

HD2

For the Conan RPG

The Shrine of the Black Ones

An adventure for character levels 10-12



"Know, O prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and in the years of the rise of the sons of Aryas, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars - Nemedias, Ophir, Brythunia, Hyperborea, Zamora with its dark-haired women and towers of spider-haunted mystery..."

This module contains background information, a large map detailing a temple complex area, referee's notes, special exploration and encounter pieces, encounter and map matrix keys, and an additional section pertaining to unique new creatures for use with this module and the game as a whole. A complete setting for play with the Conan RPG is contained herein.

If you enjoy this module, watch for future releases from Xoth.Net Publishing!

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Introduction

*"Into the west, unknown of man,
Ships have sailed since the world began.
Read, if you dare, what Skelos wrote,
With dead hands fumbling his silken coat;
And follow the ships through the wind-
blown wrack
Follow the ships that come not back." –
The Pool of the Black One*

On a nameless island in the Western Ocean stand the strange ruins of a prehuman civilization. According to worm-eaten fragments from the Book of Skelos, strange monsters guard crypts filled with hieroglyph-carven gold here, gathered by prehuman kings, long, long ago. In truth, these monsters — black-skinned, tall and regal, human-like but belonging to an evil, immortal race — still haunt the island. Their age-old ruler, Va-Guulgh, commands the rising of the sea and the rage of storms through his arcane sorceries. Merchant and pirate vessels that stray from the main shipping lanes find themselves caught in sorcerous gales and shipwrecked on the isle. The crews are captured and taken to the shrine of the Black Ones, where the captives are ritually drowned in a pool of unholy power which petrifies and shrinks its victims.

Starting the Adventure

Explain to the player characters that they found a treasure map pointing to a nameless island in the Western Ocean. Approaching the island in a chartered Argossean trading vessel, a heavy storm blew up and shipwrecked the PCs on the sandy shores of the jungled island. The vessel is reduced to driftwood, the Argossean sailors are all dead, and the PCs lack food and water. But adventure — and treasure — awaits those who dare explore the Isle of the Black Ones!

DESIGNER'S NOTES

This is a homage to the original classic adventure module, "D2 Shrine of the Kuo-Toa", by Gary Gygax, reimagined for sword and sorcery gaming in Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age using Mon-goose's Conan RPG ruleset. Many of the original's high fantasy elements have been removed or toned down, but the module should be instantly familiar to those familiar with the classic scenario, as much of the text is verbatim from Gygax's original manuscript. I have turned the subterranean Shrine into a ruined temple on a nameless island, changed the Kuo-Toa into Black Ones, and the Sea-Mother into a tentacled horror from the Mythos. The amount of treasure has been significantly reduced from the original. The graphic design (cover page, use of fonts, etc.) emulate the original adventure module, while the new artwork is taken primarily from Wandering Star's illustrated volume "Conan: The Coming of the Cimmerian".

- Thulsa

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Notes For The Dungeon Master

Black Ones are black and naked, made like men, but the shortest of them are heads and shoulders above a tall human. They are rangy, rather than massive, but are finely formed, with no suggestion of deformity or abnormality, save as their great height is abnormal. But one can sense the basic diabolism of their features; every line, each feature is stamped with evil — evil transcending the evil of humanity. Under their ebon skin long, rounded muscles ripple, and the monsters can rend an ordinary man limb from limb. The nails

of the fingers are grown like the talons of a wild beast. Their eyes are tawny, a vibrant gold that glows and glitters. They are naked and hairless.

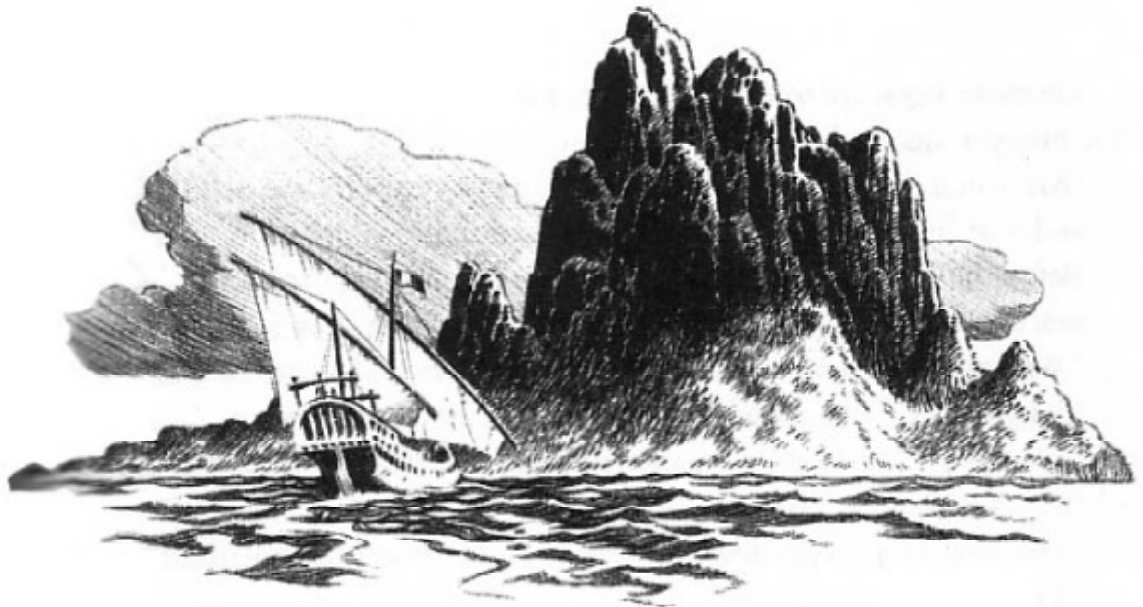
Black Ones do not speak — vocally. They nod and gesture, but are strangely silent. They find pleasure in dragging to light the abysmal secrets that sleep in the unfathomed darkness of the human soul. They worship dark gods and live forever, save for violence or accident.

For more information, see the New Monsters appendix.





Part One: The Isle of the Black Ones



The island is some eight to ten miles long in the north-south direction, and perhaps eight miles broad at the widest point. At the north end of the island, there are five smaller islands, all uninhabited. On the western coast is a shallow bay, which has a white beach bordering an expanse of gently grassy slopes, masked by green trees. The trees grow in irregular clusters, and between these groves stretch rolling expanses of meadow-like slopes. Between the slopes lie gentle declivities, likewise swarved. The scenery seems to melt into itself, or each scene into the other; the view is singular, at once broad and restricted. Over all a dreamy silence lies like an enchantment.

