



XOTHIAN LEGENDS

The Vault of Vigthrahotep

A fantastic adventure for the
Barbarians of Lemuria Mythic Edition
sword and sorcery roleplaying game

BOL

Xothian Legends: The Vault of Vightrahotep a supplement for Barbarians of Lemuria: Mythic Edition

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The Vault of Yigthrahotep

In the jungled hills of Shoma...

*"Kull stood alone, his mind a-whirl.
Neophytes of the mighty serpent, how many
lurked among his cities? How might he tell
the false from the true? Aye, how many of his
trusted councilors, his generals, were men?
He could be certain — of whom?"*
— Robert E. Howard: *The Shadow Kingdom*

Setting: Wilderness (Desert and Jungle), City, and Dungeon.

Levels: This adventure is suitable for a party of 4 to 6 characters, each with a total of 10 advancement points.

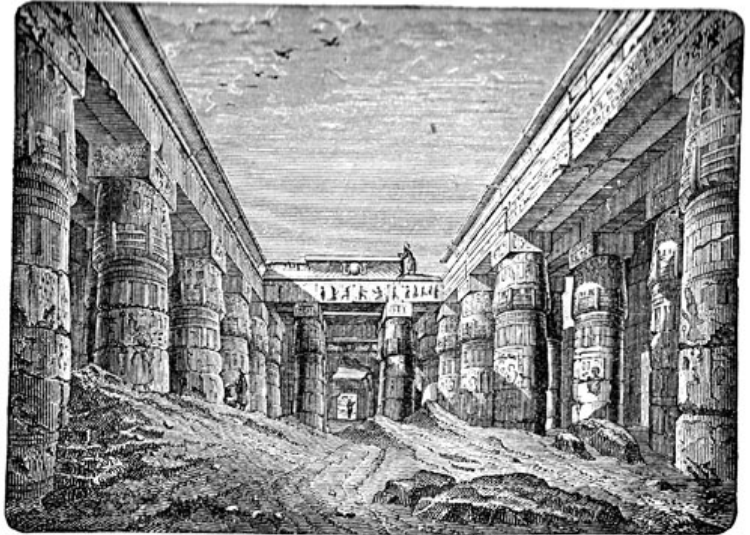
Introduction

In the centuries after the fall and devastation of Elder Kuth, the former slave peoples of the giant-kings migrated north and east to settle in the lands of Susrah. An offshoot of these proto-Susrahmites, called the Ishrah, chose instead to wander south into the hills of what is now the black kingdom of Shoma.

In the jungled hills of Shoma, the Ishrah discovered rich deposits of gold and precious stones. They enslaved the native tribes and set their new slaves to toil day and night in the mines. The small kingdom of the Ishrah prospered and a series of purple stone fortresses was built to control the mines.

Driven by greed, the Ishrah forced their slaves to dig ever deeper into the rich ore, until one day the toiling workers unearthed a series of stone chambers beneath the mine tunnels. The priests of the Ishrah studied the weird pictograms on the walls and deemed it unwise to disturb these prehuman vaults. The mine was sealed off and declared taboo by the priests, and soon the surrounding area was abandoned by the Ishrahmites.

Centuries later, the area was re-settled by a native tribe, the Wamuba, who built a village



in the shadow of the ruined stone citadel of the Ishrahmites. When the chieftain of the Wamuba died without leaving a male heir, the chieftain's oldest wife, Nugga-Tikanda, seized power and declared herself "Queen" of the tribe. Those who resisted Nugga-Tikanda's claim to the throne were soon slain or exiled, for the new queen was a witch who used curses and necromancy against her enemies. Having mastered an abominable rite of longevity, Nugga-Tikanda started a reign of terror which has lasted for two centuries.

Adventure Synopsis

The player characters are hired by a group of Susrahmite traders who have found clues to the whereabouts of a lost gold mine. These traders are in fact inphidians, serpent-men, in disguise, survivors of a lost age who seek to free a serpent-king, the ancient Yigthrahotep, who lies slumbering in the prehuman vaults beneath the mine.

The PCs travel along with the "Susrahmites" through the desert and into the kingdom of Shoma. The final piece of the key to open the

vault, which was re-sealed by the priests of the Ishrah, can be found in the temple of Katanga, the capital city of Shoma.

Reaching the lost mine, the PCs must deal with the Wamuba tribesmen and their mad witch-queen, then explore the tunnels and chambers beneath the mine. When the vault is found, the serpentmen drop their disguises and attempt to sacrifice the player characters to the awakened serpent-king Yigthrahotep.

Starting the Adventure

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

- ☛ A scholar among the PCs finds and studies a clay tablet that contains tantalizing hints of a lost gold mine in the jungles south of Shoma. The player characters set out on an expedition on their own. As they search for the keys to the lost mine, they are approached by a group of foreign merchants.
- ☛ The player characters are hired as mercenaries or caravan guards by foreign merchants who are travelling south. When the caravan reaches Shoma, it becomes apparent to the PCs that the merchants are looking for a lost gold mine somewhere in the jungle. The player characters are promised a share of the loot if they help find the lost mine.

Legend of the Purple Spires

The Ishrahmites wisely re-sealed the ancient vault they unearthed in their mines (see the Introduction), by placing powerful warding spells on the doors to prevent anyone from going into (or breaking out of!) the vault. But according to the laws of sorcery, there is no magic that cannot be undone, and for all seals there must exist a key.

The priests of the Ishrah therefore covered the vault doors with hundreds of arcane sigils and cuneiform script. Three of the symbols, placed randomly among the other sigils, are the keys to opening the vault. To preserve the keys (as they must be, otherwise the seal is voided), the priests carved each symbol on separate

objects, which were then handed on to different guardians and carried away. Over the centuries, the keys changed hands multiple times, and eventually their significance was lost.

The three objects each containing a part of the key to the vault are a clay tablet, a golden figurine, and a marble flagstone. The clay tablet is assumed to somehow fall into the possession of the player characters (see below), while the golden figurine has been found by a group of serpent-men. The marble flagstone is currently set in the floor of the inner shrine of Nataka in the city of Katanga.

The Clay Tablet of Zhaol

The clay tablet written by the priests of the Ishrah eventually found its way to the city of Zhaol the Accursed (so called by its neighbouring peoples for its wickedness) where the stone rested for centuries. Only recently, the tablet came to the city of Zul-



Bazzir through a merchant, or perhaps a thief or sorcerer. It is assumed that the player characters start this adventure with the tablet already in their possession, but a separate introductory adventure could easily be created wherein the PCs find or steal the tablet.

The tablet, little more than a square foot in size, has now broken up into three pieces, of which the largest is missing (and is, in fact, forever destroyed).

*Men of bronze, masters of fire
Kings of black jungles beneath a purple spire
Mad blind hands reach into the night
To plumb abysses dead to human sight
The Sons of Ishrah adorned with glittering stones
The earth yields riches but claims black bones
Tunnels in the earth, and vaults, too
Secrets of a lost age remain taboo
The one-eyed keeper of secrets knows the way
To the ivory goddess who holds the key all must pray*

The first remaining piece is covered with cuneiform script. It requires a successful Demanding (-4) mind + appropriate career Task Roll to read what turns out to be a myth-poem:

Further research on the “Sons of Ishrah”, for example with a Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll, makes it apparent that the myth-poem refers to the area which is now the black kingdom of Shoma. A successful Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll also reveals that the “ivory goddess” is Nataka, a female deity whose temple is in Katanga. If the PCs lack the appropriate knowledge skills,

they might seek out a sage to help them study the clay tablet.

The other remaining fragment contains a single cuneiform symbol, whose large size makes it of special significance. This is, of course, one of the keys to the vault of Yigthrahotep, although the player characters have no way of knowing this yet.

Three Men of Susrah

Whether the player characters begin to prepare for an expedition to the south or not, they are eventually approached by a group of three men, claiming to be merchants of Susrah. Through rumors and a network of spies and informants, they have learned that the PCs have the clay tablet.

The chief merchant, who calls himself Ursib, carries a small, 1-foot tall golden figurine of Aklathu, a minor god in the pantheon of Susrah. The statuette is in the shape of a pot-bellied, bearded dwarf with deformed, perhaps even retarded, facial features and a wicked grin. Also of note, the left eye-socket of the figurine is empty, while the right socket is set with a small gem. Carved under the feet of the figurine is a cuneiform symbol. Anyone with Mind 1 or more realises that this symbol is somehow related to the symbol on the clay tablet (see above).

