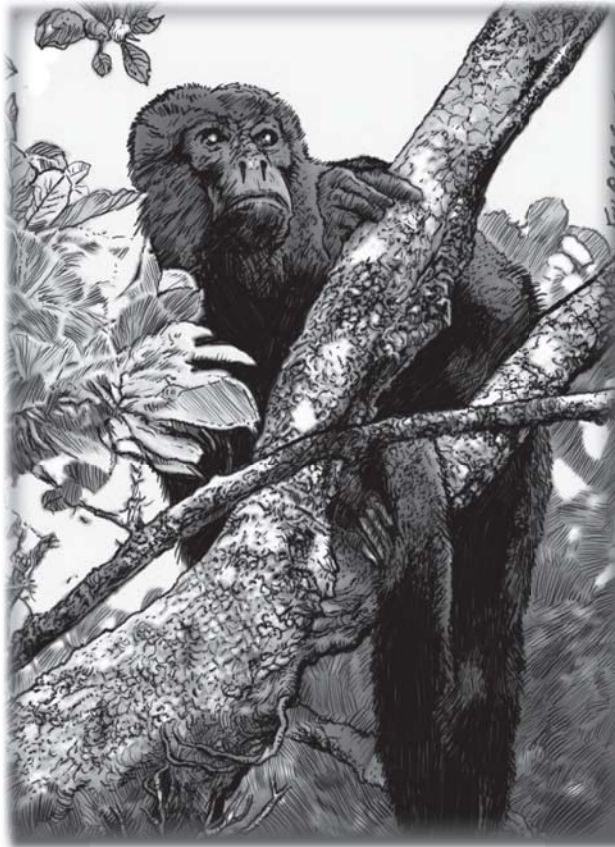
Combat

The bellow monkey is a strong combatant in small packs, leaping onto their enemies in numbers in order to bash them into submission with their fists while biting with their toothy mouths. If they are threatened by a potentially superior foe, a bellow monkey can fill its lungs impossibly large to let out a directed booming howl that can be very disorienting in a frantic conflict.

Bellow (Ex): Once every other combat round a bellow monkey can spend a full-round action to let out its bone-jarring howl. This sound can be heard for over a mile and can be very disorienting to someone nearby. Any non-monkey (or Yizil follower) within 15 feet of the bellowing monkey must pass a Will save DC 12 or suffer -1 on all attack and damage rolls for the next 1d6 rounds. The effects of the bellow are not cumulative but the duration can be restarted by new howling.

Skills: A bellow monkey has a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A bellow monkey can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.





MIDNIGHT APE

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Warm Vendhyan forests and mountains
Organization: Solitary or company (2 – 5)
Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +6 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +5
Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)
DR: 2
Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (52 hp)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2
Defensive Specials: Camouflage

Speed: 30 ft., 30 ft. climb
Attack: Claws +7 melee (1d10+5)
Full Attack: 2 claws +7 melee (1d10+5) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)
Base Attack: +3
Grapple: +12
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7
Special Qualities: –
Feats: Alertness, Toughness
Skills: Climb +10, Hide +8 (+20), Jump +12, Move Silently +12
Possessions: Scraps of cloth or jewellery
Advancement: 9 – 12 HD (Large), 13 – 16 HD (Huge)

The midnight ape is a lowland relative of the northern Hyborian great ape. Although it is slightly smaller in stature than its cousins, it is broader at the shoulder and thicker around the chest, giving it a powerful muscle structure and physique. The most unique part of the midnight ape’s biology is the way that they process the staining oils of their favourite meal – indigo bushes. Instead of digesting the oils normally, they sweat the stuff in a concentrated form, soaking their fur all over to a deep, deep blue that looks almost black in all but direct sunlight. This ‘midnight blue’ gives the animal its name and is a very effective form of nocturnal or subterranean camouflage.

Combat
 Midnight apes are brutal and tough, clamouring forward to rake their thick claw-like fingernails across an enemy or biting them with their exaggerated jaws. The apes fight with a greater ferocity whenever a family member – including the blue-stained Yizil worshippers – is threatened, willingly throwing themselves into a suicidal situation to save a weaker ‘family’ member.

Camouflage (Ex): The colouration of the midnight ape grants a +12 bonus to Hide skill checks in any dark environment (night time, subterranean and so on).



Crush (Ex): A midnight ape that makes a successful grab can make a single crush attack in place of its two claw attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 3d8+5 damage on the target and needs not roll to hit.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the midnight ape must hit with a claw attack. If it gets a hold on the target successfully, it can then crush.

Skills: Midnight apes have a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into contact with Edau Voyha.

- ❖ A textile merchant needs a few bushels of the indigo plants that grow so thickly in Vendhya for his wares. He knows of a place that the plants grow wild and prolifically but requires a few hired hands to go and pick some up for him. He is willing to pay the Player

Characters half up front for doing this but he does not explain about the subterranean temple that they will be trespassing upon...

- ❖ Something has gone awry during the last great Yizil celebration and the indigo fields are littered with dead monkeys and apes. None of the faithful have left the cavern temple in over a week and a terrible odour – the smell of rot – has begun to seep out of the mouth of the Monkey Road. The Player Characters are asked by some of the locals to go and investigate, which means they will have to go underground and risk angering the rakhshas.
- ❖ There is a rumour that has recently found the Player Characters that talks about the longevity-enhancing properties of the spring pool inside of Edau Voyha; that it cures all illnesses and adds years to the imbiber's life. There is no way to know if this is true or not; unless they go themselves. All they would have to do is get past the primate inhabitants, the Yizil-worshippers within the cavern and the Hotar himself in order to swallow or take a skin or two full of the bright blue waters. If the rumours are true, it would be well worth the risk.





The Snow Devil Hollows

The icy wastes of middle Asgard are not the kind of place that the average wilderness traveller ever wants to venture out into without preparation, training and some kind of destination. For some, the only destination to try and find in the blowing snow and crackling ice cover is a field of sloped entrances, glassy frozen tunnels and timeless remains staring lifelessly out of their crystal-clear tombs. This place has no true name known by current peoples but anyone who knows of them calls them by the title of the glacier that they are a part of – the Snow Devil Hollows.

SNOW DEVIL HOLLOWs

'That ice is hungry, friend. It will swallow you up and hold you inside until you are nothing but a warning to future fools who have come this way after you. There are no maggots, no crows, no vultures here...here you remain forever entombed a trophy in the unforgiving cold of the Snow Devil's gullet.'

Terrain Type: Tunnel/Mine/Catacombs
Total Subterranean Area: 250,000 square feet
Depth Below Surface: 50 feet
Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 125,000 tunnels, 125,000 chambers
Important Terrain Elements: Unstable, 90% Smooth/Slick Flooring, Tombscape, Sunshafts, Burial Chamber

HISTORY

Five hundred years before Conan took the throne of Aquilonia, a major battle took place between the frost giants of Ymir and their own descendants, the Nordheimers. The battle raged on the snowy surface of the bitter cold Snow Devil glacier. The fighting was fierce and bloody; so much gore was spilt that the collective warmth sent a mighty split down into the ice.

Ice and frozen stone exploded upward, knocking most of the warriors

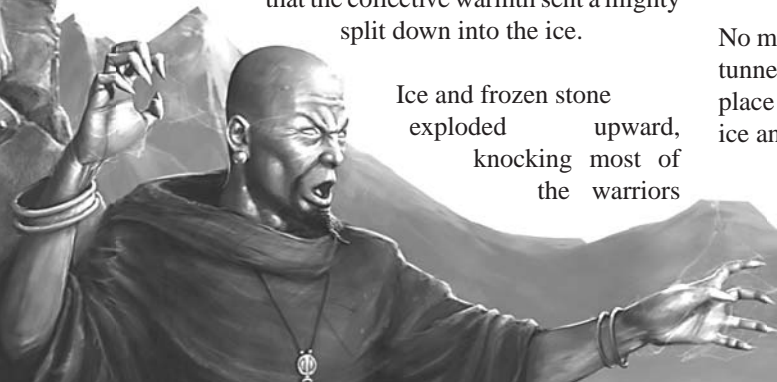
on both sides to the ground – many of them swallowed up by the welling waters from inside the glacier. Already the freezing winter wind was turning the exposed liquid to glass while the unfortunate souls thrashed about. The glass became crystal, the crystal quickly becoming as hard as stone around them. Fifty men and 10 giants were entombed within the Snow Devil that day, marking the end of the battle and the beginning of centuries of searching the ice for the fallen.

The glacial eruption left a large area of its surface pitted with numerous hollow chambers joined by icy tubes and tunnels, some open to the surface or glassed over by very thin ice created by the wind. These are the Snow Devil Hollows; a tomb of frozen remains that has too many centuries of legends wrapped around it to be left safely. Instead, the snowy catacombs devour more souls every year like some hungry beast made of stone and ice.

Over the many long centuries the Snow Devil Hollows have supposedly been the final resting place of over 1,000 different *known* people. This number is only partly due to the natural dangers of the Hollows; the ice shelves, the thin water layers, the brittle ceilings. The rest is due to the presence of certain glacial predators and scavengers that have claimed the Hollows as their home or at least as their hunting grounds. Explorers of the area have needed to look out for their personal belongings because of greedy raiders that might discover an envoy headed to the Hollows as well; they raid the explorers and leave them for the wilderness to take care of.

There is no question that there are numerous frozen dead remains in the walls, ceiling and floor of the Hollows. Exactly how many have been dug out, looted or even eaten by the wildlife is unknown, as is the number of remains that might have been pushed down by the motion of the glacier beyond the visibility through the ice.

No matter what has happened in this field of cold, empty tunnels throughout the years, it still remains a dangerous place where the inhabitants are nowhere as deadly as the ice and snow around them.





Snow Devil Hollow





LAYOUT

The Snow Devil Hollows are a series of small chambers linked by twisting tunnels, few larger than 10 feet wide and 30 or 40 feet long. There is no discernable method or pattern as to how these tunnels and chambers match to one another and many of them shift and bend slightly over time as the glacier around them moves. Minor cave-ins are frequent but new tunnels always open up to replace the collapsed ones in just a few months' time. Too long for anyone to survive being stranded within a chamber but relatively short, geologically speaking.

There are six surface entrances that all lead down into the hollows but no more than two are ever recognisable at any given time from the surface. Between the prolific snowfalls and icing over from wind-drifts, it requires a sharp eye to see the Hollows' open tunnels – and to avoid the thinly veiled ones!

Once inside the Hollows, the first 25 feet or so is white and crusted with packed or frozen snow. This makes these few dozen paces easier to traverse but not much to look at. The echoing crunch of snow under boots reverberates down into the tunnels, alerting anyone or anything inside to the presence of new arrivals.

The tunnel floor and walls will lose their snowy covering quickly enough to give way to clear and slick ice flows. This is the number one facet of the Hollows' existence that claims the most explorers – falling down and losing traction. Most of the tunnels have a slight decline into the nearest chamber, so a single icy misstep could mean tumbling 20 or 30 feet to land on a hard, icy, stone-covered floor.

The chambers are mostly just former tunnels that were widened when a quick burst of unfrozen water depressurised with a load of deposited rock in its path. They are most often cylindrical and shallow in nature, no more than 40 feet in length before they give way to another tunnel. Depending on the clarity of the ice in any given chamber, onlookers can see the frozen remains of past explorers, beasts or possibly even giants.

There is one chamber that has somehow stayed more or less intact and untouched by the erratic behaviour of the glacier – the initial burial site of the entombed leader of the ancient Ymirish giants.

Frozen in place by
500 year old

glacial pressure, this 15 foot tall monstrous thing is perfectly preserved; eyes open, veins blue and bulging, teeth clenched within purple gums. Some claim that it could awaken with the next great thaw but scholars say that can never be the case. Aesir shamans are not so quick to downplay the return of Jarle Ymirsson; he who would have his revenge upon the men and women of Nordheim.

EXPLORATION NOTES

The Snow and Ice

The surface area surrounding the Hollows is as much a part of the location as its tunnels and chambers and requires commenting on. The Snow Devil Glacier is a wind-whipped snowy field of ice and churned up stones from the thousands of years of dragging that the glacier has done across the face of Asgard. The entrances to the Hollows are often covered up by snow and thin layers of blown ice, turning the area into a dangerous series of pitfalls. Trying to find the entrances to the Snow Devil Hollows is a DC 18 Search skill check that results in a 15 foot fall into the tunnels on 50% of the failures.

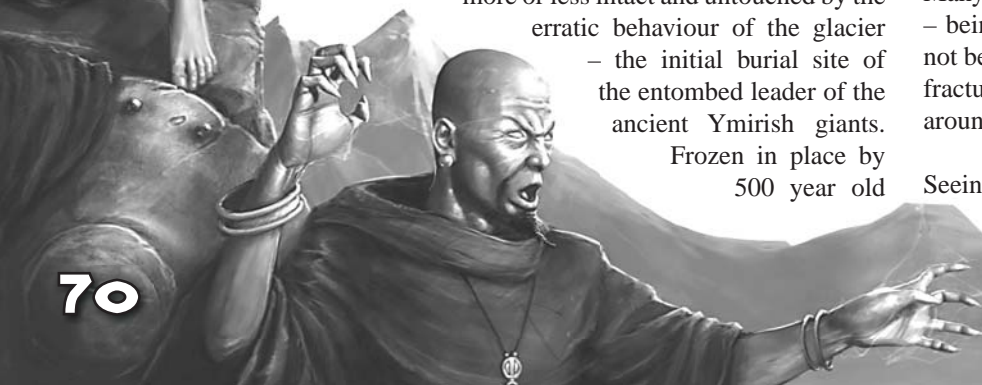
Tunnels Upon Tunnels

The tunnel map of the Snow Devil Hollows is only accurate for a few years at a time, as each cave-in or glacial shift alters the existing pattern. Sometimes these shifts are dramatic in nature but it normally takes years to alter the map enough to make it erroneous. The tunnels are all erratic and jagged in their directions, making it extremely difficult to maintain a sense of navigation. Between the random paths and turns these tunnels make and the unremarkable similarity of the icy walls and floor there is a constant -2 penalty for any Survival or related skill check used to get a sense of direction when within the Snow Devil Hollows.

Frozen Remains

The clear blue ice that makes up the glacier is cloudy and white for the first few feet of the surface, stress cracks and trapped snow disrupting its clarity but the farther you go down into the Hollows the clearer the ice gets. This allows explorers to see the eerily frozen remains of those who were swallowed up by the glacier. Animals, equipment and men can be found locked in strange positions, the ice as hard as stone around them. Many look as though it was a terribly painful way to die – being drowned and frozen alive. Some remains have not been treated too well by the glacial shifting, creating fractured bodies that strangely do not have any blood around them; it is frozen in their veins.

Seeing these assorted reminders that the characters are



walking in a frozen tomb; filled with perfectly preserved remains that they could join at any moment, is a bit disconcerting. Any living character that spends more than an hour in the Snow Devil Hollows will suffer a -1 penalty to all Will saves due to fear for the first 24 hours of exploration.

Bursting Flows

Although a glacier is hundreds of thousands of tons of ice and stone sliding slowly across the land the Snow Devil Glacier contains several pockets of pressurised water deep enough under the ice that it is not frozen. Decades of shifting and squeezing has kept tracts of cold water under enough pressure to retain its liquid state instead of becoming more ice. These flows of pressurised water sometimes lurk silently and invisibly behind thin points in the tunnel walls, ready to burst outward to shower unsuspecting spelunkers with life-threatening temperatures. Anytime that someone or something makes a hard contact with a tunnel or chamber wall, there is a 10% chance of cracking into a water flow, spraying a 10 foot cone with impossibly cold water. Anyone hit with this liquid suffers 1d2 nonlethal cold-based damage for each minute that they remain in their wet clothing.

Jarle's Tomb

The leader of the frost giants that fought in the mythic battle over the Hollows, Jarle Ymirsson was heralded as one of the direct descendants of the great Ymir himself. He claimed much of northern Nordheim under his banner before falling into the Snow Devil Glacier, becoming entombed in the sucking ice and waters of the frozen abyss. One large room at the near-centre of the Hollows is where the local exploring Aesir found the remains and polished the ice enough to see the huge monster's face. Although surely dead, Jarle's eyes remain open and unchanged from when he walked the world – begging the question of whether he is actually dead or just hibernating.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is one of the most important individuals found in or near the Snow Devil Hollows. The entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with him and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

SARDUK LODI; GLACIER GUIDE

Sarduk is the only local Aesir brave and foolish enough to make a living taking outsiders to see the legendary 'Snow Devil Battlegrounds' before fleecing them for

more money to see the inside of the tunnels. Sarduk considers himself to be the only true guide to the Snow Devil Glacier in all the lands.