The Golden Fruit: A golden-skinned fruit grows in great abundance on the island. The fruit has great taste but causes those who eat it to fall asleep (Ingested, Fort DC 19, initial damage unconsciousness for 1d3 hours, secondary damage unconsciousness for 2d4 hours). A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15), Survival check (DC 15) or Craft (herbalism) check (DC 20) allows a character to recognize the danger. The whole fruit must be ingested, so the fruit juice is not effective as a poison if smeared on weapons.

Separate encounter tables are given for random meetings with creatures. Familiarize yourself with all of these tables, and note the composition of heretofore

unknown parties of such creatures as the Black Ones. Camping for the night on the island will incur a random monster check, but only one such check for a "normal" sleep period of 8 hours, unless the party simply flops down in the middle of the ruins (in which case use the wandering monster table for the shrine itself).

While many facts and details are given to you here, it is incumbent upon you, as Dungeon Master, to bring them to vivid life and give this setting a personality. Have fun.

RANDOM MONSTER TABLE FOR THE ISLE OF THE BLACK ONES

1 in 10 chance of encountering a monster; check each hex (1 mile) by rolling 1d8:

1. Black Ones
2. Soulless servitors
3. Pirates
4. Madman
5. Snake
6. Vultures
7. Crocodiles
8. Leech swarm

Black Ones: This is a group of 1d3 lesser Black Ones with one flute-equipped master. They attack strangers on sight unless obviously outnumbered.

Crocodiles: Only encountered near the coastline or in marshland, 1d6+5 crocodiles will lie submerged in water. They use their Hide skill to ambush the unwary and drag grabbed victims into the water.

Leech Swarm: These repulsive creatures attack victims who move through stagnant pools of water. See the New Monsters appendix.

Madman: The party encounters Eberardo, a Zingaran captain of great size and strength (see the NPC appendix). He went insane from watching his comrades being captured and turned into stone statuettes by the Black Ones. He tries to avoid the party, but if cornered he starts to babble rather incoherently about the fate of his crew. For each round of interaction there is a 5% cumulative chance that he goes berserk (as the Crimson Mist ability) and attacks the nearest creature.

A cave serves Eberardo as a home. He has a large pile of dried seaweed to sleep on, various shell and stone containers and utensils, and odds and ends of worthless gear about the place. He has found a natural pot in the floor, however, and a stone thrust into the mouth of this opening appears to be quite natural. Beneath this stopper he has sequestered 420 sp, a gold ring (worth 120 sp), and a silver medallion carved with the symbol of Mitra (worth 70 sp).

Pirates: A large crew of 40 Barachan pirates have landed on the island. Their vessel is anchored in a hidden cove on the western coast (there is a 25% chance that Va-Gulgh has spotted their approach and shipwrecked the vessel through his sorceries). The pirates, commanded by a blue-bearded Pelishtim Shemite known as Kaltum the Sea-Ghoul, learned of the treasure map found by the player characters and have followed the PCs to the island; they seek riches and know nothing of the Black Ones. However, Kaltum's beautiful but bloodthirsty bride, Sancha, was captured by a group of Black Ones and taken to the shrine (see Area 35) while leading a small group of men to look for freshwater.

Snake: A large viper snake hides underneath a rock or underbrush.

Soulless Servitors: A group of 1d6 human slaves of the Black Ones, armed and equipped similarly to the human guards of the shrine.

Vultures: A flight of 1d10+10 vultures can be seen circling in the air above. They do not attack anyone unless the targets already appear half-dead.



Part Two: The Shrine of the Black Ones



The green shining walls and towers of the shrine, situated at the highest point of the island, merge almost perfectly with the green landscape of the isle. The rough walls of the ruins are dark green, and there are cracks and gaps here and there. The ground is occasionally littered with stone — fallen columns and bits of ceiling, and the walls show natural collapsing of small sections. Absolute quiet prevails when the party ceases their progress, but if silence is maintained for a time small twitterings, rustlings, and faint echoes from far distant can be heard — rats, bats, insects and other vermin, but what else?

WANDERING MONSTERS

Encounter occurs 1 in 8, check every 10 minutes by rolling 1d4:

1. Black Ones
2. Soulless servitors
3. Snake
4. Leech swarm

See above for creature details.

Refer to the map for the following area descriptions:

A. APARTMENTS: From 0-2 lesser Black Ones will be found in each such apartment. The sparsely furnished chamber will have mounds of seaweed on wooden sleeping pallets, a rough bench, a small table and several stools. Walls are about two feet thick, doors are of (precious here) wood with iron bindings (1 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18).

B. BARRACKS: Each barracks chamber holds 1-6 human guards who have been enslaved by the Black Ones.

BF. BARRACKS: These correspond to the barracks noted above. Each of these two areas houses 1-3 guards.

C. COMMON ROOM: These rooms have a number of tables, benches and stools in each. There are words of praise (in an unknown language) to Yibb-Tstll painted on the walls and religious tracts on tables.

M. MASTER SUITE: A single flute-equipped Black One is always guarding these areas.

W. See Area 33.

1. ENTRANCE TO THE SHRINE

The party is met by a chilling scene when first they step far enough northwest to view the space ahead. The green stone, coupled with a grayish luminosity from sluglike creatures as large as a man's fist which crawl everywhere (walls, ceilings,

floors) give the area an undersea appearance, and a strange salt tang is in the air to enhance this impression. Directly to the north the adventurers will see a huge dark green creature, an alien entity with leathery wings. This stone idol is detailed at Area 4 below. The walls and pavement of this place are well-made, but very worn. Obviously, this area is old. It feels alien and foreboding.

The shape of the stones are wrong to any human. A glance left and right will reveal the archway to the west and the 20 feet wide, 40 feet high opening leading east.

As the group proceeds further into the area, they will note the stairs up to the west and the slits in the east wall of the entranceway. The bend of the eastern corridor will be noticed if the area is observed. Looking ahead, the adventurers will see that the space to the north is a great sunken area, and if they proceed closer they will observe it is an arena or pool filled with translucent green water and surrounded by six tiers of stone benches, the whole forming a square around a raised stone platform in the middle of the 25 feet deep depression (actually 30 feet deep with 5 feet of water in it). Northeast and northwest will be seen stone block walls with one arched entry on each side and many narrow (1 feet wide by 3 feet high) slits piercing them at about 20 feet above floor level. The whole area is quiet, but there is a definite feeling that there are other creatures about, hostile creatures, alien things.

2. RAMP AND STAIRS

The ramp leads to a flight of broad steps which give into the pool of water surrounding the idol. From this position it will be evident that the seats of the arena will hold about 2,000 creatures of approximately human size. The depth of water in the pool cannot be determined due to its translucent quality. The 20 feet tall idol atop the dais can be seen as stone. Although the rising tiers of the pyramid obstruct vision northward, it can be observed that there is some sort of opening in the northern wall of the place.