Ursib does not initially show the figurine to the player characters. Rather, he states flatly that he and his fellow merchants are looking for a lost gold mine somewhere to the south of the black kingdom of Shoma, which is supposedly sealed by sorcery that requires knowledge of three sacred symbols to open. Since both the merchants and the PCs have a

About failure

Don't let a roll of the dice determine whether a character succeeds or fails in a task, but allow it to determine the level of success or failure. If a character is attempting to decipher the script but fails the Task Roll, you could decide that he translates enough to identify the Sons of Ishrah, which then gives the players another avenue of investigation. So the game doesn't stumble to a complete halt, because the players still have some leads and openings to continue the adventure.

Another option is to allow a player to convert a failure to a full success. He must spend a Hero Point to do this, and also suffers a complication. This complication is up to the GM, but might include letting other less honest characters know of the tablet and its secrets.

part of the puzzle, Ursib suggests that they cooperate to find the mine, and split evenly any treasure found. The player characters have (or at least are assumed to have) expert fighting skills, while the merchants have money to pay for mounts, supplies and equipment. Play out these negotiations as you see fit.

If he gets a chance to study the clay tablet, Ursib concludes that the third and final part of the key is kept in the temple of Katanga. If the player characters are on their own, or refuse to let the merchants study the tablet, this information could be given to the PCs through a sage (unless they figure it out from the poem themselves, of course).

**Merchants of Susrah (villains)
(Male inphidian “Walkers-Among-Men”)**

Strength	1	Initiative	2
Agility	3	Melee	1
Mind	0	Ranged	1
Appeal	0	Defence	0
Rogue	2	Merchant	1
Lifeblood	11		

Kukri d6L
Dagger d6L

Boons:

- ♥ Born Acrobat
- ♥ Distracted Attack - when you can use the confusion of battle to your advantage roll an extra dice in combat to make a melee attack

Languages: Yalothan, Susrahnite.

Possessions: Merchants’ clothing, kukri, 3 daggers, purse of gold, golden figurine of Akhlatu (carried by Ursib).

Description: Dressed as regular caravan-masters, these inphidians are similar to normal men in all respects. It is only when they shed their magical disguises that their true nature is revealed: Blue-green scaly skin, a snake-like head, and arms which end in viper-heads instead of hands.

Tactics: The walkers-among-men stay disguised as humans as long as possible, dropping their disguises only when they are sure that they are going to kill their surprised victims. They open combat using their

Secret History: The Children of Zanthiss

Aeons ago, a race of highly intelligent ophidians known as the “serpent-kings” ruled the primeval jungles of the continent. It is said that the great demonic serpent-god Zanthiss created this race from ordinary reptiles, and taught them the secret of sorcery. The serpent-kings used ape-men and primitive humans as slaves, and crossbreeding is said to have produced the inphidians, who had the bodies of men and the heads and hands of serpents, and some among them had the sorcerous ability to disguise as true men.

A sudden slave uprising, perhaps assisted by disloyal serpent-men, caused the decline and fall of the serpent-kings. They were driven back into the dwindling jungles of Yalotha, and Zanthiss himself is said to have been banished to a frozen star when his cyclopean black fane was sacked and destroyed at the height of the uprising.

Only in isolated pockets did there remain serpent-men, servitors of Zanthiss who were able to blend into human society. The once-great and immortal serpent-kings went into hibernation to survive, sleeping through the ages in sealed vaults beneath the earth.

blinding spray, then use Born Acrobat to get behind and flank opponents, so that they can use Distracted Attack.

Blinding Spray: Once every 1d3 rounds, a common inphidian can spew forth a line of milky-white liquid that causes blindness for 1d6H rounds to any creature struck. A PC making a Hard (-1) agility + appropriate career Task Roll manages to dodge the spray. The spray has a range of 20 feet.

Poison: A common inphidian delivers a debilitating poison with a successful bite from its snake-hands, which affects any creature of man-size (medium) or smaller. Heroes get to make a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll to avoid paralysis. Once paralysed, the victim will die within an hour. Affected Heroes get to make another Tough (-2) strength Task Roll to avoid death.

The Nameless Oasis

Approximately 100 miles north of Katanga is a small oasis that is the first (or the last) stopping-point for many caravans bound out of (or into) the city of Katanga. There is a small pool of fresh water here, ringed by palm trees.

Roll a first and a second d6 and consult the following encounter table to determine what happens when the PCs approach the oasis:

first roll 1-3, second roll below:

1 Ambush: A group of 1d3+3 per player bandits or slavers are hiding in the undergrowth near the oasis pool, waiting to rob or enslave those who approach.

2 Curse: A curse of madness affects those who sleep in the oasis or drink of its waters. If a Hard (-1) mind Task Roll is failed, the character will either try to drown himself in the pool, or suddenly attack his friends in a mad rage (50% chance of either). The curse lasts for 1d3 hours.

3 Drought: The waters of the oasis have dried up. The oasis is strewn with the bleached bones of animals and men.

4 Feud: Members of two rival nomad clans have entrenched themselves on different sides of the oasis. There are 6d6 nomads in each group, and each tries to recruit the PCs to their cause. Those who ignore the feuding groups risk getting caught in the crossfire between them.

5 Fouled or Poisoned Water: The water is either naturally fouled (perhaps by a sunken animal corpse) or deliberately poisoned (50% chance of either). Characters who drink the water must make a Hard (-1) strength Task Roll or gain a poisoned penalty dice.

6 Ghost: The oasis is haunted by a single ghost. Encounters with the ghost happen only at night.

first roll 4-6, second roll below:

1 Merchant Caravan: A caravan with 3d6 camels, carrying furs, raw metal, lumber, wine and pottery is camped at the oasis, along with 1 guard per camel. There is a 25% chance that the caravan has suffered a bandit attack in the last 24 hours, and that the assistant caravan-master was abducted, in which case the caravan-master offers a reward for his or her return.

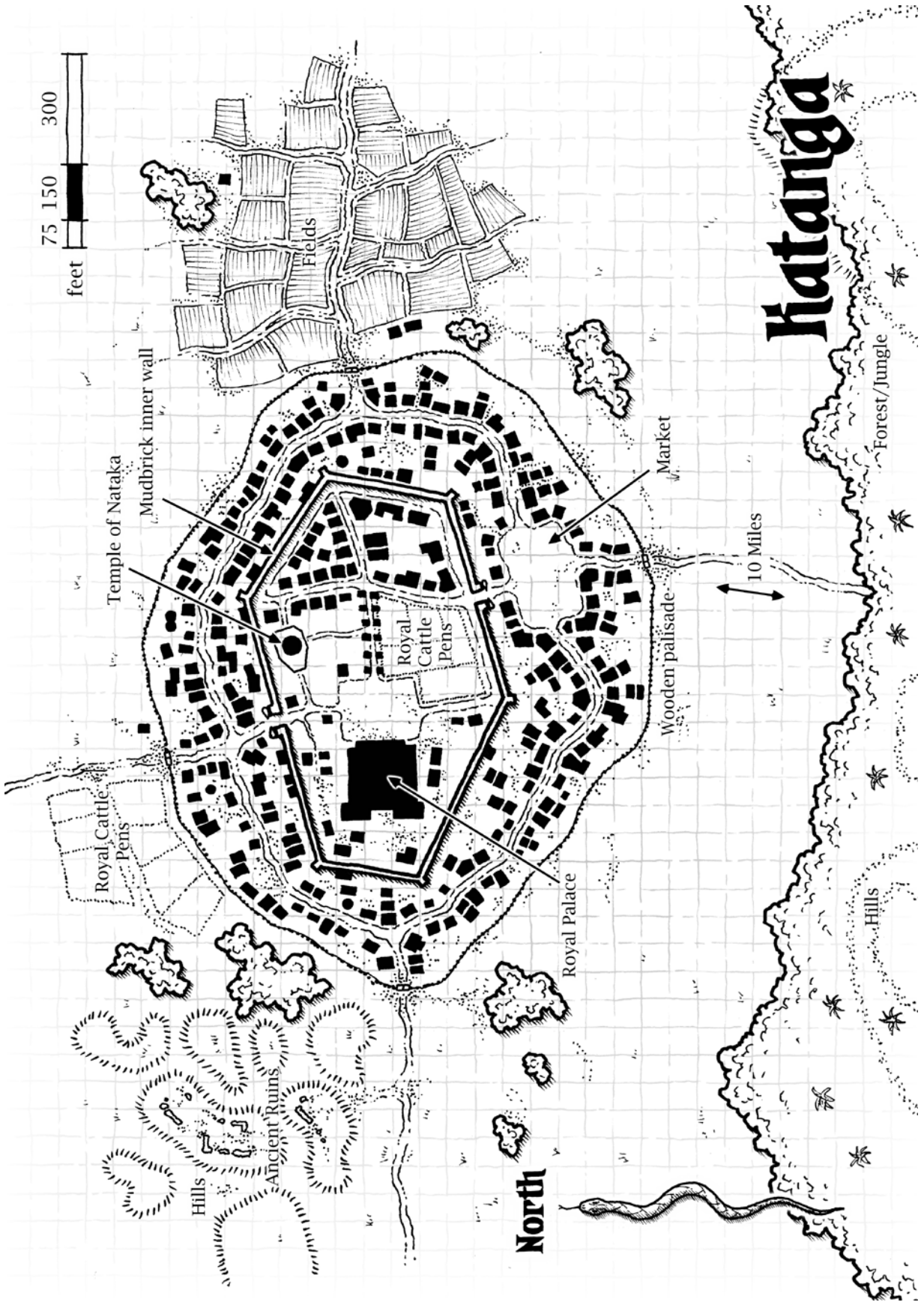
2 Narcotic Flowers: A blue lotus-flower occasionally blooms in the oasis, causing nearby creatures to make a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll or fall asleep for 2d6 hours with strange and sensuous dreams. Affected creatures may awake at the mercy of bandits, cultists or wild animals.