Medium Humanoid (Nordheimer (Aesir) Barbarian 11)

Initiative: +8 (+1 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +10, Spot +12

Languages: Cimmerian, Nordheimer

Dodge Defence: 19 (+1 Dex, +8 class)

Parry Defence: 27 (+8 Str, +4 class, +4 Shield)

DR: 11 (+8 Mail Shirt and Breastplate, +2 Great Helm, +1 Natural)

Hit Points: 83 hp

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +9

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +3

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: War Sword +17 melee (1d12+6, AP 3)

Full Attack: War Sword +17/+12/+7 melee (1d12+6, AP 3)

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

Base Attack: +11/+6/+1

Grapple: +21

Special Attacks: +1 to damage rolls with any sword, Cleave, Greater Crimson Mist, Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Familiarity (war sword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Versatility (no penalty)

Feats: Brawl, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (war sword)

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +14, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +14, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +10, Survival +16, Use Rope +10

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Possessions: Asgardian Mail Shirt and Breastplate, Horned Helm

Blonde haired, thick-bearded and broad shouldered, Sarduk has wind-worn skin that is pale with ruddy patches from countless bouts with frostbite. He is a jovial man in his mid-forties, his





age lost in the physical shape that he keeps to survive in the Asgardian wilderness. He is tall and thick but rarely can be found outside of a strong fur cloak or robe for warmth, hiding his impressive build.

Sarduk keeps his ears open to gossip chains and travellers' stories to hear for those looking to explore out in the ice and snow, particularly the Snow Devil Hollows. He will take someone out for a mere 10 silvers, show them the Hollows for another five and take them down into the tunnels for 50. Most are given a quick tour, shown a few frozen carcasses while shooing away some of the inhabitants with his sword before being shown back to their camp but special arrangements have been made in the past to see or do more, some things never change.

Combat

Sarduk is very skilled in the use of a traditional Nordheimer war sword, keeping it in hand for most of his travels in case a predator or bandit tries to attack. He does not waste time with parlay whenever a known enemy is in his sights. Vanir and most Cimmerians are dealt with quickly and without hesitation, chopping them down with his old, blade.

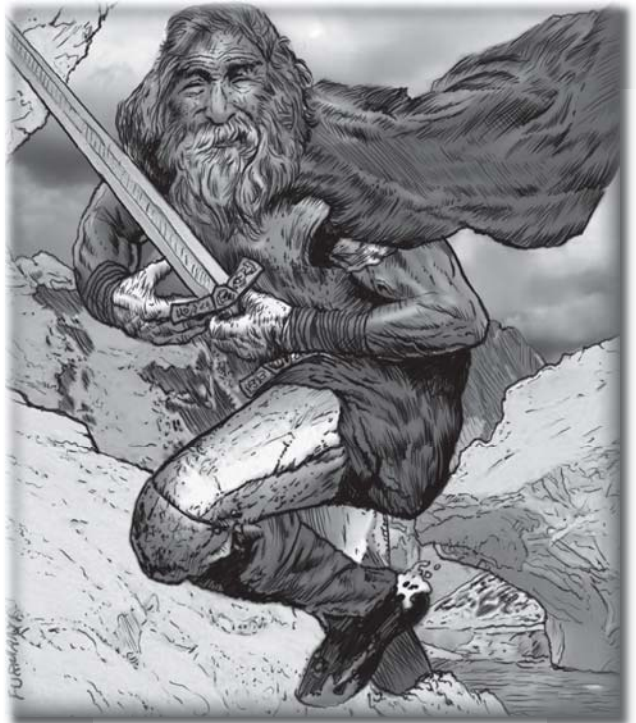
Plot Hooks

- ✦ Sarduk limped back to the closest settlement after being attacked on the way to the Hollows by some kind of terrible beast he had never heard of before. He pleads with the Player Characters to go and kill the beast – which they will have to do if they want to save the other folk that Sarduk claims to have had with him.
- ✦ Some hideous monsters have moved into the tunnels and are keeping Sarduk from making any money, as no one wants to go and risk life and limb being torn away. He will lead the Player Characters to the Hollows and pay them handsomely for eliminating the creatures; perhaps even giving them a trinket from the Hollows' depths for their troubles.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around the Snow Devil Hollows.

GIANT-KIN
Large Monstrous Humanoid



Climate/Terrain: Any cold land

Organization: Solitary

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Varies on location, occasionally Ymirish

Dodge Defence: 13 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 5d10+30 (75 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Specials: Winterkin

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: by weapon +10 melee (war spear, 1d10+7, AP 4)

Full Attack: by weapon +10 melee (war spear, 1d10+7, AP 4) or 2 fists +10 melee (1d6+5)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +18

Special Attacks: Power Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Winterkin

Feats: Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +12, Hide +2, Jump +8, Survival +11

Possessions: Normal traveller's gear, plus 3d6 skins, furs or leathers (1d6 x10 silvers worth)





Advancement: By character class (favoured class: barbarian)

When the Ymirish frost giants began to turn their attentions on the men of Nordheim, Cimmeria and Hyperborea, many small villages were raided for food and supplies. Frost giants are not known for their pleasantries and many violations of villagers – particularly women – took place. The resulting offspring of these forced unions are called giant-kin and are rare echoes of Ymir’s unholy children.

Giant-kin are hulking humans, eight to 10 feet tall on average, with thick hair and pale skin. They are heavily muscled even as children and bear an instinctual capacity for violence and bloodshed that often makes them pariahs in their communities – if they were allowed to survive at all. Some of these hulking brutes eventually learn of the battle at Snow Devil and come looking for artefacts and signs of their ancestors’ passing. This sometimes brings giant-kin to Snow Devil Hollows, where they are surely going to be a problem to normal humans that have come to ‘loot the graves of their people’.

Combat

Giant-kin know their strength and size makes a big difference in most combats and they frequently use two-handed weapons to make the most out of their prowess.

Winterkin (Ex): Giant-kin have the blood of frost giants in their veins, making them immune to the naturally dangerous elements of their parent’s area. Giant-kin do not suffer any damage or negative effects of any kind from cold-based sources but suffer double normal damage and negative effects of heat and fire-based sources.

Skills: Giant-kin have a +6 racial bonus to their Climb and Survival skills due to the physical adaptations they inherited from their frost giant parent.

NORDWOLF

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Cold to arctic plains, woods and mountains

Organization: Solitary, pair or pack (4 – 8)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +8, Spot +6

Languages: –

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

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 6d8+18 (45 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: Tenacity

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Bite: +9 melee (2d6 +3, AP 2)

Full Attack: Bite +9 melee (2d6 +3, AP 2) and 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +13

Special Attacks: Rend, Trip

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Run, Track

Skills: Hide +4 (+8), Jump +10, Move Silently +6, Survival +4 (+8)

Possessions: Metallic objects taken as den-trophies

Advancement: 7 – 10 HD (Large), 11+ HD (Huge)

Occasionally taking refuge in the Hollows, there are wolves as large as horses that hunt men as well as beasts. These gigantic canines are called ‘nordwolves’ after the land they call home. They roam across the glacier in search of small meals but have marked the entrances of the Hollows in case of harsh weather or when they want to get into shelter. They never stay long in the tunnels, the hunting is simply not good but they can be found stalking around outside often enough.

These massive beasts are five to six feet at the shoulder, nearly two-thirds that length wide and sometimes eight feet from nose to tail. They are coated in thick white or grey fur, have piercing blue eyes and a maw filled with teeth as long as a man’s hand. When a nordwolf pack comes to hunt in the area, only the bravest of warriors or hunters dares confront them without anything short of a strong militia behind them.

Combat

Nordwolves fight very much like their smaller cousins, tripping up foes in order to set their weight upon them and begin to pull them apart with their powerful jaws. Nordwolves are smarter than their kin however and reaching up to pull a man from his mount is just as possible a tactic for these beasts as going after the mount itself – depending on what would be easier for the nordwolf at the time.

Rend (Ex): A nordwolf that makes a successful grapple check can make a single rend attack in place of its normal bite attack.





The rend attack automatically inflicts 4d6+6 damage on the target, ignoring any rolls to hit.

Tenacity (Ex): Nordwolves are raised in harsh environments, filled with dangerous predators, and fighting to the bitter end can be the difference between starving and surviving. Nordwolves can fight beyond reaching 0 Hit Points, requiring a Fortitude save DC 15 each round that they are in negative Hit Points to stay conscious until they either succumb or die at -10 Hit Points.

Trip (Ex): A nordwolf that hits with a normal bite attack (non-rending) can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the nordwolf.

Skills: Nordwolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent and Hide checks when in snowy terrain.

SHREW, GLACIER

Small Animal

Climate/Terrain: Any frozen land and underground

Organization: Solitary or swarm (10 - 30)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: -

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

DR: -

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (12 hp)

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

Defensive Specials: Toxin and Cold Resistance

Speed: 30 ft., 20 ft. burrow, 20 ft. climb

Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d4)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d4)

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

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: -4

Special Attacks: Chew

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 6

Special Qualities: -

Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus (Survival)

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +8, Hide +8, Survival +8

Possessions: -

Advancement: 3 - 4 HD (Small), 5 - 7 HD (Medium)

Large rodent-like animals with grey-white fur that helps keep them insulated, glacier shrews are a constant nuisance on the frozen surface of the Snow Devil Glacier. They are not individually much of a problem, easily distracted by a bit of food or the wave of a torch. They are oftentimes found rummaging through food stores or equipment pouches looking for a meaty bit to steal but in greater numbers they can be brave enough to try to take a bite out of the living when hungry.



Combat

Glacier shrews are simple creatures that use their small, serrated set of sharp teeth to inflict painful wounds. Although it will catch their prey for them, it is not much in the way of a weapon. They would much, much rather run and hide than ever fight.

Chew (Ex): Glacier shrews can gnaw their way through just about any substance if given the time and the desire. A glacier shrew can roll its normal bite damage each full two minutes it spends gnawing on a non-metallic object, inflicting that much damage automatically to the object – bypassing hardness or DR.

Skills: Glacier shrews have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Climb, Hide and Survival skill checks and can always take 10 on Climb checks even when threatened or rushed.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounters with the Snow Devil Hollows.

- ✦ A friend of the Player Characters has found a book of legends that supposedly tell the reader where ancient artefacts and treasure can be found. The most intriguing is the entry that talks of the frost giants' graves and the amount of riches to be found there. This of course, will bring them to the Hollows – where they might try to chisel in to get at the remains...
- ✦ While travelling across Asgard the Player Characters are beset by a powerful winter storm that shows no sign of lightening up, They wander in the white out until they accidentally trip into one of the snow shelves covering a steep tube of the Hollows. A short fall and some sliding later, they are thoroughly lost and need to find their way out of the Hollows before they run out of food.
- ✦ Something has stirred in the Hollows and the body of Jarle Ymirsson is missing. If he was stolen, there are some cunning and depraved body thieves out there. If he woke up and walked out, Nordheim has much bigger problems to worry about. Either way, it is up to the Player Characters to get to the bottom of this.





The Sythic Caverns

The wild lands caught between Hyrkania and Hyperborea is a dangerous place frequented by predators, slavers, thieves and smugglers. Too far from civilisation but still a well-travelled path between the two halves of the world, this area is dangerous to journey across without suitable protection. Nestled in the centre of this throughway for the misfortunate is a large, craggy cavern that has served hundreds of groups of people through the centuries. Its limestone walls have offered shelter, secrecy and safety to many different types of people; but those who stay too long find that it asks a terrible price of lingering trespassers. The Sythic Caverns hide a bloody secret in the bowels of the world and none who have learned it have ever survived.

THE SYTHIC CAVERNS

'Sixteen horse hours south of Sythic, toward the Vilayet shore, then look for two old evergreens. The way is between them. Hard to find, hidden from view but easy to remember.'

Terrain Type: Cavern System
Total Subterranean Area: 1,850,000 square feet
Depth Below Surface: 450 feet
Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 300,000 tunnels; 1,400,000 chambers; 150,000 chasm
Important Terrain Elements: Thick Pillars, Several Stalagmite Fields (average height 2d3 feet), Waterway Access, Several Stalactite Overhangs (average length 2d4 feet), Multiple Previous Exploration Material caches

HISTORY

Opening hundreds or even thousands of years ago by a ground shift that cracked the crust, the Sythic Caverns were cut from the earth by one of the many underground waterways that feeds into the Vilayet. Centuries of pressure and erosion created the cavern

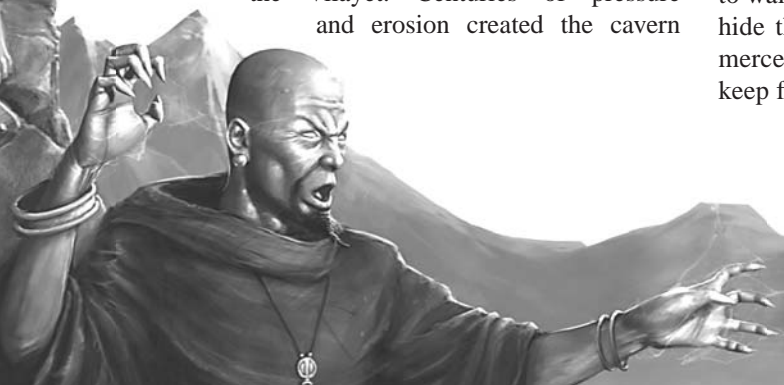
complex beneath the ground, becoming accessible by the earthquake.

Once opened, the cavern gave the surrounding territory a new facet for life to adapt to. The local wildlife stalked down into the darkness, exploring the new depths and finding new homes. Huge bats, gigantic reptiles and strange fish already lived in the subterranean ecosystem, making some interactions bloody and brutally short.

Much later, when humans began to leave their camps and search the countryside for food and shelter, the caverns were an attractive solution for large groups of nomadic peoples. Entire tribes could make a comfortable living space in its large chambers, hunt the smaller wildlife for food, use the titan bat guano for fuel, gather water from the underground stream and scavenge the parts of the larger predators for weapons and armour. It was the perfect home for simple people.

Time progressed and human civilisation evolved into villages, towns and cities; but the Sythic Cavern people remained complacent with their subterranean utopia. When the outside world changed too quickly for them, revealing some frightening growth of humankind, the Sythic tribe would retreat just a little farther into the cavern system. They pulled deeper into the darkness, fleeing from the advancement of time. Eventually it came to be that the tribe simply did not go outside any longer – they had everything they needed in the cavern and wanted nothing to do with the strange, new Hyborian Age.

When the Sythic tribe vanished into the recesses of the underground, the people of the surface discovered that the Sythic Caverns were a great place to serve as a temporary hideout or storage cache. Travellers moving across the sparse tundra found it to be perfect to wait out poor weather; smugglers used its alcoves to hide their goods from border patrols or opportunistic mercenaries and thieves spent days in its darkness to keep from being caught.







This sort of happenstance attention put the caverns on the map, so to speak and attracted more and more to its gaping mouth. One thing that no one ever really noticed however is that the Sythic Caverns were almost always empty of outsiders when a new group arrived. Thieves would go in to hide and never emerge. Smugglers would deposit their goods, return to get them and disappear. Unlucky travellers using the cavern as a makeshift home would never reach their intended destination. Something was taking them away.

Even though there are many large and savage animals that live in and around the caverns, these beasts were not likely to be the cause of so many human disappearances. The truth of the matter is that the original Sythic tribe still thrives in huge numbers in the bowels of the cavern, beyond the underground river. They live in the dark, evolved over the generations to compensate for it and they still fear the outside world's encroachment upon their own. The difference was that once their fears would send them scurrying away; now they would move up and eliminate the cause of their fears. Any humans spending more than a few days in the Sythic Caverns would soon be targeted by the tribe, knocked unconscious and then delivered to the running waters of the underground river. Eventually their fish-picked, stone-bashed, waterlogged remains would wash out into the Vilayet, never to be found.

Despite campfire horror stories and folk tales about what happens to trespassers, the Sythic Caverns are still used by travellers for an assortment of reasons. It really does not matter how many people disappear each year; convenience wins out over fear each time and soon the inhabitants have a new set of strange outsiders to hunt and kill.

LAYOUT

The whole of the Sythic Caverns can be divided into three main areas: the upper chambers, the river course and the lower chambers. Most folk will only ever see the first two areas but the latter is included here for completion's sake and the occasional (un)lucky spelunker that delves too deep.

The mouth of the caverns is a steep drop of 25 feet set in a gaping rend in the ground almost 50 feet across, made accessible by a series of

rope ladders and earth-dug steps. These augmentations to the entrance were made by one of the early human smugglers that used the caverns but are constantly replaced by those with the skill and resources to do so. The mouth empties into a large, naturally well-lit, semi-circular chamber. This main chamber tapers down into a pair of tunnels that lead into the upper chambers.