When the party descends to the place where the water meets the steps, they will have to measure with a pole of some sort, or actually enter the water, to find its depth.

If the party stays on a direct route to Area 3, the steps leading up to the first tier of the pyramid, they will be safe, but there are dozens and dozens of leeches elsewhere in the pool, and these will attack any warm-blooded creature moving through the water. The Black Ones can pass amongst these creatures without being molested.

Leech Swarms (1-6): See the New Monster appendix.

3. STEPS OF THE ZIGGURAT

If the group reaches this point they will be able to see low altar stones with shells upon them. There are two such containers on the first tier of the ziggurat, and other pairs on each successively higher altar. Each tier of the pyramid is 12 feet high, and the steps are steep.

First Altar: This block of white stone tinged with green splotches is relatively small (2 feet by 2 feet by 4 feet long) and has two ordinary looking basin-sized sea shells atop it. On the left is one filled with 337 sp; on the right is a shell filled with freshwater and snail shells.

Second Altar: This stone block is blue and twice as large as the one below it. It holds two beautiful shells with silver chasing upon their edges and ridges. Upon the left the shell basin is filled with brackish water and crab claws; the one on the right contains 71 gp and 18 gems of 10 sp value each.

Third Altar: This green stone is 3 feet by 3 feet by 6 feet long and holds two gold-inlaid shells with insides of mother of pearl. The shell on the left holds salt water and live lobsters, the one on the right contains 24 base 100 sp gems and 16 pearls (base value 50 sp).

4. IDOL OF YIBB-TSTLL

Upon the summit of the ziggurat stands a malachite statue 20 feet tall. It appears to be a dark, tentacled entity with a pulpy, alien head, detached eyes, and large bat wings under which countless black humanoids suck green milk from its innumerable breasts. The idol will not move or come to life, but can be used for various ritual purposes. Knowledge of these rituals is imparted with a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30) after at least ten minutes of studying the area.

Yibb-tstll's name is carved into the base of the statue in unknown characters (Decipher Script DC 25). If valuables (preferably pearls, but gems can also be used) are crushed while pronouncing his name correctly, the creature performing the ritual is invisibly marked and will not be harmed by any of the Black Ones for a period equal to one hour per 1,000 sp worth of pearls (or one half-hour for the same value in gems).

If one or more of the statuettes produced by sacrifice in the pool at Area 15 are placed in front of the idol, blessed, and then thrown into the pool surrounding the idol, there is a 15% chance that each statuette will transform into an egg, which



is then brought to Area 14 and impregnated. In this manner, the Black Ones procreate, albeit slowly.

Note: From the upper tier of the ziggurat the guards at Area 5 can be distinguished.

5. GUARD POST

There is a squad of eight guards here, with a Black One in charge. Four face to the north, the rest to the south. Anyone captured are taken to Area 9D for incarceration and eventual sacrifice.

6. PALACE OF THE SORCERER

The entire north wall at this location is taken up by the palace of the spiritual and temporal ruler of the Black Ones, the sorcerer Va-Guulgh. Upon the steps of the palace are posted eight guards and two Black Ones. Also there is a Black One with maximum hit points who is official herald; this fighter also bears a shell horn upon which an alarm is blown if the area is under attack, and this alerts Areas 5, 30, 32, and the barracks 60 feet immediately southwest. Other positions can hear the alarm, but it must be sounded a second time to alert all Black Ones to come to the palace. If it is blown a third time, all Black Ones in the shrine will then come to battle with the enemy.

The ancient facade of the palace is carved from living rock. Upon it are pillars, and columns, hewn so as to give the place an imposing aura. Upon its walls are bas-relief figures of all sorts of sea creatures and Black Ones carved so as to present the appearance of coming towards the entrance of the palace. Batlike creatures with human heads are carved into the stone near the doorway, the stony gaze of these weird sentinels appearing to fall upon all who ascend the steps.

7. THRONE ROOM OF VA-GUULGH

Immediately to the north of the arched entrance to the throne room is a low dais with a shell throne upon it. The throne is a strange chain carved of white coral, set about with rare sea shells and sculptings in ornamental stone of octopi, crabs, eels, and fish. There are 32 base 100 sp pearls and 16 base 50 sp pearls set as eyes for these sculptures, and there are four figures of crabs fashioned from precious red coral (each of these is worth 600 sp) which can be pried from the settings of the throne.

Flanking the throne are a pair of malachite statues 7 feet tall, each resting on a pedestal 3 feet high — copies of the idol of Yibb-Tstll in the shrine area. They have no value and hide nothing.

The floor of the palace is of polished serpentine, and the six pillars in the chamber are carved of white marble in the form of waterspouts. The whole place is alive with a shifting green luminosity from the glowing green and gold ceiling overhead. The throne room is guarded by six Black Ones, one before each pillar. They will attack any intruder in the most effective manner.

The eastern archway leads to a private audience chamber and council room. It has an upper balcony which extends along three sides of the place. There is a long stone table, a throne chair, and six smaller stone chairs in the center. There is nothing of value, although the wall murals of undersea scenes, inlaid in bits of colored stone, appear valuable to those not able to determine the worth of the minerals used to form them. In other respects this place is much the same as the throne room.