3 Sunken or Buried Treasure: With a successful Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll, the PCs stumble upon a chest of treasure, either at the bottom of the pool, or buried beneath the sand. There is a 50% chance that the treasure is associated with a curse, ghost, bandits, or a tentacled horror (see other descriptions).

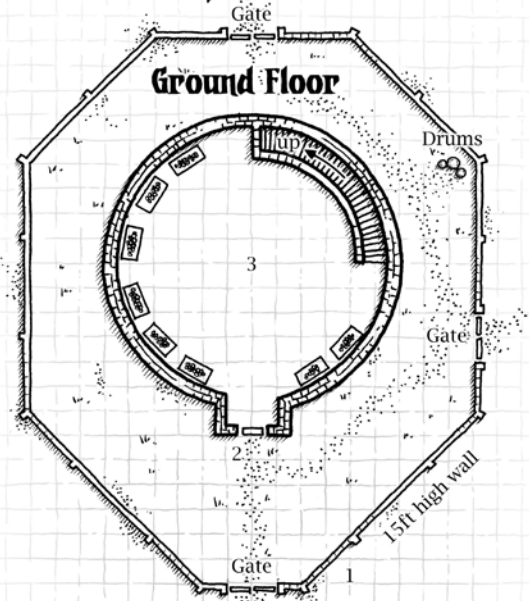
4 Tentacled Horror: A loathsome creature lurks in the oasis, preying upon visitors. The horror is either buried in the sand, or in the pool itself.

5 Treachery: There is a camp at the oasis which appears inhabited by 2d6 friendly nomads. In reality, these are cultists or slavers who offer the PCs food and hospitality, while waiting for an opportune moment to enslave the characters (and sacrifice them to their dark gods, in the case of the cultists). The PCs might be served drinks laced with sleeping-poison, backstabbed after their weapons have been stolen or removed, or attacked while sleeping.

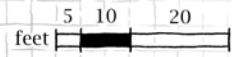
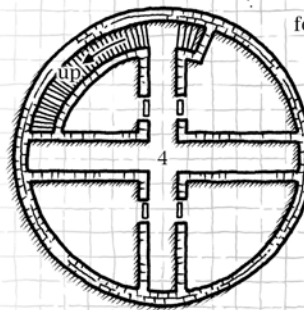
6 Wild Animal: A pride of 1d6+4 lions or 2d6+6 hyenas come to the oasis seeking food.



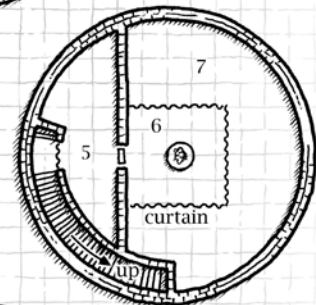
The Temple of Nataka



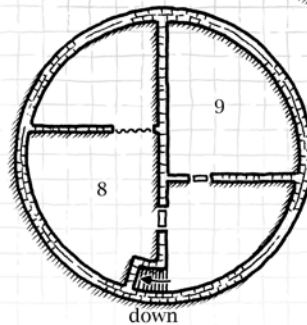
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



North



The Temple of Nataka

Standard Features: Unless noted otherwise, all interior doors are good wooden doors requiring a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll to kick open and a Demanding (-4) agility + appropriate career Task Roll to open if described as locked. Ceiling height is 20 feet.

Lighting: All rooms of the temple are lit with torches set in wall brackets of carved ivory.

4. Priests' Quarters

The shaven-headed priests live in large common rooms on the first floor of the tower. Each room holds six priests and their personal belongings. Among the priests, there is an individual named N'Kruma who is willing to betray his fellow priests if the reward is great enough (see above).

Priests of Nataka (tough)

Mind	1	Defence	1
Priest	1	Sorcerer	1
Lifeflood	6	Arcane Power	7
Fate Point	1		

Sinister Presence - the priests invoke trepidation in those they address, gaining a bonus dice in social situations.

Languages: Shoma, Azimban.

Possessions: Green robe, light mace, golden armbands

Description: Shaven-headed, dressed in flowing green robes and adorned with golden armbands, these priests perform the day-to-day duties in the temple.

Tactics: The priests rely on their great numbers, sorcerous abilities and their devotion to their god, if facing intruders.

N'Kruma, Corrupt Priest of Nataka (tough)

Mind	2	Defence	1
Priest	1	Sorcerer	1
Lifeflood	6	Arcane power	8
Fate Point	1		

Sinister Presence - the priests invoke trepidation in those they address, gaining a bonus dice in social situations.

Languages: Shoma, Azimban, Mazanian.

Possessions: Green robe with gold trim, masterwork light mace, large golden earrings.

Description: In his early thirties, N'Kruma is tall and gaunt, and very quick. He is in fact a spy of the southern realm of Mazania, although he will take a bribe from anyone if he thinks he can get away with it.

Tactics: N'Kruma avoids battle if possible, using his Sinister Presence ability. He prefers to use sorcery from a distance, and quickly flees if he feels cornered.



first roll: 1-3, second roll below:

1 Disease: The characters are exposed to a tropical disease while passing a mosquito-infested area. The disease causes the skin to turn red and become bloated, with friction spots becoming open sores. Incubation period 1 day, affects strength. The character must succeed on a Hard (-1) strength Task Roll to avoid catching the disease. Otherwise, the character takes penalty dice after the incubation period. Once per day afterward, the character must make a Hard (-1) strength Task Roll to avoid additional penalty dice. Two successful Task Rolls in a row indicate that the character has fought off the disease and recovers, taking no more penalty dice.

2 Insect Swarm: A centipede swarm approaches the party's campsite. The swarm is immune to weapon damage, but a lit torch swung as an improvised weapon deals 1d3 damage per hit. Also, a lit lantern can be used as a thrown weapon, dealing 1d3 points of damage to both the target (or where it breaks) and any adjacent creatures. Effects similar to fire may also damage the swarm.

3 Constrictor vine uses its long, tentacle-like main vine to grab and strangle a passing victim, while using its lesser vines to entangle others. It takes a Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll to detect the assassin vine before it strikes.

4 Monstrous Spider: A colony of 1d3+1 giant spiders have spun several webs to trap the unwary. A Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll is required to avoid stumbling into the webs. (Use skorpider stats.)

5 Giant Frog: A huge, feral amphibian with large gaping mouth and dark mottled skin with black splotches leap out from hiding in a marshy area.