The 'upper chambers' are a few hundred feet below the surface of the ground and are composed of a dozen small to medium-sized chambers attached to one another by short tunnels or wall-archways. Most of these chambers are riddled with dangerous limestone growths on the ceiling and floor some even have grown together to form awkward cages of stone pillars. These upper chambers are where the cavern's local wildlife and visiting humans lurk; making them the primary locations where any encounters might take place in the Sythic Caverns.

Making the journey down nearly 350 feet below the surface through the upper chambers will eventually bring an explorer to where the river passes through the open chamber. The cold waters run out from under the northern wall of the chamber, disappearing back under the southern stone. The current is fast and hundreds of tiny sightless fish live in the stone-eroded wash pools along the jagged banks. Slightly phosphorescent fungus grows in clumps along the lower stalactites that hang over the water, casting an eerie shimmer throughout the room reminiscent of moonlight upon a pond's surface. The water is fresh and the fish readily edible but it also hides the only way to the lower chambers – 100 feet of underwater tunnel that leads to the tribal chambers of the original Sythic people.

Beyond the underwater river tunnel lies the lower chambers, a series of small and craggy living spaces used by the primitive subterranean people of the Sythic tribe. These chambers are littered with moss, furs and scavenged materials to make bedding areas, some of which will surely occupy gravid females or nursing young. There are cultivation areas for food plants and fungi, a pooling area for river water to drink and store fish and several communal sleeping piles. It is a dark place devoid of light, not to mention the underwater access to the area makes torch use difficult. There is nothing beyond the lower chambers, except for dense rock walls.



EXPLORATION NOTES

There are several specific areas within the tunnels of the Sythic Caverns that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note when exploring the halls of the subterranean cavern.

The Descent Ladder

The complex rope and wood ladder that leads down into the Sythic Caverns is not the easiest to use without practice and the first three times anyone uses it calls for a Climb skill check DC 12, 10 and 8 respectively. Failure sends the character falling down 20 feet (2d6 damage). The ladder system is open to the weather and prone to being damaged, meaning that there is a 10% chance each time that it is used that it will break, dropping the character automatically and restricting access until it is repaired.

Animal Lairs

The upper chambers of the caverns are the home to many small subterranean animals like mole rats and common bats but there are also several ceiling and wall lairs of less common creatures. The larger chambers with higher ceilings are the roosts for the enormous titan bat, creatures whose constant flapping and repositioning along the ceiling and walls makes a cool air current along the ground. The deadly limestone viper, rare throughout northern Hyrkania, can be found in large numbers in the hollows of one chamber floor. These are places that human visitors might wish to avoid or at least be prepared to deal with some unexpected aggression from these subterranean beasts.

Smuggler's Alcoves

The Sythic Caverns have been a favourite for smugglers and thieves to hide their ill-gotten goods, using dozens of small corners and pitted alcoves throughout the upper chambers. These recesses are easy to miss (Search or Spot check DC 18) and are normally large enough to stash a few loads worth of goods (2d6 x 5 square feet). A few of these alcoves belonged to people that never made it back out of the caverns alive, leaving behind potentially worthwhile goods. There is a 5% chance that an alcove will have salvageable materials inside worth 2d6 x 10 sp.

Underground River Course

At the end of the upper chambers lies the river course chamber, through which the dark and cold water flows silently. It is a good source for cave whitefish and fresh water but it also is the only way to get into the lower chambers of the caverns. Requiring a skill check related to or regarding underground structures at DC

25 to discover from the surface, there is a tunnel *in* the waters that leads a full 100 feet through the river before it opens back up into the dark of the lower chambers. Swimming this distance requires three successful DC 18 Swim checks, with each failure inflicted 1d6 bashing damage (against the ceiling of the tunnel) and beginning the rules for Suffocation (see page 221 of the *Conan the Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*).

Tribal Chambers

Beyond the river tunnel lies a series of small and craggy chambers that are home to the subterranean descendants of the original Sythic tribe that settled inside the caverns. These 'rooms' have only ever been seen by the Sythics themselves and one lucky explorer who managed to get in, look around by chasing the tribals away with an oil lantern and still get back out to tell the tale. Of course, most people believe this explorer is a madman with his tales of 'cave people' and underground tribes but he still tries to get others to follow him back into the depths.

The lower chambers are littered with objects and useful materials for nesting and survival but little else. The Sythic tribals do not care for the glitter of gold or the sparkle of gemstones; all of these things look the same in the pitch blackness of the depths.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is the most likely person to be found dealing with the Sythic Caverns besides random travellers, thieves or smugglers. This entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with him and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

ARMAHLIK, GRAZED EXPLORER

The only man claiming to have found the ancient tribals living beneath the Sythic Caverns, Armahlik spends his days trying to hire new souls to accompany him into the darkness and his nights dreaming of the next time he can look upon their primitive, sightless faces.

Medium Humanoid (Hyrkanian Nomad 9 / Soldier 2)

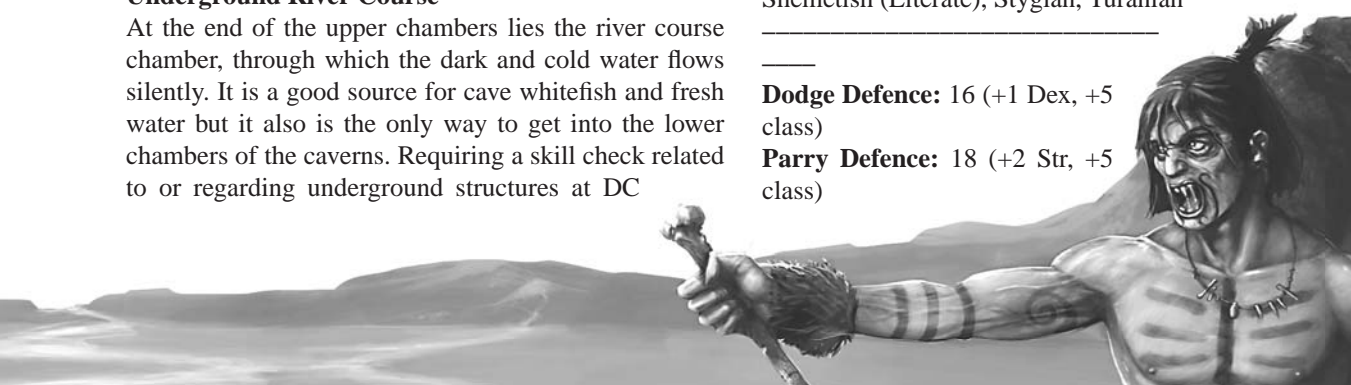
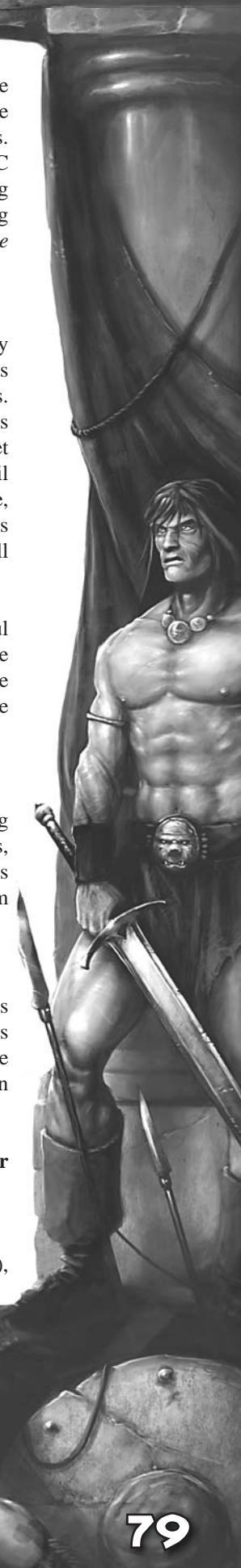
Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +11

Languages: Hyperborean, Hyrkanian (Literate), Shemetic (Literate), Stygian, Turanian

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 class)

Parry Defence: 18 (+2 Str, +5 class)





DR: 5 (+5 Padded Hauberk)
Hit Points: 72 hp
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +8 (+6 against Hypnotism)
Defensive Specials: Mobility

Speed: 25 ft.
Attack: Scimitar +14 melee (1d8+2, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +11 ranged (1d10+2, AP 3; +1 within 100 ft.)
Full Attack: Scimitar +14/+9/+6 melee (1d8+4, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +11/+6/+1 ranged (1d10, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +11/+6/+1
Grapple: +13
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with any Bow (+2 at six or higher range increments), Nomad Charge +1, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Familiarity (tulwar and Hyrkanian bow), Weapon Focus (scimitar)
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13
Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (subterranean) +1, Favoured Terrain (plains) +3
Feats: Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Climb), Skill Focus (Jump), Skill Focus (Spot), Skill Focus (Swim), Track
Skills: Bluff +10, Climb +11, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +6, Heal +6, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +5, Survival +10, Swim +12
Code of Honour: Civilised
Corruption and Insanity: 0; Obsession
Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)
Possessions: Padded Hauberk, Scimitar, Hyrkanian Bow (+2) with 12 Arrows

Bearing the weight of his age and mental instability on his features, Armahlik (pronounced *ar-mah-leek*) looks 10 years older than he truly is. He keeps himself long haired and bearded to look more like his people's most respected nobles but sometimes goes weeks without brushing his dark locks. His clothing is of an older style, showing many repairs and he rarely goes anywhere without his somewhat dull scimitar.

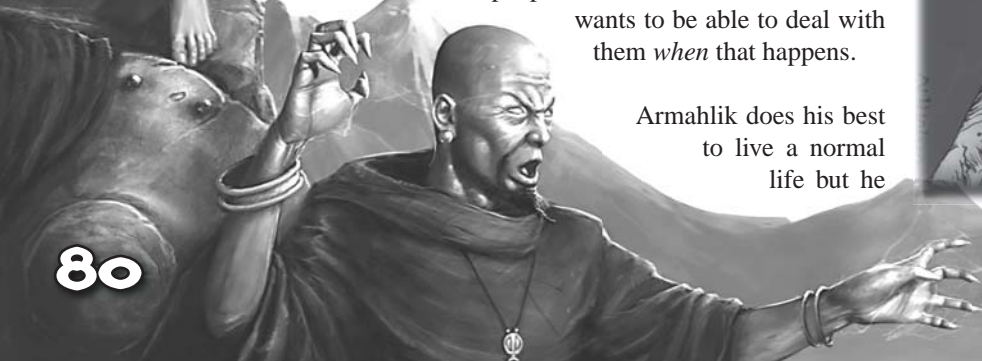
If asked, he stays armed in case the 'cave people' find him on the surface; he wants to be able to deal with them *when* that happens.

Armahlik does his best to live a normal life but he

spends most of his day to day life trying to convince others to go with him into the Sythic Caverns in order to find the way to the cave peoples' lair. He knows he needs help in this, as it was an accident how he found it the first time; having slipped, fallen into the river and frantically swam through the tunnel. With skilled help he is sure he could find it again and he will gladly tell anyone who will listen.

Combat
 Skilled from his years in the soldiery of Rhamdam, Armahlik is a talented swordsman and a competent archer. He would much rather avoid a conflict if at all possible but he understands the ways of the Hyborian Age and what a good show of strength can mean to the right people.

Plot Hooks
 ✦ Armahlik is ready to take his return trip to the Sythic Caverns and wants the Player Characters to join him but he has little with which he can pay them. Instead of appealing to their better natures toward his cause, he instead lies to them about the gemstones and treasure that the cave people had in their lairs. He promises them 'half of any treasures found', secretly knowing that the greatest treasure is proof of the cave people's discovery. How will the Player Characters treat such misinformation?





❁ Armahlik managed to talk someone into joining him to the caverns – one of the Player Characters’ family members. When they hear of it (and of the craziness of the trip’s leader), they might want to try to head him off and deal with the situation directly. If they wait too long, they may have to follow them into the cavern...

CAVERN SMUGGLERS AND THIEVES

This is the generic entry for far-travelled thieves and smugglers that *might* be found within the Sythic Cavern upper chambers, likely using them as a hideout or stash for their goods.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 4)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +4, Spot +6
Languages: Aquilonian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)
Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class)
DR: 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)
Hit Points: 18 hp
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4 (+1 versus Corruption)
Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +5 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Full Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +5 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +3
Grapple: +4
Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11
Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Hide), Sneak Attack Style (Crossbow, Dagger), Trap Disarming
Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, No Honour, Stealthy
Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +8, Climb +6, Handle Animal +2, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +6
Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+1)
Possessions: Average Traveller’s Outfit, Aquilonian Mail Shirt, 2 Daggers, Crossbow with 6 bolts, Various Wealth or Goods hidden nearby

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around the Sythic Caverns.

BAT, TITAN

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Temperate to cold tundra and mountains
Organization: Solitary or cloud (10 – 40)
Initiative: +10 (+4 Dex, +6 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Blindsense, Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +15, Spot +8
Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural)
DR: 3
Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (55 hp)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +1
Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 20 ft., 10 ft. climb, 50 ft. fly (good)
Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+2)
Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+1) and bite +10 melee (1d8+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +6
Grapple: +12
Special Attacks: Improved Grab
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6
Special Qualities: –
Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite)
Skills: Balance +12, Climb +12, Move Silently +8, Survival +14
Possessions: –

The grey-furred larger relative of the giant bat, titan bats are immense flying mammals that live in tightly packed groups clinging to the ceilings and walls of deep caverns. These massive creatures are voracious eaters that target small mammals for their meals, grabbing up lambs, dogs and the occasional child to be feasted upon back at the roost. They are not instinctually communal eaters but any bits of the carcass that fall to the floor of the cavern are left for any injured titan bats, keeping them strong enough to potentially heal their wounds.





Titan bat saliva is an excellent anti-coagulant, aiding in the use of healing and knitting of wounds. A single titan bat can be 'harvested' for its salivary gland squeezing for 2d6 doses, each one adding +2 to a single Heal check involving an open wound. The saliva loses its properties one week after harvesting.

Combat

Titan bats swoop down from the sky to slash at their foes with their tusk-like jaws and hooked talons when they cannot manage to grab smaller prey and fly away with them.

Blindsense (Ex): A titan bat notices and locates creatures and objects within 60 feet through their echolocation sonar. They can 'see' in this way in any amount of darkness.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the titan bat must hit with a bite attack. If it gets a hold on the target successfully, it can then fly at half speed with the target – biting it automatically every round.

Skills: Titan bats have a +10 racial bonus to Listen skill checks as long as they can use their *blindsense* ability.

LIMESTONE VIPER

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate to cold subterranean

Organization: Solitary or nest (5 – 20)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Blindsense, Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +10, Spot +7

Languages: –

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

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d6 and poison)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d6 and poison)

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

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (bite)

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +10, Move Silently +8, Survival +6

Possessions: –

Thin and fast, with the tell-tale flat head of a terribly poisonous snake, limestone vipers are the same pale grey colour as the wet rock that they live on and around. They are extremely aggressive predators that see anything but their own kind as a threat to their communal colony nest, slithering quickly toward a heat source to deal with it.

Limestone vipers are voracious eaters that will commonly attack prey that is much larger than they are; even that which is too large to eat. The viper kills a large target and then nests nearby to watch the corpse. Eventually carrion creatures like rats or birds will come to feast upon the rotting remains, leaving small scraps of carrion as they do so, at which point the limestone viper dines at his leisure.

Combat

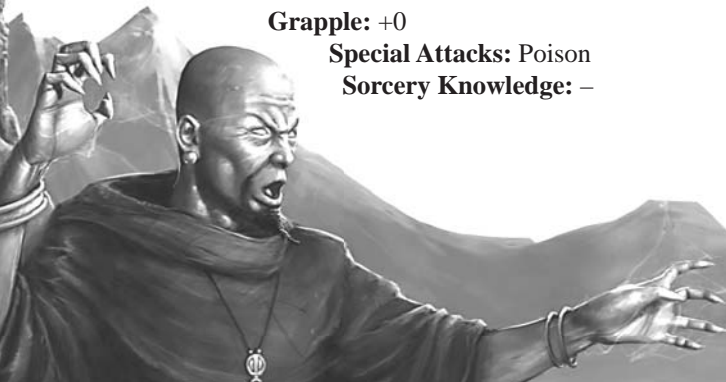
Limestone vipers slither silently up to their prey and strike quickly with their long fangs. Their venom is very potent, making short work of their victim's nervous system.

Blindsense (Ex): A limestone viper uses heat and air displacement to locate their prey. They can 'see' in this way in any amount of darkness.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a limestone viper's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Limestone Viper Venom	Injury DC 12	1d4 Con	4	One per round

Skills: Limestone vipers receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is better.