8. PRIVATE WING

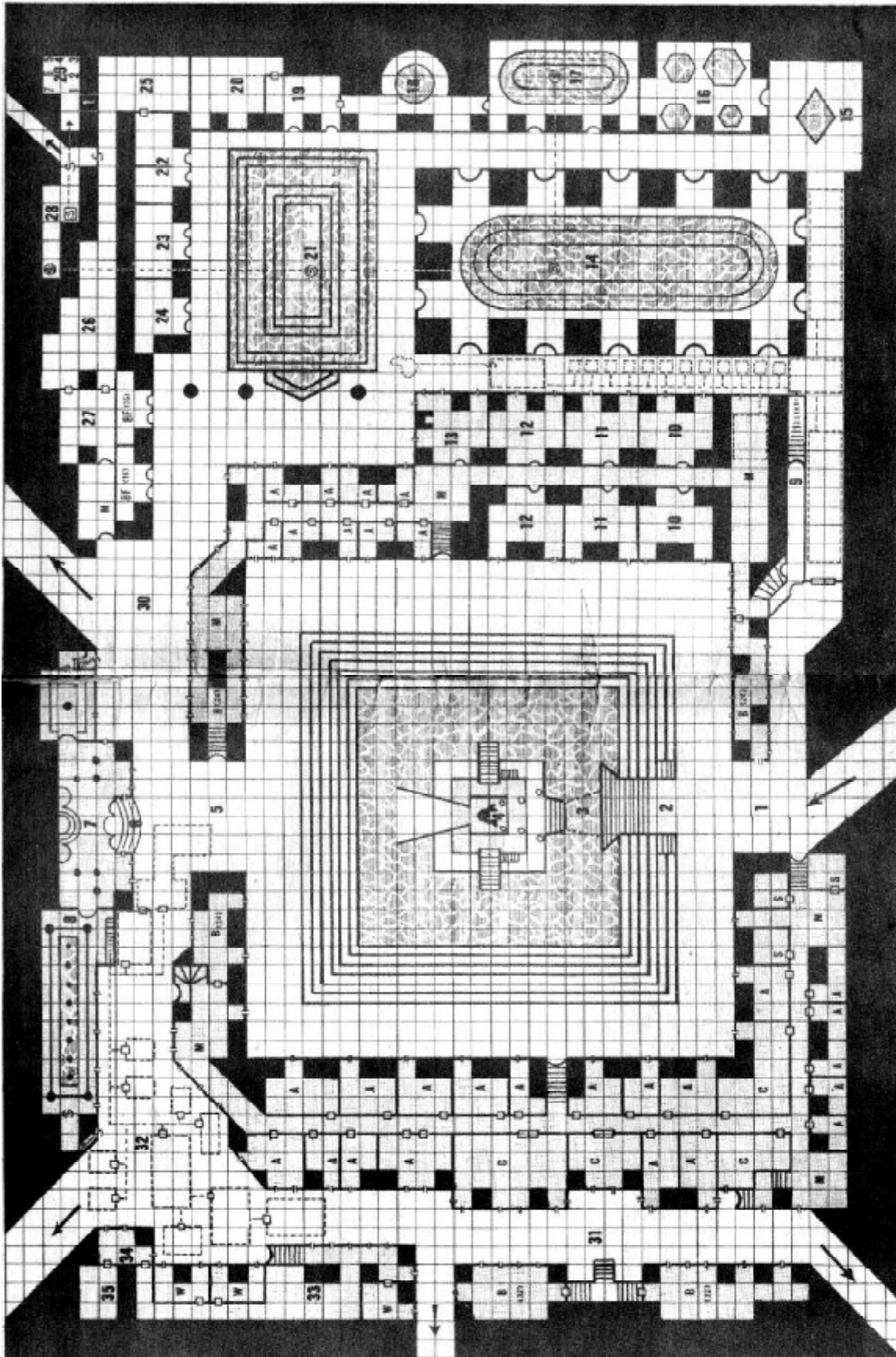
The western wing of the palace is given over to the personal pool of Va-Guulgh, and it is here that he engages in weird rituals and arcane studies. All the area is of green stone — serpentine, malachite, and slate. The pillars in the center of the pool are a mixture of malachite and azurite, carved so that they go from green to blue in their upper parts. The waters of the pool are of translucent green, and here it is likely that the sorcerer will be relaxing (unless an alarm has been sounded).

There are two Black Ones, one to either side of the pool, who guard the ruler and will give warning of any intruder. Va-Guulgh wears only a jewelled headband (worth 8,000 sp) and a harness with a masterwork dagger. He has the spellcasting ability of a 12th-level sorcerer.

If given the chance, Va-Guulgh will flee through the secret door (Search DC 25) to the west if threatened by powerful antagonists. Otherwise, he will attempt to seek safety in the bottom of the pool, where various fish, shellfish, crabs, turtles, and other creatures will obey his commands to obscure his movements and hinder the passage of any enemies. If this fails, he will either go down to the underlying rooms or fight to the death.

Secret Room: This small area is known only to the ruler of the place. The door has an iron bar, and Va-Guulgh will use it to secure the door from any chasing him (+2 to Break DC). There is a pouch of twenty 500 sp base value pearls here, and he will attach this pouch to his harness. If the sorcerer conceives the situation to be hopeless, he will abandon the shrine entirely, fleeing towards the ocean. If the





KEY TO THE MAJOR ENCOUNTER AREA

- Door
- Double Door
- Archway
- Secret Door
- Secret Trapdoor
- Secret Passage
- Upper floor Room
- Steps
- Pool
- Pool Water Contour Line Indicating Depth
- Areas Above Floor Level





situation can be recovered, he will attempt to rally his troops and counterattack.

Lower Area: The stairs to the south lead westwards to a lower complex of rooms, each secured by a very thick wooden door with iron bindings (2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 30; Break DC 25). The two rooms to the south and east are those of the sorcerer. He has various items of furnishing there, including a couch, four chairs, two large tables, a small table, two benches, and a large cabinet in which are three special ceremonial robes embroidered with shells and sewn with seed pearls (each worth 750 sp). In the far chamber is a chest (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 25) with a masterwork Yuetshi knife and a dagger of bronze.

The six small rooms (about 10 feet by 15 feet) are the cells of the personal attendants of the ruler, the Black Ones mentioned above. Amongst their personal effects and a pallet of seaweed will be found 1-100 sp each. The four rooms to the west and south are storage chambers for food, seaweed, and various worthless items. There are, however, two large casks of brandy which have no great value, but if they are sampled there is a chance (Fort DC 14) per individual drinking that too much will be imbibed, thus causing the individual to become noisy and clumsy (-2 on Dexterity and all attacks) for 3d10 minutes.

9. PASSAGE TO THE SLAVES' QUARTERS

The worn stones along this tunnel indicate it has seen the passage of countless scores of feet. The Black Ones keep their numerous slaves penned below. The stairs lead down into a guard room where four guards and a Black One (carrying the keys to all of the doors in the slave area), are on duty. All doors are of bronze and iron here (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30).

To the east and west of the guard room are two general slave barracks rooms of 20 feet by 70 feet size. The western room holds three Argosseans, one Stygian, two Shemites, two Kushites, nine Barachans, and eight Zingarans. The eastern chamber contains two Barachans, three Picts, and twenty-one Argosseans (one of whom is a 7th-level pirate). All slaves, especially the Barachans and the Zingarans, are fairly well acquainted with the normal parts of the shrine. Freed slaves will happily kill Black Ones; whether or not they will help liberators directly is a function of motivation and treatment as well as initial reaction.

The corridor north leads to a dozen small cells. In the first pair are two Kushites each, the next pair is empty, there are two Picts

in the next two, and again two empty cells, then a Zingaran merchant (with a gold ring worth 250 sp hidden inside his boot) chained to the wall, and in the last cell is a pair of rats. Empty cells usually contain filthy seaweed bedding and some scattered and gnawed bones.