6 Heavy Rain and Flood: A massive downpour of rain causes severe flooding of a nearby river. Characters are caught in the river stream and must make Tough (-2) strength + appropriate career Task Rolls every round to avoid going under. If a character gets a mighty success, he arrests his motion by catching a rock, tree limb, or bottom snag — he is no longer being carried along by the flow of the water. Escaping the rapids by reaching the bank requires three successive Tough (-2) Task Rolls in a row. Characters arrested by a rock, limb, or snag can't escape under their own power unless they strike out into the water and attempt to swim their way clear. Other characters can then attempt to rescue them.

first roll: 4-6, second roll below:

1 Constrictor Snake: Constrictor snakes usually are not aggressive and flee when confronted, especially if Ursib and the other serpent-men are with the party.

2 Fungi: A large patch of 1d3+1 deadman fungi are found in the moist and dark shade of a rotted tree.

3 Rockslide: A sudden rockslide threatens to bury one or more of the party members. A character can spot the danger with a successful Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career (e.g. architecture, engineering, stonemasonry based) Task Roll. Characters in the slide zone take 1d6H damage, or no damage at all if they make a successful Hard (-1) agility Task Roll. Characters in the slide zone who fail their Task Rolls are buried. Characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute while buried. If such a character falls unconscious, he must make a Hard (-1) strength Task Roll. If it fails, he takes 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Characters who aren't buried can attempt (each minute) to dig out their friends, by making a Demanding (-4) strength + appropriate career Task Roll in 1 minute, using only their hands. Armed with an appropriate tool, such as a pick, crowbar, or shovel, a digger reduces the difficulty to Tough (-2). For every PC helping, the character may add a bonus dice. You may allow a buried character to free himself with a Demanding (-4) strength Task Roll.

4 Carnivorous Ape: This aggressive band of 1d3+2 man-eating apes attack by jumping down from the trees above the party.

5 Native Tribesmen: This is a band of 1d3+1 per PC native warriors, unrelated to the Wamuba tribe. Their initial attitude is hostile. They are rabble, armed with spears and carrying large wooden shields. Their leader is a tough armed with a greatclub.

6 Mazanian Warband: A raiding-band from the southern realm of Mazania, consisting of 2d6 x 10 female warriors (rabble), wearing leather armor and helmets set with ostrich feathers. They are armed with clubs, javelins and bows. Their leader is a female (tough) fighter with rhino-hide armor and armed with a dire flail. The Mazanians seek loot and the capture of male slaves.

Due to the confines of the jungle undergrowth the presence of others may only be detected at close range. The background noise in the jungle makes any form of perception based Task Roll more difficult, adding a penalty dice to the Task Roll (but note that stealth based Task Rolls are also more difficult in undergrowth).

The Village of the Wamuba

The lost mine of the Ishrahmites is approximately 150 miles south of Katanga, across trackless hills, covered with jungle. A “purple spire”, actually the ruins of a small fortress built from purple stone, marks the site of the mine (although the actual mine entrance is overgrown by vines and hidden from sight).

The ruined fortress stands on the eastern slope of a jungled valley. A black tribe known as the Wamuba settled in the valley two centuries ago, clearing away the vegetation in the eastern part of the valley and constructing a wooden palisade across the valley floor. They built their small huts of wood and mud inside the palisade, in the shadow of the purple ruins. The tribe avoided the ancient fortress, believing it to be cursed, but the chieftain’s oldest wife, Nugga-Tikanda, secretly delved into the ruins. It was whispered that she learned the dark arts of witchcraft from the dead spirits of the Ishrah within the ruins. Not long after, the chieftain died from a sudden wasting disease, and Nugga-Tikanda seized rulership of the tribe.

The Wamuba live in almost total isolation from the outside world. There are currently around 300 members of the tribe; two-thirds are adult warriors and the rest are young boys. If the player characters enter the village, they soon notice that there are no women to be seen anywhere. Also, due to inbreeding (see below), many of the tribesmen have gross physical defects, such as missing or bulging eyes, weirdly twisted arms or feet, purple boils or cysts, extra or missing digits on hands or feet, and so on. The majority are still capable warriors, however.

The important non-player characters of the village include:

- Nugga-Tikanda, Witch-Queen of the Wamuba: Nugga-Tikanda is the despotic female ruler of the tribe. She is in fact a two hundred year old crone, sustained by sorcery, although her physical form is young but massively obese. The witch-queen is not wholly sane.
- Tibaa, Tribal Champion and Royal Consort: Tibaa, a powerful warrior, is Nugga-Tikanda’s current favorite, champion and consort. He enjoys his current position and acts ruthlessly to preserve it against any potential rivals.
- Mwanza “the Hunchback”, Village Elder and Chief Steward: Mwanza is an old, hunchbacked man who oversees the village and acts as the queen’s messenger. He speaks a basic form of the Shoma language, which allows him to communicate with strangers.

Development: As the PCs approach within a mile or two of the valley, they are spotted by Wamuba sentries who hide in the dense undergrowth. Imitating animal sounds, the sentries alert the tribe to the presence of intruders. Mwanza and the villagers have orders to bring any foreigners back to the village, if necessary as captives. A band of Wamuba tribesmen (1 tough + 10 rabble per PC) surrounds the party and herd the PCs along back behind the palisade wall.

Unless the PCs resist, they are escorted to the village behind the palisade wall by the tribal warriors. Once inside the village, the strangers are directed into a hut where some simple food has been prepared for them. Mwanza appears and tells the PCs that they must select a “champion” among themselves, who is to “entertain” the “queen” of the tribe, Nugga-Tikanda. If the player characters refuse to appoint a champion, Mwanza declares the strongest-looking male character to be the champion.

It is possible, of course, that the player characters choose to fight the tribesmen instead of following the Wamuba to their village. If a fight breaks out, the tribesmen attempt to capture the PCs alive, but they do not hesitate to kill opponents that they consider too dangerous to let live. If the PCs

are defeated, any survivors are taken back to the village. The strongest-looking character is selected to fight against the tribal champion, and things develop more or less as described below. On the other hand, if the PCs manage to defeat or flee from the Wamuba, despite being severely outnumbered, this part of the adventure plays out somewhat differently. The player characters can either sneak into or attack the village and/or the purple ruins, or try to avoid the Wamuba while they look for the hidden entrance to the mine which must be somewhere in the vicinity of the purple ruins. Meanwhile, Nugga-Tikanda will send out search parties to find and capture the intruders. Adjust the following events as you see fit.

Wamuba Tribesmen (tough)

Strength	1	Melee	1
Agility	1	Ranged	1
Barbarian	1		

Lifeblood 7

Spear d6 Bow d6
Large Shield

Languages: Wamuba.

Possessions: Loincloth, bone necklace, heavy wooden shield, spear, bow, 1 dose of sassone leaf residue.

Description: The Wamuba are naked except for simple loincloths. Their skin is tattooed, and they wear bone necklaces and carry wooden shields. Around 20% of these warriors have gross physical defects due to inbreeding.

Tactics: Fighting with bow and spear, these warriors occasionally coat their weapons with poison.

Rabble

Barbarian	1
Lifeblood	2
Armed d3	

Sassone leaf residue (poison): The hero must make a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll to resist the effects. If he does not then the wound burns fiercely, causing 1d3 extra damage.

Mwanza, the Hunchback (tough)

Mind	1	Ranged	1
Agility	1	Defence	1
Barbarian	1		

Lifeblood 6

Quarterstaff d6 Axe d6

Alert - treated as a villain for priority rolls
Languages: Wamuba, Shoma, Azimban

Possessions: Loincloth, cloak of monkey-skin, quarterstaff, throwing axe, pouch with herbs, pouch with 10 small obsidian stones.

Description: An old and hunchbacked man, Mwanza is both smarter and faster than he looks. His knowledge of the Northern languages makes him useful to Nugga-Tikanda.

Tactics: Mwanza rarely gets into combat himself; as the village elder he commands the other tribesmen.

Winning the favor of the queen

Assuming the chosen player character accepts his role as champion, he is escorted (along with the rest of the party, including the merchants of Susrah) from the village to the purple ruins in the hills above. Here, the tribe gathers in the courtyard of the fortress, the partly crumbled walls of which serve as an amphitheater.

The champion selected from among the PCs must prove his worth by defeating the current tribal champion, Tibaa. The rules are simple: The fight is to the death. Wearing armor is forbidden, and use of sorcery is of course considered cheating. The champions must fight on a 5 feet wide log which rests across a 30 feet deep pit. At the bottom of the pit are several cave openings; a giant centipede lurks inside one of the cave tunnels and darts out to attack anyone who falls into the pit. The walls of the pit have been greased with animal fat to prevent the centipede (as well as combatants falling in) from climbing up. During the fight, a dozen spearmen guard against interference from the other player characters.