SYTHIC TRIBE (CAVE PEOPLE)

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Sythic Caverns

Organization: Solitary, pair or hunting pack (3 – 6)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Tremorsense 60ft.; Listen +10

Languages: Primitive Barks and Clicks

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 natural)

DR: 1 (5)

Hit Dice: 3d12+6 (25hp)

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

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: by weapon (axe +7 melee (1d12+6, AP 5)) or unarmed +7 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: by weapon (axe +7 melee (1d12+6, AP 5)) or 2 unarmed +7 melee (1d6+4)

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

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Blind Fight

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 6

Special Qualities: Pyrophobia, Thick-skinned

Feats: Brawl, Great Fortitude

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Move Silently +10, Survival +8, Swim +12

Possessions: Simple Weaponry

Advancement: by character class (favoured class: barbarian)

Pale skinned, white-eyed and mostly hairless; the Sythic tribe evolved into completely subterranean creatures through dozens of generations in-breeding that took them deeper and deeper into the caverns. They are physically strong and very healthy despite their looks and live on a diet of insects, fungus, fish and the occasional captured titan bat from the upper chambers of the caverns.

Although not a distinguishable language by modern standards, the Sythic tribals use a complicated combination of clicks, whistles and howls to communicate perfectly with one another over extremely long distances, sometimes audible only to their own kind through the echoes of the cavern halls.

Combat

Sythic tribals are simple beings that barely understand simple tools and weaponry: axes, clubs and spears.

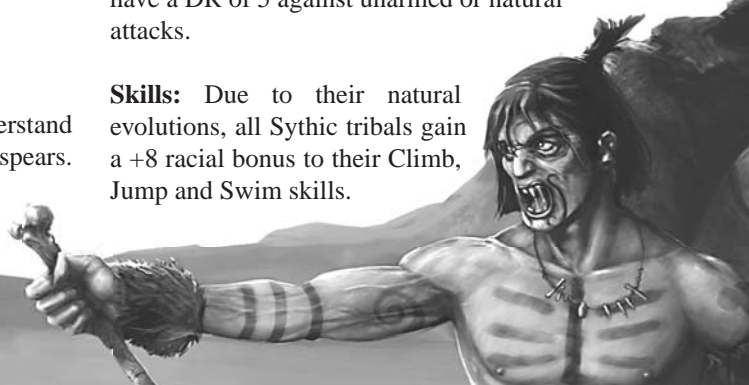


When no weapon is available to them, they can use their own leathery hands to bash their target to pulp.

Pyrophobia (Ex): Sythic tribals are terrified of fire and light in any form, causing them to pass DC 15 Will saves each round or stay at least 30 feet away from any light source or open flame.

Thick-skinned (Ex): The flesh of a Sythic tribal is thick and leathery in most areas, making them difficult to injure without a weapon. Sythic tribals are considered to have a DR of 5 against unarmed or natural attacks.

Skills: Due to their natural evolutions, all Sythic tribals gain a +8 racial bonus to their Climb, Jump and Swim skills.






PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct contact with the Sythic Caverns.

- ❖ The Player Characters are given word that a friend of theirs has gone missing near the vicinity of the village of Sythia. The people there claim to have seen this person heading south with a band of cavern explorers and that he is likely gone forever; although they will not elaborate further. If they want to risk it, the Player Characters can go and try to find out what happened.
- ❖ A trader looking to make a deal with some smugglers hires the Player Characters to escort him to these caverns in the middle of nowhere so he can complete the deal. When they arrive they find the trader's contacts are gone but their goods remain. It will take a few days to gather up all of their things...which of course will make the Sythic tribe very upset that the Player Characters and their trader ally are sticking around for that long.
- ❖ A group of bandits hit the Player Characters as they were travelling through the area and fled into the Sythic Caverns. The Player Characters can choose to go in after them, chasing them deeper and deeper into the darkness – only to push them into the arms of the primitive inhabitants!





Tai Paun Li: Nine Flooded Tunnels

Nestled in the central forests of Khitai, or rather *under* one of them, was a longstanding amber mining facility of the Hynang family. For centuries the servants of the Hynangs' worked the mines. Shut down by the family decades ago after dozens were killed in a terrible tragedy, the mines are considered a single cavernous entity called Tai Paun Li; the resting place of miners and countless fools who have gone in after them and the stores of amber that might remain.

TAI PAUN LI

'The waters of the world punished the Hynangs for cutting the roots of the great trees. It is said that so many had to lose their lives over their mistake. How long must we Khitans make up for their mistake?'

Terrain Type: Tunnel/Mine/Catacombs

Total Subterranean Area: 1,150,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 1,000 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet):

900,000 tunnels, 250,000 chambers

Important Terrain Elements: Softer Stone, Natural Reinforcement, Light Sources (Torch Sconces), Gemstone Field (Amber), Underground Lake

HISTORY

The Hynang family once owned two dozen amber mines scattered across the central provinces of Khitai, most of which ran smoothly and without many problems. One set of nine, located outside the small village of Tai Paun Li, were working perfectly until one summer's expansion.

The mine's digging had brought them to the edge of the cherished and revered Scholar Tree forests that have stood for centuries. Normally the amber miners would dig around the lighter roots and push them aside to work but the roots for these massive trees were as thick as saplings and as hard as full-grown trees. The miners could not get through the web of tree roots without significantly damaging them, so they were at an impasse.

Soonai Hynang, the director of the Tai Paun Li mining camp, chose to simply push on through – heedless of his older miner's superstitious warnings. The

miners cut huge swathes from the root walls, driving deeper into the forest to acquire some of the clearest, largest and most valuable tracts of amber ever collected. Soonai's choice seemed to be a good and profitable one.

Soonai continued his expansion project, digging nine of these mines deep into the forest in order to make massive profits on his 'brave choice'. He became the most well-known member of the family and the locals looked to him as the main source of work, wages and honour.

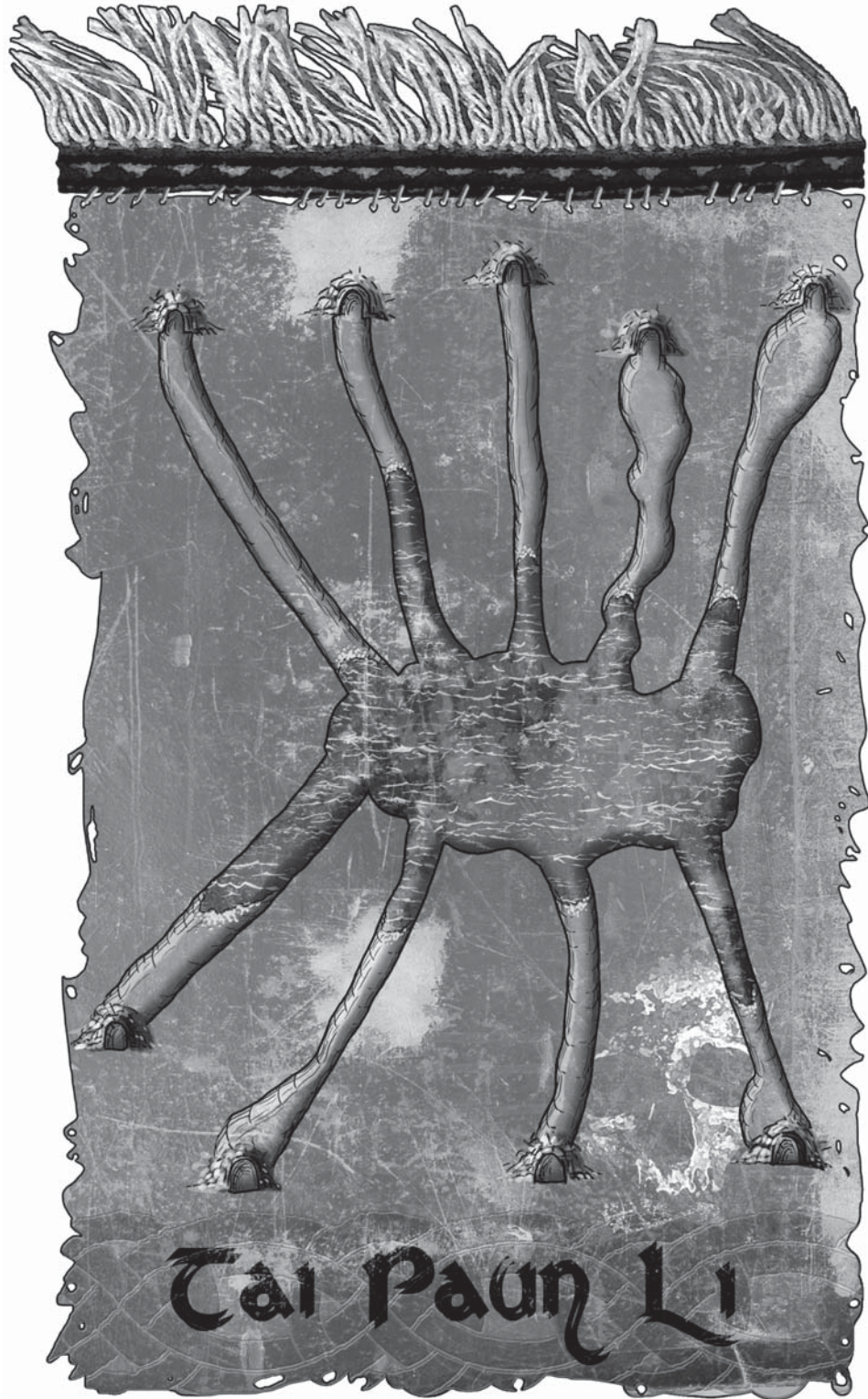
That was, until the trees began to wither above the mines.

Ancient trees that were dearly worshipped by Khitan peasants dried and became discoloured from the lack of water being pulled up from the deep earth and the Hynangs were quickly being vilified for their actions. By the time the first of the great Scholar Trees cracked in a windstorm and toppled, the first in a 100 years, the people wanted Hynang blood. Soonai was their main target and he knew that he would not survive the riotous locals if he remained in the village.

Instead he dressed as one of the amber miners and slipped into the mines. Hiding from the locals amongst the masked faces of the miners, Soonai believed he had gotten away from his murderous stalkers and would be quickly rescued by his family's distant retainers. Escape he had; but in doing so he actually placed himself in a worse position.

The only day in which Soonai Hynang ventured down deep into the mines, these mines suffered a devastating event. With the crack of a shale wall an entire underground river blasted up into the mines, flooding them with cold water. A hundred or more miners did not make it out alive, including the unfortunate Soonai.

Such an end was fitting for Soonai however, as it was his actions and orders that had caused the flood. The giant lake chamber that flooded into the tunnels was



formed by months of run off and river water collecting in a shale pocket; waters that would normally have been siphoned off by the Scholar Tree roots. The water pressure built to the point of bursting but had nowhere to go except through solid rock and packed soil. When Soonai's mining plans brought the tunnels to the retaining wall of the 'lake', the shale gave way and blasted millions of gallons of water through the gaps, thus signalling the end of the mining at Tai Paun Li.

After the incident, the Hynangs tried to send new miners to Tai Paun Li a few times but each time the crews refused to work, severed their employment or simply disappeared. Stories of spirit miners, undying stalkers in the dark and even the haunting soul of Soonai forced all of the workers away. The Hynang family had no choice but to stop trying, moving their attentions to 'safer' mining projects elsewhere. The mines at Tai Paun Li were officially abandoned, leaving their half-flooded expanses to the animals and ghosts of the past.

Explorers and foreigners to Khitai that hear about the abandoned amber mines often go to see if they can do that which no one before them has managed to – explore the nine flooded tunnels at Tai Paun Li and survive.

LAYOUT

Not terribly convoluted or complex, the Tai Paun Li mine tunnels are more or less straight tunnels leading for thousands of feet through the earth on a traversable slant. They begin at the surface in nine abruptly raised entrances containing stairwells leading down to where the mine shafts start. Ten feet of packed-earth and wooden stairs bring people down into the landing for each mine shaft.

The landing is no bigger than 20 by 20 foot square; big enough to let miners pass by one another with tools, crates and such in their arms. Two walls of the landing are reinforced with wooden slats, one wall is actually the stairs leading up to the ground level and the last wall gives way to a 15 foot wide tunnel entrance.

Each of the nine mine shafts reach between 4,000 and 5,000 feet down into the ground. They descend at a slight enough angle so as to not make it hazardous to walk but it is noticeable when trying to move quickly up or down the shaft.

The shafts are dug all the way to a central chamber that contains a massive underground lake. The water from the lake is high enough to flood the lower lengths of the mineshafts, filling some with a few feet of cold water to trudge through. At least one tunnel was

cut too low and dips completely below the surface of the water. The angle of descent and the final position of the mineshaft when the lake 'erupted' alters the water level of each tunnel, as noted in the section below.

The lake chamber is a low-ceilinged pocket of packed stone and soil almost 500 feet to a side. It has no discernable flooring except the muddy bottom of the lake itself, as the murky water stretches completely across the chamber, wall to wall. The actual depth of the water varies greatly; from only a few feet deep in one stretch of flooring to a plummeting 50 foot plunge just a few paces away. There is seemingly no further access point deeper out of the lake chamber, only the nine mineshafts leading back up to the surface.

EXPLORATION NOTES

There are several specific areas or types of locations within the tunnels of Tai Paun Li that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note when exploring the halls of the subterranean network.

Tunnel One – 'Ohi'

The primary mineshaft that started the Tai Paun Li project, Ohi (pronounced *oh-hee*) is the longest and least angled mine. With barely a few degrees of descent at a time, it was the best mine for long shifts to work. It stretches a full 5,300 feet under the great forests, its last 200 feet or so are under four feet of water before it spills into the lake chamber.

Tunnel Two – 'Nai'

Nai (pronounced *nah-ee*) is the southernmost mineshaft and the one that experienced the most trouble when initially being dug, making it also the shortest. Reaching only 3,900 feet, Nai is the driest of the nine mines, with only a foot or so of water depth for only the last 50 feet. Because of the lack of standing water however, this mineshaft is also the place where the majority of false 'Soonai' sightings occur.

Tunnel Three – 'Sehung'

The mine tunnel that suffered the highest casualties when the lake exploded up into them, Sehung (pronounced *see-hoong*) was the death place of a reported 50 miners. It is a steep incline back to the surface, dug out that way around large stone deposits and dozens of miners were caught by the rushing waters as they struggled over one another to reach the top. There are many wooden stair-slats added to the floor of the mineshaft wherever it gets too steep for normal movement



but this makes it only moderately inhibiting (-5 feet of Movement).

Tunnel Four – ‘Rao’

The most westerly mineshaft near the village, Rao (pronounced *row*) is 4,000 feet in length with really only one abrupt descending point in the tunnel that drops a full 10 feet before moving forward again at the 1,000 foot mark. The drop off is easy to miss without knowing about it, requiring a Spot skill check DC 15, with many people falling face first down the short wooden stairs placed there. The last 400 feet or so of the shaft is under three feet of water, nearly making swimming the easiest method of travel for the final leg of the shaft.

Tunnel Five – ‘Da Nau’

Da Nau (pronounced *dah noh*) is another mine shaft that suffered rather badly during the flooding. This tunnel bares the steepest incline of the stairs at ground level, walking a full 50 feet straight down before flattening into the mine tunnel proper. It was one of the more prolific mines while it was in operation and finger to fist-sized chunks of raw amber can still be found within a foot or so of digging along any of the walls. However, the last half of its 2,000 foot length is completely underwater due to an unknown natural spring adding to what the flood had begun.

Tunnel Six – ‘Jun’

Considered the flattest and easiest mine to traverse, Jun (pronounced *joon*) never struck it very rich for the miners. It had little amounts of amber and few miners ever made claims large enough to earn bonuses. This placed few miners in the shaft when the flooding took place and most of them managed to outrun the water. Only 4,000 feet in length and the last 1,000 are underneath one foot of water, Jun is still the easiest way to get to the lake chamber if someone wants to do so.

Tunnel Seven – ‘Gen Gen’

The deepest of the tunnels, Gen Gen (pronounced *jehn-jehn*) bears a heavy slope for several hundred feet at a time, banking back upwards slightly to avoid large stone formations in the ground. This makes the tunnel’s ups and downs very frequent and hard on the feet and legs of those trying to travel it quickly. Even though it is only 3,500 feet in length, with the last 750 feet completely below water, trying to manoeuvre through Gen Gen at faster than half speed will result

in 1d6 points of nonlethal damage every hour from leg and back fatigue.