The large room to the west is a standard torture chamber, with the usual rack, iron boot, chains, irons, etc. The place at the far (north) end of the line of cells is a disused storage chamber, with a few barrels and crates of provisions in the forepart, and junk stuffed into the back. Behind this refuse is a concealed escape tunnel which leads north about 40 feet to a 60 feet deep sinkhole. The sinkhole gives onto a natural passageway which eventually ends in a shaft upwards into the secondary passage northwest (about a mile north of the shrine).

10. SCRIPTURE ROOMS

There are four stone tables, two stone benches, and eight bone stools in each room. Besides short tracts, there are 27 scrolls and 18 books in each place, and these items are worth 1,000 sp and 2,500 sp respectively if brought to the mainland and sold to a bookdealer or sage.

In one of these rooms the party will note a tract-like sheet which contains writings in Zingaran, an account of a captain who searched for the fabled treasures of Skelos and was captured by the Black Ones.

The fragment from his diary says: "*... I desired to learn if this island was indeed that mentioned in the mysterious Book of Skelos, wherein, nameless sages assert — strange monsters guard crypts filled with hieroglyphs — carved in gold. We have left all charted coasts behind and are plunging further and further into that unknown billowy waste ordinarily shunned by seafarers, and into which, since the beginnings of Time, ships have ventured, only to vanish from the sight of man for ever. All known lands lie behind us....*"

11. ABANDONED ROOMS

A few common weapons are strewn about these rooms, but there is absolutely nothing of real value in either room.

12. EMPTY ROOMS

Hung about the walls of this place are various daggers, spears, nets, shields and harpoons. It is otherwise empty.

13. LIBRARY

This chamber is the repository for countless ancient works written in an unknown language. There are many shelves and

pigeon-holes, racks and cabinets holding these works and single sheet folders as well. As all of these works are scribed in a strange language, reading them might be troublesome. Four small wooden desks, four chairs, a bench, and two long tables are in the room.

There are six light globes suspended from the ceiling, each of which holds a phosphorescent liquid which gives a yellowish green light. If the chain of the fifth is pulled, let loose, and then pulled down strongly (Search DC 30), a secret compartment in the north central wall will open. Note that this small space is lined with sheets of bronze and lead inside so as to prevent magical viewing or the radiation of magic from its contents. Inside this nook are stored a map of the shrine area (which does not show the secret doors and adits!) and a black iron box (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23). The box is locked (Open Lock DC 30) and trapped (mechanical; touch trigger (opening the box); automatic reset; 5-ft. cloud of black lotus blossom [Inhaled, Fort DC 25, initial damage 1d3 Str + hallucinations, secondary damage unconsciousness for 1 hour]; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20). Inside the box are two of the books of Vathelos the Blind (out of a total of six volumes).

14. BREEDING POOL

This is where the Black Ones lay the eggs produced in rituals involving the idol at Area 4, after which the males then fertilize them with milt. The pool is about 42 feet deep in the center. There is a jade idol of Yibb-Tstill with pearl eyes (100 sp each) worth 1,900 sp at the exact center of the pool. It weighs 35 pounds.

15. OFFERINGS POOL

The Black Ones bring their live captives to this place and toss them into its oily green waters. Anyone (except the Black Ones, of course) dipped into this bottomless pool must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15, +1 for each round under water) or be petrified and shrunk to a height of six inches. The resulting statuettes are collected by Va-Guulgh and used in sorcerous rituals.

Va-Guulgh also knows a powerful ritual to bring the pool to life, but this will only be used in the direst of circumstances, because it seals the fate of the Black Ones as a race. The ritual takes 10 minutes to perform, and requires a successful Perform (ritual) check (DC 20). Once unleashed, this liquid monstrosity moves slowly across the whole island, devouring anything in sight, before it finally dissolves into the ocean.

The Blood of Yibb-Tstill: Gargantuan Ooze; HD 20d10+180; hp 290; Init +1 (-5 Dex, +6 Ref); Spd 20 ft., climb 20. ft; DV (Dodge) 1 (-4 size, -5 Dex); DR 0; BAB/Grapple +15/





+35; Atk +19 melee (slam, 3d6+12 plus petrification); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA constrict (2d8+12 plus petrification), improved grab, petrification; SQ blindsight (60 ft.), split, ooze traits; SV Fort +15, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 26, Dex 1, Con 28, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills: Climb +16. *Feats:* —.

Constrict (Ex): The Blood of Yibb-Tstll deals automatic slam damage with a successful grapple check. In addition, the victim must save against the petrification effect.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the Blood of Yibb-Tstll must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Petrification (Su): Any melee hit or constrict attack may petrify the opponent, unless he succeeds on a Fortitude save (DC 29). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Split (Ex): Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage to the Blood of Yibb-Tstll. Instead the creature splits into two identical creatures, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A creature with 10 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

Skills: The Blood of Yibb-Tstll has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

16. FINGERLING POOLS

The young of the Black Ones are raised in these pools. It takes decades before they are fully grown. There are currently a dozen fingerlings in these 20 feet deep pools. Two Black Ones guard the place.

17. SECONDARY SPAWNING POOL

This pool is not currently used. It is 20 feet deep and its bottom is strewn with 331 sp in coins.

18. SECONDARY FINGERLING POOL

Like Area 17, this pool is not currently used by the Black Ones. It is, however, currently occupied by a loathsome sea snake that preys on passersby. The pool is 40 feet deep and its bottom is strewn with 31 large base 100 sp gems.

Sea Snake: Huge Animal; HD 11d8+21; hp 70; Init +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Ref); Spd 20 ft., climb 20. ft, swim 20 ft.; DV (Dodge) 19 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); DR 5; BAB/Grapple +8/+23; Atk +13 melee (bite, 1d10+10); Full Atk +13 melee (bite, 1d10+10); Space/

Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA constrict (1d8+10, AP 8), improved grab; SQ scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16. *Feats:* Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness.

19. GUARDROOM

This chamber is furnished with 19 narrow pallets covered with dried seaweed and silk cloths. There is a small table and two benches also. There are four human guards in the place.

20. SERAGLIO

Here, the sorcerer Va-Guulgh keeps six human women as his concubines. Each has a couch, various personal effects, and jewelry worth 150 sp each. Also on the three tables about the place are eleven gold vessels worth 50 sp each and 14 silver ones valued at 15 sp each. The walls are draped with gauzy green hangings of no value, but they hide the stone behind.

21. COMMON POOL

This large body of water is 80 feet deep at the middle point. The west entry point is only 4 feet deep. It is filled with various sorts of small fish and other water creatures. The Black Ones come here to exercise and sometimes feed on these live fish as well. There will be 1-4 Black Ones swimming here.

22. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

These areas are furnished with a few stark items — pallets, a few stools, small wooden tables, and pegs in the walls ready to accept harness or weapons.

East Section: Here a Black One with maximum hit points is quartered.