A feast for the Champion

The feast is held in the village at nightfall the same day; it quickly develops into drunken revelry as the tribesmen consume prodigious quantities of banana wine. Nugga-Tikanda herself is not present during the feast.

Player characters who use the occasion to speak with the hunchback, Mwanza, can learn the following about Nugga-Tikanda with a mind + appropriate career Task Roll:

- ☛ Fail by 1: “She is very old.”
- ☛ Succeed (just): “It is said that she murdered her husband, the last chieftain of the Wamuba.”
- ☛ Succeed by 1: “She knows the secrets of witchcraft, which has made her immortal.”
- ☛ Succeed by 2: “She is the mother of us all — every living man of the tribe is both her husband and her son.”

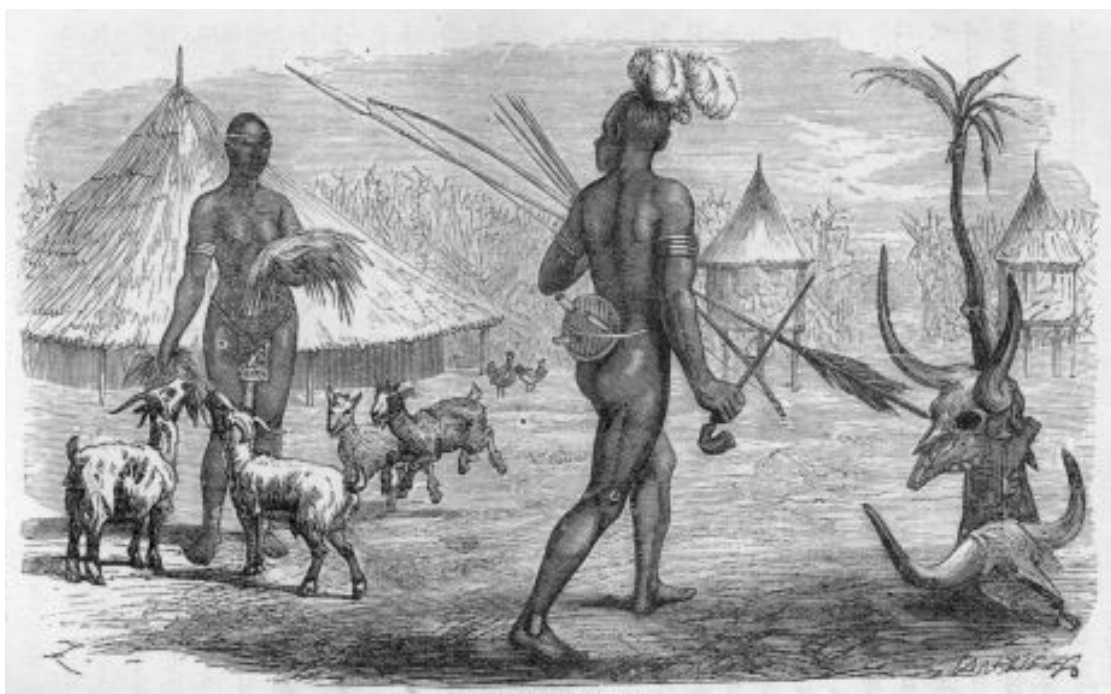
With another successful Hard (-1) mind + appropriate career Task Roll which alters Mwanza’s attitude from neutral to friendly, the hunchback can also tell the Heroes about the long-abandoned mines of the Ishrah, and how to find the mine entrance despite the heavy jungle growth which now conceals it.

If the Task Roll is good enough (i.e. if it would have succeeded against a Formidable (-6) roll) to change Mwanza’s attitude to helpful, he adds that the upper level of the mines is now inhabited by a band of degenerate savages, the descendants of those Wamuba tribesmen who were driven away by Nugga-Tikanda when she usurped the last chieftain.

During the feast, the tribesmen get drunk and it is easy for the PCs to sneak out of the village, should they so desire (possibly to try to find the mines, or even to confront Nugga-Tikanda). If the player characters do stay until the height of the feast, around midnight, a group (8) of Nugga-Tikanda’s personal guards appear and talk to Mwanza. The hunchback then announces to the PCs that the queen wishes to mate with her new consort; the celebrated champion must follow the queen’s guard alone back to the purple ruins.

The Queen’s Guard (tough)

Strength	1	Melee	1
Agility	1	Defence	1
Barbarian	1	Guard	1
Lifeblood	7		
Spear d6		Axe d6	



Hide armour d6-3 (1)

Languages: Wamuba.

Possessions: Hide armor, spear, axe.

Description: These are the elite guardians of the queen; four of them are always at the queen's side.

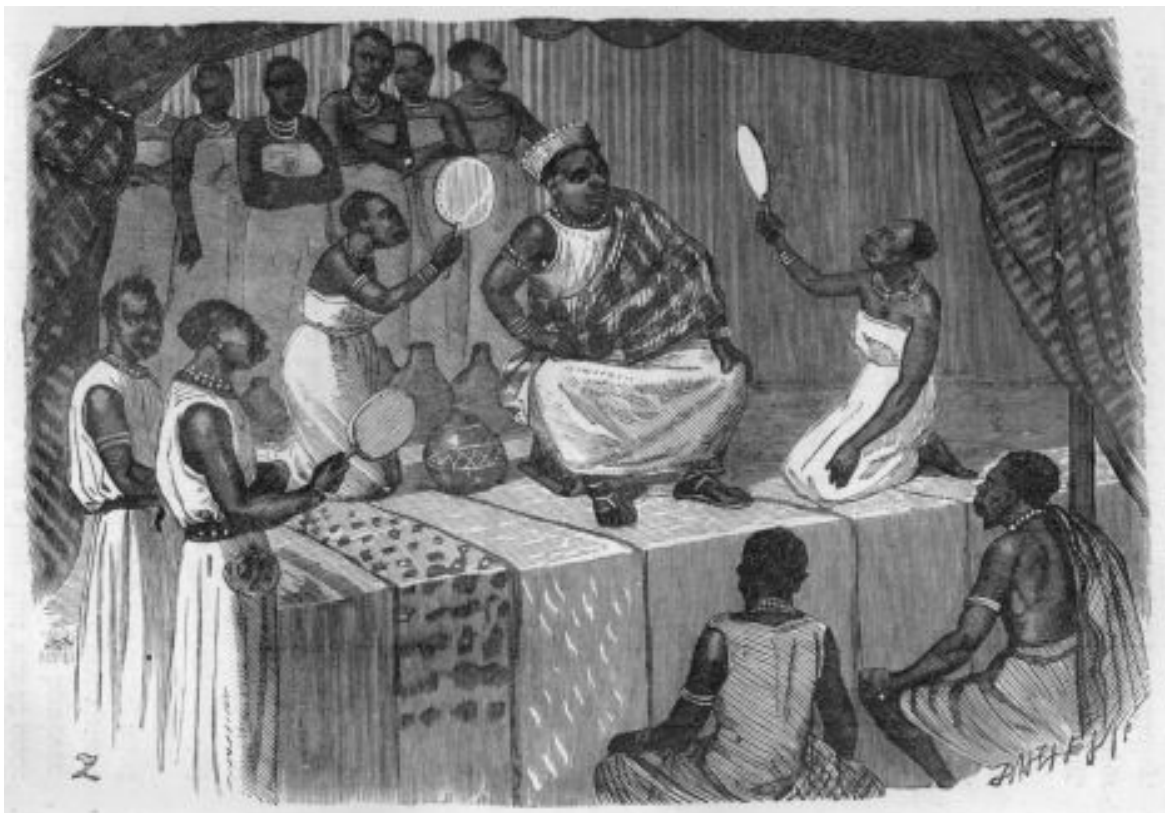
Tactics: Keep opponents away using their reach weapons, working together to form a spear-wall.

The Kiss of Death

Nugga-Tikanda has lived for two centuries by mating with her own sons, but this abominable inbreeding produces both physically and mentally retarded children, and each subsequent generation weakens the effects of the immortality rite. The witch of the Wamuba needs the blood of outsiders to improve the genetic pool of the tribe and boost the effect of her rituals, and has therefore selected the most physically impressive member of the party as her new consort.