Tunnel Eight – ‘Lau Se’

Lau Se (pronounced *lahw-say*) is a 6,000 foot long shaft that was dug at the perfect angle to reach deeply and safely into the crust. The last 1,000 feet are beneath two feet of water from the lake chamber but the whole distance still bears torch sconces for light when needed. This was the youngest of the mines, rapidly carved out of the ground in the last few months of their service. There were many alcoves and hideaway points dug out of the walls for the mining equipment that was used but now only serve as an excellent place for dangerous cave vermin to make their nests.

Tunnel Nine – ‘Rai Okumbe’

The tunnel in which Soonai himself was drowned; Rai Okumbe (pronounced *rah-ee oh-koom-bah*) is 4,600 feet of gentle downward sloping construction that begins to have water lapping at your boots after 4,000 feet. The water grows deeper and deeper the farther it goes, until it eventually reaches chin height. It is there that the shaft opens up into the lake chamber. Somewhere within this tunnel lie the remains of Soonai Hynang, buried in mine silt and eventually battered into bones that partially washed out into the lake. This mineshaft is where the actual Soonai apparition exists, appearing to anyone brave enough to spend the night hours here.

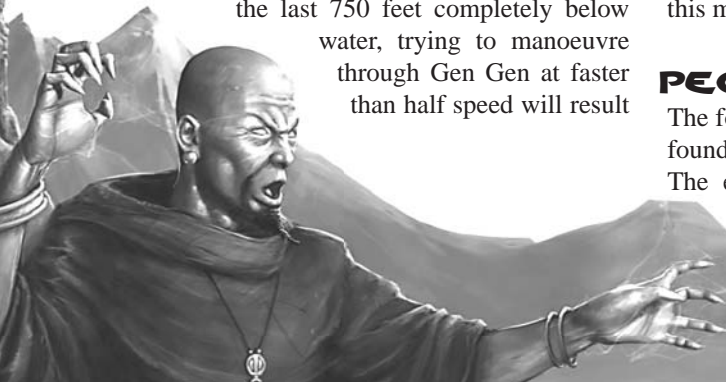
The Lake Chamber

Three hundred by four hundred feet in size with only a 24 foot tall ceiling, the lake chamber is a huge, glassy body of water that churns and moves beneath the surface because of oddly shaped pitfalls throughout the floor. Some of these pitfalls are the openings to the nine mine shafts, which is why the water acts so strangely throughout the continued complex. Anyone walking across the floor of the lake must pass a DC 10 Reflex save each minute or fall into a sucking pitfall of water 3d6 x 5 feet deep. This immediately calls for a DC 15 Swim check to avoid being sucked down with the current and starting to suffocate (per page 221 of the *Conan Roleplaying Game: Second Edition*).

The underground lake is also the breeding and nesting point for the main physical danger to anyone exploring this mineshaft system – the giant Khitan leechworms.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are two of the most important individuals found near the Nine Flooded Tunnels of Tai Paun Li. The entries have the characters’ statistics, important



information for interacting with him and a few good notes on how to use them.

BU LING HYNANG

The current magistrate of Tai Paun Li and owner of the mining complex, whether or not it is active, Bu Ling is the great nephew of Soonai himself – and they are much alike. Bu Ling cares only for money and power, heedless of the consequences. It did wonders for his late, great uncle; why could it not work out for Bu Ling?

Medium Humanoid (Khitans Noble 1 / Nomad 1)

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

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages: Khitan (Literate), Shemetish, Vendhyan (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +0 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 10 (+0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 15 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6

Defensive Specials: Dodge

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3, AP 0)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3, AP 0)

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

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: –

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (forest), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Title (magistrate), Wealth

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus (Survival), Track

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +3, Craft (mining) +7, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Move Silently +4, Ride +4, Sense Motive +5, Swim +3, Survival +8

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Possessions: Fine Cotton Blouse, Hard Leather Shoes

Attractive and wealthy, Bu Ling Hynang grew up in the lap of luxury and has never wanted for anything. After his father died during a tiger attack while travelling from Vendhya, he inherited the mines at Tai Paun Li...and the legacy that they represent. He grew very curious about his family's past and began spending more and



more time at the village. So much time that he eventually became the local magistrate.

In spite of his family's protests, Bu Ling wants to reopen the mines where he can and possibly even add new shafts to increase potential profits. He has heard the tales of ghosts and deadly creatures that live in the flooded portions of the tunnels but he has no reason to believe that it is anything but foolish superstition and local thieves trying to scare away real workers.

Combat

Bu Ling would never dare enter into combat on his own volition. He normally has several paid bodyguards with him at all times to do it for him. He is not above grovelling and bribery to avoid ever seeing his own blood.

Plot Hooks

✦ Bu Ling needs to quell local fears that *anyone* who goes down into Rai Okumbe never returns and he plans to do so with the unknowing help of the Player Characters. He plans to pay them to go down into the tunnel and spend three days and nights down in the dark. This could be a dangerous experiment; especially when the ghost of old Soonai gives *them* all of the information that they need to stop Bu Ling from continuing this course of action.

✦ Bu Ling has begun inviting foreign investors – the only people that might not know about the mines' history – to Tai Paun Li in order to try to get them to donate funds to the reopening of the mines. Some of the locals are afraid of the variety of spirits that will be released when this happens. They have chosen to go to the Player Characters with a request; will they make sure that the foreign investors never make it to the village?





SOONAI HYNANG, THE GHOST OF TAI PAUN LI

The reason why so many miners were drowned or trampled to death decades ago in the mines of Tai Paun Li, Soonai was thrust into the realm of the undead to forever haunt the dark and watery graves of the employees and servants that he condemned.

Medium Undead

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Hyrkanian, Khitan, Vendhyan

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 Dex)

DR: –

Hit Dice: 5d12 (33 hp)

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

Defensive Specials: Immune to Physical damage, Undead traits, Weakness to Silver / Magic

Speed: 20 ft. fly (perfect)

Attack: Touch +10 melee (Chill)

Full Attack: Touch +10 melee (Chill)

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

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: N/A

Special Attacks: Chill, Despair

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str –, Dex 12, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 20

Special Qualities: Haunt limitations, Insubstantial, Undead traits

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Focus (touch)

Skills: Hide +20, Move Silently +20

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Corruption and Insanity: 5

Possessions: His own bones and his last pouch of coins

Soonai's ghost appears as a wispy glowing facsimile of how he did in life; a middle-aged Khitan man with long hair and a moustache, wrapped in expensive silks belted at the waist. His voice is eerie and cold, chiming in with its own echo whenever he speaks. The air becomes frightfully cold when he manifests, a thin layer of ice forming on the stone and water all around him.

The ghost is bound to the waters that took so

many lives because of his actions, constantly seeking a living entity that might take his bones – which lay half-buried in the Rai Okumbe, under the water – to a proper resting place. Those that stop long enough to listen to his penitent pleas will have to deal with his ghastly jailors; the miners that he killed. Most do not even try to listen to him however and instead become the target of his eternal frustration and damnation.

Combat

Soonai does not combat his foes conventionally; he uses how fearful his image and voice can be to paralyse his targets. Then he passes a ghostly hand through them and fills their lungs with the cold of the eternal grave.

Chill (Su): When Soonai makes contact with living flesh he inflicts 1d6 Constitution damage, ignoring any armour worn unless it is made from silver.

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of Soonai's form, the viewer must succeed in a Will save DC 14 or be paralysed with fear for 1d3 rounds. Targets cannot be affected again by despair for 24 hours, whether or not they pass the save.

Haunt Limitations (Su): Soonai cannot leave the waters that he was killed by; they are his anchor to this world. He can go wherever standing water is within the whole mine complex or upon solid ground by a number of feet equal to his Charisma score.

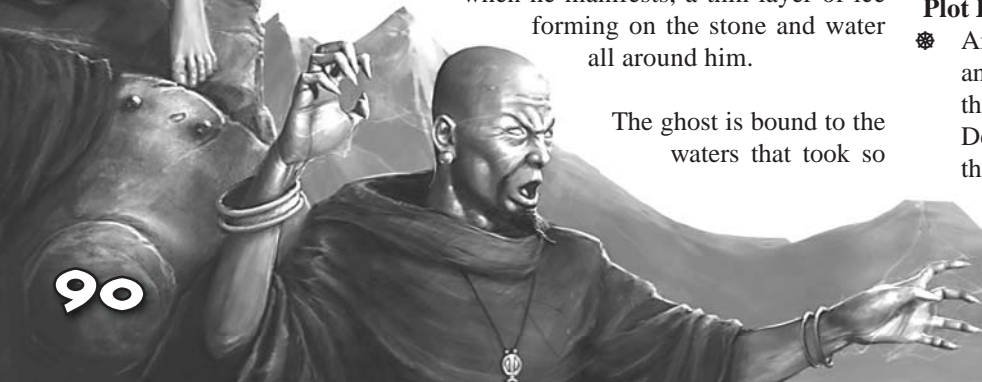
Immunities (Su): Soonai is immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by either magic or objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver buckles, candlesticks, mugs and so on, could be used.

Insubstantial (Su): Soonai is able to pass through solid objects as if they were not there unless they contain more than 10% silver in their construction or are otherwise magically protected.

Skills: Due to his silent and shifty physical form, Soonai has a flat rate of +20 for Hide and Move Silently skill checks.

Plot Hooks

- ✦ Anyone that comes into the mines at Tai Paun Li and gets deep enough to see the waters that flood them will see the ghost of Soonai appear to them. Depending on their initial reaction he will beckon them forward, trying to convince them to find his



bones and bury them outside the mines. Of course this will also summon the wrath of the Oni-Miho if the Player Characters decide to help...

- ✿ Soonai has learned by listening to those visiting his haunt about his great nephew's plan to reopen the mines. After two generations of being hunted down and repeatedly torn apart by them, he does not want others to fall prey to the Oni-Miho. If it means killing a few poor souls that come into the mines while others watch and flee to tell the world about him, so be it.



ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around the Nine Flooded Tunnels of Tai Paun Li.

KHITAN LEECHWORMS

Small Vermin (aquatic)
Climate/Terrain: Any Khitan aquatic (freshwater)
Organization: Pack (5 – 10) or tangle (40 – 60)
Initiative: +0 (–1 Dex, +1 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Darkvision 30 ft., Scent, Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 10 (+1 size, –1 Dex)

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 1d6 (3 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 5 ft., 5 ft. climb, 15 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d4+3 and poison, AP 1)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d4+3 and poison, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 1 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: –

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +10, Swim +20

Khitan leechworms are small, two-foot long at most, aquatic predators that normally feast upon fish and crustaceans that they can swim up to. They are attracted to heat and salt in the water, making any swimming or wading body a target.

Thin, pale and slightly flattened, the leechworm is nothing more than an eating machine designed solely to bring its jaws into contact with the flesh of its prey. Its ringed mouth is full of sawing and rasping teeth that cut through light armour and cloth easily, pulling flesh up into its sucker-like lips, where a powerful numbing agent seeps into the wound.

Combat

A leechworm does not actually ‘fight’ a combat as much as it does not know any better to avoid enemy attacks. It is inherently difficult to strike but it is singular in its purpose. All that it feels is the hunger toward the meat in the water – all other things become secondary when a feeding swarm is formed.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a Khitan leechworm’s bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Leech worm	Injury DC	1d2 Str	4	One per round
Toxin	14			





Skills: Khitan leechworms receive a +5 racial bonus to Climb and Hide checks due to their pale, sticky bodies. They also have a +15 racial bonus to Swim checks, as they are designed to wriggle through the water effortlessly.

ONI-MIHO (DEMON MINER)

Medium Undead

Climate/Terrain: Any Khitan subterranean

Organization: Solitary or patrol (2 – 4)

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

Sensory Traits: Listen +5, Spot +6

Languages: Khitan

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 (35 hp)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Specials: Regeneration

Speed: 30 ft.; 20 ft. burrow; 20 ft. climb

Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d6+3, AP 5)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+3, AP 5), bite +7 melee (1d8+1, AP 4)

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

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 3

Special Qualities: Entropic Bite

Feats: Multiattack, Toughness

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +15, Jump +10, Move Silently +15, Swim +10

Possessions: Rags and the occasional mining mattock

An Oni-Miho is a twisted demon-thing that is a creature of raw vengeance and hatred. Each beast is as large as a man but with jet black skin, yellow eyes and long claws that look exaggerated even on their wiry limbs.

They have wide, frog-like mouths filled with serrated shark's teeth that drip black ichors – a foul substance that helps them chew through any material.

The Oni-Miho of Tai Paun Li are hellish bound spirits created from those among the miners who were drowned that exchanged their eternal rest for vengeance upon the living. Becoming monsters that stalk the tunnels,

killing anyone or anything that could put the ghost of Soonai to rest. They also have the personal joy of tearing Soonai to pieces whenever he manifests for too long, enjoying the sounds of his undying screams again and again.

Combat

Oni-Miho attack quickly and without hesitation, slashing targets apart with their long claws or dissolving them with their supernatural bite. Because of their unnatural longevity and constant regeneration, they are also utterly fearless and will always fight until 'death'.

Entropic Bite (Ex): Once an Oni-Miho gets hold of an opponent in its bite (see Improved Grab) it can continue biting him each round thereafter, dealing standard bite damage. This also gradually dissolves through its opponent's armour – each round the Oni-Miho uses Entropic Bite, including the first round, the AP rating of its bite increases by +1.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the Oni-Miho must hit with a bite. If it gets a hold, it can use its Entropic Bite attack the following round.

Regeneration (Su): An Oni-Miho will regenerate all lost Hit Points every 13 hours, no matter how much damage they have sustained. The only exception to this is damage inflicted upon them by silver, which is permanent.

Skills: Oni-Miho have a +2 racial bonus to their Climb, Hide and Move Silently skills.

VILLAGE TROUBLEMAKERS

Medium Humanoid (Khitan Thief 1)

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

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Khitan (20% speak Hyrkanian)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +0 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)

DR: 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)

Hit Points: 8 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will –1 (–3 versus Hypnotism)

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +2 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +2 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

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

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Brawl

Skills: Appraise +2, Hide +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +4, Search +2

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (–1)

Possessions: Hand-sewn Quilted Jerkin, Dagger, Crossbow with 1d4 bolts, 2d4 sp

The people of Tai Paun Li are well aware of the nature of the nearby mines and many of them have sworn never to go near them again in fear of raising the ire of the ghosts inside. Some of the younger and more foolish villagers risk everything and duck into the shallows of the mines in search of any remaining pieces of amber that they can scavenge.

Combat

Most villagers that dare come into the mines are not looking to risk their necks against any living foes they might come across. They would have no problem laying in wait for a lone traveller to taste their dagger's point if it fills their purse with a few more coins.

PLOT HOOKS


The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounters with the Nine Flooded Tunnels of Tai Paun Li.

✿ There has been a rush of 'ghost sightings' near the entrances of all the mining shafts at night; specifically a bright green glow and loud moaning. Although these are just the actions of local troublemakers trying to keep people away from the mines, it has angered the Oni-Miho...who are turning their attentions toward the mines' shallower areas.

✿ The Player Characters are sent by an influential scholar on a hunt for a large chunk of amber that he needs for an important ritual that will save their home city. After doing a little research, they discover the location of some old abandoned amber mines near this little Khitan village that could meet their needs...

✿ A scholar approaches the Player Characters with an odd employment opportunity. He claims to be a 'spirit hunter', someone who catches ghosts and demons and makes them serve humanity instead of terrorising it. He knows of a place in Khitai that is said to be haunted by the perfect kind of soul he is looking for and he is willing to pay the characters handsomely to get him there safely. Of course, when they discover that this scholar is actually a vile necromantic slaver that tortures the dead beyond imagining, what will they do?





The Well of Restless Slumbers

It goes by a host of different names: Fidamar, Zamittan Rent, Ten Thousand Dying Steps, Mouth of Nightmares and so on. No matter what the locals might choose to call it, it has but one true calling – the Well of Restless Slumbers. This unbelievably deep tear in the Skarpash Mountains is a long and winding road to one of the Zamorian hells...

...which is precisely what the goddess Fidesa wants the world to think about her home.

THE WELL OF RESTLESS SLUMBERS

'Hobble me, cut off my hands...even send me to the gallows. Anything but the last walk to the Well. I would rather face Zandru in the next life than face the Queen of Nightmares in this one.'

Terrain Type: Tube/Flow

Total Subterranean Area: 2,000,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 2,000 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet):

1,400,000 tunnels; 600,000 chambers

Important Terrain Elements: Several Gorge/Cliffs, Flora (Poisonous Spores), Abyssal Crevasse/Volcanic Pool

HISTORY

When the first Festival of All Gods took place in the pre-history of Zamora, the gods all celebrated their return to the heavens and left their marks upon the world. While the rest left the realm of mortals behind, a young, child-like goddess named Fidesa slept soundly. So long did she sleep that, when she awoke, she was alone. No other gods remained in physical form on the planet and she was too young to know the way to heaven alone. She was stranded.