West Section: There are 2 Black Ones quartered in this part of the area.

23. LIVING QUARTERS

There are 16 pallets, two benches, four stools and a long table here. There is a chest (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20) in the room which contains 120 sp.

24. QUARTERS OF VA-GUULGH'S GUARDS

There are 16 guards here. There are 24 pallets in the place, as the 8 guards of the royal area are quartered here when off duty. Each guard has his own stool, and there are three tables and six benches in the room.

25. ARMORY

This large chamber has racks full of the following: 30 nets, 60 empty quivers, and a container of purple lotus (6 applications). There are also some boxes with ancient weapons, but these are all so old and corroded as to be useless. There are 12 bucklers, 12 short swords, 14 daggers, and 6 hand crossbows with 28 bolts. (If these items are used they will break immediately upon any employment.)

26. STORAGE CHAMBER

This area is filled to overflowing with bales, boxes, crates, barrels, trunks, hogsheads, and kegs — stacked and piled all over, with only narrow paths between them. All of the contents are of small worth, being dried fish, seaweed, cheap cloth, fish skins and scales, shells, bonemeal, carved bone items, and similar goods used in trade (pilfered from shipwrecks).



27. EMPTY QUARTERS

The chamber has 12 pallets in it, but the floor is covered with piles of dried seaweed here and there. Under one such pile is a loose stone (Search DC 20) concealing 60 base 10 sp gems.

28. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

This corridor leads to a very deep well (6 feet to water, then 50 feet deep). The well shaft leads to a circular conduit of 6 feet diameter. This pipe connects Areas 14, 17, and 21 by secret entrances (Search DC 25) in each pool bottom. On the pool side these appear to be normal stone blocks, each about 2 feet square. There is also a hidden trapdoor (Search DC 30), its iron ring concealed under a small flagstone. The 2 feet square block is about 6 inches thick and very heavy. It opens to a small square shaft leading down by iron rungs 16 feet to a 5 feet wide passage to Area 29. Note the passage widens to 10 feet after 40 feet east.

29. SECRET SUNKEN CHAMBER

The passage into the room and the chamber itself are about 7 feet from floor to ceiling. Only Va-Gulgh knows of this place. It is a secret passed from ruler to ruler. The wealth of the shrine is stored here, wealth from century upon century of looting shipwrecks and captives. There are seven large chests in the room, each about 3 feet by 3 feet by 4 feet. Each of these chests is described below, for some are cleverly trapped.

Chest #1: This bronze chest has an ancient lock (Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20). It is filled with 8,124 shells which are precious to Black Ones but are

otherwise valueless. Moving this chest from the stone it rests on triggers the mechanism (Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25) which causes a 10 feet thick stone block to seal off the whole room (3 ft. thick; Hardness 8; hp 540; Break DC 50).

Chest #2: This is a heavy wood and iron box with a great iron padlock on it (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30). Inside are 8,912 sp.

Chest #3: This is an iron chest with a secret catch lock (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30). It holds 2,440 sp, and a green silk altarcloth wrapping three gold service pieces set with pearls. Total value is 6,000 sp.

Chest #4: This bronze and iron chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) has two iron bars attached by rings on the back side. When the lid is unlocked and lifted, the bars are depressed to trigger a 10 feet wide by 20 feet long trapdoor which swings down to drop all standing on it into a 70 feet deep pit (mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 70 ft. deep (7d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18). The last 10 feet of the pit are water filled, so any creature may down unless able swim or to escape by climbing. The chest holds 5,320 sp.

Chest #5: This is an iron-bound wooden trunk (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23) which is not locked. Inside are 100 ten-pound copper ingots. Twenty of those at the bottom contain platinum (their weight will give them away, as they are 25 pounds each, although there is copper plating on the outside).





Chest #6: This locked bronze chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) is trapped identically to chest #1 (moving seals the chamber with a 10 feet thick stone block). It holds 12 pieces of jewelry set with gems (average value is 600 sp each), 20 pieces of ivory jewelry worth 50 sp each, a bone tube with a yellowed scroll, and a jeweled icon of Yibb-Tstll set with ten base 100 sp value gems and hundred base 10 sp value gems.

Chest #7: This is a locked chest (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30) plated silver over iron. All of the seams and cracks of the chest are filled with silver solder also. The container is worth 1,000 sp, and inside is a jeweled medallion worth 3,000 sp. Also trapped inside is a smoke serpent which will attack anything which frees it from its hated imprisonment.

30. GUARD POST

Here eight guards are on watch.

31. GUARD POST

There are ten soldiers here, exactly conforming to those at Area 5.

32. GUARD POST

In addition to ten soldiers conforming to those at Area 5, there are also four archers armed with dagger, short bow, and quiver of 20 arrows each.

33. EMPTY QUARTERS

These spartan quarters contain six pallets and a table with two benches in the place.

34. CHAMBER OF QUOLP-OOL

Quartered here is Quolp-Ool, second-in-command and confidant of Va-Gulgh. Although his room is as spartan as the others, Quolp-Ool has a small iron box hidden in the wall of the place (Search DC 25), and inside it are 366 sp. Behind the box, and concealed by rock dust (Search DC 25), is a small case made of rare shells. It contains a string of perfectly matched pearls (1,800 sp intact, 600 sp separated) and 12 base 100 sp gems. Quolp-Ool will rush to any disturbance in the place.

35. LOCKED ROOM

This second room of Quolp-Ool's is closed by a heavy iron door (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock 30), and he carries the only key to it. Inside is a half-naked human woman, Sancha. She is slated for formal torture soon. The room is bare of furnishings, save a pile of dried sea weed. Sancha is chained to the wall with short fetters. She claims to be a noblewoman of Kordova, but is in reality a pirate-queen in league with the Barachans. She will volunteer to aid and guide rescuers, but she will, of course, betray them at first opportunity. She does not fear death, but she will certainly do her utmost to avoid it if possible! She will not betray her pirate brotherhood, but anything else is fair game, so to speak.

THUS ENDS THIS TALE FROM THE HYBORIAN AGE, THE SHRINE OF THE BLACK ONES

Appendix A: Non-Player Characters

Va-Guulgh, Ruler of the Black Ones: Large Outsider (native); HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref); Spd 25 ft.; DV (Dodge) 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural); DR 7; BAB/Grapple +10/+20; Atk +15 melee (claw, 1d8+6) or +15 melee (dagger, 1d4+6, 19-20/x2, AP 1, finesse); Full Atk +15/+15 melee (claw, 1d8+6) and +10 melee (bite, 1d4+3) or +15/+15 melee (dagger, 1d4+6, 19-20/x2, AP 1, finesse); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA soul-stealing flute, sorcery (as 10th-level sorcerer); SQ sorcery (as 10th-level sorcerer), Knowledge Is Power; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 22, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills: Balance +15, Climb +19, Bluff +16, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Hide +15, Intimidate +16, Move Silently +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Search +15. *Feats:* Cleave, Improved Sunder, Iron Will (b), Power Attack, Steely Gaze.