Note that if the queen's former favorite, Tibaa, is still alive, he tries his best to bring the new consort into disfavor, but at the same time cannot act directly against the orders of the queen.

Development: The actions of the player character who has been chosen as the queen's new consort determines what happens next. If the PC agrees to fulfil his duties as the queen's consort, the PC is escorted by the queen's guard back to the purple ruins. He must surrender his weapons and armor to the guards before being allowed into the royal bedchamber. The guards remain within earshot of the bedchamber while Nugga-Tikanda mates with the chosen consort. Due to her sorcerous preparations, a single union is 80% likely to result in pregnancy and can produce as many as 2d6 children. Even so, the queen keeps the PC around for up to 1d3 months before she tires of him and orders him killed (and then takes a new consort from among the other PCs). In the meantime, the player character enjoys the privileges of being



the queen’s chosen consort. He and his friends are free to wander around the village and the surrounding area (including the lost mine), but are only allowed into the purple ruins when summoned by the queen.

If the player character refuses to go with the queen’s guards, a fight likely breaks out in the village as the guards try to grapple and pin the PC, then tie him up with ropes and drag him along forcefully. If the PCs defeat the guards, one or more loyal tribesmen (who have not already passed out from excessive consumption of banana wine) flee from the village and try to warn Nugga-Tikanda, who sends more guards after the player characters.

Nugga-Tikanda, the Witch-Queen of the Wamuba (villain)

Strength	2	Initiative	3
Agility	-1	Melee	1
Mind	4	Ranged	0
Appeal	-1	Defence	0
Witch	4	Barbarian	1
Lifeflood	12	Arcane Power	16

- ☞ Power of the Void (included above)
- ☞ Magic (of the Sorcerer-Kings) - bonus die when casting spells
- ☞ Obese - penalty die when moving
- ☞ Ugly and Brutish - penalty die when looks are important

Languages: Wamuba, Mazanian, Yalothan.

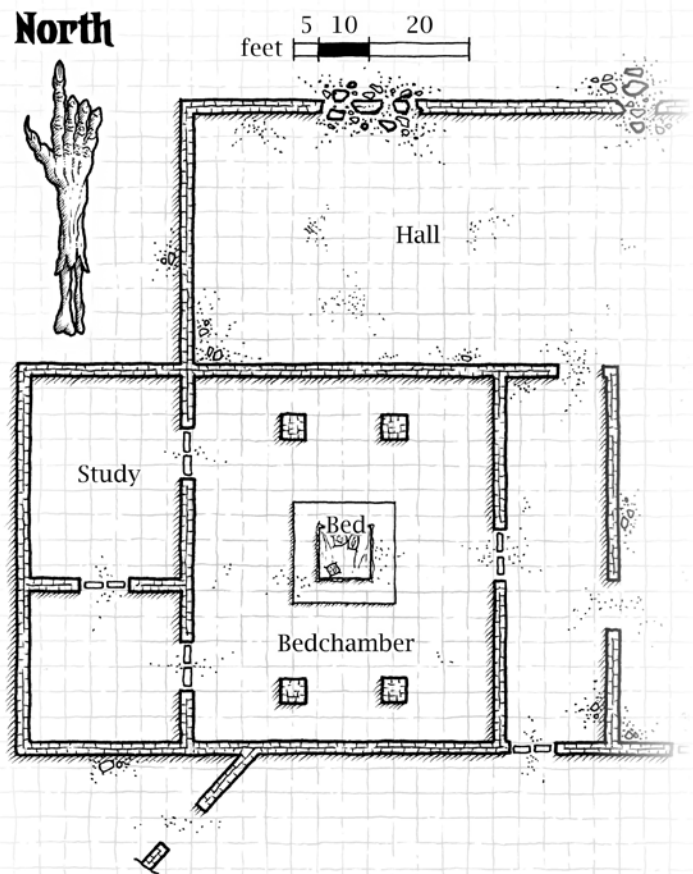
Possessions: Loincloth, bone necklace, gold nipple rings.

Description: Obese beyond imagining, Nugga-Tikanda is a repulsive sight as she is carried around half-naked on a litter by four of her bodyguards.

Nugga-Tikanda is in fact the mother of the entire tribe; female babies are slain shortly after birth. The queen’s sons mate with their own mother in an abominable fertility rite when they reach the age of manhood, a sorcerous process which extends the lifespan of the sorceress at the expense of her sanity and the well-being of her offspring.

Tactics: Nugga-Tikanda relies on her bodyguards for protection, but relishes the casting of destructive and necromantic spells. If her Sinister Presence doesn’t keep her out of melee, she tries to grapple and crush opponents under her revolting body mass.

The queen has some treasure in her personal chamber: A golden cup, a bag filled with pearls, a wooden box with 4 large pieces of gold, a damaged bronze timekeeping device (of Ishrahnite origin, appears broken), three large worn silver-embroidered tapestries, two human skulls painted with green paint, the dried husk of a black scorpion, four dark crimson poison berries (Ingested Tough (-2) strength Task Roll; incubation period 1 turn, strength penalty dice; lose their potency in 1 week), and some withered herbs (worthless).



The Royal Bedchamber

The Lost Mines of the Isbrah

When the ancient Ishrahmites discovered the prehuman vaults below their own mine tunnels, the lower tunnels were blocked with rubble and the mines were eventually abandoned.

Centuries later, when Nugga-Tikanda seized leadership of the Wamuba tribe, a group of male warriors opposed her rule. After a short power struggle, most of these warriors were killed by Nugga-Tikanda’s followers and the rest were driven away from the village, along with their women. Seeking refuge in the upper levels of the abandoned mines, these outcasts eked out a meager life here for generations, plotting to return to overthrow Nugga-Tikanda, but inevitably falling into sharp decline due to their isolation. After a time, the men were killed in battle with Wamubans loyal to Nugga-Tikanda, or fell prey to wild animals.

However, several of the outcast women were captured by a local tribe of man-apes, who forcibly mated with the captives. From this union has sprung a tribe of semi-intelligent

ape-men, who inhabit the mine’s upper caverns. They master the use of fire, primitive weapons and simple tools, but are otherwise as apes. These primitives viciously defend their territory against any intruders, including Nugga-Tikanda’s tribesmen (who now mostly ignore the savages but sometimes clash with the ape-men’s hunting bands).

1. Cave Entrance

The cave entrance is concealed by several layers of thick vegetation. It can be found with a Demanding (-4) mind + appropriate career Task Roll, or by observing the coming and going of the ape-men who inhabit the mines beyond. It is also possible to find the cave entrance by spotting these ape-men outside the mines and making a Tough (-2) mind + appropriate career Task Roll to track them back to their lair.

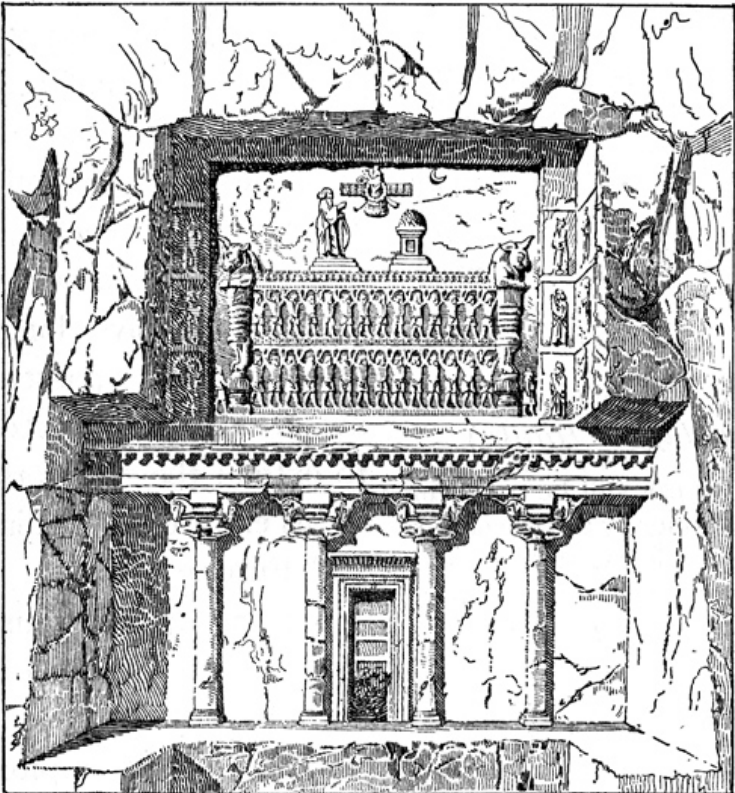
For each hour, there is a 20% chance to encounter 1d6 ape-men outside the cave.