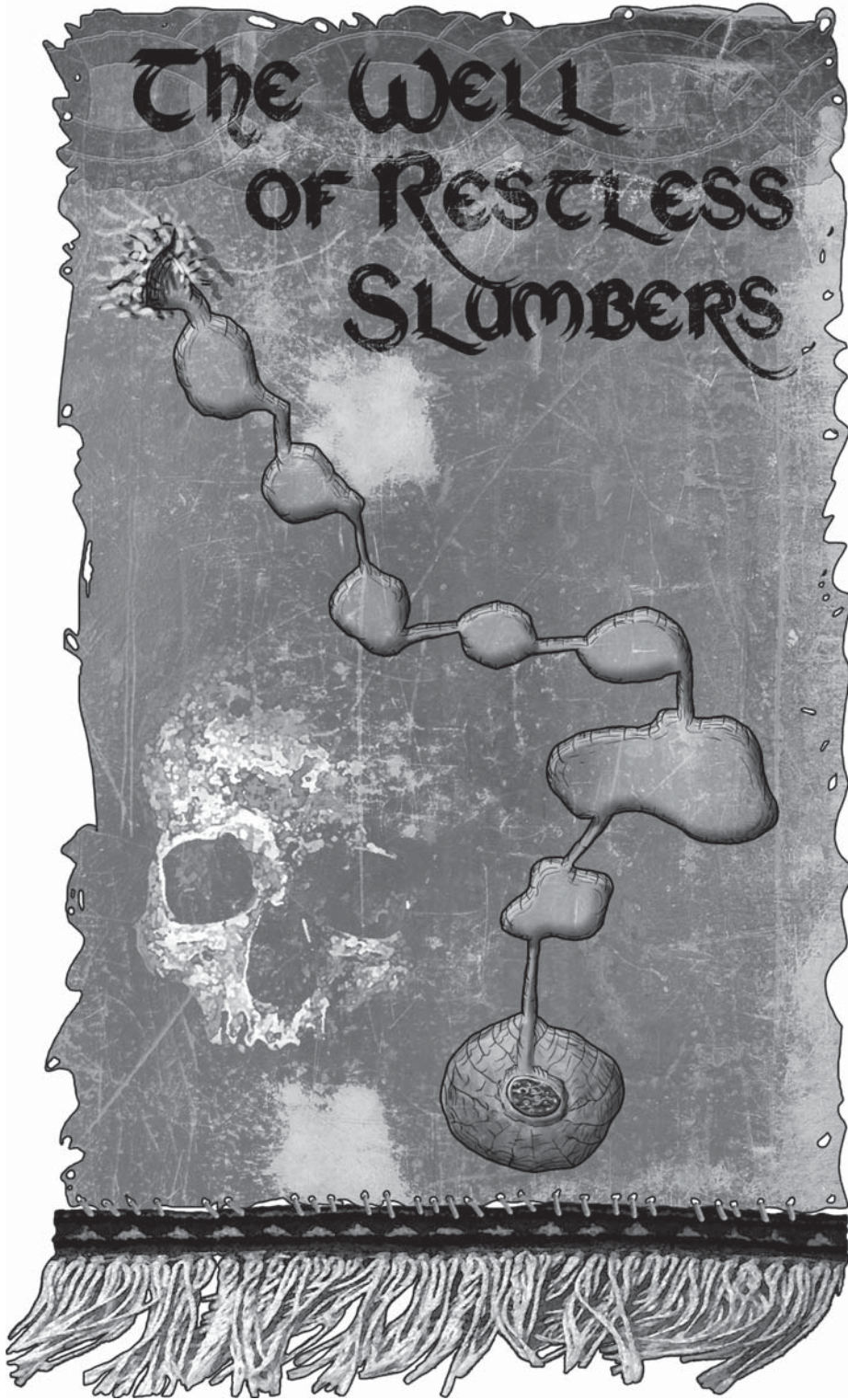
At first she was sad; left behind by the others to fend for herself. Quickly

her sadness turned into anger and her anger smouldered within her. Her anger gave Fidesa her first adult thought – revenge. This thought was too grown up and planned to be held in a young mind, so her body reshaped itself into a beautiful woman. Her thoughts of vengeance against the gods fit this new body much better, making it comfortable inside of her head once more. She plotted and schemed but with no other gods here to target she had no outlet for her rage.

It was not until the primitive creatures of the world began to reveal themselves that Fidesa found her calling. It seemed that her anger and rage manifested itself in the sleeping minds of mortal men and women, especially the closer they got to her new home – a cavern in the black and jagged Skarpash Mountain range. So she became the Queen of Nightmares, the source for horrid images and mind-crippling visions throughout Zamora, Corinthia and northern Turan.

Over 10,000 years, by written records, passed while Fidesa remained in her cavern, her hatred and rage burning a hole in the cavern root itself. The cave grew deeper and deeper with each passing year, the demigoddess retreating farther and farther into the world to get away from the prying eyes of mortal things. The human servants of the gods that forgot her were a constant source of displeasure for Fidesa, as was their incessant explorations into her home.

Her home, which is the deepest cavern to be found in all of the Skarpash mountain range, was first discovered by explorers a full 1,000 years before Conan ever picked up a sword. Fidesa's cultists had done as good a job as they could in keeping outsiders from finding it but it was inevitably going to be uncovered. When it was, the resulting battle between her cult defenders and the invading raiders from other faiths saw the bloody end of half of her cult. Fidesa had to come up with a better way to protect the mouth of her home. Although her cultists would replenish themselves over the years, she needed something a little easier to utilise. Thus, the dreamfiends were created.





Over the last few generations, the Well of Restless Slumbers has been mostly left alone by enemies of Fidesa. Instead, many local communities use the cavern as a death sentence punishment for their criminals. So few non-cultists ever enter the Well and return, it would be where they send those who cannot be redeemed; where they would either be driven mad or torn apart by the strange and powerful monsters that lurk in all the dark places.

The last 100 years have seen a decline in the cult of Fidesa, with so many of their members withdrawing deeply into the Well to serve their dark Queen. The first few hundred feet of the cavern is rarely even occupied now, forcing anyone trying to find the sleeping demigoddess to venture below the second or third cliff drop into the tunnels below – where there are much worse things than devotees waiting for them.

LAYOUT

The Well of Restless Slumbers is surprisingly simple in its layout. Beginning in a huge, mountainside opening that spans 100 feet; the Well starts out as a large cavern chamber that slopes down quickly into the main part of the tunnel. A few hundred feet later and the tunnel ends abruptly in a 50 foot drop off. The drop off is where the second landing begins.

The second landing is the beginning of another 1,000 feet or so of cavern chamber and downward sloping tunnel. The second set of tunnels extends for another stretch of winding cavern before ending again in a 50 foot cliff. At the bottom – the third landing.

So this pattern of landing/tunnel/cliff continues for a total of eight landings before the final and deepest tunnel is reached. This final tunnel is not seen by the eyes of common cavern explorers, who have likely long been killed off by the cavern's other denizens. If they did manage to reach this point of the Well however, they will notice the almost perfect symmetry in how it is dug from the glassy bedrock around it and the complete lack of life. This is due to the tunnel's 'end'. A long and perilous walkway at the end of which is a free standing, bubbling pool of liquid magma surrounded by a few feet of stone ledge, surrounded by a sheer drop off into nothingness.

Beyond the eighth tunnel there is nothing; only the darkness, which the

goddess alone is privy to. She lives within the pool of liquid stone, bathing eternally in a substance that could vaporise mortal flesh in an instant, letting her anger and rage poison the minds of humans for miles all around.

EXPLORATION NOTES

First Landing (Opening Chamber)

The Well of Restless Slumbers begins with a large maw-like cave opening in the side of a mountain, just a few hundred feet from the northern foothills of the Skarpashes. A hundred years or so ago and the mouth of the Well would have been crawling with cultists but they have all moved deeper into the cavern at this point, leaving it guarded only by its reputation.

Beyond the opening there is a large chamber that has a moderate slope downward toward the tunnel entrance to the rest of the cavern. There is frequently a number of shredded tents, bedrolls and the occasional corpse left as a reminder to foolish explorers in the main chamber.

Third, Fourth and Fifth Landings (The Cult)

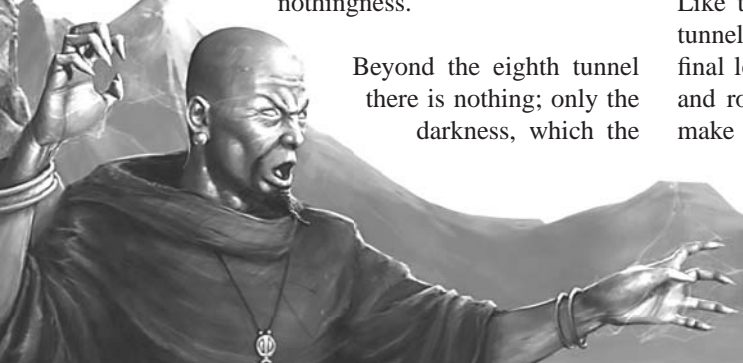
The entirety of the third cavern landing and tunnel is the primary home of the cult to Fidesa. They have constructed dozens of cabin-like sleeping structures, a common table large enough to seat 50 and several storage shacks where equipment, resources and the like are stashed. It is the home of 100 cultists, only half of which are ever home at one time to be dealt with by any explorer that has come all this way.

Sixth Landing (The Dreamfiends' Revel)

Beyond the area dedicated to the Queen's cult, down a sheer cliff decorated with jagged rocks and sharpened stones to dissuade climbers (-5 to Climb skill checks) lies a large and open landing that is home to Fidesa's most horrible of guardians – the dreamfiends. Random in just how horrifying they are, all 13 of these beasts live in the darkness of the sixth landing and tunnel. They only ever leave this area when the Queen herself sends them on a bloody errand otherwise they can be found here. Their never ending orgy of lust, pain and fear sends terrible echoes up into the fifth and fourth landings, imposing a -2 fear-based penalty to all Will saves for those who hear them.

Seventh Landing Cliffs (The Hanging Ledge)

Like the previous landings, at the end of the seventh tunnel there is a cliff leading down to the eighth and final level of the Well. It is not a typical cliff of stone and rock however, as it was shaped very distinctly to make climbing down extremely difficult. The lip of the



cliff (technically the end of the seventh tunnel's floor) is curled unnaturally sharply inward, making it curl and hang over the wall by several feet. It requires an additional DC 18 Climb skill check to bypass the Hanging Ledge successfully, with failure sending the person plummeting 70 feet to the bottom.

Fidesa's Bath (The Eighth Landing)

After the Hanging Ledge there lies a long, thin tunnel that leads only one way – down. It leads steeply down into the very bowels of the mountain for 500 feet before it empties into a smallish chamber. The floor of the tunnel keeps extending forward, like a walkway over a large bottomless pit. The chasm is 30 feet across and surrounds a single landing at the chamber's centre. On this landing is a bubbling volcanic pool almost 20 feet in diameter inside of which the goddess herself rests her earthly form and sends her nightmares out into the Hyborian Age.

PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are some of the most important individuals found in or near the Well of Restless Slumbers. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

DEIDRANNA, HIGH PRIESTESS OF FIDESA

The highest ranking servant of the Queen of Nightmares, Deidranna is a former slave girl who found solace in the only place she was not abused – her dreams. When those dreams turned dark and filled with revenge, she soon found a calling out into the wilderness, where she would discover her true calling. Now she leads the cult of Fidesa from within the Well, leaving in disguise whenever her flock needs supplies or new recruits.

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Scholar 12/Tempress 4)

Initiative: +11 (+3 Dex, +8 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +10, Spot +8

Languages: Acheronian, Aquilonian, Stygian (Literate), Turanian, Zamorian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 20 (+3 Dex, +6 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 15 (+0 Str, +5 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 64 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +20 (+10 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +12 melee (1d4, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +12/+7/+2 melee (1d4, AP 1)

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

Base Attack: +12/+7/+2

Grapple: +12

Special Attacks: Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Counterspells, Curses, Hypnotism, Prestidigitation, Summonings; 12 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +13 (+7 class, +6 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Blast Wave (Defensive Blast), Conjuring, Curse of Yizil, Deflection, Demonic Pact, Desperate Ward (Defensive Blast), Dread Serpent, Entrance, Hypnotic Suggestion, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Summon Demon, Telekinesis, Ward Dwelling, Warding*

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 22

Special Qualities: Background (Priestess), Comeliness, Dance of Desire 1/day, Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Savoir-Faire, Secret Art (sorcery), Seductive Art +1, Seductive Savant, Scholar, Sleepless

Feats: Alertness, Carouser, Iron Will, Menacing Aura, No Honour, Poison Use, Ritual Sacrifice, Stealthy

Skills: Bluff +15, Climb +10, Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +18, Craft (herbalism) +18, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +12, Hide +14, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (local) + 12, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +8, Perform (ritual) +20, Sense Motive +10, Survival + 10

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 18 (+2)

Corruption and Insanity: 10; Sadism

Possessions: Ritual Dagger, Silken Robes, Silver Jewellery

Having lived a terrible life in the streets of Shadizar long before she ever knew about Fidesa, Deidranna was a tormented slave girl that seemed to attract the worst sorts of people to her corner of the brothel. When she was 17 years of age she was forced to kill a would-be rapist and was sent to the stocks for five lashes for it. Her life was so painful that she welcomed the sting of the lash and hoped it would bring the infection that would kill her. In the days of healing afterwards she slept a great deal and found herself dreaming about turning that lash upon her owner, strangling him and then scratching out his eyes. Her dreams gave her power and courage and one day...she did exactly as she had dreamt. She



slipped into the master's chamber and slit his throat three times, scooped up his travelling satchel and headed into the mountains.

Ever since she became a member of the cult she has dedicated herself fully to it; never did she question and never did she wonder. She was a model cultist for 10 whole years before she claimed the robes of a priestess, eventually even the rings of leadership. Now she leads the cult. Deidranna is one of the only mortals allowed access through the dreamfiends' level and down into the sanctum of their goddess; who she idolises as a powerful mother-figure, even though she is not.

Combat

Deidranna would prefer not to have to fight in a direct combat at all, relying on her more physical of cultists and the dreamfiends to take care of any problems that might arise. If forced into a conflict, she will use her magic first and foremost but also knows that the edge of her blade can be deadly as well.

Sleepless (Su): All branded followers of Fidesa can stave off the need for sleep for extremely long periods of time. They only need to get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep once per number of days equal to their Charisma score.

Plot Hooks

- ✦ Deidranna has been recruiting in the streets and brothels of Shadizar and some of the locals are not happy with her. The Player Characters are being contacted to stop her during one of her many trips into the city, by any means possible. What they do not know is that she will be bringing several of her cultists with her on this trip – because she *knows* she is being hunted.
- ✦ The cult of Fidesa wants to recruit one of the Player Characters because of some horrible nightmares they have had in the past; they believe it will strengthen the cult by doing so. The problem with this is that the other Player Characters are being classified as expendable. Deidranna wants to recruit the one personally, using all of her old tricks and wiles.

personality on their own, they are very single-minded and represent a guaranteed encounter inside or near the Well of Restless Slumbers.



Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Commoner 2)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Hyrkanian, Zamorian

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+0 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 7 hp

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

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Short Sword +1 melee (1d6, AP 1) or Unarmed

FANATIC CULTIST OF FIDESA

This is the average statistic entry for a common cult member in the cult of Fidesa. While not a



Strike +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Short Sword +1 melee (1d6, AP 1) or Unarmed Strike +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

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

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: –

Sorcery Knowledge: –

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

Special Qualities: Sleepless

Feats: Stealthy

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Move Silently +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (+0)

Possessions: Canvas robe, short sword, 2d4 silver pieces

Totally devoted to the will of their goddess, cultists of Fidesa are the willing servants of Deidranna. They do not fear death or pain except that which is suffered *not* in service to their goddess. Although they look just like any other Zamorian, they can be recognised by the symbolic branding on their necks – an open eye pierced by a needle.

Combat

Cultists that plan on getting into combat will throw themselves at their enemies, swords swinging and fists flying. So long as they die in service to the Queen of Nightmares – they die without regrets.

Sleepless (Su): All branded followers of Fidesa can stave off the need for sleep for extremely long periods of time. They only need to get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep once per number of days equal to their Charisma score.

Plot Hook

- ✦ Cultists of Fidesa are always on the lookout for ways to grab resources and equipment, especially from sleeping targets. The Player Characters are likely laden with loot and equipment, making them tempting late-night targets.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are the only things found in the depths of the Well of Restless Slumbers besides cultists – all animal life is forced away by their hunger and unnatural evil.