Magical Attack Bonus: +8. *Base/Max Power Points:* 7/21.

Sorcery Styles (4) and Spells (10): Curses (Lesser Ill-Fortune, Greater Ill-Fortune, Wind's Hated Son), Divination (Astrological Prediction, Mind-Reading, Psychometry, Visions), Necromancy (Raise Corpse, Death Touch), Sea Witchery (Sense Currents, Rolling Waves, Grip of the Deep, Jaws of Atlantis, Storm of Waves)

Soulless servitors, human slaves of the Black Ones (male Zingaran Soldier 3): HD 3d10+6; hp 26; Init +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref); Spd 30 ft.; DV (Dodge) 13; DV (Parry) 15; DR 4 (leather jerkin); BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk cutlass +6 melee (1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 2) or crossbow +5 ranged (2d6, 20/x2, AP 4, range increment 60 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, sneak attack (+1d6), Formation Combat (skirmisher); SQ +1 racial bonus to all Sense Motive checks, -1 racial penalty to all Diplomacy checks, +1 racial bonus to all Profession (sailor), Balance and use Rope checks, proficient with arming sword, wield greatswords as martial weapons instead of exotic weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +8, Search +6. *Feats:* Parry, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (cutlass).

Languages: Zingaran, Argossean.

Possessions: Leather jerkin, cutlass, crossbow, 10 bolts, 7 sp.

Special Note: The souls of these poor creatures have been destroyed by the Black Ones, which makes them immune to mind-affecting magic. They obey the Black Ones without protest.

Kaltum, the "Sea-Ghoul" (male Pelishtim Pirate 10): HD 10d8+50; hp 104; Init +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Ref); Spd 30 ft.; DV (Dodge) 19; DV (Parry) 19; DR 6 (mail shirt, steel cap); BAB/Grapple +7/+11; Atk battleaxe +12 melee (1d10+6, 20/x4, AP 4) or Shemite bow +9 ranged (1d10+4, 20/x3, AP 4, range increment 100 ft.); Full Atk battleaxe +12/+7 melee (1d10+6, 20/x4, AP 4) or Shemite bow +9/+4 ranged (1d10+4, 20/x3, AP 4, range increment 100 ft.); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with any bow, +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls with bows against targets within one range increment, +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls when performing coup de grace attacks, Ferocious Attack, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Sneak Subdual, Bite Sword, Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ +2 racial bonus to Appraise, Spot and Bluff checks, +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in any plains environment, wield Shemite bows as martial weapons instead of exotic weapons, -1 racial penalty to all saves, +2 racial bonus to all Knowledge (arcana) checks, Pirate Code, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Seamanship +2, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1, Improved Mobility, Navigation; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Knowledge (geography) +14, Move Silently +15, Profession (sailor) +14, Swim +17, Tumble +15. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Leadership, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Languages: Shemitish, Stygian, Argossean, Zingaran.

Possessions: Mail shirt, steel cap, battleaxe, Shemite bow, 20 arrows, gold earrings (worth 40 sp each), hidden dagger.

Sancha of Kordova (female Zingaran Noble 5/Pirate 5): HD 5d8+5 plus 5d8+5; hp 66; Init +14 (+5 Dex, +5 Ref, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; DV (Dodge) 19; DV (Parry) 14; DR 0 (no armor); BAB/Grapple +6/+8; Atk arming sword +13 melee (1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 2, finesse); Full Atk arming sword +13/+8 melee (1d10+2, 19-





20/x2, AP 2, finesse) and dagger +11/+6 (+6 base, +5 Dex) melee (1d4+2, 19-20/x2, AP 1, finesse); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, Lead by Example +2, Ferocious Attack, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Sneak Attack +2d6, Sneak Subdual; SQ +1 racial bonus to all Sense Motive checks, -1 racial penalty to all Diplomacy checks, +1 racial bonus to all Profession (sailor), Balance and use Rope checks, proficient with arming sword, wield greatswords as martial weapons instead of exotic weapons, Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Special Regional Feature +1, Social Ability, Seamanship +1, Pirate Code, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 19.

Skills: Bluff +12, Gather Information +12, Hide +13, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Move Silently +13, Ride +13, Swim +10, Tumble +13. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Combat, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (arming sword).

Languages: Zingaran, Argossean, Aquilonian, Shemitish.

Possessions: Clothing, arming sword, dagger (assuming she can retrieve her possessions from her captors).

Kaltum's Pirate Crew (male Argossean Pirate 3): HD 3d8; hp 18; Init +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref); Spd 25 ft.; DV (Dodge) 15; DV (Parry) 14; DR 5 (scale corselet); BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atk cutlass +6 melee (1d10+3, 19-20/x2, AP 2) or Shemite bow +4 ranged (1d10+3, 20/x3, AP 4, range increment 100 ft.); SA Ferocious Attack, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual; SQ gain +2 competence bonus to extra class skills, wield greatsword as martial weapon instead of exotic weapon, +1 racial bonus to Fate Points, +2 racial bonus to Gather Information, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope checks, Seamanship +1, Pirate Code; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +9, Intimidate +5, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Shemitish bow), Weapon Focus (cutlass).

Languages: Argossean, Aquilonian, Shemitish.

Possessions: Scale corselet, cutlass, Shemite bow, 20 arrows, 29 sp.

Eberardo, the Mad Noble (male Zingaran Noble 11): HD 10d8+42; hp 97; Init +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Ref); Spd 25 ft.; DV (Dodge) 15 (+4 base, +1 Dex); DV (Parry) 19 (+5 base, +4 Str); DR 7 (breastplate, steel cap); BAB/Grapple +8/+12; Atk greatsword +13 melee (2d10+6, 17-20/x2, AP 4); Full Atk greatsword +13/+8 melee (2d10+6, 17-20/x2, AP 4); SA +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, sneak attack (+1d6), Lead by Example +4; SQ +1 racial bonus to all Sense Motive checks, -1 racial penalty to all Diplomacy checks, +1 racial bonus to all Profession (sailor), Balance and use Rope checks, proficient with arming sword, wield greatswords as martial weapons instead of exotic weapons, Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Social Ability (Comeliness, Family Ties), Enhanced Leadership, Special Regional Feature +2, Do You Know Who I Am?; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Diplomacy +16, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Ride +15, Survival +15. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Languages: Zingaran, Argossean, Pictish, Aquilonian.