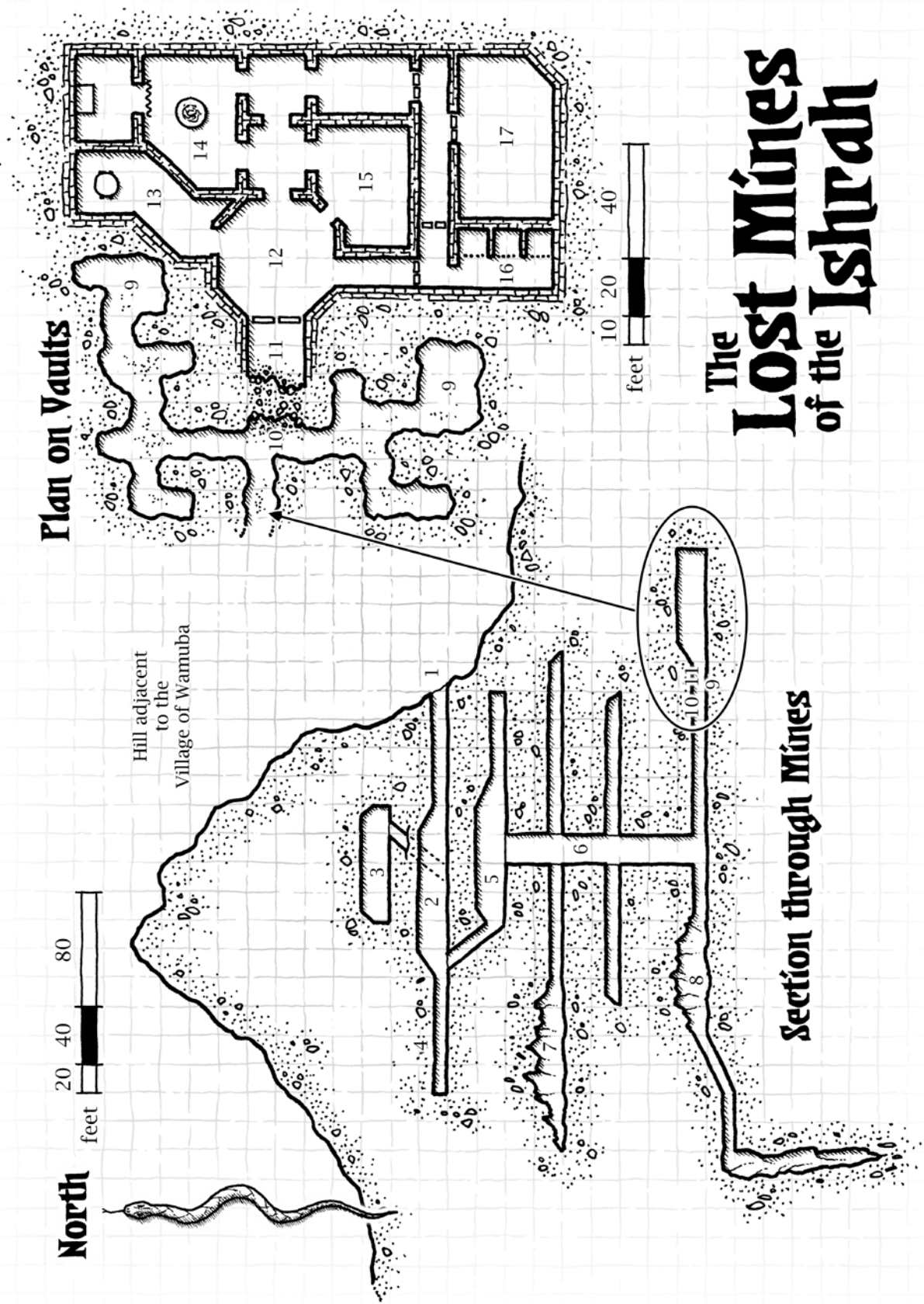
Ape-Men (rabble) 120 in total

Lifeblood 1
 Armed (club) d3
 Languages: None (primitive grunting only).
 Possessions: Furry loincloth, club.
 Description: Stunted and filthy, with unkempt long hair and beards, these ape-men could easily be mistaken for true apes were it not for their simple clothing and use of weapons.
 Tactics: The ape-men attack in packs, using a combination of charge, power attack and rage to deliver a devastating first blow. If facing superior foes, they quickly retreat into the darkness of their caves to regroup and prepare another ambush.

2. Great Cave

There is a 50% chance that a band of 1d3+3 per PC ape-men are encountered in this large cave. In the cavern wall is a hidden entrance (found using a Demanding (-4) mind + appropriate career Task Roll) to the tunnel leading upwards to the cavern of the ape-men (Area 3).





The Lost Mines of the Ishrah

3. Upper Cave

This cavern is 100 feet in diameter, and the ceiling is 20 feet tall. There are 1d6+6 per PC ape-men warriors in the cavern, as well as twice that number of non-combatants (women and children). Scattered in the corners of the cave are various items such as bone and stone tools, scraps of food, and heaps of debris and offal.

4. Dead End

A tunnel leading from the main cave (Area 2) is filled with various mining equipment, but most is in poor shape, being broken, rusted, or decayed.

5. Mine Shaft

A tunnel leads down to the main shaft. There is no “elevator” in the shaft; such equipment of wood and rope has decayed long ago. A Tough (-2) strength + appropriate career Task Roll is required for a problem-free descent; no roll is required if a knotted rope is used.

If there are surviving ape-men in the mines, they might hide in the dark tunnels opening up upon the shaft and throw rocks down on the PCs as they attempt to descend (treat such thrown rocks as a penalty dice to the Task Roll and making it Moderate (+0) even if using a rope).

On the far side of the shaft is a primitive forge hall with cobwebbed furnaces, bellows of near-decayed animal-skin, dry vats that once held water, rusted pincers, and so on.

6. Mine Tunnels

The shaft is 140 feet deep. Along the length of the shaft are several mine tunnels. These are wholly or partly excavated. The ape-men might retreat and hide in these dark tunnels if they are defeated in the upper caverns. They can automatically ascend and descend the main shaft (Area 5).

7. fungi Cave

One of the mine tunnels ends in a large natural cavern filled with weird fungi. Several of the fungi are edible, as identified with a successful Hard (-1) mind + appropriate career Task Roll. The ape-men also harvest fungi here.

8. Natural Cave and Chasm

On the lowest level of the mine, to the west, is another natural cavern, then a tunnel leading to a deep natural fissure, 100 feet deep. The edges are jagged and it requires a Demanding (-4) strength + appropriate career Task Roll to climb down. This Task Roll can be made easier by one step to Tough (-2) by using rope. The bottom of the chasm contains several bones, both human and animal.

Also on the bottom is a fast-flowing, freezing cold underground river. The river leads to a boggy marshland, about 2 miles from the village of the Wamuba, which is the abode of a giant frog. The murky swamp water is 3 feet deep, and creatures you cannot natively swim must wade through it as if entangled (penalty dice to Task Rolls as appropriate).

9. Abandoned Tunnels

These tunnels are the deepest tunnels dug by the ancient Ishrahmites before they discovered the prehuman chambers beneath the mines. The walls are rough and the floor is covered by loose rocks and debris.