DREAMFIENDS OF FIDESA

Medium Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: The Well of Restless Slumbers

Organization: Solitary

Initiative: +6 (+6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 17 (+1 Dodge, +6 natural)

DR: 5

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (77 hp)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +9

Defensive Specials: Dodge

Speed: 40 ft.; 20 ft. climbing

Attack: Tentacle +16 melee finesse (1d6+6)

Full Attack: 1d6 tentacles +16 melee finesse (1d6+6) and bite +12 melee (1d8+6, AP 2)

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

Base Attack: +9

Grapple: +17

Special Attacks: Constrict, Improved Grab, Terrorise

Sorcery Knowledge: Summoning. 13 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +8 (+4 natural, +4 Charisma)

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 18

Special Qualities: Nightmare Traits

Feats: Blindfight, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (grapple)

Skills: Climb +15, Hide +12, Jump +18, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +8

Possessions: –

Twisted forms of demonic servitude created by the unfathomable designs of Fidesa, there are 13 of these horrible creatures that lurk in the darkness of the Well of Restless Slumbers. They are warped amalgamates of flesh, bone, chitin and fur that seem directly plucked from the nightmares of frightened children – which they were.

Each dreamfiend is different on a given level of distinct characteristics based on the individual fears it has picked up upon recently but they all have a general shape that they begin as. Humanoid but with flickering tentacles instead of arms, a large sloping head that ends in a maw or beak of serrated teeth and backwards-bent knees that give it a loping gait like a dog or wolf; this the shape that all dreamfiends are based upon. However, as they absorb the fears of the mortals around them they sprout new characteristics that make them more vile and horrible to their foes.



Combat

Basic Dreamfiends fight simply and efficiently – they try to grab a foe in their tentacles to drag them into their mouth for devouring. Of course, as the dreamfiend mutates and changes, these tactics will normally change to reflect their new abilities.

Constrict (Ex): The dreamfiend deals 2d6+4 points of crushing damage with every successful Grapple action. This can be performed in addition to a single tentacle attack.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the dreamfiend must hit an opponent with a tentacle attack. It can then automatically choose to make a free Grapple attack against that target, suffering no attack of opportunity for doing so.

Nightmare Traits (Su): Every dreamfiend is partly made up of the fears of the mortal minds that they have absorbed. Whenever encountered, a dreamfiend gets to roll once on the following table to gain a single fear-mutation. Additionally, every time a character fails the *Terrorise* Will save (see below), the dreamfiend may roll an additional time on the table.

Terrorise (Ex): A dreamfiend can let out a horrible sound that is somewhere between grinding broken glass into a wound and strangling a very vocal feline. Instead of attacking it can choose to let loose with one of these howls, forcing everyone within 50 feet to pass a DC 18 Will save. Any who pass are unaffected and are immune to *Terrorise* for the remainder of the combat. Any who fail are subjected to flashes of their worst nocturnal fears, losing their next round of actions.

FIDESA'S AVATAR, THE QUEEN OF NIGHTMARES

A demigoddess demon bound to this world by the actions of the other Zamorian gods, Fidesa is now an earthly shell that lives in the depths of the Well of Restless Slumbers. From her home in the heart of the Skarpash Mountains she enjoys sending terrible visions and nightmares to mortal beings – especially those who would worship the other gods and goddesses.

Large Outsider (Demon)

Home Environment: The Well of Restless Slumbers

Initiative: +22 (+10 Dex, +12 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-Light Vision, Listen +30, Spot +30

Languages: All Human Tongues (prefers Zamorian)

Dodge Defence: 31 (-1 Size, +10 Dex, +12 natural)

Parry Defence: 30 (+8 Str, +12 natural)

DR: 15 (+15 Natural); 30 versus fire and heat

Hit Points: 250 hp

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

Defensive Specials: Fire/Heat Resistance, Spells

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Claw +26 melee (2d8+8, AP 15)

Full Attack: Claw +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (2d8+8, AP 15)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +18/+13/+8/+3

Grapple: +30

Special Attacks: Kiss of Fidesa, Power Attack, Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Curses and Necromancy; 58 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +20 (+11 natural, +9 Charisma)

2d6 Result	Fear-Mutation	Game Effect
2	Haunting Glow	-1 to Will saves within 10 feet
3 – 4	Huge Tusks	+1d6 Bite damage
5 – 6	Scourge Hooks	+2 damage to all Tentacle attacks
7	Extra Tentacle	+1 Tentacle Attacks per Full-Round Action
8	Scaly Flesh	+3 DR
9	Burning Breath	May breathe 3d6 fire-damage cone up to 45 ft. away
10	Bat Wings	Gains Flying Movement of 30 ft. (good)
11	Spiked Flesh	+2d6 damage on Constrict attack
12	Deepened Shadows	Always has 50% Concealment





Spells Known: *Agonising Doom, Awful Rite of the Were-Beast, Black Plague, Chill of the Grave (Defensive Blast), Curse of Yizil, Dance of the Changing Serpent, Death Touch, Doom, Draw Forth the Heart, Draw Forth the Soul, Gelid Bones, Greater Black Plague, Greater Ill-Fortune, Ill-Fortune, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Raise Corpse, Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast), The Dead Speak*

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 30, Con 20, Int 24, Wis 30, Cha 28

Special Qualities: Improved Grab, Nightmare Aura, True Immortality

Feats: Menacing Aura, No Honour, Poison Use, Steely Gaze

Skills: Bluff +28, Craft (alchemy) +22, Craft (herbalism) +25, Craft (oneiromancy) +35, Decipher Script +26, Heal +20, Hide +20, Intimidate +30, Jump +20, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (nature) +29, Knowledge (religion) +25, Move Silently +22, Perform (ritual) +30, Search +18, Sense Motive +35

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 28 (-4)

Possessions: None

The earthly form of the demigoddess of Nightmares, this thing is nine feet tall, with dark skin and scarlet hair and eyes. It has long, slender limbs that end in talon-like claws and strong legs that seem as though they might have too many joints at the knee. Fidesa has six teats that hang from her long and narrow chest, all of which lactate a silvery fluid that is said to be concentrated dreamstuff. One drop and a man will never be able to sleep again due to the madness that would follow when his mind opened up to her.

She is strangely sensual in her movements and when she speaks but there is little question that she is not a creature from this world – and that her time here has turned her into something foul and twisted that the mortal mind can barely fathom.

Combat

Fidesa would rather use her magic and her special powers to deal with most mortal threats but if she is forced into a situation where she has to inflict physical harm, she is more than equipped to do so. Her claws are like five axe blades cleaving into flesh and her grip is that of steel – allowing her to easily bring someone to her teat to fall under her power or simply to be tossed into her nearby bath of molten lava!

Kiss of Fidesa (Su): The Queen of Nightmares exudes a fluid that is the concentrated power of sleep and dreams, of which she normally uses to create the dreamfiends from the stuff of nightmares.

However, if she can force a mortal’s face to her teat to have even a droplet of the stuff land upon their lips, they must test against the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Milk of Night-mares	Ingested DC 24	1d4 Wis	2d6	One per round

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Fidesa must hit with a claw attack. This attack inflicts normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she gets a hold, she can then make Kiss of Fidesa attacks upon the same target without need for further attack rolls. This ability lasts until Fidesa loses the grapple or has a target in each of her hands.

Nightmare Aura (Ex): Fidesa is surrounded by a palpable aura of nightmare shadows and constant fear. All Will saves within 30 feet of her suffer a -5 penalty. Additionally, anyone sleeping within 100 miles of the Well of Restless Slumbers must pass a Will save DC 15 or count as being Exhausted on the following day from the constant assault of nightmares.

Spells (Sp): Fidesa casts spells as though she were a 20th level Scholar, spending Power Points as normal. In addition to the spells listed above, Fidesa can call upon any Curses or Necromancy spells that are known in Hyboria (in case of future sourcebook additions).

True Immortality (Su): If Fidesa’s avatar is ever destroyed it is not a permanent state for her. One of her dreamfiends will fall into an instant state of slumber and begin to mutate wildly. In a number of hours equal to the amount of damage past 0 she suffered, the dreamfiend’s body will split open and shrivel away to reveal another of Fidesa’s avatars. Only by killing her and all 13 of her dreamfiends can she be vanquished to the Zamorian hells (where Zandru will surely be waiting to chastise her!).

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounters with the Well of Restless Slumbers.

- ✿ The cult of Fidesa is on the rise and many neighbouring villages have claimed to suffer casualties to their



THE WELL

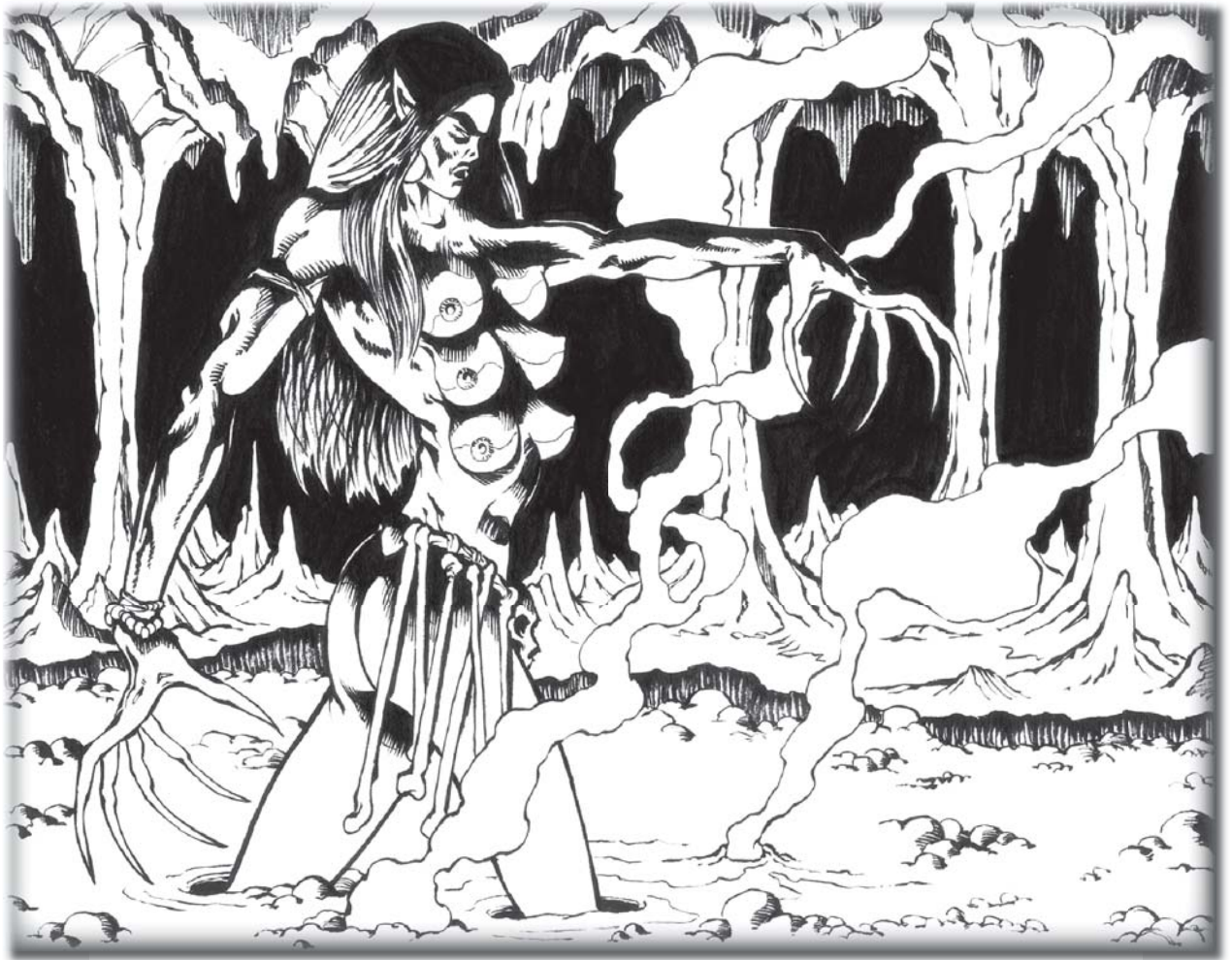


sacrifices. They need someone to venture into the Well of Restless Slumbers and deal with some of the cultists in a similar fashion. The cult must be reminded that *they* are the minority here and not the power in charge.

- ✿ Fidesa has chosen to send one of her dreamfiends into a local village to punish a local priest of Azoth, Fidesa's father in the pantheon of Zamorian gods. The Player Characters are nearby and are pleaded with to go and stop the creature, possibly tracking it

back to the Well and discovering more than they had bargained for.

- ✿ One of the Player Characters has been having sleepless nights filled with vibrant and realistic dreams that have guided them into Zamora and furthermore into the Skarpash Mountains. Their dreams will eventually lead them to the Well of Restless Slumbers, where he receives a warm welcome by the cult of Fidesa – who claim he is a long, lost member that must be brought back into the fold...or else be sacrificed to it!



Yhastur Den Leona, The Home of the Lion

For Shemites, there is one place they know they must avoid when travelling across the savannah. The lion-headed god Nergal sent his starving children to the world to feast in his honour and he gave them a home. This home, Yhastur den Leona, is a huge cavern that contains the most savage and voracious hunters of Shem.

YHASTUR DEN LEONA

'I have seen it: the white lion. I know it is real and I know it cannot be killed. Three spears we sank into it and the next day we saw the beast again...not a scratch upon its hide. The ivory lion will forever hunt these lands.'

Terrain Type: Cavern System

Total Subterranean Area: 2,550,000 square feet

Depth Below Surface: 75 feet

Spatial Distribution Information (in square feet): 750,000 tunnels; 1,600,000 chambers; 200,000 chasms

Important Terrain Elements: Mineral Deposits (Talc), Tombscape (collected bones), Low Ceiling (all tunnels), Sunshafts, Fauna (Maneless Lions)

HISTORY

The Shemites' pantheon of gods is vast and varied, especially dependant upon which tribe or city is holding up which particular god as theirs. There is no single god that is loved above all others but there is one god that is universally feared. The mighty and powerful Nergal has no formal priests or open worshippers but he does have one thing that seems to be just as good – the maneless lions of Shem. Nergal's smooth and hungry lions are his worldly emissaries; emissaries of violence, hunger and bloodshed.

Nergal may be able to open the gates between the worlds for the souls of the fallen or his demonic servitors but the god himself is bound in the underworld with his eternal wife, Ereskigal. The legends say that Nergal requires 'a thousand thousands of lives' before he will be able to come to the world of men and get away from his dark and nagging wife. To arrange for this to happen, he could not use his demons – which were marriage gifts and loyal to both deities. Thus Nergal sent his own bastard children instead. The starving lions of Shem would hunt

and kill in his name until there would be enough to open the doors of Aralu wide enough to let the lion-headed god free.

This is what Shemites say brought the maneless lions to their nation. Potentially true, there is one thing that is undisputed by all faiths and tribes; the beasts live out of a communal den called Yhastur den Leona (pronounced *yah-stoor din lee-oh-na*). This cavern has been known to be home to dozens of the savage animals and blood trails from missing persons have led a half-mile or further, back to the cavern's mouth.