Possessions: Breastplate, masterwork greatsword.

Special Note: Eberardo is insane and can berserk like a barbarian. He could be a powerful ally if his sanity could somehow be restored.

Appendix B: New Monsters

Black One

Large Outsider (native)

Hit Dice: 6d8+30 (57 hp)

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

Speed: 25 ft. (5 squares)

Dodge Defense: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+16

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (1d8+6) and bite +6 melee (1d4+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: —

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +5

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +15, Bluff +12, Jump +15, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Hide +11, Intimidate +12, Move Silently +11, Perform (ritual) +12, Search +11

Feats: Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Steely Gaze

Environment: Isle of the Black Ones

Organization: Solitary or group (6-10)

Advancement: —

No one knows the origin of the Black Ones, save perhaps those mad scholars who drink deep of the wisdom contained in the Scrolls of Skelos. Whatever it is, they seem to inhabit a single island far out in the Western Ocean. These creatures appear to have existed for centuries, if not millenia, on the Isle. They constructed an elaborate city at one point, though the ravages of time transformed it into a ruin long ago. Of the handful left, most refuse to ever speak to a mortal; indeed they fight in utter silence, not even grunting or gasping as they slay.

Combat: The Black Ones have no respect at all for humans. They regard humans as animals; they do, however, recognize an armed human as a potential threat. As such, they will typically wait until hungry crews drug themselves on the fruit of their island before gathering the main bulk for transformation into statues. Stragglers or those who go off alone will be quickly attacked by at least one of these creatures, often with a small group waiting nearby in case the hunter needs assistance.

When attacking in melee, the Black One may choose to either rend with his claws (inflicting slashing damage) or close his hand into a great fist (inflicting blunt damage).

Black One, Soulstealer

Large Outsider (native)

Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)

Speed: 25 ft. (5 squares)

Dodge Defense: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+20

Attack: Claw +15 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +15 melee (1d8+6) and bite +10 melee (1d4+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Soul-stealing flute

Special Qualities: —

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Balance +15, Climb +19, Bluff +16, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Hide +15, Intimidate +16, Move Silently +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Search +15

Feats: Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Steely Gaze

Environment: Isle of the Black Ones

Organization: Solitary or group (6-10)

Advancement: —

The subchiefs of the Black Ones carry thin, golden, soundless flutes which only they know how to use, and which only function when blown using the strange silent throats of these creatures.

Soul-Stealing Flute (Su): The Black One can direct his soundless music against a target within evil eye range. If the victim fails a Will save (DC 18), he becomes entranced and suffers 1d4 points of Wisdom damage for each round the Black One continues to play. Note that an entranced target is not stunned, so attackers gain no special advantage against it. If the victim's Wisdom reaches zero, his soul is completely devoured and he becomes a soulless slave of the Black Ones. The save DC is Charisma-based.





Leech Swarm

Diminutive Vermin (Aquatic, Swarm)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 5 ft. (1 square), swim 5 ft.

Dodge Defense: 14 (+4 size)

DR: 0

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/—

Attack: Swarm (1d6)

Full Attack: Swarm (1d6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Anesthetic, blood drain, disease, distraction, lingering leeches

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., hide in plain sight, immune to weapon damage, salt vulnerability, swarm traits, vermin traits

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

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 10, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Hide +12*, Move Silently +2*, Swim +10

Feats: —

Environment: Temperate or tropical marshes or freshwater

Organization: Solitary, infestation (2-5 swarms), or epidemic (6-15 swarms)

Advancement: —

Leech swarms typically lie quiescent in stagnant pools, waiting for prey to come to them. While they are capable of surviving out of water, they will rarely stray more than 5 feet from the water's edge (though some leeches will cling to creatures after they leave the water).

Combat: A leech swarm will move slowly toward any creatures in the water and attach to them, using their anesthetic to remain unnoticed so that they may drain as much blood as they desire before dropping off and returning, engorged with blood, to the water.

Anesthetic (Ex): Unlike other swarms, a leech swarm is not distracting to creatures within it (until they notice the leeches; see below), and in fact often goes unnoticed until it is too late. The victim of a leech swarm's attack must make a Survival check (DC 15) to notice the swarm's attack, and a Search check (DC 15) will reveal the leeches crawling into and under a person's garments or armor and attached to their skin. This Search check is made with a +1 bonus per point of Constitution drained by the leech swarm, as the leeches become engorged with blood and easier to find.

Blood Drain (Ex): In any round in which it begins its turn with a living creature in its space, a leech swarm will drain blood, dealing 1d3 points of Constitution dam-

age. Once the swarm has inflicted 4 or more points of Constitution damage to that target, the leeches detach and become quiescent again until they have digested their feast (requiring one hour). This has no effect on blood drained from other creatures; a leech swarm may drain blood equal to 6 points of Constitution from each creature within its space. Creatures leaving the swarm after the leeches have dropped off must still contend with lingering leeches.

Creatures with a natural damage reduction of 5 or better are immune to the blood drain attack of a leech swarm and are not subject to lingering leeches, but still suffer normal damage and a risk of disease from contact with a leech swarm.

Disease (Ex): Red ache — swarm attack, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its square must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Note that unlike other swarms, a leech swarm's distraction ability comes into play only after the leeches have been noticed. While the anesthetic effect remains in place, creatures are not distracted by a leech swarm.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): A submerged leech swarm can hide anytime it is submerged in murky or weedy water, even while being observed.

Lingering Leeches (Ex): If a leech swarm has successfully drained blood from a creature, many of the leeches from the swarm will remain attached even after the creature has left the swarm behind. These leeches will continue to inflict 1 point of damage and drain blood for 1 point of Constitution each round for 1d4 rounds after the creature leaves the swarm. This blood drain does not count against the swarm's maximum drain. The anesthetic ability described above also applies to noticing and finding these lingering leeches. The lingering leeches can be attacked as a leech swarm, and any attack that inflicts even 1 hit point of damage will cause them to drop off (though this does not count against the hit points of the leech swarm from which they came).

Salt Vulnerability (Ex): A leech swarm suffers damage from contact with salt. A pound of salt is as effective against a leech swarm as a lit torch is against other swarms. A handful of salt tossed upon a leech swarm inflicts 1d3 points of damage. The leech swarm or one or more of its victims must be at least partially out of the

water to be attacked with salt; salt is ineffective against a leech swarm if it is completely submerged.

Skills: A leech swarm has a +2 bonus on Move Silently checks. A leech swarm has a +4 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks in water.

A leech swarm uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Swim checks.

A leech swarm has a +10 racial bonus on any Swim checks to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.



If you enjoyed this module, watch out for
HD3: The City of the Spider-God



Coming soon...



Appendix C: License

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