10. Blocked Tunnel

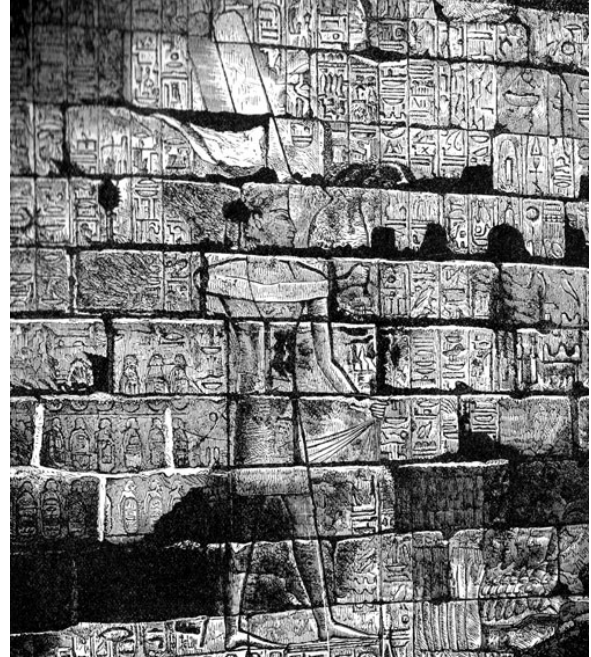
The main tunnel, which leads to the sealed door beyond, has been blocked by a huge pile of stones. It is apparent with a Hard (-1) mind + appropriate career Task Roll that the pile has been placed there by human hands; in other words, it is not a natural cave-in. It takes several hours to clear away the rocks from the tunnel to allow passage.

II. Sealed Door

To the east, behind a partly collapsed tunnel, is a massive door of a curious metal, inscribed with cuneiform symbols.

Only by pressing three specific symbols in a specific sequence (or by destroying the three items on which the symbols are written) can the door be opened. Refer to the adventure introduction for more information.

If the wrong glyphs are pressed, or if force is used against the door, a deadly blast affects the intruder. This is a blast of lightning that deals 3d6 points of damage to anyone in front of the door (Moderate (+0) agility + appropriate career Task Roll for half damage). The door instantly recharges itself and can discharge one lightning bolt each round. The metal door itself is nigh-impenetrable.



Yigthrahotep, Ancient Serpent-King of Yalotha (Greater Demon)

Strength	6	Initiative	2
Agility	2	Melee	4**
Mind	3	Ranged	2
Appeal	1	Defence	4
Lifeblood	30		
Damage	d6H + poison*		

Talents:

- ☞ Telepathy (transcends speech and language)
- ☞ Sorcery (10 points of Arcane Power)
- ☞ *Poison (exudes a substance that paralyzes Rabble and Toughs; Heroes avoid this with a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll. After an hour, paralyzed victims must make the same roll to avoid death)
- ☞ **Enhanced Weaponry: Constrict (gains a bonus die to melee attacks)

Description: Yigthrahotep is a survivor from a lost age, when the serpents ruled beneath the youthful sun from the primeval swamps and jungles of Yalotha, the serpent kingdom. Despite being immortal save for violent death, the cold-blooded serpent-kings were driven into retreat and hibernation as climate changes and slave uprisings ended their aeon-long reign.

Tactics: Yigthrahotep uses 1d3 rounds to fully recover from his long period of hibernation, during which he cannot cast spells. While highly intelligent, his tactics are simple; he spits his poison, then moves in to grab and constrict victims.

12. Octagonal Chamber

Behind the sealed doors are several chambers of a weird, curved architecture.

With a successful Hard (-1) mind + appropriate career Task Roll, a character realizes that the chambers were probably built by the prehistoric “serpent-kings”, a race of intelligent ophidians that ruled the world in ages past. This realization is reinforced by paintings on the walls, which depict scenes of primitive men being sacrificed to giant snakes.

Development: The player characters hardly have time to ponder the implications of these revelations, however. As soon as the PCs enter the main chamber, they hear a slithering sound as a large human-headed snake appears. This is Yigthrahotep, one of the ancient serpent-kings of Yalotha, who has been awakened from aeons of slumber.

As Yigthrahotep attacks, the “merchants” of Susrah, who have taken up positions behind the PCs, finally drop their disguises. Their leader, Ursib, shouts out: “O, great Yigthrahotep, we have come to awaken you from your slumber and release you from centuries of imprisonment! We now offer you these humans as a celebration of your freedom!”

Additional Rules

Environmental Challenges

When Heroes embark on a serious journey that may be lengthy or difficult, one Hero undertakes to lead them to their destination, making a travel roll to get to the destination without mishap. Failing the roll means that some unforeseen (or at least unwanted!) event has occurred before the travellers reach their destination. The GM might require a series of travel rolls if the journey is exceptionally long or passes through many different environments.

The Survival Roll

Before making the travel roll, all characters exposed to extremes of weather, heat, cold, etc. must make a survival roll, which will be +mind or +strength and any applicable career. Failure means that the character suffers from that exposure with a temporary penalty die, which can be removed once the character arrives at an occupied settlement or outpost.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Survival Roll} &= 2D6 \text{ (total of 9+ to succeed)} \\ &+ \text{mind or strength} \\ &+ \text{applicable career (e.g. hunter)} \\ &- \text{difficulty mods from GM} \end{aligned}$$

The Travel Roll

The GM determines the number of rolls that need to be made, and if any negative modifiers apply based on the difficulty of travel. One character makes the travel roll that takes into account his +mind and any applicable careers.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Travel Roll} &= 2D6 \text{ (total of 9+ to succeed)} \\ &+ \text{mind} \\ &+ \text{applicable career (e.g. sailor)} \\ &- \text{difficulty mods from GM} \end{aligned}$$

Travel Incidents

If stuck for ideas as to the nature of the incident, roll 2d6 and consult the table below. If travelling through a densely populated area, include a bonus die. If travelling through a wasteland, include a penalty die.

Roll	Incident
2	Supernatural encounter or some unknown phenomena.
3	Natural disaster, of the sort the location is prone to.
4	Threatened by local predators!
5	Ambush! By pirates, bandits, or even a military patrol if in a disputed zone.
6	Mechanical breakdown, a mount is injured, or some other frequent travel problem.
7	False alarm! (or was it...?)
8	Pull over! The authorities want to speak to you.
9	Thieves trick, pickpocket or ambush someone in your party.
10	Get caught up in a popular uprising.
11	Cultists attack!
12	Get caught up in a full-scale war.

Diseases and Poisons

Mechanically poisons (including venoms, toxins, etc.) and diseases work very similarly and consist of:

- ♥ an attribute Task Roll to resist
- ♥ an incubation period
- ♥ an effect

The Task Roll to resist uses an attribute only (no careers) and is rolled with the stated difficulty. If successful it will usually fully negate the effects, however with some particularly virulent poisons/diseases it may just reduce them.

Typically poisons have an “instant” incubation period whereas diseases usually have longer ones that could be days, weeks or even months. If no incubation period is stated the effects are applied immediately.

The effect can include lifeblood loss, paralysis, unconsciousness, attribute weakening (penalty dice) or even death.

Really debilitating poisons/diseases may have two or more effects and/or extra effects gained after further periods of incubation. Further incubation periods may be of different lengths.

While suffering from a poison/disease, should a hero roll a calamitous failure (remember player choice), they collapse unconscious (or otherwise incapable of acting) until they receive medical aid.

Should a character roll 3 ones or more (before removing extra penalty / bonus dice) on a Task Roll, the character dies from the poison/disease. It is unlikely that death will be instantaneous, however the character will die by the end of the current scene or the next.

Giant centipede

Strength 4 Agility 2 Mind -1
Attack +2 Damage: poison*
Defence 1 Protection d6-1 (3)
Lifeblood 20

*Poisoned bite, target must succeed on a Tough (-2) strength Task Roll or become paralyzed.

Giant frog (huge)

Strength 8 Agility 2 Mind -2
Attack +2 Damage special*
Defence 0 Protection d3
Lifeblood 40

*Special attack: the frog's tongue darts out up to close range and can grapple an opponent on a successful attack. The prey is then drawn back to the frog's mouth the next round.

While grappled the prey has a penalty dice on all physical Task Rolls. When the prey gets back to the frog's mouth, it is swallowed by the frog and takes d6 damage each turn as it's crushed in the frog's jaws/stomach. Once swallowed, the prey gains a second penalty dice to physical Task Rolls, but any damage it inflicts through a successful attack gains a mighty success result.

Ghost

Strength 0 Agility 0 Mind 1
Fear attack +1 mournful moan Fear 1
Non-Corporeal: The ghost can only be harmed by sorcery or some alchemy.

Panther (medium)

Strength 1 Agility 2 Mind -1
Attack +3 Damage d6
Defence 1 Protection 0
Lifeblood 10

Tentacled horror (medium)

Strength 2 Agility 2 Mind 0
Attack +3 Damage d6H+2*
Defence 2 Protection 1d6-3 (1)
Lifeblood 20

*Bonus from the Boon: Ferocious Attack

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