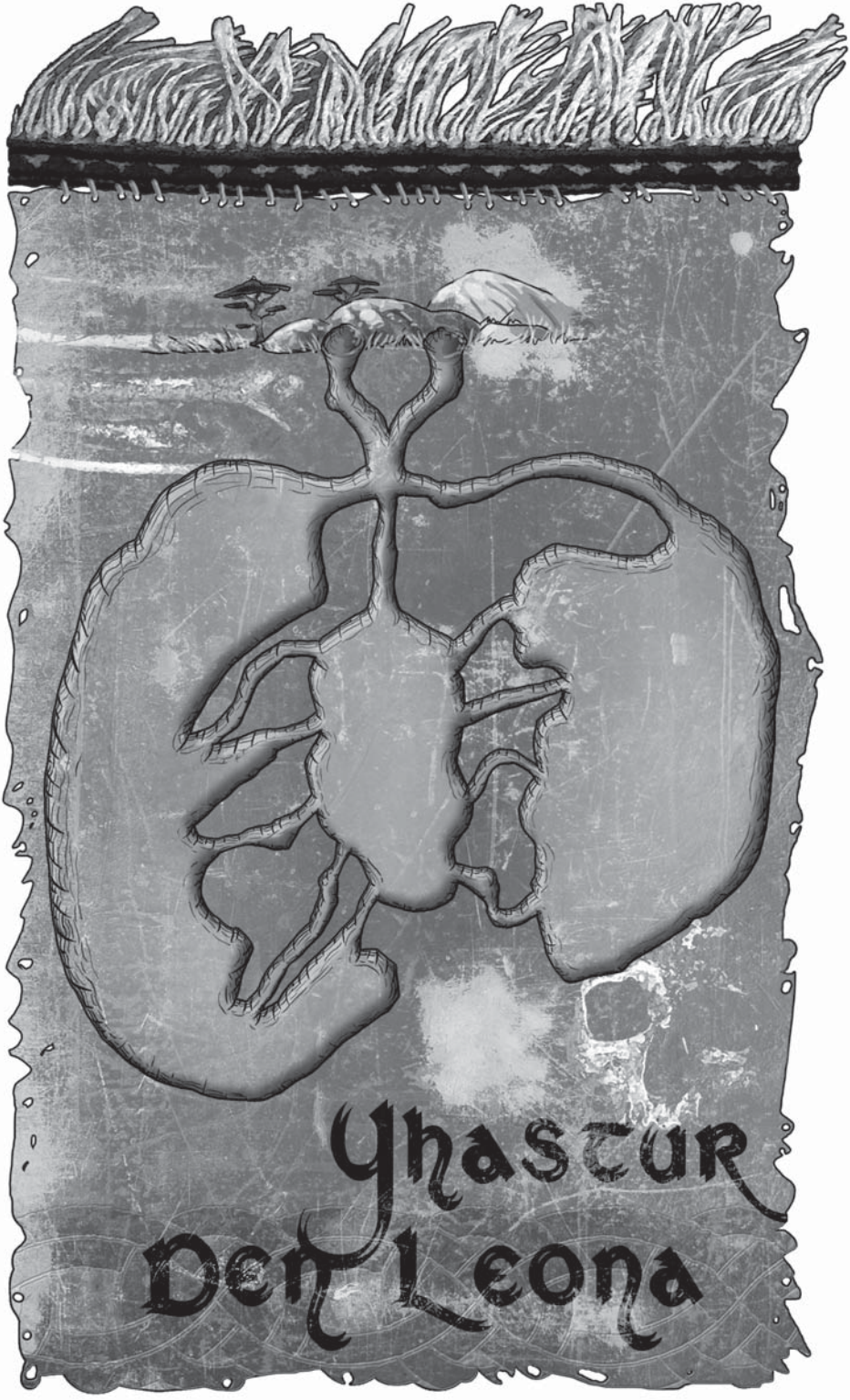
It is also said that there is one king amongst Nergal's lions; one beast that is the toughest and most savage of them all. This creature is called the Ivory Lion for its white fur and has been noted in history as long as anyone has made mention of the cavern. The Shemites in the area believe that the Ivory Lion is Nergal's immortal defender of Yhastur den Leona and that anyone who comes too near will surely be devoured and added to the paving stones of lives before the dreaded god.

This is why the local Shemites have always steered clear of the cavern's area; they would rather take longer paths through rival territories than dare risk the attentions of Nergal's children. It is better to cross spears with a fellow tribe than become one of the keys to bringing the lion-headed destroyer to the world of mortals.

LAYOUT

There are five entrances to Yhastur den Leona, two of which are large and easily seen for several hundred metres across the savannah. These main openings are set in a large hill of cracked boulders, which are almost always the site for several lounging lions. The other entrances are smaller, used only by the younger lions to come and go as they please. All entrances lead into tight tunnels that confine a man-sized explorer, 10 feet across but only six tall.

There are three large chambers that make up the cavern system, each one home to dozens of



lions. These chambers are large and floored unevenly, giving many perches and resting points for the lions but also making these chambers seem even larger by the amount of twists and turns between the boulder formations. There are a handful of breaks in the stones above that cast beams of light down into the cavern chambers that are perfect for the lions' to bask in but also create deep enough shadows to have countless places to hide. The scattered pillars of light deepen the large fields of darkness; a natural boon and threat to anyone foolish enough to venture within.

Between the chambers is a network of smaller, tighter tunnels that run along the walls. These tunnels are primarily only used by the lions, as they might be too tight for human explorers to move quickly within. These inter-chamber tunnels are lined with huge tracts of natural talc, causing the tunnels to be filled with talc dust and powdering anything that squeezes through them.

EXPLORATION NOTES

The Boulder Entrances

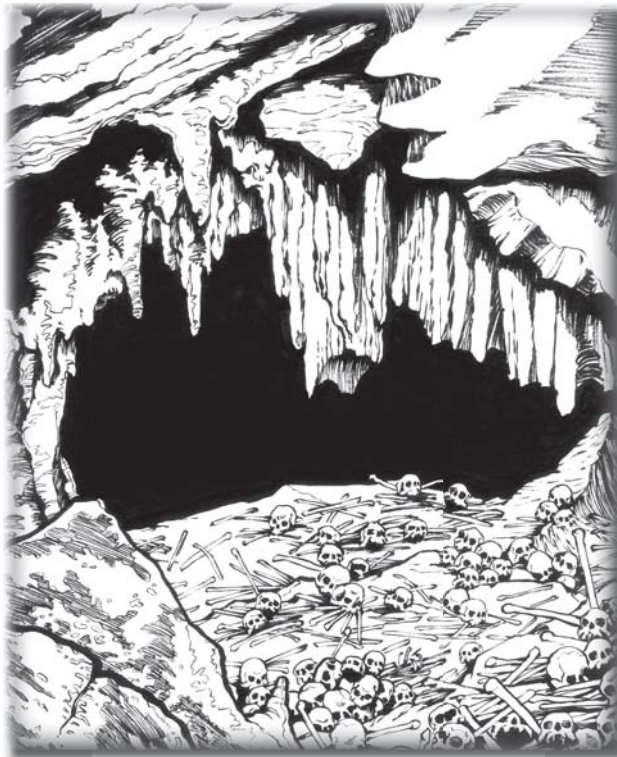
Located just south of the Libnum Hills, the two main access points to Yhastur den Leona are found tucked in a clustered field of ancient boulders. Both entrances are craggy and easily climbed, leading down over a series of five to six foot drop offs until the cavern itself begins roughly 30 feet deep. The denizens of the cavern have no problems traversing these ledges, coming and going with ease. There are rarely fewer than five maneless lions at each entrance; probably basking in the daylight.

Basking Chambers

The largest of the two chambers in Yhastur den Leona are riddled with sunshafts from above (a sign of the deterioration of the talc-heavy walls and ceiling), making them a pleasant place for the lions to lazily lie around and soak up the warmth of the Shemite sun. The staggered light and dark of these chambers make it deceptively easy to blend in with the darker places by using the lighted areas as 'cover', granting a universal +3 to all Hide skill checks while in these chambers. Of course, this bonus goes both ways – also aiding the 10 to 20 lions living here!

Nergal's Collection of Lives

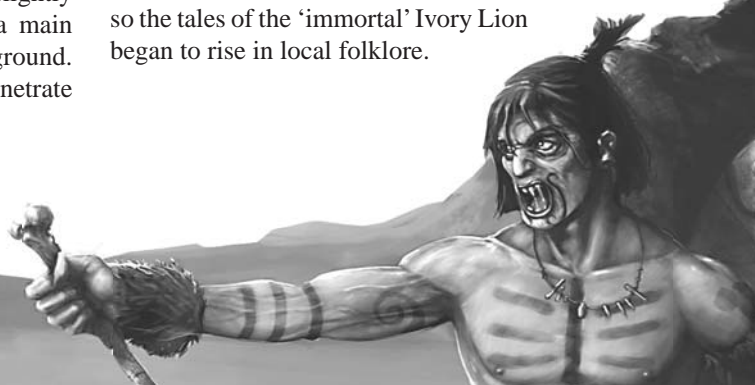
The central chamber of the cavern system is slightly deeper than the rest, sitting at the bottom of a main tunnel that digs a dozen feet or more into the ground. This depth removes the chance for sunshafts to penetrate



the rocks above, making it several degrees cooler than the others and the natural place to bring kills to be eaten later. The maneless lions of the den bring all of their kills to this chamber to be eaten at their leisure, giving the entire chamber a terrible odour of decay. The floor is lined with hundreds upon hundred of remains. Skeletons and half-rotted corpses of men, animals and other savage beasts piled several feet deep make this chamber into a sepulchre – and the running tally of devoured lives, if the tales of Nergal's return can be believed.

The Talc Tunnels

Twisting between the chambers of this cavern are several small and cramped tunnels lined with heavy amounts of talc deposits. The lions enjoy crawling through these tunnels, their claws scratching up heavy amounts of talc dust and powder, rubbing it through their fur like the meadow chinchilla does with dust to stay clean. This results in many of the lions looking white and patchy from the talc clotted in their fur but occasionally one gets a better coverage than the rest and looks stark white. Even if a local managed to kill one of these 'white lions', another one would soon be seen elsewhere and so the tales of the 'immortal' Ivory Lion began to rise in local folklore.





PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is one of the most important individuals found in or near Yhastur den Leona. The entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with him and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

ASHAMADON, NERGA'S GAOLER

Believing the local legends about the return of Nergal through his lions at Yhastur den Leona, the tribal chieftains assigned their best huntsman the lifelong task of trying to kill off as many lions as he could. No easy task, the chosen man was one of noble blood and intertribal importance. Ashamadon has spent 20 years killing the maneless lions of Shem, nothing means more to him than that.

Medium Humanoid (Meadow Shemite Noble 2 / Soldier 10)

Initiative: +10 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflexes, - 1 Shemetish, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Darfari, Shemetish (literate), Kothic

Dodge Defence: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class)

Parry Defence: 27 (+4 Str, +8 class, +1 Parry, +4 Large Shield)

DR: 4 (+4 Lion Hide)

Hit Points: 64 hp

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +6

Defensive Specials: Reflexive Parry

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Great Scimitar +16 melee (1d10+4, AP 2) or Shemite Bow +16 ranged (1d10, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

Full Attack: Great Scimitar +16/+11/+6 melee (1d10+4, AP 2) or Shemite Bow +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d10, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

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

Base Attack: +11/+6/+1

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Shemite Bow and Scimitar, +1 to hit with any Bow, Cleave, Combat Formation (skirmisher, improved skirmisher), Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Ranged Finesse

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15

Special Qualities: Officer (2), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Title (Chief Huntsman), Wealth

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Eyes of the Cat, Leadership, Persuasive, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Survival), Track

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +10, Climb +8, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +10, Hide +4, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +10, Ride +10, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Survival +12

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 10 (+2)

Possessions: Lion Hide Cape/Tabard, Shemetish Great Scimitar, Shemite Bow with 12 Arrows, Large Shield

Ashamadon (pronounced *ah-shah-mah-dahn*) was born into his tribe's royal bloodline, serving as one of its war leaders for several years before the tribes began to notice the increase of lion sightings and how brave the beasts had become. Granted immunity to the tribal squabbles in the nation and charged with the task of hunting down Nergal's children to keep the dread god in Aralu, he is defined not by his role as husband father or brother - but by the number of lion skulls with which he adorns his simple hut.

The hunter himself is in his late forties at this point, grey wisps appearing in his braided and beaded hair. He is in fantastic shape for a man his age, bearing the scars of many hunts gone awry like a treasure map upon his flesh. These scars can be seen at all times, as he wears only the pelt of his most recent kill for protection and recognition. His only other article of clothing is a sarong of lion-hide leather fastened with three of their claws; the claws he once had to dig out of his own skull before letting the wounds heal.

Combat

Ashamadon is a deadly shot with his bow and prefers to use similar tactics as the lions he hunts. He waits in ambush, particularly on a moonlight savannah night, taking aim and ambushing his prey with a few well-placed arrows. Once wounded he closes in quickly and uses his heavy, wide-bladed sword to end the beast's life as quickly as he can. He does not hate the poor beasts or anything else he is forced to kill; he is merely trying to stifle the progress of the lion-headed god's ascension to Ashamadon's world.



Plot Hooks

- ❖ Ashamadon is recently baffled by the appearance of big game hunters on the savannah – the Player Characters. He approaches them not to warn them away from the territory of the maneless lions; instead he tries to get them to push closer and closer to the cavern. They might not know what they are getting into but Ashamadon will not hesitate to take advantage of the extra bodies and blades to aid him in his appointed task.
- ❖ A small pack of lions from Yhastur den Leona have moved into the same area as the Player Characters, unfortunately in the territory of a tribe that does not recognise Ashamadon’s hunting charter from the other chieftains. He needs help convincing the local tribe that he can help them and he might need the Player Characters for that negotiation – even as the lions ravage the village!



ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in or around Yhastur den Leona.

MANELESS LIONS (CHILDREN OF NERGA)

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Warm plains
Organization: Solitary, mated pair or hunting pack (3 – 8)
Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages: –

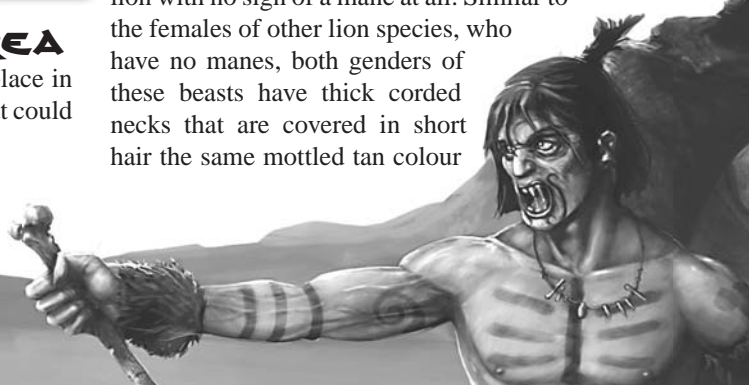
Dodge Defence: 14 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural)
DR: 2
Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (74 hp)
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2
Defensive Specials: Talc Dusting¹ (Yhastur den Leona lions *only*)

Speed: 40 ft.
Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d6+6, AP 3)
Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+6, AP 3) and bite +3 melee (1d10+3, AP 4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +3
Grapple: +14 (+18 when defending¹)
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rage, Rake 1d6+6, AP 3
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 7
Special Qualities: –
Feats: Alertness, Run, Track
Skills: Balance +6, Hide +4 (+13), Jump +13, Move Silently +12
Possessions: Weapons, scraps of armour, indigestible metal objects
Advancement: –

Said to be the bastard children of Nergal, the maneless lions are monstrous brutes that live for the hunt and the kill. Normally lone hunters that stalk on their own, the maneless lions of Yhastur den Leona are ferocious and bloodthirsty beasts that will attack nearly anything that they come across within miles of their den.

Maneless lions are exactly as they sound – a large tan lion with no sign of a mane at all. Similar to the females of other lion species, who have no manes, both genders of these beasts have thick corded necks that are covered in short hair the same mottled tan colour





as the rest of their bodies. These voracious creatures also take their kills back to the den to be feasted upon by the whole pride of lions, a different behaviour from other breeds of maneless lion. This is perhaps due to the age and size of Yhastur den Leona's lion population; or could it actually be that the god Nergal is waiting for these special lions to make his way to the world?

Combat

Maneless lions charge directly into combat with their foes, regardless of numbers or size. They use the damage that they take in these brutal assaults to fuel their fury and it can be assured that a maneless lion would rather die than give up a possible kill. Additionally, the lions found in or near the cavern of Yhastur den Leona will likely be powdered with talc, making them slightly more difficult to grapple due to the slippery nature of the mineral's dust.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a maneless lion 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 a maneless lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rage (Ex): A maneless lion that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage the following round, clawing and biting ferociously until either it or its opponent(s) is dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and -2 Defence. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily and will attack the closest target that most recently injured it.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d6+6, AP 3.

Skills: Maneless lions have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. If in areas of tall grass or similar cover, their Hide bonus increases to +12.

PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounters with Yhastur den Leona, the Home of the Lion.

- ❖ The Player Characters stroll into a local Shemite village that is completely devoid of life. There is no sign of the villagers or livestock and not a corpse can be found. All they have to go on is a handful of paw prints that lead out of the village toward a strange stack of boulders to the north...
- ❖ An Aquilonian big game hunter has heard about this strange den of lions in central Shem and wants to hire the Player Characters to escort him to this potential profit source. Of course when he gets to Yhastur den Leona and sees five times as many lions as he expected, his courage and greed are not what they used to be and soon the Player Characters are on their own.
- ❖ The legends about Nergal's return are true and his lions have nearly completed the number of sentient lives collected at the den. A friendly scholar to the Player Characters informs them about how close Shem is to seeing the return of their dread God of War and only they can sneak into Yhastur den Leona to gather as many human skeletons as they can – hopefully to stop Nergal before it is too late for the people of the Hyborian Age.





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